

**ENCOURAGING THAI EFL STUDENTS' RECURSIVE
PROGRESSION THROUGH THE WRITING PROCESS WITH BLOGS**

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Abstract

Blogging, which allows users to post texts to an online site and have others comment on them, is posited to benefit writing as a process. Whether or not blogging encourages recursive progression through the writing process, which is deemed essential to fostering writing ability, and the factors that help it to do so, still need further investigation, particularly when it is implemented in a Thai context. This study sought to determine if Thai EFL students who used blogs to complete writing assignments moved recursively through the writing process, and if so, what features of blogging seemed to promote this action. Some evidence of recursive progression was found; four aspects of blogging were determined to help students move recursively through the writing process: ease in comparing different versions of a text, ability to blog at one's convenience, the variety of comments one can receive, and the salience comments given to problems with a text.

Background of the study

For many students at Chulalongkorn University, as is the case worldwide, strong English writing skills are a necessary component of overall academic success. Achieving a satisfactory level of English writing ability, however, is not an unproblematic endeavor. One significant obstacle to the achievement of adequate writing ability is that writing does not occur in a clear-cut, linear manner; rather, good writing is developed through recursive progression through a number of stages (Parina, 2011). Good writing is believed to be the result of prewriting or planning and preparing for writing, the composing of multiple drafts, the revision and editing of each draft on the basis of feedback, and sharing the final written product with others (Hyland, 2003; Weigle, 2002). These steps, furthermore, are not taken in isolation. Rather, feedback, such as that from peers, is essential, as writing “as a learning activity, is one that lends itself to the co-construction of texts by students working together” (Barnard & Campbell, 2005, p. 78). All of these activities, however, require time, a luxury that is unavailable to first-year Chulalongkorn University undergraduate students. With only three class hours per week on average dedicated to learning English, and these three hours further divided up among all four language skills, the resultant amount of class time remaining to foster writing ability is highly limited. Learners simply do not have the privilege of progressing through the ideal writing process, whereby feedback is continually sought and incorporated into writing assignments.

Rationale of the study

One proposed solution for reconciling the paucity of time with the need for engagement in writing as a process is to introduce technology. One such technology which may aid learners’ progress through the writing process is blogging, the maintenance of an online space called a *blog*. Blogging is an activity Godwin-Jones (2003) pinpoints as being part of the *second-generation Web*, internet technologies that allow greater online collaboration opportunities

without the need for greater technical knowledge. A blog, in its simplest manifestation, is “a website that is updated regularly and organized chronologically according to date, and in reverse order from most recent entry backwards” (Ward, 2004, p. 1). Another feature of blogs, seen as essential by most bloggers (i.e. blog authors), is the ability for visitors to post comments in relation to the content of posts (Pinkman, 2005). Ferdig and Trammel (2004) note that the pedagogical worth of blogs is based on their ability to provide a space for learners to publish their ideas in a public, social space, and to have these ideas commented on by others, whereby learners are given support as they seek to construct knowledge. Thus, the learners can co-construct knowledge and make meaning with visitors to their blog. This capacity for language-based social mediation is highlighted by the sociocultural perspective as being essential for learning to occur (Warschauer, 1997). Furthermore, researchers posit that many characteristics inherent to a blog can facilitate writing as a process. These include:

- the lack of technical expertise required to establish an online presence, so that users can almost immediately focus solely on writing, and not on technical issues (Godwin-Jones, 2003; Jones, 2006);
- the ability for bloggers to take control of their own personal online space, and what to include in it, allowing them a place to be both creative and critical (Ferdig & Trammel, 2004; Noytim, 2010);
- the capacity for writing outside the classroom and beyond class hours (Godwin-Jones, 2003; Ferdig & Trammel, 2004);
- the reverse chronology of posts, which shows the latest entries before older posts, making it easy to recognize how far along a piece of writing is in the writing process (Jones & Nuhfer-Halten, 2006; Ward, 2004); and
- the ability to reach and interact with one’s readers through the commenting functionality, which provides continuous, at times nearly instant, feedback on one’s work (Pinkman, 2005).

