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Investigating the Use of Blog for Teaching Writing Courses to Undergraduates

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Abstract: In contrast to the product approach to writing, the process approach entails planning, drafting editing and revising stages. Blog an online platform for practicing process approach has long been used by EFL teachers to develop their students' writing skill. But in Bangladeshi rural higher education context, its efficacy is yet to be investigated. Hence, the aim of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of using blogs to enhance student writing skills at tertiary level at a private university located in a rural area of Bangladesh. It focuses on the advantages of incorporating blogs as a virtual writing platform for teaching writing to a group of students used to the traditional product approach. Research participants were 98 undergraduate level students of third semester in the Department of English at a private university in Bangladesh. The research method is mixed based on primary and secondary data. Online survey was conducted on 98 participants and the test scores of 25 samples were seen through random sampling techniques. The primary numerical data were analyzed through the Google form and the secondary data were manually analyzed. We found students' attitude to writing in blogs more positive in comparison with the traditional way of writing. Students felt writing in blogs to be more effective and motivating due to its continuous interactive feedback and correction and editing facilities. The test score also indicates gradual development of writing skill. It indicates that in spite of being a new platform to the participants, it can be effective to develop the rural students' writing skill.

Keywords: Blogging, peer feedback, process approach, product approach, teacher feedback.

Introduction

Incorporation of modern technology in teaching methodology makes learning full of fun and effective. At tertiary level, using weblog as a technology tool to teach process approach of writing skill positively helps students create, update and share their ideas and thoughts frequently (Arslan, 2013). Process approach in teaching writing skill is a method of creative and interactive writing process where students themselves can understand and

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evaluate their writing through feedback critically on an online writing platform. According to Steele (2021), process approach focuses more on the activities of varied classrooms by promoting brainstorming, rewriting, group discussion and developing language structure. As a process approach, blogging is a forum where blog members are engaged in discussion in the blogosphere and they can edit, delete and publish their posts with utmost flexibility as a blog owner. In process approaches to writing, feedback plays an important role in empowering learner autonomy and also actively involving them in the feedback activities (Mendonca & Johnson, 1994).

In connection with it, it can be mentioned here about the debate regarding whether teacher feedback or peer feedback is more effective. In a number of studies teacher-written feedback is found to play an important part of the writing process for both teachers and students (Zhang, 1995). On the other hand, "peer feedback is also found to be appreciated and teachers keep practicing it in their courses and report students' positive experiences" (Hyland & Hyland, 2006) as it may nurture critical thinking skills to analyze and revise their own writing (Leki, 1990; Zhang, 1995), involve learners and also create an real communicative context.

Though initially blog was not invented as a language teaching tool, to extend classroom teaching to the outside class due to the free and fair blogs on the internet and limitations of time to give feedback to all students in the classroom, teachers have created their own blogs to practice online communication and provide all-time on internet. Researchers in Arabian countries, Japan, Korea, China and Hong Kong, have widely used blogs in foreign language teaching, in particular EFL reading and writing. This asynchronous facility of blogging has been seen as a great boon for its flexibility.

Nowson (2006) points out that a blog gives the bloggers absolute freedom in writing and publishing anything on any concept at anytime and anywhere if internet connection is available. Through this freedom, in Sun (2010)'s notion, blogs might be helpful in advancing the learners' writing skill, motivating them and stimulating their autonomy. Blog-writing for students is more interactive than paper-based writing, as it creates peers of teachers and students through topic sharing and feedback from the readers, and enriches their critical thinking.

The researchers of this study from their experiences of teaching English writing skill at the undergraduate level observed that many students are still keen on considering writing skill from the product approach perspective. The researchers saw that teachers teach a writing course in a way that would encourage them for rote-learning. The students have also been used to this method of doing a writing course in their schools and colleges. They were not familiar with the process approach of writing. The researchers felt that if the university level students are not taught a writing course following the process approach, their writing skill will not develop in the long run and they cannot write academic papers for their course where rote-learning is not helpful to get good score. They will only feel tempted to memorize essays and that will not lead to creativity. In the long run, they will lose interest in their writing course as well.

The researchers in this study also believe that since it is not possible to give one-to-one feedback in a large class during the class time on their write-ups, it would be more convenient to use a platform as a supplementary tool to give peer feedback as well as

teacher feedback outside the classroom at any time of the day. It would also ensure more learning outcome, learner satisfaction and achievement than the traditional face-to-face method for its flexible nature. Moreover, the use of technology for teaching writing has always been proven to be effective in teaching the students process approach to writing. Hence, our research tries to investigate the phenomenon from an experiential perspective.

A writing course was designed in a blended form. The enrolled students had to submit four essays of four different types in the blog created for the course. They submitted their essays in the blog where each student could give feedback on other's essays. They could correct their essays according to peer feedback and teacher feedback. The submitted essays were assessed and scored as formative assessment. There was no pen and paper assessment for this course. The objective was to investigate whether students' writing skill developed following the peer feedback and process approach to teaching writing skill by using blog.

Literature Review

Academics and researchers have been working for decades to include weblogs into their teaching methodologies in order to teach writing and to instill enthusiasm for writing in pupils (Lin, Lin, & Hsu, 2011; Richardson, 2010; Wang, 2015). According to Richardson (2010) a weblog, or online diary, allows a blogger to communicate his thoughts and views on blog sites that can be updated often. Weblogs are user-friendly and can be readily customized to meet the demands of students. Teachers and researchers have taken an interest in blogging and have utilized it as a supplement to traditional teaching methods to help students have a better learning experience (Richardson, 2011).

