

# Using Padlet For Brainstorming Ideas In Teaching Writing Online

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**Abstract-Integration in learning can help students to boost their cognition and social communications, especially in the context of teaching and studying online. The study aims at the process in which students work together on an online studying platform during pre-writing lessons. A few writing tasks were designated for 24 participants to work together in an online General English course by using Padlet. They were required to perform their works by brainstorming the writing tasks, public their ideas on Padlet and comment on their friends' works. The findings showed Padlet was fruitful to motivate participants to write more and learn from their friends.**

**Keywords-Brainstorm, integration, online teaching, Padlet, prewriting, writing.**

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the context of social distancing during COVID-19 pandemic in Ho Chi Minh City and with the closure of all schools, online teaching is indispensable. However, teaching in an online platform seems to be a new notion for both teachers and learners who are familiar with traditional education. Now teaching and learning will be implemented inside their houses with the use of electronic devices. This is a real challenge for education because there is a great deal of difficulties in conducting online lessons. First, online learning progress involves in many technique factors such as the requirements of owning laptops, computers, smart phones or any devices which can access the Internet [1]. Moreover, the stability of the Internet connection must be ensured during the lessons. Second, untimely training sessions for teachers are primitive factors to be mentioned during online education. Teachers do not have proper ample opportunities to be trained in order to conduct many lessons on the online platform. In these urgent circumstances, teachers have to adapt new online teaching methods and design their lesson plans again to attain the online lesson goals. Finally, students who are familiar with traditional teaching styles may not

find their feet when they start to study online, and hence teachers have to assist their learners.

The is the tough time for education because the learning process requires not only the new teaching methods along with the use of technologies during the online classrooms but it needs the endeavors from both teachers and students. On the one hand, teaching General English online, especially teaching writing seems to be more demanding because of the need of integration of four basic skills. It is necessary for teachers to combine their general lesson plans with some online supportive teaching platforms so as to help learners achieve their learning goals. Thanks to the development of the web 2.0 patterns, there are some websites can serve online education scenario where students can read and write materials from peer to peer and have communities shares through several web applications [2]. Consequently, students can communicate with teachers and friends, and they can exchange their thoughts and speak out their ideas, send and get back their works. Therefore, teachers can opt for some suitable teaching platforms which serves the lesson objectives. Teaching writing is not an easy process. It is a stage beginning from when the teachers assign tasks and provide them with enough writing materials to the period when the writers brainstorm ideas and use their own language to when they actually write their works. For this reason, teachers may generate the online learning environment in which students are able to integrate with each other during the pre-writing process in order to enhance their autonomy. This study uses an online platform namely Padlet in which students can freely create and write their own ideas. The case study also depicts a few advantages and disadvantages of applying Padlet during the brainstorming process in pre-writing stage. Moreover, this paper has posted some solutions to online teaching writing.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Collaborative Writing

Integration is a vital part in education. Collaboration in learning will be effective for those who study together and contribute their work to the discourse [3]. Among the four basic skills in learning English, writing is not a straightforward skill for an ESL to attain. Writing requires the ability of thinking critically and a good combination between grammar and vocabulary. When ESL learners want to write even a sentence, they have to think of the ideas first, which is often called brainstorm and then they write a draft sentence, make some changes and change the drafts again to come to the final version. That's why if a student would like to achieve a writing task well, he not only has to have a firm language foundation but a frequent practice. When students finish their work, their teachers will correct their pieces of writing. This is just one-way evaluation and they get feedback only from the instructors. Notwithstanding, if an ESL learner has a peer-writing during the learning stage, they may get the comments from both teachers and friends [3]. Hence, the students will have a clear view from the writing task and then they can adjust their writing. It will definitely help their learning stages.

Teachers can apply collaborative writing method during pre-writing step, especially for brainstorming the writing tasks. Teachers may ask the class to post their ideas and set the time for students to rectify each other. Consequently, students can brainstorm their tasks and get more ideas from friends and help friends to correct some mistakes. When studying online, this step can be easily done through using Padlet.

### B. What is Padlet?

Padlet, formerly Wallwisher (<https://www.padlet.com>) is a website or an application which allows people to use it as *a virtual board*. First, Padlet is not only free, user-friendly but also handy since it provides many multimedia board or wall styles which are suitable for multipurpose lessons. Second, Padlet can be used as a note which is performed on one wall platform. In the wall, users can post ideas, write some drafts, insert links, pictures, videos are many related materials and answers are shown on the wall inside the application. Another significant function is that it is accessible for those who have a link access and they can see what written on the wall and leave comments. There are great numbers of free lessons in many fields which are well-design and free for users [2]. Therefore, Padlet is a prominent web or applicant in an online class because it works on a variety of different gadgets.

