

EXPERIMENTAL STUDY TO DEVELOP WRITING SKILLS THROUGH BLENDED LEARNING IN THE TIMES OF INTERNET

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Abstract: this article emphasizes the role of computer-based technologies in learning how to develop writing skills. It reveals that learners not only control the learning speed, but also do not suffer from the time restrictions of classroom interaction. Teaching and learning take place in both on-campus and online setting and various ways are offered to communicate with each other, either synchronously or asynchronously. Compared to paper teaching documents, the electronic resources are easier for the teachers to keep in order.

Key words: *experimental learning, technologies, learners, communication, electronic resources, blended learning, students*

In the times of information and communication technologies, internet has accompanied us every moment in any place. It is also a useful tool to develop our writing skill on the road to learn English. The rapid development of internet technology facilitates composition-writing process by offering a wide variety of authentic materials. Blended-learning approach, a combination of the traditional face-to-face learning and certain aspects of internet learning, has been widely adopted in college writing course.

Blended Learning originating from the career training in business company has aroused academic attention as it provides students with more opportunities to apply what they learn in class into the reality. It is hard to find a precise and unitary definition of blended learning. Blended learning is the combination of instruction from two historically separate models of traditional learning systems and distributed learning systems. The central role of computer-based technologies in blended learning. The two separate modes of teaching and learning are so different that combinations of different media are adapted respectively to meet the

needs of different learners. Teachers, focusing on person-to-person contact, dominate face-to-face learning. However, the internet learning happens in an opposite direction. The interaction with learning materials tends to be asynchronous and self-paced. Rapid development of technological innovations facilitates great possibilities for communication in the field of English learning and teaching. As computer-mediated instructional elements integrate into the traditional learning more and more, the Blended Learning tendency urges us to prepare for this significant development in the times of Internet.

Communication and collaborative learning can be facilitated through internet-based tools, therefore, blended learning promotes the following features of language teaching and learning:

Through blended learning, learners not only control the speed of information they are acquiring, but also do not suffer from the restrictions of interaction in the classroom. The internet provides blended learning learners with access to information any time. Generally, the learner's responsibilities are consistent with the instruction of a traditional classroom, reading, writing and familiarizing the material with which the instructor supplies him. As long as the cooperative learning is concerned, blended learning contains the process where learning takes place through cooperative efforts, creating a live learning environment dependent on dynamic communication between learners that fosters knowledge sharing. The power of self-paced learning experience is increased where opportunities for meaningful collaboration are present.

In blended learning, teaching and learning take place both on campus and on line. On campus, the instruction happens in a traditional environment while online education usually occurs on the internet. In blended writing class, students are required to have the computer-based autonomous learning with the help of computers. The students should meet their teachers in classroom, where real life situations are created for them to produce meaningful output with each other. The dual settings of study are perfectly combined to stimulate interaction, establish communication, and share content. The length of time students spent on the

activity online or in the classroom is usually decided on the nature of the course and the choice of the instructor.

Various ways to communicate, either synchronous or asynchronous, are offered to the participants of blended learning. Synchronous tools such as web conferencing, video conferencing and telephone, etc. are widely used. Asynchronous tools such as e-mail, fax, online environment and post are also very popular tools used in daily life. Online discussions have the possibility to improve students' learning and may lead to cognitive development if the participants neglect their race, gender, educational background or social status. The traditional classroom learning allows for fast and efficient exchanges of ideas. Synchronous discussions are extremely beneficial for those who miss the chances to participate in. On the other hand, asynchronous communication leaves enough time for students to reflect and react to others. Online discussions enable them to work at their own pace with flexible working hours. Whenever or wherever they encounter problems, they submit questions to instructors receive their responses and solve the problems. Otherwise, they need to wait until the next meeting with the instructors.

Compared to paper teaching documents, the electronic resources are easier for the teachers to keep in order. Teacher's online feedback to a student's task saves a lot of time for tedious grading work. In addition, the course build-in tools are extensive and allow teachers to include dynamic, news-based and skill-based elements. Event in the morning news, any up-to-the-minute data can all be included in the writing course. Teachers can save a lot of time to find authentic teaching material. With more free time, teachers may arrange interaction with students in need of much more helpful guidance. Students' interactive exercises can be recorded, which also makes it easier for teachers to keep track of students work. Once teachers get access to the learning logs of the class, they know whether each student is active to participate in the learning and check out what he is doing, for how long he studied. Furthermore, teacher can analyze the data to check their mastery of the materials, highlight the difficult points of each lesson and judge students' progress more accurately. Later in the following classroom teaching,

teacher adds more elaborate clarification to solve student's problems. Making full use of the learning log and its statistical functions, teacher can get first-hand data to do research work to improve their teaching.

In the times of internet, blended learning approach promotes the combination of information technology and traditional classroom leaning. The application in the writing course illustrates the features and advantages of blended learning approach. Blended learning approach promotes students' cooperation ability, which is beneficial to creating a pleasant writing atmosphere and establishing a harmonious relationship among the students. They can continuously enrich and broaden their writing knowledge via many ways, from native-speaker pen pals, or from proficient fellow students. In collaboration with others, students learn how to deal with problems, and then to give or receive help, share their ideas and listen to others' perspectives, seek new ways of solving puzzles. Thus, students' independent thinking and writing ability are greatly enhanced in peer writing. In addition, blended learning approach increases students' motivation and autonomy. It is found that students appear to have more interest in writing. They enjoy their writing classes and often take part in the extracurricular writing activities. This hybrid method was more effective in promoting learners' confidence; students were motivated and autonomous to write.

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