

A CASE STUDY ON THE EFFECTS OF AN L2 WRITING INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL FOR BLENDED LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This case study explores EFL (English as a foreign language) students' perceptions toward a prototype of an instructional model for second language (L2) writing in blended learning and the effects of the model on the development of L2 writing skills in higher education. This model is primarily founded on the process-oriented writing approach combined with various types of writing activities in both online and offline environments. It was observed that the participants of the study perceived the blended learning model to be useful and helpful for the improvement of their writing skills. In addition, it was found that the participants in the three focus groups received higher scores for their writing at the end of the study. Based on the main findings, modifications have been made to the model and further suggestions and implications are provided.

INTRODUCTION

As second language (L2) writing is considered very complex for L2 learners, a need for systematic and comprehensive writing instruction is heightened. The teaching and study of L2 writing involves various factors: the writing process, peer and teacher responses, writing activities, and writing instructions (Harmer, 2004; Raimes, 1983; Williams, 2005). Also, L2 learners are required to address content, organization, structure, and mechanics appropriately to convey meaning through writing simultaneously (Brown, 2007; Raimes, 1983; Tribble, 1996). For L2 learners who do not have sufficient knowledge of the four writing components - content, organization, structure, and mechanics - L2 writing is very complicated and, consequently, they often encounter a number of linguistic difficulties with vocabulary and sentence construction (Chan, 2010; Zhou, 2009), reporting verbs (John, 2012; Thompson & Ye, 1991) and cohesive devices (Hinkel, 2001; Mu & Carrington, 2007). One way to resolve these problems is to give learners a number of opportunities to write and a variety of writing activities and instructions on the four components in a systematic and organized manner. Although many L2 learners write and revise their drafts several times, they are still often unsatisfied with the writing process due to the limited number of class sessions and insufficient time in a conventional classroom. Thus, providing sufficient writing opportunities and environments for interaction and communication with peers and a teacher regardless of time or place, known as blended learning, which combines the positive attributes of online and face-to-face instruction, has been suggested (Bañados, 2006; Grgurović, 2011; Hinkelman & Gruba, 2012; Nicolson, Murphy & Southgate, 2011; Yoon & Lee, 2010). In a blended learning environment, L2 learners are able to interact with peers and a teacher using a variety of computer-mediated communication (CMC) tools (Lafford & Lafford, 2005; Lee & Pyo, 2003). Despite the promising features of blended learning, it is rarely employed in L2 writing class; furthermore, little research has been conducted on the teaching and learning of L2 writing or on the L2 writing process and instruction in a blended learning environment.

In order to implement a blended learning environment effectively and efficiently in L2 writing, a systematic and comprehensive instructional model is an integral element. In L2 writing pedagogy, it has been asserted that an integrated L2 writing approach combines the process approach and the genre approach with other aspects of writing and writing instruction (Min, 2011). Taking into account the current writing approaches and writing activities and instructions, as well as the attributes of online and offline environments, an instructional model for L2 writing in blended learning is urgently needed. Therefore, the purposes of the study are to examine the perceptions of L2 learners in higher education toward a prototype of an instructional model for L2 writing in blended learning and its effects on the development of L2 writing skills and to propose a proper model of L2 writing in blended learning. The research questions for the above purposes are as follows: 1) What are the students' perceptions toward the model?; 2) What are the effects of the model on the development of writing skills?; and 3) What is the appropriate model for teaching and learning L2 writing in a blended learning environment?

BLENDED LEARNING AND L2 WRITING

Blended learning in language teaching and learning

Since blended learning was introduced to both the academic and corporate fields, there have been various attempts to employ blended learning in the language teaching field (Behjat, Yamini & Bagheri, 2011; Grgurović, 2011; Miyazoe & Anderson, 2010; Neumeier, 2005; Yoon & Lee, 2010). Featuring a combination of instructional modalities or methods, blended learning is defined as a system that combines face-to-face instruction with computer-mediated instruction (Graham, 2006, p. 5). Through the blended learning system, instructors and learners are provided with the benefits of enhanced pedagogical richness, the active use of teaching and learning strategies, multiple platforms for interaction and communication, and an increased access to knowledge (Graham, 2006; Graham, Allen & Ure, 2005; Osguthorpe & Graham, 2003).

