

**THE ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE WRITING CLASSROOM
AND WEBLOG: THE EFFECT OF COMPUTER-MEDIATED
COMMUNICATION ON ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS AND
IMPLICATIONS FOR EFL LEARNING**

WEI-CHIH CHANG (ALEC)

INTEGRATED PHD IN EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

Innovative forms of communication technology have generated new educational models and learning environments. Existing literature includes much discussion concerning the consequences of using communication technology in the context of second language learning. However, recent research has not reached any convincing conclusion about the effects of communication technology in EFL teaching and learning. There are still many variables that need to be accounted for when the use of technology occurs in real-life educational environments, particularly when the adoption of a newly developed communication technology – the Weblog – could / may work better for language learners under specific circumstances.

This empirical study focused on whether the use of Weblogs positively changes the learners' attitudes towards EFL writing and their informal use of English language. Following the focus of this study, the research questions and hypotheses

were then addressed as a means of examining the effect of Weblogs. A quasi-experimental research design was applied with a mixed-methods approach to elicit data from 119 EFL students in two universities in Taiwan. The collected data included 112 pre- and 102 post- GEPT exam papers, 119 questionnaire responses and the qualitative data of interviews with 24 research participants. This was then analysed using inductive (qualitative logic) and deductive (quantitative logic) methods to find out the consequences of research assumptions.

The results corroborate the theoretical findings on the significance of computer-mediated communication in learners' affective learning. In other words, the use of Weblogs influenced the learners' attitudes towards EFL writing. The combination of quantitative and qualitative findings suggested that Weblog technology engages learners in active reading and encourages learners' reflectivity, collaboration, and participation in EFL writing. The results also echo the theoretical concerns about the learners' self-efficacy and language register in the context of second language writing.