

# Enhancing Learner Autonomy Abilities in Writing via WAPF

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## **ABSTRACT**

The aim for this study is to explore the types of web-based asynchronous peer feedback in enhancing the development of learner autonomy in writing. Ten respondents are involved in this interpretive qualitative study. They are from public universities. The data are collected from interviews, journal entries, essay drafts and feedback transcripts. All data are consistently compared and contrasted to yield an exhaustive analysis. The data are analyzed using thematic analysis and interpreted accordingly. The findings disclose that there are three types of WAPF delivered by the peers. They are Social, Affective and Cognitive WAPF. There are nine sub-categories of Social WAPF at personal level, eight sub-categories of Affective WAPF at personal and text levels, and four sub-categories for Cognitive WAPF at text level. It is clear that the respondents in this study are able to develop their autonomy abilities in writing through the WAPF. Ultimately, the respondents are able to reflect, decide and revise better in their writing.

*Keywords: learner autonomy in writing, web-based asynchronous peer feedback (WAPF), process writing*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Autonomous learners are reflective as they constantly rethink their ideas. Hence, they are accustomed to the customary of planning, monitoring and evaluating in everyday classroom work, ending in a more successful learning because learners are said to be more alert (Little,

2000). More importantly, these potent skills are then channeled into the real practice in their adulthood. Learners need to be autonomous as becoming one has lasting invaluable outcomes. It is an attribute that equips learners with life-long skills to enable the learner to function as a responsible independent learner in the short run and as an involved member of the society in the long run. This is in line with the country's aspiration in its journey to become a developed nation by the year 2020.

In language settings, learner autonomy is believed to enhance language acquisition (Ahmad, Yaakub, Megat Abdul Rahim, 2004; Pennycook, 1997 in Benson, 2006). In writing, learner autonomy is observed to be crucial as learners are 'given control over composing skills' (Hyland & Hyland, 2006, p.33). In other words, learners are able to shape their essays without the abstaining pressure from any parties where they have the power to determine the content and rhetoric of their writing in the process of meaning-making. This will ensure the sustenance of essay ownership and resolution to 'text appropriation' (Hyland, 2000, p.34) issue that frequently occurs in teacher-centered learning environment. Critical and creative essay writings are the potential outcomes when one is given autonomy.

### **The Current Situation**

Despite the potentials of learner autonomy in yielding the aspired nation's Human Capital, empirical studies by local researchers have shown that learners in Malaysia are not ready for learner autonomy, particularly in learning English (Ng, 2009; Thang, 2009; Junaidah, 2007; Thang & Azarina, 2007; Thang, 2005; Thang, 2001). The studies found that university students preferred teacher-centered approach, expecting the instructors to point their mistakes, guide and motivate them. They lack autonomy in learning due to the backwash of the traditional teaching practice during their primary and secondary schooling phases, which often stresses prescriptive instructions that debilitate students' potentials. Students from such backgrounds rely too much on the teachers to make decisions (Faizah, 2004). Sadly, teacher-centered approach continues at tertiary level as well. This learning approach was evident in Mahamood, Nik Yusoff and Embi (2009), Tengku Sarina Aini (2012) studies. As a result, very often teachers or lecturers dominate the learning process and thus restricting students' power of decision-makings. The conception that 'teachers are always right' has subjected the students to even withdraw from any attempts to deliver their stance.

To cater to the needs of the country's aspiration, a carefully planned strategy should be administered. In language setting, web-based peer feedback is capable of facilitating the development of learner autonomy abilities in writing as proven by Yu & Wu, (2013), Lu & Law (2011), Motallebzadeh & Amirabadi (2011), Chen, Liu, Shih, Wu & Yuan (2011), Miyazoe & Anderson (2010), Yang (2010), Dippold, (2009), Hui & Shih (2009), Xie, Ke & Sharma, (2008) and Ertmer, Richardson, Belland & Camin (2007). Observing the prospective of web-based peer feedback as proven in the foreign studies above, namely in developing the respondents' abilities to evaluate and make decisions on the changes in their essays, the researcher would like to investigate whether web-based asynchronous peer feedback is able to contribute to learner autonomy abilities in writing among the learners in the local context.

### **The Need for Web-Based Asynchronous Peer Feedback (WAPF)**

WAPF is a learning method using web-based asynchronous peer feedback to develop learner autonomy abilities in writing. Blog was operated as the platform where the writing and giving feedback occurred. This method was chosen due to the advantages that web-based asynchronous peer feedback could offer. In view of its virtual reality, this type of learning environment is less threatening (Guardado & Shi, 2007). The allowance for anonymity in cyberspace lowers learners' affective filter, thus stimulating more constructive and sincere feedback as compared to face-to-face feedback (Tuzi, 2001; Liu & Sadler, 2003). The non-real time (asynchronous) feature of blog is another plus because it provides learners the opportunity to assess and revise their ideas in their own time (DiGiovanni & Nagaswami, 2001). It does not require users to be on 'live' sessions, allowing time flexibility. The text-based online feedback rather than oral-based feedback also saves high-anxiety learners or low achievers from embarrassment to speak in English. When the learner has gained adequate motivation, learner autonomy gradually emerges as learners gain greater control in the writing process. This could be seen when learners are able to exercise their own critical and analytical judgments on the feedback given by their peers to revise their essays.

