

Promoting Noticing Through Collaborative Feedback Tasks in EFL College Writing Classrooms

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Though the concept of noticing has been extensively addressed in the SLA literature, few studies suggest promoting noticing through collaborative feedback tasks (CFTs) in an EFL college writing classroom. To fill this gap, this paper attempts to provide a framework for promoting noticing through CFTs using three sequenced and interrelated CFTs: (I) *pre-noticing stage* that aims at instructing the students on how the feedback task functions and what its purposes are, (II) *while-noticing stage* that is based on two interrelated feedback tasks, namely *contrastive-critical framing* and *transformed practice*, and (III) *post-noticing stage* that is aimed at helping students reflect on what they have learned during the entire feedback process. To begin with, the article provides definitions of noticing. It then discusses how noticing and feedback are closely related to facilitate second or foreign language writing learning. In what follows, it discusses how noticing and CFTs complement one another in order to facilitate critical and focused noticing to help students enhance their writing accuracy and fluency. Lastly, the article examines some challenges in promoting noticing through CFTs in an EFL writing classroom.

Noticing as a phenomenon that arises while paying attention to language input and output in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) has been widely examined and discussed by researchers (e.g., Ellis, 1991; Robinson, 1995; Schmidt, 1990). However, there are very few studies that have addressed noticing through collaborative feedback tasks (CFTs) in EFL writing classrooms (e.g., Qi & Lapkin, 2001; Riddiford, 2006; Tang & Tithcott, 1999). Even those few studies that have addressed noticing through CFTs were based only on asking students to compare their original pieces of writing and the revised ones at the end of the feedback process. Nevertheless, issues on how students find gaps and sources of the gaps in their pieces of writing, negotiate those gaps, and re-notice the revised versions of writing were not addressed, particularly on a pedagogical level. For this reason, this paper provides a framework for promoting noticing through CFTs in an EFL college writing classroom by using three sequenced and interrelated CFTs: (I) *pre-noticing stage*, which aims at instructing the students on how the feedback task functions and what its purposes are, (II) *while-noticing stage*, which is based on two interrelated feedback tasks, namely *contrastive-critical framing* and *transformed practice*, and (III) *post-noticing stage*, which is aimed at helping students reflect on what they have learned during the entire feedback process. It is worth noting here that the two tasks (contrastive-critical framing and transformed practice) at the while-noticing stage serve as scaffolded input for enhancing students' uptake of feedback and fostering their awareness of feedback issues like 'form' (e.g., linguistic items like grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics, which construct phrases, clauses, and sentences), 'content' (e.g., idea development, logic, and coherence), and 'organization' (e.g., the way ideas are organized into an introductory

paragraph, body paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph) in writing. The main goals of CFTs are to help student-writers gain an informed awareness of their writings and know how to find gaps and sources of gaps in their pieces of writing. These CFTs are also aimed at helping students negotiate those gaps and re-notice the revised versions of their writing to augment awareness, reformulation, and production, which in turn help them achieve considerable skills in learning to write in a second language.

Before discussing how promoting noticing through CFTs can be implemented in EFL writing classrooms, this paper addresses theoretical and empirical accounts of noticing, feedback, and collaborative feedback tasks in writing. First, this paper provides the operational definitions of the noticing concept to give audiences a clear understanding of the concept. It then discusses how noticing and feedback are closely related to facilitate learning to write in a foreign or second language. In what follows, the paper presents noticing and collaborative feedback tasks in writing to demonstrate how collaboration as a social mediation of feedback tasks can promote noticing and in turn help develop students' accuracy and fluency in writing. It then addresses how promoting noticing through CFTs can be implemented in EFL writing classrooms. Lastly, the paper addresses some challenges related to promoting noticing through CFTs in EFL college writing classrooms.

