

Integrating Online Blog in Teaching Creative Writing

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Abstract

This research was set out to examine students' writing abilities in teaching creative writing subject and investigate the students' perception in utilizing online blog as a teaching media and how do the online blog influence them in their creative writing subject? Thirty-one fourth semester students of the English Literature study program in the Humanities Faculty, Halu Oleo University who took creative writing subject in the academic year 2020/2021 participated in the research. Data were obtained from students' results of pre- and post-test on the five components of writing composition, namely content, organization, vocabulary, language use (grammar), and mechanics. The researcher used mix methods to analyze the data both quantitatively and qualitatively. The researcher runs a paired sample t-test with 2 tailed t-tests using the SPSS 16 to test the proposed hypothesis. To reveal students' perception, descriptive data were transformed into words. Analysis of the data obtained resulted in the followings: pre-test score ($M=76.38$; $SD = 8.77$), post-test score ($M=86.29$; $SD=7.78$), $Df= 30$, $t\text{-tabel} = 1,697$ and $t\text{-test} = 10.686$. These results indicated a significant difference on students' abilities in creative writing subject before and after treatment. Furthermore, students' perception on the use of online blog is positively related with the students' achievement. It can therefore be concluded that utilizing online blog as a medium for teaching creative writing is very effective not only in enhancing student's writing ability in creative writing subject, but also in creating a positive learning environment.

Keywords: *Creative Writing, Integrating, Online Blogging, Teaching English*

INTRODUCTION

Historically, writing is extremely a principal point in language skill. It is an activity that can provide an effort in expressing and thinking the sentences and joining them to become coherence and more communicative language. Writing is an essential aspect in learning English Foreign Language (EFL), it could enhance grammatical structure, reinforcing vocabulary and learning idioms. English spelling, word order, or grammar tenses always can be included among

the most frequently appearing problems. However, writing is not only a language skill that has to be learned in English, such as reading, speaking, and listening skills are also very important in learning English.

Writing requires more attention to be applied with reason that not only organizes ideas in making an understandable text, but also there are other significant aspects that will be considered such as content, vocabulary, language use, organization, and mechanics. It seems like most of the students say that writing is one of the difficult skills in English, because writing, especially in EFL, is not familiar to them. Many of the students in the English department need more and more time to graduate their education only because their mark of English writing does not fulfill the requirement in the passing grade score.

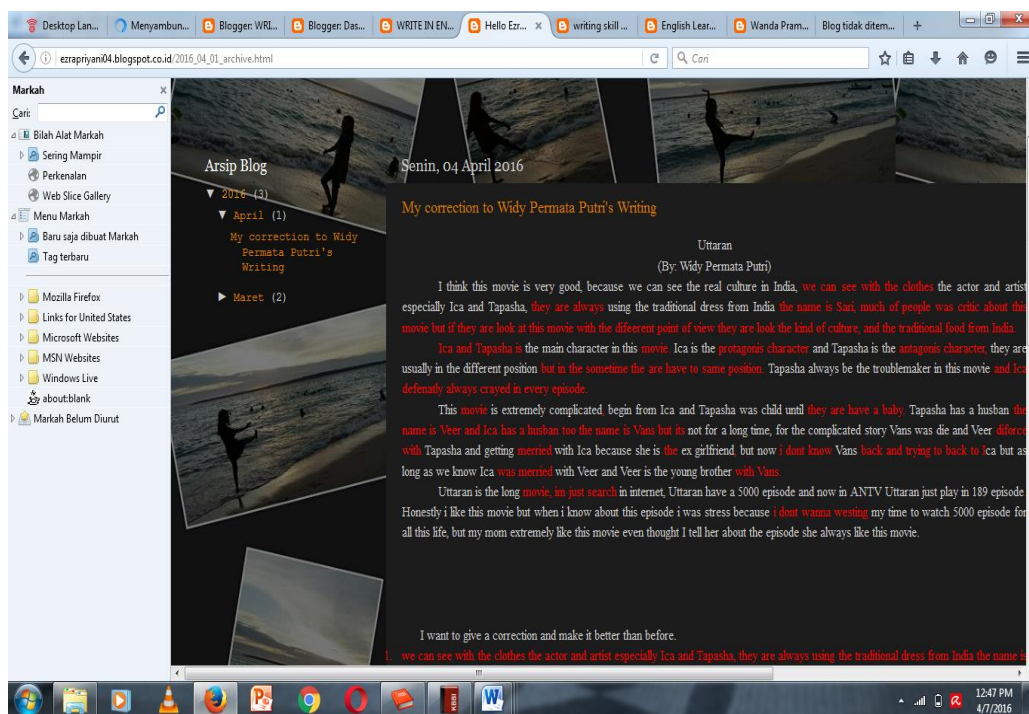
The other major causes why students struggle with writing are because they are unable for one reason or another, to link into their own knowledge resources in a manner that could be understood by others. Most struggling students are constrained by their unawareness that others may not understand the information they present through their writing. Students often are unable to expand upon a topic because they do not have a basic understanding that writing is how to communicate the writer's ideas. Therefore, it can be something easy or enjoyable, if there is a good technique, the well method or media that support the teacher or lecturers in conducting teaching writing. As Grabe & Caplan (1996) stated that conventional techniques for writing instruction fail to meet the various needs of learners or students and practitioners. Meanwhile, the emergence of new technology devices, the internet, web blog, and various web instruments have overed potentially more effective venues for teaching writing. Hence, the researcher here makes efforts to find the solution of those problems, for example utilizing technology such as online blog as an approach or techniques even as a media in teaching writing to the students especially in creative writing subject.

