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# UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

Humanities Graduate School

Modern Languages

Volume 1 of 1

**Wiki-Mediated Collaborative Writing (WMCW): an investigation of learners' perceptions and the impact of WMCW on preparatory year medical students studying English language in a university in Saudi Arabia.**

by

**Ahmed Abdulteef M. Al Khateeb**

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

## **ABSTRACT**

HUMANITIES GRADUATE SCHOOL

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**WIKI-MEDIATED COLLABORATIVE WRITING (WMCW): AN INVESTIGATION OF  
LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS AND THE IMPACT OF WMCW ON PREPARATORY YEAR  
MEDICAL STUDENTS STUDYING ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN A UNIVERSITY IN SAUDI  
ARABIA**

Ahmed Abdulteef M. Al Khateeb

Many learners of English as a second or foreign language at university, especially preparatory year students, in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere struggle to achieve a satisfactory level of English language writing. Writing in English with control of accurate mechanics of writing and vocabulary and syntax, logical flow of ideas and clear structure of organisation and coherence is a condition for students' academic success and vital for effective written communication. Despite its importance, the majority of such learners fail to meet these requirements and they have difficulties in composing texts with a logical sequence of ideas and persuasive content (Roberts and Cimasko, 2008). Part of this problem is said to occur because many writing instructors still follow traditional teaching methodologies such as the grammar-translation method and use of repetitive exercises. Such practices may seem demotivating to many learners, particularly the young generation of learner writers.

However, there are a number emerging technologies such as social networking tools (e.g. wikis), which if included in normal classes can help and are therefore relevant. Many such tools utilise writing and written messages. There is now a mismatch between what learners do in the traditional class and what they actually spend most of their time on outside class (web 2.0 technologies). A compromise between two environments: formal (in class) and informal (outside class) could offer solutions.

The current study aimed to fill a gap in the research by addressing the specific problems related to learning writing. It will suggest that a process-oriented wiki-mediated collaborative writing (PWMCW) approach can assist learners in practising writing in second/foreign language. The research also aimed to provide a formal learning setting for writing outside the classroom, to train the ESL/EFL learner writers to

target a new audience other than their instructor. In this way, they will learn to develop their abilities to share knowledge and to respond to peers and their own feedback.

The study addressed three main questions (eight sub-questions): to explore how the students perceive the PWMCW, how the learner writers process it and how it impacts on their collaborative and individual texts. The study takes a quasi-experimental case study design (one single pre-and-post-experimental group) in order to contribute to the continuity of development of learner writers regardless of place-related restrictions (Green et al., 2011). It was carried out with a mixed-research design. The quantitative analysis provided robust statistical operations to identify the significance level for certain issues, e.g. e feedback, authentic tasks and peers interaction. The qualitative analysis showed how collaborative planning and revision are achieved during the PWMCW.

The data were collected from pre-and-post questionnaires, initial-and-follow-up focus groups, delayed interviews, wiki-based contributions and samples for written texts. A purposive sampling was applied and a group of university level, preparatory year, language learners were chosen in one of the universities in Saudi Arabia. This procedure is held to ensure that writing can be socially processed in an online learning environment.

The findings revealed significant and insignificant changes in the perceptions of the learners along with emerging specific themes which contributed to understanding the topic of the PWMCW. The findings also explored the nature of how the collaborative writers worked together to establish a good start for better written texts, by emphasising collaborative planning and collaborative revision. Finally, the findings showed the impact of the PWMCW on the texts produced collaboratively (that used collaborative planning and collaborative revision) and individually (those texts produced by the individual learners before and after the course).

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# DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Ahmed Abdulteef M. Al Khateeb

declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

**Wiki-Mediated Collaborative Writing (WMCW): an investigation of learners' perceptions and the impact of WMCW on preparatory year medical students studying English language in a university in Saudi Arabia.**

I confirm that:

1. this work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
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7. Parts of this work have been published as:

Al Khateeb, A. A. (2011). Designing Authentic Social Networking Contents: a Sample from Wikispaces-mediated Tasks for Writing Enrichment. *Proceedings of International Conference of ICT for Language Learning*, Florence, Italy.

Al Khateeb, A. and Wright, V. (2013), Exploration of Collaborative Technologies in Foreign Language Writing Classes: the Use of Wikis by Novice Writers for Academic Purposes, *Proceedings of International Technology, Education and Development conference*, Valencia, Spain.

Signed: .....

Date: .....



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## Abbreviations

**CEFR:** Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

**CL:** Collaborative learning

**CW:** Collaborative writing

**CMC:** Computer-mediated communication

**CSCL:** Computer-supported collaborative learning

**EAP:** English for academic purposes

**ESL:** English as a second language

**EFL:** English as a foreign language

**FL:** Foreign language

**L1:** First (mother) language

**L2:** Second language

**NBLL:** Networked-based Language Learning

**PWMCW:** Process-oriented wiki-mediated collaborative writing

**WMCW:** Wiki-mediated collaborative writing

# Glossary

The following list of glossary items gives explanations based on the researcher's definition and understanding of those concepts. The definitions and understanding indicated below explains how they are used in the current research.

**Blended learning:** the type of learning that combines face-to-face instruction with technology-mediated instruction or networked-based learning.

**Collaborative learning:** an act of learning which supports learners working in social settings, and which also encourages shared learning and production of knowledge from peers in which each one should complement the others.

**Collaborative writing:** an act of creating texts that takes place collaboratively, when a group of writers share the content and when they work on multiple drafts to re-produce the best version.

**E-feedback:** the way in which instructors and fellow students can post their comments electronically without direct contact, which is compensated by minimal face-to-face feedback if needed.

**General academic writing classes:** the classes that cover a range of academic language skills in a more general sense, including the basics of written texts, as opposed to academic writing classes which mainly focus on advanced skills such as establishing argument and rhetoric.

**Instructor-feedback:** the common method of providing the correction, knowledge and comments about students' written work.

**Learning activities:** those activities conducted for generic purpose and goals that aim for enhancing learners' skills and experience, which are not part of a bigger plan or project and do not tell learners how to achieve them.

**Learning community:** a group of learners who share similar educational objectives through active engagement of individuals who can contribute to more successful learning experience.

**Learning tasks:** those activities conducted with specific purpose and goals that are part of a bigger plan, which are prescribed to learners and imply responsibility for individuals doing them.

**New approach to teaching writing:** it refers to the integrative approach to learning writing that is new to the students. This approach to writing is composed of using: e-feedback, authentic feedback, blended learning, phases for writing and peer interaction with each other and with the instructor along with the PWWCW.

**Peer-feedback:** the way in which fellow students can comment on each other's written work, which is often before instructor-feedback.

**Perception:** a determiner of attitude which deals with how learners see and interpret something and how they understand something.

**Preparatory year students:** the students who are in a preparatory year programme which prepares newly admitted students for their undergraduate studies at the university, and which mostly emphasises improving students' English proficiency level and language skills.

**Web 2.0:** a collection of web-based applications which enables mutual sharing and co-communication.

**Wiki:** a social networking tool and one of the web-based applications that is used by the public/or group members to add or delete content.

**Writing learners/learner writers:** it is shorthand for learners of English language who learn academic writing in general writing classes in order to pursue their academic studies more effectively.



# Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter introduces the reader to the research context of this thesis. It outlines the background and rationale for the study which takes place in a public university in Saudi Arabia. It also outlines the content of this thesis and introduces the research questions.

## 1.1. Background to the research context:

This research investigates the use of learners using a process-oriented wiki-mediated collaborative writing (PWMCW) approach. The research integrates wikis (Wikispaces) into general academic writing classes as a tool for collaborative writing (CW) and to support the face-to-face teaching of English as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL) writing. Wikis thus used to support collaborative writing and allow more social support for virtual and real-time communication.

Several pieces of research comment on the influence of the traditional style of learning religious texts that focus on memorisation and learning by heart. According to Rugh (2002), the characteristics of the instructional pedagogies of the Saudi educational system are based on rote learning, which appreciates oral interaction more than the written. This concentration on speaking, and verbal communication in general, have led to negative impact on the acquisition of writing skills and on improving the written competences of learners. Al-Kahtani (2002) has confirmed that speaking as a predominant cultural norm and other forms of verbal contact are more admired than the written and printed forms, since the Saudi culture values oral traditions and spoken language. I would argue that the main reason for this prioritisation is that spoken language is less complex and requires much less effort than that demanded by written communication. This issue raises concerns about writing as an undervalued skill during the students' academic study life. Khan (2011) describes the struggles encountered by English as a second/foreign language (ESL/ EFL) Arab students in general and Saudi learners in particular. He stresses that by 'virtue of their personal efforts some students achieve a considerably good level of fluency in spoken English. But they miserably lag behind in the other active skill that is writing' (p: 1252). Writing is a cognitive task that requires 'careful thought, discipline, and concentration, and it is not just a simple direct production of what the brain knows or can do at a particular moment' (Grami, 2010, p: 9).

In this sense, learning and teaching ESL/EFL<sup>1</sup> writing in Saudi Arabia have faced several challenges although writing is considered as a requirement for the students' educational and academic success, particularly at universities. A large percentage of learners at university start their higher education with limited writing abilities in English, e.g. in grammar, structure, articles and problems in understanding the usage of lexis and in expressing their thoughts (Khan, 2011). Such learners receive more instruction for surface writing that emphasises the mechanical and grammatical functions of writing (e.g. punctuation and grammar), in isolation from looking at the entire structure. The practice of focusing on punctuation, grammar and spelling is not supported with the cohesion of the ideas suggested and the coherence of the structure. Silva and Matsuda (2002) claim that teaching punctuation marks, spelling and grammar alone does not necessarily produce reasonable texts. On the contrary, teaching ESL/EFL writing should involve additional aspects related to giving writing learners adequate time and skills to explain their ideas, to refine their understanding and to communicate their knowledge.

The second challenge is that the learners have often inadequate understanding of writing as a learning process (see sub-section: 3.2.2.2). Al-Hazmi and Schofield (2007) mention the popularity of teaching writing as a product where certain texts are presented by instructors as 'models' that learners can imitate (see sub-section: 3.2.2.1). The same researchers explain that this kind of instruction is about the written texts and focuses more on the products generated than skills of writing.

The third challenge is that writing is usually practised without social interaction with readers (see sub-section: 3.2.2.3). Good written texts should allow the participants to become aware of concepts such as authorship and readership that reinforce social interaction between writers and readers (Hyland, 2002). Social interaction can be maintained through collaborative learning (CL) and encouraging writers to share the process of producing compositions. Nevertheless, CL and group work are rarely practised for academic purposes to advance learners' writing skills (Storch and Aldosari, 2010) in general academic writing classes (see the glossary, p: XVI). In some examples of such group work, the learners did not show positive attitudes and the collaboration and peer feedback were not satisfactory (Al-Khairiy, 2013). Similarly, collaborative writing or co-authoring, which is part of CL, is not usually used in the

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<sup>1</sup> Several researchers have shown inconsistency considering learning English as a second or foreign language (ESL or EFL) in Saudi Arabia. Hence, in this research both terms are used to refer to the same thing as opposed to English as a first language (EL1).

research context because of the low proficiency of learners and their lack of experience (Al-Hazmi and Schofield, 2007). The main reason is the complexity related to the implementation of such kinds of learning (see sub-section: 3.4.3).

Yet, the difficulty about the implementation of collaborative learning and group work in general and collaborative writing in particular, has been diminished with the advent of collaborative networking tools. Such tools (e.g. web 2.0 tools) are designed with mechanisms (see sub-section: 3.5.1) to facilitate flexible and dynamic exchange of knowledge (Palloff and Pratt, 2007; Karasavvidis, 2010). Such emerging tools are classified into: 1) *social bookmarking* that allows users to tag, organise, comment on and share certain websites; 2) *Micro-blogging* that enables the users to interact and communicate via short and brief messages and 3) *Social networking tools (or sites)* that permit the users to share information and communicate with other learners who have similar interests (MacArthur and Karchmer-Klein, 2010). The usage of these tools and social networking in particular, has influenced the daily routine and life of many ESL/EFL writing learners in the world (Tess, 2013). In this sense, Tess (2013) argues that those tools have become vital for

personal life as users generate content, share photos, choose to “like”, or interact in a game. The ubiquity of social media is [nowhere] more apparent than at the university where the technology is transforming the ways students communicate, collaborate, and learn (p: A 60).

The use of social networking tools amongst Saudis has been in the area of entertainment, social exchange and staying in touch with friends than for academic and learning purposes as the participants in a recent study explained (Scarpino and Alshif, 2013). According to Fatany (2012), Saudis are among the top users of these tools with a total number of 393,000 on Twitter and four million on Facebook. Certain social networking tools are used more frequently in several Saudi universities (e.g. Facebook, You-tube, Flickr and LinkedIn) more than others such as blogs and wikis, as shown in Table 1.1. As stated by Ahmad, Hussain and Aqil (2013), the former tools require less effort and communication between learners compared to wikis (see sub-section: 3.5.1.1) and blogs (see footnote: 2 in sub-section: 3.5.1.2). The use of wikis is not common in universities in Saudi Arabia, especially for higher education students in preparatory year programmes, and particularly for writing instruction. Learners in preparatory year programmes at Saudi universities are taught in English as a medium of instruction, and are expected to write their assignments in English (Almoallim et al., 2010). Those learners need to acquire the basics of written academic English, and to be trained to produce more meaningful texts as well as to enrich their writing

capabilities; yet writing is still seen as a 'hurdle' that is hard to cross (Mahib ur Rahman, 2012).

Government Universities	Blogs	Face-Book	Twitter	You-Tube	RSS	Flicker	Linked in	Google+	Tumblr	Scribd	Total
King Faisal University		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			7
Almajmaah University		Y	Y		Y	Y			Y		5
Islamic University in Madinah		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y					5
Al-Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y					5
University of Tabuk		Y	Y	Y	Y		Y				5
Shagra University		Y	Y	Y	Y					Y	5
Taibah University		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y					5

King Saud University	Y	Y	Y	Y							4
King Abdulaziz University		Y	Y	Y				Y			4
Najran University		Y	Y	Y	Y						4
University of Dammam		Y	Y	Y	Y						4
King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals		Y	Y	Y			Y				4
Salman Bin Abdulaziz University		Y	Y	Y	Y						4
Al Jouf University		Y	Y	Y	Y						4
King Saud bin Abdulaziz Univ. for Health Sciences		Y	Y	Y			Y				4
Taif University		Y	Y	Y	Y						4
Princess Nora bint Abdulrahman University		Y	Y	Y	Y						4
Umm Al-Qura University		Y	Y	Y	Y						4
Jazan University		Y	Y	Y							3
King Khalid University		Y	Y	Y							3
University of Ha'il		Y	Y	Y							3
Qassim University		Y	Y		Y						3
Northern Borders University											
Al Baha University											
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	

Table 1.1: Social networking tools used at Saudi government universities (Ahmad, Hussain and Aqil, 2013)

In other international contexts, as shown by Hsu (2013), social networking technologies have been found extremely useful for the establishment of a learning community or community of practice (see section: 1.4) to support EFL writing learning. A learning community is a 'joint enterprise', using 'mutual engagement' and 'shared repertoire' (Wenger, 1998, p: 2). It is a concentrated effort, and distributed work allows individuals to share understanding and contribute to knowledge (see sub-section: 2.2.1 about the role of such communities for the learning process). It can promote learning new vocabulary, increases motivation, self-confidence, positive attitude and interaction

using the target language (ibid). The integration of social networking tools into the traditional face-to-face writing instruction has been recommended, particularly for Saudi students learning ESL/EFL writing. Al-Jarf (2004) found that the combination of web-based instruction, involving usage of such tools, and traditional in-class writing instruction is significantly more effective than depending on the textbook alone. Al-Jarf (2004) also adds that the usage of social networking tools as elements of a-based course for writing instruction is seen as a powerful pedagogy to improve the work of unskilled, low ability, EFL writers at Saudi universities, especially females.

Because of the existing challenges facing learner writers, and the diffusion of social tools, I experimented with an approach to learning writing which is new to students in the Saudi context. The approach combines diverse elements to create a unique educational environment for the practice of writing. The elements include using: a number of principles for practising general academic writing (see sub-section: 6.2.1), the process approach (see sub-section: 6.2.2) and wiki-mediated collaborative writing (see sub-section: 6.2.4). Such integration might encourage learner writers to carry out collaborative learning and peer feedback (Aydin and Yildiz, 2014). This approach has been referred to, in this study, as a new approach to teaching writing for the community of learners chosen for the study. In other contexts, a combination of a process approach to writing and the use of wiki-mediated collaborative writing (WMCW) approaches might not be new unlike the context under exploration.

## **1.2. Rationale and the research problem:**

The groundwork for this project is based on creating more engaging and inspiring environments by introducing learning communities for learning writing (Rogers, 2000; Zhao and Kuh, 2004) in cyberspace. The rationale for these communities rely on Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) and other theories that perceive learning as a social matter which does not occur in a vacuum (see section: 2.2 for the basic theories underpinning the current research). These theories assume that the connection between individuals is invaluable due to the provision of content that is shared by multiple contributors which then becomes mutually obtainable by everyone (Mason and Rennie, 2008). This type of learning fosters the relationship 'between one learner and other learners; between learners and tutors; between a learning community and its learning resources' (Goodyear, 2005, p: 1). The rationale is also in the light of research that explored the impact of learning writing collaboratively, using the process approach to writing and through using wikis (e.g. Prichard, 2008; Lund, 2008; Aborisade, 2009; Woo et al., 2011; Yusof and Daud, 2013). The research rationale also focuses on the practice of learning writing in ESL/EFL contexts in Saudi Arabia (e.g.

Fageeh, 2003; Al-Hazmi and Schofield, 2007) and others (e.g. Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005; Shokrpour, 2007). The research basis is substantiated by the researcher's experience in teaching general and academic writing for health science students where several concerns were raised and were recognised by the learners themselves regarding learning writing. On the basis of the research conducted in this area and the current researcher's observations and the individuals' assertions about their practice of writing, three problems were identified: learner-related, instructor-related and pedagogy-related.

Firstly, the majority of students learning writing in higher education have been discovered to have general over-all weaknesses in their writing proficiency (Al-Khairi, 2013). It is common for texts which are written by beginners to contain lexical and accuracy-related errors and problems pertaining to style, organisation and structure and vagueness into the ideas. Inability to recognise the differences between the repertoire of spoken and written English is among the major problems that confuse Saudi university students (Al-Fadda, 2012). According to Al-Fadda (2012), the rhetorical style of Arabic is different from English; metaphors and symbols are common in Arabic and extended sentences embodying various ideas are preferred. These conventions result in an unwillingness to practise writing, particularly because of the rigidity and absence of innovation in the way in which writing is taught (Lee, 2003). Changes to the way in which writing, specifically, is taught are fundamental, since writing is different from other language skills in terms of its requirement for more thinking to plan and revise what is produced, whereas speaking is usually un-planned and it is usually processed via real-time communication (Saville-Troike, 2012).

This leads to the second problem. It was noticed that there are several instructors who directly or indirectly promote the product writing approach on its own, in isolation from the process writing approach (Al-Haisoni, 2012). Such instructors overstress the importance of the number of words and paragraphs and the shape of the overall text. This practice has negatively dominated the learning of writing in ESL/EFL classes, leading to neglect of the writing process: planning, drafting and revision which otherwise could contribute to the production of effective pieces of writing (Al-Hazmi and Schofield 2007; Al-Qurashi, 2009; Al-Seghayer, 2011).

It is suggested that instructors of writing should train learners to learn writing skills by discovery and through shared understanding (Zamel, 1982; 1983). This is to include technical matters, such as allowing steps to be built up gradually, beginning with the generation of ideas; progressing to drafting, editing and revising; and ending up with a finished piece of writing. This could reduce the difficulty of writing, and perhaps the

elements of academic writing, by absorbing these basic stages. Because of the pedagogical concerns, the process writing approach has been used as a possible remedy for inadequate levels of English writing: Al-Hazmi (2006) emphasises that instructors should adopt this writing approach since it is a way to encourage learners' critical thinking and self-reflection. It also helps instructors to identify the needs of their learners, by offering a channel through which individuals' own opinions can be expressed.

Thirdly, the current researcher reached the conclusion that the practice of ESL/EFL writing instruction in higher education and preparatory year programmes is problematic and needs improvement. This pedagogy of learning writing does not seem to be developing learners' intellectual and collaborative voice in which they become more engaged in active learning. Learners are rarely motivated and engaged in useful and well-planned tasks that can be fulfilled collaboratively in order to reduce the complexity and stress associated with skills of writing. Such learners may not learn in a constructive way in which they can supplement each other's knowledge and minimise individual competition.

Students of writing should be able to build their own sense of self-confidence and be prepared to spend more time and effort on writing well-comprehended written texts. Currently, they may be discouraged by the lack of oral exchange of information and direct expression found in speaking classes (Shafie et al., 2010; Tardy, 2010). They, particularly beginner ESL/EFL learner writers, may not pay attention to the accuracy, fluency and rhetoric of more skilled writing, mainly because of the absence of the major lexical, grammatical and content-related expertise and the relevant editing abilities (Fregeau, 1999). These problems apply to many Saudi writing learners at universities where, I believe, there is little encouragement or opportunity to practise writing. The nature of written composition regards large-scale processes of problem-solving which beginners are usually not able to grasp, making the practice of writing more demanding when it is compared with the writing of native, or more advanced, writers of English (Manchón, De Larios and Murphy, 2009). Thus, it is necessary that the writing potentials of Saudi university students should be enhanced to support their inadequate composition skills and their lack of practice in dealing with more complex writing topics (McMullen, 2009; Mahib ur Rahman, 2012).

Many Saudis however have been spending much time writing online for the purpose of communication on social media networks (Aljumah, 2011; Fageeh, 2011). Yet, the current practice of learning writing is not compatible with what the new generation of writers mostly do in their informal life. It seems there is a gap between the rapidly

increased use of 2.0 tools, including wikis, for social purposes and the existing educational practices for learning writing that occur inside classes, as Pifarre and Staarman (2011) point out. This paradoxical lack of relationship between the formal practice of learning of general academic writing inside classes and the proliferation of less formal e-based writing communication outside classes seems pervasive in Saudi society. These researchers pointed to a growing discrepancy between writing that is practised inside language classrooms, and what is practised outside classrooms by students in their social lives. This gap can be narrowed down by finding a modified pedagogy which tries to incorporate both face-to-face interaction in the writing classroom with online interaction, to ensure more successful and less effortful learning. The new kinds of social networking tools could enable learners to transpose their traditional oral communication to a new written form of human interaction. In brief, the current research adds to the body of knowledge in the following ways:

- a. It tests/suggests a new practice of learning general academic writing through the PWMCW in a new context; which includes the impact of writing on wikis before and after learners take part in this experience.
- b. It investigates how a new group of learners become engaged with wikis by showing some insights about what they think.
- c. It explores how particular learners experience the learning process by writing on wikis and how they interact with each other after seeing each other contributions.

The participants in the current research expressed their enthusiasm for making more use of social networking tools in their writing course. The participants showed similar positive reactions as found in Wheeler, Yeomans and Wheeler (2008). These positive reactions boosted as the learners were empowered and their engagement, collaboration and co-participation increased. Student reactions as far as ambitions concerning the educational implementation of social technologies, are concerned have led to a renewed interest in using social media for learning writing (Neuman and Hood, 2009; Miyazoe and Anderson, 2010; Chao and Lo, 2011; Lin and Yang, 2011; Sun and Chang, 2012). Moreover the integration of social media into teaching of writing may well help in providing unusual informal situations for collaborative writing and for increasing interactive practice and meaningful learning. Thus this integration of networked-based learning writing, using wikis, could have a significant and desirable impact in favour of learning better writing. Undoubtedly, the use of online interaction will have some disadvantages, such as reduction in the number of verbal gestures and the neglect of oral contact or synchronous communication and lack of trust (Elgort, Smith

and Toland, 2008), but it still holds promise especially for those comfortable with technology.

### **1.3. Overview of the research area:**

This section explores this emerging research area in a broader sense. In contemporary complex, high-technology society, writing as a skill for communicating thinking and understanding has developed new dimensions with the birth of 2.0 learning and social technologies. However, as well as the development of informal abbreviated writing and conventions for texts and posts, social networking technologies have influenced formal educational practices and pedagogies. This is supported by Lundin (2008) who claims that networked-oriented pedagogy can socialise learning in terms of reinforcing social interaction by multimedia sharing and professional connection. Today's students are having to acquire new types of literacies (Karasavvidis, 2010; Liou and Lee, 2011). Such literacies underline the potential of e-based social technologies for the learning of L2 and/or FL writing (Elola and Oskoz, 2010). This involves more consumption and production of information and sharing during learning, including the learning of writing, unlike traditional individualised learning (Selwyn, 2011). In fact, networked-based learning writing has changed the perception and practice of writing and the writing process. Moreover, it is postulated that collaborative and collective learning results in educational innovation; which is the incubator of the technology-enhanced new culture of learning (Thomas and Seely-Brown, 2011).

The wealth of social applications, wikis in particular, can now offer learning opportunities that focus on the written form of communication and collaboration (see section: 3.6). Asynchronous communication becomes accessible via text messages or printed scripts. Although both wikis and Google.Docs are promising social networking tools similarly usable for CW yet wikis enable users to check their individual contributions more easily than Google.Docs. The interface of Google.Docs is unlike a wiki in the sense that it is closer to Microsoft Word in that it deals with documents rather than webpages, though it is featured by its compatibility with any file documents (Gerrard, 2012). Discussion above support the importance of digital writing which is achieved in groups. Digital writing as a concept is hard to define precisely because technologies change rapidly. It is based on 'the dramatic changes in the ecology of writing and communication and, indeed, what it means to write-to create and compose and share' (DeVoss, Eidman-Aadahl and Hicks, 2010, p: 4). Research into this area becomes important for writing learners and instructors because this type of technology has become part of the students' routine and everyday life as 'tools for writing; publishing; distributing; collaborating; interacting; and remixing and mashing together

image' (ibid, 2010, p: 4). Instructors should consider recent changes along with what provokes and attracts the attention of the new generation and which might be different from previous generations. In this sense DeVoss, Eidman-Aadahl and Hicks (2010) explain that:

Equipping students to work across and within contemporary networked spaces, and to write in a range of genres and a diversity of modes to audience local and widespread, will serve students in their higher education experiences and in the workplaces of the future. (p: 5)

Using such emerging technologies for ESL/EFL learning writing seems to be inevitable in the digital age. They play a key role in delivering better blended learning and a new culture that is focused on embedding social skills through collaboration and, networking and student-centred learning (see section: 3.5.1). Bernard, Rubalcava, and St-Pierre (2000) have emphasised blended instruction that combines collaborative technologies with face-to-face instruction (see Table 3.2 by Conole and Alevizou, 2010 for a comparison between the range of social collaborative technologies and their traditional pedagogical approaches). Blended learning does not replace the role of instructors and indeed technologies are used to enrich one part of the learning process by helping learners to interact (Ginns and Ellis, 2007). On the contrary, instructors can guide learners. The technology-enhanced culture of learning, as Thomas and Seely-Brown (2011) claim, perform the function of strengthening various skills: research skills, technical skills, metacognitive skills and group learning skills.

Despite this, blended learning cannot be established without difficulties. Fuchs and Akbar (2013) mention challenges in incorporating web 2.0 tools into classes; classes and lessons take a long time if using technology; it is difficult to overcome participants' negative perceptions and experience about e-based classes; participants' limited experience in using and accessing social technologies for educational purposes; and extra time is needed to support e-based interaction with face-to-face communication. Redecker et al. (2009) have also shown additional barriers for the integration of web 2.0 tools into traditional education, particularly in Europe. They require:

- Advanced digital competence: in terms of having ability to use the interactive media with critical sense and confidence.
- Special needs: in terms of taking account all possibilities to accommodate learners' different needs
- Pedagogical skills: in terms of changing the traditional position of teachers as knowledge givers.

- Safety and privacy concerns: in terms of protecting learners' identities and keeping their communication in a private space.
- Institutional changes: in terms of re-evaluating their role in society and showing new ways to support learners, instructors and administrators

#### **1.4. Aims and significance of the research:**

The present research aims to evaluate the impact on the abilities of EFL learner writers through the use of collaborative wikis and the process writing approach. Part of the aim is to provide possible solutions for the current issues and concerns indicated earlier (see section: 1.2). This study aims to scrutinise the practice of the process-oriented wiki-mediated collaborative writing (PWMCW) in two environments with different settings. The first is the traditional (face-to-face) EFL writing classes which the learners experienced and which have the following characteristics: mostly individual-based assignments, product-orientation to writing, and where technological tools are mostly disregarded.

In contrast, the second environment is wiki-based writing classes, which are designed to meet the objectives of this study. The latter classes are characterised by more involvement of the following: collaborative-based tasks, process-orientation to writing, and the use of wikis as a tool for social interaction. They have been designed because little attention has been paid to incorporating wikis for learning writing along with the process writing approach and other social aspects of writing (Lin and Yang, 2011). Those classes tend to engage the participants' interests by moving them towards a more formal writing culture through using informal social tools. Such classes also try to help learners to maintain peer feedback and to encourage their personalised learning through a carefully designed course (see chapter 4). The tasks given were chosen to represent specific matters linked to the learners' study and thus to some extent to be authentic (e.g. diabetes). The main intention of planning such tasks was to bridge the gap between learners' individual differences which could be reduced by enabling students to learn more socially through providing scaffolding and mediation. The two writing class environments are comparatively analysed in order to discover each ones' weaknesses and strengths.

This research is significant in terms of taking advantage of the suggestions from several studies of other research suggesting the use of CL and wikis for writing instruction (Lund, 2008; Mak and Coniam, 2008; Kessler, 2009; Lee, 2010). So far, this topic has mostly been applied in the West and in South Asia, rather than in the Middle East areas which have inherited different cultures and systems of education. A few studies have explored low-level students of writing in the preparatory year at university

in this context (Mahib ur Rahman, 2012). The present investigation is expected to promote positive assumptions which are relevant to learners' understanding about practice of EFL writing and actual performance through writing on wikis. It explains the actual process of composition using wikis and its relevant content by focusing on co-planning and co-revising and individual drafting. It also answers an enquiry pertaining to how the process approach is collaboratively developed on this platform. Also, the identification of negative aspects raises questions about how and why they are dissimilar in different contexts. The style preferences or academic learners' differences (Eslami-Rasekh and Valizadeh, 2004) or cultural norms might be the reasons (Mwanza and Engeström, 2005) for this.

### **1.5. Type of research and research questions:**

The research takes a quasi-experimental approach (see section: 5.4 for more about the research design). The study participants are a group of preparatory year medical students learning general academic writing at a state-funded university in Saudi Arabia (see section: 5.5 for more about the procedures of selecting the participants). The participants have novice and intermediate levels of writing proficiency (around IELTS 4). In correlation with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), the students, according to the researcher's personal assessment, would meet level A2-B1. They are able to recognise the basic ideas of a certain topic, but not very complex ones; connect simple sentences in a text; and briefly describe their personal experiences by expressing their thoughts and understanding. For the research questions, three main questions are addressed in this research, as following:

RQ1): In general terms, how do EFL learner writers perceive the new approach to teaching writing?

- 1 a) How are the specific principles emphasised in the new approach to teaching writing perceived by learners of EFL writing?
- 1 b) How is the process approach to writing perceived by learners of EFL writing?
- 1 c) How is collaborative writing (CW) perceived by learners of EFL writing (offline)?
- 1 d) How is wiki-mediated collaborative writing (WMCW) perceived by learners of EFL writing?

RQ2): How do EFL learner writers deal with the process-oriented wiki-mediated collaborative writing (PWMCW) for enhancing writing abilities and written texts?

- 2 a) How does the practice of collaborative planning on wikis contribute to the formulation of various written drafts?
- 2 b) How does the practice of collaborative revision on wikis enrich the various written drafts?

RQ3): To what extent is the process-oriented wiki-mediated collaborative writing (PWMCW) is helpful for EFL learner writers in generating better written products?

- 3 a) What is the impact of the (PWMCW) on collaboratively produced texts?
- 3 b) What is the impact of the (PWMCW) on individually written texts?

RQ1 attempts to understand how the learners perceive the new approach to teaching writing and the changes they make. To understand this approach thoroughly, four main components were identified. This research question surveyed perceptions about implementing a number of principles (see sub-section 5.2.1 for more about these principles) (1.a). This research question studied perceptions about implementing the process writing approach (1.b). This research question also examined perceptions about CW without implementing wikis (1.c). Lastly, the same research question investigated perceptions about implementing WMCW (1.d). RQ2 seeks to establish solid understanding concerning how the writing process is achieved using the PWMCW and through the adaptation of the new approach to teaching writing; by focusing on shared planning and revision. In depth, the question addressed would reveal answers about the nature of collaborative planning (2.a). That is related to the content of ideas and suggestions used to generate the texts. This research question also attempts to understand the nature of collaborative revision (2.b). That is related to peers feedback provided by fellow students to ensure the quality of the texts. Lastly, RQ3 examines the impact of the new approach to teaching writing particularly through the practice of the PWMCW on writing learners' output or product. For more details, the addressed question reveals answers about the influence of wiki-based writing on learners' collaborative (3.a) and individual (3.b) writing abilities. The collaborative texts are assessed based on a comparison of those texts which collaboratively use the phases of the writing process on wiki and those that do not use these phases collaboratively on wikis. Similarly, the individual texts are assessed based a comparison of those texts which were created before and after the practice of PWMCW. The two versions of collaborative texts were produced by the same groups of participants. The two versions of individual texts were also produced by the same individuals.

The findings of the three core research questions addressed in this study highlight: 1) learners' perceptions about the new approach to teaching writing and the PWMCW in particular, 2) the nature of collaborative planning and revision, and 3) the impact of collaboratively-produced texts on wikis and individually produced texts. The three questions represent a complementary understanding for the topic under investigation. Both aspects of the investigation are important to give a full picture that will allow greater insight into this topic. Looking at perceptions is as important as examining what

students achieve since perceptions may determine learners' unwillingness (or willingness) to edit each other's texts (Storch, 2013). Table 1.2, shown below, details how the research questions indicated above are answered in the light of the research methodology used (i.e. the data sources and analysis methods).

Research questions	Data source	Analysis method
<b>RQ1:</b> deals with learners' perceptions in relation to: 1) specific principles for the new approach of learning writing; 2) writing approach process; 3) CW and 4) WMCW	Questionnaires (pre and post) Focus groups (initial and follow-up) Individual Interviews (follow-up)	-Descriptive and inferential analysis (Quantitative) -Thematic analysis of perceptions (Qualitative)
<b>RQ2:</b> deals with learners' writing process in relation to: 1) collaborative planning and 2) collaborative revision	Wiki-based content analysis	-Thematic analysis of actions (Quantitative) -Tracking changes of corrections and changes (Quantitative+ Qualitative)
<b>RQ3:</b> deals with learners' written products which were: 1) produced collaboratively on wikis and 2) produced individually on paper	Analysing samples of written texts (assessed by two professional raters)	-Grading scale (it was developed by the researcher based on the course requirements and learners' needs)

Table 1.2: Summary of the research questions, data sources and methods of analysis

### 1.6. Organisation of the thesis:

This thesis is composed of eight chapters. **Chapter 1** starts with a brief contextual overview concerning the situation of teaching and learning in Saudi Arabia and the current state of learning EFL writing. It then moves on to explain some of the key thoughts in the research area and where the current study fits in. The section shows the rationale and the researcher's intention behind conducting this research followed by an elaboration of the nature of the research and its research questions. The last subsection of this chapter describes the organisation of the thesis and what each chapter consists of. **Chapter 2** begins by laying out the theoretical dimensions of the study and considers how the research topic can be supported by the various theoretical analyses. It highlights how to construct a solid basis of understanding by applying theories to realities and making use of them for empirical investigation. This chapter provides explanation and justification for the research results. **Chapter 3** examines the research literature in the following subjects: approaches to teaching writing, collaborative learning and collaborative writing, and wiki-mediated collaborative writing. Owing to the interdisciplinary nature of the research components, the development of the writing process is looked at and comparisons made regarding L1, L2 and FL. After that, the

discussion focuses on the act of writing from a social perspective and the belief that writing is a social process. The concept of collaborative learning is the next element which is emphasised. The differences between collaboration and cooperation, the role of collaborative learning, and the value of receiving and giving feedback via collaborative tasks, are all scrutinised. Since collaborative writing is at the heart of the study and the assigned tasks, this confusing term is explored in detail. The next subsection entails the exploration of social networking tools. Essential issues, including the potential benefits, as well as the challenges, and the possible precautions to reduce the negatives, are considered, too. There is more concentration on wikis as they represent the key tool for the study. Finally, several studies regarding WMCW in terms of the subjects' perceptions and the actual influences on their performances are discussed.

**Chapter 4** demonstrates the structure of the programme (or course) developed for the current study. This chapter starts by drawing on the impact of the relevant theories and literature and its relationship to the practice of wikis in learning general academic writing. It details the systematic organisation between the in-class teaching and on-wiki practice. It also gives emphasis on the background of the tasks assigned and outlines the shape and content of wikis' interface. Lastly, it points out the essential characteristics of the structure of wiki interface that would enable the learners to accomplish the process-oriented wiki-mediated collaborative writing tasks.

**Chapter 5** presents the research methodology for this study. In this chapter, the research paradigms and research design are introduced. This is followed by the study context and the participants' and the researcher-instructor's roles. Details concerning the research methods are shown, including the pilot study for each of these instruments and how they were manipulated. The current research was careful to achieve ecological validity, inter-rater reliability and triangulation, because of the importance of reliability and validity which determine the quality of any research. Furthermore, as ethical issues are highly sensitive, this research is committed to meeting the ethical requirements by using several methods, such as consent forms, maintaining anonymity and confidentiality, and using the mother tongue. **Chapter 6** provides the findings and data analysis in relation to the learners' perceptions of traditional face-to-face and non-traditional (WMCW) classes. It includes the results of the quantitative data from the questionnaires. It also illustrates the qualitative analysis of the initial and follow-up focus groups and follow-up interviews. **Chapter 7** focuses on the findings and data analysis concerning the authentic performance of learners and what they achieved. This takes into account the learners' contributions on wiki through the planning and revision process. The rest of this chapter presents the impact of the recent pedagogy

on collaborative texts (produced on wikis) and individual texts (produced on paper). In **Chapter 8**, the collected data from this study are discussed in terms of triangulation of the instruments used. Furthermore, it outlines the relationship between the findings of the current study and others in similar and dissimilar contexts. Finally, **Chapter 9** presents a summary of the main findings along with pedagogical recommendations on the use of wikis for learning a foreign language writing, along with discussion of the limitations of the present study. It presents the learners' general evaluation of the course and its related tasks and provides three models that can be applied. The thesis is summarised in Table 1.3 as follows:

<b>Commentary Chapter</b>	<b>Chapter Content</b>
Chapter One: Introduction	A description of why this research was undertaken, and the aims and contribution of the research.
Chapter Two: Understanding PWMCW-Related Theories and Assumptions	A review of some relevant learning theories that provide explanation of certain activities and incidents.
Chapter Three: Writing, Collaboration and Wikis	A review of some relevant studies that influenced the investigation of the process writing approach, CW and WMCW.
Chapter Four: Structure of the teaching course (blended programme)	A description of the teaching course that was built in light of the curricula and new tasks.
Chapter Five: Research Methodology	An explanation of how the research was conducted by exploring the research design and method used.
Chapter Six: Analysis of Students' Perceptions of PWMCW	Reporting findings of data related to learners' perceptions about in the four key areas of the research topic.
Chapter Seven: Analysis of Students' Written Texts Using PWMCW	Reporting findings of data related to learners' accomplishments particularly through the PWMCW.
Chapter Eight: Discussion	Supporting the findings with evidence from similar research to find similarities and differences.
Chapter Nine: Conclusion	Recapping summary of main the findings and key issues to be considered for the current and other research.

Table 1.3: Summary of the organisation of the thesis

## **Chapter 2: Understanding Process-Oriented Wiki-Mediated Collaborative Writing (PWMCW) - Related Theories and Assumptions**

### **2.1. Introduction**

Over the last decade, researchers have been contributing to the field of Networked-based Language Learning (NBLL), and this has included studies of web 2.0 use and applications which support socially-assisted language learning. This field has been supported by research which has highlighted the advantages of the new technologies in learning and language development. Much of this social, educational and linguistic research substantiates the value of using wikis in collaborative learning. Research into the effectiveness of wikis, as a web 2.0 technology, has broadened collaboration and writing opportunities. Thus, it is important to highlight the relevant learning theories. In this chapter, firstly social constructivism is discussed, then, different aspects of social and collaborative learning are examined. Finally, the relationship of the theories selected to learning ESL/EFL writing and the use of web 2.0 technologies and wikis is explored.

### **2.2. Relevant theories:**

#### **2.2.1. Social constructivism**

Before discussing social constructivism, it is important to briefly shed light on constructivism. Constructivism has evolved from Piaget's theory, which studies cognition and human awareness and the related mental operations for individuals (Piaget, 1977). Cognition is defined as the acquisition and use of knowledge of a subject through a number of mental processes such as recognition and attention (Reed, 2007). Also, awareness refers to learner's subjective experience of understanding a topic or an issue; which are determined by explicit and implicit learning (Al-Hejin, 2004).

This theory highlights how learners construct and develop their cognitive structures for knowledge (Philips and Soltis, 2004). It is based on the theory that knowledge is built into learners' minds. It acknowledges that 'knowledge or meaning is not fixed for an object, but rather is constructed by individuals through their experience of that object in a particular context' (Honebein et al., 1993). Making knowledge or meaning, as is described by Suthers (2006) occurs when learners solve the conflict between what they

know and what they do not know concerning the world they live in. Pritchard and Woollard (2010) review the idea of constructivist learning as:

an idiosyncratic version of reality based partly on identical experiences but shaped by individual experience and, importantly, upon an individual's prior knowledge, understanding and experience (p: 5)

As a development of learning as a socio-constructive process that is influenced by outer resources such as peers; promoting social constructivism between learners and their social environments has become significant (Liem and McInerney, 2008). This theory, also known as social constructivist learning, identifies learning as a socially active process (Jonassen, 2000). It deals with the employment of learning process in classrooms and how knowledge is created (Butler and Griffin, 2010). Social constructivism addresses the collective meaning of knowledge in contrast to the individual meaning of knowledge as is the case of constructivism; and it is that collective aspect which is important to CW and WMCW (see sections: 3.4 and 3.6). It obliges learners to work socially, as they are forced to interact with different people including peers and teachers. Such theory builds on the idea that knowledge is based on social and cultural exchange that perhaps has implications for higher literacy achievement among students (Au, 1998).

Social constructivism is a product of scholarly work such as Vygotsky, Bakhtin, and Wertsch who emphasised the close relationship between mental, cultural and environmental factors for learning (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985, Cheyne and Tarulli, 2005). Burr (1995) outlines four key assumptions pertaining to this theory. First, it promotes cautious thinking about the processes through which we understand what is true or fact. Second, it views that all knowledge is historically, culturally and politically specific. Third, it maintains that knowledge is essential to make sense of the world 4). Fourth, there is an interactive relationship between social actions and knowledge.

Social constructivism stresses the impact of and need for collaboration (and collaborative writing) and social networking tools such as wikis that may influence the physical situation of learners (Kim, 2001). In this respect, it has a bearing on the extent learners can assist each other in solving problems and communicate effectively. Solving problems has become an integral part of social constructivism because it aids individuals to find solutions by themselves (Ekins et al., 2001). Learners' shared interaction for constructing their own knowledge through specific learning tasks (for writing development) represents the focal points of using the PWMCW.

## Chapter 2: Understanding PWMCW-Related Theories and Assumptions

According to Chen (2000), this theory has two components: cognitive and social. The cognitive side deals with the ways personal knowledge, via experience, is developed on the basis of accommodation and assimilation with others. Conversely, the social part emphasises how thoughts, facts, selves, texts are constructed by friends of similar age or interest (Bruffee, 1984). Amongst the concepts that are proposed within this theory is that we, as human beings, do not arbitrarily find pre-existing knowledge, so much as construct it. William and Burden (1997) also suggest that the process of social constructivism supports learning as both teachers and learners work on tasks such as monitoring, reflection and taking action.

Amongst the concepts that are proposed within this theory is that we, as human beings, do not arbitrarily find pre-existing knowledge, so much as construct it. William and Burden (1997) also suggest that the process of social constructivism supports learning as both teachers and learners work on tasks such as monitoring, reflection and taking action. The role of teachers in social constructivist classes is to facilitate the learning process that helps learners to discover the knowledge by themselves. Ndon (2011) mentions that 'a teacher as a facilitator should provide rich environments, experiences, and activities for learning by incorporating opportunities for collaborative work, problem solving, authentic tasks' (p: 253). This perspective of the role of teachers according to social constructivism is inextricably relevant to the classes that rely on the PWMCW.

According to this theory, three dimensions are involved in learning: reality, knowledge and learning in itself. Firstly, learning becomes a part of learners' reality when incorporated with social experiences (Kukla, 2000). It is believed that reality is not necessarily reflected by what is happening in the external world. Instead, it becomes reality for the individual when it is constructed socially. Secondly, knowledge is mainly a product of social and cultural construction (Earnest, 1994). That is, social and cultural interactions are the central contexts that yield knowledge (Bauersfeld, 1992). In fact, knowledge can be developed when there is a discussion by diverse minds of people sharing different experiences (Lund, 2008). Thirdly, learning in itself is a social process (McMahon, 1997). Letting people express their diverse norms and thoughts can reinforce the amount of knowledge acquired. Effective and lasting social learning occurs 'when engaged in social activity with a range of others, when in a social context and when new or repeated sensory input is related to pre-existing knowledge and understanding' (Pritchard and Woollard, 2010, p:7).

Social constructivists pay considerable attention to the underlying connection between learners' interactions and their cognitive state (Dillenbourg et al., 1996). Social constructivists view 'knowledge as an effect of social processes' and 'social practices'

rather than just natural or biological processes (Allen, 2005, p: 36). Bruner (1996) claims that higher order thinking skills such as problem solving and narrative realisation are merely acts of an individual's internal cognitive operation. When people share knowledge with each other, this can lead to complex mental operations which lead to sophisticated understanding through social interaction. Yet, according to Dillenbourg et al. (1996) this type of interaction may lead to 'socio-cognitive conflict' where didactic or group interaction is not informative perhaps due to different individuals' dispositions.

In addition, social constructivism emphasises the role of learning communities and their influence on learners' cognitive abilities. These should ideally enable individuals to work in social groups according to their interests for professional development purposes. In such communities, learning is not considered 'a process of one-way appropriation, but rather as a process of multidirectional change over time' (Lee and Smagorinsky, 2000, p: 5). The emergence of learning communities as one of the features of social constructivism theory corresponds to the nature of the PWMCW, which involves learners interacting socially with each other on wikis along with how the teacher relates to his/her students as constructivists, rather than just consumers of knowledge. Accordingly, learning is viewed as a complex joint activity where all of the students and instructors are in a phase of continuous development and change over time (ibid). Such joint activities result in meaning construction based on exploration (Wells, 2000).

Garrison, Anderson and Archer (2000) asserted that within learning communities 'the tone of the messages is questioning but engaging, expressive but responsive, sceptical but respectful, and challenging but supportive' (p: 96). As a result of such communities, social activities become a principal method of assisting an individual to develop their thinking processes and to direct them to be internalised as Dillenbourg et al. (1996) claim. Recent authors define the process of internalisation as an interactive process that means learning a new set of facts, ideas and knowledge until reasoning occurs. Tu and Corry (2002) identify the key factors that influence web-based learning communities: communities of practice, collaborative learning, social presence on the network and knowledge construction about technology.

Furthermore, group dynamics have been seen as vital consideration in learning communities. Group dynamics provides an explanation of the world and its everyday communications (Douglas, 1983). Group dynamics facilitate the expression of the various experiences of individuals, helping them to overcome difficulties with learning (Dörnyei and Malderez, 1997). Although group dynamics are a pre-requisite for social constructivism, matching well-established group dynamics using computers (or any

other social networking tools) to facilitate communication is a complex process as it very much depends on group cohesion and normative behaviour.

Group cohesion is a benchmark in social constructivism. It happens when people start organising and performing actions by distributing duties systematically and allowing everyone to play an equal role (ibid). Normative formation provides an environment for the expression of social identity, through group members, where feelings and thoughts are expected (ibid). In this way, 'group norms may emerge through interaction as a function of within group accommodation to a prototype that is inferred from ingroup communications' (Postmes, Spears and Lea, 2000, p: 344). As the research in this thesis concerns how learners use a social networking tool to create their collaborative written texts, social constructivism theory has been adopted to provide an explanation as to how learners construct knowledge in communicative environments.

### **2.2.2. Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD)**

ZPD is one of the bases of social development theory that claims that learning in a social environment is crucial for the process of cognitive development. Vygotsky's definition of ZPD examines the actual level at which learners can participate successfully in activities without help, and the potential level that learners can reach in all other activities if first provided with assistance. Vygotsky (1978) has drawn attention to this phenomenon, because according to him, ZPD determines learners' future learning. In his words, 'what is in the zone of proximal development today will be the actual developmental level tomorrow- that is, what a child can do with assistance today she will be able to do by herself tomorrow' (p: 87). Vygotsky's construct of learning development and language acquisition, particularly among children is explored through ZPD. This is:

the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers' (Vygotsky, 1978, p:86).

Vygotsky's conception of the ZPD include the actual level of learners where new activities can be achieved without help and the potential level that refers to all other activities for which learners need others to provide them with assistance. Wells (2000) defined ZPD as 'the zone in which an individual is able to achieve more with assistance than he or she can manage alone' (p: 57). Through this tool of 'mediating misconceptions and consolidating understandings' (Lee and Smagorinsky, 2000, p: 5), people become more potentially able to decipher the complexities surrounding their

learning. Shared construction of knowledge takes place between expert and novice learners where the novices ask for help from the experts to move beyond their original level to an advanced level (Lantolf and Appel, 1994; Lantolf, 2000).

ZPD is always bound with the culture, as that helps to set connections between this concept and other instructional strategies that would help learners or children to learn more effectively. ZPD contributes to the construction of bridges between learning and development of new structures (Borthick et al., 2003). Vygotsky addresses two issues which can be brought closer to make them more integrative: biological and sociological elements both represent the continuum of the normal 'genetic' learning towards positioning the individuals in their environmental 'unique' societies (Yaroshevsky, 1989).

This theory of learning sets itself against a number of other traditional theories of learning that focus on learning as intended instruction or those that stress the role of behaviourism (Newman and Holzman, 1993). In accordance with Newman and Holzman (1993), Vygotsky's ZPD rejects the idea of learning as the development of pre-instructed learning with preconceived ideas about teaching. It is rather seen as 'a dialogic unity' between both learning and development that is to complement each other. This form of learning leading development takes place because an "aspirant speaker must 'borrow' the knowledge and consciousness of the tutor to enter a language" (Bruner, 1986, p: 78) through processing of meaning and joint efforts of a group of members sharing the same culture.

The Vygotskian argument suggests that children and L2/FL adult learners have a variety of mental abilities and unique experiences, thus boosting collaboration among peers is an effective way for those who have more expertise to disseminate their knowledge to those who are less knowledgeable. This provides 'a way of conceptualizing the many ways in which an individual's development may be assisted by other members of the culture, both in face-to-face interaction and through the legacy of the artifacts that they have created' (Wells, 2000, p: 57). Consequently, variations amongst learners can solve many of the problems encountered by such learners (Pritchard and Woollard, 2010). Furthermore, ZPD is seen as the basis for widening learning experiences, knowledge and other life skills. It takes into account the role of more knowledgeable people in giving explanation of ambiguous matters to others who are deemed less knowledgeable (Lund, 2008).

As the fundamental principle of ZPD is to attempt to transform the learning process, while simultaneously affording several opportunities for increasing learners' abilities,

the PWMCW also seeks to fulfil these targets. In fact, it is evident that the application of ZPD would be crucial to the current study because it supports peer coaching and peer criticism and such roles are essential for student-centred learning settings (see section: 3.5), and in the collaborative learning environment (see section: 2.3) where instructors' control of teaching is minimised (Schinke-Llano, 1995). ZPD gives learners an opportunity to take on and become familiar with supportive roles and responsibilities such as caregivers, partners, trainers, facilitators and apprentices (Sabo, 2003). It is noteworthy to indicate that ZPD (and scaffolding in particular) is an active process and that it encourages reciprocal communication in a two or more-sided interaction rather than simply maintaining a teacher-led or adult-centred approach (Verenikina, 2004).

In this research, both ZPD and collaborative learning (see the next sub-section: 2.2.3 for more regarding collaborative learning) have been applied as they fit with the nature and principles of designing wiki-mediated collaborative writing and the learning tasks. A great deal of attention has been placed on the underlying 'relationship between social interaction and individual cognitive change', since the basic component in this approach is the social activities that assist all members engaged to develop their thinking processes and direct them to reflect inwards, by using inter psychological processes (Dillenbourg et al., 1996).

### **Mediation**

Mediation is the first construct of ZPD. The mediational process is usually organised through the use of tools and signs, mostly language, in order to boost the development of individuals. In light of Vygotsky's perspectives, learners must interact socially and culturally to understand different signs that would facilitate the mediation of their learning and psychological development. Mediation is one of the outcomes of becoming part of the social learning process and participating in collective interaction, and it is related to higher thinking skills. Guk and Kellogg (2007) state that mediation in classes between teachers and learners (and learners with each other) includes

all higher psychological processes, such as the conscious control of memory and attention, [that] are neither innately specified nor direct responses to the environment but rather develop indirectly through the mediating action of tools, signs, and of course the people who wield them (p: 285).

In fact, the role of mediation is crucial during learners' development and is necessary in order to improve their performance. Corresponding to McCafferty's (2002) findings, Vygotsky's ZPD places a great importance on the role of mediation during the development of an L2 or FL. McCafferty mentions that

when the child begins to point at objects which are then brought to him or her by others, the child experiences having his or her intentions understood through the use of signs and acted upon, a major step in entering the world of human activity (p: 194).

This can also be applied to L2/FL adult language learners. One of the principles of mediation is intersubjectivity, a factor that contributes to the less able or novice learners becoming more independent and making them more responsible for their own learning (Dixon-Krauss, 1996). Internalisation is also another central component in this process. Internalisation, which is 'the transfer of tools from the social plane, interaction with others, to the inner plane, reasoning', describes what is in social interaction; internalisation reveals the final product rather than states the core mechanisms of this sophisticated task (Dillenbourg, 1999). In this sense, Verenikina (2004) mentions the nature of the process of mediation which occurs when:

the educator meets the level of the child's understanding and leads the child to a higher, culturally mediated level of development. This connects to the idea of tool mediation, that is, to a consideration of what mental tools have been provided for the child to appropriate and use on their own in their independent performance. It also includes a consideration of the conditions that have been created for the tools to be internalised. In other words, what techniques have been used to ensure the transformation of assisted performance into independent performance (p: 11).

Mediation (of one's self-regulation) is central to individuals' educational and psychological growth (Smagorinsky, 1995). Self-regulation 'is achieved when individuals are able to find their authentic voice during problem-solving by using the mediational tool of language' (Nyikos and Hashimoto, 1997, p: 507). Mediational tools such as language can facilitate scaffolding. Accordingly, language is important because it determines the successfulness and usefulness of social interaction which includes deep discussion and problem solving (ibid).

### **Scaffolding**

Scaffolding is the second construct of ZPD theory. Scaffolding helps learners achieve higher levels of competence by nurturing know-how and know-what inquiries (Cheon, 2008). It creates interactive conditions between individuals which to facilitate interdependence according to Roschelle (1992). He suggests that scaffolding can promote socialisation for language learning skills including English for specific purposes (EAP) writing. This contributes to the production of linguistic contexts that are

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built interactively; that is, low level learners take advantage of those with more knowledge. Advanced learners also exhibit their knowledge to those around them, and by doing so, accumulate more personal confidence.

Educational scaffolding can be maintained when the following three conditions are met: the dialogic nature of the knowledge that is wanted to be constructed; fulfilling the knowledge that is embedded in the tasks delivered and identifying of the objects that would facilitate acquiring knowledge (Wells, 1999). The main goal of scaffolding when teaching the current course of PWMCW is to bridge learning gaps which would enable the learners to achieve tasks in a way which they could not do before. Furthermore, learners might fulfil the tasks more competently and proficiently, and be better able to work independently and support each other's learning (Mercer and Fisher, 1998). In fact, scaffolding, along with mediation, helps individuals to acquire a level of knowledge that goes beyond their existing knowledge, which can be useful in L2/FL classes (Poehner, 2009). In particular, scaffolding encourages the shift in learners' focus towards interlinked relationships between different individuals and their development in a joint practice (ibid). The effect of this practice has been proven as

the interconnection between social activity and development of the mind implies that teachers need not wait for learner readiness, but that they may take a leading role in helping learners chart new developmental trajectories (Poehner, 2009, p: 474).

Scaffolding can be introduced in a systematic method, yet it needs to be collaborative among learners, within the learners' zone of development and finally the teachers should withdraw when the learners become more competent (Yelland and Masters, 2007). Scaffolding is a combination of structure and process that should not be necessarily rigid, but rather dynamic and based on 'the metaphor of a scaffold as used in the construction of buildings since the means of support in this context is both adjustable and temporary' (ibid, p: 364). It should work on removing the constraints on learners' ability to learn and reducing these constraints by increasing their confidence and fostering positive attitudes to cope with their learning environment (Young, 1993). It is also crucial that the process of scaffolding should be provided at the right time with the right amount of support, and that any assistance should be phased out gradually as the learner gains more experience.

Additionally, online learning and its associated networking tools open new possibilities of scaffolding (McLoughlin, 2002), since such technologies can be used as scaffolding among teachers, learners and resources, therefore leading to more self-reliant learners

(Dabbagh, 2003). This author argues that different approaches related to scaffolding (e.g. encouraging learners to brainstorm and coaching learners through activities) can be best assisted through ICT technologies, as they have a positive influence on learners' motivation, interaction and collaboration. Furthermore, these tools develop new possibilities for the employment of scaffolding, for example students can interact on a one-to-one or one-to-many basis with peers or teachers using discussion boards or email. The provision of scaffolding in networked-based learning environments was helpful for supporting more methods that afford learners the opportunity to be more active and to maximise their potential (Yelland and Masters, 2007).

There is a range of types of scaffolding, offering from a low to a high level of support. Walqui (2006) lists the following types of scaffolding for educational purposes: 1) Continuity (e.g., repeating tasks); 2) Contextual support (e.g., providing exploration); 3) intersubjectivity (e.g., promoting shared understanding); 4) Contingency (e.g., adjusting tasks based on learners' responses and actions); 5) Handover/takeover (e.g., increasing learners' skills and confidence about their own learning) and 6) Flow (e.g., providing challenging tasks). Collaborative learning is embedded in Vygotsky's ZPD which assumes that language is one of the focal elements that permits learners to continue communicating and create social environments. This theory is explained more in the next sub-section.

### **2.2.3. Collaborative Learning (CL)**

CL relates to interaction amongst learners and/or the instructor. From a pedagogical perspective Bruffee (1984) defines collaboration as 'a way of engaging students more deeply with the text and also as an aspect of professors' engagement with the professional community' (p: 635). Kohonen (1992) argues that CL is the natural development of learning approach from behaviourism to constructivism. CL theory has originated from a desire to lessen the transmission of information by instructors to create more reciprocal peer-to-peer interaction (Koschmann, 1994). It requires a common ground for mutual understanding and negotiation of beliefs, knowledge and assumptions as proposed by Baker et al. (1999). Learning collaboratively builds a shared learning environment where learners can actively and dynamically work together in order to enhance their learning outcomes. It is based on Vygotsky's social constructivism and the work of others such as Lantolf and Pavlenko (1995) and Swain, Brooks and Tocalli-Beller (2002) who believe that human development occurs within social contexts and is socially situated.

This theory sees learners working in groups for creating meaning, figuring out solutions or designing products where the learners are responsible for each other with equal

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roles. It also sees the distributed process of collaborative inquiry amongst peers as a positive influence on knowledge communities (Lehtinen et al., 1999). It inspires users to form groups to rehearse mutual communication and receive feedback (Davoli, Monari and Eklundh, 2009). By creating more emphasis on Vygotsky's view of how learning occurs, learning is seen as rooted in collaborative problem-solving that can be facilitated through collaborative authentic tasks (see sub-section: 4.6.2) as identified by Harland (2003). Therefore, such tasks were deliberately incorporated into the PWMCW.

According to Smith and MacGregor (1992), the theory has been widely accepted with regard to the following set of conditions: learning is constructively-based; socially-related; context-oriented and mediated by learners in their individual knowledge base. Thus collaborators become motivated to adopt others' ideas instead of merely developing their own. There is a direct connection between the components of collaborative learning: situations and interactions, interactions and processes, and processes and effects (Dillenbourg, 1999).

Group work is sometimes seen as synonymous with collaborative learning (CL) because there is a similar theoretical understanding of both practices. For instance, McDonough (2004) claims that both can 'provide learners with more time to speak the target language than teacher-fronted activities, promote learner autonomy and self-directed learning, and give instructors opportunities to work with individual learners' (p: 208). CL is also understood to be a sophisticated procedure whereby participants engage in collaborative tasks in order to demonstrate their sense of belonging to their peers (Häkkinen and Järvelä, 2006).

In CL for writing, a sense of belonging (or belongingness) creates an educational need which allows learners to meet their psychological and emotional demands at the same time as creating equal distribution of work among peers (Carson and Nelson, 1994). The need for belonging has an impact on a variety of human actions: emotions, performance, competence, motivation, engagement, stress and anxiety. In addition, CL theory has emphasised self-regulated, or autonomous, learning. Self-regulation occurs as an effect of learners working jointly (Järvenoja and Järvelä, 2009). Self-regulated collaborative learning has dual functions that consider learning as an individual psychological practice at the same time as being a social interactive process (Järvelä and Järvenoja, 2011). These researchers claim that CL is composed of two angles: 'the cognitive angle' which represents the development of learning process within individuals whereas 'the situative agent' characterises the dialogic and collective development of learning amongst learners. This developmental learning process is seen as 'a collision of perspectives whose sources of validation and capacity to

enhance understandings take the form of an object of investigation, not acquisition' (Lian et al., 2004, p: 24)

This is consistent with Nelson's (1994) argument that such learning perhaps needs to be more widely adopted for teaching reasoning and drawing conclusions. As stated by McWham et al. (2003) the act of collaboration has become important in second language acquisition and for learning writing because of the following reasons: collaboration

- helps learners to be responsible and designers for their own learning; that is based on a learner-driven approach;
- presents new cognitive and academic skills that learners are not familiar with;
- finds new ways of learning that are likely to be informative and attractive and less threatening to learners;
- creates equal chances between learners in order to end in satisfactory learning.

Moreover, Boxtel, Lendin and Kanselaar (2000) mention key factors that result from this sort of learning: it helps learners to:

- negotiate different forms of meaning understanding;
- stimulate social interaction;
- promote co-construction of knowledge;
- engage to solve conflicts and to show comparison and evaluation.

As far as collaborative tasks are concerned, they help many learners reach higher levels of thinking and intelligibility. Swain has shown the importance of collaborative tasks in solving language-related difficulties especially in L2; this is labelled 'languaging' and 'metatalk' or 'collaborative dialogue' (Swain, 2000; Swain and Lapkin, 2002). 'Languaging' is used to mediate cognition and understanding. It is 'a vehicle through which thinking is articulated and transformed into an artifactual form' (Swain, 2006, p: 97). 'Metatalk' or 'collaborative dialogue', on the other hand, creates opportunities for enhanced talk. It is 'a surfacing of language used to solve linguistic problems encountered during language production' (Swain, 2006, p: 202).

In spite of the well-established status of CL, a number of scholars and educators have criticised this way of learning. CL, in the views of its opponents, should not be accepted without some criticism. Trimbur (1989) has critiqued Bruffee's concept of CL (1984) as a method whereby learners reach consensus. It was claimed that looking for consensus depresses differences, imposes agreement, and reduces imagination. As Trimbur argues, the definition does not reveal much of how knowledge occurs within individuals.

It also does not expose how a group of co-workers who share similar feelings, needs and activities learn from each other (ibid).

According to others, CL can be achieved without necessarily attaining consensus since through 'accommodation rather consensus, students may create a power hierarchy within the group' (Lee-Ernest, 2008). Alternatively, Trimbur re-defines CL as 'a process of identifying differences and locating these differences in relation to each other' (Trimbur, 1989, p: 610). In line with the relevance of CL theory to the research objectives, I decided to apply the principles of collaborative learning through using a task-based design.

### **Task-based learning**

The use of task-based design, or in other words task-based learning (TBL), has become an important element in language learning and teaching because of its focus on communication and its relationship to real-world (Skehan, 1996). TBL has emerged as a development of the PPP (Presentation, Practice and Production) model, where language learning is practised through a series of structures and controlled practices (Foster, 1999). TBL highly focuses on the definition of a task. For instance, Nunan (2006) suggests a task as being

a piece of classroom work that involves learners comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right with a beginning, a middle and an end (p: 17).

Furthermore, Bygate and Norris (2009) argue that a task is 'an activity in which a person engages in order to attain an objective, and which necessitates, the use of language' (p: 20). According to the same researchers, TBL has pedagogical influences because it involves activities, involvement, purpose and language use. In line with Willis (1996), task-based learning involves three stages:

Firstly, the *pre-task* which should consist of introducing the topic and enabling learners to engage in the learning process.

Secondly, the *task-cycle*, which involves performing tasks in pairs or in groups.

Thirdly, *language focuses*, which is the stage that is made up of feedback from teachers and peers and enables the learners to draw conclusions from what they have learnt.

In this sense, Foster (1999) lists the general features of TBL:

giving learners tasks to transact, rather than items to learn, provides an environment which best promotes the natural language learning process. By engaging in meaningful activities, such as problem-solving, discussions, or narratives, the learner's interlanguage system is stretched and encouraged to develop (p: 69).

TBL is not an isolated theory, as it is always part of other theories such as those related to second language acquisition. TBL is used to promote the usage of accuracy and fluency and facilitate the integration of the key skills of language learning (Ellis, 2003), especially reading and writing. Meaningful tasks are always directed to classroom practice to motivate learners and help them to be flexible in their language learning and to the teaching (Robinson, 2011). Consistent with Robinson (2011), designing meaningful tasks for learning has become popular because of the following:

- they provide corrective feedback;
- they offer opportunities for noticing the gaps in knowledge;
- they promote re-conceptualising and re-thinking;
- they afford negotiation and comprehension of meaning and
- they promote interlanguage

The main features of TBL relevant to this study are being based on interactive learning, problem solving and sharing personal experiences. The study intends to use TBL, because it exposes learners to a natural environment and concrete language. It also assists group participants to handle more responsibilities and cognitive processing as part of learning collaboratively.

#### **2.2.4. The Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL) paradigm**

The paradigm of CSCL is a broad concept that underlines a number of theories, assumptions and expectations. CSCL examines how learners can work together using computers or any other portable devices or social networking tools as a means for assisting learning (Stahl, Koschmann, and Suthers, 2006). Furthermore, it supports the development of social interaction in groups (Suthers, 2006). Koshman (1996) argues that CSCL presents a new way of learning and underpins the methodologies adopted. This paradigm is 'not focused on instructional efficacy, rather it is studying instruction as enacted practice' (Lehtinen, 2003, p: 23).

CSCL research views learning as an outcome based on the joint establishment of meaning, achieved through communication with participants by using new tools

## Chapter 2: Understanding PWMCW-Related Theories and Assumptions

(Bradley, et al., 2010). Networked-based learning is the central perspective in relation to CSCL (Lipponen, Hakkarainen and Paavola, 2004). CSCL concentrates on the possibility of sharing documents and tasks using a variety of synchronous and asynchronous tools to support communication in virtual and face-to-face learning environments (Lehtinen, 2003). One of the most important of these is the employment of networking technologies such as wikis. This paradigm pays great attention to social, affective and motivational issues (Jones and Isroff, 2005). The biggest advantage of CSCL is that it increases learners' abilities by providing appropriate socio-cognitive scaffolding and by showing new ways of structuring different information using a variety of tools for building knowledge communities (Lipponen, 2002). The concept of knowledge communities was identified by Scardamalia and Bereiter (1994). According to these researchers, such communities aim to increase mutual engagement and spread collective understanding among participants.

In relation to CSCL for writing skills, this paradigm views that collaborative writing is achieved by using recent information and communication technologies mainly web 2.0 technologies. Research shows that CSCL can generate a large amount of written discourse that could help in building more comprehension skills (Weinberger and Fischer, 2006). The significance of CSCL emerges using collaborative and editing tools which to complement the learning process among students and students with their instructors (Bonk and King, 1995). With respect to the research topic, CSCL has become an appropriate paradigm to explore the influences of wikis for learning writing as a foreign language. This is supported by Ortega (1997) who suggests that it also helps in the investigation of wikis contribute to learning writing.

Nevertheless, further investigation of the theoretical assumptions of CSCL has shown several challenges associated with this paradigm as indicated by Kern, Ware and Warschauer (2008). They assert that there are concerns regarding intellectual property rights, in that learners' participations are not guaranteed to be original and authentic on such open spaces. They also underline the fact that technologies are always attractive because of their novelty, and that their educational value might be less obvious. In fact, CSCL provides a set of challenging ideas, concepts and applications because of the reasons, explored by Dillenbourg, Järvelä and Fischer (2009): 'More interaction balances out less individualisation'; 'The formal/informal border is blurred'; 'Collaborative learning is not a recipe'; 'What matters is the effort required to construct shared knowledge'; and 'Task representations mediate verbal interactions' (pp: 3-9).

Lehtinen et al. (1999) express further concerns about CSCL; it is hard for learners to overcome their various social, motivational and emotional difficulties at a distance

without direct contact of face-to-face support. These researchers assert that, in some contexts, collaboration is considered to be part of the course whereas in other contexts collaboration is treated as extracurricular activities. The researchers also make clear that many CSCL tasks occur in an artificial atmosphere, which is not relevant to the subject area of learners. The present research seeks to answer these challenges through the use of supported wikis.

### **2.2.5. Motivation theories**

Motivation is a condition necessary for the constructive process of individuals' orientation towards their success in language learning (Crookes and Schmidt, 1991). Motivation is the chief reason behind all behaviours, and can be determined by individuals' needs, desires and emotions. Gardner and Lambert (1972) distinguished between two types of motivation in language learning: integrative and instrumental. Integrative motivation, on the one hand, refers to learners' inner curiosity and their higher interests and willingness to learn a target language in order to continue communication with a wider group of people and to share others' cultures. Instrumental motivation, on the other hand, refers to learners' interests in language learning because of other outer motivating forces such as gaining incentives or rewards.

Motivation is a complex concept that is multifaceted, as it does not only depend on internal processes and abilities, nor is it just a result of behavioural actions that are based on stimuli and reinforcement, but it also involves cognitive processes, which play a substantial part in determining learners' actions in the future (Dörnyei, 1998). Other theorists disagree with the concept of motivation as a process, and instead deal with it as a static state (*ibid*). To be specific, the issue of motivation theories has been widely researched in the field of L2/FL learning. L2/FL motivation looks at describing, measuring, classifying and analysing language learner motivation. Gardner (1985) determines four key components to L2 motivation, as follows: specifying a goal, effortful behaviours, desire to achieve the goal, and positive feelings and attitudes about the goal.

Nevertheless, Crookes and Schmidt (1991) included the roles of internal and external factors of motivation. Dörnyei (1994) also developed a model that looked at motivation theories and their influences in a variety of FL learning settings. He acknowledged that motivation is a multidimensional construct and has three major levels: language level, learner level and learning-situation level. Dörnyei (1996) also demonstrates that these theories, in general, attempt to answer the question of why humans behave in certain ways. They provide assumptions regarding how individuals' orientated goals are motivated and how their motivational behaviours are established for language

education. The educational and cognitive views about L2/FL motivation consisted of exploring the practical application of techniques, in order to bring greater L2 motivation into the classroom.

In this research, a number of motivation theories will be applied in order to understand how motivation can be used as a dominant factor that has a major influence on the acquisition of language and progress in learning (Ellis, 1994), particularly with PWMCW. Motivation theories increase the chances of more productive learning outcomes, since they create a higher sense of motivation. That is also because such theories indicate the 'primary impetus to initiate learning the L2 [and FL] and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process' (Dörnyei, 1998, p: 117). They rely on grounding 'a theoretical construct to explain the reason or reasons we engage in a particular behaviour' (Barkley, 2010, p: 9). The theories related to the research are mostly drawn from educational psychology, i.e., Expectancy-value theory, Achievement goal theory, Self-determination theory and Attribution theory.

### **2.2.5.1. Expectancy-value theory**

Expectancy-value theory analyses to what degree learners could expect to perform tasks successfully and to what extent they value their benefits (Wigfield, 1994; Barkley, 2010). According to this view, learners' motivation is boosted when the tasks are appreciated and feasible. However, it tends to place more emphasis on individual motivation more than group motivation. This theory assists learners by providing them with an explanation as to why they are engaged in specific tasks and roles over others through using the PWMCW and the value of this engagement in wikis.

### **2.2.5.2. Achievement goal theory**

This theory attempts to answer why certain goals are more likely to be achieved over others. The theory determines the specific goals (involving reasons and purposes) that direct learners to achieve behaviours desired or needed (Martin and Dowson, 2009). It influences learners' achievement in school as they undergo intensive cognitive self-regulation processes that engage learners in more learning. Two types of goals are linked to this theory: learning goals and performance goals. In relation to these two types of goals, Covington (2000) states that learning goals result in the 'strategic-processing of information, which in turn leads to increased school achievement' while performance goals 'trigger superficial, rote-level processing that exerts a stultifying influence on achievement' (p: 175). This theory allows the learners in which they become more able to recognise the differences between the mastery of general goals (purposes) and the specific goals (targets) which can progress performance (Pintrich, 2000).

### **2.2.5.3. Self-determination theory**

Self-determination theory seeks to establish a solid relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic factors of motivation, as well as ensuring that both orientations of L2 motivation - instrumental and integrative - are used successfully to improve learners' competence and achievement (Dörnyei, 1994). Dörnyei (1994) described the gradual actions for accomplishing self-determination between extrinsic and intrinsic constructs as follows:

- External regulation refers to the least self-determined form of extrinsic motivation such as rewards or threats.
- Introjected regulation involves externally imposed rules that the student accepts as norms that pressure him or her to behave.
- Identified regulation occurs when the person has come to identify with and accept the regulatory process seeing its usefulness.
- Integrated regulation, which involves regulations that are fully assimilated with the individual's other values, needs, and identities. (p: 276)

Corresponding to this theory, it would help the learners to understand that intrinsic motivation is no longer seen as superior to extrinsic motivation or vice versa. Alternatively, extrinsic motivation is an impetus for creating continuous intrinsic motivation (Noels et al., 2001).

### **2.2.5.4. Attribution theory**

Attribution theory is another important theory that reinforces motivation (Hollyforde and Whiddett, 2002). This concept explores the recognition by individuals of the different events that impact on their inspiration; it examines factors of success and failure in terms of learning an L2/FL (Bentham, 2002). In this sense, attribution theory may involve showing learners' reactions to the following variables 'ability, effort, difficulty of task, luck, mood, and help or hindrance by others' (Seel, 2012, p:380). As far as the learners of the current research are concerned, this theory enables them to interpret factors of success and failure while using wiki-based writing and how this related to their thinking.

Hence, L2/FL motivation theories have been applied because motivation is the essence of successful learning and it can be encouraged by social learning and CSCL as a result of the different principles they adopt for learning. Based on the theories of motivation given, we can trace interdependence between motivation and engagement. This also implies the important role of motivation for social learning or CSCL. On the other hand, Brophy (2004) asserts that motivation is an individual accumulation of

knowledge, gained throughout different experiences that are determined by values and beliefs. Responding to this view, ensuring learners' motivation before placing them into a social learning environment is crucial to ensure that learning is socially constructed. Additionally, motivation is controlled by perceptions towards learning, including learners' roles in L2/FL (Dörnyei, 1994). In the same sense, motivation in L2/FL learning contexts is usually a response to a particular incentive associated with the enthusiasm to achieve a certain task.

### **2.3. The difference between perceptions and attitudes:**

A substantial amount of literature describes the differences between perceptions and attitudes which are key terms to understand when researching motivation in language learning. As the present study is associated with the perceptions of the learners, there is a need to understand the meaning of the two terms. Perceptions are seen as a gateway to the development of human behaviours that perhaps will gradually affect individuals' attitudes (Borkowski, 2009). Furthermore, Sainn and Ugwuegbu (1980) define perception as 'the process by which we extract meaningful information from physical stimulation. It is the way we interpret our sensations' (p: 90). Such process is believed to be the outcome of focused thinking that aids individuals in choosing the objects that interest them most.

Accordingly, an individual perception is drawn from his or her understanding or interpretation of a certain experience (Cope and Watts, 2000). Perceptions can change over time because they are flexible, unlike attitudes that are more rigid, as O'Shaughnessy (1995) indicates that 'perceptions can be changed without trying to change basic attitudes' (p: 137). Schiff (1970) states that perceptions 'are more transitory than attitudes, less stable, and more subject to change with the immediate past experience and present state of the perceiver' (p: 11). As stated by Pickens (2005), a perception has four stages; stimulation, registration, organisation and interpretation.

On the other hand, attitude can be simply defined as an enduring or lasting evaluation of people or objects (Pickens, 2005). It refers to a constant tendency that is driven from memory concerning how people behave and how they see situations. Oppenheim (1978) describes attitude as 'a state of readiness, a tendency to act or react in a certain manner when confronted with certain stimuli. Attitudes are reinforced by beliefs...and often attract strong feelings (p: 105). It takes longer to change an attitude because it involves: cognitive change, affective change and behavioural change (Traindis, 1971). The main distinguishing feature of perception is that it deals with how individuals perceive the world through their senses, whereas attitude focuses on how such

individuals react towards a situation after they have developed their perceptions. In this research, the perceptions of the learners are to be investigated because the experience of wiki-mediated collaborative writing is new to the majority of the participants.

#### 2.4. Understanding the theoretical model

In line with the theoretical understanding indicated earlier, the theoretical framework model of study is composed of a number of components that intersect with each other; these are diagrammatically displayed in Figure 2.1 below. This model has been derived from Garrison, Anderson and Archer (2000) where three types of presence: social, cognitive and teaching have been identified as key principles for understanding communities of inquiry among learners.

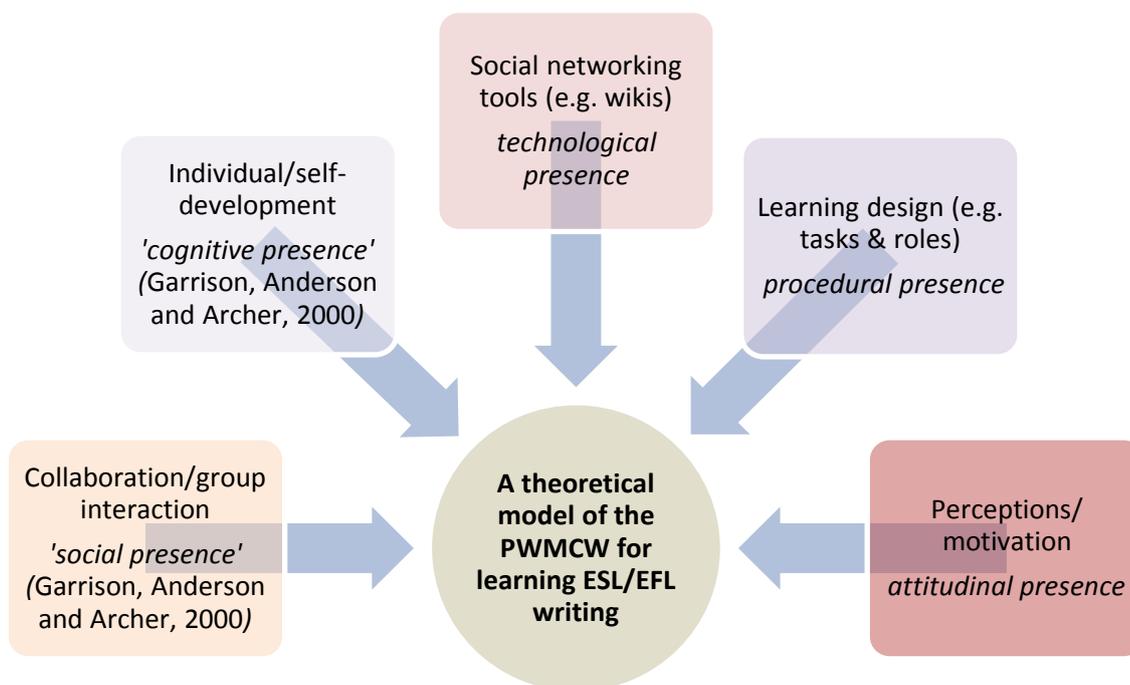


Figure 2.1: The theoretical framework model of the study

The present model, however, proposes additional types of presence: technological, behavioural and attitudinal that are fundamental for successful PWMCW in order to

## Chapter 2: Understanding PWMCW-Related Theories and Assumptions

learn ESL/EFL writing. Such types of presence include internal factors in learners. These include:

- Collaboration (*social*) (borrowed from socio-constructivism, see sub-section: 2.2.1),
- individual development (*cognitive*) (borrowed from socio-constructivism, ZPD and CL theories see sub-sections: 2.2.3 and 2.2.3),
- other external factors such as social networking tools (*technological*) (borrowed from CSCL see sub-section: 2.2.4),
- learning design (*procedural*) (borrowed from CSCL paradigm see sub-section: 2.2.4) and
- motivation (*attitudinal*) (borrowed from motivation theories see sub-section: 2.2.5).

This model implies that knowledge can be constructed when:

- 1) learning in groups and in communities takes place;
- 2) when negotiation and thinking are increased; and
- 3) when new forms of interaction and communication are developed.

It also emphasises the role of ZPD as it explains how knowledge is extended because of its concentration on social interaction and co-construction between experts and non-experts under the conditions of adequate facilitation and scaffolding. Alongside the main theories (socio-constructivism, ZPD, CL and CSCL), the present study uses some L2/FL motivation theories as supporting theories but does not explore them in-depth. The model indicated in Figure 2.1 is important since it represents how theoretical understanding can result in practical given that 'to build a coherent disciplinary knowledge base, future research on web 2.0 technologies and L2 learning should be guided by clearly-stated, clearly-identifiable, theoretical frameworks' (Wang and Vasquez, 2012, p: 420).

### 2.5. Summary:

This chapter offers a theoretical framework to understand and support the research described in this thesis. The framework attempts to bring together the most relevant learning theories. The theories are borrowed from different disciplines (e.g. psychology, sociology, education, e-learning and linguistics) in order to gain insights into the complex world of using wikis for EFL writing. The main underpinning theories include: social constructivism; Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD); and collaborative learning (CL) along with the paradigm of computer-supported collaborative learning (CSCL). In addition to the main theories, the research also adopts motivation theory to fuller support this research. This chapter also illustrates the

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cyclical process of these theories and the interrelationship between each one of them to each to result in better understanding of the learning process and meaningful learning of writing through wikis.

## **Chapter 3: Writing, Collaboration and Wikis**

### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter gives an overview of the area under investigation; the process-oriented wiki-mediated collaborative writing 'PWMCW' for enhancing writing skills. In this review, I start explaining the nature of learning writing. Then, I move on to the presentation of writing approaches, which include the product process approach, the process writing approach and the writing genre approach, in L1 and L2/FL for writers of various levels of proficiency. I show the view of writing from a social perspective rather than just a cognitive process. I give more emphasis to the process writing approach and its application, especially with the integration of the concept of collaboration and collaborative learning (CL). I define collaboration, as opposed to cooperation, and its importance for learning writing followed by the definitions, advantages and concerns about CW. The next key area of this review concerns the integration between learning writing collaboratively and recent social networking technologies. I introduce web 2.0 technologies as the key tools for enhancing collaborative writing as well as learning and teaching practices. Then, I describe these tools as they reflect the basic tenet of collaboration. I focus on 'wikis' as a specific example of how these tools can support collaboration. So, the development of wikis, the emergence of networked-based learning and the benefits and difficulties of wikis are all briefly shown. The contribution of e-feedback, which can be facilitated by wikis, during CL is discussed in the same section. Afterwards, I present the procedures for conducting sound WMCW, followed by a review of related studies of learners' and scholars' perceptions of the outcomes and constraints of this pedagogy. The last section reviews the studies that have been conducted in similar contexts.

