



Using Mobile Application as an Alternative to Pre-Writing Strategy

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Abstract

Second language learners typically have problems in writing and producing a good writing product. This is strongly related to their inability of focusing on the most important stage of writing which is the pre-writing stage; the stage of producing ideas and key points. To overcome this issue, the use of mobile application named Pinterest as an alternative pre-writing strategy is definitely relevant in accordance to the 21st century teaching and learning. Therefore, this research aimed to identify the effectiveness of using Pinterest as an alternative pre-writing strategy and students' perception on the use of Pinterest in terms of advantages and disadvantages. A set of pre-test and post-test were given to 60 respondents followed by an online survey by 30 respondents at the end of the intervention. The findings revealed that the use of Pinterest as an alternative pre-writing strategy did actually help the respondents in writing. Based on the findings, it could be summarized that Pinterest as an alternative pre-writing strategy holds the opportunity of encouraging pre-writing and improving the writing process entirely. However, in order for students to fully benefit from the method, the challenges that deter the use of Pinterest need to be overcome.

Keywords: *alternative pre-writing strategy, ESL Pinterest, pre-writing strategy, second language writing.*

1. Introduction

Pre-writing process is frequently overlooked by beginner writers and it is also believed that most writers find that the most difficult part of writing is at the very beginning [1]. It is also emphasized that students today do not have much interest in writing though the skill is vital as a language requirement [2]. Various pre-writing techniques have been introduced in order to ease the process of pre-writing. However, most seemed to fail in promoting the idea of pre-writing. In line with the 21st Century teaching and learning, it is important that education develop and advance along with technology. People in general have to keep up with technology if they do not want to be left behind [3]. Hence, it is believed that writing teachers should be aware of the potential of technology and networks for their student as young people are certainly active participants and technology users [4]. As students' lives nowadays revolve around technology and social media, the integration of technology in an ESL classroom will definitely make them eager to learn as it gives them the push or motivation to learn [5]. Social media is without doubt a powerful tool that teachers can use to truly access the learning potential of their students [6]. Therefore, this research is an attempt to investigate the possibility of using Pinterest as an alternative pre-writing strategy in ESL classroom. With the implementation of technology in writing through Pinterest, it should be able to offer students the advantage of studying anytime and anywhere at their own pace [7]. It will be a convenient platform where knowledge can easily be accessed [8]. Thus, it is believed that the implementation of Pinterest as a pre-writing strategy to be affective in promoting student's achievement [9]. This research is in high hope to prove the effectiveness of implementing Pinterest as a pre-writing strategy in order to develop a better pre-writing

strategy as an alternative to the traditional mind mapping. Pinterest is one of the recent platforms that should be highlighted in the education field particularly in teaching English writing. Pre-writing is a stage that is often neglected in the writing process though it is one of the most crucial part of writing. This makes it necessary for teachers to find a way to encourage pre-writing among students. Pre-writing could easily be carried out through the use of Pinterest. The purpose and design of Pinterest is simple. It works as a virtual pin board that allows the user to sort, collect, and organize online items where users are equipped with their own personal online 'boards,' to which they can 'pin' items and group according to themes or topics [10]. Through Pinterest, students are able to share more than just their thoughts, but to share photos, videos and documents [11]. This means that students can easily get ideas for their writing through Pinterest. The use of Pinterest enables a clearer visual understanding of the learning which obviously leads to less confusion in the students' minds and when there is less confusion, deeper understanding can begin to take hold, develop, and grow [12]. In the learning process, the learners should be looked as an important agent; their interest and characteristics must be taken into consideration, and learning should build on prior knowledge so learners understand how to construct new knowledge from authentic experience, to support active participation and engaged learning [13]. Hence, teacher should incorporate the fondness of the use of technology in student's life into classroom. Researchers have found social media to be an attraction to students because they are a mean for students to self-express and it is also where interactions are relevant to them and the platform gives a motivating vibe [14]. The most valuable and effective learning occurs when students actively construct their own understanding, which is often achieved through their own experience [15]. As stated in [16], social media give the opportunity for students to experience the

out-of-class interaction; they get to know one another in a less formal environment, which can be highly produce a high level of interactivity. Most importantly, it is important that teachers do not give up in finding ways to elevate students interest in language learning [17].

