A Review of the Blended Learning as the Model in Improving Students` Paragraph Writing Skills

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Abstract: Academics have spent many years investigating the connection between blended learning and various other instructional approaches. On the other hand, there are only a few pertinent journal articles on the impact of content assessment on the integrated effect of the blended learning model. Therefore, this conceptual paper aims to identify patterns in L2 research on paragraph writing skills to understand better the advantages and disadvantages of using Blended learning for language learning. This research used the literature review method to synthesize several previously published publications to understand the notion of blended learning as it relates to paragraph writing abilities. The primary parts of this article are broken up into two different parts. The author begins by defending the need for a course in paragraph writing skills within the L2 learning environment. Second, an analysis of the studies that were looked over is performed to highlight the pertinent benefits and limitations of blended learning for the learning of paragraph writing. The findings of this study could be applied to additional research in the future to determine whether or not the Blended Learning methodology has an impact on students' capacity to compose paragraphs.

🎯 Introduction

Currently, English is the world's leading common language that is used and learned by global communities. According to Rao (2019), English has become a worldwide language, with almost 360 million people using it as native speakers and 500 million people using it as their second language. Nishanthi (2018) also points out that English has been seen to play a good role in various industries, including medicine, engineering, and education. As agents of development, people worldwide use English as a foreign language to pass on, give, take, and provide data and knowledge to others. Therefore, to adopt these improvements, each nation should equip its people with the ability to use English.

Writing is one of four parts of competence that has become an essential factor in the fundamental study of English. Rao (2018) says that writing is seen as the most challenging of the four skills and requires more time practising it. It has been shown that most students cannot differentiate the form of a paragraph in writing and get the main idea,

the topic sentence, the supporting sentences, and the concluding sentence. As a result, they have obtained a low score in writing. Writing English skills is one way to improve the quality of the country. Rajesh (2017) argues that writing skills are a way to express one's thinking and feeling on paper. That is why every text in medicine, engineering, and international education primarily uses English as their language. In other words, writing skills are becoming an essential subject for students to study.

Paragraph writing is indicated at the beginning of paragraph writing skills (Utami et al., 2021). Before writing such essays, research papers or articles, academic journals or dissertations, and thesis, it would be easier to master paragraph writing skills first. That is why teachers should give students everything they need to direct students to get a clear understanding and accomplishments in paragraph writing. Nasser (2019) describes the difficulties of writing a paragraph, such as spelling, punctuation, grammar, diction, thesis statements, theme sentences, and a coherent sentence relevant to a paragraph that can make students' comprehension and achievement poor.

Out of all these problems and difficulties, students need the most answer from teachers and other students when making any mistakes when writing a paragraph to strengthen their paragraph. The most likely problems for students are the lack of sufficient input or feedback. Feedback plays a significant role in encouraging further learning by educating learners about the results of their education or their need for improvement (Taufiqurrochman & Rana, 2021). Brown (1994) finds feedback to be one of the keys to successful learning. It means that input or feedback is needed to enhance the teaching and learning process to recognize teachers' and students' strengths and shortcomings. In other words, teachers should focus more on choosing strategies to give students input or feedback.

Online Learning is considered the best tool in the learning and teaching process this year. According to Yulia (2020), Online Learning must be included in the learning and teaching phase because it provides more flexible access to content and training anytime, anywhere. This is also becoming famous because online learning enhances the adequacy of knowledge and skills through access to a large amount of information. In other words, online learning is the required form of paragraph writing during the Covid-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, the teaching and learning process in the online classroom cannot provide as much feedback as expected by students. Sadeghi (2019) reports that online learning makes it more difficult for students to contact the teacher. Even if they could send an email or text, it will certainly not get them the immediate response they would get if they could sit down with the teacher. This means that the learning process through face-to-face learning with instructors or teachers is much easier. Teachers should also consider more effective approaches to integrating online and conventional learning (Taufiqurrochman & Nurwendah, 2019).