### **3.2. Learning English writing**

#### **3.2.1. Nature of learning and teaching writing**

The development of learning and teaching writing and composition research have continued since the 1960s (Silva, 1990; Raimes, 1991). Learning and teaching writing is always associated with practical and functional pragmatics in classrooms in which writing is learned and taught. Hinkel (2006) also argues that a balance between all language skills taught including writing is important in such curricula for more professional instruction of second/foreign language. In particular, the role of L2/FL writing has become a focal issue among learners, teachers and professional educators (Leki, 2001). In fact, several calls have been made for those who write curricula to consider writing more seriously to be part of L2/FL curricula. For instance, Scott (1996) emphasises the importance of teaching writing as a core subject at all levels, even for

beginner learners. During this time, there has been confusion on the subject of writing itself as it was believed to be merely an assistant for learning speech and with the assumption that anyone who knows spelling and grammar was competent enough to write well (Silva and Matsuda, 2002). In addition, Silva and Matsuda (2002) state that common views used to dominate our thoughts towards writing; i.e., oral proficiency has more significance compared with written proficiency. However, after several years of research and studies on L1, L2 and FL writing, writing has become a vital field of study in language learning and applied language studies.

Within this field of study, students' writing in higher education is particularly important, as it is essential to students' progress overall, and possibly to their future careers, as well as to their continuing language development. There is a reciprocal relationship between second language acquisition (SLA) and L2 writing, since L2 learners' linguistic competence empowers their L2 writing performance (Carson, 2001). Writing in higher education, and particularly in preparatory year programmes at universities, has been categorised into three areas: study skills, academic socialisation and academic literacy (Lea and Street, 1998). According to these authors who consider writing the practice of academic literacy, these are:

- 1) relational: in showing the constantly changing relationship between the writer, reader, the text and reality;
- 2) strategic: identified by the purpose of the text (e.g. persuasive, expressive, literary) and
- 3) textual: represented by the way that the writer, reader, text and reality can be constructed and negotiated.

Accordingly, a shift has happened in approaching learning writing, that is, not only by measuring the complexity of the syntax, but by employing more functional perspectives between writers and readers (Thompson, 2001). This applies to all writers of academic writing, whether L1, L2 or FL. Yet, writing is believed to be one of the most complex skills that can be taught and learned, as it demands extensive patience, concentration and thinking on the part of learners (Widdowson, 1983). It also involves the mastery of high cognitive, linguistic and socio-cultural experiences. In order to develop this perspective towards writing skills, Kellogg (2008) draws attention to the central function of learning and teaching writing by observing and combining it with doing. He also claims that language development is determined by the texts produced, the competency of writers and instructional processes used. This complexity can also be understood because writing is 'a socio-cognitive task that involves ESL [or EFL]

learners' inter-personal (social) interaction with peers and instructors, and their interaction with teaching material and teaching processes within their learning context' (Alshahrani, 2011, p: 1). What is more the difficulty of becoming an accomplished writer applies to native as well as non-native speakers of English (Carter and Nunan, 2001).

Part of the complexity of writing is not only related to what learners can compose; it very much depends on the motivation of learners, their self-belief about their abilities to produce sound written pieces and their ability to pursue progress and development in writing (Hayes and Nash, 1996). What is more, there are more challenges facing teachers in the L2/FL setting, and these are mostly related to the inadequate time allocated to teachers to teach it and the fact they must contend with a classroom full of a large number of students who are of different levels (Leki, 2001). Leki also mentions that logistic tensions are a potential issue during the teaching of L2/FL writing, this term refers to the need to develop an understanding of each individual's needs and ensure that teachers are aware of how such needs can be accommodated, therefore various strategies are developed as a result.

Teaching writing, particularly to L2/FL learners, has become a major issue because it is considered a channel that enables the learners to communicate with native speakers of English and with many speakers of other languages as well. L2/FL writing teachers need to focus on developing learners' orthographic, morphological, lexical, syntactic and discourse proficiencies and effective writing strategies (Barkaoui, 2007). Teachers should be aware that L2/FL writing instruction requires systematic and thoughtful understanding, taking into account factors about cultural and linguistic differences between different writers (Silva, 1993). Silva argues that explicit pedagogy related to teaching L2/FL learner writers is fundamental in increasing learners' lexical and syntactic abilities. According to the same researcher, these abilities are central to learners' writing development if they are to express their social, political and economic identities satisfactorily. Learners should acquire the competencies related to using a variety of structures, organisations and styles (Cumming, 2001). The nature of learning writing is interlinked with their positive perceptions about the importance of writing skills and as a core subject to communicate meaning and to express ideas and thoughts.

Littlewood (1995) views writing as a communicative effort that carries out 'a joint journey through ideas' (p: 433). This theory corresponds to McKay (1993), who states that writing should be represented communicatively, meaningfully and appropriately. In this sense, teaching L2/FL writing is seen as encompassing more than it actually involves, for instance, the comprehension of texts, readers and contexts are all essential (Silva, 1990). Referring back to these four dimensions, Blanton (1995) recaps

the significance of these dimensions in creating a new paradigm of teaching writing. Through this paradigm, Blanton believes that writers can link 'cognitive and social behaviour that are recursive, individualistic, and dialogic' (p: 10). L2 writing necessitates learners to accomplish basic levels of knowledge related to word recognition and also higher levels of syntactic and semantic familiarity (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000). The value of consciousness and conscious attention are regarded tremendously regarded in L2/FL writing, especially in relation to using new linguistic areas such as different lexis and expressions or phrases (Uzawa, 1996).

Accordingly, English for academic purpose (EAP) has become one of the most active current research areas in teaching and learning L2/FL writing (Flowerdew and Miller, 1992; Littlewood, 2001; Peacock and Ho, 2003). EAP has thus become a vital area of research because it provides learners the opportunity to 'encounter, manage, and come to terms with new information' (Leki and Garson, 1997, p: 64). It has also become useful since it

adds a theoretical framework to 'practical writing classes', which have spread to universities in native as well as non-native countries, and which can be seen as part of professional writing in the academic world, just like professional writing in the domains of law (e.g. legal correspondence), journalism (e.g. reportage), engineering (e.g. technical reports), marketing (e.g. advertisements) (Schmied, 2001, p:2).

Hence, Hyland (1997) identifies the importance of learning writing within in EAP courses among ESL or EFL writers on the grounds that such courses are a main source of success for learners. This active research has been influential in the development of the present study. Roca De Larios et al., (2002) specify a number of elements that are significant in teaching L2/FL writing. They state it should 'manage complex mental representation'; 'construct rhetorical and organizational goals'; 'use of problem-solving procedures'; and 'distinguish between editing and revision as two different operations' (p: 27).

Furthermore, the research in the area of EAP, dealing with native speakers as well as non-native speakers, takes into account 'the teaching of English in the academy at all ages and proficiency levels... It seeks to provide insights into the structures and meanings of academic texts' (Hyland and Hamp-Lyons, 2002, p: 3). Evans and Green (2007) reflect on the most difficult skills in EAP writing: ranging from 'writing introductions', 'summarising and paraphrasing', 'proof-reading written assignment' to 'using appropriate academic style'. Leki (2001) has questioned the importance placed

on learners' perspectives towards EAP writing and has analysed a considerable number of EAP writing-related texts and detected an ambiguity in learners' perceptions about this type of writing. Since the study was based on instructors' perspectives, Basturkmen and Lewis (2002) add that learners and instructors have dissimilar interpretations of the given tasks for learning writing. Unlike Leki (2001), Basturkmen and Lewis (2002) researchers recognise that EAP is useful for different learners, regardless of their oral and written linguistic abilities, in terms of meeting learners' needs and for understanding the conventions of academic texts.

Understandably, EAP as a distinctive domain has been established for teaching and learning ESL/EFL writing in order to advance learners' written abilities (and reading). Yet, a debate has developed between process and product-oriented writing as to which teaching approach might be better for better outcomes. The product-oriented approach is useful in the sense that it adheres to a specific type of text to aid composition (Muncie, 2002). This approach is seen to encourage learners to imitate already existing models that represent learners' personal ideas (McDonough, Shaw and Masuhara, 2012). On the other hand, the process writing approach advocates reproducing drafts in order to improve accuracy and fluency (Arndt, 1993). Yet, it may ignore individual differences and social interaction with readers (Reid, 1984). There is no single better writing approach superior to the rest; but rather they should be intertwined to complement each other (Grami, 2010). In some contexts, concentrating more on one specific writing teaching approach might serve some learners better than others (ibid).

The next sub-sections review the differences among writing approaches, by showing the experiences of different writers in L1, and L2/FL. The purpose of this review is to show the limitations of the process writing approach, which is mainly individual and cognitive-based. This study intends to complement it with the writing genre approach that takes into account elements of social interaction and collaboration. In fact, the practice of learning and teaching writing is linked to the concept of collaborative writing (CW) in a sense that the improvement of writing skills of individual learners is at the heart of this process. Grief (2004) found that writing collaboratively is directly related to helping learners write, particularly to take more account of the process, vocabulary and grammar. CW requires cognitive, linguistic and socio-cultural familiarity and shared communication with the audience.

Computers in general, and the internet in particular, have been shown to have a powerful impact on learning writing and affordances on more practices in teaching writing (Pennington, 1996). As a result of the expansion of computer usage, writing is now more often viewed as a collaborative task, which is socially and interactively-

mediated by peers, a practice between distant (not necessarily adjacent) writers that takes place asynchronously (at different times) or synchronously (at the same time). The integration of collaborative writing (CW), including its potential advantages and challenges (see sub-section: 3.4), in L2/FL writing settings has been extensively researched in several contexts, either with or without the usage of networking technologies (e.g., Storch, 2005; Elola and Oskoz, 2010; Shehadeh, 2011; Fernández Dobao, 2012; Storch, 2013; Aydin and Yildiz, 2014). Therefore, the emerging technologies (specifically collaborative technologies) suggest more instructional practices that play a role in advancing learners' writing abilities both in and out of class, while also re-shaping the traditional assessment of this skill (Graham and Perin, 2007).

### **3.2.2. Approaches to learning and teaching writing**

#### **3.2.2.1. The product approach 'model-based process'**

Since the 1960s, the product writing approach has been influenced by the audio-lingual method of teaching English as an L2 or FL; particularly by emphasising correct usage of grammatical rules and syntactic structures (McDonough, Shaw and Masuhara, 2012). It seeks to produce texts by underlining the linguistic knowledge in terms of accuracy and the use of vocabulary, spelling and punctuation (Badger and White, 2000). It emphasises form revision, more than meaning-related revision, and the delivery of the main ideas but without profound communication (Zeiser, 1999).

Moreover, Valdes, Haro and Echevarriarza (1992) locate the basic features of the product writing approach achieved by low and middle novice writers. They were able to:

- form letters in an alphabetic system;
- copy and produce basic strokes of writing systems using writing system syllabaries or characters;
- can romanize isolated characters;
- copy or transcribe writing system production;
- remember familiar words or phrases;
- and reproduce some from memory.

Practising this approach helps learners to increase their lexical knowledge. The product writing approach has been argued to be useful for showing learners the principles of how to write 'correctly' (Hairston, 1982) because it follows certain models. This perspective has been supported by a number of researchers in ESL or EFL writing because they accept as true that satisfactory writing can be achieved through imitating some of the crucial patterns (Leki, 1991). Some researchers also agree that writing is a one-step procedure (Lavelle and Guarino, 2003).

Nonetheless, the product writing approach has been shown to have limitations for learners' writing progress. It imposes restrictions on instructors in terms of requiring them to follow pre-scribed models. Often students submit their written product as final versions to instructors but in fact they should be just the beginning (Barnett, 1989). This approach focuses on accuracy and correction of errors despite the fact that 'considering form and accuracy too soon obstructs the mental activity necessary to generate and communicate ideas' (ibid, p: 32). In several second and foreign English writing classes, Al-Seghayer (2011) explains that teaching the grammatical rules and meaning of vocabulary are conveyed through rote learning which is highly valued in many contexts, such as in the context of the current study. What happens in many writing learning classes is that learners are treated as knowledge receivers without being given room for thinking or for completing the learning process of writing (Ahmed and Alamin, 2012). Writing follows a natural order: ideas demand a structure which must finally be polished. When teachers correct everything, students may be faced with too many changes to fully comprehend the new knowledge (ibid). In addition, too much correction of errors has usually been considered an ineffective method for promoting writing abilities and can exhibit undesirable attitudes towards it (Semke, 1984).

Part of the problems of the product approach in writing is that learners are not usually told why the tasks are chosen, what their objectives are, and what relevance the tasks have to their lives, or what materials are needed. Good writing is expected according to Gabrielatos (2000) to move between the product and the process approach (see the next section 3.2.2.2) taking into account the language and grammar used, layout and organisation along with planning first drafts and evaluating the clarity of ideas and revising final drafts. In this approach, instructors are considered as the source of knowledge who can give knowledge in terms of corrections and comments on learners' written work and that is a major shortcoming in the product writing approach. Instructors may reject the role in which they correct texts to promote their role as facilitators to let learners observe their gradual progress in learning writing (Dheram, 1995). This practice empowers learners to express themselves in a better way instead of depending on what is suggested by others (ibid).

#### **3.2.2.2. The process approach 'cognitive process'**

The process writing approach stresses the act of writing that generates content 'by expression of ideas', and 'conveying the message to the reader', not merely through a formulated set of grammatical rules (Ur, 1996, p: 163). This approach has been developed because of the limitations identified in the product writing approach. It concentrates more on how texts are accomplished more than on analysing final written

texts (Grami, 2010). Similarly, this approach concentrates on practising linguistic skills such as planning and drafting more than on linguistic knowledge such as grammar and syntax (Raimes, 1985; Hedge, 1993) and fluency over accuracy.

Reacting to the writing process goes far beyond writing a number of sound sentences to encompass complex elements that contribute to produce final texts (Kiely, 2013). Kiely mentions that the central aspect of the process deals with feedback that can be from teachers or peers (readers) or the writer himself as a reflective writer (see sub-section: 3.5.2). Graham and Sandmel (2011) also confirm that the process involves a specific audience and purposes through engaging in planning, translating and reviewing. The same researchers highlight the significance of students' ownership of their own texts, as that can result in self-reflection. Silva (1993) shows that the basic assumption behind this process is that L2/FL writing is different from L1 writing, so they both cannot be taught in a similar way. By focusing on L2/FL writers, the process motivates the writers to 'use language to explore, to voice, and share their beliefs, values and experiences' (ibid, 2005, p: 68). Graham and Sandmel (2011) carefully suggest the ways in which the process can be operated for writing instruction: firstly, 'students are encouraged to plan, draft, and revise'; secondly, 'instruction in writing through minilessons, conferences, and teachable moments should result in improved quality of writing'; and thirdly, 'motivation for writing should be enhanced as collaboration, personal responsibility, personal attention, and a positive learning environment are stressed' (see sub-section: 3.3.3).

This approach has been adopted for the current study since there is an inextricable link between peer feedback and the process-oriented writing approach (Liu and Hansen, 2002). It can also enrich peer feedback which consequently contributes to their writing abilities (Hyland and Hyland, 2006). However, the process writing approach may become an unsuitable choice for some classes, especially those with limited time, as a greater period is required to maintain interaction, to reorganise ideas, and to redraft texts (Harmer, 2007). Moreover, it can be stressful to some learners because of its complex cognitive load (Horowitz, 1986a). Writing requires authors to access both short term and long term memories where they function as key components for the completion of the process writing approach (Dufrene, 2010).

### **3.2.2.3. The genre approach 'social process'**

The writing genre approach started in the 1980s with a development in the communicative language teaching that stemmed from the work of Halliday (1985, as cited in Ellis et al., 1998). The previous research defines genre as a text that serves a popular purpose in a society and is composed of several moves shared by different

readers and writers in order to boost the communication process. According to this approach, writing has been understood as a social process of knowledge that is mediated by social interaction and communicative engagement (Hyland, 1998). Writing is a development of products with the inclusion of social acts that occur for a specific context and audience (Grami, 2010). In the words of Hyland, the writing genre approach is based on the assumption that writing 'is seen as embedded in (constitutive of) social realities, since it is through recurrent use of conventionalised forms that individuals develop relationships, establish communities, and get things done' (p: 21).

These forms of communication with audience and readers occur during composition; this is different from speaking. Hence, such ways of communication require higher-thinking abilities to make it distinctive from other speech discourses (Ur, 1996) and to make it understandable to readers. The greatest advantage of dealing with this approach is to enable learners to construct social relationships between authors and readers; addressers and addressees via maintaining social support (Lea and Street, 1998; De Guerrero and Villamil, 2000). De Guerrero and Villamil note that maintaining mutual support creates opportunities to discuss issues about writing and '[allow] both of reader[s] and writer[s] to consolidate and recognise knowledge of second language in structural and rhetorical aspects and to make this knowledge explicit for each other's benefit' (p: 65). The writing genre approach assumes that enriched, socially developed texts can be accomplished through learning communities (see section: 1.4 to further understand how these communities have similar objectives). This approach assumes that members of these communities are potentially able to create more texts of good quality with a degree of social interaction.

In support of this approach, limitations related to the process writing approach can be avoided. Particularly with the advent of the social networking technologies, this approach to writing has become a practice which is socially developed between writing learners who share similarities with their members of a group (Faigley, 1986; Ede and Lunsford, 2001). In tandem with this notion about the writing process, Fontaine and Hunter (2006) confirm writing as 'inherently a social and collaborative process' that is 'constructed by means of an ongoing conversation' (p: 82).

Based on this definition, the writing genre approach can complement the process writing approach. However, the level of shared construction of writing, as Fontaine and Hunter confess, is always dissimilar between beginner and advanced writers. When learners become able to apply the criteria of the three writing approaches described here, or some of them, they should have more prospects for enriching their creativity,

flexibility, language development and knowledge awareness. Writing then starts to be represented as a contextualised skill that focuses on the reader.

However, the idea of the process writing approach as merely a skill to be acquired in isolation from socially constructed or embedded practices is strongly rejected by Currie and Cray (2004). Both allow for people, other than writers, to be involved and to become integral to the stages of composition and structural development. Susser (1994) underlines the importance of ensuring social interaction between readers in order to create more refined planning, drafts and revision. Ortega emphasises that the indicated phases (i.e. planning, drafting and revision) should not be entirely cognitive-based without the inclusion of social action (Ortega, 2009). It means that the process writing approach does not accomplish its best outcome if only the content of knowledge is addressed, and ignores the affective sense of readership. This integrative approach is helpful for beginner EFL writing learners in terms of revision that is based on social engagement between readers (ibid). This is helpful as a result as it lets writers 'recognize the mismatched meanings between writers and readers and to address these problems' (Min, 2006, p: 135). Corresponding to Min's assertion, writers become more able to express what is desired and made it easier to convince their fellow peers.

It is important to recognise that the writing approaches may overlap and there is not one that is better than the other. The writing genre approach has been criticised because it overwhelms learners with skills needed for generating new texts (Badger and White, 2010). There is a challenge concerning learners who have limited writing abilities and narrow linguistic knowledge. Leki (2001) notices that a group of writers were confused about how texts can be socially created. Learners, particularly beginner writers, had little awareness and experience of what writing as a social activity might mean. In addition, Basturkmen and Lewis (2002) confirm that writers and instructors had dissimilar understanding of the writing genre and the process approaches which may result in many differences among the individual writers themselves and between the writers and instructors.

In relation to the current research project, the process writing approach was broadly used to serve the purpose of the study; that is to generate multiple drafts, provide socially meaningful feedback, improve final writing products and observe improvement of peers as well as the individual. Thus, the genre-oriented approach was incorporated to a certain extent.

A number of seminal research studies have proven the positive influences of wikis in language learning in general and learning writing skills in particular, through the

adaptation of the process approach (Elola and Oskoz, 2010) Therefore, the current research explicitly endorses the process approach, since it is an effective element that confirms the affordances of wikis and collaborative writing (see sub-section: 3.5.1). In fact, the process approach is vital when writing is taught using wikis because it contributes to learners developing their thinking and awareness of texts (see sub-sections: 3.6.2 and 3.6.3). Introducing wikis as a platform for writing is a welcome change to the routine of traditional writing classes where writing can be practised innovatively. I had to introduce a formal type of writing that fits nicely with wikis, which was the process approach. The process was intended to be used in the current research in order to best implement wikis. It was appropriately tailored with the wiki-mediated collaborative writing tasks.

### **3.3. Application of the process approach and collaborative learning (CL)**

#### **3.3.1. Reviewing the writing process approach**

##### **3.3.1.1. Modes and models of L1 writing process**

The writing process for advanced L1 practitioners has been extensively studied since the nineteenth century. Janet Emig is among those who have produced detailed research on how such writers process their writing in L1. She finds that native language writers write unconsciously and in a nonlinear mode (Emig, 1971; 1977). The writers are also found to be motivated and confident when they are assigned composition tasks. Barnett (1989) shows how L1 advanced writers are able to transfer thoughts onto paper in a more sophisticated pattern. As noted by Barnett (1989), the writers have the aptitude to interact with the topics by delivering meaning as opposed to merely checking accuracy. These writers seem to be dynamically flexible as they use a group of strategies that lead them to the final product in a more flexible way.

The L1 writing process for advanced learners has been defined as the 'succession of actions undertaken to bring about some desired result' (Scott, 1996, p: 31). These actions include: planning and generating ideas that can be used before drafting; organising and analysing which can be used while drafting, and finally revising the product that can be used after drafting. In favour of this, brainstorming before drafting, producing an outline and organisation, and creating an initial draft followed by editing and revision are also signs of L1 experienced writers (Jordan, 1997). Brainstorming does not only result in valuable ideas but also increases writers' creative thinking skills (Yunus, Salehi and Chenzi, 2012).

In addition, when the process writing approach is employed by high ability writers, they normally apply recursiveness and break tasks into stages; with a focus on personal development in each stage (Elbow, 1998). Recursiveness is 'moving freely back and

forth among the steps of researching, planning, producing, revising and editing as they discover new arguments and clarify relationships' (Cohen and Spencer, 1993). Recursiveness gives writers more time re-consider the whole texts in a more comprehensive picture to refine their ideas and to enhance the overall structure of written drafts.

According to Murray (1972), the process writing approach is the method that encourages the writers to feel writing as if it is their own, while using their own language in their own ways; and it gives the chance to write several drafts, then consider the mechanics at the end. L1 expert writers can practise generating compositions without difficulty compared with L2/FL novice writers, by preparing for more thoughtful discovery of meaning around the writing topics (Odell, 1980).

The L1 process writing approach, particularly for advanced writers, has also received much attention given its power to facilitate, rather than to teach, the practice of writing. As a mental operation that contains complex processes and sub-processes (Badger and White, 2000), a model has been created by Flower and Hayes (1981) that paves the way for the scrutiny of composition and its related strategies. This model is comprised of planning, translating, and reviewing, putting an emphasis on the first and last phases as shown in Figure: 3.1. Thus during 'planning', writers generate ideas with help of internal mental processes whereas 'revision' evaluates what has been achieved during the 'drafting' phase. Flower and Hayes argue that it is wrong to assume that composition is merely comprised of choices or decisions without a true understanding of the enquiries related to those criteria.

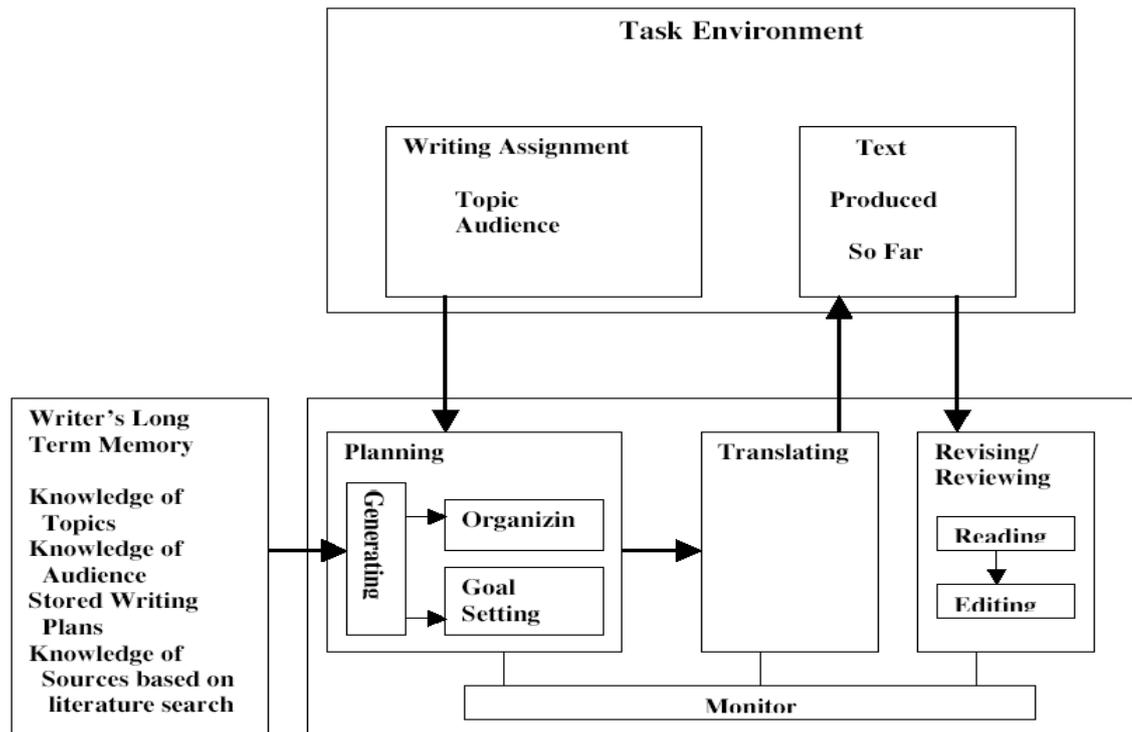


Figure 3.1: The cognitive process model of writing

Zimmermann (2000), however, has criticised this model of composition, as it does not elaborate what is specifically meant by in the 'translating phase' because it does not give details regarding how writing is achieved. As a consequence, Zimmermann redefines this model by redefining the translation phase as the 'formulating phase'. According to Flower and Hayes (1981) and Zimmermann (2000), it can be argued that the model of the process writing approach in L1, for advanced learners, must involve drafting and revision as integral components. However, some recent researchers propose that revision needs to be investigated separately due to its complexity and diversity (Pifarre and Fisher, 2011).

Another model for advanced L1 composition shows how writing is handled in this context. The model of Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) shows how cognitive elements are fundamental to composition and how it is developed structurally. They describe two strategies used by writers called 'knowledge transforming' and 'knowledge-telling'. As this model states, writers are able to compose using a knowledge-transforming strategy where they can firstly problematise the written topic and then attempt to solve the problem. Content is normally generated by linking a list of ideas, based on issues which are given priority by the writers. Conversely, beginner writers (either in L1 or L2/FL contexts) rely mainly on a knowledge-telling strategy which is a simple approach to composition in order to put words or phrases on pages. Hedge (2005) also illustrates a model showing the main components of applying the writing process for pedagogical

purposes: 1) communicating the ideas, composing the ideas into text, crafting the text and improving the text. In the majority of the models, they are understood as systematic steps, but, in fact, this might not always be the case, as they can be applied recursively, especially by skilful writers.

### **3.3.1.2. Differences between L1, L2/FL writing processes**

The L2/FL writing process has not been established on uniquely different foundations from L1 the writing process. Silva and Matsuda (2002) propose that the development of L1 writing process related studies has directly influenced studies of teaching and learning writing in L2/FL contexts. Zamel was among those who first suggested that advanced L1 and L2 writers were fairly alike (Zamel, 1976). With so many studies having explored L1 writing, the L2 process writing approach was conceived as relevant to the L1 process writing approach. This argument has been expanded by Grabe and Kaplan (1996) who tackle the similarities, as opposed to the differences, between the two types of composition. Raimes (1985) also claims that the procedures employed by L1 writers are adopted by L2 writers, as well as many FL writers, but with a difference concerning understanding the purpose of the writing and the content.

As far differences found between L1 and L2/FL studies, it has been observed that advanced L2 writers use parallel L1 writing process strategies to improve their L2 compositions (Wolfersberger, 2003). The quality of these compositions are determined by the expertise of the L2 writers, as proficiency is seen as a condition for L2 writing process development. Cumming (1989) supports this claim; he confirms that a link exists between expertise and competence in the L2 writing process. With reference to the distinctions between the L1 and L2/FL process writing approach, the revision habits and writing behaviours among L1 and L2 experienced writers were examined by Hall (1990) and common revision strategies were found during text production in both groups.

However, strategies are also observed in L2 writers that cause problematic issues; for example, transferring from L1 to their L2 compositions can be evident and revising in the L2 is also more complex because additional time is required. On the subject of revision strategies used by advanced writers in L2 situations, Faigley and Witte (1981) explore several categories and sub-categories which occur while amending compositions. Accordingly, they demonstrate the considerable differences between experienced and inexperienced L2 writers and how experienced L2 writers are similar to L1 experienced writers.

In conjunction with studies conducted in L2 contexts, L2 and FL writing practices have often been treated interchangeably to the extent that the two terms are nearly synonymous. The differences between the two areas are blurry. In fact, the writing process in a FL context has not been thoroughly examined in as much depth as L1 or at least L2. Nevertheless, for the purpose of showing more specificity, Barnett (1989) suggests a model for learning the writing process in an FL context, through a first draft, second draft, and final draft format. The first draft should be allocated to collecting and organising ideas; the second draft should be for improving the form and meaning and the last draft should integrate the coherence of the whole body of text. Manchón, Roca de Larios and Murphy (2000) indicate that some FL writers of English with a high performance level refer back to their written texts several times to revise their compositions, as many advanced L1 writers do.

Related to this, the FL process writing approach for advanced Saudi writers of English has also been investigated. The nature of this approach with learners of such specific background involves paying attention to skills and techniques (Reither, 1985; White and Arndt, 1991). Al-Hazmi (2006) recognises that writing process strategies were absent and students could not express themselves precisely and adequately. Al-Qurashi (2009) admitted that learners in an FL context are lacking many writing process techniques. This last author also reports positive progress after the implementation of this approach with his FL learners of English. In addition, Ezza (2010) demonstrates new directions for the FL process writing approach that such students require and suggests to concentrate on the arenas of sociolinguistics and social interaction.

To summarize the main features of the L2 (including FL) process writing approach, Silva states clearly as follows:

... L2 composing is more constrained, more difficult, and less effective. L2 writers did less planning (global and local) and had more difficulty with setting goals and generating and organizing material... In general, L2 writers' texts were less fluent (fewer words), less accurate (more errors), and less effective (lower holistic scores). At the discourse level, their texts often exhibited distinct patterns of exposition, argumentation, and narration... Their orientation of readers was deemed less appropriate and acceptable. In terms of lower level linguistic concerns, L2 writers' texts were stylistically distinct and simpler in structure. Their sentences included more but shorter T units, fewer but longer clauses, more coordination, less subordination, less noun modification, and less passivization. (p: 668)

### 3.3.1.3. Difficulties of L1, L2/FL writing processes

As the writing process is experienced differently by novice writers in both traditional methods (L1 and L2/FL), Sommer (1980) has investigated acts of revision by writers from similar contexts. He found that revision was rarely accomplished as the students were not comfortable into this. The writers were only aware of revision as the ability to re-order vocabulary; without having awareness of higher levels of discourse (e.g. phrase or sentence levels). Students also paid more attention to lexical changes instead of examining semantic changes. Barnett (1989) observes that writers with limited abilities do not always recognise the significance of self-editing since it is believed to be the responsibility of teachers. Zamel (1982) reveals that such writers display more usage of formulaic (or prescribed) structures, mechanical correctness that does not exceed the surface or basic level of correction, rather than targeting content or meaning-related levels. As identified by Zamel in his study, the students were better in expressing their personal thoughts; yet, this may lead to discouraging objectivity and increasing subjectivity. The students do not go beyond presenting the obvious forms related to problems that are discovered during revision (Celce-Murcia, 1991).

Furthermore, less advanced L2/FL writers practise this process very differently. Zamel (1982) indicates that novice L2/FL writers need to be introduced to cognitive skills by starting with warm-up activities and tasks to help understand the topics chosen. Sasaki (2000) shows the dissimilarities between novice and non-novice (expert) advanced L2/FL writing learners. Novice writers, on the one hand, require longer time to translate their ideas into well-written sentences and to plan, re-scan, and revise what has been written. On the other hand, non-novice writers are more able to refine their writing frequently, use English expression and apply global and local planning.

Raimes (1985) sheds light on how novice writers in both L1 and L2/FL settings used the composition process. She observed that these writers accomplish less revision, lack planning techniques at sentence level compared to proficient writers from both L1 and L2/FL contexts. This also reinforces the argument of Berninger et al. (1992) proposing the fundamental role of planning for experienced writers to ensure the quality of their produced texts. Planning is the pre-writing phase that works to encourage learners to be prepared before starting writing whereas revision is the post-writing phase that is necessary to correct mistakes and less-coherent ideas. Raimes (1985) also finds that the implementation of various pedagogical strategies of writing is of high importance for less able L2/FL writers, compared with less able writers with an L1 background. On the basis of Raimes's (1985) claim that novice writers in L1 and L2/FL contexts have

similarities, L1 novice writers might be children, unlike L2/FL writers who might include both children as well as adult learners of a new language.

Although planning and revision are rarely practised by novice writers, as shown above, there are also additional details concerning this process. These learners spend less time on planning before actual drafting; they adhere to plan as they are short of ideas which can be transformed into coherent texts (Wall and Petrovsky, 1981; Matsumoto, 1995). Moreover, during revision even though it is infrequent, the learners have constant pauses, focus on correcting grammar, spelling and editing-related errors and lose concentration and do not focus on meaning (Matsumoto, 1995; Weigle, 2002). These learners would view the development of the writing process as a linear expansion of the original plan (Perl, 1979).

Where researchers focus on L2/FL learners, it is found that the writers at this beginner level of proficiency borrow ideas from their L1 whereas more expert writers are found only infrequently refer to their original language to prevent any breakdown in the writing process (Cumming, 1989; Wolfersberger, 2003). As reported by Cumming, the expert writers consulted their L1 only for checking style. Confirming that writing is differently achieved by non-experts in L2/FL settings, Al-Hazmi and Schofield (2007) found that most of the comments and corrections which were received from Saudi beginner writers were form-related and were made on the surface level, though a checklist was available that contained questions about meaning-related changes.

In addition, such learners are believed to be in a transitional phase of their ability to control a linguistic system for producing new texts according to two skills: transcription processes and text generation (McCutchen, 2011). According to McCutchen, transcription processes involve the earliest stages of writing such as forms and letters whereas the text generation skill needs several abilities to possess lexical and semantic selections. In view of this, generally speaking, non-expert writers need a longer time to acquire and to be able to apply these two skills in their texts.

### **3.3.2. Understanding collaboration and CL**

It is essential to distinguish between collaboration and cooperation. Bruffee (1973) has underlined what occurs in the majority of traditional classrooms where collaboration is partly achieved. He states that instructors

expect a student to talk mainly to the teacher, write to the teacher, and, surely, determine his fate in relation to the teacher, individually...we tend to preserve a negative relationship among students. Officially, students are anonymous to one another, and isolated (ibid, p: 636).

Yet, confusion may arise between collaborative and cooperative learning. Panitz (1999) argues that CL is a philosophy of interaction which occurs when people get together in groups 'where individuals are responsible for their actions, including learning and respect the abilities and contributions of their peers'. On the other hand, cooperative learning is, as Pantiz assumes, a set of sub-processes which help people interact together in order accomplish a specific goal or to develop an end product. Furthermore, CL is a learning method that relies on social interaction with an emphasis on the input from other individuals whereas cooperative learning is also a learning act where individuals engaged very specific parts to be fulfilled without an emphasis on the input from other individuals (McInerney and Roberts, 2004). Joseph Trimbur (as cited in Stewart, 1988) provides a meticulous understanding of CL.

Collaborative learning is a generic term, covering a range of techniques that have become increasingly visible in the past ten years, practices such as reader response, peer critiques, small writing groups, joint writing projects, and peer tutoring in writing centers and classrooms. The term refers to a method of conducting the business at hand-whether a freshman composition course or a workshop for writing teachers. By shifting initiative and responsibility from the group leader to the members of the group, collaborative learning offers a style of leadership that actively involves the participants in their own learning (p: 59).

Following this debate, Oxford (1997) has concluded that cooperation is the learning 'that fosters learner interdependence as a route to cognitive and social development' while collaboration interprets 'learning as construction of knowledge within a social context and which therefore encourages acculturation [adoption] of individuals into a learning community'. Thus, collaboration urges the learners who are working alone to achieve their assigned roles through intermingling with others, by conducting more negotiation for the production of a shared project. Nevertheless, there are a number of similarities related to both of these concepts. They both emphasise group-oriented work rather than individual-based learning along with rejecting competition among learners (Johnson, Johnson and Smith, 1998).

Also, recognising the differences and similarities of the two concepts given as two contradictory yet complementary notions, Johnson and Johnson (1999) have stated that formal cooperative learning in classes occurs by functioning in groups and by monitoring students' learning; while informal CL out of classes is employed by focusing students' attention on important material and setting expectations. Collaboration, indeed, relies on the concept of social interaction, which seeks the mutual support of people by providing scaffolding and constructing meaningful negotiations (Boxtel,

Lendin and Kanselaar, 2000). It also supports learners in reaching a degree of communication where they can agree on certain procedures, features and standards. Cooperation, on the contrary, occurs when individuals are given separate assignments to be completed independently from other people, so as to rearrange the produced work in a single whole in order to make different parts fit together in the final stage (Donato, 2004).

Both styles of learning, though, can be viewed in a more complementary manner since each one is based on the other. Cooperation is the basis for active participation and a step towards CL whereas collaboration is the premise for more meaningful interaction. In fact, according to Freire et al. (2013), the collaborative process is vital for giving learners the feeling of competence and a successful learning experience. The core differences between the various ways of understanding these two concepts are that collaboration in learning is a collective responsibility of the people involved rather than solely individual-based as mostly happens in cooperative learning.

### **3.3.3. Developing an understanding of process-oriented collaborative learning**

Collaborative learning is a gateway to understanding and practising writing as a process. Much of the literature in this field agrees with the central role of the process in CL. Golub (1988) asserts that integrating the group process (or CL) and the writing process is valuable. He mentions that using such a form of communication for the process-oriented texts can be advantageous in several ways, and also offer many educational possibilities such as the expansion of ideas based on feedback different people present a range of previously unconsidered alternatives, if there is something incorrect or less accurate.

In writing classes, collaborative learning always comes together in alignment with social constructivism and is represented by group efforts to attempt to understand the stages that make up the writing process in order to create the best written work (Santos, 1992). Santos also states that 'the social nature of thought, knowledge, and language, the shift of power from the teacher to the students, and a product arrived at through negotiation and consensus within a group' (p: 5). The act of writing is seen as a socially collaborative practice. Thus, there is a tendency to integrate the support of the process writing approach together with collaborative learning and group work (Graham and Sandmel, 2011).

Collaborative learning (CL) emerged to change the traditional culture of practising writing through individualism (Ferris and Wilder, 2006). In many cases, such individual rhetoric is grounded on the authority of teachers. CL urges teachers to replace the idea

of teachers being the authority on all aspects of learning, including writing, and substitutes it with the view of writing as an outcome of shared interaction between writers and the audience or readers (Stewart, 1988). Teachers should demonstrate their competence by providing a series of strategies for learners that will develop the skills related to the process approach. This resonates with Santos (1992) whose view is that writing is a consequence of a group of individuals sharing ideas together not just single individuals' minds in isolation. This is seen to be effectively happening within small groups of participants, who come together in order to discuss a task or solve a problem put forward by teachers (Stewart, 1988).

Despite the fact that teaching the writing process is complex, especially throughout CL, teachers should know how this process occurs and how learners produce texts in the way described (Raines, 1991). According to Nunan (as cited in Raines, 1991), the writing process approach comprises 'a great deal of current communicative, task-based, and collaborative instruction and curriculum development' (p: 422). In short, it is based on uniting a robust understanding of theoretical and methodological grounds.

In fact, teaching a process-oriented collaborative form of learning helps to encourage students to discuss their writing, including making decisions on the appropriate content and strategies. It also offers a broad opportunity to promote active learning where learners become more engaged with their writing, audience, context and topic assigned. Bruffee (1999) contends that learning writing in social and collaborative situations is what should be emphasised in a university setting. Bruffee also argues that learners should be encouraged to strike up a conversation with others during the writing process in order to organise their shared interaction, including the form and style of feedback provided (ibid).

### **3.4. Collaborative writing (CW):**

#### **3.4.1. Definition and practice**

Using collaborative writing (CW) in learning writing has become widespread as one of the most successful applications of CL. Educators and scholars have highlighted the complexity of CW because it can be practised differently (Thompson, 2001; Lowry, Curtis and Lowry, 2004). At the beginning, this practice was used in the workplace (Faigley and Miller, 1982) before becoming common in language learning classroom. Yet, there are differences surrounding the construction of texts in each context (Bremner, 2010).

CW has also been described as a set of attempts to create a document by more than one single writer (Dillon, 1993). It is an organised piece of work which allows several

individuals to work together in a social situation and which has a range of interpretations as a result of the diversity of the participants (Rimmershaw, 1992). Mosier and Spitz (1997) have clarified that CW is the work of several writers into produce a complex written document. In addition, writing collaboratively is an attempt to encourage writers to work closely to produce a more complex document where one single writer may do the majority of the work but have it revised by others (Tammaro et al., 1997). According to Storch (2013) CW is 'an activity where there is a shared and negotiated decision making process and a shared responsibility for the production of a single text' (p: 3). As stated by these researchers, such projects are always affected by the level of proficiency, level of expertise, level of partnership, and perhaps gender of the writers.

In line with this view, Kraut et al. (1992) have reported three types of complexity that can arise during the production of CW or 'jointly written' documents: social, intellectual and procedural. The social complexity concerns the mutual relationship and accommodation between different writers. The intellectual complexity is related to promoting writers to take risks and create new ideas and thoughts. Lastly, the procedural complexity is about working out the series of actions and activities for implementation. This complexity however is described in several taxonomies. The taxonomies related to CW were designed to trigger interactive reactions between peers. Saunders (1989) built a taxonomy that has shown potential actions for directing CW related activities. This involves: 1) Type of collaborative activity which is underpinned by: co-writers, co-publishers, co-responders, co-editors, and writer-helpers. 2) Type of task assigned which contains: planning, composing, reviewing and correcting. 3) Type of interactive structure which consists of: completely cooperative, cooperative, helping obligatory and helping permitted.

Posner and Baecker (1992) designed a CW taxonomy to exhibit the organisational procedures and the themes and sub-themes of this complex process. It has been classified into four core zones: 1) Roles which include: writers, consultants, editors and reviewers. 2) Activities which involve: brainstorming, note-taking, planning, writing, revising and editing. 3) Control methods which are comprised of: centralised, relay, independent and shared. Finally 4) writing strategies, which include: single writing, scribing, separate writing and joint writing. In a more inclusive CW taxonomy by Lowry, Curtis and Lowry (2004), they stress the key elements of CW with details as follows: 1) CW activities, e.g. prewriting activities, task execution activities, postwriting activities; 2) CW strategies, e.g. single author, sequential single writing, parallel writing; 3) Document control modes, e.g. centralised, independent, shared and 4) Work modes

awareness, e.g. social awareness, workplace awareness, group awareness; 5) Participants' roles, e.g. writer, consultant, scribe. Furthermore, Li et al (2012) show an explanation of CW in the light of the process writing approach as shown below (Table 3.1):

Stage	Name	Description
1	Group prewriting	During the prewriting stage, students in each group considered and discussed the context, purpose, audience, and genre for their writing. They considered also whether they knew enough about their topic and what their writing topic was. Students could gather ideas and information by reading books, searching the Internet, and discussing with their group members. The group leader made a final decision on their writing, and posted their final ideas on the wiki page.
2	Group drafting	In this stage, students in each group wrote the first draft together on their wiki page. The students developed their own content, based on their previous ideas. All the students in the group could organise the structure and express their ideas and feelings quickly, collaboratively, and with little concern about character writing, correctness and punctuation. In this stage, their drafts emphasised the ideas and content of their writing.
3	Group revising	Revising is a complex process comprising three activities: re-reading the rough draft, sharing the rough draft, and revising based on peers' comments and feedback. Students might choose to change some words, or reorganise a part completely on the wiki.
4	Group editing	Editing is a stage in which the piece of writing is put into its final form. When editing, students could view the piece in terms of word choice and correctness of content, sentence structure, spelling errors and punctuation problems. Students were encouraged to edit their group work again on the wiki a few days after they finished their composition. The period of waiting might provide students with a fresh perspective and the enthusiasm necessary to finish the writing process. At the end, the leader needed to confirm the completion of their writing.

Table 3.1: CW stages (Li et al., 2012)

In view of the above, two critical strategies that control CW were acknowledged: the duration of the collaboration and the scale of the relationship between the collaborators (Tamaro et al., 1997). Tamaro et al. (1997) also stress the strategies used when learners decide to write together; unlike individual writing, the

nature of the group and its mode of operation evolves dynamically as authors respond to a variety of factors that influence the individuals in a group and the group as a whole (p: 22).

There are also instrumental strategies which have been identified as contributing to CW: a) the intensity of efforts exerted, b) the ways of gaining information in respect of different minds, c) the nature of completing the writing tasks and d) the extent to which the audience is addressed (Harris, 1992; Noël and Robert, 2004).

The driving force for this group work is to motivate writers to redraft and to identify the characteristics of texts written by others along with providing profound reflections

(Barkley, Cross and Major, 2005). There is a general agreement that this method goes beyond asking learners to merely sit together in order to compose a text (Bremner, 2010). Storch (2013), as one of the most influential scholars who has studied CW in L2/FL classes, distinguishes this practice. CW in L1 classes is different from L2/FL classes where L1 classes include peer response activities that are perhaps just for revision and editing. CW (in L2/FL classes) is more than just peer planning or peer response where mutual interaction and peer collaboration are crucial during all the phases of the process writing (planning, drafting, revision). Also, CW recommends creating texts from scratch; rather than working on existing texts or just grammar-focused exercises to be completed with a group of learners.

#### **3.4.2. Potential advantages of CW**

In CW, there are several advantages that have been underlined, when learners start engaging with similar tasks. Ede and Lunsford (1990) confirm that CW has been helpful because most texts that were assumed to be produced individually had in fact been dependent on other writers' work (by borrowing their ideas or showing enlightening thoughts). The same authors have shown that eighty percent (80%) of the written assignments written by writing learners were actually produced with the help of more than one single writer. Likewise, Couture and Rymer (1991) report that twenty four percent (24%) of their participants have taken roles in writing collaboratively; while eighty one percent (81%) revised their writing as a result of their peers' revision. On the basis of the last study, a distinction was identified between collaborative writing that occurs during composition with other team members and interactive writing that asks others for their opinions and feedback.

The consequence of this practice has been disseminated to several settings and contexts. Colen and Petelin (2004) claim that CW has become indispensable to separable from various academic institutions which consider writing skills a requirement for success. The demand for well-organised CW has grown as a consequence of its contribution to boosting the written text products. Therefore, as reported by Fung (2010), when learners had been engaged in CW classes and tasks, their knowledge and experience of writing and the outcome of their written texts were found gradually to improve. Hodges (2002) also points out that CW promotes linguistic accuracy of the written language and takes into account exchanges of the collective knowledge that is shaped by learners. CW, in terms of shared revision, works to strengthen learners' abilities and enriches the rhetorical structure of their own writing and self-correction (Hedgcock and Lefkowitz, 1992). CW also affords writers the opportunity to develop the

writer-reader dialogue, as writers begin to anticipate their readers' expectations and needs (Clark and Ivanic, 1997).

In addition, CW creates a higher sense of ability for writers as they control their different versions of the written products (Mendonca and Johnson, 1994). The writers are more able to recognise their weaknesses in writing as they attempt to generate standard writing (Ede and Lunsford, 1990). Moreover, peer feedback is obtained during CW, which responds to the essential desire to make learners understand theirs' and others' texts (Porto, 2002) and to make their writing better understood by others. CW also enables the practice of repetitive writing, where this spontaneous action allows writers to improve their personal ideas (Kuteeva, 2011). Kuiken and Vedder (2002b) also find that because of the collaborative dialogue 'metatalk' (see section: 2.3) during this type of task, the produced texts became more constructive and the group re-creates the fragmented efforts of the individuals. The quality of texts in terms of syntactic and grammatical rules and lexical options are improved. There is also a positive effect on learners' interaction strategies and on interlinking the form with the content.

Also, Storch (2005) compares individual and collaborative written products amongst a group of L2 writers. The collaborative texts were shorter but linguistically and structurally better and more satisfying for fulfilling the requirement of the tasks. Indeed, the large quantity of ideas, the immediate feedback and the variety of opinions all contributed to better academic writing. In an additional study carried out for similar purposes Storch (2007) found that there were no significant differences between these two modes of feedback on accuracy and grammatical correction. However, Storch stated that the pairs of students, who were in collaboration, worked more thoroughly and closely in recognising their second language writing problems. Specifically on FL writing, Shehadeh (2011) studied the contribution of CW in this FL context. He showed that CW for EFL writers provided more constructive communication and resulted in improved written text quality.

### **3.4.3. Potential challenges of CW**

Despite all of this, several other demands were identified that may intimidate collaborative writers. Ede and Lunsford (1990) acknowledge the challenges related to CW, as it contains a combination of diverse written pieces and loss of equality while distributing responsibilities among participants. Another challenge was that the harmony in thoughts between writers and readers (or other writers) was not the same, since each individual is engaged in different social actions and unique assumptions (Atkinson and Coffey, 2004). In support of this opinion, Gebhard (1980) indicates that early peer feedback on collaboratively written texts was wrongly interpreted since

learners did not have the emotional support from their friends while drafting. In a further study, a group of collaborative texts based on peer feedback did not make a significant improvement in students' writing abilities since most revisions were considered irrelevant and not highly constructive (Connor and Asenavage, 1994).

Furthermore, Chisholm (1990) claims that CW can never be entirely problem-free, and therefore requires cautious management. He found that most challenges are related to learners' resistance, inexperience, friction and sense of fairness. Anxiety has also been shown as a major challenge during CW. Kelly, Soundranayagam and Grief (2004) showed that their collaborative writers faced difficulties in communicating over the topic assigned due to feeling anxious in delivering their thoughts. There was also a challenge with the personal identity of writers who normally write individually not in a collaborative sense; that is when to use the appropriate voice using either 'I' or 'We' (Fontaine and Hunter, 2006).

CW has become a bilateral practice that has a group identity (Hyland, 2000; Thompson, 2001; Gillet, Hammond, and Martala-Lockett, 2009). It was acknowledged that most challenges linked to CW were in relation to the aspects of language (e.g. syntax and semantic) more than the actual contents such as idea and information (Evans and Green, 2007). Colen and Petelin (2004) claim that deficiency, such as lacking adequate knowledge among peers, had a negative aspect on the effect of CW. There are still possible challenges in dealing with this concept, embodied by the necessity to understand the functionality of conducting such collaborative work and to what extent it is adaptable to various learners who are non-writing experts (Asaoka and Usui, 2003). The employment of CW should be supported carefully with a higher degree of preparedness and readiness by tutors and tutees.

### **3.5. Collaborative writing and social networking tools:**

#### **3.5.1. Wikis as a social networking tool and a web 2.0 technology**

We are currently living in a time of the second generation web; namely, 'web 2.0'. A web is a set of interrelated homepages of information which are designed to be on a specific server and sustained by a person or an organisation. It provides an evolution rather than a revolution in learning (Wheeler, 2010). It can also represent a means of global partnership regardless of location constraints and time limits (Markham, 2004). O'Reilly (2005) describes the differences between the two versions of the web as the movement from 'stickiness' to 'syndication'; from 'taxonomy' to 'folksonomy', and from 'publishing' to 'participation'. This type of web has become a principle for associating users together in a less hierarchical and social-oriented approach. This is supported by Chatti, Jarke and Frosch-Wilke (2007) who explain that the distribution of contents and

decentralisation of authors are amongst the tenets of web 2.0. This automatic organisation, that permits writers to accomplish their roles in a clearer format, cannot be fulfilled in standard classes (Coniam and Kit, 2008). This web is significant as it involves read-write characteristics that bring more attention to reader-centrality (Mindel and Verma, 2006) instead of only writers.

The popularity of these technologies has been attributable to four dimensions: persistence, replicability, scalability and searchability (Zappavigna, 2012). Web 2.0 tools have promoted remodelling in knowledge formation. Traditional e-learning was claimed to be a support for traditional pedagogies, relying on behaviourist thoughts, while web 2.0 upholds co-participation (Palloff and Pratt, 2007; Mason and Rennie, 2008; Karasavvidis, 2010). Web 2.0 permits users to produce information in a more dynamic process. This dynamic process allows the users to create, publish and communicate online allowing the tools used to be updated with recent features and characteristics (Solomon and Schrum, 2007).

A recent study investigates boosting learners' competency and input as well as output for the target language (Wang and Vasquez, 2012). Integrating teaching and learning by using these technologies has been found supportive for these new channels of literacy (Williams, 2001). Certain applications of web 2.0 technology empower users to practise shared criticism and incorporate multimodality. Multimodality uses multiple modes simultaneously, e.g. wikis for educational purposes (Conole and Alevizou, 2010a). Based on Conole and Alevizou, those technologies are classified into ten categories: e.g. media sharing, media creation, instant messaging, social networking tools, blogging, wiki and collaborative tools and syndication. The two authors established a comparison to identify a road map between these technologies and existing pedagogical approaches (Table 3.2).

<b>Pedagogical approaches</b>	<b>Web 2.0 technologies</b>
Personalised and contextualized learning	Ability to personalize your digital environment, use of RSS feeds and mash ups
Situated, experiential, problem-based learning and role play	Location aware devices, virtual worlds and online games
Inquiry or resource-based learning	Google, media sharing repositories and tools to support user generated content
Reflective learning	Blogs and e-portfolios
Collaborative learning, project-based or dialogic learning	Wikis and social networking tools
Research-based learning	Distributed collection of data, new ways of organizing and representing multiple data sets and new tools for organizing and interrogating data
Creativity	New forms of co-creation and publication and new means of representing ideas and use of rich multi-media

Table 3.2: Similarities between pedagogical approaches and web 2.0 technologies  
(Conole and Alevizou, 2010)

Many scholars and educators have attempted to search out the most appropriate pedagogies for bringing the relevant technologies inside language classes. A shift has appeared towards student-centred learning and a technology-based learning environment where identifying the suitable learning pedagogy for each technology has become essential (Gibson, 2001). Learners should be involved in building online-based knowledge using either synchronous or asynchronous communication. Typically, Conole (2012) considered analysing the merits, the demerits and the power that these technologies may provide within the educational process (Table 3.3). These guidelines can show both sides of the current tools and the pedagogical difficulties implied.

Cause	Effect	Educational dilemmas
Expansive knowledge domain	Death of expertise/ everyone an expert	Challenges the traditional role of the teacher
No hierarchy or control, content distributed in different ways	Multiple (co)locations/ loss of content integrity	Need to rethink the design process and provide guided learning pathways for learners
Increasingly complex digital landscape	Beyond 'digital space'/ New metaphors needed	There is a widening skills gap between the 'tech savvy' and those without the necessary digital literacy skills
Power of the collective, collective intelligence	Social collective/digital individualism	Potential for new forms of social learning and interaction
Free content and tools, open API and mash ups	Issues about ownership, value, business models	Little evidence of uptake of free tools or use/reuse of free resources

Table 3.3: Effects related to web 2.0 technologies and potential difficulties (Conole, 2012)

### 3.5.1.1. Background and development of wikis

The first wiki was called the WikiWikiWeb and developed by Ward Cunningham in 1995. The word 'wiki' denotes fast, speedy and swift in the Hawaiian language (Leuf and Cunningham, 2001). Green et al. (2011) have defined the wiki as 'a constantly changing written text in which all active users participate in the process of reading, drafting, revising and editing' (p: 172). These authors have elaborated that a wiki is a collaborative technology that allows editing in all its meanings: adding and revising from any location at any time. In just a few years, numerous initiatives for different wiki platforms undertaken to set up for group learning projects such as PBwiki, Wikispaces and MediaWikis (Ioannou and Artino, 2009; Bradley et al., 2010).

In these platforms, users can stay closely interlinked through a complex net of ties that is handled dynamically. These wikis have considerable commonalities to support group members' online participation with the freedom to express thoughts and ideas. Wikis have become distinctive in comparison with other non-social platforms insofar as they do not require any default programming and long training (Duffy and Bruns, 2006, p:

34). They, especially Wikispaces, just require familiarity with the simple skills and basic knowledge of dealing with computers and the Internet.

A wiki has been perceived differently in terms of considering it as a website, a webpage or software. For more details, Lin et al. (2007) considered the wiki as an open website for the purpose of joint editing, revising, and adding by a certain community with the possibility of reorganising any published content (Choy and Ng, 2007). These websites have been introduced for the purpose of the learning process, as wikis have contributed to establishing different learning communities (Wenger, 2006). Similarly, Rick et al. (2002) introduced the wiki as a website embedded with editing functions for content that can be applied by a group of contributors through a regular web-browser, e.g. Firefox. This website allows a large class to take part in a genuine learning at low cost (Rick and Guzdial, 2006).

On the basis of considering a wiki as a webpage, there is a slightly different perspective that has conveyed a fuller explanation of wikis: Woods and Thoeny (2007) claim that a wiki is an aggregation of webpages. Evans (2006) also referred to the wiki as 'a webpage that nobody would own and that anyone could edit' (p: 28). Wagner (2004) commented that a wiki is an amended version of a webpage: 'the wiki is a collaboratively created and iteratively improved set of web pages' (p: 265). In a more comprehensible definition, the wiki has been described as 'a freely expandable collection of interlinked web pages, a hypertext system for storing and modifying information- a database, where each page is easily editable by any user with a forms-capable web browser client' (Leuf and Cunningham, 2001, p: 14). Thus, a webpage is an online space with static resources or information which is regularly contributed to on the World Wide Web (WWW).

Another group of educators has labelled the wiki software, an online-based application which is programmed to permit changes to occur on wiki pages whenever there is an editing process. This piece of software, it is claimed, comprises several encoded files stored on a web-browser (Augar, Raitman and Zhou, 2004; Ebersbach, Glaser and Heigl, 2006). This group of researchers called it 'web-based software that allows all viewers of a page to change the content by editing the page online in a browser'. Even though these differences mentioned describe various perspectives regarding the nature of the wiki, there is an overall agreement on the functions that ensure collaboration. Each wiki is supplemented with a discussion forum and a history for rolling back any participation, tracking any changes, or referring to the original contribution in a case of disagreement (Richardson, 2010). The distinctive feature of wikis is 'versioning capability' that can be used to show the development of original content, and the way in

which individuals contribute to it and enable the return to the previous version if necessary (Mindel and Verma, 2006; Judd, Kennedy and Cropper, 2010).

Unlike the wikis in this research which are protected wikis, Wikipedia is the most famous wiki. It is the largest free encyclopaedia that can be created by its own people and edited by anyone (Calhoun, 2014). The features of public writing on Wikipedia have similar procedures to other closed wiki platforms, e.g. Wikispaces, Mediawiki, PmWiki and PBWiki, but with a few distinctions in order to make the locked wikis more appropriate to education and academia. In fact, Wikipedia has drawn the attention of online writing researchers owing to its size and acceptance worldwide; it has also provoked curiosity concerning how this mass of edited and revised articles could have been established (Jones, 2008). The popularity of Wikipedia is increasing rapidly although controversy has been shown over the accuracy and validity of its information (ibid). The reason for this dispute is because of the limited number of administrators and inadequate scrutiny over the content provided on Wikipedia (Biuk-Aghai, Pang and Si, 2014). Researchers have extensively analysed the registered users (until November, 2012) in a few Wikipedia language editions in five languages as shown in Table (3.4). This table also illustrates the number of active users and the number of administrators in large (English), medium-sized (German and Chinese) and small (Swedish and Danish) Wikipedias.

Language	Users				
	Registered	Active		Admins	
		Total	(%)	Total	(%)
English	17,813,716	132,800	0.7	1462	1.1
German	1,535,302	21,649	1.4	267	1.2
Chinese	1,316,773	6,994	0.5	78	1.1
Swedish	299,093	3,136	1.0	88	2.8
Danish	171,699	1,155	0.7	37	3.2

Table 3.4: Wikipedia user statistics (active and admin users' percentage to the total number of users (Biuk-Aghai, Pang and Si, 2014)

### 3.5.1.2. Aspects of strenghts and weaknesses of wikis in learning

Wikis have been referred to as a scaffolding instrument to serve pedagogical and instructional objectives. On the basis of these conditions, new debates appeared about the best ways in which the learning process could be introduced to learners (Lund, 2008). The employment of wikis in learning has shifted the emphasis from the cognitive perspective to the socio-cognitive perspective which focuses on creating social meaning and shared understanding (Pennington, 1993; Kern and Warschauer, 2000).

This new tendency in learning, and specifically in learning writing, has grown to be an outcome of shared effort as opposed to merely individual reasoning practice. Furthermore, wikis have been found to be an enabler for many educational and practical purposes. Relying on empirical-related practice, various learners are engaged on wikis to enable group project activities (Parker and Chao, 2007); to build knowledge communities for a group of learners (Cress and Kimmerle, 2008); to disseminate the practice of shared knowledge and information exchange (Elgort, Smith and Toland, 2008); and to form a knowledge management store (Wegner, 2006; Chatti et al., 2007).

Participants use wikis to increase critical analysis for their learning experiences (Chandra and Chalmers, 2010). They are also often used to encourage the development of writing skills and written documents (Cress and Kimmerle, 2008) and to afford the users all types of instantaneous revision, such as addition, deletion, reformulation, restructuring and changing order (Raitman, Augar and Zhou, 2005). The relevant actions of revision are perceived positively by participants on wikis which have worked to construct more advanced learning (Meishar-Tal and Gorsky, 2010; Capitão-Tavares, 2011). The usage of wikis can also afford a solution for the educational difficulties related to the relationship among learners with each other based on Lin and Kelsey's (2009) study. The research identified three phases to represent the cycle life of wiki projects as shown in Table 3.5. It starts with exploration (or a crisis of authority), followed by adaptation or a crisis of relationship and finally collaboration or a resolution of a crisis (Storch, 2013).

Phases	Crisis of authority	Crisis of relationship	Resolution of crisis
Reactions	Lack of communication; anxiety of territorial limits	Improved communication; adjusting to different working styles	Trust and rapport were established; co-writing increased greatly
Use of Wiki	Cut and paste work from MS Word to wiki	Started to use wiki to communicate and work	Felt comfortable writing and editing in wiki
Collaboration	Little; adjustment was dominant	Collaboration emerged	Pair-share, peer-teaching, peer-collaboration

Table 3.5: Phases of overcoming the difficulties of establishing co-authority and mutual relationship (Lin and Kelsey, 2009)

Wikis have also been recognised as an invaluable repository to contain the groups' work, plus being a tool to manage the work of a group (Torres, 2009). The popularity of using wikis has developed due to the fact that it is free and interactive (Wheeler and

Wheeler, 2009). Minocha and Thomas (2007) and Ansarimoghaddam and Tan (2013) agree on additional advantages of using wikis: endurance and accessibility, unfolding history and illuminating changes and scaffolding facilities. Duffy and Bruns (2006) considered wikis as a management tool that would stimulate learners' interactivity and creativity with each other as well as with their instructors.

As learners can be assigned to wiki-based tasks, a small scale wiki can be created for a group of classmates or alternatively when there is a large group of members they can build their own wiki pages on Wikipedia (Tal-Elhasid and Meishar-Tal, 2007; Wilkinson and Huberman, 2007). The fundamental distinction between wikis and emails, blogs<sup>2</sup> and forums is that wikis are designed for many-to-many interaction (Wagner, 2004). They are dissimilar from blogs in that blogs do not spontaneously illustrate the required pages for reviewing or editing, and often convey only one author's message to many readers without exchanging thoughts or sharing ideas (Mindel and Verma, 2006; Woods and Thoeny, 2007).

Nonetheless, a number of educators and specialists have discovered some weakness in the employment of wikis. As an illustrative instance, Wheeler, Yeomans and Wheeler (2008) identified that students posted some entries but were not eager to comment or give feedback on those of their peers since they were afraid to appear negatively in front of others. The previous researchers further explained that peers had difficulties in maintaining participants' activities due to insufficient time, lack of motivation, or having the belief that adding or editing contents might be insignificant.

The issue of e-plagiarism (or the immediate copying and pasting) was of a great concern in the wiki environment (Viégas, Wattenberg and Dave, 2004) particularly due to the accessibility of unlimited resources on the Internet. Besides all of this, Davies (2004) reported that peer editing of wiki-based documents could cause a misrepresentation for the original works. Wikis might prevent login when there is a technical fault or if the web browser is not updated; and thus the colour coding of red and green bars may disappear. Additional shortcomings were pointed out by Wheeler and Wheeler (2009): there was doubt surrounding the issue of how to formalise wikis so that they are legitimately acceptable within a formal system of education.

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<sup>2</sup> A blog is social application where individuals can post their diaries, opinions and reflections whereas a forum is an internet-based public discussion board that is built on hierarchal basis.

Consistent with the problems that the learners may confront during wiki-based learning; both Karasavvidis (2010) and Su and Beaumont (2010) have extensively analysed the barriers that prevent the successful implementation of wikis. Drawing on these researchers, the obstacles discovered were: the need for more task management, plagiarism, limited communication, competition between users, information invalidity and unwillingness to edit peers' texts. Encouraging students' willingness and their effort to maintain the vitality of their wikis during collaborative work was also a major challenge (Karasavvidis, 2010; Su and Beaumont, 2010). Yet, the weaknesses indicated can be minimised if group members constantly and sincerely work hard in observing their fellows' contributions (Mindel and Verma, 2006). They need to be aware that the wiki in itself is not necessarily a factor for the quality of the work produced but it is an effective instructional technology that highlights writing from a social approach based on learners' collective orientation (Warschauer, 2010). Therefore, the next subsection explains more about the positive experience of wikis in learning.

### **3.5.1.3. Recommendations for ensuring the success of wikis in learning**

Specific practices have been recommended to maximise the efficiency of collaborative wikis in learning. So, referring to the challenges that were faced by wiki-based users, Deters, Cuthrell and Stapleton (2010) have recommended three issues to consider to avoid the difficulties: first, it is better to decide the type of wikis to be used and its purpose; second, the potential expectation and third, the assessment system. Educators need to be aware of the factors used to promote successful wiki projects: the type of the tasks, the size and composition of the groups, the role of the instructor(s), the learners' goals and perceptions, the length of the project and the assessment criteria (Storch, 2013).

Also, preparing a detailed how-to-collaborate guide is highly essential in order to empower participants to begin; otherwise they will be just aggregating instead of collaborating (Mindel and Verma, 2006). Lundin (2008) argues that the significant drawbacks of wikis can be transformed into strengths by some aspects of traditional pedagogy practices. Bossewitch et al. (2008) propose that the main principles to strengthen the efficiency of wikis are to plan the course contents, its objectives and the strategies used that will transform the new experience positively. In accord with what was advocated, Vie and deWinter (2008) confirm that choosing a wiki depends on the correct pedagogical goals: the wiki should serve learners' needs, helps to decentralise the classrooms and lead to a democratic student-centred environment, or a learner-centred approach (see section: 3.5.1).

In line with the recommendations mentioned, Duffy and Bruns (2006) emphasise the importance of delivering attentive tasks during wiki-based language learning; the pages should also be securely protected by a locking system, or by upgrading the wiki with extra protective features; so this means that they are not open to others outside the designated students' groups. The other notable point, as proposed by Duffy and Bruns is related to a social issue; they called it 'edit war' when numerous group members reach a stage where they cannot accept the views or criticism of others. For this reason, the last two researchers suggest that teaching participants the process of collaboration and how to deal with contrasting thoughts is fundamental to fight against any conflict in thoughts or opinions. Kear (2010) refers to an additional challenge that was encountered while conducting collaborative tasks on wikis: that is, the time lag effect. As stated by Kear, this challenge can be reduced by organising face-to-face meetings or by embedding synchronous communication.

The issue of openness in non-protected wikis always generates ethical issues in relation to how they are made and what the contributors' qualifications are (Priedhorsky et al. 2007; Santana and Wood, 2009). These anxieties can however be avoided by smaller-scale wikis, and applying a secure system where contributions made are only viewed by the people who desire to be involved. Drawing on the importance of designing secure and small-scale wikis, those small-scale wikis are necessary as they can be given the attribution of being part of a 'controlled environment'. This environment is rarely achieved in general wikis such as Wikipedia which is entirely open and not restricted to a group of people or on a certain discourse community. Torres (2009) argues that wikis should be different from other public spaces to ensure the number of involved users is regulated and that the invitees are easy to recognise.

Hence, there are procedural suggestions to increase the quality and outcome of wikis. One of the techniques is 'threading' or encouraging learners to be active in the area that is allocated for discussion (Kear, 2010). Kear also claims that the lack of social presence can be overcome by using cues, such as emoticons. Other considerations are also essential, such as easy navigation, adequate induction, and understanding users' needs, for example, if there are learners with dyslexia (Su and Beaumont, 2010). The following table summarises some of the strengths and weaknesses reviewed earlier and some of the possible ways to reduce the negative impact (Table 3.6).

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
Enhancing the efficiency for group projects/activities	Creating opportunities for domination by powerful learners,	Using locked systems
Increasing learning communities and for sharing information	Requiring time and needing exerting effort and planning for the tasks given	Determining the objectives and nature of collaboration ahead Justifying the selection of certain wikis/preparing a how-to-collaboration guide
Creating dynamic e-space/plus being free and interactive	Prompting plagiarism and students' competition	Using some aspects of the traditional pedagogy such as (face-to-face) discussions
Supporting self-reflection, autonomy and motivation	Discouraging learners' fluency and accuracy and reduce reluctance	Activating the role of discussion threads and emoticons
Providing confidence and equality among writers and readers		Designing easy navigation system, clear organisation and interface/ sufficient training and continuous/ immediate help

Table 3.6: Summary of the weaknesses, strengths and suggestions to use wikis

### 3.5.2. Provision feedback during collaborative writing

#### 3.5.2.1. Instructor-led feedback:

This type of feedback is the common method of dealing with written texts where instructors mark them by giving their feedback, which is mostly written. It is a dual process where the learners should write texts and give them straight to instructors, usually after the completion of the first draft. In fact, the feedback received from instructors is essential and plays a key role in L2 or FL writing learning (Hyland and Hyland, 2006). Feedback is defined as 'all reactions to writing, formal or informal, written or oral, from teacher to peer, to a draft or a final version'. However, it is not easy to give such feedback. It is required to be specific, concise and understandable and must fulfil learners' needs of writing development not personal or unnecessary information (Gibbs and Simpson, 2004). Feedback is perceived as beneficial for L1, L2 or FL writing learners regardless of their level of competence since it shows learners

their writing strengths and weaknesses and aspects that should be enhanced (Ferris, 2002; Ashwell, 2000). Among these advantages, learners can improve the desired meaning, empower their linguistic proficiency, and competency and produce texts that are suitable for readers (Grami, 2010). Giving feedback should contain form and meaning-related corrections as against the claim made by Truscott (1999) about the benefit of delivering correction-free instruction. A counterview was proposed by Hyland and Hyland (2001) confirming the importance of giving various sorts of feedback (e.g. grammar, lexis, organisation and ideas) since learners should intentionally recognise their problem.

There are two types of for instructor feedback: direct versus indirect feedback. The direct feedback is explicit and is used to show learners the precise correction whereas the indirect feedback is less explicit and used to draw learners' attention to the fact that something is wrong (Ferris and Roberts, 2001; Ferris, 2002, Ferris, 2006). There are also three techniques which can be applied to convey both forms of feedback: 1) marginal feedback by showing correction in each line, 2) coded feedback by inventing a system for abbreviations or initials and 3) un-coded feedback by determining the location of mistakes without using any of the previous methods (Enginarlar, 1993; Lee, 1997; Ferris and Roberts, 2001; Ferris, 2002). Telling which method is more effective is hard to decide, but several scholars show the benefits of indirect feedback in encouraging learners to problem solve their own problems (Ashwell, 2000). For a similar effect, instructors are advised to deemphasise corrective feedback, rather than ignoring it, and to help learners to practise recursiveness in their written work.

In the literature, teacher feedback has been found as inseparable from second or foreign language writing learning but peer feedback can be applied in the first stages to boost the learning process (Connor and Asenavage, 1994; Palaus, 1999). Nevertheless, in some studies, as in Yang et al. (2006), it was identified that the impact of peer feedback was greater than instructor feedback due to the reciprocal interaction and negotiation of meaning. As far as the type of feedback that is better given by the instructor is concerned, there is a debate in relation to what instructors should correct and focus on: form (e.g. grammar) or meaning (content)-related problems (Fathman and Whalley, 1990). There are numerous studies where findings may conflict with each other. Truscott (2004) argues that instructor feedback should not consider grammatical mistakes, particularly for beginner writers.

In counter to this study, checking accuracy (of form) was effective for both L2 and FL writing learners (Leki, 1991). Writing learners had positive beliefs that their form-related

mistakes were corrected by their instructors, because they expected error correction from their teachers (Ferris, 1997; Ferris and Hedgcock, 1998; Hinkel, 2013).

### **3.5.2.2. Peer-led feedback:**

The act of collaboration influences the nature of teaching and learning because it facilitates peer feedback. Peer feedback is a key element in the practice of learning writing in L2 or FL contexts. It has basic functions for the process and genre writing approach (Hyland and Hyland, 2006). Consistent with those researchers, feedback can be used a developmental tool for learners' motivation and confidence. Feedback has been defined differently yet Freedman's (1987, p: 5) definition seems most suitable to serve the rationale of this study which involves instructor and peer feedback. Peer feedback has been used by Nelson, (1997), since he agrees that peer feedback is an act of 'responding to each other's written work to provide their peers with comments on how they can improve the draft versions of their papers' (p: 77). Keh (1990) reports that his participants described peer feedback as a way for discussion to solve problems and to extend the number of reviews of written texts. In this sense, peer feedback has shown invaluable outcomes for writing learners. Learners have achieved a high percentage of valid feedback (80%); such feedback includes complicated comments that are understood completely or partially and learners become able to respond to the suggestions given effectively (Rollinson, 1998, 2005). In a study conducted in Saudi Arabia using this form of feedback, Al-Qurashi (forthcoming) found it successful for learners since it revolutionised their experience and practice of CL and gave them the feeling of being part of a large learning community that influenced their writing abilities.

Among the three types of peer feedback identified by Kepner (1991) for conducting peer feedback for CL purposes, he found that message-related comments given by fellow peers on their written work contributed best to increase writing proficiency and written skills. Peer feedback has been found to be suitable for the development of content, organisation and presentation along with the enrichment of learners' affective techniques (Murphy, 2010). In line with the delivery of feedback mediated by peers, Murphy (2010) also discovers three key benefits for collaborative work: feedback, correction and remediation. Allowing learners to work on each other's written texts ensured learners practised academic writing considered their readership (Levine et al., 2002; Barkley, Cross and Major, 2005; Kuteeva, 2011). Grami (2005) points out that this sort of feedback is even essential for correcting the most basic of grammatical rules, spelling and punctuation. Thus, Ferris (2002) finds that L2 or FL writers mostly focus on word-level and simple grammatical form; rather than working on sentence-

level or coherence as L1 writers would normally do; indeed, they may have problems with grammar.

Nevertheless, this type of feedback may not always be useful. There are major distinctions between learning English writing in L2 or FL and L1 contexts. Each of them has its pedagogical and social features and differences in the linguistic proficiency and competency of individuals (Hinkel, 2013). Feedback that is given by fellow peers may sometimes be misleading and inadequate; particularly if it is not immediately backed up with feedback from instructors (Rollinson, 2005). Thus, letting learners discover their own and other peers' problems, under controlled guidance from the instructor(s), gives learners more chances not to be misled or confused between what is right and wrong. Learners may also become uncertain about the advantages and disadvantages of peer feedback or they may think that the given feedback 'is a poor alternative to the real thing-that is, the teacher's periodic red-penned notations' (ibid, p: 23).

Moreover, achieving constructive peer feedback is restricted by the proper size of the peer feedback group and the form and adequacy of training (Berg, 1999). Zhu (2001) prefers to run peer feedback with four members to result in useful interaction for native and non-native speakers whereas Paulus (1999) argues that peer feedback can be achieved better when only a pair of learners work together. It is argued that 'pairs of students have greater opportunities for intensive discussion about their writing' (ibid, p: 272). This can be compared with Hyland and Hyland (2006), who suggest that there is no consensus regarding the ideal method in which peer feedback can be introduced and managed; it is entirely based on the teaching approach of the instructor(s). According to Hyland and Hyland (2006), a change in the ways of giving feedback has started to shift to computer-mediated feedback or e-feedback. As a result of the new roles of wikis, the nature of peer feedback is reformulating the face-to-face method of feedback. Thus, recent tools of Networked-based language learning (NBLL) have transformed peer feedback to electronic-mediated feedback. Thus, the next section reviews this aspect that is enhanced by instructor and peer feedback.

#### **3.5.2.3. E-led feedback (as provided by instructors and peers):**

Electronic feedback (or e-feedback) is an emerging concept that has grown with the development of web-based learning. Recent technologies have contributed to new forms of learning writing as Hyland and Hyland (2006) noted:

over the past twenty years, changes in writing pedagogy and research have transformed feedback practices, with teacher written comments often

supplemented with peer feedback, writing workshops, conferences, and computer-delivered feedback (p: 83).

The evolution of e-feedback has continued alongside the advent of web 2.0 and social networking technologies, particularly wikis. They have empowered the teaching and learning of L2 and FL writing since they enable writers to comment, add and delete electronically. As shown below in Table 3.7, e-feedback that is provided by instructors and peers can be achieved differently from the traditional feedback given in the physical mode either orally or written<sup>3</sup> (Tuzi, 2004). The question that remains unanswered is related to whether the benefits are similar or not.

E-feedback has shown several benefits for non-native English writing learners (L2/FL). The most obvious advantage is its support for collaborative writing (see section: 3.5.2 for more about this practice). It allows all the feedback suggested by peers to be viewed by both learners and instructors (DiGiovanni and Nagaswami, 2001). Palmquist (1993) found e-feedback is useful for reducing the amount of paper that needs to be carried by instructors and in order to save students' written work from being lost or forgotten. E-feedback results in greater awareness and it reinforces the habit of writing for a public, other than the instructor, whilst taking others' views into account (Ware, 2004). It has been described as an effective tool for motivating novice writing learners (Warschauer, 2002). This is probably due to the flexibility and straightforwardness of online-based feedback for form and meaning-related mistakes compared with the face-to-face mode (Hyland and Hyland, 2006).

Finally, MacLeod (1999) identified e-feedback as a good way for students to be more honest with each other rather than complimenting each other, and possibly it allows them to keep their privacy and anonymity. However, it is not necessary for all participants' names in a wiki to be anonymous to the rest of members of wikis, and they were not in the current study.

As far the disadvantages of e-feedback are concerned, there is no possibility for oral interaction if further verbal communication is needed (Tuzi, 2004). This type of feedback may take a longer time than the other methods of providing feedback (oral or written) because there is a time delay (ibid). Braine (1997) realised that students preferred the traditional mode of feedback (oral and written), because it was easier to deal with the proposed suggestions and to keep their concentration.

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<sup>3</sup> The current study does not focus on oral feedback

Oral feedback	Written feedback	E-feedback
Face-to-face	Face-to-face/distant	More distant
Oral	Written	Written
Time dependent	Depends	Time independent
Pressure to quickly respond	Pressure to respond by next class	No pressure to quickly respond
Place dependent	Depends	Place independent
Nonverbal components	No nonverbal components	No nonverbal components
More personally intrusive	Depends	More personally distant
Oral/cultural barriers	Written/cultural barriers	Written/cultural barriers
Greater sense of involvement	Greater sense of involvement	Greater sense of anonymity
Negotiation of meaning	Negotiation of meaning	Less negotiation of meaning
Less delivery effort	Greater delivery effort	Less delivery effort
N/A	No cut & paste	Cut & paste

Table 3.7: Differences between oral, written and e-feedback (Tuzi, 2004)

The effect and affect of feedback, and peer review, in electronic versus traditional (off-line) modes has been studied thoroughly by Liu and Sadler (2003). The researchers found that both modes can complement each other, e-feedback should not be used as monolithic. It was identified that that e-feedback is effective for making general comments (e.g. suggestions, evaluation and clarification). On the other hand, the face-to-face mode is more beneficial for error-correction.

This study scrutinises the effectiveness of two types of feedback (instructor and peer-based) as mainly provided online with minimal oral feedback. Peer feedback is a new practice for the participants of the current study, meaning that the common method of giving feedback in writing classes in Saudi Arabia is instructor-oriented.

### 3.6. Wiki-mediated collaborative writing (WMCW)

As shown in the literature, wikis seem to have much potential as a learning platform for the practice of collaborative learning and learning academic writing in L1 and L2/FL contexts. Storch (2013) claims that wikis in L1 education that are used for learning writing have two stands:

- students’ perceptions of wiki-based learning
- students’ contributions to wikis and their engagement with each other

Storch (2013) also assumes that wikis in L2 (including FL) education tackled the following strands for promoting the learning process and enriching learners’ writing skills:

- students' perceptions of wiki-mediated projects
- nature of contributions and engagement on wikis
- Development of language (e.g. accuracy, complexity and fluency)
- Patterns of interaction
- Quality of the produced texts

### **3.6.1. Essential techniques related to WMCW implementation**

WMCW is a socially-supported learning approach that is dependent on CMC and its target is to produce a greater interaction according to three means: communication, global connection and partnership and social constructivism (Bragg, 2006). There are important key techniques to deal with WMCW: the pedagogical context, the facilitators and the participants. To further explain, the first technique for conducting WMCW is by determining its educational objectives (West and West, 2009). This should clearly explain the teaching goals, approaches, activities and how learners will be organised (Häkkinen and Järvelä, 2006). It promotes reflections and negotiations regarding how learners could build a sense of interaction among themselves and how to create well-designed tasks.

The second technique of WMCW deals with instructors as facilitators. The facilitators need to integrate various tasks with the curricula of the language course and the rest of the traditional-based activities inside classes (Bin et al., 2012). In fact, facilitators need to be proactive in terms of ensuring that students' discussions along with the learning tasks must be purposeful and authentic (Bower et al. 2006). There is invaluable assistance that should be offered by facilitators to participants in this situation. During WMCW, the facilitators should strengthen the technical support; increasing strategies of writing on wikis; and refining teacher presence (Kennedy and Miceli, 2013). The strategies of writing on wikis involve allocating time for extensive editing and dividing texts into guiding questions (Kost, 2011). Facilitators should also take into account how to provide adequate in-class training before starting wikis (Leung and Chu, 2009) including how to provide peer feedback (Arnold et al., 2009), with reinforcing teacher presence in face-to-face encounters and enhancing the division of labour.

The third technique of WMCW depends on the participants. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of the participants play a key role in learners' decisions to engage in active learning in wikis (Kummer, 2013). Learners using wikis should be encouraged to collaborate with each other, as well as with facilitators; they should also be enthusiastic and sympathetic and be involved in participatory approaches (Warschauer, Turbee and Roberts, 1996; Hazari, North and Moreland (2009). Meanwhile, the participants are

required to sustain an increased level of communication by showing opportunities for textual production and practice of writing (Cerratto and Rodriguez, 2002). Participants achieve better interaction when they get involved in discussing content in wikis than can be elaborated in face-to-face modes. In addition, if the task is to be successful, learners should work hard and as to heed the psychological aspects of diverse contributors (Kreijns, Kirschner and Jochems, 2002).

The fourth technique of WMCW deals with usability. Hadjerrouit (2012) emphasises the role of pedagogical and technical usability of wikis for CW. According to (Hadjerrouit, 2012), pedagogical usability includes adding value, motivation, differentiation (based on learners' needs) and collaboration, on the one hand. On the other hand, technical usability comprises four criteria: ease-of-use, efficiency, technical design and accessibility (ibid).

The fifth principle of WMCW is related to the evaluation of this process in terms of three aspects: the product of co-writing, the process implemented co-writers and the learning of the subject content that the participants achieved and learned (Trentin, 2009).

In a broader sense, the basics related to the implementation of WMCW are decided by available functions and collaborative activities, the level of satisfaction and acceptance and learners' characteristics (Liaw, Chen and Huang, 2008). In other words, we cannot assume the core elements of WMCW to be sufficiently achieved if the participants have a limited level of acceptance or satisfaction. The same condition would be applied to the rest of the factors given. In the same way, before teaching students how to deal with wikis, instructors should teach students how distribute authorship responsibilities; how to revise respectively and how to respond collaboratively and to prepare students to publish publicly (MacArthur and Karchmer-Klein, 2010). There are also other relevant studies which investigate the procedural and pedagogical issues (see sub-section: 8.3.2). The next sub-section briefly reviews this topic.

