

Enhancing EFL Students' Writing Skills through Formative Assessments in a Blended Learning Course

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Abstract

This study describes a blended learning course focused on formative assessments to enhance English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' writing proficiency. Students' perceptions of the formative assessment activities and the perceived impacts of blended learning were investigated. Participants were 33 English majors enrolled in a freshman writing course. In addition to regular face-to-face learning each week, students were required to complete a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) – English Paragraph Writing – during the semester. The formative assessments in this blended writing course included online quizzes, discussion boards, teacher's evaluation of students' writing, students' self-assessments, and peer assessments. Data were collected from a pre-test and a post-test of students' writing proficiency and a questionnaire to explore their views of formative assessments. The results showed that students improved their writing performance after the blended learning course. Students perceived formative assessment activities to be useful in developing their writing skills. The personalized learning from online videos, instant feedback from online assessments, and guidance from teacher feedback all contributed to students' writing improvement. It is suggested that teachers adopt a blended approach with interactive assessment activities to promote a student-centered learning environment, monitor learning progress, and improve writing achievement.

Keywords: blended learning, formative assessment activities, English writing

Introduction

With the advancement of online teaching and learning technology, more and more teachers are integrating technology into their classrooms. Blended learning, combining traditional classroom and online learning platforms, has recently gained popularity. It provides a comprehensive learning environment and an efficient way for learners to access knowledge (Hrastinski, 2019). In addition to classroom meetings, a blended learning model includes online learning platforms, online quizzes, assignment submissions, discussion forums, extended reading materials, and resource sharing.

Learners have access to learning resources without being restricted by space and time. Autonomous learners can preview and review the materials on the online learning platform, which could improve their learning outcomes.

Assessment is an essential component of learning (Hanson & Mohn, 2011). The two main types of assessments are formative and summative assessments. Many evaluation tools, such as class discussion and submission of reports in the physical classroom, can be applied to the online environment. One benefit of online formative assessment is that learners can get immediate feedback during learning (Perera-Diltz & Moe, 2014; Wold, 2011). Teachers can intervene in the learning process on time, and students can discover and respond to their problems in time. In this way, in addition to continuously tracking the development process of students, formative assessment can also reduce the pressure brought by the summative assessment that is only conducted once at the end of the course.

Using various formative assessment activities throughout a course can enrich students' learning experiences and engage them in the learning process. Particularly in the context of teaching writing, this type of assessment empowers instructors to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning, adapt instructions accordingly, and offer students constructive feedback regarding their writing strengths and areas needing improvement (Nhu & Tin, 2019; Nurhayati, 2020). By integrating formative assessment into the writing process, teachers can gain insight into students' strengths and weaknesses, enabling personalized guidance and tailored instruction. Students can better understand the writing process and reflect on and refine their work. This study aimed to implement formative assessments in a blended writing course. It aimed to investigate the perceived impacts of blended learning on students' writing performance and students' views of formative assessment activities in the writing course. This study is vital for language teachers and students to understand the learning process using various formative assessments. This study also provides valuable information on implementing formative assessments in a blended English writing course.

Literature Review

Blended Learning

Blended learning is an approach that combines face-to-face and online learning. It is defined as "the integrated combination of traditional learning with online approaches" (Oliver & Trigwell, 2005, p.17) and "integrating online with face-to-face class activities in a pedagogical manner" (Kopecky, 2006, p.29). Blended learning has the benefits of extending learning and increasing the opportunities for interaction between teachers and students (Osguthorpe & Graham, 2003). In particular, the asynchronous mechanism gives

learners enough time to reflect on the writing content when they participate in online discussions. Blended learning supports the learning processes and provides learners with greater flexibility and convenience (Graham, Allen & Ure, 2005; Rovai & Jordan, 2004). If the traditional and synchronous or asynchronous teaching modes can be appropriately integrated according to the learning characteristics of the students, the design of blended learning would help students achieve better learning results.

