AKDENIZ UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING DEPARTMENT

AN INVESTIGATION INTO USING BLOGS AND THE INTERNET TO IMPROVE THE WRITING SKILLS OF EFL LEARNERS

M.A. THESIS

Uğur Üzer

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KABUL

T.C.

AKDENİZ ÜNİVERSİTESİ

EĞİTİM BİLİMLERİ ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜNE

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YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİNİN ADI: An Investigation into Using Blogs and the Internet to Improve the Writing Skills of EFL Learners

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Yüksek lisans tezi olarak sunduğum bu çalışmayı, bilimsel ahlak ve geleneklere aykırı düşecek bir yol ve yardıma başvurmaksızın yazdığımı, yararlandığım eserlerin kaynakçalarda gösterilenlerden oluştuğunu ve bu eserleri her kullanışımda alıntı yaparak yararlandığımı belirtir; bunu onurumla doğrularım. Enstitü tarafından belli bir zamana bağlı olmaksızın, tezimle ilgili yaptığım bu beyana aykırı bir durumun saptanması durumunda ortaya çıkacak tüm ahlaki ve hukuki sonuçlara katlanacağımı bildiririm.

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To my grandfather, who used to

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ABSTRACT

AN INVESTIGATION INTO USING BLOGS AND THE INTERNET TO IMPROVE THE WRITING SKILLS OF EFL LEARNERS

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Technological developments have affected almost all areas of teaching and learning including language education. A number of instructional techniques and methods have been put into use especially to enhance writing skills of students. This study aimed to improve students' writing skills using weblogs (blogs) and investigated their experiences and attitudes. 28 B1 level students from Antalya International University participated in the study. First, students were divided into two groups: the control group and the experimental group. Then, they were given a pre-test and an Internet use questionnaire to find their writing level and attitudes. During the 5-week-study, the control group was given a writing course with traditional instructional techniques, whereas the experimental group was supported through blogs. After this process, success of the learners was analyzed and compared through use of a post-test. Moreover, the experimental group was also given a blog use evaluation questionnaire to determine students' attitudes toward the use of blogs in the writing lesson. The results of the study showed that using blogs in writing lessons enhanced students' writing skills and students found blog use application useful for their writing courses.

Keywords: technology, Web 2.0 tools, blog

ÖZET

İNGİLİZCE YAZMA BECERİLERİNİN GELİŞTİRİLMESİ İÇİN BLOG VE İNTERNET KULLANIMI ÜZERİNE BİR ARAŞTIRMA

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Teknolojik gelişmeler, eğitim ve öğretimin birçok alanında olduğu gibi yabancı dil öğrenimini de etkilemiştir. Özellikle öğrencilerin yazma becerilerinin gelişmesinde, birçok yeni teknik ve metot uygulanmaya başlanmıştır. Bu çalışma, weblog(blog) uygulamasını kullanarak öğrencilerin yazma becerilerinin geliştirilmesi amacıyla yapılmış, süreç sonunda edindikleri tecrübe ve memnuniyetleri ölçülmüştür. Araştırma Uluslararası Antalya Üniversitesi'nden B1 seviyesindeki 28 öğrencinin katılımıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Öğrenciler kontrol ve deney grubu olarak ikiye ayrılmıştır. Çalışma, iki gruba da uygulanan ön-test ve internet kullanım anketinde benzer sonuçlar alınmasının ardından başlatılmıştır. 5 hafta süren çalışma boyunca, kontrol grubu yazma dersini klasik yollarla işlerken, deney grubu blog kullanımıyla desteklenmiştir. Bu süre sonunda öğrencilerin başarıları son-test kullanılarak ölçülmüş ve karşılaştırılmıştır. Ek olarak, deney grubuna blog destekli yazma dersine olan düşüncelerini öğrenmek maksadıyla blog uygulaması değerlendirme anketi uygulanmıştır. Çalışmanın sonuçları, blog destekli yazma derslerinin öğrencilerin başarılarını arttırdığını ve öğrencilerin bu uygulamayı yazma dersleri açısından yararlı bulduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: teknoloji, web 2.0 araçları, blog

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Rapid evolution of technology has changed and shaped daily lives since the 1990s and has enabled many technological tools to be created and developed to use for instructional purposes. Thanks to these tools, contemporary times are referred as the "information age" or "knowledge based society" (McLoughlin & Lee, 2007, p. 664). One of the reasons these terms have been founded is that advances in information and communication technologies (ICTs) have led language instructors and researchers to find out alternative teaching and learning environments in order to improve the skills of language learners.

Although the use of computers in the language classroom was of concern only to a small number of specialists a decade ago, with the advent of multimedia computing and the Internet, educators now give more importance to the role of computers in language instruction and see it as a significant issue confronting large numbers of language teachers throughout the world (Warschauer & Healey, 1998). Hence, language teaching environments have started to be integrated with the development of ICT and widespread use of the Internet. In addition to this, language teachers now attempt to find alternative ways and explore new methods and techniques to teach authentically using ICT as well as going on with their conventional teaching in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes (Kazancı, 2012). In this respect, researchers conducted some studies to understand what learners are able to achieve through technology-enhanced instruction (Christensen, 2002; Stepp-Greany, 2002; Conole, De Laat, Dillon & Darby, 2008)

Blended learning takes its background from Vygotsky's (1987) constructivism theory, especially social constructivism theory. When the history of education is examined, it will be seen that a movement away from behaviorist and cognitive approaches which "put the responsibility for learning directly on the shoulders of teachers" (Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002, p. 1) to a social approach in which learner engagement is encouraged, and learners have become the center of education. In the past, students who just learnt everything by heart and did everything their teachers asked were considered the best students but nowadays, the term student has evolved into someone who is eager to question, discuss, brainstorm and use ICT to evaluate, criticize and create using more than one resource (Köksal & Demirel, 2008). Thus, the student-centered approach is pushed forward.

Unlike Piaget and his cognitive theory, which focuses on the learning of individuals, Vygotsky put the emphasis on social constructivism, which is mainly about learning through social interaction (Kanuka & Anderson, 1999). Social constructivism focuses on learning in communities whereby groups of individuals increase their personal knowledge by interacting with each other. Kiraly (2000) states, "from a social constructivist perspective, individuals have no choice but to create or construct meanings and knowledge through participation in the interpersonal, inter- subjective interaction" (p. 4). In our current situation, the Internet has been offered as a very rich teaching and learning environment because of its rapid developments, and learners, therefore, are able to show their characteristic of using accessible resources in the most efficient way and taking responsibility for their own learning easily (De La Herpe, Kulski and Radloff , 1999; Cubukcu, 2008).

The term technology is better to be considered according to the era that is lived in. For this reason, when we look at the history of technology use in language education, even the

invention of the pencil, blackboard or paper could be seen as a progress. Lewis (2013) states "Educational technology is not new. Almost as long as there have been teachers, there have been instructional tools to help students learn; clay slates, the abacus, pencils and pens, typewriters, overhead projectors, computers, and finally, the Internet, mobile phones, and social networks" (p. 1). Before more contemporary technological tools, overhead projectors and listening laboratories provided a basis for use of technology in language classes helping learners visually and giving them a chance to be exposed to the language besides the language instructor. Soon video and cassette players had their part in daily life and with widespread use of the Internet, these tools and many others that followed turned into educational materials and became integrated into language learning. Teachers had nothing to do but learn how to use technology and allow it to change their present teaching paradigm (Bitner & Bitner, 2002). Therefore, educators reach learners in various ways such as mail groups, forums, and weblogs in language education.

