大一學生於利用多模態之部落格進行軼事寫作任務之研究

黃馨儀*

摘要

多模態寫作已被證實有助於提高學生的寫作技巧。這項研究結合了敘述故事和部落格的概念在一個多模態寫作任務中，並在以英文為外語之寫作教學課程中實施。透過學生自己創建完成的部落格貼文，每位非英語主修的大一新生用個人的敘述自己故事的方式，分享一個關於自己一個難忘事件。軼事部落格任務從授課教師在她的部落格上展示她的軼事為範例開始。接著，學生也開始撰寫其個人軼事並附上照片，張貼在其部落格上。在接下來的一週，每位學生在課堂中分享其部落格軼事，同時他們也需要，根據老師所給的同儕互評表的項目，在同儕的部落格上留言並給予同儕回饋。然後，每位學生根據老師和同學的回饋，再去修改了他們的部落格貼文。研究結果顯示，透過軼事部落格任務進行多模式寫作積極地提高了學生的參與度、學習動機和學習自主性。此外，訪談結果顯示，學生在完成軼事部落格任務時運用了批判性和分析能力，

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也展現了他們後設認知的技巧在撰寫和修改自己的貼文上。學生也認為同儕和老師的回饋對於改正貼文中文法錯誤並改寫表達不清楚的句子幫助極大,進而提高他們的寫作技巧。希望藉此應用軼事部落格多模態寫作的行動研究能為教師在指派英語寫作任務上提供了一種替代方案,並且這項結合軼事和部落格的寫作任務之課程設計可以為未來的研究開啟新的可能性。

關鍵字: 多模態寫作、軼事、部落格任務、 EFL 寫作

A Study on Engaging EFL Freshmen in Multimodal Writing Using Anecdote Blog Task

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Abstract

Multimodal writing has been proven to be beneficial in promoting students' writing skills. This study combined the notion of storytelling with blogging in a multimodal writing task, which was implemented in an EFL writing course. Through student-generated blogs, each non-English major freshman shared an anecdote, a personal form of storytelling, about a memorable event. The anecdote blog task began with the instructor demonstrating a personal anecdote on Blogger, as an example. Then, the students were instructed to post an anecdote of their own accompanied by photos. In the following week, the students were asked to leave comments on their assigned partner's blog post, following some peer review guidelines. The students then revised their blogs based on the feedback from the instructor and peers. The findings showed that

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multimodal writing via blogging positively enhanced students' level of engagement, learning motivation, and learning autonomy. Moreover, the results from the interviews revealed that the students utilized critical and analytical skills as well as demonstrated metacognitive skills in completing the anecdote blog task. The learners also perceived that feedback from peers and the instructor helped them greatly in correcting grammatical mistakes and clarifying unclear parts in their posts, which may, in turn, promote their writing skills. It is hoped that this action research applying multimodal writing via anecdotal blogs offers an alternative for teaching EFL writing, and the integration of anecdote writing and blog task design can pave the way for future research.

Keywords: anecdote, blog task, EFL writing, multimodal writing

1. Introduction

In today's highly connected world with the accessible applications of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), more and more social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, and Blogger) are available to English as a foreign language (EFL) learner to create and generate digital content to share with each other. Unlike other social networks, blogging focuses more on presenting oneself in writing and is also a great way of encouraging self-expression through writing (Liou, 2010). Liou (2010) continued to state that compared with older generations, young people are more fluent with and proficient in multimedia than print. In recent years, blogging has been applied in EFL teaching because they provide learner writers with an authentic language environment to reach wider audiences and allow the teacher and student peers to give feedback and to promote negotiation for meaning. These online media-based environments allow learners to tell stories that combine multimedia elements like texts, pictures, and photos (Hung, 2019). Also, integrating the strategies of multimodality in the classroom has been proven effective in enhancing students' writing skills (Jusslin et al., 2020; Vandommele et al., 2017). Through blogging, EFL learners are engaged in digital composing (Prada, 2022) and create, publish, and maintain their personal, interactive blogs, which allows visitors to leave comments to the authors and, in turn, promotes learning. One such practice presented in this

study was the implementation of the anecdote blog task in an EFL writing course, where learners shared their personal, notable stories through blogs. Moreover, student-told anecdotes could be highly authentic and might be applicable in real-world contexts (Guariento & Morley, 2001). The incorporation of the anecdote blog task for non-English major freshmen enabled them to compose essays and receive feedback in an innovative way. Hence, it becomes crucial to investigate the potential of how the use of the anecdote blog task as multimodal text helps meaning-making as well as exploring the learners' perceptions toward it.