In the English Language Teaching (ELT) field, Yoon and Lee (2010) further narrowed the term, blended learning in ELT and defined it as “bringing together the positive attributes of online and offline education, including instructional modalities, delivery methods, learning tools, etc., in relation to language teaching and learning approaches and methods in order to reinforce learning process, to bring about the optimal learner achievement, and to enhance the quality of teaching and learning (p. 180).” This definition not only includes the core themes of blended learning, such as the combination of instructional modalities, delivery methods and learning tools, but also emphasizes the necessity of association with approaches and methods of language teaching and learning.

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts like Korea, where language input is provided in formal classroom settings with a limited number of sessions, blended learning has been recognized as an alternative learning environment due to the increased time for language input and extended learning setting both in online and offline environments (Lee & Pyo, 2003; Yoon & Lee, 2010). Murphy and Southgate (2011) proposed that for the design of blended learning systems and materials in language teaching contexts a wide range of teaching modes, tools, and resources be integrated to meet learners’ needs and to achieve academic goals and learning outcomes. As Garrison and Kanuka (2004) indicated that learning experiences in blended learning are to be integrated, not simply mixed together, in language teaching or learning, a variety of activities and tasks are to be organized systematically in relation to the modes, tools, and available resources considering the language teaching and learning approaches and methods, learner characteristics and contexts.

L2 writing

In order to effectively write in L2, learners need to possess a variety of skills. Raimes (1983) presented nine features that produce a piece of writing: content, the writer’s process, audience, purpose, word choice, organization, mechanics, grammar, and syntax. Tribble (1996) also suggested four types of knowledge that writers need - content knowledge, context knowledge, language system knowledge, and writing process knowledge - a daunting task for any L2 writer.

For the teaching and learning of L2 writing, various approaches have been suggested such as the controlled-to-free approach, the free-writing approach, the paragraph-pattern approach, the communicative approach, the process approach and the genre approach (Hyland, 2002; Raimes, 1983; Tribble, 1996; Williams, 2005). Of these, the process approach has been a mainstay of L2 writing pedagogy. Ever since Raimes (1985) identified that the writing process is recursive, the process of writing has been targeted by researchers. Williams (2005) suggested four stages of the writing process: getting started, creating the first drafts, revising, and editing. Williams asserted that L2 learners have to spend more time on all stages of the writing process and need more discussion and feedback than native speakers (L1 writers). Similar to Williams (2005), Harmer (2004) suggested four main elements in the writing process: planning, drafting, editing (reflecting and revising), and the final version. These were presented via the process wheel, showing the many directions that writers can take. Tribble (1996) also suggested the writing process is composed of prewriting, composing (drafting), revising, and editing, indicating that the whole process is not a fixed sequence but rather a dynamic and unpredictable process.

Although the process writing approach has been adopted in L2 writing classrooms, some critiques have been made: an L1-oriented process writing approach might be inappropriate for L2 learners in different social and educational contexts from L1 contexts (Delpit, 1988; Holliday, 1994). From this argument, a post-process approach in the post-process movement has been suggested (Atkinson, 2003; Trimbur, 1994) putting an emphasis on the genre (Hyland, 2007; Swales, 2004; Tardy, 2012), other aspects of writing and writing instruction, and a final product as well as the writing process. Min (2011) suggested a principled eclectic approach for foreign language writing instruction, indicating the integral need to search for the most effective and efficient approach to enhance students’ writing skills. The principled eclectic approach adapts imported mainstream instructional approaches to local needs and stresses the creation of local practices.

