The roles of the capable others in developing learner autonomy ability in writing: reflection in a web-based learning community

R. Abdullah[1], N. Ahmad [2], A. Abdullah[3] & N. Mohd. Nor[4]

[1, 2, 3] *School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Pulau Pinang*
[4]*Education and Community Wellbeing Center, Faculty of Education,*
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Selangor
*Corresponding author E-mail: *norhayati@ukm.edu.my*

Abstract

This study explores the roles played by the capable others in developing a second-language writer's autonomy ability in writing; reflection in particular. The study focuses on how the capable others i.e. peers, through web-based peer feedback assisted the writer to reflect wisely. Nine peers, responded to the writer's essays on the writer's blog entries. Data was collected from the written web-based peer feedback, interviews and essays. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings suggest that the writer benefitted from the roles played by the peers in four categories: establishment of e-learning community, motivation, monitoring, and scaffolding. Establishment of e-learning community and motivation were found to have indirect impacts whilst monitoring and scaffolding have direct impacts on developing the writer's reflection ability.

Keywords: learner autonomy ability in writing -reflection; web-based peer feedback; capable others; peer roles.

1.   Introduction

Being autonomous is a pursued attribute by those who want to thrive as efficacious individuals [20]. Issues of teacher-dependent, superficial thinkers, inapt decision makers can be eradicated by becoming autonomous. Autonomous learners are reflective thinkers, constantly evaluating their performance for self-development [21]. This reflective ability is very much needed for a country to rise high and attain international recognitions.

However, when studies were carried out on Malaysian TESL students, they were reported to be lacking in autonomy [31,37,38,39,17]. This phenomenon would encumber the country from progressing. Measures must be taken to encourage the development of learner autonomy particularly amongst Malaysian learners, in schools or tertiary levels in ensuring the production of competitive workers that would spearhead the nation's agenda: towards the establishment of an industrialized nation with the Human Development Index (HDIs) of 0.8 or higher and the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of $12,000 (RM48774.00). At the moment, Malaysia's HDIs is 0.789 as reported by United Nations Development Programme 2018 [41] and the GDP of RM42, 228 [33].

The lack of autonomy can result from various aspects. Teacher-centered approach was found to be one of the causes that hinders the augmentation of learner autonomy [36, 28, 11] in this nation. Hence, in trying to find a way to solve this problem, this study adopted a learner-centered approach, using social constructivism as the governing theory in its measure to explore the development of reflection ability as one of the abilities of learner autonomy in language learning. Employing Vygotsky's [42] concept of socialization amongst the capable others as the thrust for learning, this study hence exercised the potentials of the peers in giving feedback to the writer's essay to develop the writer's reflection ability. Since many studies have proven that online peer feedback has the potential to hone learning [18, 4, 23, 30, 43, 9, 15, 10, 34], online peer feedback was used to investigate the issue. Thus, the objective of the study was to investigate whether the peers played any roles in developing the writer's reflection ability using web-based asynchronous peer feedback. The research question of this study was 'What were the roles played by the peers in developing the reflection ability of the writer?'

Web-based asynchronous peer feedback

As mentioned, this study intended to investigate the development of the writer's reflection ability using online peer feedback or in this study it is termed as web-based asynchronous peer feedback (WAPF). This method was chosen because there are many advantages that WAPF could provide. Guardado, M. & Shi, L [13] claim that the virtual reality learning environment is less stressful. Unlike face-to-face feedback, the allowance for anonymity in the on-line realm lowers the learner's affective filter, thus stimulating more optimistic and honest feedback [40,22]. The delayed time (asynchronous) feature of weblog is a positive point as it allows the writer and feedback providers more time to reflect on their work [8]. Weblog feature could also assist the learners to produce ideas, encourage involvement and refine their evaluation [27]. Virtual platforms, such as IPod, that accentuate group discussions and information sharing among students are beneficial for learning [16]. The learners' quality of revisions and development of ideas could also be improved [34].   The learners' postings can reach and be sustained at a high level of quality by having the collaboration between the peers and the instructor online feedback [10]. Content knowledge and language can also be heightened through collaborative feedback [26]. Autonomous learners could

also be generated through this style of learning [18]. The text-based online feedback rather than oral-based feedback also protects high-anxiety learners or low achievers from embarrassment to speak in English. When the learner has gained sufficient motivation, learner autonomy gradually transpires 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. The author is also able to gain diverse viewpoint of opinions from several sources: to be able to see things that are initially possible or vice versa [14].

