Reflections on Teaching English Composition Online During the Pandemic

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Abstract:

In 2020, the coronavirus pandemic struck across the world, impacting modes of teaching across the globe. Many academic institutions had to shift from face-to-face learning to online learning. Such was the case with this author. During the Spring 2020 semester and extending into the Fall 2020 semester, this author taught a College English writing course online to Chinese students enrolled in a dual degree program. The author delivered his course content in the Blackboard language management system (LMS).The author will present a reflection on his teaching experience under these novel circumstances. He will reflect on how backward design with activities that hasten critical thinking facilitate learner acquisition of learning objectives. He will demonstrate how instructional technology can hasten the instructor's cognitive presence and teaching presence to enable learners to reach learning goals.

Background:

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted all aspects of society including higher education. The author is a College English composition instructor, employed with an American University that has a collaborative for educational agreement with a Chinese university.

The instructor was traveling during the Winter 2020 Break. He attended the CamTESOL 2020 Conference in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Intending to return to China to resume teaching during that time, he received notice that he was not to return to mainland China due to the SARS-COV-2 outbreak occurring on her territory during the months of February and March 2020.

As a result, the author returned and relocated to his home in the United States.

Subsequently, he received notice from his employer that he would be teaching online from his home. He taught English Composition online to his Chinese students during the Spring 2020 and Fall 2020 semesters.

This retrospective study aims to discuss what are best practices for teaching an online English writing course to his learner demographic. It will describe how to design an online course that is intuitive and easy for an English as a Second Language learner to navigate to retrieve information and to upload homework.

He will also describe activities that can be used which can help enhance learners' critical thinking in writing English as a Second Language. This will be adapted to online teaching. He will also mention what are some online tools which can be used for enhancing critical thinking.

He also will describe what are best practices for maintaining instructor presence in a distance learning mode to both motivate students and to keep them on task for completing their course requirements.

This study is particularly aimed at an audience that teaches academic writing to L2 learners and which consists of instructors and / or educators who are using language management systems such as *Blackboard, Moodle,*and *Canvas.*

Literature Review:

Flower and Darby (2019) contended that online instructors need to ensure they have clearly established learning objectives at the beginning of each academic term (pp. 8, 9). They mentioned that instructors should provide means to gauge how well students have reached those objectives and they should determine what is necessary to help learners reach those goals.

In sum, the instructor needs to keep these objectives in mind in the online course and should ensure that the course design aids learners in reaching their objectives.

Based on his teaching experience, this author has aimed to make the course design as simple as possible. In using the *Blackboard* LMS, one should have a course menu populated with only the relevant information that students will need to access in the course.
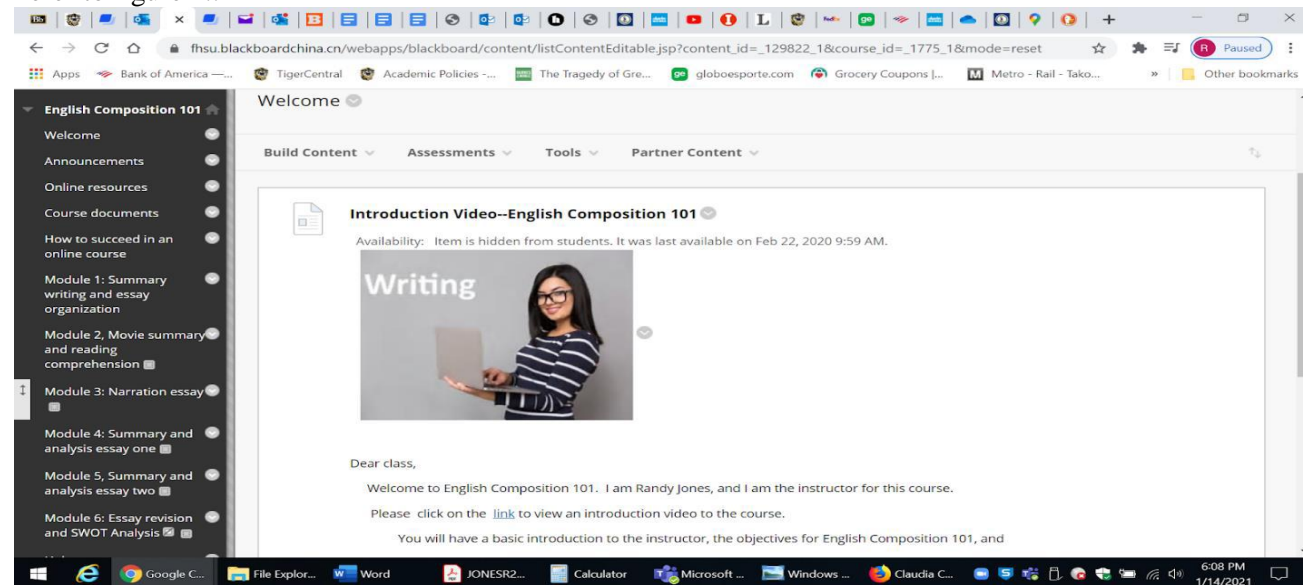
Refer to figure 1.:

Figure 1: Course menu items in a Blackboard course

In figure 1, there are items along the course menu items such as "Welcome", "Announcements", "Online resources", and course documents that can be accessed by clicking on those items. From there, learners can read the introduction content and become familiarized not only with the course but also with the resources and the layout of the learning management system.

