

Research Article

When Blogging Meets News Writing: Indonesian EFL Student Teachers' Experiences in a Journalism Course

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Abstract: This study explores Indonesian EFL student teachers' experiences of learning to write news articles through blogging in a Journalism course. The study was motivated by the need to provide meaningful and genre-based writing practice for EFL student teachers, who often face difficulties in generating ideas, organizing information, meeting genre expectations, and writing for authentic audiences. Employing a qualitative case study design, the study involved twenty undergraduate student teachers from a private Islamic university in Tangerang, Indonesia; all participants completed an online questionnaire, and five volunteers joined follow-up semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire data were analysed descriptively, while the interview data were examined thematically. The findings indicate that blogging supported regular writing practice, helped students understand news text structure, encouraged clearer organization of headlines, leads, and supporting details, and increased engagement by allowing students to publish and share their work. Blogging also promoted peer interaction and self-evaluation because students could read, compare, and comment on one another's posts. However, some participants experienced challenges related to technical blogging skills, uncertainty about writing standards, limited peer feedback, and discomfort with public online publication. The study concludes that blogging can serve as a useful platform for EFL news writing when it is supported by explicit instruction, relevant tasks, clear assessment criteria, structured feedback, and ethical awareness in using digital and AI-driven tools.

Keywords: Blogging; Digital Writing; EFL Writing; Indonesian EFL Learners; Journalism Course.

Received: April 30, 2026

Revised: May 24, 2026

Accepted: May 25, 2026

Published: June 08, 2026

Curr. Ver.: June 08, 2026



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1. Introduction

Writing is one of the most demanding skills for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners because it requires more than grammatical accuracy. Effective writing also involves generating ideas, organizing information, addressing audience expectations, and controlling genre-specific conventions (Ariyanti, 2016; Qu, 2017; Toba et al., 2019). In Indonesian EFL contexts, these demands are particularly challenging for student teachers, who are expected not only to improve their own writing proficiency but also to develop the pedagogical competence required for their future professional roles. Previous studies have shown that Indonesian tertiary EFL learners often struggle with limited vocabulary, difficulty expressing ideas, weak text organization, and insufficient writing practice (Alharbi, 2019; Ariyanti & Fitriana, 2017; Aunurrahman et al., 2017; Sundari & Febriyanti, 2021; Toba et al., 2019). These challenges point to the need for writing instruction that is meaningful, contextualized, and responsive to learners' needs. One possible response is the integration of digital tools into writing instruction.

Among the available digital tools, blogging has gained attention as a potentially meaningful platform for writing instruction in EFL contexts (Blackstone & Harwood, 2011; Khan et al., 2021; Lee, 2010; Widodo & Novawan, 2012). Blogging allows learners to write beyond classroom submission, engage with peers, and participate in more public and interactive forms of communication (Bloch, 2007; Lee, 2010; Widodo & Novawan, 2012). In the context of teacher education, this is especially relevant because student teachers need opportunities to experience digital writing practices that are both pedagogically meaningful and professionally relevant (Dewi et al., 2020; Drajadi et al., 2018; Valdez et al., 2017). Despite growing interest in digital writing environments, less attention has been given to how blogging supports the learning of news writing, particularly in Indonesian EFL teacher education contexts (Blackstone & Harwood, 2011; Chang, 2020; Ojha & Acharya, 2021; Widodo & Novawan, 2012).

This gap is important because news writing requires students to work with a specific genre that emphasizes concision, clarity, factuality, and organization (Suksawas, 2018; Thongchalerms & Jarunthawatchai, 2020; Yin, 2015). It also provides opportunities for learners to connect writing with authentic communication and current issues (Antepara, 2003; Berger, 2011; El-Nawawy & Khamis, 2013). Understanding how student teachers experience blogging in a Journalism course can therefore offer useful insights into the benefits and limitations of blog-mediated writing instruction, especially in relation to idea development, writing motivation, understanding of news structure, peer interaction, and self-evaluation (Blackstone & Harwood, 2011; Chang, 2020; Khan et al., 2021; Ojha & Acharya, 2021).

