

Using Blogs for Real World Writing: Encouraging Learner Independence

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate students' opinions on using blogs for writing and giving comments among classmates outside class. Results from a questionnaire show that students consider the act of giving comments on Blogs helped them to improve their critical thinking, problem solving and communication skills. Some students felt uncomfortable to give comments when others knew who they were. However, most of the participants preferred online to discussion to face, could express ideas in the online discussion. More than 90% agreed that Blogging supports collaborative learning both in knowledge development and group sharing. Many students agreed that Free-writing was too difficult while nearly all the students indicated Blog could help them learn how to write, they learned and used new vocabulary and they improved their writing skills. Although half of the students agreed that the assignments in Blogs were too time consuming, they encouraged learner independence.

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Introduction

According to students' quietness and embarrassing to show their opinions in class, another way to help them to express their opinions on what they learn and let them be independent learners is to encourage them to learn by blogs outside class. A reading class not only explains the strategies but also allows the students to criticise what they read. The establishment of the Internet in the last century created new and challenging environments for learning, teaching and assessment. A number of studies explore the uses of new technologies such as web pages and discussion groups (Schellens & Valcke, 2006), emails, synchronous chat, blogs and wikis (Augar, Raitman, & Zhou, 2004) in various educational settings and across disciplines. Although the technologies are new, it is important to explore new and effective ways of using them to enhance the processes of teaching and learning.

Blogs can provide an environment for students to communicate with their peers. In addition, the built-in feedback mechanism allows others to read blog articles and listen to songs and to provide some commentary (Chan & Ridgway, 2006). Blogs encourage learners to learn freely, and allow them to express their opinions from what they learn in blogs. Here, blogs were used to support communication among students in order to support reflection on their learning during a five week assignment.

The study was designed to explore the potential of blogs to support reflection and communication in realistic circumstances, and to explore the weaknesses of current practice in order to build more effective practice in the future.

Purpose of the Study

To investigate the usefulness of using blogs to encourage learner independence.

Context of the Study

The participants consisted of 28 undergraduate students majoring in English for International Communication who studied the Advanced Reading course.

Literature Review

Learner Independence

Benson & Voller (1997, p. 4) state that during the last century, the concepts of autonomy and independence have strongly affected the fields of philosophy, psychology, politics and education. Freirian ideals on the concept of empowering learners has changed and been applied way beyond its original political concept. Foreign language instructors don't see their students as being oppressed but they are now more interested in the methods of learning instead of the ways of teaching (Freire, 1970). This confirms Freire's wish to move away from teaching methods and concentrate more on creativity, inquiry, and critical thinking through by having dialogue and interaction. Learner autonomy can clearly be seen in adult learning methods of instructors with the frequent use of learner-centredness, communicative language teaching, and strategy instruction.

While talking about learner independence the terms *learner autonomy* and *learner independence* are mentioned and sometimes they are interchangeable, but this could lead to misunderstandings. *Autonomy* can mean control while *independence* means self-sufficient. Sheerin (1997, p. 56), defines independent learning as having strategy development. And he goes on to say that strategy development or learning how to learn is the pillar independent learning, which instructors relate to due to its philosophical and psychological nature. Since this paper is concerned with assisting learners to develop their language skills outside of the classroom (learning how to learn), the term *independent learning* is used since its definition incorporates both the ideas of autonomy as well as strategy instruction.

Foreign language learning are encouraging learners to use technology as it gives them the choice to choose learning material they like, plus they can work as fast or slowly as they like and follow a pedagogical path suitable for them (Blin, 1999, p. 136). With technology, specifically computers with Internet access and CALL programming both learners and instructors have the opportunity to practice their language skills in an international setting. Ngeow (1999, p. 303) states that with CALL in the classroom, instructors are helped in many ways, with learning styles and strategy development. Ngeow adds that CALL helps learners with ideas on how to present language and take part in real language learning activities. Educators are now seeing that for reflective and collaborative learning computers provide a variable learning environments. Blogs can provide this type of environment. They give learners the opportunity to interact, think reflectively and experience deep learning. Blogs improve the classroom environment and encourage students to apply their knowledge and interpretation (Cashion and Palmieri, 2002, p.157).