To use a Padlet, users simple goes to padlet.com on their web browser. Next, they can register an account on Padlet with their own Google mail and then access the dashboard as long as they use digital devices such as smart phones, laptops or computers with the Internet connection. If users do not have a Google account, they can go to padlet.com with a shared link from the teachers or anyone else in the class. Once reaching Padlet application, users can click on the button at the top right corner of the page and make a Padlet. After that, there will be several 'virtual boards' appearing on the screen like figure 1.

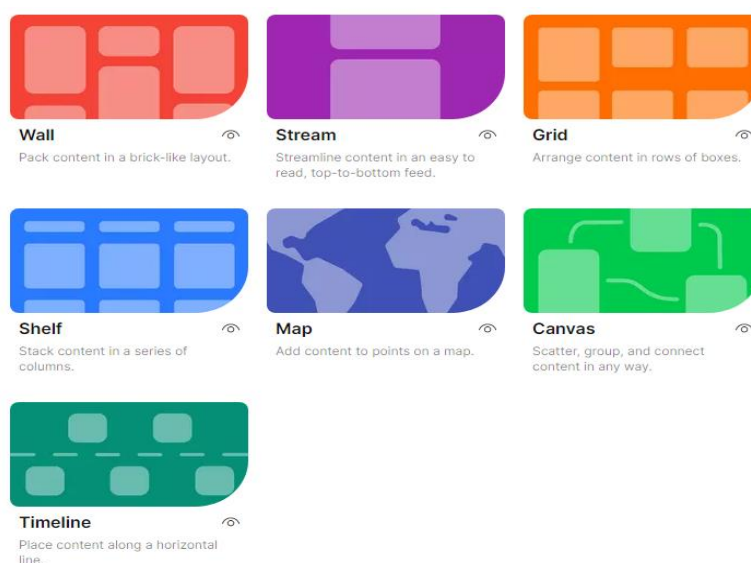


Figure 1. Example of making a Padlet.

According to the purpose of the lesson plans, teachers can choose one virtual board to teach writing and then guide students how to use Padlet. Students can easily go to Padlet platform with the provided link or a shared link from teachers. Then, teachers can opt for one suitable wall according to the target of pre-writing lessons.

Here teachers may choose one template first, set up the wall, give the writing tasks to and then guide students how to post their ideas, insert pictures or links, add comments to their friends' posts or cross out the opinions from theirs. Here is an example of using Padlet for brainstorming the ideas. [3].