Conceptualizing reflection- a learner autonomy ability

The concept of reflection can be traced back to Dewey's philosophy. Dewey [7] defines reflection as '*active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or practice in light of reasons that support it and the further consequences to which it leads*' (p.9). He also propagates that experiences do not lead to learning, rather, reflecting on those experiences would. In short, reflective practitioners are perpetual thinkers over the past actions or principles and these thoughts would drive the individuals to forge ahead. Radzuwan Ab Rashid [32] concurs that reflection is '*a purposeful inquiry as we reconsider our beliefs and practices to find justification for our actions, solutions to problems, and anticipate the consequences of the actions taken*' (p.107). According to Dewey [7], in achieving a better outcome, one goes through a complex process of reflection that involves the state of skepticism, indecision, bafflement and intellectual labour.

Fook [12] argues the necessity of critical reflections for individuals to improve his living conditions, social relationships and professionalism. Prior to making judgements, a critical reflection requires a close scrutiny on the subject matter, often leading to fundamental changes. Logically, after this period of intensive mind toiling, reassuring results are gained. Superficial reflective practitioners however would not be able to make holistic changes.

In language learning, reflection is indisputably essential [20]. A learner is assumed to project better results in the course of language learning due to the practice of reflective engagement in structuring his learning process as he implements his critical thinking skills along the process [21]. The deployment of reflective exercise also helps the learner to apply the knowledge and skills that they have acquired with commitment in the outside world. Little [21] highlights that reflection keeps the learner attentive in his work.

Benson [5] construes that reflection is carried out for the 'purpose of change.' In the learner autonomy concept, the researchers understand that reflection is necessary in order for the learner to reach his learning target- language competency. The 'change' in this case refers to the improvement in the learner's language proficiency. To do this, the learner has to analyze his work consistently and finally decide on the best method or learning agenda to carry forth. In executing the judgment, the learner should be independent from other sources that would infuse control in the decision-making process.

The reflection concept in Islam

In Islam, reflection or *tafakkur* encompasses a wider concept. *Taffakur* is of vital prominence as *Allah* revealed His *Ayah* in 12 *Surahs* in the Quran [35] which are Al-Baqarah 2:266, Al-Imran 3:191, Al-Anaam 6:50, Al- Araf 7:176 & 184, Yunus 10:.24, Ar-Rad 13;.3, An-Nahl 16:11,44 & 69, Ar-Room 30:8 & 21, Az-Zumar 39:42, Al-Jathiya 45:13, Muhammad 47:24 and Al-Hashr 59:.21. All these verses are asking mankind to reflect deeply upon His signs, proofs, revelations, lessons in this world, in order to direct mankind to live a virtuous life in his preparation for the Hereafter. The practice of *taffakur* would abstain mankind from taking the wrong turns. Hence, a Muslim should reflect on every action he makes and every move he takes. This indicates that the outcomes of the reflection or *tafakkur* in Islam does not stop at worldly matters but more importantly it would lead to a greater course, the afterlife; the everlasting life.

2. Methodology

This study intended to explore the intricacies of the writer's reflection ability enhancement, hence an interpretive qualitative design was chosen for this study. This study observed and analyzed the learning process. The study focused on the development of reflection ability of the writer. The sampling for this study was purposive and criterion sampling. Among the criteria was voluntary participation. Ten respondents (nine females and one male) volunteered to participate in the study. One of them was the writer whilst nine became the feedback providers (peers). All the respondents were public university undergraduates whose age ranged between 23-24 years old. The writer, named Isda (pseudonym) was engaged in a process writing, producing draft one, two and final draft. Isda posted her three drafts on her weblog. The nine peers then provided WAPF to Isda's draft one and two in her weblog. The data for this study was collected using WAPF, interviews and essay drafts. In total, there were two WAPF transcripts, two interview transcripts and three essay drafts. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis. According to Maguire, M. & Delahunt, B. [24] '*the goal of a thematic analysis is to identify themes, i.e. patterns in the data that are important and interesting, and use these themes to address the research or say something about an issue*' (p. 3353). The data was analyzed in six steps: '*becoming familiar with the data, generate initial codes, search for themes, review themes, define themes and write up*'[24, p.4].