With peer feedback, students will be able to experience to write for real life audience as their work is viewed by peers who are of the same status and interests. The author could discover any mismatch between the writer's contention and the reader's perception of the text. In other words, is meaning-making taking place? The author is also able to gain different perspectives of opinions from various sources: seeing things that are initially possible or vice versa (Hui, 2005). Any misinterpretation or ambiguity can be remedied in the negotiation process during peer feedback sessions. To add, by incorporating suggestions from peers would accentuate the sense of audience, eventually advancing one's communication efficiency (Kirsznner & Mandell, 1988).

### **Methodology**

This study adopted interpretive qualitative study as the research design. Purposive sampling was adopted as the basis for the selection of respondents. Ten respondents from three public Higher Institutions of Learning volunteered for this study: nine females and one male. Their age group ranged from 23-24 years old. The primary data for this study was the web-based asynchronous peer feedback (WAPF) given by the peers to the respondents. The peers were asked to respond to their counter-parts' writing drafts (Draft one and Draft two) to help them improve their writing performance. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis that emerged from the raw data. The coding process for the study is described in Table 1:

Table 1: Coding for Types of WAPF

Theme	Code	Behavior	Descriptors
A. Social - Personal Level	A1	greeting	To greet, to welcome
	A2	giving opinion	To give opinions on issues brought up in essay
	A3	agreeing to opinion	To agree with the respondent's or other peer's opinion
	A4	disagreeing to opinion	To disagree with the respondent's or other peer's opinion
	A5	sharing of knowledge	To share prior knowledge of the topic
	A6	sharing of experience	To share experience about the past
	A7	recollection of the past	To recall past experience triggered by the topic
	A8	social gesture	A form of communication to maintain a good relationship
	A9	closure	To close the interaction to signal the end of feedback
B. i) Affective- Personal Level	B1	praise	To praise on interesting or informative topic and to praise for the success or strength of the respondent portrayed in their essays.
	B2	motivation	To motivate respondents about life to carry on with

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			her life, to enhance respondent's self-confidence and self-esteem
	B3	appreciation	To appreciate the knowledge that was delivered by the respondent in the essay
	B4	advice	To advise about life
	B5	consolation	To console respondent's grief
	B6	acknowledgement	To acknowledge the contribution of knowledge delivered by the respondent in the essay
	B7	encouragement	To wish respondents good luck
	B8	expression of shock	To express shock
B.	B9	praise	To acknowledge the respondents' performance, the effectiveness of their writing skill and the improvements made in their essays.
ii) Affective - Text Level	B10	advice	To advice respondents on how to improve their abilities to write.
	B11	encouragement	To motivate the respondents to work on their succeeding drafts
	B12	allowance for counter-argue	To allow respondents to dispute on feedback

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	B13	support	To support the respondent's argument after being disagreed by other peer
	B14	consolation	To mellow down the respondents' anxiety level
	B15	recognition	To acknowledge the respondents' special talents and abilities in writing
	B16	expression of dismay	To express disappointment towards respondents
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C. Cognitive - Text Level	C1	content	To highlight weakness, suggest, ask for clarification, evaluate, caution on content
	C2	organization	To highlight matters pertaining to length, organization, cohesiveness and paragraphing on respondent's organization
	C3	style	To evaluate how the essay was presented (the writing style)
	C4	language	To monitor, suggest and correct on grammar and vocabulary

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Four raters were used to validate the data using the above coding. The percentage of agreement of the raters ranged from 95% -100%. The reliability of this study was accepted as it proved to be higher than the conditioned percentage by Miles & Huberman (1994) which was 70%.

## **Results and Discussions**

The data revealed that the respondents in this study received supportive, and constructive WAPF from their peers. There were three main types of WAPF found in this study. They were categorized as Social, Affective and Cognitive WAPF. This WAPF was crucial for the respondents' development of autonomy abilities in writing which subsequently improved their essay performances.

The WAPF was given at personal and text level. Personal level engaged feedback given on personal opinions, preferences or social obligations, generally dealing with the issues projected in the respondents' essays. Meanwhile, text level involved feedback that concerned content, organization, style and language of the essays. From the findings, it was found that Social WAPF was given at personal level, Cognitive WAPF was given at text level, whilst Affective WAPF was given both at personal and text levels.