Blogging, however, is not a technology without potential drawbacks. One issue that may be of concern is students' comfort with sharing their work with a larger, and potentially more diverse, audience than what they would have access to in the absence of blogging. Ferdig and Trammel (2004) pointed out that students placing their work online increases the likelihood of people outside of the student's teacher and classmates stumbling upon their writing. Some students may find this possibility anxiety-provoking, and these concerns must be addressed before the technology is implemented. Ensuring students' safety and privacy online, as they will be going beyond the confines of the classroom, is also an issue that must be handled prior to the introduction of blogging.

Once these issues are addressed, blogging may then be utilized to benefit the teaching and learning of writing. A body of literature on its purported ability to do so already exists and continues to grow. Bloch (2007) investigated the use of blogging to aid the academic writing of a Somali student who struggled with producing academically acceptable writing for his ESL composition course, despite having strong oral skills. By blogging, this student was able to develop stronger academic writing skills, using it as a medium to bridge his already adequate oral proficiency with his weaker writing ability. Numerous rhetorical strategies, which were transferable to later writing assignments, were evidenced in his blog posts. In addition, even when an instructor's aim in initiating blogging is not the improvement of writing skills, students may still believe their writing has improved. Pinkman's (2005) chief objective in using blogs with her Japanese learners was to explore its role in promoting learner autonomy, yet it was discovered that learners also perceived improvement in their writing skills.

Some research that has specifically investigated blogging during the writing process has also been undertaken. Jones and Nuhfer-Halten (2006) utilized blogging with learners of Spanish throughout the writing process for a Spanish-English newspaper, and reported that the blog was a "useful medium for structured, peer-

editing process writing” (p. 31). Arslan and Şahin-Kızıl (2010) discovered that by implementing blogging with a group of Turkish learners of English, their writing was judged superior in some aspects to their counterparts who had only classroom instruction. The researchers specifically emphasized the benefits the use of blogs had on the writing process, but their ultimate objective was to determine if the blogs helped to improve the experimental group’s writing performance.

How blogging is actually utilized by learners in the course of composing a written text, however, and how the aforementioned proposed aspects of a blog support the writing process, still requires further investigation, particularly in the Thai context. Indeed, there is still scant research on blog use with Thai EFL learners. One of the few studies conducted was by Noytim (2010), who implemented blogging with 20 female undergraduates studying English at Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University. The aims of the research were to investigate how familiar the participants were with blogging, and their perceptions and attitudes towards blog usage. The researcher noted many positive outcomes, including students perceiving the blog as a space for self-expression and practicing English reading and writing. The results of this research seem to bode well for the use of blogs in EFL education in Thailand, but its implementation can only come with additional empirical support of its benefits.

In order to address this gap in the research, the researchers sought to determine if the use of blogs encouraged the student writers to progress recursively through the writing process. Would the use of blogs help them to work on their writing assignments in a non-linear fashion, as posited by the literature? What features of the blogging technology would aid in this objective?

Research questions

The researchers sought to answer the following research questions:

- 1) Do blogs encourage recursive progression through the writing process?

- 2) If so, what features of blogs encourage recursive progression through the writing process?

