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A Synthesized Teaching Writing Approach: The Online Scaffolding Model

พวงเพชร โทณะวณิก*
Phuangphet Tonawanik*
วองชูวุน**
Wong Shu Woon**

*ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์สาขาภาษาอังกฤษ คณะมนุษยศาสตร์และการจัดการการท่องเที่ยว มหาวิทยาลัยกรุงเทพ

*Assistant Professor of English School of Humanities and Tourism Management, Bangkok University.

*E-mail: ptonawan@hotmail.com

**คณะศึกษาศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยมาลายา กัวลาลัมเปอร์

**Faculty of Education, University of Malaya.

**E-mail: Mcky1224@hotmail.com

Abstract

This paper presents a practical Online Scaffolding Model for ESL writing for further experiment to determine whether the model is capable of helping ESL student writers to write independently and to improve the quality of their essays in the ESL writing classroom. Traditional teaching writing approaches have their own weakness and strength; using them separately may not be fully effective. Therefore, this proposed Online Scaffolding Model incorporates the insights of the three main approaches- product, process and genre-oriented – with several key aims. First, the model sets out to give learners the experience of completing an authentic extended writing task by incorporating the writing process which involves prewriting, drafting, feedback and revising independently. Second, the model applies the concept of scaffolding to provide learners with the supports they need to assist them in the process of writing. Furthermore, it encourages learners to make use of the Internet to interrogate information and ideas while conducting research online. More importantly, in terms of language goals, the model provides learners with the supports they need, additional to the use of online dictionary and thesaurus, by introducing and training them in methods to query online corpora while providing feedback on their work by the instructor.

Keywords: Teaching writing, Online scaffolding, Teaching writing approach, Autonomous learning, Improving student's writing

บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้นำเสนอรูปแบบการสอนการเขียนด้วยระบบเสริมศักยภาพทางการเรียนออนไลน์ สำหรับผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาที่สอง เพื่อให้ผู้สนใจนำไปทดลองใช้จริงในชั้นเรียนว่ารูปแบบนี้ช่วย ผู้เรียนให้สามารถเขียนย่อหน้าหรือเรียงความและพัฒนาคุณภาพของงานเขียนได้ด้วยตัวเองหรือไม่ วิธี การสอนการเขียนที่นิยมใช้กันทั่วไปนั้นมีข้อดีและข้อด้อยของแต่ละวิธี การใช้เฉพาะวิธีใดวิธีหนึ่งจึงอาจ ทำให้การเรียนการสอนในวิชาการเขียนไม่เกิดประสิทธิภาพอย่างเต็มที่ได้ ดังนั้นรูปแบบการสอนการเขียน ด้วยระบบเสริมศักยภาพทางการเรียนออนไลน์ จึงเป็นการรวมเอาข้อดีของวิธีสอนที่ได้รับความนิยมสาม วิธีไว้ด้วยกันคือ การสอนที่เน้นผลงานเขียน (product) การสอนที่เน้นขั้นตอนการเขียน (process) และ การสอนที่เน้นรูปแบบการเขียนประเภทต่างๆ (Genre-oriented) และเพิ่มเทคนิคที่เป็นการช่วยผู้เรียน มากขึ้น กล่าวคือ รูปแบบนี้กำหนดให้ผู้เรียนเขียนความเรียงที่มีความยาวหลายๆย่อหน้า โดยจะเรียนรู้ กระบวนการเขียน เช่น ขั้นตอนก่อนลงมือเขียน การร่าง การรับฟังข้อเสนอแนะ และการปรับปรุงงาน เขียนขั้นตอนสุดท้ายด้วยตนเอง ประการที่สอง รูปแบบนี้ประยุกต์ใช้แนวคิดการเสริมศักยภาพผู้เรียน (Scaffolding) เพื่อให้ความช่วยเหลือผู้เรียนในทุกขั้นตอนของการเขียน นอกจากนี้วิธีนี้ยังช่วยส่งเสริม และฝึกให้ผู้เรียนใช้อินเทอร์เน็ตในการสืบค้นข้อมูลที่เกี่ยวข้องกับหัวข้อที่จะเขียนเพื่อให้ความคิด กว้างขวาง และประการสำคัญคือช่วยเพิ่มศักยภาพการใช้ภาษา เพราะนอกจากส่งเสริมการใช้พจนานุกรม ต่างๆออนไลน์แล้วรูปแบบการสอนนี้ฝึกให้ผู้เรียนตรวจสอบและศึกษาการใช้ภาษาอย่างถูกต้องและมั่นใจ จากเว็บไซต์คอร์ปอร่าออนไลน์ (Online Corpora) ขณะเดียวกันยังคงได้รับคำแนะนำ (Feedback) จาก อาจารย์ผู้สอนอีกทางหนึ่ง การสอนให้นักศึกษาใช้คอร์ปอร่าออนไลน์เป็นการลดภาระผู้สอนในชั้นเรียน และส่งเสริมให้ผู้เรียนสามารถเรียนรู้ด้วยตนเองตลอดชีพ