2.   Literature Review

2.1. Blogging in EFL Writing Class

English writing skills have become a fundamental requirement for college students as global citizens since English writing is one of the most used forms of communication in today's era of information technology. Nonetheless, among the four skills of English, writing skills are considered the most challenging and difficult skill to acquire, especially for low-proficiency students. While the traditional writing assignments provide the students with the opportunities to practice the skills, oftentimes they have lower motivation for traditional writing tasks probably because the assigned topics are dull or hard to relate to their lives and the writing instructor is the only perceived audience for the students' writing. In contrast, blogging as an open platform

which invites an increased readership and serves as an impetus for the students to be more mindful and thoughtful of their post contents (Ward, 2004). Chen and Brown (2012) found that increased awareness of audience positively impacts students' writing performance in their blog posting. In addition, Takayoshi and Selfe (2007) warned that if writing courses merely focus on traditional types of paper-writing assignments, it runs the risk of making classroom writing tasks less applicable to the students' present practices of communication in this digital world. Liou (2010) pointed out that blogging was helpful in increasing students' motivation and enabling self-reflections on their writing performance in a writing class. Also, she mentioned that the learning effect of blogging could be augmented if it was combined with peer reviews and collaborative writing using multimodal representation and resources. Hence, the incorporation of the anecdote blog task may tackle the issue of low motivation in EFL writing classes from the following multifaceted dimensions.

First and foremost, telling personal anecdotes by writing blogs allows the learners to use the target language, which will not only bring a positive impact on foreign language learning, but also increase learner interest and engagement by writing their own stories in meaningful ways (Nguyen, Stanley, & Stanley, 2014). Moreover, anecdote blogs written by the students could be highly authentic and applicable in real world. According to Guariento and Morley (2001), learners' own stories offer a rich source of authentic materials, which

provides a genuine purpose by addressing real-world goals as well as facilitating classroom interaction and fostering engagement. Finally, storytelling via blogs promotes learning motivation and yields beneficial psychological effects. Nicholas et al. (2011) examined students' perspectives on anecdotes and reported that anecdote sharing activities improved classroom bonding, developed the ability of narratives, and increased motivation and affect. Hemenover (2003) found that when the students shared personal stories in a safe and trusting classroom environment, their stress can be released, and resilient self-image can be strengthened.

An influential empirical study conducted by Liou (2010) described a case study with 25 English major juniors in a prestigious university in Taiwan who participated in a blog-enhanced writing class. Liou found that students' self-expression and semiotic awareness were greatly promoted compared to traditional paper essays and most of them demonstrated the ability to select and manipulate various media. Also, it is found that the clarity of the students' expression is enhanced due to the inclusion of different media. Another significant experiment was conducted by Lin (2015) on 18 Taiwanese EFL college students over 16 weeks using a learner-centered blogging approach for writing classes. The results indicated that integrating the learner-centered blogging approach into EFL writing instruction enhanced students' writing skills and increased motivation as well as self-efficacy. Nevertheless, Lin found that the students' subjective blogging experience was mixed. While

some conveyed enthusiastic support for the blogging approach and its effectiveness, some perceived that their poor writing skills embarrassed them in the blogosphere. Distinguished from the previous empirical studies, the novelty of the current study lies in the following aspects. Firstly, combining student-told anecdotes with blogging might help provide more meanings and motivation for students to write. Second, the participants in the current study were mainly non-English major, low-proficient beginners so their perceptions of blogging were valuable for investigation. Lastly, the instructor utilized her own blog posts as an example to scaffold the learners to create their own posts.

2.2 Multimodality and EFL Writing

EFL learners nowadays live in a multimedia age so traditional means of writing are enhanced and changed drastically (Liou, 2010). According to Lim, Toh, and Nguyen (2022), multimodality mainly involves understanding how semiotic resources, like visual, gestural, spatial, linguistic, or others, work together as well as including how young people in today's digital utilize it in education. New technologies have shifted the paradigm in written communication, leading to pedagogical changes among educators to redefine text and include students' writing that communicates in multiple modes (Kress, 2003). Consequently, it is crucial to expose learners to various semiotic modes and develop their awareness in writing classes (Kress, 2005; Takayoshi & Selfe, 2007). Nelson (2006) argued the significance of semiotic awareness, which

means an ability to examine and look through media for decoding, organizing and designing multimodal meaning. Nelson reiterates this awareness of multimodal representation of meaning and the allowance of freedom of utilizing multimodality in meaning-making is important for EFL writers when applied pedagogically in L2 writing.