### **Social WAPF**

Evidently, nine sub-categories of Social WAPF emerged from the study. They were greetings, giving opinions, agreeing to opinions, disagreeing to opinions, sharing of knowledge, sharing of experiences, remembering past events, social gestures and closure.

#### **A1. Greetings**

Greetings by Salina and Tini appeared at the beginning of the thread in the WAPF. In Draft One, a total number of six greetings were recorded. Amongst the six, five were given to three respondents who were from two different localities. This type of WAPF was given as a way to develop social relationships. Meanwhile out of the two feedback received in Draft Two, one was given from a friend to a friend who was studying at the same institution. This greeting then served as a starter to a discussion or as a social gesture.

#### **A2. Giving Opinions**

The second sub-category of Social WAPF was giving opinions. Giving opinions dealt with feedback that talked about the peers' personal views regarding the respondents' topics. Out of all the sub-category of Social WAPF, this was the most received. A total of 57 responses were recorded in Draft One and six responses in Draft Two. The high number of feedback was received by those essays that delivered about teaching style: 18, personal life: 10 and people's attitude: 8. These types of topics obviously had captured the peers' attention that spurred quite a discussion on the matter. For instance, the topic on teaching style talked about the teaching method that failed to achieve its goal. Therefore, the peers started posting alternatives on various strategies of suitable teaching modes. Meanwhile, one of the topics on personal lives projected about the respondent's past, present and future life triggered the peers to respond especially to what had happened during her past that actually taught her about the reality of life. Meanwhile, the topic on people's attitude that relayed on a controversial issue sparked quite a long thread as many of the peers viewed the situation differently.

The opinions were relayed based on the suitability and complexity of the essay, to confirm or extend information or to suggest solutions to improve the situation or giving their stance in the issues emphasized in the text. Examples of the various sub-themes of giving opinions:

Suitability:

the topic that you have chosen seems to be quite unfamiliar. for those who does not have science background, the topic will be not interesting for them as they did not understand what you are talking about. i've got no problem as i have read about polimer before this (Salina, ND1)

Complexity:

your article is too cplex for ordinary reader likeme to understand (Yati, ND1)

Suggestion for solutions:

You must know how to make them fun. i learned history the fun way. Cewah...cewahh... look confident and stylish Walawei!!! (Dian, RD1)

#### A3 & A4. Agreeing & Disagreeing to Opinions

Succeeding giving opinions were agreeing to opinions and disagreeing to opinions. Both were follow-ups from the personal opinions given by the peers. Agreeing to opinions were relayed in support of what had been pointed out, whereas disagreeing to opinions were delivered to oppose the peers' viewpoints. The peers displayed maturity in their thinking as they did have their own arguments to support their stance and if they disagreed, they were able to counter-argue. In other words, they were not merely followers, rather they were knowledge builders. Below are examples of agreeing and disagreeing to opinion :

a. Agreeing to opinion:

i agree with yagami. yes, it will change us to be a better person (Tini, AD1)

I agree with Yagami that our Japanese lecturer did state that from her point of view and experiences. (Ann, DD1)

b. Disagreeing to opinion:

I did not agree with babysbreath in taking a drastic action with the so-called "friends". (Ann, TD1)

After reading this several times, I began to wonder, do this situations happen in Malaysia? It does, but somehow I got the feeling it didn't really portray situations in Malaysia. (Rose, AsD1)

#### A5. Sharing of knowledge

Sharing of knowledge was the next sub-category of Social WAPF. In sharing of knowledge, the peers brought in their prior knowledge of the topic to be shared with the learning community. Quoting examples from reliable sources like expert panels and established education system, strengthened the reliability of the claims that broadened the views of the learning community:



Once I had watched Wanita Hari Ini and from the discussion, the panels said that everyone is born with different physical, the big one should be the big one and the slim one should be the slim one. The most important thing is how to show yourself appealing to others. They should not be intimidated by their physical appearance. Even so, it is hard to wipe off the thought that fat people are ugly from the mind of the society (Isda, AsD2)

like what the education system abroad have been practice (Salina, AnD1)

#### A6. Sharing of experiences

Sharing of experience relayed about past experiences alike or unlike the ones experienced by the respondents. This type of Social WAPF, also functioned to support the issues featured in the essays. Out of the 10 respondents, 70% of them received such feedback whether in Draft One or Two. This indicated that sharing of experience was a significant tool used to foster a greater understanding among the respondents in the learning community:

I was once fat too and had a low self-esteem. I had experienced of being making fun off because no one know the reason why I became fat. After I went through the operation, all of those killing and hurting words stop (Ann, WD1)

I remember being zombie in the literature class not long time ago. But our lecturer knows how to bring us back to live (Dian, RD1)

#### A7. Recollection of the Past

Recollection of the past was the 7<sup>th</sup> sub-category of Social WAPF. The issues that were presented by the respondents in the essays had made the peers recall what they had experienced in the past. In other words, the peers were able to connect with the respondents' stories, thus further strengthening the sense of belonging in the learning community:

Hahaha....reading your story reminds me of my school good old day. I hate history because it is boring and too much fact. (Wafa RD1)

Well, when I read your article, the memories when I joined kelanasiswa (scout) in USM was coming out in my mind.(Tini, WD2)

#### A8. Social gesture

Social gestures referred to the WAPF that were given as a form of communication in maintaining a good relationship. Apart from that, it was a medium that depicted the quality of humility and politeness. In effect, the respondents would not feel that the peers were showing off their competence, rather they were just lending a hand:

If there the thing that I point up is wrong, please forgive me. I'm still learning after all. (Wafa, DD1)

Good luck frenz! (Tini, ID1)

#### A9. Closure

Closure was obtained at the end of the peers' thread to signal the end of his or her feedback. Out of the 10 respondents, five received closure. Isda wrote 'Ok, that's all,' to Tini's Draft One, whilst Wafa said 'That's all. Thank you,' in Dian's Draft One.

From the data above, it can be concluded that, the respondents in this study received Social WAPF from their peers. Social WAPF referred to web-based asynchronous feedback given to the respondents by the peers, corresponding to the issues brought up by the respondents in their essays. This type of WAPF functioned as a mechanism to establish a good rapport between the respondents which in turn helped to build a trustworthy learning community.

The social WAPF found in this study was significant as it was responsible for instigating the dynamics of the learning process. This social WAPF could not be found in a traditional face-to-face or oral feedback as the feedback in the latter are often given direct to the point. Since it is a face-to-face context and often done with familiar classmates, there is no need for socialization (Shamsad, 2003; Noor Hanim, 2000). Respondents usually dealt with the task at hand straightforwardly.

On the other hand, in this study, this type of feedback was not only appropriate but necessary because at the beginning, some of the respondents were totally strangers to each other. They only communicated through an asynchronous online medium. Besides not being able to have visual or oral contact, the correspondence was not even involved in real-time communication either. The potential for the respondents' mood and interests to lessen as a result of such shortcomings was quite high. Hence, there was a need to create an environment that was inviting and sustaining. Therefore, before the peers commented on the authors' contents, they created a conducive and supportive learning cyberspace by socializing among themselves. In this learning community, no one was treated unfairly. Instead, the data revealed the prominence of communal manifestation. The strong social support thus, formed a bond, the type of relationship that kindled episodes of interactions to take place. This comfort zone provided a platform where the peers were open to relay their own opinions, agree to opinions, share knowledge and experiences with the intent of supporting what the authors had brought up in the essay, and thus establishing a reliable learning community. Without such complacent community, the effect of the learning process would not have been the same. Such form of social interactions according to Vygotsky (1978, p.86), are vital for learners' cognitive development. This finding was supported by Taylor, King & Pinsent-Johnson (2002) who projected social learning as the first component to initiate the collaboration that occurred in their study. The inviting behaviors that started off their communications had spurred the respondents to be helpful with one another.

### **Affective WAPF**

Apparently, eight sub-categories were found for Affective WAPF at Personal level. They were praises, motivations, appreciations, advice, consolations, acknowledgements, encouragements, expressing emotions and social gestures. A further discussion is presented in the next sections.

B1. Praise

Praises seemed to be the most popular sub-category of affective WAPF at personal level. Ninety percent of the respondents obtained this WAPF with a total of 35 praises. Out of the 90%, 40% of the respondents received five or more praises.

From the findings, it was concluded that the praises were given for two main purposes: to praise on interesting or informative topic and to praise for the success or strength of the respondent portrayed in their essays. Some examples of praises given by the peers are:

- a. To praise on interesting or informative topic:  
Honestly, your story is interesting (Wafa, ID1)  
It was good that u wrote about something that u have learnt. it make us will more understand and remember our subject better (Tini, ND1)
- b. To praise on success or strength of respondent:  
but i'm glad that you succeeded in increasing yourself esteem and getting friends who don't really mind what skin colour you have .It's what in the inside, nee? (Dian, ID1)  
you are a good karate-ka i'm sure..i'm amazed that you are reducing weight and become more prettier and confident nowadays (Yati, WD1)

#### B2. Motivation

Motivation surfaced as the second sub-category of Affective WAPF at personal level. Motivation was relayed to only one particular respondent: Isda. Evidently, such feedback was posted to Isda to motivate her to carry on with her life, to enhance her self-confidence and self-esteem.

.....they will look up to you as you have the credits for your intelligence, kindness and noble job as a teacher.. (Yati, ID)

.. how success u are now, ur dark story life is the reason how it happened now (Tini, ID1)

#### B3. Appreciation

Appreciation was another affective WAPF addressed at personal level. Even though only one feedback was recorded in Draft One, this WAPF was considered unique as it was relayed by a peer who actually appreciated the knowledge about polymer or better known as 'plastic' that was imparted in one respondent's essay: Nan. She thanked Nan for writing about polymer, a topic that was new for her: 'Thank you for adding my knowledge.'(Tini,ND2).