Another important premise to mind is that the course layout be as intuitive as possible and easy to read. The course designer should forestall content nesting to enable the reader to more readily access course content and reduce navigation of redundant content.

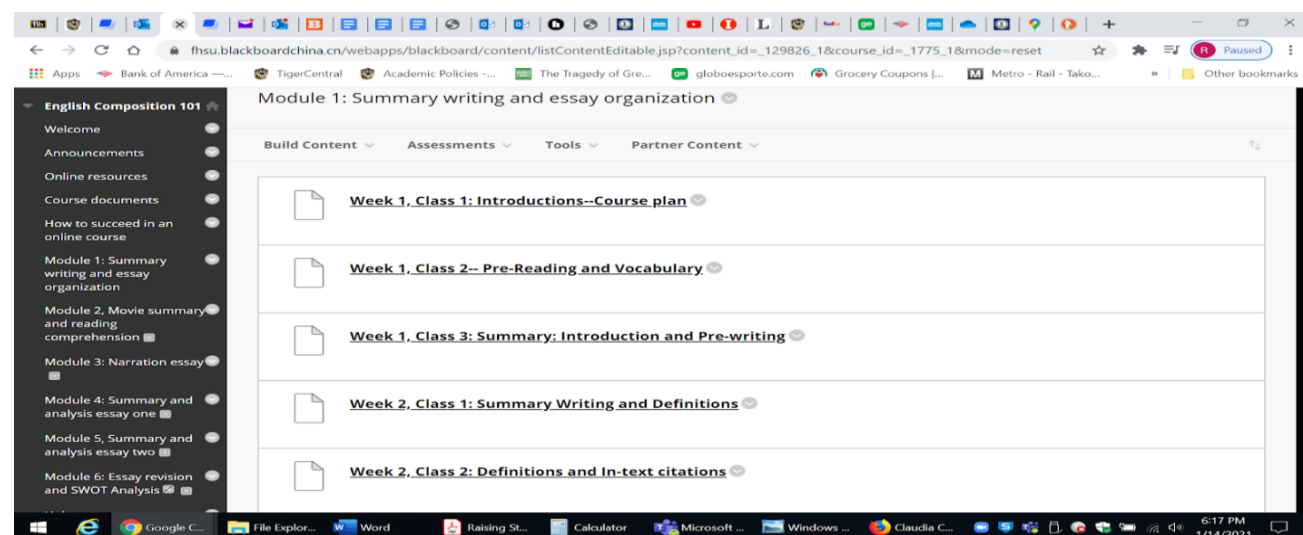In figure 2, we observe the following course module listed in chronological order.

Figure 2: Course module for a Blackboard course

At face value, one can observe that these are listed chronologically and easily accessible by a click of a button. The instructor can present the objectives for the particular module along with the activities that he wants to teach to learners.

In the example above you have a class session for the initial session of the first week of the class, "Week 1, Class 1,: Introductions--Course plan".

The instructor can furnish class objectives at the beginning of this page.

Figure 3: Class objectives for the first class session

He can then provide the online resources students will need to refer to during the class module. Following this, he can present the particular activities that will be addressed in the class.

Figure 4: Class objectives for the first class session and homework for the second class session

An activity such as a *Scavenger Hunt* is appropriate where a student is asked o fill out a form and identify where resources in the online course are located. They may be asked where to can find where their grades for the course are located in the LMS or where to locate the discussion board prompts. They can be asked where to identify personal information in the LMS, including changing their LMS password and their primary e-mail account.

Such activity serves to enable learners to familiarize themselves with the learning management system's layout. A learner can also reflect on their experience in online learning by completing a survey where they are asked about their prior online learning experience.

Following this, the instructor can provide a homework assignment and then provide a link to the discussion forum.

Then, the instructor can furnish a link to the next online lesson in a link at the end of the discussion forum.

Providing hyperlinks to webpages and other online resources are helpful to learners. An instructor can enter into the "Edit" mode of their LMS and generate hyperlinks to the resources in question to create links to course content within the LMS or to external sources on the World Wide Web.

Providing a well-designed web page allows easy navigation of learners.

An important premise of web design is to also provide a site on the course menu that lists all of the relevant online sources students will need.