Giving students the opportunity to use online blogs as a media for creating their writing products, allows for a change in their perspective and attitude about the difficulty of learning creative writing by including all the right components of writing and will be able to help them improve their ability to write with coherent compositions in creative writing subject.

The use of online blog in teaching creative writing goes to hook within social constructivism theory; it is the theory of Vygotsky and this is the current educational paradigm from instruction to knowledge construction and delivery. In constructivist approach learning is not simply assimilating the knowledge transmitted by textbooks and instructors but personally building and communicating knowledge. As online blog in language learning needs

collaboration, interaction and learning is a mental process of knowledge building (Vygotsky: 1978). Constructivists view learning as a modification of experiential memory to be more consistent with the present experience. Furthermore, online blog allows the students to attach comments to one another's reflections, enable asynchronous discussion it can begin before the class starts and continue after the class. As Rusche and Jason, (2011) argue that class blogs also introduce the element of routine peer readership, which is a substantial difference from most class journals. There can certainly be an element of peer readership inserted into journal assignments, such as by assigning journal part- peers However, a key distinction with blogs is that they are typically open to one's entire class rather than to one or two peers. For more detail, see Figure 1 an example of peer blog with feedback given as follow:

Figure 1 : Example of Real Peer Blog with Feedback Given



This research shows that constructivist views are useful in the study of online teaching through discussion. peers' feedback is very important for the students to correct, discover, and to improve the mistakes or errors on their blog creative writing

Utilizing online blog on EFL Students in creative writing subject is very attractive. Pinkman (2005) revealed that in language learning online blog has been experimentally used as tools to develop writing and reading comprehension skills: implications indicate that although using online blog should not replace face to face interaction, it may provide a practice environment where students can think reflect, and create language slowly for a real-life

audience. Online blog has been emerging as a new space for communicating via the internet as online communication. Mark (2010) argues that if communication represents an intermediate space between speech and writing, online blog is characterized as occupying an intermediate space among online media. Online blog thus represents a particularly effective tool to combine the publishing and discussion of students writing in a single media. As Fathi, J., Derakhsan, A. (2019) found that blog-based writing instruction positively influenced writing motivation and writing self-regulation of the participants.

Online blog is one of the technological tools that can help enhance writing ability. Parker & Chao (2007) find out that enhancing ability, an individual needs practice and feedback. A number of educators have been using blogs in their classes, and they have written about how blogging is grounded in current learning theory as well as writing theory and pedagogy (e.g., process, post-process, and genre). Positive expectations for the use of blogs as a new technology in language education are expressed early. Furthermore, Minocha & Roberts (2008) defines a blog as a web- based publishing tool which consists of a series of posts by the author(s) on a personalized web page, with posts usually arranged in reverse chronology from the most recent post at the top of the page. In addition, Parashar Panday (2007) argues that blogs offer many benefits to the students since they help to enhance the skills of communicating, sharing, analyzing, reflecting, reading, writing, keeping records as well as promoting collaboration among people and peers. Hence, online blog is a process of reading and writing even listening, to thoughts, views, experiences, reflecting on thoughts, views, experiences, analyzing, questioning, critiquing, reacting, agreeing/disagreeing, and recording your reflection, sharing your reflection. Thereafter, Miyazoe (2009) obtained that blog had a positive role in self-reflection.