Against this background, this study investigates how Indonesian EFL student teachers experience learning to write news articles through blogging in a Journalism course. More specifically, it explores the perceived benefits and challenges of using blogs as a platform for EFL news writing. As a preliminary study, it contributes to discussions of digital writing pedagogy in teacher education and offers practical implications for writing instructors who wish to integrate blogging into genre-based writing instruction (Dewi et al., 2020; Drajadi et al., 2018; Valdez et al., 2017). The study addresses the following research question. How do Indonesian EFL student teachers experience learning to write news articles through blogging in a Journalism course?.

2. Review of Related Literature

The literature on digital writing instruction shows that online platforms have increasingly shaped how EFL learners practise, share, and reflect on writing. In this study, blogging is positioned as a pedagogical tool that may support genre-based writing practice, particularly news writing. Therefore, this section discusses three related areas: blogging in EFL writing instruction, news writing as a genre-based learning activity, and the research gap concerning blogging, digital participation, and EFL student teachers' news writing development.

Blogging in EFL Writing Instruction

In language education, digital platforms can create opportunities for interaction, reflection, and extended writing practice beyond the classroom (Valdez et al., 2017; Dewi et al., 2020). They also highlight the need for teachers to develop technological pedagogical competence in supporting student learning (Drajati et al., 2018). Among the available tools, blogging has attracted attention as a platform that enables learners to publish texts, share ideas, respond to peers, and participate in online communities of practice (Blackstone & Harwood, 2011; Khan et al., 2021; Lee, 2010; Stephens, 2016; Widodo & Novawan, 2012). Research has shown that blogging can support writing development by encouraging reflection, audience awareness, interaction, and learner engagement (Blackstone et al., 2008; Blackstone & Wilkinson, 2011; Chang, 2020; Lee, 2010; Ojha & Acharya, 2021).

In EFL writing classrooms, blogging may be especially useful because it enables learners to write for audiences and purposes beyond classroom submission (Bloch, 2007; Lee, 2010; Widodo & Novawan, 2012). Rather than preparing texts solely for the teacher, students can use blogs to practise EFL writing (Widodo & Novawan, 2012), interact with peers and engage in reflective writing (Lee, 2010), exchange resources, and cultivate a stronger sense of authorship and public expression (Bloch, 2007).

News Writing as Genre-Based EFL Learning

Within writing pedagogy, genre plays an important role, as learning to write effectively requires students to understand how texts are shaped by purpose, structure, and audience expectations (Suksawas, 2018; Thongchalerms & Jarunthawatchai, 2020). News writing is a

relevant genre in this regard because it requires concision, clarity, factual accuracy, and attention to organization (Suksawas, 2018; Yin, 2015). It also invites students to engage with current issues and transform information into meaningful written texts (Antepara, 2003; Berger, 2011; El-Nawawy & Khamis, 2013). Reading and writing news can help learners develop vocabulary, writing ability, and broader language competence (Antepara, 2003; Grabe, 1991; Krashen, 1982; Nagy & Herman, 1987). In addition, news texts are characterized by specific linguistic and cohesive features that shape how information is presented and understood (Yin, 2015). Genre-based writing instruction has been shown to support learners' development by helping them understand how texts are organized and how language is used to achieve communicative purposes (Suksawas, 2018; Thongchalerms & Jarunthawatchai, 2020). For student teachers, learning to write news may also be valuable because it connects writing practice with authentic communication and wider public issues.

Blogging, Digital Participation, and the Research Gap

Blogging appears particularly relevant to news writing because it allows learners to publish texts in online spaces, respond to local events, and experiment with public-facing forms of communication (Berger, 2011; Blackstone & Harwood, 2011; El-Nawawy & Khamis, 2013; Widodo & Novawan, 2012). Through blogging, learners may not only practise writing but also participate in forms of digital engagement that resemble citizen journalism and community participation (Berger, 2011; El-Nawawy & Khamis, 2013). Previous research has shown that blogging can help students develop writing skills and participate in collaborative online learning environments (Blackstone & Harwood, 2011; Chang, 2020; Ojha & Acharya, 2021; Widodo & Novawan, 2012). However, most existing studies have focused on blogging in relation to general writing development, reflective writing, or collaborative writing activities, rather than on the learning of news writing in EFL teacher education contexts.