### **3.6.2. Learners' voice in WMCW**

Hearing learners' voices on WMCW is one way to find out students' thoughts on their writing learning and about collaborative tasks on wikis. Learners' voices in public encourages civic engagement between learners and empowers them in relation to how to express their ideas (Rheingold, 2008). 'Public voice is learnable, a matter of consciously engaging with an active public rather than broadcasting to a passive audience' (ibid, p: 101). This voice has been encouraged to support learning writing and to hear from students more about the advantages and disadvantages of wikis

(Rudd, Colligan and Naik, 2006). Indeed, the learners have become competent in expressing a more exploratory voice because of the visual possibilities in WMCW, and generally in CMC using visuals such as images, podcasts and hyperlinks (Bowden, 2010).

Many language learners feel that WMCW is a perfect means for experiencing the process writing approach, as the phases of this approach can be accomplished easily by several writers (Chao and Lo, 2011). Moreover, Lea (2001) reports his learners' insights regarding their improved writing on networked (e.g. wiki)-based CW. Those insights touch issues about 'leaving a time lag between reading and responding', 'making meaning in their writing through other students' messages' and 'incorporating messages into written assignments' (ibid, p: 166). Although there are a few differences between wikis and Google.Docs (see section: 1.3), participants in web (Google.Doc)-based collaborative writing felt that their written contributions were appreciated and welcomed by their respective group members; which encouraged them to be truly part of the collaborative process (Kessler, Bikowski and Boggs, 2012).

According to Martine (2007) and Wichadee (2013), the learners agreed that WMCW was an avenue for promoting written participation, since there is a record that shows those who do and those who not take part. He also adds that such work created a more enjoyable space for expressing secure thoughts. Moreover, learners felt WMCW enabled them to construct a finer culture of learning and a wider enthusiasm for completing writing projects (Aborisade, 2009). As stated by learners that took part in the study conducted by Yusoff, Alwi and Ibrahim (2012), the three most frequently used functions during WMCW were Edit page, Manage wiki and My wiki, which were developed individually as well as jointly in order to generate additional collaborative products.

Drawing on the reflective feedback from learners in their own words, Prichard (2008) presents an example of a student who responded positively to wiki-based writing. The learners commented the following:

- I made my hometown page by Wikitravel. I wanna increase more infometion [sic] from now! (p: 37)
- My favorite thing... is Music project which I wrote a part of Wikipedia [sic]. When my sentences run in Wikipedia, I was pleased (p: 37).

Very similarly, Luce-Kapler (2007) reports some of his students' comments. One of the students made an extensive reflection in an attempt to reveal his opinion about wikis:

- ... Most of the wiki print offs looked like visual pieces and artwork as opposed to writing texts. The students working in the computer lab seemed most excited when they were able to find a really “cool” image, especially if it was animated’ (p: 218).

The subjects in the study of Woo et al. (2011) exemplified additional positive and negative comments on WMCW. In this study, a student explained his positive opinions about wikis:

- I can copy and paste the information on PBwiki easily without the need of any manual copying from paper to paper (p: 47).
- I can put and edit anything I like in the content, and I can always organize the information and ideas without the feeling of wasting anything’ (p: 47).
- ... it is difficult for boys and girls to exchange information directly because some people might think there are secret dates going on if a boy talks to a girl, or vice versa. In wiki there are no such problems as we can type what we want to say easily without the embarrassment (p: 48).

Yet, the same study indicates some negative aspects and conservatism as one student reflected on WMCW by asserting that:

- ...it is frustrating to see how slow the computer is, and at those times I would rather write it on a paper instead (p: 47).
- ...it would be better if we could set the restrictions of who can edit my page and who cannot (p: 47).
- Someone would change our work, and we talked to the teacher to resolve this problem. Sometime the computer isn’t working so we call each other (p: 48).

### **3.6.3. Research on the impact of WMCW**

There have been a vast number of studies conducted to explore the impact of WMCW in general and in higher education from the perspectives of the specialists as shown Table 3.8 (see section: 1.2 for more about in which ways this research contributes to the body of knowledge). For instance, in Norway, the influences of WMCW practice have been influential on a group of Norwegian EFL writers, as investigated by Lund (2008). The participants used wikis for group writing projects discussing authentic activities on a Mediawiki platform. Lund noticed a transformation in the learners’ performance in written work and in gaining further detailed knowledge that combines both action and experience, enabling the learners in writing classes to practise writing more recursively.

Similarly, the same result was found with more learners in Vie and deWinter's study (2008). The participants began to implement recursiveness for written compositions by moving back and forth to the initial drafts to make amendments and then to observe the emerging changes. In the context of Brazil, Franco (2008) describes an innovative WMCW course with tasks that targeted young EFL learners of writing. The findings showed increased autonomy and confidence for whatever topics they wrote about; the learners' motivation and social awareness were also raised to perform composition as they composed their texts as a social process.

In line with the perceived role of WMCW, Maxwell and Felczak (2008) assert that their WMCW course for EFL learners was effective in relation to two facets: the learners all contributed to building up new content via peer discussion, as well as running peer review among the participants of the written products.

Likewise, Mak and Coniam (2008) conducted a CW project on wikis for ESL seventh grade students in Hong Kong, to be published and then distributed among the learners' parents. The learners' improved written pieces were produced in greater quantity than was usual in traditional writing where only adding words or t-units took place<sup>4</sup>. Mak and Coniam also claim that this project helped learners to expand and reorganise their written texts and to correct errors together with comments relating to accuracy. According to the analysis reported, the learners advanced their cognitive skills, together with improving their writing abilities, as an outcome of using this platform.

Wikis were also employed in ESL writing classrooms in another school in Hong Kong. Woo et al. (2011) describe the impact of this pedagogy on Chinese students. The impact highlighted three advantages: educational affordances (e.g. using online dictionary and evaluating other's given ideas); social and collaborative affordances (e.g. used as a scaffold for improving composition, a channel for communication and transparency tool for sharing feedback); and technological affordances (e.g. a quick tool for posting).

Wong et al. (2011) find that WMCW improved the writing of a group of Singaporean Chinese who were learning L2 Chinese in general education. It functioned by sustaining the motivation of writers together with their micro-linguistic skills. As the learners had diverse language competencies, the individual differences with the practice of peer coaching complemented the learning process for each other.

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<sup>4</sup> T-unit 'contains one independent clause and the dependent clauses (if any) syntactically related to it' (O'Donnell, 1974).

In a similar project, a group of participants were enrolled in a WMCW course for Chinese in a Chinese primary school, using MediaWiki. Li et al., (2012) claim that the learners were inspired to additional composing, were ready for wider interaction and were prepared for a new writing audience. This element of online communication that is

text-based and computer-mediated, many-to-many, time- and place-independent, and distributed via hypermedia links—provide an impressive array of new ways to link learners (Warschauer, 1997, p: 447).

On the other hand, Li et al., (2012) highlighted the difficulties the learners encountered. They included unable to master of MediaWiki and the absence of compatibility between the Chinese language and formatting rules of wikis.

The study	Main findings	Type of subjects
Lund (2008)	increased performance related to writing and process writing with recursiveness	Norwegian-EFL young writing learners
Franco (2008)	had greater autonomy, motivation and social awareness	Brazilian-EFL young writing learners
Maxwel & Felczak (2008)	helped to create new content through peer feedback and peer review practice	Native speakers of English /professional writers
Mak & Conaim (2008)	published a co-edited brochure, enhanced some cognitive skills and improved expanding ideas and correcting errors	Hong Kongers-ESL young writing learners
Woo et al., (2011)	contributed to educational, social and technological affordances	Chinese-ESL writing learners
Li et al., (2012)	promoted broader interaction and wider audience	Chinese-L1 learning Chinese writing

Table 3.8: Summary of the most influential studies in WMCW (general education)

As the influence of WMCW in general education has been shown, it has also extended to higher education. For more details, Zorko (2009) engaged her students in wikis for writing academic reports in a Slovenian university taking an ESP course. The findings indicated five causes that encouraged the learners to develop their composition skills during their usage of wikis: collaboration and equality, boosting motivation and inspiration, simplifying knowledge and information circulation, increasing interdependence and being a tool for accurate assessment. This result accords with Fernheimer et al. (2009) who found that wikis have reasonable benefits in terms of

assessment and coordination and enable instructors to assess individual as well as group-based writing.

In a different study, Arnold et al. (2009) employed wikis to improve the linguistic accuracy amongst a group of German learners as a FL. The learners were able to understand others' feedback quicker than the instructor's feedback. The participants also were capable of recognising what they wrote as a result of self-awareness, and paid closer attention to the cognitive operations revising how writing was done.

Kessler (2009) similarly analyses the impact of wiki-based writing on EFL students in a Mexican university. The students had the ability to learn from their own and peers' form-related errors. They built up more confidence about themselves and a willingness to depend on such autonomous environments. Yet, the students did not demonstrate an increased ability to create meaning along with the interaction. This happened because WMCW did not emphasise meaning and the role of the teacher was less influential than was needed, as Kessler confirmed.

Conversely, Turgut (2009) investigated a group of foundation college learners in a FL writing course in a Turkish university. The learners participated in PBwiki-oriented tasks to practise peer feedback and shared editing. Based on their weekly diaries, the analysis revealed learners' advanced writing abilities and their final enriched written products. The findings also showed the increased proficiency in providing meaningful feedback.

Pursuant to what was found earlier, Bradley et al. (2010) examine the impact of wikis for text construction using various forms of interaction in an ESP course among Swedish university students. The study found that greater collaborative engagement is a condition for producing more heavily revised texts. As a result of the rich collaborative engagement that was received, there were opportunities for cooperative, collaborative and interactive responses.

In a further study, Lee (2010) examine the performance of a group of wiki-based collaborative writers studying Spanish as an L2. The results demonstrate learners' positive reactions relating to their attention to content and form alike. It was an opportunity to foster the acquisition of several accurate forms in Spanish. But, the findings highlighted two limitations, as some of the peers preferred individual work. The other limitation concerned to the need for students' effort and the facilitator's encouragement of peer participation.

Elola and Oskoz (2010) have deliberately employed WMCW for a group of Spanish learners in an American university in USA. They found learners of Spanish writing were motivated to focus on organisation and structure more than just accuracy since there was reinforcement for collaboration. The researchers confirmed that the participants' interaction and concentration regarding the written texts differed when they started collaboration.

Following Chao and Lo (2011), they designed a five-phase approach for WMCW with three phases of scaffolding. Based on this design, they found that the EFL learners, who were from Taiwan, achieved greater proficiency in writing due to the authentic and socially-related tasks. The learners completed many reviews and demonstrated better writing outcomes compared with the traditional approach. The learners in this study felt less stress because of the flexibility of time and space; they also developed their personal writing voice amongst others.

Supporting the previous research studies, Kuteeva (2011) sought to improve the learners' professional writing abilities across sixteen countries in an ESP course. In fact, she found that learners' awareness of the readership increased after working collaboratively on wikis. The learners additionally became more attentive to their texts as they frequently dealt with interactional markers of engagement (e.g. self-mention).

In a different study carried out by Yusof and Daud (2013), wikis were used among a group of engineering university students learning report writing skills. The researchers identified that wikis were applied to enrich writing as process and to teach learners better skills of good written reports. The results state that the wiki is a good tool for exchanging content and form feedback and for enabling immediate, continuous and authentic feedback, which can support learning higher quality academic writing skills (Wheeler and Wheeler, 2007; Shu and Chuang, 2012).

In a similar study, Nami and Marandi (2013), noticed more form (surface-) related corrections were achieved than meaning-related changes in order not to modify the original ideas. All the studies indicated above have been summarised as follows (Table 3.9).

<b>The study</b>	<b>Main findings</b>	<b>Type of subjects</b>
Zorko (2009)	stimulated equality, collaboration, motivation, information circulation, interdependence	Slovenian-EFL university writing learners
Arnold et al., (2009)	promoted self-feedback and understanding others' feedback	English- German as FL writing learners
Kessler (2009)	identified meaning-related modifications and errors	multinational-EFL university writing learners
Turgut (2009)	encouraged oral interaction by posting in different forms & provided peers editing	Turkish-EFL university writing learners
Bradley et al., (2010)	constructed texts based on peers responses & inspired more peers revision along with collaboration and cooperation	Swedish-learning ESP writing
Elola & Oskoz (2010)	had better motivation, willingness for organisation and structure & better interaction with texts due to collaboration	Spanish-ESL university writing learners
Lee (2010)	gave attention to both form and content & guided learners for constructive feedback	English- Spanish as L2 writing learners
Chao & Lo (2011)	increased proficiency in EFL writing and achieved several reviews for written texts	Taiwanese-EFL university writing learners
Kuteeva (2011)	paid more attention to micro- and macro-corrections and considered further expectations of readership	multinational students-learning ESP writing
Yusof and Daud (2013)	resulted in to giving extensive surface and content feedback that contributed to report writing skills	Malaysians-learning ESP university writing learns

Table 3.9: Summary of the most influential studies in WMCW (higher education)

Patterns of interaction or learners' relationships when working on wikis seem to be an important factor for WMCW. This factor affects how learners develop the content of various wiki pages (Bradley et al., 2010); how they amend such pages (Kost, 2011), and how they perceive the impact of such pages on their learning process (Li and Zhu,

2011). Li and Zhu (2013) analysed the patterns of interaction that occurred in three groups of learners when they used wikis to complete their writing tasks. They identified three patterns of interaction as follow: 1) collectively contributing/mutually supportive; 2) authoritative/responsive and 3) dominant/ withdrawn. The first pattern showed the most learning opportunities as it provides evidence of collective scaffolding among learners for building on each other’s knowledge.

	Collectively contributing/mutually supportive	Authoritative/responsive	Dominant/withdrawn
Equality	Group members make equal contributions to the group discussion of the writing tasks.	Group members have unequal contribution and degree of control. One member takes most control over the tasks.	Group members have an uneven contribution and degree of control. Two members take control over the tasks, and the third member’s contribution is minimal and the member even withdraws from the writing tasks.
Mutuality	Group members are willing to offer and engage with each other’s ideas through discussion and text construction.	The other two members acknowledge the leading role of the authoritative member, and they are responsive to the leader’s behaviors. Group members fully engage with one another’s ideas.	Group members are unwilling or unable to engage with one another’s contribution. There is no reciprocal interaction and little mutual scaffolding.

Table 3.10: Patterns of CMC during WMCW (Li and Zhu, 2013)

Stoddart, Chan and Liu (2013), in a state-of-the-art-review regarding wiki-based collaborative writing projects (or WMCW), reviewed the ten most cited scholarly papers in this research area. The researcher also highlighted the successful implementation of similar projects, as shown in Appendix 14.

**3.7. Contextually-related studies (in Saudi Arabia):**

A few studies were conducted in the context of Saudi Arabia, as regards the usage of WMCW. These studies are significantly different from the present study in terms of objectives, rationale, participants and delivery of the course.

Al-Khalifa (2008) investigated the enhancement of writing abilities in EFL amongst a group of university students studying an ESP course in computer science. The use of

wikis was applied to encourage writers' participation in normal classes. The findings pointed to the increase of interest after they were involved in joint participation. There was an indirect promotion of peer reviewing and exchange of ideas among users. Nevertheless, the facilitator had to exert more effort such as to check entries on a daily basis, since free wikis were used, so not all of the advanced functionalities were possible.

In a different study, Barnawi (2009) deals with the significance of Moodle, a virtual learning environment (VLE) and its beneficial pedagogical implications. The researcher found that incorporating wikis within this VLEs is advantageous for building learning communities and reinforcing collaboration. He added that through wikis, learners can construct, re-construct and deconstruct knowledge that is related to EFL writing.

Furthermore, Alshumaimeri (2011) tries to compare the outcomes and effects of wikis on writing accuracy and quality in a preparatory year students in a different Saudi university. This comparison featured experimental and control groups who undertook similar tasks. The results disclosed more information about groups (wiki and non-wiki groups or experimental and control groups) in the sense that they both improved after their writing tasks. Yet, it was evident that the participants in the experimental group outperformed their colleagues in the control group.

Al-Zumor et al. (2013) also explored the perspectives for a group of university students concerning the employment of blended learning, using wikis. The main purpose for this integration between the traditional mode of learning and e-learning was to boost new practice for language learning. As this study was applied qualitatively to a gender-specific group (males only), the EFL students emphasised the practical feedback they received and the effective communication they conducted.

### **3.8. Summary:**

The interdisciplinary topic of this research has been inspired by several disciplines: instructional technology, learning and technology, the process writing approach, L2/FL writing, CL and CW. Throughout the sections and sub-sections outlining these various areas of expertise, I intended to demonstrate how the practice of general EAP writing can be influenced by a new pedagogy in a context that mostly promotes traditional writing instruction. This review presented the arguments on wiki-based writing by introducing brief details about the historical development of the writing process and how recent trends have shifted to the importance of social aspects during creating compositions. Based on the reviewed studies, it has been shown that the advent of recent social networking applications (web 2.0) has contributed to re-shaping the

experiences and practices of EAP writing for learners of diverse proficiency levels. Writing collaboratively using wikis and other similar tools has become more prevalent as a result of learners' acceptance of using such technologies in their everyday life and because they are highly dependent on written communication. To sum up, the current networks are no longer merely for passing on static information to readers, they are rather platforms where the processes of producing, sharing, remixing and repurposing are experienced (Downes, 2005). Such networks enable friends and group members to build stronger social connections, mostly through written communication. These connections are then beneficial in the learning of writing process.

## **Chapter 4: Structure of the teaching course (blended Programme)**

### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter describes the structure and organisation of the language course which was designed to explore the PWMCW. It also discusses the development of this intervention in relation to the principles and theories discussed in chapters 2 and 3. The chapter starts by describing the general goals, both research and educational, of the course and outlines the face to face taught component and the associated online wiki-based tasks. It also describes the main phases within these tasks, their duration and their content together with the writing roles assigned to the students.

### **4.2. From theory into practice**

The course was designed to improve and research learners' L2/FL writing skills. The course drew on theories concerning wiki-mediated collaborative writing, as well as process writing, in order to apply them to classroom and online learning (see sub-sections: 2.2.1-2.2.5). These theories support the development of the practices adopted and the incorporation of peer collaboration into the learning process. As is described elsewhere, wiki technology was introduced into the teaching of writing in order to afford collaborative assistance, since wikis have been recognised as practical tools that are socially and cognitively constructed and are supported by motivational constructs (see sub-section: 3.5.1).

The design of this intervention drew on these principles:

- Firstly, drawing on social constructivism, the PWMCW was seen as a joint enterprise between the teacher, learners and their peers in creating new meaning (e.g. Wenger, 1998; Swain, Brooks and Tocalli-Beller, 2002).
- Secondly, the concept of ZPD was at the heart of this course design as the learners were encouraged to get engaged and expand their thinking, understanding and performance with the help of 'experts' (e.g. Newman and Holzman, 1993; Borthick et al., 2003; Lund, 2008).
- Thirdly, in terms of collaborative learning (CL), learners were encouraged to participate in explicit collaborative tasks, mutual communication and knowledge sharing (e.g. Lantolf and Pavlenko, 1995; Davoli, Monari and Eklundh, 2009).
- Fourthly, the practice of computer-supported collaborative learning (CSCL) was initiated so that the learners could share knowledge asynchronously (e.g. Lehtinen, 2003; Suthers, 2006; Bradley, et al., 2010)

- Finally, motivation in language learning was seen as key so that the opportunity for language learning success was increased (Crookes and Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 1998).

The course was thus designed according to a number of theoretical principles (see above) which influenced the design of the course in relation to how collaboration, collaborative writing and wiki-based writing can be introduced, nurtured and maintained. The research literature shows the impact of using wikis in literacy; such relevant findings and suggestions enriched the design of this course. Based on this, the course focused on meeting learners' social needs and the strategies that can be used in the future. It also focused on progressing their knowledge, particularly in learning general academic writing. This course also depended on creating an engaging experience combined with meaningful tasks (see sub-section 4.6.2) using an integrated approach: face-to-face teaching and wiki (see section 4.4).

### **4.3. Defining the course goals**

The course is a fundamental constituent of the current research. As indicated earlier (see section: 1.2), designing the course was initiated to satisfy the research aims, namely exploring the impact of wikis in helping the learners to improve their general academic writing (the PWMCW). As far as the goal of the teaching programme is concerned, it contributed to improve the writing practices of the learners in a way that was meant to be interesting.

In addition, the educational goals of the course were to help the students to:

- apply the writing process and its stages and phases, with reference to CW. This would help the learners to improve their writing and experience writing in a different way.
- practise drafting, receive useful feedback and negotiations from the learners and their peers and the teacher by using wikis; for the learners, this was a new of learning and thinking about the practice of writing.
- develop their awareness concerning their practice of writing in terms of accuracy, contents and cohesion in a more interactive way.

The course is in line with Blooms' Taxonomy, which has been used by West and West (2009) for designing wiki-based projects. West and West highlight the role of knowledge construction and contextual application. Knowledge construction comprises tasks and topics seeking to teach learners to share information and build knowledge based on each other's contributions (ibid). They require students to 'understand', 'list',

'label' and 'elaborate' on information on different issues or topics. The contextual application requires the learners to 'apply' their knowledge in order 'construct', 'combine' and 'create' new solutions or products. It is very similar to 'Knowledge Construction' because the topics and tasks focus on collaboration and collaborative processes.

The potential outcomes of using the integrated course (or wiki-based tasks in classes) were:

- on an individual writing level, the learners are required to create a higher standard of texts with meaningful content gained from reliable resources (accurate and more focused).
- on a collaborative writing level, the learners are required to practise informative interaction on wikis to make it more socially acceptable and understandable to a wider audience.

### **4.4. Describing the course components**

The course is divided into two components which were designed to complement each other: the face-to-face class (the prescriptive component) and wikis (the integrated component). Much of the content of the whole course was based on delivering a course that was required by the university. In addition to the course book, wiki-based activities and task-based learning were also applied (see TBL in sub-section: 2.2.3 and 4.5 for more details about the nature and duration of these tasks). Table 4.2 shows how the wiki element of the course was planned and delivered during the weekly writing lectures along with the use of process writing, and a similar design was identified by Oh (2014), that is, to produce collaboratively and individually-based texts.

#### **4.4.1. The prescriptive (face-to-face) teaching**

As far as this course is concerned, face-to-face teaching was a requirement for passing the Orientation year and one of the University's general subjects for completing the core modules of this year. The students had to be assessed in this part of the course with a midterm exam (week 11) and a final exam (week 16). It was allocated two hours on a weekly basis for a total of about 28 hours of actual instruction time. Face-to-face teaching had a two credit hour in the students' overall credit hours degree plan. In such classes, there was a focus on direct instruction about writing to explain the contents of the textbook, which had been agreed upon by the curricula committee at the University. The classes also involved explaining various elements of developing learners' competency in writing (e.g. prepositions and prepositional phrases).

Table 4.1 demonstrates the wide range of topics covered in the writing lectures during the semester (16 weeks). These oral-oriented classes also included working on a number of activities as in the textbook and practising writing a few examples. That was to ensure the learners' comprehension and abilities regarding these elements especially when the learners started applying them on wikis (see the next sub-section: 4.4.2). In addition, there were handouts designed for each element that included a number of additional exercises to help the students use the new structure on wikis (see Appendix 13). This was in order to teach the different topics and at the same time created a chance for the learners to develop a detailed understanding regarding different elements of writing.

In order to make comparison possible, the content of the class involved in this research was identical to that of the other three classes who received teaching based on the same curricula (see section: 5.5 for more about how this class was selected). The textbook was *Writing Academic English (fourth edition)* by Alice Oshima and Ann Hogue. Quite a number of different variables that draw on the process-oriented approach and engaging the learners with additional un-assessed tasks on wikis which were voluntary (see sub-section: 4.5.2 for more details about how such tasks were constructed), unlike the rest of the classes. The rationale behind this integration of the content of the class and wiki was to unite them in order to create a more connected classroom and to make it more effective (see the next sub-section 4.4.2 for more details concerning why this form of integration has become significant).

This form of teaching briefly introduced new practices such as facilitating the CW practice to empower the students so they could apply them exhaustively on wikis. For instance, it presented how writing can be enhanced with group work especially if there is feedback from peers who have mixed abilities can be enhanced. The students were taught how to give constructive feedback and negotiate effectively, as both skills are important in terms of professional leadership and their personal life (Porto, 2002; Yang et al., 2006). Feedback must be objective and involve comments on error correction and content accuracy. It was essential to give specific and clear thoughts on improving the texts and creating multiple ways for learners to communicate amongst themselves and with the teacher. In these classes, then, the participants were theoretically instructed how to give and receive beneficial feedback and conduct effective negotiations. This was done by explaining the purpose of feedback- which focuses on the positive aspects, as well as the aspects that need improvement- and the importance of negotiation to reach a compromise and resolve problems. These classes showed the potential outcomes of practising writing collaboratively, not just individually.

## Chapter 4: Structure of the teaching course

Teaching week	Topics (elements of classroom teaching)	Class date	Reference
Week 1	Course orientation + Programme demonstration + Objectives of the course	05/03	handouts-about wiki
	Pre- questionnaires distribution + Initial focus group discussion + teachers' reflections	06/03	
Week 2	Reviewing compound sentences	07/03	
Week 3	Listing-order & time-order signals + listing & outlining	13/03	Ch:3
Week 4	Complex sentence + sentence errors and fragments	14/03	Ch:3
Week 5	Reviewing types of sentences + four rules for using capitalisation and commas	20/03	Ch:3
Week 6	Describing pictures + space order/ Using/ adding specific details	22/03	Ch:4
Week 7	Using adjectives (e.g. adjectives with nouns, adjectives with linking verbs, compound adjectives, adjectives with <i>-ing</i> and <i>-ed</i> )	26/03	Ch:4
Week 8	Cumulative adjectives and coordinate adjectives (order of adjectives) + writing sentences with adjectives	02/04	Ch:4
Week 9	Holiday	09/04	
Week 10	Prepositions and prepositional phrases	16/04	Ch:4
Week 11	Mid-term exam	23/04	
Week 12	Discussing some of the texts produced by the students	30/04	
Week 13	Activities: identifying reasons & examples for outlining + making outlines with details and specific examples	07/05	Ch:5
Week 14	Transition signals with reasons and conclusion signals with reasons	14/05	Ch:5
Week 15	Complex sentences with reasons and condition subordinators + additional rules for using capitalisation & commas	21/05	Ch:5
Week 16	Post-questionnaires distribution+ Follow-up focus group discussion +teachers' reflections	28/05	

Table 4.1: A plan for elements of classroom teaching

#### **4.4.2. The integrated (face-to-face and wiki-based) teaching**

Face to face teaching is important because it can meet the needs and interests of many students and it reinforces the fact there is physical support (Lehtinen et al., 1999). On the other hand, wikis provide more opportunities for live interaction and many-to-many collaboration (Wagner, 2004). In both mediums, peers and teachers can provide continuous feedback, but mostly when using wikis because of the unrestricted time limit. The integrated teaching (class and wiki) can take place by distributing those components which require more emphasis from face-to-face classes and those that can be best conveyed through wikis (see sub-section: 2.2.3). Therefore, the class can afford explicit instruction for various writing components (e.g., on how to write a compound and complex sentence) and include how to work effectively on collaborative wiki-based tasks in order to attain the maximum benefit of integrating both ways of learning.

The integration of face-to-face writing classes and wikis helps learners to undertake writing in a collaborative form, as Bernard, Rubalcava, and St-Pierre (2000) indicate. In view of that, the learners can develop their basic competences through teachers' instruction and guidance in face-to-face learning environments. The students can also develop their understanding concerning academic writing through peer interaction and successful online (wiki)-based learning communities (see sub-section: 2.2.1). Using wikis is helpful for sound negotiation because it increases agreement and diminishes conflicts and helps in finding mutual understanding. The intention behind this integration is to create extra time for the learners outside of class and to engage in more practice in shared environments.

In relation to the integrated course, West and West (2009) suggest that several issues should be considered when wikis are to be integrated in class. Such issues are providing adequate training on how to use wikis and how to become familiar with its functions (e.g. to add, change and delete). Accordingly, the participants undertook training on how to use the wiki. Some of the basic steps of this training were based on principles proposed by the Australian Flexible Learning Framework (2008). They included: 1) creating chunks of text; 2) editing chunks of text; 3) making those chunks of text accessible to others; 4) creating comments on those chunks of text with editing and making them accessible to others; 5) adding pictures, sound recordings, and other media files; 6) receiving notifications about the new modifications to old items through RSS; and 7) recognizing types of access to the chunks of text.

The integration between the class and wikis was also designed to be achieved through a number of pedagogical principles. There was emphasis on ensuring that the new

elements of face-to-face teaching (Table 4.1) were understood by the students in order to use them in the texts they published on wikis. The students were encouraged to give oral and e-based feedback and be part of co-learning communities and small collaborative learning groups. Furthermore, they were taught how to determine the questions and comments that are best discussed in face-to-face classes or on wikis, thus enabling the students to reflect on what they write or say.

### **4.5. Developing the course (wiki-based) tasks and the interface**

#### **4.5.1. Structure of the wiki interface (learning environment)**

Wikispaces is one of the commonly used social networking platforms that caters for building online-based communities. It was originated in 2005 by a company called 'Tangient LLC' based San Francisco; hosting millions of subscribers with over five million wikis for individuals, schools and corporations worldwide (Wikispaces website, 2011). The content used for the basic structure of this course's home page of Wikispaces includes information involving how the participants should practise their CW and how their writing can be distributed (see sub-section: 3.4.1 for details about the meaning and practice of CW). This phase involved changing the medium of the content from being on paper to wiki pages. Some information was static and untouchable such as what the tasks were and the criteria related to how they were to be completed and achieved, as well as the fundamental roles of the participants and what each role comprised. The content was designed according to the following steps:

- About the course: this included an introduction to the course, course schedule and a demonstration of the new strategies to be used with useful questions about how to achieve each task. It also included how wiki works and how to use it and the participants' and instructor's duties.
- About the tasks: these included participants' biographies (self-introduction), description of each task with presenting the tasks. The tasks were introduced one by one rather than all at once.
- About the language resources: these included non-compulsory worksheets, dictionary, links to some websites on academic writing and on learning English as a foreign language.
- Additional material: this included supplementary materials and useful links

In the present course, three wikis were structured. The interface of the first wiki was cloned for the rest of the wikis. It consisted of four areas: 'home', 'your course information', 'your writing tasks' and 'your language resources' as shown below in Figure 4.1. These constituents provide the basic understanding regarding wiki-based

writing and serve to indicate what the participants should do and how they can do it. Those areas were decided based on Li (2014).

- The first area '**Home**' included the welcome page; introduction to the course in general, wiki and how Wikispaces works (see sub-section 3.5.1.1 for more details about why Wikispaces have been chosen). This area also detailed the relevant responsibilities to be completed in-class and on wikis (see sub-sections: 5.6.1 and 5.6.2) and the expected outcomes. It concisely demonstrates the roles of the participants to be chosen and followed in each task based on the phases of the process approach (see sub-section: 4.4.2). Although those wikis are promoted to practise writing skills in English, I, as a designer, found it helpful to have some of the key information in Arabic to make it clearer for the students.
- Moreover, the second area '**Your course information**' comprised an introduction to the writing course, a brief introduction to the process writing approach with relevant questions: brainstorming, drafting, giving feedback, revision (revising and editing). It also included specific questions on how to practise peer feedback, revising and editing.
- An area entitled '**Your writing tasks**' was designed to demonstrate the core item about the writing tasks. It contained a pre-task activity and a description for each writing task.
- Finally the fourth area (**Language resources**) encompassed links to useful learning writing websites (i.e. Listening to Radio in English, A guide for Academic Writing and Practice Writing in English), plus a free online dictionary (Collins dictionary) for quick vocabulary meaning search.

## Chapter 4: Structure of the teaching course

The screenshot shows a wiki page titled "Introduction to this course". The page content is as follows:

☆ Introduction to this course

Hello dear students,

It is important to understand some basics about the goal of the tasks you will do, what action you will do and the expected outcomes from this project.

The tasks goals:

- To enable you to engage in more writing practices through collaborative writing and after that to integrate it with individual writing.
- To enable you to apply the process of writing and its strategies, based on collaborative writing; instead of practicing it solely offline or on an individual basis. This approach will use wiki as it can help you to compose written texts in simpler ways. In other words, it can enable you to practice drafting, receive useful feedback and comments from peers and instructor as well as ask different questions.
- To enable you to present your work to the public and demonstrate your views and level of knowledge.
- To enable you to construct a group wiki that can be used as reference for all group members for checking your writing pitfalls and your peers' collaboration and negotiation.

What will be done during this course:

1. In-class
  - responding to the instructor's in-class tasks and worksheets
  - choosing your writing roles for the wiki writing
  - writing the final draft of the writing task
2. On-wiki
  - practice in shared (group) planning among group members
  - practice in 1st drafting
  - practice in giving useful feedback
  - practice in revising the writing of other participants
  - practice in editing the writing of other participants

Expected outcomes:

- You will receive informative interaction and feedback about each other's writing and how to improve their works.
- You will create better written texts, valuable content gained from authentic resources, compatible with academic writing (accurate, well-organised and more focused).

The sidebar on the left contains the following sections:

- Wiki Home**
  - Projects
  - Pages and Files
  - Members
  - Recent Changes
  - Manage Wiki
  - Search Wiki
- Home**
  - Welcome page
  - What is a wiki
  - ما هو الويكي؟
  - What is wikispaces
  - Working on wiki
  - Roles of participants
- Your course information**
  - Introduction to the course
  - Timetable
  - What is a brainstorming and drafting
  - Questions for a brainstorming and drafting
  - What is feedback, revising and editing
  - Questions for peers' feedback, revising and editing
- Your writing tasks**
  - Pre-tasks activity
  - Description of tasks
  - Task 1
  - Task 2
  - Task 3
- Language resources**
  - Collins dictionary
  - Listen to radio in English
  - A guide for academic writing
  - Practice writing in English

Figure 4.1: Structure of the wiki interface

Based on the task-based learning (see sub-section: 2.2.3 for more about TBL), three tasks were designed and given to the participants that matched their syllabus content, field of study and contextual background. There were twenty one participants who were distributed into three groups (seven members in each group). All three tasks were chosen to represent different learning objectives and unique experiences: solving a problem; Scene description and analysing a situation; and summarising an academic article. Moreover, the question types were designed to address different prompts. Prompts are defined as 'sentence openers or question stems' (Weinberger et al., 2005, p: 9) encompassing procedural and elaborative prompts (Xun and Land, 2004).

Each of these three different tasks lasted for approximately four to six weeks in order to complete the stages of wiki activities, phases of the process writing and roles assigned as indicated in Table: 4.1. The students were encouraged to visit the local library in the college in order to use external resources, for instance, newspapers, websites and reference books, especially for the first task that was about diabetes (see sub-section: 5.6.2). The first task particularly took more than one month because of the participants'

unfamiliarity with most of the wiki functions. Library use was considered important to encourage the students to practise reading for writing purposes. This idea stemmed from Al-Saadat (2004) who endorsed the reciprocity between reading and writing, in that writers need to use their talents as readers. In addition, he found that both skills share in conferring pragmatic benefits for the learning process.

In keeping with Willis (1996), the components of TBL were reinforced in the following tasks: *Pre-task* where topics are introduced by the teachers, *Task cycle* where the students prepare how they do the task and how they report it and finally *Language focus* where the students examine and analyse the specific features they discover in the task (see sub-section: 2.2.3 for more about TBL). Barkley, Cross and Major (2005) argue that sound educational and learning tasks are centred on two steps: choosing appropriate tasks and designing criteria that assist in performing the tasks.

#### **4.5.2. Nature of wiki-based tasks**

To develop a technology plan to assess whatever is needed for the learners, we must understand and recognise the following issues: firstly, choosing the types of tasks that are integrated with the wiki-based course, e.g. describing an image; secondly using current social networking tools already used in the institution, e.g. Facebook or Twitter. Noting the differences between an activity and a task, Goodyear (2005) indicates that a task is a prescribed work originated by the tutor whereas an activity is what learners get engaged with and what they actually do. The present wiki-based tasks were chosen because they support the achievement of the goals of the course and increase the interdependence of the students and their peers during the learning process and they also lead to productive student activities.

Such tasks transfigure the learners' learning potential to write, creating a positive impact on their curiosity, interest, engagement and motivation. A brief introduction of each task is given below noting the distinction between a task and an activity. Those writing tasks had a link with their specialty and investigated a genuine problem (see section: 1.4 for more details regarding the justification of choosing those tasks). The written texts were produced after the relevant information has been chosen and developed into comprehensible texts (that is approximately composed of 200-300 words).

**Task 1** addressed 'diabetes', one of the common health problems in Saudi society. Since participants were medical students, they were encouraged to write about this syndrome, give information about it and suggest some possible ways to stop it spreading in society. The students were engaged to produce collaborative written texts

through gradually moving from the first creation (draft) to the best creation possible. That was expected to be in academic format (relevant to their proficiency level), using process writing strategies among peers (members of a community).

**Task 2** addressed a different kind of major problem 'car accidents'. So, it was intended to let students to write about the consequences of car and motor vehicle accidents in Saudi Arabia and the resulting injuries and other health problems. As the number of such accidents is rapidly increasing, it was useful to make the students aware of this problem by asking them to spend some time exploring the danger of accidents for drivers and pedestrians. This was to enable the students to reflect on this topic and to elicit the reasons behind this problem. So in the future when they become physicians they can play a positive role in raising awareness of patients and ordinary people. Similarly to task 1, the novice writers were asked to play the same roles of the PWMCW but changing the roles among themselves.

**Task 3** addressed one of the most enjoyable foods, chocolate; the academic article given to the learners showed how chocolate is produced. Very importantly and since it is relevant to the students' field of study, the article addressed the positive as well as negative effects and other health-related matters linked with the excessive consumption of chocolate (e.g., relaxing effects, as well as heart disease and high blood pressure). The students were asked to reflect on this debate by creating outlines and then extracting reasons and examples followed by drafting and then undertaking the rest of the roles of CW.

### **4.5.3. Use of the key stages of wiki-based activities**

Part of determining the content of the course involved referring to the key stages of wiki-based activities as identified by Wheeler (2010). Those stages (exploration, exhibition, explanation, expansion and evaluation) are employed as guiding principles for establishing successful wiki-based writing tasks. There has been growing interest in using this model because it helps the students to make progress with their collaborative writing abilities, although they were originally identified as stages of general wiki-based collaborative learning activities. Those stages proceed in line with the process writing approach and its phases of development (see the next sub-section: 4.5.4).

Exploration and exhibition include preparing learners themselves on how to use wikis and presenting their initial experience of using them. These two stages are the counterpart of planning, which involves the organisation and prioritisation of different ideas based on their relevance to the topics assigned. Explanation comes next, providing the ideas or texts to peers or other people. It is equal to drafting, as the

appropriate ideas can be maintained and formulated into texts. Elaboration and evaluation draws learners' attention to editing and revising and giving a value regarding others' texts. It indicates ambiguities and suggested alternatives.

The five phases ascend towards deeper cognitive and meta-cognitive thinking and broader engagement of a concept or skill. They aim to develop a pedagogical environment ideal for fostering collaborative writing through using wikis, along with social and professional development, since a large community of learners are more interested in presenting their ideas and discoveries on wikis. The phases are deliberately created to stimulate the students' shared discussion of knowledge, which is borrowed from the theoretical framework of the current study (see sections: 2.2).

#### **4.5.4. Use of the process writing approach (in a collaborative form)**

The process approach is one of many teaching approaches to learning writing (see sub-section: 3.2.2.2). The primary goal of this approach is to deal with writing in a more sensible and meaningful way. In other words, the students have a key role in developing their ideas and repertoire of vocabulary and structures around the topics assigned. Based on the findings of Posner and Baecker (1992) and Storch (2005), the students are directed to focus on process writing by drawing their attention to the importance of spending adequate time and effort on planning (pre-writing), drafting (focus on preparing) and evaluation (post-writing that includes editing and revising).

There is a deeper focus on the process approach for this particular class, as they need to understand the practice of writing in detail, what each phase involves and how writing a text occurs. It also helps the learners to generate ideas organically, to develop and communicate ideas and to decide on the appropriate content. The course applies the process writing approach in a collaborative form which combines the efforts of learners in groups and as individuals. The first and last phases of the process approach (planning and editing and revising) in collaborative writing requires the learners (or group members) to have explicit roles (e.g. reporting main ideas) to be achieved in a collaborative process. As there are two areas in each wiki, planning is intended to be accomplished on the discussion thread whereas drafting and revising is on the main wiki pages.

Initially, in this approach, the learners are asked to prepare the preliminary versions of the texts in isolation, by the individual, despite the fact that writing in general is considered as a social product (Ede and Lunsford, 1990). Students are required to recognise the features of the process approach and how each stage is different in order to promote reflective learning; this can also be reinforced through collaborative work.

When the students begin to consider reflection as part of the process in terms of learning writing skills during the process approach, it causes an increase in their positive feelings related to the experience, a better ability to identify related issues and find solutions to problems. They can observe the gradual movement to the more demanding phases that require shared and critical thinking. The purpose of relying on this approach is to encourage the students to use it in the first place with the assistance of the teacher and the help of their peers so they can use it individually or collaboratively with peers in the future.

### **4.5.5. Use of specific assigned roles**

As indicated in the theoretical framework (see sub-section: 2.2.3) and literature review (see sub-section: 3.3.2), allocating specific roles for continued learning, particularly when writing in a collaborative format, could facilitate the solution of problems which are caused by writing: psychological, cognitive and linguistic. There were a number of roles allocated to the students in order to practice the phases of wiki-based activities (see sub-section: 4.5.3) and the process writing approach (see sub-section: 4.5.4). The allocated roles (planners, drafters, editors and revisers) were assigned with key questions to facilitate writing practice and to give students the opportunity to choose the roles they liked in each task, as group members distributed those roles among themselves (see sub-section: 5.6.1 for responsibilities assigned to the learners which were also part of their roles).

The role of the teacher is seen to be complex in integrated teaching, as it involves being a moderator or facilitator and is therefore just as important as the participants' roles. The roles undertaken by the participants are essential, especially as each role is played by a different individual. This is done in order to provide ample time for learners to practise free writing and brainstorming. They might also produce multiple drafts until they are satisfied with their work. Learners can edit and revise someone's drafts that are easier, and this is a helpful way to get various opinions and feedback.

The practice of the roles allocated in the writing process can be more achievable when using collaborative writing platforms such as wikis (Storch, 2013). Storch emphasises that on wikis, each role can be carried out more effectively, as they allow students to outline and organise their ideas in an interactive way. For that reason, it is crucial for the learners to practise and understand the roles that are assigned according to the desires of the group members. The students choose the roles that suit them the most based on their competence and abilities. There is also the possibility of exchanging

these roles across different tasks, so they can experience the three major roles of writing.

- Planners need to think about the topics assigned, prepare the relevant ideas and develop their ideas into full texts. They are responsible for determining the audience targeted and what is hoped to be accomplished.
- Drafters are responsible for collecting and turning the segmented ideas into texts. Based on the ideas already given, they develop an introduction, discussion and conclusion in a coherent and cohesive way.
- Editors/revisers are responsible for improving the quality of the first written drafts. Students are required to be familiar with this role because it encourages peer response and better understanding of readership.

Teaching weeks	Stages of wiki-based activities+ tasks' and roles' deadline	Practice of the process + mode of achieving tasks	Elements of the course in face-to-face setting	Nature of the practice of CW + task no.
1 <sup>st</sup>	Ice-breaking, analysing the learners' grades in writing test (1 <sup>st</sup> semester), training on wiki, running the pre-questionnaires and the Initial focus group			
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Planning ( <u>exploration &amp; exhibition</u> ) Starts after lecture 2 & ends at the end of week 2	Wiki-based/ Group collaboration [Phase of <u>planning</u> - all group members]	Reviewing compound sentences	A writing task (no. 1) (brainstorming and researching)
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Drafting and posting a few written texts ( <u>explanation</u> ) Starts after lecture 3 & ends at the end of week 3	Wiki-based/ Individual duty (drafting) [Phase of writing -writers]	Listing-order & time-order signals/ Listing & outlining	A writing task (no.1) (writing and drafting)
4 <sup>th</sup>	Expanding and evaluating the writers' texts ( <u>elaboration &amp; evaluation</u> ) Starts after	Wiki-based/ Group collaboration [Phase of <u>revision</u> -editors and	Complex Sentence/ Sentence errors / Fragments	A writing task (no. 1) (editing and revising)

## Chapter 4: Structure of the teaching course

	lecture 4 & ends at the end of week 4	<u>revisers plus writers]</u>		
5 <sup>th</sup>	-----	Paper-based (practice for individual writing)	Reviewing types of sentences/ rules for using capitalisation & commas	-----
6 <sup>th</sup>	Planning ( <u>exploration &amp; exhibition</u> ) Starts after lecture 6 & ends at the end of week 6	Wiki-based/ Group collaboration [ <u>Phase of planning</u> -all group members]	Describing pictures/ Space order/ Using/ adding specific details	A writing task (no. 2) (brainstorming and researching)
7 <sup>th</sup>	Drafting and posting a few written texts ( <u>explanation</u> ) Starts after lecture 7 & ends at the end of week 7	Wiki-based/ Individual duty (drafting) [Phase of writing - <u>writers]</u>	Using adjectives (e.g. with nouns, with linking verbs, compound adjectives, adjectives with <i>-ing</i> and <i>-ed</i> )	A writing task (no. 2) (writing and drafting)
8 <sup>th</sup>	Expanding and evaluating the writers' texts ( <u>elaboration &amp; evaluation</u> ) Starts after lecture 8 & ends at the end of week 8	Wiki-based/ Group collaboration [ <u>Phase of revision**</u> - <u>editors and revisers plus writers]</u>	Cumulative adjectives and coordinate adjectives- Writing sentences with adjectives	A writing task (no. 2) (editing and revising)
9 <sup>th</sup>	Holiday (a week)			
10 <sup>th</sup>	Expanding and evaluating the writers' texts ( <u>elaboration &amp; evaluation</u> ) Starts after lecture 10 & ends at the end of week 10	Wiki-based/ Group collaboration [ <u>Phase of revision</u> - <u>editors and revisers plus writers]</u>	Prepositions and prepositional phrases	A writing task (no. 2) (editing and revising)

11 <sup>th</sup>	Mid-term exam			
12 <sup>th</sup>	-----	Paper-based (practice for individual writing)	Individual tasks related to the students' writings (for errors which were identified by peers) Discussing some of the students' produced texts	-----
13 <sup>th</sup>	Planning ( <u>exploration &amp; exhibition</u> ) Starts after lecture 13 & ends at the end of week 13	Wiki-based/ Group collaboration [Phase of <u>planning</u> - <u>all group members</u> ]	Identifying reasons & examples for outlining Making outlines with giving details	A writing task (no. 3) (brainstorming and researching)
14 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> drafting and posting a few written texts ( <u>explanation</u> ) Starts after lecture 14 & ends at the end of week 14	Wiki-based/ Individual duty (drafting) [Phase of writing - <u>writers</u> ]	Transition signals with reasons and conclusion signals with reasons	A writing task (no. 3) (writing and drafting)
15 <sup>th</sup>	Expanding and evaluating the writers' texts ( <u>elaboration &amp; evaluation</u> ) Starts after lecture 15 & ends at the end of week 15	Wiki-based Group collaboration [Phase of <u>revision</u> - <u>editors and revisers plus writers</u> ]	Complex sentences with reason and condition subordinators/ Additional rules for using capitalisation & commas	A writing task (no. 3) (editing and revising)
16 <sup>th</sup>	Conducting the post questionnaires, the follow-up focus group and the delayed Interviews			

Table 4.2: A plan of the integration of wiki into writing classes

## Chapter 4: Structure of the teaching course

As shown in Table 4.2, a plan for the integrated course was constructed in accordance with Littlejohn and Pegler (2007) who propose a plan for a number of synchronous and asynchronous tools to be used in face-to-face teaching. In this plan, the basic components are mode, tutor's and students' role(s), tasks/activities and resources. Another plan is suggested by Murphy and Southgate (2011) in the basis for a course in German at the Open University considering the following: mode, teacher's and students' activities, and resources (content/online tools). Taking these plans into account plus inserting some adaptation, the researcher's proposed plan summarised the procedures of integrating wikis using the writing process into normal writing classes. As the semester was composed of sixteen teaching weeks, it was sensible to divide the elements of the course according to those weeks. It was planned that each phase, stage or role would start when the lecture finished, and last until the next lecture began in the following week. The teaching begins in the second week of the semester and finished in the fifteenth week.

In each lecture, there was a brief discussion about what needed to be accomplished on wikis in the following week. This created an opportunity for the students who required further face-to-face support and to enquire about any difficulties they might still be experiencing and that they had not been able to solve online. It gradually introduced the PVMCW into the class through two steps adapted from the Australian Flexible Learning Framework (2008). As a first step, the participants would receive a number of emails from the instructor about the significance of using wikis in their writing course and why it was so important to actively participate on the wiki. The second step was the actual performance which included the following: 1) orienting to wikis via provision of training on wikis; 2) defining how wikis is used throughout the course; 3) determining the learning outcomes and the purpose of using wikis in the writing course and 4) defining the acceptable and unacceptable usage and guidelines for posting.

Moreover, a group of strategies were adopted from West and West (2009) in order to ensure that the students could develop connection between face-to-face and online tasks. The strategies included motivating learners and promoting their perceptions towards collaboration. The participants were also encouraged to collaborate on wiki outside classes by: 1) developing teams and roles; 2) developing a sense of community; 3) giving sufficient time for collaboration; 3) giving feedback (including questions, challenges or inquiries) and 5) comparing different visions and inferring their similarities and differences.

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The course was designed to enable the learners to understand the rules and structures of general academic writing that are taught in-class as well as to practise other skills such as the ability to collaborate and engage in shared discussions in order to complete the wiki-based tasks.

## Chapter 5: Research Methodology

### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter begins by the presentation of the research questions. The chapter then shows how a mixed methods research paradigm was maintained, specifically by conducting pre-and post-questionnaires, initial-and-follow-up focus groups, delayed interviews and by analysis of students' contributions to wikis and their written texts. This is followed by the research design that was adopted for the study. The research design selected to investigate wiki-supported learning writing is quasi-experimental. This research design is considered to be appropriate for the topic under investigation because it examines the impact of educational intervention on target individuals. Each one of the instruments used in the research methodology is defined along with a discussion of how they were designed, piloted and employed. Issues of reliability and validity are described along with trustworthiness and credibility-related concerns. Ethical considerations are also recognised. Such issues should be addressed in order to minimise the side-effects or bias that might result. Given that the nature of the collected data is quantitatively and qualitatively-oriented, it was appropriate to use both statistical and thematic analyses. The statistical analysis used refers to identifying items and elements that achieve a significance level that is less than 0.05 where the chance of error equal 5%. On the other hand, the thematic analysis used deals with categorising the data into different parts in order to label them with meaningful themes.

### 5.2. The research questions

The research questions addressed are as following:

RQ1) In general terms, how do EFL learner writers perceive the new approach to teaching writing?

- 1 a) How are the specific principles emphasised in the new approach to teaching writing perceived by learners of EFL writing?
- 1 b) How is the process approach to writing perceived by learners of EFL writing?
- 1 c) How is collaborative writing (CW) perceived by learners of EFL writing (offline)?
- 1 d) How is wiki-mediated collaborative writing (WMCW) perceived by learners of EFL writing?

RQ2) How do EFL learner writers deal with the process-oriented wiki-mediated collaborative writing (PWMCW) for enhancing writing abilities and written texts?

- 2 a) How does the practice of collaborative planning on wikis contribute to the formulation of various written drafts?

- 2 b) How does the practice of collaborative revision on wikis enrich the various written drafts?

RQ3) To what extent is the process-oriented wiki-mediated collaborative writing (PWMCW) helpful for EFL learner writers in generating better written products?

- 3 a) What is the impact of the (PWMCW) on collaboratively produced texts?
- 3 b) What is the impact of the (PWMCW) on individually written texts?

### **5.3. The research paradigm (Mixed methods)**

Conducting research is about generating more knowledge in a systematic and critical way. The discovery of such knowledge should be in line with specific beliefs, known as a Paradigm. Paradigm is

a set of beliefs, values, and assumptions that a community of researchers has in common regarding the nature and conduct of research. The beliefs include, but are not limited to, ontological beliefs, epistemological beliefs, axiological beliefs, aesthetic beliefs, and methodological beliefs. In short, as we use the term, a research paradigm refers to a research culture (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p: 24).

My selection for this research paradigm was developed by reviewing the ontological, epistemological and methodological grounds for this type of enquiry, based on Guba and Lincoln (1994).

Accordingly, I used both of an explanatory and exploratory methodology to demonstrate a parallel understanding of what learners think and how they act. This methodology seems to be very appropriate to provide a comprehensive picture related to the topic under investigation in terms of affording more validity and reliability of the findings (see section: 5.10) as supported by Flick (2006; 2009). In the explanatory methodology (mostly statistical) 'the problem is known and the descriptions of the problem are with the researcher but the cause or reasons or the described findings is yet to be known' whereas the exploratory methodology would 'discover hidden facts underlying the universe (Sahu, 2013, p: 10). Moreover, the explanatory usually seeks generalisation (Kumar, 2002); yet the generalisation in this research was not fully established because of the small number of participants. Rather, it enabled the researcher to measure the relationship between different things in a precise way and how they were related in the past and present. Also, the exploratory method enabled the researcher to deeply understand the phenomena under scrutiny by exploring the keys issues and themes that emerged directly from the respondents.

Social researchers have considered the benefits of integrating the qualitative and quantitative research paradigms within a single research study. This ontological, epistemological and methodological understanding was undertaken in order to reinforce the strengths and to avoid the weaknesses of each method. There is an argument as to which research approach (quantitative, qualitative or mixed) is more useful as a source of validity and for the development of social realities (Ritchie, 2003). In practice, the research showed that each approach has its own virtues as well as shortcomings. Based on this principle, it has become important to use mixed methods or triangulation as some scholars name it. Triangulation is described as 'using different research methods to complement one another' (Della-Porta and Keating, 2008, p: 34). Seale (1999) proposes that triangulation provides different multiple sets of data that relate to the same phenomenon. Triangulating qualitative and quantitative research can lessen many of the existing limitations as it can maximise the validity of interpretation and explanation to gain rich information.

**Positivism:**

On the one hand, the methodological approach of the quantitative paradigm is associated with positivism (Snape and Spencer, 2003). It is often equated to being scientific in terms of using measurement (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). For instance, it relies on the use of deductive logic for testing hypotheses and the ability to be replicated. Deductivism, in quantitative research, is best understood as a series, starting by postulating a hypothesis derived from a theory and moving to extract results (Bryman, 2008). In the same sense, Della-Porta and Keating (2008) state that the quantitative approach is 'an explanation that is structural and context-free, allowing generalization and the discovery of universal laws of behaviour' (p: 26). It is useful for finding the input and output (or cause and effect) relationship and the influence of different variables on each other. Yet, Robson (2011) criticises the quantitative approach as it only tests a set of fixed regulations without gaining profound insights about people or examining the complexities of human behaviours in the real world.

**Interpretivism:**

On the other hand, the methodological approach of the qualitative paradigm is built on interpretivism (Snape and Spencer, 2003). Consistent with Robson (2011), interpretivism relies on constructivism, claiming that reality is socially constructed. Also, interpretivism shows 'how people understand their worlds and they create and share meanings about their lives' (Rubin and Rubin, 1995, p:34). These researchers emphasise the individuals' explanation of their social world since this is a hallmark in the qualitative approach. Robson (2011) argues that a qualitative approach focuses on

human beings in various life situations and highlights the inductive logic of drawing knowledge from participants. Qualitative studies consider social, behavioural and cultural issues that discover the nature of contexts, explain reasons, evaluate processes and identify solutions (Ritchie, 2003). This fits with Denzin and Lincoln (2008) who claim that a qualitative approach 'implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and processes and meaning that are not experimentally examined or measured' (p: 14). In agreement with Merriam and Associates (2002), they pointed out that such a research approach is mostly socially-constructed and concerns the social experiences of participants. Nevertheless, according to Chaudron (1988) a qualitative approach may involve naturalistic uncontrolled results along with the key role that researchers play in interpreting and understanding the issue or case under investigation; this makes it difficult to seek generalisation.

Consequently, the mixed methods paradigm moves towards combining quantitative and qualitative methods to provide richer data and a wider range of analysis. Yet, there is a contention about the complexity of using the qualitative and quantitative paradigm at the same time, because of their philosophical and theoretical variations along with their ontological and epistemological differences (Ritchie, 2003). The critics assert the impossibility of polarisation between qualitative and quantitative paradigms. In fact, the mixed method helps to increase preciseness of data analysis and may suggest a more comprehensive picture of the investigated topics. It avoids separation between various events and issues that are happening in the world. It can be adequate to use just the statistical analysis for the interpretation of data, but the mixed methods paradigm should present a broader picture of the problem under investigation (Seale, 1999). This methodological approach deals with multiple layers of realities and truths with the preference for a view of pluralisation among individuals (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007) that is to significantly reduce bias and give the study more feasibility. Pluralisation methodology integrates the quantitative and qualitative instruments and analyses, in order for the issues to be extensively understood. Pluralisation can be achieved by analysing questionnaires followed by focus groups or interviews. Due to the previous reasons, this approach is considered as the appropriate way to handle the research topic and its related questions.

#### **5.4. The research design (quasi-experimental case study)**

Research design is defined as 'a framework for the collection and analysis of data' relying on several aspects or 'dimensions' (Bryman, 2008, p: 31). Five main types of research design are identified: 1) case studies, 2) comparative studies, 3) longitudinal studies, 4) cross-sectional studies and 5) experimental studies. Bouma and Atkinson

(1995) suggest similar research designs but replaced a cross-sectional study with longitudinal comparison study. One of the branches of experimental design can only be termed quasi-experimental, notwithstanding its unique characteristics. It is applied in non-scientific contexts (outside laboratories) such as educational and social studies and with flexible parameters (Curtis, Murphy and Shields, 2014).

In fact, true experimentation in social sciences or in this area of research is hard to achieve because of the lack of randomisation and absolute control of variables. This research focuses on learners who are studied before and after the research intervention. In this case, it involved a new course with tasks based on the PWMCW. The research used pre-and-post-test design, without a control group (as this was not possible). This design was chosen in order to report the differences within the same groups of learners (case study of classroom) and to show development in learners prior and subsequent to the intervention (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). These researchers found that the use of one (equivalent) group pre-test-post-test is one of the common designs to apply quasi-experimental research, that is, through using a single case study of an individual or several cases of many individuals.

The case study has been used as a procedure to support the main research design. Case studies have been defined in different ways. One definition is 'large amounts of information that are collected about one case, across a wide range of dimensions' (Hammersley and Gomm, 2000, p: 2). A case study has also been defined as 'an intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon or social unit such as an individual, group, institution, or community' (Stake, 2000, p: 8). Bouma and Atkinson (1995) propose that a case study investigates the question of what is happening for one or multi specific variables in a specific group for a single case or several cases at one point of time. Choosing a case study of individuals is relevant to this research because it emphasises the embedded social factors (Babbie, 2011). Therefore, the current research design used quasi-experimental design for a case study; that is, it studied a group of learners in a classroom in order to gather deeper insight from a limited number of people throughout a longer period of time. In this research, there was an interest in focusing on one experimental group of learners to test their perceptions before and after the intervention of wiki-mediated collaborative writing and how the learners reacted to it. There was no need to use a control group as the changes in the perceptions of the experimental group regarding this intervention and its impact on the writing that the group produced were the paramount concern in conducting this study. So, the control group was not practical.

### **5.5. Selecting the participants (individual cases) and organising learners' groups**

The research population were male, preparatory year students in the school of Medicine in a public university in Saudi Arabia. The total number of the population was nearly 120 students. They share a similar language proficiency profile as they range from post-beginners to post-intermediate with a scale of 4 according to IELTS scores. Furthermore, these students have not previously undertaken the experience of working together on a shared piece of writing with their classmates using wikis. Most of them have had the chance to socially communicate with each other through one or more social networking tools such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn but not wikis.

Such students were specifically chosen, because a number of staff at the university were consulted, and they confirmed that medical students were willing to take part in learning writing by using wikis, particularly because they need to master at least the basics of EFL writing and are considered to be motivated learners, willing to use technology. The academic staff also confirmed that such students have a desire to interact with each other because they have a good level of confidence about themselves and want to improve their expertise in writing.

After deciding on the research population, it was difficult to conduct the research on the entire population who were allocated across four classes. Hence, the academic staff were consulted for the second time to select the appropriate class. In addition to this, the final writing exams in the previous semester for all the classes were considered to check the results. The greater the variation in their marks, the better, as this would suggest more differences between the students so they would learn from each other. There was a consensus to choose one of the classes, comprised of 21 students, with a wide range of individual differences and mixed abilities.

Along with the scores achieved in the previous semester, the indicated students were also selected based on a diagnostic (mini-placement) test which was prepared by the researcher. This procedure was important to identify the accurate level of the students especially in writing. The informal test involved writing a single paragraph to answer questions about who they are; where they come from; what they are hoping to do in the future and why they have chosen this school. Most of the students achieved low scores, committing basic errors such as in verb conjugations and subject and verb agreement. This assessment resulted in creating three groups with seven members in each. Allocating the ideal number of members in groups is a fundamental issue because group size may influence learners' progress and their abilities for language correction (Storch, 2013). There was also great effort to make the groups as parallel as possible, distributing the group members equally and according to their interests.

Further information about the participants was gathered in terms of: their usage of the Internet, their frequency of using the Internet and their purpose in using the Internet. The results showed that all of the classmates taking part in the study indicated: 'yes' for using the Internet (100%, n=20). The same percentage of the respondents indicated their purpose in using the Internet, was pleasure rather than academic. Most of the learners (90%, n=18) exhibited frequent usage of the Internet on a daily basis whereas only (10%, n=2) showed their usage of the Internet was 3-4 times a week. The emerging result confirmed that the entire class were exposed to digital use and they were digitally literate, but none or only a few of them used it for study purposes.

## **5.6. Distribution of responsibilities**

### **5.6.1. The participants**

The participants were allocated a set of academic roles and responsibilities to be practised in-class as well as on the wiki. On the one hand, the in-class roles recommended the participants to be attentive, active and good communicators. The participants should work with each other to complete tasks given in the class. The roles also encouraged the learners to actively engage in the training sessions about the usage of wikis. On the other hand, the on-wiki roles mostly aided the maintenance of collaborative learning atmosphere and peer feedback. Such roles involved planning and generating new ideas, drafting, editing and revising on a shared basis. The practice of these roles was according to the participants' preferences apart from planning which was open to all group members.

### **5.6.2. The instructor-researcher**

AS the researcher worked simultaneously as an instructor, he had to take several roles and responsibilities in-class and on wiki. The main function for the instructor was to give normal lectures in face-to-face mode, but also to encourage mediation between the participants and behave less authoritatively. The in-class roles also involved designing the tasks and handouts; preparing teaching materials, organising the visits to the library, promoting the wiki to the participants, encouraging their participation and explaining how to contribute to the wiki. Conversely, the on-wiki roles needed the instructor to work as a facilitator of knowledge rather than a transmitter of information. He should lead the participants to share their problems with their peers and to discover more information by themselves by using external resources. His role also involved giving summative feedback at the end of every task, and moderating bad practices, such as a learner's domination on wikis. In addition, he was responsible for explaining any unclear points about the tasks and giving constructive feedback.

## **5.7. Research methods**

A research method is defined by Bryman (2008) as 'a technique for collecting data' (p: 31). It has also been described as 'the range of approaches used in educational research to gather data which are to be used as a basis for inference and interpretation for explanation and prediction' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2007, p: 47). The current research has applied the following research methods:

### **5.7.1. The pre-and-post questionnaires:**

#### **Design**

A questionnaire, as a quantitative research tool, can be adopted to help review a large number of people in a short span of time and without direct contact (Clough and Nutbrown, 2007). Yet, designing a well-constructed questionnaire is always challenging. Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010) assert that a good questionnaire should be built on a systemic method. This involves choosing accurate items with language that is easy to be understood. They must be in the correct sequence, and supported by clear instructions. In view of this, two questionnaires were designed to examine four areas of learners' perceptions. The two (pre-and-post) questionnaires are similar except for a few changes made in the post questionnaire such as the tense (Appendix 1). Each of these questionnaires includes four areas related to learners' perceptions relating to: 1) a number of principles (using e-feedback, peer feedback and authentic tasks) suggested for the practice of writing, 2) the process writing approach, 3) collaborative writing (CW) and 4) wiki-mediated collaborative writing (WMCW). These areas characterise the related dimensions of the investigated topic.

The pre-and-post-questionnaires were constructed by adapting some of the items developed by Lowry (2004), Franco (2008) and Kuteeva (2011); with additional modifications applied. In other words, Franco generates questions that tackle students' perceptions about peer correction on wikis. Accordingly, some of these questions were transformed into sentence items and others adopted as main sections for the new questionnaires. Likewise, a set of other items were developed based on the studies of Lowry et al. (2004) and Kuteeva (2011) who evaluate the process of writing and writing collaboratively using wikis. So the generated questionnaires required the participants to choose the most representative answer on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1='strongly agree' to 5='strongly disagree'. However, this scale was modified when different responses were entered with a software package used for statistical analysis (SPSS) as following: 1='strongly disagree', 2='disagree', 3='undecided', 4= 'agree' and 5='strongly agree'. It is important to mention that some of the sentences in both

questionnaires were in the negative form. The questionnaires involved both positive and negative formats to make sure of consistency in the participants' choices.

### **Piloting**

At the beginning, there were several attempts to test the different versions of the questionnaires. Four versions were modified to assure the suitability of the language used. The first two test versions involved a number of participants who were chosen from the English for Academic Study (EAS) course at the Centre for Language Study at the University of Southampton. The learners in EAS were from the same type of learning context but had a higher level of language proficiency, than the main participants of the study. They were asked for their feedback on the relevant difficulties and the time they took to complete the questionnaires. This helped the researcher to evaluate and revise the questionnaires in their raw drafts before testing the other versions. In the third pilot revision, the questionnaires were piloted on a number of PhD students working in similar areas of research, and a group of experts in linguistics were used to check the accuracy of sentences and the language used. The main focus in this phase highlighted on the clarity of the sentence items and the lexis used and the elimination of subjectivity as much as possible. Another aim was to select the right number of sentence items so that the questionnaires would be neither too long nor too short. In addition, presenting the questionnaires to expert senior colleagues allowed further validity and reliability. In the last phase, the questionnaires were re-piloted again on a group of EFL learners, a sample drawn from the real potential participants. They were randomly chosen to feed back to the researcher with any content-related problems or other lexical ambiguities.

In early versions of the questionnaires, there were eighty items. This figure was reduced to thirty in the final version (Appendix 1). The number of items was reduced because some of them were found to be irrelevant; time-consuming or overly general. One section about writing classes and writing development was deleted as the target was perceptions rather than progress. In the final version of the questionnaires, I decided to include four open-ended questions to let respondents give some comments and to give a space for qualitative meanings. The questionnaires were in the target language, English. An Arabic translation of the questionnaires was however translated and attached to the English copy; yet, more questionnaires were completed in English. The wording in many sentence items was changed to make them more straightforward and appropriate to the participants' level of achievement. For example, the personal pronoun 'I' was replaced with the demonstrative article 'the' to make it more acceptable to the readers and to be less emphatic. Many items such as 5, 6, 13 and 14 were

simplified by giving examples within parentheses. The students learned a set of new related vocabulary before filling in the questionnaires, e.g. feedback, drafts, accuracy (a lexical and grammatical understanding within the sentence level) and coherence (a semantic understanding within the text level).

### **Sampling**

The current research targeted a specific group of subjects in a particular context. The researcher claims that deciding on a specific group of individuals is important for the investigated topic in order to meet the purposes of the study. When there is a study that targets a class level, random sampling becomes hard to achieve. Thus, allocating a purposive sample allowed the researcher to examine the students thoroughly, together with getting the most information pertaining to their perceptions. This is in agreement with Merriam and Associates (2002), who report that it 'is important to select a sample from which the most can be learned' (p: 12). The purposive sampling enabled the researcher to establish tentative assumptions for other groups as well, as stated by Bouma and Atkinson (1995).

There were several advantages in designing these questionnaires as an economical research method for discovering perceptions. However, the use of this tool meant that the learners were incapable of responding to questions fully since they were unable to elaborate on their answers. As noted by Bryman (2008), a questionnaire does not express the profound differences related to living creatures and humans. Therefore, in addition to questionnaires, focus groups were chosen to get additional details.

#### **5.7.2. The initial and follow-up focus groups:**

##### **Procedures<sup>5</sup>**

The focus group, as a qualitative research method, is used to collect qualitative information by listening to various perspectives of people sharing similar features (Krueger and Casey, 2009) such as age, language proficiency level, gender and culture. Some scholars consider focus groups as a separate technique from other methods of collecting information, such as group interviews and group discussions (Flick, 2006; 2009). Other scholars, in contrast, define focus groups as synonymous with group interviews (Boeije, 2010). Therefore, and in order to avoid any subtle differences in meaning, they were used to mean one thing; that is group participation in

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<sup>5</sup> The first focus groups work is traced back to Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Kamberelis and Dimtriadis, 2005). It was firstly appeared in 1920 in business and marketing fields (Greenbaum, 1998) and then adopted by social scientists in the late nineteen (Gubrium and Holstein, 1997).

a collaborative form. Their key feature is naturalness as Finch and Lewis (2003) claim; 'the spontaneity that arises from their stronger social context' (p: 171). In the same vein, Stewart and Shamdasi (1990) describe focus groups as a deliberate strategic practice among fellow members. The reason for adapting focus groups was because this method can promote interaction between participants as they respond to a question, so this can highlight if people are rigid, resistant or defensive against each other's opinions.

For the next stage, I managed to organise two focus groups as shown in Appendix 2. The initial focus group had taken place between the students and the researcher-instructor early in the semester before they were told that I (the researcher-instructor) would be giving the course. This procedure helped to create a less sensitive environment for the learners to speak up. The students did not know the researcher-instructor before the discussion. The discussion was also about past events and previous instructors who had taught writing and how such classes were taught. In contrast, the follow-up focus group was run by the same researcher-instructor after the students had completed their final examination and got their marks. This latter procedure also lessened the learners' worry that whatever they contributed might not be assessed.

In both focus groups, the researcher-instructor was playing the role of moderator, leading the participants' discussion from one specific topic to another and not digressing from the topic. As a result, the participants felt in a less threatening environment while giving their opinions. Focus groups are different from other methods of data collection in terms of their ability to achieve numerous benefits for their contributors. In line with Barbour (2008), the focus groups of this research enabled the students to:

- a. re-think taken-for-granted assumptions;
- b. feel assured of being in a secure environment;
- c. have a chance of answering only desired or favourite questions;
- d. inhabit a deep thinking environment which supported exchanging of ideas.

Moreover, the participants of the initial focus groups were encouraged to take part in the follow-up focus group so that their responses (in the beginning and at the end) could be easily compared. Subsequently, the same students in the initial focus group agreed to take part in the follow-up focus group plus a new participant who was not in the initial focus group. The two focus groups identified the writing problems encountered in writing classes. Such discussions also allowed the collections of initial

and follow-up opinion regarding the practices used in the recent classes such as e-feedback, the use of the process writing approach and the impact of both CW and WMCW.

### **Piloting**

A group of scholars in the Arabic language edited and reviewed the Arabic versions of questions for the initial and follow-up focus groups. Another group of bilingual experts in Arabic and English checked the translation of the original drafts of questions. They were requested to validate the preciseness of the translation concerning the issues and matters to be investigated. Similarly to the questionnaires, the focus group questions were piloted with a group of EFL learner, a sample from the real potential participants. A group of volunteers were randomly selected to examine learners' understanding of the questions and to attain prior responses. The same participants had also given feedback on content-related problems and lexical ambiguities.

Piloting the focus group questions helped me, as the researcher, to make these questions open-ended and keep them in simple language without the use of abbreviations or obscure terminologies. As a result of changing some questions because of preliminary queries of the participants, the revised questions did not deal with complicated issues or sensitive details (see Appendix 2 for the initial and follow-up focus groups questions). As the participants preferred, the focus groups were conducted in the students' mother tongue, Arabic. This allowed them to express their perceptions more spontaneously and provide precise descriptions of what they hoped to achieve, without the additional burden of translating these thoughts.

### **Sampling**

Slightly different from the questionnaires, purposive random sampling was implemented as the sampling strategy for the focus groups. This strategy is defined as selecting random participants from a group who have already been selected to be the purposive sample (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). The purpose of this type of sampling is to gain as plentiful information as possible from specific people (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). In addition, this method of sampling was used to identify 'common ground between participants' (Macnaghten and Myers, 2004, p: 69) and balance homogeneity and heterogeneity amongst group members (Finch and Lewis (2003). In other words, the students were randomly chosen from the same class of study. They were preparatory medical students who were homogenous in age, gender and field of study, but heterogenous in cultural backgrounds and level of academic achievement. The participants for both (initial and follow-up) focus groups were also from the same class already mentioned.

Following the principles considered earlier, five students took part in the initial discussion and six students were in the follow-up discussion. Although the volunteer participants for both focus groups were from the same class, they had not much information about their peers. It should be pointed out that the participants had not experienced this kind of openness and frankness during any course before. The duration of the two focus groups' discussion varied. The initial group took ninety minutes while the follow-up group took a hundred and twenty minutes. The discussion of some questions took a longer time than expected as the participants were more enthusiastic about commenting on them, and because they had more opinions to give on particular issues. The participants were cheerful and relaxed since they were frequently reminded about the informality of these meetings. However, the researcher interrupted the volunteers when they expressed ambiguous things or digressed too much. The location of the discussion was quiet and very calm, as the place was very spacious and attractively decorated and lit. The translated transcripts for both focus groups were printed out later by the researcher (see Appendices 9 and 10).

Like other research methods, focus groups have a number of disadvantages. There are concerns regarding conformity amongst group members and the influences of some partners on each other (Morse, 1994). One further shortcoming is related to the silence of some members; on some occasions this can become a major problem as Kitzinger and Barbour (1999) indicate. It is also hard to generalise the results and findings since they may not be applicable to different contexts. Yet, focus groups can yield the rich description of specific individuals, and statistical representativeness is not a main objective. In relation to the current research, there was misinterpretation of some information given by some members of the groups. Some of the expressed opinions by the participants were disturbing for other participants who had never been criticised openly before.

### **5.7.3. The delayed interviews:**

#### **Procedure**

The interview, as a qualitative research method, is one of the most powerful methods currently used. Interviews are mainly used to 'obtain a rich, in-depth experiential account of an event or episode in the life of the respondent' (Fontana and Frey, 2005, p: 698). In line with this, Legard, Keegan and Ward (2003) suggest that a key condition for conducting valuable interviews is to sustain interaction between interviewers and interviewees. The social and power differences between researchers and respondents should not form a barrier (Miller and Glassner, 2004). Interviewing as claimed by Holstein and Gubrium (2004) is an active meaningful process, which is not built only by

asking respondents to answer a set of given questions. It is rather a shared communicative practice. This practice is manifested by raising the questions of how(s) and what(s) to be addressed to the potential respondents. According to Oppenheim (1992), there are two types of interview: standardised and exploratory. Standardised interviews are used for official purposes such as obtaining statistics or facts (structured), whereas exploratory interviews seek to find more ideas from respondents (unstructured). The reason for using exploratory interviews is that they explore interviewees' lives based on their personal and individual opinions.

In this research, semi-structured or 'half-structured' interviews (Boeije, 2010) were designed to collect additional data five months after the course was completed. The purpose of leaving a gap between focus groups and interviews was to examine the lasting impact of the WMCW course and its related tasks. With this aim, I managed to interview individually twelve volunteers who were from the same class examined in this study. Unlike in the focus groups, the participants were able to express their opinions without the influence of other peers present. This helped me to identify whether these individuals had similar or different perceptions when they expressed their opinions individually and in groups. This also allowed me to check whether or not there were changes in their ideas and thoughts over time.

### **Piloting**

The questions for the later interviews were piloted on a group of EFL learners from the research context to check how the students understood the questions and if there were any ambiguities. The questions were then checked by two bilingual experts in Arabic and English to check the content and accuracy of translation (similar to what was done with focus group questions). As the feedback from the experts was helpful, I decided not to be too systematic in the order of questions, and to be flexible whenever it was needed to add new parts or to delete some other unnecessary parts. The nature of these qualitative questions varied, ranging from main to secondary questions to probe for more data (see Appendix 3 for the individual interview questions). Based on Legard, Keegan and Ward (2003), the probing technique is to ask several follow-up sub-questions when an answer is not clear or general. This was useful to gain more profound answers, as indeed was found to be the case with the pilot study volunteers.

### **Sampling:**

As with the focus groups, purposive random sampling was used. The participants, who were part of the WMCW course, were interviewed individually to follow-up their perceptions and their written contributions posted on wikis. Twelve students volunteered for 20-30 minute semi-structured interviews. The participants were asked

about their recent perceptions regarding the process writing approach and WMCW contributions. The volunteers were also questioned about their written participations in wikis and their collaborative planning and revisions already made. In these interviews, the target was not just to ask very specific questions. Rather, the questions were used as a starting point to collect as much information as possible about the course and its relevant tasks.

In contrast to the benefits of interviews for the researcher, which perhaps cannot be attained by using other methods, there can be difficulties for the interviewees in that interviews are time-consuming and require careful explanation and expert interviewers (Oppenheim, 1992). Moreover, face-to-face interviews may become sometimes problematic as they may give impressions about the preferable answers. They may also be limited by possible errors, biases and misunderstanding (Holstein and Gubrium, 2004). The participants might sometimes report something to satisfy the researcher or say what is expected by the interviewer. Some students may also find interviews to be intimidating (Leki and Carson, 1997). There are no solutions to eradicate these problems. Nevertheless, such challenges can be minimised by various approaches. For example, the researcher praised learners' answers without assessing what they said and avoided showing preferable answers.

#### **5.7.4. The analysis of the wiki-based contributions:**

Thematic analysis was used for the content produced collaboratively on wikis. It should be also noted that this type of analysis was employed in the previous two research methods (see sub-sections: 5.7.2 and 5.7.3). The content chosen included the written contributions of the participants on the discussion threads as well as on the main wikis (i.e. the texts and their edited versions). In these two virtual spaces, the participants posted their written contributions, which allowed more reflection and advanced planning (Biuk-Aghai, Kelen and Venkatesan, 2008). The thematic analysis can remove much of the subjectivity and increase objective evaluation. Thematic analysis is a 'replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding' (Stemler, 2001). In other words, it is a data mining technique and is designed to classify the data into smaller units or segments, rather than just counting the frequency of words or patterns.

#### **5.7.5. The assessment of the written texts:**

The assessment of the written texts was applied based on an analytic scale that was developed by the researcher (see Figure 5.1). It was created based on the elements of teaching writing in the curriculum that had to be taught for the students in other normal classes that did not use wiki-mediated collaborative writing. Such elements of teaching

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the writing course are part of the course description agreed on by the higher management of the university. The purpose of this scale or grading rubric was 'to set out the criteria by which the paper [an output/a text] will be judged, making the teacher's expectations for the paper explicit' (Neff-Lippman, 2012; 161). The assessed texts involved a number of wiki produced texts and paper-based individual texts, in the beginning and at the end of the PWMCW course.

## Chapter 5: Research methodology

Component	Domains of assessment	Explanation of domains (description)	Questions for assessing written texts	Actual achieved score				
				VP <sup>6</sup>	P	F	G	V
<b>1) Mechanics (punctuation)</b>	Full stop	Using full stops correctly when ideas are completed	Does sentences end with a suitable mark of punctuation?	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
	Capitalisation	Using capitalisation when needed on a frequent basis	Does each sentence begin with a capital letter?	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
<b>2) Vocabulary and word choice (lexis)</b>	Spelling	Using error-free format on a frequent basis	Is each lexical item typed with the correctly?	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
	Relevancy	Using a wide range of appropriate lexis that suit texts	Are the lexical items relevant?	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
	Adequacy	Using a wide range of sufficient lexis that explain the text	Are the lexical items adequate (that is appropriate for their academic proficiency level)?	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
	Newness	Using a wide range of lexis from the new word list	Are the vocabulary and lexical items new?	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
<b>3) Grammar (accuracy and fluency)</b>	Agreement of subjects and verbs	Using Subject + Verb agreement structure with frequent accuracy	Do verbs and subjects agree?	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
	Agreement of verbs and tense forms	Using right verb conjugations with frequent accuracy	Are verbs and tense forms were correctly used?	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
	Usage of pronouns, adjectives, articles & prepositions	Using a wide range of various parts of speech for better communication of meaning	Are propositions, articles, nouns, adjectives and passive forms correctly used?	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
<b>4) Content and structure (coherence and cohesion)</b>	Clarity of introduction	Using an obvious statement that advices the readers to the content and unifies the order of sentences	Does each text have a clear topic sentence?	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
	Clarity of conclusion	Using an obvious statement that directs the readers to the main ideas and argument	Does each text have a clear concluding sentence?	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
	Clarity of sequence / arrangement of ideas	Using local coherence of sentences for each paragraph	Does each text have well-sequenced and well-arranged ideas?	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
	Clarity of examples for supporting ideas	Using a wide range of clarifications to maintain the explanation of key ideas and concepts	Does each text have clear examples that support main ideas?	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
	Clarity of compound /complex sentences	Using a wide range of long sentences besides simple sentences	Does each text have clear compound or complex sentences?	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
	Clarity of transition/ signposting signals	Using a wide range of linking words and phrases to connect different sentences	Does each text have clear transition or signposting signals?	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>

Figure 5.1: Rating scale for assessing written texts

<sup>6</sup> VP=very poor, P=poor, F=fair, G= good, VG= very good

#### **5.7.6. The post-evaluative questionnaire:**

The researcher designed a post-questionnaire for evaluating the PWMCW course and its related tasks at the end of the intervention. Twenty respondents agreed to complete it. The respondents indicated their views on a number of aspects relating to, for example, how Wikispaces was introduced to the participants, how they dealt with technical difficulties and how they saw their learning groups. The evaluative questionnaire documented the participants' views about the nature of the assigned tasks, the number of peers in each group or learning community and the length of each task.

#### **5.8. Data analysis**

Dealing with data began early by establishing how best to approach analysis, as Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) suggest. To achieve the best data analysis possible, I thought carefully about the data collection process along with what research methods should be applied. Thus, the initial focus group discussion was transcribed and initially coded. Preliminary analysis was also completed for actions of collaborative planning (before starting collaborative revision) on wikis in order to foresee possible ways of analysis.

The questionnaires were analysed using the software SPSS 17 (Statistical Package for the Social Science). The process of analysis comprised inferential and descriptive analyses for the four components in each of the pre-and-post questionnaire as indicated earlier (see sub-section: 5.7.1). The pre-questionnaire addressed the classes in the first semester that were delivered by other colleagues. The post-questionnaire addressed the classes in the second semester that the current researcher delivered. I investigated the students' perceptions (feelings and experience) at the end of each one of the two different classes, which had different approaches. The purpose of the investigation was to find in what aspects or items the students changed in their perceptions to discover positive impact of the recent (second semester) classes. Also, what other aspects or items did not change in the students' perceptions that should sustain the way of teaching in (first semester) classes.

The analysis included finding out the differences of the 'P' values using T-tests for every component of the questionnaires and its relevant items. The 'P' value refers to 'the probability of the outcomes occurring by chance, expressed numerically as ranging from zero to one. The convention is to accept 'P' value of 0.05 or less as being statistically significant' (Greasley, 2008, p: 134). Additionally, according to the previous researcher, the T-test is a 'statistical technique for examining differences in means between two samples' (p: 134).

Thus, the T-test is used 'to find out the significance of difference between means of paired scores of a small group ( $n < 30$ ) in a single group experiment' (Shanker, Bhushan and Bhushan, 2007, p: 101). I used the T-test to identify whether the differences between individuals or groups were statistically significant or insignificant and whether the changes were positive, negative or static (no changes). I also considered the insignificant results that disclosed positive changes relating to the learners' perceptions.

The focus groups were analysed using the qualitative data analysis software Nvivo 10 (Figure 5.2). I used this software by assigning themes and sub-themes. According to Bryman (2012), thematic analysis can be defined as the process that entails the search for a theme and its

idea is to construct an index of central themes and sub-themes, which are then represented in a matrix that closely resembles an SPSS spreadsheet with its display of cases and variables (p: 579).

Moreover, based on Bryman (2012), a theme is 'a category identified by the analyst through his/her data; that relates to his/her research focus' and 'that builds on codes identified in transcripts and/or field notes' (p: 580). In this sense, I used 'segmenting'- or breaking down- and then 'reassembling' of the data in order to identify 'patterns, searching for relationships between the distinguished parts, and finding explanations for what is observed' (Boeije, 2010, p:76) by using codes for the developed themes. According to Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011), a code is a term that refers to 'an issue, topic, idea, opinion, etc. that is evident in the data' (p: 216). This transition to choosing codes presented a gradual development of ideas in order to identify what is important and less important (Seale, 1999). Hence, I paid attention to recognise different issues by comparing similar and contrasting codes in conjunction with tracking their frequencies.

