

Implementing Online Tools to the Pre-writing Stage: An Investigation into Online Writing Classes

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Abstract

Writing is considered one of the most challenging skills for second and/ or foreign-language learners, particularly in the online environment. Numerous researchers worldwide have explored how to stimulate students' schemata and develop their writing skills. This study critically investigates the contribution of implementing online tools, such as Padlet and Jamboard, during the pre-writing stage to enhance students' writing abilities and their reactions to this application. A seven-week experimental research design was conducted with two online writing classes using the Zoom platform. The participants were 62 pre-intermediate students in the Intensive English program. T-tests were used to analyse the data, and a survey was administered to students in the experimental group at the end of week 7 to gather their perceptions. The findings revealed that integrating Padlet and Jamboard positively impacted the organisation and content of students' written texts. The survey results showed that most students were satisfied with the effectiveness of the lessons and their level of engagement in class. This study highlights the potential of technology integration in teaching writing, especially during the pre-writing stage, and suggests further research in this area.

Keywords: effectiveness, engagement, Jamboard, online tools, online writing class, Padlet, pre-writing stage

1. Introduction

The issue of teaching and learning writing skills effectively has long been a focus of research from many educators and experts (Ramli & Ardiana, 2018; Jayavalan & Razali, 2018; Alfulaila et al., 2019; Fithriani ET AL., 2019; Wahyu & Citrawati, 2022). Writing skills are considered essential because they are the most reliable indicator to measure students' knowledge and competence in exams, whether online or offline and regardless of whether language abilities or skills are being tested (Harmer, 2014). In the entire process of writing, pre-writing seems to be the most important phase as it helps learners create a more organised essay and gives them a feeling of being capable of planning beforehand and writing an essay faster and more concisely without missing any main points or elaboration needed (Yunus et al., 2018). It has proven valuable in developing students' writing abilities (Er, 2021; Zang, 2021; Fitra, 2022). Besides, engagement plays a crucial role in the language classroom, so training institutions need to design and provide engaging learning experiences for students to succeed in offline or online learning settings (Martin & Bolliger, 2018).

To facilitate teaching and learning writing skills in an online environment, various platforms and applications, such as Zoom, MS Teams, Popplet, Padlet, Google Docs, and Microsoft Whiteboard, have been suggested. However, each platform and application has its strengths

and drawbacks. Therefore, depending on the current situation of various training institutions, a decision on which learning platform to use and which applications to apply to is of great importance and needs thorough consideration.

1.1. The Rationale of the Study

The study occurred at the International University, one member of Vietnam National University. This university is the only public university in Vietnam with an English-only policy in teaching, learning and doing research. Therefore, students had to achieve an English competency equivalent to IELTS 5.5 to be eligible to start their major courses. Therefore, there always remains a high demand for English proficiency in Writing from the entire university students to fulfil the requirement to get started with the courses in their main discipline.

The university employed the paid version of the Zoom application as the main platform for learning online. However, deciding which applications to assist the teaching and learning in specific courses was in the hands of the lecturers. In the scope of this study, Zoom-based online teaching was employed thanks to some pedagogic benefits that ease the teaching and learning process and improve students' language skills, such as share screen, breakout room, non-verbal icons and allowance to combine with other interactive tools functions (Nation, 2007; Ramadani & Khaferi, 2020, and Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2022). Furthermore, based on the literature review, Zoom, Padlet, and Jamboard appeared to be an appropriate combination to facilitate a positive online general teaching and learning environment to boost students' participation and collaboration (Smith & Kaya, 2021). However, in Vietnam, and particularly in the university setting, no official publication has been found on the effectiveness of using a combination of Padlet and Jamboard in the pre-writing stage of teaching IELTS Writing online through the Zoom platform. Then, conducting a study to explore the implementation of online tools like Padlet and Jamboard in the pre-writing stage to enhance students' writing abilities and the reactions of students towards this application was one of the solutions to find out a suitable method to teach IELTS Writing effectively.

1.2. Research Questions

This study aimed to investigate the contribution of implementing online tools like Padlet and Jamboard to the pre-writing stage to enhance students' writing abilities and the perspectives of students towards this application based on the following research questions:

- RQ1. Does the implementation of online tools like Padlet and Jamboard in the pre-writing stage have a positive impact on students' writing scores?
- RQ2. What are the students' perspectives on applying these online tools to the pre-writing stage?