These are the characteristics that independent or autonomous learners possess. In an online environment where teachers or parents are inaccessible learners with these traits will succeed.

Blogs

Easy to make and maintain, blogs are almost as old as the Internet. Blogs really took off in 1999 when *Bloggerr.com* was established. They are used mostly for personal use, like a travel journal. The user does not need any technical skills to create a blog and they are easily updated.

Little (1999) states that learning a language using a computer has mostly been students interacting with an information system. With the advent of blogs that interaction has changed to interaction with other learners and the computer is just the medium of communication. Blogs get people to interact with each other in contrast to CALL where the interaction is with the application. Blogs and CALL are not a substitute for face-to-face communication but they give students a chance to think, reflect and create language at their own pace. Blogs are popular outside language learning circles so the introduction of blogs into foreign language learning students should not be a problem as they already are familiar with the concept.

Not much research has been conducted on blog use for foreign language learning. Ward in 2004 introduced a blog in his reading and writing class at the American University of Sharjah. He found that most students benefited from the blog and

helped with language acquisition and saw a rise in interest in reading and writing skills development.

Reflection for Learning

Reflection is a part of learning gain by the learners own experiences (Wu & Looi, 2012)

Denton (2011) says reflection is a humans' ability of high-order thinking and to connect their thoughts. In order to motivate learners to think or reflect on their learning researchers have broken down 'reflection' into several categories - content-based reflection, meta-cognitive reflection, self-authorship reflection, and intensive reflection (Grossman, 2009). For this study content-based reflection was thought to be appropriate as personal experiences, thoughts and feelings on blogs.

Research Methodology

Subjects

The population consisted of 28 undergraduate students majoring in English for International Communication who studied the Advanced Reading course.

Instruments

The research instruments were:

3.2.1. Five tasks including article, song, news, poem, short story on University Blog

Week 1

Task 1 Article: Eat Your Way to Health and Longevity
(<http://www.foodasfood.com/eat-your-way-to-health-and-longevity/>)

Week 2

Task 2 Song: Because You Loved Me with lyrics - Celine Dion
(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nq8TasNsgKw>)

Week 3 Task 3 News: Apple sells 9 million of its new iPhone models
(<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-24201526>)

Week 4 Task 4 Poem: Will You Tie My Shoes When I Grow Old
(<http://www.poetrysoup.com/poems/best/women>)

Week 5

Task 5 Short Story: English is Confusing
(<http://www.rong-chang.com/qa2/stories/story082.htm>)

3.2.2. Campus Blog (<http://km.rmutsv.ac.th/advancedreading/>)

Students are able to access the system at any time by logging in.

3.2.3. Questionnaires:

Part 1: Students' perceptions of the usefulness of using blogs to encourage learner independence and out of class learning

Part 2: Students' perceptions of advantages and disadvantages when using blogs for real

world writing?

Part 3: Students' opinions on communicative practices in blogging and self-reflection

Data Collection

The data collection process for this study included four procedures as follows:

1. The first day of the Advanced Reading class, the teacher explained to the 28 students and gave them an instruction sheet on what and how to do for their assignment.

Instruction Sheet

- Choose five kinds of issues which you mostly want to discuss in the campus blog.
- Choose materials among your classmates that can help you improve your writing skills from articles, news, songs, poems and short stories.
- Make a list of five topics that interest you.
- Submit them next week to the teacher so that the teacher will upload them in the campus blog.

2. The second week, the teacher explained how to learn and practice writing skills by logging in the campus Blog for 5 weeks. They had to discuss and give their opinions on topic by topic until they completed five weeks. And told them to be sure to check for spelling errors along with grammar and punctuation mistakes.

