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Process-Based Writing Approach: A Panacea to Improve Thai Chinese as a Foreign Language (TCFL) Learners' Writing Skill and to Eradicate Writing Block

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Abstract

The role of a process-based approach to writing has been increasingly recognized as a writing pedagogy in aiding learners to write compositions in higher education context. However, there is yet a growing interest in implementing this writing pedagogy to eradicate students' writing block, and it requires more research. The overarching aim of the current study was to investigate the impact of process-based writing instruction on Thai Chinese as a Foreign Language (TCFL) students' writing performance. Additionally, the present study aimed to eradicate students' writing block. An explanatory, sequential mixed method type of research was employed in the study using a pre-and post-test design. A single group of 28 first-year students of TCFL was purposively chosen as participants and underwent 10 sessions of implementing the process-based writing approach to facilitate their writing tasks. Quantitative results revealed a significant difference on participants' pre-test ($\bar{x} = 8.93$) and post-test ($\bar{x} = 14.04$) writing performance in terms of writing components such as organization, content, lexical resource, logical connections, and the use of Chinese language characters. Regarding the participants' quiz results, the most improved writing component was on "content", whilst "logical connection" was the least improved one. Furthermore, when analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed, significant differences between one quiz score to those of the other quizzes were revealed. The qualitative findings suggested that the participants had positively welcomed the use of process-based writing approach to facilitate their writing tasks and to eliminate writing block. Thus, as the students' writing performance increases, they are most likely to manage eradicating writing block. Finally, it is concluded that process-based writing approach is a helpful pedagogical approach that assisted students to not only enhance their writing performance but enable them to manage to prevent writing block. It is recommended therefore that a process-based writing approach should be used as an agentive pedagogical approach in TCFL writing classroom.

Keywords: Keywords: Process-based writing approach, Writing block, Thai Chinese as a Foreign Language (TCFL) writing

■ Introduction

Writing is an active, productive skill; however, it is one of the most difficult language skills to learn (Bayat, 2014; Robillos & Thongpai, 2022). Furthermore, writing has always been a necessary requirement for learners in their undergraduate studies; however, developing an effective writing competency is a tough undertaking for them. Loh & Krashen (2015) claimed that writing is the last language skill to master due to many challenges the students have been encountering. The challenges relating to developing an effective writing ability come from different aspects including knowledge of the content, complexity of the task, syntactic and lexical complexity, organizational mechanisms such as coherence and cohesion, and not to forget, the students' low level of writing motivation. Apart from writing challenges mentioned, students are also unable to make the connection and the plans that allow writing to occur (Sapiurka, 2015), no matter how hard they try, they can produce little, if any, writing (Rose, 1984). This is often termed as "writer's block".

Writer's block is the inability to write or to continue writing for a long period of time (Rose, 1984) due to many reasons apart from basic writing skill or commitment (Lei & Lei, 2007). Writers' block is caused by external factors surrounding the writer and these factors are related to the rhetorical situation of the writing process (Rahmat, 2020). There are various factors why students experience writing block (Lei & Wei, 2007; Rahmat et al., 2019; Rose, 1984). For example, cognitive anxiety, low self-esteem and negative feeling on writing, a non-supporting learning environment by the writing teachers (Rahmat et al., 2019), procrastination (Horwitz, Stenfors, & Osika, 2013), and inappropriate use of strategies in teaching writing (Karahan, 2021; Salem, 2018). These factors lead learners to avoid attitude and behaviors towards learning writing (Rahmat et al., 2019).

Albeit many studies have explored on the various factors why writing block has been occurring and writing anxiety have been experienced by the students (Lee, 2005; Lei & Wei, 2005; Rahmat et al., 2019), very few studies on TCFL writing consider utilizing various effective writing approaches that might potentially improve learners' writing performance and possibly eradicate writing block. One best approach to writing that might be able to address some of the significant problems faced by the students and teachers is the process-based approach to writing (Al-sawalha, 2014; Brown, 2001; Cando et al., 2017; Karatay, 2011a; Simpson, 2013; Zen, 2005). Process-based approach to writing is a systematic, specific approach that involves pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing. Teaching writing as a process allows students to make suitable writing compositions because it includes several steps to identify and reflect on their own mistakes, writing challenges, and learn from them (Karatay, 2011a; Dewi, 2021).

Writing is undeniably a laborious and challenging activity; thus, it requires thinking strategies and approaches that allow learners to express their ideas successfully and effectively. However, most Thai universities have been traditionally teaching writing through product-oriented approach emphasizing mainly on grammar and has been assessed in the form of test or exam scores (Robillos, 2021). Students are producing their own texts by merely imitating the model text given by the teacher. It is observed that focusing on language and vocabulary accuracy may ignore other important characteristics of writing, such

as organization, thought, coherence, or audience awareness. A student's creativity and capability to learn through writing are as well overlooked. Besides, most of the time in writing class, students work individually without interacting with one another. It might be useful, however, to both teachers and students focusing on the process of writing, and not just on the product itself. If learners are given time to communicate with their classmates about their written products orally, learners may be able to express their own opinions and may be able to exchange ideas to their peers. Learners should be encouraged to feel free to convey their own thoughts in written messages by providing them plenty of time and opportunity to reconsider and revise their writing and at each step seek assistance from outside resources like their peers and teachers.

