

GAZI UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

**THE EFFECTS OF USING BLOGS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF
FOREIGN LANGUAGE WRITING PROFICIENCY**

PHD DISSERTATION

Elham KAVANDI

Ankara
September, 2012

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Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü Müdürlüğü'ne

Elham KAVANDI'ye ait “ **The Effects of Using Blogs on the Development of Foreign Language Writing Proficiency**” adlı çalışma jürimiz tarafından İngiliz Dili Öğretmenliği Anabilim Dalında Doktora Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECTS OF USING BLOGS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE WRITING PROFICIENCY

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The new trend in computer technology and internet has increased in everybody's life. Teaching English as a Foreign Language is the same category and has been influenced by web technology nowadays. As developing writing proficiency is considered a basic goal of language learning, researchers try to find various ways to improve writing skill. Using web technology in language learning can affect the students' writing proficiency considerably. Weblogs can create a real situation for students to practice their materials.

This study attempts to investigate the effects of using weblogs on the students' writing proficiency. It also investigates the effects of weblogs on some key qualities of 6+1 trait of writing such as ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and convention.

The total number of 30 students were chosen and divided in two groups of 15 in Kish Language Learning institute preparing for TOEFL & IELTS. The control group (N=15) got the materials normally with no change in the instruction. Experimental group (N=15) got the same instruction using weblogs during the course. It lasted for 14 weeks. All of the students in experimental group detailed the typical process for each assignment, such as, writing paragraphs, working in groups, posting their assignments to blogs, reading their comments, making corrections and uploading their corrected assignments, and turning in their final assignments to the instructor. The students narrated some major issues for them like working in groups, peer editing, giving and receiving feedback, as well as interacting with classmates and with others.

Peer reviews, the giving and receiving of feedback were the biggest issue. Their written products were collected during the term and analyzed according to the rubric.

Data analysis indicated that blog-based group outperformed the students who got their materials traditionally. Moreover there was a significant difference in their writing proficiency in terms of idea, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, and convention but it didn't make significant difference on voice. As a whole, the students found that weblogs were useful improving the students' writing proficiency and further expressed that they had more opportunities to receive more information. They also believed that weblogs helped them to prepare themselves by collecting suggestions for their writings and to continue their jobs effectively.

Key words: CALL, Blog- based instruction, 6+1 trait rubric, writing proficiency

ÖZET

YABANCI DİLDE YAZMA YETERLİĞİNİ GELİŞTİRMEDE BLOG KULLANIMININ ETKİLERİ

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Bilgisayar teknolojisindeki ve internetteki yeni trend herkesin hayatına pozitif anlamda katkıda bulundu. Günümüzde Yabancı Dil olarak İngilizce Öğretimi de web teknolojisinden etkilenmiş durumdadır. Yazma yeterliğinin geliştirilmesi dil öğretiminin temel amacı olarak düşünüldüğü için, araştırmacılar yazma becerilerinin geliştirilmesi için farklı yollar bulmaya çalışmışlardır. Web teknolojisini dil öğretiminde kullanmak öğrencilerin yazma yeterliklerini önemli derecede etkileyebilir. Webloglar öğrencilerin materyallerini uygulayabilmeleri için gerçek durumlar yaratabilir.

Bu çalışma weblog kullanımının öğrencilerin yazma yeterlikleri üzerine etkilerini araştırmayı hedefler. Aynı zamanda çalışma weblogların yazmanın temel nitelikleri olan fikirler, düzen, üslup, kelime seçimi, cümle akıcılığı, ve uyum gibi 6+1 yazma özellikleri üzerine olan etkisini de incelemektedir.

Araştırma için TOEFL & IELTS sınavlarına hazırlanan Kish Dil Okulundaki toplam 30 öğrenci seçildi ve öğrenciler 15'er kişilik 2 gruba ayrıldı. Kontrol grubu (N=15) eğitimde hiçbir değişiklik yapmadan materyalleri kullandılar. Deney grubu (N=15) aynı eğitimi ders süresince webloglar kullanarak aldılar. Deney grubundaki bütün öğrenciler paragraf yazma, grup olarak çalışma, ödevlerini bloglara yollama, yorumlarını okuma, düzeltmeler yapma ve düzeltilmiş ödevlerini yükleme ve final ödevlerini öğretmenlerine teslim etme gibi her bir ödevde takip edilen süreci detaylı rapor olarak sundular. Öğrenciler grupla çalışma, akran değerlendirmesi, geri dönüt verme ve alma gibi temel konuları anlatırken, sınıf arkadaşları ile ve diğerleri ile etkileşimleri hakkında da deneyimlerini aktardılar. Akran değerlendirmeleri ve geri dönüt alıp

verme en önemli konulardandı. Öğrencilerin yazılı dokümanları dönem boyunca toplandı ve değerlendirme çizelgesine göre analiz edildi. Bu süreç 14 hafta sürdü.

Veri analizi blog-temelli eğitim gören grubun materyallerini geleneksel yöntemle kullanan gruptan daha iyi performans gösterdiğini ortaya koydu. Buna ek olarak öğrenci performanslarında fikir, düzen, kelime seçimi, cümle akıcılığı ve uyumda anlamlı farklar ortaya çıktı ancak üslupta herhangi bir anlamlı fark oluşmadı. Sonuç olarak öğrenciler weblogların yazma yeterliklerini geliştirmede faydalı olduklarını buldular ve daha fazla bilgi alabilmek adına daha fazla fırsatlar yakaladıklarını dile getirdiler. Öğrenciler ayrıca weblogların onlara yazdıklarına öneriler toplayarak kendilerini hazırlamada ve yazdıklarını etkili bir şekilde devam ettirmelerinde yardımcı olduklarına inandıklarını söylediler.

Anahtar Sözcükler: CALL, Blog- temelli Eğitim, 6+1 Trait Rubric, Yazma Yeterliği

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

One area that has provided much excitement in recent years is the use of advanced technology that supports both synchronous and asynchronous communication. This study focuses on the effect of using blogs on EFL students' writing skill. As writing proficiency is critical for students in schools and universities and a life-long need in learning a foreign language, it should be developed at least along with other skills. In recent years, developing fluency in writing skill has been considered a fundamental goal of foreign language learning. As such the importance of writing in language learning has led researchers to find methods and ways for effective writing instruction.

On the other hand, distance education makes learning and teaching experiences possible anywhere and anytime. It relieves learning owing to its information abundance, and immediacy of retrieval, however, it introduces viable alternatives to extend the viabilities and minimizes the deficiencies of traditional classroom experiences. Despite the central role of using blogs, human elements including teachers, learners, learning and teaching strategies adopted for postmodern education practices transcend the importance in the classroom.

The fact that language is ever dynamic as a social tool also makes clear that the authentic context is a critical factor in language learning (Hymes, 1972; Kramsch, 2000). Hymes stated, "the key to understanding language in context is to start not with language, but with context" (p.XIX). Kramsch defined the term "authentic" as one used as a reaction against the prefabricated artificial language of textbooks and instructional dialogs. According to Kramsch, authentic texts need participants to respond with behaviors that are "socially appropriate to the setting, the status of interlocutors, the purpose, key, genre, and instrumentalities of the exchange, and the norms of the exchange, and the norms of interaction agreed upon by native speakers" (p. 178). Traditional teacher-centered instruction has been dominating classrooms. Mainly the teacher talks, while the students only listen. There is not a great deal of interaction between

teachers and students. As such the students do not challenge and raise questions when the teacher is teaching.

To continue to forge ahead in the computers and writing community, however, there is always something to peak our interest in how we, as teachers of composition, can use computers to not only enhance our students' writing experiments, but to also improve student writing and encourage them to write more meaningful texts.

1.1 Background to the Study

A blog is the online equivalent of a diary. The specialty which makes a blog interesting and applicable to many people is the ability to include photographs, music, video clips and website links. There are three different kinds of blogs: teacher, student, and class blogs. A teacher blog is written by the teacher to communicate with the students outside of the classroom. Many teacher blogs are administrative in nature and inform students about the class. As such, the syllabus, handouts, supplementary materials and audio files are often made available for students to download. The most important specialty of blogs is allowing the students to post comments, which makes the communication to be two-ways. The second kind of blog is a student blog, a blog that is written by the student. The entries in these blogs are either assigned writings or free entries. The third kind of blog is a class blog where the students collaboratively write the blog entries.

A variety of benefits from incorporating blogs into classes have been found by EFL teachers and researchers. Wang, Fix and Bock (2004) state that blogs can, "become a vehicle through which learners can express their ideas in a state of virtual proximity, creating and refining their ideas through dialogue with other learners and guidance by the teacher" (p. 7). Similarly, Mynard (2007) citing (Brooks, Nichols and Priebe, 2004) and (Pinkman, 2005) states that blogs, "provide authentic writing practice, and an opportunity to recycle language learned in class, and an alternative way of communicating with teachers and peers" (p. 1). Blogs may also affect learner autonomy and independency and promote them because learners are free to choose their own materials and work at their own pace (Pinkman 2005, p.14). Fellner and Apple (2006) found that students' writing fluency improved through daily blogging.

In comparison with other internet tools, a weblog has the following special characteristics:

It's a type of website easy and quick to create, in other words it is user friendly. It can be organized by time (chronologically backwards) and by posts (or postings) which are usually short and frequently posted. Readers can often respond through a "comments" feature and give feedback about the weblog. Additionally, individual feedback can be given to individual student blogs. One can publish instantly to the web without having to learn HTML or use a web authoring program. It is usually maintained by one person, but there are multi-person blogs, too. It can be free or very low-cost to create. The use of links is a common distinguishing characteristic. The author's voice and personality often comes through. The possibility of making chat is another feature of some blogs. Weblogs also serve as a valuable learning assistant. For example, students have access to the teacher's complete notes on the weblog. Students have the option of previewing the class material before class for brainstorming and reviewing the material after class for consolidating. Students can easily find information because the class material is organized into sections. Students can read comments for the class as a whole and comments directed at them individually. The contact between teacher and students will be maximised using weblogs. Students can observe how their writing has changed over time (Johnson, 2004).

1.2 Aim of the Study

There are numerous possibilities for a blog to be used in the EFL classroom setting. Current research attempts to observe the effect of using blogs on EFL students' writing skill. The overarching question guiding this study is: How do blogs affect and help learners improve their writing skill?

Considering online constructive learning, Seitzinger (2006) mentions seven key components as follows: problem-based learning, learner-centeredness, collaborative learning, social presence, interactivity, support and cognitive tools. In her analysis, blogs can be an effective constructive learning tool for a number of reasons: a tool for reflection and a measure of authenticity to learning tasks, collaborative construction of knowledge, and comments being a powerful feedback tool which promotes active learning.

The major purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of blog using instruction on writing performance. It could help to see not only the impact of technology as a whole and blogs specially but also the process of the learning. Blog-based instruction also allows everybody to access documents anywhere at any time and share documents with others and work on them collaboratively.

Blogging has recently become one of the most effective learning tools in education. It introduces students with new methods of communicating, improving their writing. Educators generally blog about class activities and tend to write about current events, personal beliefs, and topics related to their education. In blogging, there are no set standards, no boundaries, no restrictions confining you to confirm your thoughts to any given set of rules and regulations. A great and important step in designing an integrated CALL program is determining which tasks are appropriate in order to achieve desired learning outcomes. It was previously stated that any CALL program must integrate computer tasks with classroom tasks and activities to the overall benefit of the students. However, enhancement reflects the belief, as it requires that any CALL task selected provide some potential enhancement or benefit over more traditional pedagogical approaches.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Some of the recent studies have investigated the efficiency of blog-based instruction on language learning. Research focusing on blog use in language classes is still relatively scarce in the literature. Studies that have been published include research on blogging's effect on learner autonomy (Pinkman, 2005), increasing writing fluency (Fellner and Apple, 2005), as a place for completing writing assignments (Ward, 2004; Wu, 2005), posting class materials (Johnson, 2004), and as a way to open communication with bloggers outside the classroom (Pinkman and Bordolin, 2006). These studies have focused on the use of weblogs as a communication tool and a vehicle for peer to peer and class to class interaction. They believe that using technology in the classroom will enhance language learning quality.

Having been inspired by recent studies, this study attempts to investigate the effect of blog-based instruction on writing performance.

1.4 Research Questions

The study addressed the following research questions:

1. Do the texts produced by the experimental group differ significantly from the texts produced by the control group?
2. Do the texts produced by the experimental group differ significantly from the texts produced by the control group in terms ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and convention?

I hypothesized that using blogs would enable my students to gain experiences that might not otherwise have, giving them meaningful material about which to write and consequently improve student writing.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study is conducted at the Institute of language learning Centre (TOEFL & IELTS Preparatory School). The participants are preparing for TOEFL and IELTS in an intermediate level. The total number is 30, 15 of whom are experimental and 15 are control group participants. The academic term lasts for 14 weeks.

1.6 Methodology

The present study was conducted to determine the effects of using blogs on the writing performance of students of EFL. A questionnaire consisting of a survey on computer literacy to get basic information about participants was administered. An instructional guide was given to learners to make the way of using weblog more applicable. The research was carried out during one semester consisting of 14 weeks to write their paragraphs. The experimental group got some materials, pictures and videos from weblog, made some comments and gave their feedback for writing their paragraphs. Chatting is also possible for blog-using experimental group learners.

The control group got the materials in the classroom normally. The learners' writing assignments were collected to give feedback three times, and to guide them for better writing. As writing skill is considered a process oriented task, the learners' writing activities were analyzed three times: one in the beginning of the semester, one in the middle, and the last one at the end of the term.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Like other studies, this research was also carried out with limitations. It was done in a limited period of time which was a term of fourteen weeks. The duration of this research is not long enough to get a strong result about it. Moreover; the total number of students participated in the study was limited to 30, which is impossible to make broader generalizations. The correlation analysis doesn't work properly when the number of students are under 30. Then it would be better to take larger population for stronger results and drawing certain conclusions.

1.8 Assumptions

It would be better if the instructor of the course conducted the study as she was running the research and took both responsibilities at the same time for whole the process. A researcher as an outsider cannot control all the variables as much as an instructor can; amongst all students do not understand the role of researcher focusing on just the effect on their grades. It would be more fruitful if the researcher had conducted the classes while she was observing the process of learning and giving oral feedback and reinforce them during the course. Some problems would be solved face to face in the classroom.

Quantitative scope is another limitation; it is limited to 30 students at Kish Institute preparing for TOEFL and IELTS. Additionally, the findings are gathered and limited to one semester.

Students' limited computer literacy skill is another issue; or even if they are literate, they might not be willing to participate in such implementations. As most of the students live in dormitory; availability of computers and resources are probably to be other problems.

1.9 Definitions of Key Terms

English as a Foreign Language (EFL): English studied by people who live in places where English is not the first language of the people who live in the country. The medium of instruction in education and language of communication is not English within a country.

Blogs: The word “blog” is short for “web log” (weblog). The term blog is used both as a noun and a verb. As a noun, it is also known as an online journal or web diary, as well as a content management system or an online publishing platform. As a verb, “to blog” means to write on one’s weblog. Essentially, a weblog site is organized chronologically with the latest entry appearing at the top of the page. It is updated by an individual or a group of individuals. There are other items incorporated in various blogs depending on what each blogger may want in their own blogs (Chengyi Wu, 2006). A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, Web pages, and other media related to its topic. The ability of readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of many blogs. Most blogs are primarily textual, although some focus on photographs, videos, music, and audio. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, Web pages, and other media related to its topic. The ability of readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of many blogs (available at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blog>).

Ideas: The ideas are the content of the piece, the main theme, and the supporting details that enrich and develop the theme. They are the main message and the ideas are strong in which the writer chooses details that are interesting, important, and informative. Successful writers don’t tell readers thing they already know; “It was a sunny day, and the sky was blue, the clouds were fluffy white ... “ Successful writers show readers that which is normally overlooked; writers seek out the extraordinary, the unusual, the unique, the bits and pieces of life that might otherwise be overlooked.

Organization: Organization is the central meaning, the pattern and sequence of a piece of writing fits the central idea. In fact, it is the internal structure of the written materials which can be based on comparison-contrast, deductive logic, point by point analysis, development of a central theme, and chronological history of an event or patterns. The piece begins meaningfully and creates in the writer a sense of anticipation when the organization is strong. Everything (events, programs ...) proceed logically; information is given to the reader in the right doses at

the right times so that the reader never loses interest. The bridges from one idea to the next hold up to show that connections are strong. The piece ties up loose ends, bringing things to a satisfying closure and closes with a sense of resolution. It answers important questions while still leaving the reader something to think about.

Voice: It is really writer's voice through the words, the sense of a person who is speaking to us and cares about the message. It is the heart and soul of the writing, the magic, the wit, the feeling, the life and breath. The writer imparts a personal tone and flavour to the piece that is his/hers alone. Voice is that individual something which is different from the mark of all writers.

Word Choice: It is colorful, precise, rich use of language that communicates not just in a functional way, but in a way that moves and enlightens the reader. Strong word choice helping imagery, especially sensory, show me writing clarifies and expands ideas in descriptive writing. In persuasive writing, purposeful word choice moves the reader to a new vision of ideas. In all kinds of writing figurative language like metaphors, similes and analogies articulate, enhance, and enrich the content. Strong word choice is characterized not so much by an exceptional vocabulary chosen to impress the reader, but more by the skill to use everyday words well.

Sentence Fluency: Sentence Fluency is the flow and rhythm of the language; the way sound word patterns come to ear and not just to the eye. It is the answer to the question of "How does it sound when read aloud?". Fluent writing has cadence, power, rhythm, and movement. The sentences are different in length, beginnings, structure, and style, and are so well crafted that the writer moves through the piece with ease.

Conventions: This trait is the mechanical correctness of the piece and includes five different elements: spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar/usage, paragraphing. Writing has been proofread and edited with care. During this step the person should answer the question: "How much work would a copy editor need to do to prepare the piece for publication."

Presentation: Presentation combines two elements of textual and visual. It is the way the writing presents the message on the paper. The writing will not be inviting to read even if the ideas, words, and sentences are vivid, precise, and well constructed; unless the guidelines of presentation are present. Some of the guidelines include: neatness, handwriting, font selection, graphics, borders, overall appearance, balance of white space with visuals and text. The great

writers are aware of the necessity of presentation. Presentation is a key to a polished piece ready for publication.

Writing: Writing is among the most complex human activities. It involves the development of a design idea, the capture of mental representations of knowledge, and of experience with subjects (Jozsef. H. 2001). Written language is relatively more complex than spoken language (Cook, 1997; Halliday, 1989). It has more subordinate clauses, more "that/to" complement clauses, more long sequences of prepositional phrases, more attributive adjectives and more passives than spoken language. Written texts are shorter and have longer, more complex words and phrases. They have more nominalizations, more noun based phrases, and more lexical density. Written texts are lexically dense compared to spoken language - they have proportionately more lexical words than grammatical words.

In this part the rationale, research questions, significance of the study, and definition of terms have been described. In the next chapter, the literature related to this study will be reviewed. In the third chapter, Methodology, detailed information about the research design, participants, instruments and the data collection procedure will be described. In the fourth chapter the results will be presented and, the fifth chapter will conclude the study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

“Blogs provide a multi-genre, multimedia writing space that can engage visually minded students and draw them into a different interaction with print text. Students at all levels learn to write by writing.”

Learning & Leading with Technology ,2003, 31(2), p. 33

2.0 Introduction

The chapter provides a comprehensive review of literature pertinent to this study. The review limited to the nature literacy, theories of learning, and pedagogy is looked over. Finally, blogging and its potential applications to language learning are inspected. Blogging specifically invites interaction and networking for cooperative and collaborative learning.

2.1 The Nature Literacy

The fundamental literacies of learning are reading and writing which is deeply interconnected in sharing the same knowledge and forms of knowledge. The signs visible to writer which are used to form words and sentences must be recognized and understood by the reader. Reading and writing share the same contexts and some of the same constraints but not duplicate cognitive processes (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000; Gelb, 1963). Writing is more complex task than writing because the options for the reader are limited to what the writer provides, while the writer has uncounted options in combining elements including word choice, sentence construction, punctuation, word order, and rhetorical devices (Fitzgerald & Shanahan) in the conveyance of ideas and information.

2.2 Theories of Learning

Vygotsky's theoretical framework is that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. This theory has profoundly affected the field of education and much of the research on writers and writing. This theoretical framework asserts that social interaction and cultural contexts play a fundamental role in the development of the cognition of learners. Vygotsky (1978) in his book, *Mind in Society*, states that, "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals (p. 57)."

As culture is an essential ingredient in children's development of this inner speech, the role of culture is fundamental to the development of thought. Once language is mastered, though, this external language becomes a child's vehicle for intellectual adaptation, until it becomes internalized. This internalized language is what Vygotsky calls "inner speech." Inner speech, it is widely agreed, becomes discursive thinking (Moffett, 1982). Moffett (1982) states that writing requires inventive thought during the act of composition, and the development of writing skills is at the heart of social process. The important aspect of this social process is the idea that a learner's developmental potential is influenced by what Vygotsky called the zone of proximal development (ZPD). The ZPD is defined as "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86). The implications of ZPD are that the range of skills that can be developed with others, such as adults or peer collaborators, in a social setting exceeds what can be attained alone.

ZPD can be represented through scaffolding; Scaffolding is a technique where an adult continually adjusts the level of his or her help in response to the child's level of performance. It has been shown to be an effective instructional method (Kamberelis & Bovino, 1999; Wollman-Bonilla & Werchaldo, 1999). Scaffolding not only produces immediate results, but also instills

the skills necessary for independent problem solving in the future (Hartman, 2002). A theory that has important implications for the field of education, especially the field of adult education and learning is situated learning theory which is the principles of social cognition.

While most of Vygotsky's research focused on the cognitive development of children, researchers Lave and Wenger used his theories as a foundation for their studies of adult apprenticeships. While much of formal classroom learning involves abstract concepts that are disconnected from their practical applications, situated learning theory proposes that all learning, especially informal learning, is a function of the activity, context, and culture in which it occurs (Brown et. al, 1989; Lave & Wenger, 1991). The interaction of activity, context, and culture is known as "a community of practice" and is a critical component of learning, especially informal learning.

