

Enhancing Email Writing Online: A Case Study in International Collaboration

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DOI Link: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v15-i8/26289>

Published Date: 25 August 2025

Abstract

Despite the importance of email as a primary mode of communication, studies have shown that undergraduate students still lack effective email writing skills. This gap in writing good emails not only affect students' proficiency in communication but also undermines their preparedness for the workplace. Thus, this case study utilised an online webinar to teach email writing as part of an internationally collaborative programme engaging Malaysian undergraduates from several university campuses. It aims to enhance students' email writing abilities, encouraging confidence in written communication, and exposing them to cross-cultural professional practices. Data from 162 undergraduates was gathered via a survey and student comments to look into how they perceived about the advantages of the webinar programme, knowledge acquired, personal growth, and content and delivery effectiveness. Based on the findings, collaborative online teaching can be used to enhance language learning in interesting and meaningful ways, especially when it comes to email writing skills.

Keywords: Email Writing, Collaborative Programme, Communicative Proficiency, Writing Skills

Introduction

Email communication has become the norm in today's digital world, and writing emails has become an indispensable skill whether for academic or professional purposes. Studies have shown that email writing demands clarity, professionalism, and an appropriate tone (Prasad, 2020; Malka et al., 2015). Email writing etiquette is therefore essential for students as a form of preparation for the workplace (Ghafar, 2024).

Although email writing is an important skill to master, it has often been overlooked, especially in non-native English classrooms where grammar and general writing skills are prioritized (Alali, 2022). Email writing requires understanding the audience, cultural sensitivity, and digital conventions to enable smooth communication. With the rise of online learning platforms, new opportunities have been created for the teaching of writing skills, particularly email writing, through virtual webinars, collaborative modules, and interactive technologies

(Alejandro, 2025; Rao, 2019). These platforms allow learning beyond barriers and facilitate international collaboration between educators and learners. Studies have found that cross-border collaborative teaching has been shown to enrich students' learning experience by exposing them to diverse perspectives (Sang et al., 2025; Yoke et al., 2024)

This paper presents a case study on the use of an online webinar to teach email writing through an internationally collaborative programme involving Malaysian undergraduates from different university campuses. The objectives were to enhance email writing skills among the students, foster confidence in written communication, and expose students to cross-cultural professional practices. Hence, this would be significant to undergraduates taking the course, instructors teaching the course, curriculum developers and business professionals as it can contribute to their knowledge and improvement in studies involving email writing courses. Collaboration programmes in teaching email writing would benefit the students to get a broader scope of how it is implemented and this produces a space for sharing of teaching methods and strategies among instructors. The results could be beneficial to business professionals as well since better email writing skills are put to good use in the workplace. Through a survey and student feedback, data were collected from 162 undergraduates to investigate students' perceptions of the webinar programme's benefits, knowledge gained, personal development, and effectiveness of content and delivery. The results would substantiate whether collaborative online teaching can be leveraged to improve language instruction in meaningful and engaging ways particularly for email writing skills.

Literature Review

Email Writing in Language Education

In this digital age, email writing has become an indispensable part of workplace communication. Although this is essential for communication, it is often not taught in the English language curriculum (Evans, 2012; Roshid & Kankaanranta, 2025). Effective email writing requires grammatical competence and understanding of tone, structure, audience awareness, and socio-cultural norms (Rostami & Khodabandeh, 2019). Students usually struggle to write with the right formality and clarity, and thus, teaching email writing can enhance their confidence and professionalism in workplace communication (Droz & Jacobs, 2019).

Online Platforms for Writing Instructions

Online learning platforms have become popular in recent years as they offer flexibility, accessibility, and opportunities for real-time feedback and collaborative learning (Ulanday et al., 2021). Webinars, virtual workshops, and asynchronous writing tasks are found to be able to support and help in developing students' writing skills (Newsome et al., 2023). In addition, discussion boards, collaborative documents, and video conferencing are found to enable a more dynamic writing practice session with peer review and instructor guidance (Dao, 2025). Online teaching has been found to have numerous benefits, but its effectiveness depends on the instructional design, clear objectives, and active engaging strategies for it to be successful (Gudoniene et al., 2025). In online email writing, the programmes must consider genre conventions, tone, and context-based appropriateness to ensure real-world workplace relevance (Yihan, 2024).