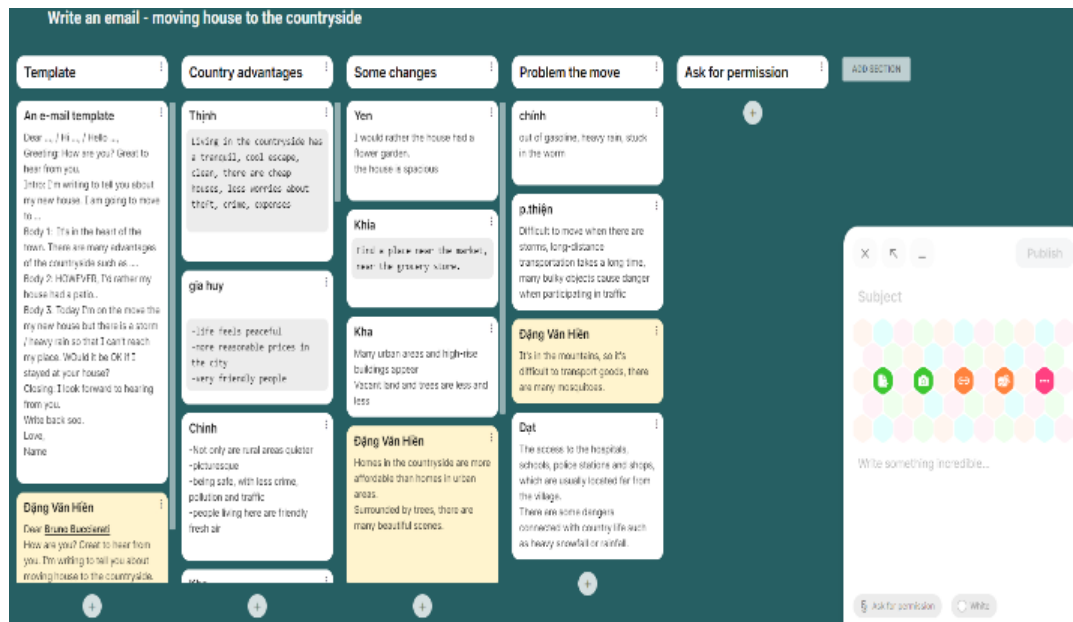


Figure 2. Example of brainstorming ideas on a Padlet

### C. The Use of Padlet in Teaching writing online

When the teachers create a Padlet when teaching writing and ask students to post their viewpoints, learners have all freedom to present their ideas to class. The students can think and brainstorm for the writing task and add their thoughts to Padlet anonymously. After students brainstorm their ideas and post them on Padlet wall, teachers can ask the other students in the class to give comments, add their viewpoints, put more information on the walls. Teachers should encourage every student in the class to involve in pre-writing stage. As a results, students can interact with each other during the lesson and they can learn from their peer-writing. Teachers will be the final person who rectify students' works.

Compared with the time students stay at classrooms, some are afraid of raising their voice during the lesson and now they can express themselves without worry.

Students can create their rough drafts on Padlet, and the other learners in the class can see them. They can add or give comments or basically share their points of view. This process can encourage students to boost their cognitive and social interactions during collaborative learning [4]. Taufikurohman conducted

a research which demonstrated the integration of Padlet during pre-teaching lessons can create a hospitable learning environment for various cooperative activities at online classes. The study from Taufikurohman also showed the significant results that all the students have opportunities to perform their abilities of doing tasks and learn from one another. Padlet has considered to be fruitful pedagogical tools in language learning [6].

## III. A CASE STUDY

### A. Background

Due to the pandemic, all the English classes have been held online since 2020. This raises a need to find a different way in the online teaching and learning process to engage students to writing studying.

Padlet is applied in one of my online writing classes in one month (04 sessions). This class named *English B1.3\_group 13* with 24 students. They are freshmen and sophomores from different departments at UTH. Almost all of them are considered to be at the upper-intermediate level of language proficiency. However, some of the students have not attended any English class for a semester, which means that some of them may forget some knowledge that they have

learned before. The book *Solutions\_Upper intermediate - Third edition (Students' book)* is used as their main textbooks. The syllabus includes the first 5 units in which two main writing tasks including writing a (formal) letter (unit 1) and writing an (opinion) essay (unit 5) are emphasized. Padlet is used for students' discussions and ideas brainstorming during writing an essay task.

#### B. Strategies

Before this web application is used to support students' writing skills, they are taught basic knowledge of the target writing points in the syllabus. In other words, they are expected to comprehend what emails and essays are, understands the structures of an email and an opinion essay. They know how to write a topic sentence, supporting ideas and examples as well. The writing pre-teaching process using Padlet usually starts with topics given and analyzed. Students

read the topics carefully and analyze the requirements given. Teachers provide them with needed vocabulary and structures. After that, class is divided into groups to prepare and brainstorm ideas. Padlet, then, is applied in the brainstorming ideas section. Learners are asked to get access and post their responses on the Padlet wall. When all students have finished their comments, they will, in groups, takes turn to read their friends' ideas and give some comments or feedback on their contribution. This gives all learners a chance to look at other ideas that they may not think of. At the end, they are allowed to make choices of what ideas they would like to use in their piece of writing later.

#### C. Methodology

A questionnaire is sent to learners to collect their feedback on the use of Padlet in their writing studying. The questionnaire is designed by Google forms with 08 statements using Likert scale.

TABLE I. QUESTIONNAIRE AND RESULTS.

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
1. I feel Padlet is user-friendly.	4,2%	0%	4,2%	45,8%	45,8%
2. Using Padlet to learn writing is fun	4,2%	0%	12,5%	45,8%	37,5%
3. Padlet encourages me to interact with other classmates.	4,2%	0%	16,7%	33,3%	45,8%
4. Padlet motivates me to work with my group members.	4,2%	0%	4,2%	58,3%	33,3%
5. I could learn from my classmates' responses.	4,2%	0%	8,3%	29,2%	58,3%
6. I feel less anxious to post answers on the Padlet wall without displaying my name.	4,1%	0%	16,7%	25%	54,2%
7. I am engaged in the lesson more when Padlet is used.	4,2%	0%	12,5%	37,5%	45,8%
8. I would like Padlet is used in my future writing studying.	4,2%	0%	4,2%	50%	41,6%

#### D. Benefits

##### 1) Collaborative writing

Padlet provides teachers and learners with a virtual wall which allows them to post their contents there. It works as a large real board where students put their ideas on. Instead of spending time waiting for students to receive the topic, think in a while, take notes, discuss with their classmates and go to the board to write or share their ideas with the whole class, I could

save a lot of time by posting a topic or a question on Padlet and let them work individually then write their answers there. Moreover, all students do have opportunities to present their thinking over the topics and at the same time to view others' responses.