Social cognition theory and situated learning theory both assert that culture and community are prime determinants of individual development, ideas that have greatly impacted the field of education, and have provided an important foundation for research on writing composition specifically.

2.3 Theoretical perspectives on L2 writing to learn

It is important to attempt to clarify what is meant by the term "writing" before further exploring the relevant research on composition, writers, and composition pedagogy. Writing as a technology of communication that transforms speech to visible form arose in a number of different cultures, at different times in history. It originated in the need to communicate thoughts and feelings in a more lasting way than only vocal utterance (Gelb, 1963; Hobart & Schiffman, 1998).

The realization that all the sounds of a language could be represented through phonetization soon led to the creation of syllabic conventions whereby a syllable would always have the same meaning no matter what word sign it was associated with. With that achievement, proto-cuneiform pictographic writing evolved into cuneiform, a more flexible and extensive system

based on syllabic signs that eventually represented words in patterns of rudimentary syntax (Hobart & Schiffman, 1998).

L2 researchers recognize that L2 writers bring with them knowledge and experiences from their L1, but that L2 writers also bring limitations of their knowledge of L2 language and rhetorical organization. They have recognized that there are differences in L2 writing based on linguistic studies that have influenced L2 pedagogy (Gebhard, 1998; Grabe, 2001; Matsuda, 2003b; Santos, 1992; Silva & Leki, 2004; Woodall, 2002). L2 writing is strategically, rhetorically, and linguistically different in many ways from L1 writing (Silva, 1993). In fact, Grabe (2001) disputes the use of L1 models for L2 instruction because they don't take into account L2 language proficiencies given that L2 writers are still in the process of acquiring syntactic and lexical competences. From these perspectives, the field of L2 writing dynamically relates to and benefits from the convergence of two intellectual directions – composition studies and applied linguistics, and those areas evolved from rhetoric and linguistics (Figure 1) (Gebhard, 1998; Grabe, 2001; Matsuda, 2003b; Santos, 1992; Silva & Leki, 2004; Woodall, 2002).

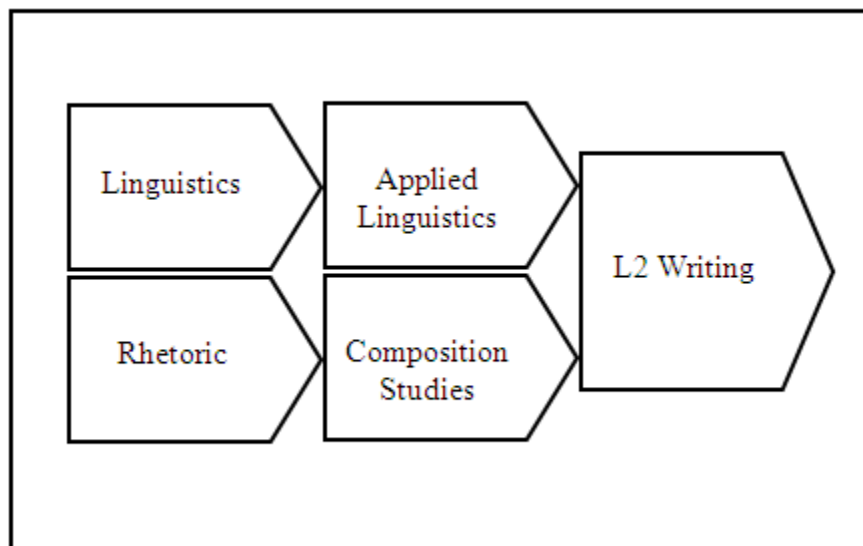


Figure 1: The Convergence of Two Fields of Study in L2 Writing

2.4 Composition Studies

Silva and Leki (2004) and others define the discipline of composition as the study and teaching of writing. Briefly, the theoretical foundations of writing research can be seen in its progression from an expressionist view in the 1960s, which was the beginning of the composing processes and a focus on the writer's authentic voice (Elbow, 1973; Emig, 1971). The aim of that view of writing was on spontaneity and originality. Peter Elbow (1981) did not believe thinking should be separated from writing, so he adopted the method of "*freewriting*" as a technique to express voice. He believed that writing should reflect the process of creative imagination. The 1970s brought the notion of writing as a cognitive process and its application to both teaching and research. Emig (1971) was the first writing researcher who saw writing as recursive. Flower and Hayes (1980, 1981) saw writing as a thinking process and, therefore, developed a process theory of writing. Figure 2 is an adaptation of Flower and Hayes' (1981) model which demonstrates their view of the writing process.

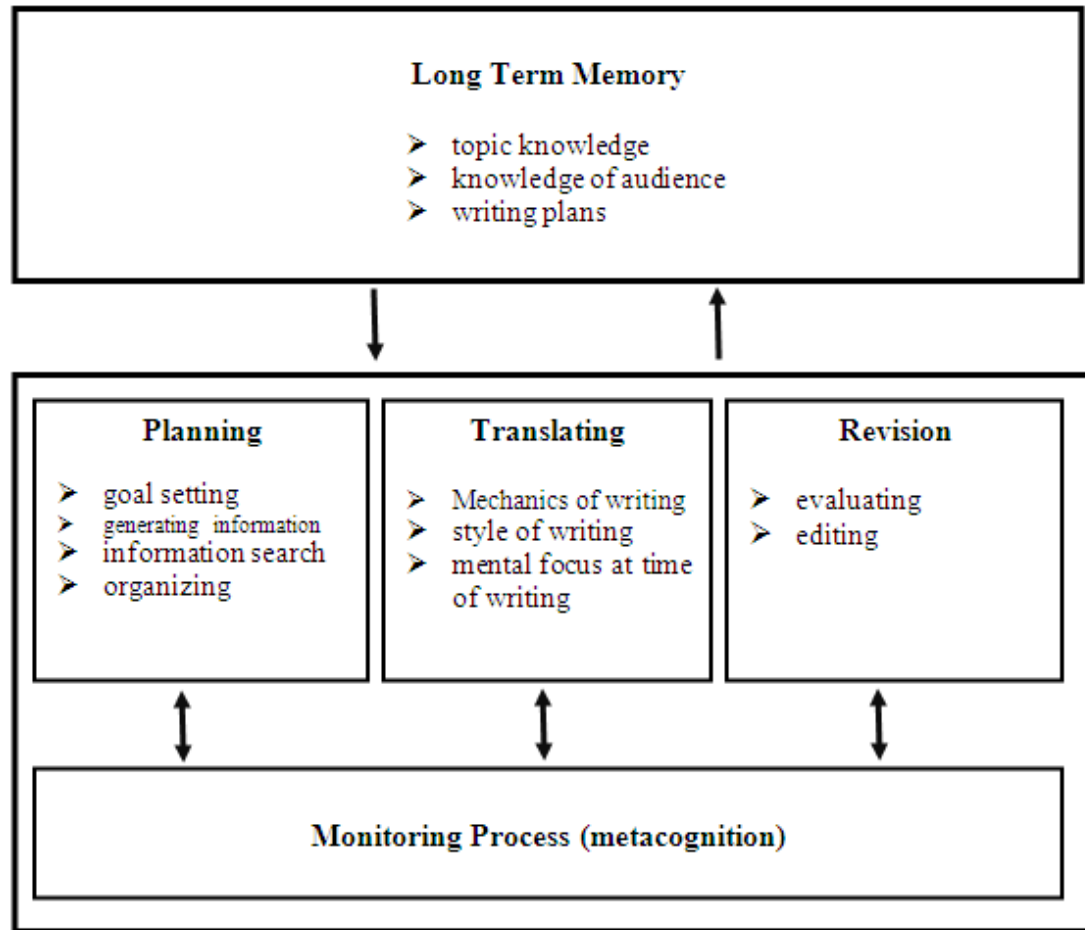


Figure 2: Cognitive Process Model of Writing

The model was founded on cognitive learning theory and focused on what writers do when they compose. Their cognitive theory of writing suggests that it is a highly complex, goal-directed, recursive activity. The cognitive learning theory perceives individuals as active learners who initiate experiences, seek out information to solve problems, and reorganize prior knowledge to achieve new insights (Schallert, 2002).

Therefore, writing is situated as a cognitive activity and is focused primarily on the learner (e.g., composing processes and strategies; (Vollmer, 2002). Additionally, writing involves metacognitive knowledge of what constitutes a good text and what strategies to employ. Metacognitive theory is a significant element in the writing process because it deals with three basic strategies: (a) *developing* a plan of action, (b) *maintaining/monitoring* the plan, and (c) *evaluating* and *revising* the plan (Garner, 1990; Paris & Winograd, 1990).

Writing was considered as a social and cognitive process in the 1980s. The essential dimension of social context was included in the writing process. In the 1990s, social constructivist theories prevailed in composition studies. These social constructivist theories of writing came from a view of learning that saw writing as including negotiation and consensus. It is also believed that writing is not a solitary act and writers do not operate as solitary individuals, but as members of a social/cultural group (Flower, 1994). Therefore, during this period, the Hayes' (1996) model broadened the earlier Flower and Hayes (1981) model of writing by giving consideration to "given task, audience, and purpose for writing" (Grabe, 2001). This model included motivational factors, context factors, and reading processes. Social constructivism has been widely accepted as a theoretical basis for understanding language use, and it is a salient aspect of the writing processes.

The knowledge gained from language use is considered a social product and learning a process of negotiation (Prawat & Floden, 1994). An important theoretical view of social constructivism is that of Vygotsky. Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) is relevant to the social aspect of writing. The "zone" is an area where a person can learn when helped by a knowledgeable individual or supported by cultural resources (Prawat & Floden, 1994; Salomon & Perkins, 1998; Wertsch, 1991).

In addition to Vygotsky's concept, the Neo-Vygotskyian concept advocates that knowledge construction is participatory and learners jointly participate in the construction of knowledge. Knowledge is created by interaction through the process of negotiation, conversation, compromise, and shared experiences and each participant comes to a new mutually shared understanding. It is also advocated that the group is a collective body of knowledge, skills, etc. (Salomon & Perkins, 1998; Wertsch, 1991). Social construction includes group collaboration and considers multiple perspectives. In social learning environments, writers engage in knowledge construction through collaborative activities that embed learning in a meaningful context and through reflection on what has been learned through conversation with other learners (Salomon & Perkins, 1998; Wertsch, 1991). In addition to the social view, theories on the importance of the discourse communities came into play in composing (Atkinson, 2003a; Berkenkotter, 1991; Casanave, 2003; Labour, 2001). These theories rest on the notion that audience and genre (purpose and context) are fundamental to writing (Atkinson, 2003a; Berkenkotter, 1991;

Casanave, 2003; Labour, 2001). This brief evolution of the theoretical growth of composition studies and the parallel development of the field of L2 writing demonstrates how the study and teaching of L2 writing has evolved into an interdisciplinary field.

2.5 Applied Linguistics

Applied linguistics is another perspective that feeds into L2 writing from which theories and research are drawn. Knowledge of second language acquisition (SLA) is required in order to understand L2 writing proficiency because L2 competence underlies L2 writing ability in fundamental ways in applied linguistics. Different researches in L2 writing and instruction has its foundation in structuralism, contrastive analysis, error analysis, and communicative competence. Grabe and Kaplan's (1996) model of the writing processes is similar to the Hayes' cognitive model of the writing processes, but their model evolved from applied linguistics (Grabe, 2001). Grabe and Kaplan's model takes into account linguistic knowledge and communicative competence as applied to writing.

The study of languages throughout the 20th century was influenced by learning theory. Language at that time was theorized as being divided into two parts – sounds and structure, thus structuralism. Structuralism has served as the basis for contemporary linguistics, and the tenets of structuralism had the greatest impact on L2 writing (Silva & Leki, 2004). L2 writing was focused on controlled composition, an approach that focused on sentence-level structure. In structural linguistics tradition, writing was viewed as reinforcement for habits in combining and substitution writing exercises. L2 writers grammatically manipulated existing text in order to learn grammar forms and avoid errors caused by L1 interference.

Drawing on the field of *contrastive rhetoric*, a part of contrastive analysis that compared similarities and differences between pairs of languages, research examined differences and similarities in texts across cultures as well as writing styles in different genres (Grabe, 2001; Grabe & Kaplan, 1989; Kaplan, 1966, 1967; Kubota & Lehner, 2004). Researchers recognized that L2 writers had different cultural and linguistic backgrounds that not only influenced the grammatical structure of their sentences, but also influenced the logical order and organization in

their text. Robert B. Kaplan (1966) argued that the problem stemmed from the transfer and interference of L1 structures to L2 writing.

An area of research in applied linguistics is contrastive rhetoric that identifies problems in composition encountered by L2 writers and explains these problems by referring to the rhetorical strategies of the L1, including content (Conner, 1996, 2003). In other words, the rhetorical choices the L2 writers make in their L1 may not be effective for writing in L2. Kaplan's (1966) study on the notion of contrastive rhetoric essays showed the impact of rhetorical and cultural preferences for organizing information and structuring text. Kaplan (1966), Grabe and Kaplan (1987), Leki (1992), Silva, Leki, and Carson, (1997), and Silva, (1990, 1993, 1997) have all focused much of their research on the distinctions between L1 and L2 writers.

Error analysis is another phase of SLA research studied along with contrastive analysis. This branch of study that involved identifying and classifying errors learners made. One part of research on error analysis investigated the general errors that are systematic across all basic writers. The types of errors can be grammatical or rhetorical in nature. Error analysis of writing from a cognitive perspective is and has been a construct that is central to L2 writing models. Error analysis helps teachers interpret and classify systematic errors. It provides the basic writing teacher with a technique for analyzing errors in the written discourse. Errors come from language transfer.

Research also shows the importance of having students study their own writing and share in the process of investigating and interpreting their patterns of errors which will put them in a position to change, experiment, and imagine other strategies (Bartholomae, 1994; Ellis, 1997; Gass, 1996; Wen, 1994).

The basic idea of communicative competence which was espoused by Dell Hymes (1972) in the early 1970s is the ability to use language appropriately, both receptively and productively, in real situations. Communicative competence included a sociocultural and functional view of learning a language. Speakers of a language needed to communicate effectively in a language; they also needed to know how language is used by members of a speech community to accomplish their purposes (Canale & Swain, 1980). Communicative competence in language learning expanded to include other theoretical orientations which included anthropological and

sociological ideas of learning. L2 writing now includes a contextually situated social and cultural practice (Vollmer, 2002). L2 writing emphasizes real language use in meaningful and authentic contexts. Therefore, L2 writing includes not only theories of structuralism, contrastive rhetoric, and error correction, but also writing in social and cultural situations.

2.6 Convergent Disciplines

Composition studies and applied linguistics research and theories developed L2 writing. Most experts agree that L2 writing is a cognitive, metacognitive, sociocognitive, problem-solving process that is affected by cultural and rhetorical norms. In short, several research strands have contributed to L2 writing, and, therefore, it has become a multidisciplinary field.

2.7 Pedagogical Approaches for L2 Writing

With the development of second language (L2) literacy research, writing in ESL/EFL settings has gained much needed attention. Scholars and researchers are trying to find ways of teaching writing to a growing number of ESL students in English speaking countries and a large number of EFL students worldwide. Different pedagogical approaches to L2 writing emerged at different times since the 1960s and continue to have an impact on writing pedagogy today. Each approach represents a particular focus in the teaching of writing to second language learners – product, process, post-process, sociocultural, and genres. Each of these approaches will be discussed as well as their contributions to developing L2 students' writing skills.

2.7.1 The Product Approach

According to Matsuda (2003a), product writing was previously referred to as “*current-traditional rhetoric*” approaches. Matsuda points out that this term was initially originated by Fogarty (1959) who used the term to explain the traditional ways of writing instruction during this time. Some researchers such as Richard Young (1978), Miller (1991) used the term, current-traditional rhetoric, in their writing and practices to refer to as product-oriented pedagogy. The

product-oriented approach dominated the 1960s and 1970s, and still holds steadfast in ESL classrooms (Santos, 1992). It is largely practiced in many countries where English as a foreign language (EFL) is taught. In fact, Porto (2001) claims that the product approach to EFL writing is paramount in many institutions in Argentina and that they are not amenable to change. The teaching experience of Casanave (2003) in Japan recounts how the Japanese educational systems rely on the product-oriented approach to teaching EFL. These EFL teachers focus on the correct form, grammar and translation; additionally, the students write in English and end up with a product that is evaluated, and the students may or may not see their papers again.

A succession of approaches during the product-centered era came about that were informed by a behavioral, habit formation theory of learning. Basically, they are all concerned with the same objective of creating a final product, and accuracy was of major importance, whether it was a report, story, paragraph, or essay. Mechanical aspects of the Standard English, rhetorical style and language – grammar, spelling, punctuation, and vocabulary were the main focus of the product-oriented approach. Conventional organization required, for example, the five paragraph essay (introduction, three paragraph body, and the conclusion), the thesis sentence and controlling idea. Basically, product-centered pedagogy is teacher-centered in nature.

In other words, the teacher tells the students what and how to write, and all products are written for the teacher. The products are graded, corrected, and commented on without any additional input, and then returned to the students.

Current-traditional view can be divided into sequential stages. The first approaches on L2 writing focused on *sentence-level structures*. Up to the 1950s, L2 writing focused on translating classical literature and languages which was referred to as the *grammar-translation* method of language learning. Memorization of vocabulary and analysis of grammatical features as well as direct (word-for-word) translation of sentences are some typical classroom activities. The teacher-centered classroom and the emphasis on grammatical accuracy have remained at the core of the grammar-translation approach even when adapted to teaching modern languages (Homstad & Thorson, 2000, p. 5). Later, L2 writing was seen as an extension of speaking and listening in the *audiolingual method* of the 1960s which reinforces oral language patterns. Writing instruction focused on form and assignments were very structured. Students' exercises consisted of drill-and-practice, fill-in the blanks, structured sentence pattern practice of linguistic forms,

manipulation of fixed patterns, substitution, and completion exercises as well as controlled replication of perfect models. The assignments included modeling paragraphs that were carefully constructed and graded for vocabulary and sentence structure. The writer is viewed as the manipulator of learned structures, and the reader, the audience for all writing, is the teacher who is the editor and proof-reader. It was believed that beginning students learned to write through a process of stimulus/response conditioning and advanced students were given models of reports, business letters, and compositions to follow. Students were not expected to write in order to communicate only to produce linguistic accuracy (Harrington, Rickly, & Day, 2000b; Matsuda, 2003a, 2003b; Silva, 1987).

Rhetorical or discourse-level structure is the next writing approach which focuses on a different view of writing. Cultural and linguistic differences of studies in contrastive rhetoric proved that students' L1 interfered with writing in another language, and they were not able to write in a logical organization to form paragraphs and essays based on American standards. According to Kaplan (1966), teaching practices should include instructing ESL students about differences of rhetorical conventions in English, so that they would become aware of differences in writing. As a result, ESL writing instruction focused on content and organization of written text. Silva (1987) points out that writing exercises include imitating writing formats such as paragraph/essays, and becoming familiar with organizational patterns of English. ESL students need to do practice exercises which include paragraph completion, sentence sequencing, and identifying topics, controlling ideas, and support. Plus, they need to learn paragraph elements such as a topic sentence statement, supported by examples that are related to the main idea, and concluding sentences which include transition words as well as paragraph development such as narrative, expository, and descriptive essays, comparison, contrast, classification, illustration, definition, cause and effect, and more. Typical exercises include outlining, mapping, clustering ideas, grouping topics, and writing a composition. In short, writing was a plan-outline-write process.

Ghaleb (1993) and Chiang (2002) found that this current-traditional method (product-oriented approach) was not adequately effective for writing instruction for both L1 and L2 writing. Silva (1987) acknowledges the dissatisfaction that educators have with the previously mentioned approaches. He adds that, "Many felt that neither of these approaches adequately

fostered thought or its expression – that controlled composition was largely irrelevant to these goals and that the traditional rhetorical approach’s linearity and prescriptivism discouraged original, creative thinking and writing” (p. 7). In support of the current-traditional method Santos (1992) states that, “Rhetorical modes of development (e.g., classification, comparison/contrast) are still explicitly taught in many, if not most, ESL writing classes, with examples drawn from paragraph or essay models, and focus on form, e.g., via error analysis, is standard procedure” (p. 2). However, proponents of the current-traditional method still continue to be concerned with accuracy and correctness of surface-level and discourse-level features (Chiang, 2002; Ghaleb, 1993; Santos, 1992; Silva, 1987).

2.7.2 The Process Approach

The process approach as a reaction to the product approach era became an essential component of composition instruction and research in the United States in the late 1970s and 1980s. Writing research and pedagogy shifted from the final written product to attention on the process of writing which was viewed as a complex problem-solving process. Two major views are considered as the focus of writing: an expressive view which is free and creative writing (Elbow, 1998) and a heavy influence of a cognitive view of writing. Later, a third view was recognized as part of the process, a social view (Faigley, 1986). Writing also included interactive, communicative, and social activities that were involved in formulating and solidifying ideas. The concept of writing was on the recursive and nonlinear mental strategies, cognitive and metacognitive, that students experience as they write.

Vivan Zamel (1976) produced the notion of writing as process to L2 studies as cited by Matsuda (2003a). She argues that advanced L2 writers are similar to L1 writers and would benefit from instruction emphasizing the process approach (Matsuda, 2003b). Silva (1987) states that there was dissatisfaction with the previously mentioned product approaches because many felt that those approaches did not foster thought or expression. As a result, many L2 researchers and practitioners began to investigate and implement process-centered approaches to L2 writing instruction.

Zamel (1983) maintained that process writing is a pedagogy in which the teacher is involved with the students during the process and intervenes at various stages (cited in Ortega, 2004). In fact, the writing process has proven to be an effective approach with L2 learners (Kroll, 1990). The typical features of process-oriented pedagogy that are used in many ESL writing classes in the United States include prewriting exercises, opportunities to reflect on writing, teacher and peer feedback on content without immediate grading, multiple redrafting cycles, and substantive interactions via teacher conferencing and peer-response groups (Auerbach, 1999; Ortega, 1997; Santos, 1992; Susser, 1993). Basically the various phases of writing include: *prewriting*, *drafting*, *revising*, *editing*, and *publishing*. L1 and L2 writers follow a similar process but not everyone goes through the same process: however, L2 writers also engage in translating from the native to second language, which occurs intermittently at various stages (Silva, 1987, 2004). Table 1 lists *general* stages of the process approach that were derived from process theory and models.