When students are given opportunities to expose themselves on the systematic processes of writing which mainly constitute of idea generation, collaboration, and peer revision, they may possibly be able to combat negative feeling on writing, procrastination, writing anxieties, and blocked writing (or writing block); thus, resulting to a more effective writing performance. Many studies have reported on the investigation of the various causes and factors of writer's block to writing (Lee & Krashen, 2003; Lei & Wei, 2007; Lei & Wei, 2005; Rahmat et al., 2019; Rahmat, 2020) however, very few studies have concentrated on the implementation of effective writing approaches and strategies (Lei & Wei, 2007) that might improve learners' writing performance and might catalyze students' writing block. Thus, the present study was set out to address this gap in the literature whether using a process-based writing approach improves TCFL learners' composition writing performance and helps eradicate writing block, where no studies, to date, have yet been explored especially in the TCFL context.

■ Literature Review

Writing Block: Its Nature and Occurrence

Writer's block is the inability to write or to continue writing for a long period of time. Rose (1984) described writing block as people's experience periods when, no matter how hard they try, they can produce little, if any, writing; when these periods last for a considerable amount of time, we say the person has a writing block". Rose (1984) identified five aspects of first language (L1) writing blocks namely: the complexity of the writing task, the writing language system, the writing attitude block, the writing blockage block, and the lateness block. In second language (L2) writing, however, writing obstacles are especially worthy of further investigation. Based on Rose (1984), scholars have successively explored the composition of English as a Second Language (ESL) writing barriers and related issues. For example, Lee and Krashen (2003) used ESL learners of Chinese – Taiwanese as the object of study and used factor analysis to determine the five factors of L2 writing disorder which was similar to that of Rose's study. Furthermore, Lee studied the relationship between writing block and writing performance of the students.

There are various causes why students' writing block occurred. According to Richards (2020), there have been various reasons: (1) they have a hard time getting started and feel overwhelmed by the task (2) students need to concentrate to form letters; it is not an automatic process (3) they struggle to organize

and use mechanics of writing (4) they are slow and inefficient in retrieving the proper words to express a thought (5) they struggle to develop their ideas fluently (poor ideation) (6) they realize that the paper is still sloppy albeit substantial amount of time and effort were spent and used.

According to Rahmat (2020), writer's block can likewise be caused by writers' perception of writing. This notion is backed up by Lachs (2018) where she listed down some origins of writers' block. One of them is "fear". Most student-writers have been struggling with fear in writing such as fear of putting themselves and ideas out there, fear of others judging or not understanding them and their work, and fear of being rejected by readers. A pilot study that was carried out by Rahmat et al (2019) on 108 respondents to find out the influence of perceived difficulties, reasons for writing and writing anxiety on ESL academic writing. The instrument used in the study was a 56-item survey with 5 Likert scales. The results of the study revealed the writing difficulty and learners' fear of writing started in semester one of their studies. This fear can be aggravated by a non-supporting learning environment by the writing teachers. Next, cognitive anxiety such as low self-esteem added on to the negative feeling on writing. This negative feeling can be rooted in the learners' experiences (somatic anxiety) in the learning of writing. Finally, learners may end up showing avoidance behavior such as learning writing. They would only write essays in English if they were not given any choice.

Another study was carried out by Lei & Wei (2007) who reported an empirical study on Chinese EFL learners' writer's block at a university level in the mainland of Peoples' Republic of China. The study utilized a factor analysis approach to explore various factors that constituted writing disorder of the students as well as its relationship to their writing performance. Results revealed three factors of writing block namely: complexity, premature editing, and attitudes. They likewise reported that the factors causing writing block might be due to learners' lack of strategies in the writing process. The researchers recommended that teachers could help develop learners' writing strategies and the teachers' evaluation be motivating and stimulating-oriented.

Process-based Approach to Writing

Many approaches and techniques have been provided regarding first language (L1) or second language (L2) writing over the last few decades. The process-based approach in particular, which many researchers started to highlight as vital in L2 writing from the late 1970s to 1980s, has been influential in developing writing competency. The process approach to writing is a way to solve the problems of how the students express their ideas in producing compositions systematically. Thus, a number of L2 teachers have come across its benefits and are using this approach in the teaching of writing in their classrooms. The present study was based on this approach, the process-based approach. White and Arndt (1991) propose this framework in which there is a brief explanation about each stage.

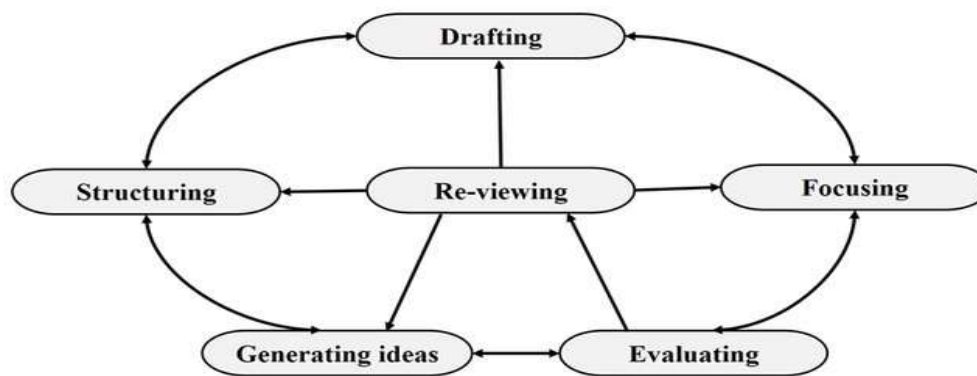


Figure 1. A model of writing via process-based writing (White & Arndt, 1991)