Literature Review of Noticing, Feedback and Collaborative Feedback Tasks in Writing

Noticing

The term "noticing," and other related terms—"attention" (e.g., Leow, 1997), "awareness" (e.g.,

Tomlin & Villa, 1994), “understanding” (e.g., Schmidt, 1990), and “memory” (e.g., Robinson, 1995)—are sometimes used interchangeably in the second language literature, thereby making it difficult to compare theories and results from different studies (Schmidt, 1995). The occurrence of such different related terms to noticing might be due to the inherent subjectivity in defining those concepts. Batstone (1996), for example, defines noticing as “the intake of grammar as a result of learners’ paying attention to the input” (p. 273). Further, Qi and Lapkin (2001) view noticing as awareness of a short-term memory-oriented stimulus, which refers to anything that recalls one’s attention to language input or output. As Qi and Lapkin conclude, “noticing as a result of producing the target language (TL), as in the context of L2 composing, also has important roles to play in L2 development” (p. 279). Noticing also refers to a phenomenon that occurs by paying attention to language input and output; Leow (2001) has perceived it as a means whereby learners take control over information or input received. The above definitions for the concept of noticing suggest that the process occurs when a learner intentionally allocates attentional resources to certain aspect of linguistic features (e.g., grammar or vocabulary) or content (e.g., ideas).

Thus, in this paper the term “noticing” is defined as a strategy of recognizing gaps, problems, mistakes, or errors in a particular piece of writing. As a result of noticing processes, students should be able to consciously refine any gaps or problems in their writing in order to achieve accuracy and fluency. For the sake of consistency, the terms *gaps* or *problems* are used as substitutes for the term *errors*. This is because the term error is problematic and derogative in meaning. Moreover, as students are potentially capable writers, the use of the terms gaps or problems is more positive than the term errors.

In a practical sense, researchers (e.g., Riddiford, 2006; Schmidt, 1990) assert that noticing is vital in second language (L2) acquisition, and it allows for uptake or outcome when learners recognize a particular feature of language. Ellis (1991) supports the importance of noticing in L2 acquisition and adds that to gain awareness of a language feature, students should go through three main stages: (I) students notice a certain structure of the input, (II) they move to compare the structure in their own version of the same feature in order to notice whether there is a gap in accuracy, and (III) they improve by incorporating the feature into their language. This process of noticing is perceived as a key to success in subsequent language learning, because a specific aspect of noticing, noticing the gap, occurs when the learners receive corrective feedback (e.g., in writing) and notice that it differs from their original output. The next section will elaborate on the

relationship between noticing and feedback in writing in detail.

Noticing and Feedback in Writing

Adopted from Ellis’s (1999) idea, in writing, students are expected to gain awareness of feedback features like form, content, and organization. In doing so, they should go through three main stages: (I) students notice a particular form, content, or organization in their writing, (II) they proceed to compare the features in their original drafts to their revised ones to identify a gap or problem in both original and revised drafts, and (III) they improve their subsequent written drafts by incorporating the solution(s) into them. After receiving feedback either from their peers or from their teachers, students need to notice gaps or problems found in their pieces of writing. These processes suggest that promoting noticing through feedback tasks in EFL college writing classrooms can help students observe or notice the targeted features of writing such as form, content, and organization, which in turn helps improve their writing learning.

Before discussing how promoting noticing through feedback tasks in EFL college writing classrooms can help students improve their writing proficiency, it is important to briefly discuss the two contentions for the use of feedback in second or foreign language writing. This discussion is intended to show how collaborative feedback can raise students’ awareness of correct versions of writing. Those who argue against such feedback about students’ writing contend that it is ineffective and may de-motivate students in revising processes because students might see themselves as weak writers (Polio, Fleck, & Leder, 1998; Truscott, 1996). Further, they argue that feedback on writing does not provide long-term effects on students’ language accuracy in writing. Students will continue making language mistakes in their subsequent drafts although they receive considerable feedback because peers, for example, are not able to address the accuracy of language forms.

On the other hand, those who argue for feedback in students’ writing (e.g., Bitchener, 2008; Ferris, 2008) maintain that although providing students with feedback “in the form of written commentary, error correction, teacher-student conferencing, or peer discussion” (Hyland & Hyland, 2006, p. xv) may not help students avoid making mistakes, it can raise students’ awareness of correct versions of writing. In this regard, it seems clear that, as other researchers (e.g., Ferris, 2008) contend, mistakes always take place while learning to write in a foreign or second language. Even with a high level of proficiency, writers cannot avoid language errors. As writing teachers, we cannot

assume that students will automatically notice their gaps or problems without the social mediation of both teachers' and peers' feedback.