There have been a few studies addressing blended learning in L2 writing (Behjat, Yamini & Bagheri, 2011; Ferriman, 2013; Miyazoe & Anderson, 2010; Yoon & Lee, 2010). These studies indicated that blended learning environments foster interaction among students and teachers and have a positive impact on the development of L2 writing skills. Yoon and Lee (2010), particularly, in a Korean university setting, proposed a model for blended learning in L2 writing (BLW) and found that the model was received positively by students and that there was an increase in high test results.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants of the study consisted of 51 English pre-service teachers in two universities in Seoul, Korea: H University and K University. The participants were enrolled in courses entitled “Logical Thinking and Writing in English” for pre-service teachers. This was a required course for pre-service teachers and taught by a bilingual Korean instructor. The course in H University was open to graduate students and the course in K University was open to both undergraduate and graduate students. A total of 25 graduate students enrolled in the course in H University, and 18 graduate students and 8 undergraduate students enrolled in the course in K University. H University’s course comprised of 3 males and 22 females, K University’s of 2 males and 24 females: a total of 5 males and 46 females.

The participants of both courses were divided into groups of four or five for the tasks. Three groups in K University were selected for inclusion in focus groups so that the improvement in their writing skills could be investigated and qualitative data gathered. The groups were heterogeneous in terms of writing proficiency level: high-beginning, intermediate, and high-intermediate. Their writing proficiency was based on their results from a pre-testing stage. The participants of the three groups (A, B, and C) are as seen in Table 1. Pseudonyms have been used to protect identities.

Table 1: Participants of three groups

Group	Name	Writing proficiency	Status	Gender
A	Eunsung	High-intermediate	Undergraduate	Female
	Mihye	Intermediate	Undergraduate	Female
	Sungjin	Intermediate	Undergraduate	Female
	Semi	High-beginning	Undergraduate	Female
B	Jihyun	High-intermediate	Graduate	Female
	Hyeyoung	High-intermediate	Graduate	Female
	Kyunghee	Intermediate	Graduate	Female
	Insung	High-beginning	Graduate	Male
C	Garim	High-intermediate	Undergraduate	Female
	Junghyuk	Intermediate	Undergraduate	Male
	Jungmin	High-beginning	Graduate	Female
	Miyoung	High-beginning	Graduate	Female

Data collection instruments and procedures

In order to obtain data for this study, quantitative and qualitative data were gathered. Quantitative data sources included a questionnaire that used semantic differentials of six bipolar adjective scales (0-5) with six items of usefulness, easiness, interest, motivation, helpfulness and satisfaction of a prototype of an instructional model for L2 writing in blended learning. The questionnaire was designed to measure participants’ perceptions and was administered in class on week 16 (the final week); 51 questionnaires were completed and returned.

Qualitative data sources included online and offline classroom observations, reflective journal entries, post interviews with the three focus groups, and the focus groups’ writing drafts of the pre-test, midterm, and post-test. The classroom observations were undertaken every week throughout the entire semester as non-participant observation in order to gather information on the students’ behaviors and interaction. Field notes and reflective observation logs were taken and offline peer response sessions of three focus groups were voice recorded. The participants were required to write reflective journals after producing a final draft in each writing cycle in order to reflect on the writing process, comments from peers and teacher, writing activities and instruction. They were allowed to write the reflective journals in Korean. Focus group interviews were conducted at the end of the course as semi-structured interviews in Korean. The interviews were all voice recorded and notes were taken during the interviews. The interviews consisted of experience and behavior, opinion and values, feeling, and background questions regarding previous experiences of English writing in

blended learning and the model. The pre-test, midterm- and post-tests were given in week 1, 8, and 16 of the semester. The tests were to write an argumentative essay on the effectiveness of homework, the need of peer assessment in language learning, and the necessity of supervised night self-study, respectively. The 40-minute tests were administered in class and the participants were required to handwrite.

Implementing a prototype of an instructional model for L2 writing in blended learning

This study was conducted over two semesters from March 2012 to December 2012 in classes entitled Logical Thinking and Writing in English. The course at H University ran from March 2012 to June 2012, the course at K University from September 2012 to December 2012. Over 16 weeks, H University's participants met for two hours each week, K University's for three hours. For these courses, a prototype of an instructional model for L2 writing in blended learning was implemented (See Figure 2). The model combines an offline class, where students meet in a conventional classroom, with an online class where students interact with others using CMC tools, such as e-mail, bulletin board system (BBS), blogs and chatting programs taking into account the recursive process of writing and writing activities as well as instruction.