White and Arndt (1991) had described a writing model via a process-based approach. To illustrate the focusing stage has to do with the purpose for writing, the real reasons for writing. Structuring deals with the organization of ideas in an acceptable way for the reader. Drafting shows the transition from writer-based into reader-based text because multiple drafts are produced and each one has feedback from the teacher or from peers. Re-viewing means standing back from the text and looking at it with fresh eyes and asking oneself: “Is it right?” Evaluation is given during the process to assist students permanently and not merely at the end. Finally, it should be emphasized that generating ideas is the most important stage when the process is starting. Here the writer looks for a topic and considers a purpose to initiate the writing task. There are number of advantages offered by this writing approach: (1) it focuses on the process, not on the final product; (2) it is reader-based, not writer-based; (3) it finds a real audience; (4) it offers a variety of techniques; (5) the teacher plays the role of guide, facilitator, and reader; (6) the student’s role is one of sharing and collaborating; (7) grammar is a tool (a means, not an end); (8) meaning is essential (not form); (9) it is a creative process; and (x) evaluation and feedback are given permanently (not only at the end).

In L2 writing classroom, a process-based writing approach has dominated the teaching of writing. Many studies have reported the implementation and effectiveness of using process-based approach to writing. For example, Brown (2001), writing is a thinking process, and it always contains stages such as prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. Similarly, Karatay’s (2011a) had a similar writing stage as those of the previously mentioned and argued that the stages of process writing approach started from prewriting, drafting, editing, revising, and publishing. According to him (Karatay), ideas are generated, and the topic and target reader are determined in the prewriting stage. During the drafting stage, specified ideas are put on paper. Ideas and the organization are addressed again in the revision stage. In the editing stage, mistakes in logical coherence among sentences and paragraphs are corrected. Lastly, in the publishing stage, the written product is shared with peers. The realization of the functions of these stages is carried out if process writing approach is applied in the classroom.

The students' writing skills can be enhanced, but it should follow the proper procedures of the implementation of process – based approach to writing (Asriati & Maharida, 2013; Miftah, 2015; Zen, 2005). Another study discussed by Imelda, Cahyono, and Astuti (2019) investigated the effect of the process writing approach on students' writing ability. Study findings revealed

that the process-based approach to writing significantly impacted the students' writing ability. Similar study was likewise carried out by Syarofi, Kuswahono, and Rizky (2018) who reported that process writing strategy especially on the pre-writing stage aided the students generate helpful vocabularies that enable them to utilize during the writing process. The revision stage of the writing approach also helped the students to revise and edit their drafts which, consequently, aided them to clearly recognize what should be added and omitted in their writing drafts. Thus, possible reformation of their drafts was practiced.

Rofiqoh & Chakim (2020), on the other hand, posit that investigating the students' perception is one way to evaluate the usage of the method, techniques, or strategies in teaching learning process due to the perceptions describing their experiences in applying those methods, techniques, or strategies. If the students' perceptions are positive, the acceptance of the approach is practical. On the other hand, if the students' perceptions are negative, the acceptance approach is constrained. It means that students' perceptions influence the success of using the approach applied by teachers or students.

Albeit many studies have explored on the various factors of writing block that have been experienced by the learners (Lee, 2005; Lei & Wei, 2007; Rahmat et al., 2019), very few studies on Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) writing have considered utilizing writing approaches that might improve learners' writing performance and potentially catalyze writing block (Lei & Wei, 2007; Salem, 2018). Even though these few studies empirically examined CFL writing investigating the role of writing as language learning endeavor in CFL classrooms (Lei & Wei, 2007; Rahmat et al., 2019; Zhang, 2009), the results fail to address the issue of instructional approaches to writing (Karahana, 2021; Lei & Wei, 2007). As a result, teaching approaches in CFL writing are scarce and thus, still need further research. Furthermore, studies on the application of process-based approach to writing utilizing TCFL students in the Thai educational context had yet to be undertaken. Thus, the present study seeks to address this research gap in the literature by implementing a process-based approach to improve TCFL learners' writing performance and to eradicate writing block. Specifically, the following were the research questions sought to be answered:

1. How has the use of process-based writing approach affected the writing performance of the TCFL learners?
2. Do the students' writing quiz performances across organization, content, lexical resource, logical connection, and use of Chinese language characters, improve after the implementation of process-based writing approach?
3. What experiences have the students gained in improving their writing performance after a process-based writing approach was implemented?
4. What experiences have the students yielded in preventing writing block after process-based writing approach was implemented?

■ Methods

Research Design and Participants

The present study employed explanatory, sequential, mixed methods using a pre- and post-test design to explore the explicit instruction of writing using a process-based writing approach as the strategy intervention. There were 10 sessions involved which constituted of: two sessions for the administration of pre- and post- writing tests, eight sessions for the implementation of the intervention. A total of 28 first-year students was purposively selected as the subject of the current study involving 2 males and 26 females with ages ranging from 17-18 years old. They majored in TCFL program in the study-university located in Khon Kaen - one of the provinces in the Northeastern part of Thailand.