The mixture of online and offline learning is called Blended Learning. Blended

Learning has been applied to social constructivist theory. Lalima and Dangwal (2017) claim that Blended Learning is also based on social constructivism. They also state that Lev Vygotsky has founded social constructivism. This theory explains that the product of learning is the student's contact with others, such as input or feedback from teachers or other students.

In other words, the Blended Learning Model can develop social experiences with teachers and other students that help promote learning and comprehension of the content. Blended Learning has several benefits that are necessary for the learning and teaching method of paragraph writing. Blended Learning takes advantage of two approaches (online and traditional), so it is a very effective process. It is supported by Shand & Farrelly (2018) that Blended Learning takes advantage of online learning, such as flexibility, and that there are so many services and tools available to support the learning and teaching process. It also takes advantage of traditional learning, such as getting input or feedback from teachers, asking teachers and other students questions in real-time, and getting clarity on assignments (Taufiqurrochman et al., 2020). In other words, Blended Learning will enable the teaching and learning process of paragraph writing to reap many benefits from the combination of online and conventional learning.

The Blended Learning Model is more fitting than the Online Learning Model in paragraph writing courses. Based on the research conducted by Alqahtani and Rajkhan (2020), Blended Learning appeared to be the best decision-making option for educational institutions. Their research also explains that Blended Learning was the most preferred form of learning and teaching. However, Blended Learning also has contentious concerns. While several studies have shown that Blended Learning is better than Online Learning, other research has shown that Blended Learning has little effect on student comprehension and achievement. It has also been questioned by Alsalhi et al. (2019) that the impact of Blended Learning on student learning achievements is still unclear. They also point out that many researchers wonder about Blended Learning in student achievement, and some of them already show that it can improve student achievement, especially in paragraph writing.

According to the above case, the student achievements in paragraph writing do not appear to be refined, and even the current approach is inappropriate for teaching paragraph writing. In the researcher's view, there is a need to investigate a specific model to solve the problem (Herlina et al., 2021). The teacher should find a suitable model that can improve students' achievements. The literature review shows that the best decision-making option for educational institutions is Blended Learning (Alqahtani & Rajkhan, 2020). Based on the explanations above, this paper will deeply identify the blended learning model in enhancing students' paragraph writing skills.

The study was carried out with the use of a method known as a literature review,

🔍 Method

which included finding, choosing, analyzing, elaborating, and synthesizing previously published papers or data pertinent to the topic of blended learning and paragraph writing skills of students. According to Gibbs et al. (2017), using research from literature reviews is acceptable for evaluating educator`s capabilities by providing the evaluations accurately and reliably. In this particular research study, the usage of a literature review and the many facets of blended learning improved the students' capacity for composing paragraphs. These components, which helped instructors become more knowledgeable and professional during their tenure at the institution, may benefit the teaching profession in higher education.

👥 Discussion

Paragraph Writing Skills

The Definition of Paragraph Writing

Writing has become one of the essential skills in English. We can articulate, discuss and describe our thoughts, feelings, and experiences through writing skills (Lestari, 2018; Yamin, 2019). It means that writing requires the writer to deliver what to think and what to write to the reader. However, to be clear, we need to know basic writing skills. Paragraph writing is the first step in mastering writing skills. According to Wali and Madani (2020), a paragraph is an essential skill in writing. Before mastering any writing skills, we must first master paragraph writing skills. A solid ability to write a paragraph is necessary since it allows readers to grasp the quality of the writing. However, teaching writing is not an easy activity. The challenge of paragraph writing skills is that teachers are responsible for it. Rajesh (2017) notes that teaching Paragraph Writing is a challenging challenge for a teacher who is also a second-language learner but must teach students how to write appropriately and acceptably. Some reckless teachers even ignore it because they find it challenging to teach.

Components and Characteristics of Paragraph Writing skills

Paragraphs have some components that should belong to them. According to Maharani (2017), there are three components to a successful paragraph. It contains topic sentences, supporting sentences, and concluding sentences. These three elements make the paragraph complete and make it easier for the reader to understand the paragraph. The first is a topic sentence. Wali and Madani (2020) assume that topic sentences are structured into two sections. They are topics that influence ideas. Topic means a word or phrase that describes what the whole essay is talking about, and controlling the idea represents the writer's idea of the topic.