3. The students independently accessed the campus Blog once a week for 5 weeks.

4. The modified questionnaire consisted of thirty - one 5-point Likert scale questions to access students' attitudes towards blog learning.

All the items in the questionnaires given were explained and translated into Thai. In the seventh week the students completed the part of the questionnaire with the teacher in the class.

Blogs were used as a mandatory elements of an Advanced Reading class. Twenty - eight English major students took part in the study. The blog component accounted for 15% of the students' final grade. The purpose of the blogs was for communication practice, rather than grammar practice.

The students were encouraged to practice using their English without being concerned about mistakes.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data was collected by means of the questionnaires. Descriptive results (percentages, frequency, and mean) were used in analysing the data.

Results

The main issues addressed in the study were:

1. What is the usefulness of using blogs to encourage learner independence and out of class learning?
2. What do learners perceive advantages and disadvantages when using blogs?
3. What are the students' opinions on communicative practices in blogging and self-reflection?

Data collected included the students' opinions in blogs and the questionnaire. The questionnaire contains ten 5-point Likert scale questions. Each question was analyzed by means of its mean score and percentage so that we could understand how students' blog using can encourage them to be independent learners.

Table 1 The usefulness of using blogs to encourage learner independence and out of class learning

For the following, make a tick in one column.	5 Strongly Agree %	4 Slightly Agree %	3 Neutral %	2 Slightly Disagree %	1 Strongly Disagree %	Total % (N=28)	Mean (\bar{X})
1. Blogs contribute to more interactivity among users.	14.29 (4)	60.71 (17)	25.00 (7)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	100 (28)	3.89
2. Blogs can increase the level of students' participation and strengthen the sense of community.	21.43 (6)	67.86 (19)	10.71 (3)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	100 (28)	4.10
3. Comments from my classmates increased my motivation to blog	17.85 (5)	67.86 (19)	10.71 (3)	3.57 (1)	0.00 (0)	100 (28)	4.00
4. I enjoy reading others' opinions	46.43 (13)	39.29 (11)	10.71 (3)	3.57 (1)	0.00 (0)	100 (28)	4.28
5. Blogging supports collaborative learning both in knowledge development and group sharing.	46.43 (13)	46.43 (13)	7.14 (2)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	100 (28)	4.39
6 It improves critical thinking, problem solving and communication skills.	42.86 (12)	57.14 (16)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	100 (28)	4.42
7. Blogging reach out and interact with knowledge communities.	32.14 (9)	60.71 (17)	7.14 (2)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	100 (28)	4.25
8. I enjoy a chance to communicate with classmates outside of class.	35.71 (10)	46.43 (13)	17.86 (5)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	100 (28)	4.17
9. Blogs have	17.86	57.14	17.86	7.14	0.00	100	3.85

increased meaningful interaction with my classmates.	(5)	(16)	(5)	(2)	(0)	(28)	
10. I can evaluate my writing ability.	7.14 (2)	32.14 (9)	50.00 (14)	10.71 (3)	0.00 (0)	100 (28)	3.35
11. I am responsible for the assignment.	32.14 (9)	32.14 (9)	35.71 (10)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	100 (28)	3.96

From Table 1, 100% agreed or strongly agreed that blogging improves their critical thinking, problem solving and communication skills while only one-half of the students were neutral to they could evaluate their writing ability. 92.86% agreed that blogging supports collaborative learning both in knowledge development and group sharing.