2. Literature Review

2.1. What is Pre-writing?

The term "pre-writing" is referred to as the period where writers prepare to write by collecting information, organising ideas, determining audience and purpose and choosing genres (Urquhart & McIver, 2005). Additionally, Inal (2014) has defined pre-writing as the first phase of the writing process in which students generate ideas for a specific topic and stimulate thoughts. Besides, "pre-writing" is also defined as the first step in the writing process, allowing learners to think about the topic and find and arrange ideas for the next

steps. It is considered a fundamental part of a writing class that deserves much attention and time because it facilitates students' acquisition of the target language, the development of interpersonal, cognitive, and planning skills and writing performance. (Hashempour et al., 2015). Pre-writing is also stated to provide great support to the writing process since students can have time to think about the audience and the purpose of the writing, and the content and the language to express their thoughts (Byrd, 2011, cited in Abrams & Byrd, 2017). This stage is also known for its key role in constructing a well-organized piece of writing (Yunus et al., 2018). In this stage, Caswell & Mahler (2004) confirm the role of encouraging students to cognitively record what they have known before starting the writing stage. (p42). They also stated that teachers can instruct students through “visual monitoring and conferencing” (p6). The main recursive steps in the pre-writing stage suggested by White and Arndt (1991) included drafting, structuring (ordering information), reviewing (checking context and connections), focusing (checking the message you want to transfer) and generating ideas and evaluation (assessing draft) whereas Harmer (2007) referred to pre-writing as the various phases of drafting, reviewing and redrafting. However, these suggestions are mainly better used by learners themselves. Cotton (1997) cited Fitra (2022) mentioned that during the pre-writing stage, students are instructed to acquire knowledge and experiment with ideas. It means that the input also plays a crucial role in the pre-writing stage, and input related to the format of the essay, cohesion devices and some specific language use should also need to be taken into consideration. Therefore, in this study, the pre-writing stages for each writing class follow a similar framework (See Figure 1).

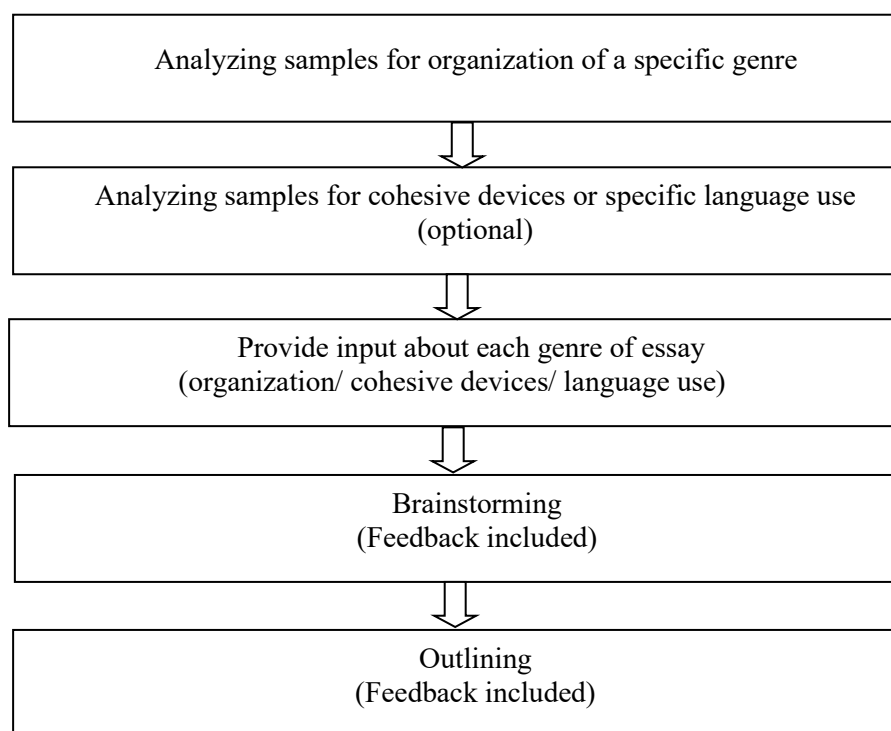


Figure 1. Suggested Framework of Pre-Writing Stages

Harmer (2007) referred to pre-writing as the various phases of drafting, reviewing and redrafting. The pre-writing stage was modified by White and Arndt (1991) with five recursive stages:

- Drafting
- Structuring (ordering information)
- Reviewing (checking context, and connections)
- Focusing (check the message you want to transfer)

- Generating ideas and evaluation (assessing draft)

In this study, the pre-writing stage includes the following steps:

- Analyzing samples for organisation and/ or language use for a specific genre
- Getting input about each type of essay
- Brainstorming
- Outlining with mind mapping