International Collaboration in Language Teaching

International collaboration in education has been practised in recent times. Language teaching across borders through collaborative efforts has been found to expose students to different English teaching varieties, intercultural norms, and professional standards of communication (Byram & Wagner, 2018). Educators also benefit from the sharing of best practices and the co-construction of meaningful learning experiences.

Conclusion

In sum, the literature shows the growing importance of online platforms as an effective tool for delivering writing instruction, offering flexible and interactive learning that supports student engagement and development. International collaboration in education further enriches student learning experiences. Despite these benefits, there is still a gap in research focusing on instructional approaches to email writing through collaborative online platforms. As such, this study intends to examine the impact of collaborative online programmes on students' learning outcomes, perceptions, and skill development and hence, contribute to new insights to digital pedagogy, professional writing instruction, and global educational partnerships.

Methodology

Research Design

A case study approach was adopted for this study to investigate the effectiveness of an online email writing programme delivered through international collaboration. The case study design was selected to allow an in-depth exploration of student experiences and perceptions in a real-world educational setting (Cleland et al., 2021). The programme was conducted using the Google Meet platform in the webinar format and focused on email writing skills to undergraduate students from different campuses in a Malaysian university.

Participants

The participants consisted of 162 undergraduate students taking the LCC113 English for Communicative Competence Level 3 course at the diploma level. A total of 11 classes participated, with varying degrees of representation from different campuses of a local university. Considering these variations when analysing is important, particularly when making generalisations across the cohort.

Programme Description

The webinar, referred to as the CGCT (Collaborative Global Communication Training) Programme, was jointly facilitated by educators from different institutions as part of an international collaboration initiative. The programme focused on teaching students the components of email writing, including subject lines, salutations, common expressions, format and tone. Model email analysis, interactive tasks and live discussions were included in the programme which lasted for approximately 60 minutes.

Instruments for Data Collection

There were two types of data collected:

1. Quantitative data through an online questionnaire using Google Form consisting of closed-ended Likert scale items (1- strongly disagree to 5- strongly agree). The items provided information on students' perceptions about programme benefits, knowledge

gained, self-development, alignment with course objectives, content quality, and presenter delivery.

2. Qualitative data was obtained through open-ended feedback in the same questionnaire, allowing students to freely express their views on the programme.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data collected from the online questionnaire were analysed using descriptive analysis to determine the overall outcome of students' responses. The high percentage of students' agreement (ratings 4 and 5) indicated positive agreement with the programme's effectiveness. The analysis was presented in figures and charts for clearer visualisation.

Qualitative data collected through the open feedback from the same online questionnaire were analysed using thematic analysis. Students' responses were grouped into themes such as clarity of presentation, content relevance, need for more interaction, and requests for future webinars. This allowed for triangulation of data to support the quantitative findings and provide a better understanding of the students' experiences.

Ethical Considerations

Participation in the online survey was voluntary, with consent from the participants, and they were assured that their responses were confidential and would only be used for the research.

Findings and Discussion

Both quantitative and qualitative data were analysed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the programme based on the students' perceptions of the collaborative online email writing through a webinar.

Perceived Benefits of Online Email Writing Webinar

Figure 1 shows the students' perceptions of the programme's benefits, based on 162 responses using a five-point Likert scale. The results were overwhelmingly positive, with the majority of students indicating that the programme was beneficial (Strongly agree = 61.7%; Agree = 32.7%). There was only a slight negative response (disagree = 0.6%) and a small number who opted for neutral (neutral = 4.9%). The results suggest that the collaborative teaching programme was well-received and met the students' expectations. It shows that the students found the programme effective, engaging, and relevant to their learning.

This programme has been beneficial to me.