In a similar vein, blogging serving as a means of digital composition is a form of multimodal writing. Research has shown that multimodal writing features several benefits which can promote L2 writing skills. First of all, many studies reported that students showed higher levels of engagement, motivation and exhibited learning autonomy during multimodal writing activities. Lammers et al.(2014) mentioned that multimodal writing products which can be read by a real-world audience not only increase the students' motivation but also lead to higher-quality works. Second, multimodal writing is beneficial to learners with low English proficiency. Smith (2014) suggested that L2 learners can use non-linguistic alternatives like images and photos to express meaning to complement their insufficient linguistic resources in multimodal writing. Third, multimodal composition offers scaffolding to L2 writers. The teacher can use real-world examples and models to guide the students and the students can also search for writing models themselves (Vandommele et al., 2017). Fourth, multimodal writing engages learners in a non-linear and iterative writing process (Vandommele et al., 2017). Thus, L2 learners will go through the recursive writing process from brainstorming, selecting pictures and

editing texts, receiving feedback, revising, and reflection. Despite the potential benefits that multimodal writing might bring to L2 learners, Lin et al. (2021) found that students encountered negative experiences in multimodal writing environments. Their students reported that they were overwhelmed by the information and sometimes felt confused in a multimedia environment, which was probably caused by lack of teacher explanations, and insufficient time to do everything in detail. In addition, technical issues were also a concern, which was sometimes unavoidable in a technology-enhanced teaching context.

Hence, the objectives of this anecdote blog task are threefold: first, to have the students share a memorable event in life in the target language through blogs; secondly, to have the students give feedback on their peers' blogs; and third, to have them reflect on their own blogs and make revisions based on the feedback from their peers, the teaching assistant (TA), and the instructor. As Huang (2016) claimed, writing blogs allows learners to negotiate for meaning in the target language and to reach a wider audience with feedback. Sorensen and Mara (2014) noted that offering students an opportunity to give feedback on the work of their peers is vital because knowledge is constructed from participation in the learning activities of the community. In addition, blogging provides a natural method for promoting social interaction through leaving comments. Online composition creates numerous possibilities for peer collaboration (Vandommele et al., 2017) and L2 writers may obtain knowledge

they didn't possess by co-constructing texts using the target language (Swain & Lapkin, 2001). Distinct from traditional face-to-face peer feedback, peer feedback on blogs is asynchronous, which is less threatening than face-to-face and allows learners to respond to the comments and edit the writing mistakes at their own pace (Chang, 2012). Moreover, peer feedback is not only beneficial for the persons who receive it but also conducive to those who provide it as the students need to execute their critical thinking when they are doing the peer review process (Nicol & MacFarlane-Dick, 2006). Namely, if one can assist a peer in editing his writing, it means he may as well be able to revise his own.

The nature of blogs is ICT oriented, so it doesn't require the instructors to make any adjustments in the curriculum when the classes are forced to move online during the pandemic. Furthermore, the feedback session of this anecdote blog task can easily promote interaction and activate learning, which the instructors feel is challenging to promote in online teaching, compared with face-to-face classes, unless they are well-trained in digital pedagogy.

3. Methodology

3.1 The Teaching Context

The anecdote blog task was implemented in the course, EMI English Reading and Writing, which aims at preparing non-English major freshmen for English Medium Instruction (EMI) courses in their junior or senior years, at a

technical university in southern Taiwan. In this course, in addition to reading and grammar activities in class, the students linked the reading texts to practice writing four cohesive essays with two-paragraph as their assignments as well as revising their essay drafts to gain self-editing experience. The innovation in practice presented here was that the researcher, serving as the instructor, substituted one of the four essays with the anecdote blog task, where students were instructed to write a blog post about a personal interesting story and then publish it online. In addition, due to the spread of the pandemic, by the time of implementing the anecdote blog task, the classes had been forced to move online. While the instructors are faced with the challenges of providing quality instruction with interactive, learner-centered activities during emergency remote teaching (Hodges et al., 2020), this anecdote blog task through multimodal digital composing might be a means to provide educators with pedagogy appropriate for promoting interaction among the teachers and the peers online.