2.2. The Application of Padlet in Language Learning

Padlet can be considered a free online space where teachers and students can easily interact, collaborate, and share knowledge and ideas (Putman, 2014, cited in Zhi & Su, 2015; Klein, 2013, cited in Mahmud, 2019). Similarly, Padlet is described as a free online collaborative tool to allow users to create an “online bulletin board” to collect, share and edit ideas later (Sangeetha, 2016). Stannard, 2015 cited in Mahmud, 2019 also mentioned that Padlet proved useful in brainstorming, discussion and project work activities. In addition, Padlet is characterised as a “free multimedia wall” that encourages whole-class participation through real-time interaction among students and students, and students and the teacher. This tool offers gathering resources, frequently asked questions, and brainstorming functions (Mardari, 2020). Dianati et al. (2020 & Mehta et al. (2021) cited in Shuker & Burton (2021) admitted the benefits of Padlet in sharing experience, discoveries and ideas about concepts being taught to enable learners to construct new knowledge. As a result, the role of bringing teacher and learners, and ideas together synchronously or asynchronously was highly appreciated (Shuker & Burton, 2021). Other features that contribute to the success of Padlet in fostering students’ engagement and interaction with the content are selecting the colour of each post and adding images or animations and reactions to the post (Huwamel & Alabbad, 2020, cited in Alastal et al., 2022).

In the scope of this research, Padlet was used as an online collaborative tool to enable teachers to provide input to students and students to discuss, share their knowledge, opinions, and analysis ability, and brainstorm ideas for their writing. Students were also encouraged to personalise their posts with favourite colours or images and even animations (see Figure 2).

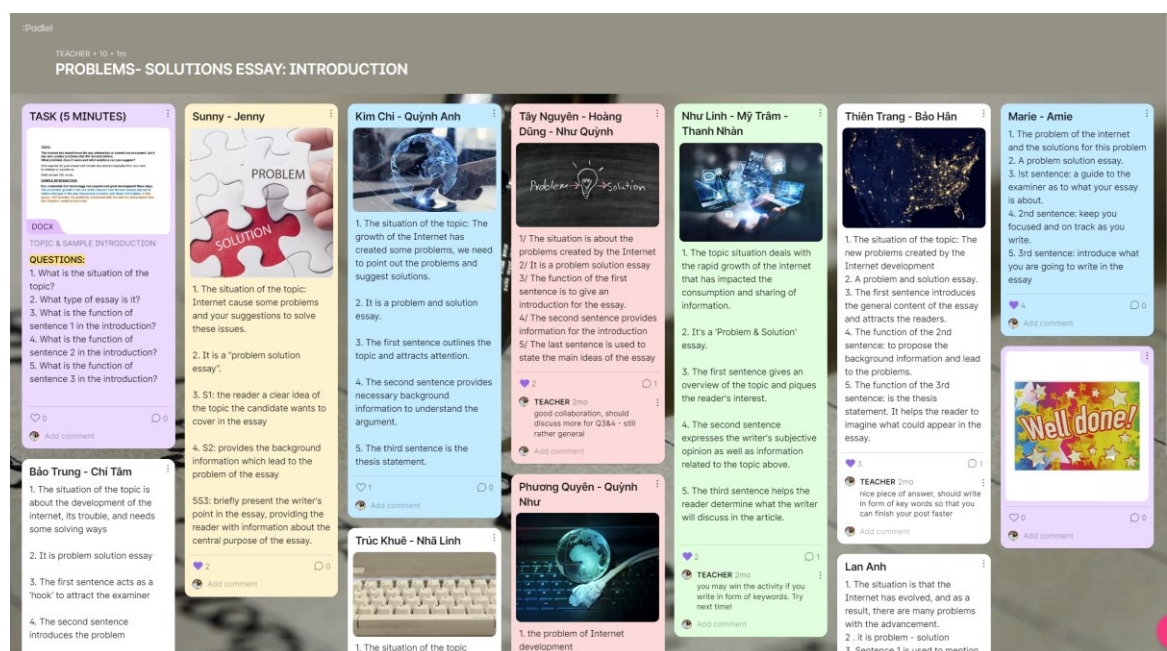


Figure 2. Example of Padlet

2.3. The Application of Jamboard in Language Learning

Keeler & Mattina (2021) described Jamboard as a collaborative digital tool that allows teachers and learners to collaborate to share knowledge and ideas and make decorations with drawings or images easily via a browser on smartphones, tablets, desktops or laptops. Jamboard which is a Google-owned whiteboard application is free to use with no more than 20 slides per Jamboard, and multiple users can participate in adding or editing information, images and drawings simultaneously (Sweeney et al., 2021). Other features that attract many educators using this tool are the functions of adding frames, selecting backgrounds, creating sticky notes and dragging posts which create an alternative for brainstorming stages (Gulati & Bhatt, 2021). Similarly, Smith & Kaya (2021) mentioned that Jamboard could help create a fun environment for brainstorming sessions and tasks related to vocabulary and grammar. This application is believed to support online learning by fostering interaction and delivering materials (Muchlis et al., 2022). In this research, Jamboard is used as an interactive platform for all students to discuss and add their ideas with or without decoration in the brainstorming and outlining stages in the writing class (see Figure 3).