The interviews were coded using different software to Nvivo 10 to simplify identifying emerging themes and sub-themes (Figure 5.3) in a similar way to focus groups. I used a MAXQDA 10 database for analysing the responses of the interviewees since it recognises the Arabic script. All interviews were conducted in the mother tongue language, Arabic, to ensure spontaneity and a relaxed environment among the participants. In addition, the process of analysis of the interviews was similar to the focus groups (thematic analysis). I acted differently during the interviews since some participants were not happy to be recorded, so I had to take plentiful notes in order to write down verbal as well as non-verbal interactions. I analysed the interviews slightly

differently from the focus groups, based on the principle suggested by Barbour (2008) that interviewees can bring up issues of interest; consensus is not necessary, and the differences between individuals is important for showing additional perspectives and thoughts (see Appendix 11 for a sample of a later interview in Arabic). It is noteworthy to clarify that some excerpts from the data can be categorised under more than one sub-theme because they were overlapping with different issues.

Name	Sources	References	Created On
A. Emerging themes in the initial focus group	0	0	20/11/2012 14:16
B. Emerging themes in the final focus group	0	0	20/11/2012 14:19
Course evaluation	0	0	21/10/2012 15:41
Drawbacks of peer (group) feedback	0	0	09/10/2012 11:52
Educational implications of wiki- oriented writing	1	6	02/11/2012 21:21
Perceptions wiki-based writers	1	6	02/11/2012 21:29
Reflections on the proces of writing (awareness)	1	1	09/10/2012 21:05
Students' recognition of wiki-mediated writing	0	0	10/10/2012 19:17
Students' reflections on hybrid learning	1	6	21/10/2012 18:40
Students' reservation on wiki-mediated writing	0	0	10/10/2012 19:18
C. Emerging themes in both focus groups	0	0	20/11/2012 14:20
Concerns of WMCW	0	0	11/09/2013 19:18
Hardships of implementation	2	4	09/10/2012 20:40
Unfamiliarity and un-readiness	1	7	16/10/2012 13:10
Time barriers	2	8	09/10/2012 17:50
Time consuming	1	4	21/10/2012 13:49
Students' impact on collaborative writing tools	0	0	06/10/2012 20:25
Constant virtual communication-Learners' needs of WMCW	2	3	07/10/2012 15:38
Motivation and encouragement	2	9	08/10/2012 17:53
Popularity and acceptance of this practice of writing	2	12	07/10/2012 16:32
Students' impact on formal feedback and role of instructors	0	0	07/10/2012 12:24
Effects of instructors' feedback	0	0	07/10/2012 12:26
Triggering uncomfortable learner-instructor relationship	2	5	11/10/2012 17:40
Students' impact on intimate informal feedback-Benefits of WMCW	0	0	07/10/2012 12:38
Benefits of peer (group) feedback	0	0	06/10/2012 21:40
Comfortable and less embarrassing (equal levels of knowledge)	2	4	21/10/2012 13:09
Exhibiting and correcting basic errors	2	2	10/10/2012 21:20
Nurturing peer and friendly criticism	2	7	11/10/2012 18:00
Confidence and self-reliance	2	8	11/10/2012 18:29
Macro-level of correction (fluency plus accuracy)	2	6	16/10/2012 12:53
Students' reflections on writing as an academic practice	0	0	09/10/2012 14:06
Concerns regarding familiar writing topics	2	7	09/10/2012 12:19
Motives for changing current writing environment (need interactive practice)	2	16	07/10/2012 17:26
Students' understanding of collaborative writing	0	0	06/10/2012 21:13
Factors of influences	0	0	08/10/2012 19:35

Figure 5.2: Example of coding the focus group discussion using Nvivo 10

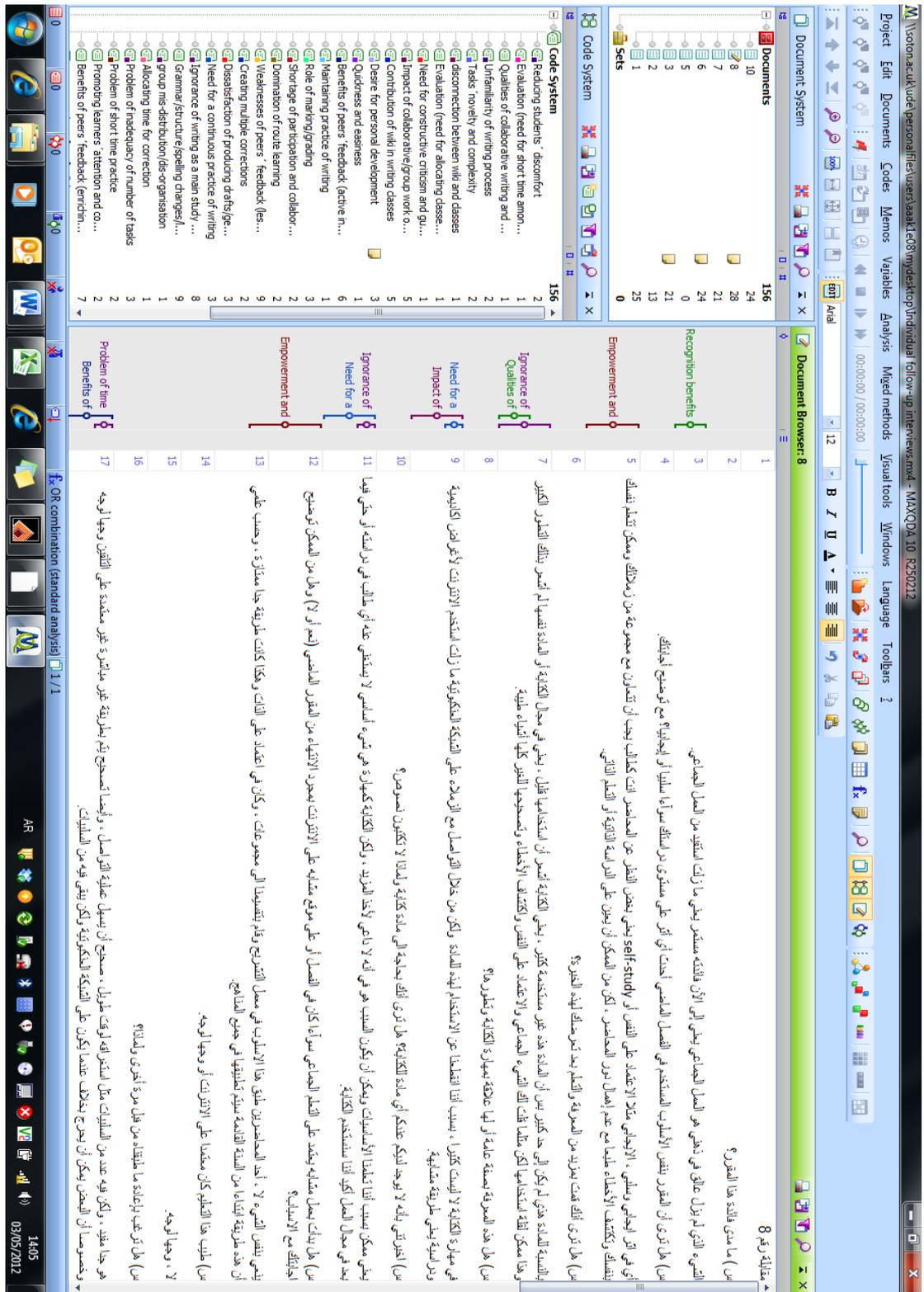


Figure 5.3: Example of coding the interviews using MAXQDA 10

Concerning the thematic analysis of contributions posted on wikis, the researcher looked at the data with a top-down design where a number of themes and sub-themes were decided prior to the data collection. Such themes, which were mostly from the literature, are deductively-driven according to a pre-defined frame. However, a bottom-

up design related to generating themes and sub-themes inductively or directly from the data was also considered. In addition to the thematic analysis, content analysis was used to study incidences of collaboration among participants. It was also applied to examine the produced texts and their different edits and the types of amendments made for each text. For the purpose of understanding how collaboration took place and what was included, I developed a model to analyse modes of collaboration during wiki-based collaborative planning (Figure 5.4).

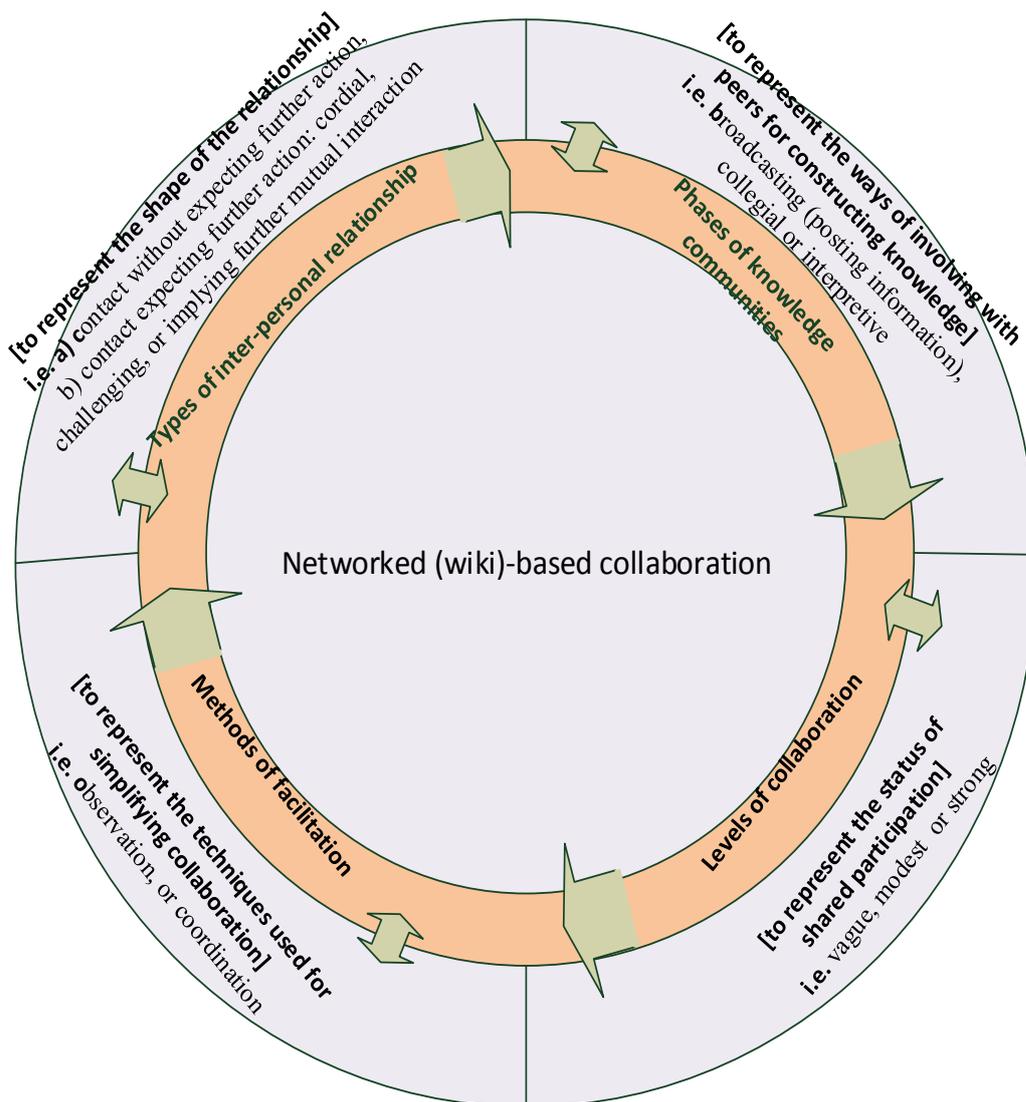


Figure 5.4: A framework for analysing modes of collaboration

This model, as shown above, is based on the components of networked-based collaboration recommended by Campos et al. (2001) and the model of cognitive networked-based communication and knowledge communities developed by Campos (2003). In both places of research, learning through extending knowledge was the focus. Accordingly, learning is ‘understood as a process, emerging naturally from human cognitive structure through language (conversation)’ (Campos, 2003). This model is composed of four focal areas of investigation to:

- a. demonstrate the nature of the interactive/social relationship;
- b. show the degree of belonging to the learning groups (or learning/knowledge communities);
- c. exhibit the power of co-participation amongst peers and
- d. determine the means of enabling collaboration amongst contributors.

On the other hand, the content of the produced texts was checked in order to explore individually and collaboratively-oriented texts and the differences between them. In addition, this exploration involved finding types of amendments and their frequencies for collaboratively edited texts. The original collaborative (on wiki) as well as individual (off-wiki) texts were comparatively analysed to find out the influence of using (and not using) WMCW course and its related tasks (see sub-sections: 6.3.1 and 6.3.2).

### **5.9. Distribution of the research methods during the teaching course**

As the research design required, I had to design and deliver a new course based on a combination of the PVMCW with face-to-face learning of writing. This form of blended learning involved writing classes. There were three main tasks which were designed in parallel with the contents of the students’ textbook. Each task was planned to last for one month (see chapter 4 for more details concerning the teaching course). During this month, the participants should take part in collaborative planning (group brainstorming), individual drafting and collaborative revision (editing and revising) on Wikispaces<sup>7</sup> (the type of wiki chosen for this course).

All the wikis were paid for to ensure participants’ protection, i.e. nobody from other groups or outsiders could see what had been written. The participants would also

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<sup>7</sup> Wikispaces offers three types of group space. These are 1) Basic: which is open for everyone but cannot be edited by everyone except by those who have been invited. 2) Plus: which cannot be either seen or edited by others unless invited. 3) Super: which cannot be either seen or edited by others unless invited with additional privileges.

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undertake two individual writing tasks on paper before and after their contributions on wikis (see chapter 4 for details about this course and how it was implemented).

Before starting the course, I

- Prepared learning materials and handouts for most of the teaching weeks to simplify the course and to show how to navigate Wikispaces.
- Finalised the layout of the wiki and the content for each group and the necessary modifications such as the type of font and the colours of the scripts.
- Examined the IT facilities (e.g. availability of a network) and the wireless network, along with ensuring the availability of good projectors.

Furthermore, during the course I achieved the following:

- In the first week, I distributed the pre-questionnaire. The participants seemed to be unaware of the new course and the instructor. Yet, it was appropriate to express their perceptions based on their former knowledge.
- After completing the pre-questionnaire, the participants performed short CW tasks, where they formed their own small groups and started writing texts with their classmates about the side-effects of consuming fast food.
- In week 1, I ran the initial focus group. It was a good idea to do this before telling the learners that I would be teaching this course. This promoted their willingness to speak freely and to discuss their past experiences mostly about the instructors who had already taught them.
- In weeks 2-15, the participants had the chance to focus on WMCW in using the writing process.
- In weeks 2-15, I discerned that several collaboratively written texts were carefully edited and revised in an attempt to make texts more accurate and have sound content and structure.
- In week 16, after announcing the final grades, I re-distributed the post-questionnaire. The participants had become more aware of what they were doing so they were able to give their post perceptions.
- In week 16, I conducted the final focus groups after running the questionnaire. The participants stated their experiences of the PWMCW.

## **5.10. Establishing trustworthiness**

### **5.10.1. Validity and reliability**

I established several procedures to ensure the validity and reliability of the research. This is in line with Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) who emphasis that validity and

reliability are pre-requisites for academic research. The importance of validity and reliability is that they reflect issues of trustworthiness, credibility and transferability (Yang, 2009). I employed two types of validity testing: content and face validity within the research methods used (questionnaires, focus groups and interviews). This was ensured by asking a group of bilingual experts and learners to provide sound feedback regarding these instruments in the pilot study. In line with validity, reliability was also ensured. Reliability is mostly applied in qualitative research. There are two types of reliability: internal and external. Internal reliability considers to what extent the findings of the main researcher match the findings of other researchers, whereas external reliability scrutinises the issues pertaining to replicability and transferability in other settings (Seale, 1999). In relation to the current research, I applied external reliability checking by using some coding schemes and themes that were created by other researchers in order to reinforce reliability. Using others' codes and themes enabled me to transfer aspects of different studies to the present study.

#### **5.10.2. Inter-rater reliability**

Inter-rater reliability is the level of agreement between two or more raters (markers) for specific scores. It is highly important to ensure this type of reliability, at least in this kind of research, since it can show whether or not students obtain comparable results by different raters (Mackey and Gass, 2005). In this research, I ensured inter-rater reliability by comparing the initial and final results assigned by each rater.

The raters were native speakers of English and had from 10 to 12 years of experience in teaching English as a second and foreign language. The raters, who are based in the UK, received some training about the rating scale developed for this research and what each component (and its sub-components) measure. They were given brief information about the system of education and English language teaching in the research context. The main elements of rating focused on: mechanics, lexis, accuracy and coherence and cohesion. These elements were rated by answering the questions suggested according to the following criteria: 1 (very poor), 2 (poor), 3 (fair), 4 (good) and 5 (very good). The rating process was achieved for collaboratively and individually produced texts before and after wiki-mediated collaborative writing. The raters marked the texts anonymously and at different times and without telling them which texts were produced collaboratively or individually before and after the course intervention. My concern was to discover which aspects of learning writing particularly on wikis achieved a significant level in the view of the two markers. The differences in the marks were not problematic as long as the two raters confirm that a certain aspect is statistically significant or insignificant in the first and last time of creating texts.

As inter-rater reliability was found between the first and second raters (see sub-sections: 6.3.1 and 6.3.2), I have randomly chosen the scores given by the second rater. It was sufficient to report one cohort of scores since other scores, given by the second rater, showed statistically similar agreement between the initial and final results. There is however a problem with inter-rater reliability as it shows the entire level of significance for many aspects without looking at the level of significance of each single issue. The two raters might not show significant consistency pertaining to writing learners' development for all aspects. Therefore, I decided to include the scores given by second rater for the aspects that show differences on insignificant level.

### **5.10.3. Triangulation**

Triangulation is related to using a variety of methods of data collection to complement each other (Della-Porta and Keating, 2008). There is an argument as to whether or not triangulation can be useful and practical as a source of validity since there are differences among research methods (Ritchie, 2003). This argument was disputed by Flick (2009) who confirms the validity of the findings that are obtained from more than a single method of data collection. In a similar vein, Seale (1999) states that triangulation provides different multiple sets of data that help find various insights for similar events.

Based on the statements addressed at the end of section of 5.4, I gained a fuller understanding of the investigated topic from more explanation and interpretation than would be given by use of a single method. Triangulation helped me as a researcher to infer more details about the phenomenon under investigation. For instance, the questionnaires were followed-up by adopting two qualitative instruments (focus groups and interviews) in order to elaborate on the findings from the responses of the participants.

### **5.10.4. Generalisability and ecological validity**

There is a debate about the generalisability of quasi-experimental research that may negatively impact on its external validity. The problem is whether it is possible to generalise the findings of a study to other contexts and users. The negative view is taken by Al-Fadda (2012) who argues that neither quasi-experimental nor non-quasi-experimental situations are generalisable. Yet, they can both establish generalisability in terms of generating theories and developing theoretical perspectives. There may be a possibility for generalisation in a different meaning based on comparing cases or situations that share similar characteristics and which have related objectives to this study.

This is the view of Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) who highlight the importance of showing generalisability by a clear and deep description of the research and how it was carried out. They also suggest that achieving generalisability from individual cases is not problematic since another type of validity emerges; that is, ecological or natural validity. Previous researchers assumed that ecological validity would be identified by forming 'accurate portrayals of the realities of social situations in their own terms, in their natural or conventional settings' (p: 195). The researcher claims that this kind of validity would approximate the validity of the real world that is being explored. Thus, I explained the factors, characteristics and realities that distinguish this research and its related social context from others. Stake (1994) and Duff (2008) both noted several concerns about how generalisability can be minimised by employing a triangulation of research methods and finding an accurate way of coding.

### **5.11. Data protection and ethical issues**

The research was carried out while ensuring the data protection of the participants. At the same time, it was important to apply several ethical principles that are aligned with research-based practice, suggested by Silverman (2006). The role of data protection and ethics is to prevent manipulation and misuse of participants. The participants were aware of their freedom to withdraw at any time and of what was needed from them as students in a blended learning writing course on wikis. Consequently, the provided data needed to be confidential and anonymous, and informed consents were obtained. There were other ethical considerations encountered as following:

#### **5.11.1. Confidentiality and anonymity**

Confidentiality was highly important since there would be extensive data, relating to the participants' online-based discussions and their produced written texts. The concept of confidentiality was applied by hiding any personal details that might lead to the individuals identities being revealed (David and Sutton, 2004) particularly during analysing data and reporting findings. This procedure reinforced the confidentiality of the class members in order to make them un-recognisable by the public as well as by future readers. Instead, alphabetic abbreviations were used to denote each participant with his contributions.

All the real names across the entire data were replaced with two letters for each participant indicating their first and family names. As far as anonymity is concerned, the questionnaires were completed anonymously and in a pseudonymous method (Denscombe, 2002). The purpose was to protect the privacy of the participants and remove any possibility of identifying the respondents. As opposed to the

questionnaires, other research methods such as focus groups and interviews were less anonymous. Confidentiality was confirmed in such research instruments.

### **5.11.2. Consent forms**

Obtaining consent forms from the participants was vital before starting the study. The participants were informed about the details of the research and what they should do. The consent forms also stressed the personal choice of the participants either to take part or to withdraw at any time (see Appendices 4, 5 and 6). This is seen as vital by Homan (1991), 'the essence of the principle of informed consent is that human subjects of research should be allowed to agree or refuse to participate' (p: 69). The forms also conveyed a message that an agreement to participate meant a responsibility for the potential participants to respond to the tasks and roles assigned. Barbour (2008) emphasises the importance of telling the participants what they will do in advance before they take a decision.

The forms also conveyed details about sensitive issues associated with maintaining the privacy of participants' identities so no one from the university would be able to see what these participants were doing. In addition, the forms described the potential implications and expectations of this course and its related tasks. These forms also assisted me to obtain agreement from the participants to be recorded and then to translate their recordings into English from Arabic. The same students knew that all wiki-based pages and drafted texts would be only used for the purpose of this research and they would be seen only by the researcher and his supervision team.

### **5.11.3. Attribution of writing development: Is it because of the instructor's devotion or the new course of PWMCW?**

As part of meeting the ethical considerations, learners' attribution of their learning was considered. Research into attribution theory refers to

the perception or inference of cause... The common ideas are that people interpret behavior in terms of its causes and that these interpretations play an important role in determining reactions to the behavior (Kelley and Michela, 1980, p: 458).

It determines why learners do what they do. I considered the participants' attribution regarding their development in writing in relation to two causes. They involved firstly the instructor's commitment to delivering the best teaching and moderation possible, and secondly the new PWMCW course and its related tasks.

During the qualitative research methods (i.e. focus groups and interviews), I paid a great deal of attention to this issue where the participants were frequently asked over

time about what aspects had enriched their writing skills and expertise: the style of teaching or the wiki-based writing. I asked the participants about which one of the two methods (instructor's enthusiasm while teaching or PWMCW) were more helpful that contributed to the students' development in creating better written texts. As a result, the new course of WMCW was highly attributed. However, the participants also asserted that wiki-oriented writing tasks were useful because the instructor played certain roles such as moderation and encouragement.

#### **5.11.4. Dual identity: researcher and instructor**

It was essential, as a researcher-instructor, to be as neutral as possible in presenting the results and in drawing conclusions. This precaution has been taken into consideration to avoid bias and negative influence of being a researcher in a classroom. Acknowledging an ethical issue brings more accuracy to the research regarding the potential effect of influence and the procedures needed to lessen it. Research ethics require researchers 'to be as clear as possible about the grounds and criteria for this selection [of data collection] and make these criteria clear when presenting the research conclusion' (Oliver, 2003, p: 141). I have followed the steps below to ensure that I have properly addressed the generated concerns of being a researcher at the same time.

- Step1: Using un-assessed tasks where all marking was conducted for research purpose, which did not affect the learners' final scores.
- Step2: Adhering to (and telling the learners) the responsibilities and the roles of instructors and researchers.
- Step3: Thinking critically during the focus groups, the interviews and the interpretation of data about whether the findings described the participants' thoughts or just followed the instructor's interests.
- Step4: Showing the normality of having learners with different points of views and perspectives.
- Step5: Collecting data was achieved before the researcher introduced himself as an instructor and after announcing the final grades at the end of semester.

Key reasons for deciding that the researcher should have a dual-role identity were formulated after talking with a group of academic instructors; and are as follows:

- It was difficult to convince other instructors to adopt a change of pedagogy in their style of teaching and to adopt new one, especially without showing evidence of its success and value for learners (i.e., findings).

- It was difficult to find instructors who would have a high level of motivation and willingness, and who had also sufficient time to incorporate wikis into their writing classes according to the new plan, despite their positive interest in the idea of WMCW and its related tasks.
- It was difficult to give additional training (on how to use wikis) to the instructors. Unlike the students, training academic staff is complex mostly because of the numerous differences in their age, educational level and expertise in using technology.

In brief, being a researcher and a teacher at the same time might bring with it a few limitations such as the influences of the teacher. Yet, to minimise any possible influence, I followed a number of practical procedures such as using un-assessed tasks, promoting different opinions and running the instrument at the very beginning and end of the course. The researcher was the best person to implement the experiment as he was familiar with the context and the learners' experience and this was important for interpreting the findings accordingly. The dual personality of the teacher and researcher did not result in a negative outcome. Rather, it contributed to building trusting relationships with the teacher and cultivating an interest in gaining insight into diverse views.

In this research, the participants took part in pre-and-post experiments mediated by wiki, which, along with the motivation and enthusiasm of the teacher, created a novelty effect (see sub-section: 5.11.3 for the learners' attribution about the study). The Hawthorne effect was at the top level where the participants created different perceptions and behaviours that would fit the anticipated results. From the findings, it was reported that both factors (wiki-based writing and the enthusiasm of the teacher) had a positive impact on their writing learning process, rather than it simply being the effect of a new tool. The initial and follow-up focus groups, as well as the delayed interviews, looked at the lasting impact of the course and its effect after a period of six months.

#### **5.11.5. Permission to access the research location**

Getting permission to access the research location and to deliver a different teaching course in writing for one academic semester (16 weeks) was a major hurdle for me as a researcher. That was because required modules are not normally delivered by visitor instructors who stay only for a short period of time. Fortunately, I managed to get the agreement from the Head of the Centre of English Language who is responsible for teaching English language-related modules to the students in the preparatory year at

the university. In the first a few weeks, I was mentored by a senior instructor, from the same centre, who provided me with some advice regarding how to deal with the students.

#### **5.12. The limitation of methodology**

The research methodology showed a number of limitations. The study was based on only three groups. Although they showed adequate and interesting social interaction and group work, having more groups using wikis for learning writing might have revealed a wider range of perceptions along with different findings. Likewise, dealing with one class for experimenting the use of PWMCW was also another limitation. If there had been more classes involved in the study, and if there were more instructors using the same pedagogy, this might have revealed widespread results based on comparative analysis. As the participants were allocated three tasks, these tasks enabled them to undertake this experience and learn something new. Yet, the students expressed their feelings and need to do more wiki-based tasks. Such tasks involve several transferable skills (e.g. collaboration, peer feedback etc.) that need a long time and much practice to be developed. Another limitation concerned the number of face-to-face meetings with the instructor as well as with the peers themselves. Having three physical meetings prior to each task was not adequate.

Moreover, there was a gender-related limitation because the research context was a segregated higher education system. In such a setting, the medical students only start mixed-sex education in their fourth year literally immediately on internship. Preparatory year students are still separated. For that reason, it was not possible to explore female learners' perceptions or enable them to post their written contributions. The investigation of gender differences, in relation to WMCW and its related tasks, especially in this research context, may reveal unexpected insights such as whether or not the learners will enhance their written skills if they are situated in a mixed environment. A further limitation concerned the translation of the focus groups and interviews. I spent a considerable time on transcripts to provide accurate translation for focus group discussions and interviews from the mother tongue (Arabic) into the target language (English). Translating the transcripts from an L1 to an FL was a challenging task. I faced some difficulty in translating some lexis and content that had no simple equivalent meaning in English. Such lexis and content were very few so most of them were transcribed as they were pronounced by the participants in Arabic whereas others could not be neither translated nor transcribed because they were unclear in the recording.

For that reason, the transcripts were created by presenting the primary content and the relevant interaction. I mostly stressed lexical-related content (what is said) more than phonetic content (how it is said). I did not consider in detail the following issues: intonation pauses and stressed words. Yet, in conjunction with Seedhouse (2005), I underlined the features of conversation analysis related to adjacency pairs and other-/self-repair (see sub-section: 5.5.1).

### **5.13. Summary**

This chapter has presented the justification for choosing a quasi-experimental methodology to find out the impact of wikis on EFL writing. The data collected for this study was obtained from a range of qualitative and quantitative sources based on direct and indirect procedures. The direct procedure of data collection involved the pre-and-post-questionnaires, the initial and follow-up focus groups and later interviews. The indirect procedure comprised the texts and postings made by the students' on-wiki and during classes. The indicated instruments were employed in line with the quasi-experimental design where each instrument (except the interviews) were applied twice before and after the intervention. In this chapter, detailed information has been given to describe the sample of the study and how the participants were distributed into three learning groups (or learning communities) consisting of seven members in each. It has explained the guidelines that were followed (e.g. training the learners how to use wikis, and how to take part in peer feedback) to make the potential participants prepared for the new classes and related tasks. There was also a description of how research method were distributed and how ethical considerations encountered.

The main limitation is the limited number of individual cases. The number of the participants does not result in absolute generalisability. The reason is related to time constraints. There was not enough time to study a bigger sample with a higher number of students or more than one classroom without studying the students thoroughly. The researcher is interested in gaining as many rich description and insights from the same individuals as possible to observe the level of development and change over time according to quantitative and qualitative analyses. This explanation should include what they say about learning writing on wikis and what they do on wikis to complete their writing tasks. As has already been shown in sub-sections: 5.10.4, generalisability is not a major problem in the quasi-experimental research since another type of validity can be proven, namely individual validity. It is believed that by exploring such detailed accounts of the students in this research, the results can be linked to other learners particularly from similar contexts (non-English native speaking learners) that use wiki-mediated writing process in general academic writing classes.

## Chapter 6: Analysis of Students' Perceptions of PWMCW

### 6.1. Introduction:

Chapter 5 and 6 present an analysis of the findings of the study. Chapter 5 focusses on learners' perceptions of the following: the specific principles involved in the teaching writing approach, the process writing approach, collaborative writing (CW) and wiki-mediated collaborative writing (WMCW). Chapter 6 will take a closer look at the process involved in WMCW and at the texts that the participants produced. The current chapter is made up of four sections which attempt to answer the first research question and four sub-questions as follows:

Research Question (RQ1)

RQ1) In general terms, how do EFL learner writers perceive the new approach to teaching writing?

- 1 a) How are the specific principles (refer to sub-section 5.7.1 in methodology chapter) emphasised in the new approach to teaching writing perceived by learners of EFL writing?
- 1 b) How is the process approach to writing perceived by learners of EFL writing?
- 1 C) How is collaborative writing (CW) perceived by learners of EFL writing (offline)?
- 1 d) How is wiki-mediated collaborative writing (WMCW) perceived by learners of EFL writing?

The first section draws from the pre-and post-questionnaires and takes a descriptive approach to the students' perceptions of their previous and current writing classes. The second section draws from the initial and follow up focus groups and delayed interviews, and takes a thematic approach. The third section brings together the findings of the previous two sections. The final section looks in more detail at some of the discussion arising from the focus groups and at the level of consensus and disagreement between the participants.

### 6.2. Descriptive analysis:

Generally speaking, the findings obtained from the statistical analysis revealed changes within the perceptions of the participants between the pre-and post-questionnaires. The findings are rated according to a scale consisting of: 1 (strongly

disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (undecided), 4 (agree) 5 (strongly agree) where the higher score is the more positive result. Out of the thirty sentence items, the respondents showed positive significant changes in sixteen items. They all achieved a statistical probability that gives 5% or less chance of error ( $p < 0.05$ ) with a confidence level that is 95% or more.

In addition, the respondents did not show significant changes of perceptions in the rest of the fourteen items. Although the results of these items indicated insignificant changes in the participants' perceptions, the results were not all the same. The results showed a marginal level of significance or what can be considered moderate change in items 1 and 25.

### **6.2.1. EFL learners' perceptions about the principles used for the new approach to teaching writing**

For a number of items, the students' questionnaire responses indicated a significant positive change in perceptions towards using the new approach to teaching writing:

- Helpfulness of writing tasks for improving learners' writing abilities
- Type of writing tasks (authentic and discipline-related)
- Division of writing tasks into strategies or phases
- Use of E-feedback

On the other hand, the students' questionnaire responses did not show a significant positive change in perceptions concerning the new approach to teaching writing in relation to other questionnaire items:

- The advantage of peer interaction
- The advantage of interaction with the instructor
- The feedback provided by the instructor
- The adequacy of feedback

The results below are the output of the statistical comparison of the means identified for section A in the pre-and-post questionnaires addressing the previous (first semester) and current (second semester) classes (see Appendix 1).

Based on a T-test using the rating scale from 1 to 5, four items achieved a positive significant change in the learners' perceptions towards the new approach to teaching writing whereas the remaining four items did not. Further information is presented in Table 6.1.

Section A Item No.	Pre- responses (M/SD)	Post- responses (M/SD)	'p' Value
1. The tasks were not exciting because of the interaction among the students.	3.80/1.05	3.00/1.12	P=0.053
2. The tasks were exciting because of the interaction among the students and the instructor.	2.50/1.14	3.25/1.29	P=0.114
3. The tasks were helpful for improving the writing skills.	1.65/.671	2.80/1.54	P=0.021
4. Face-to-face correction by teacher(s) help to understand writing problems.	3.25/1.16	2.55/0.99	P=0.059
5. Task types were encouraging (e.g. solving a problem and describing a scene).	2.00/1.41	3.35/1.08	P=0.034
6. Writing strategies were motivating (e.g. planning, drafting, and editing).	2.30/1.08	3.45/0.88	P=0.002
7. The type of feedback (e-feedback) was supportive.	2.25/.851	3.45/.887	P=0.037
8. The feedback given on content was not enough (e.g. commenting on the written text).	3.40/1.23	2.95/1.19	P=0.154

Table 6.1: A T-test for EFL learners' perceptions about the principles used for the new approach to teaching writing

Item 1: The advantage of peer interaction (Negative statement)

There was no significant change in the students' perceptions of peer interaction (from 3.80 in the pre-responses to 3.00 in the post-responses). However, 85% of the participants indicated the benefit of peer interaction in the post-responses as opposed to 45% in the pre-responses.

Item 2: The advantage of interaction with the instructor

There was only a marginal change in the students' perceptions about interaction with the instructor, as a facilitator of knowledge (from 2.50 in the pre-responses to 3.25 in the post-responses). Dealing with the instructor as a guide for knowledge was not fully appreciated by all the learners since they thought that the instructor should be the main source of knowledge (see sub-section: 6.3.4.3).

Item 3: Helpfulness of writing tasks for improving writers' skills

There was evidence of a positive significant change in the participants' perceptions regarding the helpfulness of the writing tasks. A total of 35% of the respondents in the questionnaire agreed or strongly agreed with this item. Yet, in the post-responses 85% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed.

Item 4: The feedback provided by the instructor

There was no significant change in the participants' perceptions of the medium used for feedback; which incorporates face-to-face and online. The mean dropped from 3.25 in the pre-responses to 2.55 in the post-responses suggesting that more face-to-face feedback was needed. The learners felt that the feedback provided by the instructor was not enough as it was mostly online, as shown in the follow-up focus groups (see Appendix 10 for more of the participants' perceptions in their own words).

Item 5: Type of writing tasks (authentic and discipline-related)

The participants displayed a positive significant change in their perceptions about the type of writing tasks that were derived from the students' discipline and targeted medical-related issues. The percentage of agreement or strong agreement in the pre-responses was 50% and rose to 85% in the post-responses. Such tasks led many of the students to exert more effort (See sub-section: 6.3.1 about the learners' responses to the authentic tasks).

Item 6: Division of writing tasks into strategies or phases

There was a positive significant change in the participants' perceptions concerning the division of writing tasks into phases to minimise the complexity of writing. Creating texts on the basis of straightforward steps was perceived as an effective technique for learning writing (more results about the process writing approach are presented in the next sub-section: 6.2.2). Therefore, 60% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 20% were undecided in the pre-survey. However, in the post-survey 80% agreed and strongly agreed believing that such phases can be practical for writing learners.

Item 7: Use of E-feedback

The participants revealed a positive significant change in their perceptions regarding using e-feedback. In the pre-responses, 40% of the students were less confident about (and did not like) e-oriented feedback to be used as a formal way for learning writing. Yet, in the post-responses, the users acknowledged the significance of this method with 70% agreeing or strongly agreeing. The percentage of undecided respondents decreased from 35% in the survey to 15% in the post-survey. The participants appreciated the way of receiving corrections electronically either from fellow students or from the instructor (see Appendix 10 for more of the participants' perceptions in their own words).

Item 8: The adequacy of feedback (*Negative statement*)

The participants marginally changed (from 3.40 in the pre-responses to 2.95 in the post-responses) their perceptions concerning the adequacy of feedback provided on

the content of their written texts. Nevertheless, in the post-responses, 60% of the respondents accepted the adequacy of feedback on the content provided, compared to 35% in the pre-responses.

### **6.2.2. EFL learners' perceptions about the process writing approach**

The students' questionnaire responses demonstrated a significant positive change in perceptions concerning some aspects of the process writing approach in the new classes. They are as follows:

- Accomplishing planning tasks
- Achieving discussion
- Choosing interesting ideas
- Producing multiple drafts
- Focusing on accuracy (i.e., grammar, spelling and )
- Generating final drafts

Conversely, there was no significant positive change in perceptions for some other aspects of the process writing approach. They are as follows:

- Focusing on content (i.e., reliability of the information provided)
- Focusing on unity (i.e., coherence of the whole text)

The results shown below were the output of the statistical comparison of the means identified for section B in the pre-and-post questionnaires which aimed to understand the impact of the process writing approach in the new classes.

Based on a T-test using the rating scale from 1 to 5, six items achieved a positive significant change in the learners' perceptions supporting the use of the process writing approach whereas the other two items did not, see the following details in Table 6.2.

Section B Item No.	Pre- responses (M/SD)	Post- responses (M/SD)	'p' Value
9. The tasks were comfortable because there were planning for the writing topic.	1.90/1.07	3.20/1.11	P=0.004
10. The tasks were comfortable because there were enough discussions about the writing topics.	1.95/1.05	2.75/1.02	P=0.022
11. The tasks were interesting because they presented interesting ideas for the writing topics.	2.05/0.83	3.00/0.92	P=0.008
12. The tasks were useful because there was no practice of writing drafts.	2.35/1.22	3.40/1.09	P=0.011
13. The tasks were useful because content was checked.	2.40/0.99	2.65/1.04	P=0.489
14. The tasks were useful because keeping unity was checked (e.g. using a topic sentence with relevant sentence coherence).	2.40/1.09	2.70/0.87	P=0.369
15. The tasks were useful because forms were checked (e.g. grammar and spelling accuracy).	1.85/.671	2.85/1.34	P=0.024
16. The tasks were helpful because a final draft was completed after revision.	1.75/0.85	3.45/1.15	P=0.000

Table 6.2: A T-test for EFL learners' perceptions about the process writing approach

Item 9: Accomplishing planning

The participants indicated a positive significant change in their perceptions regarding their ability to accomplish planning or 'brainstorming', for the assigned writing tasks assigned. There was an adequate amount of planning involved on the part of the students, before they embarked on the writing tasks. The learners had a minimal level of stress and tended to be more excited and motivated by the activities. As the learners had the opportunity to plan, this increased confidence and sound structure and helped peers and the teacher to provide relevant feedback. The results showed four times higher levels of agreement for this item in the post-responses (85% compared to 20% in the pre-responses).

Item 10: Discussion

The participants demonstrated a positive significant change about discussion for the writing tasks assigned. The results illustrated that the post-responses were 80% compared to 20% in the pre-responses. It is essential to clarify that both items 9 and 10 were seen as important by the participants in order to simplify the preparation of writing and to give relevant material for well-informed texts; this conclusion was derived from the participants' focus groups and interviews (see section: 6.3.2 for more details).

Item 11: Choosing interesting ideas

The participants showed a positive significant change in their perceptions regarding interesting ideas for the writing tasks given. This response was equalled by 85% agreement or strong agreement in the post-responses whereas there was only 35% in the pre-responses.

Item 12: Producing multiple drafts (*Negative statement*)

The participants had a positive significant change in their perceptions about the production of multiple drafts to improve the early drafts. In the pre-responses, only 20% of the learners recognised the usefulness of working on multiple drafts. However, in the post-responses this percentage increased more than three times (70%).

Item 13: Focusing on content (to provide more reliable information)

The participants changed their perceptions marginally but not significantly (from 2.40 in the pre-responses to 2.65 in the post-responses), about checking content and information reliability for the writing tasks given (refer to sub-section 5.10.1 in methodology chapter).

Item 14: Focusing on unity (to show coherence of the whole text)

There was insignificant change in the students' perceptions about checking the unity, and coherence, of the entire texts for the tasks given. The participants registered a marginal level of positive perceptions as the mean increased from 2.40 to 2.70 (refer to sub-section 5.7.1 in methodology chapter to understand the meaning of coherence).

Item 15: Focusing on accuracy (i.e. grammar and spelling)

The participants demonstrated a positive significant change in their perceptions in relation to accuracy, which includes syntactical and lexical corrections. The percentage of the participants who agreed, increased from 25% in the pre-responses to 70% in the post-responses (refer to sub-section 5.7.1 in methodology chapter to understand the meaning of accuracy).

Item 16: Generating final drafts

The participants recorded a positive significant change towards generating final drafts after responding to the corrections and suggestions. 60% of the pre-responses were either neutral or disagreed with this item. But in the post-responses, 85% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this item.

### **6.2.3. EFL learners' perceptions about the practice of collaborative writing (CW) - offline**

The students' questionnaire responses revealed a positive significant change in perceptions showing the impact of CW; the practice that the students did before trying the new course that emphasised wiki-based writing (see section: 5.9 for more information about the description of this course and how offline CW tasks were delivered). The responses pointed out the benefits of some aspects of CW as following:

- CW is a helpful practice for learners to understand each other.
- CW allows learners to express their ideas without stress.
- CW is a useful practice for learners to increase interaction.

In contrast, the students' questionnaire responses did not result in a positive significant change in perceptions for other aspects of CW as follows:

- CW is a good way of reducing the difficulties of writing tasks.
- CW is a useful practice for learners where they can see each other's writing.
- CW is a useful practice for learners than the traditional (paper-based) individual writing.
- CW creates equal chances of participation between participants.
- CW is a useful practice for learners to identify the linguistic problems related to their writing.

The findings presented here were the output of the comparative analysis of the means identified for section C in the pre-and-post questionnaires. The objective was to discover which aspects of CW would change in the perceptions of the students.

Based on a T-test using the rating scale from 1 to 5, three items achieved a positive significant change in the learners' perceptions as a consequence of using CW, which was carried out in a traditional way without wikis, whilst the other five items did not, based on the results shown in Table 6.3.

Section C Item No.	Pre- responses (M/SD)	Post- responses (M/SD)	'p' Value
17. Writing with classmates will reduce/reduced the difficulty of doing writing tasks as they help each other.	1.60/0.59	1.35/0.59	P=0.262
18. Writing with classmates will be/was challenging to understand each other.	1.85/.875	2.45/.686	P=0.010
19. Writing with classmates will not be/was not useful as they will see each other's writing in English.	2.10/1.29	2.25/.967	P=0.634
20. Writing with classmates will be/was stressful as it does not allows everyone to express his personal ideas.	4.05/0.99	3.20/0.95	P=0.003
21. Writing with classmates will be/was less interesting than individual writing.	2.05/.999	2.25/1.02	P=0.428
22. Writing with classmates will be/was useful as there is interaction with other classmates.	1.75/.910	3.15/1.66	P=0.004
23. Writing with classmates will be/was difficult as some of them might write more than others.	2.75/0.97	3.30/1.17	P=0.134
24. Writing with classmates will simplify/simplified knowing the writing problems as they will look at the work.	2.00/0.91	1.85/0.98	P=0.603

Table 6.3: A T-test for EFL learners' perceptions about CW

Item 17: CW is a good way of reducing the difficulties of writing tasks.

There was no significant change in the participants' perceptions of CW as a good way of reducing the difficulties linked with writing tasks. Despite this result, 95% of the post-responses disagreed or strongly disagreed as opposed to 65% of pre-responses which disagreed or strongly disagreed with this sentence.

Item 18: CW is a helpful practice for learners to understand each other. (Negative statement)

There was proof of a positive significant change in the participants' perceptions of CW as a helpful practice that would enable learner writers to get to know each other, including their interests and emotions. In the pre-response, 85% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this item whereas the percentage of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement declined to 55% in the post-responses.

Item 19: CW is a useful practice for learners where they can see each other's writing. (Negative statement)

There was not a significant change in the participants' perceptions regarding CW as a useful practice for because learners can see each other's writing. 70% of the respondents in the pre-questionnaire disagreed or strongly disagreed with this item while the percentage of the post-respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed reached 75%. The reason for the high percentage of disagreement in both cohorts is perhaps due to the difficulty of exchanging the hard copies of different drafts between the participants.

Item 20: CW allows learners to express their ideas without stress (Negative statement)

The participants showed a positive significant change in their perceptions concerning CW as a convenient practice that would enable learners to express their various ideas easily. The respondents in the pre-questionnaire who found this practice comfortable were 45%. However, the percentage of post-respondents rose to 75%.

Item 21: CW is a useful practice for learners than traditional (paper-based) individual writing. (Negative statement)

The participants did not perceive a significant change considering CW as a more interesting practice than individual paper-based writing. Both of the pre-and-post responses resulted in similar percentages of disagreement or strong disagreement with this item (80%).

Item 22: CW is a useful practice for learners to increase interaction.

The participants indicated a positive significant change in their perceptions towards CW as a good way of interaction with their peers. In the pre-responses, there were 40% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with this item. However, in the post-responses, a total of 90% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed. The result is in line with some of the written responses given by the participants during their interaction on wikis indicating their acceptance and preference for writing and commenting in public with their peers (see sub-section: 6.2.1).

Item 23: CW creates equal chances of participation between participants. (Negative statement)

The participants did not show a positive significant change in their perceptions regarding CW as a practice that would enable learners to create equal chances of participation between learners. Yet, more approval for this item was shown in the post-response with 45% compared to 25%.

Item 24: CW helps learners to identify the linguistic problems related to their writing.

There was not a significant change in the participants' perceptions regarding CW as a useful practice that would enable learners to identify each other's linguistic problems.

85% of the participants indicated agreement or strong agreement in the pre-responses but that declined to 70% in the post-responses with a higher percentage of undecided, 25% compared to 10% in the beginning.

#### **6.2.4. EFL learners' perceptions about the practice of wiki-mediated collaborative writing (WMCW)**

Concerning the practice of WMCW, the students' questionnaire responses pointed to a positive significant change in perceptions regarding the application of WMCW in a number of aspects which include:

- WMCW is an easier practice than CW in-classes.
- WMCW helps to improve learners' writing problems.
- WMCW is a suitable practice for learners to provide more information/ content.

However, there was not a positive significant change in all the aspects of WMCW. The students' questionnaire responses did not reveal a positive significant change in perceptions for the following areas:

- WMCW is a comfortable practice for learners to reduce the stress of writing tasks.
- WMCW is a more productive practice than traditional (paper-based) individual writing.
- WMCW is a useful practice for learners to provide knowledge exchange/ discussion.

The findings shown here were the outcome of the comparative analysis of the means identified for section D in the pre-and-post questionnaires. The purpose was to explore which aspects of WMCW would change the students' perceptions.

Based on a T-test using the rating scale from 1 to 5, three items achieved a positive significant change in the learners' perceptions as a consequence of using WMCW whereas the other three items were not consistent with the results described below in Table 6.4.

Section D Item No.	Pre- responses (M/SD)	Post- responses (M/SD)	'p' Value
25. Writing with classmates on the Internet (wiki) will be/was comfortable to reduce the stress of writing tasks.	2.30/1.49	2.35/1.49	P=0.054
26. Writing with classmates on the Internet (wiki) will be/was more productive than individual writing on paper.	2.05/1.09	2.65/1.35	P=0.104
27. Writing with classmates on the Internet (wiki) will be/was easier than writing with classmates in classes.	2.15/1.08	3.35/1.22	P=0.003
28. Writing with classmates on the Internet (wiki) will not improve/did not improve writing problems.	1.95/1.05	3.05/1.468	P=0.002
29. Writing with classmates on the Internet (wiki) will be/was useful for knowledge exchange.	2.05/1.23	2.30/1.38	P=0.506
30. Writing with classmates on the Internet (wiki) will be/was more suitable for giving information about writing.	1.85/.988	3.25/1.44	P=0.004

Table 6.4: A T-test for EFL learners' perceptions about WMCW

Item 25: WMCW reduces the stress of writing tasks.

The participants did not demonstrate a positive significant change in their perceptions regarding WMCW as a practice for reducing the stress related to writing tasks. On the other hand, the participants indicated a marginal level of positive change in perceptions where two-thirds of the post-respondents agreed or strongly agreed on this item positively (75%) compared to 35% in the pre-questionnaire.

Item 26: WMCW is a more productive practice than traditional (paper-based) individual writing.

The participants did not offer a positive significant change in their perceptions regarding WMCW as a more productive practice than traditional individual writing on paper. Nevertheless, the participants achieved a higher number of positive responses in the post-survey, 85% compared to 55%. There are a number of participants who thought that individual writing was the foundation for their study success since it was the method in which the participants would be assessed, regardless of the value of WMCW (see sub-section: 6.3.4.4 for more information).

Item 27: WMCW is an easier practice than CW in the classroom.

The participants indicated a positive significant change in their perceptions in terms of WMCW as an easier practice than CW that takes place inside classroom. This

percentage of agreement or strong agreement responses improved to 80% compared to 30% before.

Item 28: WMCW helps to improve learners' writing problems. (Negative statement)

The participants had a positive significant change in their perceptions regarding WMCW as a helpful practice to improve learners' writing problems. 45% of the pre-respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement but more disagreement and strong disagreement were shown by the post-respondents (85%).

Item 29: WMCW helps learners to provide knowledge exchange/discussion.

The participants did not indicate a positive significant change in their perceptions of WMCW as a useful practice for providing more knowledge exchange and discussion. The responses of the participants did not significantly change in the pre-and-post surveys. The percentages of agreement or strong agreement in both cohorts were 75% in the pre-responses and 80% in the post-responses.

Item 30: WMCW helps learners to provide more information/ content.

The participants had a positive significant change in their perceptions considering WMCW as helpful for providing more information and content. In the pre-responses, a total of 40% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with the item. However, in the post-responses, after implementing WMCW, this percentage of responses increased to 80%.

The participants provided more written perceptions as a response to the open-ended questions in the questionnaires.

In the pre-questionnaire (addressing the previous classes and showing expectations for the new classes), the students stated the following:

- There is not enough practice of writing.
- I want writing classes not to be for improving writing skills only but I want them to be classes for improving all other skills of English.
- It was good and full of information. The teacher was giving us some homework.
- My writing good but I have problems in grammar.
- It is a very good idea but it is exhausting for the students because it needs time.
- We do not have time to do the tasks on Wikispaces since we spend most of the day at the university and then we go home to study. (translated from Arabic)

Yet, in the post-questionnaire (addressing the new classes and their recent experience), the students stated the following:

- Yes, we did not expect to use this tool in this course and in the beginning of this course. We expected it to be boring and monotonous. In fact, we enjoyed writing for each other
- The writing tasks were interesting and beneficial.
- There was not enough participation from some students (translated from Arabic)
- We need to follow the suggested plan in order to get enough time and to achieve the tasks on time.
- In the beginning, I expected more hardships... I expected hardships but I was surprised how easy and beneficial the tasks were especially with using Wikispaces during this academic term. (translated from Arabic)

### **6.3. Thematic analysis:**

This section presents more findings to answer the research questions already addressed for this chapter (R.Q.1.a, b, c and d) using a different method, based on themes. The students provided their perceptions about using the new approach to teaching writing, by reflecting on a number of principles suggested for new ways of learning writing, the process approach, CW and WMCW. The perceptions, which are handled in this section, are derived from the students' comments and contributions arising from the focus groups (Appendices: 9 and 10) and interviews (Appendix: 3).

Analysis of both sets of data was undertaken using deductive coding (by starting the analysis with themes already in mind) and inductive coding of responses for all the participants (by identifying the emerging sub-themes falling under the main themes). This analysis was achieved horizontally by identifying the sub-themes across the responses. At the end of this analysis, further analysis was achieved chronologically by finding out the sub-themes for particular individuals.

#### **6.3.1. Consequences of using the new principles for learning writing**

The first theme 'Consequences of using the new principles for learning writing' was driven deductively from the researcher's prior assumptions. As a result, three sub-themes emerged inductively as illustrated in Table 6.5. This theme uncovered learners' perceptions of the new principles used in the approach to teaching writing. Each one of the sub-themes will be presented with a few examples.

A theme and its sub-themes		Focus groups		Interviews Delayed	Frequency
		Initial	Follow-up		
<b>Theme 1: Consequences of using the new principles for learning writing</b>					
	Sub-theme 1.1: Learning writing as an interactive practice	Frequency	10	2	4
	Perception	Negative	Positive	Positive	
Sub-theme 1.2: Responding to authentic tasks	Frequency	11	5	-	16
	Perception	Postive	Positive	-	
Sub-theme 1.3: Reflecting on blended learning	Frequency	-	11	3+1	15
	Perception	-	Positive	Positive/ Negative	

Table 6.5: The theme and sub-themes related to consequences of using the new principles for learning writing

#### 6.3.1.1. Learning writing as an interactive practice (among peers and with the instructor)

The students indicated their negative perceptions in the initial focus group, before they started the new collaborative tasks, about the consequences of using one of the principles used in the new approach to teaching writing. It was the principle of understanding writing as an interactive process with the instructor(s) and among peers. Nonetheless, the students' understanding about learning writing gradually changed whilst using the collaborative tasks. The students tended to be more positive in the final focus group and in the delayed interviews.

In the initial focus group, MS described what they used to do in normal traditional classes in order to practise writing. This practice neglected interactivity and valued memorisation.

**MS:** That wasn't everything... sometimes we had in our textbook six chapters and for each there was a passage or paragraph, but this paragraph was to be memorised. In fact we were (?)... I mean the tutor didn't make any changes in the final exam.

HA offered evidence of the lack of interactivity in the traditional writing classes.

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**HA:** Not only in the first semester, the instructors (?) dictate us the information, we listen a lot to them but without any medium of interaction or interactivity, the instructor speaks all the time. When we listen to the lecture, we feel we will forget it the next day.

Similarly, HA confirmed the limitation of interaction with the instructor and among peers.

**HA:** There is no action (.). There's no action so you feel you don't construct new meanings for learning with the tutor, I mean we're only asked questions and answer them in an ordinary way and we don't do anything else.

In contrast, there was more interaction among peers in the later classes for learning writing, according to HB indicated in the follow-up focus group.

**HB:** Because we had different experiences I mean someone correct our writing, so we need to re-read it again ask your peer why this correction has been done... then I can insist it should be reinstated or not and my style can gradually improve.

MN also pointed out his positive perception about the impact of learning writing by engaging the students in an interactive practice among peers.

**MN:** Of course, that became clearer after the quiz; for example, you gave us a topic about the description of an image, so we did task 2 on this basis on Wikispaces. Everyone produced a very good piece based on interacting with these topics and with peers. This was proof that everyone wrote well.

MN thought that the new approach to the collaborative practice of writing would be helpful because his peers worked harder to take note. Furthermore, they managed to put their ideas in order and analyse different tasks. MN believed that everyone produced a very good piece based on the topics selected and had the opportunity to interact with their peers. He judged that everyone had improved their writing, since they were able to compare their work with what they had written before, especially during the previous term, when many elements of writing were ignored such as using a variety of lexis and clear introductory sentences.

#### **6.3.1.2. Responding to authentic tasks**

The students expressed their positive perceptions about using one of the principles of the new approach to teaching; the relevance of the writing tasks assigned. This was the relevance which was derived from their discipline and their future career needs.

Further positive perceptions appeared in the follow-up focus group. In the initial focus group, HB explained the reason that led him to prefer the new tasks to other tasks that were common in the previous classes.

**HB:** Because you changed the topic from 'my father' or 'my mother' to a wider topic about diabetes, we used to deal with normal situations even youngsters can easily understand, but now we deal with a scientific topic and for that reason we need factual information.  
(71: 74)

SA confirmed the positive impact of the current classes on their everyday life and their area of expertise.

**SA:** I think choosing topics-related to medicine derived from our environment is very good because we deal with everyday life (.). When we read something about this topic it helps us understand our field more (.). I mean, if we need to make a presentation on the subject of medical terminology, this will absolutely benefit us. I have a presentation and it will be about diabetes ...

HA also mentioned the benefits of engaging the students with authentic tasks about topics related to medicine as it introduced him to new vocabulary and helped him write critically.

**HA:** It will contribute to gaining new words and more information about this disease, I mean it's a new experience and we will learn how to criticise this topic (.).

In the follow-up focus group, HA showed the importance of authentic tasks of new topics to make writing exciting and to learn the basic steps of practising academic writing.

**HA:** ... The second point was that the topics were exciting whereas in the first semester experienced the traditional way of giving topics, which were boring. In other words, we were requested by the instructor to write about a topic without preparing a plan or looking at specific resources to extract some of the information needed or anything else....

### **6.3.1.3. Reflecting on blended learning (integrating modes of face-to-face learning with distant learning)**

The students reflected on the positive role of blended learning where textbook and technology can be integrated for more enhanced learning. The students increased their understanding of blended learning as a key component facilitating the new approach to

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teaching writing. The positive perceptions in the follow-up focus group were also reinforced in the delayed interviews.

In the follow-up focus group, HA explained how Wikispaces enabled the students to facilitate what they studied in classes.

**HA:** We took what we studied in face-to-face teaching and then implemented it on Wikispaces {overlapping}.

HA emphasised the role of classes and face-to-face during blended learning.

**HA:** If we don't make use of the structure of writing and what we hear in classes, we won't be able to do anything on Wikispaces.

HA also recognised in more detail the outcomes of blended learning particularly because it links the theory with practice.

**HA:** We took them from our textbook and then we implemented them here on Wikispaces. You know we learned how to revise the concluding sentences and the controlling ideas .. and how to write a suitable sentence for certain topics whilst taking into account how to make them well-organised ... we learned theoretically and then we tried to employ it that on Wikispaces. (79: 24)

Very similar to what HA expressed, HB highlighted the importance of learning new content through using wikis.

**HB:** As my friend (M2) suggested, every factor was linked to the other, so if we're just using Wikispaces without studying new content, we would not be able to improve our writing. We need to study grammar or practise reading {overlapping}.

In the delayed interview, MT commented on the advantage of blended learning and how this kind of learning helped to enhance learning.

**MT:** I think the subject was not that important. However, the blended learning between face-to-face and online teaching using different tools, such as wikis, has drawn our attention to the importance and relevance of this subject. In fact, Wikispaces improved this subject, yes it improved a lot

### **6.3.2. Perspectives on the process writing approach:**

The second theme 'Perspectives on the process approach to writing' was driven deductively from the literature and previous studies and resulted in two sub-themes that

emerged inductively as shown in Table 6.6. The students described their perceptions regarding the use of the process writing approach, which contributed to meaningful learning. They also showed their developed awareness during this approach for advancing their EFL writing skills. Both of the sub-themes identified will be explained with some examples.

A theme and its sub-themes		Focus groups		Interviews	Frequency
		Initial	Follow-up	Delayed	
<b>Theme 2: Perspectives on the process writing approach</b> Sub-theme 2.1: Experiencing meaningful learning	Frequency	3+3	9	5	20
	Perception	Positive/ Negative	Positive	Positive	
Sub-theme 2.2: Developing awareness and cognition	Frequency	-	12	4	16
	Perception	-	Positive	Positive	

Table 6.6: The theme and sub-themes related to perspectives on the process writing approach

### 6.3.2.1. Experiencing meaningful learning

The students showed positive perceptions about the process writing approach considering it a meaningful experience of learning. They recognised the potential for deep thought and searching for new content in an attempt to accomplish something genuine during this approach. The students had mixed (positive and negative) perceptions in the initial focus group but more positive perceptions appeared in the final focus group and in the delayed interviews.

Thus, HB, in the initial focus group, had given a negative perspective regarding the usefulness of the process writing approach since it keeps the student busy and requires more work.

**HB:** The process of writing will take some of our free time (.) We have dedicated time for fun but this time isn't spent as it used to be (.) This time for fun is replaced with writing, as I need to open and check the website every time and on a regular basis.

However, the benefit of this more time-consuming approach were recognised by many students. For example, SA reported that following the main phases of the process approach makes the writers more assertive in justifying what they have written about.

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**SA:** Yah, but if we use these phases [the process writing approach] before we submit our final writing to our tutor, we will be assertive about the writing we have produced and the content we included.

Later, in support of the positive comments, HB critiqued the method they used to follow in some previous writing classes that did not consider the process writing approach.

**HB:** You just hold a pen and take a piece of paper to start writing the assignment without any warm up or planning.

The interviewee MS also mentioned the way the process writing approach helps to reduce the difficulties related to writing tasks (e.g. loss of focus).

**MS:** The process was an interactive approach which made the complicated tasks easier. I can still remember how easy the writing topics were that were assigned in the last semester. They were different from the ones we have tried recently where they were more meaningful, e.g. describing a situation (our task 2).

In a different interview, HA talked about the process writing approach using wikis as meaningful learning experience for his, and his peers, progress in academic writing. He now appreciated the results of spending so much additional time on writing tasks.

**HA:** The way of writing we knew was different from the process approach with using wikis that contributed to useful learning. We did not often write weekly and we did not use to revise what we wrote in order to improve our writing skills.

#### **6.3.2.2. Developing awareness and cognition**

In a slightly different way from the above sub-theme, the students demonstrated positive perceptions about the process writing approach in terms of developing their awareness and cognition (see sub-section: 2.2.1 for further understanding of terms of awareness and cognition). They expressed thoughts about how writing can be achieved in the light of this approach. Additional perceptions were offered by describing both the easiest and most complicated phases and what each phase or role was about. This sub-theme was positively perceived in the follow-up focus groups and in the delayed interviews.

Accordingly, MN began by considering the first phase of the process writing approach, which is planning.

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**MN:** Planning is supposed to be the simplest, as just we bring some relevant ideas to a surface level.

Yet, HA disputed the previous claim.

**HA:** It [planning] isn't the simplest. It requires me to think about the linguistic style of writing /to create new texts/.

HA also added:

**HA:** It [planning] isn't an easy mission and you will be responsible for the linguistic style. It's not only concerned with ideas.

Then, HA showed further assumptions about the revision and drafting phases after he thought about the planning.

**HA:** They [peers] play with the content and grammar while the writer needs to create a new text and needs to use the suitable rules...I mean people doing the editing and revising give only some knowledge with the source (.). They will play with the content while the writer needs to create a new text and needs to use the rules...

Participant SA however drew attention to the complexity of drafting, by viewing it as the most demanding stage in the process approach to writing.

**SA:** The writer (.) exerted more effort, whereas the rest didn't expend much effort, they just did editing, revising and discovering errors and that's it (.)... The reason was that the writer was required to use the appropriate style of writing plus thinking about all the suitable rules and structures...

In line with the findings from the follow-up focus group, in the interviews, AL argued that the process writing approach was an enabler to create more useful texts due to its systematic steps.

**AL:** Hence, using the four phases (i.e., planning, editing, drafting and revising) were the cornerstones for producing good written content which is neither long nor short. Taking into account these steps were much better than randomly jumping to the final step or thinking about the final shape.

The interviewee AB also showed the importance of dividing the writing task into phases instead of treating it as a whole component.

**AB:** The writing process was a good approach because it was impossible for anybody to write a proper text the first time. Selecting the relevant ideas in the beginning was important. Then, the organisation of the ideas involved in well-written structured texts was also fundamental.

**6.3.3. Benefits of WMCW classes and their related tasks:**

The third theme ‘Benefits of WMCW classes and their related tasks’ was determined in a deductive reasoning. Four sub-themes emerged inductively from the analysis as illustrated in Table 6.7. The students recognised the positive perceptions of such classes and tasks for enriching their writing abilities and their writing experience; including their socially-aided and technology-mediated aspects. The emerging sub-themes will be explored by giving some examples.

A theme and its sub-themes		Focus groups		Interviews Delayed	Frequency
		Initial	Follow-up		
<b>Theme 3: Benefits of WMCW classes and their related tasks</b> Sub-theme 3.1: Empowerment of confidence and responsibilities	Frequency	12	8	4	24
	Perception	Positive	Positive	Positive	
Sub-theme 3.2: Appreciation of virtual social interaction	Frequency	-	14	5	19
	Perception	-	Positive	Positive	
Sub-theme 3.3: Fostering linguistic correction	Frequency	3	5	3	11
	Perception	Positive	Positive	Positive	
Sub-theme 3.4: Nurturing friendly feedback/ criticism	Frequency	9	7	3	19
	Perception	Positive	Negative/ positive	Positive	

Table 6.7: The theme and sub-themes related to benefits of WMCW classes and their related tasks

**6.3.3.1. Empowerment of confidence and responsibilities**

The students indicated their positive perceptions about taking part in WMCW classes and their related tasks, which contributed to their personal as well as group confidence. The students became more willing to defend their ideas and to accept others’ advice without embarrassment. This sub-theme was positively perceived across the focus groups and in the delayed interviews.

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In view of this, HA admitted that the new tasks enriched his peers' linguistic experience and confidence partly because there was no auto-checker used in this type of wikis (Wikispaces).

**HA:** Our grammar, spelling, and different vocabulary have improved and we have used different styles of writing for the assigned topics. In fact, we didn't rely on the computer to correct us, no we started correcting errors by ourselves and with the help of peers.

Besides this, MS pointed to the role of WMCW in generating more autonomous writers who can manage their learning by themselves with confidence. He also confirmed that the wiki was an ideal platform to work jointly with a sense of self-reliance.

**MS:** If the instructor is in charge of everything the students will stop editing and revising and will depend on him. They will lose their self-confidence. Learners need to be more independent and that's easy to be performed on wikis.

MS further remarked:

**MS:** Using the Internet and other social collaborative tools will change our motivation because you change the routine and in this way we could have online meetings or something similar. I'm sure it will be different from what we used to do in the past...

SA with his friends became more confident in posting their contribution online and in engaging in virtual communication with the rest of their group members. He also emphasised the students' willingness to accept others' corrections and feedback.

**SA:** This practice can help us to add new skills /<< >>/. Many of us have become less nervous about publishing their writing for the public; this means we have become more self-confident.

MN considered this practice a technique to promote students' confidence about their writing since a less convincing sentence or phrase might be deleted or crossed out by others; so reinstating these deleted parts required justification.

**MN:** This is the key advantage of this tool, which is to promote discussion among peers to see why they have deleted that part or sentence and then to become more confident about whatever is written and make them ready for defending their writing.

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The interviewee AD revealed the positive contribution of WMCW to his confidence and illustrated that achieving different roles 'especially as an instructor' triggered him to accomplish more peer checking.

**AD:** I felt as if I was the instructor when I did the correction because I gained more confidence. I became more able to correct the language and check different pieces of texts. I mean these are among the characteristics that inspired me largely to pursue writing.

In another interview, HA expressed how his group members' suggestions transformed his confidence.

**HA:** There are examples I can remember that I wrote incorrectly (e.g. lexis, phrases and sentences) and that my peers highlighted these mistakes... I remember in task 2 one of my peers added a piece of information 'I was very sad'. Then, after exchanging ideas and having a discussion, we became more confident and changed it to 'accidents are painful'...

#### **6.3.3.2. Appreciation of virtual social interaction**

The students described their positive perceptions about the benefits of WMCW classes and their tasks relating to appreciation of virtual social interaction; which relies on using social networking tools. The students showed the impact of the co-construction of knowledge among peers and with the instructor(s). WMCW, especially with peers, was seen as playing a key role for the cognitive development of the individuals. This sub-theme was positively perceived in the follow-up focus group and in the delayed interviews.

Thus, MN demonstrated his eagerness during the social engagement with his peers. He explained that more constructive relationships were revitalised in so far as the students were pleased to help each other.

**MN:** The main reason, I think, was the corrections and contributions made by my peers urging me to be as active as them by asking questions and keeping the discussions going on and trying to understand the topic.

HA showed that WMCW became a popular practice to maintain social interaction with colleagues and to increase mutual communication.

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**HA:** ... the integration of peer communication for completing writing tasks on Wikispaces, this activity enabled us to look for online-based resources and also gave us a chance to interact and then to discuss topics online. (9:03)

HB thought about the usefulness of creating co-relationships with others in WMCW, considering that the instructor should mediate between learners only when there is a real challenge.

**HB:** .... He only needs to intervene (.) to determine whether it is better to keep that sentence or not because he has more experience and to avoid any unnecessary discussion. Otherwise, peers' interaction on WMCW is helpful for producing useful relationships and informative communications.

In the interviews, HU found that the students approached writing differently because of the new method of accomplishing the tasks easily, based on WMCW.

**HU:** Relatively, it was very good as it particularly gave us a wider chance to practise the writing skill outside school, I mean at home. We benefited from this course in the sense that I and my peers would write and then my peer(s), had to correct me and vice versa. Simply, we all used to collaborate.

In agreement with other interviews, SA reported that working in a group that distributed the collaborative effort among its co-workers, on WMCW, was an interesting activity since everyone had a social context for the task.

**SA:** I really liked the idea of working socially under common objectives. The discussion about our different ideas was an enjoyable exercise to increase our experience in life.

### 6.3.3.3. Fostering linguistic correction (accuracy and fluency)

The students expressed specific positive perceptions of the benefits of WMCW classes and their related classes in relation to fostering the linguistic correction of accuracy (grammar, spelling and lexis) and fluency (longer sentences with different structures). This sub-theme was positively perceived even in the initial focus group and similar perceptions were achieved in the follow-up focus group and interviews.

Based on this, HB, in the initial focus group, expressed his expectation of the role of WMCW to foster the linguistic accuracy of the learner writers.

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**HB:** It will make things easier for us if we started to know how to write accurately and in a good way (.). The new way of learning writing will guarantee our future because everything in our future career is related to writing...

In the follow-up focus group, HA described how WMCW tasks enhance users' writing abilities.

**HA:** I felt a lot of improvement in task 2 specifically in terms of spelling and other writing skills such as organisation and thinking and we used new structures of grammar to describe situations. We greatly improved in task 3 as we were able to create new ways of writing and /<< >>/ we were also able to do something original.

Throughout WMCW, HB noted that his peers increased their willingness to identify errors related to fluency and accuracy.

**HB:** It increased our attention about common errors and imperfect sentences, because if we were using Microsoft Word we wouldn't be worried and thoughtful about our writing (.). In Word, each error was underlined in red so we don't pay much attention.

In the delayed interviews, MT assumed that, in WMCW, accuracy-related problems rather than information, were more important because of the nature of the course.

**MT:** I generally concentrated on accurate spelling rather than correct information because this is a writing class. However, if it was biology I would focus more on content and information accuracy. Therefore, I was concerned more about spelling and grammatical errors.

The interviewee AB also showed the usefulness of WMCW as it made him re-consider and then avoid the errors committed previously by himself and others.

**AB:** I learnt how to identify different errors and to be very careful, especially for the errors that were committed by my peers and myself and thus to make sure to avoid them and not to make the same errors again such as tenses, conjugations, choosing specific lexis and sequencing in ideas.

#### **6.3.3.4. Nurturing friendly feedback/criticism**

The students demonstrated their positive perceptions of the benefits of WMCW classes concerning the provision of friendly peer feedback. The students recognised that they can easily give comments on each other's work from a distance, in the form of opinions, suggestions and ideas. This sub-theme was perceived positively from the beginning of

the initial focus group, although mixed (positive and negative) perceptions were found in the follow-up focus group. The delayed interviews however positively perceived this practice.

Accordingly, HA, in the initial focus group, supported peer feedback on WMCW because it allowed interaction and open access to content within a small community of learners.

**HA:** The good thing in this method is that all my peers will be able to criticise me, and I will see my work every day and if there are any changes; I will see the stages of progress. I will see what others do, how others criticise me...

In the final focus group, MN specified the positive role of peer feedback on WMCW as it encouraged learners to be active to learn from each other.

**MN:** I mean we recognised differences between topic sentences and conclusions. The main reason, I think, was the corrections and contributions made by my peers urged me to be as active as them by asking questions and keeping the discussions going on and trying to understand the topic.

MN also proposed that peers may understand each other's needs more fully than instructors since peers have difficulties related to similar age and level of proficiency.

**MN:** The basis of the problem is that the tutor already knows the topic so he might consider it a silly question or a stupid mistake while my friends will take it as an important question or a normal mistake, which can happen to everyone, so it can be answered comfortably.

MS found that referring writers to each other's mistakes was informative for friendly criticism on WMCW. He stated that this practice was important, as long as it was combined with physical communication, because other people are the audience who should read and understand the written texts. He also recognised the importance of knowing an audience

**MS:** But if you were just spotting my errors that would be problematic without involving me in a real face-to-face interaction (.). However, if we were closely working with others in order to identify each other's errors for the purpose of collaborative learning, no, it's their right to identify my errors as they are in fact my audience.

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MS also elaborated on the positive role of peer feedback where learners are stimulated to make better contributions.

**MS:**.. I mean everyone benefited from the others' mistakes (.). There was practice for obtaining new knowledge based on contributions from other writers.

In the interviews, AB described the way he assisted his co-workers. His group members also did the same thing with AB's mistakes. They were all relaxed since their personal conflicts were lessened via peer feedback.

**AB:** Certainly, it was beneficial since there was knowledge exchange with my peers. I corrected their mistakes and they did same thing with my mistakes (I learnt from them and they learnt from me). Some of my peers benefited from my ideas in their drafting.

In a further interview, DK also referred to the influential role of peer feedback as an informal learning experience of writing

**DK:** However, in the second term, by using wiki as a social tool, our concept of writing has changed to the type of writing which can be facilitated by peer criticism and this wasn't hard to receive, rather it was enlightening.

#### **6.3.4. Concerns of WMCW classes and their related tasks:**

The fourth theme 'Concerns of WMCW classes and their related tasks' was identified deductively from the literature and it resulted in five sub-themes that were derived inductively from the data as demonstrated in Table 6.8.

In this main theme, as opposed to the previous one, the students pinpointed their negative perceptions about WMCW classes and their related tasks for writing learning. The students were cautious about accepting the new writing classes that use wikis, because such tools are mostly used for entertainment. As this writing practice differs from what most of the learners are familiar with, they raised several issues which should be considered before starting similar classes or tasks. The emerging sub-themes will be shown in detail with some exploratory examples.

A theme and its sub-themes		Focus groups		Interviews Delayed	Frequency
		Initial	Follow-up		
<b>Theme 4: Concerns of WMCW classes and their related tasks</b>					
	Sub-theme 4.1: The time factor	Frequency	4	10	2
	Perception	Negative	Negative	Negative	
Sub-theme 4.2: difficulty of implementation	Frequency	2	10	2	14
	Perception	Negative	Negative	Negative	
Sub-theme 4.3: Partial presence of the instructor and his new facilitating role	Frequency	2	10+3	4	19
	Perception	Negative/ Positive	Negative/ Positive	Negative /Positive	
Sub-theme 4.4: Assessment of the group work	Frequency	-	4	3	7
	Perception	-	Negative/ Positive	Negative	
Sub-theme 4.5: Collaborative authorship and individuals' rights	Frequency	-	12	2	14
	Perception	-	Negative/ Positive	Negative /Positive	

Table 6.8: The theme and sub-themes related to concerns of WMCW classes and their related classes

#### 6.3.4.1. The time factor

The students revealed concerns about WMCW classes and their related tasks in relation to the time factor. The students found it challenging to fully concentrate on these tasks, either online or offline, because they demand more time than ordinarily individual tasks. They said that because their time was limited they preferred to focus on subjects related to medicine (e.g. anatomy, bio-chemistry and physiology). This sub-theme of the demand of time appeared to be a crucial issue that was negatively perceived across the focus groups and interviews.

In considering this, in the initial focus group, MO claimed that students would be less able to continue discussions on WMCW and to reach the creativity level because of the time constraints.

**MO:** [No] we can share.. but we can't actively collaborate because we don't have sufficient time, because of the limitation on available time, we can't reach the required level of creativity. (21:64)

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In the follow-up focus group, SA explained that shortage of time was the reason for the small number of contributions on WMCW.

**SA:** I think the reason why there were limited participations was because of the large number of exams and quizzes in a restricted time. Yah that's it.

On a different occasion, HA revealed that because of the time barrier, students tended to be more attentive to assessed subjects with more credit hours such as physiology, pathology and anatomy.

**HA:** I mean, for example, after two days we have a biochemistry exam and it has eight credit hours. Therefore many people would say that instead of concentrating on these assignments it's more worthwhile to focus on the exam in order to save time.

According to the individual interviews with SA, the main problem facing students on WMCW is the need to establish expertise, which is not easy to achieve because this would involve additional time.

**SA:** It takes a long time. Some people may not understand this method since it is an unfamiliar approach to many students. To make it plausible to the students, they need additional time and it is not easy to find enough time to do more work.

HA again pointed to the limited tasks covered because of the inadequacy in time that was available to the learners. Alternatively, he thought that there should be tasks on a weekly basis.

**HA:** It was excellent, yet, we have not studied enough topics as we had restricted time. We should have been assigned new tasks on a weekly basis. In each session there should be a new task.

#### **6.3.4.2. Difficulty of implementation**

The students had concerns about WMCW classes as it needed continuous training and careful design of the learning tasks. The students indicated that it was not easy to deliver such a course in an ideal way because of the following challenges: students' reluctance, classroom disruption and plagiarism. This sub-theme was negatively perceived across the focus groups and interviews.

Hence, in the initial focus group, MS expressed his concern about the issue of learners' withdrawal at any time with no justification.

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**MS:** Particularly because it's applied for the first time.. Also you can't guarantee who will be involved in these virtual groups, whether there will be collaboration between all of those who work with you.

In addition, SA showed a further challenge concerning copying and pasting or re-use of the same content existing on the Internet ('plagiarism').

**SA:** The majority would still find it (WMCW) very hard to compose texts without relying on others' pre-made texts or others' available ideas on the web.

Part of the difficulty for WMCW implementation as pointed out by HA was that such authentic tasks were slightly above his as well as his friends' levels.

**HA:** The second reason was that in task 1 we didn't have enough knowledge about such medical topics. I mean it was very scientific, so we didn't have sufficient knowledge and we couldn't bring fake information.

In the individual interviews, MT confirmed, as MS claimed earlier, that not all the participants would definitely stay active till the end of the activity.

**MT:** I do not know they may have withdrawn without any reason; other students may be busy with other assignments or because the subject does not have a lot of credit hours since it carries a quarter of the total mark of all the English language subjects.

DK also claimed that such tasks of composing with social tools such as wikis might disturb learners' concentration.

**DK:** Several medical students do not want to be involved in collaborative writing tasks and social networking-related activities since they distract us. We need to be focused so keeping the balance is always hard. We prefer to study different medical subjects in our own ways.

### **6.3.4.3. Partial presence of the instructor and his new facilitating role**

The students had concerns about the partial presence of the instructor and the new facilitating role. A group of students emphasised the importance of the instructor's presence at all times to explain the details and minor errors and to agree on everything the students do. However, other students preferred the minimal correction of basic problems provided by the tutor, to encourage writer-centred learning, and to minimise the reliance on the instructor. This sub-theme resulted in mixed (positive and negative) perceptions across the focus groups and interviews.

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For instance, HB claimed that instructors should control interaction on wikis, instead of learners, to prevent unnecessary deletions and reinstatement of lexis, phrases or sentences.

**HB:** I agree that the person who is administrating the group should intervene to keep learners away from deleting certain parts and returning them for more than one time.

HA argued that instructors should deal with judging matters related to correction and amendments, not the students.

**HA:** We need to keep the discussions, but not in relation to editing and revising. The instructor should do it... Editing or revising should be done by the person who is in charge of teaching us /<< >>/. He should be doing the correction for us, not the students. It's not our job (34: 11)

Furthermore, HB urged the continuous need for the instructors' input and support for peers' contributions throughout the process of writing.

**HB:** ... peers' correction can still continue, but with the constant online presence of the instructor, his moderation and management are not enough. We need him to be more engaged with what we write and do.

In the interviews, HA, showed that several mistakes were left in with no sign of them having been observed on wikis. Corrections must be approved by an experienced person.

**HA:** Correction should be carried out by a person who has more knowledge or s/he is a person who knows how accurate writing is achieved. What we articulate as students is in fact various point of views which enable us to express our own visions...

The interviewee, DK, emphasised the importance of the moderator's support and encouragement while the students wrote on WMCW. He believed that the outcome was based on the moderator's effort (see sub-section: 5.11.4 for more about to what extent my personality as a researcher and teacher affect the outcome of the intervention course).

**DK:** Without your support and encouragement to participate in this software and without your telling us its benefit, you would not have had any participation. Because you pushed us to take the lead since the last semester, I learnt a lot from my friends' mistakes as well as from your guidance.

**6.3.4.4. Assessment of the group work (different from the typical assessment of individuals)**

The students perceived assessment of the work of the group as one of the concerns of WMCW classes and their related tasks. Despite the fact that wiki-based tasks were not assessed, the students were worried about their assessment on wikis since they were familiar with assessment on an individual basis, mostly based on examination in a face-to-face setting. This sub-theme appeared in the follow-up focus group and resulted in mixed perceptions (positive and negative). Yet, the delayed interviews showed more negative perceptions about this theme, in the form of anxiety about the exams.

For instance, HA showed the distinction between WMCW tasks and writing tasks in exams that were individually assessed.

**HA:** it means (.) in fact what we did in the exam was not exactly the same as what we did on Wikispaces. In the exam you write about something with different styles for limited time without a source while on Wikispaces we had several free sources.

In the same focus group, MO argued that WMCW is a useful practice for general purposes but does not help learners to pass the writing course.

**MO:** I also think that this way was useful, but I felt it was too far from what we do in the exam. (13:20)

However, MN disagreed with the previous statement showing the effectiveness of group-based tasks on individual writing tasks including exams.

**MN:** I think this way of writing was similar to the style of exam (?) I mean at the end, at the end /<< >>/ things related to reasons and examples in task 3 helped so much.

MO showed a more concise view concerning the usefulness of WMCW for individual tasks.

**MO:** It is useful for giving ideas, showing ways of how to write and how to use different rules of writing correctly (.), but it won't develop writers' individual skills as the exams require.

On a different occasion, HB compared the nature of assessing texts on WMCW and in exams. During WMCW, more sources and time were available whereas in exams additional sources and time are not accessible.

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**HB:** The biggest problem was losing the use of the Internet, as in the exam we didn't have the Internet and this was the main source to fulfil the tasks on Wikispaces.

The interviewee AL claimed that most of the learners did not seriously participate in group activities compared to individual activities or exams that are assessed.

**AL:** The stage I struggled most with was when some friends were not fully involved with the group work. Only two or three students were working together. The rest of participants were mostly searching for a way to achieve higher scores for their individual exams.

MN showed a concern about his personal assessment, how exams would be conducted and how marks would be allocated for the group and for each individual.

**MN:** That made us think about how midterm and final exams would look like since we could not figure out how many marks would be allocated for each individual in their groups.

#### **6.3.4.5. Collaborative authorship and individuals' rights**

The students perceived collaborative authorship and individuals' rights as one of the concerns of WMCW classes and their related tasks. The students questioned whether peers had the right to amend each other's written texts or not. Some learners felt that this process breached the original texts considering each text to be an individual's property that should not be affected by others. In contrast, other learners liked this process whereby people could work to refine and improve the original ideas given by the main writers. This sub-theme resulted in mixed (positive and negative) perceptions in the follow-up focus group and in the delayed interviews.

MS illustrated his negative perception of peers making changes to each other's texts, considering personal texts like sacred scripts that should not be touched other than by the main author.

**MS:** I see it as if you have an image and you then modify it. I see this as a better analogy; once someone changes it, it will be destroyed.

SA also suggested that in each personal text, there is a basic concept which would disappear once it was changed by others' thoughts.

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**SA:** Because there is an idea which I would seek to convey by writing that sentence and not one of my peers should delete what I want to express, so deleting any part would be really undesirable and prohibited.

HA felt that peers did not understand the subtle meaning in each text.

**HA:** The real problem is that a friend might make the corrections, but he doesn't have a comprehensive background or any idea of why he is doing this or why he is correcting his peers writing by making changes to their sentences...