Classification of Blogs

Bakar and Ismail (2009) categorize blogs into three types. They are tutor blog, learner blog and class blog.

Tutor Blogs

This form of blog is managed and controlled by teachers. Teachers use this to distribute course materials and internet resource links. This blog can also be used by teachers as an assignment submission platform. Teachers can communicate with their students outside of the classroom using this type of blog (Bakar & Ismail, 2009).

Learner Blogs

These types of blogs are created by students and maintained by them. These blogs can be used for either collaborative or individualized blogging. These blogs allow students to express themselves through writing. Learners write on a wide range of topics using these kinds of blogs (Bakar & Ismail, 2009).

Class Blogs

A class blog is one that is kept by the entire class and is primarily used to discuss writing. Students exchange writing tips and provide criticism of their classmates' work. It's also a popular choice for project-based writing classes ([Bakar & Ismail, 2009](#)).

Studies on the Impacts of Blogging on Writing Skill Development

The following section discusses some of the research done so far on the impacts of blogging on developing the writing skill of the EFL students. It has been observed that blogs encourage student interaction with their teachers and peers through written language, greater students' engagement in online writing activities in relation to the traditional forms of writing, and thus significantly augment writing prowess of learners ([Arslan, 2013](#); [Blau, Mor, & Neuthal, 2013](#); [Halic, Lee, Paulus, & Spence, 2010](#)). Moreover, feedback from peers help blog members develop critical thinking skills. Furthermore, students' attitude to blogs as a writing platform is largely positive, and they view it as interesting, unique and creative in comparison to traditional writing ([Chen & Brown, 2012](#); [Nguyen, 2012](#); [Pinkman, 2005](#)). Besides, a weblog is empowering for learners since it encourages group learning and collaboration in the blogosphere when students are not in the classroom .

[Ibodullayevna and Muzaffarovna \(2020\)](#) also stress the importance of blogging in the writing process. They emphasized that blog-supported process writing is motivating for students because they know they would only be evaluated when they eventually submit their writing after revising and editing it in response to comments from course instructors and peers. They also claim that this method of teaching process writing assists students in learning process writing and overcoming their fear of it. According to [Sulistyo, Mukminatien, Cahyono, and Saukah \(2019\)](#), implementation of 'BlogAssisted Language Learning (BALL)' in EFL classes of tertiary education helped the students work collaboratively and improve their writing skills, which covered articulacy, accuracy and intricacy. Their research findings from a flexible questionnaire, writing test and interview also noted that blog assisted language learning increased enthusiasm and competition among the students and made them sincerely active in online classes.

[Zhou \(2015\)](#) used a questionnaire, an interview, and SPSS 19.0 to conduct an eighteen-week study among 81 Chinese undergraduate EFL students to explore the efficiency of blog assisted process writing in improving students' writing skill. The study found that using blog-assisted process writing strategies increased students' writing performance considerably. Furthermore, the majority of students believed that this method could address the inadequacies of traditional methods of teaching writing, and thus formed a favorable opinion of it. Additionally, by using this writing style, learners acquired new expressions, learned brainstorming, and collaborative writing, all of which helped them enhance their writing skills. [Arslan \(2013\)](#) investigated the usefulness of teacher-peer feedback in the writing process using blogs and portfolios among a group of potential English language teachers at a university level English language teaching program in Turkey. The use of blogs and portfolios greatly enhanced basic writing skills such as,

content, process, organization, vocabulary, language use, and accuracy, according to the study. In comparison to peer feedback, teachers' feedback was reported to be more effective and popular among participants. Blogs and portfolios were also found to be useful tools for incorporating both peer and teacher feedback into the writing process.

According to [Nelson and Fernheimer \(2003\)](#), blogs are also a good medium for small group collaborative writing assignments. They point out that because blogs are easy to maintain and can be easily updated, they can be highly helpful in guiding students through the writing process. They also suggest that a writing group blog is beneficial for students to share individual work since it facilitates revisions that may be negotiated between the writer and the readers. Course instructors may watch the writing projects progress and follow along as the writer makes revisions depending on reader comments. Blogs encourage self-reflection since students can submit their observations and so provide evidence for their self-assessments. [Lowe and Williams \(2004\)](#) emphasize the relevance of using blogs in the writing process. They discovered that because it encourages a collaborative learning environment, student writers can elicit comments from readers at any stage of the writing process. They observed that by broadening the discourse beyond the classroom, [their] student bloggers frequently face real rhetorical challenges in a highly social, beneficial manner. The following studies highlight the effectiveness of blog as a medium of practicing learning and developing the writing skill of EFL students. [Lin \(2015\)](#) conducted research to evaluate the effectiveness of the blog-assisted learning approach and to examine the experience of student bloggers. Research data revealed that integration of blogging into an EFL writing class helps learners improve writing abilities as well as self-confidence and learning motivation. However, the enthusiasm and interest participants showed to learner centered blogging on paper were not reflected in actual blog writing activities due to some reasons. A scholarly paper conducted by [Mabuan \(2018\)](#) examined learners' attitude to learner centered blogging as a means to develop English writing abilities. The findings reported that blog writing is perceived as an effective platform by learners in spite of the accessibility challenges due to limited access and exposure to technology. In the blogging platform, students enjoy greater degrees of freedom in expressing themselves and increased online communication with their fellow learners.