Based on the process-oriented writing approach, the model possesses five stages: getting ready to write, drafting, revising, producing the final draft, and reviewing. In the first stage, students met in an offline class and, on selected topics, performed pre-writing activities such as listing, outlining, clustering, brainstorming and mind-mapping individually, in groups and as a whole class, using various learning tools. In the drafting stage of while-writing, the students were to produce first drafts, focusing on content, organization and structure, and to upload them to each group's BBS in a class BBS. In particular, the students were supposed to write their first drafts, deliberating the organization of content and structure using corpus tools and web content such as video clips, articles, learning web pages, etc. related to each topic. The students were required to conduct an online peer response session in each group, using a tag-line function in BBS, e-mail asynchronously or using chatting programs. After the online peer response sessions they were asked to revise their first drafts, produce a second draft, and upload it to the class BBS. In the revising stage, the students conducted the offline peer response sessions, collaboratively working on second drafts. The teacher also responded to students' second drafts and provided feedback for the students. They were provided with writing activities such as controlled and guided writing, repairing sentence, sentence combining, parallel writing, and so on. In the fourth stage, the students produced the final draft based on feedback from peers and the teacher in the online environment and uploaded it to the class BBS. The teacher responded to the students' final drafts and provided feedback. After producing the final draft, the students wrote a reflective journal to reflect on the writing process, feedback and comments from response sessions. The journal entries were also uploaded to the class BBS and recommended that they be shared to extend the learning experiences. Finally, in the reviewing stage, they evaluated their final drafts and conducted group discussions based on the reflective journals. This stage is distinguished from the pre-existing writing process, such as the writing process suggested by Williams (2005), Harmer (2004), and Tribble (1996). In order to reinforce learning and writing experiences throughout the one cycle, the students need to be provided explicit opportunities for evaluating and reviewing what they did in the one cycle with peers and the teacher.

Methods of data analysis

Quantitative data from the questionnaire was analyzed using SPSS for descriptive statistics in order to investigate the participants' perceptions toward the model for L2 writing in blended learning. Reliability analysis for the questionnaire was conducted. Cronbach's alpha value was 0.97 for standardized items, showing very high reliability for the items in the questionnaire. Field notes and reflective observation logs collected through classroom observation were categorized into either description or reflection. The field notes and observation logs were analyzed descriptively. The collected reflective journal entries from the focus groups were read through by the researchers to investigate emergent themes regarding perceptions toward the model. The instances of accounts were categorized into the perceptions toward the stages of the model and translated into English. The focus group interviews were also transcribed and translated into English. The interview transcripts were read through and then analyzed and categorized. The drafts of pre-test, midterm- and post-tests were scored using the rubric for academic writing based on the scoring rubric for paragraph writing (Yoon & Lee, 2010). The rubric consists of four main components: content (30 points), organization (30 points), structure (20 points), and mechanics (20 points). The drafts were scored by two raters, and Pearson's r for all the drafts was over 0.8 in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Perceptions toward a prototype of an instructional model for L2 writing in blended learning

The participants were found to have positive perceptions toward a prototype of an instructional model for blended learning in L2 writing as seen in Table 2. They considered it useful (4.2745), interesting (3.3922), motivating (3.6667), helpful (3.9020) and satisfying (3.7843).

Table 2: Perceptions toward the model

Feature	N	Mean	SD
Usefulness	51	4.2745	0.82652
Easiness	51	2.6863	1.17457
Interest	51	3.3922	1.09688
Motivation	51	3.6667	1.12546
Helpfulness	51	3.9020	1.13587
Satisfaction	51	3.7843	1.06421

The ample opportunities for writing and response sessions in online and offline environments were seen as the major benefits provided by the model. More than half of the participants (31, 60.8%) had not experienced process-oriented writing, indicating the participants were previously not given sufficient opportunities to write. This model appeared to provide opportunities for producing multiple drafts, revising the drafts, giving and receiving peer feedback, and receiving teacher feedback. The following are excerpts from the participants' comments on the model.