Blended learning has the following advantages. First, it improves students' learning. Previous studies (Hamad, 2015; Zhang & Zhu, 2018) have shown that students who participated in blended learning had better learning outcomes than those in face-to-face classrooms. When encountering complex and incomprehensible content in the classroom, students could not stop the teacher's lecture in time to ask questions. However, in online courses, students can watch the course content repeatedly. Therefore, they have more opportunities to internalize the knowledge, not just memorize the answers. Second, blended learning increases the interaction of student-teacher and student-student (Osguthorpe & Graham, 2003). Topics in the classroom can continue to be discussed online. This offers students more learning opportunities and deepens their understanding of the content. Students who do not often speak in class can participate in online discussions, which may increase their learning motivation. This mutual learning approach personalizes each student's learning needs and makes it easier for students to grasp the main points of learning. Teachers also have the opportunity to know the students more and help each student. Third, the design of the blended learning approach is learned-centered (Koohang, 2009). When adopting the blended learning approach, teachers should consider what classroom activities should be designed for students to discuss, practice, and apply their knowledge and how to encourage students to study independently and think critically. Fourth, the online platform records students' learning processes and outcomes (Liu, 2013). For example, reports, teacher feedback, peer review, and discussion forums can be submitted online. The teacher can track students' progress over time and know what students have learned and what they still need to improve.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment plays a crucial role in enhancing English writing skills by providing timely feedback and opportunities for improvement. It involves ongoing evaluation and feedback throughout the writing process (Perera-Diltz & Moe, 2014), allowing students to identify and rectify their weaknesses. By focusing on the developmental aspects of writing, formative assessment helps students build their skills gradually. According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), formative assessment provides

valuable information about students' current understanding, which can shape instruction and guide further learning. It helps teachers identify specific areas where students may be struggling, such as grammar, organization, or clarity of ideas, and tailor their instruction accordingly. By receiving feedback at various stages, students can actively engage in the writing process, reflect on their work, and make necessary revisions to enhance their writing proficiency (Ahmed & Troudi, 2018).

Self-assessment and peer assessment can also serve as formative assessment tools. Self-assessment empowers learners to evaluate their written work actively, fostering metacognitive awareness and promoting autonomy (Ebrahimi, Izadpanah, & Namaziandost, 2021). Through self-assessment, students reflect, identify their strengths and areas for improvement, and set goals for their writing development. This process encourages students to take ownership of their learning, enhancing their ability to monitor and regulate their progress. On the other hand, peer assessment involves students evaluating and providing feedback on each other's written work, fostering a collaborative and interactive learning environment. It offers additional perspectives and insights on writing quality and cultivates students' critical thinking and analytical skills. Both self-assessment and peer assessment promote active engagement and responsibility among students as they become actively involved in the learning process (Ahmed & Troudi, 2018; Ebrahimi et al., 2021; Fitriyah et al., 2022).

Empirical Studies

Formative assessment has been regarded as a valuable tool for enhancing learning achievements, as evidenced in previous studies (e.g., Elmahdi, Al-Hattami, & Fawzi, 2018; Nhu & Tin, 2019; Tempelaar, 2020; Wijaya, 2022). Elmahdi, Al-Hattami, and Fawzi (2018) examined using a technology-based tool for ongoing assessment to enhance students' learning at Bahrain Teachers College. The results showed that continuous assessment benefited the learning process by increasing student engagement, ensuring equitable participation opportunities, and fostering an enjoyable and stimulating learning environment. Another study (Nhu & Tin, 2019) investigated the effect of online formative assessment on fifty undergraduate Vietnamese students' writing performance in a writing course. An online discussion board was adopted as the main activity throughout the course. The results derived from the writing tests revealed a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups.

Similarly, Wijaya (2022) explored Indonesian teachers' perceptions of using formative assessment in the context of EFL writing. The findings suggest that formative assessment plays a crucial role in guiding learners to enhance the quality of their writing and promotes

a more comprehensive approach to learning writing for all students. Furthermore, Tempelaar (2020) investigated the role of blended learning and formative assessment in students' learning process and found students engaged actively with the blended learning module, particularly the assessment and feedback components. In summary, these empirical studies revealed the effectiveness of formative assessment in improving language skills and student achievement and supported the benefits of formative assessment in education.

The Study

Despite the positive effects of formative assessment on improving students' writing abilities (e.g., Graham, Hebert, & Harris, 2015; Wijaya, 2022) and the integration of technology and formative assessment strategies to develop students' writing skills (e.g., Nhu & Tin, 2019), more research is needed to explore the incorporation of various sources of formative assessments. This study filled the gap by including formative assessment activities such as pre-writing activities, online quizzes, online discussion boards, teacher feedback, self-assessment, and peer assessment to promote students' writing development. It aimed to investigate the following research questions:

1. What are the perceived impacts of blended learning on students' writing performance?
2. What are students' views of formative assessments in the blended English writing course?