Yamin (2019) notes that Topic Sentences should be neither too specific nor too

general. Topic sentences that are too specific usually have issues with supporting sentences that cannot establish the topic sentence. However, a topic sentence not finalized in one paragraph means that the concept is too broad and that we should make a new paragraph to continue the idea. Therefore, a good paragraph should have one topic sentence in one paragraph. The second is in supporting sentences. The topic sentence is clarified in the supporting sentences. According to Wali and Madani (2020), keeping sentences is the sentence that builds up the body of the essay. Zemach and Islam (2006) also note that supporting sentences add clear information and explanations on the topic of sentences. It contains reasoning and proof to persuade the readers or, at least, our message to the audience. In other words, the supporting sentences must apply to the topic sentence to be done. The last sentence is the concluding sentence. According to Maharani (2017), the final sentence stipulates two points. They shall sign the end of the paragraph and notify the most relevant concept. Wali and Madani (2020) note two concluding sentences: the retrial and the summary. The Concluding sentence re-statement offers the same information as the sentence subject, but the information is conveyed differently.

The summary of the concluding sentence lists all significant supporting sentences and is provided as a final sentence. In brief, in conclusion, and summary is examples of concluding sentences that feature a transition at the beginning of the phrase. In addition to these three elements, there are features of paragraph writing. These three characteristics can allow students to develop the writing of their paragraphs. It requires coherence, continuity, and unity. In other words, these three characteristics should be set out in our paragraph in prose. The first is coherence. Coherence is a property that should exist between the words of related and ordered sentences in a precise sequence. Yamin (2019) points out that coherence addresses one central and crucial concept in each paragraph. It also notes that the continuity of paragraph writing makes the flow of one sentence to another in a paragraph smooth.

The second is cohesion. Wali and Madani (2020) argue that cohesion is a method of linking sentences. It relates supporting sentences to each other in support of the topic sentence. Boardman and Frydenberg (2008) note that four main coherent structures are in place. It consists of connectors (such as but not only), introduction article(s), personal pronouns (such as he/him/his/her), and demonstrative pronouns, among other things (i.e., this, those). The last thing is unity. Wali and Madani (2020) note that paragraph writing has a unity characteristic when supporting sentences are linked to the topic. Yamin (2019) notes that the key concept of unity is to finish one idea in one paragraph before the other ideas are discussed in the following paragraphs. In other words, unity in supporting sentences is described as a pointer to what should be conveyed in each supporting phrase and to the same idea represented in the subject sentence.

Types of Paragraph Writing

According to Wali and Madani (2020), Narrative paragraphs, Descriptive paragraphs, and Exhibition paragraphs are the three types.

Narrative paragraph

Wali and Madani (2020) clarify that the narrative paragraph is a paragraph that typically speaks of events that have taken place in the past. It is frequently used to narrate stories such as fairy tales, folklore, and fables. It has the same structure as the other paragraph (Topic Sentence, Supporting Sentences, and Concluding Sentence). The transitions that can be used to endorse sentences are: first, second, third, then, after, and finally.

Descriptive Paragraph

According to Sari and Wahyuni (2018), a descriptive paragraph describes a specific person, item, place, or object. It also explains how this paragraph has generic structures; identification, definition, and conclusion. Identification is the aspect that tells readers what the writer is going to tell. The description is a component that describes the details of the person, event, place, or object so that readers can easily visualize the object while reading it. The conclusion is the last part of the sentence in which the specifics of the paragraph can be concluded. Popular premises are: above, around, behind, below, between, in, in front of, on, below, and next to.

Expository paragraph

Wibowo and Febrinda (2019) clarify that the expository paragraph is a paragraph that provides the reader with details. To offer information is to share something that readers need. Wali and Madani (2020) also clarify that the expository paragraph is a paragraph that describes something. The transformation that can support is: first, third, next, and finally.