These developments are also linked to broader discussions of digital learning environments and the role of technology in shaping students' writing practices (Lakhal, 2021). In such contexts, digital platforms have been associated with changes in how students approach learning, creativity, and problem-solving in technology-rich environments (Novak & Mulvey, 2021). Generally, these studies suggest that blogging has pedagogical potential in EFL writing instruction, but they also indicate the need for more context-specific inquiry into how student teachers experience blogging as a platform for learning genre-based news writing.

3. Method

Research Design and Context

This study employed a qualitative case study design to investigate how Indonesian EFL student teachers experienced learning to write news articles through blogging in a Journalism course. A qualitative case study was considered appropriate because the study sought to explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and interpretations within a specific educational setting. This design enabled an in-depth understanding of how blogging functioned as a pedagogical platform for learning news writing in a bounded institutional context (Yin, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The study was conducted in a Journalism course offered by the English Language Education Department of a private Islamic university in Tangerang, Indonesia. The course introduced student teachers to basic principles of journalism, including identifying newsworthy topics, understanding the structure of online news articles, selecting relevant sources, and practising news writing. Blogging was integrated into the course as a learning platform through which students published summaries, reflections, and news articles. This context provided a relevant setting for examining blogging as a platform for EFL news writing.

Participants

The participants were twenty undergraduate student teachers enrolled in a Journalism course and drawn from four comparable cohorts with similar levels of English proficiency. All twenty participants completed the questionnaire, and five of them voluntarily participated in follow-up semi-structured interviews to provide more detailed accounts of their experiences. The participants were recruited for this study because they were directly involved in blog-mediated news-writing activities as part of the course and were therefore able to offer relevant insights into the phenomenon under investigation. Their demographic characteristics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Participant demographics.

Characteristics	Category	n	%
Gender	Female	14	70
	Male	6	30
Age	21–23 years	19	95
	24–25 years	1	5
Academic Status	Undergraduate student teachers	20	100

As shown in Table 1, the participants were predominantly female undergraduate student teachers, with most of them aged between 21 and 23 years. This demographic profile indicates that the participants shared relatively similar academic and age-related characteristics. Such relative similarity is relevant to the present study because it provides a fairly comparable participant background for exploring experiences of learning to write news articles through blogging in a Journalism course. While female participants were more highly represented than male participants, the table is intended primarily to describe the composition of the participant group rather than to support any gender-based comparison.

This participant profile provides contextual information for interpreting the students' responses in relation to their shared educational background. The researchers also acted as participant observers throughout the study. These roles enabled closer engagement with the instructional context and supported a deeper understanding of students' learning experiences. At the same time, reflexive awareness was maintained throughout the study to minimise potential bias and to ensure that interpretations remained grounded in participants' responses (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Instruments and Data Collection

Data were collected through an online questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire consisted of nine items designed to identify general patterns in students' perceptions of blogging as a platform for learning to write news articles in English. The use of a questionnaire enabled the researchers to capture broad response patterns efficiently (Glasow, 2005). The questionnaire was developed with reference to Hodgson and Wong's (2011) discussion of journalism-related skills developed through blogs. It focused on aspects such as writing practice, understanding of news writing, communication with peers, and the perceived usefulness of blogging for future learning. Participants responded using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

To complement the questionnaire data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five volunteer participants. The interviews were intended to generate richer and more detailed accounts of students' experiences, particularly regarding the perceived benefits and challenges of learning news writing through blogging. The interview questions addressed participants' prior blogging experience, their experiences of blog-based news-writing activities, their strategies for understanding course materials, and their experiences of peer feedback. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes and was conducted at a time and place convenient for the participant.

Before conducting the interviews, the researchers developed rapport with participants to support open and comfortable discussion of their academic experiences. After transcription, participants were invited to review their interview data before analysis as a form of member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Care was taken during transcription to preserve the meaning and clarity of participants' responses, as these are important considerations in qualitative interview research (Widodo, 2014).

Procedure

Leading up to data collection, institutional approval was obtained, and permission was granted to inform student teachers about the study during class. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. After the blogging activities had been completed as part of the Journalism course, the questionnaire was distributed to all participants. Those who were willing to elaborate on their experiences were subsequently invited to participate in follow-up interviews. Informed consent was obtained before the interviews were conducted.

