

Using MY Access!™ in EFL Writing

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This paper presents the reflection and the practical experience of using MY Access!™ to help college EFL students improve their writing proficiency. Developed by *Vantage Learning*, MY Access!™ provides a prompt-driven, web-based writing environment with immediate student essay evaluation and diagnostic instructions that intends to engage and motivate students to improve their writing. In this test project, MY Access!™ was used as an integrated part of EFL writing classes or as a supplementary writing practice in the author's university during the 2002-2003 academic year. Altogether 2 freshman English classes, 4 English composition classes, and 67 signed-in students from a self-study program (monitored by the Audio-Visual Education Center at NTU) were involved. A questionnaire was administered to all participating students and teachers at the end of semester to elicit their opinions and reactions toward using MY Access!™. It was found that most students felt positive about the revising process and immediate feedbacks, and they liked having their own writing portfolios. However, careful planning and student guidance were needed for using such learning technology. Challenges and problems in using such learning technologies as well as instructional suggestions will be also addressed.

INTRODUCTION

Writing has been an important skill in students' academic English training. No matter it is the writing process or the product that the writing instruction emphasizes, both researchers and educators have agreed that frequent and accurate assessment is crucial to the development of student writing skills. How can teachers provide effective feedback and evaluation to students' writing in a timely manner? This has been one of the challenges and concerns for most writing teachers, especially when grading essays for large classes of students. Besides, the quick result and feedback for writing is not only helpful in the instructional process, but it is also a must for the admission or placement purpose, for teachers and administrators mostly cannot wait for a long period of time to receive test results.

Recent advances in technology, such as an automated electronic essay scoring engine, has offered a tool that may assist English teachers in providing effective feedback and evaluation to students' writing in a timely manner. However, teachers will face various challenges in adopting such an e-learning tool in the classroom. Will such a tool offer an efficient and reliable assistance in the process of teaching and learning how to write? What else can such a tool do? And what can't such a tool do? How can it help teachers and learners in EFL writing?

This paper reports the reflection and the practical experience of using MY Access!™ with college EFL students in a test project. Although the tool has been used in a variety of educational settings, such as public schools, high schools and higher education in the United States, the EFL students in the test project were among the early trial users in Taiwan. Various ways of using the tool were explored in the test project. Issues of students'

writing proficiency, computer and Internet literacy, technology-assisted teaching, as well as teachers' and students' reactions were discussed, followed by Caveats and suggestions.

MY ACCESS!™

MY Access!™ is an online writing program which provides writing evaluation with immediate feedback and score. Developed by *Vantage Learning*, the program uses an artificial intelligence automated essay scoring technology (i.e., IntelliMetric™), which has been used as writing assessment tool by several educational institutions such as, The College Board, Harcourt Educational Measurement, and Petersons. According to Scott Elliot, COO for *Vantage Learning*, the IntelliMetric™ engine claims a 99 percent reliability rate, which means that 99 percent of the time, the engine's scores match those of humans. Recent research report also shows high validity of the IntelliMetric™ scoring engine (e.g., Vantage Learning, 2003-2004).

The general procedure for using MY Access!™ is as follows: First, students log onto MY Access!™ web site and follow the prompts to begin writing their essays. The prompts can be pre-selected from different writing modes, such as narrative, persuasive or informative, by the teacher according to students' levels (high school or higher education). When students submit the finished writing, they get immediate feedback and a score through the Internet. Based on the feedback with line-by-line detailed analysis and writer's guide and model, students may revise and improve their writing as often as they desire. All the writings and revisions are documented in an online portfolio for teachers' and students' reference. Students and teachers can access student writing and records whenever they prefer through an Internet-enabled computer.

The evaluative feedback students receive includes a holistic score on a 4 or a 6 point scale and analytical analysis in five major domains:

1. Focus and meaning: indicating cohesiveness and consistency in purpose and main idea. This part evaluates the extent to which the writing establishes and maintains a controlling idea (or central idea), an understanding of purpose and audience, and completion of the task.
2. Content and development: indicating breadth of content and support for concepts advanced. This part evaluates the extent to which the writing develops ideas fully and artfully using extensive, specific, accurate, and relevant details.
3. Organization: indicating logic of discourse, including transitional fluidity and relationship among parts of the response. This part evaluates the extent to which the writing demonstrates a unified structure, direction and unity, including transitional devices.
4. Language use and style: indicating sentence complexity and variety. This part evaluates the extent to which the writing demonstrates an awareness of audience and purpose through effective sentence structure, sentence variety, word choice and usage.
5. Mechanics and conventions: indicating conformance to English language rules. This part evaluates the extent the writing demonstrates control of conventions, including paragraphing, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

In a 6 point holistic rubric, which was chosen for the test project, a score of 6 means the writer very effectively communicates the his or her message and 1 means the writer inadequately communicate the his or her

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Table 1
Six-Point Holistic Rubric

Scale	Description
6	Very effectively communicates the writer's message
5	Strongly communicates the writer's message
4	Adequately communicates the writer's message
3	Partially communicates the writer's message
2	Is limited in communication of the writer's message
1	Inadequately communicates the writer's message

THE TEST PROJECT

In the 2002-2003 academic year, 300 trial accounts of MY Access!™ program were offered to the author's university, thus a test project started to evaluate its potentials for training EFL writing. Except that one teacher teaching two Freshman English classes of about 100 students dropped out in mid-semester, altogether 2 Freshman English classes and 4 Freshman English Composition classes as well as 67 signed-in students from a self-study program (monitored by the Audio-Visual Education Center at NTU) had participated and used MY Access!™ to practice their English writing for a period of one semester to two semesters.