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Introduction

Writing is often an agonizing experience for many native speakers and ESL learners, especially expository essay writing, which among students has been one of the least favored forms of writing [...] for many years (Andrews, Torgerson, Low & Mc Guinn, 2009). Students find it hard to grapple with argumentative writing, a form of discourse often tested in internationally recognized standardized tests such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the International English Language Testing Systems (IELTS) and the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). A number of studies on L2 university argumentative writing have indicated L2 university students' lack of preparation for English argumentative writing, and thus their inadequate performance, producing texts that are often poorly reasoned and minimally developed (Varghese and Abraham, 1998).

Deteriorating writing performance has become a global concern, causing many researchers, educators and policy makers to shift their attention back to research on writing instruction. For instance, the percentage of Year 9 (age 14-15) Australian students who perform below standard in writing is double of those who perform below standard in reading (Ministerial Council on Education,

Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, 2008). In the U.S., indicators suggest that secondary students there have long struggled and continue to struggle to show mastery of written composition (Beck, 2009). Similar trends have also been noted in the UK (Andrews, 2008) and in Malaysia. According to Hassan & Selamat (2002), the writing skill is one of the two weakest language skills of L2 learners in Malaysia.

Most Asian secondary schools, particularly in Malaysia, have a "teacher-centered, examination-oriented teaching culture" (Pennington 1995: 707) and a product-oriented educational system (Pennington 1996). A product-oriented approach focuses on the product emphasising surface level errors and mechanics of the language (Chow, 2007) rather than the process of writing used in teaching writing. Most students do not know how to do free writing, and they do not possess the strategies for composing texts independently. Furthermore, most of them do not enjoy writing and lack confidence in writing on their own.

In looking at approaches to writing, it is important to explore the impact of the use of computer and technology, particularly among tertiary-level students. Since computers nowadays are as "natural in children's environments as TV was to the last

generation, and movies and radio were to the generation before that" (Wepner, Valmont & Thurlow, 2000, p.4), and also because "computers as literacy environments have become an undeniable part of the academic landscape" (Selber, 2005, p.331), it is essential to incorporate computer and technology as instructional components for writing instruction in today's classroom. Despite the insufficiency of school computer labs, almost all students have their own mobile phones or tablets that can easily access to internet.

Since the introduction of computer into educational settings beginning in the late 1970s (Pennington, 1993), many researchers who have investigated the impact of computers on writing have concluded that computers influence the ways students learn to write, and many of these studies suggested that writing on computers can help enhance students' written work (Goldberg, Russell & Cook, 2003).

It is not uncommon to find the use of drills, rote learning and memorizing of model answers (Tan, 2006) in the teaching and learning of writing, which seriously discourages the ability to transform information. Moreover, many English writing tasks are to be completed in the time frame as well as are still conducted

in traditional ways, involving paper and pen. The hassle of writing and rewriting or recopying discourages students to write (Schwartz, 1982).

The process of writing taking place in classrooms was often burdened by the constraint of limited resources. The reality of scant references and resources during the writing class might leave student writers not knowing how to improve the structure and content of their essays, especially when attempting to write within a discursive genre such as the expository or argumentative essay.

Furthermore, many student writers who are English learners do not use English in their day-to-day activities, and hence are restricted by a limited pool of vocabulary and linguistic proficiency. Thus, they often find it difficult to express themselves in their essays in a systematic and well-structured way (Guan, 2009). To avoid this problem, students will then rely on their less-sufficient cell phone dictionary or writing instructors as a source of information and correct language.