3. Findings

The summary of Isda's essay.

Isda's essay entitled 'My dark past,' is a sad but an edifying one indeed, a portrayal of a life beyond imagination. It is a story about her life. Her mother's marriage to her father who has dark complexion triggered it all. Standing on an unfounded belief, Isda's maternal family, namely her grandmother, branded colored people, unworthy. Due to the births of dark grandchildren, Isda included, her entire family was abused badly with indescribable mental tortures. Despite the maltreatments, Isda and her family had not once break their family ties. They continued their visits instead. Fortunately, even though voices of ridicules are still heard till this day, it has mellowed over the years. As she grew up into a wiser human being, Isda's revulsion against her grandmother began to diminish too, leaving only the wounds behind, unhealed.

While providing WAPF to Isda, the peers actually played significant roles that contributed to Isda's development of reflection ability. In this study, these roles are defined as peer roles. Four categories of peer roles were deduced from the data: establishment of e-learning community, motivation, monitor and scaffold learning. The first two roles: to establish e-learning community and motivate were found to have contributed indirectly to the development of Isda's reflective ability in writing. Even though they resulted in indirect impacts, the significance of those roles was never in doubt. The other two roles: to monitor and scaffolding provided direct contributions to the development of Isda's reflective skill. The roles were executed when the peers provided Isda the WAPF. There were three types of WAPF delivered: social, affective and cognitive.

After the data was analyzed, four expert raters crosschecked the analysis. The inter-rater reliability obtained a high (>95%) agreement according to Miles & Huberman [29]. Table 1 below is the coding derived from the thematic analysis.

Table 1: Coding for Peer Roles

Coding	Theme	Descriptor	Example
PR1	Establishment of e-learning community	To develop a harmonious relationship between the respondents in the online community by greetings, giving opinion, agreeing to opinion, disagreeing to opinion, sharing of knowledge, sharing of experience, recalling the past and through social gesture and closure	Giving opinion I do admit that some people love to discriminate other especially those who are not good looking. Pretty people will always get better treatment. There are good people who always appreciate and support us but there are also so many people out there who always make our lives miserable. Sharing experience I want to share with you with my story. Ever since my secondary school time, I suffered from severe acne problem. It caused frustrations making me feeling stressed all the time.
PR2	Monitor	To analyze, evaluate and judge the respondents' essays by illuminating the strengths and the weaknesses on the content, organization, style and language. To monitor the strengths, praises and recognitions were provided. To monitor the weaknesses, advice, expression of dismay, consolation were offered affectively. Meanwhile, error identification, suggestion, clarification, caution, correction were offered cognitively	Highlight strength …… the content is interesting, meaningful and full of emotion in it. Your essay had lot strong points in it. Highlight weakness ... siblings and I 'perceive on' things. I check Mr. Cambridge.. just not sure whether we have to use ON after perceive or not. But in the Mr. Cambridge sentence example, there is no on.
PR3	Motivate	To support learning or increase respondents' self-esteem and self-confidence. Praises, consolation, motivation, support, recognition, advise, encouragement, appreciation were offered affectively.	Praise Honestly, your story is interesting. Overall, your language is very good. Good elaboration and there are feelings inside it. You successfully delivered the message that you want to reader. Advice Think of it this way. If you were born fair but at the same time you are suffering from bad disease or born handicapped, wouldn't it be worse? So, don't give up. Face this world and remember to enjoy life.
PR4	Scaffolding	To provide scaffoldings for respondents' learning process by providing constructive WAPF by asking for clarification, highlighting weaknesses and providing suggestions and corrections	Highlighting weakness and providing suggestion For your writing, I think that maybe you should organize it properly. Each paragraph is too long. May be you can split it in two. Sometimes it does make the reader's eyes tired reading those words in a long paragraph

a. Establishment of e- learning community

Establishing e-learning community referred to a process of developing harmonious relationships between the respondents in the online community. This was carried out by first breaking the ice, later becoming familiar and closer and eventually feeling at ease with each other. Given that not all the respondents knew or had seen each other, there was a common need to establish a rapport between them, in order for a conducive learning to take place. This was especially necessary for a learning environment that only relied on virtual connectivity. When one is comfortable with one another, it would be easy to interrelate on any purpose as trust is established.