Methodology

Participants and research context

The participants of this research study were thirty first-year university students of Chulalongkorn University's Faculty of Engineering who used blogging while attending the Experiential English II course, which was taught by the first author, hereafter referred to as the "researcher-instructor". The course is offered by the Chulalongkorn University Language Institute and is the second of two English courses that must be taken by all first-year Chulalongkorn University students (except those in the Faculty of Arts). The class meets three hours weekly for sixteen weeks. The course objectives, as outlined in the Experiential English II 2011 course syllabus, are that at the end of the course, students should be able to "communicate effectively in daily life using the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing); and analyze, synthesize, summarize and evaluate information from different sources, and give oral and/ or written presentations." There are both formative and summative aspects to students' assessment. A student's final grade comprises scores from two examinations (a midterm and a final), and satisfactory completion of classwork and homework, and two major assignments - oral presentation to be completed in a group and a written project to be completed individually. This individual project assignment was worth 10% of the students' final Experiential English II grade. For the project, students could choose to complete an external reading project or write an argumentative paragraph utilizing information from three sources (such as magazine articles or excerpts from books) the learners selected for themselves. Though the major focus of each of these choices was different - with one emphasizing reading and the other emphasizing writing - in actuality, both necessitated the reading of English texts and the writing of a 150 to

200 word English text. Attendance and participation also contributed to students' grades.

All Experiential English II writing assignments were for paragraph-level texts of academic English. There were two predominant types of writing, as dictated by the course: writing to persuade the reader on a topic and writing to inform the reader about a topic. For both types of writing, content was supplied via external sources of information, either given by the instructor or chosen by the students themselves. Students had to read and understand the sources (separate from those chosen by the learners themselves for the individual project), and summarize and paraphrase the information to include in their own writing.

Instruments

The researchers collected data through the use of an online blogging site and a semi-structured retrospective interview with five randomly chosen participants (16.67% of the total sample). To choose from the blogging websites available online, the researchers utilized criteria drawn from the literature to evaluate and select the most appropriate platform for the Experiential English II students. The blogging service to be used had to be free of charge (Johnson, 2004), be relatively user-friendly (Pinkman, 2005), allow the creation of individual blogs (Johnson, 2004), allow customizable privacy settings, particularly for comments (Dudeny & Hockly, 2007), and permit the user to include other media, such as sound files (Jones & Nuhfer-Halten, 2006). The chosen website, Wordpress (<http://www.wordpress.com>), met all these criteria, and also gave users access to a large community of bloggers who were also using the site, a community that includes CNN political analysts and People Magazine fashion reporters. The retrospective semi-structured interview was authored by the researcher-instructor and was looked over by three experts in the field who recommended changes for the instrument's improvement, including rephrasing questions in order to ensure honesty from the informants. The interviews were conducted in Thai, as that was the language participants were more comfortable using.

Procedures

Before the data collection period, the researcher-instructor introduced the concept of blogging and the use of blogs. Writing as a process was also outlined, with reference made to the stages of prewriting, drafting, revision and editing, and publishing, as well as the recursive nature of writing. Although writing was the skill that received focus in the class hour where blogging was introduced, students were told to use the blogs however they wished, not only for writing. The blogs were meant to supplement their face-to-face classes with the researcher-instructor, and be another avenue for language learning in general.

Following a discussion on online safety, privacy, and etiquette, the learners set up individual blogs on Wordpress. In introducing blogging, the researchers broadly followed the four steps on how to begin using blogs with learners set out by Dudeney and Hockly (2007). The four steps are: establishing a sample blog, establishing student blogs, posting entries to and visiting blogs, and encouraging further blogging. Thus, the researcher-instructor created a central class blog on the Wordpress site, which was shown to students in class. The students then signed up to the site using chosen screen names (online pseudonyms). The functionality of the individual blogs was explored briefly, before students were encouraged to try posting and commenting on each other's blogs, though they were not required to do so. The researcher-instructor collected the addresses of each class member's blog and posted it to the central class blog (controlled by the researcher-instructor) for easy reference.