Apart from lexical limitations, the argumentative genre emphasizes the semantic micro-functions of individual words and sentences as well as the macro-purpose of language use that seeks to

achieve a communicative purpose at the level of discourse as a whole (Lin, 2006). It also helps to refine written communication through arguments and critical thinking skills. Without an appropriate channel of resources, learning may not be effectively supported, especially among weaker students.

In addition, given the amount of conscious effort put into the writing process, students will expect feedback on their written work and may feel discouraged if none is provided (Hedge, 1988). However, it is necessary to balance between the needs of individual students for meaningful feedback and the unfortunate reality of ever-increasing workloads, some of the problems faced by many teachers (Gilmore, 2008). In Malaysian secondary schools, for example, it is common for a writing teacher to conduct at least three concurrent writing classes, with each class consisting of 30 to 35 students. In other words, the writing teacher will have at least 90 essays to mark for each assignment, and the number will easily double or triple if the process-writing approach is adopted, which demands rewriting of initial drafts. As a result, it becomes very difficult to explain to students the grammatical errors and problematic areas in their essays.

So how do writing teachers in similar situations deal with these problems? According to Badger & White (2000), an effective methodology for teaching writing requires the incorporation of the insights derived from the product-, process-, and genre-based approaches to teach and improve students to write efficiently and to enable them to cope better in their further studies and working lives. Keeping this in mind, the present paper proposes an Online Scaffolding Model, the combination of synthesized writing approaches as well as online scaffolding features, such as online resources, dictionary, thesaurus and corpora in writing practice.

The Main Approaches to Teaching of Writing

a. The Product-oriented Approach

According to Badger & White (2000), the most explicit description of the product-oriented approach is provided by Pincas (1982). This approach is also known as a method to teaching of writing which focuses on writing tasks in which the learner imitates, copies and transforms teacher-supplied models (Nunan, 2001). The focus in product-oriented writing classes is on the written product rather than on how learners should approach the

process of writing (Grabe & Kaplan, 1997). It sees writing mainly as involving knowledge about language structure, and writing development as the result of the imitation of input in the form of teacher-supplied texts (Badger & White, 2000).

The product-oriented approach has its weaknesses and strengths. The weaknesses of this approach are first, that process skills like planning and revising a text are given a relatively small role, and second, the knowledge and skills that learners bring to class are undervalued. Its strengths are that it acknowledges the need to provide learners linguistic knowledge about texts, and understands that imitation is a way in which learning takes place.

b. The Process-oriented Approach

In the process-oriented approach, teaching focuses on the writing process rather than the final product. It includes several stages: pre-writing (brainstorming and assessing of ideas), drafting, seeking feedback (from peers or the instructor), revising (on the whole text level and at the paragraph or sentence level), proofreading and publishing the final text (Sun & Feng, 2009). Most importantly, these composing sub-processes are recursive instead of linear in nature (Chow, 2007). The process

enables a writer to get closer to perfection of the composed work by producing, reflecting on, discussing and reworking successive drafts of a text. Furthermore, this approach emphasises the writer as an independent producer of texts, a framework where teachers allow their students time and opportunity to develop their abilities to plan, to define rhetorical problems, and to propose and evaluate solutions (Kim & Kim, 2005)

Like the product-based approach, it has its strengths and drawbacks. Badger & White (2000) highlight the main advantages of this approach: it understands the importance of the skills involved in writing, and second, it recognises that the knowledge and skills that learners bring to class contribute to the development of their writing abilities. According to them, the disadvantages of the process approach are first, that it does not give sufficient importance to the type of texts produced and why such texts are produced, and second, it does not provide adequate linguistic knowledge and guidance in order to write successfully.

Recognising the weaknesses of this approach, Bizzell (1982) proposed focusing on the conventions of different academic discourse, where the relationship among discourse, audience and knowledge are

emphasised; subsequently, this would help prepare students for the different types of writing discourse at the tertiary level (Chow, 2007). Bizzell also proposed offering external assistance to help guide individual writers to define problems, work out solutions and shape texts.