Here is a list of such resources available for one of the courses which I previously designed.
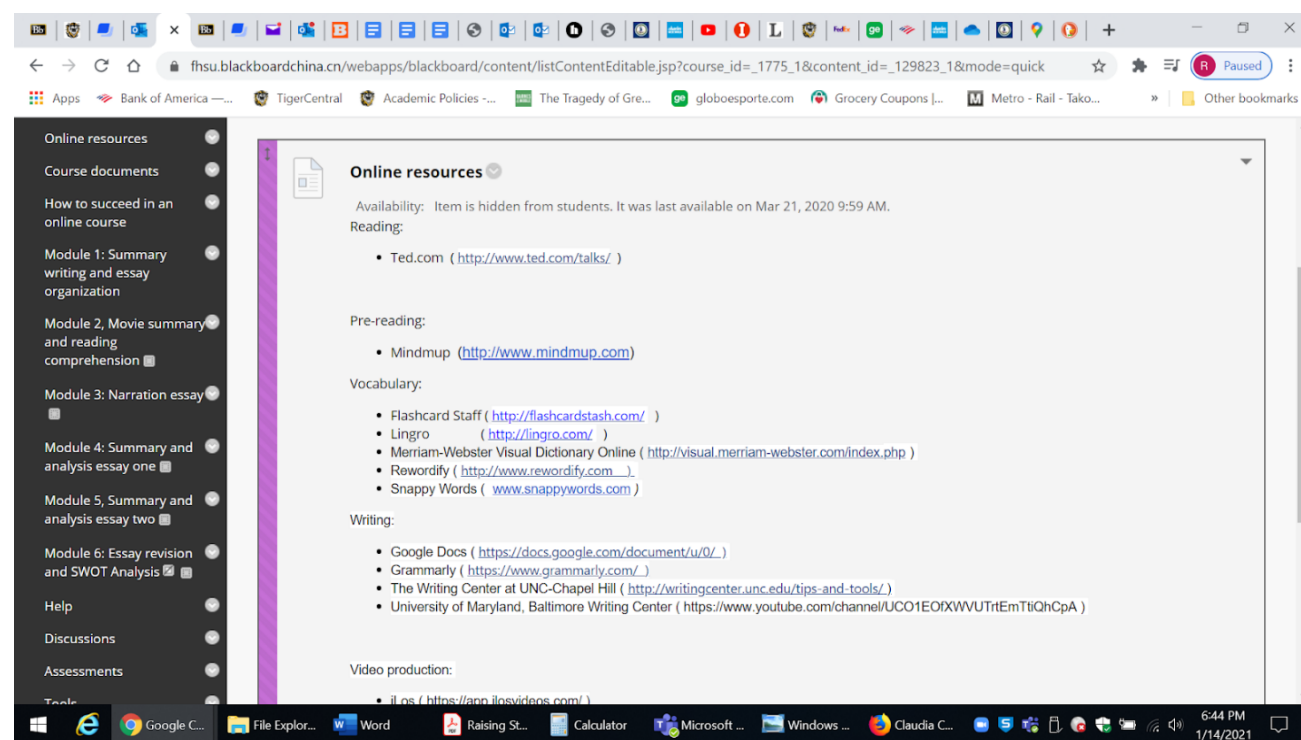
Figure 5: Online resources

It is very helpful to learners to make these online resources readily available. This may be the case when a student may not recall where to find the resource in his or her class module. A student is provided with ease of access to the resources in case they may not remember were these are located within their course modules.

It also is necessary that course activities support the development of critical thinking skills. The instructor can help learners cultivate and develop critical thinking faculties by establishing teaching presence and cognitive presence in the online classroom.

Bailin, Case, Coombs, and Daniels (1999) described critical thinking as solving problems with the skill sets and the aptitudes that they have available. (as cited in Shim & Walczak, 2012, p. 17). It is implicated with problem solving and effective reasoning. (King, Kendall-Brown, Lindsay, and Van Hecke (2007), as cited in Shim & Walczak, 2012, p. 19). The construct of problem solving was described as having the "capacity to make reflective judgements; think critically and independently; and analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information to make decisions and solve problems." (King et al., as cited in Shim & Walczak, 2012, p. 19).

Many of the aforementioned faculties, in turn, are directly correlated to Bloom's taxonomy.