During the founding of such a relationship, the peers in this study often reacted to the issues that Isda projected. Even though at times they seemed to have some disparities over certain topics or issues, the formation of friendship did not falter; in fact it was reinforced as there were other fellow peers who supported them. Furthermore, by having a variety of different views, Isda's thinking perspectives were broadened.

Due to the intense emotional impact that was delivered by Isda's story , the central focus of the WAPF provided by the peers was Social as well as Affective WAPF. Their functions were to support Isda psychologically and at the same time to establish Isda's relationship with the respondents. Meanwhile, the Cognitive WAPF helped to monitor and offered scaffoldings for Isda's learning.

During Isda's learning process, certain indicators of social establishment developed by the peers were present. They were sharing experience, giving opinion and agreeing to opinion. This social formation was vital for Isda. Having her readers cum peers responded well to her story showed their great interests in her sad story. A feeling of closeness was sensed in this learning community who were some, totally strangers to each other.

The peers' spontaneous responses to Isda's discrimination issue like *'shocking and speechless'* provided by five of the peers, indicated how well they related to Isda's story. In fact, two of them linked Isda's experience to a global social issue, looking at it as a real serious problem for they did not expect such things to happen amongst the present Malay populace. This shows that Isda

received more than sympathy from the peers, they empathized with her for all the heartbreaking endurances.

The peers' willingness to share their experiences displayed another form of e-learning community establishment. It is rather seldom that a person would share a life experience, particularly about something that is disgraceful or embarrassing with an outsider. However, in this learning process, the sharing of experiences proved the peers' efforts to tighten the bonds between them and Isda. The intimacy being built had created a comfort zone for everyone to express and share their private life experiences with relative ease.

Giving their personal opinions on the issue was yet a further example of how the peers played their roles to build a pleasant e-learning community in their small learning circle. Each of those who offered their opinions had their own views on Isda's discrimination. All the opinions were mindful: *we are what we are, purity of one's heart is what really counts in life, not our complexion or appearance and that getting supports and ill-treatments are just how things are in life.*

b. Motivation

Motivation can either come from internal or external source. In this study, the data revealed that Isda obtained extrinsic motivation from her peers' Affective WAPF. That feedback positively energized Isda's intrinsic motivation which responsibly expanded her reflection ability.

There were two levels of motivation given by the peers: personal and text (essay) level. At personal level, the affective WAPF: praises, consolation, motivation, expression of emotion and advice mainly touched on psychological aspects on how Isda should treat her predicament, providing her with optimistic viewpoints. These types of feedback, namely the praises, had to a certain extent lifted Isda's self-esteem and self-confidence by allowing her to see her actual capabilities which were handicapped by the relentless cruel discriminations. Her peers also pointed out that apart from the negative impacts, there were useful and meaningful lessons that can be attained from the tragedy.

At text level: the praises had motivated Isda psychologically too as they stimulated her to achieve a higher level in her writing. The apparent admiration projected by her peers on her work was indeed valuable as it instigated Isda to add more significant details in order for her story to become more appealing. The language and words used to express their admiration for Isda's writing: *'like, good, successful, meaningful'* were encouraging. These words brought positive effects of contentment, pleasure and pride to Isda which undoubtedly resulted in more engagements in her efforts to progress.

Categorizing Isda's writing as *'one of the best,'* was a great push for Isda to march even further to success. The label '*best'* not only connoted how impressive Isda's writing really was but also implied that she was actually a potential prolific writer. Hearing this praise from another person was of course a huge recognition for Isda.

Wafa's honest confession, *'Honestly, your story is interesting'* too impacted Isda's writing spirit. The word '*interesting'* itself led to a jubilant psychological effect. Simultaneously, the word 'honest' conveyed the true value of the praise. It indicated that the peer, Wafa, did not make the comment up simply to blind Isda with a fake satisfaction. Isda's essay was indeed interesting.

c. Monitor

Evidently, the peers played the role as external monitors which also contributed to the development of Isda's reflection ability in writing. At any stage of learning, monitoring is essential to keep individuals on the right track. The peers monitored Isda's writing progress by analyzing, evaluating and judging her draft one and draft two. Consequently, they highlighted both the strengths and weaknesses of Isda's drafts.