2. Methodology

This research used the experimental research design where pre-test and post-test were given to 60 respondents followed by an online survey to 30 respondents. The data for this research was collected from the form 2 students in a secondary school in Putrajaya. Two classes were chosen; 1 as the controlled group and the other one as the uncontrolled group.

2.1 Pre-test and post-test

Both classes were given pre-test and post-test of the pre-selected topic of 'My Dream Car'. In both tests, the respondents were asked to create a mind map to describe their dream cars and then write an essay using the descriptions. The controlled group went through the intervention of using Pinterest as an alternative pre-writing strategy. They were required to create an account on Pinterest and later they were asked to create a board entitled 'My Dream Car'. They were then asked to search and pin related pictures of their liking on their respective boards. They then produced an essay of 'My Dream Car' as their post-test with the help of their board on Pinterest as a visual reference. All pre-test and post-test were marked using the PT3 rubric for writing.

2.2 Online survey

Following the intervention, an online survey through Google Forms was distributed to the controlled group consisting 30 respondents. The survey was divided into three parts; Sections A, B and C. Section A covered on the students' perception on the use of Pinterest as an alternative pre-writing strategy. Section B on the other hand covered on the advantages of using Pinterest as an alternative pre-writing strategy and finally on Section C, respondents were asked of the disadvantages or challenges of using Pinterest. All elements were measured in Likert scale measurement; from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Pre-test and post-test

The researcher wanted to know whether there was different score between the students before and after the intervention by using Pinterest as an alternative pre-writing strategy. Essays were marked using the PT3 writing rubric for question 6.

Table 1: Marks and bands based on the rubric used to mark the pre-test and post-test.

Grade	Marks	Band
A	25-30	Excellent
B	19-24	Good
C	13-18	Satisfactory
D	7-12	Weak
E	1-6	Very Weak

Table 2: Marks and grades obtained by respondents in the controlled group for both pre-test and post-test.

Respondent	Pre -Test Marks	Grade	Post-Test Marks	Grade
1	10	D	15	C
2	20	B	25	A
3	19	B	23	B

4	6	E	18	C
5	19	B	28	A
6	2	E	20	B
7	4	E	18	C
8	17	C	23	B
9	15	C	20	B
10	18	B	24	B
11	16	C	22	B
12	23	B	27	A
13	17	C	23	B
14	19	B	24	B
15	2	E	18	C
16	20	B	25	A
17	12	D	25	A
18	20	B	25	A
19	19	B	24	B
20	13	C	18	C
21	13	C	17	C
22	17	C	23	B
23	13	C	20	B
24	19	B	23	B
25	20	B	25	A
26	17	C	24	B
27	18	C	26	A
28	19	B	25	A
29	26	A	28	A
30	25	A	27	A

Table 3: The percentage of respondents obtaining each grade in pre-test

Grade	Number of Respondents	Percentage
A	2	6.67
B	10	33.33
C	11	36.67
D	3	10
E	4	13.33

Table 4: The percentage of respondents obtaining each grade in post-test

Grade	Number of Respondents	Percentage
A	11	36.67
B	13	43.33
C	6	20
D	-	-
E	-	-

Based on the results, it can be concluded that the achievement of the respondents from the controlled group increased after the intervention. Each and every one of them has increased in marks in their post-test. In the Pre-test, only 6.67% of the respondents obtained the Excellent band while in the Post-test, the percentage increased to 36.67% after using Pinterest. Another 33.33% obtained Good band while 36.67% obtained Satisfactory band in their Pre-test, however the number of respondents achieving Good increased to 43.33% and Satisfactory respondents decreased to 20.0% after using Pinterest as a pre-writing strategy. In the Pre-test, 10% of the respondents obtained the Weak band while 13.33% obtained Very Weak but both bands were not obtained in the Post-test which showed that their achievement increased after the use of Pinterest as an alternative pre-writing strategy. From these results, it is proven that the implementation of Pinterest as an alternative pre-writing strategy was able to help students in increasing their achievement in writing [9].

The table showed a few drastic improvements among the students. For example, respondent 6 and 15 had increased from the Very Weak band to Good band. Both respondents obtained Very Weak because they were not able to describe their dream car in the form of an essay during the pre-test however after the intervention, they were able to describe their dream car well and clear. This could highly be affected by their motivation in writing. Prior using Pinterest, they had to create a mind map to describe the car using their own imagination which might be something that is foreign to them. However, by using Pinterest, a social media platform where they are quite familiar with, they were able to come up with descriptions with the help of the images they

have pinned on their boards on Pinterest. The aid of the visual reference on a social media platform has elevated their motivation to write better [14].