In the delayed interviews, MS agreed with his peers' claim about the potential misinterpretation of meaning.

**MS:** This process of exchanging texts may lead to the distortion of the basic meaning addressed by the writer.

FB showed learners' preferences to correct the grammar and spelling of others' texts since that is less drastic compared to changes in thoughts that could imply changes in meaning and the ideas of the main writers.

**FB:** I preferred to work on grammar-related problems as they were very obvious and do not imply different meaning unlike content-related corrections. I left content changes as I was not sure. The fundamental ideas of the authors must remain...

### **6.3.5. Needs of WMCW classes and their related tasks:**

The last theme 'Needs of WMCW classes and their related tasks' was deductively identified based on other similar studies and it underlined two sub-themes that were inductively discovered as shown in Table 6.9.

The learners expressed their positive perceptions of their expectations of WMCW and related tasks for writing learners. Its most conspicuous benefit was to improve the existing environment of classes to make them more productive. The participants emphasised the significance of increasing collaboration between peers and changing the monotonous practice of learning writing. The sub-themes identified will be explored in detail with some examples.

A theme and its sub-themes		Focus groups		Interviews Delayed	Frequency
		Initial	Follow-up		
<b>Theme 5: Needs of WMCW classes and their related tasks</b> Sub-theme 5.1: Facilitation of communication and collaboration	Frequency	5	11	3	19
	Perception	Positive	Positive	Positive	
Sub-theme 5.2: Reestablishment of the environment of learning writing	Frequency	22	7	2	31
	Perception	Positive	Positive	Positive	

Table 6.9: The theme and sub-themes related to needs of WMCW classes and their related tasks

### 6.3.5.1. Facilitation of communication and collaboration

The students articulated their positive perceptions regarding the need for WMCW classes and their related tasks for facilitating communication and collaboration. The students considered this new environment of learning writing (WMCW) as an enabler for more interaction among their peers and with the instructor, irrespective of the elements of time and space. They also clarified that wiki-based collaboration resulted in making this complicated process (of collaboration) easier. The learners positively perceived this sub-theme in focus groups and interviews.

Thus, in the initial focus group, HA described his engagement with WMCW with his peers and as he became more involved in communicative and collaborative process.

**HA:** ... we can have useful communication regarding what writing we do, what information we use for brainstorming, everyone can do this because all information is in front of us all the time and there is no need to go somewhere to look for it.

In the follow-up focus group, MS found that frequent contributions using WMCW resulted in improved communication with colleagues.

**MS:** Because things are in a state of continuous development.. It's not necessary if I need something from you to go to your home to see you or to meet face-to-face.. Everything is available on the web and accessible all the time.

In one of the delayed interviews, MT thought that WMCW contributed to more complex nets of communication which were hard to maintain in traditional classes.

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**MT:** Shared participation on collaborative networks enables sharing with others in a different method than what is usual. I mean, in the traditional classes, students are usually passive since the tutor is located a long way from the students...

HA also described that these multi-layers of discussions on WMCW are important for interaction among learners to as it helps them discover more reliable information.

**HA:** The course benefited us because we discussed things with new students who gave us wrong information. The same information was later revised by more able students. They gave them better information and used references to check this information.

Participant SA illustrated the need for WMCW to avoid placing learners in a threatening environment, which might hinder the progress of communication.

**SA:** It is true that networking on collaborative tools makes communication much simpler and quicker. In such modes, correction takes place indirectly without feeling embarrassed.

The interviewee FB showed the need for WMCW to maintain the students' friendship with their ongoing conversation.

**FB:** This way of practising writing was good. It enabled the students to keep in touch and to communicate outside the walls of the school, the class and study rooms.

### 6.3.5.2. Reestablishment of the environment of learning writing

The students indicated their positive perceptions relating to the value of WMCW classes and related tasks for reestablishing the environment of learning writing, specifically by the adoption of the process writing approach. The students spoke about the drawbacks of their previous writing classes, as they mostly dealt with exercises on grammar and did not engage in intensive practice in how to produce complete sentences. Thus, this theme was positively perceived in the focus groups and interviews.

In the initial focus group, HA observed that WMCW and other similar tools should be employed to enhance the environment of learning writing and to focus on what the students should write about.

**HA:** That means we need to practice (?) paraphrasing and rewriting what we read in a different way than the main source we use e.g. Wikipedia or any other website or information we take from a specialised person or relative. We need to read the topic

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and understand its problems and have enough information in general to produce the required text. If we can't accumulate enough information, it will be impossible to do it.

In addition, HA spoke about the essential role of WMCW in improving the ordinary environment of learning writing to make classes more competitive.

**HA:** We need more competition (.). I mean you can set difficult questions, so then we feel there is a competition to generate more opportunities for constructing various meanings (.) that comes from the experience of the learners. We need this to see who will break this challenge. (91:12)

In the follow-up focus group, HB agreed about the effectiveness of WMCW for improving the environment of learning writing by integrating writing and reading.

**HB:** Yah, because we employed writing and reading to complement each other. Reading and writing were always connected... We needed to read other written texts and then paraphrase them and make a number of drafts they were all helpful (.).

HA also showed the usefulness of WMCW for improving learning writing as the students went through intensive reading before writing.

**HA:** We can keep discussing assignments which need to be written with the whole group. We also need to know what each member should do in his group work, for example, about nerve supply, so we collaborate with each other including giving feedback and criticising each other {overlapping}.

The interviewee MN indicated the consequences of using WMCW in order to re-structure the normal atmosphere of learning writing.

**MN:** It changed the way we normally write. It facilitated the building of a lot of information about specific texts. My friends helped me to re-organise the shape of my composition and they circulated ideas that were either rejected or modified.

In relation to the emerging sub-themes, the findings establish that learners had more positive perceptions than negative. It was realised that changing the learners' perceptions (including their thoughts and judgments) was possible but not as easy as predicted. It was discerned that learners, or users of the PWCW in particular, have various perceptions that have been perhaps shaped by one or more of the following key factors:

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- The linguistic competency of the individuals (the learners with higher academic levels had more positive perceptions).
- The personality traits of the individuals (the learners with more confidence and energy and have social skills had more positive perceptions).
- The amount of exposure to various experiences (the learners with open-mindedness and flexibility had more positive perceptions).
- The pre-conceptualisation and type of stereotype (the learners with unbiased impressions beforehand had more positive perceptions).

According to the learners' perceptions, the students did not easily change their prior assumptions, including their insights and understanding. Some of the learners had similar perceptions over time, even after the new experience. This should be set alongside the major finding that the participants' perceptions had significant agreement as well as disagreement on some issues. However, other issues were seen very differently by the same individuals before and after their experience based on their enthusiasm, willingness, preparedness and personal confidence to use the new style of learning writing.

In addition, the results showed the perceptions for a number of students who participated several times and expressed their perceptions and new changes over time on the same sub-themes already identified in Table 6.10. The perceptions of the following students (HA, MO and HB) were tracked as examples. It was found that not all of these three students revealed positive changes about the process-oriented wiki-mediated collaborative writing (PWMCW).

Participants' Initials	Sub-themes	Initial perception	Follow-up perception	Delayed individual perception
HA	Fostering linguistic correction	Positive	Positive	Positive
	The time factor	Negative	Negative	Negative
	Re-structuring the environment of learning writing	Positive	Positive	Positive
MO	Responding to authentic tasks	Positive	Positive	-
	The time factor	Negative	Negative	Negative
	Collaborative authorship and individual rights	-	Negative	Positive
HB	Nurturing friendly feedback/criticism	Positive	Positive	Positive
	Appreciation of virtual social interaction	-	Positive	Positive
	Experiencing meaningful learning (about the process approach)	Positive	Positive	Positive

Table 6.10: Perceptions of three individual participants

By referring to the three chosen examples of participants who participated in more than one of the research instruments (HA, MO and HB), I identified that most perceptions that arose were seen as positive from the beginning or transformed into more positive at the end, indicating one of the following: strong, moderate and less emphasis on the new approach to teaching writing (see section: 8.2 for more about understanding the differences between the three types of perception discovered).

#### 6.4. Cross analysis of students' perceptions

The analysis showed that some issues were repeatedly observed across the entire findings, and that such issues established a fuller picture of understanding the topic about the PWMCW. The perceptions identified did not however necessarily agree with each other across the questionnaires, focus groups and interviews. For example, some results of the pre-and-post questionnaires contradicted other data when the learners started talking naturally about their perceptions in Arabic in their own words. The interaction with the instructor and among the peers, for example, was found not particularly popular in the questionnaires in contrast to the focus groups and interviews that indicated a contrary finding. The provision of well-checked content during the process, posting texts to the group to see each other's texts and using WMCW for

knowledge exchange produced similar results, which resulted in no consensus in the perceptions of the learners.

On the other hand, the learners had significantly positive perceptions in the questionnaires regarding the process approach as an avenue to improve their shortcomings in writing. This finding was backed up with further data which expressed similar outcomes in the focus groups and interviews. Similar consistent results were obtained for the following issues: helpfulness of authentic writing topics, significance of using e-feedback, focusing in accuracy and production of final drafts. Other elements also showed little or no changes or perhaps remained negative in the learners' perceptions. For instance, the learners had stable perceptions concerning whether or not CW was more valuable than individual writing, as the questionnaires revealed. This agreed with the results from the focus groups and interviews.

In the interviews, the learners offered comments to express their prior and subsequent perceptions about the new experience of learning writing in general classes. In relation to the first perceptions, the students made positive comments as follows:

- I personally have not tried it but I think is very useful for me because I have problems in my grammar. I hope this method will improve my writing in English. (interviewee No. 6)
- I think the traditional method of writing is not enough as it lacks showing us much information. The teacher used to give us normal homework in an ordinary method. (interviewee No. 5)
- I want writing classes to be not only for teaching exercises but also to help us how to improve our writing skills and expertise as in the new classes. (Interviewee No. 19)

Other learners however also offered negative comments as following:

- We do not have enough time to work actively on this tool or to keep in touch with you and with our peers for longer periods of time because our time is very limited. I prefer the traditional method that is just based on individual quizzes.... (Interviewee No. 1)
- It is a great project but it is exhausting and requires a lot of time. (Interviewee No. 1)

In relation to the subsequent perceptions, the learners articulated positive responses as following:

- I expected more difficulties in the beginning of the new wiki-based tasks, but at the end I realised that everything was easy. I benefited from this tool –Wikispaces- throughout the semester. (Interviewee No. 8)

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- The relevant tasks involved interesting topics. They were new, informative and beneficial. (Interviewee No. 9)

The same learners also expressed negative responses as follows:

- The allocated tasks were many and long which demanded us to spend more time. Thus, they had negative impact on other important subjects such as the medical modules. (Interviewee No. 1)
- It was not possible to properly follow the plan for fulfilling the tasks and to achieve them in the best way. (Interviewee No. 12)

Generally speaking, there were more positive perceived changes in the data. The changes enabled the learners to act, to take decisions, to make choices and to be conscious of what they learned, rather than just learn the rules. On the basis of the results, I have found that:

- There were many negative perceptions which were transformed into positive perceptions in the pre-and post-questionnaires.
- There were positive perceptions which were further positively reinforced in the focus groups and interviews.
- There were stable perceptions which were not transformed into positive in the questionnaires, the focus groups and the interviews.

## **6.5. Focus groups**

In the focus groups, the participants showed sometimes agreement with each other and at other times not. In fact, they encouraged the learners to express what they thought, perhaps because it creates an equal environment for everyone. It was found that learners do not always agree each other (partial agreement). Peers had also impact on each other's perceptions for learning writing. The following examples highlight this.

### **6.5.1. Complete agreement:**

Several incidents in the focus groups showed complete group agreement where participants built shared interpretations during the writing course. In these situations, the fellow participants demonstrated a sense of agreement and/or approval on numerous issues. They particularly became interested in the practice of writing and the ways in which writing tasks are assigned and taught. The selected example highlights how participants had similar perceptions pertaining to their experience about rote learning in traditional writing classes. This example also demonstrated the problems that were encountered preparing for exams and practising memorisation.

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**HB:** I mean, before the exam, we used to be given two passages and were told that one of them would be in the exam. It was common for us to know which one would come up in the exam [so we memorised it].

**SA:** Yah [we just memorise it].

**MS:** That wasn't everything... sometimes we had in our textbook six chapters and for each there was a passage or paragraph, but this paragraph was to be memorised. In fact we were (?)... I mean the tutor didn't make any changes in the final exam.

**SA:** We were told which parts would be included in the exam.

**HA:** Ah we didn't study writing in a way that astonished us, as it should be taught by university tutors, they didn't introduce new topics that we didn't know about or hadn't heard about (?) maybe because we didn't have the necessary vocabulary...

**MO:** [Or the ideas]

**HA:** Or the ideas, yah yah. It's not different from the textbook at school we are already knew the ideas and could memorise the necessary words or vocabulary and that's it /<< >>/.

**MO:** So you needed to learn the text by heart and that was enough

**HB:** Indeed, we were given two texts and were requested to keep one of them and to memorise it.

### 6.5.2. Complete disagreement:

It was however common to get as many different perceptions as there were individuals who moved from approval to disapproval or vice versa. The following example presents total disagreement by a group of participants; this was informed by extended negotiation about the value of modifying each other's texts. The students' lack of necessary knowledge was the main concern for those who did not support the instructors' partial presence on WMCW as they claimed that editing and revising were not their responsibility.

**MN:** ...the key advantage of this tool, which is to promote discussion among peers to see why they have deleted that part or sentence and then to become more confident about whatever is written and make them ready for defending their writing... (36: 15)

**HA:** This was the real problem in the programme, ah {overlapping}.

**HB:** I see this as an advantage

**SA:** I see this {overlapping}.

**HA:** The real problem is that a peer might make the corrections, but he doesn't have any background or idea of why he is doing this. Why he is correcting his peers' writing or making changes to their sentences...

**MN:** As I said before, I think it should become standard practice for peers to correct for each other's work or do other tasks, but I suppose that at the end the instructor should check to see precisely what has taken place.

**SA:** .. If one of my peers deletes some of my sentences that wouldn't be acceptable, but adding something to it might be okay, but not deleting any part.

**A:** Why?

**SA:** Because there is an idea which I would seek to convey by writing that sentence and no one of my peers should delete what I want to express, so deleting any part would be really undesirable and prohibited.

**HB:** I think that creates an environment for a challenge. I mean, if there is any deletion or addition, okay, fine, you have right to delete and add as well. It is like a challenge so it gives us more motivation and creates a different competitive atmosphere.

### 6.5.3. Personal contradiction (self-inconsistency):

There are incidents where a group of participants contradicted themselves in the two focus groups. They seemed to be indecisive in forming a judgment concerning their perceptions where they were not clearly either for or against the topic. These students were also inconsistent in expressing their views. The next example illustrates how one participant (HA) refuted his previous perception. HA presented a positive assumption about the usefulness of WMCW tasks for individual-based writing as many other peers agreed. Yet, after several contributions from his peers, HA started to hesitate about the efficacy of integrating such tasks (that focus on CW) into classes since the tasks differed from the way writing is achieved in reality as he claimed.

**HA:**... I realised that task 3 was the perfect topic, that's my personal view, but I don't know about my friends. I think the task has shown me a new resource and knowledge different from what was just written in the produced texts. (13:08)

**MO:** I also think that this way was useful, but I felt it was too far from what we do in the exam. (13:20)

**HA:** IYWAH this point is true {overlapping}.

**MS:** I mean /<< >>/ I think we didn't study our textbook with sufficient depth or in great details.

**MN:** I think this way of writing was similar to the style of exam (?) I mean at the end, at the end /<< >>/ things related to reasons and examples in task 3 helped so much.

**MS:** Yah.

**MN:** Due to the fact we had similar things to do on Wikispaces.

**MS:** But we didn't study everything that is in our textbook.

**HA:** Because in essence this way was different from the way we did our quizzes in writing. I mean the assignments on Wikispaces are considered to be quizzes, but they were different from the way the final exam is normally given.

#### **6.5.4. Partial agreement (limited agreement because of external factors)**

In these focus groups, sometimes there was partial agreement by a number of participants although they had shown their general agreement. These participants became slightly unhappy about external factors such as time limitation, insufficient training, the work-load and additional requirements. The following extract is an illustrative example that clarifies the participants' general agreement on the importance of conducting authentic writing tasks. However, they departed from their general agreement on such tasks, as they became concerned about time constraints.

**SA:** I think choosing topics-related to medicine derived from our environment is very good because we deal with everyday life (.). When we read something about this topic it helps us understand our field more (.). I mean, if we need to make a presentation on the subject of medical terminology, this will absolutely benefit us. I have a presentation and it will be about diabetes; therefore, I will use what I learn from this writing topic for my presentation to provide relevant information.

**HA:** Sure, that will give me experience in the practice of reading for the topic we write about.

**A:** Will it inform and interest you more (?)?

**HA:** It will contribute to gaining new words and more information about this disease, I mean it's a new experience and we will learn how to criticise this topic (.). However, the time factor is the issue.

#### **6.6. Summary**

This chapter has presented the findings pertaining to the data collected from the participants about their perceptions in the four areas proposed for understanding the new approach of learning writing. In brief, the participants showed significant changes about: e.g. authentic tasks and e-feedback whereas peer interaction with each other and with the instructor saw no significant change. The participants demonstrated

significant changes in their perceptions towards the process writing approach in terms of: e.g. planning, discussion and multiple drafts; unlike focusing on content and coherence which showed little change. The participants also exhibited significant changes in perceptions towards CW as a practice which increased learners' mutual interaction. Yet, CW was perceived negatively in terms of creating equal chances of participation between the participants. Finally, the participants showed significant changes in perceptions towards the practice of WMCW, e.g. as an easier practice than CW in-classes and helpful to improve learners' writing problems. Yet, WMCW was perceived relatively negatively as a comfortable practice which reduced the stress of writing tasks and was more productive than paper-based individual writing.

This chapter has revealed further findings related to the changes in perceptions of the learners, based on thematic analysis. The emerging themes and sub-themes focused on the effects of the principles used in the new approach to teaching writing, the perspectives on the process writing approach, the potential of using WMCW, the challenges of using WMCW and the needs of using WMCW. In addition, both types of analyses or 'triangulation' elicited additional information about the issues that received more agreement or disagreement by the individuals across the research instruments used. In fact, this chapter is key to understanding the next chapter (chapter 7) that will investigate how the participants achieved the tasks using the PWCW and how social interaction and collaboration were maintained.

## Chapter 7: Analysis of Students' Written Texts Using PWMCW

### 7.1. Introduction

This chapter explores the findings about the role of wikis for enhancing written compositions by promoting the students' collaborative planning, drafting, editing and revising. The previous chapter (chapter 6) examined the students' perceptions and what their feelings in four key areas relevant to the process-oriented wiki-mediated collaborative writing (PWMCW). This chapter analyses the students' texts that were processed and produced using the PWMCW. The analysis deals with three areas of investigation:

Firstly, it examines the nature of the writing process employed by the learners in collaborative planning, editing and revising for writing development. The data for this section emerged from the wiki discussion threads.

Secondly, the analysis explores the findings about the PWMCW as used for drafts which were shaped collaboratively. The drafts, which were composed on wiki main pages, were firstly drafted based on the ideas of peers and revised again by additional peers. This was to assess the significance of the process, and revision in particular.

Thirdly, it was important to identify the effect of collaboration and the PWMCW on individuals' actions. These matters were examined in order to analyse the impact of collaboration on individual writing especially when learners were requested to compose texts individually after collaborative tasks (see sub-section: 5.7.5 about the assessment of the written texts).

The analysis has been designed to answer the remaining research questions with their sub-questions:

Research Questions (RQ2 and RQ3)

RQ2) How do EFL learner writers deal with the process-oriented wiki-mediated collaborative writing (PWMCW) for enhancing writing abilities and written texts?

- 2 a) How does the practice of collaborative planning on wikis contribute to the formulation of various written drafts?
- 2 b) How does the practice of collaborative revision on wikis enrich the various written drafts?

RQ3) To what extent is the process-oriented wiki-mediated collaborative writing (PWMCW) helpful for EFL learner writers in generating better written products?

- 3 a) What is the impact of the (PWMCW) on collaboratively produced texts?
- 3 b) What is the impact of the (PWMCW) on individually written texts?

## 7.2. The collaborative process writing

### 7.2.1. Findings about planning in the writing of learners' texts

Learners' writing, based on the process writing approach, was preceded by collaborative planning as a gateway to starting compositions. It was followed by collaborative editing and revising to complete the writing tasks. There were three significant acts emerged from the data given on the discussion threads of wiki during the collaborative planning phase. These data driven acts were: acts of understanding, acts of partial (incomplete) negotiation and acts of collaboration.

#### 7.2.1.1. Acts of understanding:

An act of understanding (cf. learning experience; see sub-section: 2.2.2) is defined here as the mental process that permits the learners to acquire the necessary information to complete the assigned tasks. The environment of collaboration using wikis generated lots of thinking and enabled the majority of participants to learn at their own pace. The total contributions relating to students' acts of understanding posted on the discussion thread was 58 across the three groups as shown in Table 7.1. The individuals in groups 1 and 2 made fewer contributions than group 3.

Acts of understanding	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3
group 1	11	5	3
group 2	6	7	3
group 3	9	5	9

Table 7.1: Number of contributions showing acts of understanding

Evidence of understanding between peers appeared to be very different between the groups as well as between the tasks. Some groups achieved quicker and deeper mutual and personal understanding (e.g. group 1) than others (e.g. group 3) perhaps because the group members in group 1 had more friendly relationship and were happy to work with each other. Some tasks were more suitable for learners to express more facets of understanding and thinking, such as Task 1 about diabetes and Task 3 about the pros and cons of chocolate consumption.

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In addition, acts of understanding were discovered through peers' use of a number of strategies. These strategies which were deductively driven from the data helped the learners to sustain ideas and to create new thoughts when writing drafts. The different strategies reflecting understanding were:

1) elaboration and explanation, 2) interpretation and prediction and 3) summarising and paraphrasing (Table 7.2).

Strategy	Description	Illustrative examples
<b>Elaboration &amp; explanation</b>	Learners identify knowledge and provide additional information, e.g. facts, cases and reasons.	e.g. causes of accidents: 1- driving fast, 2.cross the traffic light, 3.equipment failure, 4. using cell phone, 5.the weather: (rain, fog, storm)
<b>Interpretation &amp; prediction</b>	Learners expect the results of something; analysing information and predicting results.	e.g. there is one of the main causes of diabetes... genetical...if one of the parents (or both of them) has or have diabetes....maybe the first generation of children carry the disease.. or Infect by it..
<b>Summarising &amp; paraphrasing</b>	Learners paraphrase the main details of the given information or the main ideas.	e.g. I will talk about advantage and disadvantage of chocolate on our body. Chocolate is a good food and it benefits our body in many ways. First of all it helps the circulatory system to reduce blood pressure. It can be used also as an anticancer to prevent happening of cancer. And it helps the body to be a brain stimulator and cough preventer...

Table 7.2: Strategies demonstrating acts of understanding

As there were many examples of understanding, I will illustrate some of the most significant ones in the three groups.

### **Evidence of acts of understanding by group 1:**

In group 1, HA showed his understanding of the sorts of diabetes, which different people might be diagnosed with by noting gender and age. For example, the third type usually affects pregnant women.

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**HA:** Diabetes is one harmful metabolic disease. Diabetes has three types: 1) insulin-dependent diabetes, 2) non-insulin dependent diabetes and 3) Gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM). I will explain every type with my classmates.

In a different example from Task 2, SA at the beginning, listed the five most common causes of car accidents which seem to be human induced (e.g. using cell phones) or non-human induced such as weather.

**SA:** Causes of accidents: 1) driving fast, 2) cross the traffic light, 3) equipment failure, 4) using cell phone, and 5) the weather (e.g. rain, fog, storm)

HA continued by listing his understanding of the main causes of car accidents. He briefly described each cause in a few words:

**HA:** These are the definitions for some causes of accidents. Distracting driving: when you are busy with some thing like eating, using the mobile...etc. Speeding: when you are driving in a very high speed or overspeed...

The second finding from group 1 showed students' acts of understanding using peers' thoughts (e.g. MO). MO re-stated the ideas and phrases that were already proposed by his group members (MS and FB).

The peers' thoughts that he used are: for example, respect light signal or a child riding scooter.

**MO:** it was Saturday. The street was very crowded. there was cars accident between two cars and was the first owne of the car very angry. the couses of the accident no respect signal light. there is bus stopp next ti the light. nxet of the bus there is tixe car. there is some one set in moveing chare next to the corner ship.in front of this ship child ridding scottar or smoething like this.

The next finding related to Task 3 where good understanding of the topic was evident. Hence, SA, from this group, listed the main pros and cons of chocolate consumption from the academic article:

**SA:** First of all it helps the circulatory system to reduce blood pressure. It can be used also an anticancer to prevent happening of cancer.

On the other hand chocolate has many damages. Eating too much quantity of chocolate may lead to obesity. Obesity is the main risk factor for many diseases.

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Furthermore, by referring to the instructor's handout along with the academic article, HA elaborated on ideas relevant to the disadvantages of chocolate consumption as in the next contribution.

**HA:** I will talk about the disadvantages: first, chocolate is addictive, so from the first time you eat it you will love it.

second, chocolate with high sugar content.

third, chocolate is comfort food so when you eat it you can't stop eating it.

finally, eating too much of chocolate may cause obesity.

### **Evidence of acts of understanding by Group 2:**

Group 2 demonstrated understanding in a different way, where the participants posted their ideas in meaningful sentences in an attempt to write longer sentences.

In relation to Task 1, AB, presented new information about the outcome of being affected by diabetes in the long run.

**AB:** Diabetes is a very dangerous disease and has a lot of results on the body. First result, the body's fail to produce insulin so it requires insulin by injection. Second result, the cells fail to use insulin properly, sometimes combined with an absolute insulin deficiency. Third result, is when pregnant women have a high blood glucose level during pregnancy it may affect on the child.

AD also pointed to the three main actions that should be taken into account in order to reduce the consequences of this disease.

**AD:** The main procedures to fight against it are: Diet food, Non-breeding between families which are affected by this disease, psychological comfort...

Moreover, in Task 2, AD described the situation as illustrated in the image given.

**AD:** There were violation of traffic regulations, excessive speed, a man cross the street while the signal was green. this caused accident, a handicapped man was surprised at the site of the accident, and police was directed to the incident.

Pertaining to Task 3, MN, from this group, has drawn attention to the uses of chocolate and its medical advantages and disadvantages.

**MN:** Chocolate is a food that is popular all over the world: it can be eaten, used as a flavour in ice cream, and used in candy and other foods.

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AD, then, added further information regarding pros and cons of chocolate consumption.

**AD:** Chocolate is popular all over the world, e.g. eaten, used as flavour.

Chocolate is important the mayan culture, e.g. drunk in special parties.

There are negative effects of chocolate, e.g. obesity, tooth decay.

### **Evidence of acts of understanding by group 3:**

In Task 1, AL pointed to the main driving cause of diabetes that is obesity: eating too many sweets was seen as less dangerous than a generally excessive diet.

**AL:** Eating sweets or not suitable food does not cause diabetes. However, it may be caused by obesity and this lead people developing Type-2 diabetes.

In Task 2, FB, from this group, showed an act of understanding about something that was not spotted by the participants in groups 2 and 3 namely, that there were two car accidents that happened simultaneously.

**FB:** there are 2 car accidents in the picture... on the left side, there are two small cars crashing each other. The other accident happened between a taxi car and a bus on the right side.

AL added his understanding with more thinking about the situation that happened in the picture given.

**AL:** There is an accident in the middle of the street because one of the two cars crossed the red traffic light. Below the picture, a woman on her motorcycle stopped her vehicle by a long break in order to avoid the other woman who fell over the street.

Concerning Task 3, FB posted new information gained from the external reading he did with his group members.

**FB:** Chocolate is the most common sweets in the world. There are over 50 kinds of it and all people from different ages like to eat chocolate.

Afterwards, DK stated his understanding of some of the important ingredients available in chocolate which are important for the human body.

**DK:** Chocolate has a lot of substances that's important for human body for example, carbohydrates, fats and other vitamins and minerals.

### **7.2.1.2. Acts of partial (incomplete) negotiation:**

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An act of partial (incomplete) negotiation is when the students adjust to each other without much extended interaction as a result of working with each other- the initiators and responders. In other words, peers might not necessarily address each other or refer to what they have said.

In this phase there were some contributions where peers started the negotiations but they were not continued for longer scrutiny or multi-level responses. This was perhaps because of a lack of knowledge or experience of social interaction in web-based learning environments. In such examples, the negotiation process with progressive construction of communication in a complex way did not happen. There were more instances of partial negotiations expressed by group 2 for Task 1. The total number of instances of partial (incomplete) negotiation was 25 across the three groups (see Table 7:3).

<b>Acts of partial (incomplete) negotiation</b>	<b>Task 1</b>	<b>Task 2</b>	<b>Task 3</b>
<b>group 1</b>	1	2	1
<b>group 2</b>	14	3	0
<b>group 3</b>	3	0	1

Table 7.3: Number of contributions reflecting acts of partial (incomplete) negotiation

The strategies involved however were varied among the groups as shown in Table 7.4. The emerging strategies typical of coping with partial (incomplete) negotiation contained:

1) reiterating and recapping content; 2) raising enquiries and looking for information; 3) giving guidance and direction to each other; 4) challenging as a means of exerting more effort and 5) praising peers. Such short sentences were posted before writing the texts and they contained signs of peer interaction (e.g. for everyone, ok) that were not used as a starting point for higher levels of negotiation.

Strategy	Description	Illustrative examples
<b>Reiterating content</b>	Learners restate facts, opinions or information already given by peers.	e.g. Symptoms may develop rapidly (weeks or months) like the in type 1 diabetes that (SA) explained
<b>Raising enquiry</b>	Learners offer a public space for writing reflective questions /comments.	e.g. To everyone: What is the relationship of diabetes with the pressure and Atherosclerosis
<b>Giving guidance</b>	Learners show peers the suitable/ appropriate information and what are the best ways to complete assigned tasks.	e.g. We will start today to finish the planning quite early, so then we can start the editing and revising immediately after the drafting ok?
<b>Challenging</b>	Learners create challenging atmosphere among peers to exert their best efforts.	e.g. for everyone, why you do not write any things for the task. and hi (AB) where your skills that you have
<b>Praising peers</b>	Learners include appreciating peers' works and to result in better encouragement.	e.g. Hi guys, please I want you all to participate with us and would like to thank those who participated and recommend you to keep up. We want to be the best group...Thanx for participation

Table 7.4: Strategies demonstrating acts of partial (incomplete) negotiation

The results showed collaborative planning as learners' established tentative relationships with peers. The learners posted contributions aimed at other group members but without completely feeling part of a social group. Such contributions were characterised by a one-part thread or a single response.

Here we have some of these examples in English as posted by the participants before producing the original texts:

**Evidence of acts of partial (incomplete) negotiation by group 1:**

In an extract by HA from Task 1, he reiterated one of his peer's contributions. However, he did not receive any further reaction from other fellow peers perhaps because there was no agreement between the fellow members.

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**HA:** Symptoms may develop rapidly (weeks or months) like the in type 1-diabetes that (SA) explained it while in type 2 diabetes they usually develop much more gradually.

HA, as in the next extract, had also an administrative role to keep in touch with the group members to help them to accept challenges. There was not, however, serious discussion by the rest of participants.

**HA:** We will start today to finish the planning quite early, so then we can start the editing and revising immediately after the drafting. Ok?

In Task 2, SA from the same group made a contribution that encouraged peers to be more interactive with each other.

**SA:** Excellent (HA), that's really useful. What about other group members? They should participate in a similar way.

In addition, it was observed that HU, from the same group, asked a question of his peers but no response was received.

**HU:** Guys, should we write about Accident Statistics in Saudi Arabia?

### **Evidence of acts of partial (incomplete) negotiation by group 2:**

In relation to Task 1, within group 2, AB praised his friends in order to support them for giving adequate ideas.

**AB:** Hi guys, please I want you all to participate with us and would like to thank those who participated and recommend you to keep up. We want to be the best group.

Moreover, AD made an excuse to his peers for not participating. He also raised a question for more discussion.

**AD:** To everyone, sorry I was busy last week preparing my PowerPoint slides. Do you have any idea about the how this disease spread? I have placed some reasons that may help inn reducing its impact on patient.

AM also iterated content that was given by one of his peers suggesting that the two fundamental contributors to diabetes are: obesity and laziness.

**AM:** Hi everybody, as MN said: obesity and inactive lifestyle are the must reasons for diabetes in Saudi Arabia. I think the obesity is the biggest reason to have diabetes...but

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there is another reason...if the human does not move his body so match or is he does not do exercises...the surge in his blood will accumulates...

In Task 2, HA from group 2 has given guidance to his peers on how to be more precise during planning and to be vigilant before they make any changes.

**HA:** To everyone, if you want to change anything on the task, please be sure you are absolutely right and think about it carefully. Otherwise, I saw something correct changing to be incorrect. To be the best group, we have to help each other. Thank you all

### **Evidence of acts of partial (incomplete) negotiation by group 3:**

In Task 3, AL presented a personal repeat of content that was modified by himself: 'to be affected by' not 'to affect by'. This comment demonstrated a beginning of self-negotiation, other peers were expected to respond with more discussions, in order to use the correct grammatical structure in the written texts.

**AL:** Sorry I made a grammatical mistake, In addition, women with hypertension (high blood pressure) are more susceptible to be affected by diabetes specially type-2.

It was observed that the examples shown above and others were produced by a group of single contributors where no follow-up comments or responses were received from peers. The resulting strategies, as shown in Table 6.4, represent what the participants did during this acts of 'partial (incomplete) negotiation'. The strategies practised by some learners were useful for the initiation of more social interaction between peers, at least by starting to break down some of the boundaries between each other. Indeed, it was discovered that this act is considered as a tactic to promote collaboration later on. The strategies emerged were applied as a bridge between personal understanding and group collaboration.

Moreover, these strategies were seen to be beneficial in highlighting the need to continue working on these strategies, by responding to each other. In addition, identifying the actions, which led to partial or incomplete negotiation, could be re-evaluated to find out the reasons (e.g. cognitive or social) that interrupted this process of meaningful learning.

#### **7.2.1.3. Acts of collaboration:**

An act of collaboration is defined as the learners' response to enquiries by their fellows in order to establish social interaction. This form of social interaction is to encourage

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the participants to accept the errors that are identified by their peers and then to engage in further discussion. Social interaction was examined by investigating different layers of communication and parts of each discussion thread based on Campos et al. (2001) and Campos (2003). This research has come up with an adapted model relating to acts of social interaction (see Figure 5.4 for further information about this model). On the basis of this framework for analysing modes of social interaction, several examples were identified to show evidence of collaboration across the three groups.

In this phase, the frequency of collaboration on the discussion threads of wiki was not great. There were, however, examples of collaboration that comprised a five-part interaction as in group 3. The examples of collaboration may suggest further information about the variation in participants when they plan for writing in groups. The total number of instances of collaboration was 11 across the three groups as in Table 7.5.

Acts collaboration	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3
group 1	2	2	1
group 2	1	1	1
group 3	2	1	0

Table 7.5: Number of contributions showing acts of collaboration

### Evidence of acts of collaboration by group 1:

In Task 1, peers had the chance to construct the definition of diabetes together. The response from SA sought to obtain a more accurate description of this medical problem (Line 19). The thread, here, involved three parts where a mistake in the previous definition was revised (Lines 15 and 16) to show a value-added definition. This definition was established through contacting peers without expecting further interaction. Yet, HA managed to create a learning community (see section 1.4) for knowledge development using the word 'right' that inspired others to state either their agreement or disagreement (Line 18). Hence, a modest, as opposed to vague or strong, level of collaboration was accomplished (see Figure 5.4 in section: 5.8 in methodology chapter). The participants started a discussion about an important topic but they did not continue to build a more complex collaboration.

15. SA: Diabetes is a disorder characterized by high blood sugar. It result from
16. disorder in insulin which is a hormone secrete by pancreas.
17. HA: (deletion for name- SA)... but the diabetes is syndrome so we must rewrite the
18. definition right?

19. SA: The definition: Diabetes is a syndrome characterized by high blood sugar.
20. It result from disorder in insulin which is a hormone secrete by pancreas.

The next short extract shows another act of collaboration for Task 1 that took place in two parts to explain the difference between 'syndrome' and 'disease'. The interpersonal relationship was conducted by contacting the group, using the word 'guys' by HA, with an expectation of mutual interaction. A response from RQ was posted to HA showing the distinction between these two terms (Lines 25 and 26). The use of 'guys' by HA, created a friendly atmosphere (Line 25). The collaboration in this learning community illustrates communication of simple but significant information (Line 26). The method of facilitation collaboration was personal observation rather than group coordination, and the level of participation was modest rather than strong.

25. HA: What is the difference between syndrome and disease, guys?
26. RQ: We can treat disease but we can't treat syndrome.

In Task 2, two students discussed the differences between 'ice' and 'snow'. One of them addressed the other by stating his name emphasising the interpersonal relationship (Line 65). This happened by contacting someone in the group (HA) with an expectation of interaction. There was continuation of a collegial relationship, using the word 'yah', before providing some information on a limited scale (Lines 67-70). In addition, the person who asked the question showed his appreciation at the end and indicated his understanding (Line 71). Collaboration in this example can be perhaps considered as moderate. Knowledge of collaboration was evidenced through peer observation, not coordination because there was no extended interaction among peers (see Figure 5.4 in section: 5.8 in methodology chapter).

65. SA: Excuse me (HA) can you tell me what is the difference between ice and
66. snow?
67. HA: Yah, though ice and snow are both made up of water but the main
68. difference: is that snow fall can be seen only in winters at areas of high
69. altitudes and places and near the polar regions whereas ice can be seen in
70. any season of the year in our refrigerator.
71. SA: aha, thanks a lot (HA). That's interesting.

Fewer incidents of social interaction were observed in Task 3. In one of the examples selected, SA initiated collaboration (Line 90). The interpersonal relationship produced, based on a question and an answer, maintained the contact with someone from the

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group with an expectation of challenging mutual interaction. The knowledge was provided using information from Wikipedia (91-93) although the collaboration did not last for long. The method of facilitating collaboration was personal observation and the level of collaboration was also modest as there was only one response.

- 90. HL: (SA) what about the history of the chocolate? we didn't talk about it?
- 91. SA: the history of chocolate begins in Mesoamerica. Chocolate, the fermented,
- 92. roasted, can be traced to the Mokaya and other people, with evidence of
- 93. cacao beverages dating back to 1900 BC.

### **Evidence of acts of collaboration by group 2:**

The next example, from Task 1, consisted of a two-part interaction. AD was wondering about the connection of diabetes with two other diseases that endanger human life. Peers were asked about something that was not previously studied, *atherosclerosis*, to create a relationship (Lines 32 and 33). This relationship helped to construct knowledge in a collegial and interpretive way (Line 34). The method of facilitating collaboration in this example was weak as the level of collaboration was limited.

- 32. AD: to everyone: What is the relationship of diabetes with the pressure and
- 33. Atherosclerosis?
- 34. HB: hi guys I'm sorry I don't understand your question. What do you mean or
- 35. what is your target?

The next example from Task 2 (Lines 76-77) shows peers supporting each other in order to establish shared communication. This three-part interaction does not seem to represent meaningful learning that could lead to new knowledge. It was more for giving instruction than to identify new content. Yet, collaboration was achieved by contacting the group expecting cordial interaction (see Figure 5.4 in section: 5.8 in methodology chapter). This example provided a collegial response to AM through using the informal words 'hi'. The group did not get past the broadcasting phase that is based on posting different messages without mutual communication. The method of facilitating collaboration was through personal observation and the level of collaboration was modest.

- 75. AM: I can not see where task 2 is where is it? I am so excited ^\_\_^ thank you.
- 76. HB: hi (AM) It's easy. Have you written for task 1? It's on the left side
- 77. below the task 1. Good luck.
- 78. AM: aha I saw it I saw it and I will be participating for task 1 thank you (HB).

This next example from Task 3 is similar to the collaboration held between HA and AM already indicated in Task 2. AD and AM had procedural interaction rather than meaningful interaction for learning (Line 97). The interpersonal relationship was composed of contacting the members of the group with an expectation of cordial mutual interaction. This two-part interaction was not made to construct exchange of information rather it emphasised broadcasting instruction in a collegial way using the word 'broth' or 'brother'. The level of collaboration was modest and its facilitation was based on personal observation.

96. AD: To everybody: did (MS) write anything?

97. AM: Hi (AD) yes he did go to task 3 and he did the editing good luck broth.

### **Evidence of acts of collaboration by group 3:**

In Task 1, FB suggested steps to reduce the negative impact of diabetes. This example of collaboration contained a three-part interaction between two peers. They show agreement concerning the causes of diabetes (Line 42). Moreover, a statement was given by the initiating person (FB) to show his confirmation that the main cause of diabetes is obesity (Line 43). Based on Figure 5.4, the interpersonal relationship was created by contacting the group members without an expectation of further action. However, this social interaction was established as a part of a collegial and interpretive learning community. The level of collaboration may be considered as modest, as it included only two students, and the method of facilitating the collaboration was through personal observation.

38. FB: ...Type 2 diabetes is treated first with weight reduction, a diabetic diet,

39. and exercise. When these measures fail to control the elevated blood sugars,

40. oral medications are used. If oral medications are still insufficient, treatment

41. with insulin is considered.

42. AL: Do you mean that the main cause of diabetes Type 2 is the obesity?

43. FB: yes (AL) that's the main cause....

The next example from Task 1 from group 3 represented the most significant act of collaboration as there was evidence of interpersonal relationship between three different peers that was created by contacting the members of the group with an expectation of cordial mutual interaction, as illustrated in Figure 5.4 (see section: 5.8 in methodology chapter). This social interaction on the discussion thread of wiki resulted in a five-part interaction. It started with FB's enquiry who sought further shared discussion about diabetes (Line 49-51). AL demonstrated the reasons for diabetes in a friendly tone (Lines 52-56). FB then thought about other sources of diabetes (Lines 57-

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59). SH, however, contradicted FB's perspectives (Lines 60-61), then FB explained his disagreement with SH (Lines 62-63). This discussion helped to create a collegial and interpretive learning community and showed more exchange of knowledge as a new speaker (SH) was inspired to take part. The level of collaboration was strong, as three peers took part, and the method of facilitating the collaboration was through group coordination.

49. FB: that's new for me.... thanks (AL) ok let's discuss about this question.
50. Why diabetes is the most common disease in Saudi society...? Is it from
51. eating a lot of fast food? or something else?
52. AL: I agree with you Mr (FB) fast food causes diabetes indirectly see that ...Fast
53. food is one of the main causes of obesity and as you mentioned, obesity is also
54. the main cause of diabetes Type 2. To conclude, there is a relationship
55. between obesity and diabetes...Fast food causes diabetes, lack in exercises I
56. mean physical exercises may also cause diabetes.
57. FB: there is one of the main causes of diabetes 'genetical'. If one of the
58. parents (or both of them) has or have diabetes...maybe the first generation of
59. children carry the disease...or be infected by it.
60. SH: well, hello guys... I think lack of exercises is not a basic cause for diabetes,
61. because there are many people like to walk an hour at least every day.
62. FB: many people like to walk....and so many people like to set all day watch
63. T.V and eat....I disagree with you Mr (SH)

The next example of collaboration from Task 2 by the same group achieved a three-part interaction that was created by contacting the group members without an expectation of further action. In this sense, the interpersonal relationship began with AL who described the phenomenon of car accidents in an attempt to involve other peers in additional contribution (Lines 83 and 84). FB responded to provide more explanation concerning this crisis especially in Saudi Arabia using a motivational word 'Mr' (Lines 85-87). AL showed a collegial and interpretive learning community (Lines 88 and 89). The level of collaboration was modest because it was on a dual basis between AL and FB, and the method of facilitating collaboration was through coordination.

83. AL: there is an accident in the middle of the street because one of the two
84. cars crossed the traffic light.
85. FB: I agree with you Mr (AL) when there is a traffic light, you'll find a system
86. but when someone broke that system, all thing that belong to it will be

87. missed up.

88. AL: yes (FB) Now I believe that the accident was because of the system

89. disorder of the traffic. Thank you for your comment.

The practice of collaborative planning has clearly contributed to the generation of new drafts. Based on the three acts of planning revealed by the participants, the newly formulated drafts were better than those drafts produced individually. The reasons were that planning collaboratively on wikis allowed the learners to have adequate time to think about the topics assigned, answering related enquiries, raising some problems, ensuring knowledge and searching for additional information. In terms of quantity, collaborative planning by peers did not result in a huge amount of complex planning, perhaps because it was new to most of the learners. However, the resulting planning was enjoyable and became the main way of developing the preliminary knowledge of peers. It assisted the learners of writing as well as peers to consider writing as a cognitive and growing skill that is reinforced by extended reading and investigation, sharing knowledge and collective efforts.

### **7.2.2. Findings about revision in the writing of learners' texts**

The nature of revision varied among the participants, who were mostly beginners and intermediate in writing. The process of navigating the 'history' function simplified the identification of amendments made by the individual participants to peers' contributions as well as to their personal texts. It helped to preserve a record of development for the learners. The findings showed that most of the participants tended to work on small items of language including change of words and spelling adjustments instead of more challenging aspects such as restructuring sentences. Few participants were found editing subtle and uncommon mistakes to make sentences more readable.

#### **7.2.2.1. Results of amendments made by group 1 in Task 2:**

In the first edit of this collaborative text No. 1 by MT (Figure 7.1), MT focused on correcting grammar, spelling and wording. He primarily concentrated on surface-related amendments and there was no opportunity to add or revise a complete phrase or sentence. MT overlooked some errors, for example when the appropriate definite article was missing in *car* and again in *bus*.

**MT:**

it It was on a Saturday. The street was very crowded. There was ~~a cars~~ car accident between two cars and ~~was~~ the first ~~owne~~ owner of the car ~~was~~ very angry. the ~~causes~~ causes of the accident ~~were~~ no respect signal ~~light.there~~ light. There is bus ~~stopp~~ stopped next to the ~~light~~ ~~axet~~ light. N~~xet~~ of the bus there is ~~taxi~~ taxi car. ~~there~~ There is some one set in moving ~~chare~~ chair next to the ~~cornir~~ ~~ship.in~~ corner of the shop. In front of this ~~shop~~ shop there is child ridding scotter or something like this. Police car ~~was~~ coming toward the accident ~~cars~~ ~~the~~ of the cars. There was a disabled truck ~~there are disabled~~ behind the police car ~~behind.The~~.The girl ~~fell~~ dropped purchases because of the speed of the motorcycle and her dog was ~~afrid~~ afraid.

**The key:** Red= deletion of items Green= addition of items

Figure 7.1: 1st edit of the collaborative text no. 1

The second edit of the previous collaborative text was done by SA as shown below (Figure 7.2). Yet, he was not willing to make multiple amendments at one time (i.e. accuracy and content). He preferred to gradually discover errors related to the texts and removed a few of them each time. In the text below he suggested a new prepositional phrase and definite articles (a).

**SA:**

It was on a Saturday. The street was very crowded. There was car accident between two cars and the first owner of the car was very angry. the causes of the accident were no respect ~~signal~~ to the traffic light. There is a bus stopped next to the light. N~~xet~~ of the bus there is a taxi car. There is some one set in moveing chair next to the corner of the shop. In front of this shop there is child ridding scotter or something like this. Police car was coming toward the accident of the cars. There was a disabled truck behind the police car .The girl dropped purchases because of the speed of the motorcycle and her dog was afraid.

**The key:** Red= deletion of items Green= addition of items

Figure 7.2: 2nd edit of the collaborative text no. 1

In the third edit of the same collaborative text, SA posted a meaning-related addition (Figure 7.3). The two suggested sentences were proposed to act as a way of introducing the core of the topic. This act of editing and revising did not occur at the same time when the text was first seen by the same reviser (SA). The reviser, here,

worked on the sentence-level but neglected other existing problems on word level such as conjunctions (e.g. next) and other misspelled vocabulary (e.g. moveing and scotter).

**SA:**  
accident is so dangerous and alot of people were killed by accidents. one of the accidents is what we can see in this picture. It was on a Saturday. The street was very crowded. There was car accident between two cars and the first owner of the car was very angry. the causes of the accident were no respect to the traffic light. There is a bus stopped next to the light. Nxet of the bus there is a taxi car. There is some one set in moveing chair next to the corner of the shop. In front of this shop there is child ridding scotter or something like this. Police car was coming toward the accident of the cars. There was a disabled truck behind the police car .The girl dropped purchases because of the speed of the motorcycle and her dog was afraid.

**The key: Red=** deletion of items **Green=** addition of items

Figure 7.3: 3rd edit of the collaborative text no. 1

In the fourth edit of the same collaborative text, HU made three changes for aesthetic purposes (Figure 7.4). These amendments were at the surface level. A few other changes were also very basic. Words were both deleted as well as inserted on the basis of the desired meaning (i.e. too and very). There was much inaccurate information and errors which remained untouched.

**HU:**  
accident is so dangerous and alot of people were killed by accidents. one of the accidents is what we can see in this picture. It was on a ~~Saturday.~~ ~~The~~ ~~rainy day.~~ ~~The~~ street was ~~very~~ ~~too~~ crowded. There was car accident between two cars and the first owner of the car was ~~very~~ ~~too~~ angry. the causes of the accident were no respect to the traffic light. There is a bus stopped next to the light. Nxet of the bus there is a taxi car. There is some one set in moveing chair next to the corner of the shop. In front of this shop there is child ridding scotter or something like this. Police car was coming toward the accident of the cars. There was a disabled truck behind the police car .The girl dropped purchases because of the speed of the motorcycle and her dog was afraid.

**The key: Red=** deletion of items **Green=** addition of items

Figure 7.4: 4th edit of the collaborative text no. 1

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The fifth edit of the same collaborative text was done by HA (Figure 7.5). He mainly concentrated on punctuation, formatting, grammar and spelling. There were also errors that had to be changed immediately, but they were not noticed until the final round by different editors. Moreover, a new style of using written language started to appear, for example, using the pronoun 'it' to indicate the preceding name and a concluding sentence was inserted to smoothly finish the paragraph.

**HA:**

accident is ~~Accidents are~~ so dangerous and alot of people were killed by ~~accidents, one of it~~ .  
~~These are an examples for~~ the accidents ~~is what we can see~~ in ~~this~~ ~~the~~ picture. It was on a rainy day. The street was too crowded. There was car accident between two cars and the first owner of the car was too angry. ~~the causes~~ ~~The cause~~ of the accident ~~were no respect~~ ~~was the esteem~~ to the traffic light. There is a bus stopped next to the ~~light~~ ~~Nxet~~ ~~light~~ . ~~Next~~ of the bus there is a taxi car. There is ~~some one set~~ ~~someone sat~~ in ~~moveing~~ ~~moving~~ chair next to the corner of the shop. In front of this shop there is child ridding scotter or something like this. Police car was coming toward the ~~accident~~ ~~accidents~~ of the cars. There was a disabled truck behind the police car .The girl dropped purchases because of the speed of the motorcycle and her dog was afraid ~~-.SO these are examples of accidents.~~~~In the end this picture described how is the accidents are dangerous.~~

**The key:** Red= deletion of items Green= addition of items

Figure 7.5: 5th edit of the collaborative text no. 1

This final edit of the same collaborative text included a few correct additions replacing misspelling and adding transition words as illustrated in Figure 7.6. Yet, most of the amendments were related to the surface level. It was noticeable that not all of the problems related to the text were figured out by the participants. There were some parts which could not be understood. However, and in comparison with the first edit, the current edited text has much improved since there was correction, but not for all the problems.

**RQ:**

Accidents are so dangerous and alot of people were killed by it. These are an examples for the accidents in the picture. It was on a rainy day. The street was too crowded. There was car accident between two cars and the first owner of the car was too angry. The cause of the accident was ~~the~~ ~~no~~ esteem to the traffic light. There is a bus stopped next to the light. Next of the bus there is a taxi car. There is someone sat in moving chair next to the corner of the shop. In front of this shop there is child ridding ~~seotter~~ ~~scooter~~ or something like this. Police car was coming toward the accidents of the cars. There was a disabled truck behind the police car .The girl dropped purchases because of the speed of the motorcycle and her dog was afraid ~~.SO these are examples of.~~ ~~.In short this picture shows some~~ accidents. In the end this picture described how is the accidents are dangerous.

**The key:** Red= deletion of items    Green= addition of items

Figure 7.6: 6th edit of the collaborative text no. 1

The amendments indicated prove that fellow students produced an effective outcome contributing to the preliminary written drafts though this development of drafts was slow and took a number of iterations. The participants' collaborative revision enriched the linguistic correctness of the drafts mostly at word-level for errors related to the superficial aspects of texts whereas correctness at phrase- and sentence-level were occasionally used.

**7.2.2.2. Results of amendments made by group 2 in Task 1:**

In the first edit of the collaborative text No. 2, AD started with deleting unnecessary words (Figure 7.7). He also suggested a new verbal phrase and replaced some unsuitable lexis. However, many other errors and wrong forms were neither edited nor revised.

AD:

Diabetes is a high level of glucose in the blood ~~than normal~~. It is more common disease in our social ~~. Can be affects weather. It may affect~~ young or older ~~man~~ ~~people~~. The most symptom of diabetes (Type I and II) is a rise in rate of blood sugar . There are two main types of diabetes .First type, usually occurs in young children and teenagers and also can ~~may be~~ ~~affects~~ ~~affect~~ older ~~person~~ ~~people~~ . In type 1, Infected person can not make insulin . There is a hormone converts blood sugar into energy . That hormone is produced by cells existent in the pancreas . But for some reason this is not happening. As the glucose in the blood can not convert into energy. But cells in the blood absorb that and result that higher in blood sugar . There is a treatment for this type . The treatment is injections of insulin everyday for maintains the level of blood sugar normal . The second type is called mature onset diabetes. It is the most common more than type 1 . The problem in type 2 same problem in type 1 . It is related to insulin. But in this type the produced glucose builds up in the bloodstream Instead of absorbing in the cells . Many Infected people might not recognize the symptoms in early period.

**The key:** Red= deletion of items    Green= addition of items

Figure 7.7: 1st edit of the collaborative text no. 2

In the second edit of the same collaborative text, HB engaged in non-language-related episodes to deal with forms and mechanics (Figure 7.8). He spent most of the time deleting the spaces between dots and commas at the end of sentences. He also made subtle changes to correct plural forms and be precise with verbs after 'to' (i.e. to maintain) with deletion of 'S' for the third person singular. Other errors related to forms were not grasped although they were basic errors and simple to be recognised.

**HB:**

Diabetes is a high level of glucose in the ~~blood~~ ~~blood~~. It is more common disease in our social .It may affect young or older people. The most symptom of diabetes (Type I and II) is a rise in rate of blood sugar . There are two main types of diabetes .First ~~type~~ ~~type~~, usually occurs in young children and teenagers and also can affect older ~~people~~ ~~people~~. In type ~~1~~ ~~1~~, ~~infected~~ ~~1~~, ~~infected~~ person ~~can not~~ ~~cannot~~ make ~~insulin~~ ~~insulin~~. There is a hormone converts blood sugar into ~~energy~~ ~~energy~~. That hormone is produced by cells existent in the ~~pancreas~~ ~~pancreas~~. But for some reason this is not ~~happening~~ ~~happening~~. As the glucose in the blood ~~can not~~ ~~cannot~~ convert into ~~energy~~ ~~energy~~. But cells in the blood absorb that and result that higher in blood ~~sugar~~ ~~sugar~~. There is a treatment for this ~~type~~ ~~type~~. The treatment is injections of insulin everyday ~~for maintains~~ ~~to maintain~~ the level of blood sugar ~~normal~~ ~~normal~~. The second type is called mature onset ~~diabetes~~ ~~diabetes~~. It is the most common more than type ~~1~~ ~~1~~. The problem in type 2 same ~~problem~~ ~~problems~~ in type ~~1~~ ~~1~~. It is related to ~~insulin~~ ~~insulin~~. But in this type the produced glucose builds up in the bloodstream Instead of absorbing in the ~~cells~~ ~~cells~~. Many Infected people might not recognize the symptoms in early period.

**The key:** Red= deletion of items    Green= addition of items

Figure 7.8: 2nd edit of the collaborative text no. 2

As shown in Figure 7.9, in the third edit of the previous collaborative text, HB made only one contribution that was not correct; (converts) is more appropriate than (convert's). Furthermore, many segments of the texts were quoted from an external source due to the fact that several participants had difficulty in rephrasing information. Some of them also had a problem in understanding the ideas given by other peers and in then changing them into full comprehensible sentences.

**HB:**

Diabetes is a high level of glucose in the blood. It is more common disease in our social .It may affect young or older people. The most symptom of diabetes (Type I and II) is a rise in rate of blood sugar. There are two main types of diabetes .First type, usually occurs in young children and teenagers and also can affect older people. In type 1, infected person cannot make insulin. There is a hormone ~~converts~~ ~~convert's~~ blood sugar into energy. That hormone is produced by cells existent in the pancreas. But for some reason this is not happening. As the glucose in the blood cannot convert into energy. But cells in the blood absorb that and result that higher in blood sugar. There is a treatment for this type. The treatment is injections of insulin everyday to maintain the level of blood sugar normal. The second type is called mature onset diabetes. It is the most common more than type 1. The problem in type 2 same problems in type 1. It is related to insulin. But in this type the produced glucose builds up in the bloodstream Instead of absorbing in the cells. Many infected people might not recognize the symptoms in early period.

**The key:** **Red**= deletion of items **Green**= addition of items

Figure 7.9: 3rd edit of the collaborative text no. 2

In the fourth edit of the same collaborative texts, the last reviser, HB, changed the incorrect form of the verb (convert) as in Figure 7.10. It became more accurate than the first time as a relative demonstrator (that) was added followed by a verb ending with a third singular person (converts) to be grammatically correct. Again, HB did not take into consideration other issues related to the deficiency of this text, such as for the several complicated sentences that needed to be restructured and simplified.

**HB:**

Diabetes is a high level of glucose in the blood. It is more common disease in our social .It may affect young or older people. The most symptom of diabetes (Type I and II) is a rise in rate of blood sugar. There are two main types of diabetes .First type, usually occurs in young children and teenagers and also can affect older people. In type 1, infected person cannot make insulin. There is a hormone ~~that convert's~~ ~~converts~~ blood sugar into energy. That hormone is produced by cells existent in the pancreas. But for some reason this is not happening. As the glucose in the blood cannot convert into energy. But cells in the blood absorb that and result that higher in blood sugar. There is a treatment for this type. The treatment is injections of insulin everyday to maintain the level of blood sugar normal. The second type is called mature onset diabetes. It is the most common more than type 1. The problem in type 2 same problems in type 1. It is related to insulin. But in this type the produced glucose builds up in the bloodstream Instead of absorbing in the cells. Many Infected people might not recognize the symptoms in early period.

**The key:** Red= deletion of items Green= addition of items

Figure 7.10: 4th edit of the collaborative text no. 2

The amendments admitted by peers through collaborative revision in this group confirm the development of several early versions of texts by making them more comprehensible, despite this the corrections did not exceed the sentence level. It appeared that accuracy-related errors (i.e. word choice, spelling, subject-verb agreement, proportions and articles) are important to be fixed in the first place. Ignoring such errors may hinder learners to understand the meaning of texts. It was identified that both participants with more and less advanced writing experiences were keen to treat such form-related errors at word level before looking at explaining ideas at phase- and sentence-levels.

#### **7.2.2.3. Results of amendments made by group 3 in Task 3:**

In the first edit of the collaborative text No. 3, AL demonstrated several amendments related to form as well as meaning (Figure 7.11). Signposting words were used (e.g. also, third and fourth) besides using different forms of adjectives (e.g. comparative and superlative forms). Relative pronouns and clauses were often used and more than one sentence was correctly written without mistakes.

AL:

Chocolate ~~of the best foods in the world.~~~~first~~ is a food that is popular all over the world for some reasons .~~first~~ of all Chocolate can be eaten and also used as a flavour in ice cream . ~~Second,~~ it consists of around 300 chemical substances they have many function. For example chocolate has polyphenols that anti-oxidant substance to protect body of internal materials that destroy the body. ~~The other~~ Another example ~~reduce~~ is flavanols that reduces high blood pressure ~~to contain flavanols.~~~~second~~ . Also, continuous consumption ~~reduce~~ of chocolate reduces heart ~~problems.~~~~conected~~ problems. Third, Chocolate and cacao were very important for the Mayan culture for instance, families drank hot chocolate drink at a group special occasions and at parties. Fourth, chocolate is produced by many countries such as United States, Great Britain, Germany, Switzerland, The Netherlands, and France. Many countries produce cacao bean like Ivory coast, Ghana, Indonesia, and Brazil. Chocolate making is a big business . For instance, more than five billion dollars worth of people where they eat cacao beans are sold every year. in short, chocolate ~~once or twice in week rate~~ 25g.in short, chocolate is one of ~~greater foods~~ the greatest food in present.

The key: Red= deletion of items Green= addition of items

Figure 7.11: 1st edit of the collaborative text no. 3

In the second edit of the same collaborative text, AA reorganised the sequence of ideas and content (Figure 7.12). The sentence 'Many countries produce cacao bean like Ivory Coast, Ghana, Indonesia and Brazil. More than five billion dollars worth of cacao bean are sold every year.' was re-ordered to be re-placed at the beginning. AL seemed to consider this sentence to be more general which could be introduced as a topic sentence. However, there were subtle mistakes and less accurate linguistic choices which were left unchanged.

AA:

Many countries produce cacao bean like Ivory Coast, Ghana, Indonesia and Brazil. More than five billion dollars worth of cacao beans are sold every year. Chocolate and cacao were very important for the Mayan culture. For instance, families drank hot chocolate drink at a special occasions and at parties. .Chocolate is a food that is popular all over the world for some reasons .first reasons. First of all Chocolate all, chocolate can be eaten and also used as a flavour in ice cream . Second, it consists of around 300 chemical substances they have many function. For example chocolate has polyphenols that anti-oxidant substance to protect body of internal materials that destroy the body. Another example is flavanols that it reduces high blood pressure .Also, .Third, the continuous consumption of chocolate reduces heart problems. Third, Chocolate and cacao were very important for the Mayan culture for instance, families drank hot chocolate drink at a special occasions and at parties. Fourth, chocolate making is a big business. So, it is produced by many countries such as United States, Great Britain, Germany, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Switzerland, The Netherlands and France. Many countries produce cacao bean like Ivory coast, Ghana, Indonesia, and Brazil. Chocolate making is a big business . For instance, more than five billion dollars worth of cacao beans are sold every year. in In short, chocolate is one of the greatest food in present.

The key: Red= deletion of items Green= addition of items

Figure 7.12: 2nd edit of the collaborative text no. 3

In the third edit of the previous collaborative text, FB tended to concentrate on punctuation (e.g. full stops and commas) and unnecessary changes, indicating similar meaning (Figure 7.13). FB also suggested ‘which’ instead of ‘that’ for the right relative pronoun, though they were taught that both are used with inanimate objects. Beyond all of this, the past tense in these sentences was reversed into present tense since the students seemed to consider these sentences to be a sort of habitual action. Most of the changes relating to the prepositions were accurate.

**FB:**

Many countries produce cacao bean like Ivory Coast, Ghana, Indonesia and Brazil. More than five billion dollars worth of cacao beans are sold every year. Chocolate and cacao ~~were~~ are very important for the Mayan culture. For instance, families drank hot chocolate ~~drink~~ at a special occasions and ~~at~~ parties. ~~Chocolate is a food that is popular~~ Chocolate is the most common sweets all over the world for some reasons. First of all, chocolate can be eaten and used as a flavour in ice ~~cream.~~ cream. Second, it consists of around 300 chemical substances ~~they that~~ have many ~~function.~~ functions. For ~~example~~ example, chocolate has polyphenols ~~that~~ which is an anti-oxidant substance used to protect body ~~of from~~ internal materials that destroy the body. Another example is flavanols ~~that it~~ which reduces high blood pressure. Third, the continuous consumption of chocolate reduces heart problems. Fourth, chocolate making is a big business. So, it is produced by many countries such as United States, Great Britain, Germany, Switzerland, The Netherlands and France. In short, chocolate is one of the greatest food in present.

**The key:** **Red**= deletion of items **Green**= addition of items

Figure 7.13: 3rd edit of the collaborative text no. 3

In the fourth edit of this collaborative text, DK changed most of the edits made by FB as shown in Figure 7.14. Yet, there were several problems that were realised in this new text since most of the recent changes were actually wrong (e.g. to protect body of internal materials). DK also mixed the past and present tenses and misunderstood some of the basics of English language such as plural forms, and punctuation marks and capital letters.

**DK:**

Many countries produce cacao bean like Ivory Coast, Ghana, Indonesia and Brazil. More than five billion dollars worth of cacao beans are sold every year. Chocolate and cacao ~~are~~were very important for the Mayan culture. For instance, families drank hot chocolate at a special occasions and ~~parties. Chocolate is the most common sweets~~at parties.Chocolate is a food that is popular all over the world for some reasons. First of all, chocolate can be eaten and used as a flavour in ice ~~cream.~~cream . Second, it consists of around 300 chemical substances ~~that they~~have many functions. For ~~example.~~example chocolate has polyphenols ~~which is an~~that anti-oxidant substance ~~used~~to protect body ~~from~~of internal materials that destroy the body. Another example is flavanols ~~which~~that it reduces high blood pressure .Third, the continuous consumption of chocolate reduces heart problems. Fourth, chocolate making is a big business. So, it is produced by many countries such as United States, Great Britain, Germany, Switzerland,The Netherlands and France. In short, now chocolate is one of the greatest food ~~in present.~~all over the world.

**The key:** Red= deletion of items    Green= addition of items

Figure 7.14: 4th edit of the collaborative text no. 3

In the fifth edit, AL the first contributor engaged with the same text to make additional refinements as exemplified in Figure 7.15. He attempted to enhance the effectiveness of the current text by re-deciding upon the introductory sentence. He seemed to be absolutely sure about where to start a new sentence. Hence, he moved it to the end of the text.

AL:

~~Many countries produce cacao bean like Ivory Coast, Ghana, Indonesia and Brazil. More than five billion dollars worth of cacao beans are sold every year. Chocolate and cacao were very important for the Mayan culture. For instance, families drank hot chocolate at a special occasions and at parties. Chocolate~~
of the best foods in the world.
~~first~~ is a food that is popular all over the world for some ~~reasons. First of all, chocolate~~
reasons .first of all
Chocolate can be eaten and also used as a flavour in ice cream. Second, it consists of around 300 chemical substances they have many function. For example chocolate has polyphenols that anti-oxidant substance to protect body of internal materials that destroy the body. The other Another example reduce is flavanols that ~~it~~ reduces high blood pressure ~~.Third, the to contain flavanols .second . Also,~~ continuous consumption reduce of chocolate reduces heart ~~problems.conucted~~ problems. Third, Chocolate and cacao were very important for the Mayan culture for instance, families drank hot chocolate drink at a group special occasions and at parties. Fourth, chocolate ~~making is a big business. So, it~~ is produced by many countries such as United States, Great Britain, Germany, ~~Switzerland,The Netherlands~~ Switzerland, The Netherlands, and France. ~~In~~ Many countries produce cacao bean like Ivory coast, Ghana, Indonesia, and Brazil. Chocolate making is a big business. For instance, more than five billion dollars worth of people where they eat cacao beans are sold every year. in short, ~~now~~ chocolate once or twice in week rate 25g.in short,chocolate is one of greater foods the greatest food ~~all over the world. in present.~~

The key: Red= deletion of items Green= addition of items

Figure 7.15: 5th edit of the collaborative text no. 3

In the sixth edit, AL, again, reproduced this text for the third time and each time he discovered a few problems which were not recognised before as shown in Figure 7.16. Despite that, there still were some problems which could not be figured out; most of the recent changes however were in the right place and redundant words were deleted.

AL:

Chocolate of the best foods in the world.first is a food that is popular all over the world for some reasons .first of ~~all-Chocolate~~ ~~all, chocolate~~ can be eaten and also used as a flavour in ice cream. Second, it consists of around 300 chemical substances they have many function. For example chocolate has polyphenols that anti-oxidant substance to protect body of internal materials that destroy the body. The other Another example reduce is flavanols that reduces high blood pressure to contain flavanols .second ~~chocolate once or twice in week~~ ~~rate 25kg may reduce heart connected problems.~~ Also, continuous consumption reduce of chocolate reduces heart ~~problems.conucted~~ ~~problems.~~ ~~problems.~~ Third, Chocolate and cacao were very important for the Mayan ~~culture-for~~ ~~culture.~~ ~~For~~ instance, families drank hot chocolate drink at a group special occasions and at parties. Fourth, chocolate is produced by many countries such as United States, Great Britain, Germany, Switzerland, The Netherlands, and France. Many countries produce cacao bean like Ivory coast, Ghana, Indonesia, and Brazil. Chocolate making is a big business. For instance, more than five billion dollars worth of people where they eat cacao beans are sold every year. ~~in-short, chocolate~~ ~~once or twice in week rate 25g.in~~ ~~in~~ short, chocolate is one of greater foods the greatest food in present.

The key: Red= deletion of items Green= addition of items

Figure 7.16: 6th edit of the collaborative text no. 3

In the final edit of this collaborative text, SH worked on amending capitalisation and commas (Figure 7.17). He also used correct intensifiers such as 'many' and markers of third personal singular, e.g. 'decreases'. Furthermore, two redundant words were deleted (e.g. greater, the greatest food). As many students were found mixing the prepositions 'of' and 'from', SH was observed differentiating between these two overlapping prepositions 'of' and 'from' in a correct way.

**SH:**

Chocolate ~~is one~~ of the best foods in the ~~world.first~~ world. ~~Chocolate~~ is a food that is popular all over the world for ~~some~~ many reasons ~~first~~. ~~First~~ of all, chocolate can be eaten and also used as a flavour in ice cream. Second, it consists of around 300 chemical substances ~~they~~ ~~which~~ have many function. For ~~example~~ example, chocolate has polyphenols that ~~is~~ antioxidant substance to protect body ~~of from~~ internal materials that destroy the body. ~~The~~ ~~other~~ Another example ~~reduce~~ is flavanols that ~~reduces~~ reduce high blood pressure to contain flavanols ~~second~~. ~~Third~~, chocolate once or twice in a week ~~in a~~ rate ~~25kg of~~ 25kgs may reduce heart connected problems. Also, continuous consumption ~~reduce~~ decrease of chocolate reduces heart ~~problems..~~ ~~Third~~, ~~problems~~. ~~Fourth~~, Chocolate and cacao were very important for the Mayan culture. For instance, families drank hot chocolate drink at ~~a group~~ special occasions and at parties. ~~Fourth~~, ~~Fifth~~, chocolate is produced by many countries such as United States, Great Britain, Germany, Switzerland, The Netherlands, and France. Many countries produce cacao ~~bean~~ beans like Ivory coast, Ghana, Indonesia, and Brazil. Chocolate making is a big business. For instance, more than five billion dollars worth of people where they eat cacao beans are sold every year. ~~in short, chocolate~~ ~~In short~~, chocolate is one of ~~greater~~ greatest foods the ~~greatest food in~~ in our present time.

**The Key:** Red= deletion of items Green= addition of items

Figure 7.17: 7th edit of the collaborative text no. 3

Across the three groups, the participants were considerably more likely to edit texts than to post new ideas or to make comments, which is a part of collaborative planning.

The findings showed a total of 94 edits aiming to create new written versions and more refined revisions. Some of these new edits comprised one or more amendment per time (e.g. changing grammatical form or misspelling vocabulary). Compared with the participants of groups 1 and 3, the population of group 2 generated more versions of texts as shown in Figure 7.18.

In group 2, the percentage of new edits (iteration for new versions) of various collaborative texts was 51.06%, compared with 25% by group 1 and 23.4% by group 3.

In fact, group 2 appeared to be the group which worked more frequently on the three tasks assigned and contributed more to the discussion threads. In addition, the quality of the texts produced varied among various groups and within each time of

amendment. It was also observed that some of the students produced fewer edits. However, these edited texts were more accurate rather than correcting more mistakes.

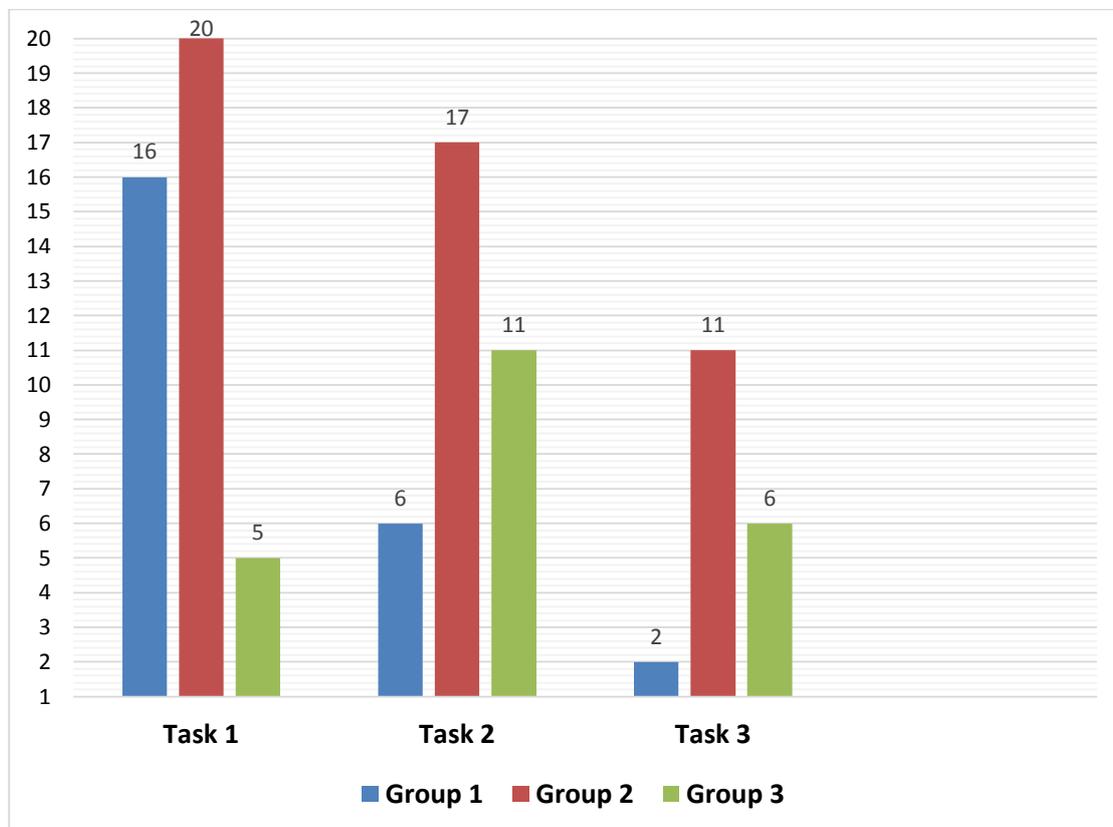


Figure 7.18: Number of edits across the three groups and tasks

Furthermore, the number of newly written edits encompassed only those texts that achieved meaningful amendments. On the other hand, some of the edited texts lacked substantial amendments. Such edits were re-saved on wikis so the same texts would be posted virtually without making amendments, but this process of saving is counted as a new edited text. In several examples, however, it was found that making multiple insignificant edits helped the participants to reinforce the relationship with other peers and to motivate them to accomplish additional contributions. Nonetheless, there was an extensive decline in the number of edits performed across the three tasks. Several external factors were found to be the reasons for the deterioration of students' participation on wikis over time. The students needed to prepare for many exams and quizzes. The students also did not prioritise the participation on un-assessed tasks.

#### 7.2.2.4. Overview of results:

All the produced edits (various versions) were examined. The students addressed several types of amendments during this process of editing and revising for the whole

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texts. In the findings, a total of 936 amendments were performed by the participants in their learning groups in the various edits (Figure 7.19). Group 2 achieved a similar number of amendments to group 3 (349 versus 350). Both groups 2 and 3 accomplished a higher number of amendments than group 1, which made 237 amendments. An amendment includes any minor change (e.g. adding/deleting a pronoun) or a major change (adding/deleting a sentence) that each student might do at one time.

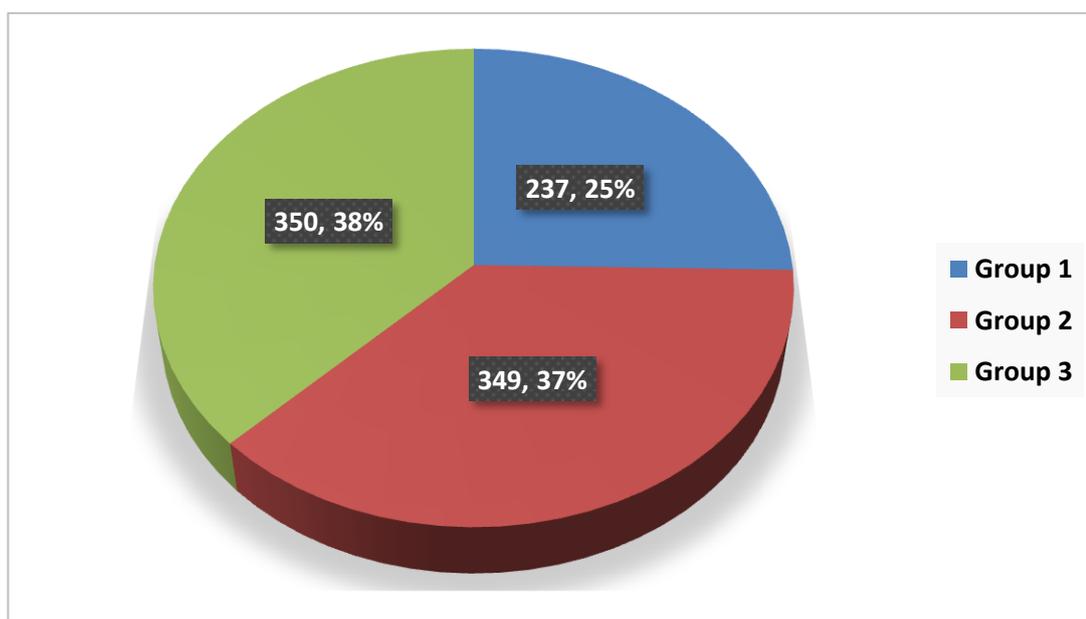


Figure 7.19: Number of amendments across the three groups

The analysis of students' texts, during wiki-based revision, identified three types of amendments: correct, incorrect and unnecessary changes. These changes have different meanings. The majority of other amendments were correctly reformed for better written texts. There was a smaller number of incorrect and new unnecessary changes than correct changes that have been spread across the three groups (Figure 7.20). The correct changes involved more than two thirds, less than fourth, of the corrections provided by peers (73%). The percentage of incorrect and unnecessary changes were found to be limited (14.6% and 12.4 respectively) compared to correction changes. In relation to incorrect changes, it was discovered that those peers who performed a higher number of correct amendments made a higher number of incorrect amendments as well. Therefore, the number of contributions to new amendments do not necessarily indicate more improvements in the produced drafts or reflect the proficiency level of participants.

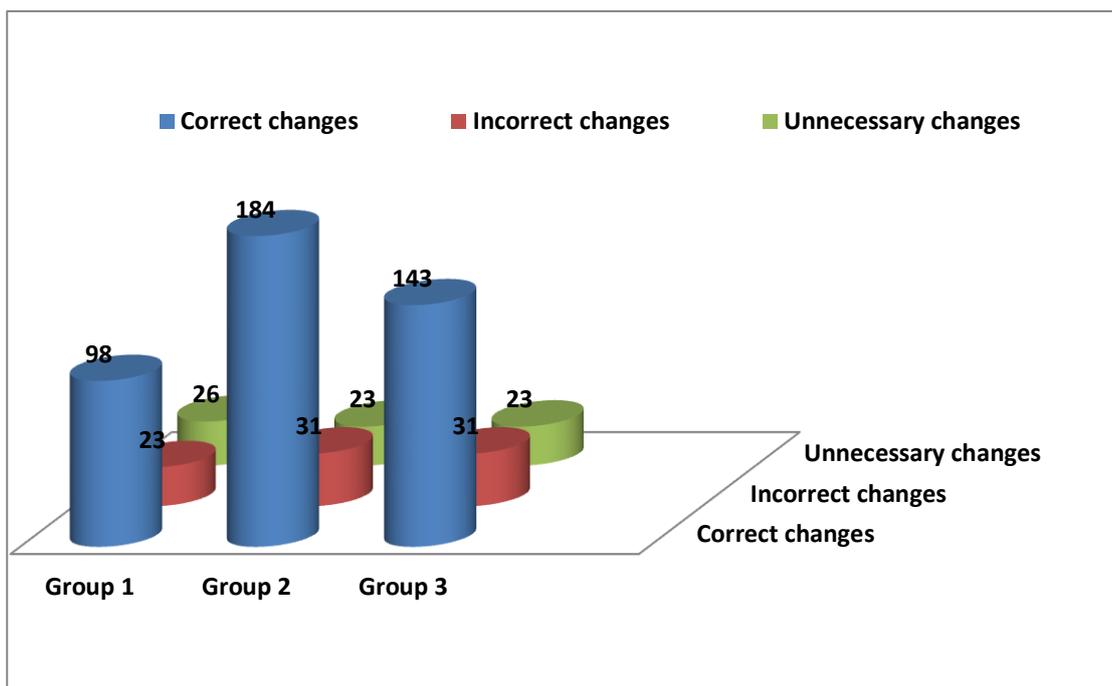


Figure 7.20: Number of correct, incorrect and unnecessary amendments

In view of this, meaning-related amendments (including adding or deleting new clauses and sentences and changing the order of sentences) were not as frequent as form-related amendments, with a percentage of 32.6%. Specifically, there were few amendments which were related to adding as well as deleting and restating phrases, clauses and sentences. Macro-changes for long parts of the texts, e.g. such as one or two full sentences, were rare compared with micro-changes such as adding or changing lexis, which was often used to slightly alter the content.

In conjunction with the analysis of the nature of corrections by the students, the findings revealed that there was a dominating focus on non-language related episodes which just included indentation and spacing. Across the three groups, the surface-related amendments were overriding (Figure 7.21). Surface or form-related amendments involved: word choice, spelling, tense, subject-verb agreement, pronouns, prepositions, relative demonstrators, articles, third person singular and passive voice). Accordingly, the total percentage of this type of amendment showed its prevalence among the learners (67.4%).

In relation to form-related amendments, group 1 differed surprisingly from the rest of the groups (2 and 3). This group had an approximately equal number of form and meaning-related amendments (73 versus 70). In the rest of the groups, the form-based amendments were double the content-based amendments. Overall, form-related

amendments were significantly frequent in use by group 1 students, mostly in a correct way.

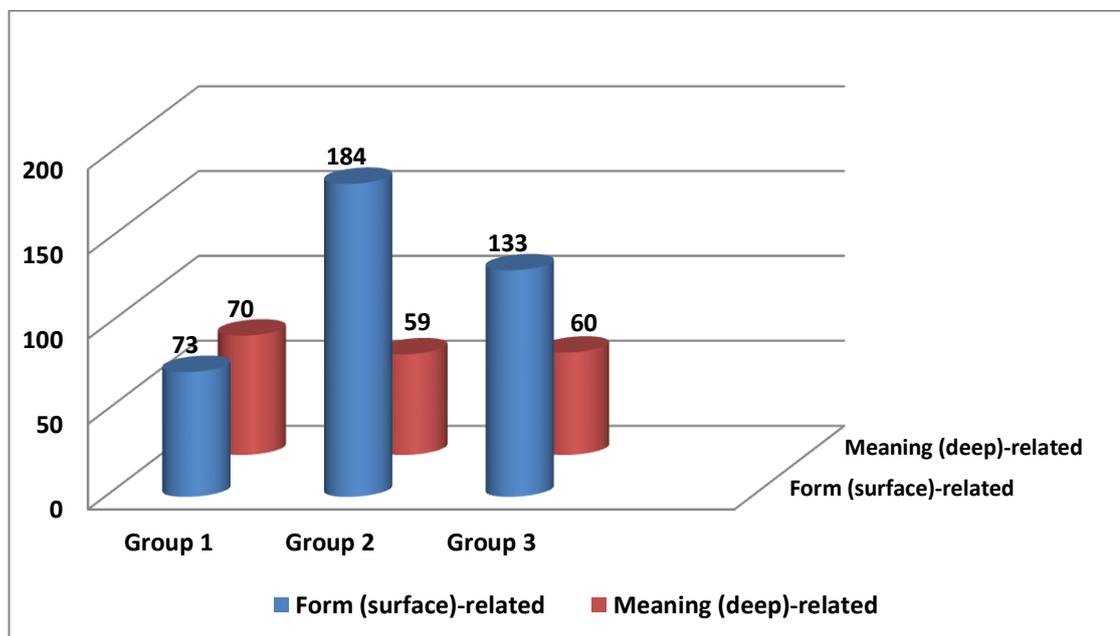


Figure 7.21: Number of form-and meaning-related amendments

There were several techniques used by the participants, which would have been difficult to accomplish traditionally by hand. That is because wiki-based texts are more dynamic than paper-based texts. They involved moving written chunks by copying and pasting, dragging or replacing (see section: 8.7 for the affordances of collaborative revision on wikis). The findings revealed that the participants used the collaborative planning phase, at the beginning, to enhance their knowledge, awareness and understanding about the assigned topics. In contrast, the participants used the collaborative revision phase, at the end, to improve final written drafts. Therefore, recursiveness from planning to revising and vice versa was not practised significantly. Instead, linearity was the predominant process that enabled the learners to complete the assigned tasks.