A trial period of two weeks was initiated, during which students were encouraged, not required, to use the blogs to supplement their face-to-face class periods; no further guidelines for use were issued. Following the initial trial period, the blogs were then maintained for another ten weeks, which comprised the data collection period. For the first six weeks of this period, students' blog use was still purely on a voluntary basis, but blog use was recommended for several writing assignments set as classwork and

homework. The only writing assignment where the instructor explicitly asked the students to utilize their blogs was for the completion of their individual project. The time period for mandatory blog use in completing the individual project was the final four weeks of data collection; blog usage during this time contributed to the participation portion of the students' final grade. The students had been explicitly informed that in posting about their individual projects (and indeed, for all their writing assignments), the steps of the writing process did not have to be accomplished in a linear manner. However, for convenience in assigning participation scores, the researcher-instructor utilized a posting schedule that required students to complete one step every week (though there was no requirement that they, for instance, only draft during the week allotted to drafting; if the student wished to revise and edit as well, they were allowed to do so). While the researchers acknowledge that obligating students to blog, by linking a portion of their grade to it, is not ideal, it is believed that even such mandated blog use would be beneficial to the students, a point also acknowledged by Ward (2004). Thus, each week during the last four weeks of data collection, students were required to post on their blogs regarding their writing progress for the individual project, as well as to comment on at least one other classmate's blog. The researcher-instructor supplied weekly prompts to give learners an idea of what they could post about, but they were free to write above and beyond what was prompted. Weekly deadlines were established so students knew by when they had to post, but additional voluntary use was also encouraged.

The interviews were conducted at the end of the data collection period at the participants' convenience. Each interview was carried out in a single session and each lasted approximately ten minutes. All interviews were completed within two weeks of the data collection period's completion. To answer the interview questions, the participants were asked to recall their blogging experience.

Data analysis

In order to answer the research questions that were set, the posts and comments the participants made to their blogs over the ten-week data collection period were collected, counted, and analyzed. In order to address the first research question - that is, to determine if there was evidence of the participants working recursively through their writing assignments - the researchers examined the data for explicit mentions of stages of the writing process, such as “drafting”, as well as activities associated with each of the stages, such as “finding sources”, which is related to the prewriting or planning stage.

For the second research question, to determine how recursive progression in the writing process is encouraged by blogs, the researchers compared the content between posts regarding the same writing assignment against the received comments. Changes were counted and categorized according to whether they displayed a direct or indirect link with a given comment, or had no discernible impetus present on the blog. Semi-structured follow-up interviews were conducted with some participants who were queried about their blog use; their responses helped support the data collected from the blog posts and comments. The researchers also examined the blog posts and comments for any aspects of blogging that were singled out as being favorable or problematic. These were categorized according to whether or not they supported writing as a recursive process. The interviewed participants were also asked to identify the features of blogging they favored or disliked, and these data were compared to those collected from the blogs to determine which features helped the students to progress recursively through the writing process.

To ensure greater reliability during data analysis, another Experiential English instructor also helped to analyze a sample of the data. Her analysis was compared to that of the instructor-researcher', and differences were discussed. Based on her comments, it was determined that several data were better suited to other categories than those they were initially placed in.

Findings

As noted, the research questions addressed by this study were:

- 1) Do blogs encourage recursive progression through the writing process?
- 2) If so, what features of blogs encourage recursive progression through the writing process?

It was found that over the ten-week data collection period, the participants made a total of 256 posts to their blogs, or a mean of 0.85 posts, per person, per week. A total of 186 comments were left on the participants' blog posts, which is a mean of 0.73 comments per blog post. The instructor's comments accounted for 57.92% of all the comments left to the participants' blogs, while classmates' comments comprised 41.4%. Comments from those outside the participants' class accounted for 1.61%. In total, three writing assignments were posted about on the participants' blogs (a greater number were assigned in class). The three writing assignments were:

- an argumentative paragraph on the topic "Should children be allowed to use the Internet?",
- an informative paragraph on the topic "What should you do if your car plunges into the water?", and
- the individual project.

Recursive progression through the writing process was evidenced by explicitly-mentioned writing process stages in the title and content of the blog posts, as well as reference to activities that were undertaken during the various stages. These findings were further supported by data collected via the interviews. All of these findings are discussed in greater detail in the following sections.