In another research article, [Alsubaie and Madini \(2018\)](#) investigated how effective blogging is to improve vocabulary use in writing at a Saudi university. The researcher reported improved writing skills of learners, especially in the vocabulary part of writing due to blogging activities. Students retained most of the vocabulary they learned using web blogs and were able to use it in a wide range of different contexts. The findings also revealed improvement in digital literacy, social skills, and practical learning. Along the same line, [Ramli, Rafek, and Hasni \(2015\)](#) conducted a study at a Malaysian university to examine the impact of blog writing to learn writing. The study reported that blogging improves students' writing performance and essay development skills. It also found that writing on the blog better facilitated idea generation in comparison to traditional forms of writing. It was ([Nepomuceno, 2011](#))'s observation that choosing blog activity as effective writing skill materials in ESL classrooms would improve and develop the students' writing proficiency positively. For this, [Chen and Brown \(2012\)](#) thought that concerns and responses of the audience would affect those students' writing abilities who wrote on

blog. Moreover, to them students' blogging generated a higher level of facilities and incentive that learners would recommend blogging as an effective writing approach for the students of ESL and EFL classrooms. Like them, Akdağ and Özkan (2017) also claimed in their research paper that blog writing has the potential to improve students' writing abilities since it creates enthusiasm for writing and facilitates learners' autonomy.

Few authors in their qualitative research paper generalized the outcome of using on-line media like blog, Google docs and wikis in teaching English language at the tertiary education in Bangladesh. Their primary data based findings showed that to the university students, learning English language became more pressure-free, context-free, inspirational, efficiently accessible and budget friendly while they were using Google docs, wikis and blogs as learning materials. Also, both authors pointed out the negative impacts of using blogs as learning material as the standard of language inputs like mechanics, vocabularies and grammar is not up to the mark, and they proposed the tertiary institutions to provide the students lists of reliable blog and wiki links so that students do not get confused in learning accurate language input. They conducted a 14-week experiment with a group of university students in Bangladesh who were enrolled in a course designed to teach academic writing to see if blog writing affected their attitudes toward writing. Following their participation in blog writing activities, the vast majority of study participants changed their negative attitude toward writing to a positive attitude toward writing. The study also discovered that using blogs to teach writing has numerous advantages over traditional methods.

Significance of the Study

There has been scanty research on the effectiveness of blogging in developing the writing skill of the Bangladeshi students at small scale for a couple of days centering around a few writing activities. But there is no significant research on the efficacy of blogging on writing at course level in any Bangladeshi university. Moreover, there is no significant research on the effectiveness of blog in developing the process writing skill of Bangladeshi tertiary students. So, our research is significant because it investigates whether EFL undergraduate students' writing skill at a course level can be developed through the use of blog as a process writing teaching-learning platform. This research will explore whether instead of paper and pen based examinations, a blog can be used as a platform to conduct the testing of a writing course at universities.

The researchers assume that blog as an ancillary tool for writing skill can have a positive role in developing the writing skill of the undergraduate level students. If students post their essays in the blog and their peers and teachers provide feedback on the essays there, the students will have the opportunity to edit and correct their essays. This opportunity of peer and teacher feedback is assumed to increase student achievement, satisfaction and motivation in the long run. It is also assumed that if a writing course can be accessed through blog, students will be encouraged to give attention and importance to writing efficiently and professionally in the blog for better scores and leaning outcomes.

Research Method

This research paper is based on the mixed method where the researchers collected data through online questionnaire and interviews with seven samples selected through the purposive sampling technique. The interviews were held separately. The samples for the interview were those who posted all the four essays and gave feedback on at least one of their peer's essays. The Primary data came through the online questionnaire from 98 students of the course and interviews with seven samples and two teachers. The secondary data came from the essay scores of the students. Essay scores of 25 randomly selected students were evaluated for the data. To select the 25 student essays from 98 participants, we used the random number generator without looking into the name, gender or any other factor. A course was designed keeping in mind the process approach to writing, not the product approach. We all know that process approach to writing is the latest and scientific approach to teaching and learning writing skills.

Location and Context of the Research

This research was conducted at the English Department of a private university of Chattogram, Bangladesh. Permission was taken from the Academic Committee of the Program offering entity for conducting the assessment of the course, titled English writing skill, on wiki. While designing the course, we tried to make a switch from teacher-centered to more learner-centered teaching.

About the Course

The sixteen- week online course was originally designed keeping the process approach in view. The course was conducted as a blended one. It was conducted through face-to-face, Zoom and Google Classroom. The face-to-face classes comprised 40 percent of the total classes for the course. The synchronous virtual classes were through the zoom platform and the asynchronous part was conducted through the Google Classroom. Blog was used for submitting the essays going through peer feedback, editing and final submission. So, nothing new had to be incorporated for the course. For creating the blog, Wix, a free hosted workspace which allows collaborative editing of pages and files was used ([http:// Wix \(www.wix.com\)\)](http://Wix(www.wix.com))). This platform is also easy to use and access, which is very important in our learning context.