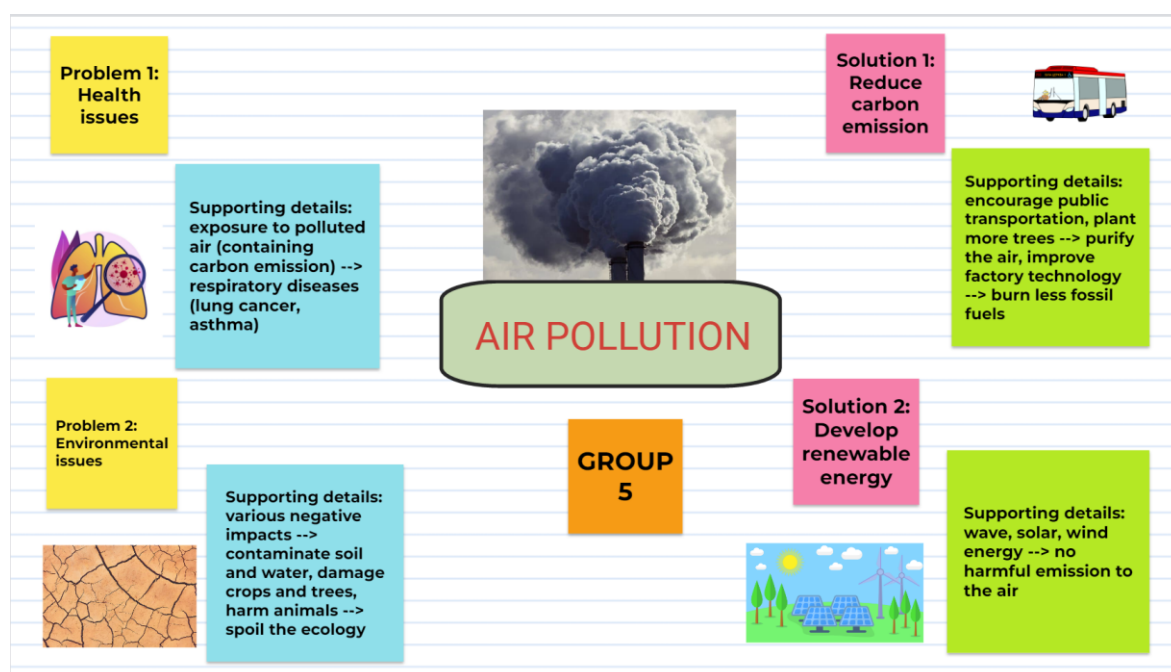


Figure 3. Example of Jamboard

2.4. Engagement

The term engagement has been conceptualized in various ways in the educational literature. It has been defined as the amount of time and effort that students invest in classroom activities (Kuh, 2009), as well as the extent to which students involve in interactions with their peers within the classroom context (Dixon, 2010). Engagement can also be considered students' willingness to participate in classroom activities (Audas and Willms, 2001 cited in Ali, & Hassan, 2018; Fredrick et. al, 2016 cited in Durón-Ramos & García-Vázquez, 2018) or students' attention, excitement and commitment to learning (Yazzie, 2010 cited in Ali, & Hassan, 2018). In the scope of this paper, engagement refers to the active involvement or participation of each individual in the collaborative task assigned by the teacher in the pre-writing stage.

2.5. Previous Studies

A number of studies have been carried out to explore the importance of the pre-writing stage and the potential of online learning tools.

Schweiker-Marra and Marra (2000) examined the effects of pre-writing activities on writing performance and anxiety of students at risk. Holistic scores on writing were used to compare the participants' writing performance before and after the study. The experimental group showed clear improvements. Also, the writers' anxiety was lowered, which demonstrated the significance of the pre-writing stage.

Shi (1998) aimed to find out if peer discussions and teacher-led pre-writing interactions influenced the students' writing quality. A total of 47 adult students from three different universities were involved in the study. The participants, after being selected, were placed into three groups for three distinct pre-writing strategies: peer talks, teacher-led discussion and no discussion. The findings highlighted the pre-writing conditions to generate a variety of thinking types and discourse processes to accommodate adult learners' compositions.