Thanks to the Internet, learners discover their potential and develop their own personalized learning environments, forcing them to take responsibilities and meet their needs (Jonassen, Howland, Moore, & Marra, 2002).

The results of previous studies (Christensen, 2002; Stepp-Greany, 2002; Conole, De Laat, Dillon & Darby, 2008) and more (Labrie, 2000; Salaberry, 2001) have revealed that numerous types of Internet resources have been widely integrated into educational environments, including language teaching classes.

To better understand the use of the Internet in language classes, it is necessary to investigate the first attempts of its integration into language environments, which started with Web 1.0 consisting of personal web pages run on web servers. Its effect gradually

diminished due to the fact that Web 1.0 platform users consumed the content that few people created without any interaction (Cormode & Krishnamurthy, 2008). Furthermore, there was no comment section at the end of pages but rather a visitor page that created a new page for comments that could easily slow down the site, which decreases the capability of the server. In an educational sense, they provided one-way communication and there was no support for peer-to-peer learning. That's why first generation web-tools only allowed students to take instructions from instructors instead of encouraging their active participation.

After the introduction of Web 2.0 tools, which enabled two-way communication such as Wikis, learners have had a chance to be active participants in the learning process, and teacher-student and student- student interaction have been possible. Students' interaction with their peers and teacher, being able to research various materials and reaching different sources of information has also changed the teacher's role in class making him a facilitator rather than the only director of learning. Another second-generation web-tool worth mentioning is weblogs, or short, blogs which can be defined "as an online journal with one or many contributors, presented in reverse chronological order and published on the internet" (Duffy & Bruns, 2006, p. 2).

Blogs have been used for various purposes and education is one of them. Campbell (2003) states blogs are online journals, which an individual can easily update or edit with his/her own words or ideas using a software. Zhang (2009) affirms that blogs have a great potential as a tool for teaching writing in EFL writing classes since they provide a collaborative learning environment. Moreover, students write not only for themselves but also for their peers to read and improve their writing skill. The emergence of blogs in language education is significant as Blackmore-Squires (2010) puts forward:

> "The introduction of new technologies such as Weblogs has encouraged ESOL/EFL teachers to start thinking of the potential uses, benefits and challenges for teaching and learning in the second language classroom. General discussion around blogging suggests blogging can be good for reasons of self- expression, communication, sharing of ideas and reflection. All these reasons seemed particularly valid and exciting reasons to incorporate blogging into the ESOL classroom to improve L2 writing skills. Furthermore blogging appears to underpin current constructivist learning theory as well as supporting writing theory such as the process approach proposed by Flowers and Hayes (1981)" (p. 8).

With the widespread use of the Internet based on technology, language classrooms welcome technological tools that are actively used by learners and instructors. A quick review of the relevant literature also shows that blogs are among these tools used in language learning. Jones & Nuhfer-Halten (2006), Murray & Hourigan (2006) and Moundridou & Goulioti (2010) assert that blogs can be applied into language learning and there are benefits to discuss. Moreover, Oravec (2002) claimed that the blog can enhance students' analytical and critical thinking skills as well as boosting student's self-confidence. The idea behind it is that writing a blog helps students prepare and organize their ideas more effectively and consider how their peers will interpret the posts written (Blackmore-Squires, 2010). The reason why this is significant is that writing in the target language supports learners acquisition of grammatical rules and helps them learn a great amount of vocabulary. In addition, as writing is a productive skill, learners have a chance to use what is acquired outside of the class as well.

There are various ways of improving student writing including process writing, free writing, product writing, creative writing, and the paragraph pattern and communicative approaches. Though the main goal of each of these approaches is to write effectively, they differ in their own way. Process writing involves generating ideas, structuring or

organizing them, drafting, reviewing and evaluating. It is a cycle that encourages students to write and improve their written work. Accuracy has a great importance in this approach as only the final drafts matter. For product writing, accuracy holds great importance giving less room for discovering a range of language uses. Free writing focuses on quantity rather than quality. On the other hand, the paragraph pattern approach is about organization. Students are given random sentences or paragraphs with the goal of making them into a comprehensible paragraph or essay. In the communicative approach, students think of why they are writing and who will read it, in other words their audience. Writing is considered to be communication, so expanding the audience is a significant factor. Commenting on or responding to others' work is also important. Creative writing is more engaging for most students and they tend to work harder. It is mostly based on personal experiences. Publishing students' work on bulletin boards or online encourages them.

At Antalya International University, process writing was used for teaching writing in the 2015-2016 academic year. The main aim was to provide students with motivation for writing. Unfortunately, after some experiences, it was seen that the time allotted for the writing activities was not enough and peer-to-peer collaboration was not possible to apply. There was a need to motivate students using extra tools or materials. For this reason, blogs were introduced. Since the use of blogs is believed to provide such motivation for writing in a language other than one's mother tongue, blogs were chosen as a means to enhance learners' writing skills.

As Godwin-Jones (2008) explains, blogs provide users with new opportunities and support for personal writing as well as peer collaboration. Therefore, the researcher aimed to provide a blog-enhanced writing course for a preparatory English program at Antalya International University and to evaluate its influence in terms of its contribution to the

learners' writing skills and their attitudes toward writing.

1.2 Statement Of The Problem

At Turkish universities, which use English as a medium of instruction, students take 20-25 hours of English lessons depending on their proficiency level, which is legislated by Council of Higher Education (CoHE). Antalya International University's main aim is to prepare students to have the required proficiency level to survive when they start their departments.

Other preparatory programs at Turkish universities have more or less the same tendency to teach language skills like listening, reading and language use by using course books, interactive CDs or DVDs and web pages related to the course book. The teacher tries to improve students' speaking skills by adapting exercises in the course book. When it comes to writing, exercises again can be found in the course book; however, these exercises are not believed to be authentic nor encouraging by both students and teachers. Thus, teachers are supposed to bring authenticity and joy to the writing classes with extra materials. However as Kazancı (2012) explained "due to concerns such as course schedules, teachers' workloads, and the lack of sufficient course hours in preparatory programs, it may be difficult to provide authentic materials and out-of- class activities for language learners" (p. 7). He further mentioned "additional problems related to lack of interaction between teachers and students, as well as among the students themselves; limited class time for peer collaboration…"(p. 7).

Under the light of research done (Pinkman, 2005; de Almeida Soares, 2008), which supports the idea that using blogs has a positive influence on language learners, the present study intends to examine the benefits of blogs on the success of learners' writing skills, as

well as investigating students' attitudes towards the use of the Internet and blogs in language learning.

1.3 Purpose Of The Study

Technological improvements have affected our lives to a great extent. Tools invented thanks to these improvements enlighten many academic fields including language learning. The use of technology in language classes is very popular and its popularity is increasing every day. Wu (2005) underlined the effectiveness of using blogs in writing classes since there is a need for more authentic materials other than course books to facilitate writing for students.

Providing more authentic, realistic and out-of-class environments for learners is one of the main goals of teachers who aim to help students improve their writing skills, but this is also difficult because according to Brown (2001), the instructor is considered as an audience to learners' written work such as a small paragraph. He is a checker or a grader. Therefore, students do not feel comfortable when it comes to producing writing. What the instructor is supposed to do is to bring a new way of teaching writing and joy to the class. Despite the fact that there is plentiful research available to understand opinions of the participants of the Internet-based technologies in language instruction, few studies have succeeded in evaluating the effect of the Internet-based technologies in language instruction. Thus, the present study intends to provide a blog-enhanced writing course for students in the English preparatory program at Antalya International University and to examine its effects on the success or improvement of these students with respect to their writing skills.