Explicit mention of writing process stages

Of the 256 blog entries that were made by the participants during the data collection, 101 (39.5%) named one or more stages of the writing process specifically within the title of the blog post. Only one participant wrote the names of the stages of the writing process within the body of his posts. The stages were listed out as a checklist,

and were apparently used to help him keep track of his progress in completing his individual project.

The stages of the writing process referred to in the blog post titles followed a mostly linear progression (with post titles running from prewriting to publishing), particularly during the four-week period when blogging about the individual project was required. This was likely in keeping with the posting schedule set up by the instructor. However, a large number of the participants titled the blog posts idiosyncratically, i.e. did not use the names for the writing steps as discussed in class. One of the interviewed participants had blog posts with the following titles:

- *Should children be allowed to use the internet(fixed)*
- *First Drafting*

When queried, he explained that the first title referred to a revised and edited draft of his argumentative paragraph on the topic “Should children be allowed to use the Internet?”, which is why he titled the post with the topic and the word “fixed”, to denote the revision and editing he had undertaken. The title “First Drafting” was to denote a “first draft” (a later post was titled “Second Draft”, and he explained he had been confused with the terminology for the previous title, but did not feel the need to correct it).

The inclusion of the names of the writing stages in the titles and content of the participants’ blog posts seems to indicate an awareness of writing as a process. Posts that identified progressively numbered drafts (first, second, so on) also seemed to support the possibility that blogs foster non-linear movement through the writing process. However, the explicit mention of writing process stages itself cannot serve as compelling evidence of recursive progression through the writing process, as most of the mentions of the stages still followed a linear sequence.

Mention of activities associated with different writing process stages

A number of the titles and posts in the sample made reference to activities that are associated with various stages of the writing process - for instance, “finding sources” is an action that would fall under the “prewriting or planning” stage, while “posting a new version” is synonymous with “drafting.” Within a single post, there were often references to activities that constitute different writing process stages. In the following blog post from a participant titled “Individual Project Version 3” (which refers to the third draft of his individual project), there are references to actions that are associated with the prewriting, drafting, and revision and editing stages. The post discussed a draft of the participant’s individual project, which was an argumentative paragraph written in answer to the prompt “Is money the root of all evil?” His central thesis was that money was indeed the root of all evil, and as support, he put forth an example of a contract killer or hit man who killed people for financial gain, elephants being killed for profit, and the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA/PIPA). He had previously found several sources of information, and written two drafts of his paragraph. The following excerpt is presented exactly as written by the participant.

This version is going to be version 2 look alike but with more proper source+add 3rd reason (SOPA)+fix 1st source from

Thai—>ENG

EDITED [26/2]

-Hitman part (Shoot->Shot)

-Elephant part (fix most of it because it doesn't make sense)

-SOPA, PIPA part (concerning->to)

He stated that this blog post would show a draft (a version) of his work that was similar to a previous draft (version 2), but had been improved with the addition of information from a “more proper source” - searching for sources of information is an activity associated

with the prewriting or planning stage of writing. He also included a new detail about the Stop Online Piracy Act, which is referred to as “3rd reason (SOPA)” in this blog post, and is an example of revision. Thus, within this single blog post can be seen indications that the writer progressed back and forth between the various stages of the writing process as he attempted to complete his work.

Once it had been determined that there was evidence of recursive progression through the writing process, the researchers sought to elucidate what features of blogging may have encouraged working in a non-linear fashion through the writing process. From the blog data and the interviews, four factors of the blogging platform and its commenting functionality were found to encourage recursive progression through the writing process. Recursive progression appeared to be supported by the fact that the blogging platform allowed easy comparison between different versions of an assignment (comparisons could be made between different versions of the participants’ own work and to those of their classmates), and that blog posts could be made at any time, meaning the participants could work on their writing when it was convenient for them. The variety of comments received and the increased salience the comments gave to problems with the writing assignments were also factors that helped the students to progress in a recursive fashion through the writing process.

