

Design Principles for EFL Writing Instruction in a Technologically-mediated Knowledge Building Environment

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The purpose of the research was to find out the design principles of an effective, reform-oriented educational innovation in a technologically-mediated knowledge building environment that teacher-researchers may employ in order to transform a university EFL classroom culture from a traditional pedagogy model to a knowledge-building community model. The participants in the research were nineteen second-year university students of the Department of Applied Foreign Languages of a university of technology in Taiwan. Among the 19 students, 4 were male and 15 female. The ages of the 19 participants ranged from 20 to 23, and they had studied English in Taiwan for 7 to 10 years. Three “design experiment” (Bereiter, 2002a; Brown, 1992) iterations were carried out, over two-semester period, to assess how the epistemology, curriculum, technology, new forms of interactivity, knowledge-building environment, and educational innovations shaped the transition. Three kinds of data were collected at the end of the iterations: (1) quantity of participation in *Knowledge Forum*®; (2) quality of essays; and (3) qualitative, open-ended interviews. The findings suggested the quantity of students’ participation increased and their essay-writing quality improved. It was concluded that the design experiments were effective in shifting the classroom culture toward knowledge building community model, but that more time would be needed to fully achieve the expected results.

keywords: EFL, writing instruction, knowledge building community, design experiment

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