The students could submit their essays through the blog where they could edit, correct their essays. So, the assignments were set in the blog at least fifteen days ahead of the deadline of submission. In the blog, the students posted their works in progress or completed ones. The students were asked to post their works in the blog at least one day ahead so that others could comment on at least one of their peers' work. After that the students revised their essay drafts based on the comments of their peers and the teachers. This way the students went through all the stages of the writing process and could continuously work on improving their essay drafts. It was very convenient to draft, revise and edit essay drafts in the blog which allowed for an easy exchange of comments and for

multiple ways of commenting both by editing the work and/or adding comments in the thread. Though one teacher conducted the face-to-face classes, two teachers monitored and assessed the essays posted on the blog. The four essays dealt with are as follow- One compare and contrast essay, one cause and effect essay, one problem-solution essay and one compare and contrast essay on two characters of literary series, Game of Thrones.

Peer-editing

Different aspects of peer-editing pedagogy have been widely discussed in research literature. Some of the advantages of incorporating peer revision in writing instruction include students working in a friendly environment (Villamil & De Guerrero, 1996), gaining a better sense of the audience (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). As all the students were new to peer-editing and revision activities, they were taught what they could comment on in their friends' works. Later in the course, students were made to pay attention to more advanced things of essay content/organization/style. It was ensured that each student in the group received some feedback on their work. In addition to publishing their own works, each student was required to comment on a work published by at least one of their peers.

Data Collection

The primary quantitative data was collected through survey designed by the researchers and done on 98 samples. A pilot testing on 10 samples was conducted to ascertain the reliability of the data to be collected, that is, to assess whether adequate data would come from the 98 samples. The survey was designed by the researchers themselves. The survey was done online by using the Google form sent to them through WhatsApp. Out of them, one survey had to be rejected because it had incomplete information and two did not return the survey. The 98 survey questionnaires were processed by the Google form automatically. The qualitative data collected for this study consisted of transcripts of in-depth interviews with seven student samples completed on two different days but at the same location (the teacher's office). The two teachers teaching the course and giving feedback in the blog on student essays were also interviewed at the same venue. That is, in total interview of 7 students and 2 teachers were conducted. Each interviewee had to give interview once only, i.e. after the conduct of the course. The interview questions for the teachers centered around issues like their experiences with the blogging activity, students' activities and performance, the problems and satisfaction, they believe, the students had while writing essays and editing and giving feedback and their own experiences while monitoring student activities in the blogs in general.

Instrument(s)

The primary qualitative data of the research were also collected via online survey on 98 participants and verbal responses of the participants with the "standardized open-ended interview" both developed by the researchers. The standardized open-ended interview

consists of a series of pre-prepared and sequenced questions, which are posed to all participants in the same manner and order. In this approach asking all participants in a systematic way minimizes interviewer influence and subjective judgments. Interview participants were 7 students participating in the course and 2 teachers conducting the course. Each sample was interviewed at separate time for around 30 minutes, using a set of open-ended questions corresponding to the aim of the research. All students were interviewed in Bangla to ensure that they could express themselves clearly, precisely, and explicitly; the interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed verbatim, and later translated into English. The secondary data which are the scores of 25 students were selected through the random sampling technique. 25 essays from each category i.e. compare/contrast, cause/effect, problem/solution and character of literary series were reviewed for checking the scores of all of them.

Reliability

The first strategy to increase the credibility of the discovery is 'peer review and debriefing'. The purpose is to have an external review from a colleague who has expertise in the research topic and can "challenge assumptions made by the investigator" (Shenton, 2004, p. 67). Feedback from these debriefing sessions can be a good way to reinforce the study; and thus, intensifying its credibility. I discussed the procedures of the data analysis process with my three co-researchers.

Ethical Protection of Participants

All participants in our study were entitled to a right to privacy and to an assurance that there are no potential conflicts of interest in conducting the study and no foreseeable psychological, economic, professional, or physical risks associated with participating in the study. Our participants were free to withdraw if they considered the study too sensitive or personal even if they were in the middle of the interview.

Findings

The quantitative data were analyzed by using the normal excel software of data analysis. The data of 98 students who participated in the survey were processed by the Google form and the following findings are revealed. The following table shows the attitude of the participants to blogging as a platform for writing skill development.

The analysis of the survey yields the following results. The participants were all familiar with the internet. Nearly half of the students said they had used the internet for three to five years, with twenty-one percent saying they had used it for more than five years, and twenty-two percent saying they had used it for fewer than three years. Around three-quarters of the students claimed to be familiar with blogging, whereas the others had not heard about blogging before. When asked, if they had ever written on a blog, only a small portion of the students (15 out of 98) responded affirmatively, while an overwhelming

majority (83 out of 98) reported not to have any prior exposure to writing on blogs. On the blog set up for them, 70 participants reported posting four essays, with 15 participants posting three essays, 11 students posting two essays, and 2 participants posting one essay. Again 81.5 % believe that blogs are useful tool for them to learn process writing. 82.5% also believe that posting essays on blog is also a good idea to learn writing. 82.5% agree that it is a good idea to use blogs in English writing class. Similarly 82.5% think that essay writing using a blog is more fun than the traditional way of essay writing. 81.5 participants claimed to have received feedback from peers and course instructors on the essays they submitted on the blog created for this study.