3.2 Research Participants

The participants in this study were nine non-English major freshmen aged from 18 to 20 with English proficiency level ranging from A1 to B1, mostly in A2, on the Common European Framework of Languages. The anecdote blog task combines the personal anecdote with the blog to motivate the students to use the form of blogs to write about their personal stories. For instance,

students can tell a story about a difficult journey they had, a birthday they remember, an encounter they felt surprised, and so on. Student-told anecdote blogs are quite distinct from a typical essay assignment which tend to be formal, academic, and without any pictures. In contrast, the anecdote blog containing images, photos and different semiotic modes in texts is relatively more interactive, creative, and related to lives, which might motivate the students to practice writing in English and edit their writing to obtain better results.

3.3 Research Questions

This research aims to address the following research questions:

1. What are the students' perceptions toward the incorporated anecdote blog task in the writing classes?

2. How does the incorporated anecdote blog task impact the students after they complete their personal blogs?

3.4 Research Framework and Procedures

The present study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), which involves four stages in a spiral of self-reflective cycles of plan, action, observe, and reflect. Through the investigation, it is hoped that this experience can help improve the quality of EFL writing instruction and, in turn, enhance student engagement and learning. The procedure of this anecdote blog task consisted of four phases and each phase lasted for a week, which was summarized in the following Figure 1.

In the first phase of the anecdote blog task, the instructor gave some

prompts for the students to brainstorm and conceive some ideas for writing anecdotes. The students were asked to explore the platform of blogging, *Blogger*, and get familiar with it. Also, the instructor showed an example of her anecdote on *Blogger* to the students. The students started to draft some ideas and search for some photos or pictures they could put on their blogs. For homework, they need to have a blueprint in their mind of their stories and collect the pictures they need for finishing their blogs with an entry of a post containing at least 150 words next week in class.
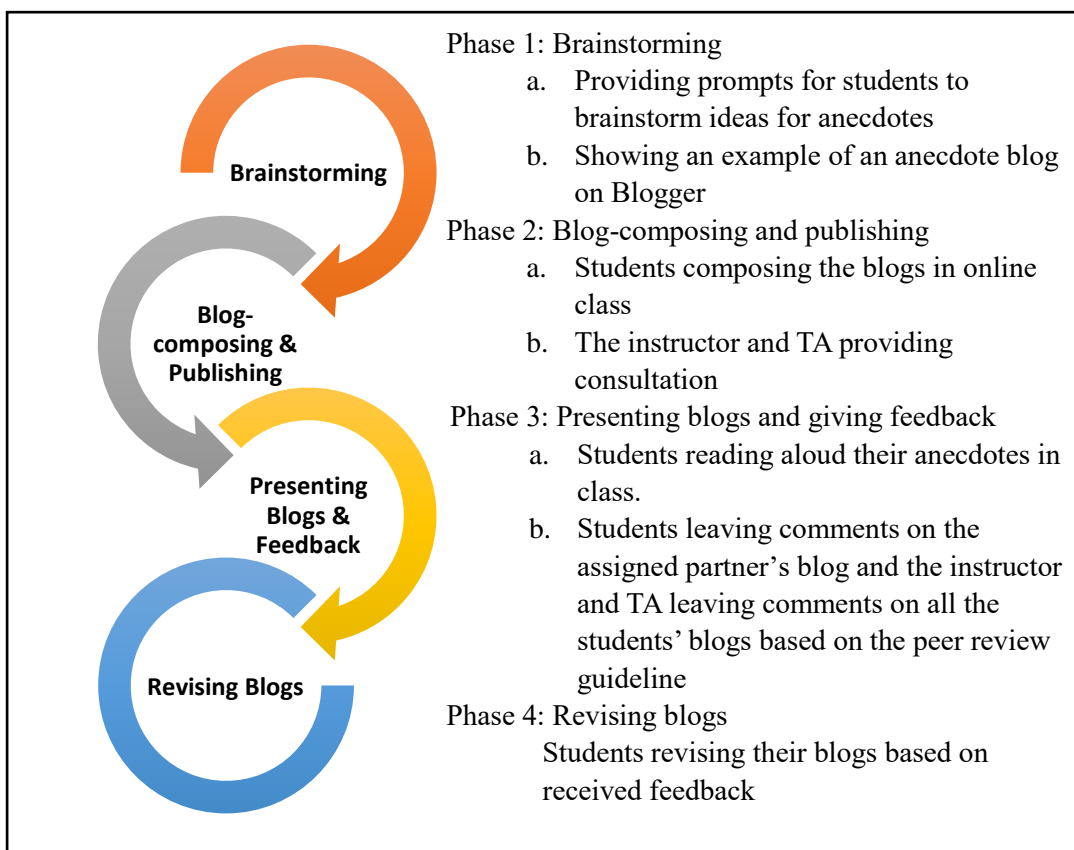