Problems Related to Paragraph Writing Skills

Writing is one of the four skills that are difficult to learn. According to Melati (2020), writing is the most complex and challenging skill for native language speakers to master. It is common for EFL students to make mistakes in writing, particularly in their early learning, such as paragraph writing. In other words, students appear to have some difficulties in writing paragraphs. The lack of practice in paragraph writing can be the most challenging issue. According to Novariana et al. (2018), students must frequently write to be effective. As a result, the practice was critical for students to strengthen their paragraph writing abilities.

Students typically have difficulties in deciding the topic sentence correctly. Students typically make sentences that are too general or too detailed for students to complete the paragraph. In this case, Yamin (2019) points out that many students make a topic sentence without information, making it difficult to create the topic sentence. In other words, students must avoid having topic sentences that are too general or too specific and ensure

that students have some information when deciding on the subject sentences.

The next issue has to do with the supporting sentences. Yamin (2019) observes that students typically make supporting sentences that are not in line with the subject of sentences or make supporting sentences out of the subject. These issues can be overcome by ensuring that the paragraph has coherence and unity. In other words, students should ensure that sentences are connected when making paragraphs.

Concluding sentences are often seen as an issue for students. Melati (2020) points out that concluding sentences is a big problem for students. It is considered a problem because many students cannot provide the end of the paragraph's key point that is so relevant. To address this issue, students should create ending sentences that incorporate re-statements, recommendations, and citations. Grammar problems are another concern. Novariana et al. (2018) note that grammatical problems are students' most internal problems in paragraph writing. It also states that grammatical issues include subject-matter agreements, pronoun references, and connectors. Cognitive issues were often known to be a concern in paragraph writing. According to Novariana et al. (2018), several students have a cognitive problem with paragraph writing. They further demonstrate that cognitive difficulties include punctuation problems, capitalization problems, spelling problems, content issues, and difficulty in the organization.

There may also be an issue with the lack of inspiration in paragraph writing. Students should keep writing if they feel interested in writing. Students are more likely to write if they are motivated by the writing task and are involved in the process (Handrianto et al., 2021; Ramadhani et al., 2021). The last issue is the teacher's input or feedback on the writing of the teaching paragraph. Teachers typically do not have enough time to give students feedback. Teachers often only give their writing scores without input or comments. It does not help students know what to do and how to make writing easier.

Teaching Paragraph Writing skills

The instructor should consider factors affecting student writing success to help students develop better writing skills in the paragraph. This argument is backed by Alsmari (2019), who says that teachers have a significant role in seeking to boost student achievement. In other words, teachers need to know what might influence paragraph writing skills in teaching and learning.

Lack of reading skills is the most significant factor impacting paragraph writing skills in teaching and learning. Ataveya et al. (2019) support this argument by saying that good reading skills will boost their awareness and understanding of their subject matter and that paragraph writing is helpful. When students have low reading skills, it will take even longer to teach them, and they will not be successful in teaching and learning. In other words, if students want to have good reading skills in paragraph writing, they should first have good reading skills.

Feedback is also an essential part of the paragraph writing class. According to Anggraini (2018), teachers provide feedback on student paragraph writing to help progress. Sari and Wahyuni (2018) claim that teachers need enough time to provide high-quality feedback and those students need enough time to process and apply feedback. In other words, good feedback is neither too much nor less and should be substantive, timely, and consistent.

Blended Learning

The Definition of the Blended Learning Model

Stein and Graham (2014) define blended learning as a combination of face-to-face and online learning to deliver flexible, productive, and efficient learning. According to Jayanthi (2019), blended learning was first initiated by Sir Isaac Pitman. Pitman sent his student's mailed postcards containing shorthand texts, and they were asked to send them back to be graded and corrected. In other words, first, distance learning begins, becoming the root of blended learning.