Figure 6 presents Bloom's Taxonomy that was originally created by Benjamin Bloom in 1958 with an adaptation in 2001 by Lorin Anderson. (Overbaugh & Schultz, n.d.)
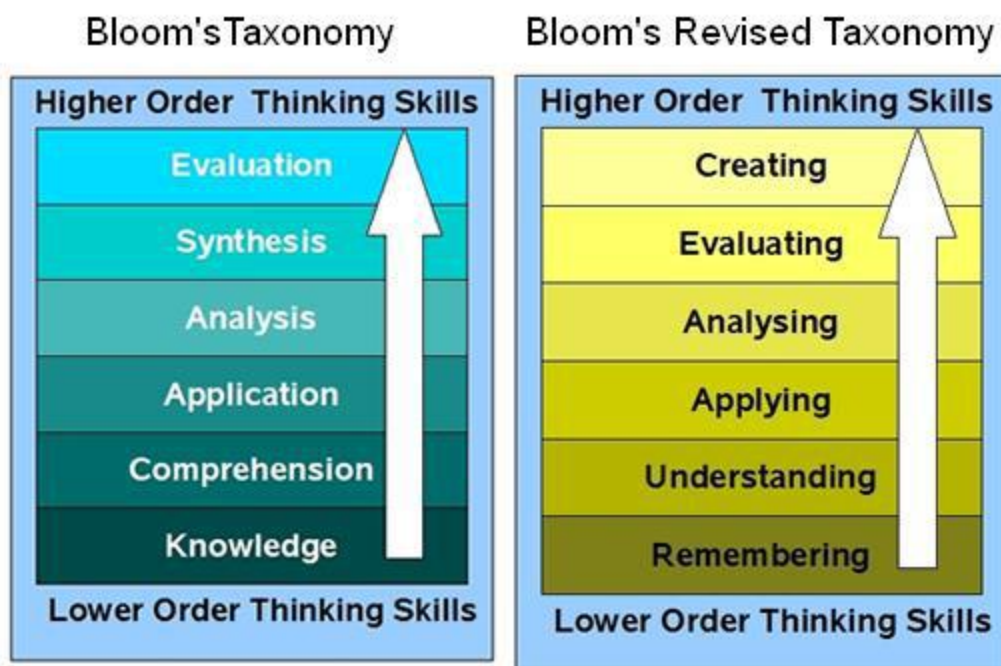
Figure 6: Bloom's Taxonomy and Bloom's RevisedTaxonomy, (Roberts, 2011)

Given the curricular requirements of coursework which require students to know how to read texts, comprehendtexts, analyze texts, summarize texts, evaluate texts, and integrate ideas from source articles in argumentation essays or in research papers, it is fundamental to hasten the appropriation of the higher order thinking skills from Bloom's taxonomy into the learner's writing assignments.

Thus, it is incumbent on the instructor to develop assignments and activities that help trigger the higher order critical thinking skills catalogued in Bloom's taxonomy.

Regarding the thinking processes associated with Bloom's Taxonomy, he associates activities such as memorizing and listing with *remembering* on Bloom's taxonomy scale, paraphrasing and summarizing with *understanding,* interpreting and problem solving with *applying,* comparing, contrasting, questioning, and testing with *analysing*, appraising, judging, and arguing with *evaluating,* and creating, designing, formulating, and writing with *creating*. (Overbaugh & Schultz, n.d.)

The college writing course offered by our university aims to help students develop and acquire these higher order thinking skills via their academic writing in the learning objectives furnished in the course syllabi.

In our program, our institution offers an English Composition I course during the Fall semester, and an English Composition II during the Spring semester. During the fall semester, students enrolled in the English Composition I course learn how to read, comprehend, and annotate source materials in the form of magazine, newspaper, or journal articles and how to produce original summaries of the same. They also learn how to compose expository essays and how to produce argumentation essays.

During the spring semester, learners enrolled in the English Composition II course learn how to critique articles and online essays and they also prepare for, compose, and revise research essays via a process-writing approach.

These two writing courses require students to learn and to leverage these higher order thinking skills into their writing.

The key takeaways which students gain from such training include learning to integrate ideas of others in their essays with proper authorial attribution, enhancing analytical skills, and enabling learners to compose prose that is well organized, well-reasoned, and original.

Another encouraging takeaway for the instructor who is designing such an online writing course for L2 learners is that they do not need to invest an inordinate amount of time in learning online instructional technology to help hasten these higher order thinking skills in their students' writing.

The LMS which an instructor uses in their course can assist in developing these higher order thinking skills among their students. The instructor can easily embed instructional videos, announcements, and other multimedia within the LMS.

With a well-designed course, it is important to ensure that ultimate learning objectives are reached. *Backward design* can ensure that the LMS design aids in ensuring that these objectives are fulfilled.

Wiggins and McTighe (2006) defined backward design as an instructional orientation in which learners know what are the learning objectives at the beginning of the term and where the instructor designs the course with assessments, activities, and materials that help learners reach those stated goals throughout the term.

It is characterized by the inclusion of multiple assessments and by the instructor aiding learner achievement of course objectives goals by providing feedback and instruction to learners throughout the term.

Similar to the notion of beginning with the end in mind which Steven Covey (1989) conveyed in his book Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, instructors are encouraged to identify the goals and objectives of the course which there are teaching and then to carefully design the LMS so as to facilitate learners reaching those goals with the greatest opportunity for success at the end of the term.

Wiggins and McTighe (2006) suggested three stages in designing a course to ensure that it follows these principles of backward design.: 1) Identify desired results, 2) Determine acceptable evidence, and 3) Plan learning experience and instruction.

In Stage 1, the instructor of the LMS should carefully identify the desired objectives he wants students to reach and of course before he or she begins designing the course. This is the stage where the instructor identifies the course objectives and considersthe types of skills they want students to develop.

Stage 2 deals with evaluating how well learners achieved the objectives and how well they understood the content which was taught them. In this stage, the instructor should consider materials and assessments that should be used to adequately evaluate the learner. Here they design quizzes, relevant discussion topics, and produce writing assessments to evaluate learners.

Stage 3 refers to the selection of the particular assessments the instructor will deploy to enable learners to reach these objectives. This is where the instructor specifically decides what materials will be used by the instructor to facilitate learner achievement of the learning goals.