162 responses

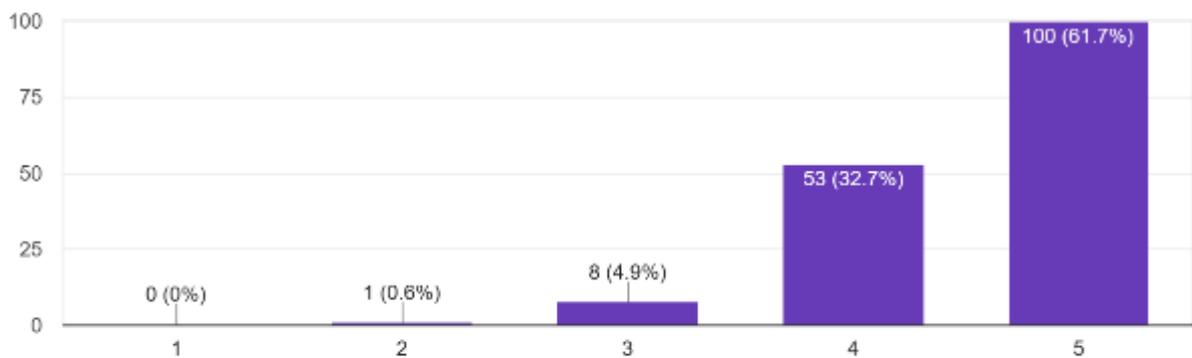


Figure 1 Students’ perceptions of the benefits of the programme.

Knowledge gained from the Programme

The findings in Figure 2 showed that the programme was effective in enhancing the students’ knowledge of email writing. More than half the students strongly agreed (57.4%) and agreed (37%) that the content delivered was relevant, engaging, and applicable to their course. There was a slightly negative response (0.6%) and a small number who opted for neutral (4.9%). The positive responses reflect the effectiveness of the programme in meeting the needs of the students, and they found the knowledge gained useful.

This programme has increased my knowledge in my area of practice.

162 responses

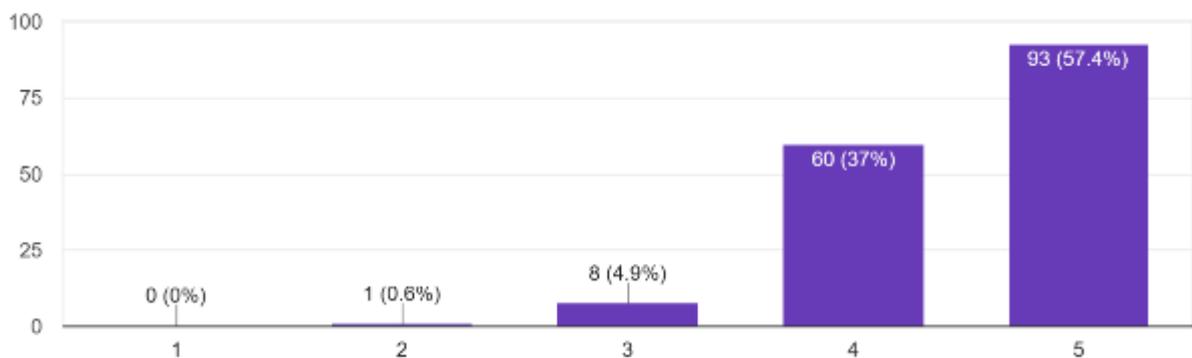


Figure 2 Students’ perceptions of knowledge gained from the programme

Impact on Attitude and Self-Development

The students were also asked whether the programme impacted their attitude and self-development, as shown in Figure 3. Most of the students strongly agreed (52.5%) and agreed (40.1%) that the programme improved or strengthened their personal growth. There were no responses indicating disagreements with the statement, and only a small number opted for

neutral (7.4%). The results indicate that the programme was highly effective in promoting positive attitudes and self-developmental outcomes among the students.

This programme has improved/strengthened my attitude and self-development.

162 responses

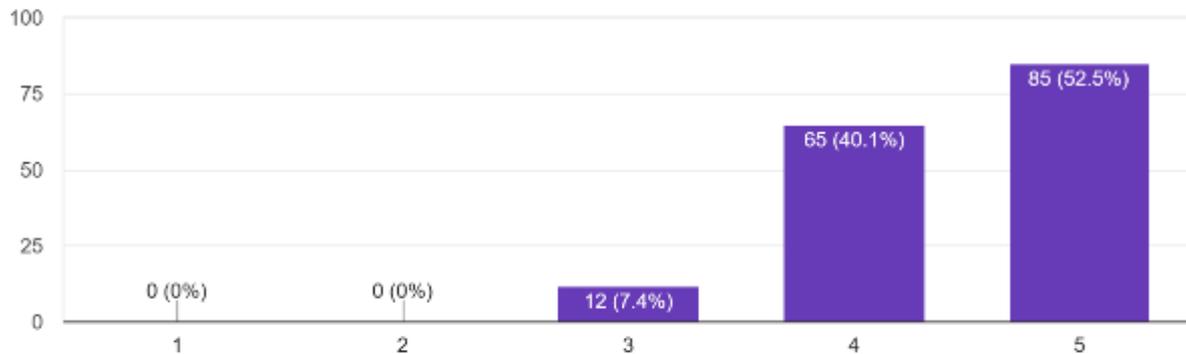


Figure 3 Students' perception of the impact of the programme on attitude and self-development