To 82.5%, the feedback from teachers and classmates was deemed to be extremely valuable. Furthermore, nearly the similar percentage of students, i.e. 85 out of 89 agreed that having access to a wide variety of writing samples on the blog, as well as teacher-peer feedback on them, considerably enhanced their essay writing skills. Furthermore, nearly 79.5% of respondents said their essay writing skills improved with each consecutive essay they submitted; however, 20.5% of them felt otherwise as they did not think there was any consistent improvement in their writing performance. It is important to note that 70% respondents are satisfied with effectiveness of peer feedback whereas 30% consider peer feedback as useful. Because students' attitudes regarding blog writing are positive, it is no surprise that majority of the participants, i.e. 79.5% are in favour of taking more writing classes utilizing a blog in future. On the other hand, only 20 students are not willing to take any additional blog writing courses. The use of blogs in an EFL writing class is supported by 78.5% of students, while the rest are opposed to the idea.

Interviews

All the qualitative data analyzed for the study came from the interviews. The process of transcription started after the completion of all interviews. Depending on the length of the interviews it took the researcher five to six hours to transcribe the data. The audio recordings were listened to several times to ensure the correctness of the transcribed data. Examining the codes and identifying patterns in the data for searching for themes can happen during the reassembling phase. In this study, the answers given for each question were first examined and similar statements were combined and coded. The data obtained were coded manually by the researchers. We used the open coding and axial coding method as part of the coding process as suggested by [Saldaña \(2021\)](#). For this study, we used the following techniques to establish the themes.

Reviewing Themes

We checked the coded data set in relation to themes and its relation to the research question. This was done in an iterative way to ensure each theme is important before creating the final set of themes.

Defining and Naming Themes

It was an interpretive analysis where the in-depth analysis of each theme is studied and defined. The themes helped plan a story about the meaning to address the research question.

Writing up

We produced a report to tell a story of the analysis to make the readers understand the researcher's interpretation. Four themes emerged from the coded data: In the results section the researchers emphasized the four themes in connection with the study's research questions. Content analysis was also useful for the interpretation of the effectiveness of blogging in writing skill development. The content analysis process included: reading all the documents, highlighting relevant information, and evaluating the data by assigning codes.

Thematic Analysis

Content analysis helped the researchers to review the collected documents to match with the interviews. To examine the transcribed data from the interviews the researchers followed the techniques of thematic analysis. In the process of the thematic analysis, (1) reduction of the data, (2) exploration of the data, and (3) integration of the four themes emerged. By using a tactical method of merging and combining the codes, the researchers created the overarching themes. The interview excerpts reveal the following findings that ultimately lead to the themes such as, 1. teacher feedback, 2. feedback, 3. learning new techniques of writing and 4. impacts of blog on writing skill development.

Teacher Feedback

Teacher feedback has an important role in ensuring the effectiveness of any teaching–learning method. It ensures student success, guidance and motivation. Five students were happy with teacher feedback they got in the blog. Student A says, *"After submitting for the first time, teachers would give us feedback about our essays. Moreover, teachers would rewrite our errors and motivate how to write an essay in the best way."* Student B says, *"Teachers would individually tell us where our mistakes were in the blog."*

All agreed that they are interested to join in more blended course at the university. For example, student C says, *"The feedback that I got in the blog helped to eliminate the difficulties."* Student-E says, *"The best side of the blog is getting feedback from the teachers. After submitting the essays, teachers showed what was wrong in my essays. For example, mistakes include grammar mistake and spelling mistake. Then I was able to edit the essays. Overall I liked the feedback."* However, student D has some reservations about the teacher feedback. He says, *"It would have been better to give the feedback on the fourth essay because it has to be written based on a literary piece."* Student F says, *"First of all I would like to tell about giving individual feedback. For this feedback we have been able to correct many subtle mistakes, given a chance to correct my*

mistakes and resubmit again, opportunity to submit the essays on the new platform, being able to discuss the problems face-to-face with the teachers, we could interact with some classmates." Student G says, "After the teacher feedback, I could correct all my mistakes. This is what I liked most of the blog."

Peer Feedback

Peer feedback was a common feature as mentioned by seven students. Student F says, *"My friends could give me feedback on my essays. Discussion with friends helped me to correct my mistakes."* Student C says, *"The feedback my friend would give me helped to spot my mistakes and rectify them with fun."* Student B says, *"Everyone has the opportunity to read another's essay and there is opportunity to give feedback".* Student A says, *"I also understood in better way how to practice group work skills and how to give useful feedback and how to make use of feedback etc."* Student-D says, *"Writing in blog was a great experience for me. My friends could read my essays and could send me feedback which was very useful for me."* However, Teacher -1 has some reservation about the student feedback. She says, *"It was not much useful as it should have been because a good number of students did not give feedback on one essay assigned by me."* Student C says, *"I enjoyed the feedback I got from my friends regarding my essays. I also gave a number of comments about my three friends' essays. They accepted the comments and put them in his essays."* Student B says, *"I got the best pleasure when my essays got comments from my friends. Three friends gave comments on my two essays."*