Phase 1: Brainstorming
    a.   Providing prompts for students to brainstorm ideas for anecdotes
    b.   Showing an example of an anecdote blog on Blogger
Phase 2: Blog-composing and publishing
    a.   Students composing the blogs in online class
    b.   The instructor and TA providing consultation
Phase 3: Presenting blogs and giving feedback
    a.   Students reading aloud their anecdotes in class.
    b.   Students leaving comments on the assigned partner's blog and the instructor and TA leaving comments on all the students' blogs based on the peer review guideline
Phase 4: Revising blogs
    Students revising their blogs based on received feedback

Figure 1. Anecdote blog task phases

In the second phase, students composed their anecdotes on *Blogger* in class on Google Meet. The instructor and the TA would provide one-on-one consultation when the students encounter any difficulty. Upon finishing, the students published the blog online and pasted the link to the school learning platform so that everyone in the class could see their blogs. Figure 2 is a student's blog sample. The next week, during the third phase, each student was asked to take turns reading aloud their anecdotes to the class online like telling a story. In addition, the students needed to leave comments on the assigned partners' blogs based on the peer review guide questions (see Appendix 1).
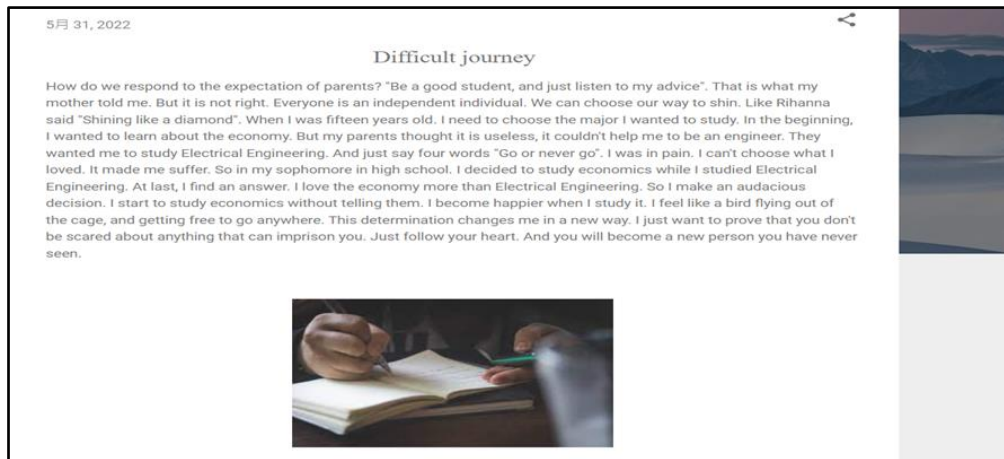

Figure 2. A sample from a student's blog post

Both the instructor and the TA left feedback on every student's blog follow the same peer review guide questions. In the final phase, the students were asked to revise their blogs according to the feedback given by their peers, the instructor, and the TA.

4. Results

Upon completing the anecdote blog task, the students were asked to fill out a survey questionnaire and to have an interview with the instructor. The survey contains ten statements where the students gave a score for the degree of agreement from 1 to 5 (from strongly disagree to strongly agree) and they also needed to write down a short response about the reasons they perceived for each statement.

4.1 Perceptions of the Anecdote Blog Task

Table 1 reports students' views on the incorporation of anecdote blog tasks in the writing course. Overall, the students' perceptions toward the incorporation of the anecdote blog task were substantially positive (the average mean for the ten items is 4.08). For statement 1, 77.78% of the students strongly agreed or agreed that they prefer to write about an anecdote-like topic compared to traditional writing topics. Their positive attitudes about this blog anecdote assignment are also illustrated in the following excerpt taken from the open-ended questions in the survey.