The application of Padlet in online learning, especially in writing skills has also attracted many researchers in recent years. Taufikurohman (2018) examined the efficacy of utilizing Padlet in teaching descriptive writing in a high school. It was concluded that students in experiment groups experienced an enhancement in descriptive text writing ability. Findings in the questionnaires also showed positive perceptions regarding collaboration and engagement factors. Similarly, Mahmud (2019) investigated the students' perceptions of integrating Padlet as a learning tool to write full 200-word essays and give peer feedback in a writing class in a private college in Penang. Generally, students perceived positively an improvement in writing skills after receiving the treatment. However, results from the interview unveiled the truth that students were not fully satisfied with the tool because of the possibility to use more advanced language and the quality of the interface. In the same year (2019), Rashid et al. did research to explore the role of Padlet in teaching writing to low-level students at a university in Malaysia. Data collected proved that Padlet could enable low-level students to be autonomous learners when studying writing. Following the trend, Dollah et al. (2021) applied the quasi-experimental method with 240 students and claimed that the implementation of Padlet was significantly influential to the students' motivation of the senior high school students on the material subject of writing. Regarding the implementation of Padlet in pre-writing stage, Affendi et al. (2020) conducted a study to figure out the advantages of integrating Padlet as a pre-writing strategy with 30 secondary school students. The conclusion claimed that teachers should implement innovations like Padlet in their classes, as it motivated students in learning the language and their personal development. Im & Lee (2022) when looking into the impacts of using Padlet on college students' writing anxiety and strategies found that implementing Padlet into online writing classes brought some advantages of pre-writing activities which encouraged learners to improve their writing skills and language proficiency.

In 2021, Kosnin et al. tested the effectiveness of the Jamboard application on a Financial Management course among students of the Faculty of Hospitality, Tourism, and Wellness and reported that Jamboard was an effective tool for drawing and writing online. Another finding from the research to examine the perceptions of students toward the application of virtual workspace like Jamboard by Castillo-Cuesta et al. (2022) revealed that the implementation of Jamboard created the positive learning environment which fostered students' collaborative and communication skills, engagement and active participation, interest and motivation. Khoiriyah et al. (2022) realized from the research of embedding Jamboard to collaborative reading strategies that the Jamboard is beneficial for their study and simple to use. In

addition, group work using Jamboard in this study was highly appreciated for the enjoyment factor. In terms of using Jamboard for writing classes, Yulianto (2021), when conducting research about the influence of using the brainstorming method, which is Jamboard, on students' writing performance, discovered that this treatment was effective for students.

Although these studies could not address the concern of whether the implementation of Padlet and Jamboard on the Zoom learning platform to the pre-writing stage in teaching IELTS Writing Task 2 would be successful or not, they acted as a foundation for this research study to be conducted.

3. Methodology

3.1. Study Design

A mixed-method of experimental with t-tests and questionnaires together with observations was employed in this research. The t-tests were used to "compare the average performance between the two groups" (Geoffrey & David, 2005). In this study, both paired samples t-tests and independent samples t-tests were applied to examine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the scores of the pre-test and post-test in each group and between the post-tests of two groups (Phakiti, 2015). In addition to the t-tests, a questionnaire with Likert scales was designed as a fundamental tool in the study of perspective (Taherdoost, 2019). Open-ended questions were also asked in the questionnaires to get a deeper insight into the personal perspectives of students (Allen, 2017) about the implementation of the treatment because it offered much more freedom in expressing opinions (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). Observations by watching class recordings were also included to ensure the validity of the results (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

3.2. Sampling

Participants included 62 pre-intermediate students in the Intensive English program of International University. All students had passed the IE1 level (equivalent to IELTS scores of 5.5). However, the focus of the study was on IELTS writing task 2 so 68 students of two IE2 classes were asked to take the pre-test with only IELTS writing task 2.

Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics of the Pre-tests of the Control group and the Experimental group

Variable	Total Count	Mean	SD Mean	StDev	Minimum	Maximum
PRE-C	31	4.9516	0.0746	0.4154	4.5	5.5
PRE-E	31	4.9355	0.0795	0.4424	4.5	5.5

After collecting data and excluding extreme cases, 31 students from each class were selected and formed a control group and an experimental group ($M=4.95$ and $M=4.94$, respectively). Only the teacher knew which participants were chosen. The decision on keeping the real list of participants secret was one step toward preventing any discrimination among participants throughout the study.

3.3. Procedures

On the first day of the course, students were asked for permission to do the research on session 4 of each week which focussed on IELTS writing task 2. After receiving the permission of the Head of the Program and from students of two classes, students were required to take a pre-test. When finishing the pre-test, students in the experimental group

were guided to read the requirement of the tasks posted in Padlet or Jamboard and to take notes of the responses for the required tasks in these two online tools. Students in both groups were provided with similar learning materials, teaching approaches, stages of the lesson, genres of essays, sample texts, teaching slides, and writing topics to practice. The distinctive difference between the two groups was the way the teacher organized and controlled pre-writing activities with and without the help of online collaborative tools. The similarities and the differences between the two groups in pre-writing tasks were summarized in the Table 2.