Table 1: General Stages of the Process Approach

	Stages of Writing Process
Prewriting	Emerging thoughts are generated through talking, drawing, brainstorming, reading, note-taking, free-associating, and questions in order to generate ideas and find topics.
Drafting	This is rough, exploratory piece of writing in which ideas are organized and written up into a coherent draft: this stage of writing should not be evaluated, but supported. Topics and concepts are generated through “quick writes”: free writing: graphic organizers: journals: learning logs.
Revising	This includes looking at the work though a different perspective-through another reader, a peer-response group, and oneself by rereading and considering other people’s questions and comments. Responses at this stage typically focus on meaning, not correctness. Activities include conferencing; getting feedback; sharing work; responding to comments, suggestions, reflecting on own writing (meta-writing). A variety of responses (as opposed to just the teacher’s) promotes awareness of a diverse audience, which helps make the writing more complex and interesting.
Editing	Students have teacher conferencing sessions, and/or form peer editing groups in which they do proof reading; spell checking; sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, vocabulary corrections; and modifying and rearranging ideas. Teachers can also provide focused mini-lessons based on students errors in specific areas such as punctuation, mechanics and grammar.
Publishing	In this stage students share their final versions of writing with others.

Adapted from Silva (1987), Susser (1994), Pennington (1996)

Caudery's (1995) quantitative research on ESL teachers' use of process writing methods showed that teachers use bits and pieces of this approach, so that the elements become incorporated into eclectic methods, under the banner of process. Research on the editing stage of L1 and L2 writing involves using teacher and peer feedback and revision. Feedback on errors has generally been a staple of ESL writing instruction (Carson, 2001; Ferris, 2003; Frodesen & Holten, 2003). Research on teacher comments has investigated what to edit, how to edit, and in what pen color. Makino (1993) points out that feedback in the form of error correction activates the learner's linguistic competence, fosters language awareness through reflection, and emphasizes self-discovery in the learning process.

Peer revision has drawn a considerable amount of discussion and contention for its efficacy in ESL classrooms because a number of teachers doubt the helpfulness of peer editing. Peer revision allows for the intervention of other students as audience and collaborators. In the ESL classroom, the problems of peer revision stem from the fact that students have a tendency to address surface-level errors of grammar, spelling, and mechanics while failing to address problematic issues of meaning. DeGuerrero and Villamil (2000) found in their research that peer collaboration improved students' writing. Therefore, in order for the peer-review process to be effective, carefully guided training is needed in order for students to look at alternative points of view in their writing that can lead to further development of their ideas. To prepare students to provide any type of peer feedback, research suggests that students should participate in some kind of feedback training and coaching in order to provide meaningful suggestions for revising papers instead of vague comments and empty praise (deGuerrero & Villamil, 2000; Ferris, 2002, 2003; John Hedgecock & Lefkowitz, 1992; J. Liu & Hansen, 2002; Paulus, 1999; Stanley, 1992; Villamil & deGuerrero, 1996a, 1996b). Based on research, it was confirmed that students who received training developed better quality responses and contained more specific suggestions for writing improvement. The feedback training should begin with introducing and familiarizing the L2 writer with the process approach to writing (essays, paragraphs, etc.), which includes multiple revisions of the same writing assignment, and with effective responding comments. Training should include practice in giving critiques, suggestions, questions, and advice as well as the typical praise (Paulus, 1999; Tuzi, 2004).

To put it simply, in collaborative and cooperative learning theory, teacher, peer, or group feedback and response as well as the edit and revision process are used. Also, collaborative learning is based on the social nature of learning, a socioconstructivist notion, and that writing is a social act (Santos, 1992). Knowledge, therefore, is give and take and depends on the interaction with others. Students gain self-confidence and self-esteem; they also become more tolerant of different opinions and appreciate the non-threatening environment of working in small groups (Carson & Nelson, 1994; John Hedgecock & Lefkowitz, 1992; Romney, 2000). However, there are researchers who believe that social learning goes beyond the process approach and should be looked at from an exclusive perspective, a post-process approach to writing.

2.7.3 Post-Process Approach

Rhetoric approach consisted of three views: expressive, cognitive, and social. The attention of writing instruction was on linguistic and cognitive processes and on the products of writing which are embedded in a variety of contexts. Additionally, grammar, syntax, drafting, and revising mattered. Writing is viewed as both a personal, expressive act as well as an interpersonal, social act.

Atkinson (2003a, 2003b), Olson (2002), Ewald (2002), Reiff (2002), and Kent (1999) have pointed out that the process approach has its limitations. Kent (1999) declared that writing is not centered on the process but in the communication, and he stresses that students focus on language use as the content to be communicated. The most important limitation is that the process approach is based on cognitive learning theory in that attention is given to how the individual writer produces text. In the process tradition, readers are cast in the roles of passive recipients who exist apart from the discourse. Plus, attention is not on the role of readers who interact with writers and texts to construct meaning (Reiff, 2002). Olson (2002) assume that the process approach is a “one-size-fits-all” concept that would apply to most if not all writing situations. Atkinson (2003a, 2003b), Ewald (2002), Kent (1999), Olson (2002), and Reiff (2002), have delineated the social/cultural view as a separation or extension of the process approach to teaching writing.

According to some scholars, writing involves multiple audiences in a variety of professional and disciplinary contexts (Reiff, 2002). What transpired was a sociocultural approach to teaching writing called the *post process* approach. This approach does not mean “after” the traditional concept of process approach but “beyond” it or an extension of it (Reiff, 2002). Vollmer (2002) strongly base their stance on the foundation of socioconstructivist learning theory, the Vygotskyian (1978) concept that individuals are social beings and learning occurs through social and cultural interactions.

The idea of the *post-process* approach to L2 writing was presented in a special issue of the *Journal of Second Language Writing*, volume 12, number 1 (2003). According to Atkinson and Matsuda, the conceptualization of post-process writing was originated from Trimbur (1994). Trimbur described post-process composition as a post-cognitive (social cognition), socially and culturally situated activity in L1 writing.

According to Atkinson (2003), process writing has been an asocial practice and has focused on the writer’s individuality. Teaching practices focused on the development of the inner self and writing was an act of discovery; even though teaching practices sometimes connected to the social environment (Atkinson, 2003a). Atkinson recognizes the power of process writing and that typical L2 writing pedagogy includes prewriting, drafting, feedback from teachers and peer reviews, editing, and revising as important classroom activities.

Matsuda (2003b) and Casanave (2003) describe changes in L2 writing, but rather accept that during the post-process the sociocultural approach is a natural extension of the writing process. They assert that social and cultural factors, along with cognitive factors, affect language learning and writing as a means of communicating ideas.

Writing across the curriculum of post-process writing involve writers learn to write for a multiplicity of audiences in different disciplines because writing instruction should provide students with opportunities for encounters with readers who are “real” readers. Instruction includes writing assignments that encourage students to learn disciplinary discourse that can expand students’ notion of audience. According to Reiff (2002), writing assignments should include having student writers observe and participate in “community actions which would

expose them to the public, situated nature of discourse and their conflicting interpretations within communities” (p. 108).

Auerbach (1999) stated that, “The message in this approach is that learners’ cultural knowledge and ways of using literacy are valuable and can become a bridge to new learning. Writing is a vehicle of social and cultural affirmation (p. 3). Post-process perspectives emphasize the public, interpretative, and situated nature of communication. Writing is an interpretive act, and this interpretative act is shared with multiple readers who play multiple reading roles.

2.8 Assessing writing

Since the scores are the ultimate end to decide about the students, and our ability to address this concern will depend, to a great extent, on our decision to make valid, useful judgments about the students’ writing, the procedure of assessing writing becomes very critical. The score is the outcome of an interaction that involves students, the writing piece, the rater, and the rating skill (McNamara, 1996). There are three different principle ways of scoring scales for rating essays- primary trait, holistic, analytic.

2.8.1 Primary Trait Scoring Procedure

Primary Trait Scoring guide was developed by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Its commissioner is responsible for carrying out the NAEP project through competitive awards to qualified organizations. The Primary Trait Scoring Procedure considers that how well students can write within a narrowly defined range of task. It begins with the analysis of the assignment or tasks that incites writing piece. It requires knowing the requirements imposed on the writer by the specific audience and purposes characterized by the writing task (Odell & Cooper, 1980, p.39). Scoring rubric in a primary trait assessment includes: (a) the writing task; (b) a statement of the primary rhetorical trait; (c) a hypothesis about the expected performance on the task; (d) a statement of the relationship between the task and the primary trait; (e) a rating scale which specifies levels of performance; (f) sample scripts at each level; and (g) explanations of why each script was scored as it was.

The 6+1 Trait definitions

The 6+1 writing analytical model for assessing and teaching writing is made up of 6+1 key qualities that define strong writing. They are:

Ideas: the main message;

Organization: the internal structure of the piece;

Voice: the personal tone and flavour of the author's message;

Word Choice: the vocabulary a writer chooses to convey meaning;

Sentence Fluency: The rhythm and flow of the language;

Convention: the mechanical correctness; and

Presentation: how the writing actually looks on the page.

Ideas

The ideas are the content of the piece, the main theme, and the supporting details that enrich and develop the theme. They are the main message and the ideas are strong in which the writer chooses details that are interesting, important, and informative. Successful writers don't tell readers thing they already know; "It was a sunny day, and the sky was blue, the clouds were fluffy white ... " Successful writers show readers that which is normally overlooked; writers seek out the extraordinary, the unusual, the unique, the bits and pieces of life that might otherwise be overlooked.

Organization

Organization is the central meaning, the pattern and sequence of a piece of writing fits the central idea. In fact, it is the internal structure of the written materials which can be based on comparison-contrast, deductive logic, point by point analysis, development of a central theme, and chronological history of an event or patterns. The piece begins meaningfully and creates in the writer a sense of anticipation when the organization is strong. Everything (events, programs ...) proceed logically; information is given to the reader in the right doses at the right times so that the reader never loses interest. The bridges from one idea to the next hold up to show that connections are strong. The piece ties up loose ends, bringing things to a satisfying closure and closes with a sense of resolution. It answers important questions while still leaving the reader something to think about.

Voice

It is really writer's voice through the words, the sense of a person who is speaking to us and cares about the message. It is the heart and soul of the writing, the magic, the wit, the feeling, the life and breath. The writer imparts a personal tone and flavour to the piece that is his/hers alone. Voice is that individual something which is different from the mark of all writers.

Word Choice

It is colourful, precise, rich use of language that communicates not just in a functional way, but in a way that moves and enlightens the reader. Strong word choice helping imagery, especially sensory, show me writing clarifies and expands ideas in descriptive writing. In persuasive writing, purposeful word choice moves the reader to a new vision of ideas. In all kinds of writing figurative language like metaphors, similes and analogies articulate, enhance, and enrich the content. Strong word choice is characterized not so much by an exceptional vocabulary chosen to impress the reader, but more by the skill to use everyday words well.

Sentence Fluency

Sentence Fluency is the flow and rhythm of the language; the way sound word patterns come to ear and not just to the eye. It is the answer to the question of “How does it sound when read aloud? ”. Fluent writing has cadence, power, rhythm, and movement. The sentences are different in length, beginnings, structure, and style, and are so well crafted that the writer moves through the piece with ease.

Conventions

This trait is the mechanical correctness of the piece and includes five different elements: spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar/usage, paragraphing. Writing has been proofread and edited with care. During this step the person should answer the question: “How much work would a copy editor need to do to prepare the piece for publication.

Presentation

Presentation combines two elements of textual and visual. It is the way the writing presents the message on the paper. The writing will not be inviting to read even if the ideas, words, and sentences are vivid, precise, and well constructed; unless the guidelines of presentation are present. Some of the guidelines include: neatness, handwriting, font selection, graphics, borders, overall appearance, balance of white space with visuals and text. The great writers are aware of the necessity of presentation. Presentation is a key to a polished piece ready for publication.

2.9 Genre Approach

Genre approach is an approach to both L1 and L2 writing that is supported by opponents of the process approach. They believe that genre pedagogy is a social response to process views which is popularized in England and Australia. Swales (1990) identified a genre as “a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes” (p.

58). His definition offers the basic idea that there are certain conventions or rules which are generally associated with a writer's purpose. The researchers believe that writing is basically individual problem-solving and that process models fail to introduce students to the cultural and linguistic resources necessary for them to engage in critical texts (Hyland, 2003; Johns, 2002). Some researchers believe that there are multiple perspectives on genre pedagogy (Adam & Artemeva, 2002; Coe, 2002; Dudley-Evans, 2002; Hyland, 2003; Hyon, 1996; Johns, 2003, 2002; Paltridge, 2002). Swales (1990) and Martin (1984), as cited in Kay and Dudley-Evans (1998), shared an essential viewpoint that all genres control a set of communicative purposes within certain social situations and that each genre has its own structural quality according to those communicative purposes (p.309). Therefore, the communicative purposes and the structural features should be identified when genres are used in writing classes.

Common sets of linguistic features can constitute a text type. Text type was defined by Biber (1988, as cited in Paltridge, 1996) as a class of texts having similarities in linguistic forms regardless of the genre (p.237). For example, Hammond (1992, as cited in Paltridge, 1996) examined the characteristics of several genres and categorized them according to similarities in text types: recipes are known to have the text type of procedure; personal letters are used to tell private anecdotes; advertisements deal with description; news articles have the text type of recounting; scientific papers prefer passive voice over active voice in presenting reports; and academic papers are likely to have embedded clauses (pp. 237-239). This means that different text types involve distinctive knowledge and different sets of skills, so teachers should introduce a variety of genres to have students understand and practice different sets of skills.

In the process approach, the steps or stages are illustrated and practiced from the generation of ideas and compilation of information through a series of activities for planning, gathering information, drafting, revising, and editing (Campbell, 1998, p. 11). This sequence of activities typically occurs in four stages: "prewriting, composing/drafting, revising, and editing" (Badger & White, 2000, p. 154). Prewriting is the phase of idea gathering. Drafting is the process of writing a rough outline of what will be addressed. Once students produce a rough draft, they read it again and share it with peers or a teacher to receive comments. Then they make modifications to their writings based on the feedback from their peers or a teacher; revising, or elaborating on

the first draft, takes place at this point. Editing, correcting mechanical errors like spelling or punctuation, is the last stage.

Proponents of the process approach argue that the procedures of process writing help learners to develop more effective ways of conveying meaning and to better comprehend the content that they want to express. They strongly believe that students can discover what they want to say and write more successfully through the process model than the genre approach, as the process approach is viewed as writer centered (Walsh, 2004, p. 15).

However, none of the process writing procedures of the past sufficiently dealt with linguistic knowledge, such as grammar and the organization of content as much as necessary. Even though the final stage of editing addressed some mechanical features of language, they were mainly concerned with the skills of processing ideas like planning and drafting. Furthermore, the process approach has a very restricted view of writing, in that the approach presumes that writing proficiency takes place only with the support of the repeated exercise of the same writing procedures. Although it is obvious that the amounts of pre-writing necessary for writing a personal letter and for creating an academic research paper are different, in the process model, the practice of writing is identical regardless of what the topic is and who the writer or the reader is (Badger & White, 2000, pp. 154-155).

In the genre approach, on the other hand, the knowledge of language is intimately attached to a social purpose, and more focus is on the viewpoint of the reader than on that of the writer. Writing is mostly viewed as the students' reproduction of text based on the genre offered by the teacher. It is also believed that learning takes place through imitation and exploration of different kinds of models. Accordingly, learners should be exposed to many examples of the same genre to develop their ability to write a particular genre. Through exposure to similar texts, students can detect the specialized configurations of that genre, and they also can activate their memories of prior reading or writing experiences whenever they encounter the task of creating a new piece in a familiar genre (Badger & White, 2000, pp. 155-156). When it comes to explaining writing development in the genre approach, Hammond (1992, as cited in Burns, 2001) proposed "a wheel model of a teaching learning cycle having three phases: modeling, joint negotiation of text

by learners and teacher, and the independent construction of texts by learners” (p. 202). Modeling, Hammond noted, is the time when the target genre that students should construct is introduced to them [the students]. At this stage, discussion focuses on the educational and social function of the genre, and analysis focuses on the text structure and language.

Joint negotiation of text refers to the stage when learners carry out exercises which manipulate relevant language forms. It fosters a negotiating process between the teacher and the students. It involves reading, research, and disseminating information, and the text of the genre is dependent on those activities. The independent construction of texts is the final phase; in which learners produce actual texts through activities such as choosing a topic, researching, and writing (p. 202). Proponents such as Kay and Dudley-Evans (1998) have argued that the genre approach is more effective for learners to advance their writing skills in a second language than the process approach since the model helps free students from their severe worries over writing (p. 310).

2.10 Computer Assisted Language Learning and L2 Writing

Concerns with technology-enhanced language learning (CALL) research have been noted in the literature for years, and many of these concerns are similar to the ones held by those reviewing second language acquisition (SLA) research in general. As the use of technology in language classrooms has increased dramatically over the past years, L2 teachers have recognized and acknowledged its value for teaching and learning. Computer application to education has been around since the 1980s but in the 1990s technology development accelerated rapidly.

Many authors note the importance of teachers in integrating technology into instruction well (see, e.g., Jung, 2005; Kern, 2006). Garrett (1991) noted that teachers determine how and why technology is used in language teaching, and she underscored the importance of teachers in understanding what students need. Furthermore, Warschauer and Cook (1999) clarified that teachers make “learning more meaningful, motivating, and rooted in the personal interests of students” (p. 32). Some researchers found the use of various technologies (e.g., word processing, telecommunication technology, e-mail, a project using a personal computer in the classroom to

teach the writing process, computer writing systems, computer-assisted writing software) increased the quantity and quality of student writing more than with traditional instructional methods; additionally, students' attitudes toward writing on the computer improved (Braine, 1997, 2001; Gousseva- Goodwin, 2000; Liou, 1997; Pennington, 1993; Sullivan & Pratt, 1996; Wang & Wen, 2002).

Computer Assisted Language Learning encompasses a wide array of radically different creative activities ranging from simply typing content into the predefined forms of a computer template, to designing and scripting complex courseware using software intended for the production of computer-based instructional programs. It also refers to combining these creative products to build multifaceted online learning environments. Asynchronous language learning, such as what takes place within discussion forums, has long been viewed as an equalizing tool (Godwin-Jones, 2003; Warschauer, 1996) that encourages universal participation as opposed to the more complicated dynamics found in face-to-face dialogues, where certain individuals can often dominate the flow of the discourse. However, Payne (2004) cautioned that participating in asynchronous discussion forums was not the same as doing a writing assignment but rather more like a protracted conversation that takes place over time. He suggested that teachers needed to think about structuring interaction in online learning much more than in the classroom because online activities such as forums cannot be fine-tuned on the fly in the same way as discussions in the classroom context.

Kraemer (2008) pointed out that Distance Learning (DL) comes in a great many flavors, as evidenced by the following collection of terms: online learning, e-learning, open learning, distributed learning, teleconference or videoconference learning, blended or hybrid learning, life-long learning, or independent study (also see Goertler & Winke, 2008; Hauck & Stickler, 2006; Homberg, Shelley, & White, 2005). In theoretical terms, the array of DL formats all use digital tools to support engagement between and among learners in ways consonant with SLA theories of either an interactionist (Gass, 1997) or sociocultural (Lantolf, 2000) persuasion. Likewise, those SLA researchers who particularly stress the role of corrective feedback (e.g., Ellis, 2009; Long, 2006), including the constructionists from the education field, have little difficulty seeing how digital exchanges can be used to shape, stimulate, and scaffold the L2 learner's progress

(Doughty & Long, 2003; Hubbard & Levy, 2006; Lee, 2008; Schwienhorst, 2007; Ware & O'Dowd, 2008).

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With respect to asynchronous online learning, The Sloan Consortium (Moore, 2004) has posited the following guidelines for asynchronous instruction in any discipline. The concept of interaction is a key component in their list (items f and g): (a) orientate students on how to learn online and help them adjust to their new role as more self-directed and independent learners; (b) write clear learning objectives at both the macro (i.e., syllabus) and micro (i.e., day-by-day) levels of curricular planning; (c) ensure that the quality of the online course is comparable to that of traditional classroom materials; (d) provide ready help of both a technical and content nature and respond within 24 hours (or sooner, if possible); (e) minimize technical difficulties for obtaining the necessary plug-ins and software; (f) feature interaction—with instructors, classmates, and the interface—at all possible moments; (g) include student feedback in shaping the instructional goals for specific activities; (h) recycle instruction, materials, topics, concepts, and practice through the course; (i) allow students to practice before taking exams so as to ensure positive outcomes; and (j) demonstrate to students in palpable ways the progress being made throughout the course.

2.11 Pedagogy of Technology

2.11.1 Word Processing:

computer application for composing written text. It allows for many different modifications to written text, before and after saving. It facilitates the mechanical process of putting words on paper; revising text by substitutions, deletions, additions, and block moves.

2.11.2 Networking (synchronous):

It is a kind of computer-assisted classroom discussion (CACD) such as chat which is used for instantaneous discussions in the form of written communication.

2.11.3 Networking (asynchronous):

e-mail, listservs, newsgroups, and bulletin boards which are used for threaded written discussions.

2.11.4 Hypermedia/Hypertext:

World Wide Web (WWW, Web pages and Web sites) is used for creating products for a specific purpose to a wider audience.

2.12 Technology as a Product: Sentence- And Discourse-Level Structures

2.12.1 Word processing and e-mail

In a study by Biesenbach-Lucas et al. (2000) and Biesenbach-Lucas and Weasenforth (2001), they used 49 participants and contrasted online and offline writing of essays and studied 3 textual characteristics (frequency of textual cohesive features, variations in text length, inclusion of contextualization – providing background information for the reader). They examined writing for academic purposes and language proficiency using two technologies, e-mail and word

processing. They found some differences in cohesive features and text produced. Word processing produced longer text and included more background information. In 2001, they used 14 participants, and, contrary to their previous study, they found no obvious differences in e-mail and word processing for textual cohesive features. However, similar to their previous study, word processing produced longer text and more background information.