Research Method

Course Design

This study was conducted in a pre-intermediate English writing course for a semester. Students attended the writing class two hours a week for 18 weeks. Before the class, students were asked to watch videos of lectures online and take weekly quizzes on a MOOC, a massive online course on English paragraph writing recorded by the researcher. This MOOC aimed to familiarize students with writing genres, including descriptive, narrative, opinion, comparison and contrast, and cause and effect paragraphs.

In the class, the teacher adopted a process-oriented writing approach. First, students brainstormed ideas on Zuvio, an online response system that simulates interactions between students and the teacher. Second, students wrote their first drafts. Third, the teacher collected some sentences that needed to be revised from students' writing, and students practiced correcting sentences on Zuvio. Fourth, the teacher offered feedback to students, and then students revised and produced their second drafts. Fifth, self-assessment or peer assessment was conducted. Students were required to submit five

compositions during the semester. In addition to teacher feedback, self-assessment was implemented on the first, second, and third compositions, and peer assessment on the fourth and fifth compositions.

The formative assessments in this study included online quizzes (MOOC), discussion boards (MOOC), brainstorming exercises (Zuvio), sentence pattern practice (Zuvio), sentence correction (Zuvio), teacher's evaluation of students' writing, students' self-assessment and peer assessment. The evaluation guidelines were provided for students.

Participants

Participants of this study were 33 English majors in a freshman writing course at the University of Science and Technology in Taiwan. Their ages ranged from 19 to 22 years old. All of them are native speakers of Chinese. Most of them were at a low intermediate English proficiency level.

Instruments

The data sources were a pre-test, a post-test of writing, and a perception questionnaire. The pre-test and post-test aimed to examine students' writing proficiency. Students had to write opinion paragraphs in the two tests. In the pre-test, they were asked to write about whether they like working alone or in a group and give reasons to support their opinions. In the post-test, they were required to write about the pros and cons of social media and give examples to support their views. The pre-test was performed at the beginning of the semester, while the post-test and the questionnaire were administered at the end of the semester.

The questionnaire was designed to explore students' views of formative assessments and the perceived effectiveness of the blended writing course. Questions 1-2 are about the pre-writing activities. Questions 3-7 discuss students' views of the in-class and online exercises and discussions. Questions 8-11 explore students' ideas of teacher feedback, self-evaluation, and peer review. Questions 12-16 investigate students' views of the effectiveness of the blended writing course. The questions are designed around a five-point Likert-type scale with responses from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Questions 17-18 are open-ended questions that ask about students' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of the blended course and the comparison of teacher assessment, self-assessment, and peer assessment.

Data Collection Procedure

The procedure of the study comprises the following steps. First, all the students took the pre-test of writing. They were asked to write opinion paragraphs. Second, two writing teachers graded the pre-test of writing. Third, students attended the writing classes from week 2 to week 16. In addition to regular face-to-face classes each week, they were required to complete a MOOC – English paragraph writing (see details in the course design section). Fourth, at the end of the semester, all the students took the post-test of writing, in which they were also required to write opinion paragraphs. Fifth, two writing teachers graded the post-test of writing. Sixth, students answered the questionnaire. Seventh, the researcher analyzed the quantitative part of the questionnaire and the qualitative part of the open-ended questions. The procedure of data collection is shown in Table 1.

Table 1
A summary of data collection

Week	Description
Week 1	Pre-test
Weeks 2-4	Descriptive paragraph: Online weekly quiz, discussion board, paragraph writing (first draft, teacher feedback, revised draft, self-assessment)
Weeks 5-7	Narrative paragraph: Online weekly quiz, discussion board, paragraph writing (first draft, teacher feedback, revised draft, self-assessment)
Weeks 8-10	Opinion paragraph: Online weekly quiz, discussion board, paragraph writing (first draft, teacher feedback, revised draft, self-assessment)
Weeks 11-13	Comparison & contrast paragraph: Online weekly quiz, discussion board, paragraph writing (first draft, teacher feedback, revised draft, peer assessment)
Weeks 14-16	Cause & effect paragraph: Online weekly quiz, discussion board, paragraph writing (first draft, teacher feedback, revised draft, peer assessment)
Week 17	Post-test / Questionnaire survey
Week 18	Wrap-up

Data Analysis

To answer RQ1, which examined students' writing performance, two writing instruction experts graded the pre-test and post-test using a holistic rubric. Table 2 shows the rubric description.

