

A study of the Effects of Online Blogging in EFL writing instruction in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

Many EFL instructors and students dream of devising the most effective technique to teaching and learning EFL writing, which has always been one of the most difficult challenges in EFL writing instruction and learning. With the unprecedented developments in technology that the world witnessing, particularly with the beginning of coronavirus, online blogging as an interactive technology viewed as a technology to have the potential to engage the student in social interactions to learn in EFL writing which in turn can enhance peer collaboration and scaffolding for the development of student's writing skills from the perspective of sociocultural theory based on Vygotsky's ideas that emphasise social interaction and collaboration considered as key concepts for an effective learning process. In Saudi Arabia, the students are taught writing in traditional methods fully dominated by the teacher where they are spoon-fed in a passive method that lacks any form of interaction or collaboration between peers. So, this study investigated the effectiveness of online blogging in EFL writing instruction with adopting progressive/developmental tasks through integrating genreprocess approach newly coined by Badger and White contrasted to product approach that is widely used by Saudi teachers. This study involved 30 second-year undergraduate students were studying in the department of Languages in one Saudi university. This study adopted a mixed research methods design where integrated qualitative and quantitative approaches to identify the perceptions and experiences of Saudi students with online blogging technology as an innovative approach in writing teaching, their advantages in addition to the challenges they faced while doing their blogging activities where it included a questionnaire, interviews and blog entries posted by students. The findings intervention that online blogging with integrating genreprocess approach was an effective approach and the Saudi students formed extremely positive attitudes toward their experience with online blogging experience. Additionally, the online blogging enhanced sociocultural theory constructs that Vygotsky emphasises such as scaffolding which was social assistance in the form of peer and teacher feedback, collaboration, and social interaction that positively reflected the development of their writing, reading, social and thinking and collaboration skills and their attitudes towards writing in English. However, the students faced some challenges that affected their experience with blogging including technical challenges

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like internet connection problems and weakness of learner's skills in some areas such as computer skills and time management skills.

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