Table 2 Learner-perceived advantages when using blogs

For the following, make a tick in one column.	5 Strongly Agree %	4 Slightly Agree %	3 Neutral %	2 Slightly Disagree %	1 Strongly Disagree %	Total %(N=28)	Mean (\bar{X})
1. I improve writing skills.	32.14 (9)	60.71 (17)	7.14 (2)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	100 (28)	4.25
2. I learn and use new vocabulary.	57.14 (16)	39.29 (11)	3.57 (1)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	100 (28)	4.53
3. I feel comfortable with technology.	32.14 (9)	53.57 (15)	10.71 (3)	3.57 (1)	0.00 (0)	100 (28)	4.14
4. I see blogs as a way to express myself.	46.43 (13)	42.86 (12)	10.71 (3)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	100 (28)	4.35
5. Blog can help me learn how to write.	57.14 (16)	42.86 (12)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	100 (28)	4.57

From Table 2, 100% of the students indicated blogs could help them learn how to write, more than 90% agreed or strongly agreed they learned and used new vocabulary and they improved their writing skills while only one participant disagreed that he or she felt comfortable with technology.

Table 3 Learner-perceived disadvantages when using blogs

For the following, make a tick in one column.	5 Strongly Agree %	4 Slightly Agree %	3 Neutral %	2 Slightly Disagree %	1 Strongly Disagree %	Total % (N=28)	Mean (\bar{X})
1. I was worried about grammar when writing.	42.86 (12)	28.57 (8)	21.43 (6)	7.14 (2)	0.00 (0)	100 (28)	4.07
2. The assignments were too time consuming.	21.43 (6)	35.71 (10)	35.71 (10)	7.14 (2)	0.00 (0)	100 (28)	3.71
3. Free-writing is too difficult .	7.14 (2)	25.00 (7)	35.71 (10)	14.29 (4)	17.86 (5)	100 (28)	2.89
4. I sometimes cannot access using blogs.	25 (7)	21.43 (6)	28.57 (8)	3.57 (1)	21.43 (6)	100 (28)	3.25
5. I feel uncomfortable to give comments when others know who I am.	35.71 (10)	17.86 (5)	35.71 (10)	3.57 (1)	7.14 (2)	100 (28)	3.71

From Table 3, approximately 32% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that free-writing was too difficult. Moreover 57.14% agreed or strongly agreed that the assignments were too time consuming. Half of the students agreed that they felt uncomfortable to give comments when others knew who they were.

Table 4 Communicative practices in blogging and self-reflection

For the following, make a tick in one column.	5 Strongly Agree %	4 Slightly Agree %	3 Neutral %	2 Slightly Disagree %	1 Strongly Disagree %	Total % (N=28)	Mean (\bar{X})
1. I enjoy using blog discussion for writing practice.	28.57 (8)	50.00 (14)	17.86 (5)	3.57 (1)	0.00 (0)	100 (28)	4.03
2. I am comfortable with reading tasks.	32.1 (9)	46.43 (13)	21.43 (6)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	100 (28)	4.10
3. I am comfortable with writing tasks.	14.29 (4)	46.43 (13)	39.29 (11)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	100 (28)	3.75
4. I am comfortable with listening tasks.	14.29 (4)	71.42 (20)	14.29 (4)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	100 (28)	4.00
5. I prefer online to discussion to face.	42.86 (12)	42.86 (12)	10.71 (3)	0.00 (0)	3.57 (1)	100 (28)	4.21
6. I can express ideas in the online	39.29 (11)	46.43 (13)	14.29 (4)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	100 (28)	4.25

discussion.							
7. I can understand the ideas.	25.00 (7)	57.14 (16)	17.86 (5)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	100 (28)	4.07
8. My partner can express in the online discussion.	32.14 (9)	46.43 (13)	21.43 (6)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	100 (28)	4.10
9. I feel it was to negotiate meaning in the online discussion.	25.00 (7)	57.14 (16)	14.29 (4)	3.57 (1)	0.00 (0)	100 (28)	4.03
10. It was easy for me to discuss an issue in English in the online discussion.	10.71 (3)	25.00 (7)	42.86 (12)	17.86 (5)	3.57 (1)	100 (28)	3.21

As we can see from Table 4, about 85% of the participants preferred online discussion to face to face, could express ideas in the online discussion and were comfortable with listening tasks while 21.43% of the students disagreed or slightly disagreed that it was easy for them to discuss an issue in English in the online discussion.