1.4 Research Questions

Considering the aim mentioned above, the present study tries to answer the following questions:

1) Does the blog use in English preparatory class improve the writing performance of students in their writing classes?

2) What are the students' attitudes toward the blog use in their writing classes at preparatory school?

1.5 Limitations

The number of students involved in the study is a concern as only 28 B1 level students participated in the study. It is believed by the researcher that a larger number may give a better result.

Another limitation of the study is the time frame of the project, which lasted 5 weeks, or approximately 25%, of the academic year. Applying the study over a semester or a full year might open more doors to better results.

1.6. Importance Of The Study

The present study is the first to be applied in terms of teaching writing through technology, namely, blog use, at the Antalya International University School of Foreign Languages. The role of blogs in writing courses, students' attitudes towards blogs in writing courses, and the effects of using blogs on students' success have been studied a number of times. However, the current study attempts to find the effectiveness of using blogs and the Internet in writing classes as well as students' attitudes towards these technologies. It is

hoped that this study may give an alternative and effective angle for teaching writing to learners of English as a foreign language in Turkey.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

In today's world, writing has great importance in terms of communication, as it helps us create written documents that can be passed from generation to generation. That's how so many things are known about previous experiences and research, and that's how many more will be produced thanks to them. It is also a key element in foreign language learning. Like other language skills speaking, reading and listening, writing also carries some difficulties. To give an example, writing is a productive skill, so in order for students to perform writing, they need enough time and a collaborative environment as well as conscious effort and practice. However, in foreign language classes, students write and the only person they can get feedback from is their teacher. Hence, it is not possible to mention a collaborative environment and as the teacher is the only source, time to give/get feedback is really limited. These reasons cause learners to feel uncomfortable (Abu Shawish & Abdelraheem, 2010) and make them anxious about writing (Chaudron, 1988). In addition, generating new ideas in a second language is also a challenging process since it is basically transforming or reworking information. (Myles, 2002). Students have to deal with "a two-way interaction between continuously developing knowledge and continuously developing text" (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987, p. 12). These factors urge students to be dependent on their teachers.

Additionally, Piaget (1953) states that humans must construct their own knowledge according to their previous experiences rather than being given information and expected to understand and use it directly. Therefore, educators are trying to find new approaches or

tools to make learners enthusiastic about learning and connecting their social lives with their learning. (Kazancı, 2012)

The Internet has been reshaping many aspects of education and language learning is one of them. It has attracted interest among a growing number of language teachers who follow developments in ICT, support diversity in learning methods, multimedia materials and tools that can be effective for language learners. (Shin & Son, 2007). Studies (Daugherty & Funke, 1998; Mosquera, 2001) have indicated that students can be encouraged to use the target language in an authentic environment. As Ward (2004) puts forward, blogs help increase student interest in their writing as there are other readers besides the teacher and this is persuasive for learners to improve their writing skills. This is why an eight-grade student of Witte's (2007) says "That's online writing, not boring school writing" (p. 92) for using blogs.

In this chapter, the constructivist theory and social constructivism that are the theoretical basis for the use of blogs in teaching will be discussed. Then, the definition of a blog will be given, the educational purposes of blogs will be analyzed, and how to apply blog use in the context of language teaching will be described in detail. In this respect, the role of blogs in improving learners' writing skills, their benefits to learner success, and students' attitudes towards the use of blogs will be examined. When it comes to the next part of the chapter, the importance of developing writing skills and approaches to teaching writing skills will be reviewed. In the final section of the chapter, studies related to the use of blogs in the EFL context, notably in the teaching of writing, will be discussed.

2.2. The Theoretical Basis For The Use Of Technology In The Efl Classroom

Advances in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) depict a new classroom environment in which students, defined as digital natives (Prensky, 2001) or net geners (Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005), are familiar with technological tools provided by the Internet and they are part of their everyday lives, as if they were just another part of their body. Teachers, being the other part of the classroom environment, endeavor to integrate these tools into classroom teaching in order to satisfy learners' needs. Early attempts of this integration were associated with behaviorism, which include repetitive drills, tutorials and practice in learning. According to Skinner (1954), language is a behavior and it can be taught by imitating.

The first application of new technologies, however, fell short of providing a communicative classroom environment whereby there was only one-way communication and the activities carried out between a person and a machine were just artificial. Overtime, instructors have shifted their notion about how to use technological tools to teach. As Salen (2007) explains, "At the turn of the millennium we witnessed an interesting change in the way people use computers from a focus on what people can do *with* the computer to what the computer can do *for* its users" (p .1). She furthers that this shift leads people to develop a range of computer software applications changing "the way the younger generation receives, transforms, and retrieves information" (p. 1). Therefore, using these tools and applications, students are encouraged to communicate not only with their teachers but also with their peers and construct their own knowledge based on their previous experiences. When this constructivism is combined with students' social settings, learning has been given a new shape. From a constructivist point of view, interaction between student-teacher and student-student are equally crucial in a classroom setting.

However, learning is not limited to classroom activities. It should rather be supported by out-of-class activities. As Obliner & Oblinger (2005) states "Interaction is not limited to classroom settings. Informal learning may comprise a greater share of students' time than learning in formal settings. The type of interaction, peer-to-peer instruction, synthesis, and reflection that takes place in informal settings can be critically important" (p. 10). In the following section, the theoretical principles of both constructivism and social constructivism will be discussed in terms of the use of technology in teaching.

2.2.1. Constructivism

From an educational perspective, constructivism is a theory that tries to shed light on how learning occurs. It "implies that learners are encouraged to construct their own knowledge instead of copying it from an authority…" (Kanselaar, 2002, p. 1). While doing this, the mind is used as an instrument of thinking process, which focuses on interpreting events, objects, and perspectives rather than trying to remember and comprehend an objective knowledge (Jonassen, Davidson, Collins, Campbell & Haag, 1995). The origins of constructivism date back to Piaget, Vygotsky and Dewey; however, the theory has been popular in teaching since 1985 (Kanselaar, 2002).

Piaget (1953), considered as the pioneer and one of the most important constructivists, put emphasis on a learner-centered education philosophy, in which students are active participants of the learning process by exploring, questioning and experimenting. The role of the teacher is to guide and facilitate students in this process, assessing their strengths and weaknesses, letting them make mistakes and learning from them. According to Piaget and his schema theory, learning has three processes: assimilation, accommodation and equilibrium. When new knowledge is presented, it is assimilated through mental operations

into preexisting knowledge. Afterwards, this preexisting knowledge is changed in order to accommodate new information. After these processes, equilibrium takes place when a child's schema is able to deal with new information through assimilation and accommodation, which are in corporation. If there is no balance between assimilation and accommodation, then disequilibrium occurs, meaning new information cannot be fitted into existing schemas (McLeud, 2009).

Another important constructivist to mention is Bruner whose theory is grounded on three stages of representation that are "ways in which information or knowledge are stored and encoded in memory"(McLeud, 2008, para. 7). The first stage is enactive stage, which can be considered the hands-on part of learning. Brahier (2009) describes this stage as the beginning of learning triggered by touching, feeling and manipulating. The second stage is an iconic stage, in which information stored in the first stage turns into visuals. In the last one, the symbolic stage, this information turns into a code or symbol, such as language. Wilson & Lowry (2000) ask "Teaching from a constructivist viewpoint may include a drill, or a lecture, or a prepared reading assignment without sacrifice of principle. A constructivist would ask, what are the fundamental aims? How is meaning construction best facilitated in this case?" (p. 82) and added "Strategies are then placed opportunistically to serve these worthwhile ends" (p. 82). In this sense, in constructivism, teaching has more importance than learning, as the teachers' task is to create a better environment in class to help learners construct knowledge. Each learner is unique and they generate their own "rules" and "mental models" to make sense of experience (Overbaugh, 2004) and the teacher, being aware of his/her job is not to transfer information, but rather to guide learners to bridge the gap between their prior knowledge/experiences and new knowledge.