Sulistyo, Mukminatien, Cahyono, & Saukah (2019) confirmed that the use of Blog made EFL students enhance their writing performance and became more active in online classes. In addition, Vahideh, A., (2020) highlighted that the blog-supported writing instruction was significantly effective in improving the writing performance in the EFL learners.

This research used a mix method, namely qualitative and quantitative. In a qualitative method, the data were transformed into words. The quantitative method aims at numeric data collection and statistical analysis of data, in the sense to know the effectiveness of integrating online blog and conventional techniques in enhancing students' writing ability by applying pre-post-test design in creative writing subject. Approach implemented in this research is experimental one group pre-post-test design. One group participant is pre-test on dependent

variables and post-test after the treatment is given. This research includes a pre-test that indicates students' prior knowledge before treatment and a post-test indicating how participants measured after treatment. The results of pre-test and post-test of the students' writing ability were compared.

Table 1 : The One Group Pre-Test-Post-Test Design

Pre-test	Independent Variable	Pos-test
Y1	X	Y2

Note:

Pre-test (Y1) aims to know the students' writing ability in creative writing subject before treatment.

Treatment (X) is the use of online blog as a medium in teaching creative writing.

(Post-test (Y2) aims to know the students' writing ability in creative writing subject after giving the treatment under online blog (Ary, Donald. 1979)

The treatments gone to students where the instructors teach the class with an internet connection classroom along with teaching and learning process under web-blog online blog.. In analyzing the data, the researcher applied quantitative and qualitative data analysis. The data of this research is analyzed by using SPSS version 21.

The students' achievement data were taken from pre-test and post-test's result and it was analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean score, median, modus, range, standard deviation). The current research used non-independent t-test or paired/matched t-test to compare the means of two variables in one group (Pre-Posttest). Qualitative data analysis is used to analyze and describe the data of students' perceptions after an interview by using descriptive statistics (describe data into words). Research instruments in this research involved achievement test, questionnaires includes: in-depth interviews and teaching creative writing using Online-Blog. Achievement Test: there are two tests that were given to the students in achievement test. Pre-test and post-test of which result became the main indicator whether or not there is a significant effect of using blog in teaching writing. The instrument used in achievement test is narrative essay.

Table 2 : Instruments Test

Achievement Test (Pre-test and Post-test session)

Subject : Creative Writing

Credit : 3 Credit

Class/ Semester : IV

No	Intruccion
1	Write a narrative individually based on the topic “True Friends”
2	The length of composition is about 300-400 words
3	Arrange your narrative essay as good as possible in terms of developing and organizing ideas, content, vocabulary, grammar and mechanics.
4	Time allocation is 50 minutes

Questionnaires

There questionnaire that have been use in this research is using blog in EFL learning adapted from Jones (2006). In addition, in-depth interview consists of pre-indepth-interview and post-indepth-interview.

Questionnaires Test

Directions: Answer the all-questions bellow based on your experiences

A. Participants’ perceptions towards Previous experiences in using social networks in EFL learning.

- Have you ever used social networks in your English learning experience?
- Do you think social network or Internet helped with your English learning?
- Have you ever used Weblogs (blogs) before this research? If so, could you describe your experience of using blogs?
 - i) How long have you kept this blog?
 - ii) What is your purpose of writing blogs?
 - iii) Is it a personal blog or public one?
 - iv) Have you ever written in English on your blog?
 - v) Have you ever used your blog as an educational tool? If not, how do you think about this idea?

B. Peer Working

- How do you feel like reading the other students’ writing works?
- How do you feel like the other students reading your writing works?
- Have you ever offered advice to another student on his/her paper? What kind of advice?
- Do you like receiving advices from your classmates on your writing? Why or why not?
- Which do you value more, peer feedback or instructor feedback?

(These interviews question are cited in Jones (2006) Appendix D, Interview 1, p.266)

Pre- In-depth Interview Sheet

1. Listening, speaking, reading and speaking, which do you think is your weakest?

2. How do you practice your English writing usually?
3. How much time do you spend online every day?
4. Are you using any social network? What is it?
5. Have you heard about blogs or did you have your own blog?
6. Have you ever used Internet for learning?
7. Do you think writing regularly on your blog will be helpful to your English writing?
8. Is it acceptable to you to share your writing with your classmates and receive their feedback online?
9. What else do you think blogging can help you with your writing?