The Characteristics of the Blended Learning Model

Huang, Zhou, and Wang (2006) note three characteristics of blended learning. The first is flexibility in the provision of learning resources. The blended learning model has several methods to promote students' learning, where students not only obtain information from the teacher and the computer (online or offline). The second is the promotion of diversity in learning. Each student has different learning styles, such as audio, visual, and kinesthetic. The type of learning style that each person has is the best way to absorb, organize, and process knowledge. In other words, blended learning makes it easier for students to understand. The third is the enrichment of the online learning model. Online learning activities, such as assignments and discussions, are cited as ways students gain more knowledge. Their online learning experience can thus improve the students' experience (Tiara et al., 2021).

Based on the explanation above, the authors conclude that a blended learning model involves a variety of learning opportunities where students can learn online or offline from the teacher's explanation and use the computer. Then, two learning opportunities also aid students in their diversity of learning. If students can identify their preferred learning style, they will better comprehend the material they are studying.

The Feature of the Blended Learning Model

Wintarti et al. (2019) argue that several features can be blended into this definition, which includes both conventional ICT- supported teaching and earnings, such as (1) Face-to-face instruction, both teachers and students can connect directly and receive input immediately; (2) Students' experiences with content can learn the words of a teacher

as in a conventional model and ICT media learning; (3) While students use online learning on a stand-alone basis, community interaction can meet and discuss with other students; (4) Accessing the library, students can access the digital library and the school library (library building) to get more books; (5) Online and realistic online assessments can make evaluation successful, but specific skills need to be evaluated practically in the classroom; and (6) Tutoring, because of the pupil's different needs, the instructor could provide special tutoring for the slow learner while the other could get it from the internet (YouTube).

The Advantages and Disadvantages of Using the Blended Learning Model in Promoting Paragraph Writing Skills

Blended learning can offer students and unique teachers benefits. The first advantage of combined learning is improved access and usability. It lets students and teachers have more opportunities, such as the Internet. Stein and Graham (2014) suggest that blended learning can add flexibility and make it more convenient for students and teachers to engage in learning. In other words, both teachers and students will make learning and teaching easier.

Another advantage is that students learn more effectively. According to Stein and Graham (2014), blended learning will enhance learning by promoting access to learning activities and increasing involvement through social interaction and time to work (Rahman & Ja'afar, 2018; Mufidah et al., 2019). Even though this will make studying and teaching more challenging, it will also save time for both students and instructors alike. Learning and teaching methods may be improved, in other words.

The next advantage is the reduced cost. According to Stein and Graham (2014), teachers and students will benefit from less travel time, fewer transport savings, and fewer parking costs (if payment is required). It makes the spending of both teachers and students more effective. In other words, this would offer more benefits to students and teachers.

Jayanthi (2019) points out that blended learning has one downside. It is getting students to misuse the internet for non-school-related things. In this situation, teachers should always consider how and why their students use technology and track student behaviours to their best. Therefore, we should not diminish the benefits of blended learning in teaching and learning.

Theoretical Framework of Research

Social Constructivism is an approach that believes in active learning. Din (2017) points out that Lev Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist, emphasizes social constructivism. He believes learners build their understanding by actively engaging with the world, teachers, classmates, and family members. In other words, this principle focuses on active experiences that help students develop their teaching and learning skills. There are two

ideas of this Vygotsky theory; ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development) and Scaffolding.

ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development) is a way to improve students' skills by correcting their errors by using the position of teachers or other students. Polly and Byker (2020) argue that Vygotsky advanced the concept that each individual had a personal ZPD in the theory of social constructivism. They also state that these aids help individuals accomplish activities beyond what they can do on their own. In other words, ZPD can boost students' abilities by correcting their errors. In Blended Learning, correcting students' errors by using teachers called for feedback. Blended Learning has given input or feedback on its benefit in teaching and learning. Feedback can correct student errors and help develop student skills in paragraph writing. In other words, Blended Learning is linked to the ZPD principle of feedback.

Another essential idea of Vygotsky is scaffolding. Finnegan and Ginty (2019) suggest that scaffolding is a concept that is closely associated with the philosophy of social constructivism. Different from ZPD, scaffolding means that students can correct their errors on their own. Scaffolding will help students determine what to think about learning and direct them to key concepts. In other words, scaffolding gives students more responsibility than ZPD does.