To unlike what cannot be seen at the classroom, students are more enthusiastically attending in writing process. The students are not shy are awkward any

more, they are eager to post their ideas on Padlet and look at their friends' words and give comments.

According to students' responses to the questionnaire, most of them agree that they interact with their lecturers and friends more if Padlet is applied (45,8% strongly agree and 33,3% agree). Padlet enhances both teachers-students and students-students interaction in the writing class. Students could collaborate instantly by commenting to their friends' responses.

The number of students agree that Padlet helps them collaborate with their group members to complete the writing tasks is relatively high (over 91% of participants agree and strongly agree). This tool is

highly recommended to brainstorming in writing as it is a place for learners to upload their ideas immediately and easily. The communication gap among students could be shortened. It also has other functions such as providing a comment to others' responses, giving a thumb up or making a vote. These collaborative actions could contribute to peer-learning or peer-assessment. The integration of Padlet into writing teaching and learning reinforces class communication and collaboration. That helps students achieve better performances by learning new concepts/ideas from others' posts, learning from each other through their feedback or a live discussion right in the class time.

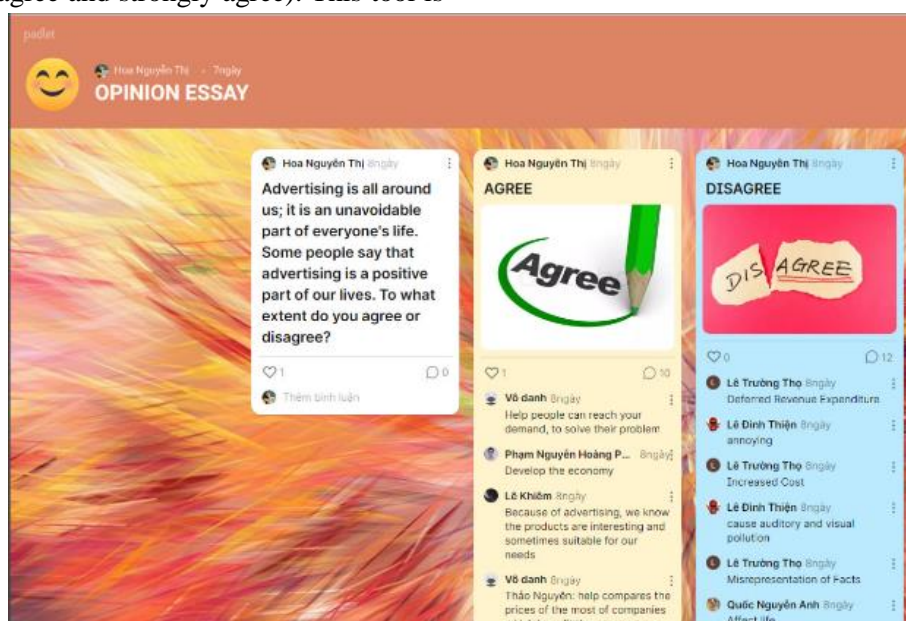


Figure 3. Example of a Padlet.

## 2) Students' engagement

Padlet is a place to enhance students' participation in class activities. At this point, learner-center is highlighted as they actively take part in expressing their opinions and the discussions. A good side of Padlet is that it allows learners to post the questions on the wall without showing their names. This *anonymous* function helps students, especially shy students, feel more confident, not be afraid of giving a wrong answer or making mistakes and encourages them to feel free to deliver their answers. The figures show that about 79% of respondents feel less stressed to post their replies when they are anonymous. When it comes to the discussions, no one knows the responses belong to whom so they may have the freedom and confidence to share their thinking or to give feedback. At this point, Padlet reduce learners' anxiety.

Padlet could maintain students' engagement if they keep posting their ideas regularly. The flexibility of Padlet allows learners to post their answers at anytime or anywhere with their mobiles. They are kept engaged throughout the learning process, not just the class time only.