From the analysis of draft one, generally the peers provided an overview of their opinions regarding Isda's essay. Basically, they were impressed by her interesting story that was full of emotions. The language command and elaborations were satisfying as well. However, Wafa highlighted a very important point, i.e. regarding Isda's long paragraphs where many of them consisted of more than one main idea. Meanwhile, Rose noticed Isda's limited vocabulary on exemplifying a character: *my mother's mother*. She also noted Isda's preposition and spelling error. At this point, the most significant weakness identified was on the length of Isda's paragraphs and this remark had led to a huge revision in Isda's Draft Two.

d. Scaffolding

Scaffolding is an essential teaching approach, involving a gradual evolvement of one's learning achievement with the support from the 'capable others'. From the data analysis, it was observed that Isda received significant scaffoldings from her peers. The peers not only provided challenges to Isda by provoking her thoughts about the weaknesses of her texts, but they also supported her well by providing suggestions and motivations to overcome her problems.

Isda had problems with some of her sentence structures. Some were quite monotonous and some were quite vague. For instance, a sentence was found awkward when she wrote *'boys are not related with it'*. What she actually meant by that was, unlike girls, boys do not have to be born fair. Hence, Rose implied that Isda ought to amend the sentence so that the meaning would be more precise.

Paragraphing was an issue for Isda too. Quite a number of peers mentioned that some of her paragraphs were too lengthy that made her essay uneven. Each paragraph should only contain one main idea. Isda had missed this criterion. In order to correct this problem, they proposed that Isda divided her paragraphs into smaller units discussing one main idea at a time.

Another glaring weakness addressed by the peers was the repetition of some of her vocabulary. Repetition is not an effective technique in narrative writing. The more words used the more attention-grabbing the story becomes. Isda unfortunately lacked this. Hence, the peers suggested new words like '*maternal mother, skin and colour'*.

Isda's Reflections

Right after Isda received the WAPF, she pondered over the comments thoroughly and reacted accordingly during this phase. The data revealed the depth of reflection that Isda performed. This period projected the first ability of learner autonomy ability that is necessary in writing. The reflections were described in accordance with the three types of WAPF obtained: social, affective and cognitive.

Reflection on Social WAPF

In actuality, Isda had successfully touched her peers' hearts with her revealing true story, a chapter of her life that was never revealed before to anyone. The peers had similar views on the matter: Dian associated it with skin color segregation in the U.S whilst Tini related it to Apartheid in Africa. Ironically, Isda was

shocked herself for getting such responses as all her life she assumed that discrimination is a normal practice worldwide including Malaysia. Nonetheless, she was glad to expose her peers to an example of an unanticipated dark side of life that is full of deliberate cruelty and sufferings,   particularly among the Malay community (intv. 1, lines 241-247).

'Relieved' was the word Isda used to describe her feelings after she disclosed her secret. It had been a painful memory kept locked in her heart for too long. Like the saying in the Malay language, *"bagai telur di hujung tanduk,"* the story was just waiting to burst open and it was in this writing blog that she decided to let the truth out. Perhaps by letting people know about her past would help them understand her behavior that was due to her lack of self-esteem as a result of the continuous psychological pressure.

In contrast to the rest of the peers, Isda's story irritated Asiah. Remarked to be a story filled with exaggeration, Isda's story was no match to those struggling to make ends meet. Isda on the other hand, should be thankful for her meager challenges, Asiah voiced. However, no matter how strong and shocking the comment, Isda accepted it well as she realized perhaps the over- pouring of her life account appeared to be childish.

After reading Isda's sad story, many of the peers also shared similar experiences. She was happy that the other peers were willing to share their bad memories with her. This had surely relieved some of her pain, knowing that the other peers have also had their share of agony. It was comforting to know that she was not the only one. In fact, many of them had suffered from psychological afflictions too. This sharing of common part of life had helped to tighten the respondents' virtual relationships as well.

Seeing the peers' opinions on the issue had made Isda confident that her Draft One had achieved its objective: to convey her message, to share her burden with others and that they understand how she felt and most importantly, they supported her.