Table 2
Scoring rubrics for the writing pre-test and post-test

Score	Description
10 Excellent	The main idea is stated clearly. The content is well-organized and coherent. There is almost no error in grammar and vocabulary.
7-9 Very good	The main idea is clear. The content is moderately well-organized and relatively coherent. There are only a few errors in grammar and vocabulary.
4-6 Fair	The main idea is fairly clear. The content is not very well organized and is somewhat lacking in coherence. There are some errors in grammar and vocabulary.
2-3 Poor	The main idea is hard to identify. The content is poorly organized and relatively incoherent. There are some errors in grammar and vocabulary.
1 Very poor	The main idea is missing. The content is poorly organized and generally incoherent. There are many errors in grammar and vocabulary.

To answer RQ2, which explored students' perceptions of formative assessments, the researcher analyzed questionnaire items 1-16 by Excel calculation and sorted the answers from the open-ended questions (items 17-18) into three categories: (1) the advantages of the blended writing course, (2) the disadvantages of the blended writing course, and (3) the comparison of teacher assessment, self-assessment, and peer assessment.

Results

Results of RQ1

RQ 1: What are the perceived impacts of blended learning on students' writing performance?

Table 3 shows the pre-test and post-test results, indicating the improvement in students' writing after the blended writing course. Three students (9.1%) were considered excellent, and 18 (54.5%) were considered very good in the post-test. The number of

students increased from 5 (15.2%) to 18 (54.5%) in the category of "very good" performance and decreased from 15 (45.4%) to 9 (27.3%) in the category of "fair" performance. Thirteen students (39.4%) performed poorly in the pre-test, while only three (9.1%) performed poorly in the post-test.

Table 3

Results of pre-test and post-test of writing

Score	Pre-test		Post-test	
	N	%	N	%
10 (Excellent)	0	0	3	9.1%
7-9 (Very good)	5	15.2%	18	54.5%
4-6 (Fair)	15	45.4%	9	27.3%
2-3 (Poor)	13	39.4%	3	9.1%
1 (Very poor)	0	0	0	0

More than half of the students could produce moderately well-organized and coherent paragraphs. Compared with the pre-test, they made more progress in grammar and vocabulary than in the organization and coherence of their texts in the post-test. Still, one-third of the students need improvement in all aspects of writing, i.e., organization, coherence, grammar, and word choice.

Results of RQ2

RQ2: What are students' views of formative assessments in the blended English writing course?

Table 4 presents the descriptive analysis of participants' views of formative assessment activities. The results showed that around 76% of the participants agreed that the online brainstorming activities on Zuvio before writing helped them generate ideas (item 1). About 73% of the participants thought drawing graphic organizers helped them organize thoughts in writing (item 2). Around 76% of the participants indicated that the weekly quizzes on MOOC helped them identify areas for improvement (item 3). Therefore, the online quizzes helped them identify which parts they already understood

and needed to improve. Other advantages of online quizzes are that students can retake the quizzes if they want to improve their scores, and they can get instant feedback. They also agreed that the discussion board (on MOOC) enabled them to share ideas or problems with the teacher and classmates (item 4). In addition, about 76% of the participants indicated that practicing correcting sentences on Zuvio helped to improve their writing (item 5). Around 79% of the students said they liked participating in English writing activities, including in-class and online exercises (item 6).

As for students' views of teacher evaluation, self-assessment, and peer review, more than 80% of them agreed that teacher feedback helped to improve their writing (item 8); however, only 36% of the students thought they could help to correct their peers' writing (item 10) and peers could help to revise their writing (item 11). Students reported that they could not find peers' errors because of poor grammar ability. They agreed that teacher review was more effective than peer review. Besides, more than 80% of the students indicated that they learned how to self-evaluate their writing (item 9).