In this test project, there were no fixed rules or procedures for how to implement MY Access!™. Therefore, the program was experimented in different ways. In general, all participants received a basic orientation or workshop about how to use the program. However, according to the learning context in which teacher's detailed instruction about writing and the use of MY Access!™ were available, the participants could be categorized into five groups: Freshman English Composition class with MY Access!™ instruction (WI), Freshman English Composition classes without MY Access!™ instruction (WN), Freshman English class with MY Access!™ instruction (EI), Freshman English class without MY Access!™ instruction (EN), and self-study students with neither writing instruction nor MY Access!™ instruction (S). Table 2 presents a summary of each group.

Table 2
The Use of MY Access!™ by Each Group

Groups	Teacher's Writing Instruction	MY Access Instruction	Student Writing Period	Pre-Selected Prompts No.	Required Essay No.
WI	A lot	Yes	Oct. ~ Jan.	6	3
			Feb. ~ June	8	4
WN	A lot	No	March ~ June	5~11	1~3
EI	A few	Yes	Oct. ~ Jan.	8	2
			Feb. ~ Aug.	10	3
EN	A few	No	Oct. ~ Jan.	3	3
S	None	No	March ~ July	22 (all prompts)	1+

Note: W = writing course, I = with MY Access!™ instruction, N = no MY Access!™ instruction, E = English course, S = Self-study students

English Composition Class (WI Group)

In the WI composition class, MY Access!™ program was integrated into the classroom writing instruction taught by the author. Students met in the computer classroom every other week, so the link to MY Access!™ web site was built in the course web pages to facilitate students' easy access. Since the first semester's course objectives focused on principles of paragraph writing, not on essay writing, and both students and the instructor needed some time to get familiar with the new online writing environment, the program was used as supplementary exercise in the first semester. After the teacher's introduction and demonstration in class, students were given some time to try it. They were free to choose from 6 pre-selected prompts and complete three essays on their own. In the second semester, when students were taught to write essays, students were asked to use the program to complete at least four essays, which corresponded to class writing assignments (i.e., narrative, description, cause and effect, and persuasive writing). The following is the assignment instruction posted on the course web site for the second semester:

To refine your writing skills, you are invited to practice writing on-line with MY Access!™: First, for practicing *narratives*, you may choose to write on the prompts of either "Feeling Proud" or "Life without Electricity"; Second, for practicing *description*, you may choose "The Person You Most Admire" and/or "Visiting an Interesting Place"; Then, for *cause and effect*, you may write on "Effects of Technology"; Finally, for *persuasive* writing, you may write on the topic of "Choosing a Rewarding Occupation" or "Time Capsule."

During the semester, students' online writing practice at home reinforced the writing instruction in the classroom. The teacher also responded to students' questions or problems in using the program in class or via e-mail. At the end of both semesters, students selected one favorite or best essay from both their class writing assignments and MY Access!™ essays and posted them on the course web site for sharing with the whole class. Students read their own essays out loud and discussed their feelings and thoughts about the writing with the class. In summary, the program was fully integrated into the writing instruction in the WI group.

Other English Composition Classes (WN Group)

After an introducing workshop, three Freshman English Composition classes started using MY Access!™ in their writing course in the second semester; but the teachers did not offer any special instruction about the program. One teacher who shared with the author and used the computer classroom every other week had tried to use it for final writing test and for in-class writing practice. Students in her class were asked to complete one ~~essay~~ in a fixed class time at computer classroom. Another teacher had assigned three MY Access!™ writing ~~as~~ homework assignments. The other teacher used it as an optional writing practice. These composition teachers ~~used~~ MY Access!™ mostly as a supplementary writing practice and asked their students to complete one to three ~~essays~~ in a semester.

Freshman English Classes (EI and EN Groups)

As for the two Freshman English classes, the EI and EN groups, they both emphasized on integration of ~~four~~ skills of English. MY Access!™ thus served as the writing practice tool and students were ~~required to complete~~ each essay at home. The two classes differed in whether MY Access!™ instruction was given in ~~class to the~~

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participating students. For the EI group/class, which was taught by the author, students met in the computer classroom every other week; thus, more detailed instruction about MY Access!™ was offered by the teacher when needed. Eight and ten prompts were selected for the first and second semesters. The prompts were chosen for being related to class reading topics or students' lives. Students were free to choose from these pre-selected prompts and complete two essays on their own in the first semester and three essays in the second semester. As students would not be judged at one-shot examine situation, they could revise their writing as much as they liked until the end of the semester, at which time their last score on each essay was counted in the final grade. Altogether 43 students from EI group participated and used the program in the first semester and 33 students did in the second semester.