#### B4. Advice

Advice appeared to be the second highest sub-category of Affective WAPF. Apparently, Ann received the most advice: five. Ann wrote about her life experiences, therefore the advice was offered to help Ann see her experiences from other perspectives as well as to uplift her morale: think this..if you were born fair, but at the same time you are suffering from bad disease or born handicapped, wouldn't it be worst..?so, don't give up. face this world and remember to enjoy your life. (Salina, ID1)

as a muslim we also will be testing by our god. so what ever happen we should go through with the patient and always remember Allah S.W.T (Nan, AD1)

#### B5. Consolation

Consolation was another sub-category of Affective WAPF obtained at personal level. Consolation was relayed to one respondent: Isda. She received five consolations all together in Draft One. This was the result of personal support that the peers provided due to her overwhelming childhood history:

Well rumie, do not feel down. We love to be your friends (Ann, ID1)

don't be sad k... you deserve to be happy and enjoy this life (Salina, ID1)

#### B6 & B7 Acknowledgement & Encouragement

Following consolation were acknowledgement and encouragement. These personal affective WAPF was expressed to the same respondent: Nan. Acknowledgements were given for his contribution of knowledge to the peers. They wrote that , 'Your writing really add up my knowledge' (Wafa,ND1). In relation to the contribution, encouragement was also provided. Tini encouraged Nan in Draft One by saying, 'keep on ur great effort since i never learn about it before.' These acknowledgements and encouragement had motivated Nan to produce a more informative text for his readers.

#### B8. Expression of Shock

Expression of shock was especially relayed to Isda's essay who wrote about her dark childhood life. Isda's story imbued shock amongst the peers because it was a tragic true story about her own life. The peers who were close friends and even those who did not know her never thought that she had gone through such sufferings:

your story was really shocked me (Tini, ID1)

Speechless is the best word for describing my feeling right now when reading your entry (Wafa, ID1)

### **Sub-categories of Affective WAPF at Text Level**

Besides the sub-categories for Personal level, another sub-category that emerged from the data was at Text level. There were eight sub-categories of Affective WAPF at text level : praises, advice, encouragement, allowance for counter-argue, support, consolation, recognition, frustration and hope. An elaborate discussion of each sub-category is addressed in the following paragraphs.

#### B1. Praises

The first sub-category of Affective WAPF at text level attained by the respondents were praises. Corresponding to Affective WAPF at personal level, praise was also the main sub-category of Affective WAPF relayed at text level. Due to the large amount of feedback, the researcher felt that it was necessary to understand praises even better by looking at its different functions. In truth, all the praises in Draft One were given to acknowledge the respondents' first draft's essay performance, the effectiveness of their writing skill, whilst for Draft Two, it was for the

improvements made in their essays. Praises in Draft One were more focused on the style and message of the essay. The feedback was also quite general. Praises in Draft Two in contrast were more descriptive with various purposes. Most praises in Draft Two were posted for the content. Others were on organization, style and language. The examples below justify the above discussion:

Draft One:

- a. Style:  
Your style of writing also differ from others (Ann, YD1)  
i like the way you use monologue or dialogue (Yati, WD1)
- b. Message:  
you have pointed out some important points in your life (Yati, AD1)  
  
i like your points it has deep meaning (Asiah, RD1)

Draft Two:

- a. Content:  
it was very fun to read your article when you have included some exagarated expression of your students. It showed me that you are funny person (Tini, RD2)
- b. Organization:  
ur draft is better now because you arraged it according to paragraph, easy for me to read (Yati,DD2)  
good improvment. so reader can know what have u go through. the flow of story are good to grab attention(Nan, YD2)
- c. Language:  
i love ur language simplicity, simple sentence structure yet u can convey ur message successfully (Rose,YD2)  
Your word usage is very powerful and meaningful until i can feel the pain that you have gone through and the hatred you feel inside (Yati, ID2)

## B2. Advice

Advice surfaced as the second sub-category of Affective WAPF at text level. Advice at text level was given with an equivalent purpose to the one received at personal level. However, this advice was given not on general opinion on the topic but rather on the specific text per se. In other words, it was meant to guide the respondents to improve their abilities to write.