Table 4

Participants' views of formative assessment activities

	SA	A	N	D	SD
	Percentage (%)				
1. The brainstorming activity (on Zuvio) before writing helps me generate ideas.	42.4	33.3	24.2	0	0
2. Drawing graphic organizers helps me organize ideas in the writing process.	39.4	33.3	24.2	3	0
3. The weekly quizzes (on MOOC) help me identify areas for improvement.	39.4	36.4	21.2	3	0
4. Through the discussion board (on MOOC), I can share ideas or problems with the teacher and classmates.	39.4	48.5	12.1	0	0
5. Practicing correcting sentences (on Zuvio) helps to improve my writing.	33.3	42.4	24.2	0	0
6. I like participating in English writing activities, including in-class and online exercises.	30.3	48.5	18.2	3	0
7. Compared to in-class discussions, I prefer online discussions.	9.1	30.3	48.5	9.1	3

8. Teacher feedback helps me to revise my writing.	39.4	33.3	27.3	0	0
9. I learned how to self-evaluate my writing.	33.3	51.5	15.2	0	0
10. I could give comments and help to correct my peer's writing.	12.1	24.2	57.6	3	3
11. Peer review could help to improve my writing.	9.1	27.3	57.6	3	3

Note. N=33. SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree

Table 5 presents the descriptive analysis of participants' views of the perceived effectiveness of the blended writing course. More than 70% of the students thought the writing course could help to improve the accuracy (item 12) and organization (item 13) of their writing, train their English thinking ability (item 14), and improve their writing through revisions (item 15). 75% of the students agreed that the blended writing course improved their writing proficiency (item 16).

Table 5

Participants' views of the perceived effectiveness of the blended writing course

	SA	A	N	D	SD
	Percentage (%)				
12. This writing course could improve the accuracy of my writing.	36.4	33.3	27.3	3	0
13. This writing course could improve the organization of my writing.	48.5	27.3	24.2	0	0
14. This writing course could help to train my English thinking ability.	33.3	48.5	18.2	0	0
15. This writing course helps to improve my writing through revision.	39.4	36.4	24.2	0	0
16. Overall, this writing course improved my writing proficiency.	36.4	39.4	24.2	0	0

Note. N=33. SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree

Questionnaire items 17 and 18 are open-ended questions. Students were asked to express their opinions about the advantages and disadvantages of blended learning and the comparison of teacher assessment, self-assessment, and peer assessment.

For the advantages of blended learning, students' answers were as follows:

"I can flexibly adjust my study time and speed."

"In the face-to-face classroom, I could not stop the teacher's lecture, but in the online course, I can watch the video repeatedly to make sure I understand the content."

"The discussion forum allows us to continue the topics in the classroom."

"We get instant feedback from the online quizzes."

"I can have more learner autonomy."

A few students mentioned the disadvantages of blended learning:

"Sometimes there are technical problems such as slow Internet speed or device malfunctions."

"I feel anxious if I cannot come up with good ideas in the online brainstorming activity."

"I may get distracted in front of the computer and surf the Internet."

"Although I can ask questions on the discussion forum, I prefer face-to-face interaction in the class."

As for students' views of teacher feedback, self-evaluation, and peer review, their answers were as follows:

"The revising and editing checklists help me to self-evaluate my writing."

"I perceive teacher feedback more helpful than peer feedback."

"Peer review provides an opportunity of interaction in terms of sharing and learning from each other."

"Compared to teacher assessment, peer review made me feel more relaxed."

"Specific comments on how to revise the text are more useful than general comments."

Discussion

Improved Writing Performance

Both the pre-test and post-test results and the questionnaire (items 12-16) showed the perceived impact of blended learning on improving students' writing abilities. This result aligns with previous research (Hamad, 2015; Zhang & Zhu, 2018) that blended learning enhanced students' learning outcomes. The improvement can be attributed to various

factors, including personalized learning, timely feedback, increased interaction, and a supportive blended learning environment. In this study, students received personalized education by watching videos of lectures online. They could learn at their own pace, revisit the content as needed, and receive immediate feedback through online assessments, i.e., weekly quizzes on the MOOC. In addition, teacher feedback helped students to revise their writing and guided them to improve their writing quality. When students receive feedback gradually, they can use it as their guidelines to perform better (Wijaya, 2022).

The supportive learning environment created by blended learning also contributed to students' improved writing performance. The questionnaire results indicated that online brainstorming activities, sentence correction practice, teacher feedback, and self-evaluation were found to benefit students in the writing process. This result suggests that blended learning offers a process-oriented environment for writing (Liu, 2013), in which students benefit from a combination of classroom instruction and online learning resources. Integrating technology and face-to-face interaction fosters a more interactive and personalized learning experience. Students can develop their writing skills progressively, engage in collaborative discussions, receive real-time feedback, and improve overall writing proficiency (Mohamadi, 2018).

