

Balancing Teacher and Peer Feedback in Writing Medical Article Summaries

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Introduction. Being consistently the least favoured by RSU students according to needs analysis results, the writing skill as an ESP course component should not be left neglected. On the contrary, a well-designed intervention is needed in order to alter students' lukewarm attitude and get them more motivated and involved in writing activities. Personalized teacher feedback may have a formative effect; however, feedback provided solely by the teacher discourages students' autonomy. Combined teacher and peer feedback is probably more likely to raise students' awareness of text production aspects.

Aim, Material and Methods. The aim of the present research is to ascertain if there is synergy between teacher and peer feedback that results in stronger motivation and improved quality of writing. Three groups of RSU students from the Faculty of Rehabilitation participated in the research. The control group was given feedback through peer group discussions, while in one experimental group the students were only provided with personalised teacher feedback by means of software Jing videos. The second experimental group received both teacher and peer feedback.

Results. As the writing task difficulty level grows during the course, students need to invest increasingly more time and effort into writing a summary. The students' attitudes and opinions were assessed through pre-course and post-course questionnaires. Their writing was evaluated by analysing marking scores and by frequency analysis. In the control group, the quality of the students' writing reduced. In the first experimental group, weaker students' summaries also showed a downward trend, while stronger students' summaries quality improved. In the second experimental group, both weaker and stronger students sustained the quality of their writing. For frequency analysis, article usage was chosen as one of the most problematic grammar areas for Latvian students. There was a lot of fluctuation in article usage in all three participant groups; however, there were some random positive trends in experimental groups. As to the students' attitudes, post-course questionnaires revealed much a stronger motivation in both experimental groups compared to the control group.

Conclusions. Software Jing videos used for personalised teacher feedback are an effective tool for the modern teacher to strengthen students' motivation for writing. However, teacher feedback gives better results if combined with peer feedback which enhances students' awareness of how criteria for good writing should be met.