There are a couple of key applications of backward design to online teaching. First, the instructor decides early on what objectives he wants students to reach before he populates the LMS with materials and activities help learners reach the goals from week to week. Next, the instructor carefully considers the skills he wants students to develop throughout the term, and then provides carefully selected materials to help students successfully develop those skills.

Discussion boards, quizzes, and assessments of student writing are effective means of evaluating learners in an EFL writing course. Along with this, these resources can help hasten critical thinking skills among learners.

Shim and Walczak (2012) conducted research on the kinds of pedagogical practices and assignments reported by learners which enabled them to hasten critical thinking skills. According to the results of their research, asking challenging questions in the classroom helped hasten critical thinking among learners (p. 21).

In designing his course, the author has aimed to furnish challenging discussion questions in the weekly discussion boards which are designed to assess learning comprehension of course content. The author aims to furnish questions on the discussion boards that helped learners make evaluations of concepts being learned in the course.

For instance, the authorintroduced a summary of an article obtained from *China Daily Online*, "Big brands cash in on China's bling obsession" in the English Composition I course. Learners were introduced to the module on writing summaries. The instructor intended to present a model summary of the article and to elicit discussion of ideas brought up in the text. Leading up to the assignment, the instructor asked learners to read the article. They also were furnished with a list of definitions of key vocabulary terms, and they also completed a worksheet with discussion questions based on the article content.

These comprehension questions served as a formative assessment that enabled learners to become familiar with some of the key main points that were also incorporated into the summary of the article.

The article addressed issues such as "conspicuous consumption", "luxury brands", while exploring the impact of materialism on the buying decisions of *nouveau riche* Chinese.

In a discussion board, the instructor furnished the following discussion prompt based on this article.:
The article's main point is that young, nouveau riche Chinese spend too much on luxury brand products without minding the cost of producing these goods.

This article was written 9 years ago, in 2011. Think about now, in 2020. Do you still agree with this idea? Do you agree, or disagree, thatyoung, nouveau riche Chinese spend too much on luxury brand products without minding the cost of producing these goods?

Provide an answer to this topic in a well-reasoned discussion post of 75 – 100 words.
Figure 6:Discussion Prompt, Discussion Board, English Composition I

This discussion prompt lent itself to analysis and an evaluation of the article content. The prompt provides context by allowing learners to evaluate the attitudes and buying behavior of young, rich urbanites in 2020 as compared to in 2011.

Then, learners had to furnish an argument where they presented their thesis on this topic, followed by an attempt at defending their claim. Such discussions also allow for the instructor to consolidate teaching presence by furnishing follow up comments and questions on learner remarks in these discussion boards.

Such an activity rates high in terms of authenticity and validity. Learners are motivated to discuss a topic that is common in urban China and which learners are familiar with. It also is valid because learners need to demonstrate ability to read and appraise the content they are tasked with summarizing. Learners, in turn, are motivated to make appraisals on a discussion prompt based on an authentic text culled from an online periodical that learners read and comprehended.

Students can engage in a variety of assignments where they leverage critical thinking skills to adequately meet the assignment requirements. One of these includes evaluating citations from source texts to ensure they are adequately documented according to American Psychological Citation (APA) conventions.

Appendix A refers to a source text with a reference entry which documents the author, the book title from which the text is extracted, and publishing information for the same. The learners review APA in-text citation rules for documenting quotations and paraphrases from sources. After this, the instructor assigns homework and requests that students identify if the source content is properly cited or erroneously cited. There are ten citations of the text which the students must rate for accuracy.

After students complete the assignment, the instructor reviews the answers with learners via a live *Zoom* session. This serves as a review of the assignment. Furthermore, the instructor can use the "Annotate" feature of *Zoom* when they share their screen with students which allows the instructor to highlight text on the screen and share that with students. They can compare the source paragraph with the citations in the exercise to show learners how the citation is properly or improperly formatted. Using such a heuristic device, in turn, can aid learners in determining if the source content is correctly formatted and documented according to APA protocols.

Most of the higher order thinking skills inventoried and Bloom's taxonomy are leveraged during this exercise. Students have to read and recall the content from the source text. They have to compare the citations in their exercises with the source content to discern if the student accurately quoted or paraphrased the note. They need to evaluate if the citation identifies the author and the year of publication in a signal phrase that introduces the notes or in a parenthetical citation at the end of the note.

This review of in-text citations serves as a formative assessment of some of the skills that learners will need to master as they produce expository essays such as comparison and contrast essays, argumentation essays, or research essays. It certainly serves as a relevant formative assessment due to the need for learners to integrate evidence, facts, and information from source materials into their essays to support their claims in writing.

Another relevant assignment is requiring learners to critique source articles. In Appendix B, the author furnished a critique of a source article, "Student anxiety." The critique begins with an introduction to the article and to the articles' main points. Following this, there is a summary of the article's main point. Following this, there is an evaluation of the source in terms of its reliability as a source article by the learner.