The process of editing new versions and amending writing problems became more straightforward because of the availability of texts on wikis. Regardless of time and space constraints, the students seemed able to shift from one specific phase to another. By tracing the time of contributions on the history function, it was found that several contributions were achieved at different times as shown in Figure 7.22. Here is a snapshot of the edits that were achieved in the period between the 31st and 2nd of

April, 2011. The names of the contributors have been covered for reasons of anonymity.

Search		
<p><b>Home</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcome page</li> <li>What is a wiki</li> <li>ما هو الويكي؟</li> <li>What is wikispaces</li> <li>Working on wiki</li> <li>Roles of participants</li> </ul> <p><b>Your course information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction to the course</li> <li>Timetable</li> <li>What is a brainstorming and drafting</li> <li>Questions for a brainstorming and drafting</li> <li>What is feedback, revising and editing</li> <li>Questions for peers' feedback, revising and editing</li> </ul> <p><b>Your writing tasks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-tasks activity</li> <li>Description of tasks</li> <li>Task 1</li> <li>Task 2</li> <li>Task 3</li> </ul> <p><b>Language resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collins dictionary</li> <li>Listen to radio in English <a href="#">↗</a></li> <li>A guide for academic writing <a href="#">↗</a></li> <li>Practice writing in English <a href="#">↗</a></li> <li>Activities for ESL/EFL students <a href="#">↗</a></li> <li>Resources for English as a second language <a href="#">↗</a></li> <li>ESL sites: Tower of English <a href="#">↗</a></li> <li><a href="#">edit navigation</a></li> </ul>	Apr 2, 2011 11:34 pm	Select [REDACTED]
	Apr 2, 2011 11:20 pm	Select [REDACTED]
	Apr 2, 2011 11:07 pm	Select [REDACTED]
	Apr 2, 2011 9:59 pm	Select [REDACTED]
	Apr 2, 2011 9:56 pm	Select [REDACTED]
	Apr 2, 2011 9:08 pm	Select [REDACTED]
	Apr 2, 2011 8:24 pm	Select [REDACTED]
	Apr 2, 2011 5:56 pm	Select [REDACTED]
	Apr 2, 2011 5:43 pm	Select [REDACTED]
	Apr 2, 2011 4:12 pm	Select [REDACTED]
	Apr 2, 2011 4:11 pm	Select [REDACTED]
	Apr 2, 2011 2:47 pm	Select [REDACTED]
	Apr 2, 2011 2:45 pm	Select [REDACTED]
	Apr 2, 2011 2:44 pm	Select [REDACTED]
	Apr 2, 2011 2:35 pm	Select [REDACTED]
	Apr 2, 2011 10:47 am	Select [REDACTED]
	Apr 1, 2011 10:06 pm	Select [REDACTED]
	Apr 1, 2011 9:28 pm	Select [REDACTED]
Mar 31, 2011 8:06 pm	Select [REDACTED]	

« 1 2 3 »

Figure 7.22: A snapshot from wiki tracking system

### **7.3. The collaborative product writing**

#### **7.3.1. Findings about the impact of the PWMCW on collaboratively written texts on wikis:**

The outcome of the PWMCW using student-created edits of texts was extensive. There were twenty (20) texts produced from scratch that were created by the main drafters in different groups as following: 5 texts by group 1, 8 texts by group 2 and 7 texts by group 3. These original (primary) texts were generated after peers' planning together on the assigned thread discussions. Later on, with collaborative revision, the number of the original texts (20) extended to (49) because of the set of edits and iterations of the same texts, as shown in Figure 7.18.

It was found that the original texts were produced not only through the participants in the same learning groups. Rather, some of the participants also established their own mini-learning groups. In other words, although each group members were supposed to produce one text through drafters chosen by the participants as this was part of the new instruction, a number of texts were generated through sub-groups. This happened when a group decided to subdivide away their main groups to work in smaller groups with a fewer members (3 or 4 people). The findings indicate that at first both sub-groups and whole group consultation methods were common for creating collaborative texts. Later, groups became more cohesive as a whole as was hoped.

It was observed that the majority of learners had a chance to participate with their peers either in writing new texts or by providing revision. Both acts seemed easy to maintain in a non-collaborative environment where learners are inspired to do something different from others. The participants with their different learning abilities seemed to be exerting efforts to produce better written revisions. Many of them had also a chance to contribute more than one time, up to nine times as shown in Table 7.6. These were the consequences of using WMCW trained learners to take part in the process of refinement. The results also showed that group 2 achieved the highest number of iterations within the edited texts.

Group 3, on the other hand, accomplished fewer texts than groups 1 and 2 but, unlike other groups, the iterations of this group were fulfilled through more shared collaboration and effort as they did not split off to work in sub-groups. Moreover, group 1 achieved a slightly higher number of iterations than group 3 and it also contained fewer sub-groups than group 3 since they were observed following the roles of completing the tasks.

G:	Task 1		Task 2		Task 3	
	Edits per text	Contributors per text	Edits per text	Contributors per text	Edits per text	Contributors per text
1	10	Five peers (one participated six times- including the 1 <sup>st</sup> author)	6	Five peers (one participated for two times)	2	Two peers (including the 1 <sup>st</sup> author)
	1	One member				
	5	Two peers (one participated four times)				
2	1	One peer	1	One peer	11	Six peers (two participated two and five times- including the 1 <sup>st</sup> author)
	13	Four peers (two participated two and nine times- including the 1 <sup>st</sup> author)	15	Six peers (three participated two, four and five times)		
	2	Two peers	1	One peer		
	4	Two peers (one participated three times)				
3	2	Two peers	1	One peer	6	Five peers (one participated two times)
	1	One peer	2	Two peers (including the 1 <sup>st</sup> author)		
	2	Two peers	8	Five peers (two participated two and three times-including the 1 <sup>st</sup> author)		

Table 7.6: Number of iterations and contributors for collaborative texts

**7.3.1.1. Establishing inter-rater reliability for the collaborative texts:**

By using the Spearman Correlation Coefficient test, the statistical analysis between the two raters identified a high level of agreement of 0.85 for the original texts (planning-oriented) and 0.80 for the edited texts (revision-based). The values of the two variables (0.85 and 0.80) correlated highly since they are less than 1 or 'P' < 0.1.

It was found that there were no statistical variations between each pattern of assessment made by the two raters based on using Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney Test for measuring the level of differences. The statistical analysis resulted in a level of

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difference at 0.27 for the raters of the original texts, whereas the other level of difference at 0.69 was achieved for the edited texts. The style of marking for original texts did not significantly differ between raters 1 and 2. Similarly, the marking of the final edits did not significantly differ between raters 1 and 2. The values of the two variables (0.27 and 0.69) were above the significance level ('P' < 0.05). Yet, despite these results regarding the agreement between the two raters, the raters showed limited disagreement for some of the given markers but they were not significant

A paired sample T-test was applied to show levels of development (or progress) in learning writing. Each one of the two cohorts of assessment (of raters 1 and 2) was statistically matched and this resulted in a significant changing indicating development in writing learners' abilities. By considering the same significance level 'P' < 0.05, the findings indicated a good development for the final edits that applied the PWMCW according to the following results (M=55.85/ SD=8.45 and M=61.80/ SD=6.33 in consistent with the first rater and M=52.45/ SD=7.16 and M=61.50/ SD=5.15 in consistent with second rater).

Thus, the null hypothesis of the first rater, supposing that differences between the initial and final rating of PWMCW-related texts equals 0, was refused, as the test of the hypothesis showed a significant change at 0.000. Also, the second null hypothesis of the second rater, assuming the differences between the original texts and final edits of wiki-based texts equals 0, was also statistically refused demonstrating at a significant change at 0.000 as shown in Tables 7.7 and 7.8.

	Paired differences				Significance level
	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval of Difference		
			Lower	Upper	0.000
<b>InitialRater1 &amp; PostRater1</b>	-5.950	6.329	-8.912	-2.988	

Table 7.7: Level of development in collaborative writing (rater 1)

	Paired differences				Significance level
	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval of Difference		
			Lower	Upper	0.000
<b>InitialRater2 &amp; PostRater2</b>	-9.050	7.163	-12.403	-5.697	

Table 7.8: Level of development in collaborative writing (rater 2)

**7.3.1.2. Assessing development in the collaborative texts:**

As the results identified a good level of inter-rater reliability and agreement between the two raters, this enabled the researcher to report the results given by one rater. There was complete ‘statistical’ agreement on eleven sub-components and four were rated differently (see Tables: 7.10 - 7.13). So, the differences between the raters seemed to be small.

The findings related to the overall assessment of the texts revealed a range of development in line with three levels of accomplishment: better, equal and worse achievement in four components: mechanics, vocabulary, grammar and content. The level of achievement was decided as follows:

1. better achievement if there was an increase in a grade of three or more;
2. equal achievement if the grade was the same or just one or two grades different to the first and
3. worse achievement if the result was three grades or more than the previously.

It was discerned that better achievement for learning writing was created by most of the groups. Equal achievement was also observed in very limited texts. Worse achievement, however, had not been noticed by anyone from the three groups.

The results showed that collaborators were better in a number of sub-components of learning writing such as in using new lexis, correct usage of articles and pronouns and agreement of subjects and verbs. Such levels of accomplishment were made based on the classification of three relative degree boundaries. The boundaries were above 55 for high learners, from 54 to 35 for moderate learners and below 35 for low learners.

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	Original texts (just planning)		Final edits (planning & revision)		Level of Accomplishment
	Contributor Name	Total mark (75)	Contributor name	Total mark (75)	
<b>Group 1:</b>	<b>HA</b>	56	<b>MO</b>	62	Better
	<b>RQ</b>	57	<b>MO</b>	61	Better
	<b>SA</b>	65	<b>HA</b>	68	Better
	<b>MN</b>	38	<b>RQ</b>	57	Better
	<b>RQ</b>	42	<b>RQ</b>	59	Better
<b>Group 2:</b>	<b>AB</b>	62	<b>MN</b>	65	Better
	<b>HB</b>	63	<b>HB</b>	68	Better
	<b>MN</b>	57	<b>HB</b>	63	Better
	<b>AK</b>	48	<b>HB</b>	57	Better
	<b>AM</b>	51	<b>MN</b>	53	Equal
	<b>AK</b>	40	<b>MN</b>	62	Better
	<b>AD</b>	55	<b>MM</b>	56	Equal
	<b>MM</b>	49	<b>HB</b>	69	Better
<b>Group 3:</b>	<b>AL</b>	54	<b>SH</b>	63	Better
	<b>FB</b>	53	<b>DK</b>	63	Better
	<b>DK</b>	53	<b>SH</b>	57	Better
	<b>AL</b>	55	<b>FB</b>	55	Equal
	<b>FB</b>	47	<b>AL</b>	57	Better
	<b>DK</b>	54	<b>DK</b>	63	Better
	<b>BU</b>	50	<b>SH</b>	72	Better

Table 7.9: Overall assessment for the collaborative texts

Accordingly, the obtained results, as in Table 7.9, determined the level of the success for each group of participants who worked jointly. The percentage of the helpful provision for such texts reached 85%. On the contrary, the percentage of the texts that did not prove informative assistance for the writing learners was 15%. The results also showed that a group of individual writers (i.e. RQ, HB and DK) enhanced their writing skills of producing better edited texts. These learners managed to post their original

drafts. Then, after their peers started this process of revision of the same texts of these individuals, the original contributors achieved a more improved final revision.

The findings also reported the analytic assessment for each sub-component of learning writing. Overall, most of the sub-components selected for assessing writing exhibited widespread changes for constructing written texts with higher quality at ('P' <0.05). For more details, the results showed a significant development for the mechanics of writing which included using full stops and capitalisation as is described in Table 7.10.

**a.) Mechanics:**

Component	Sub-component		Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig (2 tailed)
<b>Mechanics</b>	Full stop	Original texts	4.15	.813	0.004
		Final edits	4.70	.657	
	Capitalisation	Original texts	3.85	1.089	0.004
		Final edits	4.75	.550	

Table 7.10: Impact of using mechanics in collaborative texts

The findings about using vocabulary and lexis underlined significant development. Use greatly developed from the original texts to the final edits. This comprised involving more relevant, adequate and new words. Similar findings revealed however that choosing correct spelling did not greatly develop in the final written versions as shown in Table 7.11.

The findings of the other rater indicated inconsistency regarding spelling as it was shown that the collaborative writers significantly developed in spelling ('P'=0.02). Moreover, according to this rater, the collaborative writers did not significantly develop in choosing relevant as well as adequate lexis (p=0.330 and 'P'=0.716 successively).

**b.) Vocabulary and lexis:**

Component	Sub-component		Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig(2 tailed)
<b>Vocabulary and lexis</b>	Spelling	Original texts	4.25	1.020	0.088
		Final edits	4.65	.671	
	Relevancy	Original texts	3.80	.616	0.010
		Final edits	4.10	.641	
	Adequacy	Original texts	3.45	.510	0.008
		Final edits	3.85	.671	
	Newness	Original texts	3.45	.510	0.008
		Final edits	4.05	.686	

Table 7.11: Impact of using vocabulary and lexis in collaborative texts

The results also pointed to significant development in using grammar and syntax. In fact, the final edits were more advanced as they applied agreement between subjects and verbs and agreement between verbs and tense forms more correctly. The results also presented some progress in using articles, adjectives, relative pronouns and prepositions as in Table 7.12.

**c.) Grammar and syntax:**

Component	Sub-component		Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig (2 tailed)
<b>Grammar and syntax</b>	Agreement of subjects and verbs	Original texts	3.95	.759	0.001
		Final edits	4.55	.605	
	Agreement of verbs & tense forms	Original texts	3.40	.821	0.001
		Final edits	4.05	.605	
	Accurate usage of articles, adjectives, relative pronouns & prepositions	Original texts	3.20	.894	0.002
		Final edits	3.85	.587	

Table 7.12: Impact of using grammar and syntax in collaborative texts

In addition, the results related to using new content and structure showed significant development. It involved using better introductions, conclusions and sequence of ideas.

The same results also revealed that presenting examples with supporting sentences was used along with writing long sentences (e.g. compound or complex) with transition signals (Table 7. 13).

Nevertheless, the findings of the other rater reported inconsistency concerning the significant development of using compound and complex sentences (p=0.186).

**d.) Content and structure:**

Component	Sub-component		Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig (2 tailed)
<b>Content and structure</b>	Clarity of introduction	Original texts	2.65	1.089	0.001
		Final edits	3.55	1.234	
	Clarity of conclusion	Original texts	3.35	.745	0.004
		Final edits	3.85	.671	
	Clarity of sequence & arrangement of ideas	Original texts	3.50	.827	0.017
		Final edits	3.90	.788	
	Clarity of examples for supporting ideas	Original texts	3.10	.788	0.000
		Final edits	4.00	.725	
	Clarity of compound & complex sentences	Original texts	3.30	.923	0.021
		Final edits	3.80	.616	
	Clarity of transition & signposting signals	Original texts	3.05	1.099	0.000
		Final edits	3.85	1.040	

Table 7.13: Impact of using new content and structure in collaborative texts

**7.3.1.3. Comments about the collaborative texts on wikis (based on the findings from the original texts and their final edits):**

**Comments about products of group 1:**

In the original texts of Task 1, the observation of the original texts showed that the vocabulary was not entirely suitable, but this did not impede understanding, e.g. diabetes can shoot any age. There was confusion between words such as 'life' and 'live' and there was a lack of a clear conclusion. The following features of basic good writing were less apparent in early collaborative texts: agreement of subjects and verbs

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and use of transitions and signposting. In the final edits, however, the style of writing was impersonal enough for academic style of writing and the usage of agreement between subjects and verbs was improved. However, the final edits of one group of participants focused on correcting 'errors' which were not truly mistakes.

In relation to the observation of Task 2, some of the original texts started well but then became more difficult to follow. In the final edits, the writing abilities of the learners increased as they used a wide range of adequate lexis for describing their ideas. Still, some other final edits had misspelling-related problems such as 'ridding', which was spelt as 'riding'.

The observation related to Task 3 indicated that some sentences had problems, such as that more than one sentence was repeated ignoring spelling mistakes. Yet, in the final edits, a range of other issues were not solved such as mixing between 'much' and 'many'. Articles and prepositions were sometimes not correctly used.

### **Comments about products of group 2:**

Collaborative writing by group 2 was slightly different from group 1. The observation of the original texts produced for Task 1 was generally better than the original texts produced by group 1. Such texts were written with clear planning, correct spelling and good grammar. The texts had some problems with the mechanics of writing as many apostrophes were ignored. The final edits treated most of these shortcomings, although two edited versions remained without good signs of writing development. In these two versions, there were several personal pronouns and contractions.

In Task 2, some of the original texts used the spoken rather than written style. There were also many problems with punctuation. Yet, the final edits enriched these texts as they paid more attention to spelling correction and using prepositional phrases for better understanding. The edited versions also showed development regarding using full stops, new lexis, compound sentences and relative pronouns.

The original texts of Task 3 were produced in a better way than the previous tasks (1 and 2). In addition, the final edits enhanced these texts in respect to: the agreement between verbs and tense forms and the agreement between subjects and verbs. Most of the edited sentences used articles and prepositions, and there was a clear conclusion supporting examples. Nonetheless, it was discerned that the learners had difficulties with using correct relative phrases.

### **Comments about products of group 3:**

The findings of Task 1 explained that there was a general weakness in the produced texts. This weakness appeared in using correct punctuation and applying compound or complex sentences and well-developed conclusions. These texts were created in informal language; such as using contractions and phrasal verbs which are more suitable for spoken language. In contrast, the final edits displayed more development. This related to correcting punctuation, spelling and verbs and tense agreement and parts of speech.

In Task 2, some of the original texts contained similar problems as in Task 1. Indeed, they had been replaced by unnecessary and incorrect changes in the final edits. Although there were several instances of development in the edited versions, spelling was still incorrectly used and this led to something other than what it was meant to be; e.g. 'pit' not 'pet' and 'track' not 'truck'.

In Task 3, some of the original texts missed necessary verbs and punctuation marks. They had also simple grammatical and syntactic mistakes. The final edits of these texts, however, resulted in more consideration of the organisation of ideas, structure and content.

### **7.3.2. Findings about the impact of the PWMCW on individually written texts in class:**

#### **7.3.2.1. Establishing inter-rater reliability for the individual texts:**

The findings confirmed that the PWMCW had positive impact on the development of the individual writing. As there were twenty (20) participants took part in the study, this resulted in forty (40) individually-based texts. Each participant (on paper) produced a pair of texts prior and subsequent to the experience of the PWMCW.

The Spearman Test for measuring correlation between the two raters resulted in a high level of agreement of (0.85) for the participants' first texts (before introducing wiki-based writing) and (0.98) for the participants' final text (after introducing wiki-based writing). The value of the two variables (0.85 and 0.85) were significantly correlated since they are both close to 1.

Also, by applying the Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney Test in order to determine the difference level between these two markers, it was identified that a level of difference between the two raters at 0.17 was accomplished for the first texts. The two raters also accomplished a level of difference at 0.97 for the final texts. So, as was found in the collaborative texts, the assessment process between the two markers did not significantly differ for the individually-based texts. The values of the two variables (0.17 and 0.69) were above the significance level ('P' < 0.05).

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A paired-sample T-test was also conducted to express levels of development (or progress) for individual writers. By considering the significance value  $p < 0.05$ , the findings presented a good level of development for most of the individual writers and their final texts, according to the following results:  $M=47.05/ SD=17.76$  and  $M=52.05/ SD=52.05$  for the first marker and  $M=41.38/ SD=41.38$  and  $M=52.10/ SD=52.10$  for the second marker which proved there was a substantial amount of improvement among the participants for their individual writing. Therefore, the first null hypothesis assuming the differences between the first and final marking of rater 1 equals 0 was rejected as the test of the hypothesis showed significant development for individual writers at 0.011. Moreover, the second null hypothesis assuming the differences between the first and final marking of rater 2 equals 0, was rejected as the test of the hypothesis demonstrated significant development for the individual writers at 0.000 as presented in Tables 7.14 and 7.15.

	Paired differences				Significance level
	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval of Difference		0.011
			Lower	Upper	
<b>InitialRater1 &amp; PostRater1</b>	5.000	8.222	1.257	8.743	

Table 7.14: Level of development in individual writing (rater 1)

	Paired differences				Significance level
	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval of Difference		0.000
			Lower	Upper	
<b>InitialRater2 &amp; PostRater2</b>	10.714	8.338	6.919	14.509	

Table 7.15: Level of development in individual writing (rater 2)

**7.3.2.2. Assessing development in the individual texts:**

The findings related to the overall assessment of the texts produced individually revealed enhancement for individuals' writing skills in four main components: mechanics, vocabulary, grammar and content. Since the scores of the one of the raters were already adopted, the scores of the individual texts were found in agreement with two levels of accomplishment: increase and decrease in their writing abilities (Table 7: 16). There was complete agreement between the raters in ten sub-components out of fifteen (as shown in Tables: 7.16-7.20).

The findings revealed that all of the final texts which were later produced by the individual writers in class were better than before course texts, e.g. in writing clear introductions and using transition and signposting signals. Out of the twenty one (21) individual writers, nineteen (19) managed to upgrade their level of accomplishment in the final texts, either from low to moderate writers or from moderate to better writers. The findings also suggested that even writers with high abilities increased their level of accomplishment (students no. 4, 6, 12 and 18). On the other hand, it was found that two individual writers did not change and two other writers indicated regression in their writing abilities (students no. 19 and 21).

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No.	Level of proficiency	Total mark (75)		Level of Accomplishment
		First text	Final text	
1	Moderate	40	47	Increase
2	Moderate	47	51	Increase
3	Moderate	43	49	Increase
4	High	55	71	Increase
5	Low	33	40	Increase
6	High	63	67	Increase
7	Low	17	34	Increase
8	Low	19	42	Increase
9	Low	24	37	Increase
10	Low	20	29	Increase
11	Moderate	38	53	Increase
12	High	55	59	Increase
13	Moderate	52	65	Increase
14	Low	34	59	Increase
15	Moderate	36	58	Increase
16	Moderate	44	57	Increase
17	Moderate	43	64	Increase
18	High	61	70	Increase
19	High	56	50	Decrease
20	Moderate	43	50	Increase
21	Moderate	46	42	Decrease

Table 7.16: Overall assessment for the individual texts

The findings related to the analytic assessment for each sub-component of learning writing varied across the participants. Based on the rating scale developed for this research (Figure 5.1), the results pointed out that the experience has significantly enriched the abilities of the individual writers at ( $P < 0.05$ ).

The results indicated a progress in the abilities of individual writers in using the mechanics of writing, involving full stops and capitalisation as shown in Table 7.17.

This progress possibly happened as the learners became more aware of what they wrote in order to be understood by peers.

**a.) Mechanics:**

Component	Sub-component		Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig (2 tailed)
<b>Mechanics</b>	Full stop	First	3.76	.996	0.031
		Final	4.10	.889	
	Capitalisation	First	3.90	.944	0.021
		Final	4.14	1.014	

Table 7.17: Impact of using mechanics in individual texts (first texts compared to final texts)

The findings showed the individual writers’ development in using vocabulary since they used more suitable words, particularly in order to be formal and to be clearly understood. They focused on more correct spelling of British English along with applying the new vocabulary studied in the course as shown in Table 7.18.

Yet, the findings of the first rater indicated inconsistency in the individuals’ development in using better spelling (p=0.629) and providing more adequate lexis (p=0.095).

**b.) Vocabulary and lexis:**

Component	Sub-component		Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig (2 tailed)
<b>Vocabulary and lexis</b>	Spelling	First	2.86	.910	0.004
		Final	3.38	1.117	
	Relevancy	First	2.86	1.195	0.006
		Final	3.67	.856	
	Adequacy	First	2.48	.928	0.000
		Final	3.48	.873	
	Newness	First	2.48	.928	0.001
		Final	3.14	.655	

Table 7.18: Impact of using vocabulary and lexis in individual texts (first texts compared to final texts)

The findings also showed substantial development for the individual writers in many grammatical-related aspects as is shown in Table 7.19. This is related to using better

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agreement between subjects and verbs and between verbs and tense forms. Such texts also involved more articles, adjectives and prepositions which made individuals elaborate their ideas.

Despite this, the first rater indicated inconsistency concerning the individual writers' increased ability to use the agreement between subjects and verbs in a correct way ( $p=0.184$ ).

### c.) Grammar and syntax:

Component	Sub-component		Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig (2 tailed)
<b>Grammar and syntax</b>	Agreement of subjects and verbs,	First	2.81	1.078	0.000
		Final	3.81	.981	
	Agreement of verbs and tense forms	First	2.52	1.030	0.001
		Final	3.29	.956	
	Accurate usage of articles, adjectives, relative pronouns and prepositions	First	2.67	1.065	0.000
		Final	3.38	.669	

Table 7.19: Impact of using grammar and syntax in individual texts (first texts compared to final texts)

Finally, the findings highlighted the development of the individual writers in using better content. This development included their ability to use clear conclusions, a sequence of ideas with supporting examples, longer (especially compound) sentences, and transition signals and connecting devices (Table 7. 20). However, the majority of the texts lacked clear conclusions.

Yet, the first rater did not find consistency in the development of the individual writers in using compound and complex sentences ( $p=0.493$ ) and providing writing a clear sequence and organisation of ideas ( $p=0.096$ ).

**d.) Content and structure:**

Component	Sub-component		Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig (2 tailed)
Content and structure	Clarity of introduction	First	2.57	1.165	0.015
		Final	3.19	1.289	
	Clarity of conclusion	First	2.48	1.167	0.106
		Final	2.95	1.284	
	Clarity of sequence & arrangement of ideas	First	2.43	1.028	0.000
		Final	3.62	1.284	
	Clarity of examples for supporting ideas	First	2.52	1.123	0.000
		Final	3.76	1.221	
	Clarity of compound & complex sentences	First	2.38	1.117	0.008
		Final	2.76	1.091	
	Clarity of transition & signposting signals	First	2.67	1.155	0.020
		Final	3.43	1.434	

Table 7.20: Impact of using content and structure in individual texts (first texts compared to final texts)

**7.3.2.3. Comments about the individual texts (based on the findings from the first and final texts):**

The findings indicated that each one of the participants contributed to the final texts differently. Students No. 4, 13 and 14 addressed a wider audience. More than half of the participants (e.g. No. 2, 9, and 17) established an ability to produce clearer compositions. They also developed their accuracy and fluency in terms of their usage of grammar and lexis and the overall structure and organisation. Students No. 4, 9 and 13 presented signs of progress in their writing learning skills on a gradual basis. An improved higher degree of choosing accurate lexis was found in students No. 8, 11 and 14.

The results showed that more than two thirds of the writers paid attention to correct their punctuation, whereas just under a third of the participants did not develop this. The results also determined that most of the final texts involved clear introductory sentences. A minority of texts, however, did not include such sentences, as the writers immediately started with the main body. Less than a quarter of the participants

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produced final texts that demonstrated mistakes related to spelling and correct tense form. Several participants were observed with problems in distinguishing between similar letters such as 'p' and 'b' or 'a' and 'e'. Some other participants (No. 19 and 21) produced final texts with poorer quality in terms of the content and the structure. A few final texts used compound or complex sentences.

Yet, the majority of such texts focused on giving examples to support their ideas. In addition, before experiencing PWMCW, the writing learners were able to complete their texts in a short time (45-60 minutes). However, the results showed this did not necessarily guarantee that they had achieved the task as outlined. In contrast, the participants took longer time than was allocated for producing their final texts.

The results also noted that such writing learners were observed to be writing texts by following a plan and achieving drafting before revision. The findings showed evidence of the positive impact of PWMCW on the development of individually written texts. For instance, one participant (SA) has boosted his learning abilities in writing and his social interaction with peers as is described in Appendix 12.

### 7.4. Summary

This chapter has presented the findings related to the data collected from the participants about their wiki-based and off-wiki contributions. This included how texts were processed and produced by the learners using the PWMCW. During the collaborative planning, the students accomplished three consecutive acts: acts of understanding, acts of partial (incomplete) negotiation and acts of collaboration. In relation to the collaborative revision, the students carried out three types of changes to show their peer feedback: correct, incorrect and unnecessary changes. Most of these changes were mostly surface-related changes (e.g. word choice, spelling, tense, prepositions). Deeper changes were infrequently used (e.g. changing or recognising full sentences).

In relation to the products, the findings showed great impact of the PWMCW on the texts produced collaboratively and individually, based on the consistency between the two raters. The PWMCW was useful for some components of collaborative texts (see sub-section: 7.3.1). The overall assessment of collaborative texts and the analytic assessment for each component illustrated the general level of progress of learners (or groups) and the aspects of writing that needed further development. The same technique (PWMCW) was also discovered to be effective for other components of individual texts, which were written by the beginner and advanced learner writers (see

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sub-section: 7.3.2). The overall assessment of individual texts and the analytic assessment of each component clarified the general level of progress for the individual.

## Chapter 8: Discussion of the key findings

### 8.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the findings described in chapters five and six that answer the research questions (see section: 1.5) will be further discussed. The discussion is developed in light of other similar findings already mentioned in the literature review (see chapter: 3) that revealed how the learners perceive new principles of learning writing (e.g. introducing e-feedback, blended learning, peer interaction and authentic tasks) along with the process writing approach, CW and WMCW. Thus, this chapter revisits the findings of the present research and relates them to the conclusions of previous researchers, as outlined in chapter 3. It demonstrates the strengths and concerns of the new approach to teaching writing, which is based on WMCW, the process approach and the principles newly used by the participants. The current chapter also explains the nature of learning EFL writing on wikis, the promise and challenges of WMCW and how to deal with the challenges in the best way along with its impact on the produced collaborative and individual written texts. It also presents additional insights about the potential consequences of the integration of wikis and CW in EFL writing classes.

### 8.2. Learners' perceptions about the principles used for the new approach to teaching writing

The research sub-question 1.a investigates the changes in the learners' perceptions regarding a number of principles applied in the new approach to teaching writing. One of them was their perceptions towards working tasks. The perceived perceptions regarding achieving the tasks for writing development were positive (see differences between learning activities and learning tasks in Glossary). As opposed to the findings identified by Kessler (2009) where the chosen tasks did not improve the contributors' abilities in accuracy, the tasks currently assigned were observed to be helpful for better learning of writing since they were structured and focused on correcting form and content (see item 3).

Furthermore, assigning authentic tasks was positively perceived and such tasks contributed to the development of the learners' awareness and cognition concerning what they should do (see item 5 and sub-theme 1.2). The tasks given were supportive for boosting learners' writing abilities since they were driven from the students' medical life (see section: 4.3 in chapter 4 for more about the nature and duration of tasks). For this reason, authentic learning is important because it 'focuses on real-world, complex problems and their solutions, using role-playing exercises, problem-based activities,

case studies, and participation in virtual communities of practice' (Lombardi, 2007, p: 2).

The findings also showed the positive perceptions of the learners about the division of writing tasks into phases (see item 6). Thus, students' perceptions indicated a shift from the product to the process writing approach (Bruffee, 1984). This shift in the learners' thinking would develop their experience of the process writing approach in terms of promoting better revision and maintaining wider understanding of the audience (Storch, 2013). It is important to stress that going through the basic phases of writing deliberately was considered useful for increasing, especially beginner and intermediate, learners' motivation.

E-oriented peer feedback was also positively perceived by the participants as supportive for the traditional (face-to-face) feedback given by instructors as well as peers (see item 7). This result corroborates the effects of using electronic-based feedback for L2 [and FL] learner writers as found by Tuzi (2004). It was observed that this form of feedback enabled learners to easily access and co-respond with peers. This practice would also inspire learners to engage in more dynamic friendly (less intimidating) feedback.

On the other hand, the learner writers developed mixed and negative perceptions concerning other principles applied in the new approach to teaching writing. The learners showed mixed perceptions concerning learning writing as an interactive practice with peers themselves and with the instructor. Interaction with peers among themselves and with the instructor for learning writing was identified as being less significant, according to the questionnaires (see items 1 and 2 and sub-theme 1.1).

Yet, these findings were contradicted in the focus groups and interviews where the participants expressed their positive perceptions about the contribution of social interaction and shared communication with peers themselves and with the instructor. In this sense, Tsui and Ng (2000) indicated that peer feedback is helpful for the writing learners as they can learn from reading the texts of their peers. However, these researchers confirmed that peer feedback may not always be useful in giving ideal answers nor, sometimes, the correct answers.

The previous results are in line with a wide range of studies which argue that the two types of interaction are driving forces for continuous drafting and for revising texts either face-to-face (Lundstrom and Baker, 2009) or online (Liu and Sadler, 2003; Tuzi, 2004). These results are supported by Paulus (1999) who indicated that peer-and instructor-based feedback is highly recommended but to make it productive and

informative to the learners is a challenge. It is normal to find some learners who are uncomfortable, with peer feedback (or even with that of the instructors), particularly in the beginning of the course, but with the instructor guidance on editing and mutual interaction this practice can be more comfortable (Ducate, Anderson and Moreno, 2011).

Similarly, the learners also showed their mixed perceptions in relation to the insufficiency of the face-to-face feedback that was provided by the instructor and the advantage of blending face-to-face and online feedback (see item 4 and sub-theme 1.3). This indicated the need to keep a balance between the feedback that is given face-to-face and online. The findings revealed the benefits of both sources of feedback in terms of raising learners' awareness about their writing problems and how to solve them. Face-to-face and virtual experiences of the learners need to be supported by each other to fulfill the desired learning outcomes (Ginns and Ellis, 2007). However, a number of students perceived this integration negatively. It is expected that a minority of learners may not be suited to this idea of giving feedback.

As the study found out, the students perceived the peer feedback provided face-to-face negatively since there had been more concentration on e-based feedback (particularly on wikis). In this study, a group of the participants complained about the insufficiency of the explanations and comments provided by their peers (see item 8 and sub-theme 4.3 that is perhaps because of the instructor's role as a facilitator, instead of being a regular instructor). Those students wanted professional, guided and elaborative comments given by the instructor. The results are not surprising since similar conclusions were drawn from other studies. Based on a single draft setting Fathman and Whalley (1990) proved that the instructional feedback given by tutors resulted in higher quality texts. Further studies on multiple initial and final drafts were conducted by Ferris (1997). She demonstrated that feedback from the instructor is more robust and highlights the essential parts that need improvement. Yet, it is time consuming for the teachers and difficult to apply to all participants. In this study, the learners however perceived peer comments as more comfortable in order to discuss their basic problems related to the texts they generated, whereas it was considered as inconvenient if they were given by the teacher.

### **8.3. Learners' perceptions about the process writing approach**

The next research sub-question (1.b) deals with the changes in the learners' perceptions regarding the use of the process writing approach for EFL learning writing. The learners positively perceived several aspects of this approach that were applied in the new classes. For instance, the students demonstrated their positive perceptions

about the process approach as it provides learners with careful planning, adequate communication, including appropriate ideas, re-producing multiple drafts and final drafts and focusing on language development (see items 9,10,11, 12, 15 and 16 respectively).

This finding is in agreement with Goldstein and Carr (1996) who claimed that the process approach enables learners to 'plan their writing', 'make a formal outline before they write', 'define their purpose and audience', 'use sources or resources other than their textbook' and 'write more than one draft of a paper' (p: 3). These researchers also argue that through the process writing approach, writing becomes more accessible to learners, regardless of their linguistic proficiency or cultural background (Goldstein and Carr, 1996). Such results support Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) whose outcomes validate the impact of developing planning, using multiple drafts, spending some time on revision and providing peer and teacher feedback for enhancing writing learners.

The students also expressed their positive perceptions regarding the consequences of using this approach for writing learners, particularly in ESL/EFL contexts, since it gradually advanced their knowledge and expertise in writing. The process approach contributed to the provision of more meaningful learning of writing and to the development of writing learners' awareness and cognition (see sub-themes 2.1 and 2.2 respectively). This approach is advantageous for writing learners since it urges them to explore their views and ideas with the act of self-reflection on what was written. It also encourages them to consider writing as a 'cyclical process of generating and integrating ideas' (Zamel, 1982; Zamel, 1983).

The participants appreciated planning as a vital phase to ensure learners' familiarity with the key points of any writing topics before starting writing. This phase motivated the learners to be open-minded, look for material and practise additional reading. This involved scanning and inferring (see section: 8.6 for more discussion about the effects of collaborative planning). The findings, however, showed that planning does not always result in complex interaction. For instance, the participants had the opportunity to construct knowledge about the writing topics through simple and moderate interaction; however, novice learners of low L2/FL writing proficiency were observed not to spend much time on planning (Emig, 1971).

The next phase was drafting. The participant writers managed to assemble the distributed content suggested by each other (i.e. ideas and examples) to incorporate into good texts (see Figures 7.1, 7.6 and 7.11). More than half of the participants came to understand the importance and the need of placing ideas into full texts to practise the

production of actual written pieces. The drafting phase concentrates on helping writers to generate multiple drafts by placing different pieces of content together to become more meaningful as described by Silva (1990). The drafters in this study also consulted e-dictionaries to look up synonyms, antonyms and derivations of relevant vocabulary. They accessed several websites which were designed for learning EFL writing.

The third phase was revision. The participants developed their positive perceptions about the process approach and its constructive outcomes for learning EFL writing mainly because of the practice of revision. The tasks assigned to the learners focused on this phase, by allocating more time for the participants to revise their drafts. This resulted in substantive revision. In this study, the participants confirmed that the practice of intensive revision, particularly in a collaborative format, was helpful for increasing accuracy of new lexis use and spelling and for refining numerous drafts and discussion as already presented in sub-section 6.2.2. It was indicated that revision can aid the participants to reconsider their ideas and thoughts, in additional thinking processes. This finding is in agreement with Hall's findings (1990) which showed the importance for the ESL and EFL writing learners to know how to approach revision by themselves (i.e. detection, categorisation and then correction).

In contrast to the previous findings, the research established that the students perceived some aspects of the process writing approach negatively. A group of the students failed to follow the phases required for this writing approach because as they reported, their main problem was the difficulty of completing the tasks with adequate time to focus on content as in item 13. The tasks demanded higher order thinking skills such as comprehension and problem-solving. This data accords with Myles (2002) showing that writing learners may struggle to develop their writing skills through the phases of the process writing approach at the same time. Therefore, the learners need adequate time to develop their mental and learning strategies. Moreover, the complexity of the writing process not only occurs during its main phases (planning, drafting, editing and revision); it also demands a balance of four basic components: the form, the writer, the content and the reader (Raimes, 1991).

In harmony with the earlier findings, and consistent with Silva (1993), there are other difficulties that ESL (and EFL) writers and drafters may face during the generation of first drafts, as the participants of the current study stressed. The tasks assigned did not provide focus on unity when creating well-organised texts, including ideal patterns and structures as in item 14. As this phase was, to some extent, understood differently by learners, it resulted in some drafts being better than others, partly because of the

subjective differences between the individuals. Regardless of this shortcoming, the differences in writing abilities have gradually vanished since each member was responsible for overcoming his own problems, as also shown by Wong et al (2011).

Therefore, based on the findings of items 13 and 14, it is interesting to note that not all of the findings related to the revision phase were encouraging, as the current participants showed. A group of participants experienced several challenges that did not permit the learners to positively perceive procedures such as verifying of information and the checking of the unity and content of texts. Although they performed revision over several drafts and managed to produce final drafts, such drafts did not address all the problems related to the structure. The participants did not show great confidence concerning their ability to work on such details of their texts. Unlike the previous two phases (planning and drafting), many of the participants considered revision one of the instructor's responsibilities. The reason was because learners are often convinced that revision given by instructors is more helpful than that of peers (Jordan, 1997) as indeed Fathman and Whalley (1990) have shown (see section 8.2).

#### **8.4. Learners' perceptions about CW (offline)**

Research sub-question 1.c explores the changes in learners' perceptions about the use of CW for EFL learning writing. The learners positively perceived some aspects of CW that was completed in a face-to-face setting. The students exhibited their positive perceptions about CW because it provided several benefits. It was seen as an ideal practice for promoting understanding among peers with each other (see item 18). This finding corroborates the ideas of Colen and Petelin (2004) who suggest that practising writing collaboratively provides a focused review for content where writers can clarify the nature and intention of their feedback and offer a balance between such feedback and the more appropriate information to readers. This is attributed to the natural environment of CW in providing feedback, either from peers or instructors (Storch, 2013). CW was found to be an ideal practice for learners in order to convey and communicate their different ideas without difficulty (see item 20). This finding supports the claims of Fernández Dobao (2012) and Storch (2013) that CW concentrates on, and aims at, the articulation of more developed ideas. The establishment of more developed ideas occurs when the cognitive conflict related to making decision and negotiation decision making are activated between collaborative writers (Trimbur, 1989).

Furthermore, CW was positively perceived as an ideal practice for mutual interaction. This practice thus becomes useful in order to bring students closer to expand their shared relationships (see item 22). This collaborative relationship is expected to help

the learners to build a productive connection between content knowledge and language skills (Snow, Met and Genesee, 1989) that can be advanced during CW. This connection can engage the collaborators in more activities to fulfill the demands and needs of writers and readers at the same time (Clark and Ivancic, 1997). Similarly, Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1992) suggest that CW is helpful since 'novice L2 [perhaps FL] writers may not have the problem solving skills to enable them to detect errors and perform repairs on their own, a writer-reader pairing might provide a situation where the writer's text serves as the basis for a conversational repair sequence' (p: 259). Based on the learners' perception, it was found that writing collaboratively would increase the satisfaction of the participants as they became involved in teamwork. The outcomes of the teamwork can contribute to re-uniting the fragmentary efforts of learners (Kuiken and Vedder, 2002b).

In the case of negative perceptions, the learners showed that CW was not an ideal practice to reduce the difficulties related to writing tasks, so many helpers working together did not help to make the tasks assigned simpler (see item 17). This result does not accord with Noël and Robert's (2004) findings about the positive aspects of CW as it helps with the writing tasks and make them more straightforward. Lowry, Curtis and Lowry (2004) however admit the complexity of writing tasks being accomplished collaboratively. The researchers state 'the process complexity of CW is compounded by the possibility of multiple writing strategies, writing activities, document control modes, roles, and work modes' (p: 70). In Liu and Sadler's study, the participants showed resistance to accepting CW as a practical technique to limit the apprehension related to the writing tasks. This result seems to be consistent with Ede and Lunsford (1990) who argue that CW might make writing more complicated because of the additional efforts it requires in dealing with others.

Similarly, the learners negatively perceived CW as an ideal practice for learners to see each other's texts perhaps because it exposed the participants to direct contact with peers (see item 19). In harmony with this perception, exposing the learners to CW may increase sensitivity among the participants so they become at risk of withdrawing at any time. This finding is in agreement with Liu and Sadler's study (2003). They identified that CW triggered more face threatening behaviour for the participants. The participants also showed that CW was not necessarily a guaranteed practice to create better written products than individually paper-based written texts (see item 21). That is because when collaborative writers make several amendments, it does not necessarily mean that all of these changes are a result of good peer response (Connor and Asenavage, 1994) and collaboration. The involved participants also noted that CW was not an ideal

practice for dismantling inequality between the learners, inasmuch as they might have different competency levels (see item 23). Conversely, Lee (2010) mentioned that more equality between peers is achieved through computer (and wiki)-mediated collaboration, a view discussed below (see the next section: 8.5).

The participants had negative perceptions regarding CW as an ideal practice for helping them to identify and solve each other's linguistic problems related to their writing (see item 24). In opposition to this, Jong (2009) found face-to-face CW was worthwhile for her Korean EFL students in terms of its contribution to developing interpersonal skills, empowering learners of writing and creating better independent L2 writers. It should be noted that several related studies confirm the benefits of CW that is carried out in a face-to-face mode whereas other studies prove the benefit of computer (or wiki)-mediated CW (e.g. Cress and Kimmerle, 2008; Elgort, Smith and Toland, 2008; Lin and Kelsey, 2009; Meishar-Tal and Gorsky, 2010; Capitão-Tavares, 2011). From a general perspective, there seems to be consensus on the benefits of CW because it influences the learning process of L2/FL writing rather than just the produced texts (Storch, 2013). Storch clarifies that both 'languaging' and 'metatalk' or 'collaborative dialogue' concepts, which have been identified by Swain (see sub-section: 2.2.3), reinforce how the social use of language via collaboration could enhance language learning and writing development.

### **8.5. Learners' perceptions about WMCW (online)**

Research sub-question 1.d reveals the changes in learners' perceptions about the use of WMCW for EFL learning writing. As opposed to CW, the learners positively perceived some aspects of this medium in relation to the merits and demerits of incorporating wikis into normal writing classes. The findings of the current study showed that the participants positively perceived WMCW and its related tasks as an easier practice to be achieved than CW inside classes and as an avenue to increase learners' confidence and responsibilities about their work (see item 27 and sub-theme 3.1). Writing was considered to involve a group of tasks that can be achieved socially and communicatively via collaborative networking tools such as wikis and through web-based learning communities. That is owing to the contributions of a group of individuals who had distributed online roles in order to achieve certain work as part of a shared and collective practice (Franco, 2008).

The participants agreed that such communities promoted their ability to spend more time and energy on writing than they usually do during their weekly classes. It is encouraging to compare these findings with those of Tu and Corry (2002) who prove that networked-based learning using learning communities can open new gates to

practise writing in different ways with more equality among individuals. It was also found that online learning communities can reduce the complexities that are sometimes associated with offline learning communities, and perhaps with CW tasks inside classes (see the previous section: 8.4), by resolving the linguistic and cognitive problems that learners might face from distance (Swain, 2000; Swain and Lapkin, 2002).

In the same way, the participants positively perceived WMCW as a method that could be used to solve, some of, the writing problems of the learner writers. Wikis turned out to be a safe space for the EFL writing learners to post their thoughts while maintaining a high degree of sensitivity, which would encourage friendly meaningful feedback (see item 28 and sub-themes 3.3 and 3.4). This result concurs with Kern, Ware and Warschauer (2008) who recognise that learners' needs could be solved and goals achieved where learners electronically share open communication to enhance their writing expertise. The participants acknowledged that they expanded their knowledge about the assigned writing topics without intimidating anyone. The participants of the current study justified their preference for using social networking tools such as wikis for learning writing because of the shared support they acquired from peers in a non-threatening way. This argument resonates with Wong et al (2011) who claim that errors can benefit learners, and such errors should teach something new not just to work against students or to threaten them.

The findings of the current study are not however totally consistent with Kuteeva (2011), who claimed that WMCW had great impact on students' micro (e.g. spelling and grammar) as well as macro (e.g. sentence structure) language levels. The type of feedback, which appeared as advantageous in this study, was mostly focused on accuracy or form-related issues such as punctuation, grammar, spelling, articles, prepositions and subject verb agreement. This same result corroborates Elola and Oskoz (2010) that a group of writing learners spent considerable time correcting grammar rather than content. The members of the groups also admitted that grammatical errors or inaccuracy related problems were easier to mark (by individuals and their peers) as opposed to checking the relevance of ideas. Following the findings of Nami and Marandi (2013), it seems that students paid more attention to form (54.49%) than content (45.51%) in order not to hinder the conveyed meaning by the original writer. They also recognised that accuracy-related errors are more obvious to detect especially in electronic settings. Nevertheless, in the present study there were instances of linguistic and rhetoric enhancement for different aspects of writing including content and structure.

The participants also positively perceived WMCW as an ideal practice for providing more information related to the tasks assigned and social interaction (see item 30 and sub-theme 3.2). In accordance with Chao and Lo (2011) and Li et al (2012), it seems that WMCW has an invaluable role in creating motivation among learners to contribute by posting their content. The advantage of participating, in similar wiki-mediated projects, encourages students to observe, compare and contrast each other's input (Judd, Kennedy and Cropper, 2010). At the beginning, it was hard for the participants to accept and/or even to understand different posts or content by their peers but at the end they showed their willingness for shared benefit and united effort and acknowledged the importance of posting about each other's contributions.

As a response to the research sub-question 1.d, the research explores the negative perceptions of WMCW for EFL learning writing in general classes. Throughout this project, the participants faced several challenges. The participants mentioned that this method of learning is not necessarily a way to reduce the stress linked with writing tasks, and it often takes longer time and there may be difficulties in its implementation (see item 25 and sub-themes 4.1 and 4.2). The tasks were different from the writing activities the participants were used to doing in the traditional writing classes. This outcome is consistent with the finding of Chao and Lo (2011) which showed students' struggle at each stage of WMCW. However, Fontaine and Hunter (2006) assert that a WMCW course and its related tasks should not be straightforward. The learners had to accept the different role of the instructor as a facilitator rather than a main source of knowledge. In relation to the present study, most of the feedback and collaboration had to be provided by peers. This made a group of the participants worry about the validity of provided feedback and corrections given by their peers (see sub-theme 4.3). For example: HA comments:

regarding peers' corrections ... They might be wrong... I would like to get confirmation that my peer corrections are accurate, and that can be given by the instructor. (Follow-up focus group, 52:48)

A possible explanation for this might be that they were anxious about the idea of becoming over social, and wanted to prevent personal conflicts. They also possibly did not want peer correction because it requires more intellectual effort by the participants. In this respect, using a checklist, and preparing learners how to use it, for the provision of feedback is desirable but hard to accomplish (Lin and Yang, 2011). In fact, this is a major transition in the learning as well as teaching process, since the instructor is transformed from being a source of authority to a source of mediation (Palloff and Pratt, 2005). By this method, the authoritative roles of instructors become less and they are

replaced by the need for the students to be the decision makers about peer contributions. Supporting this, Bower et al. (2006) revealed that learners looked for more immediate rather delayed feedback from lecturers that emphasised the quality of content. They also stressed that the learners should use wiki-mediated feedback among peers as an additional practice, with normal physical feedback provided by instructors, rather than considering it as an exclusive component, as shown earlier in sub-theme 1.3.

As the present study set out, WMCW was viewed as not necessarily more productive than traditional (paper-based) individual writing. A small minority of users demonstrated preference for individual, rather than collaborative, tasks because they had a concern about the assessment of the work produced collaboratively and about the possibility of plagiarism or e-plagiarism (see item 26 and sub-themes 4.4 and 4.5). The students also reported that they cautiously viewed some of the written contributions posted by their peers as they were not sure whether they had copied from other websites or been originated by their peers. In the work of Su and Beaumont (2010), the fear of posting poor texts is the reason for committing plagiarism or 'vandalism'. Su and Beaumont (2010) commented that collaborators need to be aware that 'this ownership promotes responsibility, authorial identity and values of giving credit for intellectual work, which is very positive development' (p: 426). In accordance with Karasavvidis (2010), plagiarism was also a barrier for the successful implementation of wikis. Hence, plagiarism in such social networking tools as wikis is a serious matter, because learners have to be aware of the potential dangers or negative consequences of attempting it. As a result, it is very important to teach learners to acknowledge others' work and to cite the original authors.

Furthermore, WMCW was not viewed as a guaranteed method to provide robust exchange of knowledge perhaps because of the participants' resistance, unpreparedness or their limited proficiency level (see item 29). Lin and Kelsey (2009) explore the evolving phases of relevant challenges when writing learners interact collaboratively on wikis. Learners were found hesitant at the beginning of collaboration. These researchers showed that learners 'saw the assignment [of WMCW] as pieces of a pie to be delegated and reassembled after the fact, rather than a whole pie for which they would all take credit' (p: 156). A different piece of research by Lund (2008) examines a similar practice of using wikis to improve the writing abilities. The students were found to be frustrated with using CW, since they struggled to accept the deletion and editing of each other's contributions. The participants may lack the persistence and endurance of interaction if things go wrong. So, they will stop enjoying public participation and building a networked environment for collaborative learning (Rick and

Guzdial, 2006; Elgort, Smith and Toland, 2008). Moreover, there are probably learners with a more dominant voice; such learners might cause a problem for the remaining learners who might be indirectly discouraged from 'making their own voices heard within their individual groups and within the broader collaborative space of the wiki' (Vratulis and Dobson, 2008, p: 290).

There may be challenge in terms of finding a well-designed plan to promote WMCW (with or without the process writing approach) in the normal (face-to-face) writing classes. However, the research participants have drawn attention to the usefulness of WMCW classes and their tasks, despite the difficulties already expressed in this section. Such classes were seen as the source of facilitating communication and collaboration (see sub-theme 5.1) and reestablishing the environment of learning writing (see sub-theme 5.2). Kummer suggested that WMCW can be fostered in higher education by establishing actions that can inspire learners to more discussion: building communities, providing incentives, availability of facilitators, following netiquettes, distributing roles and forming scaffolding. Similarly, Stoddart, Chan and Liu elaborated on the best practices of embracing wikis for learning writing as follows: introduce the concept of collaboration; introduce the software 'wikis'; introduce assignment; break assignment into smaller units; establish feedback procedure; teach methodology of critiques; establish a group-to-group critique timetable and provide post-project critiques.

The employment of the PWCW for learning writing promoted more group dynamics among the collaborative learner writers as shown in sub-sections: 6.5.1, 6.5.2, 6.5.3 and 6.5.4. The learners managed to explore different issues, moderately, by sharing their various experiences at the same time as developing their group and individual relationships. This result corresponds to the study of Dörnyei and Malderez (1997).

#### **8.6. Role of collaborative planning during the PWCW**

In relation to research sub-question 2.a, this section explores planning during the process-oriented wiki-mediated collaborative writing (PWCW). In other words, it investigates how collaborative planning on wikis contributed to learning through the process writing approach (see section: 5.9 for a summary about the course design and its tasks and how planning is a key component in the tasks assigned). Collaborative planning occurs when students are encouraged to join in group brainstorming, the generation of a wide range of ideas, and free writing (Seow, 2002). So, collaborative planning is always a vital step for drafting and wiki-based writing (Chao and Lo, 2011; Ansarimoghaddam and Tan, 2013). Wikis that ignore systematic collaborative planning may result in un-structured texts and chaotic collaboration. This type of planning is

substantive since it 'allow[s] members to get familiar with one another, as well as gain some commitment to, and ownership of, the project goals, deliverables, and timelines' (West and West, 2009, p: 49).

With regard to this study, the participants gradually absorbed the importance of planning in general and specifically on wikis, and they started to use it more frequently. The participants were encouraged to apply certain strategies (i.e. elaboration and explanation, interpretation and prediction and summarising and paraphrasing) to understand each other better (see acts of understanding in sub-section: 6.2.1). Similar strategies were determined by Kost (2011). Such strategies resulted in linking the participants to resolve the complex issues related to peers' engagement and mutual understanding. These strategies also showed the overall progress and development for the assigned topics (Biuk-Aghai, Kelen and Venkatesan, 2008). These researchers managed to use the platform or the thread discussion designed for planning in three ways: to be a source of knowledge and a reference point, to be a representative for various perspectives and to post unfinished 'raw' texts. Franco (2008) also considers that such preparation for producing written texts was used to explore new ideas, finalise main ideas and organise the shape of drafts.

In line with the current research, the planning on wikis was found to be a practical opportunity for raising the participants' curiosity and thinking about addressing each other's posts. Most likely, adding the element of wiki to develop practising planning also helps to promote collaboration (Ioannou and Artino, 2009). This was the primary step that led to collaboration where two peers or more started real social interaction with each other. The participants applied the following strategies: reiterating content, raising an enquiry, giving guidance, challenging and praising peers (see acts of partial or incomplete negotiation in sub-section: 7.2.1).

Indeed, it was observed that this type of planning played a major role in advancing written texts and the writing skills of learners, based on collaboration. The participants used certain strategies driven from the four key areas as shown in Figure 7.4 (see acts of collaboration in sub-section: 7.2.1). It helped writers to deliver better texts by communicating their messages with clarity. It trained the participants to understand each other's ideas before actual drafting and correcting linguistic-related issues which helped to build rapport and facilitated the development of individuals (see sub-section: 7.2.1). It also allowed for diverse types of communication among collaborators: one-to-one, one-to-many, many-to-one and many-to-many communication as shown by Warschauer (1997).

This correlates with Yunus, Salehi and Chenzi's (2012) study. They identified that this kind of planning leads to much brainstorming, as even shy students can be encouraged to 'write out loud' from a distance, as opposed to 'traditional brainstorming' as suggested by Davies (2004). Traditional brainstorming is usually held in a face-to-face setting using verbal or body language that may affect the basic goals of brainstorming such as spontaneity and flexibility and freedom of expression. Through wikis, moreover, the process writing approach has become easier to deal with since planning can be accomplished separately from revision. Similar conclusions were drawn by Pifarre and Fisher (2011).

Although it was hard to apply wiki-based planning, it was found to be an attractive method to preserve the users' attention and keep them updated with recent changes. In tandem with its helpfulness for beginner writers, the wiki can be considered as a safe place and an inspiring tool for learners. That led many novice learners in writing to take action, to be like their peers so they maintained communication which was difficult to do in the same way on paper. It seems possible that these results are due to the wiki's accessibility for extending and improving the posted ideas and information (Ansarimoghaddam and Tan, 2013). This was conducted with a maximum level of sensitivity and great personal affection as the current participants illustrated. For instance: MN comments:

The basis of the problem is that the tutor already knows the topic so he might consider it a silly question ... while my friends will take it as an important question ... so it can be answered comfortably. (Follow-up focus group, 52:48)

Wiki-based planning reinforced the means of scaffolding (see sub-section: 2.2.3) where the participants responded to enquiries from each other, particularly those with more knowledge. The efforts exerted here between the group participants matched the principles of the Zone of Proximal Development or ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978). The principles state that learning, involving L2 and FL writing, and its functions do not occur or even naturally progress in isolation, without social interaction. In the way indicated, this planning, along with revision (as is explained in the next section: 8.7), have been endorsed as a way to pursue building of shared knowledge and mutual communication. The application of such social activities can strengthen learning outcomes that correspond with a group of learning theories such as social constructivism (see sub-section: 2.2.3).

Likewise, and in relation to the CSCL paradigm indicated earlier (see sub-section: 2.2.4), there were incidences of constructed and created meanings that showed high

levels of concentration on important issues such as deep mutual and personal understanding (e.g. see the examples given as evidence of acts of understanding in sub-section 7.2.1). The participants responded to the central network of others' ideas and the external world of different human beings. On this point, Laurillard (2009) claims that 'the mission of the CSCL community is to focus attention on the importance of collaboration between learners as a way of motivating a high level of processing of ideas, argument, justification, and evidence' (p: 18). Obviously, the processing of ideas is reliant on the quality of the planning that is performed by the contributors. The quality and quantity of ideas and content posted can be determined by the availability of information and accessibility of assigned topics. In this study, both of these factors were considered prior to the drafts and revisions being produced.

### **8.7. Role of collaborative revision during the PWMCW**

To focus on the research sub-question 2.b, the contribution of collaborative revision on wikis to learning the process writing approach must be examined. The revision that is meant here in this study is collaborative revision when students edit or revise both their own and peers' drafts (see three examples of collaborative revision from three different groups in sub-section: 7.2.2). The students were taught to develop the drafts by editing the form (surface-related) and revising the content (deep-related) based on the elements studied in class, related to EFL writing. It was found that, in practice, wiki-mediated revision made the process writing approach easier to achieve, particularly for producing more refined drafts. Because of their editability by any user as Leuf and Cunningham (2001) note, wikis allowed the participants to perform shared revision. Wikis have the features of re-writability, graduality and equality. These characteristics enabled the drafters as well as the writing learners to become more effective regulators of their own and others' errors due to their engagement with giving informative criticism, as Wichadee (2013) underlines. This finding is also supported by Freire et al. (2013): who emphasise that the practice of wiki-based revision contributes to more enriched drafts; that is through looking at the deleted and added parts suggested by different individuals.

According to the findings of the present study, shared revision was accomplished by the participants but in a less sophisticated manner than advanced writing learners would achieve. It was found that most of the changes within collaborative revision made by peers related to form (or surface) changes (see Figure 7.21). This result is in agreement with many studies (e.g. Bradley et al., 2010; Kost, 2011; Kessler, Bikowski and Boggs, 2012) which show that more experienced writers, specifically in ESL/EFL, demonstrate additional abilities that not only take account of local (form-related)

corrections but also provide global (meaning-related) comments. Conversely, in several examples, it was noted that detecting all the errors (i.e. linguistic, syntactic or rhetoric-related) in the drafts by novice peers in writing was a complex task. There are several studies which seem to support this current result. It is not easy for ESL/EFL students to spot errors on wiki pages as most of such students are not fully confident about their writing abilities (Coniam and Kit, 2008; Shafie et al., 2010).

It was also observed that the learners' academic abilities had an impact on their success at identifying errors and enhancing the initial texts. The differences in the academic abilities of the students played a major role. Those with higher abilities managed to make both form and meaning-related revisions. In contrast, the less able students could not achieve both types of revision concurrently (see the participation and engagement of HA and MO in sub-section: 7.2.2 about the revision of writing learners' texts). In addition to the need for advanced writing abilities, enhancing written drafts demand a greater degree of observation, as nothing is underlined or noted as in Microsoft Word.

According to Shu and Chuang (2012), in comparison with Microsoft Word, wikis resulted in higher quality documents as they permit use of specific features and navigation to compare different versions. Moreover, wikis can preserve the original texts of individuals. However, according to Shu and Chuang (2012), the participants struggled with its incompatibility with Microsoft Word, annotation style, and layout for illustrating colour-coding. This should not lead us to underestimate its educational value and potential. On this topic, Chu et al. (2013) show users' experiences of different types of wikis compared to Microsoft Word (Figure 8.1).

In addition, the current research observed that a group of the participants did not check the whole drafts for revision, but only sections or a few sentences were read (as is observed in the following Figures: 7.2, 7.3, 7.7). That was to leave the rest of the texts for others to correct or to be reviewed again later on. This result corroborates with the findings that less experienced writing learners are not always competent at identifying all relevant errors from an initial review, simply due to their basic level of competence and limited concentration (e.g. Celce-Murcia, 1991; Matsumoto, 1995; Al-Hazmi, 2006).

In line with this argument, a group of writing learners in a similar study showed their concerns about using wikis as they do not include auto-spellcheckers (Wheeler and Wheeler, 2007). This may create a group of reluctant learners who are not interested in editing or revising texts, whereas, on the other hand, the salient advantage of using

wikis may lower the high level of dependency on auto-correction (which is sometimes inaccurate).

	Wiki tool	MS Word
	Positive comments	
TWiki	Facilitating collaborative group work (10) (50%)	Greater familiarity (6) (30%)
	Facilitating knowledge sharing (10) (50%)	Working individually according to one's own schedule (1) (5%)
	Facilitating group communication (8) (40%)	User-friendly interface (1) (5%)
	Keeping track of others' working progress (7) (35%)	Allowing easier facilitation of work (1) (5%)
	Working anywhere at any time (7) (35%)	Highly secure documents (1) (5%)
	Keeping track of different versions (6) (30%)	Same functions (1) (5%)
	Referring to and learning from other groups (6) (30%)	
MediaWiki	Facilitating collaborative group work (11) (69%)	Greater familiarity (2) (13%)
	Facilitating knowledge sharing (10) (63%)	User-friendly interface (1) (6%)
	Referring to and learning from others (7) (44%)	Easy to print (1) (6%)
	Facilitating group communication (5) (31%)	
	Easy to use (5) (31%)	
	Working anywhere at any time (5) (31%)	
	Keeping track of different versions (5) (31%)	
	Encouraging participation (4) (25%)	
Keeping track of others' working progress (2) (13%)		
	Negative comments	
TWiki	Difficulty in formatting (13) (65%)	Overdependence on sending documents by e-mail (4) (20%)
	Technical problems, e.g. server problem (7) (35%)	Difficult to identify others' contribution (3) (15%)
	Unfamiliarity (5) (25%)	Only allows individual work (1) (5%)
	Time consuming to learn editing tools (4) (20%)	Cannot compare with older version (1) (5%)
	Insufficient training provided (3) (15%)	
	Difficulty in using (3) (15%)	
	Insufficient functions compared to alternatives (2) (10%)	
MediaWiki	Not user-friendly (2) (10%)	
	Unfamiliarity (5) (31%)	Only allows individual work (6) (38%)
	Server and network problems (4) (25%)	Overdependence on sending documents by e-mail (2) (13%)
	Difficult to use (3) (19%)	Difficulty in formatting (1) (6%)
	Insufficient guidance provided (2) (13%)	Time consuming to combine work (1) (6%)
	Requires login (2) (13%)	
	Multiple input problem (2) (13%)	
Documents not secure (2) (13%)		

Figure 8.1: users' experiences of using different wikis (Chu et al., 2013)

The participants of the present study considered wikis beneficial and an invaluable tool for training on revision (see also Raitman, Augar and Zhou, 2005; Cress and Kimmerle, 2008). Whereas during drafting, the focus is on writing full sentences or just writing something, they became aware that for revision, on the other hand, they needed to pay attention to the form and content using the best of their knowledge. As a result of engaging the participants with this type of revision, various edits of first drafts became

much more understandable, perhaps due to the likelihood of recursiveness. Recursiveness, where writers can change their ideas and check the organisation and structure of drafts at any time as it identified by Cohen and Spencer (1993), was less in evidence than expected, perhaps due to the beginner and intermediate levels of the learners. In a similar study, although there was limited recursiveness, the participants in the studies of Fernheimer et al. (2009) and Chao and Lo (2011) evidenced good collaboration with the production of multiple better drafts.

As indicated in Figures: 7.1 to 7.17, the participants achieved wiki-based revision by modifying the form and content of several edits. These edits of different drafts was accomplished through three kinds of change: correct, incorrect and unnecessary changes as in Figure 7.20. It was possible to track all the changes that had been applied in refining texts and it was possible to identify the related actions (i.e., adding, deleting, replacing and moving) which occurred at the same time in revision. Yet, it was not possible to distinguish between the types of revision (i.e. dragging, cutting and pasting or deleting with re-typing) and the frequency of each type though they were frequently used as, the participants confirmed. In this study, the participants' contributions were dealt with as actions or changes because of the dynamic nature of wikis. This idea was borrowed from Meishar-Tal and Gorsky (2010) proposing a model of analysing beginner writers' revision on wikis.

Because this model of the latter researchers was adopted and then adapted, a different model was produced in the light of the different context of participants of the current study and is shown in Figure 8.2. It was derived from the participants' revision involving the type of amendments they made. It was built on three constituents: levels, types and elements of revision. The drawn actions for the model were also slightly similar to the actions found by Capitão-Tavares (2011). This model was intended to focus on actions of revision carried out by beginner EFL learners in writing. As opposed to the model about actions of revision identified by Faigley and Witte (1981), the current model is specifically designed for wiki-based actions and it is composed of actions that are expected to be achieved by novice writing learners, i.e. minor rather than major changes in content and where the overall meaning of the texts stays as the same.

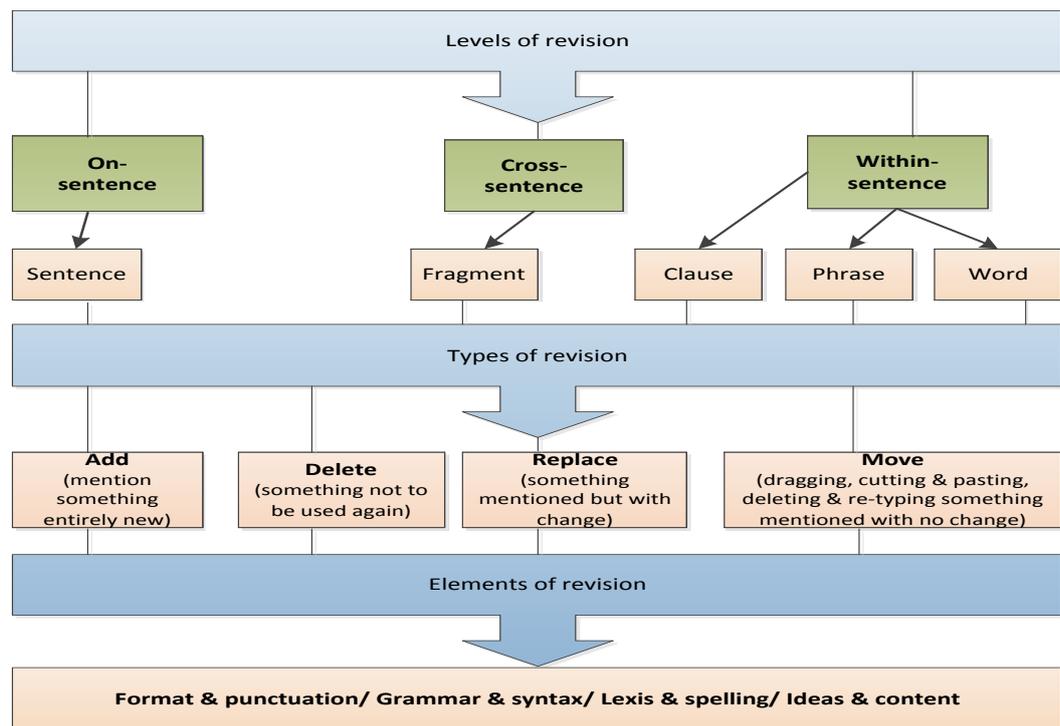


Figure 8.2: The model of wiki-based revision

### 8.8. Impact of the PVMCW on collaboratively produced products

The present study explored the impact of PVMCW on collaboratively produced texts and their final edits. This section provides discussion of the research sub-question 3.a. It is essential to draw attention to the fact that the current study did not intend to compare which method is more effective: individual writing (without wikis) or collaborative writing (with wikis), as opposed to Storch (2005, 2007). Working individually and working collaboratively are two significantly different methods for practising learning writing. Indeed, both methods cannot be compared as each one has different assumptions and techniques regarding how texts can be produced. However, they can complement each other in enhancing the abilities of writing learners. Thus, the original collaborative texts were compared with the final edits of collaborative texts (that were produced on wikis and used collaborative planning and collaborative revision). The first individual texts were also compared with the final individual texts (that were produced on paper without wikis).

Not all of the collaborative writers who participated in producing texts and edited drafts were fully competent to produce sound texts. It is fair to say that all the final edits of the drafts showed development in form and content compared to the original texts (see

Table 7.9 for more about the overall assessment of the pre-and post-collaborative texts) but the quality of the collaboratively produced texts differed across the groups and tasks. One group of writers were keener and more enthusiastic during collaborative writing than during individual writing. The majority of those writers who did not show positive impact were mostly moderate participants.

Yet, some groups achieved better work than others where they exerted more effort to apply what they studied in the traditional (face-to-face) classes (for instance, Table 7.6 shows a number of iterations and contributors for each one of the pre-and-post-collaborative texts). The collaborative writers learned several lessons from engaging in collaboration and expanding their roles as readers and editors, not only as writers. The wiki technology has been found effective for the students' communicative abilities and writing skills which extend beyond the classroom (Rott and Weber, 2013). This practice also empowered collaborative writers to express their own, unique voices by choosing the best ideas suggested during the planning phase.

In the current study, most of the final edits of the wiki-based collaboratively produced texts were better than the first drafts produced at the beginning. Those resulting edits, of more than a single writer, were more refined and concise and several sentences were removed, as already shown in Tables: 7.6 and 7.9, following suggestions, as similarly reported by Aborisade (2009) and Chao and Lo (2011). In fact, the learners became more creative by themselves, which shows how social networking technologies can change the way we approach writing, as described by Warschauer (2010). He states that recent educational innovations, including using wikis inside classrooms, can encourage 'exploring identity, expressing one's voice, airing diverse views and developing community... Wikis are... an especially powerful digital tool for collaborative [and individual] writing and collective knowledge development' (ibid, p: 4-5).

Based on confirmation by the two raters, it was concluded that the practice of the PWMCW is useful in developing most of the ESL/EFL collaborative learner writers (see Tables 7.10, 7.11, 7.12 and 8.13). This is particularly in relation to: punctuation, the choice of new words, grammar and syntax (e.g. agreement of verbs and tense forms) and content and structure (e.g. clarity of introduction and sequence of ideas).

### **8.9. Impact of the PWMCW on individually produced products**

This section provides discussion for the research sub-question (3.b) that examines the first individually-produced texts (before applying wikis) and the final individually-produced texts (after applying wikis). It was found that the first individual texts were

finished in a shorter time, as opposed to the collaborative texts which demanded additional time. The individually produced texts could not necessarily be guaranteed to have been achieved in the way expected and required by the tutor. During the composition of new texts, prior to introducing wiki-mediated collaboration, the majority of students failed to deliver their messages clearly to reach the audience. It was common to compose and revise their texts at the same time and without using adequate plans. Some of the sentences were also vague and others were unclear in meaning.

On the other hand, in the final individual texts, after applying wiki-mediated collaboration, the majority of the writers had improved in line with their academic level, in that they described their ideas more logically and in a way that was easier to follow. The writers with advanced and beginner proficiency levels achieved higher scores than the writers with a moderate proficiency level based on the overall assessment of the individual writers (Table 7.16). The moderate writers required more direct tutoring with frequent guidance on a regular basis from the instructor. It could be deduced that the limited progress of moderate writers was perhaps due to the questions they had which could not be answered satisfactorily by peers. One of the main factors limiting their progress in this skill was maybe their ambition to conduct more sustained interaction with several peers working together. Yet, such learner writers (no. 1, 2, 3, 11, 15, 16, 17, 20 and 21) achieved better follow-up individual texts with a number of corrections pertaining to content, lexis, grammar and tenses.

The rest of the students (beginners and advanced) did not require support to such an extent (see the examples of the pre-and-post individual texts for the student SA in Appendix: 12). Nevertheless, a minority of the lower writers did not show great development over the course. They had genuine difficulties with their writing that required frequent input from the instructor, as did the moderate writers. Both groups of writers lacked some basic knowledge and needed more intensive feedback given by the instructor. They also wanted to know about their strengths and weaknesses to show them their progress in a more formative type of assessment. Formative assessment “is concerned with how judgments about the quality of student responses (performances, pieces, or works) can be used to shape and improve the student's competence” (Sadler, 1989, p: 120).

Quite the reverse, summative assessment for such a group of writers may not be helpful on its own. That is because it ‘is concerned with summing up or summarizing the achievement status of a student, and is geared towards reporting at the end of a course of study especially for purposes of certification’ (Sadler, 1989, p: 120). Yet, the

majority of the writers with advanced and beginner proficiency levels were successful in their final individual texts. They managed to produce better grammar, lexis and content. Such writers included more dependent clauses and a number of compound and complex sentences. Taking the case of student No. 10, who was assessed as a writer with low proficiency level in writing, but his final individual text involved more sophisticated content, his ideas were in a more chronological order and he used more illustrative examples. Likewise, writers with advanced proficiency level such as student No. 18 had a chance to broaden their understanding and awareness about the practice of writing. In agreement with DeVoss, Eidman-Aadahl and Hicks (2010), writers from different proficiency levels, especially beginner and advanced, felt that PWMCW helped them to focus on reflection about audience, purpose and form.

In line with the agreement between the two raters, it was concluded that the practice of the PWMCW is useful in developing the majority of ESL/EFL individual (beginner and advanced) learner writers. These learners had better punctuation, used relevant and new words, agreement of subjects and verbs and accurate usage of articles and adjectives, clarity of introduction, clarity of examples and supportive ideas (see Tables 7.17, 7.18, 7.19 and 7.20).

#### **8.10. Reflections on the integrated course (features to be kept, dropped and adapted in the future)**

Reconsidering the course designed for this study is important as the inclusion of recommendations and guidance is invaluable for future users, including the researcher and other teachers. There were a number of lessons learned from this course. As the main concern of the course was to improve the writing skills of English learners of L2/FL, the main three core foci of the research (wiki, collaborative writing and the process approach) contributed to the target of learning writing skills in a novel way (see sub-sections: 7.3.1 and 7.3.2). Moreover, choosing authentic tasks, using Wikispaces, designing an area for planning and another for drafting and revising, creating collaborative learning environments and reinforcing collaborative and individual writing simultaneously were all helpful in meeting the course goals as reported in section: 4.3. Those elements supported the course, so it is essential that they remain.

Other features were found to be less effective so they should be dropped. The prescription of the entire course details in advance was important, however, this should not be to the extent that there is no flexibility whatsoever. Flexibility and planning for additional time are vital in course design particularly if technology is integrated in the project or it seeks to establish integrated learning. This can provide more room for adjustment of less desired practices and replace it with those that are more interesting.

Learners should be included in the design process with teachers, e.g. in relation to the size of the groups and the adequacy of training.

Other features were found to be beneficial but need further adaptation. The learners expressed a desire to conduct more face-to-face meetings to discuss their wiki-based interactions and what they hoped to achieve. The learners had to be repeatedly reminded about their roles as active learners who take responsibility for their own learning. Furthermore, it was essential to explain more about the different way of assessment using wikis, which is formative-based in order to provide more interactive, useful feedback and the expected outcomes.

As this course mainly focused on assessing the individual tasks, the assessment of collaboratively-produced work was also seen as indispensable (see sub-section: 5.7.5 for more about the assessment of written texts). It would be more useful if participants were given more intensive training on how to deliver peer feedback and if there were several tasks so that each group of learners could select the tasks they like. If I have the opportunity to repeat this course, I will run a second phase in which the same participants will be introduced to the tasks and requested to write texts according to their own process so they can decide on the type of collaborative writing and the approach that they wish the writing process to take.

### **8.11. Summary of the discussion**

This chapter has emphasised that acts of deletion and addition on the texts and their edited versions are invaluable. That is because they involved applying 'negotiation skills', 'group decision making' and 'task management' as shown by Liou and Lee (2011). Thus, the affordances of the new approach for teaching writing including the PWWCW, as the research revealed, can be stated as follows: creating peer-aided collaboration and constructive peer feedback; promoting learners' attention and awareness; reinforcing flexible learning based on learners' confidence and motivation; encouraging e-feedback that is indirect and less sensitive via social tools and focusing on accuracy and form-related writing problems. Yet, the incorporation of the new approach of teaching writing based on the PWWCW in the normal classes may result in several challenges, as was discovered in the findings (chapter 6). These challenges involve the need to increase awareness about e-plagiarism, collaborative authorship and audience, along with knowing how to deal with several roles and duties; providing adequate training sessions and physical meetings besides supporting real-time communication; designing a sound framework and tasks; accepting the shift in roles for the instructor as a facilitator as well as the classmates as co-workers; and adjusting from an individually-based system (i.e. exams and assessment).

As far as the collaborative planning is concerned for wikis, this phase empowered the participants to accelerate their learning of writing and over-all language learning too. It helped to further strengthen the opportunity to become well-organised and better in communicating specific ideas, instead of confusing their readers with unrelated ideas. The participants also had time to inspire their classmates, in different classes, to try wiki-based planning at least on one occasion and expressed how enjoyable and useful it was (see Appendix: 10 for the follow-up focus group). Moreover, the collaborative revision made on wikis was generally successful although the participants primarily tackled surface-related problems more than meaning-related. A similar conclusion was drawn by Lee (2010) with his beginner writing learners: it was shown that writing learners mainly concentrated on correcting errors made with form. The participants in both settings, collaboratively and individually, achieved considerable development in their writing abilities and in their expertise and awareness about this skill, in specific aspects of academic writing, as explored in the previous two sections: 8.8 and 8.8.

## Chapter 9: Conclusion

### 9.1. Introduction to conclusion

This chapter starts with a summary of the most important findings that are attained from this study. The next section deals with the evaluation of the course delivered, and the method of writing that was new to the participants of the research context, built on the PWMCW and other specific principles for learning writing (see section: 1.1). This evaluation is drawn from the participants' perspectives based on their responses through completing a post-questionnaire, highlighting important procedures to make this practice more beneficial, from conducting focus groups and interviews. The following section shows the pedagogical implications of incorporating wikis into normal writing classes. It assumes that this practice can have great impact on learners doing different courses relating to English for specific purposes and academic writing. The penultimate sections emphasise the limitation of the study including its scope and the generalisation of the results. The last section shows additional suggestions for conducting future research.

### 9.2. Summary of the main contributions

The most important contribution from this study is its endeavour to solve an existing problem relating to the learning of writing in the research context. Its objective was to improve the practice of learning writing in higher education in Saudi Arabia (as well as in other similar contexts), by introducing a new type of activity that seems more contemporary and appropriate for the new and future generation of learner writers of ESL/EFL.

In this study, it was possible to uncover many details about the learners' perceptions and their implementation of the PWMCW and its related tasks, along with suggesting a number of principles for learning writing (see sub-section: 6.2.1). The perceptions of the participants expressed repeatedly were in three of the tools used for data collection. They strongly reiterated positive perception in the initial and follow-up focus groups and the interviews. There was also moderate emphasis of positive perception in the initial and follow-up focus groups. The least emphasis of positive perception was in the initial focus group but still expressed.

A swift changes in the perceptions of the individuals is not normal, especially in the first time of implementation. The learners could not easily change their insights over a short period of time. Changes in their perceptions may take months based on the facilitation and learning support provided and deep thinking about what has been achieved. Most

of the learners who exerted more effort and showed their readiness to participate several times had positive perspectives from the beginning of the course. Most of the learners changed their perceptions into positive ones about most of the issues tackled in the study except for the issue about time. The time factor was found to be a real problem to the majority of the learners. Thus, limiting the time of participation and sticking to deadlines might minimise the negative perception.

The perceptions cannot be underestimated since they stem from the way the participants reacted to fulfill their actions. In addition, based on what the participants achieved, it was possible to recognise the most and least effective aspects of the new suggested approach for developing grammatical and spelling accuracy and overall structure and organisation of ideas and content.

The main findings of the current study reflect many of the key studies in this area, relating to the significance of wikis for learning writing (e.g. Lund, 2008; Kessler, 2009; Lee, 2010; Elola and Oskoz, 2010; Bradley et al., 2010). However, each study has different settings, tasks and research designs. The previous studies adopted one or more of the following theoretical perspectives: socio-constructivism, ZPD, collaborative learning and CSCL. These theories have also become applicable to social networking tools such as wikis. So, the area of this research has been supported by the combination of good educational practice and prominent theories.

### **The conclusion of the study**

The course in this study built on a number of principles for revolutionising the way in which writing can be learnt. The new approach to teaching writing was beneficial in as much as it created an unusual environment for retrieving information and providing comments. The participants valued this experience not only because it helped them to learn and work collaboratively in groups, but also to develop more self-reliance on a personal level. The usage of a number of principles in learning writing on WMCW (i.e. using authentic tasks and e-feedback) and the process writing approach reformed the practice of writing and the final texts. Both the principles used and the phases of the process approach are effective in advancing the correct usage of grammar, lexis and punctuation and the relevant ideas and organisation.

So, the learners become alert to the milestones of writing, noting the importance of planning, drafting and revision. They also become aware that writing needs a circle of correction for linguistic and semantic problems and reorganisation of content. The practice of the new principles and phases of writing on wikis reduced the anxiety that usually results from CW and the practice of writing, since this skill requires proficiency

and much preparation with more thinking, as explored by Kelly, Soundranayagam and Grief (2004). In addition, the principles suggested for learning writing and the process writing approach are useful for encouraging the writing learners because of the intervals occurring when one composes a text and allowing plenty of time for thinking.

The provision of e-feedback between the instructor and peers and among peers with each other can diminish some of the less effective habits and behaviours of the participants. The senders (peers) felt that it was normal to give feedback with their advice to their peers, thus gaining more knowledge. Similarly, the receivers got used to acts of feedback and the importance of listening to other views for enriching their texts. So, both actions, either to send or receive comments from others, were accepted even by the sensitive participants where the entire communication of groups took place behind the screen. Thus, these learners contributing to wikis were more able to share, comment and edit others' written entries. This also broadened the confidence of the participants in addressing different readers; focusing not only on ideas but also discussing content. The environment was safer in that no humiliation would occur. As some of the participants had poor handwriting, using wikis worked to reduce any embarrassment this might cause them.

Another conclusion reached by this study is that the approach seemed to be relevant to the participants of the context of this study. The approach also is seen as an effective pedagogical tactic used to re-model the traditional attitudes and practices in learning EFL writing. Peer feedback and self-feedback form the typical part of the practice when texts are produced on wikis, given that PWMCW is a continuous development process. Seeking peer feedback becomes normal, and perhaps preferable, in order to obtain finer texts, whereas it used to be seen as shameful to get criticism from anyone except the instructor. Showing the audience or other peers the written texts also becomes normal, although at first many of the writers were unhappy with this action.