## 3) Results

The results show that over 83% of learners find using Padlet to learn writing is a fun activity. It is also user-friendly with many beautiful layouts and simple to use. The satisfaction with Padlet application in writing class is high (around 92%) as participants would like to continue using it in their future learning. Learners' performances may also be improved after several times practicing uploading posts and interacting with their classmates on Padlet.



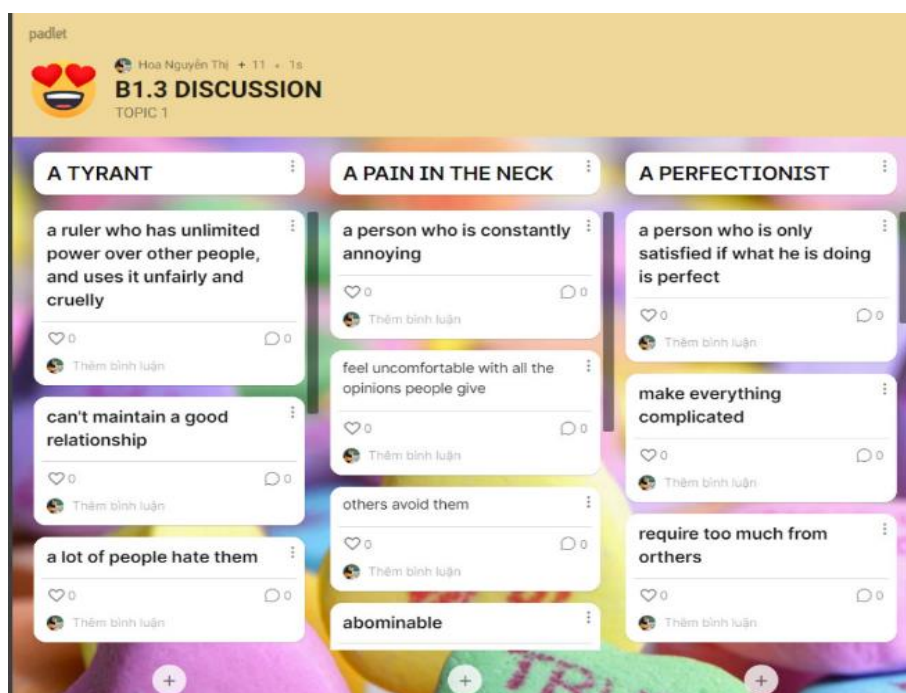


Figure 4. Example of a collaborative writing Padlet.

### E. Limitations

#### 1) Students' sedentary

Apart from encouraging learners not to be shy to express their viewpoints on the given topics by uploading or responding anonymously, participants' anonymity in responding to the questions or topics also brings some disadvantages. The biggest drawback should be increasing learners' laziness. In order to encourage them to freely reply to the questions, teachers sometimes may not ask them to post with their names displayed. That is why there might be some students do not take part in the learning activities. Being anonymous makes some students who are not so familiar to learning autonomy refuse to respond. As a result, there are students who choose not to give any replies and wait to use their peers' answers as the suggestions for their own writing pieces without thinking. Moreover, because of learning online, some students tend to use Google to search the ideas instead of brainstorming. Some of them lean on the fruitful knowledge which is available on the Internet but not thinking of their writing tasks. This may limit their pre-writing tasks.

#### 2) Limited numbers of Padlet walls

Although it is a free web tool, Padlet only allows users to create a maximum of five walls at a time. If users would like to create more, they have to pay more or delete previous ones. Therefore, it is hard to keep a diary for students to check their work at a later time.

### 3) Solutions

To limit the use of Google when studying online and open more walls on Padlet, teachers can pay fees for the third-service providers with the help from school.

## IV. CONCLUSION

This paper tries to figure out students' engagement and collaborative learning when Padlet, a web application, is used through the perceptions of learners. The responses show that it is one of the good ways to support learners in their writing learning. Since there are still some limitations that need to be solved when Padlet is used, we would suggest using other digital applications to support students' writing learning process. Furthermore, by reinforcing learners' collaboration, teachers could also try to apply Padlet in their speaking lessons. It could be used as a platform for teachers and students to make discussions on different speaking topics and they could control and manage many group discussions at the same time by this virtual wall.

The application improves students' engagement in class activities, enhances collaborative learning, provides learners with chances of working in groups and individually, reduces learners' anxiety of expressing their own opinions. This tool should be used as a useful tool for learning writing skill.

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