Another factor that might have affected this drastic change is the accessibility of the social media platform. The implementation of social media in learning is supposed to ease and help the students. During Pre-test, respondents had to do it all by themselves; from thinking to constructing. However, the use of Pinterest as an alternative pre-writing strategy was able to help them in developing ideas easily through the aid of the images that they have pinned on their board. Hence, the intervention of using Pinterest is proved to be helpful towards the respondents as it is very accessible to users where all they need to do is search and pin [8].

Table 5: Marks obtained by respondents in the uncontrolled group for both pre-test and post-test.

Respondent	Pre –Test Marks	Grade	Post-Test Marks	Grade
1	12	D	15	C
2	7	D	12	D
3	8	D	13	C
4	15	C	13	C
5	15	C	13	C
6	18	C	15	C
7	24	B	26	A
8	18	C	14	C
9	25	A	27	A
10	13	D	13	D
11	20	B	17	C
12	18	C	16	C
13	5	E	10	D
14	18	C	12	D
15	14	C	12	D
16	18	C	13	C
17	17	C	15	C
18	15	C	12	D
19	13	C	14	C
20	19	B	20	B
21	16	C	17	C
22	20	B	23	B
23	14	C	16	C
24	22	B	20	B
25	7	D	10	D
26	17	C	18	C
27	18	C	20	B
28	2	E	10	D
29	7	D	2	E
30	2	E	2	A

Table 6: The percentage of respondents obtaining each grade in pre-test.

Grade	Number of Respondents	Percentage
A	1	3.33
B	5	16.67
C	15	50
D	6	20
E	3	10

Table 7: The percentage of respondents obtaining each grade in post-test.

Grade	Number of Respondents	Percentage
A	2	6.67
B	4	13.33
C	14	46.67
D	8	26.67
E	2	6.67

Based on the tables above, it can be concluded that respondents in the uncontrolled group did not increase as much marks in their Post-test as their results do not show much improvement as compared to their pre-test. In the Pre-test, 3.33% of the respondents obtained Excellent and the percentage increased to 6.67% in the Post-test. 16.67% of the respondents scored Good but the percentage decreased to 13.33% in the Post-test. Half of the number of respondents (50%) obtained Satisfactory in the Pre-

Test however the percentage went down to 46.67% in the Post test. The controlled group managed to obtain zero percentage of Weak and Very Weak respondents. However, the uncontrolled group had 20% of Weak respondents during the Pre-test and 10% of them obtained Very Weak. In the Post-test the percentage of Weak respondents increased to 26.67% while Very Weak respondents slightly decrease to 6.67%

From these results, it can be clearly seen that there is a huge difference in achievement between the controlled group and the uncontrolled group. The difference in result might largely be affected by the lack of interest in developing ideas as well as writing. As teachers, it is definitely our responsibility to cater to this problem. Lack of interest in learning should not exist in a classroom. Teachers should be able to come up with ways to overcome this problem [17]. As technology is a part of youth’s lives nowadays, it is believed that students’ motivation and interest could be elevated by implementing technology in class. It is important for teachers to provide the best learning experience to students according to their needs and interests [13]. The use of social media which is Pinterest in writing is able to increase students’ interest as they are used to social media in their everyday lives [4].

It is also very important for teachers to provide the opportunity for students to do self-learning. It is strongly believed that the implementation of technology in learning could do so. The use of Pinterest as a pre-writing strategy lets student to explore and develop their own idea at their own personal space [7] and students definitely learn better through their own experience of developing ideas [15] rather than being spoon fed by teachers. In this era, teacher-centred learning is no longer relevant as students need to experience the learning themselves so that they do better. People learn better when they personally experience the event, hence it is teachers’ role to find ways to provide the best learning experience for the students.

3.2 Online survey

Tables 8, 9 and 10 presents the findings in percentage.

Table 8: The perception of students on the implementation of Pinterest as a pre-writing strategy.