Instructional scaffolding feedback facilitates students in gaining awareness of their gaps or problems in writing, and in turn they can refine their writing based on the feedback given. Feedback in writing is one of the means of negotiating students' pieces of writing with teachers or peers who are considered real audiences or readers. Significant achievement in writing requires students to experience short-term revisions to particular texts as a starting point for long-term achievement in writing (Ferris, 2002). EFL students are often not developmentally ready to self-correct, and therefore they learn through feedback by teachers and peers to become adept at correcting their own errors (Aljaafreh and Lantolf, 1994). Writing teachers must take into account that individual differences are important variables while considering the successes of corrective feedback (Han, 2001). As Gue'nette (2007) suggests, "teachers must not lose sight of the fact that second language acquisition is slow, gradual, and often arduous, and that corrective feedback is only one of the many factors that contribute to that process" (p. 52). For this reason, providing feedback to students should be seen as a gradual, process-oriented, and interactional activity in which students, peers, and teachers can negotiate both the processes and the product of writing.

The argument is that feedback plays a facilitative role in L2 acquisition, and there is interplay between teacher and peer feedback with noticing and comparing processes (Naeini, 2008; Qi & Lapkin 2001; Riddiford, 2006). When noticing and feedback are implemented together, they potentially complement one another in facilitating second or foreign language writing learning. For instance, in their case study with two Mandarin ESL learners, Qi and Lapkin (2001) investigated error feedback and form-based noticing. They observed the correlations of noticing in (i) the composing stage when students wrote, (ii) the reformulation stage where they compared their incorrect versions of writing (inter-language) with their correct ones (the target language), up to the (iii) post-stage where the improvement of their written products arose. The results of Qi and Lapkin's study revealed that when students notice their correct versions of writing with understanding they are more likely to be able to improve their writing. Qi and Lapkin further conclude that the higher the level of meta-cognitive processing by students, the greater the level of understanding they will have when noticing. Therefore, Qi and Lapkin's study (2001) leads to the conclusion that when students have better understanding, they will have a higher quality of noticing, suggesting that noticing together with understanding facilitates feedback in learning to write in a second language.

In other studies (i.e., Swain & Lapkin, 2002), feedback is regarded as a reformulation technique. This allows learners to make comparisons cognitively and notice gaps between their original versions of writing and their reformulated ones. Chandler (2003) also examined the importance of feedback about error in students' writing improvement. In her study, she viewed such feedback as a medium for encouraging students to notice errors in their pieces of writing. She found that when students were asked to notice particular errors in their writing, errors decreased in a subsequent draft without a reduction in the overall quality of writing. She concluded that feedback on errors helped students identify a mismatch or gap between their original versions of writing and their revised ones. Thus, the studies by Chandler (2003) and Swain and Lapkin (2002) suggest that students will enhance their language production in writing when they notice particular language problems or gaps in their own writing.

The empirical evidence above shows that noticing and feedback help students identify the gap between their earlier drafts and later revised versions of a text. Before students are asked to revise their drafts or write in subsequent drafts, they need to notice and understand the gaps so that they gain awareness of what to revise. In order to facilitate the learning process of noticing and revising the gaps, students need to have interpersonal interactions with either their peers or their teachers. For this reason, collaborative responses to help notice particular gaps or problems facilitate feedback tasks in writing, which will be further elaborated on in the next section.

Noticing and Collaborative Feedback Tasks (CFTs) in Writing

Differentiation between peer review/responses and collaborative feedback in writing is necessary to avoid misinterpretations. *Peer reviews/responses* are seen here as pairs of students working together with the teacher's scaffolding. *The focus is often* the product of writing or the final stages of writing rather than the process of writing (Ferris, 2002, Storch, 2005). Unlike peer reviews, the term *collaborative learning* is usually perceived as joint intellectual efforts among students and between students and teachers. It is the mutual engagement of the group members in a coordinated effort to complete a particular task (Min, 2006; Yuan & Wang, 2006). This differentiation suggests that in CFTs, students are supposed to work in groups of two or more in which they mutually share knowledge and linguistic resources, negotiate for meaning interpersonally, and construct, de-construct, re-construct, and co-construct knowledge in the process of writing, with more expert students scaffolding the

novice students. Thus, in this paper CFT is defined as collaboration between students and students or students and teachers who are engaged in the act of explaining, arguing, and negotiating their ideas with their peers. This process also includes discovering ideas, drafting, revising, working collaboratively, and sharing successes.