In the other Freshman English class (EN) which also used the program, students were told to write three essays in the first semester. The program was used as a supplementary writing practice.

Self-Study Students (S Group)

Students from a self-study program monitored by the Audio-Visual Education Center of National Taiwan University were invited to take part in the test project. These students, including over 800 undergraduate and graduate students from NTU, registered in a self-study program in which they were allowed to use *Tell Me More Pro*, a courseware for training in English listening, speaking, pronunciation, and vocabulary, for a semester. After registration, they could walk in the computer classroom with the courseware at any time and log in and practice their English as long as they wish. There were 91 students who signed in and 67 who attended an orientation workshop on how to use MY Access!™ in March, 2003. Then, these 67 students were allowed to start writing essays with the online program. No other writing instruction was offered except some e-mail messages sent to them for encouraging them writing.

THE FINAL SURVEY

To elicit participating students' and teachers' attitudes and reactions toward using MY Access!™, a questionnaire was developed by the author with reference from MY Access!™ online student and teacher survey. The questionnaire has two versions, one for students and the other for participating teachers (See Appendix 1 and 2). The questionnaire for students contains four parts. Questions in the first part focus on students' frequency and habits of using computers and MY Access!™ program. The second part surveys students' opinions about using the program. The third part has three other questions. The last part collects information about students' demographic data and English learning experiences. The teachers' version focuses on teachers' opinions about using the program in class and its features.

The questionnaires were distributed to each class in paper and to those self-study students via e-mail and online survey at the end of the semester. At last, 84 regular class students and 26 self-study students answered and returned the questionnaire. There were only 21 valid questionnaires for the self-study group since five students had never used the program and only answered the first and last part of the questionnaire (See Table 3 for information of the surveyed students).

Table 3
Frequency and Percentage of Surveyed Students

Groups	Students Total	Surveyed Students (N)	Surveyed Students (%)
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EI	33	33	100%
EN	10	7	70%
WI	13	13	100%
WN	42	31	74%
S	67	21	31%
Total	165	105	64%

Among the 84 regular class students (EI, EN, WI, WN) who answered the questionnaire, 17 (20%) were male and 67 (80%) were female. Half of the students (42) were English majors, while the rest of the students mostly came from Colleges of Management or Social Studies. Among the 21 self-study students, 7 (33%) were male and 14 (67%) were female. They were in 19 different majors and only 3 were English majors.

Descriptive statistics analyses were performed for the valid survey data. Multivariate test was conducted between the five groups to check the group differences. Other statistic analyses, like Follow-up ANOVA and crosstabulation, were performed for further analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Significant difference was found in the five groups, especially in their response to two questionnaire items: Item 1-4 and 2-9. The former item was about the frequency of using the program by the students ($F = 9.39$, $p < 0.0001$) and the latter one asked students if they thought the program was helpful to their English writing ($F = 8.72$, $p < 0.0001$). It was found that all students except one in the WI group used the program more frequently and chose the answer of "a few times per month," while the other students (WN and S groups) used it less often. For item 2-9, most EI students chose yes for their answer, while most WN students were uncertain about the helpfulness of the program.

As the crosstabulation shown in Table 4, it was found that as students used MY Access!™ more frequently, they also tended to feel positive that the program was helpful to their English writing. On the other hand, for those who felt uncertain about the helpfulness of the program, they used the program less frequently. About two thirds of them used it two or three times per month. The survey data also revealed that almost one half of the students indicated they had logged on MY Access!™ at least a few times per month or per week, while the other half used the program less frequently, two or three times per month.

Table 4

Crosstabulation between Item 1-4 and 2-9

Count		Item 2-9 ¹			Total
		(1) Yes	(2) No	(3) Uncertain	
Item 1-4 ²	(1) Never	1 (2%) ³	2	3 (7%)	4 (4%)
	(2) 2 or 3 times per month	18 (32%)	5	28 (66%)	51 (49%)
	(3) A few times per month	33 (59%)	2	11 (26%)	46 (44%)
	(4) A few times per week	4 (7%)	0	0	4 (4%)
Total		56	7	42	105 (100%)

Notes: ¹Item 1-4: "How frequently do you use MY Access!™?"

²Item 2-9: "I think MY Access!™ is helpful to my English writing."

³The percentage has been rounded to nearest whole number.

The questionnaire returning rate for self-study students was very low (only 31%) and self-study students in proportion had used the program less frequently, thus, their survey results were treated separately. As no other significant group differences were found in the majority of the survey items by 84 students in the regular classes, the following section presents the results of the final survey and discusses all regular class students' reactions.

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toward MY Access!™, except for specific items indicated.