c. The Genre-oriented Approach

The genre-based approach focuses on the reader and the conventions that a piece of writing needs to follow so that it is acceptable to its audience (Kim & Kim 2005, citing Muncie, 2002). This is an approach where teaching and learning focuses on the understanding and production of selected genres (Lin, 2006) that, as described by Freedman & Medway (1994), could be classified broken down into exclusive categories such as exposition, argument and description, and subcategories such as business letter and lab report (Kim & Kim, 2005). According to Hicks (1997), genre theory calls for a return to grammar instruction, but at the level of the text. In other words, it is concerned not just with the semantic micro-functions of individual words and sentences, but with the macro-purposes of language in order to achieve its communicative purposes (Lin, 2006). Badger & White (2000) highlight the strengths and limitations of this approach. The positive sides of this approach are first,

that it recognises that writing takes place in a social context and is a reflection of a particular purpose, and second, it understands that learning occurs consciously through imitation and analysis. They also point out the negative aspects of this approach, including underestimating the skills needed to produce a text and a tendency to view learners as merely passive.

A Synthesis of Approaches

The three writing approaches discussed above largely complement one another, and it becomes more apparent when their strengths and weaknesses are evaluated. An effective methodology for teaching writing, as emphasised by Badger & White (2000), requires the incorporation of the insights derived from the product-, process-, and genre-based approaches. They also suggest that one way is to begin with one approach and adapt it. To illustrate the above, Badger & White cite White & Arndt (1991), who suggested utilising techniques such as 'group work,' where input is provided by other learners, and 'conferencing,' where input is provided on a one-to-one basis by the teacher. These suggestions were made to solve one of the problems in the process approach, namely the lack of input.

This has inspired the eclectic model developed for future implementation. To begin with, the process-oriented approach is adopted and later adapted by incorporating a few other methods to support the teaching/learning process, which include analysing model essays, researching the Internet for relevant materials, and using online dictionaries, thesaurus and corpora.

The essential idea for the proposed model is as follows:

(1)   writing requires knowledge of the structure and organisation of texts (as in a product-oriented approach), knowledge about the context and purpose of writing (as in a genre-oriented approach), and knowledge about language (as in both product- and genre-oriented approaches); consequently, the use of model essays was proposed.

(2)   writing requires skills in using language (as in a process-oriented approach), so the use of online dictionaries, a thesaurus and corpora was proposed.

(3)   writing requires knowledge of the content (as in a genre-oriented approach), so the use of the Internet as a source for facts and details was proposed.

(4)   writing development occurs through drawing out the learner's potential (as in a process-oriented approach), so the proposed model was a process-based model.

(5)   writing development occurs through providing appropriate and adequate input to which learners can respond (as in product-and genre-oriented approaches), and by providing feedback to help learners through the stages of the writing process (as in a process-oriented approach); consequently, model essays, teacher's feedback on writing and online corpora were proposed.

Scaffolding

Scaffolding features as the core component of this proposed model. The term scaffolding is a technique that involves changing the level of support for learning where over the course of teaching/ learning, the more skilled person (e.g. a teacher or advanced peer) adjusts the amount of guidance to fit the learners' current performance (Santrock, 2008). The concept of scaffolding is closely linked to the idea of ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development) as developed by Vygotsky, often applied to help students attain the upper limits of their ZPD (Horowitz et. al., 2005). According to Santrock (2008), the teacher

normally uses direct instruction when the student is learning a new task, but less guidance is given as the student's competence increases.

Santrock (2008: 49) also mentions that the best way to scaffold student's learning and to help them develop more sophisticated thinking skills is to ask probing questions such as "What would an example of that be?", "Why do you think that is so?", "Now, what's the next thing you need to do?" and "How can you connect those?" Over time, learners should begin to internalise these kinds of probes and monitor their own work (Horowitz et. al., 2005). Teachers who adopt scaffolding allow their students time to sort out and manage their problems and guide them later should they make no further progress (Horowitz et. al., 2005).

One of the types of scaffolding that Yelland and Masters (2007) proposed was technical scaffolding, in which computers or technology act as a scaffold to support the creation and development of conceptual understandings. Wood and Wood (1996) provided an example of the ways in which the computer can act as a scaffold via the use of a software program serving to tutor and guide learning toward specific outcomes. However, Yelland and Masters (2007) stress that teachers play a critical role in this computer-based context. The teacher should appear to be confident in her/his approach and encourage learners to take the risks. Teachers should also make learners realize that there is not always one way to solve a particular problem. It is evident that a teacher who effectively scaffolds learning ensures that children are afforded the opportunity to maximize their potential and use higher-order thinking skills to solve problems.