Excerpt 1

"With anecdote-like topics, I can write more freely and have more to write because it's more related to lives." (Student A)

"It's more like writing a diary so I can share my stories and interesting things with the classmates and it's also interesting to know others'

stories."(Student B)

Table 1.

Students' views on the incorporation of anecdote blog task

Survey Statements	% of Agree and Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
1. Compared with traditional writing topics, I prefer to write about this anecdote-like topic.	77.78	4.00	0.71
2. I think completing an anecdote blog task can help improve my writing skills.	66.67	3.89	0.78
3. I think reading peers' blog posts is more enjoyable and interesting than reading regular essays when doing peer feedback.	88.89	4.11	0.60
4. I think giving feedback on peers' blog posts can make me develop my critical thinking and analytical abilities.	100.00	4.11	0.33

For statement 2, 66.67% of the students strongly agreed or agreed that completing an anecdote blog task helped them improve their writing skills. Although two students said anecdote-writing isn't different from essay writing with respect to improving writing skills, others mentioned that this anecdote blog task made them search for more descriptive words and expressions to express their experiences and to enrich the contents of the story, which elevated their narrative abilities. They also noted this task helped increase their

vocabulary. Student C commented on the writing skills she learned from the task:

Excerpt 2

"When I was writing this anecdote blog, because of my topic, I sought many words related to the New Year and some grammatical structures. Besides, through this task, I learned how to narrate to make the content of each paragraph more complete."

For statement 3, 88.89% of the students strongly agreed or agreed that reading peers' blog posts is more enjoyable and interesting than reading regular essays when doing peer feedback, which can be illustrated from the following students' open-ended responses concerning this item.

Excerpt 3

"Reading the texts with the pictures in the peers' blogs is more motivating even though they were in English." (Student D)

"Since going to college, it's harder to get to know the classmates; however, through blogs, we could get to know each other better." (Student E)

"It's interesting to read each other's blogs where everyone shared their lives and with others' comments on my blog, I feel there are people out there growing up with me, which is really amazing." (Student F)

Statement 4 ranks the highest, which shows that 100% of the students strongly agreed or agreed that giving feedback on peers' blog posts

can make them develop critical-thinking and analytical abilities. The students further elaborated their thoughts as follows.

Excerpt 4

"I learned how to find writing mistakes in the peer's post and from others' feedback on my blog. I also learned from the mistakes which I often neglected." (Student A)

"If the partner can find writing mistakes in my blog, which means my English writing proficiency is not good." (Student E)

"Giving feedback on the peer's blog made me examine the post seriously and carefully read through the text, which also made me learn how others used the grammatical structures so I can learn from it." (Student F)

"This practice made me aware that sometimes some thoughts or ideas we wrote may not so easily be understood by others as we thought." (Student G)

"Giving feedback on the peer's blog made me learn how to find writing mistakes and provide our opinions and I also better understand the tenses in English grammar." (Student H)

4.2 Perceptions of the Feedback from the Instructor, TA, and Peers

Table 2 illustrates the students' perceptions toward the feedback the peers, the instructor and TA left on their blogs. For both statement 5 and statement 6, 77.78 % of the students strongly agreed or agreed that the peer's feedback is helpful to them in correcting grammatical and spelling mistakes, and in

rewriting the unclear parts in their blogs. For both statement 7 and statement 8, 88.89 % of the students strongly agreed or agreed that the instructor's and TA's feedback is helpful to them in correcting grammatical and spelling mistakes, and in rewriting the unclear parts in their blogs. From the findings, it might be suggested that the students thought the helpfulness of feedback from the instructor and TA was greater than that from the peer.

Table 2.

Perceptions on the feedback from the peers, the instructor and TA

Survey Statements	% of Agree and Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
1. Classmate's comments on my blog are helpful to me in correcting the grammatical and spelling mistakes in my own blog.	77.78	3.89	0.60
2. Classmate's comments on my blog are helpful to me in rewriting the unclear parts in my own blog.	77.78	4.00	0.71
3. The teacher's and TA's comments are helpful to me in correcting the grammatical and spelling mistakes in my blog.	88.89	4.33	0.71
4. The teacher's and TA's comments are helpful to me in rewriting the unclear parts in my	88.89	4.33	0.71

Survey Statements	% of Agree and Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
blog.			

When asked to indicate the mistakes they successfully corrected based on the feedback from the peers, the instructor and TA, Table 3 presents some samples of the improved evidence.

Table 3.