2.12.2 Word processing or other software applications

Some of the researchers conducted studies on how to use word processing to facilitate the writing process (Cunningham, 2000; Kehagia & Cox, 1997; Phinney, 1993). Other researchers used computer-aided classroom discussion (CACD; synchronous communication) for the writing process (Nassour Ghaleb, 1993; Schultz, 2000). Some of the research on writing using word processors showed the effectiveness of using word processors for the writing process. However, the use of computers in these studies was nothing more than using them as glorified typewriters. A positive benefit is that it makes the process of writing easier.

2.12.3 Computer-Aided Classroom Discussion (CACD)

Ghaleb (1993) and Schultz (2000) both used CACD for formal writing using the process writing approach. They both studied sentence-level structures in editing in the process writing approach, and used Daedalus Interchange for their online chat activity. They both examined sentence-level structures in CACD. Ghaleb compared “chat” writing to the focus on grammar in traditional classes. Schultz studied the peer-review aspect of the writing approach in respect to sentence-level structures. They both had similar results in sentence-level improvements, more sentence level grammar changes. Additionally, Ghaleb’s study showed greater productivity in writing quantity and quality. However, Schultz’s results were slightly different. Her results were negative for the use of CACD for formal writing. She found that in face-to face classes, students produced more changes in organization, style, and especially produced quantitatively and qualitatively more changes in content than in CACD. She stated that this finding is significant because interpretative ability is crucial for improving content and producing compositions. She

maintains that speaking is best for the idea generating process of writing. Three areas assessed, grammar, organization, and style, can be relegated to the editing process after ideas have been generated. Her position is that face-to-face sessions provide students more opportunities to discuss, edit, and revise their writing. Tuzi (2004) studied the relationship between electronic feedback (e-feedback) and its impact on L2 writers' revisions. He focused on how L2 students responded to their peers and what kinds of revisions they made as a result of the feedback. The results of Tuzi's study suggest that students preferred oral feedback, but e-feedback had a greater impact on revision than oral feedback, implying that e-feedback is more useful. The literature shows that using CACD for language production and proficiency is more advantageous because it is instantaneous than using it for just sentence-level structures.

2.12.4 E-mail, listservs, and bulletin boards

Some of the researchers, Fitze (2006), Gousseva (1998), Knoy et al. (2001), Wang (1993), and Weasenforth et al. (2002), examined the writing process using asynchronous tools such as e-mail, listservs, and bulletin boards for electronic communication. Gousseva (1998) looked at collaborative writing, writing groups, and peer reviews in the writing process. In her study, she had her students use e-mail and listservs for electronic dialog journals. She examined the interaction of the students while writing and found that the collaborative cooperative activity for writing was effective. The students also found the context of e-mail and listservs for writing meaningful because the audience was their peers, and the assignment was especially enjoyable. Wang (1993), like Gousseva, used email in his study, and was interested in process writing using dialog journal writing. He found that students wrote more per writing session than they did using pencil and paper. Even the instructors provided more feedback to students. Wang found that through email, interaction was increased among students and instructor. He also noticed that the students focused more on grammar and vocabulary. One more consequence of using email for writing was the positive attitudes of the students toward e-mail for writing, and the students were not affected by computer experience or typing skills. Knoy et al. (2001) and Weasenforth et al. (2003) both used bulletin boards for peer reviews to observe student interactions, editing abilities, and critical thinking. Knoy et al. focused on peer assessment using the bulletin board to improve writing skills, and Weasenforth et al. focused on responding and interacting with

classmates while using collaborative writing activities, and having students develop critical and analytical thinking skills. The method of using a bulletin board for this activity had a positive impact on their attention as well as their critical and analytical skills.

One research study by González-Bueno and Pérez (2000) was similar to Wang's because they both used e-mail for dialog journal writing. However, they compared pencil and paper versus e-mail use in writing journals, and they examined the sentence-level structures, such as grammatical and lexical accuracy as well as quantity of writing. They found no significant difference at the sentence-level structures between the pencil and paper students and the e-mail students. In fact, e-mail did not facilitate improvement in vocabulary and grammar accuracy at all, but more language was produced. E-mail is best used for communicating thoughts and ideas. However, González-Bueno and Pérez as well as Wang found positive results when the focus was on language production. Similar to Knoy et al. (2001) and Weasenforth et al. (2003) who used bulletin boards for the peer-review process, Fitze (2006) conducted a quantitative study on face-to-face and written electronic conferences via discussion board in WebCT. He compared both forms of communication for lexical features and student participation in prewriting activities. His analysis of the data showed that there was no significant difference in the amount of participation (number of words produced) by the students in both face-to-face and electronic conferences. However, similar to Wang, Fitze found that there was a statistically significant finding of increased lexical range in electronic communication. Fitze also recognized that group dynamics in the face-to-face conferences may have influenced the results of his findings.

2.12.5 Multiple technologies

Al-Jarf (2004) and Kubota (1999) employed a variety of technologies, such as word processing, software programs, Web-based programs, bulletin boards, and Web publishing, to support the writing process in her writing class. Kubota (1999) used dialog journaling for collaborative writing activities and peer editing in an authentic context. She also wanted to increase motivation during the writing process. She had the students use word processing and bulletin boards for their initial writing and then published their projects on the Web. The results of her quantitative and qualitative study showed positive motivation and high excitement when

projects were combined with the writing tasks. Journal writing helped them improve their grammar and vocabulary. Kubota validated the use of certain technology tools for process writing, and the value of using another tool such as Web publishing to make the writing experience authentic and meaningful. Al-Jarf (2004) compared the effect of word processing, supplemental programs, conferencing, computer-based instruction, and Web page design on writing achievement of EFL female college freshmen who received combined technology-enhanced and in-class writing instruction to students who received in-class instruction only. She found that the experimental group who was taught using a combined method of instruction scored significantly higher than the group who was taught using just the traditional in-class writing instruction.

2.13 Technology as a Post-Process/Sociocultural Tool

2.13.1 Word processing or other computer applications

None of the researchers examined the use of the computer alone for written communicative language proficiency in social contexts.

2.13.2 CACD

Several researchers used CACD (chat) for written communicative language proficiency. Chun (1994), Kern (1995), Sullivan and Pratt (1996), and Kramsch et al. (2000) used Daedalus Interchange for chat capabilities. Their analyses were based on function, not syntax, and writing was informal. These researchers, unlike González-Bueno, Pérez, and Wang who looked at sentence-level structures, were interested in proficiency and language generated during chat sessions. The data for Chun and Kern showed that students used more language in discourse management, speech acts, and requests for clarification, conversations, and leave-taking utterances. On the other hand, Kramsch et al. and Sullivan and Pratt investigated the affective factors, attitudes and writing apprehension during written discourse in their writing classes. They

showed that the learners enjoyed the authentic medium of writing to peers. In fact, Sullivan and Pratt showed that the students' writing quality improved because comments during CACD sessions were more focused; however, there were more numerous discussions in face-to face class meetings. Warschauer (1996a) also used CACD to study written communicative language proficiency, and the formal and complex use of language. He examined the equality of student participation based on factors such as shyness and learning cultures and found that there was more equal participation among students using the computer mode. He also found that writing in CACD was more formal and more complex in language use, lexically and syntactically, than in face-to-face discussions. He noted that his findings are significant for acquiring more sophisticated communication skills. The use of networks for building a sense of community and collaboration definitely has its advantages for writing. However, I find it difficult to see its application for evaluating sentence-level structures, particularly in formal and complex use of language.

2.13.3 E-mail, listservs, and bulletin boards

Bloch (2002) and Hertel (2003) used e-mail in their studies of written communication. Bloch focused on language use and had the students employ a wide variety of rhetorical strategies to interact with the instructor. He categorized and analyzed e-mail messages and determined that the students exhibited a good ability to switch between formal and informal language, depending on the context. On the other hand, Hertel focused on attitudes and written conversations in an authentic and natural environment and not on linguistics. He used surveys and action research to show that students' attitudes and perceptions were influenced by the experience as well as a decrease in perceptions of differences between cultures and recognition of similarities between cultures.

2.13.4 Multiple technologies

Pérez (2003) focused on written communication that compared synchronous CACD (chat) with asynchronous (e-mail for electronic dialog journaling). She found no significant difference between e-mail and chat on language productivity. However, both modes of communication enhanced the language acquisition process. Warschauer (1996b) also focused on written communication as well as academic writing, and he compared synchronous (chat) to word processing for writing. He also added another variable, motivation. Using quantitative research methodology, his findings were all positive for attitudes toward using computers; motivation was tied to the desire to communicate and to the goals of computer-based projects; and students believed that they could write better with computers. Al-Jamhooor (2005) conducted research for his dissertation using a courseware platform he designed for an Online Writing Collaboration Project (OWCp). This course delivery system platform included an integrated Web interface with synchronous (chats), asynchronous (threaded discussion forums and email), and word processing capabilities not unlike integrated learning environments such as WebCT and Blackboard (communication tools with course management), or TeachNet (a communication tool by First Class) or other similar ones, but his platform interface also included tutoring and online exercises plus a number of other instructional functions. The premise of his platform was to promote collaborative learning with students from different countries. The OWCp included students from the United States, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Bulgaria, Japan, China, Korea, the Gulf States, and countries in Africa. However, for the purpose of his research, Al-Jamhooor closely examined the Arab EFL (AEFL) students from Egypt and Saudi Arabia in advanced writing courses and American college students. The goal of his study was to investigate AEFL students' attitudes of using the OWCp for intercultural communication to foster critical thinking and to improve writing skills. Al-Jamhooor used both quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the attitudes of these students in the computer supported collaborative writing project. Al-Jamhooor's findings showed strong positive attitudes toward online collaborative writing, but some other findings produced both positive and negative results. He also showed that the AEFL students increased motivation, increased self-esteem, and developed confidence due to the interaction with online peers and tutors. The students in the study learned how to provide feedback, and they became more aware of audience. They were motivated by writing directly to an active audience and by receiving immediate feedback.

As a result, the students read their postings habitually. Their ability to critique their own writing errors improved from the inter-collaborative writing in the OWCp forums. The less competent writers were motivated to write because they received more comments of praise and compliments. The AEFL students experienced some difficulties in regards to sharing writing online, attitudes toward peers' and tutors' feedback, exposing writing errors, and the form of feedback given. Because of the public nature of writing, the students in the study exposed many fears related to self-confidence including: fear of being graded by the instructors for all the mistakes they made online, fear of exposing their identities, fear of exposing writing errors and public embarrassment, fear of offending online peers and of being offended, fear of negative and deconstructive criticism, fear of rejection by group members and conflicts online, and fear of crossing religious boundaries. Praise was seen as inadequate to help students think critically; however, socialization and interpersonal relationships prompted students to give praising comments. The AEFL students rejected informal and non-academic comments as valid. Non-academic comments pertained to content and personal expressions of liking or disliking. The AEFL students wanted comments on grammar and structure that facilitated writing development. The students indicated that it was impossible to keep track of all the information posted in the OWCp, and the multiple-voiced feedback caused confusion. In spite of the AEFL students' fears and concerns, Al-Jamhooor's data showed that the students benefited from the intercultural experience and developed a global understanding of their target audience.

2.14 GENRE: Multiple Technologies

A variety of writing purposes was examined in a study by Warschauer (2000). He examined four writing classes using technology. The technologies these classes used were CACD, word processing, WWW projects, and keypals (e-mail). Class 1 focused on sentence-level structures using drill and practice exercises on the word processor, online quizzes, WWW grammar quizzes, and some process writing activities using the network and key pals for peer reviewing of paragraphs. The students writing experiences were not good because there was no connection between writing, and it was neither meaningful nor purposeful. However, Class 2 had a positive writing experience. They wrote for authentic purposes using listserv discussions, got detailed feedback from peers, and finally created home pages on the WWW for a wide audience. Class 3

also had a positive writing experience. The students responded positively to the WWW writing projects and Web assignments because they were contextual. However, the results were mixed in regards to using the network activities, and it was extremely positive for Web assignments and Web projects. Class 4 showed mostly positive results because the students had an authentic purpose to write. They participated in service learning projects via computer-based projects. The Web pages they created were very motivating, but the brochures they created for an agency were not used. As a result, motivation decreased.

2.15 Blogging

One of newest form of emerging technology in the area of computer-mediated communication is the weblog which is more widely known as the blogs have very quickly captured the attention of mainstream media (Mead, 2000; Morris, 2001, Weber, 2000). As Brascum (2001) claims, “if you want reality, forget ‘survivor’. Check out weblogs: public online journals that can be racy, riveting and alarmingly blunt” (p.62).

2.15.1 Blogging as an Influential Tool

According to Bausch et. al., a blog is “a page with numerous chunks of content, arranged from newest to oldest” (p.7). Despite the confusion in defining blogs, a number of characteristics classify the genre including personal editorship, giving one person sole responsibility of the blog; hyperlinked post structure, or referencing to material outside the site; frequent updates displayed in reverse chronological order, thereby creating an expectation of updates that encourages readers to visit on a frequent basis; free, public access to the content, allowing content to be accessible via the World Wide Web without limitation; and archival, alleviating the obstacle of discarding potentially important files for future reference (Paquet, 2002). The advantages of blogging over the traditional method of creating Web pages include simple software and minimal training. The traditional method of creating a Web page involves using an HTML editor or Web site programs such as Microsoft FrontPage, Dreamweaver, or Microsoft Word Web page. As a

whole, the blog method of posting student work online is easier to initiate, train, maintain and revise than the traditional method. Publishing work online enables students to make visible contributions to the class, promotes peer learning, and encourages quality work because it is an ongoing practice. Learners work individually, in small groups as well as in virtual international classrooms (Johnston, 2002; Lowe & Williams, 2004).

With the ease of use and the potential for publishing personal thoughts and ideas, there is little wonder that blogs have seen a tremendous boom in popularity. Increasing involvement of blogs from around 1000 blogs in mid-2000 to over a half-million in mid 2002 (Paquet, 2002), free blogging services, such as Blogger.com, Wordpress.com, WebQuest.com, Webs.com, and inexpensive services such as UserLand.com, MovableType.org are supporting the blogging sites.

Similar to discussion boards, Weblogs are interactive. Readers respond to any given entry with a comment, and ongoing threaded discussions can take place both within classroom settings, across other classrooms, as well provide access to other learning environments and resources. However, they are different from discussion boards in that self-publishing encourages ownership and responsibility for online content.

2.15.2 Blogging in Education

Increased attention toward the personal publishing realm via blogs, attention is being directed toward the application of blogs in education. While the potential for implementation of blogs seems limitless, there are a few educators who are actually taking the plunge into incorporating blogs into classroom. Educational uses of blogs evolved to apply to classroom learning because they were depicted as an ideal platform for student writing. SchoolBlogs.com was created for teacher resources and information as well as a soapbox for children to have their own voice and because it fosters communication between children (Downes, 2003). The founder of weblog-ed.com, a blog on using Weblogs in education, will Richardson notes potential implementations (2002): student learning logs, giving a place for feedback, collaboration, and reflection; professional development, providing a peer coaching environment from people not necessarily in the local school; classroom management, establishing a space for posting assignments, links,

and notes of interest; classroom collaboration, utilizing collaborative opportunities within as well as outside of the classroom and school; community relations, involving parents in the educational dialogue, internal and external communications, providing a centralized portal for school groups such as a yearbook staff to communicate; knowledge management, offering a place for referencing policies and forms; research logs, presenting links to reference materials and, finally best practices, creating a place to share successes and aspirations. The blogging way, on the other hand, allows students to independently contribute to a class Web page with minimal training.

Nelson and Fernheimer (2003), and Campbell (2003a, 2003b) contend that blogs promote classroom discussion, and that the continuous postings create an ongoing document of the learning process and a resource for others. They stated that blogging is a powerful tool for building classroom community. They suggest that learners could work individually, in small groups as well as in virtual classrooms. As Weblogs are interactive, blogs create classroom community by linking to other blogs and creating groups with common interests. Blogging opens up personal thoughts and ideas and public issues and opinions to a wider audience. Campbell's model (Figure 4) demonstrates the community building nature of blogging and its interconnectedness of blogs with the teacher, students, and readers outside of the classroom. Students can share their blog, not just with teacher, but with other class members, or the entire class, and potentially with any interested reader on the Internet.

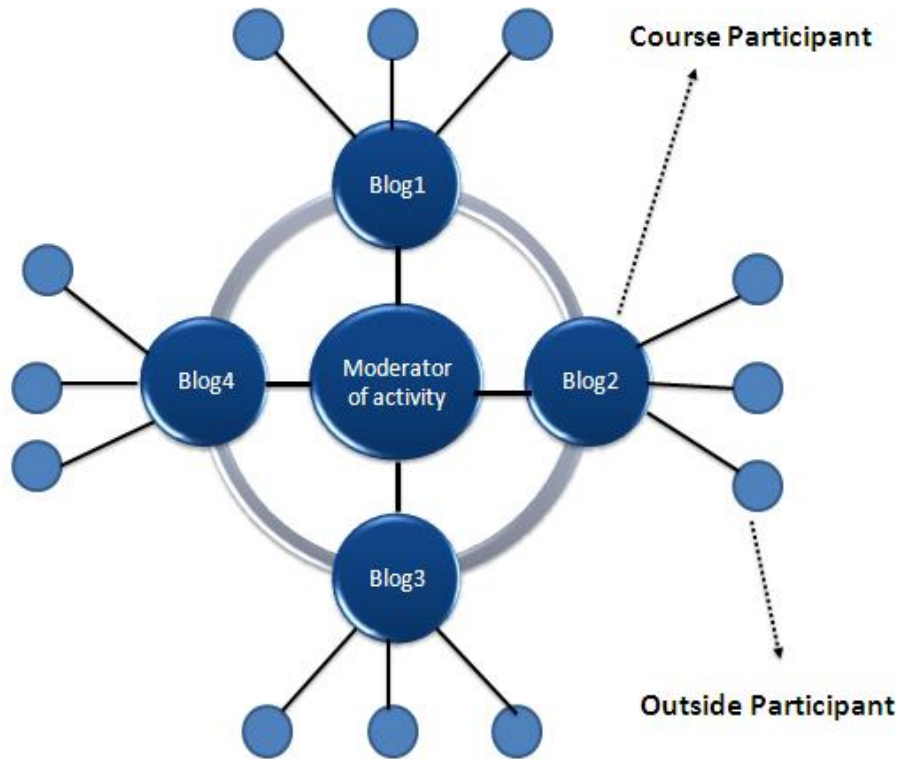


Figure 3: Campbell's (2003) Student-Community Blogging Interaction Model

This model shows a case of building an online writing community where students' writing takes centre stage and involves inviting audiences to read and reflect on their published work. On the other hand, students would benefit from having outside readers critique and encourage their work. Kennedy (2002, 2004) states that because blogs are part Web sites, part journal, part free-form writing space, they can have the "potential to enhance writing and literacy skills while offering a uniquely stylized form of expression" (p. 1). Some researchers describe the potential of blogging for writing development and improvement (Austin, 2004; Barrios, 2003a; Bay, 2004; Brooks, Nichols, & Priebe, 2004; Downes, 2003; Gurak et al., 2004; Holinka, 2004; Johnson, 2004; Johnston, 2002; Kajder & Bull, 2003; Kennedy, 2003, 2004a; Love, 2004; Lowe & Williams, 2004; Ly, 2004; Miller & Shepherd, 2004; Nelson & Fernheimer, 2003; A. Olson, 2004; Packwood, 2004; Spangenberg, 2004; Ward, 2004; White, 2004). Barrio (2003) asserts that blogs can empower students to become better researchers, writers, independent learners, and develop international Web communities. . Blogs for writing can be used in various ways; for

example, learning journals, learning logs, thinking journals, reader response journals, reflective journals, and visual learning logs. If the journaling is to be collaborative then blogging would be an effective use for it. Practitioners also assert that the assessment of writing is facilitated by the use of blogs because it combines the best elements of portfolio-driven courses, where student work is collected, edited, and assessed, with the immediacy of publishing for a virtual audience.

Lowe and Williams (2004) value the use of blogs for the writing process. They have found that student writers can solicit comments from readers during all stages of the writing process because it facilitates a collaborative learning environment. They have found that “extending the discourse to a large community outside of the classroom, [their] student bloggers regularly confront ‘real’ rhetorical situations in a very social, supportive way” (Lowe & Williams, 2004, p. 2). Nelson and Fernheimer (2003) point out that because blogs consists of brief, frequent posts, they can be very useful in helping students work through the writing process. They point out that because blogs consists of brief, frequent posts, they can be very useful in helping students work through the writing process. They also indicate that a writing group blog is useful for students to share individual work because it facilitates revisions that can be negotiated between writer and readers. Instructors can see the writing projects evolve and follow along as the writer makes changes based on collective feedback from readers. Blogs inspire self-reflection because students can post their observations, and thereby provide a source of evidence for students’ self-assessments. Finally they indicate that blogs are an effective tool for collaborative writing projects for small groups.

Dawn Shepard and Ann Miller (2004) examined blogs as a new genre. They address the relationship between blogging and its use in the particular cultural contexts of the early 21st century. They acknowledge that using blogs raises a number of rhetorical issues such as the private and public nature of writing where writers may feel uncomfortable writing their personal thoughts for an unknown audience. Nelson and Fernheimer (2003) also discuss the relevance of blogging to rhetorical genre. They point out how instructors could design activities “in which students use blog content for a basis of rhetorical analysis to determine the ways in which bloggers write for a specific audience and employ certain techniques and strategies to build ethos within a community” (p. 7).

Lantolf (2003) believes that blogging increases the production of language by students, so it enables students to maintain and augment their proficiency through writing and dialog. Campbell (2003), who first presented blogs for ESL/EFL, points out three practical uses of blogging for ESL: a tutor blog which provides reading practice and responses, a learner blog run by individual or collaborative groups of learners for ESL students to get writing practice, and a class blog which involves one blog for a whole class. Godwin-Jones (2003) sees blogs as the opportunities for online collaboration and learning because ESL teachers have already embraced other collaborative tools such as e-mail, chat, discussion forums, and so forth. Campbell (2003), who first presented blogs for ESL/EFL, points out three practical uses of blogging for ESL: a tutor blog which provides reading practice and responses, a learner blog run by individual or collaborative groups of learners for ESL students to get writing practice, and a class blog which involves one blog for a whole class.