Eunsung: At first, it was difficult and even scary: English writing. However, as I practiced writing and conducted peer response sessions, following the steps in this course, I realized that English writing was not that difficult. [Reflective journal (RJ)6]

Jungmin: I am absolutely satisfied with this course. Although I was very despondent due to my lack of writing skills, I thought the process-oriented writing was very interesting. This helps me study English writing by myself. [RJ6]

Jihyun: I had no idea when I wrote the first draft at the beginning of the semester, and it was very difficult to connect my writing to very specific content related to the major. But as I wrote more and more, I figured out repeated terminologies and organization of English writing. This was very interesting and exciting. [RJ6]

Semi: *"I liked the peer response sessions provided in this course, utilizing the class BBS and the mobile messenger application, Kakao Talk. Through these sessions, I could recognize mistakes and errors which I had not known before and widen my knowledge of English writing."*

However, easiness (2.6863) was received as less positive than others. It can be attributed to the fact that most of the participants (39, 76.5%) had not had any previous experience of blended learning. They also seemed to have difficulties dealing with the content provided at each stage and considered L2 writing a difficult and challenging skill as seen in the transcripts of the interviews.

Jihyun: *"It is, of course, not easy to write multiple drafts and upload them to the class BBS in time."*

Miyoung: *"I liked the content addressed in the classroom, but I felt rushed to finish the tasks and activities. It would be much better if we had enough time to address the content and conduct the tasks and writing activities."*

In Table 3, the participants had positive perceptions toward pre-writing activities in the getting ready to write stage. The participants considered the pre-writing activities useful (4.3922), easy (3.000), interesting (3.5294), motivating (3.8627), helpful (3.9216) and satisfying (3.9216). The participants were observed thinking of ideas and deliberating the organization of content during individual work, and enjoying discussing and sharing the results of individual work during group work in a non-threatening environment. Also, they appeared to appreciate further information and comments provided by the teacher. The following are the excerpts from the participants' reflective journals commenting on pre-writing activities.

Sungjin: I could gather a lot of information through the pre-writing activity, listing. Pre-writing activities have merits in terms of producing better drafts through a variety of collected information. [RJ1]

Jungmin: I had recognized that mindmaps are a very powerful technique in writing, but I had rarely used them. I think organizing ideas and expressing them are part of a quite meaningful process. Also, I really liked the websites, such as <http://www.okmindmap.com> or <http://www.lex tutor.ca/> because they are useful. [RJ5]

Table 3: Perceptions toward pre-writing activities

Feature	N	Mean	SD
Usefulness	51	4.3922	0.80196
Easiness	51	3.0000	1.14891
Interest	51	3.5294	0.98697
Motivation	51	3.8627	0.84899
Helpfulness	51	3.9216	0.93473
Satisfaction	51	3.9216	0.91309

As shown in Table 4, the participants considered writing multiple drafts, drafting, revising, and producing the final draft performed in the while-writing stage useful (4.3922), motivating (3.7059), helpful (4.2549), and satisfying (3.9412). In particular, they were found to think it very useful and helpful to improve writing skills because it provided sufficient opportunities for writing practice. Although the participants found it difficult to write multiple drafts, they appeared to recognize the benefits of the process-oriented writing approach as presented in reflective journal entries.

Jihyun: As I wrote the drafts several times throughout the semester, it became more helpful for the development of my writing skills. I think the writing assignments and the instruction are both very necessary, and I appreciate this course since it helped me a lot. [RJ3]

Mihye: The biggest improvement this made to my writing was related to time. I usually spent a long time drafting, but I decided to produce the drafts fast, focusing on the drafts, and I could complete the drafts in one hour. [RJ4]

Table 4: Perceptions toward writing multiple drafts

Feature	N	Mean	SD
Usefulness	51	4.3922	0.69508
Easiness	51	2.3725	1.29554
Interest	51	2.9020	1.06311
Motivation	51	3.7059	1.06384
Helpfulness	51	4.2549	0.84482
Satisfaction	51	3.9412	0.98817

The participants' perceptions toward writing reflective journals are somewhat less positive than the other elements of the model as presented in Table 5. Despite its usefulness (3.7647), the participants showed a low level of interest (2.6471) and motivation (3.0392).