Instruments and Data Collection

Pre-Writing Test. Students were asked to compose a paragraph in Chinese language for at least 100 words in an hour. The composition writing topic was aligned to the topics they study in their Chinese language writing class. This writing topic was checked by two Chinese lecturers in the study-university for its cultural and cognitive appropriateness. Moreover, building their background knowledge such as question posing, brainstorming, clustering strategy were some of the activities that were carried out prior to writing of their draft. These activities were usual activities they were undertaking in their regular writing class before writing. Furthermore, the students' written compositions were checked based on the writing scoring rubric adapted from Bayat (2014) which composed of four writing components: organization, content, lexical resource, logical connection. The rubric, however, was slightly modified by the researcher herself, *i.e.*, one component on the "use of Chinese language characters" was added. This has been added as one criterion since the first year TCFL students have not been proficient in using the Chinese language characters especially in writing. This aspect was found as well as one of the causes of writing block which was somehow contributory to cause "language system blocks" (Lei & Wei, 2007; Rose, 1984). It was then checked by the two Chinese experts for its cultural and cognitive appropriateness.

Post-Writing Test. This was administered after the strategic intervention was implemented to the participants. The writing topic during the pre-test was again utilized and given to the participants to develop. They were asked to use at least 100 words in 60 minutes. However, they were not reminded anymore what strategies or instruments they should use. The researcher just put on her table the revising and editing checklists and the students may or may not use those. The students' written paragraphs were assessed using similar writing rubric that was used during their writing pre-test.

Writing Quizzes. These were the scores that students obtained from their written paragraphs throughout the implementation of the intervention program. Each of the four writing topics was aligned with the course goals and was aimed to assess whether students could be able to write in the Chinese

language (apart from taking into account the following components of writing) based on the topics they developed.

Each written composition was scored based on the criteria of the scoring rubric mentioned previously involving organization, content, lexical resource, logical connection, and use of Chinese language characters. The student's written paragraph/s would receive the highest total score of 20 marks whilst 5 as the lowest mark/s.

Interviews were conducted voluntarily to students to provide more details about how often and when the respondents would use the process-based writing approach which constituted of prewriting, drafting, and revising strategies to aid them in their writing processes as well as how the writing approach assists and aids them to prevent writing block.

The Intervention Programme

To achieve the purpose of the study, a programme was designed and was carried out during 10 sessions constituting 8 sessions implementing the process-based writing approach as a strategy intervention and one session each for the pre- and post-writing tests. Table 1 presents the intervention programme implemented to the participants.

Table 1.

The Intervention Programme

Session/s	Stages	Learning Activities
1 st Session	Pre-test	● Administration of writing pre-test. Introduction and prior activities were carried out.
2 nd -6 th Sessions	Pre-writing Stage	● Introduction of the 1 st stage. Brainstorming and organizing ideas were implemented. Brainstorming, concept mapping and clustering techniques were carried out.
	Writing Stage	● Writing part. Students were asked to write a paragraph and were given the chance to share their drafts to gain more ideas from their peer's comments and suggestions and to solve issues regarding organization of ideas. The teacher, on the other hand, would just be around ready to respond if there are issues needed to be addressed.
	Post-writing Stage	● These sessions comprise of post writing stage that involved revising and editing sub-stages. Under the former, participants' written paragraph was checked by the students themselves using a revision checklist. This was to further let the students discover if their ideas were already complete or still need more ideas. Furthermore, they would be given several minutes to share their revised paper to their peers to gain more insights as well as resolve issues regarding lexical and organization of ideas as well as the use of Chinese language

Session/s	Stages	Learning Activities
		characters. For the latter, students had the chance to edit their written piece using the editing checklist to further spot minimal errors before they write their final draft.
7 th -9 th sessions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● These last three sessions were another round of composition writing; different writing topics would be developed. These rounds were to give them ample exposures of practices using the approach before they were administered with the post writing test.
10 th session	Post-test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A topic which was similar to the topic they developed during the pre-test, was developed by the students (as their Post-test) and used at least 100 words in an hour (at most).

Test Marking and the Scoring Rubric

For the evaluation of the participants' written compositions, five criteria were identified and used as the writing scoring rubric: organization, content, lexical resource, logical connection, and use of Chinese language characters. This scoring rubric criteria was adapted from Bayat (2014); however, few revisions were made and was checked by the two Chinese language lecturers for its cultural and cognitive appropriateness. A descriptive checklist of these five components was prepared in order to standardize the evaluation of students written compositions as follows:

Under organization, the subsections were the presence of introduction, body, and conclusion; the use of the thesis statement in the introduction; the specification of the points to be discussed in the thesis statements; the presence of topic sentences at the beginning of the paragraphs reflecting the topic to be addressed, and reference to the thesis statement in the conclusion.

Under content, the subsections were the presence of specific main idea in the compositions; explanations to support the main idea, the absence of redundant information, the suitability of the narrative technique for the topic/s.

Whilst lexical resource included avoidance of ambiguous word, and effective use of words for expression, logical connection contained style establishing logical and semantic links between sentences; constructing appropriate relationships between ideas through conjunctions; making use of techniques of effective expression such as exemplification, description, etc. and ensuring continuity in the text.

Furthermore, a criterion on the "use of Chinese characters" was added as one of the criteria in the scoring rubric because the participants were in the first-year level, and thus, their exposure to the use of Chinese language characters have still been limited which might be a factor of writing block (Lei & Wei, 2007; Rose, 1984). With regard the scoring for the last criterion (use of Chinese language characters), students would earn 4 marks for 1-2 errors, 3 marks for 3-4 errors, 2 marks for 5-6 errors, and 1 mark for over 7 errors.