The weblog has a growing impact on writing as it ranges from personal reflections and experiences, to community building, to critical analysis of segments of blogs, to discourse analysis, to quantitative and qualitative studies of blogging activity. Cole (2004) examined the attitudes and perceptions of teachers and their students toward the implementation of blogs into the curriculum and their perceptions regarding their views of using technology in the classroom. Cole found that blogs provided a motivating environment and enabled students to have an audience for their writing as well as to read their peers' writing. Campbell (2004) examined the effectiveness of using a class blog to disseminate and discuss assignments, communicate ideas in order to prepare for conversational topics as well as post reading explanations of assignments and materials. The results of his qualitative and quantitative study revealed students enjoyed learning with Weblogs, their attitudes toward learning English improved, and there was significant interest among learners to create their own blogs to accompany writing classes in the future. Another study conducted by Campbell (2003a) on computer supported cooperative learning using Weblogs in a university class showed that Weblogs were beneficial for constructivist learning in a blended structure learning environment and that the public nature augmented students' interest in writing. He examined the learners' experiences in the following areas: cooperative learning, blended structure learning environment, Weblog use, and the public nature of writing.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of using blogs for the writing process approach with EFL students and how students responded to the pedagogical application of blogging in a community college Intermediate EFL writing class. This chapter attempts to deal with research methods and procedures used in the study as well as the data collection and analysis procedures. It covers information about participants and gives information about the people involved in the current study.

Experimental design proves to be useful in evaluation questions about the effectiveness and impact of any innovations in an educational context as it was assumed in this study (Gribbons & Herman, 1997). Cohen and Manion, (1994) argued that the designs which make use of experimental and control groups but cannot realize random assignment of the subjects are called as quasi experimental designs. This study tries to find out the effect of using weblogs on writing proficiency; as it could not assign the students randomly to experimental and control groups; a quasi experimental design was adopted.

A survey gathers data from specific population with the purpose of finding people's opinions on the situation given (Robson, 1995). A survey is the most commonly used descriptive methods in educational research (Cohen & Manion, 1994).

The present study used both qualitative and quantitative methods to measure variables. Quantitative method is the analysis of the numerical data and statistics. The scores given to the students' writing essays provided numerical data for quantitative study. However; qualitative method is a research that relies on observations, questionnaires, interviews and subjective reports rather than the numbers and statistics (Boeree, 2005). The data comes from questionnaires, feedbacks, formal and informal interviews is a good help which provides data for qualitative study.

3.1 Research Approach

The research processes of this study were situated on a constructivist paradigm. The paradigm gathers the basic sets of beliefs that help the researcher get the guidance. The assumption in this research is based on the knowledge which is actively and socially constructed. It shows some realities and is influenced by culture and history. Everybody is interactively linked and created understanding in the world, and as such, findings are created in the investigation (Guba & Lincoln, 2000).

The disciplinary orientation is foreign language education and technology. The approach to teaching EFL has evolved from the teaching and learning experiences and is embodied in the teaching practices. Teaching style for English and EFL has always been focused on student-centered, active, and cooperative/collaborative learning. The belief is focused on the notion that teaching is interactive not unidirectional.

This study wanted to see and evaluate how the advanced proficiency EFL students performed and improved their writing skills. One of the first online chat tools and synchronous (real-time) communication tool was used. It was serendipitously found that students were writing more and more coherently as time passed in the semester using the word processor and software. The attention was not focused extensively on grammar and error correction. The students managed to help each other with grammar, content, and other problems.

Nowadays, technology evolved to include synchronous and asynchronous forms of communication. These tools ranged from computer-aided classroom discussion (synchronous communication) to asynchronous forms of communication, such as e-mail, bulletin board, and listservs. The fact that newspapers, television, and discussions which are highly valuable for L2 learners is not deniable, but World Wide Web provides authentic language resources in the form of multimedia that utilize a multi-sensory collection of text, sound, pictures, video, animation, and hypermedia to provide meaningful contexts to facilitate comprehension and discussion (M. Liu, 1995; M. Liu, Moore, Graham, & Lee, 2002).

3.2 Instruments:

This program in the institute is designed to develop students' language proficiency in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in order to prepare them for the IELTS and TOEFL. The students enter this program by taking a placement test, Actual TOEFL Test, which is based on listening, reading, grammar, and sentence structures. The writing courses are designed to help students increase fluency and build confidence in writing. The courses focus on writing as a process. Through inventing, drafting, revising, and collaborating with peers, students write for specific audiences and purposes.

3.3 Measures to Determine Students' Proficiency Level

The placement test had 3 parts consisting of 3 parts: section one (questions from 1-50) measuring listening ability; section 2 (questions from 1-40) about structure and written expression; and section 3 (questions from 1-500 on reading comprehension. The recommendation time for the completion of section 2 was 25 minutes and section 3 was 55 minutes. The results were interpreted according to the scores shown in table 2 below.

Table 2: The Equivalency Table for TOEFL and IELTS Scores

OEIC	TOEFL Paper	TOEFL CBT	TOEFL IBT	IELTS	VEC Online Score	Approximate VEC Level
0-250	0 - 310	0 – 30	0 - 8	0 - 1	0 - 34	Beginner
	310 - 343	33 – 60	9 - 18	1 - 1.5	35 - 38	Middle beginner
255 - 400	347 - 393	63 – 90	19 - 29	2 - 2.5	39 - 45	Upper Beginner
	397 - 433	93 – 120	30 - 40	3 - 3.5	46 - 53	Low Intermediate
405 - 600	437 - 473	123 – 150	41 - 52	4	54 - 57	Middle Intermediate
	477 - 510	153 – 180	53 - 64	4.5 - 5	58 - 65	Intermediate
605 - 780	513 - 547	183 – 210	65 - 78	5.5 - 6	66 - 73	Low advanced
	550 - 587	213 – 240	79 - 95	6.5 - 7	74 - 81	Middle advanced
785 - 900	590 - 637	243 – 270	96 - 110	7.5 - 8	82 - 90	Upper Advanced
905 - 990	640 - 677	273 – 300	111 - 120	8.5 - 9	91 - 100	Upper Advanced

The course of this study was intermediate writing course. The students were placed in the intermediate writing course scored between 437 – 473 (see Appendix 3, Table 20 and 21 and 22). The goal of this course is to develop paragraph construction skills and to learn the essay format. The students should also learn appropriate capitalization, punctuation, spelling, correct word order, and appropriate transition words. Proofreading and editing paragraphs and essays are the other areas needing emphasis. The classes are offered 2 days a week for one and half hours per meeting during a regular semester. A booklet was proposed by the institute to be taught during the term.

The learning objectives of writing course for this class consist of the following points:

- ✓ The learner will produce different types of paragraphs and essays that a writing task requires.
- ✓ The learner will plan and develop paragraphs and essays using a variety of sentence structures and vocabulary appropriate to the level. The paragraphs and the whole essay should be written with clarity, coherence, and Standard English.
- ✓ The learner will edit writing.
- ✓ The learner will use computer word processing skills and internet use
- ✓ The learner will execute writing tasks including: comments to the weblog selections, summaries, and e-mails.

The learners had nine writing assignments on different essay topics. The class was conducted with process of peer responding, editing, revising, and publishing their drafts:

1. **Peer responding:** It is referred to as feedback or commenting and used for students to collaborate and discuss their writing and provide feedback. The feedback can be provided in different formats like face to face (oral and written critiques) and computer-assisted-communication through blog comments;
2. **Editing:** students can read and analyze input from the comments and incorporate into their writings.
3. **Revising:** students make changes based on the feedback they receive from the comments
4. **Publishing:** The students can produce their final draft.

Blogs were used for different aspects of the writing process approach. I examined different free blog sites and I decided on www.blogspot.com because it has editing and deleting features accessible to the writer. It supports commenting tools, time date feature, and access to archived entries. It is very similar to word processor and very user friendly. As the word processing feature is similar to Microsoft Word, the students feel comfortable working with it. I had the students sign up the blog and join the blog which is for the entire class. The goal for the students was to present their writing assignments on the blog and have peers give meaningful and critical

comments to their writing. The blog was maintained as the central location for the students to their writing tasks like peer responding, editing, revising, and publishing and their writing assignments. They used blog features such as posting to publish their papers that were composed in Microsoft Word or composed directly in their entry space. They used commenting feature to provide feedback on their peer' writing and reflect on their own writing from the comments and questions posted. Finally they used the editing tool to make changes on their drafts.

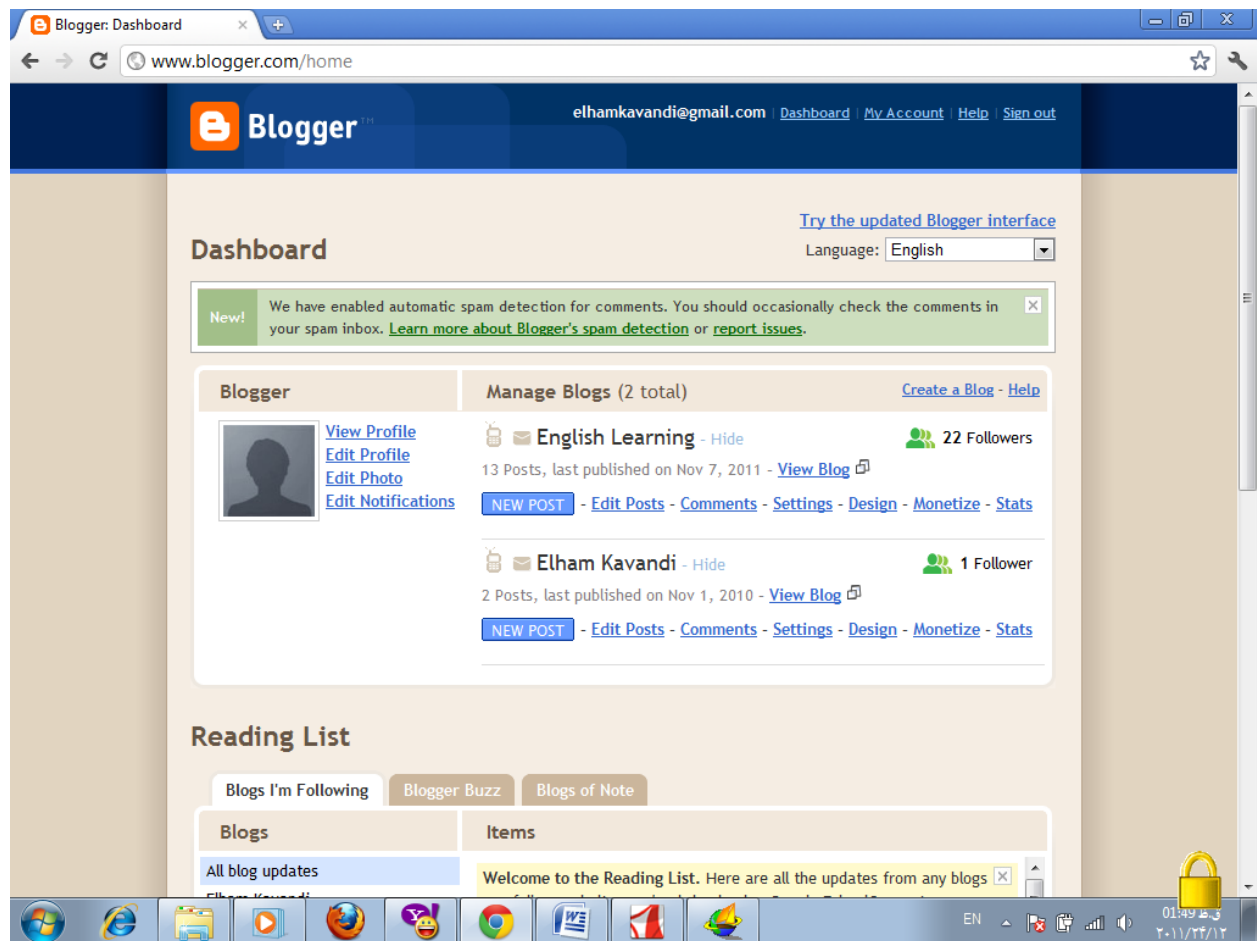


Figure 4: The Dashboard of the Blog

3.4 Measures to Determine the Students' Self-rating of English Proficiency

A questionnaire was designed to get the general information about the students including students' name, age, and department, school of graduation, their feelings about new technology and their attitudes on e-mails, internet, and weblogs as a whole.

A questionnaire was designed by the researcher to measure the students' self-rating of English Proficiency. The questionnaire included students' name, age, department, school of graduation.

3.5 Participants

This study took place at an institute in Zanjan, Iran which advocates learning of students as the main goal for the philosophy of students. This institute maintains that all instruction should focus on cooperative and constructivist learning and student-centered active learning. These values exist to produce life-long learning possible.

Table 3: Groups' Number, Range of Age, Departments, and Educational Background

Groups	Gender	Range of Age	Number	Departments	Educational Background
Experimental Group	Male	22- 29	11	Engineering-Mathematics-social science	Private & State Schools
	Female	21-31	4	Engineering-Chemistry-	Private & State Schools
Control Group	Male	23-30	9	Engineering-Physics-Chemistry	Private & State Schools
	Female	23-31	6	Engineering-Business Administration	Private & State Schools

A purposive sampling was performed to maximize the ability to identify students in my EFL writing class to participate in the use of blogs for the writing process approach. It would be effective to choose information-rich participants for in-depth study. The participants' educational experience, technology ability, writing ability and English proficiency were taken into consideration. A total of 30 students enrolled in the writing class in which 15 ones participated in the experimental group and 15 others studied in the control group.

3.6 Procedure

The main procedures which were involved in this study are data collection, writing instruction, and data analysis.

3.6.1. Data Collection

A pre-test was administered to the participants at the beginning of the term to both groups of control and experimental. During the term control group and experimental group got the same materials and topics. Everything was the same in these two groups such as oral communication, brainstorming, feedback and comments but experimental group got these materials through weblog. The only plus in experimental group was the use of weblog and the comments they get from each other. A kind of group collaboration and peer to peer cooperation was administered in experimental group.

Taught by the same instructor, both groups got the same materials according to the same curriculum assigned by the institute on the same topics, however; the experimental group benefited from extra materials in the weblog. After a 14 week treatment the post- test on writing proficiency was given to the students of control group and experimental.

An open-ended questionnaire addressed the students' background with technology such as word processors, e-mail, internet, and software; their thoughts and feelings about using technology for writing; their thought about using blogs; about their experience with blogs for writing (Appendix 4 & 5). This questionnaire was given to the students at the beginning of the course term. It was given to the students to establish the criteria for the participants and to get their perspective of the experience. The questions were:

- a) What are your language learning experiences?
- b) What are your writing skill experiences?
- c) What are your experiences in using technology?
- d) What are your feelings and thoughts when you are using technology?

The students answered the questionnaire and the survey in English. The last week of the semester, another open-ended questionnaire was given to the participants in order to assess their experience during the semester. The questions in this questionnaire consist of their attitude towards their experience:

- a) Do you think that blogs helped you to improve writing proficiency?
- b) Do you think that blogs helped you to improve language learning proficiency?
- c) How useful were the comments you got from the people?

- d) Did you use technical aspects of blogging?
- e) Do you think that teachers should use blogs when they are teaching English?
- f) Do you like to continue blog-based classes?
- g) How do you like to use technology in your future writing classes?

The participants' attitudes and feeling were different among the students and they had various ideas about blogging. First, they mentioned that "it was a difficult task", "I couldn't manage it", "I didn't feel fine", "I was worried, anxious, and frustrated", and "I emotionally was not prepared". After a few sessions of using weblogs (blogs), they said, "I feel fine, comfortable, better ...", "it was marvelous", "I think I am not confused now".

During this study the control group received writing instruction based on process approach whereas the students in experimental group received process-oriented approach accompanied by weblog use. Both control group and experimental groups were instructed by the same instructor and the same curriculum was instructed on the same topics and materials.

3.6.2 The Writing instruction

The aim of the instruction is to provide students with opportunities to practice the language effectively in well-organized essays. The writing instruction this term begins with the reviewing of the paragraph writing and in succession it goes on with essay-writing. The instruction was conducted and the students are required to complete 9 assignments. The types of the essay place in the curriculum are *descriptive, narrative, critical, compare and contrast* essays.

To test the learners' existing ability, the students in both groups of experimental and control group were asked to perform a writing task as a pre-test on the given topics. They were provided with different topics and given chances to choose the topic they wanted. The same test was repeated at the end of the term as a post-test after the treatment. The time given to the students to do the task was 60 minutes. The evaluators were trained using 6+1 rubric.

Three experienced EFL teachers read the writing essays of the learners. To find out whether the compositions are valid or not, the scores were correlated with the scores from the TOEFL test.

First of all, the students are given the theoretical information about the topic and the type of the materials. Each type of paragraph is studied in almost two sessions but not in succession. The curriculum is designed by the staff and the content is followed in accordance with the syllabus and the writings are compiled. The instructor followed the curriculum; however, she had the chance of working some extra materials. After getting the theoretical information and some exercises, they are getting ready to write their first draft. They are given time to write their first draft and get feedback on it to probably writing the second draft and at last the final version. The students were required to complete 9 assignments in a portfolio to be able to pass the course.

The basic conditions in both groups of experimental and control were observed.

3.6.2.1 Experimental Group and Writing Instruction

This study considers the use of blogging in process-oriented approach and the course design involves the principles of process approach in writing instruction. The writing instruction considered process-oriented when it involves six recursive procedures: prewriting, drafting, reviewing, editing, revising, and evaluating (White & Arndt, 1991). It is considered as a non-linear activity (Tribble, 1996). The basic purpose of in process approach is to guide students through multiple drafting, stages of getting different feedbacks, and sharing the ideas.

Table 3: The process of writng in Experimental Group

The process of writng in Experimental Group	
Selection of the topic:	by the teacher or students in the class
Prewriting:	Brainstorming, collecting data, note taking, outlining, etc...
Drafting:	writing ideas down in the class blog
Feedback:	Teacher and peers respond to ideas, organization and style
Revising:	Reorganizing, style, adjusting to readers, refining ideas
Editing:	checking and correcting form, layout etc.....
Evaluation:	Teacher evaluates progress
Publishing:	Publishing through blogging,
Follow-up tasks:	Reflection on learning process, to address weaknesses

(Selected from Hyland, 2003)

3.6.2.2Setting Up a Blog-based Classroom

The first step in the class was the introduction of www.blogger.com which was one of the commonly used blog page. This blog was user friendly and and very easy to start through three steps. The teacher was required to create an account on www.blogger.com. It takes a few easy steps to create the account. She had to click on create your own blog on the hompage and to choose username and password. The process continues creating and entering a title for the blog and a URL address. The last step was to choose a template according to the use and requirements of the blog. In this part the person should decide on the color, font and layout of the blog when viewed as a webpage. The template can be changed at any time. The first process can be considered as it comes in the following picture.

Blogger: Create Blogger Act x

https://accounts.google.com/NewAccount?hl=en&continue=http://www.blogger.com/create-blog.g&service=blogger&naui=8

ELT Podcast to stud...

Blogger™

1 CREATE ACCOUNT ▶ 2 NAME BLOG ▶ 3 CHOOSE TEMPLATE

1 Create a Google Account

This process will create a Google account that you can use on other Google services. If you already have a Google account perhaps from Gmail, Google Groups, or Orkut, please [sign in first](#)

Email address (must already exist) You'll use this address to log in to Blogger and other Google services. We'll never share it with third parties without your permission.

Retype email address Type in your email address again to make sure there are no typos.

Enter a password Must be at least 8 characters long.
[Password strength:](#)

Retype password

Display name The name used to sign your blog posts.

Email notifications ☐ Send me feature announcements, advice, and other information to help me get the most out of my blog.

Birthday MM/DD/YYYY (e.g. 01/01/1980)

Figure 5: Setting up a Blog

In order to add the student to the class- blog, they were directed to click on “join this site” as it is shown in the following picture.

Monday, November 7, 2011

Advertising

Imagine that you are writing an advertisement for Coca_Cola. Which words do you use to describe it?

What kinds of people are most likely to buy this



Followers

 [Join this site](#)
with Google Friend Connect

Members (22) [More »](#)



Already a member? [Sign in](#)

Figure 6: The Members of the Blog

After pushing on the button of “join this site”, a page appears like the one shown in the coming figure and the person have to choose the account s/he has been created earlier. During this step the students became the group members and the weblog is easily available.