Table 5: Perceptions toward writing reflective journal

Feature	N	Mean	SD
Usefulness	51	3.7647	1.47768
Easiness	51	3.0392	1.26429
Interest	51	2.6471	1.45360
Motivation	51	3.0392	1.42774
Helpfulness	51	3.0784	1.26243
Satisfaction	51	3.2745	1.23415

It can be attributed to the notion that there was a lack of interaction among the participants and the teacher. Since writing reflective journals was considered personal and cognitive work, it remained in individual areas. Some had difficulties writing about the given areas and were overwhelmed and stressed after finishing the entire process. It was also suggested that the reviewing stage needed to be intensified with more explicit consolidation by the teacher to reinforce and to foster further learning as seen in the transcripts of the interview.

Mihye: *"I was stressed out about writing the first draft and further revising. Also, it was not easy to write the reflective journals and upload them to the class BBS."*

Jihyun: *"I think this course could be much more helpful if the teacher consolidated the entire writing process and content at the end of the cycle. Because we did not address the final drafts in detail, there were some things that I could not fully understand."*

Effects of a prototype of an instructional model for L2 writing in blended learning

As shown in Figure 1, the members of group A showed an increase in scores from the pre-test to the midterm, and the post-test. Eunsung, who is a high-intermediate level student, got 81 points in the pre-test, 86 points in the midterm, and 90 points in the post-test. Although she was knowledgeable of English writing, she seemed to be concerned about content and organization. It was observed that she recognized the importance of content and organization through the writing process and writing activities and often interacted with group members in response sessions in the drafting and revising stages. Mihye, who scored 71 points in the pre-test, also showed an increase of 10 points from the pre-test to the post-test. Mihye was a very hardworking student and completed each task and activity in the stages diligently. Not only did she gain higher scores in the midterm and post-test, but she also gained confidence in English writing and was satisfied with the model as seen in her interview transcript:

Mihye: *“This course is absolutely helpful for improving individuals’ writing skills. I feel a big sense of accomplishment in my writing. At first, I felt some pressure writing the first draft, but as I wrote more and more, I could produce the first draft fast and learn certain strategies. Through this course, I was able to gain confidence in writing and now I even consider myself a good writer.”*

For all the members of Group B, there were increases of points from the pre-test to the post-test as seen in Figure 1. Among the group members, Insung gained 59 points in the pre-test, showing a low level of writing proficiency. Insung seemed to have difficulty selecting appropriate words and organizing the content of drafts. However, as he produced drafts and revised them through received feedback from peers and the teacher with the writing activities and instructions in the model, his writing skills improved, gaining six points overall from the pre-test to midterm, and eight points from the midterm to the post-test. The other group members, Jihyun, Hyeyoung, and Kyunghee, were all eager to respond to peers’ drafts and participate in the writing activities as well as the writing process, and gained higher scores in the midterm and post-test. Jihyun expressed her satisfaction with this course as seen in the interview transcript.

Jihyun: *“I am really satisfied with this course. This writing course is very meaningful and helpful because writing opportunities were sufficiently given to the students. I think if this course can be offered every semester, students’ writing skills would be a lot better.”*