From practising writing freely and giving comments on each topic in blogs for five weeks. Listed some comments given by here are some comments given by some students.

Students' comments

Week 1 Article: Eat Your Way to Health and Longevity

By Pimchanok Tanwapitak

Currently, we eat everything even insect dung or something that not food. Human are stange more and more for eatting but the most will find much that Europe and America. The disease are coming near us from our eatting cauze we only eat but not care health, We know that which good or not but I don't know that why still have eatten that. We know for the protect any disease such as: eatting the veggetable will good for health, drinking the milk will prevent bone etc. When some people to be cancer or diabetes the both are popular disease it will cause food that you eat always.

By Malai Ninmanee

Taking care of yourself is a good thing, but is that how we care. Because now that we are a disease. Result of our eating. We will eat your expensive or cheap, but it's not always good to genus. Thus it is that we do themselves. Growing your own vegetables chemicals, and other coupled with exercise. How primary care itself.

By Asman Pradoo

Well, I agree with the text "we also know so little about eating" that mentioned above. I don't want to say HOW CAN WE GROW UP UNTIL NOW? but I want to say HOW CAN WE LIVE LONG FOR A CENTURY? You know it's depends on how we are eating? Be smart paying and choosing for market and shopping for food cooking. Be smart for eating; we must know what kinds of food good or bad effect to our health.

These are some methods for us to LIVE LONG FOR A CENTURY. YOU KNOW WHERE IS MOSTLY ILLNESS FROM? It's from our eating for the answer so don't forget "Health is wealth".

Week 2 Song: Because You Loved Me with lyrics - Celine Dion

By Kanokwan Dedkongkaew

When you listen: Because you loved me. For this song I have been hearing about 10 years ago. That times I don't know what does it mean. I just know this song very musical. Nowadays, I have to listen again and I've started to finding of the means of this song. Finally, I found this song is try to shows about the power of love.

Who do you think of: Everytimes when I have listens this song I thinks of my ex-boyfrind because he is my first love and only one love of me and his love is wonderful for me likes this song.

By Jenjira Mudadinan

This song is melodious song and impress. This song meaningful with my mom because mom is that woman's lucky for married life of her. Dad was always there for her. He will indulge her forever. After I listened this song I thing that she is a lucky woman for married life because her husband takes care forever. The truth of world I want to everyone have that loves. The love is beautiful for me and everyone. In the future If possible I want to be her 555. The finally important loved for me are I love family very much.

By Chumpoonit Tongjear

While i sited on the chair to this song. I ever hear just recently,But i never to found mean it. Until now i'll must searching HaHAHAHAH after i understood to mean of song I'll get to love .It convey definition " true love" I sit on the chair my house with listen this song First! i thought my mom and close friend (man) especially my mom because nobody come can to replace true love like a mom. I like her (Celine Dion) i love her inner beauty& good voice. I got feel want to smile and cry i believe that."love" when appear what times...it's always beautifully.^-^

Week 3 News: Apple sells 9 million of its new iPhone models

By Wissuta Sangtong

In my opinion,I think Apple is very famous of the world. People in the world use apple brand in the office and use mobile phone (iPhone) to communication because It's easy to use with icon of screen on mobile phone that can help old people can use.After I read this topic I think that there will be many people switching from Android to Iphone-5C. There are many people fed up of there low cost android phone that does not work.And finally I have been use iPhone because the application are free that make me upload many game on my mobile phone .it's save my money to enjoy it so much.

By Nuttarin Suktongseng

Newaday, I think mobile phone is the important thing for everybody. Someone use iphone 5s but I don't have because it's very expensive 555. It can update new version or other applicats. It's suitable for teens and working age. Although nowaday I don't have iphone5s but next time I will buy it "promise" 555

By Suchada Kimton

I think that Apple is brand name to has famous and quality. Now, iPhone 5s and 5c launches of new phones, so people to interest with iPhone 5s and 5c. iPhone 5s design to modern has a fingerprint sensor built into the phone's main button. Although, iPhone has very expensive price but someone want to buy it. I like iPhone so much because It was design very beautiful and use easy.