It is worthwhile noting that though there is considerable discussion about collaborative feedback in writing (e.g., Nelson & Carson, 2006; Villamil & de Guerrero, 2006), few studies have addressed the issue of promoting noticing through CFTs, especially in EFL writing classrooms. Noticing is a means of internalizing the foci of feedback and sources of gaps or problems through self-noticing and collaborative noticing. Collaborative noticing in particular is perceived as an essential means for social mediation of internalization and development. When responding collaboratively to each others' drafts, more capable peers act as mediators for a wide range of issues on feedback like form, content, and organization in writing (Villamil & de Guerrero, 2006). In such tasks, peers will be able to collaboratively notice gaps or problems in their writing with the teacher's scaffolding. More crucially, they will be able to support one another through discussion and negotiation about the gaps or problems found in their pieces of writing.

After students receive feedback from teachers or peers, they are asked to respond to the feedback. This collaborative feedback task should promote noticing and in turn help to enhance students' uptake of feedback and foster their awareness of feedback issues. There are reasons to believe this is true. First, when students collaboratively notice or identify problem(s) in the correct and incorrect versions of drafts, they provide different noticing strategies. For example, one student may be good at identifying form problems (e.g., mistakes in grammar and in vocabulary), and another student may be good at recognizing a problem in content or logic of ideas. Such collaboration allows students to support one another in recognizing problems. Second, these tasks allow students to do critical noticing. If students have different interpretations of gaps or problems, they will negotiate them by expressing their ideas or arguments, and in turn they will justify such arguments with lines of evidence. This process helps students to build and develop critical thinking in noticing the gaps or problems in their pieces of writing. Third, these tasks help students to be aware of their own or their peers' drafts, which in turn help enhance students' awareness of the way their writings may present difficulties for a reader.

The idea of promoting noticing through CFTs in writing has been spelled out in some empirical studies. For instance, Tang and Tithecott (1999) examined the value of collaborative feedback tasks in a college

writing classroom. They reported that students' writing accuracy improved even though students had some concerns about the collaborative task: some students felt less comfortable and others found it hard to criticize their peers' work. According to Tang and Tithecott, students' language accuracy improved overall because they were engaged in the socio-cognitive activities, which enabled them to notice the difference between what they want to say in their drafts and what they had written. Thus, as Tang and Tithecott concluded, both low and highly proficient students benefited from the CFTs. As a result, such tasks raise students' awareness and self-confidence in writing.

Similarly, Riddiford (2006) investigated the use of collaborative feedback tasks in promoting noticing in a university-level academic writing class. In her study, 32 international participants at a New Zealand University were asked to collaborate with their peers and give feedback, correcting each other's errors in their weekly essays after the teacher provided indirect feedback by highlighting the errors. The findings indicated that collaborative feedback tasks in ESL writing promoted noticing because students discussed the errors. Thus, peer dialogs enhanced students' meta-cognitive processing. Despite the fact that it is seen as dialogic interaction, there are some critical issues in the use of noticing in CFTs that will be discussed in detail in the next section.

Critical Issues in the Use of Noticing in Collaborative Feedback Tasks (CFTs)

When teachers promote noticing in CFTs, they need to consider a number of issues in order to facilitate the entire process of feedback. The first crucial issue is training students how to do CFTs. The teacher should train students by clearly explaining the process of CFTs and modeling this entire process in the classroom several times. The teacher needs to negotiate feedback goals, quality, time, and pace. First, the teacher and students should talk about students' goals for CFTs. Second, the teacher and students need to negotiate what constitutes feedback value and how much time students have to spend on providing comments on others' drafts. In modeling the process of CFTs in the classroom, the teacher needs to assign students to small groups and ask them to practice the tasks and continue with scaffolding input by going around the class and answering questions, participating in different group discussions, and sharing ideas with students. This modeling process will help students acquire noticing skills with understanding.

The second important point is assigning groups for CFTs. In this regard, as Storch (2002) suggests, small groups of two or three students are more effective because they maximize the opportunities of

participation among students. It should be noted, however, that the number of students in each group depends on the class size. For example, if a class is large, with 35 to 40 students, then four or five students in each group may be necessary to complete the CFTs during a class meeting. Additionally, teachers may ask students to work in pairs or in groups consisting of more capable students and less capable students so these groups can maximally benefit from the CFTs with a more knowledgeable student helping a less knowledgeable peer (Qi & Lapkin, 2001). In assigning students into pairs or groups, both teacher and students should negotiate the choice of selecting pair or group members because such negotiation provides more opportunities for students to select their own group members and in turn work at their convenience (Jacobs, 2006; Storch, 2005).