It was then checked by the two Chinese experts for its cognitive appropriateness.

Analysis of Data

Quantitative data were evaluated based on descriptive and inferential statistics, whilst qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency, percentage were calculated and presented in a tabular form. The t-test statistical analysis was used to compare the means of both sets of tests to indicate the effect of the intervention employed.

In addition, the qualitative data from semi-structured interviews were analyzed independently. The researcher coded the data by using topical coding to label text. Codes then were interpreted and modified to identify themes that emerged (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). The following themes were emerged after the conduct of semi-structured interviews: theme 1 pertained to the students' benefits from using process-based writing approach in facilitating their writing tasks, theme 2 related on the challenges of using process-based writing approach on students' writing task, and theme 3 included the potential use of process-based writing approach in dealing with students' writing block.

■ Results and Discussion

Quantitative Analysis

Overall Test of difference on the participants' writing performance

Table 2

Overall test of difference on the participants' pre- and post- writing performance

Variables	Mean	S.D.	t-computed value	df	p-value
Before the Intervention	8.93	3.651	11.839	27	.001
After the Intervention	14.04	3.958			

Table 2 presents the overall test of difference on the participants' writing performance before and after the strategy intervention. As shown, the students' pre-test's mean and SD scores ($\bar{x}=8.93$; $SD=3.651$) and post-test's ($\bar{x}=14.04$; $SD=3.958$) showed statistically significant difference as indicated by a computed p-value of 0.001 and was found less than 0.05 level of significance. This simply showed that the use of process-based writing approach made significant gains towards the participants' writing performance.

Table 3

Participants' performances on their writing quizzes

Writing Quizzes	Quiz 1		Quiz 2		Quiz 3		Quiz 4	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Organization	12.18	.61	12.21	.63	12.32	.77	13.14	.65
Content	12.14	.69	12.75	.75	12.96	.69	13.68	.48
Lexical Resource	11.64	.73	12.17	.71	12.11	.73	12.93	.81

Logical Connection	12.14	.59	12.50	.69	12.34	.96	12.75	.52
Use of Chinese Characters	11.54	.64	12.14	.72	12.17	.74	12.93	.81
Overall	11.91	0.65	12.32	0.70	12.41	0.78	13.19	0.65

Table 3 presents the Mean and SD results for the following four quizzes. The results showed that the quiz scores of the participants began at a quite lower starting point. However, the overall writing quiz scores the participants gained eventually improved throughout the implementation of the intervention. This is indicated by the following mean scores of $\bar{x}=11.91$, $\bar{x}=12.32$, $\bar{x}=12.41$, and $\bar{x}=13.19$ for Quiz 1, Quiz 2, Quiz 3, and Quiz 4 respectively. Moreover, it is likewise noticeable from the table that there were three out of five writing components namely “organization” ($\bar{x}=12.18$, $\bar{x}=12.21$, $\bar{x}=12.32$, and $\bar{x}=13.14$), “content” ($\bar{x}=12.14$; $\bar{x}=12.75$; $\bar{x}=12.96$; and $\bar{x}=13.68$), and “use of Chinese language characters” ($\bar{x}=11.54$, $\bar{x}=12.14$, $\bar{x}=12.17$, and $\bar{x}=12.93$) showed a gradual increase from the 1st quiz, 2nd quiz, 3rd quiz and 4th quiz respectively. The other two writing components such as “lexical resource” and “logical connection” decreased the scores during the students’ 2nd and 3rd quizzes but soared quite high during their 4th quiz. It is worthwhile to note that the most improved writing component was on “content” amongst all components whilst “logical connection” was the least improved one.

Table 4

Repeated Measure ANOVA. Measure: MEASURE 1

	Source	Type III sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Partial eta squared
Quiz	Sphericity Assumed	120.107	3	40.036	97.113	<.001	.782
	Greenhouse-Geisser	120.107	1.524	78.808	97.113	<.001	.782
	Huynh-Feldt	120.107	1.597	75.229	97.113	<.001	.782
	Lower Bound	120.107	1.000	120.107	97.113	<.001	.782
Error (Quiz)	Sphericity Assumed	33.393	81	.412			
	Greenhouse-Geisser	33.393	41.150	.812			
	Huynh-Feldt	33.393	43.107	.775			
	Lower Bound	33.393	27.000	1.237			

Table 4 presents the SPSS result for Repeated Measure Analysis of Variance (within subjects). It can be observed that the p-value under the Sig. column and sphericity assumed is less than 0.05, this indicates a significant difference among the scores in the four quizzes. The value of the ANOVA is indicated by the F column (F=97.113).