In the following chapter, a part of constructivism, learning through social introduction, in other words social constructivism will be discussed.

2.2.2 Social Constructivism

Social constructivism is based on the work of Vygotsky, whose ideas were unknown to western cultures, possibly because of the communist regime of the Soviet Union banning studies that referred to western psychologists until his works were translated into English in the 60s and 70s (Salen, 2007). Vygotsky provided alternative ways to Piaget's theories in terms of language, culture, and cognitive development (Santrock, 1999 as cited in Salen, 2007).

Vygotsky, unlike Piaget, who focused on individuals, signifies the role of social interaction. According to Vygtosky (1978), an individual can understand the world best with the help of others. He defined this never-ending interaction between the individual and others surrounding him/her as the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002). He describes ZPD as "the distance between the actual developmental 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" (p. 86). In this sense, in order for a task to be accomplished, there should be a need for collaboration of a less competent person and a more competent person, only then the less competent person becomes individually proficient at what was initially a jointly accomplished task (Chaiklin, 2003). Therefore, it can be said that learning occurs through social interaction with the environment and the people living in it. Learners are active participants of this process, applying new information they gained from a more experienced adult or a peer to create a personal view of the world. As a result, information

constructed is not just concepts memorized but rather effective “operations” that can be used in new and/or different situations in the future.

Another theory Vygotsky put forward is inner speech. According to Piaget’s research on preschoolers, children speak aloud but to themselves, rather than for any social interactive purposes. McLeod (2007) calls this egocentric speech as a developmental “dead end” as it declines with age and is replaced by the social speech eventually (Berk & Garvin, 1984). On the other hand, after repeating Piaget’s work on language, Vygotsky claimed that this speech was actually social from the beginning. He proposed that "egocentric speech" was actually the starting of the formation of the inner speech and it would be used as a tool afterwards in thinking. For Vygotsky, “this was a case of how the outward interpsychological relations become the inner intrapsychological mental functions...how culturally prescribed forms of language and reasoning find their individualized realization” (Kozulin, 1986; as cited in Fosnot & Perry, 1996, p. 20). In his example, Gibbons (2002) states that when a child starts to do a jigsaw puzzle with his/her family or a caregiver, they talk about the shapes of the pieces, color match ups and so on. He added that this external and social interaction is internalized slowly and then turns into a resource for individual thinking, resulting in an “inner speech” according to a Vygotsky-ian point of view.

Eventually, there will be no need for any external interaction for this child to complete a puzzle in the future; he/she will be able to do it alone. The child is both learning how to do that particular puzzle and becoming familiar with following puzzle-solving processes. Gibbons defines the aim of this type of learning as “to learn *how* to think, not simply *what* to think” (p. 14).

Although Vygotsky himself didn't use the term, another theory that relies on social constructivism is scaffolding. Scaffolding, physically, is a temporary structure used while constructing or repairing a building. It is removed after the process has been completed. In an educational sense, scaffolding refers to techniques of instructions in order to move students progressively toward a better understanding and, finally, greater independence in the process of learning (Abbott, 2014). In other words, it is the idea of temporary assistance by which a teacher or a more experienced adult guides a young learner to know how to do something; thus the learner will later be able to accomplish a similar task alone (Gibbons, 2002), like a padawan trying to be a Jedi in George Lucas' Star Wars series (Salvatore, 2011). As the metaphor suggests, these techniques are meant to be removed when there is no longer need for assistance. By scaffolding, the teacher has a new role in classroom: facilitating learning rather than dictating knowledge. Hence, by social interaction and activities, learners will be challenged by each new step of learning and they will improve what they have already known or what they are able to do at that time. Teacher assistance should gradually decrease once learners have become independent in their learning.

There are several studies showing the positive effects of scaffolding. Zarandi (2014) tried to improve his students' speaking abilities. The results of the research indicate that teaching through scaffolding improves learners' speaking skills compared to those who were taught through traditional methods. Another study by Huggins and Edwards (2011) shows that their learners performed better in reading comprehension and writing skills through scaffolding.

With the definitions of constructivism and social constructivism in mind, it can be said that knowledge is not something that is directly transferrable from a single source to individuals rather it is constructed through social interactions and making use of experiences between these two sides. As Von Glasersfeld (1989) explains, learners construct their own understanding by being active in the learning process, using their existing knowledge and integrating it with their social environment, always looking for meaning even if there is incomplete information. Instructors, on the other hand, are expected to consider each learner as a unique personality and adapt to the role of a facilitator guiding learners to get their own understanding of the context taught (Bauersfeld, 1995). Technology has a possible role to play in this learning process (Richards, 1998; Brush & Saye, 2000). Students are more active and more responsible in a classroom integrated with technology and constructivist methods (Grant, 2002).

Furthermore, technological tools help students raise interest to the subject, adjust learning time better and present authentic environments to learn (Gilakjani, Leong & İsmail, 2013). Lancy (1990) also asserts computers play an effective role in describing problems, evaluating information, problem solving and drawing conclusions. Taking all these ideas and research into account, a technology-enhanced learning environment could contribute a lot to foreign or second language learning. There are various numbers of technological tools to mention.

2.3 Technological Tools In Education

The Internet has dramatically changed the way people live and it has contributed a lot to the field of education. Technological development of education owes a lot to papers, pens, boards, board markers, cassette players and so on since they were significant advances

when it is thought of from an historical perspective. However, with the help of the Internet, not only the tools mentioned but also brand new ones that run on the Internet have reshaped classrooms, teaching and learning methods. Teachers have become like magicians creating an illusion in the class (Lehtonen, Page & Thorsteinsson, 2006), with their smart board markers as their wands and smart boards as their performance stage. They can create a great number of authentic and attractive contexts with some clicks of their markers on the board attaching videos, pictures and/or songs in seconds and help learners visualize, listen and see the knowledge taught. Therefore, learners have a better understanding of the topic and they are encouraged to think critically and see behind the walls.

The use of Web-enhanced technologies, especially Web 2.0 technologies like blogs and social networks, started to be introduced into education programs in the late 1990s (Enonbun, 2010). As learners born in the very late 20th century are described as digital natives (Prensky, 2001), they are already familiar with such technological tools in their daily lives and did not have difficulty in adapting the new atmosphere. Moreover, as Tiene & Luft (2001) states, they have potentially positive outcomes out of learning in a technology-rich environment such as motivation increase and social interaction improvement.

For a language classroom, there are number of applications for technology. Computers are one the most important tools that are used in classrooms. That's why, many schools are investing so much in computers since they offer varied opportunities to student learning to reform education through technology (Becker, 2001). In language learning, computers are used for dictionaries, developing certain language skills, grammar exercises, informative games, wide range of research and etc. Using technology in the language-learning

environment has a number of advantages. Dunkel (1990) asserted those advantages as self esteem, vocational preparedness, language proficiency and overall improved academic skills. In addition, Warschauer (1996) noted that a technology-enhanced learning environment not only provides a limitless number of resources but also motivates students for a better language learning experience.

