

# **Thai Teachers' Reflections on Alternative Assessment and Collaborative Learning in an English Academic Writing Class During the Covid- 19 Pandemic**

**Pragasit Sitthitikul**

Language Institute, Thammasat University, Thailand

## **Abstract**

This presentation focuses on the use of the assessment methods and collaborative learning in an EFL academic writing class at a tertiary level in Thailand in response to the changes necessitated by the global Covid-19 pandemic. With the Thai government's announcement in March 2020 of a country-wide lockdown to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus, all educational institutions in Thailand had to move their teaching and learning online. However, the researcher realized that it was not simply "changing the venue." In the physical class, traditional teaching, learning, and pen-and-pencil tests and exams were used. Additionally, collaborative learning and alternative forms of assessment such as group discussion and peer evaluation of writing were employed. Switching to the online mode, face-to-face collaborative learning became nonviable, meaning adjustments and changes were required. Peer evaluation was replaced by self-evaluation and a formal test was substituted with a group project. Through observation in this study, the result of using self-evaluation in academic writing was less than satisfactory as the students tended to take it lightly and did not effectively use the self-evaluation guidelines in revising their texts. Employing the reflective practice approach, the researcher concluded that the primary causes were the over-dependence on teacher's feedback, typical in the Thai context, and the lack of proper training for the students in doing self-evaluation. However, the students tended to perform well in group report projects. The insights from practitioner reflection shed light on ways to improve the assessment methods used to foster autonomous learning of academic writing not only for online and distance learning, but also how it can also be transferred to physical classrooms.

**Keywords:** online learning, alternative assessment, collaborative learning, academic writing, covid-19 pandemic