Learners’ Perceptions of Online Collaborative Argumentation in Business Writing

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Outline

• Introduction
• Research questions
• Methodology
• Main findings and discussion
• Pedagogical implications
Introduction

• Numerous studies investigated the effectiveness of e-learning in business courses. However, there have been scarce findings on the student perspectives before and after using online collaborative discussion in business writing classes.
Research Questions

1) What are the learners’ perceptions before using online collaborative argumentation in business writing?

2) What are the learners’ perceptions after using online collaborative argumentation in business writing?
Methodology

• The subjects included 30 undergraduate students (10 males and 20 females) majoring in accounting and finance who enrolled in a business writing course.

• They participated in an online asynchronous discussion for four weeks to write argumentative essays related to business topics.
Eastman Kodak Company filed for bankruptcy protection on 19 January 2012. The 131-year-old company had struggled for decades to cope with digital competition, disruptive technology and cost obligation. It still hopes to continue in business after using the bankruptcy court to restructure and sell off some patents. Are there lessons to be learnt? Discuss the kind of lessons that other companies can learn from the fall of this giant.

To what extent do you agree that companies can learn from Kodak, and that Kodak will survive and continue in the business? Justify your stand and support your arguments with reasons and examples.
Business Writing Topic 2

The Internet has opened up a host of opportunities for people looking to make money beyond their daily nine-to-five jobs. Despite its obvious benefits, online businesses are fraught with many challenges as well as problems. Some of these employees may be using their work hours, energy or office facilities to focus on their online business. There may be a conflict of interest.

Do you agree that it is ethical and right for full-time employees to start online businesses? Justify your stand and support your arguments with reasons and examples.
Methodology

• The students were asked to complete online questionnaires, before and after participating in the Google Groups online asynchronous discussion.

• The online questionnaires consisted of close-ended and open-ended questions.
Methodology (Cont.)

• Using SPSS, the descriptive data was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively.

• The analyses of data obtained before and after the online discussion were compared and discussed.
Before participating in the online asynchronous discussion
Main Findings

• 43% of the participants have not participated in any online discussions while 57% of the participants have participated in online discussions.
Main Findings (Cont.)

- 67% of the participants who have participated in online discussions think that online debates help them learn business writing more effectively.

- 73% of the participants \((n = 22)\) who have and have not participated in online discussions perceive the online discussion as an effective way of learning business writing.
Main Findings (Cont.)

• 97% of the participants ($n = 29$) want to participate in the online discussion of business writing course.
Figure 1: The participants’ willingness to participate in the online discussion

Response

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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The students’ comments on their willingness to participate in the online discussion

“Participation in the online discussions broaden my thinking skills. It’s help me to ‘think out of the box’.”

“Because I want to try something that I never try before.”
The students’ comments on their willingness to participate in the online discussion (Cont.)

“It would be beneficial for everyone. Helping one another would be easing the load of the assignment. Besides, sharing is caring.”

“Because participate in the online discussion not only can improve my Eng, meanwhile this discussion able to lead me to a logical thinking way by debating with friends.”
The students’ comments on their willingness to participate in the online discussion (Cont.)

“More work.”

“To get more mark :) ”
After participating in the online asynchronous discussion
Main Findings of the Likert scale questions

- 67% of the participants \((n = 20)\) agree that participating in the online discussion helps them develop ideas in writing the business argumentative essay.

- 70% of the participants \((n = 21)\) share their research resources such as journal articles and quotations with peers in the online discussion.
Main Findings of the Likert scale questions (Cont.)

- 73% of the participants ($n = 22$) speak out when they disagree with peers in the online discussion.
Main Findings of the Likert scale questions (Cont.)

- 43% strongly agree and 53% of the participants agree that they feel free to discuss with peers in the online discussion without the teacher.

- 7% strongly agree and 57% of the participants agree that the teacher should not check the students’ comments in the online discussion on a daily basis.
Main Findings of the Likert scale questions (Cont.)

• 37% strongly agree and 50% of the participants agree that the teacher should interact with the students actively in the online discussion.
Main Findings of the Likert scale questions (Cont.)

• 37% strongly agree and 50% of the participants agree that the teacher should interact with the students actively in the online discussion.
Main Findings

• 90% of the participants spent from less than 1 hour to 2 hours in the online discussion (Figure 2).
Figure 2: Duration of participating in the online discussion weekly

- 47% for less than 1 hour
- 43% for 1-2 hours
- 3% for 3-4 hours
- 7% for none
Main Findings (Cont.)

- 80% of the participants ($n = 24$) think that online debates help them learn business argumentative essay more effectively.
The participants’ comments

“I agree because it allows me to see another perspective of the topic and use evidence to prove my argument.”

“It helps us share our ideas collectively. A synergy of ideas is better than a single idea.”
Main Findings (Cont.)

• 60% of the participants ($n = 18$) prefer the face-to-face discussion to the online discussion in learning business argumentative essay.
The participants’ comments

“I prefer face-to-face discussion because more ideas are shared and discussion can be done at the same time. Online discussion is not very effective as it takes time to get the response from another person”

“Face-to-face is better as people may tend to slack during online discussion and some people might not even post anything and do no have time to go online.”
Pedagogical Implications

• Increase the student-teacher interaction

“Teacher should participate more so we know if we are in the right path or not before continuing our discussion on a particular statement or idea.”
Pedagogical Implications (Cont.)

- Add the synchronous mode to the asynchronous online discussion.

“Do include online real-time, sandboxes shout out would help.”

“Teacher could be more interactive/involved, and maybe if there is a chat box it will be so much easier.”
Pedagogical Implications (Cont.)

• Use an online discussion tool that provides updates and notifications.

“Give an early update about it if there is changes made!”

“More systematic arrangement of latest posts' orders and notifications for new posts.”
Pedagogical Implications (Cont.)

• Ensure the students’ active contribution to the online discussion

“More students need to express their thoughts and ideas to make this a successful educational Platform.”

“Just make sure most of the post are related and is helpful rather than just answering for the sake of participating to look good.”
THANK YOU

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