The model proposed is supported by the concept of scaffolding to a certain extent, and asking probing questions was often used during the redrafting stages of the process of writing. The scaffolding in this proposed model incorporated the following features: a predetermined essay structure, joint instructor-student analysis of model essays; focus on language skills and knowledge, and feedback from the writing instructor. These features will be discussed in the following section.

Scaffolding Features

Scaffolding features for this proposed teaching model are carefully considered and can be chosen to provide relevant and appropriate support to facilitate students' writing. The scaffolding features include:

1. **Explicit instruction**

Explicit instructions in process-writing strategies and essay writing are provided. This feature introduces the writing process. Guidelines for writing a specific kind of expository essay are given to allow learners to focus on the structure of the target genre while introducing them to important rhetorical patterns. Some may regard this approach as overly prescriptive, but Cotterall & Cohen (2003) argue that ensuring the predictability of structure could serve to effectively enhance the learner's sense of security.

2. **Joint Instructor-Student Analysis of Model Essays**

Generally, this instruction seeks to increase student awareness of the generic identity of specific type of essays through genre analysis. It offers a visible means of transmitting the main features of the target genre and the patterns of the target language, while at the same time allowing learners to model the construction of the introduction and conclusion, thesis statements, topic sentences and supporting details as well as focusing on the use of signals, links and transition markers

3. **Use of Technology and Focus on Language Skills and Knowledge**

This refers to the use of technology in writing. First is the use of relevant online materials for content development. Then we can recommend the use of online dictionaries, thesauri and corpora to focus on language skills and knowledge. Students are introduced to searching an online dictionary and thesaurus for lexical input as well as online corpora for error correction purposes during the revision stage.

TheFreeDictionary, for example, contains 260,000 entries. It is augmented with Collin English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged, and is enhanced by 30,000 illustrations, an audio pronunciation feature, etymologies, abbreviations and thesaurus features. Definitions are also accompanied by usage examples.

The British National Corpus (BNC) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) are the two corpora introduced in this study. The key characteristics of these two free online corpora are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1

BNC	COCA
100 million word collection	450 million word collection
British English	American English
Written/spoken English	Written/spoken English
Not linked to other corpora	Linked to other corpora

Key Characteristics of BNC and COCA

Sources: http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/corpus/index.xml, http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/

4. Feedback from Writing Teacher

The teacher's feedback aims to reinforce the uptake of ideas relating to the structure and pattern of content organization as well as learners' language skills and knowledge. While learners' attention is directed to language accuracy and use, concerns are also highlighted regarding incorporating appropriate and relevant ideas in appropriate sections of the essay, linking ideas adequately and using signposting language effectively.

Online Corpora in ESL Writing

Corpora refer to electronic authentic language databases available via the Internet or as software (Hasselgard, 2001). Language corpora are large collections of written and spoken texts extracted from books, newspapers, magazines, journals, transcribed speech, etc., produced by native speakers of English (Gilmore, 2008).

Yoon (2008) pointed out that corpus technology has demonstrated great potential for L2 writing instruction. A corpus approach befits second language writing as it is text-oriented and makes use of words and word combinations as well as lexical patterns (Jabbour, 2001). One of the bases of corpus approach befits L2 writing is that one of its central principles sees vocabulary and grammar as interrelated (Halliday, 1992: Sinclair, 1991). The connection between vocabulary and grammar, known as lexico-grammar, emphasises the co-occurrence or most frequent combinations of words – "collocation" (Biber, 2001). For instance, the noun "arrival" is often followed by the prepositions "of" and "in".

Indeed, many linguists believe that "much of language is made up of such 'multi-word units' [...] Because we now believe that a great deal of language is stored in people's minds as these 'chunks,'" it make little sense to see them as if generated according to grammar rules

alone (Schmitt & Celce-Murcia, 2010: 12). So such structures are best seen and taught within a broader "chunking" conception of the "company words keep" (Kryszewska & Davis, 2012; cf. video: http://goo.gl/EYp9B). This combined focus on lexical input and grammatical function is valuable for ESL and EFL learners as well as teachers. Furthermore, attempts to link the corpus approach with genre analysis have been particularly beneficial in domains such as English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Genre-based corpus analysis looks within particular genres, such as business or legal English, for common collocations, and in the process may enable learners to achieve their communicative purposes within specific genres (Yoon & Hirvela, 2004). Hence, "given such emphases, the use of corpus data has become increasingly appealing" in L2 writing instruction, "where the simultaneous focus on vocabulary, grammar and discourse patterns provides second language writers with the kinds of target language input they especially need" to achieve higher levels of proficiency (p. 259).