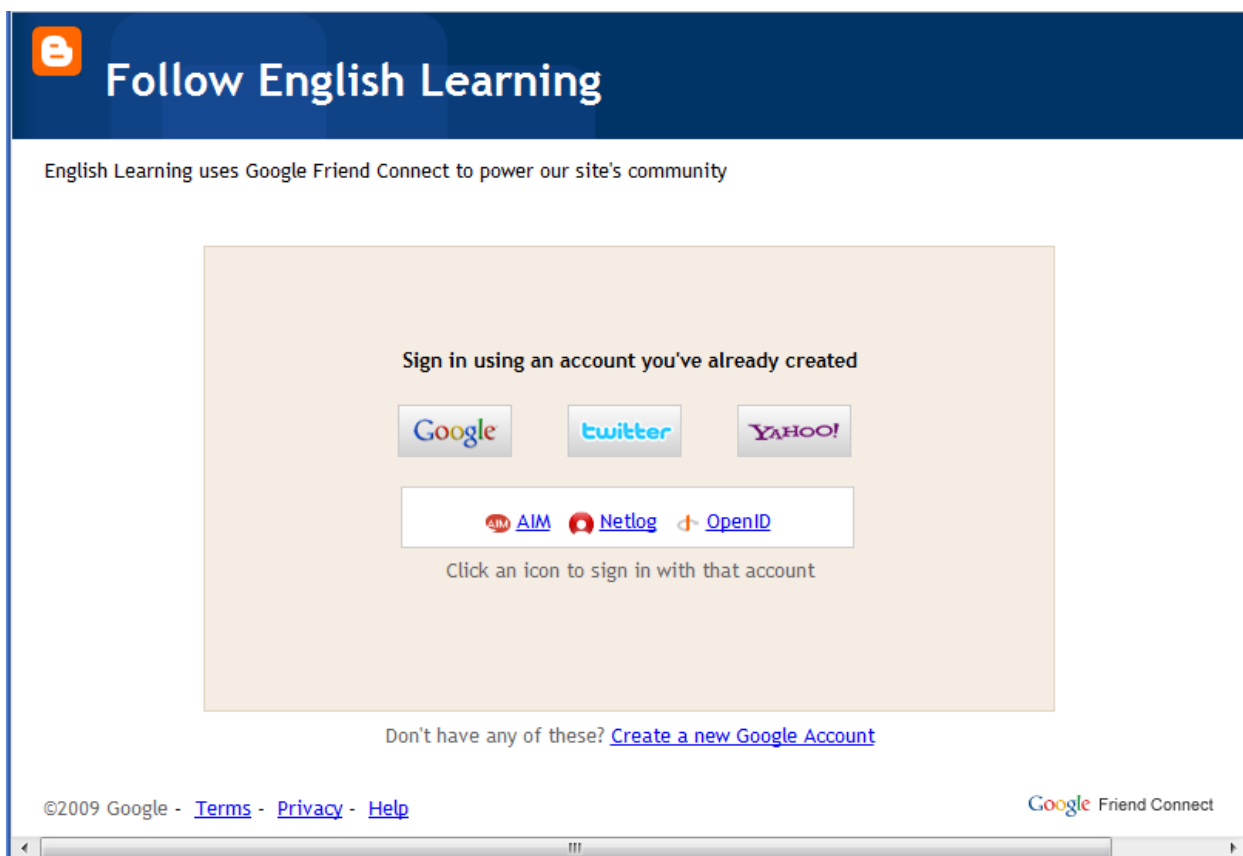


Figure 7: Connection to Site's Community

Each student got an e-mail regarding the steps he or she should pass to join the site and become the member of this site. The blogs were designed a place for publishing their writings, and comments. It was used as a personal space where students could reflect on their own ideas and on their learning process.

For the teaching of this course, first of all new themes were introduced. Continuing this part more purposeful integration of critical thinking and enhanced focus on academic skills such as inferencing, synthesizing, note taking help students develop strategies in the classroom. A culminating productive task galvanizes content, language, and critical thinking skills. Fully integrated writing leads students through writing process with engaging assignments focusing on various rhetorical modes.

The topic were introduced and in the following hours the students were shown how to write a paragraph about the topic, talk about it in the class, use the vocabulary taught in the class appropriately, give comments on the ideas given by the students, do the prewriting paragraphs. The students were asked to write and publish their first drafts in their blogs. During this period, students communicated with teacher and their peers by the means of the blog. Even they were able able to send private messages to their classmates or group of them. After examining the first drafts and getting feedback on them, students wrote their final version of their assignments and e-mail it.

The students wrote their essays on different topics, here you can see some of them:

Some people say that computer have made life easier &more convenient. Other people say that computer have made life more complex and stressful. What's your opinion? Use specific reasons& examples to support your answer.

computer can changes our life, in my idea it has good and bad effect on our life.

1.computer has done calm our life,for example

1.1in universities and institu of technology professors and students have increased their information with computer,so on science has progressed with computer

1.2 in bussines,all of the comanies use computer and internet for relat with another companies

in a factory many of things do with computer ec(electronic commerce) is a peace of the commerce in world and it is most benefit peace of the commerce , many people in world work with computer for reach money in their jobs.

1.3 computers has done many effects on illnesses cure,analies experiment people in haspitalis an example for using computer in illnesses cure,medical has progressed with computer

1.4 in science space computer is very useful, for example for control spacecraft in air and for relation between center with spacecraft.

for another example use from computer for analising air pictures

1.5 in airplan industry computer is very important for control airplan in sky and give information to it for landing and getin up, another example relate to use computer in airplan that is analaises air ways

in second section i want talk about computer bad effects on our life

computer can has bad effect on our life too.work with computer has bad effect on our health , many of children just play with it and this is very bad for their health.more work with computer can create stress for body and for mind, many of child adict to computer.

21st century has begun. What changes do you think this century will bring. Use examples and details in your answer.

Now, we are living in 21st century. When we think about the ancient, we realize that the speed of progress in all branches of science has become faster. For example, fastness of improvement in the major of agricultural science in 20th century was obviously more than 19th century. I believe this type of progressing will go on and scientists will have reached more successes by beginning of 22nd century.

Anyway as experts say, we're living in the age of communications; and I think specialists will discover productive ways of communications and undoubtedly telecommunication will be the most important course in this century.

On the other hand, we have three tight challenges in science which will influence mankind life a lot;

First, the challenge of countries to be the king of space; It has made valuable opportunity for science to improve well in astronomy.

Second, the challenge between computer hardware and software manufacturing companies; Surely we're going to have an exciting competition between these companies.

Third, the challenge of tourism industry and having beautiful cities has made civil engineering a prominent course and it is progressing uninterrupted.

You may think that I've forgotten to write about basic sciences as mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology, but when I compare these majors with engineering majors I find their progress less important. Maybe it's because of the fact that we are in contact with them less in comparison with the engineering majors.

In conclusion, I predict these events will happen in this century: all of people will have their own flying machines to even travel through the city and also humanity life will be continuing wireless at least for indoor facilities. Laptops will be as weight as an apple.

In addition, mankind will import many materials from space planet and I'm sure that man will walk on the Mars in 21st century.

Although we have many weird constructions all over the world ,but many buildings, towers and skyscrapers will have been built by the end of century which we can't even conceive them now and if we see their photo now we'll not believe our eyes.

As we've seen in the movie "terminator" perhaps some glasses may be invented which if you wear them you'll detect the details of everyone who you see them.

Do you agree or disagree with following statement? Advertising can tell you a lot about a country. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Imagine, for the first time you will go there a new country. What do you do? Do you know the places? To answer that question, we have to information about the country , someone by reading a catalogue before traveling, someone by watching a advertising.

We can reach some information about the country. Knowing the foods, restaurants and famous hotels and University results of seeing the advertising, but we don't know the country's law and current rules and peoples' believe. Additionally we didn't reach some information about act of the people again the passenger and how can you buy a necessary thing to live there. This problem will happened for new traveler who will see the country and will caused him confused.

In My believe, to solve those problems, we need another reference. Advertising are not a good source to receive a precious information, because it shows a things.

I suggest the friends and who will go to the new country, first, read the catalogue and maps to understand about the life, laws, hotels located, bus stations, taxi stations. Second, flow the map to identify the roads where he/she will go there, by identifying the roads he/she can save his/her times and see another places.

Advertising exaggerate the fact and full of treats in order to sell the things and attract the tourist not show the fact and essential things.

The 21st century has begun what changes you think this century will bring, use examples and details in your answer.

I strongly believe that the 21st century is known as "the speed century". In fact this speed owe to the technology which is an integrated part of this century. In my opinion, we can classify the changes that this century can bring from three aspects including communication, transportation, and finally war-related equipments. Before I start to scrutinize every aspect, I should remind all of these changes need to the technology.

One of the most important features of the 21st century refers to how people communicate each other. We can use the internet to keep in touch with our fiend who lives one thousand miles away. Even we can have video-conference for our meetings. Most interesting is that surgeons can survive ones from a distant place by the means of remote technology. I think communication based on the internet were not so usual during the past century.

The next characteristic of the 21st century is related to the transportation. Since the speed plays a key role in our life; so more speedy, more successful. Nowadays, there are lots of hi-technic vehicles for transportation that they use the power of electricity and pass a long distance just in few hours. In the past century, the transportation somewhat had its traditional form but with revealing the new century, the speedy transportation penetrate in our daily life as an essential factor.

Final aspect is about war-related equipments. In fact, this aspect is a negative point of this century that we live in. Every day, we see new inventions about some exotic and fatal weapons that can kill millions of innocent people in just one second. These weapons were not in the past centuries.

All of all, our world in the 21st century is so strange rather than the past centuries. It has its own proofs and disadvantages. I just hope we to use modern technology, speed for a peaceful world without any war!



Figure 8: Joining the Blog

3.6.2.3 Control Group and Writing Instruction

The main principles of writing process were taken into consideration in the writing instruction of the control group. They were supposed to attend in the class like the students in the experimental group. All the in-class activities were repeated like experimental group in the control group. All the exercises and vocabulary in both groups are repeated as the same. Every part consists of the exercises which are done before going to the paragraph writing part. The students were assigned the same topic introduced to experimental group as well. The pre-writing and drafting stages were done with paper and pencil. The feedback is given to the students on their own papers and sometimes orally in the classroom. Revising and editing stages are done by

the teacher. The final version of the essay is produced at the end. This group was designed not to use the internet for their writing activities. The students collected their drafts, pre-writing activities and final version of the topics chosen in a dossier called a student portfolio.

3.7 Data Analysis

To analyze the quantitative data, the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. To test the hypothesis if there is a significant difference between the writing performances of the learners who got the normal traditional class and those who got blog- mediated process-based instruction. Data were elicited from the students through writing task used both as a pre and post-test. As such the data obtained is in the form of scores which can be considered ordinal scale for writing performance. The analysis of T-test was used to see if there is a difference between two samples or not. There are different types of T-test but to see the difference between two groups from pre-test to post-test separately, paired samples T-test was used. Another test was used to check the difference between groups. The same data were analyzed this time by ANOVA to see whether the difference between two groups is because of the treatment done during the term.

During the semester a reflective journal was kept, such as describing their feelings and motivation. They described the different kinds of activities and tasks in the class and indicated their problems, thoughts and feelings. They talked about the activities such as using technology during the semester, their writing skill, blogging and commenting, group cooperation, editing, giving and receiving feedback, interacting with others especially classmates and the instructor. Most of them mentioned that they enjoyed their experience of using blogs in their writing course:

I enjoyed blogging during the activities because I had more chances to learn. I think blogging is useful for everybody. It gives us the ability to interact with others.

Or

It was enjoyable for me that when I opened the weblog and saw my friends have given comments on my writing. As you know we don't give comments on different writings in the class. They look at the writing from different points of view.

Some students were embarrassed to ask other classmates to help them. One person mentioned that blogging is really a waste of time because they were not helping each other. However, several others realized the value of blogging and giving feedback on each others' work.

Some students believed that using weblog in the classroom increased their responsibility, for example:

I had the responsibility of writing comments for my classmates. And my self-confidence increased when I gave comments and saw my classmates' writings.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

4.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the findings of the study and stimulates the discussions of the hypotheses.

4.1 Main Study

This part is concerned with the results of the main study. The findings are examined qualitatively to give the details of the study.

4.2 Writing Performance of Control & Experimental Groups

This study wants to investigate the effect of using blogs on the development of foreign language writing proficiency. To achieve this goal, these research questions arose in the mind that is there any significant difference between the texts produced by the experimental group and the texts produced by the control group? and is there any significant difference between the texts produced by the experimental group and control group in terms of ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and convention?

The hypotheses considered in this research were as the following:

- 1.** There is a significant difference between the texts produced by the experimental group and the texts produced by the control group.
- 2.** There is a significant difference between the texts produced by the experimental group and control group in terms of ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and convention.

4.3 Interpretation of Writing Performance of Both Groups

The data gathered for the answer of the first question were through the writing performance done during the term. The writing performance task measures the students' writing proficiency in essay writing. The students were asked to write to an essay on the chosen topic in both groups of experimental and control group. The essays were corrected using a rubric called 6-point writers rubric (2010, Education Northwest). The means of the scores of students determined the level of proficiency of the students. The results obtained from this study were calculated in SPSS computer program. To get the results, two different analysis techniques were used: paired sample t-test, and analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Table 4: Paired Sample t-test Results for Writing Performance Score in Experimental and Control Group:

groups	n	Pre-test		Post-test		t
		M	SD	M	SD	
Control	15	17.67	1.799	21.80	2.210	-7.883
Experimental	15	17.33	2.160	25.60	2.559	-8.409

Results of the paired sample t-test showed the results of writing proficiency scores in two groups of experimental and control. The results show that the control group increased their mean score from 17.67 to 21.80 and experimental group from mean score of 17.33 to 25.60. The findings showed $t = -7.883$, $P < .001$ in control group and $t = -8.409$, $P < .001$ in experimental group after the treatment during the term. Both groups of control and experimental had been affected positively getting the instruction during the term.

Subsequently ANOVA was applied to analyze the difference of post-test writing performance scores between control and experimental group and to recognize the source of

difference from pre-test scores to post-test scores as a covariate. This test displays the source of changes:

Table 5: ANOVA Results for Writing Performance Scores of Groups

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
pretest	Between Groups	.833	1	.833	.211	.650
	Within Groups	110.667	28	3.952		
	Total	111.500	29			
posttest	Between Groups	108.300	1	108.300	18.953	.000
	Within Groups	160.000	28	5.714		
	Total	268.300	29			

The results of the study show that the treatment done during the term had a statistically significant impact on the post-test result $F = 18.953$, $P < .05$. As it was shown in the previous table, the mean score of experimental group ($M = 25.60$) was higher than the mean score of control group ($M = 21.80$). The findings showed that weblog had a great and significant influence on writing proficiency than the normal class with class instruction and the learners' writing proficiency has been improved highly in blog-based classroom of experimental group than control group.

4.4 Interpretation of the Findings in Relation to Hypothesis 1

Another t-test was employed to analyze the difference between control group and experimental group after treatment. The writing performance of the participants were evaluated and analyzed according to idea, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and convention. These six items are the components of the 6-point Writer's Rubric (2010, Northwest Education) used in the study.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of Writing Performance of Two Groups

Class		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Score	Blog-based	15	25.60	2.558	.660
	Normal-class	15	21.80	2.210	.571

The descriptive statistics show that mean score in blog-based group (M=25.60) was higher than the mean score in normal, traditional group (M=21.80). T-test analysis showed that the integration of weblogs in the classroom had a statistically significant difference on the score of the writing of the experimental group ($.000 < \alpha, p < 0.05$). The learners in the blog-based classroom outperformed the traditional group in terms of their writing proficiency. Analyzing the difference between the writings of the control group and experimental group gives us a good idea about the difference between control group and experimental group. The following table shows the differences in mean, standard deviation of both groups.

Table 7: Independent Samples Test of Two Groups

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Differen ce	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Score	Equal variances assumed	.000	1.000	4.353	28	.000	3.800	.873	2.012	5.588
	Equal variances not assumed			4.353	27.423	.000	3.800	.873	2.010	5.590

4.5 Interpretation of the Findings in Relation to Hypothesis 2

Another t-test was employed to check the difference between the control group and experimental group. The writing score of the learners were analyzed during the term after taking their writing assignment. These writing assignments were analyzed considering ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation.

4.5.1 Idea

The descriptive statistics showed that blog-based learners outperformed the learners in the other class writing traditionally in terms of their mean ($4.20 > 3.67$).

Table 8: Group Statistics for Writing Performance: Ideas

Class		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Ideas	Blogbased	15	4.20	.775	.200
	Traditionalclass	15	3.67	.488	.126

The learners in the experimental group used weblogs and put their comments about the topics of the week and helped each other. As the ideas are the main message and the main theme with all the supporting details enrich and develop the theme. The ideas would be strong when the message is clear. The writer chooses the ideas which are important, interesting and informative. These details are the kinds in which the reader would not normally anticipate or predict. As a whole the details shouldn't be known by the reader. Considering these materials the learners in experimental group got the mean score of 4.20 and control group got the mean score of 3.67.

Ideas in this rubric divided into six dimensions:

1. Beginning: No main idea, purpose, or central theme exists; reader must infer this based on sketchy or missing details.
2. Emerging: Main idea is still missing, though possible topic/theme is emerging.
3. Developing: Main idea is present; may be broad or simplistic.
4. Capable: Topic or theme is identified as main idea; development remains basic or general.
5. Experienced: Main idea is well-marked by detail but could benefit from additional information.

Exceptional: Main idea is clear, supported, and enriched by relevant anecdotes and details. The key question aroused in this part tries to get information about: "Does the writer stay focused and share original and fresh information or perspective on the topic?" (Educational Northwest, 2010).

Table 9: Independent Samples Test of Two Groups: Ideas

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Ideas	Equal variances assumed	3.058	.091	2.256	28	.032	.533	.236	.049	1.018
	Equal variances not assumed			2.256	23.599	.034	.533	.236	.045	1.022

Using t-test revealed that there is a significant difference in ideas between experimental and control group. As it is shown in Table 9 $P\text{-value} < 0.05$ ($0.032 < 0.05$), then the learners in blog-based group outperformed the learners in traditional group. It means that weblogs and, information it gives, the comments they get from each other ,and the help they share, assisted them a lot to write the main message.

4.5.2 Organization

The descriptive statistics in Table 10 show that the mean scores of blog-based group is higher than traditional group ($4.40 > 4.07$).

Table 10: Group Statistics for Writing Performance: Organization

Class		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Organization	Blogbased	15	4.40	.828	.214
	Traditionalclass	15	4.07	.594	.153

To understand the difference between these two groups, another t-test was enrolled to find the effect of weblog integration on the organization of the writing proficiency of the learners.

Organization is the internal structure of a piece of writing, the thread of central meaning, the pattern and sequence, as it fits the central idea. Organizational structure can be based on comparison-contrast, deductive logic, point by point analysis, development of a central theme, chronological history of an event, or any of a dozen other identifiable patterns. When the organization is strong, the piece begins meaningfully and creates in the writer a sense of anticipation that is ultimately, systematically fulfilled. Events proceed logically; information is given to the reader in the right doses at the right times so that the writer never loses interest. Connections are strong, which is another way of saying that bridges from one idea to the next hold up.

Organization in this rubric consists of:

1. Beginning: Organization can't be identified; writing lacks sense of direction; content is strung together in loose, random fashion
2. Emerging: Organization is mostly ineffective; only moments here and there direct reader
3. Developing: Organization is still problematic though structure begins to emerge; ability to follow text is slowed
4. Capable: Organization moves reader though text without too much confusion
5. Experienced: Organization is smooth; only a few small bumps here and there exist
6. Exceptional: Organization enhances and showcases central idea; order of information is compelling, moving reader through text

Organization answers the key question: “Does the organizational structure enhance the ideas and make the piece easier to understand?”

Table 11: Independent Samples Test of Two Groups: Organization

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Organization	Equal variances assumed	5.408	.028	1.267	28	.021	.333	.263	-.206	.872
	Equal variances not assumed			1.267	25.383	.022	.333	.263	-.208	.875

As shown in Table 11 there is a significant difference between blog-based group and traditional group of learners in organization ($P\text{-value} < 0.05$). It means that using blogs in the class helped the students a lot and the learners in the experimental group did better than the students in the control group.

4.5.3 Voice

The descriptive statistics in table 12 displays that the mean score of voice in blog-based group which is higher than the mean score in normal group ($5.20 > 3.80$).

Table 12: Group Statistics for Writing Performance: Voice

Class		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Voice	Blogbased	15	5.20	.676	.175
	Normalclass	15	3.80	.676	.175

As it is shown, the mean score of voice in blog-based group is 5.20 and the mean score of voice in normal group is 3.80. To find the difference between two groups in their voice of writing proficiency another t-test was applied.

Voice is the writer coming through the words, the sense that a real person is speaking to us and cares about the message. It is the heart and soul of the writing, the magic, the wit, the feeling, the life and breath. When the writer is engaged personally with topic, he/she imparts a personal tone and flavor to the piece that is unmistakably his/hers alone. And it is that individual something-different from the mark of all other writers- that we call Voice.

The rubric used in this study shows that voice consists of:

1. Beginning: Author seems indifferent, uninvolved, or distanced from topic, purpose, and/or audience.
2. Emerging: Author relies on reader's good faith to hear or feel any voice in phrases such as "I like it" or "It was fun"
3. Developing: Author's voice is hard to recognize, even if reader is trying desperately to "hear" it
4. Capable: Author seems sincere, yet not fully engaged or involved; result is pleasant or even personable, though topic and purpose are still not compelling
5. Experienced: Author attempts to address topic, purpose, and audience in sincere and engaging way; piece still skips a beat here and there

Exceptional: Author speaks directly to reader in individual, compelling, and engaging way that delivers purpose and topic; although passionate, author is respectful of audience and purpose.

Table 13: Independent Samples Test of Two Groups: Voice

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Voice Equal variances assumed	.000	1.000	1.620	28	.116	.400	.247	-.106	.906
Equal variances not assumed			1.620	28.000	.116	.400	.247	-.106	.906

Table 13 shows that there is no significant difference between the groups of this study. P-value is larger than 0.05 ($p\text{-value} > 0.05$). It means that using blogs in the class didn't help the students a lot in terms of voice and the learners in the experimental group did approximately as well as control group even though the mean in blog-based group was higher than the other class.

4.5.4 Word Choice

The descriptive statistics in Table14 shows that the mean in blog-based group shows priority than the normal class ($4.33 > 3.20$).

Table 14: Group Statistics for Writing Performance: Word Choice

Class		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Wordchoice	Blogbased	15	4.33	.724	.187
	Normalclass	15	3.20	.676	.175

The mean score of blog-based group is 4.33 which is more than the normal class with the mean of 3.20.

Word Choice is the use of rich, colorful, precise language that communications not just in a functional way, but in a way that moves and enlightens the reader. In descriptive writing, strong word choice resulting in imagery, especially sensory, show me writing, clarifies and expands ideas. In persuasive writing, purposeful word choice moves the reader to a new vision of ideas. In all modes of writing figurative language such as metaphors, similes and analogies articulate, enhance, and enrich the content. Strong word choice is characterized not so much by an exceptional vocabulary chosen to impress the reader, but more by the skill to use everyday words well.