Reflection on Affective WAPF

Isda received abundant of affective feedback which gave her moral support. These supports were praises, consolation, motivation, advice and expression of emotions. They were given on personal and text level.   Tini expressed, ' *u already prove yourself that u are the best among ur other relative'* whereas Yati said, '*........they will look up to you as you have the credits for your intelligence, kindness and noble job as a teacher..*' These supports made Isda stronger as she now realized her potentials, the strengths that were belittled by her grandmother's prejudice all these years.

The consolations, motivations and advice obtained from the peers had made Isda a stronger person. She convincingly claimed that she will no longer be affected if other people look down on her because of her skin color. These supports helped Isda to further diminish her pre-conceived notion about her complexion, thus building her self-esteem and self-confidence.

Apart from positive responses to her story, Isda's style of writing was also admired. This praise inspired Isda to further improve her second draft. Since her style of writing was well accepted, Isda decided to retain the style but work on the flow of her essay in order to better express the emotions of sadness, frustration and anguish that she had to endure.Stunned by the strong feelings that the story evoked, Isda was again praised for her skillful writing performance. Yati remarked, '*…there are feelings in it.*' Isda reasoned out that her choice of words and style of writing probably resulted in the revelation of her compelling inner voice (intv. 1, lines 173-4). Apparently, the peers empathized with her situation: the misery, the countless and merciless mental torments.

Feeling highly stimulated, unlike her first draft which was more on exploration of general ideas, Isda decided to substantiate her second draft with more significant incidents to leave a marked dramatic effect in the hearts of her readers.

Reflections on Cognitive WAPF

Besides positive comments, Isda received constructive comments which she dealt with accordingly. This conjured the positive attitude towards learning possessed by Isda. She was never reluctant to respond to the WAPF although the feedback was at times spiteful.

The minute Isda obtained the suggestion about the *impact of psychology* delivered by Nan, though not the exact original idea, she felt an instant surge to revise on the reasons why her grandmother behaved in such a ruthless manner. Psychology was an area that Isda had not ventured into or even think of when describing her grandmother. She voiced, '*after receiving the comment, I wanted to immediately fix my draft* ' (intv. 1 lines 117-119). This truly indicated how much the WAPF had influenced Isda. With concrete evidence she believed, peers would be more convinced with her story and would be able to make a fair judgment whether it was really her grandmother's fault or was it the family upbringing to be blamed for the torments she received.

Salina's Affective WAPF: '*ALEK WEK …she is a successful supermodel even though she is having dark skin complexion'* generated a new idea for Isda's content. She thought about it and decided to emulate this idea but not taking the super model as an example. In its replacement, she decided to source from her religion, Islam, hence, adding an Islamic figure for her second draft.

Isda also agreed with the reviews on the length of her paragraphs albeit having her own viewpoint. According to Wafa, Isda's paragraphs were too long, straining the reader's eyes. Therefore, it was proposed that she split her paragraphs into two. Ignoring her initial opinion that an interesting story would not tire one's eyes no matter how long the paragraph is, Isda followed the advice as she agreed it would make her story more organized, less crowded with words, thus establishing the flow of the story.

Meanwhile, Isda confidently rejected a suggestion proposing to add a statement so that Isda's grandmother's evilness will be more extended as compared to her grandfather's. Accepting the suggestion that her grandmother had influenced her grandfather into mistreating her family would be spreading a lie even though the impact would be incredible, Isda expressed.

Although all her peers were amazed by her remarkable composition, some did notice Isda's grammar errors, namely her tenses and preposition. Despite the minor errors, the comments were not taken lightly. Isda admitted that tenses were always problematic for her. She found it really complicated when writing her story as she tended to mix the tenses up. As a result of this WAPF, Isda planned to reorganize her second draft, narrating the past events before the present. In the meantime, the mistake on preposition was often done unnoticed, she reflected. Surprisingly, for someone observed to be one of the best writers amongst the others, writing draft two was a big challenge for Isda as she was not used to writing the same topic twice, let alone three times. To worsen the situation, it developed a certain degree of boredom and laziness in her. Nonetheless, once she started working on her draft, her motivation resumed as the draft got better. She became excited when new words began to emerge. Ultimately, when her draft was completed, she felt satisfied and proud. In a joyful tone, Isda claimed that although she was re-writing on the same issue, the completion of her Draft Two had made her grow wiser.