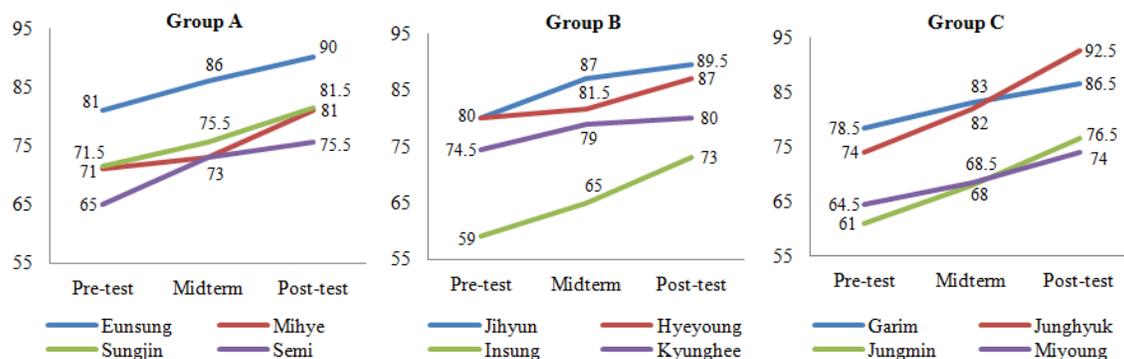


Figure 1: Scores of three groups

Every member in Group C showed increases in points from the pre-test to the post-test as well. Among the group members, Junghyuk’s performance was notable. Junghyuk was not able to complete his composition in the pre-test in 40 minutes. The number of produced words was 132, and the number of produced sentences 10. However, he completed his mid-term and post-test composition with 276 words and 15 sentences, and 296 words and 19 sentences respectively. With the increase in quantity of words and sentences, the quality of drafts improved from the pre-test (74) to the post-test (92.5) stage. This improvement can be attributed to Junghyuk performing tasks and activities provided in the model and following the writing process. Junghyuk was observed to interact with other group members in the class BBS, respond to peers’ comments and explain the reasons for his writing through the tag-line function. He seemed to be able to acknowledge his weaknesses and thus tried to make as many revisions to the first and second drafts as possible. He also recognized that he could write faster than before and could arrange his ideas in more logical ways as this excerpt from his reflective journal states:

Junghyuk: I think I become more confident and relaxed while I am writing. Now, I organize my

ideas and then start to write from these thoughts for more logical drafts. [RJ3]

Modification of a prototype of an instructional model for L2 writing in blended learning

Based on the main findings, a prototype of an instructional model for L2 writing in blended learning was modified as presented in Figure 2. In order to reduce the burden that the participants bear during the writing process of the model and to provide sufficient time to reflect on the feedback from online peer response sessions, the task of *revising the first draft and producing the second draft* was moved from the drafting stage to the revising stage. The participants were observed to have too heavy a workload in the drafting stage: writing the first draft, conducting online peer response sessions, revising the first draft and producing the second draft all within one week. They seemed to be in a hurry to conduct each task and to not have sufficient time to reflect on comments from peers or to make decisions as to whether the comments were to be incorporated for revisions or not. By revising it, the students' burden can be eased, and ample time is allowed for students to reflect on feedback and deliberate the revision process more thoroughly.

To reinforce the writing process and foster further learning after producing the final draft, *conducting online peer response sessions* in the producing the final draft stage is to be added. The participants in the study were found to rarely address the final draft despite its importance as a product. In order to engage students' attention to the final drafts and promote interaction among the students, the online peer response session is to be added; however, this online peer response session should only be conducted if the students find it necessary. In addition, the reviewing stage is to be intensified to reinforce teaching and learning writing skills. In the prototype model, reviewing was conducted based on the reflective journal entries with evaluation of the final draft by the teacher and students. However, it was found to be insufficient for addressing the tasks and activities provided in the model, so *consolidating the writing process and peer and teacher feedback*, and *setting goals for the next writing cycle* are included. The consolidation provides students with opportunities to review what they have learned in the writing process and to address the important points made. Goal setting also connects problems acknowledged in the writing cycle to improvements that need to be made for further writing cycles.

Also of interest was the participants' use of personal learning devices (PLDs). The participants in the study were observed to utilize various functions of PLDs such as smartphones, iPads or tablet PCs including mobile messenger applications (MMAs) for their response sessions as well as the drafting and revising stages. Using PLDs and MMAs did not require the participants to use computers, and consequently provided flexibility and mobility for communication and interaction regardless of time or place; thus, it is seen as essential to implement PLDs and MMAs as learning tools.

