

**Enhancing Writing Skills for Second-year  
English Majors through a Moodle-based  
Blended Writing Course  
An Action Research at Hue University of  
Foreign Languages**

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- Have you ever taught writing skills to your students?
- What difficulties do you often have when teaching writing skills?



# What is blended learning?

- *Blended learning*:
  - a mixture of online learning with traditional methods of learning and teaching (Thorne ,2003)
  - a combination of face-to-face and computer assisted learning in a single teaching and learning environment (Neumeier, 2005)



# Benefits of blended learning



(Source: The Internet)

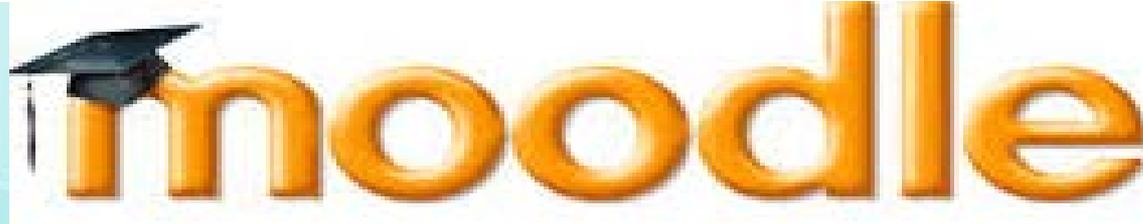
# Benefits of blended learning

- “ [Blended learning] improved pedagogy, easy access to knowledge, more interaction among learners, personal presence, cost effectiveness, and ease of revision of learning content”

(Tayebinik & Puteh, 2012, p. 28).

- "its overall focus is concerned with the attempt to identify the optimum mix of course delivery in order to provide the most effective language learning experience"

(Sharma, 2010, p. 457).



- Moodle = Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment
- The system is based on the concepts of social constructivism which tries to offer both educators and students a platform for online interaction and collaboration (Tang, 2013).



# Moodle's features

## **Moodle can help teachers:**

- record students' online activities
- control the deadline and timeframes for assignments
- easily modify existing courses and add new courses
- offer a good range of assessment strategies
- apply different formats of social interaction and collaboration

(Wu, 2008)

# Previous studies

- The result of Nagatomo's research (2006) showed positive effects of using Moodle on students' regular participation, self-study and writing performance.
- In Taiwan context, Wu's study (2008) revealed that the use of Moodle helps English writing teachers organize their teaching materials, improve their means of communication, and retrieve their records of interaction with students.

# Previous studies

- Suvorov (2010) proposed the use of Moodle for ESOL writing classes because a typical Moodle course provides a wide range of activities, and multimedia resources, interaction, and testing and assessment of students' work.
- Adas and Baki (2013) conducted a study on blended learning which indicated the benefits of integrating blended learning into traditional methods in developing writing abilities for second and third year undergraduates at a conventional university in Palestine.

# Purposes of the research

- enhance students' writing skills through the combination of traditional face-to-face instructions and online support based on Moodle
- examine the effects of using Moodle to design a blended writing course
- find out the problems students may encounter in the blended writing course
- suggest solutions to those problems

# Research questions

- To what extent can the Moodle-based blended writing course enhance students' writing performance?
- What factors of the Moodle-based blended writing course contribute to the enhancement of students' writing performance?
- What difficulties may students encounter when taking part in the Moodle-based blended writing course? What are some possible solutions?

# Research Methodology

- *Participants:* one class of second-year English majors at upper-intermediate level or B2 according to CEFR
- *Course Selection:* Writing 4 which focuses on essay writing
- *Online Treatment (Moodle):* a webpage designed on Moodle ([hucfl.hueuini.vn](http://hucfl.hueuini.vn))

# Research Methodology

- *Data Collection*: data were collected from various sources (pretest, posttest, questionnaire, interview, students' writing e-portfolios)
- *Data Analysis*:
  - Students' scores collected from pre-test and post-test in writing were compared by using paired-sample t-test.
  - Students' responses to questionnaires and interviews were also analyzed.

# Research Result

The result of comparing students' pretest and posttest scores

**Paired Samples Statistics**

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest	6.3171	41	1.78100	.27815
	Posttest	7.5732	41	1.45156	.22669

**Paired Samples Correlations**

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Pretest & Posttest	41	.704	.000

**Paired Samples Test**

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	-1.25610	1.28024	.19994	-1.66019	-.85200	-6.282	40	.000

# Research Result

## Students' Improvement in Writing Performance



# Factors that contribute to students' enhancement in writing performance

Factors of the Moodle-based blended writing course have the most influence on the enhancement of students' writing skills	Students (N = 41)	
	Number	Percentage (%)
Organization of the Moodle-based blended writing course	15	37
Content of the Moodle-based blended writing course	7	17
Extra materials shared on the Moodle-based blended writing course	27	66
Forums for me to display my writing	12	29
Writing assignments that I have to submit online	16	39
Peer feedback activity for each assignment	19	46
Teacher feedback for each assignment	27	66
Online interaction among students	10	24
Online interaction between teacher and students	21	51
Others	0	0

# Difficulties students encountered in the Moodle-based blended writing course

Students' difficulties in the Moodle-based blended writing course	Students (N = 41)	
	Number	Percentage (%)
Difficulties with the access to the Moodle-based blended writing course	6	14
Difficulties with the interface of the Moodle-based blended writing course	17	41
Difficulties with the peer feedback activities in the Moodle-based blended writing course	22	54
Difficulties with the technology skills when participating in the Moodle-based blended writing course	26	63
Other difficulties	0	0

# Suggested solutions

- provide students with more essential facilities to deal with the blended course
- offer students clear instructions about how to deal with the online section of the blended course
- update several functions of the Moodle site
- give students more technical supports
- make the blended course more attractive and interesting
- encourage students to be more involved in the blended course

# References

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