Computer and program Usage

These students were quite familiar with computers and the Internet, so there were few problems for them to log on the online program. Many students in the survey used computers (88%) and surfed the Internet (89%) almost daily and 75% wrote frequently with computers. The majority (91%) did not have any difficulty in logging in the online program. Over 60% also agreed that the program was easy to use and over two thirds considered it user-friendly. Yet, not all the program's functions were used effectively or fully. The most frequently used functions in the program were "writer's guide" and "view essays," which only required writer's passive viewing strategies. On the other hand, "notepad," a function that might ask for more active writing strategies, was used the least often and only one forth had tried it. Besides, students considered the functions of "writer's guide", "Grammar", "spelling" and "view essays" helpful when writing.

Students' Reactions about MY Access!™

MY Access!™ provides a prompt-driven, web-based writing environment with immediate student essay evaluation and diagnostic instructions that intends to engage and motivate students to improve their writing. Students in the survey reacted differently about various features of the program. First of all, concerning the clarity and difficulty of the prompts, about two thirds of the students (68%) agreed that the instruction in the prompts was clear, while one fifth felt uncertain about it. So about one third of the students did not think the current instruction in the prompts was clear enough. Only 7% considered the prompts difficult, while about one third felt unsure.

Students expressed diverse opinions about the evaluation and feedback. About 45% agreed that the evaluative comments were easy to understand and over one half would use them to improve writing. But it's noteworthy to find that only few students (13%) thought their evaluation scores were appropriate, while over one half felt uncertain about the scores. When asked about what they did not like about the program, 37 out of the 59 responses were related to the score and feedback. Several students complained about getting "off topic" feedback too often or not knowing the reasons for getting "off topic." Besides, in comparison with the feedback from their writing teachers, the computer comments seemed too soon and too general, thus they were considered inaccurate and unspecific. After getting the same feedback for the same score for several times, some students found it meaningless. Other students even commented that they didn't like being evaluated by the computer program or just didn't trust the computer's scoring.

On the other hand, when asked what they liked about MY Access!™, many students agreed that they liked the program because it allowed them to go back and revise their essay (89%); as soon as they submitted an essay it was scored immediately (86%); they liked having their own writing portfolio (83%); and the program told them what they needed to do to get a better score (77%). Slightly fewer students liked the program due to the following reasons: the suggestions it made about their grammar (71%); it was easy to use (67%); and it was an effective way to improve their essays (65%). These students found using MY Access!™ was helpful to improve their writing in the following domains: Organization (61%), focus and meaning (52%), content and development (45%), language use and style (39%), mechanics and conventions (19%). From this online experience, they felt they need the most improvement in organization (46%) and language use and style (43%).

In addition, when comparing English students (EI and EN groups) with composition students (WI and WN

groups), English students reacted slightly differently. First, English students tended to react more positively to the online writing experiences than composition students. More English students (64%) were found to feel more accustomed to the Web learning environment than composition students (51%) did. In contrast to composition students, more English students also agreed that writing online was helpful (78% vs. 33%) and felt positively about the helpfulness of My Access!™ (75% vs. 32%). Second, more English students (25%) than composition students (2%) thought the evaluation scores were appropriate, while about 28% and 41% each disagreed. In other words, more composition students tended not to trust the scores given by the computer program. However, both groups endorsed the special need of having instructors' guidance on English writing. In brief, most of these regular class students (75%) agreed with the statement about having human guidance for EFL writing.

Advantages and Disadvantages

In the test project, several advantages could be found in using MY Access!™ in EFL writing. First, it met students' habits and interests since over 88% of the students surveyed used computers and surfed the Internet almost daily. Over 75% wrote with computers several times a week. Second, it facilitated the learning and teaching of writing. One favorite features by most of the students (83%) was the online portfolio, which contained students' initial draft, evaluation scores, and subsequent revisions. With it, students could maintain their work easily. Students could also check their progress and take control of their writing practice by using portfolios (Yang, 2003). Thus, it encouraged autonomous learning. Similarly, teachers could review any individual student's portfolio, provided comments, and track the overall class portfolio to manage writing instruction in the online program.

Third, MY Access!™ provided students with more writing and revising opportunities as well as immediate feedback. Take students in the WI composition class as an example, in the past, students were first taught how to develop essays in one genre like narratives in class, and then they wrote two drafts of one assigned narrative essay. Students had to wait for comments by peers and then by the instructor in the following two to three weeks before they could revise for final version. Now with MY Access!™ they could not only practice another narrative writing and got immediate feedback from the program in the meantime. The immediate feedback also allowed students to revise their essays as frequently as they like. It was not until the end of the semester would the last score of the four essays be counted into their final grade. Hence, students could revise more often for improvement. For four required essays in one semester, the WI group students produced an average of 9 drafts and revisions per person. Of the 13 students, three of them wrote 5 essays and one completed 6 essays with 21 revisions. The frequent revisions helped them in EFL writing. No wonder these features, the revising process and immediate feedback, were among the most often selected reasons for liking the program.

There were also disadvantages found by the survey respondents, such as, the number of the prompts was limited; the scoring system was fixed; by requiring a specific writing mode, the program discouraged creative writing or writing in other modes; and sometimes the computer system was not working properly.