Word Choice in rubric (Education Northwest, 2010) consists of different levels:

1. Beginning: Vocabulary is limited; author searches for words to convey meaning; no mental imagery exists
2. Emerging: Vocabulary is flawed, resulting in impaired meaning; wrong words are used; and reader can't picture message or content
3. Developing: Vocabulary is understandable yet lacks energy; some interpretation is needed to understand parts of piece
4. Capable: Vocabulary is functional yet still lacks energy; author's meaning is easy to understand in general
5. Experienced: Vocabulary is more precise and appropriate; mental imagery emerges

6. Exceptional: Vocabulary is powerful and engaging, creating mental imagery; words convey intended message in precise, interesting, and natural way

Table 15: Independent Samples Test of Two Groups: Word Choice

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Wordchoice Equal variances assumed	.453	.506	4.432	28	.000	1.133	.256	.609	1.657
Equal variances not assumed			4.432	27.871	.000	1.133	.256	.609	1.657

A t-test was applied to display that whether there is a significant difference between blog-based group and normal group in terms of word-choice. As P-value < 0.05 there is a significant difference between these two groups. Table 15 shows the blog-based group outperformed normal group and got better results in word-choice ($0.00 < 0.05$). Blog helped the students use rich, colorful, precise language that moves and enlightens the reader. It moves the reader to a new vision of ideas in which metaphors, similes and analogies articulate, enhance, and enrich the content.

4.5.5 Sentence Fluency

The table below shows that the mean of blog-based group is more than the mean in normal class in terms of sentence fluency.

Table 16: Group Statistics for Writing Performance: Sentence Fluency

Class		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
SentenceFluency	Blogbased	15	4.33	.724	.187
	Normalclass	15	3.40	.828	.214

It shows that the mean of sentence fluency in blog-based group is higher and the students outperformed the students in normal class with traditional conditions.

Sentence fluency is the rhythm and flow of the language, the sound of word patterns, the way in which the writing plays to the ear, not just to the eye. How does it sound when read aloud? That's the test. Fluent writing has cadence, power, rhythm, and movement. It is free of awkward word patterns that slow the reader's progress. Sentences vary in length, beginnings, structure, and style, and are so well crafted that the writer moves through the piece with ease.

Sentence Fluency in different levels:

1. Beginning: Sentences are incorrectly structured; reader has to practice to give paper a fair interpretive reading; it's nearly impossible to read aloud.
2. Emerging: Sentences vary little; even easy sentence structures cause reader to stop and decide what is being said and how; it's challenging to read aloud
3. Developing: Sentences are technically correct but not varied, creating sing-song pattern or lulling reader to sleep; it sounds mechanical when read aloud
4. Capable: Sentences are varied and hum along, tending to be pleasant or businesslike though may still be more mechanical than musical or fluid; it's easy to read aloud
5. Experienced: Some sentences are rhythmic and flowing; a variety of sentence type are structured correctly; it flows well when read aloud

Exceptional: Sentences have flow, rhythm, and cadence; are well built with strong, varied structure that invites expressive oral reading.

Table 17: Independent Samples Test of Two Groups: Sentence Fluency

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
SentenceFluency	Equal variances assumed	.271	.607	3.287	28	.003	.933	.284	.352	1.515
	Equal variances not assumed			3.287	27.507	.003	.933	.284	.351	1.515

To show the exact evidence, a t-test was administered to find the cause of difference in mean. Table 17 displays that there is a significant difference between blog-based and normal-class in terms of sentence fluency. In this table P-value is less than 0.05 ($0.003 < 0.05$), then there is a significant difference between blog-based group and normal group in terms of sentence fluency.

4.5.6 Convention

The last point in the 6-point writer's rubric is convention which is compared in two groups of this study.

Table 18: Group Statistics for Writing Performance: Convention

Class		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Convention	Blogbased	15	4.13	.640	.165
	Normalclass	15	3.67	.724	.187

Descriptive statistics show that the mean in the blog-based group ($X=4.13$) is statistically more than the mean in normal class ($X=3.67$). The information came from this table says that blog-based group performed better than normal class.

The Conventions Trait is the mechanical correctness of the piece and includes five elements: spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar/usage, and paragraphing. Writing that is strong in conventions has been proofread and edited with care. Since this trait has many pieces to it, it's almost an analytical trait within an analytic system. As you assess a piece for convention, ask yourself: "How much work would a copy editor need to need to do to prepare the piece for publication?" This will keep all of the elements in conventions equally in play. Convention is the only trait where we make specific grade level accommodations, and expectations should be based on grade level to include only those skills that have been taught. (Handwriting and neatness are not part of trait)

The rubric contains different parts in Convention:

1. Beginning: errors in conventions are the norm and repeatedly distract reader, making text unreadable
2. Emerging: Many errors of various types of conventions are scattered throughout text
3. Developing: Author continues to stumble in conventions even on simple tasks and almost always on anything trickier

4. Capable: Author has reasonable control over standard conventions for grade level; conventions are sometimes handled well; at other times, errors distract and impair readability
5. Experienced: Author stretches, trying more complex tasks in conventions; several mistakes still exist; for secondary students, all basic conventions have been mastered
6. Author uses standard writing conventions effectively to enhance readability; errors are few and only minor editing is needed to publish.

Table 19: Independent Samples Test of Two Groups: Convention

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Convention	Equal variances assumed	1.326	.259	1.871	28	.042	.467	.249	-.044	.978
	Equal variances not assumed			1.871	27.586	.042	.467	.249	-.045	.978

A t-test was applied to see the difference between control group and experimental group on convention issue. Table 19 shows that P-value is statistically less than α ($P\text{-value} < \alpha$). As it is obvious there is a significant difference between blog-based group and normal group because $0.042 < 0.05$. Then Blog-based students outperformed normal-class in convention and did their job better.

As a whole, we should mention that blog-based writing positively influenced the students' writing performance. The analysis showed that students in blog-based group outperformed the students in normal class which was run traditionally.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This study arranged to find the effects of using weblogs on the English as a Foreign Language learners' writing performance. In a quantitative study, it collected the data from learners: one considered as experimental group (n=15), and the other one as control group (n=15). The subjects were intermediate learners preparing for IELTS in an institute in Zanzan, Iran. This study presents pedagogical implications for teachers, limitations of the study, as well as some suggestions for further studies.

5.1 Summary of the Study

This research is arranged to find the potential effects of weblogs on EFL learners' writing proficiency. Weblog is used as an educational tool in writing course to describe its use and effect on the students' essays. This study conveyed in two groups and got data from experimental (N=15) and control group (N=15). The subjects were on intermediate level who were preparing for IELTS and TOEFL.

To get the data from the learners and collect the necessary data, a pre test and post test was carried out and the results were analyzed. For the analysis of data, descriptive statistics were used as well as the paired sample t-test to compare the writing performance of the control students with that of experimental group. ANOVA was used to find out the source of improvement in the writing performance of the students.

The results showed that the students in experimental group outperformed the students in control group in terms of writing proficiency. The analysis of data attained through writing performance of pre and post test demonstrated that both groups improved at a significant level. However, the differences in post test showed that blog-mediated writing instruction was more effective than normal writing instruction. Using weblogs in this class affected the students'

writing proficiency positively as a whole. It also significantly affected some key qualities of 6+1 trait of writing analytical model for assessing and teaching writing. Blog affected the qualities like Ideas, Organization, word choice, Sentence Fluency, Conventions, and Presentation. However weblog didn't affect the Voice quality of this rubric significantly. It showed that the personal tone and flavor of the message has not been changed a lot. The main message; the internal structure of the piece; the vocabulary a writer chooses to convey meaning have been improved significantly because of the use of weblogs in the class.

The possible explanation of the effectiveness of weblog is choosing the content of the piece and supporting details that enrich and develop the theme. The ideas used are strong because the message is clear. The students used details which are interesting, important, and informative. The learners organized the internal structure of a piece of writing, the pattern and sequence that fits the central idea. The connections are strong that bridges from one idea to the next. The students in the experimental group also have chosen rich, colorful, precise language that communicates not just in a functional way, but in a way that moves and enlightens the reader. They have used the words which clarify and expand ideas. Using strong words, one can enhance and enrich the content. The results showed that the students of the experimental group have used the rhythm and flow of the language, the sound of word patterns, the way in which the writing plays to the ear, not just to the eye. The writings of blog-mediated group are strong in conventions and include the elements of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar/usage, and paragraphing which are related to the mechanical correctness of the piece. As a whole overall appearance of blog-used group such as balance of white space with visuals and text, graphics, neatness, handwriting, font selection, borders attract the attention.

On the other hand, no effect of weblog was discovered on the voice trait. There was no significant difference between the tone and flavor to the piece that is his/hers alone in two groups of study. It shouldn't be ignored that the students in control group improved their writing proficiency too. However, the improvement in the control group can be considered as the result of process oriented course they had during the term.

The students found that weblogs were useful improving the students' writing proficiency and further expressed that they had more opportunities to receive more information. They could choose the materials according to their own needs and supply it in language learning and

especially in their writing proficiency. Weblogs helped the students to prepare themselves by collecting suggestions for their writings and to continue their jobs. They had a positive feedback on using weblogs in their classes and for improving their writing proficiency.

5.2 Pedagogical Implications of the Study

The significant implication of the present study in educational setting for the EFL teachers should not be ignored. The results of this study show that EFL teachers can make the benefit of using weblogs in their writing courses. As it is obvious the students writing proficiency have been improved significantly. It is an astonishing offer for the teacher to start their writing courses using weblogs in their classes.

Weblog is a user friendly technology that can be incorporated by teachers if they desire to make use of it in their classes. It can be used outside the classroom anywhere they would like. It incorporates the learners and the teachers with the tool in every setting without limitation in time and space.

The findings of the study displayed that using weblogs in the class improved their writing course more than the other class which didn't use weblogs. Therefore; it is recommended to extend the use of weblogs in the EFL classes. Authentic situation and real audiences are the motivational factors in this regard and also it is possible for other people to use the weblog and put their comments about different topics.

As peer responding is one of the best methods of teaching L1 and L2, this research and the use of peer responding, and peer editing and peer correction in weblog situation will be one of the most effective ways of learning and improving language. On the other hand, it is very important to find some ways to increase the students' confidence and trust in peer editing. Having interactional collaboration will help the students to benefit from different opportunities to see their classmates' ideas and comments and also to be seen from other students' eyes.

5.3 Recommendations for Future Research

The study attempts to find the effectiveness of using blogs on the development of foreign language writing proficiency. Moreover; some issues can be added and other materials can be considered in the future researches:

- 1) This study can be repeated with a large population. It will help the users to make broader generalizations on the same issue.
- 2) The study can be performed just qualitatively, to evaluate the students' performances during the term in which this study was carried out. Moreover; the students' team cooperation when they are interacting with each other can be inspected carefully.
- 3) A study can be explored to invite students to create team weblogs and perform the study again checking the learners' cooperation and the probable effect it may have on the students' writing proficiency or language learning as a whole. This will show the result of enhanced interaction among students.
- 4) The students in this study had varying levels of expertise as a computer user; a further study can be done to improve the students' computer knowledge in advance.
- 5) A further study can be conducted to explore different ways for improving the learners' voice too. As it was demonstrated the learners' writing in terms of voice did not make significant difference. Future researches could find some ways to improve voice using weblogs in the classroom.

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Appendix I: Weblog Pictures

English Learning

www.englishlearning-education.blogspot.com/search?updated-min=2011-01-01T00:00:00-08:00&updated-max=2012-01-01T00:00:00-08:00&feed=posts

ELT Podcast to stud...

Monday, November 7, 2011

Advertising

Imagine that you are writing an advertisement for Coca-Cola. Which words do you use to describe it?

What kinds of people are most likely to buy this product: teenagers, parents with young children, or senior citizens?

Do you know any TV commercials or other advertisements for the products like

- shampoo
- toothpaste
- snack foods
- drinks




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▼ 11/06 - 11/13 (1)

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► 10/30 - 11/06 (1)

► 10/23 - 10/30 (1)

07:51 PM
02/06/2012

English Learning: Advertising

www.englishlearning-education.blogspot.com/2011/11/advertising.html#comment-form

ELT Podcast to stud...

Sheida Nov 7, 2011 10:46 AM

When I am writing an advertisement for the product like Coca-Cola, I think the words like delicious, powerful, nutritious, and cool will best describe it.

[Reply](#)

Sheida Nov 7, 2011 10:48 AM

To sell a product in a foreign country, a firm often has to write powerful words.

[Reply](#)

Sheida Nov 7, 2011 10:55 AM

New ads also are very effective and the firms know its effect and change the ads from time to time.

[Reply](#)

Behzad Nov 7, 2011 11:01 AM

I think the advertisement is not the same in different countries and differs from country to country.

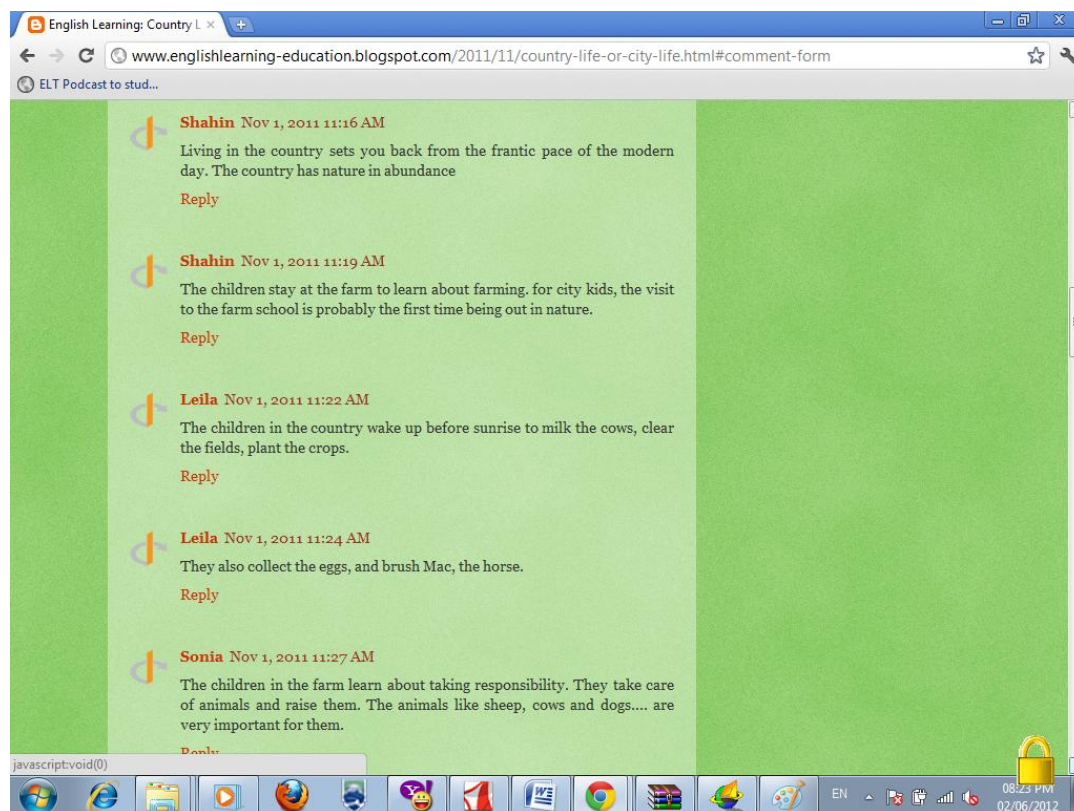
[Reply](#)

Behzad Nov 7, 2011 11:02 AM

May be the laws are not the same in different parts of the world.

[Reply](#)

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02/06/2012



English Learning

www.englishlearning-education.blogspot.com/search?updated-min=2011-01-01T00:00:00-08:00&updated-max=2012-01-01T00:00:00-08:00

ELT Podcast to stud...

Finding an Ideal Job

Which statement do you believe in?

- Enjoying your work is more important than making a lot of money.
- Working with a lot of people is better than working alone.
- Working from home is better than working at an office.
- Working indoors is better than working outdoors.



A person looking for a job should think about three things:

- The skills
- Job setting
- Job rewards



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English Learning

www.englishlearning-education.blogspot.com

ELT Podcast to stud...

Climate Change

- What are some ways in which the Earth is changing?
- How responsible are humans for changes on the planet?
- Are these changes making the world better or worse?



How greenhouse gases cause climate change?

Consider

- some fuels like coal and gasoline
- gases like carbon dioxide



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English Learning

www.englishlearning-education.blogspot.com/search?updated-min=2011-01-01T00:00:00-08:00&updated-max=2012-01-01T00:00:00-08:00

ELT Podcast to stud...

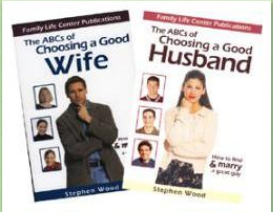
Finding a Spouse

There is a joke:
 "Marriage has three rings:
 an engagement ring,
 a wedding ring, and
 suffering."
 What do you think this
 joke means?
 Do you agree that
 suffering is a part of
 marriage?



People choose marriage partners for various reasons. Which of these reasons is important to you?

- ability to have children
- partner's age
- partner's choice
- religion
- love
- money



Courtship refers to the period of time when a man

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English Learning

www.englishlearning-education.blogspot.com/search?updated-min=2011-01-01T00:00:00-08:00&updated-max=2012-01-01T00:00:00-08:00

ELT Podcast to stud...

Gender Differences In Language

Gender is a basic part of our identity. When we think about who we are, we begin by thinking of ourselves as male or female. How do we use language to communicate who we are?



© Mark Parisi, Permission required for use.

There are differences in the way that boys and girls play. Which gender is more interested in giving every member a turn?



following the rules of a

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www.englishlearning-education.blogspot.com/search?updated-min=2011-01-01T00:00:00-08:00&updated-max=2012-01-01T00:00:00-08:00

ELT Podcast to stud...

The Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Computers



Nowadays, computer is a very sophisticated tool which sparks in our life. It helps people work quickly and accurately.



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English Learning

www.englishlearning-education.blogspot.com/search?updated-min=2011-01-01T00:00:00-08:00&updated-max=2012-01-01T00:00:00-08:00

ELT Podcast to stud...

The Changes in The 21st Century

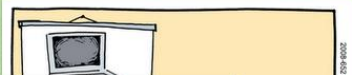
"The undertaking of a new action brings strength." Evenius



The 21st Century and developing skills:



Different kinds of revolution you may guess:



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EN 08:11 PM 02/06/2012

English Learning

www.englishlearning-education.blogspot.com/search?updated-min=2011-01-01T00:00:00-08:00&updated-max=2012-01-01T00:00:00-08:00

ELT Podcast to stud...

Home Remedies

Modern medicine, Home remedies, and Traditional medicine are different kinds of medicine practiced today all over the world.



Some Alternative Medicine treatments are more popular and widely known than others. Acupuncture and yoga are now widely integrated treatments. Herbal remedies and nutritional supplements have been growing in popularity and may be recommended by conventional physicians as well as nutritionists and dietitians.



Meditation, yoga, exercise and proper diet are all well documented mechanisms for a healthy balance and a well tuned system.

A herb is any plant material that may be used to improve, maintain or restore health and

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English Learning

www.englishlearning-education.blogspot.com/search?updated-min=2011-01-01T00:00:00-08:00&updated-max=2012-01-01T00:00:00-08:00

ELT Podcast to stud...

Organic Produce

Write a short explanation of organic food for an article in a children's magazine. The children who read magazine are 8 to 12 years old. Most of them live in big cities, and most are not familiar with organic food. Before you write your explanation, think of your audience and of the content and tone that is best. What will interest your readers? What will they need to know?



Posted by Blogger at 9:33 AM 2 comments

Recommend this on Google

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Subscribe to: Posts (Atom)

javascriptvoid(0)

Appendix II: Topics

Write a paragraph describing a time when an advertisement convinced you to buy something. Were you satisfied with the product? Give details about your experience.



Do you like to be an engineer or a farmer? Why?



Which do you think is better, country life or city life? Write a paragraph to give your opinion.

What color is your parachute?

- Are you out of work?
- Do you hate your job?
- Aren't you satisfied with your career?
- Are you looking for a job?

What should you do and where do you start?

You are going to write a paragraph about your ideal job. You will explain why this job is ideal for you. You can tell about the skills, setting, and rewards related to this job.



Signs of Climate Change:

- More energetic weather
- Increasing drought
- Rising sea levels and flood

Think about how your life will change as a result of climate change. Write an essay discussing the positive and negative changes in your life.



What are the characteristics of a happy marriage? Do these characteristics change as a couple gets older?

Write an essay to explain. describe a happy marriage of a couple that you know.



Different ways of speaking are part of gender. As adults, men and women sometimes face difficulties in their communication with each other.

It is possible to understand that because of gender differences in language, there is more than one way to communicate.



What do you think is the biggest difference between male and female speech?

Now consider different cases it may help or harm people:

Business and Career
Art and Artifact
Economics and Politics
Science
Health
Banking and Financial
Education
Personal Development

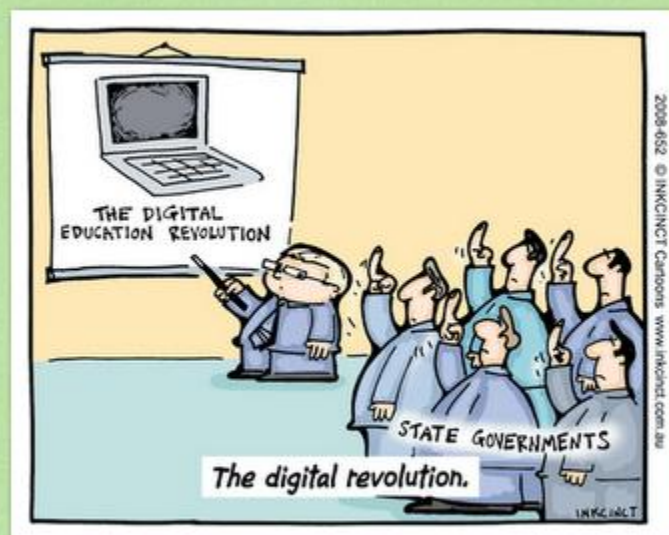


Some people say that

computers have made life easier & more convenient. Other people say that computer have made life more complex and stressful.

What's your opinion ? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Different kinds of
revolution you may guess:



The 21st century has begun. What changes do you think this new century will bring.

A herb is any plant material that may be used to improve, maintain or restore health and wholeness. Old home remedies are based on using the natural ingredients and constituents found in many spices, fruits, grasses and herbs to naturally treat foreign bodies, dangerous viruses and bacteria that are causing pain, inflammation, disease and damage to the body. Herbal remedies continue to increase in popularity.



I believe that home remedies are.....