Besides the lexico-grammatical aspect, the corpus approach also benefits L2 writing by offering learners a rich collection of real language use. Corpora, as discussed earlier, which are databases of authentic language uses gathered from various sources, expose learners to large quantities of genuine language use; as a result, can enhance learners' understanding of specific uses of target words in a wide variety of contexts and expand their L2 linguistic repertoire (Yoon & Hirvela, 2004). Reppen (2010) also stresses that corpus-based research can identify linguistic and situational co-occurrence patterns. She further explains that native speakers have strong and fairly accurate intuitions about whether a form is grammatical or not; thus they often notice the unusual rather than the typical uses of language. Yoon (2008) claims that the use of corpora gives learners more confidence in the quality of their final product and enabled them to approach writing with less emotional stress, leading to increased confidence in writing.

The third benefit of incorporating a corpus component in L2 writing instruction is that it fosters inductive learning (Gilmore, 2008; Yoon & Hirvela, 2004; Yoon, 2008), an important feature of second language acquisition. As learners examine multiple examples of a specific linguistic item, they are capable of making their own inductive discoveries about the target language. As a result, it leads to student-centred discovery learning which enhances the mastery of the learning process and learner self-confidence (Johns, 1991; Stevens, 1995).

Furthermore, Yoon (2008) states that the corpus approaches not only enhanced learners' awareness of lexico-grammatical patterning of texts, but also affected their approaches to writing and the writing process. Her research findings revealed that students' overall writing process (drafting, composing and editing) did not undergo dramatic changes as a result of corpus use, but the introduction of corpus technology to the writing process encouraged students to take more responsibility for their writing by checking the corpus, and also helped them to approach writing with more ease and confidence.

Given such benefits of corpora use in L2 writing, many studies have urged the inclusion of corpora in teaching materials and classroom activities; however, the call is not for a corpus-dominant writing pedagogy but for the incorporation of corpus technology as just one instructional component in writing classroom. (Yoon & Hirvela, 2004)

There is a wide selection of corpora ranging from in-house programmes or specialised corpora to general corpora (Yoon, 2008). In the present proposed model, two general corpora are introduced - The British National Corpus (BNC) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). Bernardini (2001) argues that the

use of general corpora opens up a new dimension for "wide-ranging exploration of the pedagogic potential of large corpora" (p. 220), which could promote "serendipitous learning" (p. 226, cited in Yoon, 2008).

According to Gilmore (2008), training students in methods to query online corpora encourages them to focus on error correction, and at the same time provides them with the support they need to do so. This approach to dealing with error correction is in parallel with the constructivist theories of learning, which "sees individuals as active participants in the construction of their own personal meaning from the experiences they have" (citing Williams and Burden, 1997, Gilmore, 2008, p. 365). No doubt the corpus approach is more time consuming, but the increased cognitive work should encourage greater learning gains (Gilmore, 2008).

Conclusion

Teaching writing skills to non-native students is a very challenging task for teachers because developing this skill requires much time to achieve student improvement. In addition, teaching separate writing approaches in the writing class may not be fully effective since the weaknesses of each writing approach tend to impede students' writing development. To improve students' writing proficiency,

teachers may need to incorporate the insights of the three main approaches--product, process and genre-oriented-- into the writing class.

The proposed Online Scaffolding Model has several key aims. First, the model sets out to give learners the experience of completing an authentic extended writing task by incorporating the writing process which involves prewriting, drafting, feedback and revising independently. Second, the model applies the concept of scaffolding to provide learners with the supports they need to assist them in the process of writing. Furthermore, it encourages learners to make use of the Internet to interrogate information and ideas while conducting research online. Finally, in terms of language goals, the model provides learners with the supports they need by introducing the use of online dictionary and thesaurus, training them in methods to query online corpora while providing feedback on their work by the instructor.

It is recommended that this synthesized teaching writing model be further experimented in usual writing classrooms to assess if this model is effective and capable of enhancing learners' writing ability and writing skills. Implementation of the model can be comparatively done among classes with similar levels of English proficiency.

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