Computers allow learners to choose their own speed of learning, method, and their own vocabulary to reflect their interests (Atwell, 1999). English language teachers are aware of these advantages and try to raise awareness to use computers in their lessons (Coniam, 2004). Moreover, with its widespread use around the world, the Internet is considered to be incorporated into language classes. According to Linder (2004), the Internet has a potential to be an indispensable language learning tool in the future not only inside but also outside of the classroom. For instance, instead of listening to CDs only in classroom, learners have lots of options like self-material listening products and online podcasts with which they can have extra practice.

Podcasts are digital audio or video files that are regularly updated and downloadable. They can also be subscribed to so that when new content is available, users can have it automatically. As these files are portable, they can be listened to anytime and anywhere the user wishes to (Diem, 2005), on their mp3 players, computers or smart phones. According to Meng (2005), some possible use of podcasts that are helpful for language learners are being able to reach teacher's notes, lectures distributed directly to student's devices, meeting and conference notes and student projects and project support interviews.

Another Internet-based technology is mail groups, which allows members of a group to receive the same message helping the development of a discussion on a specific topic. Mail

groups are useful means for written communication outside the class. Teachers can send their instructions via mail groups and students can send their assignments and each mail is chronologically listed and archieved. Mail groups also encourage learners to write e-mails to learners who are in other countries, which creates an authentic communicative atmosphere. In addition to e-mails, instant messaging programs that are used almost everyday are also popular and widely used by teachers and learners to promote language learning. Researchers indicate that (Alsaleem, 2013; Allagui, 2013; Bouhnik & Deshen, 2014) these programs improve language skills of learners as well as give them the joy of being active on social media. Therefore, learners have a chance to discover the potential of this type of communication.

Social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook are also being used as Internet-based learning environments. Today's young adults and children spend most of their time in front of a computer (Subrahmanyam, Kraut, Greenfield & Gross, 2000). English and Duncan-Howell (2008) note that most learners have either Facebook or Twitter membership to communicate with their family or friends. English language teachers have tried to convert these sites into an educational setting to take advantage of them as a learning base. Cain & Policastri (2011) claim that "when used as a teaching tool, new social media applications may offer distinct advantages for teaching today's students. The use of social media applications in teaching and learning has garnered substantial interest among educators" (p. 1). Teachers and learners are already familiar with these sites, so it is easy for teachers to use those sites and it is both enjoyable and informative for learners to improve their written communicative skills per se. Sharing and discussing ideas with their peers are great advantages for learners. Studies (Mazer, Murphy & Simons, 2007; Kabilan, Ahmad, Abidin & 2010; Shih, 2011) also confirm that networking sites have positive effects on

motivation and language learning.

One of the most recent and popular ways of technology use is electronic portfolios (e-portfolios) that help learners improve their writing skills. With e-portfolios, it is easy to track students' achievement and progress. Furthermore, they are easier to access than paper-based portfolios, which can be heavy and take up a serious amount of space. DiBiase (2002) asserts "it (e-portfolio) fosters a reflective approach to learning, the process of e-portfolio development encourages students to become more actively involved in planning, and more responsible for achieving, their own educational goals" (p.8). E-portfolios help students control their own learning, reflect on their activities and plan their future accordingly as well as providing a student centered view of learning rather than course centered (Banks, 2004). It also encourages continuing professional development.

Another worth mentioning web-based tool is blogs, which is a more interactive platform than e-portfolios and can be used in an educational setting.

2.4. Blogs

Blogs, shortened version for weblogs, started to be used in 1999 and since then they have been an important tool for language education. Campbell (2003) describes blogs as "an online journal that an individual can continuously update with his/her own words, ideas and thoughts through software that enables one to easily do so" (para 1). Anyone with an e-mail address can easily sign up and create a blog (Kazancı, 2012). Although blogs included some links to "little-known corners of the web" or some interesting articles that a blog editor, or blogger, thinks worth reading in the first place, they now include not only links but also images, audio files, videos and personal thoughts like a weekend note or a reflection on a specific subject (Blood, 2000). Blogs have been very popular since they do

not require any technical background knowledge, which makes them easy to use.

Blogs provide an online web page for those who want to be "heard". A blog is a platform that gives an individual an audience (Solomon & Schrum, 2007). In this sense, anyone who has an idea can express it and readers can comment on it by creating a collaborative environment. In addition, blogs are easy and free to use and bearing young adults' and children's interest in technology in mind, they are increasingly popular. As of 2014, two of the most used blog hosting websites, Tumblr and Wordpress, have 250 million blogs combined. It means there are over one fourth of a million blogs around the world in existence.

In the field of education, benefits of blogs began to be recognized by teachers. There is an increase in the use of blogs in language education since the beginning of the 21st century (Arena, 2008; Hernandez-Ramos, 2004). English language teachers consider blogs to be efficient as Davis (2006) asserts "Blogging lets many more become engaged. Blogging can be a place where we can make connections and dig deeper into how and what we are learning, both student and teacher" (para. 5). Teachers take advantage of blogs especially for improving writing skills (Downes, 2004) as students post and comment, they engage in communicative activities with their teacher and peers in a networked place, in which "writing has social meaning and public consequences" (Benson & Reyman, 2009, p. 1).

Blogs are considered effective for the development of critical thinking skills as well as increasing motivation and raising interest for language learners because as Kennedy (2003) states, they are writing for a real audience and not only for their instructor, so that they are having a more authentic writing experience. Moreover, readers can easily comment on what is written and this two-way communication between a blogger and a reader facilitate

discussion and improves convincing and argumentative skills on both sides (Bakar, 2009). In other words, Blogs offer students self-awareness and self-determination within an environment where they can have a chance to learn from each other and this kind of sharing knowledge is actually the basis of a constructivist approach for language learning (Blackmore-Squires, 2010).

Johnson (2004) gives five advantages of blogs to students. The first one is that students have access to the notes online. In addition to previewing, they can also review the materials after class. Therefore, they do not have to deal with finding lesson notes when they are absent or will not suspect any missing ones. Secondly, students will be connecting to the Internet while they are using blogs, which makes them easier to use an online dictionary and find the meanings of unknown vocabulary. This opportunity helps them save time and focus more on the content of the post. The third advantage is that since materials are archived according to reverse chronological order in blogs (latest post comes first), they will reach whatever they want easily and in an organized way. Fourthly, as students comment on each other's posts, they have a chance to get feedback from their peers as well as their instructors, which supports their individual learning. The last advantage is that students can observe their progress; how their writing has changed, what new words and structures they have learnt overtime.

With these advantages in mind, students may be guided to keep writing portfolios to see their self-development. Furthermore, blogs can be used as discussion forums in which students talk about a lesson or even their hobbies and interests. Blogging provides a sense of belonging for both teachers and students and help them feel as a community in which each individual's sayings matter (Arena, 2008).

Numerous types of blogs are used in education. According to Campbell (2003), there are three types of blogs, which are class blogs, teacher blogs and learner blogs.

Class blogs that are created by English Language teachers aim to encourage learners to be a part of online communication outside of school time. Learners, without any time restriction, can reach the blog and can comment on the topics that teachers provide. Class blogs are not only used for sharing knowledge but also providing feedback and assessment (Zhang & Olfman, 2010). Via class blogs, teachers have the opportunity to know their students better in terms of language knowledge, personality, thoughts and attitudes. Moreover, learners have the chance of knowing and understanding their peers better.

Teachers may also set up blogs for their classes to give instructions to their learners. Teacher blogs provide useful links and/or resources for learners. Therefore, it makes it easier for students to get the instructions, turn in their assignments, and reach class material uploaded by their teacher. In addition, with videos, photos or audio files added by teachers, learners discover authentic language learning tools.