Post- In-depth Interview Sheet

C. Participants' perceptions towards recent web-blog Instruction effect students' writing and collaboration?

- 1) How would you rate the we-blog (blog) writing?
- 2) How do you feel about your writing improvement?
- 3) How do you feel about your writing ability at the end of web-blog ?
- 4) How was your experience of letting your classmate to review your writing?
- 6) What is the most memorable thing you read on other students' blogs?
- 8) How do you think blogging has affected your reading, writing, and confidence in writing?
- 9) Will you keep writing on the blog after this learning?

(This Observation Sheet and Interview Sheet are adapted from Jones (2006) Appendix E, p.270-271.)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis of Pre-Test

This section explains the descriptive statistics analysis of students' writing competence before giving treatment. The students' writing composition is measured in five aspects of writing band score which is proposed by Jacobs et al (1981), namely content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanic. The description bellow is the result of students' pre-test scores.

Table 3: Descriptive Analysis of students' Score on Pre-Test

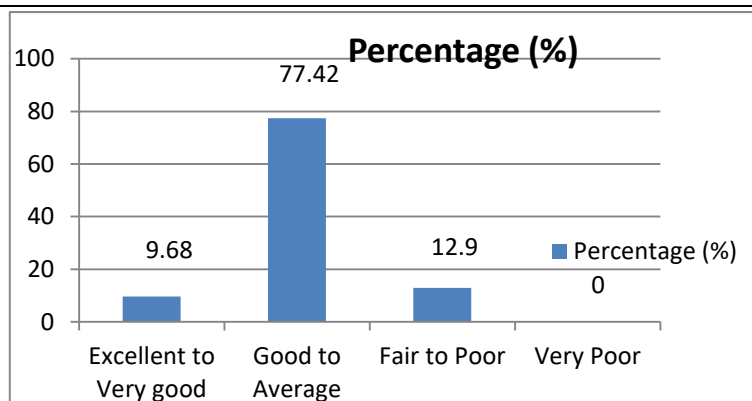
NO.	Students' Score	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	53.5	1	3.2
2	54.5	1	3.2
3	55	1	3.2
4	65	1	3.2
5	73	1	3.2
6	74	1	3.2

7	74.5	1	3.2
8	75	1	3.2
9	75.5	1	3.2
10	76	5	16.1
11	76.5	1	3.2
12	77	1	3.2
13	78.5	1	3.2
14	79	2	6.5
15	79.5	2	6.5
16	80	1	3.2
17	81	2	6.5
18	81.5	1	3.2
19	84	3	9.7
20	85.5	1	3.2
21	89	2	6.5
	Total	31	100
	Mean		76.39
	Standard Deviation		8.77
	Minimum		53.50
	Maximum		89.00

The above previous table is descriptive analysis of pre-test score that shows the description of Mean, Standard Deviation, Minimum and Maximum scores. Based on the table 3 the maximum score was 89.00, while the minimum score was 53.50. Both scores indicated that the students' scores of pre-tests were distributed into two criteria, namely very good and good to average criteria. Although the scores distribution was divided into two criteria, the majority of students' scores were in good to average criteria. The mean scores of the above result are 76.39 which is categorized as good to average (Jacob, et al 1981). Since the students' range scores were categorized good to average it is important that the researcher tried to give a treatment by using online-blog whether the students writing ability can be affected or not. The detail distribution of students' pre-test score is presented in the following table:

Table 4. The Distribution of Students' Scores on Pre Test Scores

NO.	Composition Category	Interval Scores	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Excellent to Very Good	100 - 85	3	9,68
2	Good to Average	84 - 68	24	77,42
3	Fair to Poor	67 - 45	4	12,90
4	Very Poor	44 - 0	0	0



Graph 1: Graph Distribution of Students' Scores Pre-test

Pre-test was conducted before applying the treatment through the teaching and learning process under web-blog instructional program. As shown in table 4 and graph 1, over half the participant observed 77.42% are in good to average criteria, 12.9% in fair to poor criteria, and 9.68 in excellent to very good criteria of writing.