Week 4 Poem: Will You Tie My Shoes When I Grow Old

By Witsumitta Jaisamud

When reading this topic, I think a person who is my mother because she is creator. She be pregnant in 9 month and she endure very much for me and she forgiveness always. She never hope consideration from me and she gave everything always when I want and when I made a mistake, she said to me " Don't worry but not made is second "I feel very happy and proud. My mother is the best for me. She must working very hard for send I study and for future of me. I know she love me by actions of mom. She look me is children always and I pure for mom. I look mom is person who sacrifices oneself and giver than who. I love mom in the world forever.

By Salameeya Era

It's show that love from who is mom is a great. Mom can do everything for me and she needs me care her as she care me when I was baby. As I see and read this poem then make me think of mom. I will not make mom cries anymore and take care her for live.I promise.

By Jariya Utaikaseam

when i read this poem. I thing to my mother. It's talk about the person who take care of child. I love my mother. She is a best women for me.

Week 5 Short Story: English is Confusing

By Yuwadee Rungsawang

English is my favorite. But I can't speak and write it well. Because in the elementary school. I do not intend to. But today I know that what is past. It may affect us in the present. However, it would be difficult and tedious. I had to fight with it. Finally of the story above, I have read that as a teacher I would cheer all teachers as well.

By Panida Sutthi

I think, English is very confuse. Sometimes one word there are several meaning. Some word there are the same pronounce. So it can make the student confuse and scare to speak or learn. One thing that I think it can help them; vocabulary. If there are more vocabulary in your mind, you don't worry with any problem. I think like that.

By Nurisan Gupoo

I think school is a place where one goes to learn but i also believe that there should be times where fun is necessity. That is why I think the teacher should have fun with the students.Kids learn faster when they feel attracted to an exciting lesson.There are all types of teachers some are better than other. Through my life I had some professors who were well prepared and some who were not!

5. Discussion

This chapter is divided into two sections: students' comments on topics in Blogs and students' attitudes towards blogs using

Section 1: Students' comments on topics in blogs.

There were 28 comments from 28 students in each topic. Here some examples of their comments. Giving comments on each topic for five weeks required to encourage students to think about their learning, researchers have used the term *reflection* to represent different levels of thinking, such as content-based reflection, meta-cognitive reflection, self-authorship reflection, and intensive reflection (Grossman, 2009). The students reflected their thinking freely and gave comments on each topic without caring about the correct grammar.

"Well, I agree with the text "we also know so little about eating" that mentioned above. I don't want to say HOW CAN WE GROW UP UNTIL NOW? but I want to say HOW CAN WE LIVE LONG FOR A CENTURY? You know it's depends on how we are eating? Be smart paying and choosing for market and shopping for food cooking. Be smart for eating; we must know what kinds of food good or bad effect to our health. These are some methods for us to LIVE LONG FOR A CENTURY. YOU KNOW WHERE IS MOSTLY ILLNESS FROM? It's from our eating for the answer so don't forget "Health is wealth". or " In my opinion,I think Apple is very famous of the world. People in the world use apple brand in the office and use mobile phone (IPhone) to communication because It's easy to use with icon of screen on mobile phone that can help old people can use. After I read this topic I think that there will be many people switching from Android to Iphone-5C. There are many people fed up of there low cost android phone that does not work. And finally I have been use iPhone because the application are free that make me upload many game on my mobile phone .it's save my money to enjoy it so much."

Those comments reflected their value in a form of learning process through individual experiences (Wu & Looi, 2012). Reflection is a part of learning gain by the learners own experiences. Denton (2011) says reflection is a humans' ability of high-order thinking and to connect their thoughts.