The researcher noticed that the advice were allocated mostly for two respondents: Nan and Tini. Nan received three advice, whilst Tini two. After an analysis, it was discovered that these two respondents' revisions in Draft Two did not meet the peers' expectations. The total number of advice recorded was two in Draft One and four in Draft Two. The succeeding examples demonstrates the advice WAPF:

juz have to familiarize urself with english structure by mingling around them.. :) i mean by reading a lot (Ann, ND1)

It just you need to sit back sometime and read your essay back thoroughly a few times or maybe thousand of times to check everything in it (Wafa,TD2)

### B3. Encouragement

Encouragement was another Affective WAPF addressed at text level. It surfaced as the second highest in Affective WAPF at text level. Evidently, encouragement was given to motivate the respondents to work on their succeeding drafts and in actual fact it had touched the respondents well psychologically:

All the best (Isda,MD1)

Good luck for your third draft (Wafa,MD1)

### B4. Allowance for counter-argue

Allowance for counter-argue was a distinctive Affective WAPF at text level received by the respondents. This WAPF was considered as distinctive because of the impact that it led to. This sub-category of WAPF had opened the minds of the respondents to be critical and analytical in responding to all the WAPF relayed. To put it in another way, the respondents were encouraged to evaluate the validity of the WAPF, not simply taking in all the WAPF as absolute. It was observed that out of the four WAPF, three were posted by the same person: Wafa. Wafa argued that 'it was meant to provoke the respondents to defend their points if they felt that they were right' (Wafa, intv. 2, lines 405-409).

Ah..if you want to defend your point, please do so. I did not mind after all. It shows that we are learning (Wafa,MD1)

Feel free to defend your points. I would love to hear it (Wafa, RD1)

### B5. Support

Support was the next sub-category of Affective WAPF obtained at text level. All the three support was posted to object the WAPF delivered by other peers on the respondents' essays. These peers instead felt that what the respondents wrote were suitable and appropriate. Evidently, this sub-category of Affective WAPF had increased the respondents' beliefs in their capabilities in producing a better writing. Wafa for instance got uptight when Nan wrote that her introduction was not good, for she had indeed put a painstaking effort in it. Hence, when Salina backed her up, she was very happy (intv.2 lines 55-61). Meanwhile, Tini felt that the support offered were meaningful for her as there were people willing to help her with her writing (intv.2 lines 130-2). Below are two examples of support:

i think i disagree with fahmi..well..i like the intro. i think it can attract others to read the article (Salina, WD2)

If you got problem with it, feel free to ask all of us. We are willingly to help you since all of us still learning (Wafa, TD2)

### B6. Consolation

Like advice, consolation, was posted to these respondents: Nan and Tini. Logically, due to the numerous feedback that embossed their errors, consolation played a vital role to mellow down

the respondents' anxiety levels. This act was especially significant for Tini who were shattered by the Cognitive WAPF in Draft Two:

as a non native speaker, we always do grammar mistakes sometimes, same like me  
(Yati, ND2)

Don't worry, it is just common mistake. What do you need to do is think it properly before you write it in your essay (Wafa,ND2)

#### B7. Recognition

The seventh category of Affective WAPF at text level: recognition. This feedback placed the respondents in a state of joy. For instance in Ann's Draft One, when Yati said 'i know you can elaborate your story well'(Yati,AD1), it gave the sense that Yati knew that Ann has the ability to improve her essay. It was a recognition from a friend that had obviously boosted Ann's intrinsic motivation. In another example: Isda did feel 'happy' (I feel happy.... (intv.2 lines 38-40) when Tini wrote, 'I think that I need to learn from you on how to write an essay perfectly' (Tini, ID2).Unlike the former case, this feedback was given by someone who only knew Isda through her writing, thus heightening the reliability of the WAPF. Both WAPF conveyed that the peers acknowledged the respondents' special talents.

#### B8. Expression of Dismay

The next sub-category of Affective WAPF at text level was expression of dismay. The frustration was expressed to Nan's Draft Two which did not reveal any improvement albeit he was advised to amend his grammar errors in his Draft One WAPF.

Expression of dismay, was rather unique too as apparently, the WAPF relayed by the peers was not all pleasant to read. On occasions like this one, particularly the WAPF provided by Ann, one would really have to stay calm and reflect on the seemingly harsh comment. This type of WAPF also enhanced the authenticity of the feedback given by the peers, that they did not just give positive WAPF but negative ones too. Two expressions of dismay were voiced out in Draft Two:

Well, first of all grammatical errors. It seems like you did not improve on this after being told so in your first draft. (Ann, ND2)

i wonder, do u really take all d comments into consideration... (Rose, ND2)

Evidently, the data revealed that the respondents received Affective WAPF both at personal and text levels. The positive WAPF provided a strong moral support for the respondents at personal or text level. Praises, motivation, encouragement, appreciation, consolation, expression of emotion (shock) and advice; the feedback categorized under personal level had psychologically uplifted the morale of the respondents, ultimately increasing the respondents' self-esteem and self-confidence in their personal beings. Meanwhile, at text level, evidence of excitement and eagerness among the respondents were present when they were poured with praises, encouragement, support, advice, acknowledgements and recognitions. The Affective WAPF at both levels in due course provided a profound extrinsic motivation for the respondents that in turn founded their intrinsic motivation resulting to more convincing



compositions. As studies had proven, performances that resulted from intrinsic motivation were of higher quality (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Spratt, Humphreys & Chan, 2002; Wachob, 2006). Hence, with encouraging affective WAPF, the respondents were able to produce better revisions in their writing drafts.