Five respondents found peer feedback as effective as the teacher feedback. They opine that teacher feedback is also required for better learning. Student F says, *"I have found peer feedback as valuable as teacher feedback. But teacher feedback is crucial. Teacher should at least monitor and give summative feedback on the essays. It is true that teachers cannot give feedback on the essays of all students in detail. But their feedback however it is, is important."* Student C says, *"I have got a constructive feedback from my teachers on the blog. They gave overall feedback and comments on my essays. On the basis of their feedback, I could correct my mistakes. I also got feedback from my friends. Two friends gave specific feedback on my essays. But I trust my teachers feedback more."*

Learning New Techniques of Writing

The purpose of the course was to teach process approach to writing. Majority of students say that the brainstorming, planning, writing the first draft, feedback, editing etc. helped them to refine their writing skill. 6 students say that brainstorming and editing were helpful for them. Student D says, *"I found activities such as, practice brainstorming, free writing, outlining, draft, revision, final copy, how to give useful feedback, and how to make use of feedback most effective in achieving learning outcomes."* Student C mentions, *"Keep in mind that you can't learn how to write overnight. It's a process and the more you write and receive feedback on your written work, the stronger you will become".* Student D says, *"I have spent 10-12 hours to write the four essays in the blog. Though it took more time to write the four essays, I was benefited because I did not have to memorize."*

All students said that this course developed their writing skills. Student F says, *"I have learned how to write essays without memorizing. Hence, I was benefited."* Student B says, *"Teachers have tried their best to enhance our writing skill by correcting mistakes and the opportunity to edit was the best side of the course."* Student A says, *"I have benefited a lot from doing this course. The most satisfying thing regarding this course is getting feedback from teachers. After submitting the essays, I liked the teachers' feedback .. I have been able to read everyone's essays on wix. I enjoyed writing essays online at home. Since pandemic is going on now, I am benefiting from doing this course. I was able to discuss with teacher how to write an essay and give feedback."* The two teachers have a slightly different view about the process approach of writing they followed. Teacher-1 says that many students properly followed the approach method. But teacher-2 complained that four or five of the students did not edit, give feedback to each other for their essays and did not write from their own.

Impact of Blog on Writing Skill Development

Technology has an impact on the success of learning and teaching at present. But the contribution of technology to Writing Skill Development is felt more when the course is conducted as a blended or online course. This is applicable for this course as well. Student C says, *"We could easily do collaborative works in blog. In the Google classroom I could comment on another's essay. We could do correction instantly without wasting time. This was possible only for technology. We never did it before."* Student D says, *"It was interesting because I have learned how to write an essay without memorizing them correctly with the help of a blog. The blog was very helpful in achieving my desired objectives in writing skill development."* Student A says, *"I felt better for using two type of technical component those were Google classroom , blog. In the blog we were giving each other comments on the post. And we could easily discuss, collaborate and this opportunity was the best for us as technological support."*

Student A says, *"I could myself easily myself observe that my writing skill was improving after I was trying to include the suggestions and comments made by my teachers and friends in the blog. I was also feeling that my writing skill was much advanced in two months time than when I was just staring to write ."* Teacher -2 says, *"My students found it very useful to discuss, write, rewrite, give and have feedback on the blog."*

Analysis of Student Essay Scores

A comparative study of the students' score in the four essays indicates their gradual progress in the writing skill following the process approach of writing. So, the twenty five students' scores in all of their four essays are presented in the following table.

Learners submitted four essays utilizing the blog set up for them with the aim of learning process writing. The table shows the students' final essay grades after revision and editing. With the exception of 11 students whose scores remained unchanged, 14 out of 25 random samples received greater grades in essay 2 than in essay 1. In essay 1, 19 participants received approximately an average of 67 percent of the marks. However, 14 students' overall grades improved by slightly more than 2% in essay 2, with average students' grades in essay 2 hovering around 69 percent. In essay 3, all students except 9

received much higher grades than in the previous two essays. 19 learners received approximately 78 percent of the marks on average, which is 11 percent higher than the first essay scores and 9 percent higher than the second essay scores.

Table 1
Essay Scores

Students ID	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3	Essay 4
5	67%	67%	79%	80%
8	66%	69%	77%	82%
10	67%	68%	78%	81%
21	65%	60%	68%	68%
52	66%	61%	63%	60%
19	65%	69%	79%	79%
22	67%	67%	76%	80%
77	66%	65%	67%	63%
12	67%	67%	63%	61%
26	68%	70%	80%	82%
49	67%	72%	81%	83%
28	55%	55%	52%	53%
61	55%	53%	52%	51%
55	66%	69%	79%	82%
56	70%	73%	77%	81%
69	66%	68%	76%	79%
70	66%	67%	69%	70%
71	59%	62%	63%	65%
37	57%	59%	60%	60%
84	69%	73%	84%	84%
88	69%	71%	80%	84%
57	58%	58%	53%	52%
79	67%	69%	76%	80%
17	59%	53%	55%	51%
34	67%	67%	82%	84%

Despite the few cases where students scored similar points in two consecutive essays, the data demonstrates that almost 60% participants improved their writing with each subsequent essay they produced on the blog following the submission of the first essay on the blog. There are a total of 9 students whose grades have remained the same in two consecutive essays, with 3 students in essay 2 compared to essay 1, and 2 students in essay 4 compared to essay 3. 16 learners, however, received better scores in the third essay than the previous two essays. It is seen that 7 students' essay scores rather decreased. Student ID no.77,12,28,61,52,57 and 17 show decrease in score whereas student ID no. 21 and 37 do not indicate considerable progress in their performance. So, though the data indicates a steady progress of students' writing skills through the blog, students' stagnant condition of 2 out of 25 indicates a mixed results about the effectiveness of the blogging activities. In spite of the lack of significant progress in the score of 9 students in the successive essays, there is a steady progress in the performance of 16 students' writing skill. So, it can be rightly assumed that the positive impacts of blogging on their successful achievement of writing skill are supported by the score data. That is, there is a significant improvement in students' writing skill through the blogging activities.