The questionnaire results revealed that students liked participating in English writing activities, including online and in-class exercises. This result echoes previous research that a blended approach with interactive assessment activities could increase levels of student engagement (Vaughan, 2014). Students also reported that one advantage of blended learning is that they can flexibly adjust their study time and speed. This result suggests that blended learning promotes a shift from dependence on the teacher to reliance on self-regulated learning (Crosslin, 2018). This approach to learning requires individuals to be autonomous and independent (Dawson et al., 2015). As a result, students who are engaged in blended learning environments tend to demonstrate improved writing performance.

Effective Formative Assessment Activities

The questionnaire results suggest that students must be supported in the writing process through formative assessment activities, including online quizzes, discussion forums, teacher assessment, self-evaluation, and peer review. Online quizzes provide instant feedback to students, allowing them to know their performance right after completing the quiz. This immediate feedback helped students identify areas of strength and weakness, enabling them to focus on areas that require improvement. Besides, students could retake the quizzes to improve their scores, enhancing their learning

(Paturusi, Chisaki, & Usagawa, 2014). As for the discussion board, it has proven to be a valuable tool for promoting interactions among students and the teacher. In this study, students were willing to participate in online discussions when the teacher created prompts that foster interaction. This finding is supported by previous literature (e.g., Miniaoui & Kaur, 2014) in that the advantage of a discussion forum lies in its asynchronous nature, which allows for broader student participation and offers them more time to process their thoughts. Furthermore, the insights gained from monitoring these discussions enable the teacher to support individual students and continuously improve their learning experiences.

Students reported that compared with peer review and self-evaluation, they benefited more from teacher feedback. This finding is in line with previous research (Ahmed & Troudi, 2018; Graham, Hebert, & Harris, 2015) that examined the impact of formative writing assessment on enhancing students' written performance and found that feedback received on students' writing from teachers, peers, and self has proved effective in improving students' writing performance. Teachers can tailor feedback to individual students, fostering a supportive, student-centered learning environment. With specific feedback, students know exactly what aspects of their writing they should focus on to enhance their skills. When students engage in self-evaluation and peer review, they become actively involved in the writing process and seek opportunities for improvement. These interactive formative assessment activities help improve students' writing achievement (Nhu & Tin, 2019).

Implications and Conclusion

This study investigated EFL students' perceptions of formative assessment activities and the perceived impacts of blended learning on their writing performance. Based on the study's findings, some implications for implementing formative assessments in the writing course are provided. First, the writing tests and questionnaire results showed that students improved their writing abilities in the blended writing course. It is suggested that blended learning positively impacts students' writing proficiency by offering personalized learning experiences through online lectures and immediate feedback via online assessments. Thus, students can learn at their own pace and have the flexibility to review complicated or unclear content.

Additionally, creating a supportive learning environment through face-to-face and online interactions fosters a more interactive and process-oriented approach to writing. This can lead to improved overall writing proficiency and increased student engagement. Second, the findings implied the significance of formative assessment activities,

including online quizzes, discussion forums, teacher feedback, self-evaluation, and peer review, in supporting students' writing process. It is suggested that teachers prioritize the integration of these formative assessment techniques into their writing courses. Online quizzes offer instant feedback, enabling students to identify their strengths and weaknesses promptly. Discussion forums facilitate the exchange of ideas, peer learning, and interaction among students and teachers.

Moreover, teacher feedback is crucial in enhancing students' writing performance, and personalized feedback tailored to individual students can be particularly effective. Engaging students in self-evaluation and peer review also encourages active participation in the writing process and seeks opportunities for improvement. Hence, teachers can consider adopting a blended approach with interactive assessment activities to promote a student-centered learning environment and improve students' writing achievement.

Despite the benefits of incorporating formative assessments in the blended writing course found in this study, some limitations were addressed for future research. First, the study's limited sample size of 33 EFL students in a college in Taiwan restricts the generalizability of the results. Future research could enlarge the participant sample. Second, the data were mainly collected from Taiwanese students. Further studies could include students of different cultural backgrounds. Lastly, this study primarily adopted a quantitative method, i.e., writing tests and a questionnaire, to investigate students' writing abilities. Researchers in the future can carry out qualitative research, i.e., interviews and observation, to explore teachers' perceptions and students' experiences in blended learning.

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