The last important issue is related to paying attention to how well the groups are functioning. Jacobs (2006) suggests that to enhance group functioning, teachers should encourage groups to work together by “fostering the feeling of positive interdependence among group members” (p. 36) and the feeling of supporting one another in order to complete particular feedback tasks. Teachers may assign the same groups with the same members to respond to a particular piece of writing until the feedback process task is accomplished. In another feedback process task, teachers may rotate group members because interacting with different peers helps students to gain different experiences (Storch, 2005). As Nelson and Carson (2006) suggest, this rotation can be made based on the initial preferences of students, mixed genders, and mixed proficiency levels in language and writing, followed by other types of groups structured by the teachers.

Promoting Noticing through Collaborative Feedback Tasks (CFTs)

As mentioned earlier, most previous studies (e.g., Riddiford, 2006; Tang & Tithecott, 1999) on promoting noticing through CFTs addressed how students noticed a gap or problem between the original versions of their writing and the revised ones at the end of the feedback process. However, more crucial issues on how students should find gaps and sources of gaps in their writing, negotiate those gaps, and re-notice the revision for gaining awareness, reformulation, and production remains unclear on a pedagogical level. Therefore, this paper provides a framework for promoting noticing through CFTs based on three sequenced and interrelated stages: pre-noticing, while-noticing, and post-noticing stages. As mentioned earlier in the introduction, contrastive-critical framing and transformed practice, the two tasks at the while-

noticing stage, are designed to be interrelated tasks. Teachers should not treat them separately; instead, they should be used together in order to gain the intended benefits of the entire CFT process (i.e., how collaboration as a social mediation of feedback tasks can promote noticing and in turn help to develop students’ writing accuracy and fluency through pre-noticing, while-noticing and post-noticing stages).

Pre-noticing Stage in Collaborative Feedback Tasks (CFTs)

In the pre-noticing stage of CFTs, the teacher needs to train students to help them notice their gaps or problems in the while-noticing stage because CFTs may be complicated for students; for example, students may not know which aspects they need to focus on when commenting on their peers’ pieces of writing. Teacher modeling for such tasks is useful for scaffolding students’ CFTs so that they will be able to perform the tasks easily. In teacher modeling, the teacher shows the students the way to identify the three main features (form, content, and organization) in a piece of writing.

It is worth noting here that at the pre-noticing stage, teacher modeling is also intended to promote students’ positive attitudes towards CFTs, as not all students are familiar with collaborative work. Furthermore, students’ cultural beliefs and values may not place a high value on collaborative work. If students, because of their cultural values, see the teacher as the focus of the classroom, they may not readily understand that other students can help them to learn.

While-noticing Stage in Collaborative Feedback Task (CFTs)

Two interrelated tasks can be used in CFTs during the while-noticing stage: contrastive-critical framing and transformed practice, adapted from The New London Group’s terms (1996). The former refers to a task that encourages students to collaboratively compare and contrast the original and noticed versions of their writing critically. The latter is perceived as a task that urges students to collaboratively transform what they have negotiated, which contributes to possible solutions to the problems noticed during the feedback process. These two interrelated tasks are aimed at training students to be critical about meaning making in peer or teacher negotiation for students’ drafts.

In contrastive-critical framing, students are asked to respond collaboratively to each other’s drafts in groups or pairs, and the teacher acts as a reader as well. Afterwards, students and teacher notice gaps or problems; the foci of gaps or problems include form, content, and organization. Then, groups/pairs of

students are asked to recognize sources of gaps or problems. These sources can be derived from differences between their mother tongue and the target language as well as cultural differences. Regarding linguistic differences, for example, Japanese has no articles, whereas English does have articles. As another example, Arabic generic syntactic structure is Predicate + Subject + Object; on the contrary, English generic syntactic structure is Subject + Predicate + Object. These two examples may result in negative transfer of students' native languages when students compose in English. Pertaining to cultural differences, the way EFL students write in English may be partly influenced by the way they compose in their native languages. In this regard, students may be unfamiliar with organizational rhetoric of English. For example, Chinese students may write regarding a set of rhetorical norms (i.e., the 'eight-legged' or eight sections essay). This rhetorical norm has the following schematic structure: opening, amplification, preliminary exposition, initial argument, central argument, later argument, final argument, and a conclusion. This schematic structure is different from that of American English, for example, which may entail traditional five-paragraph essays with an introductory paragraph, three body paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph (Cai, Matalene, & Williams, as cited in Myles, 2002).