Items	SD	D	PA	A	SA
I feel comfortable while using Pinterest as a strategy to learn writing.	0%	3.3%	13.3%	53.3%	30%
I feel encouraged and motivated to learn writing while using Pinterest.	0%	3.3%	20%	53.3%	23.3%
I prefer visual mapping as a method to spark ideas instead of writing them down in sentences.	0%	0%	23.3%	36.7%	40%
I find Pinterest very interesting and very easy to use.	0%	0%	26.7%	26.7%	46.7%
I will use Pinterest for every chance of using a visual map from now on.	0%	6.7%	26.7%	36.7%	30%

SD: Strongly Disagree; D: Disagree; PA: Partially Agree; A: Agree; SA: Strongly Agree

Based on the table above, it is believed that the respondents from the controlled group accepted the intervention positively. The results demonstrated that majority of the respondents (96.6%) agreed that they feel comfortable using Pinterest in writing and the same percentage of respondents felt encouraged and motivated when using Pinterest. As stated in [5], the implementation of technology such as Pinterest in an ESL classroom will give students the motivation to learn better. It will become a push for them to be interested in learning. It is important for teachers to tackle the students’ interest in learning. Teachers could do it by identifying student’s personal interest and

ability. In this modern era, gadgets and technology are part of students' lives. Thus, teachers should be opened up to the idea of implementing technology in an ESL classroom. On the other hand, a total of 100% respondents agreed that they prefer using visual map to develop ideas for writing. All respondents (100%) also agreed that Pinterest is interesting and easy to be accessed. It is important for teachers to choose the right teaching aid in order to make learning easier and better for students. The tool that teachers choose should be convenient and accessible so that students will be able to truly explore the tool and experience learning by themselves [7,8]. Pinterest is suitable as an alternative pre-writing strategy as it is easy to be used in class. Students will be able to develop ideas better through the features offered on Pinterest and all they need to do is basically search for related images and pin [10]. As stated in [11], students can easily share their thoughts from the items that they have chosen and pinned on their boards. They also can easily develop, construct and elaborate their ideas as they are visualized on the board. Most of the respondents (93.4%) said that they would continue on using Pinterest when they have the opportunity.

Table 9: Advantages of using Pinterest as a pre-writing strategy with regard to developing ideas, gaining new ideas and producing better essay.

Items		SD	D	PA	A	SA
Developing Ideas	I can organize my thoughts better by pinning visuals and related images on Pinterest before the actual writing.	0%	0%	20%	53.3%	26.7%
	I can expand my ideas for writing better while using Pinterest.	0%	3.3%	6.7%	66.7%	23.3%
	I get more and better ideas for writing Ideas or Pins posted by my peers on Pinterest.	0%	3.3%	20%	50%	26.7%
Gaining New Knowledge	I learn new vocabulary from browsing other Pins on Pinterest.	0%	6.7%	23.3%	50%	20%
	I discover new forms of sentences and poetic expression that can be beneficial for my essay while browsing on Pinterest.	0%	3.3%	20%	50%	26.7%

	I can obtain a lot of useful information and knowledge while browsing through Pins on Pinterest.	0%	3.3%	10%	50%	36.7%
Producing Better Essay	I find it easier to complete my essays after participating in Pinterest activities.	0%	3.3%	10%	66.7%	20%
	I can stay focused longer while using Pinterest as compared to normal lessons on writing.	0%	0%	20%	60%	20%
	I know how to improve on my writing skills with help from Pinterest.	0%	0%	26.7%	63.3%	10%

SD: Strongly Disagree; D: Disagree; PA: Partially Agree; A: Agree; SA: Strongly Agree

The advantages of using Pinterest as a pre-writing strategy is discussed according to three different themes; developing ideas, gaining new knowledge and producing better essay. Based on the table, all of them (100%) agreed that it is easier for them to organize their ideas by pinning related pictures on their boards. 96.7% of the respondents agreed that it was easier for them to elaborate their ideas when using Pinterest and the same percentage (96.7%) agreed they were able to get more and better ideas when using Pinterest. As stated in [12], ideas are clearer when there is less confusion. Hence it is easier for students to develop their ideas by choosing related pictures and pinning on the board. They can only focus on the visuals and elaborate from it. In terms of gaining new knowledge, most of the respondents (93.3%) said that they were able to gain new vocabulary through the use of Pinterest. A majority of 96.7% agreed that they were able to discover new expressions to be used in their writing when using Pinterest. The same percentage (96.7%) of respondents said that they were able to discover on a lot of new knowledge through Pinterest. The implementation of social media in an ESL classroom does not only motivate students to learn better, it also works as a platform where knowledge can be accessed beyond limit [8]. Everything is at the end of our fingertip now, thus teachers should really consider integrating technology such as Pinterest in class. Teacher should not deprive students of their rights of getting the best learning experience. Teacher should try to implement technology in class as stated in [6], it has the ability to expose students to their true learning potential. The final part of the advantages of using Pinterest as a pre-writing strategy is discussed in terms of the ability of producing a better essay. Most of the respondents (96.7%) agreed that they find it easier to complete an essay when they pre-write using Pinterest. 100% of them said that they were able to stay focus when using Pinterest rather than other normal writing lesson. All of the respondents (100%) also agreed that they were able to improve their writing skills when using Pinterest as an alternative pre-writing strategy.