In a discussion of learner independence, here *learner autonomy* and *learner independence* are mentioned and sometimes they are interchangeable, but this could lead to misunderstandings. *Autonomy* can mean control while *independence* means self-sufficient. However, independent learning, according to Sheerin (1997, p. 56), defines independent learning as having strategy development. The students' comments below show that they studied independently or were autonomous learner. Holec (1981) said that it involves taking charge of one's learning and being responsible for all the decisions related to all aspects of the learning process including setting objectives, choosing methodology, and evaluating what has been learned". Besides, they expressed their opinions without caring about correct grammar.

"While i sited on the chair to this song. I ever hear just recently, But i never to found mean it. Until now i'll must searching HaHAHAHAH after i understood to mean of song I'll get to love .It convey definition " true love" I sit on the chair with listen this song First! i thought my mom and close friend (man) especially my mom because nobody come can to replace true love like a mom. I like her (Celine Dion) i love her

inner beauty & good voice. I got feel want to smile and cry i believe that "love" when appear what times...it's always beautifully.^-^" or " When reading this topic, I think a person who is my mother because she is creator. She be pregnant in 9 month and she endure very much for me and she forgiveness always. She never hope consideration from me and she gave everything always when I want and when I made a mistake, she said to me " Don't worry but not made is second "I feel very happy and proud. My mother is the best for me. She must working very hard for send I study and for future of me. I know she love me by actions of mom. She look me is children always and I pure for mom. I look mom is person who sacrifices oneself and giver than who. I love mom in the world forever." or " I think, English is very confuse. Sometimes one word there are several meaning. Some word there are the same pronounce. So it can make the student confuse and scare to speak or learn. One thing that I think it can help them; vocabulary. If there are more vocabulary in your mind, you don't worry with any problem. I think like that".

Section 2: Students' attitudes towards Blog using

After the five week tasks, the participants were given the questionnaire inquiring on their perceptions of blogs using.

100% agreed or strongly agreed that blogging improves their critical thinking, problem solving and communication skills while only one-half of the students were neutral to they could evaluate their writing ability. Approximately 70% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that free-writing was too difficult. However, more than 90% of the students indicated blogs could help them learn how to write, they learned and used new vocabulary and they improved their writing skills. Ward (2004) found that most students benefited from the blog and helped with language acquisition and saw a rise in interest in reading and writing skills development.

About 85% of the participants preferred online discussion to face to face, could express ideas in the online discussion. Blogs improve the classroom environment and encourage students to apply their knowledge and interpretation (Cashion and Palmieri, 2002, p.157), blogs are being used to enhance and supplement classroom environments while 21.43% of the students disagreed or slightly disagreed that it was easy for them to discuss an issue in English in the online discussion. Only one participant disagreed that he or she felt comfortable with technology. Moreover 35.71% strongly agreed that they felt uncomfortable to give comments when others knew who they were. 85% of the students were more comfortable with listening tasks than reading and writing tasks. 57.14% of the participants agreed that the assignments in blogs were too time consuming. More than 90% agreed that blogging supports collaborative learning both in knowledge development and group sharing.

6. Conclusion

Blogs are easy-to-create and easy-to-maintain websites (Pinkman,2005). They provide a practice environment where students can think, reflect, and create language for a real-life audience outside class and encourage learner independence.

Using blogs could promote the students to be independent learners because they understand the tasks by doing rather than by instruction. All students agreed that they could improve their critical thinking and communication skills. Some students felt uncomfortable to give comments when others knew who they were. However, Most of the participants preferred online discussion to face to face, could express ideas in

the online discussion. Many students agreed that free-writing was too difficult while nearly all the students indicated blogs could help them learn how to write, they learned and used new vocabulary and they improved their writing skills. Few students disagreed that it was easy for them to discuss an issue in English in the online discussion. Half of the students agreed that the assignments were too time consuming. Nevertheless, more than 90% agreed that blogging supports collaborative learning both in knowledge development and group sharing.

7. Suggestion

It is suggested that further study to investigate more interaction among the students and how social network influence the students' learning should be conducted.

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