Descriptive Analysis of Post-Test

Table 5: Descriptive Analysis of students' Score on Post-Test

NO	Students Score	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	64.5	2	6.5
2	79	2	6.5
3	79.5	1	3.2
4	80.5	1	3.2
5	81.5	1	3.2
6	82.5	2	6.5
7	84	1	3.2
8	84.5	1	3.2
9	85	1	3.2
10	86	2	6.5
11	87	1	3.2
12	88	2	6.5
13	89	1	3.2
14	89.5	1	3.2
15	90	2	6.5
16	91	1	3.2
17	91.5	2	6.5
18	92	1	3.2
19	92.5	1	3.2

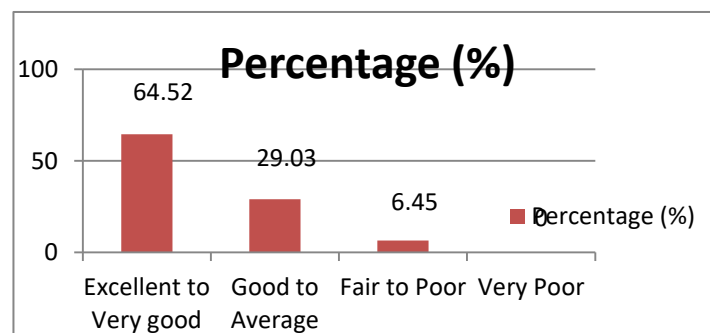
20	93	1	3.2
21	93.5	1	3.2
22	94.5	1	3.2
23	95.5	1	3.2
24	99.5	1	3.2
Total		31	100
Mean		86.29	
Standard Deviation		7.79	
Minimum		64.50	
Maximum		99.50	

The above table is the descriptive analysis of the post-test score that shows the description of Mean, Standard Deviation, Minimum and Maximum score of post-test. Based on the table 5.5, Mean score of the post-test is 86.29 whereas the standard deviation of the score is 7.79. The maximum score is 99.50, and the minimum score is 64.50.

The distribution of students' post-test scores is shown in the following table:

Table 6 :The Distribution of Students' Scores on Post-Test

NO.	Composition Category	Interval Scores	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Excellent to Very Good	100 - 85	20	64,52
2	Good to Average	84 - 68	9	29,03
3	Fair to Poor	67 - 45	2	6,45
4	Very Poor	44 - 0	0	0
Total			31	100



Graph 2: Graph Distribution of Students' Scores Post-Test

Post-test is given after applying the treatment through teaching learning process under online blog program. The treatment is designed to ensure the effectiveness of using blog in teaching creative writing. It is done after the students' is given the treatment with four meetings under online blog program. As shown in table 6. and the graph 2, most of the students about

64.52% obtained “excellent to very good” writing score; 29.3% obtained in good to average writing score; and 6.45% or 2 students obtained in “fair to poor” writing score.

The Comparison of Students’ Pre-Test and Post-Test Score

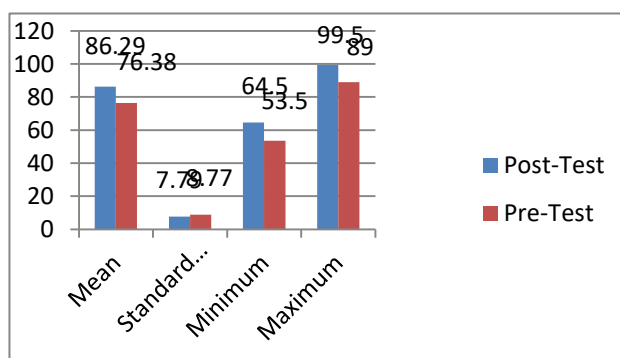
Result of the pre-test and post-test are compared in order to describe clearly the significant differences of students’ creative writing performance after taught under online blog program. Table 7 displays the statistical data showing the comparison between the post-test and the pre-test on creative writing achievement of the experimental class.

Table 7 Descriptive Analysis of Students’ Pre-Test and Post-Test

Student Scores	Post-Test	Pre-Test	Gain Score
Mean	86.29	76.38	9.9
Standard deviation	7.79	8.77	5.16
Minimum	64.5	53.5	0
Maximum	99.5	89	30

Both pre-test and post-test were done to measure the students’ performance before and after teaching process under treatment. The tests are used to check and find out whether the approach using online blog as a media for teaching creative writing works or not. Table 7 shows that there is a significant different score after students are given online blog program. As a comparison, the mean score in pre-test is 76.38 while in post-test is 86.29, in which the gain score is 9.9. Furthermore, the maximum score in pre-test is 89, while in post-test is 99.5, and the minimum score in pre-test is 53.5, while in post-test is 64.5.