4. Discussion and conclusion

The data revealed that the peers played significant roles in the development of Isda's reflection ability. The researchers concluded that the peers in this study did play significant roles in the development of learner autonomy abilities in writing, namely reflection. They assisted in the establishment of a conducive learning community, motivated Isda throughout the learning process, monitored Isda's strengths and flaws and provided strong scaffoldings to support learning.

Before embarking on serious feedback on the text, the feedback providers built a learning community that resulted in a highly engaged learning process. As mentioned, after a conducive learning space was established, a social bond had also developed. This finding was supported by Amelia' s study [2] study. Her respondents played social roles in establishing a social network among themselves. However, her respondents were already close friends. Despite that, social roles termed as social presence still existed when the respondents were expressing themselves. The respondents used informal language, greetings, closure and gratitude as their social cues. The close relationship that they already had resulted in the comfortable and informal learning environment for the respondents to interact. Social bonding was seen important in online studies alike: Azidah [3] and Amelia [2]. According to Azidah [3], social support is undoubtedly significant. She wrote, *'the whole is greater than the sum of its parts in that by actively supporting the learning of the group as a whole, each individual learns'* (p.129). Likewise, Amelia [2] reported that the close relationship that emerged throughout her study was an advantage to her respondents.

The peers monitored Isda's essay performance at two phases: draft one and two. In each draft, the essays were most of the time closely scrutinized by nine peers, each observing either on the same or different aspects. The content, organization, style and language components were analyzed, evaluated and judged. At this phase, Isda received the verdict whether her essays were satisfactory or flawed. Rationales as to why the comments were made were lucid, evoking Isda to see her writing from a myopic lens to a wider view. From this scrutiny, Isda reciprocally exercised her own monitoring systems on her essays when she reflected on the WAPF in draft one and draft two. It can be concluded that the Isda's essays received two levels of monitoring: externally (peers) and internally (Isda herself). This finding was in agreement with Lai. C.L & Hwang, G.J.'s research [19], where interactive peer assessment led to '*greater use of meaningful self and peer assessments and shared development of collective knowledge'* (151).

This resulted in developing learner autonomy, improving student engagement and motivation, greater use of meaningful self and peer assessments and shared development of collective knowledge. Further to this, it builds a foundation from which authentic assessment, student ownership of learning and peer support can occur in an ongoing way as learners make the important shifts in power to owning their learning and becoming problem-based inquirers in future courses. As a result, in order to fully embrace the online learning environment, we cannot limit ourselves to simple text based measures of student achievement. Stepping into this brave new world requires innovation, creativity and tenacity, and the courage to accept that as the nature of knowledge has evolved in the digital landscape, so must our means of assessing it.

Motivation was the next important peer role . The findings of this study agreed with Deci & Ryan's [6] study 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. If Isda was not motivated,, probably, it was hard for the learning to proceed due to a number of logical reasons. Being an ordinary human being as all the respondents are, when someone made a strong comment on his or her draft, he or she could get hurt or frustrated. On top of that, Isda had opened herself to be condemned. Her imperfections were not only exposed to the learning community but to the whole world virtually as weblog was the learning platform. This could have brought shame to Isda. On the same note, if recognitions or praises were not given to reward a good piece of writing, Isda could feel less inspired to improve her drafts as this would mean that her work was not appreciated. As a result, Isda could have been less critical and thus producing a poorer revision on her drafts.

Particularly for weak writers, the scaffolding role is essential. According to Mariani, L.[25], for a scaffolding to succeed, students need to be highly challenged and highly supported at the same time. Neither one role can be missed out. Similarly, Isda was highly challenged and highly supported by the peers where her imperfect essays were gradually shaped and improved by questions, suggestions as well as motivations. The *'what, why and how'* questions posed to her could have been over-whelming at times. But the pressure was immediately lifted with the presence of possible solutions and comforting encouragements. This approach of scaffolding appeared to be successful. This finding is corroborated with Yi's study [44], '*online resources can facilitate critical scaffolding in learners' interaction and knowledge construction, which also encourages collaborative learner autonomy.'*

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