Teacher's reactions

Though only one Freshman English teacher and one English Composition teacher returned the questionnaire, other teachers have talked about their opinions privately with the author. Their reactions were summarized as follows.

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groups), English students reacted slightly differently. First, English students tended to react more positively to the online writing experiences than composition students. More English students (64%) were found to feel more accustomed to the Web learning environment than composition students (51%) did. In contrast to composition students, more English students also agreed that writing online was helpful (78% vs. 33%) and felt positively about the helpfulness of MY Access!™ (75% vs. 32%). Second, more English students (25%) than composition students (2%) thought the evaluation scores were appropriate, while about 28% and 41% each disagreed. In other words, more composition students tended not to trust the scores given by the computer program. However, both groups endorsed the special need of having instructors' guidance on English writing. In brief, most of these regular class students (75%) agreed with the statement about having human guidance for EFL writing.

Advantages and Disadvantages

In the test project, several advantages could be found in using MY Access!™ in EFL writing. First, it met students' habits and interests since over 88% of the students surveyed used computers and surfed the Internet almost daily. Over 75% wrote with computers several times a week. Second, it facilitated the learning and teaching of writing. One favorite features by most of the students (83%) was the online portfolio, which contained students' initial draft, evaluation scores, and subsequent revisions. With it, students could maintain their work easily. Students could also check their progress and take control of their writing practice by using portfolios (Yang, 2003). Thus, it encouraged autonomous learning. Similarly, teachers could review any individual student's portfolio, provided comments, and track the overall class portfolio to manage writing instruction in the online program.

Third, MY Access!™ provided students with more writing and revising opportunities as well as immediate feedback. Take students in the WI composition class as an example, in the past, students were first taught how to develop essays in one genre like narratives in class, and then they wrote two drafts of one assigned narrative essay. Students had to wait for comments by peers and then by the instructor in the following two to three weeks before they could revise for final version. Now with MY Access!™ they could not only practice another narrative writing and got immediate feedback from the program in the meantime. The immediate feedback also allowed students to revise their essays as frequently as they like. It was not until the end of the semester would the last score of the four essays be counted into their final grade. Hence, students could revise more often for improvement. For four required essays in one semester, the WI group students produced an average of 9 drafts and revisions per person. Of the 13 students, three of them wrote 5 essays and one completed 6 essays with 21 revisions. The frequent revisions helped them in EFL writing. No wonder these features, the revising process and immediate feedback, were among the most often selected reasons for liking the program.

There were also disadvantages found by the survey respondents, such as, the number of the prompts was limited; the scoring system was fixed; by requiring a specific writing mode, the program discouraged creative writing or writing in other modes; and sometimes the computer system was not working properly.

Teacher's reactions

Though only one Freshman English teacher and one English Composition teacher returned the questionnaire, other teachers have talked about their opinions privately with the author. Their reactions were summarized as follows.

Both teachers who answered the questionnaire had logged on MY Access!™ online writing system several

times a month. They also considered the system very easy to use. They both felt positive that practicing online would be helpful to students' English writing. However, they were uncertain about how effective such a program could be to enhance students' concepts and motivation about writing.

Without teachers' introduction to the English academic writing, most beginning EFL students might find it difficult to understand the prompt and start the first essay with the program. It was also felt that for more advanced and sophisticated writers, the evaluation provided by the automated electronic essay scoring engine seems not enough. For free style or creative writing, there seemed to be great limitations for using computer scoring engine or computer-assisted tool. While for intermediate writers, the writing environment created by MY Access!™ might facilitate their learning with careful guidance.

Caveats and Suggestions

Therefore, it needs careful planning on integrating the use of technology, such as MY Access!™ program, into the teaching of EFL writing. Students also need guidance to use the Web technology for learning, especially for autonomous learning. For using MY Access!™ in EFL writing, here are some suggestions:

1. Introduce the concepts of autonomous learning: Although some features of the program may encourage and facilitate autonomous learning, students still need some introduction from the teacher to have positive attitude toward autonomous learning and some guidance to learn how to take control of their learning. It was only when students believed in value of taking control and responsibility of their learning could they see the advantages of using the program by their own.

2. Provide writing instruction for self-study students: Although those self-study students were encouraged in the beginning to write at least one essay to be able to keep the account, only 16 students (24%) had completed their essays and got evaluation scores. Thus, except for these few students, it seemed not easy for most of them to start writing their first essay without proper EFL writing instruction in the beginning. Also, as suggested in the survey, some appropriate writing instruction offered by the teacher would be useful to their use of the online program.

3. Offer guidance to the program: To help both students and teachers learn how to use the program, a demonstration workshop was arranged in the beginning of the second semester. But it was not enough. It was found in the survey that familiarity with the program and frequency of use would affect students' attitude toward the program. As students in the WI and EI groups were more familiar with the program through further instruction and guidance about MY Access!™, more of them agreed that the program was user-friendly. In comparison with WN students, more of WI students also considered that the program helped them in English writing ($F = 7.28, p < 0.05$). Besides, some possible reasons for students to get "off topic" feedback might be because some of them did not read the prompt's instruction carefully, just wrote whatever they liked based on the topic only, or did not understand or follow the requirements in the prompts. Therefore, further instruction and guidance on making better use of the program and technology is essential.