Appendix III: The Equivalency Scores

Table 20: The comparison of scores in TOEFL and IELTS with the program:

Program	IELTS	TOEFL		
		Paper based	Computer based	Internet based
Preparatory 1 year	5.0	500	173	60
Preparatory 6 month	5.5	525	196	70
Bachelor	6.0	550	213	80
Master	6.5-7	575	232	90
PhD	7	600	250	100

Table 21: The comparison of scores in TOEFL and IELTS:

TOEFL Paper	TOEFL Computer based	TOEFL iBT	IELTS Equivalent
625 -680	263-300	113 -120	7.5 – 9.0
600	250	100	7.0
575	232	90 -91	6.5
550	213	79 -80	6.0
525	196	69 - 70	5.5
500	173	59 - 60	5.0
475	152	49 - 50	4.5
450	133	39 - 40	4.0
425	113	29 -30	3.5

Table 22: The scores and approximate level:

OEIC	TOEFL Paper	TOEFL CBT	TOEFL IBT	IELTS	VEC Online Score	Approximate VEC Level
0 - 250	0 - 310	0 - 30	0 - 8	0 - 1	0 - 34	Beginner
	310 - 343	33 - 60	9 - 18	1 - 1.5	35 - 38	Middle beginner
255 - 400	347 - 393	63 - 90	19 - 29	2 - 2.5	39 - 45	Upper Beginner
	397 - 433	93 - 120	30 - 40	3 - 3.5	46 - 53	Low Intermediate
405 - 600	437 - 473	123 - 150	41 - 52	4	54 - 57	Middle Intermediate
	477 - 510	153 - 180	53 - 64	4.5 - 5	58 - 65	Intermediate
605 - 780	513 - 547	183 - 210	65 - 78	5.5 - 6	66 - 73	Low advanced
	550 - 587	213 - 240	79 - 95	6.5 - 7	74 - 81	Middle advanced
785 - 900	590 - 637	243 - 270	96 - 110	7.5 - 8	82 - 90	Upper Advanced
905 - 990	640 - 677	273 - 300	111 - 120	8.5 - 9	91 - 100	Upper Advanced

Appendix IV: Questions for Interviews

Interview 1

Gender: male female

Age:

1. Tell me about your language learning experiences.
 - When did you start learning the English?
 - What are your experiences in learning English (classes & courses you have passed)?
 - What is your purpose/goal for studying the English?
2. Tell me about your writing experiences?
 - How do you feel when you are writing in English?
3. Tell me about your experiences in using technology.
 - How often do you check your e-mail?
 - How do you like to use internet when you are learning English?
 - Have you ever used weblogs, word processors, software programs, and chartrooms?
4. Tell me about your feelings and thoughts when you are using technology?
5. Tell me about your experiences in group working.
 - How do you feel when you are working in a group?
 - Do you like to get the opinion of others?
 - Do you offer advice to your classmates?

Appendix V : Questions for Interviews

Interview 2:

1. What do you think about using blogs as a tool for teaching in the classroom?
2. Do you think that blogs helped you to improve writing skill?
3. Do you think that blogs helped you to improve language learning proficiency?
4. Do you like using blogs for improving writing proficiency?
5. How easy or difficult did it become for you when you used blogs in the classroom?
6. How useful was the comments you get from the people?
7. How do you feel when you get comments from others?
8. How do you feel when you use the weblog (blog)?
9. Did you use technical aspects of blogging?
10. Do you think that teachers should use blogs when they are teaching English?
11. Do you like to continue blog-based classes?
12. How do you like to use technology in your future writing classes

Appendix VI: 6- Point Writer's Rubric

6-POINT WRITER'S RUBRIC

	IDEAS					
	Not			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	No main idea, purpose, or central theme exists; reader must infer this based on sketchy or missing details	Main idea is still missing, though possible topic/theme is emerging	Main idea is present; may be broad or simplistic	Topic or theme is identified as main idea; development remains basic or general	Main idea is well-marked by detail but could benefit from additional information	Main idea is clear, supported, and enriched by relevant anecdotes and details
A	No topic emerges	Several topics emerge; any might become central theme or main idea	Topic becomes clear, though still too broad, lacking focus; reader must infer message	Topic is fairly broad, yet author's direction is clear	Topic is focused yet still needs additional narrowing	Topic is narrow, manageable, and focused
B	Support for topic is not evident	Support for topic is limited, unclear; length is not adequate for	Support for topic is incidental or confusing, not focused	Support for topic is starting to work; still does not quite flesh out key	Support for topic is clear and relevant except for a moment	Support is strong and credible, and uses resources that are
C	There are no details	Few details are present; piece simply restates topic and main idea or merely answers a question	Additional details are present but lack specificity; main idea or topic emerges but remains weak	Some details begin to define main idea or topic, yet are limited in number or clarity	Accurate, precise details support one main idea	Details are relevant, telling; quality details go beyond obvious and are not predictable
D	Author is not writing from own knowledge/experience; ideas are not author's	Author generalizes about topic without personal knowledge/experience	Author "tells" based on others' experiences rather than "showing" by own experience	Author uses few examples to "show" own experience, yet still relies on generic experiences of others	Author presents new ways of thinking about topic based on personal knowledge/experience	Author writes from own knowledge/experience; ideas are fresh, original
E	No reader's questions have been answered	Reader has many questions due to lack of specifics; it is hard to "fill in the blanks"	Reader begins to recognize focus with specifics, though questions remain	Reader generally understands content and has only a few questions	Reader's questions are usually anticipated and answered by author	Reader's questions are all answered
F	Author doesn't help reader make any connections	Author does not yet connect topic with reader in any way although attempts are made	Author provides glimmers into topic; casual connections are made by reader	Author stays on topic and begins to connect reader through self, text, world, or other resources	Author connects reader to topic with a few anecdotes, text, or other resources	Author helps reader make many connections by sharing significant insights into life
	Key question: Does the writer stay focused and share original and fresh information or perspective on the topic?					

6-Point Writer's Rubric

Organization						
Not				Proficient		
1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional	
Organization can't be identified; writing lacks sense of direction; content is strung together in loose,	Organization is mostly ineffective; only moments here and there direct reader	Organization is still problematic though structure begins to emerge; ability to follow text is	Organization moves reader through text without too much confusion	Organization is smooth; only a few small bumps here and there exist	Organization enhances and showcases central idea; order of information is compelling, moving reader	
A	There is no lead to set up what follows, no conclusion to wrap things up	The lead and/or conclusion are ineffective or do not work	Either lead or conclusion or both may be present but are clichés or leave reader wanting more	A recognizable lead and conclusion are present; lead may not create a strong sense of anticipation; conclusion may not tie up	While lead and/or conclusion go beyond obvious, either could go even further	An inviting lead draws reader in; satisfying conclusion leaves reader with sense of closure and resolution
B	Transitions between paragraphs are confusing or nonexistent	Weak transitions emerge yet offer little help to get from one paragraph to next and not often enough to eliminate confusion	Some transitions are used but they repeat or mislead resulting in weak chunking of paragraphs	Transitions often work yet are predictable and formulaic; paragraphs are coming together with topic sentence and support	Transitions are logical, though may lack originality; ideas are chunked in proper paragraphs and topic sentences are properly used	Thoughtful transitions clearly show how ideas (paragraphs) connect throughout entire piece, helping to showcase content of each paragraph
C	Sequencing doesn't work	Little useful sequencing is present; it's hard to see how piece fits together as a whole	Sequencing has taken over so completely, it dominates ideas; is painfully obvious and formulaic	Sequencing shows some logic, but is not controlled enough to consistently showcase ideas	Sequencing makes sense and moves a bit beyond obvious, helping move reader through piece	Sequencing is logical and effective; moves reader through piece with ease from start to finish
D	Pacing is not evident	Pacing is awkward; it slows to a crawl when reader wants to get on with it, and vice versa	Pacing is dominated by one part of piece and is not controlled in remainder	Pacing is fairly well controlled; sometimes lunges ahead too quickly or hangs up on details that do not matter	Pacing is controlled; there are still places author needs to highlight or move through more effectively	Pacing is well controlled; author knows when to slow down to elaborate, and when to move on
E	Title (if required) is absent	Title (if required) doesn't match content	Title (if required) hints at weak connection to content; is unclear	Uninspired title (if required) only restates prompt or topic	Title (if required) settles for minor idea about content rather than capturing deeper theme	Title (if required) is original, reflecting content and capturing central theme
F	Lack of structure makes it almost impossible for reader to understand purpose	Structure fails to fit purpose of writing, leaving reader struggling to discover purpose	Structure begins to clarify purpose	Structure sometimes supports purpose, at other times reader wants to rearrange pieces	Structure generally works well for purpose and for reader	Structure flows so smoothly reader hardly thinks about it; choice of structure matches and
Key question: Does the organizational structure enhance the ideas and make the piece easier to understand?						

6-Point Writer's Rubric

	VOICE					
	Not			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	Author seems indifferent, uninvolved, or distanced from topic, purpose, and/or audience	Author relies on reader’s good faith to hear or feel any voice in phrases such as “I like it” or “It was fun”	Author’s voice is hard to recognize, even if reader is trying desperately to “hear” it	Author seems sincere, yet not fully engaged or involved; result is pleasant or even personable, though topic and purpose are	Author attempts to address topic, purpose, and audience in sincere and engaging way; piece still skips a beat	Author speaks directly to reader in individual, compelling, and engaging way that delivers purpose and topic; although
A	Author does not interact with reader in any fashion; writing	Author uses only clichés, resulting in continued lack of interaction with	Author seems aware of reader yet discards personal insights in favor of safe	Author attempts to reach audience and has some moments of	Author communicates with reader in earnest, pleasing, authentic	Author interacts with and engages reader in ways that are personally revealing
B	Author takes no risks, reveals nothing, lulls	Author reveals little yet doesn’t risk enough to	Author surprises reader with random	Author surprises, delights, or moves	Author’s moments of insight and risk-	Author risks revealing self and shows
C	Tone is not evident	Tone does not support writing	Tone is flat; author does not commit to	Tone begins to support and enrich	Tone leans in right direction most of the	Tone gives flavor and texture to message and
D	Commitment to topic is missing; writing is lifeless or mechanical; it may be	Commitment to topic “might” be present; author does not help reader feel anything	Commitment to topic begins to emerge; reader wonders if author cares about topic	Commitment to topic is present; author’s own point of view may emerge in a place	Commitment to topic is clear and focused; author’s enthusiasm starts to catch on	Commitment to topic is strong; author’s passion about topic is clear, compelling, and
E	Voice is inappropriate for purpose/mode	Voice does not support purpose/mode; narrative is only an outline; expository or persuasive	Voice is starting to support purpose/mode though remains weak in many places	Voice lacks spark for purpose/ mode; narrative is sincere, if not passionate; expository or persuasive lacks	Voice supports author’s purpose/mode; narrative entertains, engages reader; expository or	Voice is appropriate for purpose/mode; voice is engaging, passionate, and enthusiastic
	Key question: Would you keep reading this piece if it was longer?					

6-Point Writer's Rubric

	WORD CHOICE					
	Not			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	Vocabulary is limited; author searches for words to convey meaning; no mental imagery exists	Vocabulary is flawed, resulting in impaired meaning; wrong words are used; and reader can't picture message or content	Vocabulary is understandable yet lacks energy; some interpretation is needed to understand parts of piece	Vocabulary is functional yet still lacks energy; author's meaning is easy to understand in general	Vocabulary is more precise and appropriate; mental imagery emerges	Vocabulary is powerful and engaging, creating mental imagery; words convey intended message in precise, interesting, and natural way
A	Words are overly broad and/ or so generic no message is evident	Words are so vague and mundane that message is limited and unclear	Words are adequate and correct in a general sense; message starts to emerge	Words work and begin to shape unique, individual piece; message is easy to identify	In most cases words are "just right" and clearly communicate message	Words are precise and accurate; author's message is easy to understand
B	Vocabulary confuses reader and is contradictory; words create no mental imagery, no lingering memory	Vocabulary has no variety or spice; even simple words are used incorrectly; no mental images exist	Vocabulary is very basic; simple words rule; variety starts to "show" rather than "tell"; mental images are still missing	Vocabulary includes familiar words and phrases that communicate, yet rarely capture reader's imagination; perhaps a moment or two of sparkle	Vocabulary is strong; it's easy to "see" what author says because of figurative language—similes, metaphors, and poetic devices; mental imagery	Vocabulary is striking, powerful, and engaging; it catches reader's eye and lingers in mind; recall of handful of phrases or mental images is easy and automatic
C	Words are incorrectly used, making message secondary to word misfires	Words are either so plain as to put reader to sleep or so over the top they make no sense	Original, natural word choices start to emerge so piece sounds authentic	Attempts at colorful word choice show willingness to stretch and grow, yet sometimes go too far	New words and phrases are usually correct	Word choice is natural yet original and never overdone; both words and phrases are unique and effective
D	Misuse of parts of speech litters piece, confusing reader; no message emerges	Redundant parts of speech and/or jargon or clichés distract from message	Rote parts of speech reflect a lack of craftsmanship; passive verbs, overused nouns, and lack of modifiers and variety create fuzzy message	Accurate and occasionally refined parts of speech are functional and start to shape message	Correct and varied parts of speech are chosen carefully to communicate message, and clarify and enrich writing	Parts of speech are crafted to best convey message; lively verbs energize, precise nouns/ modifiers add depth, color, and specificity
	Key question: Do the words and phrases create vivid pictures and linger in your mind?					

6-Point Writer's Rubric

SENTENCE FLUENCY

	Not			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	Sentences are incorrectly structured; reader has to practice to give paper a fair interpretive reading; it's nearly impossible to read aloud	Sentences vary little; even easy sentence structures cause reader to stop and decide what is being said and how; it's challenging to read aloud	Sentences are technically correct but not varied, creating sing-song pattern or lulling reader to sleep; it sounds mechanical when read aloud	Sentences are varied and hum along, tending to be pleasant or businesslike though may still be more mechanical than musical or fluid; it's easy to read aloud	Some sentences are rhythmic and flowing; a variety of sentence types are structured correctly; it flows well when read aloud	Sentences have flow, rhythm, and cadence; are well built with strong, varied structure that invites expressive oral reading
A	Sentence structure is choppy, incomplete, run-on, rambling, or awkward	Sentence structure works but has phrasing that sounds unnatural	Sentence structure is usually correct, yet sentences do not flow	Sentence structure is correct and begins to flow but is not artfully crafted or musical	Sentence structure flows well and moves reader fluidly through piece	Sentence structure is strong, underscoring and enhancing meaning while engaging and moving reader from beginning to end in fluid fashion
B	No sentence sense—type, beginning, connective, rhythm—is evident; determining where sentences begin and end is nearly impossible	There is little evidence of sentence sense; to make sentences flow correctly, most have to be totally reconstructed	Sentence sense starts to emerge; reader can read through problems and see where sentences begin and end; sentences vary little	Sentence sense is moderate; sentences are constructed correctly with some variety, hang together, and are sound	Sentence sense is strong; correct construction and variety is used; few examples of dialogue or fragments are used	Sentence sense is strong and contributes to meaning; dialogue, if present, sounds natural; fragments, if used, add style; sentences are nicely balanced in type, beginnings, connectives, and rhythm
C	Incomplete sentences make it hard to judge quality of beginnings or identify type of sentence	Many sentences begin in same way and are simple (subject-verb-object) and monotonous	Simple and compound sentence types and varied beginnings help strengthen piece	Sentence beginnings vary yet are routine, generic; types include simple, compound, and perhaps even complex	Sentence beginnings are varied and unique; four sentence types (simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex) create balance and	Varied sentence beginnings add interest and energy; four sentence types are balanced
D	Weak or no connectives create massive jumble of language; disconnected sentences leave piece chaotic	"Blah" connectives (and, so, but, then, and because) lead reader nowhere	Few simple connectives lead reader from sentence to sentence though piece remains weak	Connectives are original and hold piece together but are not always refined	Thoughtful and varied connectives move reader easily through piece	Creative and appropriate connectives show how each sentence relates to previous one and pulls piece together
E	Rhythm is chaotic, not fluid; piece cannot be read aloud without author's help, even with practice	Rhythm is random and may still be chaotic; writing does not invite expressive oral reading	Rhythm emerges; reader can read aloud after a few tries	Rhythm is inconsistent; some sentences invite oral reading, others remain stiff, awkward, or choppy	Rhythm works; reader can read aloud quite easily	Rhythm flows; writing has cadence; first reading aloud is expressive, pleasurable, and fun
Key question: Can you feel the words and phrases flow together as you read it aloud?						

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6-Point Writer's Rubric

CONVENTION						
Not			Proficient			
1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional	
	Errors in conventions are the norm and repeatedly distract reader, making text unreadable	Many errors of various types of conventions are scattered throughout text	Author continues to stumble in conventions even on simple tasks and almost always on anything trickier	Author has reasonable control over standard conventions for grade level; conventions are sometimes handled well; at other times, errors distract and impair readability	Author stretches, trying more complex tasks in conventions; several mistakes still exist; for secondary students, all basic conventions have been mastered	Author uses standard writing conventions effectively to enhance readability; errors are few and only minor editing is needed to publish
A	Spelling errors are frequent, even on common words	Spelling is phonetic with many errors	Spelling on simple words is incorrect, although reader can understand	Spelling is usually correct or reasonably phonetic on common grade-level words, but not on more difficult words	Spelling on common grade-level words is correct but sometimes incorrect on more difficult words	Spelling is usually correct, even on more difficult words
B	Punctuation is often missing or incorrect	Simple end (. ? !) punctuation is correct; internal (, ' ; -- : ...) punctuation is usually wrong or missing	Punctuation is inconsistent	End punctuation is usually correct; internal punctuation is sometimes correct; for secondary students, all punctuation is usually correct	Punctuation is correct and enhances readability in all but few places	Punctuation is correct, creative, and guides reader through entire piece
C	Capitalization is random, inconsistent, and sometimes nonexistent	Only the easiest capitalization rules are correctly applied	Capitalization is applied inconsistently except for proper nouns and sentence beginnings	Capitalization is mostly correct	Capitalization is correct; more sophisticated capitalization is used	Capitalization is thoroughly understood and consistently correct
D	Errors in grammar/usage are frequent and noticeable, making writing incomprehensible	Serious grammar/usage problems of every kind make comprehension difficult	Inappropriate grammar/usage results from heavy reliance on conversational oral language; meaning is confusing	Proper grammar/usage remains inconsistent and inaccurate though problems are not serious enough to distort meaning	Grammar/usage is usually correct; there are few grammar mistakes yet meaning is clear	Grammar/usage is correct and contributes to clarity and style; meaning is more than clear; piece is engaging and inviting to read
E	Extensive editing (on virtually every line) is required to polish text for publication; reader must read once to decode, then again for meaning	There's still a lot of editing required for publication; meaning is uncertain	Too much editing is still needed to publish although piece begins to communicate meaning	Moderate editing (a little of this, a little of that) is required to publish; meaning is clear	Several things still need editing before publishing; conventions are more correct than not; meaning is easily communicated	Hardly any editing is needed to publish; author may successfully manipulate conventions for stylistic effect; meaning is crystal clear
Key question: How much editing would have to be done to be ready to share with an outside source? (Note: For the trait of conventions, grade level matters. Expectations should be based on grade level and include only skills that have been taught. Expectations for secondary students are obviously much higher than those of the elementary grade levels.)						

6-Point Writer's Rubric

	PRESENTATION					
	Not proficient			Proficient		
	1 Beginning	2 Emerging	3 Developing	4 Capable	5 Experienced	6 Exceptional
	Presentation/formatting of piece confuses message	Presentation/formatting delivers a message clear in places and confusing in others	Presentation/formatting of piece delivers clear message, yet lacks a finished, polished appearance	Presentation/formatting of piece works in standard, predictable fashion, delivering a clear message that appears finished	Presentation/formatting enhances understanding of message; piece appears finished and is pleasing to eye	Presentation/formatting exceeds best of finished pieces; formatting extends understanding of message; finished appearance is of superior quality
A	Handwritten letters are irregular, formed inconsistently or incorrectly; spacing is unbalanced or absent; reader can't identify letters	Handwritten letters and words are readable with limited problems in letter shape and form; spacing is inconsistent	Handwriting creates little or no stumbling in readability; spacing is consistent	Handwriting is correct and readable; spacing is consistent and neat	Handwriting is neat, readable, and consistent; spacing is uniform between letters and words; text is easy to read	Handwriting borders on calligraphy; is easy to read and uniformly spaced; pride of author is clear
B	Many fonts/sizes make piece nearly unreadable	Few fonts/sizes make piece hard to read or understand	Fonts/sizes are limited in number; piece starts to come together visually	Fonts/sizes are consistent and appropriate; piece is easy to understand	Fonts/sizes invite reader into text; understanding is a breeze	Fonts/sizes enhance readability and enrich overall appearance; understanding is crystal clear
C	No thought is given to white space—it is random and confusing; identifying beginning and ending of text is difficult	Understanding of white space begins to emerge though piece seems “plopped” on paper without margins or boundaries	White space begins to frame and balance piece; margins may be present though some text may crowd edges; usage is inconsistent; paragraphs begin to emerge	White space frames text by creating margins; usage is still inconsistent on the whole; some paragraphs are indented, some are blocked	White space helps reader focus on text; margins frame piece, other white space frames markers and graphics; usage is consistent and purposeful; most paragraphs are either indented or blocked	White space is used to optimally frame and balance text with markers and graphics; all paragraphs are either indented or blocked
D	Visuals/graphics/charts are nonexistent, incomprehensible, and/or unrelated to text	Visuals/graphics/charts “might” be related to text	Visuals/graphics/charts match and integrate with text at times	Visuals/graphics/charts support and consistently clarify text	Visuals/graphics/charts enrich meaning of text and add layer of understanding	Visuals/graphics/charts help enrich and extend meaning by focusing reader’s attention upon message
E	No markers (title, bullets, page numbers, subheads, etc.) are present	Perhaps one marker (a title, a single bullet or page number) is used	Markers are used but do not organize or clarify piece	Markers are used to organize, clarify, and present whole piece	Markers serve to integrate graphics and articulate meaning of piece	Markers help reader comprehend message and extend or enrich piece
	Key question: Is the finished piece easy to read, polished in presentation, and pleasing to the eye?					

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