In Blended Learning, students can correct their errors by looking for answers or content on the Internet. In the teaching and learning process, Blended Learning has flexibility as its benefit. Flexibility ensures that the teaching and learning process for teachers and students requires the source of the content. In other words, the book is not the only source in the teaching and learning process and is looking for the proper response on the Internet.

Studies on the Blended Learning

There is numerous research related to the blended learning model in the literature. Muhtia et al. (2018) conducted the first research on the introduction of blended learning in the literature under the title "Investigating Blended Learning in a Paragraph Writing Course to Promote Student Engagement." Data were collected through interviews, document analysis, observations, and analysis using the interactive model (Miles et al., 2014; Tarmizi et al., 2022). It was revealed that the educational methods in the course centred on the advantages of face-to-face learning as the primary teaching tool. In contrast, online learning was supplementary to improving students' knowledge and understanding. The introduction of blended learning in the course encouraged student participation through online quizzes, uploading course materials, student-teacher lectures, online writing assignments, class discussions, and group work.

Muhtia et al. (2018) clarify that blended learning is described as an educational approach that combines traditional face-to-face learning with online learning that complements one another. Researchers prefer LMS as an online site. They further clarify that student participation can be stepped up by combining two different learning

platforms, called blended learning. For writing courses that require much practice, class time in face-to-face settings is considered relatively short or not enough. Using Schoology as an online platform that complements face-to-face learning will provide more time and improve student participation. It is often acknowledged that there is no single best model for blended courses. Still, teachers will learn which combination of approaches works best for different students and subjects through experience. In other words, teachers can conduct blended learning into a paragraph writing course.

Huda (2020) explored the impact of a blended learning model on student writing skills. It sheds light on how blended learning using telegram could improve writing ability. In light of this analysis, there was a strong indication that blended learning was very successful, with apparent differences in the results of pre-test and post-test student writing. It was clear that blended learning improved the writing skills of the experimental group participants, and the experimental group achieved better post-test results than the control group. It also claimed that Blended learning helped many students become more metacognitively aware of their English writing process. Thus, the findings of her study showed that blended learning using telegram could be used as a learning model to develop writing skills outside the classroom. Based on the results of her report, the researcher recommends the following: (1) Helping students use English in "life-like" circumstances such as emails, conversations, forums, text messages, and blogs; (2) Implementing modern techniques that improve student engagement and interaction; and (3) Performing potential research related to the impact of blended learning on other skills through the use of other techniques.

Lalima & Dangwal (2017) argue that blended learning is a groundbreaking idea that embraces the advantages of traditional classroom learning and online learning. It has space for constructive, collaborative, and computer-assisted learning (CAL). They also clarify that blended learning requires the right mindset, outstanding commitment, a substantial budget, and highly motivated teachers and students to achieve it successfully.

Conclusion

Writing skill is very important for senior high school student's future. It has good use in expressing feeling and thought. The main problem faced by senior high school students is their inability to write correctly. Even the basics of writing, such as Paragraph Writing, still feel difficult for students. The paper aims to discuss the effectiveness of blended learning in Paragraph Writing. Studies have shown that researchers have extensively used the blended learning model to improve Writing skills, including Paragraph Writing. Because of that, the researcher expects to know whether blended learning is also effective for students in paragraph writing. Also, school teachers will get benefit from the blended learning model after finding this report on the advantages and the disadvantages of the blended learning model. School teachers may want to use this model to improve students' achievement in Paragraph Writing skills. Since this model

offers two learning models (online and face-to-face Learning), the teacher might need more time to design the blended learning model to make it more effective. It would be better to make it balanced. However, the effectiveness of blended learning is based on the environment and students' experience. Writing ability is critical to a student's future success in high school. It may be used in education, medicine, and other fields to describe sentiments and thoughts. The main problem faced by senior high school students is their inability to write correctly. Even the basics of writing, such as Paragraph Writing, still feel difficult for the students. Therefore, the one way to make students achieve better paragraph writing is to use Blended Learning as their teaching and learning process model.

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