4. Incorporate practice into class assignments and final grades: Only few students with strong motivation or good learner autonomy could keep writing to the end of the trial period. By incorporating the online essays into class assignments and counting them in the final grades, teachers could motivate most students with moderate or low motivation to start writing their first essay with the program. Once students get familiar with the program through frequent writing, they may increase their intrinsic motivation to keep writing and grab any opportunities to

practice and learn by themselves..

5. Implement frequent sharing and checking activities: These activities were found to be useful to participating students in WI and EI groups. The sharing activity helped them solve problems in using the program and encouraged students' cooperative learning. With frequent encouragement and regular checking, almost all of the students in WI and EI groups were motivated to finish their required writing. Some of them even tried to write more essays than required. Several of them would revise several times and thus made progress in writing.

Based on the results of the test project, some suggestions for the program are also summarized. To better serve EFL writing students, the program could make the following improvement:

1. The program could provide detailed guidance and material for most EFL students before they write an essay, not just in the feedback. For example, a writing model for each new writing prompt might be useful.
2. The program could provide more supporting environment that guides and helps self-study students in the writing process, such as some mechanisms that lead them through the pre-writing stages to post-writing revisions.
3. The program could provide more instruction in the feedback, such as telling students what and how to do when getting "off topic" feedback.
4. The program could develop and offer more options for writing, such as options for writing in other modes for the same topic, and options of free style or creative writing.
5. The program could provide the score in more scales, not just the current 4 or 6 point scale.

CONCLUSIONS

In this test project, MY Access!™ was test used for the first time in EFL writing and it was thus explored in various ways. This experience should be helpful for future users and its developers. For most students, after teachers' writing instruction, MY Access!™ could provide them with further opportunities for writing practice. It was especially helpful to students of intermediate level and when writing in fixed formats or writing modes. Technology has its strengths and limitations. EFL writing instructors should make the best use of its strengths to facilitate students learning in and out of the classroom.

Finally, as for the question about whether computers will eventually become so intelligent that they will replace human teachers, the answer is negative for the present status. One can't replace a teacher, especially for teaching EFL writing. As Dr. Kurt VanLehn, AI researcher and professor at the University of Pittsburgh suggested, some smart tutoring system might acted as a coach and offer hints to problems students encountered during online learning, but it can't replace teachers (Kennedy, 2002). A more likely scenario may be happening at the night after the English composition class in school when students write an essay at home with the help of smart online tutoring tool. When students hit a rough spot, the tutor will automatically send a file with the problem to the teacher. The teacher can also find students' writing process and records in their online portfolio system before class. When students return to class, the teacher can help them. In brief, the technology does not replace humans, it should be able to direct human contact where it is most needed.

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Appendix 1
Questionnaire for Using MY Access!™ (Student version)

MY Access!™ 線上寫作系統期末問卷(S)

各位同學: 大家好!

本學期同學們上網利用 MY Access!™ 線上寫作系統練習英文寫作, 到目前為止已有近三個月的時間了。我們設計本問卷, 希望瞭解各位同學的使用情形及對 MY Access!™ 學習成果之意見與感想, 並作為將來網路教學上的參考。本問卷個人資料與答案僅供學術研究使用, 請同學放心並誠實填答。

視聽教育館 教學研究組

請依該敘述符合你實際情況的程度來作答, 切勿依你認為『你應該如何』或『別人會怎樣』來回答。這不是考試, 答案無所謂對或錯。請迅速並仔細地作答, 每一題都要作答。

一、電腦使用

1. 你是否常使用電腦?

☐幾乎每天 ☐一星期數次 ☐一個月數次 ☐二、三個月一次 ☐從未使用

2. 你是否常使用電腦上網?

☐幾乎每天 ☐一星期數次 ☐一個月數次 ☐二、三個月一次 ☐從未使用

3. 你是否常用電腦寫作(文章或書信)?

☐幾乎每天 ☐一星期數次 ☐一個月數次 ☐二、三個月一次 ☐從未使用

4. 你是否常登入使用 MY Access!™ 線上寫作系統?

☐幾乎每天 ☐一星期數次 ☐一個月數次 ☐二、三個月一次 ☐從未使用

5. 你登入使用 MY Access!™ 之線上寫作系統是否有困難?

☐是 ☐否

二、整體而言... (未曾使用 MY Access!™ 系統者請跳答第三大題)

1. 我認為 MY Access!™ 這個線上系統使用很方便。

☐非常不同意 ☐不同意 ☐沒意見 ☐同意 ☐非常同意

2. 我認為 MY Access!™ 的操作介面容易使用(user-friendly)。

☐非常不同意 ☐不同意 ☐沒意見 ☐同意 ☐非常同意

3. 我曾使用過 MY Access!™ 以下之功能:(可複選)

☐Writer's Guide ☐Checklist ☐Notepad ☐Writer's Tools
☐View Essays ☐Spelling ☐Grammar

4. 我認為 MY Access!™ 以下之功能對我寫作有幫助(可複選)

☐Writer's Guide ☐Checklist ☐Notepad ☐Writer's Tools
☐View Essays ☐Spelling ☐Grammar

Appendix 1

Questionnaire for Using MY Access!™ (Student version)

MY Access!™ 線上寫作系統期末問卷(S)

各位同學: 大家好!