Learners are required to critique source articles in preparation for composing their research essays. In the context of the author's course, he had his students evaluate one source essay which they have previously read in their research essay for validity and reliability. This exercise activates the higher order thinking skills inventoried in Bloom's taxonomy.

Critiques entail analyzing a text and appraising the text according to pre-defined criteria. For example, regarding the source article documented in Appendix B, "Student anxiety", a learner may rate this as an adequate source because it was published in a peer-reviewed journal which included original research by two scholars.

However, the author of the sample critique argued that the authors did not adequately describe how the online orientation program described in the study helped reduce the anxiety faced by graduate students upon enrolling in such programs. Furthermore, the author felt that the sample researched in the study was not sufficiently large nor adequately diverse in order to make generalizations on the findings of this research.

Such a model critique provides a clear exemplar of how to critique an article. For one, it enables learners to review the organization of ideas in a critique essay. It clearly demonstrates that the learner is aiming to make connections between the article content and what they have learned in regard to criteria for evaluating source materials to be used in a research essay.

Indeed, making inferences on the validity and reliability of source materials is intrinsically connected to critical thinking.

With the requirement that learners leverage thinking skills inventoried in Bloom's Taxonomy, it is incumbent on the instructor to facilitate learning by means of scaffolding activities that lead to learner comprehension and eventual intake of the skills in question. Taking advantage of the LMS design and providing appropriate scaffolding can enable learners tomore easily grasp these skills.

Bandura (1977) noted that achieving success on tasks enables learners to increase their confidence in achieving their future goals (as cited in Darby & Lang, 2019, p. 145). Providing scaffolding has a positive impact on learners' affect, and it predisposes learners to remain motivated throughout the course.

The instructor can use scaffolding to help learners become acquainted with LMS resources they will need to use throughout the academic term. For instance, Darby and Lang indicated that an instructor can show learners how to post a videoto a discussion board in their LMS (p. 146). In such a case, an instructor presents a video on a discussion board that shows the steps for launching a session on a videoconferencing platform such as *VidGrid*. The instructor can then record the session, and use the *share screen* feature on *VidGrid* to walk learners through the process capturing information on the computer screen showing how a student can record a *Zoom* session. He can also show learners how to embed the *VidGrid* recording within the Discussion Board of their LMS.

The instructor, in turn, can provide links to online tutorials that show users how to leverage other features of the *VidGrid*software. Learners can establish autonomy on using the software by watching the videos and practice utilizing the learnt features when they produce future *VidGrid*recordings.

Scaffolding activities can also be used in teaching students other learning points in the curriculum throughout the semester, such as teaching students how to summarize an article.

Regarding the summary of the article "Big brands" referred to in this research, I demonstrate to learners how I extracted a thesis from the article. I also used *VidGri*d presentations where I demonstrate where I derived ideas from the source text to produce a debatable thesis on the beginning of my summary paragraph.

Such a demonstration can be recorded in a brief, 3 - 4 minute*VidGrid*video recording which can be posted to the relevant learning module on the LMS that addresses summarizing source articles.

Along with this, having clearly presented materials to learners can foster learner critical thinking skills and can also motivate students to reach the learning objectives. In their research, Shim and Walczak (2012) reported that furnishing well organized presentations along with frequently explaining abstract concepts to college freshmen correlated with learners' self-perceptions of improvement in critical thinking (p. 24).

Within his course design, the author would include *VidGrid*presentations that would both explain abstract concepts to learners. He has embedded Powerpoint videos in his *VidGrid*presentations that explain what is a summary,what purpose does a summary serve, and what specific steps should be taken to compose original summaries of articles.

Therefore, one key inference to be derived in regard to clear presentations is that they help hasten critical thinking by enabling learners to understand specific writing assignments, to apply specific instructions in writing tasks, and to create original prose that follows the assignment requirements.

Key Takeaways:

There are important principles in designing a learning management system that can be applied to teaching College English Composition to English as a Foreign Language learners to ensure that they are meeting the learning objectives for their coursework.

Here is a list of the key takeaways that can be gathered from this discussion.:
- **Course design should be logically designed and learning modules should be placed in sequential order.:** Learning objectives for each module should be listed at the beginning of each lesson module, and relevant activities that support acquisition of teaching points should populate each class session. There should be a clear link to homework assignments and a direct link to the next learning module.

Care should be furnished to reduce the number of nested hyperlinks within the LMS. This may cause frustration for learners who may not readily find the relevant resources they are seeking as they
navigate the LMS to identify learning materials in their study time. As much as possible, the instructor should aim to make the course design as simple and intuitive as possible.
- **Backward Design:** The instructor should use a backward design approach where he determines what are the desired learner outcomes before the course is deployed to learners. Following this he determines what is proper evidence for assessing that learners are reaching the desired outcomes. He then creates materials and assessments that best aid learners in reaching those desired outcomes throughout the academic term.

