Chapter 7
Adopting Web 2.0 in English Writing Course:
A Collaborative Learning Approach in NPO Universities in Taiwan

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ABSTRACT

In this chapter, the authors present a Web 2.0 collaborative learning approach that facilitates the English learning process for universities in Taiwan. In traditional English writing course, the lack of intensive interactions between students and teacher may not provide sufficient information for students to improve their writing content. In order to understand how web 2.0 and collaborative peer group facilitate English learning, the authors elaborate the collaborative learning process in both micro view and macro view. The micro view focuses on individual students' viewpoint and their learning stages in web 2.0 collaborative learning. The macro view of learning approach focuses overall interactions between students, teacher and student peer groups. The proposed web 2.0 learning model allows learners to access abundant learning materials from their peer groups. Students can learn though peer interactions and enhance the learning motivation in the collaborative learning environment. By peer learning and competition, students can benefit from various learning resources by adopt web 2.0 concept in the collaborative English writing course.

INTRODUCTION

Advanced information technology has improved the quality of our life in many ways. The Internet makes the information exchange rapidly in our daily life. The telecommunication technology makes it possible for people to communicate with others crossing geographical distance. As the development of new information technology, our real world has integrated with the cyberspace and become a well-connected environment. The relationships in current era are more complex than the old days. Today, people can interact with others through various information channels and connected with each other easily, that helps people's social networking become a loosely connected environment.

Non-Profit organization (NPO) is an organization that does not distribute its surplus funds to owners or shareholders, but instead uses them to help pursue its goals. Educational institutions in Taiwan are one kind of NPO. In this paper, we will introduce a collaborative learning approach based on Web 2.0 that facilitates the collaborative English learning for universities in Taiwan.

Teaching English writing for universities in Taiwan focuses on traditional writing teaching methods. Usually, teachers try to explain the rules and use the textbooks; and students are just listeners during the writing class. The writing course may be lack of interactions between students and teachers.

Today, the world is a global and high-tech era that people utilize various kinds of information communication technologies to improve their life quality. How teachers utilize the internet in writing course and encourage collaboration between students becomes an important issue in NPO's performance. In this chapter, we will discuss how the emerging Web 2.0 collaborative approach is applied to English writing courses and its performance.

Statement of the Problem

In the past, teaching English writing in the classroom might be limited by time. Teachers might only supply few writing samples to discuss in class. Students may read only parts of writing works from classmates or textbooks, and imitate writing from them. The lack of strong interaction between students and teacher may cause students to obtain limited information about how to write English well. Moreover, there may not be enough information for students to improve their content significantly.

Problems of English Writing Leaning in Current Era

Currently, the model of English writing mainly focuses on the interaction between teachers and students. Imitation and learning between students is restricted by time and place. In addition, there may be difficult in achieving the goal of peer learning. With the trend of combining information technology and English learning, the model of interaction and learning between teachers and students may overcome limitation by the use of information delivery. Moreover, there would be far more interaction between students and teachers. This model is called the "Asynchronous Network Collaborative Learning Model".

In order to teach students to improve English writing efficiently, the learning model combines information technology with English writing. It emphasizes providing more opportunities for students and teachers to have more interaction outside of classroom. Nevertheless, interaction and cooperation between students may not be focused on and may not be managed properly in the age of web1.0. In other words, during the age of web1.0, there might be a lack of interaction between groups. Therefore, the power of cooperation and competition between groups may not be strengthened and not put it into practice.

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