Discussion

In this paper, researchers examined the blogging efficacy on learning process writing among a group of Bangladeshi undergraduate students at a private university. Overall, the participants' English writing dramatically improved on a quantitative level. The improvement in writing performance is consistent with earlier research ([Mabuan, 2018](#); [Akdağ & Özkan, 2017](#); [Fellner & Apple, 2006](#); [Vurdien, 2013](#)), which found that blogs provide a platform for improving students' writing abilities. This study also echoes the positive perceptions of blog participants in previous studies that writing on blogs helped them improve their writing skills.

The students' performance in the early phases, particularly in the first two essays, was not up to the mark. This is mostly due to the fact that the majority of students lacked clarity in their thinking on how to approach essay writing and were unaware of how to evaluate their own work. Furthermore, some of them did not include thesis statements in their writings; others did not employ connecting devices, did not adhere to proper essay structures, and did not use a diverse range of syntax and vocabulary.

Participants in our study indicated that they had not received enough constructive criticism on their written works prior to their involvement in this research, which prevented them from further developing their writing abilities. That is, they also said that they had never heard of the process approach to essay writing and that they were unaware that essay writing can be a process involving some stages that can be refined over time through revision and editing. They said that they used to memorize essays and write them down in the exam from memory, and they never received comments on them, but only grades. As a result, they did not feel active, empowered and active in their own learning. Majority of the respondents also believe in the efficacy of blogging in learning the process writing. They think it to be a good idea to use blog in the writing course. Almost 82.5 % of respondents have reported more motivation and fun in doing the course through blogging than the traditional classroom writing. This view is reflective of [Ahmed et al. \(2018\)](#) studies where the vast majority of study participants changed their negative attitude toward writing to a positive attitude as a result of blogging.

81.5% participants claim that they received feedback from their friends and teachers on their essays. It indicates that students have started to find interest in blogging. They also felt the efficacy of feedback in the blog to develop their writing skill, as is evident from the responses of 98 participants. The gradual development of their writing skill through blogging is indicated through the positive responses of 79.5% participants. In our research, students' response to feedback on their work was overwhelmingly positive, and 81.5% find them useful, hence, they expect advice on their works. This is in line with Harmer's theory (2001) that one of the things students look for from their teachers is confirmation that they are using English correctly. After receiving the feedback on each essay, students further developed their essays by revising and editing them, which allowed them to rectify the mistakes they had made previously. As a result, learners showed significant progress in developing their essays. This is similar to Ur's suggestion (2003) that feedback is mostly given as continuous correction and evaluation, and the goal is to make improvements. Furthermore, blog members provided input on their peers' essays, assist-

ing them in identifying areas of their writings that needed improvement. The positive impacts of blogging on their writing skill development are so highly felt by them that 76 out of 98 are interested to do more writing classes utilizing blog in future and 81 out of 98 feel the usefulness of blog in their learning. [Alsubaie and Madini \(2018\)](#)'s research indicates improved writing skill, digital literacy, social skills and practical learning. [Ramli et al. \(2015\)](#)'s study also reported writing skill development and idea generation as a result of blogging. [Akdağ and Özkan \(2017\)](#) claimed enhanced writing skill as a result of learner enthusiasm and learning autonomy in blogging.

In the later phases of our project, learners became more confident about their learning efficacy and felt a sense of empowerment as they got themselves engaged in their own learning. Due to the pool of a large selection of essays and teacher-peer comments on them, learners reported that they were more in charge of their own learning and responsible for their learning outcomes. This in turn created a new sense of enthusiasm in learning activities and motivated them to do more course in writing with the help of blog. This self-independence is reflective of [Sulistyo et al. \(2019\)](#)'s study where the authors presented that Blog Assisted Language Learning(BALL) can constructively improve the students' writing skills because students can flexibly and independently apply these learning tools inside and outside of the classrooms to practice their writing skills. [Mansouri \(2018\)](#) also found that the autonomy students enjoy in blogassisted learning fuels learning interests and self-efficacy, and moreover, significant improvement in students' writing performance over time was also reported by the participants.

The purpose of the course was to teach process approach to writing. Majority of students say that the brainstorming, planning, writing the first draft, feedback, editing etc. helped them to refine their writing skill. Seven students say that brainstorming and editing were helpful for them and said that this course developed their writing skills. Student F says, *"I have learned how to write essays without memorizing. Hence, I was benefitted."* Student D says, *"I was benefitted because I could rewrite my essays based on the good feedback I got from my teachers and friends not only in the online but also during the face-to-face classes."* These views are reflective of previous findings. As I have used blog as a platform for the writing course, the use of blog to develop the writing skill through process approach can be mentioned here. [Lowe and Williams \(2004\)](#) indicated the usefulness of using blogs in the writing process saying that it encourages a collaborative learning environment and student writers can elicit comments from readers at any stage of the writing process.