Table 5

Pairwise Comparisons of the Means of the Four Quizzes. Measure: MEASURE 1

(I) Quiz	(J) Quiz	Mean Difference (I- J)	Std Error	Sig ^b	95% Confidence Interval for Difference ^b	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound

1	2	-2.071 [*]	.185	<.001	-2.598	-1.545
	3	-2.500 [*]	.227	<.001	-3.147	-1.853
	4	-2.500 [*]	.227	<.001	-3.147	-1.853
2	1	2.071 [*]	.185	<.001	1.545	2.598
	3	-.429 [*]	.140	.030	-.828	-.029
	4	-.429 [*]	.140	.030	-.828	-.029
3	1	2.500 [*]	.227	<.001	1.853	3.147
	2	.429 [*]	.140	.030	.029	.828
	4	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
4	1	2.500 [*]	.227	<.001	1.853	3.147
	2	.429 [*]	.140	.030	.029	.828
	3	.000	.000	.	.000	.000

Based on estimated marginal means

* = the mean difference is significant at the .05 level

^b = adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

Table 5 presents the pairwise comparison of the means of the four quizzes. Here, the 1st quiz is compared to 2nd quiz, 3rd quiz, and 4th quiz. It was noticeable that the p-value was .000 which was all less than 0.05 level of significance. Thus, scores in 1st quiz were significantly different to the scores in the other 3 quizzes. It was also indicated from the means found in the second table, the mean in 1st quiz is less than the mean of the other 3 quizzes, meaning, their score in 1st quiz was found significantly lower than their scores in the other quizzes. The *asterisks* from the mean scores found in the third column indicated a significant difference.

Qualitative Analysis

After the implementation of the intervention, a semi-structured interview was conducted to 10 participants who voluntarily participated in the endeavor. The following themes that emerged together with their sub-codes and respective sample responses were shown in table 6.

Table 6

Emerged themes and sub-codes along with sample responses from the interviewees after the semi-structured interview was conducted.

Themes	Sub-Codes	Sample response/s of the interviewees
Theme 1 Benefits of using Process-based approach on participants' writing tasks and processes.	Sub-code 1 Importance of planning technique	<i>"The brainstorming technique allows me to explore many ideas before linking them to the new writing topic" P5</i>
	Sub-code 2 Evaluation of one's own performance	<i>"I don't practice checking and revising my paragraph, but after I was taught of techniques such as revising and editing, my written paragraphs were free from grammatical mistakes due to the useful revising and editing checklists provided to us and also with my peers' suggestions." P8</i>
	Sub-code 3 Self- Reflection on the problems being encountered	<i>"I always revise my own paragraphs and always take down some of the mistakes from my paragraph and tried to put some remarks for me to be guided next writing activity. This technique might lead me to not commit the mistakes again." P9</i>
	Sub-code 4 The use of writing stages to other skills	<i>"I believe that in any skill like reading, listening and even speaking, I can use the same stages." P3</i>
Theme 2 Challenges of using process-based writing approach on students' writing tasks	Sub-Code 5 Time constraints	<i>"The writing stages that my teacher told us to follow were very useful, but it took us a lot of time to complete those stages, and this required us to extend our time just to complete our draft." P2</i>
Theme 3 The potential use of process-based writing approach in	Sub-code 6 Group work builds students' confidence and avoids them to procrastinate in writing	<i>"I prefer having people or friends around when I write so that I can gather ideas from them. Furthermore, it aided me to combat writing block since working in teams boosts more confidence to not procrastinate writing and finish any writing tasks given to us.</i>
	Sub-code 7	<i>"I can be able to identify some Chinese language characters distinctly and that enabled</i>

Themes	Sub-Codes	Sample response/s of the interviewees
preventing with students' writing block	Understand more of Chinese language characters, and feel motivated to finish the writing task/s given to them	<i>me to use them appropriately in writing paragraphs." P4</i> <i>"I get motivated to continue writing because of the helpful strategies I learnt. Moreover, I learnt to manage confidently writing block by solving it myself especially on generating content ideas for my paragraph."</i>
	Sub-code 8 Enhanced self-confidence, motivation and builds positive habits on students' learning experiences	<i>"I started improving my confidence because I am directed to what I am doing during tasks, and this helped me to fight writing block such as lack of content ideas and laziness to continue writing. I also established discipline because it reminds me of what to follow before, during, and after writing." P1</i>

Discussion

The results from the present study revealed that the treatment was successful and effective as it manifested positive gains on students' writing performance. Furthermore, it aided the students to eradicate writers' block. To illustrate, the intervention helped the students to increase their writing performance and further learn to use the techniques in writing process at each stage of the process-based writing approach. It is worth noting that the learners' likelihood of unsuccessful production of written composition decreased considerably at the end of the writing process. Since evaluation is carried out by students themselves, their peers and their teacher, text eventually contains less mistakes. The lessons using process-based writing approach decreased students' negative views about writing (Yayh, 2009) and that eventually prevent writing block. This outcome could result from errors being evaluated and corrected as soon as they emerge in the writing process. Writing is a complex process and can lead to learner frustration, laziness, and procrastination, thus, it is necessary to provide a supportive environment for the students and be patient. This approach needs more time be spent on writing in class, but as you have seen, not all classroom time is spent on writing. Though it requires more classroom time spent on writing, but there is more than just writing happening during a session dedicated to process writing. Students, as we know, may also react negatively to re-working the same material, but if the activities are varied and the objectives are clear, then they will usually accept doing so. In the long run, the students will start recognizing the value of the process-based writing approach as their written composition improves.