Data Analysis

The questionnaire data were analysed descriptively using frequencies and percentages to provide an overview of participants' general response patterns. Given the small number of participants, the questionnaire findings were not intended to support statistical generalisation. Rather, they were used to provide descriptive support for the qualitative findings and to identify broad patterns in students' perceptions that could later be explored in greater depth through the interview data (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The interview data were analysed thematically following an iterative process of familiarisation, coding, categorisation, and interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Gibson & Brown, 2009). First, the interview transcripts were read repeatedly to gain an overall understanding of the data. Second, relevant segments were coded according to recurring ideas and experiences related to learning news writing through blogging. Third, the codes were grouped into broader categories, from which themes were developed. The analysis focused particularly on the perceived benefits of blogging, the challenges encountered by participants, and the ways blogging supported writing practice, idea development, reflection, and peer interaction. Through this process, themes were developed to represent common tendencies across participants' accounts while preserving the contextual richness of the case.

Trustworthiness

Several strategies were employed to enhance the trustworthiness of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). First, methodological triangulation was achieved through the use of both questionnaire and interview data (Patton, 1999). Second, member checking was conducted by inviting interview participants to review their transcripts before analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Third, the researchers' sustained engagement with the research setting as participant observers supported a deeper contextual understanding of the learning process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Throughout the study, care was taken to ensure that interpretations were grounded in the data and accurately reflected participants' perspectives.

4. Findings and Discussion

This section presents the findings of the study and their discussion. The findings are organized into four themes related to the students' experiences of learning to write news articles through blogging in the Journalism course. The discussion is presented continuously to explain the benefits and challenges of blogging in supporting EFL news writing.

Blogging as a Platform for Practising News Writing

The findings show that blogging functioned as a practical platform for learning and practising news writing. Most participants (15 out of 20) stated that blogging helped them write more regularly and apply their understanding of news structure, such as headlines, leads, and supporting details. This indicates that blogging was useful not only as a medium for submitting tasks but also as a space for developing genre-based writing skills. The interview data support this finding. One participant stated that blogging helped them "learn how to write news more clearly and follow the structure," while another explained that blogging made them more aware of how to present information concisely. These responses suggest that blogging encouraged students to pay more attention to the organization and clarity of news texts.

This finding is in line with the nature of news writing itself, which requires concision, clarity, factuality, and organization. Through blogging, students were given repeated opportunities to practise these features in a more meaningful context. This supports previous studies showing that blogging can extend writing beyond conventional classroom activities and help learners develop writing ability through regular practice and audience awareness (Awada et al., 2020; Blackstone et al., 2008; Chang, 2020; Lee, 2010; Widodo & Novawan, 2012). In this study, blogging appears to have helped students understand that writing news is not simply about producing sentences in English, but also about arranging information according to the conventions of the genre. Therefore, blogging can be seen as a useful pedagogical tool for supporting genre-based writing instruction in EFL contexts.

Blogging, Engagement, and Idea Development

The findings also indicate that blogging contributed positively to students' engagement and idea development. A majority of participants (13 out of 20) reported that writing through blogging was more interesting than traditional classroom writing activities. The opportunity to publish their work and share it with peers appeared to increase their willingness to write. This tendency is also reflected in the interview responses. One participant described blogging as "more flexible and more interesting than writing on paper," while another noted that

blogging allowed them to explore current issues and develop ideas more freely. These responses show that blogging created a more meaningful context for writing and encouraged students to become more involved in the task.

This finding suggests that blogging can make writing activities feel more purposeful. Unlike classroom writing that is often prepared only for the teacher, blogging allows students to write for a wider audience and to engage with topics that are more closely related to real-life issues. This condition may increase students' motivation, sense of ownership, and involvement in the writing process. The finding supports previous studies, which argue that blogging can strengthen learner motivation, reflection, and awareness of audience in EFL writing classes (Blackstone & Harwood, 2011; Khan et al., 2021; Lee, 2010; Ojha & Acharya, 2021). In the context of news writing, this is especially relevant because students are expected to respond to current events and transform them into meaningful written texts. Thus, blogging helped students not only practise writing but also generate and develop ideas more authentically and engagingly.

Bloggng, Peer Interaction, and Self-Evaluation

Another finding concerns the role of blogging in supporting peer interaction and self-evaluation. More than half of the participants (12 out of 20) stated that blogging helped them share their work and respond to the writing of others. Through blog-based activities, students were able to read their peers' posts, exchange comments, and observe different ways of writing news. One participant explained that reading others' blog posts allowed them to "compare writing styles and learn from each other." This indicates that blogging provided opportunities for collaborative learning and encouraged students to reflect on their own writing. At the same time, several participants mentioned that peer feedback was sometimes too brief and lacked detail. Even so, blogging still allowed students to revisit their own texts and reflect on their progress over time.