However, the two teachers' slightly different view about the process approach to writing is to be considered. Teacher-1 says that many students properly followed the approach method. But Teacher2 complained that three to four of the students did not edit, give feedback to each other for their essays and did not write from their own. This view is reflective of previous studies. [Lin \(2015\)](#) said that it is sometimes seen that the enthusiasm and interest participants showed to learner-centered blogging on paper were not reflected in actual blog writing activities due to some reasons. This new technique of writing skill development through blogging has far-reaching consequences on the learning activities and the overall academic achievement of the learners. As this approach depended on blogging, it contributed to the development of 21st century graduate skills of the students, such as, critical thinking, collaborative and interpersonal skills through the use of technology.

Technology has an impact on the success of learning and teaching at present. But the contribution of technology to writing skill development is felt more when the course is conducted online. This is applicable for this course as well. Student D says, *"We could easily do collaborative works in blog. In the blog I could comment on another's essay. We could do correction instantly without wasting time. This was possible only for technology. We never did it before."* Teacher -2 says, *"My students found it very useful to discuss, write, rewrite, give and have feedback on the blog."* This view is reflective of [Nelson and Fernheimer \(2003\)](#) who mention that blogs are a good medium for small group collaborative writing assignments as they are easy to maintain and can be easily updated and hence, they can be highly helpful in guiding students through the writing process by facilitating revisions that may be negotiated between the writer and the readers. The continuous improvement of scores in essays of 16 students out of 25 reaffirms the efficacy of blogging as an effective platform to improve the solid writing skill of the samples in our research. This indicates the fact that though a considerable number of students were not positively influenced by the feedback from teachers in the blog, the majority, i.e. 16 had their writing skill reinforced as a result of constructive feedback from teachers and students.

To sum up, the findings reveal that all students reported the usefulness of blogging to learn process writing. And all believe that it is a good idea to use blog to learn writing. Almost 82.5% students also believe blogging for writing to be an activity of more fun and joy than the traditional product approach to writing where memorization is all that counts. Similarly 82.5% found feedback from teachers and peers useful. Almost 79% believe that feedback found on blog gradually improved their writing skill. The fact that 79.5% are interested to do more writing course through blog indicates their satisfaction with the platform of writing. So, all the statistics here show the usefulness of blogging to improve the solid writing skill of the students in contrast to memorization-centered writing activities. They also indicate the satisfaction of the participants with the blog in developing their writing skill in the long run. Preferring teachers' feedback to peer feedback by 2 respondents in the interview and 30 % of students not considering peer feedback as effective as teacher feedback in the online survey, call for cautiousness regarding the efficacy of peer feedback. They cannot completely trust peer feedback to develop their writing skill. Similarly, it is to be taken care of that students write their essays on the blog on their own. Copying and plagiarizing will not develop their writing skill and spoil the creativity and originality of the students. It will also de-motivate the enthusiastic students who want to put the marks of their creativity on the circle of academic writers.

Implications of the Study

This study will be valuable to curriculum designers for the writing course at the Bangladeshi universities which have long been used to following the product method of writing. The findings of the study could be useful to education policymakers seeking for innovative teaching approaches, such as, the blended method. Furthermore, EFL teachers and instructors who are looking for ways to incorporate more student-centered learning methods into their teaching style may benefit from this research.

Conclusion

The findings of this research indicate that blogging has facilitated the EFL students' writing, especially, process approach to writing among the tertiary level students at this university in Bangladesh. This study reveals that students' skill in process writing improved significantly over time as a result of blogging which also corresponds to participants' favorable evaluation of blog efficacy. Furthermore, the study reveals that students were more engaged in their learning, and they were more willing and motivated to participate in group learning activities, as learners provided feedback and comments on each other's essays, suggesting methods to improve their peers' writing. Furthermore, the researchers found that learners have significantly positive attitude towards the usefulness of blog writing in the development of writing skill. Finally, the study discovered that students regard blogs' large-scale interactive peer-peer and peer- teacher feedback as an exciting feature of blogs, assisting them in identifying and overcoming their lapses in process writing. It also suggests that the assessment activity of a writing course can be successfully conducted through a writing blog. But at the same time, the fact that 2 out of 25 students' scores in essays did not improve and those of 7 out of 25 rather decreased deserve careful thought about the efficacy of the platform as an alternative way to teach writing through the process approach. Similarly, during the interview two students' reservation about the peer feedback needs to be take notice of as they are doubtful about the quality of peer feedback. So, there is scope for cautiousness regarding the use of blog for writing course because if not properly monitored by the teachers, it can lead to disastrous results. So, teachers' involvement and engagement in the blog as an overseer and monitor are of crucial importance. It should not be all about students engagement and feedback only. To address this problem of quality and efficacy of the blog, the future research could look into whether students are overly concerned with the feedback they receive when they submit essays to blogs that can be read, commented on, and critiqued by people other than the course instructors, or how students handle unsolicited, misleading, and irrelevant comments on their writing, which can make blogging difficult for some students. It can be done by asking specific questions regarding people's subjective blogging experiences.

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