Table 2.

Similarities and Differences Between the Control Group and the Experimental Group in Pre-Writing Tasks

Tasks	Groups	Send files/ links through the chat box	Group work in Breakout rooms	Padlet	Jamboard	Share screen when providing answers in front of the class
Analyzing samples for organization and/ or language use for a specific genre	Control	✓	✓			
	Experimental	✓	✓	✓		✓
Providing input about each type of essay	Control					
	Experimental			✓		
Brainstorming	Control	✓	✓			
	Experimental	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Outlining with mind mapping	Control	✓	✓			
	Experimental	✓	✓		✓	✓

During 7 weeks, students learnt the general format of an academic essay and 5 genres of IELTS Writing Task 2 including Advantages-Disadvantages; Problems-Solutions; Opinion; Discuss both views and Two-Part questions. When students of both groups completed the revision session in week 7, they took the post-test. Then, the questionnaire was sent to students in the experimental group via a google form link.

3.4. Research Instruments (Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument)

Based on the concept by Taherdoost (2016) of Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument including Criterion validity, Face validity, Content validity, and Construct validity, the instruments of the study were the two following components:

- Pre-test and Post-test: These tests were in the same format taken from the Cambridge test source, each of which consisted of one similar question in the same question type to write an IELTS Writing task 2 essay. This was a pen and paper test and the time allowance for the test was 30 minutes.
- The questionnaire: This questionnaire was composed of 6 items with 3 questions on the Likert scale to collect students' perspectives on the use of the online tools in the pre-writing stage and 3 open-ended questions to get more elaboration on students' answers.

The test format was developed based on two objectives: (i) to reflect the focus of session 4 in the 7-week training, which was the IELTS Writing task 2 essay, and (ii) to test students' competence in the IELTS Writing task 2 essay after the treatment period.

A detailed summary of the test structure and scoring rubric was informed to the students before they took the pre-test and the post-test. This scoring rubric has been publicly issued by the British Council, which is the official representative of Cambridge University, the U.K to conduct IELTS exams in Vietnam. The rubric of writing task 2 consists of 4 main criteria which focus on Topic Achievement, Coherence and Cohesion, Lexical Resources, and Grammatical and Accuracy. The band scores range from band 0 to band 9. It was important to note that the topics in the pre-test and post-test which were taken from a series of IELTS Cambridge Practice Tests were of a similar level of complexity. Therefore, there was not much difference in the requirement for background knowledge to develop the content of the essays.

The questionnaire was piloted with 5 random students to check its clarity and understandability before it was given to all the experimental students.

3.5. Data Collection and Analysis

Data on the pre-test was taken in week 1 and data on the post-test and the questionnaire in Google form were collected in week 7. Students got quick access to the questionnaire via a shortened link which could be done via desktop, laptop, iPad or smartphone. To analyse descriptive statistics from the pre-test and post-test scores, Minitab19 was used as it is simple to use and can support most of the other statistical analyses and methods including descriptive statistics, and reliability (Mathews, 2005). To process data taken from the questionnaire, the criteria on the Likert scale were coded as 1-5 (negative to positive). Then, a spreadsheet was extracted from Google Forms to run the necessary statistical formulae. The data was then added to Minitab19 to calculate the Cronbach's alpha value for the reliability of the Likert-scale questions in the questionnaires because of the limited pilot participants.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Pre-test, Post-test

Table 3 shows the results of the pre-test and post-test of the Control group with mean scores of 4.95 and 5.43 respectively. The minimum score was the same (at 4.5), but the maximum score of the post-test (at 5.5) was 1.0 higher than that of the pre-test (at 6.5).

Table 3.

Descriptive Statistics of the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Control group

Variable	Total Count	Mean	SD Mean	StDev	Minimum	Maximum
PRE-C	31	4.9516	0.0746	0.4154	4.5	5.5
POST-C	31	5.4355	0.0795	0.4424	4.5	6.5

Descriptive statistics of the Experimental group (Table 4) report the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test with 4.94 and 6.02 respectively. Besides, both the lowest and highest scores of the post-test were higher than those of the pre-test, with 4.5 and 5.5 compared to 5.0 and 7.0.

Table 4.

