

Building A Writing Community through Blogs and Collaborative Learning

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Abstract

Engaging EFL students in English writing involves encouraging them in ways that are different from those the students encounter in other subjects. Is there any relationship between the students' perceptions of their English writing proficiency and satisfaction with blogs? How does collaborative learning affect language learning through blogs?

This paper reports on the blogging experiences and attitudes toward blogs and collaborative learning in an English writing class at a Thai university. The participants of the study were 65 low-intermediate EFL students from different fields of study. The participants were provided with course materials including the blogging tutorials and a course syllabus. For six weeks of study, the participants were given writing assignments which allowed them to create personal blogs and to write essays on six different topics. At the end of the semester, a questionnaire was conducted to elicit both qualitative and quantitative data.

The results of the study show a significant relationship between the student's perceptions of their English writing proficiency and satisfaction with writing through blogs. The collaborative activities in the classroom were significantly related to positive communication on the blogs. Furthermore, the findings show that publishing online comments is an effective way of sharing each other's review which encourages the participants to pay more attention to the content and language on their blogs. The blogging experiences also gave the participants self confidence. A majority of the participants stated that the team-work activities in the classroom drew them together as a cyberspace community.