本學期同學們上網利用 MY Access!™ 線上寫作系統系統練習英文寫作, 到目前為止已有近三個月的時間了。我們設計本問卷, 希望瞭解各位同學的使用情形及對 MY Access!™ 學習成果之意見與感想, 並作為將來網路教學上的參考。本問卷個人資料與答案僅供學術研究使用, 請同學放心並誠實填答。

視聽教育館 教學研究組

請依該敘述符合你實際情況的程度來作答, 切勿依你認為『你應該如何』或『別人會怎樣』來回答。這不是考試, 答案無所謂對或錯。請迅速並仔細地作答, 每一題都要作答。

一、電腦使用

1. 你是否常使用電腦?

☐幾乎每天 ☐一星期數次 ☐一個月數次 ☐二、三個月一次 ☐從未

使用

2. 你是否常使用電腦上網?

☐幾乎每天 ☐一星期數次 ☐一個月數次 ☐二、三個月一次 ☐從未

使用

3. 你是否常用電腦寫作(文章或書信)?

☐幾乎每天 ☐一星期數次 ☐一個月數次 ☐二、三個月一次 ☐從未

使用

4. 你是否常登入使用 MY Access!™ 線上寫作系統?

☐幾乎每天 ☐一星期數次 ☐一個月數次 ☐二、三個月一次 ☐從未

使用

5. 你登入使用 MY Access!™ 之線上寫作系統是否有困難?

☐是 ☐否

二、整體而言... (未曾使用 MY Access!™ 系統者請跳答第三大題)

1. 我認為 MY Access!™ 這個線上系統使用很方便。

☐非常不同意 ☐不同意 ☐沒意見 ☐同意 ☐非常同意

2. 我認為 MY Access!™ 的操作介面容易使用(user-friendly)。

☐非常不同意 ☐不同意 ☐沒意見 ☐同意 ☐非常同意

3. 我曾使用過 MY Access!™ 以下之功能:(可複選)

☐Writer's Guide ☐Checklist ☐Notepad ☐Writer's Tools
☐View Essays ☐Spelling ☐Grammar

4. 我認為 MY Access!™ 以下之功能對我寫作有幫助(可複選)

☐Writer's Guide ☐Checklist ☐Notepad ☐Writer's Tools
☐View Essays ☐Spelling ☐Grammar

5. 我認為 MY Access!™ 裡的題目(Prompts)說明清楚。

☐是 ☐否 ☐不確定

6. 我認為 MY Access!™ 裡的題目(Prompts)很困難。

☐是 ☐否 ☐不確定

7. 我認為 MY Access!™ 所評的分數很適當。

☐是 ☐否 ☐不確定

8. 我認為 MY Access!™ 的評語很容易了解。

☐是 ☐否 ☐不確定

9. 我認為 MY Access!™ 有助我的英文寫作。

☐是 ☐否 ☐不確定

10. 我認為使用 MY Access!™ 對以下部份的寫作有幫助:(可複選)

☐ Focus and Meaning ☐ Content and Development
☐ Organization ☐ Language and Style
☐ Mechanics and Conventions

11. 我認為我在以下部份最需要改進:(可複選)

☐ Focus and Meaning ☐ Content and Development
☐ Organization ☐ Language and Style
☐ Mechanics and Conventions

12. 我會運用 MY Access!™ 之評語和說明來改進寫作。

☐是 ☐否 ☐不確定

13. 我喜歡 MY Access!™ 之部份/原因:

- A. 我喜歡當我送出文章後, 會即時收到成績及評語。 ☐是 ☐否
B. 我喜歡它告訴我如何修改才能得到更好的成績。 ☐是 ☐否
C. 我喜歡它在文法上的建議。 ☐是 ☐否
D. 我喜歡它能讓我反覆修改我的文章。 ☐是 ☐否
E. 我認為它有效協助我改善寫作。 ☐是 ☐否
F. 它很好用。 ☐是 ☐否
G. 我喜歡自己有一個寫作歷程紀錄的檔案。 ☐是 ☐否
H. 其它: _____

14. 我不喜歡 MY Access!™ 之部份/原因: _____

15. 我想下學期能再繼續使用 MY Access!™ 線上寫作系統。 ☐是 ☐否

16. 我對使用 MY Access!™ 系統之感想及建議: _____

三、 其它…

1. 我認為網上寫作對學習幫助不大。 ☐是 ☐否 ☐不確定
2. 我不習慣網際網路所呈現的學習環境。 ☐是 ☐否 ☐不確定
3. 我認為英文寫作的練習特別需要有人實際的指導。☐是 ☐否 ☐不確定