Ease in comparison between versions

Being able to compare between different versions of the writing assignments was noted by the participants as a beneficial aspect of the blogs. The various drafts of their work could be readily compared due to the reverse chronology organization of the blog. Earlier posts would be towards the bottom of the page, while newer ones would be towards the top, with each clearly dated. Being able to see all versions of one’s work at a glance may have led to greater awareness in regards to the progress of their writing, as observed in the following

unaltered excerpt from one participant's blog post, where there is a clear reference to a previous draft of his work:

I change final reason and supporting reason from draft 1.

Furthermore, the students revealed that they did not only compare different versions of their own work, but visited their classmates' blogs and made comparisons between what their classmates had posted and their own writing. The benefit of seeing examples of others' writing was attested to by one interviewed participant in the following statement, translated from Thai:

When I want to write, sometimes, I might want some guidelines for my writing. Having the blog allowed me to study the writing styles of my friends.

Comparing their work to that of others allowed them to see areas in which they could improve their own writing, and served as an impetus for revisiting different stages of the writing process, as was deemed necessary.

Time-independence of blogging technology

The blogging platform allows users to make posts and leave comments at their convenience, a factor identified in the literature as conducive to recursive progression through the writing process. Once their work had been posted, the participants could log in and see the instructor's and peers' comments at any time as well, instead of waiting to meet them face to face. From the data, it was found that the participants took advantage of this technological capability, as their blog posts and comments were made at various times of the day, ranging from early morning to late at night. Furthermore, they posted on every day of the week, not only on days they attended the face-to-face Experiential English II class. Each writing assignment saw an average of at least two drafts. This ability to make a post or comment

on others' work whenever it was convenient was highlighted by the students as being beneficial to their writing as a process. One of the participants interviewed revealed:

I can talk about my work all the time. I don't have to wait to meet my classmates.

[translated from Thai]

This factor led to the participants working whenever it was comfortable for them to do so, allowing them to give greater attention to particular writing assignments than may have been possible in a non-blogging situation. This increased attention translated to them working iteratively through the writing process.

Variety of comments

Participants identified the variety of comments received as being helpful to writing as a process—variety in terms of who had made the comments and the aspects of the writing that they focused on. They received comments in English from their instructor and classmates, as well as others outside the participants' class, although this was found from only one participant's blog posts. The types of comments the participants received focused on a number of issues, such as vocabulary, grammar, organization, and formatting. Some comments were also left to give encouragement to the blogger or to initiate or continue conversations about the writing or related topics. The examples below, presented without any alteration on the part of the authors, illustrate each type of comment—one about a vocabulary issue, one about a grammar issue, one about an organization issue, one about a formatting issue, one meant to be encouraging, and one meant to be conversational (the commenter is engaging the participant in a dialogue about his writing, which was on the topic of whether the Thai government should give out tablet computers to school children), respectively.

- *Here are some wrong spelling words and no s: businessman and information (line 2).*
- *Also, you should check some of the article and connector.*
- *Therefore, by leveraging some details and structure, the author could greatly improve his work.*
- *I think you should make new line for new reason it will make your essay easier to read.*
- *About this post it great reasons and ex[a]mples.*
- *I like your topic but i think the source you choose didn't say about is it good or bad to give tablet to children clearly. So, you may have trouble finding reasons and support ideas.*

According to the participants, receiving comments that focused on different aspects of their work, and from both the instructor and their peers, was highly beneficial. One of the interview participants summarized the value of the variety of comments, translated from Thai, as follows:

*Students can help each other when they work.
They can offer their opinions, too, and not just
about language, which will help each person's
work get better.*

This ability to discuss their writing with others led, consequently, to revisiting of the various stages of the writing process, as appropriate.