Descriptive Statistics of the Pre-test and the Post-test of the Experimental group

Variable	Total Count	Mean	SD Mean	StDev	Minimum	Maximum
PRE-E	31	4.9355	0.0795	0.4424	4.5	5.5
POST-E	31	6.0161	0.0819	0.4561	5.0	7.0

Descriptive statistics of the post-tests of both groups show a higher mean score of the Experimental group (6.02) compared to the Control group (5.43).

Table 5.

Descriptive Statistics of the Post-tests of the Control group and the Experimental group

Variable	Total Count	Mean	SD Mean	StDev	Minimum	Maximum
POST-C	31	5.4355	0.0795	0.4424	4.5	6.5
POST-E	31	6.0161	0.0819	0.4561	5.0	7.0

In response to research question 1: *Does the implementation of online tools like Padlet and Jamboard in the pre-writing stage have a positive impact on students' writing scores?*, four descriptive statistics tests were put into consideration: (a) independent Samples t-test of the pre-test scores of both groups (Table 1), (b) independent Samples t-test of the post-test scores of both groups (Table 5), (c) Paired Samples t-test of the pre-test post-test scores of the Control group (Table 3), and (d) Paired Samples t-test of the pre-test post-test scores of the Experimental group (Table 4).

In test (a), Table 1 reporting [M(C)=4.95; M(E)=4.93] and $p > 0.05$ indicated that there was no significant difference in the pre-test scores of the two groups. In other words, students of the two groups possessed similar English competency at the beginning of the research, which is an important criterion for reliability. Test (b), described in Table 5 with [M(C)=5.43; M(E)=6.02] and $p < 0.05$ showed that after a 15-week treatment for the Experimental group, there came a significant difference in the post-test scores of the two groups. Test (c) as shown in Table 3, [Pre(C)= 4.95; Post(C)= 4.53] and $p < 0.05$ revealed that the Control group students performed better in the post-test compared to the pre-test. It is logical and understandable that students were trained with pedagogical standards, and they got improvement after a course of fifteen weeks. This was a matter of maturity that students studied, and they made progress (Britzman, 2012). Test (d) in Table 4 with [Pre(E)= 4.93; Post(E)= 6.02] and $p < 0.05$ meant that the experimental students got higher scores in the post-test than in the pre-test. It is significant to note that the improvement in the Experimental students is much higher than the improvement the Control students have made (1.08 and 0.48 respectively for the Experimental group and the Control group). From the results of the four tests (a), (b), (c), (d), it can be claimed that Experimental students achieved higher scores in the post-test than those in the Control group.

Looking closely at the statistics for analytical assessment (Table 6), which are the four aspects of IELTS essay writing, including Topic Development, Coherence and Cohesion, Lexical Resources, Grammatical Range and Accuracy, students gained the most improvement in the areas of Topic Development by 1.65 and Coherence and Cohesion by 1.26. This was probably due to the fact that presenting essay outlines and reviewing works from other groups via Padlet helped students get more ideas and build better logic and coherence in essay development. This coincides with the findings of Sehuddin et al. (2021) that the implementation of Padlet is an effective technique in fostering the students' English writing achievement.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics in the analytical assessment of the Experimental group

Variable	Total Count	Mean (Task Achievement)	Mean (Coherence and Cohesion)	Mean (Lexical Resources)	Mean (Grammatical Range and Accuracy)
PRE-E	31	4.6935	4.7258	4.9032	4.8548
POST-E	31	6.3387	5.9870	5.7290	5.5967

4.2. The Questionnaire

Turning to research question 2: *What are the students' perspectives on applying these online tools to the pre-writing stage?*, findings from the questionnaire were critically considered.

Table 7.

Level of effectiveness when using online tools in writing class

	1 (Totally ineffective)	2 (Very ineffective)	3 (Effective)	4 (Very effective)	5 (Totally effective)
Level of effectiveness	0%	0%	3.2%	51.6%	45.2%

Table 8.

Level of engagement when using online tools in writing class

	1 (Totally unengaged)	2 (Very unengaged)	3 (Engaged)	4 (Very engaged)	5 (Totally engaged)
Level of engagement	0%	0%	9.7%	51.6%	38.7%

Table 9.

Level of agreement to continue using online tools in writing class

	1 (Strongly disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Neutral)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly agree)
Level of agreement	0%	0%	3.2%	54.8%	41.9%

It is learnt from the percentages in Table 7 that all the students had positive views on the use of online tools in this study. The ratings of *Very effective* and *Totally effective* went up to 96%. Also, the online applications used in the Treatment helped keep students involved in the lessons with engagement ratings (Table 8) up to 90% of *Very engaged* and *Totally engaged*. Class observation diaries gave explanations for the proportion of *Engaged* that some students experienced internet connection disruption. Some students appeared to be a bit bored with a similar class routine for 7 weeks. These students were sort of energetic and would feel comfortable with frequent changes in class activities during the course. The positive perspective found in the study correlated with the findings of Yee & Yunes (2021) that online collaborative tools helped students to enhance their writing qualities and achieved better cognitive skills when they were allowed to discuss with their peers, and the indication of Etfita & Wahyuni (2021) that the implementation of collaborative discussion using Padlet positively impact students' writing ability.