The differences on the gain scores both in pre-test and post-test indicates that there is a different impact on students’ creative writing abilities before giving treatment and after giving treatment. It is clear that there is an improvement on students writing abilities after being given treatment using online blog program.



Graph 3 The Comparison of Students’ Mean Score of Pre-Test and Post-test

The Improvement of Students' Creative Writing ability

The results of pre and post-test, it presents that there is an improvement of one level of students' creative writing ability from "fair to poor" to "good to average". Thus, it can be said there is a positive improvement in students' writing on *content* aspects after the participants have been exposed with an instruction using a complementary learning of online blog instruction. In assessing students' creative writing ability in the organization aspect, this research evaluates the aspect through extended profile criteria proposed by Jacobs et al (1981). Writing score in the organization aspect is improving from "good to average" to "excellent to very good" after being treated with a web-blog program. In addition, there is a positive improvement in students' writing on *vocabulary* aspects after the participants have been exposed with an instruction using a complementary learning of online blogging programs. In all seriousness, after applying an online blogging program as a medium for teaching writing, the result indicated the technique of teaching writing using online blogging as a medium affects the students' *language use* in writing positively. The mean score of students in the mechanics aspect got 4 points categorized as "good to average" writing criteria, it improves slightly into 5 points categorized as "excellent to very good" after being treated.

Students' Perception Before Utilizing Online Blogging in English Creative Writing

According to the pre-in-depth interview of the participants' English learning experiences, the researcher concluded the following points:

1. There was a lack of an English language environment outside of the classroom. Most participants perceived that it was the end of learning after school because there was no English language environment
2. Participants seemed not to have the ability of self-learning and depended too much on their lecturers. Some of them had no idea of how to conduct independent learning. Moreover, they did not know how to make the best use of time after attending the lecture for self-learning and their English learning time.
3. Some participants reported that they had limited time to interact with their lecturer. They also stated that they could not receive timely feedback.
4. Some of the participants admitted that the reason they felt it was difficult to learn English

Writing. They did not know language learning strategies.

5. Around a half participants admitted that they were not interested in English writing and they preferred to spend time on other aspects like reading and speaking.

Furthermore, post-in-depth interviews elicit deep information related to participants' perceptions towards social networks in EFL learning. Most participants normally spent about one hour every day on the Internet. Most used their smartphone to connect to the Internet instead of using a computer. They said there was no Wi-Fi on learning's room but there is in the official room or in computer laboratory access. Also, the limited number of computers in the laboratory was not enough for all the students to use.

Students' Perception after Utilizing Online Blogging in English Creative Writing

The Majority of English literature students have positive perception on using online blogging several indicators as follows:

1. The students were confident to write because they felt there is a medium for in-depth consultation with their lecturers.
2. Creative writing ability of students is greatly improved.
3. The students gain fast information experience using online blog with good knowledge of technology and communication.
4. Using online blog improves critical thinking abilities. For example, while the students listen to a tutoring session, the students can access other applications that assist with pronunciation, translation, and speaking. And also, quickly researching words and phrases that the students didn't understand.
5. The students can do assignments on online blog rather than conventional writing on an assignment paper sheet.
6. The students experience positive responses when using online blog as a media in writing class.
7. With online blog students have more control over their learning speed. Students feel that they have the opportunity to learn on their own schedule and manage their time wisely.

CONCLUSION

As the result, the researcher comes up with conclusion that there is a powerful influence of using online blog as a media for teaching creative writing subject at English Literature Study Program in Language and literature department, Faculty of Humanities, Halu Oleo University, in academic year 2019/2020 who took creative writing subject in semester IV. It is indicating that the students gain higher score on post-test than the pre-test. The results indicate a significant difference in students' writing ability before and after treatment. The students' perceptions that using online blog as medium for teaching creative writing subject is effective for enhancing students' writing ability and produces a positive learning environment for the students. Furthermore, findings of this research are also the best suggestion for lecturers themselves to utilize online blog as a teaching and learning medium, especially in creative writing course, and in the other writing course.

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