Learner blogs are run by the learners themselves and used as a self-expression platform. Learners may use their blogs as a portfolio page or as a diary. Each member of the class can follow other members' blogs and post comments on them. Therefore, learners improve their written communication skills. Efimova and Fiedler (2004) express that learner blogs give learners a cooperative language-learning environment, in which learners can benefit from feedback all the time that keeps them interested in the lesson.

2.5. Writing

When a foreign language is being learnt, the main aim is to understand and to be understood by people using that language; in other words, to communicate. When it comes

to written communication, it can be said that it is often used for academic or business purposes. For this reason, writing should not be given less importance than the other skills; on the contrary, it should be practiced equally with those since writing is effective and necessity to master the language. As Abidin, Pour-Mohammadi, and Hamid (2011) state, while writing, it is not only hands but also the brain and eyes working in cooperation so that learners can express their ideas freely by thinking and imagining.

Moreover, in writing courses, learners have time to think and plan before they put their pen on paper, which is not the case in speaking. They may want to check grammar books, dictionaries or other sources to learn how to use the language accurately (Harmer, 2004).

Writing is more difficult than other skills, though. The first communicative skill that is developed in humans is listening, which is followed by speaking. Hence, as Harmer (2004) states, all human beings grow up using listening and speaking in their languages, and then writing is usually taught after accomplishing listening and speaking skills. Nevertheless, writing is a significant skill to develop, and it is not easy to learn how to write properly as it is a process which needs more than moving one's pencil. While learning a first language, it is listening and speaking that takes place, which do not require the systematic use of language; those skills are used for communication. However, systematic language is taught in formal schools, which cause learners to feel that writing is difficult and unnatural (Raimes, 1983). Furthermore, writing is used for academic or business purposes, which means it has certain defined rules and formulizations.

Various methods and approaches have been applied to help learners write more effectively. Process writing, free writing, paragraph pattern approach, communicative approach and creative writing are among the widely used approaches. The aim of these approaches is

similar, but they differ in terms of application. For instance, since it has its roots from the behaviorist theory, product writing gives more importance to grammar and vocabulary whereas free writing encourages learners to write for real communicative purposes in a more fluent way, focusing less on grammatical errors, which will naturally develop as learners begin to understand how to organize their ideas (Scott, 1996). Likewise, learners using communicative approach to write are expected to produce informal texts for communication, mostly among their peers. Therefore, in this approach interaction between learners should be encouraged. The process writing approach, on the other hand, focuses on stages. Learners first think of a question or a problem and brainstorm before they begin to produce. Afterwards, they can write their first drafts, then get teacher and peer feedback. With this kind of social and constructivist based writing courses, learners have an opportunity to improve their writing performance.

The use of technological tools such as the Internet can support these writing strategies and approaches. The Internet leads the way for generating ideas and research. With the changing role of the teacher, from being the only source of knowledge to an active facilitator of learning, learners are the ones who make learning occur. According to Boas (2011), as the Internet is multilingual, online resources can help learners to use English for their online tasks. In addition, as learners have a chance to interact with their peers outside of the classroom environment, it is easy for them to learn collaboratively, especially when this situation is supported by teacher feedback and assistance.

2.5.1. Peer Feedback

According to Hansen & Lui (2004), peer feedback has a great impact on students' learning within process and collaborative writing process. Instead of a teacher being the only

feedback provider, learners ought to be encouraged to give each other feedback, which is considered to support their idea development as well as their communication and collaboration with their peers. By getting feedback, learners have the opportunity to look at their writing from a different angle, and by giving feedback they guide their peers to a more successful writing. Atay & Kurt (2006) states that learners interacting with each other can lower their anxiety and their motivation will increase. Also, learners increase their confidence by sharing ideas with their peers. Using blogs can provide a suitable environment for this kind of sharing and improving.

2.5.2. Computer-Mediated Feedback

Computer-mediated feedback may also have positive effects on learners as it decreases psychological pressure of face-to-face feedback (Ho & Savignon, 2007). It also "provides a non-stress environment for learners who are shy or overly concerned about their oral language proficiency" (Huang, 1998, p. 2). Learners are more involved in their learning and more motivated. DiGiovanni & Nagaswami (2001) found out that it is really beneficial for learners to receive feedback when they are in front of the computer.

2.5.3. Teacher Feedback

Teacher feedback shows the recipient how to be correct, accurate and appropriate (Mottet, 2008). After the peer reviews, the teacher, if necessary, guides learners to be organized and correct the drafts. Revising their drafts is significant for learners for their final submission. Teacher feedback that is provided via blogs also means interaction between the teacher and learners is still continuing even when they are outside of the classroom

2.6. Related Studies

Blogs, with their increasing popularity, have an important role in teaching language skills. Therefore, various studies have been conducted to understand its role in foreign language education. Blogs have mainly been used for developing learners' basic skills and setting up an authentic atmosphere for sharing experiences, ideas and knowledge. Taking limited lesson times into consideration, it can be said that using blogs give learners the opportunity to practice the language outside of school time and thus boost their motivation. Furthermore, blogs provide a learning environment in which the learning process is combined with the real world, which reflects the social constructivist perspective as using blogs is considered to trigger learning through social interaction. For this reason, the effects of using blogs have been investigated from three perspectives: peer feedback, learner success and students' attitudes.

In a general sense, research has revealed that using blogs has a positive effect on learner' success, peer feedback encourages learners to interact with their peers and learn from them, and learners have a positive attitude towards using blogs. Studies dealing with each of these three perspectives will be presented in detail in the following sections.

2.6.1. Peer Feedback Through Using Blogs

Blogs allow their users to comment on the writings of others while providing a constructivist-learning environment for language teachers and learners. Therefore, various researchers in the field of teaching English as a second or foreign language try to find out the effects of peer feedback. Sayed (2010) examined the effects of using blogs in terms of peer feedback in an experimental study with twenty-seven EFL business management students at the community college in Bisha, King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia. He

used a pre-test/post-test experimental and control group design in which the experimental group practiced persuasive writing giving and receiving peer feedback through an online class blog whereas the control group practiced persuasive writing giving and receiving face-to-face peer feedback among all members of the group inside the classroom. The results revealed that the experimental group outperformed the control group in terms of means of score for persuasive writing. This superiority of the experimental group over the control group is attributed to the effectiveness of the blog-based peer feedback that the experimental group students received on their persuasive writing.

A similar study was conducted by Vurdien (2011) with eleven students who were studying for the Certificate in Advanced English (CAE) examination at a language school in Spain. For this study, participants created their learner blogs and were asked to read and comment on each other's writing. According to the results, learners showed more attention to avoid errors and expressed their ideas more clearly thanks to feedback from their peers. Moreover, learners' collaborative skills were also fostered.

Similarly, Kitchakarn (2013) investigated how Vietnamese EFL students use blogs to practice writing, examined whether student comments help in peer revision, and evaluated whether peer comments improved the writing drafts. 11 students in an EFL classroom in Vietnam participated in the study. Data were collected via students' first and final drafts for two writing topics, comments posted online, and a questionnaire responded to by students. The findings indicate that most students expressed positive attitudes toward using blogs to practice second language writing. In addition, there is strong evidence that students' comments on their peers' drafts helped them to revise their own final drafts.

In a similar study, Tseng & Tsai (2007) studied the effect of online peer assessment in high schools with 184 10th graders. Each student was asked to create an online itinerary project suitable for his/her classmate. After that, students were asked to comment on their classmates' projects anonymously. Then, they were asked to revise their own projects by taking their peers' comments and suggestions. The results showed that students significantly improved their projects after involving the peer assessment activities.