In this study, the researcher believed that motivation preceded autonomy. Both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations were present in the process of learning. Extrinsic motivation was evident when the peers acknowledged and recognized the strengths of the respondents' essays and provided constructive feedback, consisting of intellectual inputs for the parts that needed improvements. The external positive reinforcement was believed to boost the learner's intrinsic motivation where he or she would be conscious of the advantages of feedback. Realizing the importance of improving his or her writing, the learner would then attempt on revising the composition. To put it simply, the extrinsic motivation offered by the peers triggered the learner to willingly reflect on his or her work and lastly revise her or his essay illuminating the practice of learner autonomy abilities. The findings of this study agreed with Deci & Ryan's, (2000) Spratt et al.'s (2002) and Wachob's (2006) studies that motivation leads to autonomy. As found in this study, extrinsic motivation from other sources like a dynamic teaching style, enhances one's intrinsic motivation that later results in autonomy.

### **Cognitive WAPF**

Specifically, there were four sub-categories of Cognitive WAPF. They were content, organization, style and language. Elaborations on each sub-category are explained in the subsequent paragraphs:

#### **C1. Content**

Content appeared to be the most Cognitive WAPF conveyed. Apparently, Salina's Draft One was too short and too general. Thus, the peers constructively worked out a framework of her text to make it more revealing and justified. Even in her Draft Two, a peer (Yati) still thought that her text was still too general. Meanwhile, Wafa's text was commented for lacking quality in justification, length and cohesiveness:

##### **a. Suggestions:**

but i think maybe there will be some people who cant understand what r u trying to say..so u may post a question down there whther this is the teachers we want to be in school? (Asiah, FD1)

it would be more meaningful if u can start the paragraph with a sad or memorable story of u and one of your best friend, and then you can elaborate the meaning of friendship to you. then u can insert your feelings or emotion. put some sayings, poem, or song. you can improve by adding some complex sentences on certain parts. so that ur story will be interesting. you can put some rethoric question and of course u answer it as ur personal thought (Yati, SD2).

##### **b. Clarification:**

What do you mean by incompetent physically? (Isda, WD1)

Opps.....is it in the world or in the Asian? Because from the previous essay you said the rudest cities in Asian. Just want the clarification. (Wafa, SD2)



- c. Evaluation:  
i think your essay was to[too] short and to[too] general (Nan, SD1)  
but you seemed to exaggerate the students' reaction (Isda, RD2)

## C2. Organization

The second sub-category of Cognitive WAPF was organization. Organization dealt with the coherence of the essay in which ideas were smoothly and logically connected that allowed information to be meaningfully imparted. Mainly, the respondents were asked to reorganize the order of their paragraphs for the cause of length, coherence and paragraphing:

- a. Length:  
Well, I think you should balance your paragraph in good manner. Some of your paragraph was too long and it was odd to me (Tini, AnD1)  
i think for the paragraph development, it seems to be uneven. the first paragraph and the second paragraph seems to be a bit longer compared to the 3rd, 4th and the last paragraph. Try to distribute your idea evenly to make your writing become more organized.(Salina, AD2)
- b. Coherence:  
For the first and second paragraph, I could not see the transition between it. Maybe it is just my feeling. But the starting of the second paragraph seemed that it is a new essay writing. That is why I could not see the coherent between the 1st n 2 nd paragraph (Dian, TD1)  
you can arranged your paragraph by starting with what happened to you when you were small and you u express ur feelings in the next paragraph, then the negative effects , positive effects and finalize with the ways u overcome your problem or the moral values of the stories.(Isda, YD2)
- c. Paragraphing:  
Maybe you could do some paragraphs to make it easier for us to read and the ideas might not get confusing (Asiah, AD2)  
Besides, i think you should divide the second paragraph into two parts.The first one is about how people easily get fat and second is about the prejudice among fat woman. You have raised two issues in one paragraph. So, it is better to divide and you can talked about it more and give examples (Asiah,WD2)

## C3. Style

The third sub-category of Cognitive WAPF was style. Style referred to how an essay was presented. It could also be described as the manner of writing. Although only Nan received this feedback in Draft One and Two, whilst Yati in Draft One, style is an important criterion for a good essay. The style of one's writing has a strong impact on the reader. An essay with an intriguing style filled with elements of surprise, joke or flashback written descriptively is able to sustain the reader's interest and vice versa. Yati's essay was commented implying that she should change her style of writing so that it would be more intriguing. Nan was also commented due to his writing style. With Nan's factual essay, the peers thought that he ought to consider writing in an informal fashion to inject some life into his essay as Rose and Yati put it:

if ur target readers are people who do not have any single knowledge bout the info, maybe u can put in something fun or fun fact or anything bout polymers so readers won't feel so %^#^%#37 when reading ur article (Nan, RD1)

your essay is a factual essay. but think u can make it more interesting by adding some rhetoric questions or add some tag line or excerpt or newspaper article or dialogue or anything (Nan, YD2)