The instructor should furnish materials and assessments in the LMS throughout the term that assist in enabling learners to reach these outcomes. For instance, the instructor may furnish a course
syllabus which is placed in the course menu that states the learning objectives, the material students will need to study and prepare for the course, and a list of weekly assignments describing what students
are expected to accomplish in their learning during those relevant weeks. The students can take a quiz at the beginning of the semester which serves as an assessment of their understanding of the course
syllabus content. In turn, this connects the learner with the learning objectives early on in the term, enabling them to make a connection between what they are studying in the course modules with the
overall course learning objectives.

- **Aiding and supporting critical thinking in learning.:** In order to develop autonomy in learning, learners should develop critical thinking skills to produce writing that meets the assignment
requirements. Critical thinking is hastened by having learners answer challenging questions by their instructors and also by reading and / or listening to well organized presentations in their course (Shim
& Walczak, 2012).

• **Discussion boards can support critical thinking in learning.:** Discussion boards can hasten critical thinking. By having the instructor pose challenging questions or providing writing prompts that can elicit learner discussion, learners can demonstrate comprehension of a topic of discussion and be able to provide evidence to support their claim.

Furthermore, discussion boards or peer review sessions are forums for learners to engage in discussion and to receive feedback and advice from other learners which can lead to further learner intake. Lev Vygotsky (1978) proposed that learners can reach a higher "Zone of proximal development" by discussing with and interacting with other learners to accomplish their learning tasks (as cited in Richard-Amato, 2003, p. 51). When learners engage in such interactions during discussion groups, they can ask clarifying questions to ensure that their peers understand the writing prompts, and can paraphrase what their classmates have written or pose counterarguments to opinions with their classmates with the aim of having their classmates rebut those antitheses.

It is through such interactions that critical thinking takes place. In the evidence of compelling evidence presented by their instructor and/or by their peers, learners may reevaluate their claims or positions and change these as well.

So, as instructors, it is important to furnish discussion prompts and /or peer assignments of essay drafts that can ensure that learners engage in meaningful exchanges based on what they have written, and where they can receive meaningful input from their peers to ensure that their written content is on task.

- **Instructors should scaffold assignments to ensure that learners are making progress toward reaching learning outcomes.** Instructors need to furnish scaffolding for learners when they are teaching novel or challenging course content. This will be motivating for learners as they will succeed in grasping the content more easily. It also will provide motivation for learners to continue learning.

This principle should also be followed when the instructor furnishes feedback to learners during discussions. Provide writing prompts that are directly relevant to the learning module being taught, and then assigning more challenging writing prompts in subsequent lessons that build on the concepts being taught during the semester will help hasten critical thinking among learners.

· **The instructor must provide effective cognitive presence and teaching presence in the online course.:** Instructor presence throughout the course is essential both to monitor student progress and learning throughout the semester as well as to motivate learners to continue in their endeavors. Instructors should also take into consideration their class sizes in terms of how often they should interact with learners in their discussion boards or on their homework assignments.

The author spent an average of at least 30 - 60 minutes during each day reading and reviewing learner remarks in the weekly discussion boards.

Also, similar to the remarks concerning scaffolding, the instructor should aim to provide not only constructive feedback but encouragement for learners to persist in their learning. It is quite possible that learners will be struggling with learning points from time-to-time. However, providing encouragement and positive feedback will serve to animate learners to remain committed to learning.

Conclusion:

Applying principles of backward design into an EFL writing course and hastening critical thinking skills in an intuitively designed LMS contributes to students' acquiring the learning skills needed to succeed in the English composition courses described in this study.

Generally speaking, the author noted that learners benefitted from the scaffolding activities furnished by the instructor which helped them to learn course content. The instructor furnished ample cognitive presence and teaching presence, especially in monitoring discussion boards and in updating announcements for the course. In turn, learners often appropriated these suggestions, and it enhanced the quality of their written output.

Students reported in their course surveys that they benefited from the application of these learning principles in their LMS.

The Spring 2020 semester represented the first occasion where the instructor taught a full semester online to his learners.

Furnishing multiple assessments in the forms of quizzes, discussion boards, summaries of assigned reading materials, and written expository essays offered many occasions for students to leverage the higher order thinking skills listed in Bloom's Taxonomy in order to meet assignment requirements.

It is important to note that furnishing these assessments throughout the semester aided in hastening these skills.

There are some caveats to some of the findings which are mentioned here. Silva (1993) noted that less proficient learners faced difficulty especially in the planning stage of writing assignments. Transcribing ideas into text and reviewing the text with the aim of making revisions was also more cumbersome.

Less proficient learners may struggle with these issues and this also may require intervention from the instructor or through peer review sessions where competent peers can provide suggestions for learners to make improvements in their essays.

Our faculty also furnished live Zoom lectures to learners. While the presentations by this author were generally well organized, the students, from time to time, had difficult connecting to live Zoom sessions due to network issues.

In hindsight, it would be advised that if instructors used lives Zoom sessions, they should aim to record their sessions to the Zoom cloud. Once said presentations have been uploaded, then the instructor can upload a link to a recording of the Zoom presentation in the course module or on the "Announcements" to make the content available for viewers to watch or review.

