



October 2021 (Issue #4)

The University Grapevine

For University English Language Teachers

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Grapevine News

You can now publish up to 3 articles per year!

After the enormous response to the start of the newsletter, I've now decided to accept up to 3 articles for publishing from authors each year. I want to give everyone a chance to share their great ideas and also allow those with lots of ideas to get them out there for us all to enjoy! The deadline for Issue #7 is January 30th. Take a look at the simple [guidelines](#).



Find a 2022 online classroom exchange with [Culture Club](#)!



If you want to get your students communicating with students from around the world, [submit](#) some simple info on the website and other teachers will contact you directly. It's all free and probably the easiest way to make classroom connections!

Start teaching your students the [SMART](#) way from 2022!

You can make classroom preparation, online teaching, assessment and student motivation easier by switching to the [SMART Class Series](#) textbook range. Take a look at the textbooks available and make a switch to give yourself and your students a new and exciting start to 2022!



From the Editor

I'm proud to be sending you all this fourth issue of the newsletter. Once again, there are some excellent ideas inside to help us all improve our teaching and feel a little bit closer to each other. Thank you to everyone involved and please do not be shy about sending in your very own creative lesson plans, project ideas or approaches to helping university students learn English. Our world has very much changed and the experience and wisdom that we teachers can offer really are the way forward.

If you have not yet registered for the newsletter, you can [join here](#). Also, if you wish to send in an article for review, please use the simple [guidelines and template](#).

Good luck to everyone with teaching!

Robert Stroud
TUG Editor

Using Real-Time Online Exercises to Encourage Independent Writing

Alyson Galea
TAFE, NSW Australia

Teaching Goal

A problem I have struggled with in teaching an English for Academic Purposes writing on-line course, is the fact that many students get friends or family to write their papers. The college where I work recommends a set of correction codes for writing. For example, WW - wrong word, RW - rewrite, P - punctuation. Using these, together with corrections is the only means I have to communicate with the students about their writing. What I have found is that some students are able to work with such marking, but many look for outside help and not to me. My goal is to teach and mark writing assignments online in 'real time', therefore not allowing the students time to get someone else to write their papers for them.

Approach

My approach to address this has been to create one-hour writing exercises with students in small breakout groups.

The following are the steps I used:

1. Using Google slides, display a writing question. For example: Tell us when, how and why you write. What does writing do for you? How has it played a role in your life?
2. Explain that students will need to write 100-150 words in answer to the question while part of an online breakout group. Put the instruction on Google slides with text such as: We will go into Breakout groups for this activity. Please keep your cameras on as I will visit each group and you can ask me questions or check your writing during this time. We can then share our thoughts and writing with our group. NOTE: if your students are strong aurally and do not need written support for instructions, then this step can be omitted.
3. Assign the students to breakout groups with a set time of 60 minutes. (Maximum of 4 per group)

4. Pop into the groups to watch the members of each group and answer any questions.
5. Ask the students to read out their answers to the group. They can also copy and paste the writing into the group chat.
6. Ask permission to correct the writing in the chat so that others can benefit. The reason for this is that, by sharing a short piece of writing and watching, as the teacher corrects it and explains the corrections, others can see corrections to common mistakes.
7. Resume the full class and reflect on the process. This is done by taking questions from students about their own writing or the corrections.
8. This activity is best repeated every couple of weeks with a new topic.

Pros and Cons

The first attempt at this activity brought better results than I anticipated. Students who were confident at writing on their own presented work which may have had errors in word choice, word order or punctuation. However, in a safe space of a small group, they were happy to share what they had written. Another positive which came out of this approach was that students could not rely on outside writers. One student who had been relying on her partner to write her papers, came to me immediately after the lesson and told me what she was doing. I simply asked her, 'If you have your partner checking and correcting your work, then what part would you like me, as your teacher, to play?' She thought, and then said she would rather try to submit her original work in the future.

The main con of this approach is if students are reticent to participate in a small group setting. They may have issues of saving face or feel pressured by the one-hour time limit and having their cameras on. Steps 5 and 6 are optional. This is aimed at reducing pressure on any student that may be nervous. I do try to create a trusting space for the students by using small groups where the students can talk to each other while they complete the task.

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How to Publish an Article

Please follow the [guidelines](#) to submit an article to the newsletter:

Content:

Ideas that help ESL/EFL university teachers around the world improve their craft are warmly welcome. Some topic suggestions are: online teaching, student motivation, classroom management and teaching material design.

Language of Submission:

All articles will need to be submitted in English.

Length of Submission:

Ideally, articles should be longer than 500 words and no more than 1500 words.

Editing:

Please check your spelling/grammar carefully as it cannot be corrected for you (and the article may not be published).

Citations:

Citations/research data are not necessary. If you do want to include some, please keep them to a minimum.

How to Submit:

Submit your article by completing the boxes in the [template](#) and sending this file directly to robertstroud@hosei.ac.jp.