This finding confirms that blogging may serve as both an interactive and reflective learning space. By reading peers' work, students can become more aware of different approaches to organizing and presenting information. At the same time, by reviewing their own published writing, they can evaluate their progress and identify areas for improvement. This result is consistent with earlier studies that describe blogging as a platform for collaborative learning and online communities of practice (Blackstone & Harwood, 2011; Stephens, 2016; Widodo & Novawan, 2012). However, the finding also shows that interaction alone is not enough to produce meaningful learning. As noted by Awada and Diab (2021), peer review in EFL contexts needs clear criteria and proper guidance to be effective. Therefore, while blogging can support peer interaction and self-evaluation, its benefits depend on the quality of the feedback process designed by the teacher.

Challenges in Blog-Mediated News Writing

Although most participants responded positively to blogging, the findings also reveal several challenges in blog-mediated news writing. A smaller number of students (around 5–6 out of 20) reported difficulties related to blogging skills, unclear writing standards, and limited peer feedback. Some participants admitted that they were not fully familiar with managing blog-based tasks, especially at the beginning of the course. One participant stated that they were "not good at running a blog," showing that technical difficulties affected their confidence in completing writing tasks. Other participants were uncertain about how to evaluate their own writing or provide useful feedback to peers. In addition, several students felt uncomfortable with the public nature of blogging, as publishing their work online made them feel exposed and less confident.

These findings indicate that blogging does not automatically improve writing instruction unless it is supported by appropriate pedagogical guidance. Although blogging offers opportunities for participation, interaction, and publication, it can also create difficulties for students who are less familiar with digital tools or less confident in sharing their writing publicly. This supports broader discussions in technology-enhanced EFL pedagogy which emphasize that digital tools need to be integrated with clear instructions, relevant tasks, and sufficient scaffolding (Dewi et al., 2020; Drajati et al., 2018; Valdez et al., 2017). In this study, the challenges faced by students suggest that the successful use of blogging depends not only on the tool itself, but also on how teachers guide students in using it. Thus, blogging is most effective when accompanied by explicit instruction, clear writing criteria, and structured feedback practices.

Overall, the findings and discussions show that blogging has the potential to support the learning of news writing in an EFL teacher education context. It helped students practise genre-based writing, develop ideas, increase engagement, and participate in peer interaction

and self-reflection. At the same time, the study also shows that the benefits of blogging are closely related to how it is implemented in the classroom. Difficulties in digital literacy, uncertainty about writing standards, and limited peer feedback may reduce its effectiveness when adequate support is not provided. Therefore, blogging can be a meaningful pedagogical platform for EFL news writing when it is supported by clear guidance, structured feedback, and appropriate instructional scaffolding.

5. Conclusions

This study investigated how Indonesian EFL student teachers experienced learning to write news articles through blogging in a Journalism course. The findings show that blogging can support the learning of news writing by helping students practise writing more regularly, understand the structure of news texts, develop ideas, and become more engaged in writing activities. Blogging also provided opportunities for peer interaction and self-reflection, although these were not always fully effective.

The study also found several challenges in the use of blogging, including limited familiarity with blogging tools, uncertainty about writing standards, and limited peer feedback. These findings indicate that blogging can be useful in EFL writing instruction when it is supported by clear guidance, relevant tasks, and structured feedback. In addition, the integration of digital tools in writing instruction, including AI-driven tools, should be accompanied by ethical awareness. Students need to use such tools responsibly, maintain originality in their writing, verify generated content critically, and avoid over-reliance on automated assistance.

Based on these findings, it is suggested that lecturers provide explicit instructions on how to use blogs, explain clear criteria for writing and feedback, and gradually introduce blog based activities to students who are less familiar with digital tools. Lecturers also need to guide students in using AI-driven tools ethically and responsibly in academic writing. Future research may involve larger and more diverse participants and include direct analysis of students' written texts in order to examine how blogging and other forms of technology integration, including AI-driven tools, influence specific aspects of writing development.

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