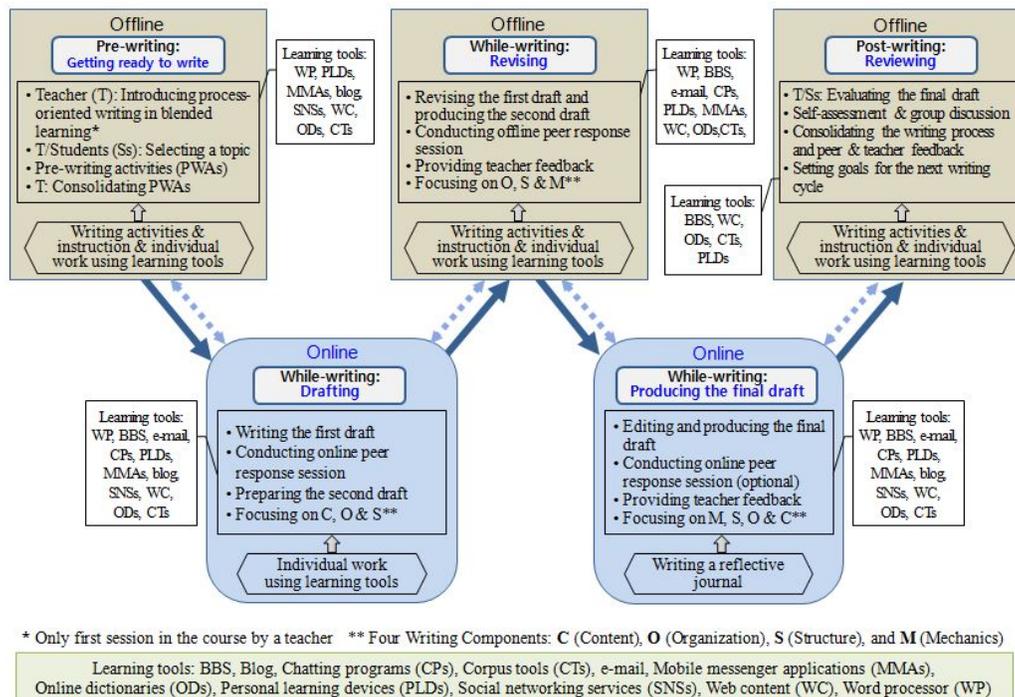


Figure 2: The instructional model for L2 writing in blended learning

CONCLUSIONS

This case study was conducted to investigate EFL pre-service teachers' perceptions toward a prototype of an instructional model for L2 writing in blended learning and its effectiveness on the development of L2 writing skills, and to develop a proper model of the instruction for L2 writing in blended learning. The main findings are as follows: First, the participants were found to receive the model positively. They considered it useful and helpful for the improvement of their writing skills; however, they found it somewhat difficult dealing with some of the tasks and activities provided in the model. Second, the model was found to be effective for the development of L2 writing skills. The model illustrates the writing process in five systematic stages and suggests a combination of writing activities based on the four writing components with varied learning materials and tools provided in online as well as offline environments. Due to the abundant opportunities to produce multiple drafts, the giving and receiving of feedback, and the explicit practicing of the four writing components, the participants were found to gain higher scores for the midterm and the post-test than the pre-test. Last, the prototype model for L2 writing in blended learning was modified by reducing the students' burden, intensifying the reviewing stage to reinforce further learning, and adding the learning tools for the promotion of interaction and communication among the students and the teacher.

For the effective and efficient implementation of this model for L2 writing classrooms, teachers need to carefully consider their students' learning environments and academic needs. This model is flexible enough to be modified according to the learning environment and academic need. For example, the writing process can be shortened to a one week cycle for advanced students. Writing activities on structure such as repairing sentence, sentence combining, and parallel writing can also be added for students who need extra help with accuracy. Regardless of the context, the need for adequate teacher training remains constant prior to the implementation of this model since it requires teachers to teach content, respond to students' writings, interact with students through varied learning tools, facilitate interaction, monitor students' writing process, and manage time efficiently. Teachers, therefore, need to be prepared to effectively employ this model for their students in terms of utilizing learning tools as well as addressing content.

Since this study was conducted as a case study, further research needs to be carried out with a large number of participants to provide a true experiment and investigation of its effectiveness. Furthermore, more studies need to be conducted with participants of other languages and varied proficiency levels to examine the impact of the model on the development of L2 writing skills.

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