This programme meets the objective and fulfils the requirement of the course (LCC113)

162 responses

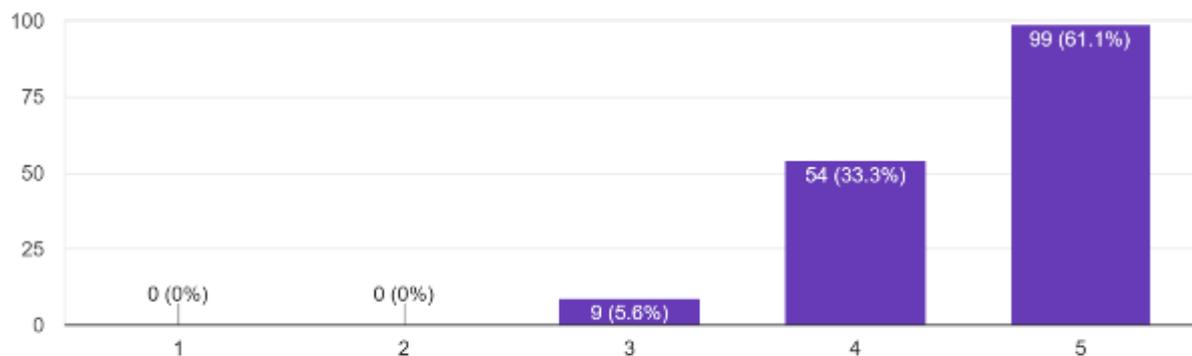


Figure 4 Students' Responses to Programme fulfillment of Course Objectives

Quality of the Webinar Content

The students' evaluation of the quality of the webinar content is shown in Figure 5. Most of the students rated strongly agree (61.1%), followed by agree (32.7%), which reinforced their positive responses of excellent quality. There was a slight negative response of strongly disagree (0.6%), while a small number responded neutral (5.6%). The results indicate a consistent satisfaction with the programme and webinar content.

Overall content of the webinar.

162 responses

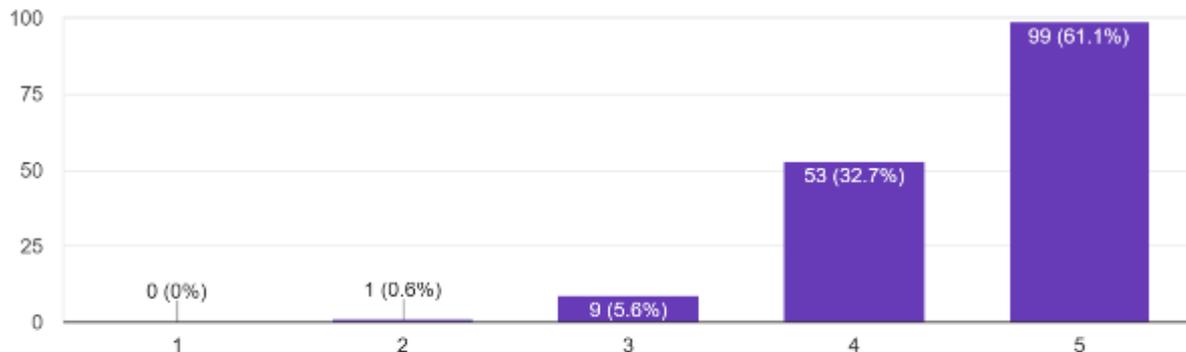


Figure 5 Students' response to the overall content of the webinar

Presenter Delivery and Engagement

The students also rated the presenter's delivery and engagement as shown in Figure 6. Most of the students strongly agreed (61.7%) and agreed (32.7%) with the statement. A small number, however, opted for neutral (5.6%), and none disagreed. This overwhelmingly positive response indicates the presenters' strong control of the lesson, clarity and student engagement, which are key factors for an impactful learning experience.

Presentation skills and delivery of the presenters.