Table 1
A Framework of Contrastive-Critical Framing for Collaborative Feedback Tasks

Drafts	Versions	
	Original	Noticed
Foci of gaps/problems		
• Form		
• Content		
• Organization		
Sources of gaps		
• Interlanguage difference		
• Cross-cultural difference		
Noticing the gaps		
Negotiation for gaps		
• Comparing and contrasting the gaps		
• Finding solutions for the gaps		

When students are working in contrastive-critical framing in a form of groups or pairs, they are usually asked to notice the gaps between the original versions of the drafts and the noticed versions of the drafts based on the above-mentioned cross-cultural and cross-linguistic differences. Such collaboration provides a medium of negotiation for the gaps. This negotiation encourages students to critically discuss finding

solutions for the gaps noticed. Moreover, conflict or disagreement in the negotiation process provides impetus for students to re-examine their language use, arguments, and organizational clarity in their writing (Swain & Lapkin, 2002). In other words, in collaborative negotiation, students verbalize their thoughts through explaining, questioning, and defending their arguments. The entire framework for CFTs using contrastive-critical framing is depicted in Table 1.

Based on the contrastive-critical framing, students work on a transformed practice task. This task urges students to transform the negotiated solutions for the gaps identified. In the transformed practice, teachers can design their CFTs, as outlined in Table 2 below.

Table 2
A Framework of Transformed Practice for Collaborative Feedback Tasks

Drafts	Versions	
	Original	Revised
Revising drafts using a transformative strategy		
Re-noticing		
• Form		
• Content		
• Organization		
Degree of Output		
• Awareness		
• Reformulation		
• Production		

As seen in Table 2, in order to complete the process of CFTs, the next step in the negotiation process is collaborative transformation, which helps students re-notice and transform form, content, and organization. In doing so, teachers ask students to revise their drafts based on both teachers' and peers' feedback at the gap negotiation stage. Whether students take the feedback into consideration depends on how students make use of it in a revised draft. In this respect, students do not necessarily make use of the feedback directly, but they have to address how the feedback can improve their drafts of writing. After students have revised their drafts, they are asked to re-notice or re-identify the original and revised versions. This task includes noticing form, content, and organization in writing. Re-noticing is aimed at helping students gain critical awareness of possible future gaps in their pieces of writing and reformulate such gaps into their own situated writing contexts/tasks. In turn, student writers will be able to produce good pieces of writing in terms of form, content, and organization, thereby being able to voice their own ideas. In short, the main goals of transformative practice in CFTs are to help student-writers re-notice the revised versions of their writing to gain awareness, reformulation, and

production, which in turn help them achieve considerable skills of writing in a foreign or second language.

It should be noted, however, that the application of those two tasks (contrastive-critical framing and transformed practice) in CFTs might frustrate students who are unfamiliar with collaborative tasks. To address this issue, writing teachers should support students by modeling the way to accomplish those tasks. Alternatively, teachers and students may work together on the tasks. As Donato (cited in Storch, 2005) maintains, this collaboration is seen as “collective scaffolding” in which EFL writing teachers are viewed as more capable people who scaffold students so as to make CFTs much easier to accomplish. Thus, EFL writing teachers should facilitate the entire CFT to help students write better in English and see feedback as a negotiated, process-oriented dialog, not as a medium of hunting for errors or blaming students as incompetent or ignorant EFL writers.