Improved evidence from the help of feedback

Improved Evidence on Grammatical and Spelling Mistakes from the Help of Feedback	
Example sentences before feedback	Improved changes after feedback
1. The <u>scape</u> is beautiful and perfect for taking pictures. <u>Recommend</u> for <u>those who are not afraid of being tired.</u>	1. The <u>landscape</u> is beautiful and perfect for taking pictures. <u>I recommend</u> this beautiful place <u>to those who is not fearful of fatigue</u>.
2. I also <u>saw</u> the customs of Vietnam.	2. I also <u>learned</u> the customs of Vietnam.
3. <u>Looking at</u> the <u>weather</u> a few days before departure, I said that it might rain in Beijing and the low temperature was below zero, but I was lucky.	3. <u>As I watched the weather forecast</u> a few days before departure, I thought that it might rain in Beijing and the low temperature was below zero, but we were lucky.
Improved Evidence of Revising the Unclear Parts from the Help of Feedback	
Example sentences before feedback	Improved changes after feedback

1. No matter how many times I go to different New Year's Eve occasions, I will be very impressed every time.	1. I rarely get a chance to hang out with my friends. Although it is only a few hours, no matter how many times I go to different New Year's Eve occasions, I will be very impressed every time.
2. But the atmosphere of the New year is still not lost to Taiwan.	2. And I also think that the atmosphere of Vietnamese New Year is even richer and warmer than that of Taiwan.

4.3 The Differences in the Helpfulness of Feedback from the Teacher and TA Versus the Peer

The results showed that generally, the students agreed that the teacher's and TA's comments on their blogs are more helpful than the peer's. As illustrated in Table 4, 66.67 % of the students strongly agreed or agreed that the teacher's and TA's feedback is more helpful to them in correcting grammatical and spelling mistakes than the peer's (statement 9). Also, 77.78 % of the students strongly agreed or agreed that the Teacher's and TA's feedback is more helpful to them in rewriting the unclear parts in their blogs (Statement 10). Although most students thought that the teacher could find more mistakes and could better point out the unclear parts in their writing, a few students still thought that their peers could provide feedback from other perspectives, which is also very useful and valuable to them.

Table 4.

comparison on helpfulness in the teacher's and TA's feedback with the peer's

Survey Statements	% of Agree and Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
1. I think the teacher's and TA's comments are more helpful than the peers' in correcting the grammatical and spelling mistakes on my blog.	66.67	4.00	1.12
2. I think the teacher's and TA's comments are more helpful than the peers' in rewriting the unclear parts in my own blog.	77.78	4.11	0.78

The findings from the interview somewhat echoed the findings from the survey and they generally showed that the participants held positive perceptions about the incorporation of the anecdote blog task. Through analyzing the recurring themes, the responses were categorized into three dimensions: 1) motivation, interaction, and enjoyment, 2) real-world relevance and application, and 3) technology acceptance.

4.4 Motivation, Interaction, and Enjoyment

Six out of the nine participants found that the anecdote blog task could increase their motivation in English writing because it is an innovative alternative for writing assignments, whereas three students said this blog task was not different from the conventional assignments, so they didn't feel motivated. Except for one student, the participants all mentioned that the blog

task could increase interaction through reading others' blogs and leaving comments on them, which increased bonds with the classmates in an interesting, enjoyable way. In most cases, the participants in this study shared how enjoyable they had in reading each other's blogs without feeling bored or tired. One student mentioned that she would not usually write so much on *Instagram* and she commented that she felt more freedom in writing blog assignments because she could choose the topic and contents she'd like to share. Two students noted that they were happy when doing this assignment because it made them feel like keeping diaries which are more related to lives and personal life experiences.

4.5 Real-world Relevance and Application

Almost every participant mentioned that writing an anecdote blog is very close and relevant to their lives and they were all convinced that this skill can be applicable in the future. One student noted that he could use the skill to promote a product, a sightseeing place, etc. Another student commented that she could apply this skill of writing the English anecdote blog to autobiography writing. Still, another student mentioned that in some job interviews which are conducted in English, interviewers may ask you of personal stories. In that case, this anecdote blog will certainly be of great help.

4.6 Technology Acceptance

The platform for writing anecdote blogs in this study was *Blogger*, which

is free, as simple as Word document to use and can help you get your article published online effortlessly. Nevertheless, many students commented that its operative interface was not good to use because it is not so easy to adjust its layout and format as Word document. Also, Blogger doesn't have spelling-function and cannot be inserted with interactive photos or pictures like Facebook or Instagram.