Salience of problems with writing assignments

The comments left on the blog posts seemed to help the participants to notice problems with their work. When there were multiple posts regarding one writing assignment, differences between earlier and later posts could often be linked directly to comments left on the earlier entry. In this example from one participant, the original

blog post on the topic of whether the government should allow child beggars had this sentence (underlining added for emphasis):

According to the sources, these child beggars were bought from their families to work hard and begged all day so it's make them lack of opportunities to do activities like other kids and gain their rights fewer than other young boys and girls such as they would lack of opportunities to study and normal growth outweighs.

This blog post received two comments, one from a classmate and one from the instructor. The classmate's comment specifically referred to a part of this particular sentence (underlined in the previous example and in the following excerpt):

the overall of this essay is good but you might want to check some words that may look a little confusing, such as "gain their rights fewer than other young boys and girls such as they would lack of opportunities to study and normal growth outweighs."

It's either this sentence is confusing or I just don't get it.

The content of the proceeding blog post appears to have taken into account this classmate's observation. The problematic portion of the sentence has been completely rewritten.

One of the examples is in Thailand, the little kids were bought from their families to work hard and begged all day which makes them lack of opportunities to do activities like other kids. They could unfortunately do not have chance to study nor have the basic needs as they should.

That participants utilized some of the comments left by visitors when working through their writing assignments was explicitly mentioned by some of the participants in their blogs, as in the following excerpt:

I use my friends' suggestions to revise and edit my work by reading my work again and then revise to the point of my work that my friend mentioned, afterthat correct it suitably. Read it again from detail to detail and check all of my work again, if there is unsuitable grammar or vocab change it.

As can be seen, the salience the blogs gave to problems with the student's writing, via comments from his classmates, led to him working in an iterative manner, reading over and his revising his writing several times. The following excerpt, translated from Thai, from a follow-up interview seems to support the data from the blogs, as the student revealed how having his problems pointed out to him encouraged him to go back over his work:

If I make a mistake in my work, my friends will help to give suggestions and I use them to fix my work before I send it in.

Discussion

This study attempted to determine if blogs could be used to encourage Thai EFL students to progress recursively through the writing process as they worked to complete English writing assignments. If this was possible, the factors that seemed to support this were also to be identified. The data showed that there was some recursive progression occurring, which was manifested in the participants' blog posts and supported by the responses of five random interview participants. The blog entries made by the participants chronicled their efforts to evaluate, reassess, and adjust

their work in accordance with the feedback they received via comments. The participants interviewed also attested to how keeping blogs helped them to work iteratively through the writing process. These findings correspond to assertions made in the literature that blogs allow students to move in a recursive fashion through the writing process in a manner that face-to-face classes may not be able to; as Arslan and Şahin-Kızıl (2010) argued in their research, blogs equal greater opportunities for receiving language and writing input, and this increased amount of exposure may lead to both awareness of problems and an incentive to remedy them.

The blogging features found in this study to promote recursive progression through the writing process are in line with what were noted and proposed by a number of researchers. Godwin-Jones (2003) and Ferdig and Trammel (2004) identified the ability of blogging to support out-of-class, time-independent writing as one of the technology's strengths; this study discovered that this aspect helps learners to progress recursively through the writing process. When they implemented blogging with their learners, Ward (2004) and Jones and Nuhfer-Halten (2006) noted that the reverse chronology of posts helped writers to ascertain their writing progress, promoting a greater awareness of writing as a process; this was also observed in the present study. Furthermore, similar to what was observed by Pinkman (2005) with a group of Japanese learners, the commenting functionality of blogs allowed the Thai EFL learners to offer feedback on each others' writing. This feedback stimulated working through the writing process in a non-linear manner. Thus, it would appear that if teachers are looking for techniques to promote awareness of writing as a process and to encourage their students to work through the writing process recursively at their own pace, blogging may be a viable option.

This study, however, had a number of limitations which need to be addressed in future research, the key ones being the small sample of participants and the short period of data collection. Though there was some evidence of recursive progression through the writing

process discovered in this research, future studies are needed to confirm if these findings hold true for larger and/or different samples.

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