In another study by Ciftci & Kocoglu (2012), the effect of online peer feedback through blogs was investigated on Turkish EFL students' writing performance as well as their perceptions. There were a control group consisting of 15 classroom-based students who attended in-class writing activities and face-to-face oral discussions and an experimental group consisting of 15 blog-based students who attended classes in the computer laboratory and used blog peer feedback for their process oriented writing classes. Data were collected by using a survey that evaluates Turkish EFL students' background, with interviews held at the beginning and end of the term, first and revised drafts and a questionnaire given at the end of semester. The results showed that the students in both the control and experimental group improved their writing in their revised drafts. However, those who were in the experimental group showed higher performance in revised drafts. Also, the analysis of interviews and end-of-semester questionnaires revealed positive perceptions on the use of blogs in their writing classes.

Nguyen (2012) studied the effects of peer feedback activity through blogs on students' writing ability and examined their attitudes towards peer feedback activity. He conducted his research using a single group pre-test, post-test design with 34 second-year students who studied English for Expressing Ideas course at Bangkok University. Two writings tests and a questionnaire were used to collect data. The results showed that students'

writing scores on the post-test was better than those on the pre-test, which concludes that peer feedback activity through blogs had a significant role to play in improving students' writing skill. Moreover, the students expressed positive attitudes towards the value of peer feedback activity.

In another study, Tai, Lin & Yang (2015) compared single teacher-led feedback method and the effects of the combination of teacher-led feedback and peer review (TF + PR) on the writing performance of English as a foreign language (EFL) university students in a collaborative online learning system. Participants were 107 undergraduate students majoring in nursing. Their results revealed that the students in the TF + PR group demonstrated greater improvements than those who received only TF in terms of holistic writing skills and the subscales of content, organization, grammar, mechanics, and style.

2.6.2. Students' Attitudes towards Using Blogs

Learners improve their writing skills with the help of feedback while using blogs. Furthermore, their attitude towards the use of blogs is another topic that has been discussed by many researchers. Blogs that are thought to have a positive effect on learner success also affect learners' motivation. Several studies have been done to investigate learners' view of using blogs to improve their writing skills. Mynard (2008) studied twenty-two female Japanese students who spent a semester studying English in the United Kingdom as part of their two- year college program. Their level was pre-intermediate and their ages were 18 and 19. The participants were accustomed to keeping non-graded blogs in the first semester. Then, they were invited to continue this practice in a blog form in the second semester for 12 weeks. They wrote about everyday activities, their feelings about exams

their environment as well as their reflections about language learning. The findings showed that blogs are effective tools to encourage learners to reflect on their learning process.

In another study, Ahluwalia, Gupta, Aggarwal (2011) introduced blogs to forty-two first year engineering students from a college in India. These students were asked to write a practical record of communication skills' class activities on their blogs rather than on their files. At the end of the semester, the students answered a survey that is related to their attitudes toward writing their practical records on blogs, commenting on others' posts, and difficulties that they experienced. Also, the researchers made interviews with six students to get a better understanding about their blogging process. According to the results, the students showed positive attitudes toward blogging activities. Thirty-three students out of forty-two stated that they enjoyed posting, reading comments of their classmates and commenting on others' posts. A year later, the researcher did a follow-up study with the same group of students although the number of the responses the researchers got was 16 out of 42. However, these 16 students stated that they like using blogs and admitted that blogs are "an interesting way to be in touch with others."

In another study concerning learners' attitudes towards the blog use, Miyazoe and Anderson (2010) used three different online writing activities -forums, blogs and Wikis- with 61 university students in Japan. Forums were used for discussion related to topics, blogs were used as an optional writing activity and Wikis were set in the aim of conducting collaborative translation from English to Japanese. Questionnaires and interviews indicated that students found these online writing tools effective and they stated that the process was useful and encouraging.

In a different study, Hsu & Wang & Comac (2008) investigated the use of audioblogs to improve English instruction of a language teacher and evaluated students' attitude towards using these blogs. 22 international students participated in the study. The main aim of their lesson was speaking and listening. Therefore, students recorded their oral assignments through mobile phones and created personal blogs for themselves to upload and submit their assignments. The teacher applied the same procedure to give feedback to her students. The researchers used surveys, interviews, open-ended questions, and analyzed each blog. According to the results, audioblogs make English instruction easier and provide an effective and useful method to evaluate students' oral performances. In addition, results indicated that students concentrated more on their assignments, had a chance to establish their own learning and all in all, enjoyed using blogs.

In another study, Aljumah (2012) conducted research with 35 undergraduate students in The Department of English Language at Qassim University, Saudi Arabia. In this study, learners created their blogs and were asked to write one entry of 150 words per week during a semester, and commenting on two or three of their classmates' blogs. The contents of their entries were based on classroom context. After the semester, the questionnaire was completed and open-ended questions were asked to students to understand their attitude for the project. Responses indicated that students have a favorable perception towards blog use in their writing classroom, their interest and motivation increased to use English.

In a similar study, Simsek (2009) investigated the effects of blog integrated writing instruction on students' writing performance as well as students' perception toward blog use in their writing courses with 77 undergraduate students in the Department of Primary Education at Marmara University. Data collected through students, written products and

questionnaires indicated that blog integrated writing instruction improved the writing performance of students.

Zarei & Al-Shboul (2013) conducted a similar study with 10 postgraduate Jordanian EFL Learners who attended English Intensive Course. They collected data through semi-structured interview questions regarding learners' feedback on their perceptions to the integrated blog. The data they obtained was recorded, transcribed and described by the researchers and lastly analyzed qualitatively. According to the findings, students consider the blog as an interesting and helpful tool since interacting via blog helped them improve their English language skills and their peer feedback. Therefore, the role of the blog for Jordanian EFL learners is really significant as it allowed them to exchange their experiences and ideas with peers. Also, it enhanced their English language learning process.

2.6.3. The Blog Use and Student Success

The researchers have done various studies on the use of blogs and results indicate that blogs improve learners' motivation, help them experience an effective learning environment and create positive attitudes. Therefore, learners' success rates are increasing accordingly. For instance, Sun (2010) investigated the effects of extensive writing by comparing the writing performance in the first three and the last three blog entries written by 23 undergraduate students at a university in Taiwan. A survey was conducted to have a better understanding of the participants' blogging process and their attitudes towards blogging. Under the light of his results, it is clear that blogs have a positive impact on participants' overall writing performance, help participants monitor their own writing process, and promote positive attitudes toward foreign-language writing. According to

findings, it can be concluded that writing blogs in an online environment could be beneficial in enhancing learners' writing skills and motivation to foster learner autonomy.

In a similar study, Tu, Chen & Lee (2007) tried to explore the effect of the application of Weblog to promote EFL students' English writing competency. A guided-writing instruction and a questionnaire survey were used to collect data. 34 eighth graders at a junior high school in Taiwan participated in the study. Participants were supposed to complete web-based guided writing tasks. After having finished the writing drafts, they got reviews from both their teacher and peers. Lastly, a questionnaire was administered to find out EFL learners' attitudes toward Weblog writing and their strategies for web-based guided writing. The results revealed that learners had a positive experience by using blogs to learn writing in English.

In another study, Arslan and Şahin-Kızıl (2010) studied two groups of students: a control group who received in-class, process-oriented writing instruction, and an experimental group who integrated blogs into their writing process by using blogging software. The researchers tried to shed light on whether the use of blog software as a supplementary tool for the writing process enhanced learners' writing performance. According to the findings, the experimental group had better results than the control group, specifically in the areas of content and organization. Hence, it can be suggested that the use of blogs in writing classes enhances students' performance.