It is notable as well that the participants gained an increasing trend of scores regarding their writing quizzes. Though they began at a lower baseline, their quiz scores increased dramatically after they were

exposed to the intervention which potentially facilitated their writing tasks. Furthermore, the writing component on “content” was revealed as the most improved criterion. There was an obvious improvement on the presence of specific main idea on the participants’ written composition, they showed progress in incorporating content where they could include more related ideas and information on their paragraphs meaning, they incorporated explanations to support the main idea of the topic they wanted to develop. On the other hand, the writing component on “logical connection” was revealed as the least improved component. The students had difficulty establishing logical and semantic links between ideas in their sentences. Further, the participants tried to minimize the use of redundant information and tried to connect ideas logically. This is an indication that whilst the content in their writing improves, so does the organization, lexical resource, logical connections, and the use of Chinese language characters. Regarding the least improved writing component (logical connection), they were quite weak at constructing appropriate relationships between ideas through conjunctions such as transitional devices (*moreover, furthermore, in addition, however, regarding*). They were also quite weak at using “elaborating techniques” such as exemplification, description.

Meanwhile, the results in the interview questions provided more comprehensive insights into how learners’ writing performance was facilitated as well as how writing block was prevented. There were three themes emerged: The first theme emerged pertained to the benefits of using process-based approach on participants’ writing tasks and processes. Ten participants (P) voluntarily participated in the semi-structured interview. During the interview, when the participants were asked about their thoughts regarding the use of process-based writing approach in processing their writing tasks in the classroom, they said that the approach aided them to facilitate their schemata of background knowledge. Knowledge activation is known as a useful activity when planning to write. Students’ background knowledge when triggered could actively link to the new topic. P5 conveyed that: *“the brainstorming technique allows me to explore many ideas before linking them to the new writing topic because it helped me know more helpful words which have relationship to the topic we would be writing.”*

Evaluation of one’s own language to improve through checking one’s own text, looking for errors and structure (Robillos, 2021) is one good feature of a good writer. In this way, they will become better writers. P8 said, *“I don’t practice checking and revising my paragraph, but after I was taught of techniques such as revising and editing, my written paragraphs were free from grammatical mistakes due to the useful revising and editing checklists provided to us and also with my peers’ suggestions.”*

Requiring the students to reflect on what problems they encountered during the writing process would somehow overcome their writing difficulties. Evaluating one’s writing process gives a student a better understanding of his/her writing processes which could eventually help him/her prepare for future writing tasks better: P9 revealed his insights regarding self-evaluation: *“I always revise my own paragraphs. I always take down some of the errors and mistakes I noticed in my paragraph and try to put some remarks for me to be guided next writing activity. This technique might lead me to not commit the mistakes again.”*

The aim of using process – based writing strategies in teaching writing is to guide students to be better writers. In the study, the students were guided to help themselves in learning writing not only for one day but for their future learning experiences. As P3 expressed, *“Activating my background knowledge helps me know what is going to write. But this stage does not end only in my writing class. I believe that in any skill like reading, listening and even speaking, I can do the same thing. I also learnt handling situations and help me tackle writing problems as I studied on my own.”*

The second theme was about the challenges of using process-based writing approach on students’ writing tasks. When the process-based approach to writing was used by the teacher, they followed many stages, and it took more time to successfully implement it. Because of lack of time, the students were unable to finish their written outputs on time. P2 felt, *“The writing stages that my teacher told us to follow were very useful, but it took us a lot of time to complete those stages, and this required us to extend our time just to complete our draft.”*

The last theme (Theme 3) that emerged involved the potential uses of process-based writing approach in dealing with students’ writing block. Positive comments can help build student confidence and create good feeling for the next writing class. Paired and group work builds students’ confidence which aids them to not feel lazy and not to procrastinate. Confidence is a strong attitude that helped writers to combat writing block since it allows them to work continuously and that it hinders them to procrastinate. P6, P3 and P4 could attest this as they unfold their experience during collaboration stage. P6 expressed, *“I gained more confidence in the class after having taught how to collaborate amongst peers before, during, and after writing. Before, I was shy about sharing my ideas because I feel that it is wrong, and this stops me from continuing writing and feels lazy to continue writing. Additionally, since some of them also had the same ideas as mine as we share, it gives me confirmation that I can also do what they can do. This feeling helped me to continue writing again.”* . P3 likewise conveyed, *“I prefer having people or friends around when I write so that I can gather ideas from them. Furthermore, it aided me to combat writing block since working in teams boosts more confidence to not postpone my writing and thus, finish any writing tasks given to us”* . Another interviewee (P4) also expressed, *“It was difficult to find words although I could access them in my mind, but sharing ideas and thoughts with my peers helped me to grasp these words out.”*

After the strategy intervention, the participants stated that they learned a lot of writing strategies and these aided them to combat writing block such as discipline to not feel lazy writing, understand more of Chinese language characters, and feel motivated to finish the writing task/s given to them. Two interviewees conveyed their feelings with regard to this. P3 said, *“After being taught writing strategies in the class, I get motivated to continue writing because of the helpful strategies I learnt. Moreover, I learnt to manage confidently writing block by solving it myself especially on generating content ideas for my paragraph.”* and for P4, she expressed, *“I can be able to identify some Chinese language characters distinctly and that enabled me to use them appropriately in writing paragraphs.”*

Various writing strategies were used in the process of teaching writing in the classroom and these build self-confidence, motivation and positive habits on students' learning experiences. As P1, P10 and P5 conveyed their thoughts regarding this:

“After the approach was taught, I started building confidence and discipline. I improved my confidence because I am directed to what I would be doing during writing activities and this helped me to combat writing block for example, lack of ideas and laziness to continue writing. I also established discipline because it reminds me of what to follow before, during, and after writing.” P1

“Since the teacher developed assessment for class activities and out of class activities, I became more motivated and disciplined to finish my work and stopped procrastinating which is one cause of writing block.” P10