5. Discussion and pedagogical implications

This study incorporated the anecdote blog task into EFL writing course for freshmen. The results of the study can provide writing instructors and material developers with some pedagogical directions obtained from the experience and reflections in this classroom-based action research. Firstly, multimodal writing via blogging positively enhances students' level of engagement, learning motivation and learners' autonomy. Participants' responses suggest the anecdote blog task yielded increased motivation and interaction. Many participants mentioned that the anecdote is related to their lives which kept them motivated to complete the task and reading others' stories increased the interactive bonds with each other. Also, the researcher found multimodal writing via blog can be easily adapted into online course design to create an interactive environment to compensate for what online course often lacks during emergency remote teaching. Secondly, most participants seemed to have enjoyed writing their blogs and successfully

manifested and utilized critical and analytical skills concerning not only their own work but also that of their classmates during the peer feedback session. The researcher also observed that all the students demonstrated the use of metacognitive skills in this anecdote blog task. Cummings (2015) stated that the manifestation of one's use of metacognitive skills is the awareness of his or her level of understanding a subject. Empirical evidence obtained from the survey and interview findings revealed that students were aware of their shortage in grammatical and lexical knowledge. As they were revising and rewriting the unclear parts or correcting the grammatical errors in their blogs, they sought for appropriate words online or asked help from the instructor to fill the gap. Thirdly, all the participants seemed to have benefited greatly from both the teacher's and the peer's feedback on their writing. It is interesting to find that the participants valued the peer feedback and thought it useful as well in helping them correct the grammatical mistakes and unclear parts. The degree of helpfulness of peer feedback revealed in the survey was just slightly lower than that of teacher feedback. Thus, it might shed light on EFL writing instruction that skipping peer feedback sessions is definitely the loss of a well-rounded writing process since the students are much more dependent on their peers than the instructors thought. Oftentimes, the first consultant they would seek was not the instructor but their peers, probably because the power relationship dreads them from seeking help from the instructor.

In the future, EFL practitioners may consider designing and incorporating both individual and collaborative weblog writing tasks to enhance writing courses. For instance, in addition to engaging learners with individual blog entries, the syllabus design can include pair writing tasks with one of the pair members serving as the main author, while the other serves as the contributor. Hence, learners can co-write and go through the process of brainstorming, drafting, commenting, and revising together. Certainly, peer comments from other pairs are mandatory to encourage online reading and writing as well as promote class interaction. Since the integration of weblog tasks can be easily implemented online, with careful syllabus design, it can also be applied to courses of Telecollaboration, or Online Intercultural Exchange (OIE) to facilitate cultural exchange among language learners from geographically distant locations to promote their foreign language skills and enhance intercultural competence via doing collaborative tasks and project work. Moreover, teachers can also assess the progress of the students' writing performance by employing writing tests before and after the blog writing tasks. Lastly, if possible, it is more ideal to include a control group to further verify the reliability of the effectives of blog tasks.

6. Conclusion

While the present study provided empirical evidence regarding how to incorporate anecdote blog tasks in an EFL writing course and this form of

multimodal writing did enhance the students' motivation, engagement, interaction, autonomy, and writing skills, future studies addressing the limitation of this project are needed. First, the sample size and the span of the project were limited. More participants and more anecdote blog tasks should be included to enhance generalizability. Second, follow-up studies should consider integrating speaking into student-told anecdote blogs. Namely, students can share their anecdotes in pairs, groups or in the whole class so the instructor should guide the participants on how to share their personal stories orally. Finally, with the availability of technology, the affordance, *Blogger*, used in this study could be replaced by a more advanced, interactive one to yield better learning outcomes. The researcher hopes that the design of this applied multimodal writing via anecdote blog offers an alternative for teaching EFL writing and the integration of anecdote and blog task design can pave the way for future research.

Appendix 1

Peer Review Guideline

1. What is the main idea or story in your classmate's blog post?

2. What is your favorite part about your classmate's blog post?

3. Which part of your classmate's blog post is not clear to you?

4. Do you find any misspelled words? If yes, please point them out.

5. Do you find any ungrammatical sentences? If yes, please point them out.

6. Do you find any incorrect word usage? If yes, please point them out.

7. What questions do you have for the writer?

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