The writers become interested in hearing and reading what peers would say in public, which might be different when it is given privately. Such ways of expressing views cannot be conventionally produced individually or even collaboratively without the incorporation of wikis. Using wikis and peer feedback helps to create novelty and integrate informality in formal classes. This integration is important to reduce boredom and tension and is likely to have a positive impact on the written texts, particularly pertaining to more feedback and negotiation, this would resonates with Aydin and Yildiz (2014). This would also make writing classes more realistic and practical, especially for the new generation of learners who depend on such social networking tools for their everyday communication.

Despite the advantages of PWMCW, there are challenges associated with this practice. In other words, failure to follow guidelines may make it difficult for learners to distinguish different individuals' written contributions. Beginner writers may struggle to cope with writing in an electronic environment due to lack of verbal interaction if more personal reinforcement is needed as Table 3.7 by Tuzi (2004) shows (see sub-section: 3.5.2.3). Many learners cannot manage without face-to-face support for writing and believe that body language and gestures are assisting tools for writing and thinking (see sub-section: 3.6.1 for the essential techniques related to the implementation of successful PWMCW). In fact, we cannot dismiss the preference and popularity for feedback that is both given physically or electronically by instructors or peers (Yusoff, Alwi and Ibrahim, 2012).

The main challenge is how to convince such learners to be willing to welcome both types of feedback, since integrating them at the same time can provide more comprehensive feedback. Physical (face-to-face) feedback can be used to solve major problems that need direct discussion. On the other hand, e-feedback can be used to comment on minor problems that do not need direct interaction. This will also be supportive as there is no time limitation or space restriction. Dependency is also a potential risk as learners may rely on others' efforts. They may also commit plagiarism by using others' written texts; both Karasavvidis (2010) and Su and Beaumont (2010) found it to be existing among their participants, and this is shown in the research findings (see sub-section: 6.3.4.4).

Thus, it is crucial that the instructor(s) applies strict rules to avoid these potential infringements from the beginning. It also demands clear instruction from the instructor(s) and adequate training for learners on how to provide informative feedback, and on what sort of parts can be deleted or added. Ignoring these precautions could cause confusion and make correct practice harder to be understood and less natural.

### **9.3. Evaluation of the course and its related tasks:**

The participants had a chance to evaluate the PWMCW course and its related tasks. This evaluation is useful as it illuminated further insights about this course and its related tasks from the participants' point of views. Moreover, the participants had been given time to make decisions regarding their own learning. Chapelle (2007) asserts that learners' evaluation of their learning materials and tasks assigned that are facilitated through technology-assisted language learning could boost their understanding for better innovative learning environment.

On this basis, the learners pinpointed three major issues that are seen as crucial for delivering effective PWMCW course:

- 1) quality assurance for the designed layout and tasks;
- 2) fair distribution of groups and individuals and
- 3) considering assessment as a core rather an elective choice.

### 9.3.1. Analysis of the post-evaluative questionnaire

In the post-evaluative questionnaire, most of the participants gave positive responses that disclosed higher percentages of agreement and satisfaction with various aspects of the course, focused on the PWMCW, as shown in Tables 9.1 and 9.2. For more information about how the data was collected see section: 5.7 in the methodology chapter.

Item description		Yes	No
Was the introduction to Wikispaces enough?	Response %	8 <b>90</b>	2 10
Do you wish to integrate wiki-mediated collaborative writing in your regular writing instruction in classes?	Response %	12 <b>69</b>	8 40
Were you pleased with your group?	Response %	17 <b>85</b>	3 15
Were the tasks new, informative, related to your future career and interesting?	Response %	17 <b>85</b>	3 15
Were there any difficulties related to the technical side?	Response %	6 30	14 <b>70</b>
Were there any difficulties in dealing with the tool bar?	Response %	4 20	16 <b>80</b>
Were the questions given for each role (i.e. collaborative planning, drafting and collaborative revision) sufficient?	Response %	19 <b>95</b>	1 5
Was it confusing to work on more than one area: 'discussion' and 'main wiki page' areas?	Response %	19 <b>95</b>	1 5

Table 9.1: Participants' responses for the evaluative questionnaire (1)

Item description				
Was the timing for each task: long, satisfactory or short?	Response %	long	satisfactory	Short
		1 5	18 <b>90</b>	1 5
Was the number of members in each group: big, sufficient or small?	Response %	big	sufficient	small
		2 10	18 <b>90</b>	- -
Was the nature of achieving the tasks: clear (easy) or confusing (difficult)?	Response %	Easy		Difficulty
		18 <b>90</b>	2 10	

Table 9.2: Participants' responses for the evaluative questionnaire (2)

### 9.3.2. Procedural issues

- **Quality assurance for the designed layout:**

The first procedural issue raised by the participants concerned quality in the design of (and active work on) wikis and with their tasks. The views of the participants, who expressed the importance of designing clear content in an attractive way with providing continuous training and instructional guidance, are shown in the following quotations:

**HB:** Frankly, I disagree with my friend H2, I think the subdivisions in the website are well-organised. I see it really well-organised and very very systematic. These areas can be easily recognised as there is a main page to draft. There is also history to identify any addition. The task is on a side.

**HB:** It [the current layout] is comfortable; in fact I didn't note any complexity or the possibility of losing my way. It might be there that in the beginning, but we become used to it, it became very comfortable since all of its categories were clear.

**SA:** Yah, at the beginning of the semester we saw you explaining how to use it in two weeks, so I thought how difficult that would be, but then I realised later when I logged in how easy it would be to deal with.

Thus, in order to ensure a high quality PWMCW course with effectively designed layouts, there are a number of studies that identify models to ensure this feature. Minocha and Thomas (2007) consider the following aspects to be important: access and motivation, online socialisation, information giving and receiving, knowledge

construction and development. Liu (2010) highlights that wiki-based layouts should reduce learners' anxiety related to online posting; encourage their online participation and acceptance of using social tools and promote the feeling of usefulness of incorporating such tools. Hadjerrouit (2011) also shows the importance of: starting with gathering information about the chosen topics; designing of the wikis overall architecture by deciding on the main and sub-pages and their appropriate content; creating the necessary links and hyperlinks; assessing the content of these pages; and (f) providing opportunities for peer review to improve the prospective wikis.

- **Fair distribution of groups and individuals:**

The participants expressed the importance of fairness in the distribution of groups and individuals through applying procedures that determine the proficiency levels of the participants. Fair distribution is a determiner for establishing interdependence, or mutuality, and allowing synthesis of new information among individuals. Both are key elements in online CL as was discovered by Ingram and Hathorn (2004).

This study conducted a diagnostic test in order to identify the academic level of the participants so they could be distributed in different groups. Also, a group of instructors, from the same research context, were consulted in order to seek their advice about the achievement level for each participant. Those instructors have already taught such participants and have enough experience about them. A further procedure was applied consulting the scores and levels of achievement which those participants had achieved in the previous term in their writing course.

Despite the effort carried out by the researcher, a group of participants were not fully satisfied with their groups and that was the reason for drawing this issue into attention. A handful of the participants, as they emphasised in the following examples below, asked why they had been allocated to a certain group, and with certain peers, rather than others which they thought would be more appropriate.

**MN:** Among the drawbacks in relation to the distributions of groups, I think group members should be distributed similarly. I mean, you need good, average and slow learners (.) all within one group. I think the distribution of members in the groups wasn't fair.

**MN:** I mean (*he mentioned two participants*) they were very excellent and they were in the same group... I mean students shouldn't only be evaluated by scores. There are other things which are necessary to know about students before giving any test or distributing a role. (68: 21)

**MS:** It [the distribution of individuals] depends on students' willingness and acceptance of this idea.

The indicated contributions have resonance with Einon (2010) who emphasises the importance of the users' agreement on the distribution of groups and individuals, also the duties assigned and the timeline for when the project should be completed, and what the final image of the project would look like. Yet, it was realised that it is hard to be absolutely fair in the distribution of the groups and individuals. The most important thing is the adoption of as many procedures as possible to ensure consistency in the distribution of groups and individuals. Each learning group should have similar number of individuals with mixed abilities (e.g. beginner, intermediate and advanced learners).

Notwithstanding, negotiation with participants prior to starting the distribution of groups and individuals is perhaps a potential procedure for ensuring fairness. The participants can also distribute themselves according to what they think is comfortable but in keeping with some general principles agreed from the beginning. In fact, it is most likely that self-distribution of groups and individuals of themselves can reinforce learners' distributed cognition. Distributed cognition is 'a process in which cognitive resources are shared socially in order to extend individual cognitive resources or to accomplish something that an individual agent could not achieve alone' (Lehtinen, 2003, p: 12).

- **Consideration of satisfactory grading 'or assessment':**

The participants drew attention to the status of assessment for the new course and its related tasks. It must be noted that the participants mentioned this issue because they think that the un-assessed subjects are less important than the assessed (e.g. biology, autonomy, biochemistry and physics). They also felt that assessment, and allocating good marks, is essential since they study several subjects and usually concentrate more on subjects with higher mark allocations. The indicated subjects carry higher marks compared to the minimal marks assigned to the individually-produced texts.

Besides that, the collaboratively-produced texts on wikis were not assessed at all, and this led several participants to consider it as an elective course. Such tasks were not assessed because the purpose was not to force the participants to achieve the tasks and not everyone was required to take part. Yet, a number of the participants pointed out the consequence of assessment on their motivation as shown in the examples given below, regardless of their interest in the new classes and tasks.

**HB:** Yah, so we tell ourselves that instead of wasting an hour everyday working on un-assessed work, it's better to do more on the biology course.

**HB:** ... We are studying for roughly seven or six years, so of course we will be excellent in English by the end of these years, so just working in this semester won't make a huge improvement or improve us 100% but if there are no marks we won't become highly interested in it. I mean other things might have more priority.

**HA:** There is another reason why students wouldn't participate. They may say we have subjects that have more priority in which I must succeed or need to concentrate on to augment my accumulative GBA, so we can postpone this to our free time... when we can work on it.

**HA:** Marks give motivation and force you to work.

It is true to say that there was satisfactory collaboration and participation. However, the minimal assessment of the individually-produced texts did not increase the empowerment of the participants to be socially interactive. If there had been more allocated marks, there would have been more collaboration than they in fact accomplished. The participants stated their preference for PWMCW more than traditional writing but that assessment should be integrated to give them more enthusiasm. Such extended tasks should be assessed in order to make participants more able to pursue social interaction. It was evident that the participants think that creating well-constructed writing in wikis is determined by assessment and the allocation of sufficient marks, reflecting what was recognised by Coniam and Ki (2008).

There were a few marks allocated to the products of the individually-based texts produced before and after collaboration. However, the students wanted further details about how the process and product of the collaboratively-oriented texts would be assessed. Although the participants stated the importance of assessing what they do in groups, they were also concerned about how assessment would be accomplished for their collaborative product. This feeling highlighted the need to make accurate grading criteria 'to avoid one-sentence pages, to reward good effort, and to provide feedback' (Cronin, 2009). Correspondingly, Hazari, North and Moreland (2009) agree with this view. Those researchers confirm that sound assessment 'should set clear performance expectations, and include consideration for both the process and product used by team members to develop the final deliverable for the assignment' (p: 189).

#### **9.4. Implications of the study**

In light of the findings, the current research has a number of theoretical and practical implications for the approach to learning to write effectively. The implementation of wiki-mediated collaborative writing and its core components (or PWMCW) can have several

pedagogical applications for the classroom, especially in the area of developing writing skills in L2/FL writing. It showed how Arabic native speakers in their orientation year can use wikis in collaborative English writing in order to boost their academic knowledge and learning from the practice of writing. It also provided a holistic understanding of the relationship between technology and pedagogy and how web 2.0 (particularly wikis), along with other relevant pedagogical strategies in the teaching English writing in L2/FL contexts (e.g., understanding social contexts and cognitive processes-related to texts) can be effectively integrated together. The implications concern three subjects: learners, teachers and institutions and policy makers.

### 1) Learners

- The implementation of wikis in writing classes provides an opportunity for learners to have many-to-many interactions, which is advantageous for teamwork success and to enrich learners' knowledge and their shared accountability. As wikis are built with valuable functionalities such as history logs these can also help ensure the flow of discussion and quality of texts produced. They contribute to the production of larger chunks of texts involving greater quantities of work, as found by Mak and Coniam (2008). Consistent with Miyazoe and Anderson (2010), the new course, through adopting wiki-mediated collaborative writing, assisted learners in producing better and higher quality compositions (see the findings in sub-sections: 6.3.1 and 6.3.3).
- Learners learn to understand that the emphasis of working on wikis is to reach a collaborative level of interaction, rather than simply cooperation. They can become aware of the meaning and consequences of collaboration and social interaction and the impact of collaborative process and networked-based learning. Networking tools have proven useful for learners especially when tailored for CL and CW (Leung and Chu, 2009) (see the findings in sub-section: 6.3.1).
- The process approach to writing supports the work on wikis. The combination of the three areas indicated (wikis, collaboration and the process) can be helpful for learners to advance some aspects of writing that would otherwise remain undeveloped such as learners' confidence. PVMCW, with an emphasis on using the process approach, allows learners to co-construct shared and interactive content and information with other students and manage their content with each other outside the boundaries of the university. As a result, they can explore complex ways of thinking that contribute to advanced dialogues leading learners to enhance their knowledge (see the findings in sub-sections: 6.3.2 and 6.3.3).

- Peer review before teacher feedback through wikis enables learners to look at their work once again with vigilant eyes and to increase their reflective practice in terms of their own and others' work. Wiki-mediated collaborative writing allow learners to change their perceptions with regards to learning writing, making them more positive, and it provides further understanding of the practice of writing as a holistic or integrative practice (see the findings in sub-section: 6.3.3).
- Wikis can be effective in raising learners' awareness about ownership and authorship, allowing ample time to collect relevant information and reflect. Lamb (2004) confirms that most of the pedagogical implications of wikis are related to the support of writing instruction. It is a practical method to use in writing classes because it can be applied to learners from diverse levels and for a variety of purposes (e.g. writing abstracts, writing conference papers, writing reports) (see the findings in sub-section: 6.3.3).
- Wikis are an enrichment tool that enables learners to express their opinions in wider learning communities so that they can publish their work to an audience using different communication styles and seek various forms of feedback from their peers and instructors. Support for this interpretation comes from Kuteeva (2011) who proved that 'peer revision and feedback [on wikis] were used to foster awareness of the audience, which contributes to reader-oriented writing'.
- Wikis provide an increased opportunity for learners to promote the process approach involving planning and revision in a shared environment with peers and the instructor. This boosts their academic progress and personal (social, cognitive and metacognitive) skills causing more satisfying learning of writing and ability to reflect on what they produce in order to make it even better (see the findings in sub-section: 7.2.1 and 7.2.2).

## 2) Teachers

- Teachers play a key role in implementing successful PWMCW. They should adopt it wholeheartedly if they wish to reform learning and increase learning motivation as it is a method that will complement their face-to-face teaching of writing. A careful compromise between offline interaction and online-based discussion is always necessary for reinforcing meaningful discussion. Accordingly, it is essential to design appropriate curriculum that maintain both interfaces (see the findings in sub-section: 6.3.4).
- Teachers can gain a comprehensive understanding regarding how PWMCW is perceived by learner writers, including those aspects or areas that were seen to have improved with their inclusion into a course, therefore positively impacting

teachers' instruction. The value of this intervention enables teachers to reflect on their teaching and what might be effective, relevant and interesting for these students.

- Teachers can get detailed insights into what learners can achieve by using other tools (not possible to achieve in normal writing classes) especially by adding wikis, collaborative writing and the process approach. This can all be observed by viewing history logs of contributions (e.g. additions, deletions and amendments) (see the findings in sub-section: 6.3.5).
- Teachers can get ideas about those elements of learning English writing which can be enhanced by the use of wikis in collaborative platforms for more improved collaborative and individual texts (see the findings in sub-sections: 7.3.1 and 7.3.2).
- Teachers need to adapt their roles from being transmitters of knowledge into facilitators of learning, while continuing to encourage participants to build, create and develop their existing knowledge. They also need to develop participants with ample skills related to collaborative learning and collaborative writing.

### 3) Institutions and policy makers

- Decision makers should consider the integration of blended learning as a strategic approach for reform by providing continuous professional development training programmes for learners and teachers on how to use wikis and other social networking tools and how they can be integrated into language learning. A number of practices in teaching writing adopt conventional methods, such as imitating a standard text to re-produce a new text, but ignore the affordances of ICT and other recent technologies (Al-Ahdal et al., 2014). Similarly, Liton (2013) found that the educational policies followed in teaching English, including writing skills, in Saudi universities should be modernised and more open to adopting newer techniques (see the findings in sub-section: 6.3.1).
- In terms of using wikis for learning of writing, institutions and decision makers should make a long term plan that takes into account the concerns related to PWMCW and the incorporation of wikis into general classes by gradually phasing it in, since satisfactory results will not be seen immediately. Institutions and policy makers should encourage teachers and academic staff to embrace it as an official method that would help the new generation, in other words, those who frequently use social networks (see the findings in sub-section: 6.3.4).
- Policy makers are advised to identify new policies to promote learner writers to be more active through using digital media. Some of the current practices rely only on individual work and regard it as the only way to develop the individuals without

taking advantages of learning in groups. In fact, decision makers need to change, or at least update, some of the educational practices of teaching the English language and writing skills for Arabic native speakers who face difficulties when they deal with writing (Ezza, 2010). The new policies can be accomplished by following different criteria for assessment, employing synchronous or asynchronous social networking tools and taking advantage of open educational resources such as *Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCS)*.

- Institutions and policy makers have major responsibilities towards maintaining the roles of learners and teachers for ensuring the use of wiki-mediated collaborative writing at an institutional level. They should make general plans that would support teachers using it, make it part of their curriculum and give teachers some flexibility in how they deliver it, in order that they can find an approach that is suitable for their specific learners.
- It is necessary for decision makers to understand the potential advantages and disadvantages of bringing wikis into the classroom in order to work on minimising learners' unwillingness in learning general academic writing (see the findings in sub-section: 6.3.4).
- Institutions should provide Wi-Fi access across campuses and continue maintaining computer labs to support work with wikis. It is also important to build more labs with high-speed Internet that meets the requirements of learners.

### **9.5. Revisiting the theoretical framework**

In the light of the results of the current research, the five main theories used in this research were useful (see chapter two). Social constructivist learning was helpful for enabling individuals to reach a common ground so they could promote mutual engagement between them. In addition, it allowed their beliefs and experiences to be the subject of further discussion and exploration. The learners placed great emphasis on processing social learning for writing in a social constructivist classroom where knowledge construction is considered to be accomplished only through members of a society and their collective understanding of knowledge. The learners were keen to create their own student-based learning in social settings which featured the construction of a small culture of shared artifacts, interests and benefits (see sub-section: 2.2.1 for more details).

Furthermore, Vygotsky's view of the Zone of Proximal Development was confirmed as underlying good practice for learners in groups, as it enabled them to help and support each other therefore leading to deeper learning about writing. ZPD was vital because it challenges individuals' learning processes, and as a result it advances their mental

thinking in order to acquire more knowledge, which is referred to as mediation. Thus ZPD led the learners in the present research to perform social tasks which then involved receiving corrective and meaningful feedback and assistance from teachers or more knowledgeable individuals, which is known as scaffolding. Scaffolding is a product of ZPD that inspires learners to react to difficulties by implementing problem-solving skills during tasks. It was recognised that effective learning involving developing learners' writing does not happen without multi-dimensional levels of reciprocal communication between teachers and peers (see sub-section: 2.2.2 for more details).

The previous two theories feed into the Collaborative Learning (CL) theory and computer-supported collaborative learning paradigm (CSCL). In my research, the learners created learning communities together and gained a collective understanding of the common goals or tasks. Collaboration implies that each learner was responsible for his peers' learning as well as his own, as each learner made some contribution to the learning on a group level. It encouraged the learners to participate in order to maximise their abilities and enhance their professional practice. The clearest advantage of this process was the academic progress made by all the participants. Collaboration for learning writing enabled the learners to work effectively and gain a substantial amount of knowledge on the topics assigned. They managed to give explanations about others' work and receive feedback on their contributions (see sub-section: 2.2.3 for more details).

Computer-supported collaborative learning (CSCL) increased the learners' opportunities to develop new avenues for collaborative information processing outside classes. Computers (particularly social networking tools) were used as catalysts for building more social interaction contributing to learning writing. CSCL, as represented by wiki-mediated collaborations, enhanced the learners' abilities and skills to problem solve and to collaborate in a social environment. The new sources of knowledge reasoning and ways of communication enlivened the traditional methods of interaction that might take place when using non-collaborative tools. CSCL motivated the learners to learn because it involved more instructional, cognitive, motivational and social support. CSCL created an appropriate environment where peer and teacher's feedback could be given. It also developed the learners' positive perceptions about understanding learning writing and its process and the curriculum (see sub-section: 2.2.4 for more details).

In general, L2 motivation theories attempt to explain what motivates learners and what triggers them to learn further. In this research, such theories reinforced how individuals' orientation and their related goals could be activated and directed towards language

learning when technology was associated. It supported the resilient relationship between L2/FL motivation and the technological affordances. The usage of technologies was powerful and actively supported learners and team members to achieve more than other previously used methods. The positive value, with regard to the usage of technologies in learning, contributed to an increase in learners' expectations to succeed. The employment of recent information and communication technologies has influenced learners' motivation to integrate tools such as these into their learning, because of the subsequent satisfaction, increased performance, and /or their interests, desires or needs (see sub-section: 2.2.5 for more details).

### **9.6. Practical considerations for the course implementation**

The new course emphasises not only the product, but also the process, which could contribute to the construction of a good piece of writing (Al-Hazmi and Scholfield, 2007; Al-Qurashi, 2009; Al-Seghayer, 2011). Following this practice creates more chances for learners, particularly beginners, to construct meaning during their learning of writing. It also constitutes a channel through which individuals can express their own opinions by demonstrating and discussing their writing needs and how they can be met. For this reason we need to consider the steps shown below. The same steps are agreed by Stanley (2013). An instructor, or a facilitator, is required to:

1. plan a writing lesson for a writing topic that is interesting and can be discussed in a collaborative way;
2. set up a wiki platform (one or many based on the number of participants);
3. ask the participants to join and contribute to the wiki(s);
4. conduct specific training (by showing learners how wiki works, its functions and advantages and things they need to be aware of);
5. set up a plan for fulfilling the tasks and the distribution of roles; and
6. set up a plan to revise all the amendments contributed by each individual.

Undeniably, the new course may not always be beneficial, as participants may sometimes show biased opinions influenced by their learning groups rather than what they as individuals think. It is crucial to apply the PWMCW within a complete pedagogical model for teaching writing appropriately. This model must entail how tasks and rules can be fulfilled. Wikis are tools which alone do not result in effective learning; rather, such learning mostly depends on learners' understanding of collaboration and their response to the assigned tasks. Following well-planned models, such as those ones already explained in sub-section: 9.3.2 by Minocha and Thomas, 2007; Liu, 2010 and Hadjerrouit, 2011, should decrease the difficulty of composing texts, explaining how to start and how to revise. Yet, such pedagogical models might involve a few

difficulties regarding: setting appropriate time limits, maintaining awareness of and providing adequate training and technical support. The technical support involves dealing with the website, of Wikispaces when it fails, teaching learners how to update the content and how to use the proper browser.

There were also challenges which were hard for the instructor to deal with and provide full support for all the students. They exhibited needs for emotional and psychological support during their social interaction at a distance, because of lacking verbal interaction. This support is necessary to ensure learners' capacities for generating new written texts in line with the given description for each task; and they need to do this within a specific time by responding to the roles as agreed among peers (Ducate, Anderson and Moreno, 2011). In this study, the researcher adapted collaborative and individual tasks without grading. Only the individual tasks were graded as the course guide outlines.

This result showed that the students were less likely to be involved in activities unless they were assigned marks. Hazari, North and Moreland (2009) advocate the necessity of identifying a robust marking scale in order to let writers assess their contributions. In view of that, it was not easy to persuade the students to work actively without assessing them on their collaborative effort. It is striking to observe the influence of rewarding by grades on students' achievement. In harmony with Kummer (2013), he claimed that rewarding students by marks is the foundation for intrinsic and extrinsic motivation even in higher education, which can be applied to EFL learning of writing in the preparatory year.

The new course, relying on the PWMCW, also needs great patience, effort and skill from instructors. The present instructor was responsible for giving comprehensive feedback and general guidelines. It is highly dependent on

the effectiveness of the instructor in promoting group collaboration, the instructor's role in creating the course conditions and climate for establishing an online community, and the instructor's ability to engage students to be active participants' (Choy and Ng, 2007; p: 209-226).

Besides all of this, the participants described a difficulty concerning applying the new course in regular classes. This is because the classes are built on an individual basis rather than by the inclusion of groups, especially in exams. Conforming with Lund (2008):

this approach has been at odds with more traditional and dominating forms of testing and assessment... Focus on coursework, process, collaboration... This is a shift that, at least to some extent, is more aligned with a sociocultural view of learning and teaching (p: 35).

Based on the given steps and challenges related to the pedagogical implications, we can conclude that the PWMCW and its related tasks, along with a number of the principles suggested here, should be officially adopted for writing classes and perhaps for other classes, but with the utmost degrees of planning and organisation. This practice should also be part of the course design for different subjects that seek to enhance learners' abilities in writing skills and collaboration.

### **9.7. Limitations of the study**

The study encountered a number of limitations to be considered, along with the ones already explained in the methodology chapter (see section: 5.12). The course in this study enabled students to understand the complementary relationship between collaboration, wiki and the process writing approach all together. However, the separate roles of each component were not fully advantageous. In general, the role of collaboration, was seen as a helpful technique for active participation and confident learning where learners share their experiences and learn from each other's. Yet, collaboration, without wikis, was considered to be too difficult mostly because students did not have enough time and it was considered to be a new technique to the students. Also, it is not easy for instructors to accomplish collaboration with a high level of quality without using aiding tools.

Furthermore, the role of wikis, as an editing tool, was acknowledged by the students and as a tool for promoting communication and motivation among participants. Wikis, without well-designed collaborative tasks, however were assumed to be misleading without careful organisation and guidance on e-plagiarism. The role of the process writing approach was to encourage the students to communicate their written texts. Nevertheless, a group of the students realised that the practice of this process in-class, without supporting tools, would impede the fluency of ideas and preferred spontaneity for developing texts.

The data were collected from a wide range of research methods (e.g. from the questionnaires, focus groups, interviews and wiki-based written contributions), the questionnaires, in particular, were conducted in English as preferred by a group of the participants. However, it was discovered that the participants had a few difficulties to understand all the items in English. Therefore, Arabic translation was applied on site,

during the fieldwork, for those less obvious items (no. 12, 23 and 24). Based on Arabic translation, the students understood these items as follow: The tasks were useful because there was no production of multiple drafts (Item 12). Writing with classmates or 'CW' will not be/ was not an easy practice for learners to create equal chances of participation (Item 23). Writing with classmates or 'CW' will assist/assisted learners to identify the linguistic problems related to their writing (Item 24).

Thus, if the questionnaires were to be used in English by other researchers, it is important to modify such statements to get the most benefits from this research instrument and to make it clearer for beginner and intermediate learners. In addition, as it is claimed that it is hard to be an absolutely neutral 'impersonal' researcher using an interpretative 'qualitative' approach, The interpretation of data being based on the researcher's prior assumptions and understanding about the topic. The researcher and participants shared similar culture and background. All possible means were applied to decrease the researcher's unavoidable bias, for example by using the quantitative approach and triangulation. Despite that, a qualitative understanding revealed several new facts, values and rich information about the learners.

Other limitations should also be noted. The participants started to exchange knowledge among themselves but they took a longer time than that allotted in the course plan. A group of the participants were noticed just collecting information and preparing for content without selection of what was meaningful and most relevant to the tasks. Moreover, the number of tasks was not enough to allow the participants to gain enough experience of writing on wikis. The weekly lectures were also not long and frequent enough to give the participants a chance to discuss their writing problems in depth. Therefore, supplementary lectures were arranged with the participants in order to familiarise them with this new practice, and as a result the tasks took a longer period than expected.

A further limitation of the study was that the participants started to gain inspiration and energy especially in the last task. Yet, they could not transform this willingness into action because they became busier in preparing for final exams in different modules. They had more time for the first and second tasks. In addition, the motivation of the participants was not similar but at the same time it was not possible to precisely trace the level of motivation for each participant. Some of the participants had either intrinsic or extrinsic motivation whereas having them equally is important. There was much effort and time spent, more than was predicted, on IT-related support showing how wikis can be used although the participants were familiar with similar social tools.

The current study also had limitation regarding the generalisability to other world-wide contexts with students who had already been introduced to similar social networking tools and web-based collaboration for their formal classes. The conclusions drawn, including the development of the perceptions and actual actions of the writing learners, cannot be generalised to all classes intending to apply the PWMCW courses and their related tasks. They may not be generalisable to distinctly different groups such as low level vocational students. Nonetheless, the attained results may be generalisable to other writing learners studying in the preparatory year in a university achieving ecological validity (see sub-section: 5.10.4). It might be applicable to other learners in different preparatory year programmes across the universities in Saudi Arabia. The results can also be generalised to non-Saudi EFL writing learners who shared a similar educational system and methods of being taught writing.

### **9.8. Suggestions for future research**

As there is an exponential growth in the written digital communication and its effect on the practice of writing skills, there is much need to conduct research in this evolving area. Suggestions for future research might include the study of several methods which could all open up new gates for enriching learning, especially writing. This investigation would serve different stakeholders: learners, instructors, researchers and course designers. The current research investigated the participants' perceptions about and the impact of the PWMCW where participants shared similar qualities such as age, cultural background and educational context. Future research could apply the same PWMCW project where participants might reflect different variables such as different gender and nationality. Because of the differences in the variables, they could reveal interesting results that could complement what was found in the current study.

It would also be useful if future research studied the collaboration of students from one learning context, such as the current study's medical cohort, with students from a different learning context by applying similar tasks. Both groups of learners would be expected to create more knowledge about how to construct sound academic texts. It would be valuable to conduct comparative or complementary studies with regard to using this practice (PWMCW) on two or more classes to explore the impact on a wider scale. Other recommendations for conducting future research might extend the usage of wikis with additional collaborative writing tools and to a wider area of participants as follows:

Firstly, adding blogs or blogging to wikis for the completion of the PWMCW tasks would achieve a mixture of platforms of different natures, which would facilitate learners in being more expressive and creative. It would be interesting to examine learner writers'

usage of different media (e.g. videos, photos, hypertexts, podcasts... etc.) for their written texts, incorporating 'multimodal composition'. Regarding multimodal composition, there is a group of researchers who feel such practice is inappropriate for learning academic writing and writing course. Yet, the new generation of learner writers should be exposed to similar media in order "to extend students' ability to express themselves in interactive, visual and auditory media as well as written ones" (p: 420) in a world that gradually depends on non-verbal forms of interaction as Gerrard (2012) states. Secondly, comparing the helpfulness of wikis with other social networking writing tools might reveal some unexpected information about these tools for writing purposes. It would be useful to distinguish between the similarities and differences of various authorship tools such as Edmodo, Twitter and Facebook. Thirdly, it would be valuable to explore the implementation of such tasks for writing argumentative texts among advanced writers. Producing such extended and creative texts would most likely result in more discussion and exchange of knowledge. Lastly, designing different layouts for the PWMCW tasks, based on integrating e-portfolio within Wikispaces could reveal more about users' personal abilities and allow for greater self-expression.

To conclude, this research hopefully has achieved its aims of studying learners' perceptions of the PWMCW and its impact on learners' writing skills. It is hoped that the findings of the investigation fill a particular gap in knowledge, as Alebaikan (2010) suggests: 'there is very little literature on the use of web 2.0, including blogs, wikis and other social networking in blended learning' (p: 267). The current findings can lead to a series of other investigations in the area of using social networking technologies to enhance learners' L1, L2 or FL writing. Conducting such an evidence-based study to attempt to assess and demonstrate the usefulness of the PWMCW should provide a good starting point for enhancing traditional practices in learning writing in a way that would also be more desirable for learners from the net generation, particularly in preparatory year programmes in higher education institutions, where the affordances of wikis for the learning of writing has not yet been discovered.









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## Appendix 1: The Pre-and Post-Questionnaires

### a. Pre-questionnaire (this should be completed anonymously)

All the answers to this questionnaire should be based on your prior experience of the other writing classes you may have taken during your study years.

Course:

Class:

- a- Do you use the Internet?                      yes                          no
- b- How many times do you use it?    once a week        3-4 times a week        daily
- c- What do you use it for more? Academic                          pleasure

#### Section (A): Perceptions about the principles used for the new approach to teaching writing (compared to the previous classes)

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. The tasks were not exciting because of the interaction among the students.					
2. The tasks were exciting because of the interaction among the students and the instructor.					
3. The tasks were helpful for improving the writing skills.					
4. Face to face correction by teachers help to understand writing problems.					
5. Task types were encouraging (e.g. solving a problem and describing a scene).					
6. Writing strategies were motivating (e.g. planning, drafting, and editing).					
7. The type of feedback (e-feedback) was supportive.					
8. The given feedback on the content was not enough (e.g. commenting on the written text).					

#### Section (B): Perceptions about the process writing approach (compared to the previous classes)

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The tasks:					
9. were comfortable because there were planning for the writing topics.					
10. were comfortable because there were enough discussions about the writing topics.					
11. were interesting because they presented interesting ideas for the writing topics.					
12. were useful because there was no practice of writing drafts.					
13. were useful because content was checked.					
14. were useful because keeping unity was checked (e.g. using a topic sentence with relevant sentences- <i>coherence</i> ).					
15. were useful because forms were checked (e.g. grammar and spelling- <i>accuracy</i> ).					
16. were helpful because a final draft was completed after revision.					

**Section (C): Perceptions about collaborative writing (based on its impact for the new classes)**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Writing with classmates:					
17. will reduce the difficulty of doing writing tasks as they can help each other.					
18. will be hard as it is challenging to understand each other.					
19. will not be useful as they will see each other's writing in English.					
20. will be stressful as it does not allow everyone to express his personal ideas.					
21. will be less interesting than individual writing.					
22. will be useful as there is interaction with other classmates.					
23. will be difficult as some of them might write more than others.					
24. will simplify knowing the writing problems as they will look at the work.					

**Section (D): Perceptions about collaborative writing using Internet (based on its impact for the new classes)**

Statement	strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	strongly disagree
Writing with classmates on the Internet:					
25. will be comfortable to reduce the stress of writing tasks.					
26. will be more productive than individual writing on paper.					
27. will be easier than writing with classmates in classes.					
28. will not improve writing problems.					
29. will be useful for knowledge exchange.					
30. will be more suitable for giving information about writing.					

**i. Further comments:**

**1. Is there anything you would like to tell me about how your writing classes have been in the past?**

.....  
 .....

**2. Is there anything you would like to tell me about your expectation in these writing classes?**

.....  
 .....

**Thank you for your contribution**

## Appendices

### b. Post-questionnaire (this should be completed anonymously)

All the answers to this questionnaire should be based on your recent experience of the writing classes you may have recently attended.

Course:

Class:

#### Section (A): Perceptions about the principles used for the new approach to teaching writing (compared to the previous classes)

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. The tasks were not exciting because of the interaction among the students.					
2. The tasks were exciting because of the interaction among the students and the instructor.					
3. The tasks were helpful for improving the writing skills.					
4. Face to face correction by teachers help to understand writing problems.					
5. Task types were encouraging (e.g. solving a problem and describing a scene).					
6. Writing strategies were motivating (e.g. planning, drafting, and editing).					
7. The type of feedback (e-feedback) was supportive.					
8. The given feedback on the content was not enough (e.g. commenting on the written text).					

#### Section (B): Perceptions about the process writing approach (compared to the previous classes)

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The tasks:					
9. were comfortable because there were planning for the writing topics.					
10. were comfortable because there were enough discussions about the writing topics.					
11. were interesting because they presented interesting ideas for the writing topics.					
12. were useful because there was no practice of writing drafts.					
13. were useful because content was checked.					
14. were useful because keeping unity was checked (e.g. using a topic sentence with relevant sentences- <i>coherence</i> ).					
15. were useful because forms were checked (e.g. grammar and spelling- <i>accuracy</i> ).					
16. were helpful because a final draft was completed after revision.					

**Section (C): Perceptions about collaborative writing (based on its impact for the new classes)**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Writing with classmates:					
17. reduced the difficulty of doing writing tasks as they can help each other.					
18. was hard as it is challenging to understand each other.					
19. was not useful as they will see each other’s writing in English.					
20. was stressful as it does not allow everyone to express his personal ideas.					
21. was less interesting than individual writing.					
22. was useful as there is interaction with other classmates.					
23. was difficult as some of them might write more than others.					
24. simplified knowing the writing problems as they will look at the work.					

**Section (D): Perceptions about collaborative writing using Internet (based on its impact for the new classes)**

Statement	strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	strongly disagree
Writing with classmates on wiki:					
25. was comfortable to reduce the stress of writing tasks.					
26. was more productive than individual writing on paper.					
27. was easier than writing with classmates in classes.					
28. did not improve writing problems.					
29. was useful for knowledge exchange.					
30. was more suitable for giving information about writing.					

**ii. Further comments:**

**1. Is there anything which you were hoping for did not happen?**

.....  
 .....

**2. Is there anything which you have enjoyed and you did not expect to happen?**

.....  
 .....

**Thank you for your contribution**

## Appendix 2: The Initial and Follow-up Focus Groups Questions

### الاسئلة الخاصة بفريق المناقشة (المجموعة اليورية)

#### الاسئلة القبليه:

1) أرغب في معرفة المزيد عن الواجبات المتعلقة بمادة الكتابة التي كنتم تقومون بأدائها من قبل. هل من الممكن أن تصفوها لي بصورة أوسع وكيف كنتم تقومون بعملها؟

1. I would like to know more about the sort of writing assignments you were asked to do. Can you describe them further; how were they achieved?

2) هل كنتم تتحصلون على أي تعديلات على هذه الواجبات؟ ما نوعها؟ وما رأيك تجاهها؟ هل كنتم تستخدمونها لعمل نسخة أخرى معدلة؟

2. Did you used to receive any correction on your written works? What were they? And what do you think about them? Did you used to produce modified written works?

3) هل ترغبون في العمل التعاوني مع زملائكم؟ هل تتوقع أنها يمكن أن تزيد من مهاراتكم الكتابية؟ لنناقش هذه النقطة بصورة أوسع؟

3. Would you like to work in groups for collaborative learning with your peers? Do you expect that it will improve your writing skills? Let us discuss this issue further?

4) هل الكتابة التعاونية مع الزملاء يمكن أن يكون لها دور في زيادة القدرة الكتابية لدى الافراد؟ الرجاء توضيح اجابتك.

4. Can collaborative writing with peers contribute to improving learners' individual writing? Please explain your answer.

5) ما رأيكم في الحصول على تغذية راجعه من الزملاء من خلال المشاركة في مجموعات؟ وضح وجهة نظرك؟

5. What do you think about obtaining feedback from your peers through working in groups? Explain your point of view?

6) ماذا تتوقعون فيما لو قمت بعمل واجبات لمادة الكتابة معتمدةً على حل مشكلة معينة؟ أو وصف موقف معين؟ هل سوف تكون أكثر متعة؟ لماذا؟

6. What do you expect when you get engaged in authentic tasks that involve such as *solving a problem* and *describing a scene*? Will they be more interesting?

7) أرغب في التعرف على الآتي :

أ) -هل تقومون باتباع اي استراتيجيات خلال الكتابة؟ مثل (التخطيط أو العصف الذهني -عمل مسودة -عمل مراجعة -عمل تدقيق)

ب) ما هي مشاعركم تجاه هذه الاستراتيجيات؟

7. I am interested to explore more information about the following:

- Do you play any strategies while writing (e.g. planning or brainstorming, drafting, revising and editing)?
- What are your feelings towards these strategies?

8) أود معرفة المزيد عن استخداماتكم لمواقع التواصل الاجتماعي مثل الفيس بوك واليوتيوب وغيرها وهل يمكن أن تطور من مهاراتكم الكتابية؟

8. I am curious to know more about the ways you use the social networking sites e.g. Facebook and You tube, etc.? and could they improve your writing skills?

9) ما الذي يعجبكم والذي لا يعجبكم في محاضرات وفصول مادة الكتابة التي قد قمتم بحضورها مسبقاً؟

9. What are the things you have liked and disliked most in the writing lectures or classes you have attended before?

10) ما أثر هذا الأسلوب التدريسي على كل من الآتي: أ) مستوى الحماس لديك ب) مستوى التغذية الراجعة الكافية؟

10. What is the effectiveness of this teaching style on the following: a) on your motivational level, and b) on your adequate feedback level?

## Appendices

### الأسئلة البعدية:

1) هل ترون أن استخدام نشاطات واستراتيجيات مختلفة خلال القيام بواجبات الكتابة من خلال الويكي سبب قد ساهم في تطوير قدراتك الكتابية (مثل تكوين جمل مختلفة لها بناءات مختلفة / استخدام أدوات ربط مختلفة / واختيار المحتوى المناسب)؟ ماهي الأسباب التي دفعتك لذلك؟

1. Do you see that playing various tasks and strategies while writing assignments on Wikispaces has boosted your writing abilities (i.e. *formulating different sentence structures, linking words, and choosing the right contents*)? What are the reasons that led you to do this?

2) هل ترغبون بالاستمرار في استخدام الاستراتيجيات الخاصة بعملية الكتابة؟ لماذا؟

2. Would you like to continue using the strategies of writing process? Why have you made this decision?

3) كم من الوقت استغرقتم لعمل هذه الواجبات من خلال الويكي سبب مع زملائك في المجموعة الخاصة بكم؟

3. How much time have you spent working on Wikispaces with your group members to complete each of the assigned writing tasks?

4) هل تحصلت على تغذية راجعة كافية من زملائك؟ إذا كانت الإجابة نعم: ما نوعها؟ وإذا كانت لا: ماهي العوامل التي أدت الى ضعف المشاركة وما الذي يمكن عمله لتطوير وزيادة المشاركة؟

4. Did you get feedback from your peers? If yes what was that? If not, what were the reasons that lessened their participation and how could collaboration be improved?

5) خلال المراجعة، هل كان الدور الذي أدبته مقبول لديكم بأن تقوم تدقيق ومراجعة وإعطاء تغذية راجعة لكتابة زملائك؟ وهل تعلمت أي شيء من ذلك؟

5. While revising, was it ok for you to edit, revise and give feedback on your peers' writing? Have you learned anything from that?

6) هل كان دوركم الذي ادبتموه مقبول لديكم بأن تقوموا بكتابة نص أو تشاركوا في كتابة نص لكي يتم تدقيقه ومراجعه من قبل زملائكم؟ وضح ذلك؟

6. Was it okay to write something or participate in writing something to be edited and reviewed by your peers? Explain this.

7) أرغب في المزيد من التعرف على شيء من خبراتكم التي حصلتم عليها من خلال التعامل مع الويكي سبب في إنجاز واجبات الكتابة؟ هل كانت ممتعة ومفيدة لتطوير الكتابة؟ كيف كان ذلك؟

7. I would like to get something from your experiences you learned while dealing with Wikispaces to complete the writing assignments? Was it enjoyable and useful for your writing improvement? In what ways?

(8) هل تم استخدام أي برامج للتأكد مما تمت كتابته أو قمتم باستخدام الويكي سبيس منذ المرة الأولى ليتم تصحيح ما كتبتّه من خلال زملائكم؟

8. Has any software been used to check your first writing, or have you used Wikispaces from the first time to get what you write modified by your peers?

(9) هل توافقوا بأن مشاركة الزملاء في الكتابة الجماعية على الويكي سبيس كان لها أثر على قدراتكم الكتابية؟ وعلى الكتاب كأفراد؟ أتمنى لو توضح ذلك قليلا؟

9. Do you agree that sharing your peers for collaborative writing on Wikispaces has an effect on your writing skills? And on individual writers? I hope to explain this a bit?

(10) كيف ترون الاستراتيجيات التي استخدمت في واجباتكم الكتابية لهذا المقرر؟ هل ترى أنها سهلت عليكم الواجبات أم زادت تعقيدا؟

10. How do you view the strategies used through doing your writing assignments for the course. Have they made the writing assignments more straightforward or more complicated?

(11) ما شعوركم تجاه النقاشات التي تم عقدها مع باقي أعضاء مجموعتكم؟ هل كانت ممتعة ومساعدة لك في إنجاز الواجبات؟ هل كانت محمسة ودافعة لك لعمل المزيد؟ أعطني بعض الأمثلة؟

11. What do you feel about the discussions you held with your group members? Were they interesting and helpful in achieving more? Were they enthusiastic and motivated? Give me some examples?

(12) هل تفضل بأن يتم تبني برنامج الويكي سبيس لعمل المزيد من واجبات الكتابة وغيرها من الواجبات في المستقبل؟ زودني ببعض الأسباب من وجهة نظرك؟

12. Would you prefer that Wikispaces be adopted for more writing tasks and for other types of tasks in the future? Please give reasons for your response.

(13) أرغب في معرفة المزيد حول الاستراتيجيات التي أسندت لكل مجموعة بين كاتب ومراجع ومدقق؟ أي من تلك الأدوار كان سهلا وأي منهم كان أكثر تحديا؟ لماذا؟

13. I would like to know more about the various strategies which were assigned for each group including writers, editors and revisers? Which roles were easy and which one were more difficult? Why?

## Appendices

14) ما رأيكم في هذا النوع من التغذية الراجعة المعتمدة على الإنترنت والتي من خلالها يتم إعطاء التعديلات فيها من بعد؟

14. What do you think about this type of feedback (e-feedback) which is based on the Internet where corrections can be received from a distance?

15) ما هي الجوانب الإيجابية والسلبية التي لاحظتموها من خلال استخدام أسلوب الكتابة الجماعية المعتمدة على الويكي سبيس؟

15. What are the advantages and disadvantages you have noticed- while using collaborative writing method on Wikispaces?

16) تقويم البرنامج

- تقديم البرنامج (هل كانت مقدمة شرح البرنامج كافية؟)
- مدة التدريب (هل كانت مدة التدريب قليلة جداً، كافية، أكثر من الحاجة؟)
- مدة كل نشاط (هل كان طويلاً، كافياً، قصيراً؟)
- وجهة نظرك حول النشاطات (هل النشاطات كانت جديدة، ذات فائدة، لها علاقة بالمستقبل الوظيفي وممتعة؟)
- طبيعة الواجبات (هل كانت طبيعة أداء عمل هذه الواجبات واضحة أم معقدة سهلة أو صعبة؟)
- عدد الأفراد في كل مجموعة (هل كان عدد الأفراد في كل مجموعة كبير جداً، مناسباً، قليلاً جداً؟)
- توزيع المشاركين في كل مجموعة (هل كنت سعيداً ومنسجماً مع مجموعتك؟)
- توزيع الأدوار بين المشاركين والمعلم
- دمج الكتابة الجماعية من خلال الويكي مع المحاضرات التقليدية المعتمدة على التواصل المباشر "وجهها لوجه" (هل كان هذا الأسلوب بناء من أجل كتابة فعالة وجيدة؟)
- الصعوبات (هل كان هناك صعوبات متعلقة بالجانب التقني؟ هل كان هناك صعوبة في التعامل مع شريط الأدوات؟)
- لعمل مراجعة وتدقيق وإعطاء تغذية راجعة كافية (هل كانت الأسئلة المعطاة لكل دور كافية أم لا؟)
- العمل على أكثر من منطقة على الويكي سبيس (هل كان مشوشاً لك أن تعمل على أكثر من منطقة " المناقشة " والصفحة الرئيسية للويكي؟)

16. It will be my pleasure if you can draw my attention to how the next items were observed by you:

- Introducing the programme (did the introductory explanation about the programme were sufficient?)
- Duration for training (was the amount of training too little, satisfactory, or too much?)
- Timing for each task (was it long, satisfactory, or short?)
- Opinions about the tasks given (were they new, informative, related to the future career, and interesting?)

- Nature of tasks (was the nature of achieving the tasks clear or confusing-easy or difficult?)
- Number of group members (was the number of members in each group too big, sufficient, or too small?)
- Distribution of participants (were you pleased with your group?)
- Roles' distribution among the participants and the instructor
- Integrating wiki-mediated collaborative writing with regular writing instruction in classes (was it a constructive approach for effective writing?)
- Difficulties (were there any difficulties related to the technical side or in dealing with the tool bar?)
- Knowledge for editing, revising, giving feedback (were the questions given in each section sufficient or not?)
- Working on more than one area (was it confusing to work on the discussion and main wiki page areas?)

17) ما هو تقييمك لهذا البرنامج سواء من (نشاطات، تكوين مجموعات، المظهر العام، استخدام الويكي سبيس لتطوير الكتابة) وماهي توصياتك لتطوير هذا الأسلوب وجعله أكثر ملاءمة للطلاب الذين سيأتون بعدك؟

What is your evaluation of this programme including (tasks, group format, layout, and using wikispaces for writing improvement)? And what are your recommendations for improving this style and making it more appropriate for the students coming after you?

### **Appendix 3: Participants' Individual Questions**

#### **(Impact of this course, wiki-based collaborative writing on the participants)**

1. Since you were a member in a group, can you give more information about the following:
  - 1.1. How useful was that course?
  - 1.2. Do you feel that this course has caused any impact on your current study or current courses (positive or negative)? Please explain your answer.
  - 1.3. Have you formed any knowledge or/and learning after you were exposed to that experience? Please explain your answer.
  - 1.4. Did you start doing any collaboration or collaborative work since you have finished the course? Whether the answer is Yes or No please state the reasons.
  - 1.5. Did you take any advantages from exchanging ideas and editing texts given by your peers? Give one example.
  - 1.6. Did your peers take any advantages from your ideas and editing of their texts? If so can you think of one example?
  - 1.7. What is your overall impression of the collaborative writing tasks on wiki?

#### **(Impact of writing process on the participants)**

- 1.8. Do you think the writing process in the course was beneficial? What are the things that had benefited you the most which didn't exist before especially in your writing?
- 1.9. What do you think about writing process (the strategies of writing we have followed in the course)?
- 1.10. What do you think the merits and weaknesses of practicing process writing collaboratively on Wikispaces?

#### **(Participants' reflection and thoughts on the headings and themes identified)**

2. The participants will be asked to reflect and give their point of views with the on these questions:
  - 2.1. How do you feel about these headings? Do you think that these are true and can signify your characteristics?
  - 2.2. To what extent do you agree/disagree with these headings and themes I obtained? Please justify your opinion?

#### **(Participants' reflections and thoughts on their contributions in focus groups and the produced texts)**

3. Based on showing the participants' their collaborative texts (on wiki) and showing them the transcripts of their focus groups, they will be asked to:

- 3.1. **What do you think about your contribution in the focus groups? Why did you indicate that (it will differ from an individual to another)? Do you still have the same thoughts? {for those who participated in focus groups}**
- 3.2. Why did you produce you written text in this way?
- 3.3. **Why have you contributed only for one time/for several times (everyone will be asked this question based on his contribution)?**
- 3.4. Do you think that your writing has changed since then? If yes, what did make your writing better (Is it the wiki-mediated collaborative writing or instructor's lectures)? Which of these two modes made you recognise your errors more?

## Appendix 4: Participant Information Sheet

Study title: 'Wiki-Mediated Collaborative Writing: Looking at Developing Writing Effectiveness in EFL 1<sup>st</sup> Year College Students'

Ethics reference: 222607242

### Introduction:

It is important for you an EFL learner to read and understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. If you are happy to be involved in the study, you will be asked to sign two consent forms.

### What is the purpose of the study?

This tries to enrich the students' writing through engaging them with social activities such as practice writing via peers feedback and exchange of ideas by introducing wiki technology. It will also provide considerable benefits to students taking the course after you, as a result identifying to what extent this research is useful and helpful to the practice of academic writing.

### Why have I been chosen?

You have been invited to take part in this study because you are a learner of English as a foreign language. You are required to produce written texts according to certain criteria and rules of academic writing. Because you have attended several classes in writing, you can compare your experience about the previous approaches and the new approach you will take by stating your experience in both styles. As a future physician, you need to train yourself how to work with other colleagues via different modes by giving constructive feedback and by becoming accustomed to listening to their ideas and learning from them.

### What is required of me? (What will happen to me if I take part?)

You, as a potential participant, will be required to do several collaborative tasks. They will involve:

1. In-class : Writing the final draft of the writing task
2. On-wiki: Practice in shared (group) planning among group members (i.e. practice in 1<sup>st</sup> drafting, practice in giving useful feedback and practice in revising and editing the writing of other participants)

The participants will be supposed to respond by:

- Participating in online-based group discussions
- Completing questionnaires

### Are there any benefits in my taking part?

Ahmed Al Khateeb

Your assistance would benefit the learners of writing to a great extent, to identify the effectiveness of a new innovative approach of writing instruction; the learners' ways of accessing it and their feelings towards it.

**Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?**

Yes, any information obtained from the participants will be treated with complete confidentiality. In the (pre and post) questionnaires all names will be kept anonymous. The names of participants in focus groups and online discussion will not be stated in any case. Instead, a list of coding will be adopted to avoid any mention of names. All data will be kept safe in a password protected computer and all paperwork will be maintained in a secure locker for a period of time and then they will be destroyed.

**What if I change my mind about taking part?**

If you make a decision to involve yourself in this study and be part of it, and then for any reason you have altered your mind; you will still be free to withdraw.

**Do I have to take part?**

It is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide not to, we will entirely respect your decision and, of course, it will not affect your study programme in any way.

**What if there is a problem?**

Once a problem is faced by any of the participant or in case of complaint, he will be strongly encouraged to raise his inquiry without any further delay or hesitation either directly to the researcher or by contacting the research team whose their contact details are in the contact list paper.

**Who will get access to the data?**

These data will be mainly used by the researcher. His supervisor and advisor will be shared to look at this data too. Furthermore, it is needed to get your permission as these anonymous findings and analyses for these data might be accessed by the academic community when the research is finished. This community includes people in conferences, seminars and presentations. Some other people might access them through getting them published in scholarly publications.

**Researcher details:**

Name: Ahmed A. Al Khateeb

Email: ahmed\_9114@hotmail.com

**I Wish You All the Best**

(01/01/2011/version 1)

## Appendix 5: Focus Groups Consent Form

Study title: 'Wiki-Mediated Collaborative Writing: Looking at Developing Writing Effectiveness in EFL 1<sup>st</sup> Year College Students'

Ethics reference: 22607242

Please initial the box (es) if you agree with the statement(s):

1. I have read and understood the information sheet (version1) and have had the opportunity to ask any questions about the study.
2. I have been given full information regarding the aims and purposes of the research.
3. I have been informed that my participation is a voluntary work and I may withdraw at any time without any consequence on my study at the University.
4. I agree to talk  in the (pre and post) focus group discussions.
5. I have been told that I have the choice of not answering any specific questions
6. I give my consent  to the (pre and post) focus group discussions, being recorded and transcribed.
7. I have been told that my (pre-post) focus groups information will be kept restricted to the group members and will not be publicly available.

Kindly indicate your decision by ticking the appropriate option below:

- A- I **agree** to take part in this research project and **agree** for my data to be used for the purpose of this study.
- B- I **do not agree** to take part in this research project and **do not agree** for my data to be used for the purpose of this study.

### Researcher's details:

Name: Ahmed A. Al Khateeb

Email: ahmed\_9114@hotmail.com

### Participant's details:

Name: .....

Signature: .....

Date / /

**Best Wishes**

(01/01/2011/version 1)

## Appendix 6: Online Participation Consent Form

Study title: *'Wiki-Mediated Collaborative Writing: Looking at Developing Writing Effectiveness in EFL 1<sup>st</sup> Year College Students'*

Ethics reference: 22607242

Please initial the box (es) if you agree with the statement(s):

1. I have read and understood the information sheet (version1) and have had the opportunity to ask any questions about the study.
2. I have been given full information regarding the aims and purposes of the research.
3. I have been informed that my participation is a voluntary work and I may withdraw at any time without any consequence on my study at the University.
4. I have been told  that my online participation will be kept restricted to my online group members and will not be publicly available.
5. I agree to take part in online and other wiki-based collaborative writing g tasks.
6. I have been  informed about the commitments I should follow during the wiki-based participation, i.e. maintaining interaction with others and completion of the writing tasks.
7. I have been informed that wiki-based participation will be through a closed environment 'space' so then the participants will be limited.
8. I have been introduced to the members of groups, so we will know each other when we start collaboration.
9. I have been informed about the number of members in each group (7 people).
10. I have been  informed that each group will be allocated a wiki page for their tasks, so no other users (no other instructors) will be intervene.
11. I agree to take part in the (pre and post) questionnaires.
12. I have been told that the questionnaires will completed anonymously and no information that identifies me will be made publicly available.

Kindly indicate your decision by ticking the appropriate box below:

- a. I **agree** to take part in this research project and **agree** for my data to be used for the purpose of this study.

b. I **do not agree** to take part in this research project and **do not agree** for my data to be used for the purpose of this study.

**Researcher's details:**

Name: Ahmed A. Al Khateeb

Email: ahmed\_9114@hotmail.com

**Participant's details:**

Name: .....

Signature: .....

Date / /

**Best Wishes**

(01/01/2011/version 1)

# Appendix 7: The Ethical Research Committee Approval



Mr Ahmed Abdulteef M Al Khateeb  
School of Humanities  
Avenue Campus  
Highfield  
Southampton  
SO17 1BF

RGO Ref: 7986

19 April 2011

Dear Mr Al Khateeb

**Project Title Wiki-Mediated Collaborative Writing: Looking at Developing Writing Effectiveness in EFL 1st Year College Students**

This is to confirm the University of Southampton is prepared to act as Research Sponsor for this study, and the work detailed in the protocol/study outline will be covered by the University of Southampton insurance programme.

As the sponsor's representative for the University this office is tasked with:

1. Ensuring the researcher has obtained the necessary approvals for the study
2. Monitoring the conduct of the study
3. Registering and resolving any complaints arising from the study

As the researcher you are responsible for the conduct of the study and you are expected to:

1. Ensure the study is conducted as described in the protocol/study outline approved by this office
2. Advise this office of any change to the protocol, methodology, study documents, research team, participant numbers or start/end date of the study
3. Report to this office as soon as possible any concern, complaint or adverse event arising from the study

Failure to do any of the above may invalidate the insurance agreement and/or affect sponsorship of your study i.e. suspension or even withdrawal.

**On receipt of this letter you may commence your research but please be aware other approvals may be required by the host organisation if your research takes place outside the University. It is your responsibility to check with the host organisation and obtain the appropriate approvals before recruitment is underway in that location.**

May I take this opportunity to wish you every success for your research.

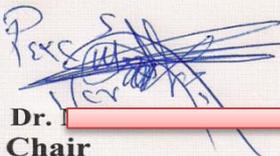
Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "M. Prude".

Dr Martina Prude  
Head of Research Governance

Tel: 023 8059 5058  
email: [rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk](mailto:rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk)

Appendix 8: The Fieldwork Approval

<p><b>KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA</b> Ministry of Higher Education</p>		<p>المملكة العربية السعودية وزارة التعليم العالي الرمز (٠٣٧)</p>
المرفقات:	التاريخ:	الرقم:
<p>January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011</p>		
<p><b><u>To Whom It May Concern</u></b></p>		
<p>This is to certify that the [redacted] [redacted] has approved <b>Mr. Ahmed Abdulteef M. Al Khateeb's</b> request to apply his research fieldwork within the <b>English Language Center</b> [redacted] This approval allows the researcher to collect the needed data for his research project, entitled <b>“Wiki-Mediated Collaborative Writing: Looking at Developing Writing Effectiveness for 1<sup>st</sup> Year College Students”</b>, starting from <b>18/02/2011</b> to <b>18/06/2011</b>.</p>		
<p>This certificate has been issued upon his request.</p>		
		
<p><b>Dr. [redacted]</b> <b>Chair</b> <b>English Language Department</b> <b>E-mail: malbraik@yahoo.com</b></p>		
<p>[redacted]</p>		

## Appendix 9: Transcription for the Initial Focus Group

### Transcription for the initial focus group

Legend	Meaning of legend
( )	Practical action rather than from the audio recording
[ ]	Interruption by the participants among themselves or with the researcher
( ? )	Inaudible
( . )	Short pause
..	Deletion from the original text as that can't be transcribed literally from Arabic
...	Un-transcribed section/segment
/ << >> /	Hesitation
{ }	Overlapping
/ /	Not in the transcript (but what is probably meant by participants)
IYWAH	Arabic word means exactly/ used for emphasis

#### **Beginning of the focus group:**

Q1). I would like to know more about the sort of writing assignments you are usually asked to do. Can you describe them further; how are they perhaps achieved?

A: (introduces himself to the participants)

**MS, MO, HB, HA** and **SA**: (gave a brief introduction about themselves while enjoying the tea and cakes)

**HA**: In the first, second and third secondary schools we weren't given to many writing assignments...we used to do exercises in the textbook, but we didn't use to take external exercises.

**HB**: Right right.

**HB**: So the exercises in the textbook were very simple, the writing teacher didn't give us in detail what we did in reality; we always memorised rather than studied grammar, the structure of writing. In the final exam we used to keep, memorise and match passages which were similar to those in the textbook, so the questions were from the textbook, but with a few changes in numbers or words or so on.

A. Do you mean that no questions asked you to write paragraphs for a specific topic?

**HB:** I mean, before the exam, we used to be given two passages and were told that one of them would be in the exam. It was common for us to know which one would come up in the exam [so we memorised it].

**SA:** Yah [we just memorise it].

**MS:** That wasn't everything... sometimes we had in our textbook six chapters and for each there was a passage or paragraph, but this paragraph was to be memorised. In fact we were (?)... I mean the tutor didn't make any changes in the final exam.

**SA:** We were told which parts would be included in the exam.

**HA:** Ah we didn't study writing in a way that astonished us, as it should be taught by university tutors, they didn't introduce new topics that we didn't know about or hadn't heard about (?) maybe because we didn't have the necessary vocabulary...

**MO:** [Or the ideas]

**HA:** Or the ideas, yah yah. It's not different from the textbook at school we are already knew the ideas and could memorise the necessary words or vocabulary and that's it /<<>>/.</p></div>
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**MO:** So you needed to learn the text by heart and that was enough

**HB:** Indeed, we were given two texts and were requested to keep one of them and to memorise it.

**HA:** At the university we discovered that the academic writing and also the textbook was powerful.

**A:** I would like to know your experience your first academic semester and the secondary school (.). I'm interested to know how your writing teachers used to deal with you in the previous years.

**HA:** Shall I talk about the previous tutors? I talked about the situation in the secondary stage.

**A:** Yah yah I.

**HA:** Concerning my university experience, I was surprised by the intensity of our writing textbook (.). It was very complicated and not easy to understand (.) without sufficient knowledge about structure or some of the necessary vocabulary (.). We learnt many rules used for writing, e.g. deleting or adding commas.

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A: In secondary [there is no]...

MO: Nothing was specific for writing.

HB: Everything was scattered scattered.

HA: We take more specialised... we specialise in writing (.). The secondary school was different as we only had grammar lessons such as adding *and* or doing exercises about present simple.

A: Do you mean they used to give you sentences and ask you to add third person singular or change its format?

HA: IYWAH

A: You were asked to write full paragraphs or texts?

MO: [no no]

HA: [no not at all]

HB: [definitely not]

A: That means there was no writing.

HB: Just memorising memorising.

A: So what you used to do was grammar-related exercises, rather than actually writing paragraphs.

HA: [exactly]

HB: [right right]

A: That is problematic. Writing isn't only about accuracy e.g. underlining titles, but also coherence is important e.g. linking sentences and ideas together.

SA: They concentrated on indentation (.). We didn't study enough grammatical rules (.). They focused on underlining paragraphs and titles

MS: We received a mark when we just underlined [a paragraph title]...

HA: In fact, in our native Arabic, we're in the Arabic language we don't know how to write paragraphs on complex topics e.g. about a certain galaxy or something else unfamiliar.

**A:** Why?

**HA:** IYWAH because there is no reading ... or the culture and sentences acquired from our language weren't sufficient, so the big problem we faced in the first semester in academic writing this year was the requirement to write about topics that we didn't know or weren't expected.

**A:** Do you mean that in the first semester you were required to write texts about specific topics?

**MS:** Exactly, even in the exam we had questions that were similar to those we had throughout the semester.

**HA:** No, we didn't know the text that would be in the exam, so we got unfamiliar topics.

**A:** Excellent

**HA:** Therefore, we were asked to do something different from what we know.

**HA:** I am telling you that... this academic writing would benefit us (.) and your idea of writing and forming paragraphs over the Internet / << >>/ in order to take information and use it for writing will benefit us in our discipline.

**A:** This method which we will use throughout this semester has its positives and negatives, but let's delay the negatives until the end of the discussion. Would you like to add any points?

**MO:** I agree with HA because the tutors are following a similar system.

**HB:** Yah, nothing new!

**A:** Would you like to add any points concerning this topic?

**M2, HB, HA, MO and SA:** (*nodding their heads*, indicating that they didn't have anything additional to say)

Q2). Do you receive any corrections on your written work? What corrections have you received and what do you think about them? Do you use them to modify your written works?

**HB:** In school?

**A:** Yes

**HB** We didn't have writing assignments we didn't have [writing assignments]...

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**SA:** [there weren't any assignments].

**MO:** There weren't any assignments /<< >>/.

**HB:** We had no writing assignments; therefore, how we could make any modifications.

**A:** Okay, did you understand my question?

**HB:** Yah yah, it's clear you want to know whether there was anyone who used to follow up on our written work.

**A:** I mean, did you used to receive any corrections from your tutors or peers on the written texts you produced and then modify any errors based on comments or feedback?

**HB:** The problem was that there were no assignments in writing; there were no assignments in writing.

**SA:** Only the final exam ... [?]

**MS:** In the final exam we memorised a few texts by heart just to write them down exactly as they were.

**HB:** Exactly, someone might try to be smart by adding two new sentences or something similar.

**A:** So, in essence there weren't writing assignments to write paragraphs or texts?

**HB:** In our schools there was no consideration given to writing skill at all (.). They concentrate more on reading, as they always used to bring new passages for reading, but not writing (.). We were given three texts used helping words

**A:** What do you mean by helping words?

**HB:** Key words, yah key words.

**A:** Is it like a glossary of words and their meanings?

**HB:** No no

**HA:** No, they help us to complete the writing assignment.

**SA:** Use them to connect [?]

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**HB:** In the first semester, for example, we were given a topic about my friend; therefore, the question was about writing on this topic, whereas in the secondary school they used to give us helping words or key words.

**A:** Okay did you have helping questions (.)? Helping questions that help you or perhaps their answers might help you to produce a written text?

**HB:** No (11: 18)

**A:** So, there weren't sufficient independent assignments in writing. (12: 12)

**MO:** Right, not a sufficient number of assignments.

**HA:** Yah, exactly, there were no assignments.

**A:** And there tutors concentrated on reading?

**MO:** More reading.

**SA:** And grammar.

**HA:** Of course grammar.

**MO:** We have a lesson on this everyday.

**HA:** We always study new things in reading.

**SA:** I mean they do make some changes (.), they always bring new passages and new questions.

**A:** We have a problem (.). We focus on grammar and forget writing (.). Just studying grammar doesn't help anyone (.). The thing that's more important is how to use grammar to form a complete sentence and how to put this sentence into a cohesive text. (12: 53)

Q3). Would you like to work in groups for collaborative learning? Will it help to make your writing better? Let's discuss these issues further?

**HA:** We haven't tried collaborative work before; therefore, we don't know what its impact will be.

**HB:** So we can't anticipate its results.

**HA:** In the first semester we tried to work together as classmates, so we worked together to answer general questions or something similar, but we didn't collaborate or

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work together to describe something this in writing (.). We tried similar things in fact (.). It's our first meeting and I hope that is a good motive for us to [?]

**A:** In which subjects did you try collaborative work with your classmates?

**HA:** In biology we did some collaborative work in groups.

**HB:** Sometimes we engaged in collaborative work in practical subjects more than theoretical subjects.

**MO:** I'm not interested in the idea of practicing collaborative work to do writing-based process assignments because I simply see writing as an individual skill which should be achieved naturally (.). In Arabic it is an individual skill and I assume it won't be different if you write in English / << >>/ (.). Collaboration is useful for giving ideas, showing ways of how to write and use different rules of writing correctly (.), but it won't develop writers' individual skills.

**A:** What I mean by developing your writing is developing your ideas, accuracy, grammar and [similar things].

**HA:** But still, we can develop our individual writing skills through doing collaborative work by peer discussion of specific topics e.g. diabetes, each participant can bring his writing (.). So based on each other's writing skills, we can meet to discuss our ideas and criticise and to acquire necessary vocabulary and study other writers' styles of writing. (17: 23)

**A:** Excellent.

**HA:** Peer criticism that will increase our writing abilities.

**A:** That's what I want to see (.). Do you really criticise your peers in a good way (.)? When we say criticism some might think of [negative meaning] and that's wrong.

**MS:** /<< >>/ [constructive criticism]

**A:** Criticism means constructive criticism (.). I mean positive criticism and [to give ideas] when we use the phrase criticism we always think about (?) the sensitivity of this issue.

**HB:** [Because there is no perfect]

**A:** So you didn't do any collaborative work related to the writing course? (18:22)

**MO:** Not in English.

**A:** What is your opinion (.)? Your opinion about collaborative writing?

**MO:** Not in English.

**MO:** I currently have no idea, but if it occurs then I will identify its positives and negatives.

**A:** I'm not sure.

**MO:** Yah.

**A:** I'm not sure.

**MO:** Aha /I also don't know/

**A:** I'm not sure and that is why I want to know more about it.

**MO:** Currently, I have negative feelings towards it.

**A:** So in the meantime, can we say that you have a negative impression I mean /<< >>/ negative?

**MO:** Yah ...

**A:** Okay /what about you/ guys?

**HB:** There is a problem with time availability. It takes a long time, more than necessary (.). We have other subjects we consider to be more important than writing such as biology and chemistry which have more credits (.). So if you want us to collaborate on this website we need at least two hours every [day].

**HA:** [No but] this is related to our speciality/and it is one of the things we should do/.

**A:** No wait a minute (.). You are talking about the value of credits and hours (.) for writing rather than the importance of writing itself as a subject (.). If you know how to write well (.) you will succeed in your study.

**HA:** Because writing depends on [skills].

**HB:** It will make things easier for us if we started to know how to write accurately and in a good way (.). The new way of learning writing will guarantee our future because everything in our future career is related to writing... we are in the era of writing, we use writing more often than speech. (19: 69)

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**HA:** Despite what was mentioned before, writing depends on all the language skills reading, structure /<< >>/ listening and speaking .. what do these mean? If you are able to write satisfactorily that means you should have good level of proficiency in the rest of language skills.

**A:** Right (.) especially reading (.). Reading and writing are always connected if [you].

**HB:** They complement each other. (20: 55)

**A:** You read then write and that is what I want you to do now; read and then you

**HB:** [We write what we read in our own way]

**A:** You summarise or paraphrase it (.) You take the idea and [then].

**MO:** Nevertheless I am saying /<< >>/ you are expecting the students to work hard (.). I expect that there will be interaction among the students (.), but not too much /<< >>/ there mightn't be creativity.. because you know it is our first time to work in a such way using the process writing

**A:** Okay (.). Do you think that because of these reasons that the students won't have the ability to do this or they won't have the time the sufficient time?

**HA:** No (.) time.

**MS:** Time.

**MO:** Right (.). Time we have a lot of pressure on us already from the subjects, other subjects we study.

**A:** Ahaa

**HB:** If you concentrate on it /on this website/ we will forget [ourselves].

**MO:** [No] we can share.. but we can't actively collaborate because we don't have sufficient time, because of the limitation on available time, we can't reach the required level of creativity. (21:64)

**MO:** My current view is that I am neutral. (22:08)

**HA:** Everyone should say what is in his heart what he feels frankly and honestly.

**A:** What is your opinion (HA)?

**HA:** In fact, my opinion is that I haven't tried it, but I think it will be excellent since peers can work together without direct contact to demonstrate and comment on each other's written language problems and all of them will have high levels of perseverance and motivation.

**A:** Could it increase your writing ability?

**HA:** Yes.

**A:** At least each peer can [benefit].

**HA:** Help his peer.

**A:** His peer in a specific way or with an [idea].

**HB:** I hope it will be beneficial.

**MS:** In a sentence, I mean that will be motivating (?).

**A:** Okay, very nice, so all of you aren't sure /about the impact of this technology/.

**SA:** It's a good idea but there's (.) a difficulty in implementing it in [reality].

**A:** [?] okay.

**MS:** Particularly because it's applied for the first time.. Also you can't guarantee who will be involved in these virtual groups, whether there will be collaboration between all of those who work with you. Others mightn't be enthusiastic (.). I mean others might bring you down, I mean some of them mightn't be free (?).

**A:** (.) Right. (23: 65)

**SA:** It's interesting as it will help us to learn new skills and we will benefit from it, even if it's not relevant we will still learn something new. (24: 27)

**A:** Very nice.

**HA:** It will be the best idea if it's (.) successful with our students, it could be applied to all the other colleges of the university.

**A:** Okay that means that none of you are sure about the effectiveness of the [programme]. (25:65)

**HB:** [Most of us] aren't sure.

**A:** Not sure except you (HA) you are optimistic I think?

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**HA:** I'm not only optimistic [but enthusiastic].

**MS:** I'm also expecting (?).

**A:** Enthusiastic?

**HA:** Yah, and I'm expecting it to be successful.

**MS:** I believe it will be successful.

**HA:** With (?) students.

**A:** Alright.. thanks. (26: 22)

**A:** If I mentioned collaborative writing, what would you expect it to be like? (27: 62)

**MS:** It's collaborative writing.

**A:** I know but what do you understand from this expression?

**MS:** Every member writes a sentence or something for each other.

**A:** Do you mean two members share their writing with each other for the same topic (.)

**MS:** That's what I'm expecting too (.). Two or more people joining together to produce something (.), or to produce one piece of work.

**A:** To produce one work of a passage or paragraph.

**HB:** (.) I have a similar thought (laugh). I mean two people or more are given a task and they should work together (.). Yah, the task, for example, might be about assigning five people to write on a specific topic, so these five members should work with each other (.). They should coordinate work, some might bring ideas while others do the writing (.) and by themselves can sort everything out.

**A:** So it doesn't mean that only two writers share with each other just to write and that's it; rather, there are rules or [strategies].

**HB:** Yah that's necessary.

**A:** It's not an easy process.

**HB:** Of course it's complex.

**HA:** in fact I agree with (M2) that two or more people or peers /<< >>/ participate to create a paragraph, passage or topic (.). One person for example could write, another criticise the topic or I mean others bring new ideas until they complete a passage or a topic.

**MO:** We mentioned two definitions; the first is each should be responsible for one part (.). The other idea is that all participants work with each other until the end to achieve the task and peers have the commitment to do the task. I think I agree with the second idea.

**A:** Which one do you mean?

**MO:** The one which means the students work with each other until the end to complete the task, not just one part of a task being assigned to one person to finish it and that's it. I mean, when you (A) explained to us the task /that should be completed/ you told us that there's a person who can be responsible for checking commas, full stops, things that are related to the grammatical rules, and another person can be responsible for [producing ideas].

**A:** According to specific assigned duties.

**MO:** Yah everyone has a specific duty (.). I believe in the opposite.

**A:** How?

**MO:** I mean they collaborate (.) rather than one finding the missing punctuation, one might say it's better to say this instead of this, one might say that idea is wrong until they complete the text.

**HA:** I think we can't criticise everything.

**A:** Do you mean that everyone should work together to find the grammatical mistakes and wrong ideas and to seek truthful information?

**HB:** (M1) means that there should be [general criticism] without assigning specific roles.

**HA:** (M1) I think that every member should criticise the others till they reach the end of the topic.

**HB:** No no.

**A:** That will be applied, different people will be assigned to do specific roles in certain ways.

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**MO:** No, I'm saying there is no need to restrict the participants by only being committed to specific roles (.), so each member is only responsible for finishing his role and then leaves the task.

**MS:** They find the mistakes.

**HB:** (M1) means that only one member looking at the ideas isn't right (.). The same person should look at ideas and editing and everything else.

**HA:** (M1) means that every member in the group has the right to criticise and draft till they [reach the conclusion].

**MO:** [I mean] group by group (.). We finish the task after we all agree on everything.

**HB:** That means there is no need to distribute specific roles (.) make it open.

**MO:** (?)

**HB:** without determining specific duties.

**A:** Very interesting.

**HB:** That will make it general.

**HA:** I think it is better than the suggestion you mentioned to us that six members work together, two as writers, two as editors and two as revisers. (M2)'s idea is that every member has the right to criticise and draft.. all of the group members can criticise or you (A) can criticise us in general after we write the final version. You (A) can see the best idea.

**A:** That's a good idea.

**HB:** Otherwise that will be unfair on others. I mean the writer will get the most benefit, whereas (?).

**MO:** I mentioned that it is an individual skill. I mean if I'm only concentrating on commas or editing; I will only see these things, but if I'm in charge of reading all the passage all errors related to editing and revising will be identified.

**A:** you will read it and will check for all errors.

**MO:** I will gather more information and skills.

**HA:** in fact this good idea.

**A:** That's very good. When I distributed the roles on members I meant to give each one a specific duty so they are focused /<< >>/, because when you have a specific responsibility you will achieve it successfully.

**HA:** Yah but that doesn't work, I think (M2)'s idea is better.

**MO:** No, the idea of having duties distributed to achieve the task.

**A:** Okay.

**MO:** When we finish the task, everyone should have a specific duty. (33:23)

**SA:** Even the person who will revise the topic/ text might miss something because he can't see everything (.). It's better for the members to participate, revise, give ideas; Arabic can also be used if someone has an idea in Arabic about the suggested topic to write about. (35: 50)

**A:** in Arabic?

**SA:** Yah someone might do the role of /<< >>/

**A:** Translation.

**SA:** Yah, for example if I have an idea about the same topic but I don't know how to [put it in a sentence].

**HA:** [His peers] can help him.

**SA:** Yah.

**A:** they help him by translating it.

**SA:** Yes.

**A:** Very interesting ideas.

Q4). Can writing with peers (collaborative writing) contribute to improving learners' individual writing? Please explain your answer.

**SA:** There weren't any writing assignments.

**MO:** In the first semester.

**A:** Yah in the first semester.

**MO:** Before you came?

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**A:** Forget about the secondary school because there wasn't any writing, so let's see how you used to write in the first semester.

**HA:** Even in the first semester we didn't do any writing.

**MS:** We didn't write a lot but there too many other exercises.

**A:** I mean in the first semester!

**MS:** Yah in the first semester.

**SA:** The assignments weren't about writing full academic paragraphs (.). Sometime we only used to use them in the exam or at the end of chapters.

**A:** So you only used to do exercises.

**HA, M1 and MS:** [*overlapping*]

**SA:** There were exercises about writing topic sentences (?). (37: 42)

**MO:** We used to do assignments to connect sentences as well. (37: 62)

**MS:** To connect sentences with each other using *and* and *but*.

**MO:** We did exercises about my shape ... etc.

**HA:** In fact, this wasn't a writing assignment.

**A:** When I say writing assignment, I mean writing well-structured paragraphs.

**M1 and HA:** [*overlapping*]

**A:** I mean you begin with a topic sentence, then state sentences with supporting examples and /<< >>/ and state the [conclusion].

**HA:** IYWAH

**A:** It means it's not an easy task.

**HA:** These assignments weren't comprehensive and weren't in specialised topics (.). They were about topics we have already talked about such as forming concluding sentences or complex sentences...

**A:** So it was considered [as].

**HA:** They weren't comprehensive topics; rather, they were part of the lessons we studied, unlike the topics that we do now about diabetes. This topic encompasses all aspects of structure, it also includes new vocabulary.

**A:** There is a problem with many tutors who teach writing, they divide writing into segments. Writing can't be divided, it's a package of everything including cohesion, editing, coherence which means all sentences need to be in the same topic and have unity. (39:28)

**HA:** The problem with the topic about diabetes is that we need to research information about it by doing some reading. (43:39)

**A:** That's what I would like you to do.

**HA:** That means we need to practice (?) paraphrasing and rewriting what we read in a different way than the main source we use e.g. Wikipedia or any other website or information we take from a specialised person or relative. We need to read the topic and understand its problems and have enough information in general to produce the required text. If we can't accumulate enough information, it will be impossible to do it.

**A:** Right, okay this is our chance, as I said writing always comes with reading.

**HA:** Right.

**A:** You need to read about a topic, you take the ideas and you start drafting plus criticising whatever [you read].

**HB:** [The problem] is that writing isn't given its right. For example, in the first semester our first assignment was about my father; in the exam we had also a topic about my best friend.

**A:** This topic was given in the secondary school?

**HB:** No no, in the third preparatory school the first topic given in English class is [my best friend].

**HA:** The topic was about myself.

**HB:** We had the same topic and we had it in the first semester.

**A:** And the topic is 'about yourself' is repeated every year?

**HB:** The problem is that the topics in the third year of secondary school were more difficult than those given in the first year of college.

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**HA:** No, but the one we had at the university required more [proficiency].

**HB:** [We had] similar topics all about my best friend. For example, in one the institutions (the participants mentioned its name) the students were asked to write about 'KABSA' (a traditional meal) in 400 word whereas we were only asked to write five sentences on a given topic. In this institution they mostly concentrated on writing. I mean the graduates from this institution become good writers. (45: 19)

**A:** In your future career, you might use English for everything like this institution so you may need to write reports, make portfolios etc.

**HA:** But that depends.

**A:** I mean in most cases.

**HA:** It depends on the number of the subjects we have. For example, in this institution they study for eighteen hours a week. Right (S)? (.), more than any other subject, more than mathematics, more than all other subjects. They focus on English including writing which is different from us here.

**SA:** Thirteen.

**HA:** Only 13 hours approximately.

**MO:** Yah, right.

**HA:** We focus /<< >>/ don't focus on language as much as that institution does, they focus on language basics and other subjects too. (45: 58)

**A:** Okay, that means you weren't given assignments to write structured paragraphs. That means you didn't write a lot paragraphs in either secondary school nor in the first semester? (46: 23)

**HB:** That's correct.

**A:** That means this will be your first [time].

**MO:** Yah.

**HA:** But in the first semester, we took the grammatical rules of writing.

**MO:** Yah but we did take [?]. (46.46)

Q5). What do you think about obtaining feedback from peers and working in a group? Explain your point of view.

**A:** What do you think about the feedback gained from peers? In fact, I'm not sure, do you have any experience of the collaborative learning experience?

**HA:** We haven't ever tried it before

**A:** Do you mean you haven't ever worked with peers so none of you have benefited from peers by hearing new ideas or anything?

**HA:** Unfortunately.

**A:** Okay, what are your expectations? Will the feedback you get from your peers online in this course be beneficial?

**HA:** That depends on the peer who gives the feedback.

**A:** Tell me more (.).

**HA:** It depends on the person you talk to and how much knowledge this person has. IYWAH it depends on the level of knowledge that he has (.), the information he has.

**MS:** If the person hasn't got any information or if information is given by someone who doesn't have any knowledge... no valuable feedback will be attained from that person.

**A:** It means those who have more knowledge can benefit those who have less knowledge.

**HA:** Yes.

**A:** What about the person who gives the feedback, will he get any benefit?

**HA:** Yes, the person who gives knowledge will also benefit ... For example, you (A) have more knowledge [than us...].

**A:** [No] I mean between you and your peers.

**HA:** For example, you are my peer and you have more knowledge so you teach me and give me information that I don't know. In fact, I can criticise you but also you can criticise a person who is more knowledgeable, but we can only criticise him with regard to giving different opinions not information.

**MO:** Yes, suppose I am in a mathematics class and I have just studied a new formula and once I finished it (S) came to ask me about this formula. I will explain it. It will stick in my mind 100% and I will never forget it.

**A:** Excellent that means both sides will benefit

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**MO:** Yes

**HB:** Of course, if the feedback is given by a native speaker that will be amazing /<< >>/. For example, for each group you could assign an anonymous native speaker and he could criticise us.

**A:** What do you mean by this?

**HB:** I mean a professional person.

**HA:** Still, choosing a native speaker or a professional person is based on what knowledge he has. We are talking about diabetes; therefore, we need a person who understands this topic.

**HB:** I mean because he's a native speaker, his language would be sufficient, language is enough.

**A:** he (HB) means native speakers who are specialised in the field.

**HA:** Ahaa that's possible. (49:64)

**A:** Do you expect that peer feedback in your group might be more useful than your tutor's feedback? (50: 25)

**HA:** I didn't get the question.

**A:** For example, if (M1) gives feedback do you think it will be more useful than if it's given by your tutor?

**HB:** It depends on the resources he has. I mean, if it's from a trustworthy resource I will make use of it and take note the level of the person who gives the feedback.  
{overlapping}

**HA:** I don't have accurate answers.

**A:** What's your opinion (HA)?

**HA:** I don't have any opinion.

**A:** Some students might say the tutor's feedback in normal situations, not over the Internet (.). cause embarrassment (.) so they mightn't /<< >>/ accept this feedback. Some /students/ may say this.