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Appendix A: In-text citation exercise

Exercise 62-1: Please read the following passages. Then, look at in-text citations # 1 – 10. Identify if the in-text citations are cited correctly or not. If they are, write "OK" next to the number. If they are plagiarized, write "plagiarized" next to the answer.

In everyday situations, behavior is determined by the combination of internal knowledge and external information and constraints. People routinely capitalize on this fact. They can minimize the amount of material they must learn or the completeness, precision, accuracy, or depth of the learning. People can deliberately organize the environment to support their behavior. Some people with brain damage can function so well that even their co-workers may not be aware of their handicap. Nonreaders have been known to fool others, even in situations where their job presumably requires reading skills. They know what is expected of them, follow the behavior of their co-workers, and set up situations so that they do not need to read or so that their co-workers do the reading for them.

From Norman, D.A. (1988). The psychology of everyday things. New York, NY: Basic Books. [The source is from page 55].

1. According to Norman (1988) in everyday situations, behavior is determined by the combination of internal knowledge and external information and constraints (p. 55).
2. Norman has observed that "behavior is determined by the combination of internal knowledge and external information and constraints " (p. 55).
3. Norman (1988) has pointed out that people routinely minimize the amount of material they have to learn or they minimize the completeness, precision, accuracy, or depth of the learning (p. 55).
4. Norman (1988) has pointed out that people try to reduce the amount of work they have to do to learn new information. To expend less effort, they may learn as little as they need to do the task at hand or absorb information incompletely or imprecisely (p. 55).
5. "People can deliberately organize the environment to support their behavior," noted Norman (1988). "Some people with brain damage can function so well that even their co-workers may not be aware of their handicap" (p. 55).
6. At work, people can organize the environment to support the way they behave, according to Norman (1988). People with brain damage sometimes function so well that co-workers may not know of their handicap, and people who cannot read have been known to fool others even when their job apparently requires reading skills (p. 5).
7. According to Norman (1988), some workers who are brain-damaged or illiterate nevertheless manage to perform tasks well enough to keep their co-workers from knowing about their disabilities (p. 55).
8. Norman (1988) explained that some people who are brain-damaged or illiterate still manage to perform tasks well enough to keep their co-workers from knowing about their disabilities (p. 55) .
9. Some people with brain damage can function so well that even their co-workers may not be aware of their handicap, and nonreaders have been known to fool others, even in situations where their job presumably requires reading skills (Norman, 1988, p. 55).
10. People who can't read have been known to dupe co-workers, noted Norman (1988), even when their job supposedly requires reading skills (p. 55).
(Adapted from Hacker and Sommers, (2011), 7th. Ed., p. 55.)

Appendix B: Sample Critique

Graduate student enrollment has increased in recent years, but these students face many challenges on their path to a degree. Researchers have noted that graduate students experience anxiety and stress that may be connected to high attrition rates (Poock, 2002). In the article "Student anxiety: Effects of a new graduate student orientation program," Megan Hullinger and Dr. R. Lance Hogan (2014) examined the impact of an online orientation program on student anxiety. While this article produced significant results showing that an orientation program could reduce anxiety of new graduate students there are limitations related to the replicability, sample, and generalizability of results.

Hullinger and Hogan (2014) used a sample of 32 incoming graduate students to examine the impact of an online orientation program designed to connect new students with resources across the university. The researchers collected demographic information of participants and used the State Trait Anxiety Inventory to measure anxiety before and after the orientation program. Using t-tests, Hullinger and Hogan found that the participants experienced a significant reduction in anxiety following the completion of the online orientation program.

The researchers discussed an important topic, as administrators continue to attempt to improve retention efforts in higher education. The approach of an online orientation program could be useful for students as it would allow them to have important information at their fingertips, regardless of if they are on campus or not. However, Hullinger and Hogan (2014) did not provide key information about the orientation program they used in their study. This lack of detail would make it difficult to replicate their program in order to further expand the research on this kind of program.

Significant results were noted in the results of this study, but there are limitations to these findings. First, the sample size was small. Out of 802 incoming students who were invited to participate, only 32 students completed the pre- and post- anxiety inventory. With such a small sample size it is difficult to generalize these findings to the larger graduate student population. Also, all participants in this study were from a state university in the Midwest; this also limits the generalizability of these findings to the larger student population. While Hullinger and Hogan (2014) stated that the study should be replicated with a larger population and at other schools, the authors did not discuss how these factors of their study were limitations.
This article focused on an important topic within higher education, as administrators need to find solutions to improve retention. One of the barriers graduate students face is anxiety, so an online orientation designed to reduce anxiety could be one useful tool to address this problem. Hullinger and Hogan (2014) shared encouraging results of an online orientation program designed to connect incoming graduate students with university resources. However, this study did not adequately describe this orientation program so that future researchers can replicate this program in other samples. Furthermore, the small sample size and lack of diversity among participants limits the generalizability of these findings. Future research on online orientation programs with a clear description of the program among a larger more diverse sample is necessary to provide evidence of the impact of online orientation programs.

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