“If I get into my fear and doubts, it may give me a problem which I believe a hindrance to motivate me to write. But the self-assessment technique that I learnt from the classroom aided me to convince myself to prevent procrastination.” P5

It is noticeable that most of the studies in the literature concentrated on employing a quantitative approach to evaluate what influences writing difficulties, using survey questionnaire (Rahmat et al', (2019);), using factor analysis approach to explore various factors that constituted writing disorder of the students as well as its relationship on their writing performance (Lei & Wei, 2007). However, in the present study, it explored the effectiveness of a writing strategy to determine what militates students' writing difficulties as well as writing block. It might be claimed that when a writing instruction is facilitated through a writing process, *i.e.*, a process-oriented writing approach, a more improved writing performance would be yielded by the learners (Al-sawalha, 2014; Brown, 2001; Cando et al., 2017; Karatay, 2011a; Simpson, 2013; Zen, 2005). The explicit discussion on the different stages of the writing process was vital towards successful writing and might be a potential catalyst to eradicate writing block. The activities in the planning stage, reflective writing tasks, and the use of the language of writing process most likely aided the students perceive the importance of the approach. This writing awareness can be useful to students because it may help them begin to become aware of using systematic and strategic ways to write a composition. Another important feature of a process-oriented writing approach is the peer feedback sessions under the post - writing stage, which appeared to play a crucial role in aiding students to develop their writing and motivating them to not procrastinate writing. During these stages, the quality and usefulness of feedback that the students received from their peers was noticed which helped shape their compositions into more effective compositions.

Further, present study results showed that using process-based writing approach helped the learners enhanced their motivation and discipline for accomplishing writing tasks, managing their own learning, and

involving themselves to active and constructive procedures which eventually prevent the occurrence of blocked writing. Whilst it was true that blocked writers were due to lack of self-esteem as reported by Rahmat (2020), results from the present study (during the interviews) revealed that the reason why students experienced block writing was not totally because of low self-esteem. However, it might be because of the following aspects: the use of teaching and learning approach to writing, the form concentration of the first year TCFL; the difficulty in developing content ideas, and the laziness and, consequently, writing procrastination. The study findings were in the same veins with Richards (2020), claiming that students experienced blocked writing because they were overwhelmed by the writing tasks and that they had a hard time getting started to do the writing tasks. Richards also added that the students organized and used the mechanics of writing, apart from poor ideation to express their thoughts. In addition, the systematic stages of writing approach aided the participants become motivated and disciplined to their learning as indicated by their strategic planning process, their approach to the task prior to actions, their own monitoring process while performing the task, their process of evaluating their performance and outcome after completing the plan. They were also able to reflect on what they have accomplished and unaccomplished, which gives them more possibilities to face and perform tasks to be completed the next time. The processes involved in process-based approach were designed by well-planning and well-monitoring during the process which helps raise students' self-reflection. With their critical thinking, reflection, in this regard, can optimize learners' self-regulated learning abilities because self-regulated learners have already known their position in the task. Robillos (2020) described that self-regulated learners can establish goals for their learning, can monitor, can assess, and can self-reflect their learning. Thus, self-regulated learners are likely to become more able to interpret the signs of changes continuously.

Writer's block is sometimes described as a form of procrastination, inefficiency in retrieving the proper words to express a thought, poor ideation (Richards, 2020), extrinsic task factors such as failures to complete the task on time (Pittman et al., 2008), little production of ideas, no matter how hard they try (Rose, 1984). However, with the useful features of process-based writing approach implemented on the TCFL students, they tend to reduce their feeling of procrastination due to the motivation and engagement they have obtained from the collaboration activities – one of the features of the approach. Furthermore, because there were more sharing activities being implemented before writing, during writing, and after writing, the student tends to enhance self-discipline to not procrastinate and thus, motivated to complete their writing task/s. The positive outcome was further evidenced by the result obtained from the quantitative and qualitative results wherein as they improved their writing performance so does the writing block was most likely managed to be eliminated.

■ Conclusion

From the study findings, it may be concluded that, firstly, the process-based writing approach is effective for enhancing students' composition writing performance. It likewise aided them to eradicate writing block. This indicates that the approach impacted the writing processes of the students in a positive

and statistically significant manner. This might be attributed to the fact that process-based writing approach involved the process of text construction which further lessened the likelihood of ineffective and unsuccessful text construction at the end of the writing process. The students, being aware of the strategies that influence the writing process, can express themselves better in writing and can manage to eliminate writing block especially procrastination (laziness), fear, and sometimes lack of content ideas to write.

■ Limitations and Recommendations

This research study has made an important contribution to the field as this paper demonstrates that the writing approach is beneficial to both teachers and learners. To maximize the benefits of process-based writing approach, it can be suggested that the design of effective training procedures and the aiming of specific learning outcomes of training towards composition writing tasks and other TCFL macro-skills for the different groups of learners are further recommended for future research. Although there have been several studies conducted in the field, more research in different settings should be implemented to gain broader views about the causes and effects of writers' block and that it will be possibly (if not totally) eradicated. The intervention on the other hand, comprised 10 sessions (1.5 hrs./ session) and conducted for 28 first-year students of TCFL which is considered a small-scale study, thus, the demographic information is quite limited. It is recommended then that the intervention programme be retested using a longer period of investigation along with a greater number of participants.

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