The results from Table 9 indicate that the majority of students (96.8%) in the experimental group wanted to continue using this technique in the next writing classes. There appeared a special case (3.2%) who chose neutral. However, this result was somewhat correlative with the score in the post-test with only one student achieving 5.0. Additionally, the Cronbach's alpha value for these three Likert-scale elements in the questionnaire reached 0.9587 which

could indicate the reliability of the quality of the questions and the correlations among these three items. In addition, the lesson recordings of the writing classes also showed that most of the students cooperated with their partners to finish the tasks in breakout rooms and took turns posting their products. Some groups even included images to make their posts more beautiful. However, some students were quite passive in group discussions and never took initiative in asking questions or posting their responses on the Padlet or Jamboard. This might be considered an explanation for the neutral attitude to the application of these online collaborative tools.

Responses from the open-ended questions about what students like about using their online tools in the pre-writing stage revealed that most students admitted that the implementation of these tools helped them understand the input more easily which was somewhat supported by the idea of Shelvam et al. (2022) who mentioned that the use of Jamboard with a mind mapping format eased students understanding when learning writing. In addition, students shared that the ease of using the tools in both laptops and smartphones made their learning more comfortable. Moreover, students shared the opinions that this technique enhanced their level of concentration, collaboration and motivation because they were aware of the control of their teacher and their products were shown to all members of the class. Some students also showed their interest in the fact that they could design their posts with favourite colors and images when using Padlet. With a great level of enjoyment mentioned, they tried their best to finish their content so that they could choose the relevant images and colors to make their post more distinctive. What's more, students were looking forward to receiving reactions or comments from the teacher.

In terms of Jamboard, some students revealed that they enjoyed the features that all members could contribute to the design and content of the task. Some students appreciate the sticker features whereas others preferred the adding text function, and the image insertion tasks. It saved time and also helped students improve collaboration skills to finish the mindmap in a logical and beautiful way. Regarding the mindmap form, students reported generating the ideas more easily so that they can edit their product or review it after class. Students also enjoyed the fact that they can vary their background to prove the identity of their group.

For both of the online collaborative tools applied, students gave great support to the collaborative factors, the freedom and enjoyment to design their work, and the ease to create, edit, store and review later. They said that they could have a look at the basic knowledge post that they need to remember and their products as well as products of other groups. As a result, they can also learn different styles of writing, various vocabulary use, and also different details to develop ideas for the upcoming tasks.

Moving to the minus points of the application of these two tools in the pre-writing process. One of the major problems reported is the quality of the internet connection in specific rooms on campus. Also, sometimes it took much time to negotiate the meaning with other friends so they couldn't complete the tasks on time as required. However, this problem was stated to be solved after three or four times working together. Regarding Padlet, several students who were not familiar with modern technology had some trouble using the smartphone interface during several first weeks as some posts moved positions. In the case of Jamboard, students who used smartphones faced challenges in dragging the frame or text during some first tasks.

Although the study provided promising results, it reported a few limitations. First, this was a small-scale study, involving only 62 students. A study on a larger scale with more participants in the experimental group would provide a more reliable result. Also, the time duration of the study was quite short. Seven weeks passed by so quickly, and maybe, the participants did not have sufficient time to fully experienced all of the upsides and downsides

of Padlet and Jamboard. Last but not least, referential statistics or correlation tests hadn't been employed to prove the relationship between test scores and learners' attitudes. A follow-up study should be conducted to give better confirmation of the effectiveness of these tools in teaching writing skills online.

5. Conclusion

The research study attempted to explore the effectiveness of implementing online tools: Padlet and Jamboard to the pre-writing stage to enhance students' writing abilities and the reactions of students towards this application. Results from the seven-week training course indicated that the use of Padlet and Jamboard brought about considerable improvement for the experimental participants, especially in the areas of topic development and essay organization. Besides, students gave very positive attitudes towards these two online learning applications. There are possibilities to claim that one big challenge of teaching writing, particularly in teaching IELTS writing task 2 essay, is how to help students be engaged and active (Lin, Zhang & Zheng, 2017). More practice and research should be conducted on the use of online tools like Padlet and Jamboard to explore more of the potential and risks, which would contribute to making an effective online teaching and learning environment.

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