162 responses

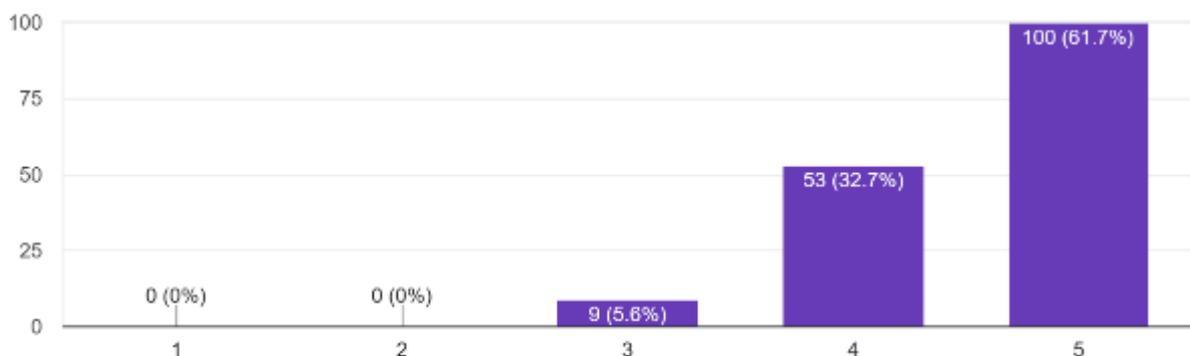


Figure 6 Students' responses to the presentation skills and delivery of the presenter

Thematic Analysis of Open-Ended Feedback

Besides the Likert-scale responses, students were also asked to provide open-ended feedback. The open-ended feedback provided valuable insights into the students' experience and perceptions of the collaborative online programme. Generally, the feedback was

overwhelmingly positive with students describing the programme as “good,” “very nice,” “excellent,” and “so good.” There was a recurring theme of *clarity and effectiveness of the presentation*, with several students remarking that the programme was “easy to understand” and praising the presenter for explaining “very well.” Another recurring theme was *useful and relevant*, specifically in helping students improve their email writing skills, as stated by one student, “it helped me a lot in creating formal emails,” while another commented that it served as an “excellent guide” for email writing.

Another strong theme was *enthusiasm for future webinars*. Most of the students requested for similar programmes to be conducted, with remarks such as “please do it again,” “I want more webinars like this,” and “this kind of programme needs to be spread among students.” This indicates students’ engagement and appreciation for learning email writing through collaborative online approaches.

Although the feedback was generally positive, there were some comments from students that offered *constructive feedback for improvements*. So, under this theme, some feedback received included “more interactive elements to maintain student attention,” “improvements in slide design,” and “longer sessions.” These comments suggest that the programme can be refined to enhance the learning experience.

Overall Interpretation

Overall, the qualitative results supported the quantitative findings and emphasised the strong impact the collaborative online programme had on students’ learning, engagement, and motivation. There was a consistent pattern found: the programme met its educational goals, delivered relevant and engaging content, and supported student development. The triangulated data from both the quantitative and qualitative instruments reinforced the reliability of the results. Lack of negative feedback from the students also indicated that the programme design and delivery were well-executed.

Conclusion

The findings of this study showed that the online email writing programme delivered through international collaboration, which is a CGCT collaborative webinar, was highly effective in achieving its objectives of enhancing students’ email writing skills, inculcating self-confidence in writing, and promoting professional communication through formal writing. The results from the quantitative data analysis indicated that there were overwhelming positive responses (strongly agree and agree) across all measured aspects, such as perceived benefits, knowledge gained, self-development, alignment with course objectives, content quality, and presenter delivery. The results also affirm that the webinar was relevant, engaging, and impactful with well-structured content, clear presentation, and interactive delivery. Students especially appreciated the practical focus on email writing that has sometimes been overlooked in language learning skills.

The qualitative data supported the findings from the quantitative data, revealing strong satisfaction with the programme and a desire for more sessions in the future. The overall responses were positive, with some constructive suggestions such as increasing interactivity, improving slide design, and allocating more time.

In conclusion, the success of this international collaborative initiative highlights the potential of online platforms to deliver language lessons across borders effectively and how educational partnerships can enrich students' learning experiences. Based on the outcomes of this study, several recommendations are proposed. Firstly, given the success of the CGCT webinar, similar collaborative webinars focusing on different aspects of academic and professional communication can be done more widely. Secondly, student feedback indicated a need for increased interactivity, and it is suggested that future sessions include live editing of sample emails or peer feedback activities to promote more engagement. This could make the webinar more interesting and increase learner reception of this approach to learning.

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