#### C4. Language

The last type of Cognitive WAPF found in the study was language. Language consisted of grammar and vocabulary elements. Grammar WAPF emphasized on spellings, pronouns, tenses, transitions, subject-verb agreements, preposition and direct translations. Meanwhile comments on vocabulary were about the wrong usage, limited vocabulary or repetition of some words. The feedback was either provided in a suggestive, inquisitive, corrective or at times directive manner. Here are some examples of the language WAPF:

##### a. Grammar:

###### i. Spelling:

.... 'grand father' should be 'grandfather', 'staff' should be 'stuff' (Isda, AD1)

spelling error: I always taught should ..I always thought (Isda, AnD1)

###### ii. Transition:

..... you should use transition words in order to link the paragraphs. For example is in paragraph 3,4 and 5. I don't find it linking with previous paragraph. Reader might get confused what are you talking about when they read first sentence. (Rose, WD1)

.....it is better if you use transition words to link each paragraph.Examples are furthermore,in addition.It will make your writing even better (Ann,ND1)

###### iii. Direct translation:

it seems you direct translate the sentence into English..... Her face and tall is almost similar to me....What differentiate us when she is start wearing spectacles.. Ithink what you mean is 'her face resembles me and we are almost of the same height. Whatmakes us different is when she wears spectacle..... (Tini, RD2)

##### b. Vocabulary:

###### i. Wrong usage:

the use of certain words are not appropriate to describe something such as 'So the polymer will become more strength' (Nan, AnD1)

###### ii. Limited use:

It was my grandmother (my mother's mother).Maybe u can use maternal mother (saje je nak gune bombastic word) (Isda,WD1)

However, maybe the limitation of your vocabulary prevent the story from capturing readers'attention till the end (Yati, AnD1)

In this study, Cognitive WAPF emerged as the predominant type of feedback. Without it the whole learning process would have been a complete failure. This Cognitive WAPF was necessary to provide '*global feedback*' which according to Liu and Hansen (2002) is significant for text development. On the contrary to surface feedback, global feedback is comprehensive as it does not only focus on marginal errors like grammar but also on more crucial elements in a text like content, organization and style. The cognitive WAPF referred to feedback that provoked thinking on the text. It was the point of reference for the respondents to learn to be autonomous in writing. With it, the respondents could resolve issues of ambiguity, mismatches, unfounded assertions, redundancy, cohesion or language use that were unheeded. Cognitive WAPF surfaced at text level only.

It was proven that the peers in this study did comply with this condition. The WAPF was mind provocative where questions and suggestions were constantly posted if the author's intended message was vague or ambiguous. The four areas covered; content, organization, style and language were inclusive, encompassing a complete framework of an essay. It really triggered the respondents to re-conceptualize what they had written in their essays in the attempts to convince the readers (peers). The peers were able to comment on the content by providing different views, agreeing to issues raised, raising awareness and suggesting solutions to problems. With the genuine intention of helping the respondents improve writing, all the drafts were read thoroughly producing deep level reviews where 'they make connections among ideas and able to follow the writer's logic, implicit meaning, and intent' (Liu & Hansen, 2002, p.107). As for organization, the peers could make judgments on the suitability of organization and paragraphing, two aspects which are rudimentary in writing composition. The comment on style of writing was also important to produce better drafts. Language errors were not marginalized either. The peers provided general as well as specific grammar feedback to the respondents. Ultimately, the well-thought Cognitive WAPF had effectively guided the respondents to be critical and analytical of their own essays. This finding was in agreement with what Liu & Hansen (2002) proposed that Cognitive feedback generates learners to take charge of their learning and thus produce critical thinkers.

### **Conclusion**

In short, the respondents in this study obtained three types of WAPF: social (personal level), affective (personal and text levels) and cognitive WAPF (text level). The three types of WAPF exercised by the peers assisted in the development of learner autonomy abilities in writing among the respondents. Along the process, the peers played four significant roles: establishing e-learning community, monitoring, motivating and scaffolding. During the writing experience, the respondents had developed their learner autonomy abilities in reflecting, decision making and revising of their essays. Clearly, this study has proven that the dire need for autonomous learner-centered learning for this country can be resolved through this type of learning process. The peers who played the significant roles did not spoon-feed or make decisions for the respondents as teachers normally would. They were merely there to spark the respondents' thinking process. The respondents could then employ the autonomy abilities in other parts of their learning process and gradually become successful and responsible individuals.

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