Post-noticing Stage in Collaborative Feedback Task (CFTs)

After students go through the process of contrastive-critical framing and transformed practice at the while-noticing stage of CFTs, the teacher can ask them to reflect on what they have learned during the entire feedback process. This reflection not only helps EFL students self-assess strengths and weaknesses of their writing abilities but also offers students opportunities to better understand the changes they made during the writing and feedback process (Swain & Lapkin, 2002). One possible way to help students do reflection is by offering students reflection guides explaining the intended goals and objectives of the reflection. This reflective task enables teachers to see what their students have learned during the feedback process and what aspects they have improved on regarding their writing. Additionally, students may be asked to share their reflective notes or essays. This reflection sharing further assists students in better understanding the nature of different problems in their writings, thereby encouraging students to make informed plans for improving their drafts.

Challenges of the Framework for Promoting Noticing through Collaborative Feedback Tasks (CFTs)

In this framework for promoting noticing through CFTs, there are some possible challenges that teachers need to take into account. First, EFL students may notice the easiest focus, form, because form or language accuracy may be spotted more easily. For this reason, at the teacher modeling stage, writing teachers need to

make students aware that form, content, and organization are equally important in constituting good pieces of writing. By demonstrating the importance of both accuracy and fluency in writing, teachers will help address the challenge of orienting students in addressing the feedback they receive. Another challenge occurs when pairing/grouping EFL learners to do CFTs. EFL writing teachers should weight factors like student’s language proficiency as well as writing and pair dynamics to create more interactive collaboration that will urge students to focus on a variety of gaps or problems in the form, content, and organization of writing.

Additionally, some students or teachers may feel reluctant to comment critically on their peers’ drafts because they do not want to hurt their peers. This cultural perception or attitude may hinder CFTs. Therefore, EFL writing teachers and students need to have positive attitudes towards the tasks. One way to promote positive attitudes towards CFTs is through teacher negotiation with the students. They can demonstrate that writing is always social: subjectivity is multi-valenced and multi-voiced; writers and readers are always conditioned and interpolated by networks of social relations; and the goal of commenting critically on peers’ draft is about raising peers’ awareness on discursive formations rather than hurting peers feelings. Thus, it is important to comment on peers’ draft, interact with peers, negotiate, evaluate, share ideas/opinions, and defend ideas in order to construct and co-construct knowledge.

Regarding another cultural issue, as Nelson and Carson (2006) point out, when responding to each other’s drafts, students may be reluctant to spot some gaps or problems because (1) they would like to provide positive comments for maintaining harmony in groups, (2) they would not want to hurt others’ feelings, and (3) they would think that only teachers should provide negative feedback because they have the sole authority in assessing students’ writing. Spotting others’ mistakes or problems in others’ writing causes embarrassment. This face-threatening issue hinders students from being critical in commenting on others’ drafts even in cultures where collaboration may be valued. In this regard, as mentioned earlier, the teacher should tell the students about the fact that writing is a social practice and there is always room for negotiation. The students should develop tolerance for critical feedback, which in the long run helps them reconstruct and reform their writing practices.

The last challenge of the framework is that teachers may have limited time. This is true when institutional policies provide scant time for writing classes or writing is integrated with other skills or with other curricular agenda such as examinations. Time can be limited because class sizes are large, so teachers may

have difficulty in meeting individual needs. For this reason, these CFTs may be carried out in subsequent class periods in a sequence of process-based activities. The teacher can arrange group conferences in which more than one individual's gaps or problems can be addressed through CFTs.

In spite of these challenges, this framework is intended to provide students with interactive, process-focused feedback tasks in which errors are viewed as problems or gaps for students' further development in writing. More important, this framework provides flexible space for students to support one another in achieving informed and integrated awareness of feedback in writing, and in the long term it supports them to become competent writers.

Conclusions

Promoting noticing through collaborative feedback tasks (CFTs) using pre-noticing, while-noticing (i.e., contrastive-critical framing and transformed practice), and post-noticing potentially helps students make significant improvements in writing when they are provided with feedback either from teachers or from peers. Whether this structure leads to awareness of form, content, and organization in pieces of writing, idea reformulation in new drafts and better production of writing deserves further empirical studies into the use of noticing in CFTs and its implications for students' entire writing abilities. These strategies are aimed to better help EFL students achieve writing accuracy and fluency. The most important thing is that this framework should be redesigned based on particular writing, learning, and teaching contexts, practical implementation of the framework in specific learning/teaching contexts and goals, expectations, and outcomes for foreign or second language writing learning from student, teacher, and institution perspectives. In other words, situated collaborative feedback practices rest on institutional, curricular, cultural, and interpersonal contexts.

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