**MS:** Right

**A:** Did you understand me?

**HA:** I understood you but still /<< >>/ I don't know how to answer this question.

**A:** Okay

**SA:** Concerning the truthfulness of information, the information we get from our tutor will of course be directly accepted, unlike the information gained from peers, but (.) I mean in terms of embarrassment, it's the opposite. If it's from your peers we don't feel shame asking them many questions.

**MO:** More.

**A:** It will be easier to accept.

**SA:** Exactly, we will have more confidence to ask him without feeling a sense of discomfort... we might make mistakes so the tutors might make [fun of us or...].

**MO:** [Especially] if it's a silly error.

**SA:** Yah.

**A:** That's in normal situations where you're with your tutor face to face. Is that right? What about if it's on the Internet?

**HA:** But.

**A:** Sorry.

**HA:** The basis of the problem is that the tutor already knows the topic so he might consider it a silly question while my friends will take it as an important question so it can be answered comfortably.

**A:** That's right. Would you like to add any points?

**HA:** That's my point of view.

Q6). What do you expect when you get engaged in authentic tasks such as *solving a problem* and *describing a scene*? Will they be more interesting?

**MO:** That there are two or three tasks that will take time because they need preparation and [reading].

**HB:** [We] need to paraphrase and make a number of drafts.

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**MO:** We also have other subjects which we often think about. I mean, in the first semester we didn't use to be able to enjoy our weekends, now although we still do a lot of things during the weekends, we don't finish our homework.

**HA:** (M1) Let's discuss other issues which aren't related to time because we spent enough time talking about it; excluding the time factor, if someone needs references (.), references for a certain topic I mean while reading about diabetes (.) and he isn't a specialist he will need to read from several authentic references to get information. What do you think guys?

**SA:** I think choosing topics-related to medicine derived from our environment is very good because we deal with everyday life (.). When we read something about this topic it helps us understand our field more (.). I mean, if we need to make a presentation on the subject of medical terminology, this will absolutely benefit us. I have a presentation and it will be about diabetes; therefore, I will use what I learn from this writing topic for my presentation to provide relevant information.

**HA:** Sure, that will give me experience in the practice of reading for the topic we write about.

**A:** Will it inform and interest you more (??)?

**HA:** It will contribute to gaining new words and more information about this disease, I mean it's a new experience and we will learn how to criticise this topic (.). However, the time factor is the issue.

**A:** That means the impact of this course will still continue because in fact you will absorb a lot of information (.) which will stay with you. Do you agree with me?

**H2:** I agree with you.

**HB:** Of course. It will benefit all because the subject is different topics we keep doing such as about my father, my mother or my car, yah. A topic about diabetes is useful for everyone and it isn't necessary to be a medical student to make use of it (.). This is a disease which is spreading rapidly nowadays in my community; therefore, I need to investigate more about this topic and I think there's no problem even though I am a normal student to know more about diabetes.

**HB:** They have meaningful purposes.

**A:** has a meaning, yah.

**HB:** Yah.

**A:** Such as describing a problem, solving a problem or let's say talking about specific situations that happened, an authentic task that's original and new or has a value and /<< >>/.

**HB:** Of course we can benefit from it.

**A:** You can benefit from them?

**HB:** That means I spend so much time writing, but then what? We need something else that saves us from the boring topics we had.

**A:** You need something that can benefit you later on, right?

**HB:** Yah.

**A:** Not only in your current situations (.). Do you have any other points?

**HA:** It doesn't matter whether the person is a specialist or not; he must take advantage of it; we as medical students will benefit because it's a medical topic while for the others who aren't specialists will obtain information about how to fight against it, plus the causes, consequences and side effects.

**A:** Very good.

**HA:** Then they will help each other or their peers regarding completing the task.

**MO:** Two elements should be taken into account: the time sufficiency and the scope /size/ of each piece of work.

**A:** I mean your general perspective.

**MO:** From my point of view, that is a new topic.

**A:** Not specifically talking about this course. I mean your assignments should contain lovely ideas, have a value and be meaningful.

**MO:** Yah, this shouldn't only apply to writing; rather, all subjects to make them meaningful.

**A:** Your assignments of course writing assignments should always be connected with something else.

**HA:** Yah.

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**A:** That's related to the [speciality].

**MO:** [medicine]

**A:** Related to your future career.

**HB:** Because we will exert a lot of efforts, we need to gain something useful.

**HA:** The problem is time, it will be reduced if we work as a group because everyone will do something different.. so the time factor will diminish because of the collaboration.

**A:** That's a good thing. (60: 32)

Q7). **A:** I am interested to explore more information about the following: Do you usually play any strategies while writing (e.g. planning, drafting, revising and editing)?

**HA:** We haven't used any strategies before. (64: 31)

**A:** You haven't used because you weren't given assignments?

**HB:** Yes, and due to that we haven't tried them before.

**A:** Okay, what do you think about using strategies including planning, free writing or brainstorming, then starting to draft and then revise sentences and then finally looking at grammatical errors or editing (.). Many people focus on form and forget the content, which is also important.

**MS:** (.) But brainstorming and planning are based on the information you will read about.. you take the information from what you read.

**A:** Of course, planning is done /<< >>/ after you do the required reading... planning is a wide word and it involves brainstorming and listing.

**HA:** However, this topic is still a fact. We can do some free writing or express our opinions, but the subject has a lot of facts. These facts /<< >>/ these facts about the disease include its symptoms, since in fact many people have similar signs.

**A:** By free writing I don't mean what your personal ideas are. I mean information such as reasons/<< >>/ (.) Free writing doesn't mean that you write something from your own self.

**HA:** Ahaa you mean I should generate ideas?

**A:** What are your feelings towards these strategies?

**MO:** We haven't tried them yet.

**A:** Okay, what do you expect? I mean, will they make you feel calm when you come to write assignments?

**HB:** I'm sure, we will have some difficulties; these difficulties occur because we go to the field to play football once we go home (.). The process of writing will take some of our free time (.). We have dedicated time for fun but this time isn't spent as it used to be (.). This time for fun is replaced with writing, as I need to open and check the website every time and on a regular basis.

**MS:** Not only this.

**SA:** Yah, but if we use these phases [the process writing approach] before we submit our final writing to our tutor, we will be assertive about the writing we have produced and the content we included.

**MS:** They are useful for giving ideas, showing ways of how to write more accurately with using better content. It may also guide users to different rules and how they can be used precisely (.).

**HA:** The good thing in this method is that all my peers will be able to criticise me, and I will see my work every day and if there are any changes; I will see the stages of progress. I will see what others do, how others criticise me. Indeed, everyone can do this because all information is front of us all the time ... we can have useful communication regarding what writing we do, what information we use for brainstorming, everyone can do this because all information is in front of us all the time and there is no need to go somewhere to look for it.

**A:** Sorry, I didn't understand you, so do you agree with these strategies?

**HA:** I agree.

**A:** How do you agree for?

**HA:** That will be beneficial.

**A:** Beneficial?

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**HA:** Yes, because everyone will be able to criticise and see what others do or write, look at the words and gain some information and then will start changing their views; for example, they collect different opinions from (S), another from (M) they may gather opinions and then create new opinions (.) based on these opinions already given.

**MO:** So does that mean that they will increase your confidence?

**HA:** It will increase my confidence, of course, of course.

**SA:** Because of the many people that look at our work and the numerous times it is edited and revised.

**HA:** Sure, sure.

**MS:** So instead of only asking one person to do the writing assignment, many people could get together to produce that text.

**HB:** Right, right.

**A:** Okay, what do you think about only working together as members of a certain group without letting your instructor see what you do? Will you be more comfortable?

**HA:** We wouldn't be happier because if someone who is more experienced in the language /in English/ were present, he would benefit us more. (68: 63)

**HB:** One of the problems here is that if the instructor isn't with us all the time, some of the students will be careless. (69:53)

**HA:** No no, the instructors shouldn't correct ideas ideas rather they should concentrate on the language; for example, you can correct our language and our editing errors, check our writing styles (.). The ideas should be open, everyone should bring his ideas, but after you look at them you can criticise our contributions.

**A:** So do you see that the presence of the instructor is important?

**HA:** It's important, yes yes. (70: 41)

**MS:** We need to be treated as beginners in writing (?), on behalf of myself I consider myself to be a beginner. (70: 72)

(**HA**), (**M1**) and (**HB**): I feel the same thing.

**MS:** I mean don't be surprised if you see some silly errors.

**HA:** (.) We don't have /<< >>/ we have a problem with the styles of writing, rather than the information we have in our brains.. I mean how you can transform this information into a written paragraph is the problem.

**HB:** Because you changed the topic from 'my father' or 'my mother 'to a wider topic about diabetes, we used to deal with normal situations even youngsters can easily understand, but now we deal with a scientific topic and for that reason we need factual information. (71: 74)

Q8). I am curious to know more about the ways you use the social networking sites e.g. Facebook and You tube, etc.? And could they improve your writing skills?

**MO:** We use it mostly for enjoyment and daily communication such as chatting, viewing different images, posting different comments. (87: 76)

**HA:** With the help of our classmates, we established a group on Facebook and other students registered with this group (.).

**A:** Are there other colleges of medicine at Saudi universities?

**HA:** No, other students from other classes at our university, such as class 3 who are enrolled with us. In this group, we have discussions, we post our questions, and we post the latest news and information regarding exams or lectures {overlapping}.

**HB:** It is very useful.

**MO:** We put slides, images.

**MS:** Ask questions.

**MO:** The students also ask [questions] (?)

**HA:** There is continuous communication.

**HB:** This point is valid. It was good before the physics exam, everyone in the group started posting different questions therefore we had exactly four questions in the exam. Someone felt that those questions were important, so he pasted these questions online for his classmates.

**HA:** Everyone can give you an answer, one student said (c), another said (d) if they all have a consensus on (c). For example, if five students agreed on (c) and one said (d) we would accept the opinion of those who chose (c).

**A:** With the correct answer?

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**HB:** Yah, with the correct answer.

**HA:** [There] was cooperation to find the correct answers, since we had no knowledge about the correct answer.

**HB:** So, we can have an amusing time and at the same time learn something new.

**A:** While doing these things, did you correct each other? [For example] (M1) wrote something /which was incorrect/.

**MS:** [Yah]

**HB:** [Sure]

**A:** So you (HB) asked him to change something?

**MS:** There was also a discussion.

**HB:** Exactly, there was a strong discussion over giving a detailed explanation, even with page numbers.

**MS:** Right. (89: 51)

**MO:** I mostly use social networking sites such as Facebook for images, adding comments and other uses for enjoyment. (90: 63)

Q9). What are the things you have liked and disliked most in the writing lectures or classes you have attended before?

**HA:** Frankly speaking, the general problem in all writing classes I have been to (.) they lack action...and they weren't lively enough.

**A:** Was that in the first semester?

**HA:** Not only in the first semester, the instructors (?) dictate us the information, we listen a lot to them but without any medium of interaction or interactivity, the instructor speaks all the time. When we listen to the lecture, we feel we will forget it the next day.

**HB:** They don't pay attention to teaching writing properly and in an academic way.

**HA:** There is no action (.). There's no action so you feel you don't construct new meanings for learning with the tutor. I mean we're only asked questions and answer them in an ordinary way and we don't do anything else.

**A:** Okay, what do you suggest we could do to increase the students' interaction?

## Appendices

**HA:** For example, use Power point every day to explain the lessons, give some external activities, I mean you can bring external passages ahaa and other similar things (.) I mean external resources which aren't related to the lecture or lesson are important.

Q10). A: What is the effectiveness of this style on the following: a). on your motivational level, and b). on your feedback level?

**HA:** We need more competition (.). I mean you can set difficult questions, so then we feel there is a competition to generate more opportunities for constructing various meanings (.) that comes from the experience of the learners. We need this to see who will break this challenge. (91:12)

**HB:** Working only on the questions in the textbook will be boring.

**HA:** Yah.

**HB:** You need to bring external materials and other resources.

**MS:** I feel that writing class is a bit boring.

**HA:** Not only writing, all English subjects are tough.

**MO:** Yah, all of them. (93: 73)

**HA:** In essence, English lectures [should].

**HB:** [Break] the routine.

**HA:** Break the routine, that means you talk, add a joke, give external information, discuss topics that motivate the students while they're at the lecture.

**HB:** To draw their attention. (95: 70)

**A:** What if working on the Internet is added?

**MS:** Inside the classroom?

**A:** No, at home; for example, I assign you new tasks to be done online, [but at home].

**HA:** The most important thing is to add something that attracts the students.. You need to talk about external information to break the routine. (97:56)

**MO:** Information (.). New information attracts us.

**SA:** It's possible that while students do the exercises in the textbook, the instructor could comment on these exercises and elaborate on them.

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**A:** Do you mean that only the right answer is said; for example, a 'dependent' or 'independent' sentence?

**SA:** Yah.

**MO:** Yah.

**SA:** The instructor can comment on the same sentence. (98: 31)

**HB:** I mean I think it's important to give us something from your experience; for example, while we do something you could recount of something else that occurred to you in Britain or a similar experience or something you learned from your teachers and /<< >>/ that allows the students to live with you in that situation.

**MS:** We won't forget it.

**HA:** We want to know the story and what happened to you as a teacher.

**HB:** I [think].

**MS:** Using the Internet and other social collaborative tools will change our motivation because you change the routine and in this way we could have online meetings or something similar. I'm sure it will be different from what we used to do in the past...

**HA:** It depends on the students /<< >>/.

**HB:** Yah, right.

**A:** Okay, so how do you expect your motivation to be?

**MS:** I expect that our motivation will be high.

**HB:** I expect that the writers will be the most motivated people.

**HA:** If you tell the students that there will be extra marks for those who are more active, all the students will work actively by posting new information, criticising others and so on to be the best and to get [full marks].

**HA:** [So everyone] will be motivated after that.

**A:** Based on that way, will you gain any new knowledge?

**HA:** They will gain the knowledge if they become highly motivated about any specific topic and of course they will acquire new information.

**MO:** Right.

**HA:** In many things. (100: 66)

**MO:** Increase the sense of competition.

**A:** Can you give examples?

**MO:** I mean for example if group 2 completes the task before other groups and they were creative in this, other groups would be more engaged and willing to complete their task.

**A:** Okay, what would you like to happen? Should we say how the groups are doing and who is the best?

**MO:** In fact, every group wants to [be].

**SA:** [In the top]

**MO:** [In] /<< >>/ especially who will lead the group. (102:29)

**A:** What about final participation, do you think that will increase? Will your participation with your peers be enhanced /<< >>/? In the past, you told me that there wasn't so much participation or interaction.

**HB:** Concerning myself, I would be more interactive if you assigned me the draft duty, otherwise I would only check or visit the website rarely. I wouldn't be as interested as those doing the most important task, the drafting.

**A:** Still, editing and revising are very important, what's the benefit if you write something but it's full of mistakes?

**HB:** Yah, if you draft something you will exert more effort than editing and revising.

**A:** So you feel that drafting is very important?

**HB:** Yah, of course because that's the rule..

**A:** Okay, what about if you are assigned a drafting role and then you are asked to edit and revise for other writers?

**MO:** That would be [awesome].

**A:** Do you have any other points? (.) What about the level of feedback? Do you expect that giving feedback will increase as well?

**HA:** With the excitement of the feedback, it will increase.

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A: I think we need to stop here. Thank you very much guys and see you in the next focus group.

## Appendix 10: Transcription for the Follow-up Focus Group

### Transcription for the follow-up focus group

Legend	Meaning of legend
( )	Practical action rather than from the audio recording
[ ]	Interruption by the participants among themselves or with the researcher
( ? )	Inaudible
( . )	Short pause
..	Deletion from the original text as that can't be transcribed literally from Arabic
...	Un-transcribed section/segment
/ << >> /	Hesitation
{ }	Overlapping
/ /	Not in the transcript (but what is probably meant by participants)
IYWAH	Arabic word means exactly/ used for emphasis

**Beginning of the focus group:**

Ahmed Al Khateeb

**A:** today is the 1<sup>st</sup> of June and it's my pleasure to invite a group of students to the follow-up focus group; welcome dear students.

**MS, MO, HB, HA, SA and MN:** Most welcome (enjoying tea and cakes).

**A:** After you've completed your tasks and course, I want to start with the first question. I have approximately 13 questions some are long while others are short.

Q1) Do you see that playing various tasks and strategies while writing assignments on Wikispaces has boosted your writing abilities (i.e. *formulating different sentence structures, linking words, and choosing the right contents*)? Whether yes or no what are the reasons that led you to do this?

**HA:** I think because we had only a few tasks that was the reason that we didn't experience a huge improvement... in other words, the task about the image in task 2 hasn't added a lot. I mean we weren't given something additional as a topic sentence *{pause for 15 seconds}*.

**SA:** I think because of time limitations and there were only three tasks, that wasn't great for our improvement to the level we wanted. I think (H) meant that task 2 wasn't the best because there were limitations in terms of generating sentences and we had difficulty in varying our ideas *{overlapping}*.

**HA:** There was a complexity in creating something new. That means the ideas from a person were similar to another... I mean task 3 about producing chocolate was the most useful one due to ahhh *{group interference}*, the reason is that we had plenty of ideas to talk about and a number of styles which were mentioned by different students. it contains history.. having more than one point we can talk about. the task about diabetes wasn't good because we were looking for scientific information.

**HA:** I felt a lot of improvement in task 2 specifically in terms of spelling and other writing skills such as organisation and thinking and we used new structures of grammar to describe situations. We greatly improved in task 3 as we were able to create new ways of writing and */<< >>/* we were also able to do something original.

**A:** What were the reasons that made you benefit from and like task 3?

**HA:** The topic was very motivating; you know, we wanted to know how chocolate was created, its history and we had many points... *{overlapping}*.

**MN:** You provided some external information and resources, which was different from task 1 about diabetes as we had no ideas.

**Q2)** I am interested to explore more information about the following: Did you play any strategies while writing (e.g. planning or brainstorming, drafting, revising and editing)? What were your feelings towards these strategies?

**MS:** We used different strategies,

**HA:** Yah we used a number of different strategies,

**MS:** Because they were requirements for this course. We started generating ideas.

**MN:** Yah, we started generating ideas about writing topics.

**MS:** And drafting {?} and then started looking at editing and revising.

**A:** How were your feelings?

**HB:** If we had enough time we would have performed better. We were very limited in time and therefore it was so challenging. (6:14)

**MN:** There were numerous exams at the same time for every task.

**MO:** That's true.

**HA:** I think we aren't discussing the issue of exams.

**A:** I am looking for your feelings.. interesting /<< >>/boring or what? How did you feel towards these strategies? Were they more or less useful?

**HA:** Using different strategies for our writing assignments was very useful. For example, the brainstorming or planning or, I mean the ideas we collected from each other have helped us to form a new style of writing. Also, drafting hasn't only shown us how to form the main ideas in sentences, but put them in an organised shape. It has taught us how to make linguistically correct sentences that follow the right style of writing. For the assignments we used a good style of writing, everyone did his writing on his own, everyone was responsible for his own writing in a way, but they weren't edited or revised by the instructor.

**MS:** During the phases of the process, others could make use of each other's mistakes (.). I mean everyone benefited from the others' mistakes (.). There was practice for obtaining new knowledge based on contributions from other writers. That was the reason that made it encouraging for most of the users {25 seconds pause}.

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**SA:** As H2 indicated, it was very good, but we had some disadvantages such as time restrictions {overlapping}.

**MS:** But not from the strategies themselves, it was from the surrounding environment {overlapping}.

**SA:** From the surrounding environment.

**MS:** Otherwise the strategies are very {?}.

**A:** Let's focus on these strategies. I am assuming that a few of you have applied.

**HA:** That was impossible.

**HB:** That was impossible. (8: 37)

**HA:** the thing that we enjoyed was that it was collaborative that was the first point. The second point was that the topics were exciting whereas in the first semester experienced the traditional way of giving topics, which were boring. In other words, we were requested by the instructor to write about a topic without preparing a plan or looking at specific resources to extract some of the information needed or anything else. So using Wikispaces, for example, enabled us to look for resources and also gave us a chance to interact {overlapping}. (9:03)

**SA:** It increases your knowledge when you look for any topic. I mean it feeds your knowledge or something like this.

**MN:** That includes learning new vocabulary of course and spellings for this vocabulary. You actually work on these paragraphs by yourself and on the computer {10 seconds pause}.

Q3) Okay would you like to continue using the strategies of writing process for your writing assignments? Why have you made this decision? And how do you view these strategies? Have they made writing assignments more straightforward or more complicated?

**HB:** If someone wants to develop his English, he needs to use these strategies because {overlapping}.

**A:** In English in general or in writing? / << >>/let's focus on writing.

**HB:** In writing (.) I mean if we want to improve our writing it is necessary to use these strategies since if we use the old traditional strategies there won't be any benefit.

**A:** What 'the old traditional strategies'?

**HB:** You just hold a pen and take a piece of paper to start writing the assignment without any warm up or planning.

**HA:** Yet, there is one point I think is important concerning /<< >>/that way is better if everyone had the chance to write on his own and get his own writing corrected by the instructor, not his peers, that would be better so they are edited and revised not by the peers, but rather by the instructor because peers' editing or revision won't allow us to identify whether /<< >>/this is true or not. Therefore his criticism would be more constructive...

**HB:** No, but this

**SA:** Yet, the writer himself mightn't be right.

**HA:** Yah.

**MN:** No, but I expect the instructor's criticism to be in the end (?) {overlapping}.

**HB:** But you don't know, a student may correct something believing this is correct, so consequently his peers and ourselves as well would follow him by learning this as the correct answer, so then we build own knowledge on that.

**MS:** The question is whether we should keep going with similar assignments or not?

**A:** Let's come back to the question. What do you think about this question?

**MO:** No, because it is taking up a lot of our time.

**HB:** Do you want it to be without time?

**MO:** Because it is too long in fact it might negatively impact our other courses.

**A:** So the problem is time-related?

**MS:** Yah.

**HA:** Yah.

**MN:** Yah, I mean.

**MO:** I told you the answer is no.

**HA:** Yes, of course of course /<< >>/.

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**A:** I think that's not a main reason. Could it be due to another reason or reasons?

**HA:** There is a reason in addition to that time restriction was the first reason and the other one which is fundamental is that we tried it for the first time, so we were a specimen for this experiment.. We were amongst the first students who used this way. Therefore it was a new methodology; of course, it was very interesting although it was a bit complicated due to time limitations and some of the tasks were have done in a different way to the one we know and this didn't improve our writing.

**A:** Like what?

**HA:** For example... I realised that task 3 was the perfect topic, that's my personal view, but I don't know about my friends. I think the task has shown me a new resource and knowledge different from what was just written in the produced texts. (13:08)

**MO:** I also think that this way was useful, but I felt it was too far from what we do in the exam. (13:20)

**HA:** IYWAH this point is true {overlapping}.

**MS:** I mean /<< >>/I think we didn't study our textbook with sufficient depth or in great details.

**MN:** I think this way of writing was similar to the style of exam (?) I mean at the end, at the end /<< >>/things related to reasons and examples in task 3 helped so much.

**MS:** Yah.

**MN:** Due to the fact we had similar things to do on Wikispaces.

**MS:** But we didn't study everything that is in our textbook.

**HA:** Because in essence this way was different from the way we did our quizzes in writing. I mean the assignments on Wikispaces are considered to be quizzes, but they were different from the way the final exam is normally given.

**A:** Ahaha.

**HA:** I think this is the meaning of the reason given by my friend (M2).

**A:** So would you like them to be incorporated or not?

**MS:** No.

**MN:** Still it will greatly support the preparatory year students, since we have many subjects in English and they therefore need to write something in English.

**HA:** Or the students of English department.

**MS:** Or the students of English department.

**HA:** It will be good for the students of the English department because their timetable is less busy.

**MS:** Concerning the second part of the question, the assignments you asked us to do?

**A:** Yah

**HB:** It has become more complex, but aided us a lot because of the negotiation and discussions among our group members. The more effort that's exerted, the greater gains will be by the end.

**HA:** The complexity has started to increase gradually (.).

**MS:** But in a positive way {overlapping}.

**HA:** Indeed in a positive way.

**A:** Okay, fine

**HB:** It increased our duties and responsibilities.

**HB:** Yah it added more work.

**MS:** If you had just given us this assignment to be on Wikispaces in the beginning {overlapping}.

**HB:** You might finish it in an hour.

**MS:** We might do nothing except writing the title and that's it.

**A:** Okay.

**MS:** But then we started working with each other doing some reading and you did two quizzes on Wikispaces for us so we become familiar with it and with this way of working.

**A:** Ahaha.

Q4) I would like to know more about the various strategies/roles which were assigned in each group including writers, editors and revisers? Which roles were easy and which were more difficult? Why?

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**SA:** The writer (.) exerted more effort, whereas the rest didn't expend much effort, they just did editing, revising and discovering errors and that's it (...). The reason was that the writer was required to use the appropriate style of writing plus thinking about all the suitable rules and structures...

**HA:** No, the reason was that the writer was required to use the style of writing required including using all the rules/structures of writing to create writing from scratch and that's what made the writers' job more challenging and complex.

**A:** Do you mean that the writer needs to form a new text?

**HA:** They [peers] play with the content and grammar while the writer needs to create a new text and needs to use the suitable rules...I mean people doing the editing and revising give only some knowledge with the source (...). They will play with the content while the writer needs to create a new text and needs to use the rules...

**HA:** They all need to examine everything, but it is different from doing the writing. To criticise is simpler than doing the writing.

**HB:** The writer starts from scratch.

**MS:** See, that was the writer's main responsibility to do planning and to choose the suitable plan in order to decide what to do next.

**HB:** The editors and revisers have something in front of them while the writer starts from scratch, okay.

**HB:** The simplest role was the editor because it was only about adding sentences and something similar to that; nevertheless, it still needs some concentration.

**A:** What is that - revising or editing?

**HB:** No, I mean revising concerns adding or deleting new sentences (...). I mean, I mean this should be the order: writing is the most difficult, then editing and then revising.

**MN:** Planning is supposed to be the simplest, as just we bring some relevant ideas to a surface level.

**HA:** It [planning] isn't the simplest. It requires me to think about the linguistic style of writing /to create new texts/.

**A:** Ahaha.

**HA:** It [planning] isn't an easy mission and you will be responsible for the linguistic style. It's not only concerned with ideas.

**MO:** Still this is the simplest. (18:37)

**Q5)** Did you get feedback from your peers? If yes, what was it? If not, what were the reasons that lessened your participation and how could collaboration be improved?

**HA:** This point helped us.

**MN:** We got feedback during the planning phase. That's where we got feedback.

**MO:** Or from different websites.

**MN:** Also when we were online browsing the Internet.

**A:** From where did you get this feedback?

**MO:** From the planning phase.

**HA:** True.

**HB:** In a discussion area, from what happened in the discussion.

**MS:** For example, in task 1 which was about diabetes (S) posted reasons for acquiring this disease - genetically and something like this

**A:** Is there anybody who didn't receive any feedback or made use of feedback?

**MN:** In the beginning it was necessary to receive enough feedback about each topic to be able to write about it or to do the paragraph /<< >>/without this feedback you couldn't do the actual writing. In task 1 everyone was supposed to write about diabetes. Everyone should have written a paragraph.. then returned to his peers who acted as editors and revisers and the same thing happened with everyone.

**A:** If not, what were the factors that lessened students' participations?

**HB:** Lack of knowledge.

**A:** What can be done to increase and develop chances of participation?

**HA:** More reading, more reading to augment our knowledge and information..

**MN:** The same thing with task 3, about producing chocolate. You gave us a handout about that topic and that paper contained various types of information to help us to

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write the topic. That was very supportive to us when generating ideas and writing sentences.

**SA:** I think the reason why there were limited participations was because of the large number of exams and quizzes in a restricted time. Yah that's it.

**MS:** The time.

**HB:** The time.

**A:** So issues related to time availability and having free time?

**MN:** As we expressed, this will be very useful for those who concentrate more on English like orientation year students and those taking many English subjects.

**HB:** And you can practise the language more.

**HA:** I mean, for example, after two days we have a biochemistry exam and it has eight credit hours. Therefore many people would say that instead of concentrating on these assignments it's more worthwhile to focus on the exam in order to save time. Yet the students of the English department can focus on it all the time and everyday (.). I mean it's something that matches their needs... I don't think that's the reason. The instructor's method of motivating the students and his approach is the reason for promoting peers' feedback. (22: 55)

**A:** What does that mean?

**HA:** He means that some instructors may fail in their approach to teaching and, yah {overlapping}.

**MS:** He doesn't motivate us with additional marks or using other new means of attracting us and (?).

**HA:** No, but my personal view is that proficiency and academic levels are the fundamental reasons.

**HB:** I know that is a basic reason, but also what we mentioned is important.

Q6) What do you think about this type of feedback (e-feedback) which is based on the Internet where corrections can be received from a distance?

**MS:** I think the feedback given on the Internet is better as some people prefer not to get any comments from others in a direct. On the other hand, if it's given online that might be received more easily without causing any sensitivity.

**M1 and HA:** *(Taking very quietly with each other)*

**H1:** IYWAH I totally agree with that, many people don't like others advising them in a face-to-face mode.

**MO:** For me, they are similar.

**HB:** It differs from person to person.

**SA:** It depends {overlapping}.

**HA:** If it is from the [instructor]

**HB:** Generally speaking, every rule has its own exceptions, but face-to-face correction might make more people embarrassed. I prefer it to be online.

**SA:** True.

**MS:** But if you were just spotting my errors that would be problematic without involving me in a real face-to-face interaction (.). However, if we were closely working with others in order to identify each other's errors for the purpose of collaborative learning, no, it's their right to identify my errors as they are in fact my audience.

**A:** Does it depend on the type of mistakes?

**MN:** If it's something silly that would cause discomfort.

**HA:** Yah, that what would cause embarrassment.

**A:** While revising, were the roles you adopted acceptable in terms of giving satisfactory feedback to peers? In other words, if the draft was written by (H2) and then (M1) came and gave feedback was that okay for you (H2)?

**HB:** No problem at all, it's normal because it's one of the requirements to work on this programme.

**A:** I am talking about your personal opinion, was it problematic for you to accept that?

**HB:** {Laugh} it was very, very normal.

**SA:** Particularly if that occurred from a distance and not face-to-face.

**HB:** And we are still in the early stages of learning. We have no problem making mistakes and then learning from them.

**SA:** Very true.

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**H2, S, M1 and MS:** *(Talking and laughing quietly with each other)*

**HA:** We learned how to criticise each other in a polite way.

**A:** How?

**HA:** Simply, he can criticise my writing and I can do the same thing with his writing.

**HA and HB:** {overlapping}

**MN:** I will look at his work and similarly he will look at mine; there won't be any embarrassment.

**SA:** This practice can help us to add new skills /<< >>/. Many of us have become less nervous about publishing their writing for the public; this means we have become more self-confident.

**A:** Was it okay for you to write something or participate in writing something to be edited and reviewed by your peers? Explain this...This one is looking for your view on your peers adding or deleting something from your piece of writing. Do you feel that it's not their right to make any changes because it's your own work?

**MN:** This is the key advantage of this tool, which is to promote discussion among peers to see why they have deleted that part or sentence and then to become more confident about whatever is written and make them ready for defending their writing. Deleting some parts or sentences brought necessary discussion and increased the writer's knowledge. (36: 15)

**HA:** This was the real problem in the programme, ah {overlapping}.

**HB:** I see this as an advantage

**SA:** I see this {overlapping}.

**HA:** The real problem is that a peer might make the corrections, but he doesn't have any background or idea of why he is doing this. Why he is correcting his peers' writing or making changes to their sentences...The real problem is that a friend might make the corrections, but he doesn't have a comprehensive background or any idea of why he is doing this or why he is correcting his peers writing by making changes to their sentences /<< >>/ why the instructor can't make the necessary corrections.

**MN:** As I said before, I think it should become standard practice for peers to correct for each other's work or do other tasks, but I suppose that at the end the instructor should check to see precisely what has taken place.

**SA:** .. If one of my peers deletes some of my sentences that wouldn't be acceptable, but adding something to it might be okay, but not deleting any part.

**A:** Why?

**SA:** Because there is an idea which I would seek to convey by writing that sentence and not one of my peers should delete what I want to express, so deleting any part would be really undesirable and prohibited.

**HB:** I think that creates an environment for a challenge. I mean, if there is any deletion or addition, okay, fine, you have right to delete and add as well. It is like a challenge so it gives us more motivation and creates a different competitive atmosphere.

**HA:** We need to keep the discussions, but not in relation to editing and revising. The instructor should do it... Editing or revising should be done by the person who is in charge of teaching us /<< >>/. He should be doing the correction for us, not the students. It's not our job (34: 11)

**MN:** In fact, the history area is unlike what (H2) has expressed. Your topic/the individual contribution/ is saved in this area, that can't be changed. Everything is already there, what your peer is trying to do is just give you his personal ideas and consequently change the rest of the text. This is the benefit of this programme, but everything else is part of the history. (34: 48)

**A:** So your original text is there.

**MN:** Yes, it exists and won't be changed.

**HA:** My idea is that your peer doesn't have the right to make any modifications. The only person who has the right to do so including editing or adding is the instructor himself.

**MN:** Still the original topic is there, why doesn't he have the right?

**HA:** What I want to say is that I usually have something in my mind that I want to tell to my peers or those potential people who will read the topic {overlapping}.

**HB:** You can still return deleted parts to the original text.

**HA:** How can I do that after it gets changed?

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**HB:** ...Yah, just go to history and post the original text back.

**HA:** After you have criticised it and deleted it, how can you return it back?

**MO:** But it is still there in the history.

**HA, M3 and SA:** (?) {overlapping}

**HA:** (H1) I need you to understand me, I mean it's illogical (?) to put something back after it has been criticised.

**HB:** But you have the right to criticise his work as well. (35:36)

**MN:** This is the key advantage of this programme, which is to promote discussion among peers and to see why they deleted that part/sentence and to become more confident about whatever is written. (36: 15)

**MS:** I see it as if you have an image and you then modify it. I see this as a better analogy; once someone changes it, it will be destroyed.

**HA:** Okay, he can correct it but not to delete anything.

**HB:** I agree that the person who is administrating the group should intervene to keep learners away from deleting certain parts and returning them for more than one time. He only needs to intervene (.) to determine whether it is better to keep that sentence or not because he has more experience and to avoid any unnecessary discussion. Otherwise, peers' interaction on WMCW is helpful for producing useful relationships and informative communications.

**HA:** This is a very important point.

**HB:** There is a need for the instructor to intervene.

Q7) Has any software been used to check your first draft of writing or have you used Wikispaces from the first time to have your work modified by your peers?

**HA:** Ahh in task 1 we used Microsoft Word so all mistakes were corrected by the programme, whereas in tasks 2 and 3 we didn't use any software.

**A:** What kind of corrections were made in Microsoft Word?

**HA:** They were mostly spellings, with some corrections related to grammar.

**SA:** Capitalisation and other similar things {overlapping}.

**HA:** Yah, capitalisation.

**M2 and MO:** Punctuation e.g. commas and full stops.

**A:** What about content-related changes or sentence structures?

**MN:** No, of course not, sentence structures are only formed by you, the writer.

**HA:** He can't change them because he /<< >>/ {overlapping}.

**SA:** Doesn't have the right.

**HA:** Because he doesn't have any ideas about the topic.

**MN:** *{laughing}*

**HA:** In task 2 and task 3 we used different ways to complete these two tasks. You told us that the method we used in task 1 wasn't appropriate.

**MS:** And our changes were just simple changes.. in task 2 we couldn't make any changes due to the fact we had an image {overlapping}.

**SA:** Not many sentences could be used to describe it.

**MS:** IYWAH not many ways could be used to describe it.

**HA:** It means there were no other ideas that could be mentioned. I mean, all sentences regarding the description of the image were based on known points so we didn't have other points to talk about, to add or to criticise.

**A:** In tasks 2 and 3 did you use Microsoft Word to make sure that your writing was correct?

**H2, M2 and HB:** No no.

**HA:** Our grammar, spelling, and different vocabulary have improved and we have used different styles of writing for the assigned topics. In fact, we didn't rely on the computer to correct us, no we started correcting errors by ourselves and with the help of peers.

**MS:** And also we didn't fully concentrate on correcting punctuation related-mistakes such as commas (.). We concentrated more on ahh content. (39: 02)

**HA:** It felt that like if you depend on yourself, and you won't become self-reliant on anybody else {overlapping}. (39: 51)

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**HB:** It increased our attention about common errors and imperfect sentences, because if we were using Microsoft Word we wouldn't be worried and thoughtful about our writing (.). In Word, each error was underlined in red so we don't pay much attention.

**HA:** Well done. (40: 07)

**A:** Since we are talking about tasks 1, 2 and 3, I noticed that copy and paste was frequently used in task 1. Why that did happen, as opposed to being used in tasks 2 and 3 since which were produced entirely by you? (40: 33)

**MS:** That's true.

**HB:** Task 2 was completed entirely by us and it was about describing an image.

**MS:** This was the positive side of this task.

**HA:** The second reason was that in task 1 we didn't have enough knowledge about such medical topics. I mean it was very scientific, so we didn't have sufficient knowledge and we couldn't bring fake information.

**HB:** You can't report any wrong information.

**HA:** So we couldn't make many changes.

**HA:** The third reason was that we are beginner writers and the topic was at a higher level. We don't have the skills to write about this scientific-related topic.. it requires a high level of knowledge and needs to be your field of study.

**HB:** A lot of experience.

**HA:** And enough experience to be confidently able to write about it or about this disease..

**A:** I mean, why did you use copy and paste so much?

**S:** Because it was the first task following this method.

**HA:** We had no experience.

**HB:** My peers didn't take collaboration seriously in the beginning. I mean they weren't used to doing this.

**MN:** They weren't ready for this kind of tasks so they started copying and pasting.

**A:** There seems to be a problem; why didn't you start writing from the beginning?

**MS:** Because you can't start writing about {overlapping}.

**HA:** I told you the reasons we had in task 1.

**A:** I think the fact it was a scientific topic wasn't the reason. You could have written some ideas or sentences without necessarily being very accurate.

**HA:** No, the level of this topic was very high in terms of its rationale and everything. Therefore, we wouldn't be able to overcome this problem. (42: 51)

**A:** Still, I believe there were a number of reasons for this problem.

**SA:** Copy and paste has different uses; some people paste a text as it is 100%.

**HB:** Yah.

**SA:** When we were at school doing the writing assignments for Arabic language, we used to copy others writing. It (WMCW) was impolite to copy it as is. Some of us still might paste it as is without making any changes, while others might make some deletions or additions. The majority would still find it (WMCW) very hard to compose texts by themselves without mostly relying on others' pre-made texts or others' available ideas on the web.

**HB:** Or might take bits and pieces from here and there.

**SA:** Different selections from different texts and that's it.

**MN:** And because it was the first topic in this format. (43: 22)

**HA:** No, not all students are accustomed to copying and pasting. There are people who do the writing assignments by themselves, but as I said the topic was the main reason. (43: 59)

**MN:** Yet the majority are accustomed to copying and pasting.

**SA:** Yah.

**MO:** Very truthful. (44: 11)

Q8) Do you agree that sharing your peers for collaborative writing on Wikispaces has an effect on your writing skills? And on individual writers? I hope you explain this a little? Was it enjoyable and useful for your writing skill? In what ways?

**HB:** There is supposed to be an improvement. (46: 52)

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**A:** Did you start having these feelings, especially those who wrote the drafts?

**HB:** Every task had its own style, so we got lost.

**HA:** No, we had different experiences whilst doing different tasks, but we wrote about general tasks without you giving us the factors behind their selection.

**A:** What do you mean by these factors?

**HA:** I mean the reasons, I mean for each task there were specific aspects. I mean task 1 had its own factors, reasons and a style of writing, same thing with tasks 2 and 3, so each task had its own way of improvement.

**MN:** Of course, that became clearer after the quiz; for example, you gave us a topic about the description of an image, so we did task 2 on this basis on Wikispaces. Everyone produced a very good piece based on interacting with these topics and with peers. This was proof that everyone wrote well.

**A:** Do you think yourselves have improved in some areas of writing?

**MN:** Indeed.

**A:** Like what?

**MN:** I started to have /<< >>/more writing fluency. These ideas can come spontaneously and quickly in a sequence and in a systematic style.

**A:** What was the reason that led you to that?

**MN:** The main reason was the corrections by my peers and various contributions concerning the topic assigned.

**SA:** Now in our final exam which was about recommending the school of medicine to a friend of mine we made use of it in terms of giving reasons and examples. This topic was really easy to write about on Wikispaces, as you can just search for information, which is different from exam conditions {overlapping}.

**HB:** You must depend on yourself.

**HA:** it means (.) in fact what we did in the exam was not exactly the same as what we did on Wikispaces. In the exam you write about something with different styles for limited time without a source while on Wikispaces we had several free sources.

**MO:** It is useful for giving ideas, showing ways of how to write and how to use different rules of writing correctly (.), but it won't develop writers' individual skills as the exams require.

**A:** Okay.

**HB:** The biggest problem was losing the use of the Internet, as in the exam we didn't have the Internet and this was the main source to fulfil the tasks on Wikispaces.

**MN:** It wasn't the main source.

**HA:** Having a source available.

**MS:** You may give us a topic similar to what we do on the Internet; so that was very helpful and advanced our language learning.

**MN:** IYWAH (50: 10)

**HA:** .. Wait a second, regarding peers' corrections and the improvement of individual writers; I think that improvement is limited. They might be wrong, so next time or next year, I would like to get confirmation that my peer corrections are accurate, and that can be given by the instructor. (52: 48)

**SA:** He needs to be there.

**MS:** {?}

**HB:** He needs to intervene only if there is something wrong by saying that's wrong, but (.) peers' correction can still continue, but with the constant online presence of the instructor, his moderation and management are not enough. We need him to be more engaged with what we write and do.

**MS:** If the instructor is in charge of everything the students will stop editing and revising and will depend on him. They will lose their self-confidence. Learners need to be more independent and that's easy to be performed on wikis.

**HB:** IYWAH so there will be no benefit, just draft it and submit it to the instructor, your job is over.

**HA:** We need to keep the discussions, but not related to editing and revising.

**HB:** At the end the instructor can finalise things.

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**MO:** At the end he can give a brief summary about the percentage of mistakes and what they are.

Q9) What do you feel about the discussions you held with your group members? Were they interesting and helpful in achieving more? Were they enthusiastic and motivating? Give me some examples?

**SA:** They facilitated showing you the main aspects of the topic we were writing about and also any related ideas.

**HA:** {19 seconds pause} It gave the writer more and new knowledge.

**HB:** It showed us also how to start the topic.

**A:** Not as much planning happened as I expected.. The participants should have suggested certain topic sentences (.). Most of the posts made were just information, feedback and generation of some ideas, why did that happen..?

**MS:** See, that was the writers' responsibility to do that, to choose suitable {overlapping}.

**HB:** Every author has his different way.

**MS:** They created suitable sentences.

**HB:** Some people may start directly

**SA:** With the introduction.

**HB:** Others may prefer to go around the topic before they start and then go back to the topic. (55: 18)

Q10) Would you prefer Wikispaces to be adopted for more writing tasks and for other types of tasks in future? Please give reasons for your response.

**SA:** We are employing this realistically on facebook. (57: 03)

**MN:** Very true.

**HB:** On facebook, yah, it is the same.

**A:** A wiki is similar to facebook. It's a social networking tool and one of social networking media.

**HA:** It is useful for science-related topics, we have already studied before. For example, a certain subject we have already studied.

**HB:** Like anatomy..

**HA:** Yah, a subject like anatomy so we can create more stable knowledge and an avenue to stimulate discussions. It's straightforward to find the right and suitable style and it creates more motivated learners.

**HA:** That all happened because prior sufficient knowledge about that topic was available..

**A:** It can't only be used with writing-related tasks; rather, it can be used with other types of tasks.

**HA:** It will simplify a lot of things if it's connected with other subjects we are studying.

**MS:** Because things are in a state of continuous development.. It's not necessary if I need something from you to go to your home to see you or to meet face-to-face.. Everything is available on the web all the time.

**HA:** The programme is so distinctive.

**HB:** The notion behind this programme is very nice.

**MO:** It will be very practical if it's connected with other subjects or projects that require collaborative work /or learning/or any work, instead of asking people to get together face-to-face and to be in one location.

**A:** So do you want to keep working on such tasks as part of your study at the university?

**MN:** Yah, I still want it to be optional rather than mandatory or anything else.

**A:** Are there any reasons why you want this approach to be solely integrated with writing?

**HA:** Easier to create and operate discussions ... the integration of peer communication for completing writing tasks on Wikispaces, this activity enabled us to look for online-based resources and also gave us a chance to interact and then to discuss topics online.

**MS:** Concerning the issue of face-to-face meetings, many people become annoyed when they meet face-to-face and their innovations appear only on the Internet.

**MN and HA:** The shy or introverted people.

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**HA:** And online you learn on your own pace and there is no need to be swift other than keeping up with what's going on or having a conversation.

**MN:** It has also made everything more meaningful, since it is typed in computer font which can be recognised and understood by everyone.

**HA:** We can keep discussing assignments which need to be written with the whole group. We also need to know what each member should do in his group work, for example, about nerve supply, so we collaborate with each other including giving feedback and criticising each other {overlapping}.

**SA:** At a distance from the eyes of the instructor.

**HA:** Far from any pressure of the instructor, he may spot errors so make learners so fearful of making mistakes.. So you become afraid to make any error in front of him.

**MN:** The basis of the problem is that the tutor already knows the topic so he might consider it a silly question or a stupid mistake while my friends will take it as an important question or a normal mistake, which can happen to everyone, so it can be answered comfortably.

**MS:** But now you are contradicting your views. In the beginning you explained that the instructor must be the one who does the corrections while ahh.

**HA:** That was different, it was mandatory while this is a general discussion.

Q11) What are the advantages and disadvantages you have noticed- while using the collaborative writing method on Wikispaces?

**MO:** It could help to improve self-confidence.

**HB:** We can talk freely without any pressure.

**SA:** We spent less time on the lecture (half of the lesson) and the rest was allocated to talk about how to use wikis and what is done on it. I mean this was one of drawbacks, since we wasted a lot of lesson time.

**MS:** I agree, it was a new programme and we needed time to get used to it.

**SA:** Yah, this was one of the negatives. In the final exam we had some topics, but.

**MS:** Very true, we didn't study everything in detail.

**SA:** IYWAH we didn't study them in depth in class.

**MS:** One of the drawbacks was that it took a long time.

**SA:** Very true.

**A:** Did it take a long time to achieve at home?

**MS:** Indeed.

**HB:** it needed students who don't have as busy a schedule as us.

**A:** Again most of disadvantages are time-related, right?

**HB:** I think this was the main reason for all the problems just time shortage {overlapping}.

**HA:** Why we can't get tasks that last for one day?

**HB:** Oh that's impossible.

**A:** What do you mean by that?

**HA:** I mean you assign different tasks on a daily basis. You tell us that today we have a task about this and tomorrow will be the deadline you require us to submit it and by a certain time so all members adopt strategies to achieve this.

**A:** Can you do such work in a day?

**MN:** I don't agree.

**MO:** It would be very complicated.

**MN:** And you won't get enough information.

**SA:** But the advantage is that {?}.

**HB:** If it is done in one day the tactic will be just to do it and then to get rid of it {overlapping}.

**SA:** You could allocate just one day for each strategy, that is possible; but one day to do all the strategies no.. I mean, I think that two weeks to achieve one assignment is a long time, but also one day to do everything isn't possible.

**H:** That is too short.

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**A:** .. Are there any advantages or disadvantages would you like to add? advantages or disadvantages about anything that is in the programme used? For example, the tasks assigned or group distribution..?

**MN:** It facilitated a lot of skills related for writing {overlapping}.

**MS:** Considering some of us didn't know how to work on the programme until the end, as that wasn't so clear in the beginning.

**A:** Did you think the method of working was complex?

**MS:** a bit complicated.

Q12) What is your evaluation of this programme including tasks, group format, layout and using Wikispaces for writing improvement? And what are your recommendations for improving this style and making it more appropriate for the students coming after you?

**HA:** How to deal with the website was complicated, since we had to keep working on different areas.. the discussion was there and history was there but you could easily / << >>/get lost on the way.

**HB:** Frankly, I disagree with my friend H2, I think the subdivisions in the website are well-organised. I see it really well-organised and very very systematic. These areas can be easily recognised as there is a main page to draft. There is also history to identify any addition. The task is on a side.. {overlapping}.

**SA:** In the beginning of the semester {overlapping}.

**HB:** It is comfortable; in fact I didn't note any complexity or the possibility of losing my way. It might be there that in the beginning, but we become used to it, it became very comfortable since all of its categories were clear.

**SA:** Yah, at the beginning of the semester we saw you explaining how to use it in two weeks, so I thought how difficult that would be, but then I realised later when I logged in how easy it would be to deal with.

**HB:** You just need to use it once or twice and then you won't have any problems, I mean.

**MN:** Among the drawbacks in relation to the distributions of groups, I think group members should be distributed similarly. I mean, you need good, average and slow

learners (.) all within one group. I think the distribution of members in the groups wasn't fair.

**A:** That was done according to your scores in the first semester plus a mini writing task. I distributed the participants. Do you think that groups weren't equivalent {overlapping}?

**MN:** I mean (*he mentioned two participants*) they were very excellent and they were in the same group... I mean students shouldn't only be evaluated by scores. There are other things which are necessary to know about students before giving any test or distributing a role. (68: 21)

**MS:** It depends on students' willingness and acceptance of this idea.

Q13) If the tasks had been assessed would you have collaborated and participated in the same way (i.e. more or less)? Why?

**HA:** I don't think so. (69: 00)

**MO:** of course not.

**HB:** Much more work would be achieved than has been done now.

**A:** Will it be more or less?

**SA:** More

**HA:** Because there will be motivation.

**MO:** And enthusiasm.

**A:** What do you mean by motivation?

**HB:** Marks.

**HA:** We'd become worried that we may lose marks.

**HB:** Yah, so we tell ourselves that instead of wasting an hour everyday working on un-assessed work, it's better to do more on the biology course.

**HB:** Because as he said there will be no marks and English as a subject isn't considered to be among the main subjects (.). I mean we don't need to be professional in English now. We are studying for roughly seven or six years, so of course we will be excellent in English by the end of these years, so just working in this semester won't make a huge improvement or improve us 100% but if there are no marks we won't become highly interested in it. I mean other things might have more priority.

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**HA:** The psychological pressure.

**A:** What does that mean?

**HA:** Marks give motivation and force you to work.

**A:** If there are no marks, what will happen?

**MN:** I don't expect that there will be enough interaction {laughing}.

**HB:** We're twenty one students. If you say that there will be no marks only.

**MS:** Two.

**HB:** Two might work with you and that's the maximum. It would be very good turnout if only two become interested (.), as many students now only think about the marks.

**A:** What about the internal satisfaction for improvement, does that exist or not?

**HB:** As I told you, only two people would have these feelings whereas the rest may claim that we will study English for six years so we will become very good in writing {overlapping}.

**HA:** There is another reason why students wouldn't participate. They may say we have subjects that have more priority in which I must succeed or need to concentrate on to augment my accumulative GBA, so we can postpone this to our free time... when we can work on it.

**A:** You mean if there are no marks this subject {overlapping}

**HA:** ... We focus on subjects that can increase our grades or might lead to termination from the college if they weren't passed..

**MN:** Motivation is important.

**HA:** There must be psychological pressure, a concern that you will be dropped if we didn't pass these subjects.

**MS:** It must be compulsory.

**A:** What about if you have other means of motivation such as giving coupons or vouchers?

**HB:** Still they aren't working as marks.

**HA:** Still not.

**SA:** Still not.

**HB:** they don't convince me.

**MN:** That may work with kids in elementary or intermediate schools, they might be convinced by that but not us.

**A:** Do you think that the same thing might happen with other classes?

**HB:** 100% sure in Saudi Arabia and you can ask anybody, they will tell you the same thing.

**HA:** Not only in Saudi Arabia, I think, in the whole world there are priorities.

**HB:** I am talking about my country because I know it very well... I can guarantee this to you. (72: 32)

**SA:** Of course, they know that this is useful but It's hard to change their mentality and it's hard to change it now in this age. (73:36)

**HB:** We know that this is useful.

**MS:** Personally I didn't know until I tried. Frankness is very good, but before trying it I didn't know that it would be useful for me.

**A:** Did you try it because there were a few marks allotted on some tasks?

**MS:** Yes, because some parts were compulsory /individual writing tasks/.

**A:** This is another issue. What about if it was entirely an optional choice would you take part?

**HB:** I don't think so.

**MS:** Not for myself, I wouldn't even open that website.

**HB:** I told you that out of the twenty one only two would take part.

**HA:** I might be motivated in the beginning just out of curiosity to see what this is about, but that wouldn't last long. We might be pushed in the beginning as a result of the lecturers talking about it, but without any interest to pursue.

Q14) What were the most significant things in writing which have been improved in this course?

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**HB:** For myself, this style, I mean how to start on a specific topic and enter into the content of the topic. We develop the ability to spot spelling-related mistakes by ourselves without relying on Microsoft word or any other software.

**A:** Okay.

**HB:** The style of writing can be improved with a lot of experiences.

**MS:** Especially as a result of the amount of reading we did.

**HB:** Yah, because we employed writing and reading to complement each other. Reading and writing were always connected... We needed to read other written texts and then paraphrase them and make a number of drafts they were all helpful (.).

**A:** [So have you learned how to improve your style of writing?

**HB:** Yah.

**A:** Because of what?

**HB:** Because we had different experiences I mean someone correct our writing, so we need to re-read it again ask your peer why this correction has been done... then I can insist it should be reinstated or not and my style can gradually improve.

**MN:** Of course, knowing the topic sentence from the conclusion and {?} I mean we recognised differences between topic sentences and conclusions. The main reason, I think, was the corrections and contributions made by my peers urging me to be as active as them by asking questions and keeping the discussions going on and trying to understand the topic.

**A:** My question is about the improvement you said took place in your writing.. Did it happen because we used Wikispaces and collaborative writing or my style of teaching in class or because there were different modules which were taught, plus the writing subject?

**HB:** No no {overlapping}.

**MO:** Because Wikispaces {overlapping}.

**MN:** The first reason

**HB:** No no /<< >>./

**HA:** Excuse me instructor.

**HB:** Can you repeat the question?

**MN:** The first reason.

**MS:** What was the last reason?

**HB:** The factor that has contributed to improvement in our writing?

**A:** Yah I am talking specifically about writing skill.

**HA:** I think using Wikispaces helped our style to when studying writing. It's the tutor idea who suggested this way... all of them /writing tasks/were useful.

**HB:** As my friend (M2) suggested, every factor was linked to the other, so if we're just using Wikispaces without studying new content, we would not be able to improve our writing. We need to study grammar or practise reading {overlapping}.

**HA:** If we don't make use of the structure of writing and what we hear in classes, we won't be able to do anything on Wikispaces.

**HB:** I mean every item is supporting the other.

**MS:** But the strongest connection was between the first and last options, in fact.

**MN:** We still need the textbook, in-class teaching as without it we won't be able to improve our writing.

**A:** What about if you were only taught using the textbook without Wikispaces? Would you gain the same knowledge as you have now?

**MN:** No {overlapping}.

**HB:** No because the textbook is limited and you give us general knowledge.

**HA:** Here we applied what we already studied and learned.

**MS:** {?}

**HA:** We took what we studied in face-to-face teaching and then implemented it on Wikispaces {overlapping}.

**MN:** We implemented everything as it's.

**MS:** We didn't focus on everything and in the exam we were asked several things that weren't covered in face-to-face-classes.

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**HB:** Everyone in the group started posting different questions therefore we had exactly four questions in the exam. Someone had feeling that those questions were important, so he posted these questions online for his classmates and we had detailed discussion.

**SA:** Yah true.

**MO:** True.

**MN:** Both the textbook and working on Wikispaces, we can't disregard any aspect of these two.

**HB:** No, I think the importance of Wikispaces comes before the textbook, since the latter is so limited.

**MN:** Without the textbook we can't identify what we should do, when writing and the topic we should write about.

**HA:** We can't decide on the topic.

**HB:** When we open the textbook to see what's there, there are just commas, but or first... we have already studied similar things to these in the first intermediate school {overlapping}.

**HA:** Wait a second (H1), these are the fundamental rules of writing. Without them we can't write anything.

**HB:** But still some of the content are very simple like using first, second and also

**HA:** But these are the rules of writing, these are the rules of writing.

**HB:** Okay we have studied these rules before, why are they here again {?}??

**HA:** If know them, I don't know them how they can be used in my writing.

**HB:** That's your problem, that's your problem.

**HA:** I gave these as examples, but we also studied other useful things such as differentiating between topic and concluding sentences.

**A:** Through what?

**HA:** We took them from our textbook and then we implemented them here on Wikispaces. You know we learned how to revise the concluding sentences and the controlling ideas .. and how to write a suitable sentence for certain topics whilst taking

into account how to make them well-organised ... we learned theoretically and then we tried to employ it that on Wikispaces. (79: 24)

**A: A:** Okay guys, thank you for your contributions.

**End of transcription**

## Appendix: 11: Transcription for a Sample of a Delayed Interview (Arabic)

### Interview No. 8

س ( ما مدى فائدة هذا المقرر؟

الشيء الذي لم يزل عالق في ذهني هو العمل الجماعي يعني إلى الآن فائدته مستمر يعني ما زلت استفيد من العمل الجماعي.

س) هل ترى أن المقرر بنفس الأسلوب المستخدم في الفصل الماضي أحدث أي أثر على مستوى دراستك سواءا سلبيا أو إيجابيا؟ مع توضيح أجابتك.

أي في اثر ايجابي وسلي ، الايجابي مثلا الاعتماد على النفس أو self-study يعني بغض النظر عن المحاضر انت كطالب يجب أن تتعاون مع مجموعة من زملائك وممكن تتعلم نفسك بنفسك وتكتشف الأخطاء طبعا مع عدم إهمال دور المحاضر ، لكن من الممكن أن يعين على الدراسة الذاتية أو التعلم الذاتي.

س) هل ترى أنك قمت بمزيد من المعرفة والتعلم بعد تعرضك لهذه الخبرة؟

بالنسبة للمادة هذي لم يكن إلى حد كبير بس أن المادة هذه غير مستخدمة كثير ، يعني الكتابة أشعر أن استخدامها قليل ، يعني في مجال الكتابة أو المادة نفسها لم أشعر بذلك التطور الكبير وهذا ممكن لقلة استخدامها لكن مثلما قلت لك الشيء الجماعي والاعتماد على النفس واكتشاف الأخطاء وتصحيحها للغير كلها أشياء طيبة.

س) هل هذه المعرفة بصفة عامة أو لها علاقة بمهارة الكتابة وتطورها؟

في مهارة الكتابة لا ليست كثيرا ، بسبب أننا انقطعنا عن الاستخدام لهذه للمادة ولكن من خلال التواصل مع الزملاء على الشبكة العنكبوتية ما زلت استخدم الانترنت لأغراض اكااديمية ودراسية يعني طريقة مشابهة.

س) اخبرني بأنه لا يوجد لديكم عندكم أي مادة للكتابة؟ هل ترى أنك بحاجة الى مادة كتابة ولماذا لا تكتبون نصوص؟

يعني ممكن بسبب أننا تعلمنا الأساسيات ويمكن أن يكون السبب هو في أنه لا داعي لأخذ المزيد ، ولكن الكتابة كمهارة هي شيء أساسي لا يستغني عنه أي طالب في دراسته أو حتي فيما بعد في مجال العمل أكيد أننا سنستخدم الكتابة.

س) هل بدأت بعمل مشابه يعتمد على التعلم الجماعي سواءا كان في الفصل أو على موقع مشابه على الانترنت بمجرد الانتهاء من المقرر الماضي (نعم أو لا) وهل من الممكن توضيح أجابتك مع الاسباب؟

يعني بنفس الشيء لا ، أحد المحاضرين طبق هذا الاسلوب في معمل التشريح وقام بتقسيمنا الى مجموعات ، وكان في اعتماد على الذات وهكذا كانت طريقة جدا ممتازة ، وحسب علمي أن هذه طريقة ابتداء من السنة القادمة سيتم تطبيقها في جميع المناهج.

س) طيب هذا التعليم كان معتمدا على الانترنت أو وجها لوجه.

لا، وجها لوجه.

## Appendices

(س) هل ترغب بإعادة ما طبقته من قبل مرة أخرى ولماذا؟

هو جدا مفيد ، ولكن فيه عدد من السلبيات مثل استغراقه لوقت طويل ، صحيح أن يسهل عملية التواصل ، وأيضا صحيح يتم بطريقة غير مباشرة غير معتمدة على التلقين وجها لوجه وخصوصا أن البعض يمكن أن يجرح بخلاف عندما يكون على الشبكة العنكبوتية ولكن يبقى فيه من السلبيات.

(س) لما ذا البعض من أعضاء هيئة التدريس أو الطلاب لا يستخدمون هذا الأسلوب؟

يمكن الطلاب تعودوا على الطريقة التقليدية وبالتالي فإنه صعب أن يغير من الطريقة التقليدية يعني الاعتماد على الشرح وهكذا. الطريقة التقليدية جيدة ولكن العمل الجماعي فوائده أكثر ويعتمد على المجال مثل مجالنا الطبي الذي يعتمد على التعاون والعمل الجماعي وهم من أهم الأشياء التي نحتاجها.

(س) هل استفدت من عملية تبادل الأفكار وتدقيق النصوص الكتابية؟ ممكن تذكر لي مثال واحدا؟

... كان في استفادة من ناحية تصحيح الأخطاء وكذا هم صححوا (زملائي) صححوا أخطائي و أنا صححت لهم ، لا أتذكر مثال واحدا لكن الأخطاء الإملائية والقواعدية كانت كثيرة واستفدنا منها.

(س) هل تشعر بأن زملائك استفادوا من الأفكار التي أدليت بها وكذلك كتابة وتدقيق النصوص التي شاركت فيها؟

نفس الشيء ممكن أني أفدت غيري في المادة نفسها في الكتابة وممكن أن تكون الفوائد متبادلة ، من ناحية التعديل طبعا وخصوصا الأخطاء الإملائية ، وممكن أن هذا خطأ حدث بسبب الخطأ المطبعي أثناء الكتابة يعني نفس الكتابة لو يشاهدها مرة ثانية سيرعرف أنها خطأ بس لم ينتبه لها ، لكن أنت ممكن تصحح له مثلا في عدم ترابط الأفكار أو تركيب الجمل ممكن يكون غير صحيح ، هذا ماأذكره عن المواضيع التي كتبنا عنها ولكن لا أذكر جميع التفاصيل.

(س) ما رأيك في أسلوب الكتابة كعملية التي تم انتاجها في هذا المقرر؟

هو جيد لكن أحس أنها تأخذ وقت من أكثر من اللازم ، يعني أنت لما تجي تكتب تعبير من غير هذه الخطوات ممكن تكتبه بشكل تلقائي ، يعني البعض يمكن عندما تخبره ببتوليد افكار أو أي خطوات اخرى يمكن لا يتطور أو ينتج تعبير معين ولكن عندما تقول له خلاص أكتبلي عن موضوع معين من غير هذه الخطوات ممكن ينتجه بشكل أفضل.

(س) طيب هل ترى أنه الأفضل بالنسبة لك أن تكتب من أول مره من غير تجهيز مسبق عن الأفكار؟

أي بالنسبة لي شخصيا ويختلف من شخص لأخر يحتاج أن يرتب ما سيكتبه ، يعني ممكن في ناس العكس يفضل أن تخبره من أول مره بالموضوع الذي سيكتب عنه فيكتبه من أول مره.

(س) ما أكثر الأشياء التي ساهمت في افادتك جراء استخدام هذا الأسلوب أي الكتابة كعملية والذي لم يكن متوفرا في المقررات السابقة للكتابة؟

يمكن أن يكون أكثر تقدما ، اذكر أن المواضيع في الفصل الأول كانت بسيطة يعني عن صديقي الى آخر ذلك وهي أشياء سهلة ، غير عندما نتكلم عن موقف وتصف صورة وهذا الشيء يتطلب عصف ذهني واستخراج افكار صعبة يعني كلما صار الموضوع أكثر عمقا وتقدما ، يكون أصعب في أن تكتب عنه بسرعة وبالتالي ستتعلم كثيرا من خلال العصف الذهني وانتاج جمل جديدة.

(س) ماهي جوانب الضعف والقوة المتعلقة باستخدام هذا الأسلوب؟

من ميزاته عندما اكتب أي موضوع مهما كان لا بد أن أقوم بنفس الخطوات... وهكذا لا أستغني عن الترتيب وعن كتابة المسودة واستخراج الأفكار ، لكن بالنسبة جوانب الضعف أو السلبيات أن في البعض غير متعود أو لا تعرف إلا أن تكتب من أول مرة.

(س) طيب والسلبيات التي للتو ذكرتها؟

هذي أنها تأخذ وقت طويل ، والبعض قد لا يستوعب أو لا يعرف الطريقة ، لا يعرف وقد تناسب اشخاصا دون اشخاص.

(س) ما رأيك في النصوص الكتابية التي تم انتاجها ومن ثم تدقيقها؟ لماذا كانت كتاباتك وتدقيقك بهذه الصورة التي أنتجت هذا العمل؟ (13:14)

هو قد يكون البعض يفتقد الى الجرأة أو مثلا غير متأكد ، يعني عندما تعرض عليه نص وتقول له صلح الأخطاء يمكن يمر على هذه الأخطاء لكن لا يعلم أن هذا بالفعل خطأ ويقول أخشي أن أعدل شيء ولكن يكون العكس ، يغلط الشيء الصحيح هذا شيء والشيء الاخر البعض ربما يركز أكثر على الأشياء القواعدية المتعلقة ب **grammar** مثل **have, has, it** وغير ذلك أما الأشياء المتعلقة بالأفكار وتركيب الجمل لا يلتفت لها ، يعني لما كنت اصحح كنت أركز أكثر على الأشياء القواعدية والإملائية في الكلمات البسيطة أي أن المحتوى ما كنت أدقق عليه بشكل كبير... بسبب التردد يعني تقول الذي كتب النص ممكن يكون أعلم مني وهو أدري بالمقصد أو ما يقصده. (14:17)

(س) في بعض الأشياء صحيحة ولكن بعض المدققين أو المراجعين حولوها إلى خطأ.

يمكن لم يصفل جيدا، يعني لا يمتلك الخبرة الكافية للتصحيح.

(س) ما هو السبب الرئيسي الذي أدى بك إلى المشاركة أكثر من مرة بينما يوجد أشخاص لم يشاركوا كثيرا؟

أولا يعني أن هذا الشيء متعلق بالمادة التي ندرسها حاليا ، ثانيا عندما تلقى من قبل مدرس المادة تشجيع أو دعم أو تحفيز هذه أشياء تشجع على هذا الشيء.

(س) أها

وأیضا البعض يعمل من أجل من الدرجات وتحسين النتائج ، ولو أن العمل مش مرتبط بدرجات ... يعني يمكن حتى لوأنه يعلم أن في فائدة لكن من غير درجات سيكون عنده أولويات ولا يمكن أن تنكر فائدة العمل هذا.

(س) في التاسك الأول كان فيه بعض النسخ واللصق في الموضوع المتعلق بالسكري ، ما هو السبب وهل في التاسك الثاني والثالث أصبح أقل؟

يمكن يعني أنهم فهموا أن أول خطوة هي كتابة المسودة ، كتابة مسودة أو شيء مشابه فيمكن أنهم فهموا خطأ وتجميع معلومات من الويكيبيديا وبعدين يتم صياغة التعبير ، وممكن الموضوع لم تكن عندهم معلومات عنه فيضطرون أن يأخذوا من الويكيبيديا ويعمل نسخ ولصق ، غير التاسك 2 و 3 التي كانت عبارة موقف في صورة وكان صعب إنك تأخذ شيء مشابه من الانترنت.

(س) هل التطور حصل بسبب المحاضرات الأسبوعية أم بسبب أسلوب الكتابة الجماعية على الويكي سبيسس؟

## Appendices

هو يعني الاثنين مفيدين يعني أتوقع من ناحية المادة أو الفصل أفاد في معرفة أنواع الجمل ال compound وال complex أما من ناحية الويكي سبيسس يعني كان مفيد في تصحيح الأخطاء وأكثر أفادنا من ناحية الانتباه لبعض النقاط التي تفوتنا في المحاضرات وايضا في تراكيب الجمل وهذا أكثر شيء من ناحية الويكي سبيسس ، الاثنين كانت لهم فائدة

## Appendix 12: Analysis of an Individual Case

### Theme 1: Consequences of using the new principles for learning writing

#### Responding to authentic tasks

SA: I think choosing topics-related to medicine derived from our environment is very good because we deal with everyday life (.). When we read something about this topic it helps us understand our field more (.). I mean, if we need to make a presentation on the subject of medical terminology, this will absolutely benefit us. I have a presentation and it will be about diabetes ... (follow-up focus group)

### Theme 2: Perspectives on the process

#### Awareness and consciousness

SA: The writer (.) exerted more effort, whereas the rest didn't expend much effort, they just did editing, revising and discovering errors and that's it (.)... The reason was that the writer was required to use the appropriate style of writing plus thinking about all the suitable rules and structures... (follow-up focus group)

### Theme 3: Benefits of WMCW classes and their related tasks

#### Empowerment of confidence and responsibilities

SA: This practice can help us to add new skills /<< >>/. Many of us have become less nervous about publishing their writing for the public; this means we have become more self-confident. (follow-up focus group)

#### Appreciation of virtual social interaction

SA: I really liked the idea of working socially under common objectives. The discussion about our different ideas was an enjoyable exercise to increase our experience in life. (delayed interviews)

### Theme 4: Concerns of WMCW classes and their related tasks

#### The time factor

SA: I think the reason why there were limited participations was because of the large number of exams and quizzes in a restricted time. Yah that's it. (follow-up focus group)

#### Difficulty of implementation

SA: The majority would still find it (WMCW) very hard to compose texts by themselves without mostly relying on others' pre-made texts or others' available ideas on the web. (follow-up focus group)

### Collaborative authorship and individuals' rights

SA: Because there is an idea which I would seek to convey by writing that sentence and not one of my peers should delete what I want to express, so deleting any part would be really undesirable and prohibited. (follow-up focus group)

### Theme 5: Needs of WMCW classes and their related tasks

#### Facilitation of communication and collaboration

SA: It is true that networking on collaborative tools makes communication much simpler. In such modes, correction was taken place indirectly without feeling embarrassment. I learnt that there are three types of diabetes: childhood diabetes, adult diabetes and pregnancy diabetes. (delayed interviews)

#### Act of understanding (planning phase):

SA: The definition: Diabetes is a syndrome characterized by high blood sugar. It result from disorder in insulin which is a hormone secrete by pancreas

SA: Causes of accidents: 1) driving fast, 2) cross the traffic light, 3) equipment failure, 4) using cell phone, and 5) the weather (e.g. rain, fog, storm)

SA: First of all it helps the circulatory system to reduce blood pressure. It can be used also an anticancer to prevent happening of cancer. On the other hand chocolate has many damages. Eating too much quantity of chocolate may lead to obesity. Obesity is the main risk factor for many diseases.

#### Act of incomplete negotiation (planning phase):

SA: Causes of accidents: 1) driving fast, 2) cross the traffic light, 3) equipment failure, 4) using cell phone, and 5) the weather (e.g. rain, fog, storm)

SA: Excellent (HA), that's really useful. What about other group members? They should participate in a similar way.

#### Act of collaboration (planning phase):

SA: Diabetes is a disorder characterized by high blood sugar. It result from disorder in insulin which is a hormone secrete by pancreas.

HA: (deletion for a name-SA)...but the diabetes is syndrome so we must rewrite the definition right?

SA: The definition: Diabetes is a syndrome characterized by high blood sugar.

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It result from disorder in insulin which is a hormone secrete by pancreas.

SA: Excuse me (HA) can you tell me what is the difference between ice and snow? HA: Yah, though ice and snow are both made up of water but the main difference: is that snow fall can be seen only in winters at areas of high altitudes and places near the polar regions whereas ice can be seen in any season of the year in our refrigerator. SA: aha, thanks a lot (HA). That's interesting.

Act of revision (editing and revision phase)

Task 1

SA:

Diabetes is a syndrome characterized by high blood sugar. It ~~occur~~ occurs by many reasons, and we can't treat it, but we can minimize its impact by many methods. One of its causes is obesity that happens by 85% in diabetics. Another is genes specially in relative husbands. Another is gender. It occurs in the female more than the male. The other is too eating. After we know some reasons of diabetes, we should know how deal the diabetic with the diabetes. First step the diabetic should know this disorder is syndrome to the death. For that he must accept this fact, and he must do all the instructions that are given by the doctor carefully. Second is the diet. Third, he must do exercise daily or four times in the week at least. Fourth, the diabetic is given injection of insulin for minimize this syndrome. In short the diabetics have to know these causes and these cures.

SA:

My passage is about diabetes. I will explain how it ~~destroy~~ destroys the pancreas and the body and how we can cure it or reduce the symptoms. Diabetes is one of very serious syndromes that attack millions of people around the world. In Saudi Arabia there are 4 million person have this syndrome .It can shoot any age and can happen to anyone. Although we are not sure about the causes of diabetes we knew that it happens with the body's own immune system attack and destroys insulin-producing cells in the pancreas. Without insulin the glucose that we need to live has a lot of time entering the cells of the body that need it. If too much glucose builds up in the blood, then a diabetic may begin to ~~have~~ has headaches or blurry vision. They possible become very thirsty and have dry. If glucose levels are too low, then a diabetic almost feel tired, hungry, confused or nervous. There are two types of diabetes. They are called Type 1 and Type 2 some symptoms of diabetes include: excessive thirsty, constant hunger, sudden weight loss for no reason, rapid hard breathing, sudden vision changes or blurry vision .These symptoms can occur at any time. In type 1 diabetes, a person's pancreas produces little or no insulin, and because insulin is necessary for life. People with Type 1 diabetes must take several insulin injection and take it everyday all of their lives.

## Task 2

SA:

It was on a Saturday. The street was very crowded. There was car accident between two cars and the first owner of the car was very angry. the causes of the accident were no respect ~~signal to the traffic~~ light. There is a bus stopped next to the light. Nxet of the bus there is a taxi car. There is some one set in moveing chair next to the corner of the shop. In front of this shop there is child ridding scotter or something like this. Police car was coming toward the accident of the cars. There was a disabled truck behind the police car .The girl dropped purchases because of the speed of the motorcycle and her dog was afraid.

SA:

accident is so dangerous and alot of people were killed by accidents. one of the accidents is what we can see in this picture. It was on a Saturday. The street was very crowded. There was car accident between two cars and the first owner of the car was very angry. the causes of the accident were no respect to the traffic light. There is a bus stopped next to the light. Nnext of the bus there is a taxi car. There is some one set in moveing chair next to the corner of the shop. In front of this shop there is child ridding scotter or something like this. Police car was coming toward the accident of the cars. There was a disabled truck behind the police car .The girl dropped purchases because of the speed of the motorcycle and her dog was afraid.

- Act of composition (drafting phase)

### Task 1

SA: There are many common diseases in our society one of them is diabetes. According to the statistics, there are 3.5 million in Saudi Arabia suffer from this disease. Diabetes is a group of metabolic diseases characterized by high blood sugar levels which result from defects in insulin secretion, or action or both. There are three main types of diabetes. First of all is type one diabetes which result from loss of the insulin producing by beta cells in the pancreas. It can affect children or adult and sometimes it transmit genetically. We can minimize its impact by inject insulin. Second, type2 diabetes which is a combination of insulin resistance and insulin deficiency. Generally, it initiates after 30 years of age. The overweight and the obese are more susceptible to develop type2 diabetes. Finally, gestational diabetes which occurs during pregnancy usually after the 2nd. It is characterized by hormone secreted by placenta which inhibit the action of insulin and it can improve or disappear after delivery. There are several symptoms of diabetes. First of all, polyuria which include presence of glucose in the urine. Second, polyphagia. The patient still hungry all the time although he or she has eaten. In addition, polydypsia (frequent thirst) which is unrelated to exercise or hot weather. Also, fatigue which may make you fall asleep unexpectedly after meals. And finally, slow healing wounds. We can confirm if the patient has diabetes by making diabetes test. If the level of glucose in the blood more than 126 mg/dl before meals, the patient is affect by diabetes. Diabetes is chronic disease so, there is no cure for it. There are however, many treatments, medications and lifestyle strategies for managing diabetes.

## Appendices

- Individual student texts: before and after the intervention of WMCWP course

### Text 1: (Before the course)

SA: Big cities are full of noise. because big cities have a lot of cars, people, males, factories and crowded. Big cities have their anoyimity. Because they have a log of people, workers, students and All of these make their anoyimity. Big cities have a high crime rate: Because the big cities have richer people and a lot of poor people, so the poor people the don't have food, money, houses, clothes and everything they need it. They will kill and make crimes, because these reasons. And another reason, when the cities are very big the controle of them will very hard. So there are a lof of people hates Big cities.

### Text 2: (after the course)

SA: My college- college of medicine of King Faisal University- is one of the best medical colleges to study medicine for two reasons. The first reason is that it has good teachers. They graduated from the best universities in the world. Dr XXX for example, graduated from Oxford University. The teachers are professional and have good ways to explain their subjects. Second, it has good campus. It is new and neat and it is cleaned everyday. The campus of my college has many labs, such as anatomy lab, histology lab, and computer lab. For these two reasons, if you want to study medicine, one of the best decisions is to go to college of medicine of XXX University.

## **Appendix 13: Samples from the lectures Plans**

### ***Lecture 3: Listing-order, time order signals and listing and outlining***

#### **Lecture objectives:**

1. To teach the learners to practice describing the contents of the pictures according to their order.
2. To develop them so they can present an accurate description of the pictures' contents.
3. To develop them so they can distinguish between the topic and the controlling idea behind why they are used.

#### **Procedures:**

1. The instructor will help learners to practice and understand the differences between topics and controlling ideas by giving various examples from their lives.
2. The instructor will start by describing one of the volunteer learners. Then, the learners will be asked to perform the same actions among themselves.
3. The learners will complete the two the tasks in their textbook and then will be directed to complete the worksheet. (worksheet No.3)

#### **In-class tasks:**

Practice 1 (page: 100): space order and paragraph organization

Practice 3 (page: 102): adding specific details

Worksheet No. 3 (optional)

#### **Wiki task:**

The learners will produce their individual writing or drafting about task 1 (diabetes) (See appendix 1).

### ***Lecture 8: adjectives, cumulative and coordinate adjectives***

#### **Lecture objectives:**

1. To encourage learners to use many adjectives to make their descriptions more descriptive and colourful.
2. To allow them to identify the differences between various forms of adjectives in English written texts (-ed versus -ing) and (comparative and superlative).
3. To allow the learners to know how to use cumulative and coordinate adjectives.

#### **Procedures:**

1. The instructor will commence the lecture by distributing a different written script amongst the learners after dividing them into smaller groups. He will ask the learners to read the script and identify the adjectives used in the texts.
2. The instructor will ask learners to use a set of adjectives and put them into meaningful sentences.

3. The learners and their instructor will identify some useful vocabulary.

**In-class tasks:**

Practice 5 (page: 106): identifying adjectives

Practice 8 (page: 110): cumulative and coordinate adjectives

Practice 10 (page: 111): writing sentences with adjectives

**Wiki task:**

The learners will continue their revision on the texts produced on wikis about task 1 (diabetes) (See appendix 1).

***Lecture 10: prepositions and prepositional phrases***

**Lecture objectives:**

1. To increase the ability of the learners regarding the different meanings and functions of prepositions; e.g. to illustrate *where* and *when* and to express possession.
2. To increase the ability of the learners to use prepositional phrases and recognise how they are combined and used in different places.

**Procedures:**

1. The instructor will perform acts that express some prepositions and ask the learners to say the phrase describing the act and then ask each of them to write it down.
2. The learners will individually complete a worksheet, No.10, on the same topic (see worksheet No.10).

**In-class tasks:**

1. Practice 11 (page: 115): prepositional phrases
2. Worksheet No.10 (optional)

**Wiki task:**

The learners will continue their revision on the texts produced on wikis about task 2 (car accidents) (See appendix 1).

## Appendix 14: Review of the most Cited Papers in WMCW (Stoddart, Chan and Liu, 2013)

Paper	Research	Principles
<i>Using wikis to enhance and develop writing skills among secondary school students in Hong Kong</i> (Mak & Coniam, 2008)	Secondary school year 7 ESL students in Hong Kong using wikis as a collaborative writing platform	In the initial stage of learning how to use the wikis, ask students to discuss general issues instead of complicated issues (it will reduce anxiety and accelerate the learning process) Teachers should organize learners' work to allow each student to take a part in every development stage (This way, students will be motivated) Teachers should build tables and formulas to monitor learners' participation and interactions.
<i>Using a wiki to evaluate individual contribution to a collaborative learning project</i> (Trentin, 2009)	Evaluating the collaborative learning process of co-writing in PBwiki (now PB works)	At the beginning, teachers should design a practice article for students to learn how to use wikis and ask students to rewrite others' writing as practice. Informal communication (e.g., discussion board in wiki) should be encouraged (Informal communication is student-driven) Timely feedback should be provided when monitoring students
<i>Building a networked environment in wikis: The evolving phases of collaborative learning in a wikiobook project</i> (Lim & Kelsey, 2009)	Investigating learners' interaction and collaboration in a graduate course wikiobook project	Teachers should carefully create and control the learning environment which is student-centered, so that autonomous collaboration will emerge Teachers should provide learners with diverse contexts for interaction
<i>Student-initiated attention to form in wiki-based collaborative writing</i> (Kessler, 2009)	Pre-service Non-Native Speaker (NNS) English teachers in a web content-based wiki collaborative writing course learning English-speaking countries' cultures and correction of grammar errors	Students may encounter plenty of challenges taking new technology-enhanced tasks, and teachers had better discuss them with the learners beforehand.
<i>Developing collaborative autonomous learning abilities in computer mediated language learning: Attention to meaning among students in wiki space</i> (Kessler & Blikowski, 2010)	Analyzing phases of individual behaviors and group collaboration of pre-service Non-Native Speaker (NNS) English teachers in a web content-based wiki collaborative writing course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To empower students to do autonomous wiki activities with flexible assignments is important because learners like to interact in various ways</li> </ul>

(Continued)

Paper	Research	Principles
<p><i>Collaborative writing: Fostering foreign language and writing conventions development</i> (Eloia &amp; Oskoz, 2010)</p>	<p>An advanced Spanish writing course to develop learners' writing skills in Spanish and expand their personal experiences through collaborative writing by using PBwiki (now PBworks) Swedish software engineering students within computer science, taking a 7-week advanced ESP course in Spring 2008. Project intended to assist students in academic writing exercises related to professional needs of future software engineers</p>	<p>When introducing learners unfamiliar genres, teachers should choose the methodological approaches in which stress or frustration can be minimized                      Breaking assignment into smaller units (This allows an instructor to monitor and address problems faster). It also makes the task less intimidating to the student                      Encouraging students to incorporate their own deficiencies within the document (Specifically adding non-assignment text. Example: "Please add more info here. I need more")                      Encouraging cross-group critiques (Allows students to learn from others while simultaneously assisting their development)</p>
<p><i>Learning outcomes and students' perceptions of online writing: Simultaneous implementation of a forum, blog, and wiki in an EFL blended learning setting</i> (Miyazoe &amp; Anderson, 2010)</p>	<p>Blended ESL program for sophomore Japanese university students (included forums, blogs and wikis)                      n = 61</p>	<p>Incorporated very early introduction of digital media to be used (previous semester)                      Allowed for the use of "screen names". Letting participants keep their identities anonymous encouraged greater participation and meant that students felt less intimidated to critique others.                      Used multiple formats for greater breadth and to demark activities; forums for discussion, blogs for thoughts and wikis for collaboration.                      Teachers should teach students appropriate skills (e.g., critical evaluation) to scaffold students.</p>
<p><i>Using a Wiki to Scaffold Primary-School Students' Collaborative Writing</i> (Woo et al., 2011)</p>	<p>Collaborative writing projects for a Hong Kong primary-five English-language class in which the way wiki's key affordances' aid to scaffold learners is examined</p>	<p>Included one class of dedicated software instruction. Instruction provided by knowledgeable (non-class) teacher                      Specifically researched and then chose a good platform (WePaint)                      Incorporated a class about how to collaborate and give feedback. Gave tangible examples feedback sentence forms</p>
<p><i>Exploring students' perceptions of integrating Wiki technology and peer feedback into English writing courses</i> (Lin &amp; Yang, 2011)</p>	<p>32 sophomore English students at Taiwan college general writing assignment</p>	



