

Investigating Students' Perception of Using Wikis in Academic Writing

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ABSTRACT

Wikis are emergent technologies which are increasingly used in writing classrooms. These web-based, authoring tools have been used in academic writing classrooms and specifically for collaborative work. This study investigated students' perception of using wikis for collaborative writing. Four-hundred twenty four undergraduate students enrolled in an academic writing course participated in the survey. In the course, students wrote, revised and submitted group research reports via wikis. This paper discusses two main issues, the first is to determine group participation level during group work via wikis and the second is, to identify the preferred collaborative writing mode. Findings indicate that students did not face major problems working together online. On the one hand, the students reported that wikis were useful for data storage and group work task completion. In addition, they claimed that using wikis for group work encouraged group participation. On the other hand, the students argued for the preference for face-to-face discussion during collaborative writing.

Keywords: wiki; collaborative work; perception; group participation; face-to-face discussion

INTRODUCTION

The development of a variety of easy-to-use Internet publishing tools is recently evident (Richardson 2009). These tools are changing the way people, including students at all levels, interact with the world (Solomon & Schrum 2007, Pramela Krish, Marlyna Maros & Siti Hamin Stapa 2012). Learning has become more personal, yet at the same time more connected to the surroundings, and with more potential for connected and collaborative activities among students (Kukulsak-Hulme & Traxler 2007). Multimedia language laboratories are equipped with relevant software and hardware for students to use during and after class hours. Students are also able to access the internet easily. In many language lessons, web-based tools that are readily-available on the internet are often adopted in classroom activities.

The implementation of information and communication technology in writing classrooms has been found to be advantageous in developing students' writing skills (Cunningham 2000, Goldberg, Russell & Cook 2003) and facilitating their writing process (Lee 2004, Ware 2004). Through the years, writing instructors have used software, word processors, and synchronous or asynchronous computer-mediated communication (CMC)