The implementation of Pinterest as an alternative pre-writing strategy has succeeded in catering the problem stated in [1] for the students. Respondents in the controlled group strongly stated that they were able to write better after using Pinterest for pre-writing. Teachers should be able to come up with ways to make students improve in their writing ability. Writing consist of a few stages and one stage that is most neglected is the pre-writing stage where it is a stage of developing and constructing ideas. Pre-writing is frequently overlooked because it is boring for students because it is usually done in the form of writing. It is somehow a repetitive process in which they need to write down their ideas first and then rewrite it again in an essay. However, through the implementation of Pinterest, pre-writing is made easy as all they need to do is search for related images and pin it on their board. These simple steps could easily help them develop ideas in order to be elaborated in their essay [10]. The simplicity of this pre-writing strategy could help students in improving their ability to write [9] as ideas are more organized and clearer.

Table 10: Disadvantages of using Pinterest as an alternative pre-writing strategy.

Items	SD	D	PA	A	SA
I find it difficult to find a secure Internet connection.	6.7%	33.3%	30%	23.3%	6.7%
I tend to be distracted by other features of Pinterest.	3.3%	16.7%	46.7%	30%	3.3%
I am a tech-savvy person and I can use Pinterest very well.	0%	3.3%	20%	53.3%	23.3%
I have smartphones/ tablets that can support Pinterest and other mobile platforms to learn writing.	0%	0%	16.7%	50%	33.3%

SD: Strongly Disagree; D: Disagree; PA: Partially Agree; A: Agree; SA: Strongly Agree

Based on the results of the survey, more than half of the respondents (60%) agreed that the stability of the Internet connection is one of the issues that they have to face when using Pinterest. On the other hand, 80% of the respondents said that the other features available on Pinterest tend to distract them. A majority of 96.6% has no problem in handling Pinterest as they are used to technology. All of them have no issue if they were to use Pinterest as a pre-writing strategy as they own devices that are compatible to Pinterest. According to the table above, among the challenges that they face is the stability of the Internet. This could be considered as a universal challenge when trying to implement technology in classroom. One way to cater to this issue is by asking students to share their devices for less Internet usage. Another problem that was found during this research is the distraction of other features on Pinterest. Other than pinning images on boards, Pinterest like any other social media platform has the features of sharing and connecting with other users on the application. Hence, it is important for teachers to ensure that students only use Pinterest to pre-write during class. Monitor them at all times, walk around the class and check on their progress. Let them know that the teacher is always aware of their doings. Teachers could also use this disadvantage as an advantage. Let it be a motivation to the students. Make it as a reward to students who are able to complete the task before the rest; if they are able to finish their essay, they can explore the other features on Pinterest.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the implementation of Pinterest as an alternative pre-writing strategy is proven to be effective and helpful to students in order to develop ideas for writing. It also plays its part as a motivation booster in order to increase students' interest in

learning particularly writing. However, there are still a few challenges that need to be overcome in order to fully utilize the full potential of using Pinterest as a pre-writing strategy. Teachers should be able to teach students on how to use Pinterest as a pre-writing strategy effectively so that students could use it correctly and achieve the objective. In general, ESL teachers should work hard in order to make students love language learning. Writing is a part of the language skills thus teachers should be able to find ways for students to polish their skills in order to produce good essays. Apart from teachers, students should also always be opened to new methods of learning. The era has changed so the teaching and learning process should also advance with time. Based on the findings, it is proven that the use of Pinterest as an alternative pre-writing strategy shows the importance of the pre-writing stage and is able to help students in improving their writing skills.

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