四、 基本資料（僅供教學研究參考）

1. 你的性別是：1. ☐ 男 2. ☐ 女
2. 出生日期：西元 19__年__月__日
3. 主修(系別)： _____
4. 在國中之前有超過一年的英語學習經驗（如兒童英語）：
☐是 ☐否
5. 曾在英語地區居住過一年以上？
☐是 ☐否
6. 跟據你的大學入學(或基本學力測驗)之英文成績，你認為自己的英語程度如何？
☐差 ☐不好 ☐中等 ☐好 ☐優異
7. 如果你有機會接觸外國人，你認為自己使用英語溝通的能力如何？
☐差 ☐不好 ☐中等 ☐好 ☐優異

Appendix 2

Questionnaire for Using MY Access!™ (Teacher version)

MY Access!™ 線上寫作系統期末問卷(T)

各位老師: 大家好!

本學期讓學生上網利用 MY Access!™線上寫作系統練習英文寫作，到目前為止已有近三個月的時間了。我們設計本份期末問卷，希望瞭解各位老師對使用 MY Access!™輔助教學及學生使用情形的感想和意見，以作為將來網路教學上的參考。 本問卷個人資料與答案僅供學術研究使用，感謝老師的合作與填答。

視聽教育館 教學研究組

請依該敘述符合你實際情況的程度來作答，切勿依你認為『你應該如何』或『別人會怎樣』來回答。每一題請仔細地作答。

一、 使用情形與頻率

1. 你是否常登入使用 MY Access!™線上寫作系統？
☐幾乎每天 ☐一星期數次 ☐一個月數次 ☐二、三月一次 ☐從未使用
2. 整體而言，你是否覺得該系統容易使用？
☐非常容易 ☐容易 ☐普通 ☐有點難 ☐非常困難
3. 你是否規定學生上網寫固定篇數的作文？ ☐是 ☐否
一學期有幾篇？ _____篇
4. 你認為學生上網練習寫作是否有助英文作文？
☐是 ☐否 ☐不確定

三、 其它...

1. 我認為網上寫作對學習幫助不大。 ☐是 ☐否 ☐不確定
2. 我不習慣網際網路所呈現的學習環境。 ☐是 ☐否 ☐不確定
3. 我認為英文寫作的練習特別需要有人實際的指導。 ☐是 ☐否 ☐不確定

四、 基本資料 (僅供教學研究參考)

1. 你的性別是: 1. ☐男 2. ☐女
2. 出生日期: 西元 19__年__月__日
3. 主修(系別): _____
4. 在國中之前有超過一年的英語學習經驗 (如兒童美語):
☐是 ☐否
5. 曾在英語地區居住過一年以上?
☐是 ☐否
6. 跟據你的大學入學(或基本學力測驗)之英文成績, 你認為自己的英語程度如何?
☐差 ☐不好 ☐中等 ☐好 ☐優異
7. 如果你有機會接觸外國人, 你認為自己使用英語溝通的能力如何?
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每一題請仔細地作答。

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2. 整體而言, 你是否覺得該系統容易使用?
☐非常容易 ☐容易 ☐普通 ☐有點難 ☐非常困難
3. 你是否規定學生上網寫固定篇數的作文? ☐是 ☐否
一學期有幾篇? _____篇
4. 你認為學生上網練習寫作是否有助英文作文?
☐是 ☐否 ☐不確定

5. 你是否會推薦學生繼續使用這套系統?

☐是 ☐否 ☐不確定

6. 你是否會推薦視聽館或外文系訂購這類系統供學生使用?

☐是 ☐否 ☐不確定

二、 以下有關 MY Access!™的部份/特點, 你是否喜歡?

1. 寫作題目 (prompts) 的數量多寡。 ☐喜歡 ☐不喜歡 ☐不確定
2. 寫作題目之內容。 ☐喜歡 ☐不喜歡 ☐不確定
3. 寫作題目之可選擇範圍。 ☐喜歡 ☐不喜歡 ☐不確定
4. 寫作題目之難易度。 ☐喜歡 ☐不喜歡 ☐不確定
5. 寫作說明之份量。 ☐喜歡 ☐不喜歡 ☐不確定
6. 寫作說明之介紹。 ☐喜歡 ☐不喜歡 ☐不確定
7. 即時評分回應。 ☐喜歡 ☐不喜歡 ☐不確定
8. 評分之正確度。 ☐喜歡 ☐不喜歡 ☐不確定

三、 我認為 MY Access!™線上寫作系統

1. 有助改善學生寫作。 ☐同意 ☐不同意 ☐不確定
2. 評量的分數適當。 ☐同意 ☐不同意 ☐不確定
3. 能在學生寫作過程中提供協助。 ☐同意 ☐不同意 ☐不確定
4. 回應說明有助提升學生對寫作之觀念。 ☐同意 ☐不同意 ☐不確定
5. 即時評分回應能增強學生練習寫作的動機。 ☐同意 ☐不同意 ☐不確定

整體而言, 你對此次讓學生參與使用 MY Access!™有何感想與建議?