In a similar study by Taki & Fardafshari (2012), the effect of weblog-based collaborative learning on young Iranian EFL learners' writing skills and motivation was investigated. The researchers selected two groups of learners from a language institute in Iran. Each group consisted of 40 female students. The control group attended classes while the

students in the experimental group were asked to put their writing assignments on the weblog. Students were responsible for reading each other's writings and make comments and sometimes corrections. A pre-test was administered to understand the participants' initial behavior in writing. Then, a parallel test was applied at the end of the study to see the effect of the process on the students' final behavior in writing. Finally, a questionnaire was also used to check the blogger's motivation. Data analyzed showed that the experimental group learning through blog-integrated and collaborative learning instruction was more successful than the control group who received in-class language learning instructions. Moreover, the results indicated that using blogs promotes motivation and fosters autonomy for learners.

Similarly, Lin, Li, Hung & Huang (2014) conducted a comparative experiment with two groups of EFL college students to find the effects of blogging as an approach to journal writing in the EFL writing classroom. In this 26-week-comparative research, the experimental group was asked to write blog entries daily; on the other hand, the control group had to do so using traditional pen-and-paper methods. Data were collected through a writing test and a semi-structured survey. It has been found that blogging a journal led the students to achieve a greater enhancement in their writing than did the regular pen-and-paper treatment. Additionally, the experimental group was more confident than the control group, which suggests that blogging is a useful approach for students to improve writing skills.

In another study, Amir, Ismail, and Hussin (2011) studied how weblogs could be used in the classroom to improve students' collaborative writing with 80 English Language Studies and Literature program at a university in Malaysia. The participants were required to post six weblog posts given a topic during their 14-week semester, and then a survey

questionnaire was applied. It was found that students did benefit from blogging to enhance their writing skills, as they were becoming more careful in terms of grammar and vocabulary, more motivated and self-aware after getting reviews for each draft.

Similarly, Al-Mudallal (2013) investigated the effect of using the weblog as a supportive tool to learn and teach English for writing performance and the process writing approach. There were 40 participants, a control group of 20 students, and an experimental one of 20 students who were studying at a high school in Palestine. The researcher used pre and post attitude scales, a process writing questionnaire designed to find out how students took advantage of this type of writing before and after the study, and a writing achievement test to measure how students performed in their writings. The results revealed that the mean scores of the experimental group outperformed the ones of the control group in a post writing achievement test, which shows that blogging helped the experimental group improve their writing performance. Moreover, the process-writing questionnaire indicated that mean scores of the experimental group is higher than the scores of the control group.

It can be seen that many researchers have studied blogs. For instance, Sayed (2010), Vurdien (2011), Kitchakarn (2013), Tseng & Tsai (2007), Ciftci & Kocoglu (2012), Nguyen (2012) and Tai & Lin & Yang (2015) studied peer feedback through using blogs and its effects on learners' writing skills. The results of these studies showed that peer feedback has a positive and motivating effect on learners' writing skills.

Similarly, Mynard (2008), Ahluwalia, Gupta, Aggarwal (2011), Miyazoe and Anderson (2010), Hsu & Wang & Comac (2008), Aljumah (2012), Simsek (2009) and Zarei & Al-Shboul (2013) investigated students' attitudes towards using blogs. According to their

results, blogging not only helps learners have positive attitudes in their lessons but also motivates them to improve their writing skills.

Sun (2010), Tu & Chen & Lee (2007), Arslan and Şahin-Kızıl (2010), Taki & Fardafshari (2012), Lin & Li & Hung & Huang (2014), Amir, Ismail, and Hussin (2011) and Al-Mudallal (2013) investigated the relation between blog use and learner success, and their findings indicate that the use of blogs mostly enhanced learner outcomes in writing.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Method

The methodology used for the present study is a quasi-experimental research design, a type of evaluation that tries to find out whether a program or intervention has the desired effect on a study's participants (NCTI, 2011). As the most common form of a quasi-experimental study includes a pre-test and a post-test design with both an experimental group and a control group, the present study was conducted accordingly.

3.2. Settings

This study took place in Antalya International University (AIU) School of Foreign Languages classes in Antalya, Turkey. The medium of instruction in AIU is English. Therefore, it is compulsory to finish preparatory classes successfully to start a department. AIU preparatory classes' main aim is to help students to understand their lessons and express themselves both written and orally without experiencing any problem in English when students start their departments.

Learners begin AIU preparatory classes by taking a placement test prepared by the testing department of the school of foreign languages and according to the points they get, they are divided into levels. Each level lasts 8 weeks with a different number of lesson hours. This study was conducted with the participation of students from B1 level. In this level, students have twenty-three hours of English each week: thirteen hours for mainstream instruction, five hours for reading and five hours for writing. Mainstream lessons consist of all four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. In addition, there are vocabulary

and grammar exercises in each skill. Besides a course pack for mainstream lessons, a reading package for reading and a writing pack for writing lessons were used to enhance learners' academic levels. Each lesson has its own syllabus. The writing pack used included run-on sentence exercises, conjunction exercises, short essay organization activities, grammar points and paragraph completion exercises. These exercises were completed prior to the writing phase for each topic.

This study was implemented in the context of the writing course. Although the topic studied by learners were non-academic, its aim was to improve learners' overall academic and organizational writing performance.

Throughout the academic year, the learners had four terms. In the first term, students studied the sentence structure. They learnt how to form grammatical and meaningful sentences with information given. Then, they wrote very short paragraphs using these sentences in order to do activities such as introducing themselves and other people like their friends or celebrities. They also learnt chunks and important punctuation.

In the second term, they studied linking sentences to express their opinions in a paragraph. In the paragraph phase, students learnt how to brainstorm and organize their ideas for the aim of understanding paragraph structure and organization. Students were given theoretical information about creating an outline. Diagrams and outline sheets were used for this phase. Therefore, students had a chance to write down their notes and ideas organizing their supporting details and wrap-up sentences before they started writing.

In the third term, students used above mentioned diagrams and outline sheets to combine their paragraphs and write their essays. In this term, learners studied both opinion and compare-contrast essay. Before they began writing each essay, they did brainstorming

activities. Then, they filled their diagrams to organize their ideas. These diagrams first were peer checked. After that, their final diagrams were checked by their writing teacher and learners were asked to write their the first draft of their essays. Their peers checked the first drafts and the learners gave each other feedback. After receiving feedback, the learners wrote their second draft. The teacher checked the second drafts. The teacher used error correction symbols for correction and gave oral feedback about paragraph and essay organization. In the end, the learners wrote their third and final drafts and were told to add these to their folders. This phase was the same for all writing topics.

In the fourth and the last term, students were taught argumentative essay in addition to opinion and compare-contrast essays. They wrote two different topics using the same process as in the third term. Conjunction exercises, paragraph completion activities and grammar points were studied in detail. In the end, the learners wrote their essays related to what they had learned in the chapter. Peers checked their first drafts, and then second drafts were written, which were checked by the teacher. Lastly, third and final drafts were written.

At the end of each level, the learners' writings or drafts for each topic were checked by the class teacher and given back to the learners for safekeeping.

3.3. Participants

The participants were 28 Turkish EFL learners from two classes in Antalya International University (AIU) School of Foreign Languages. The level of participants was determined according to the placement exam applied by the School of Foreign Languages at the beginning of the term. According to the placement exam, the learners in both the control and experimental groups were revealed to be at the A1 level. After 2 8-week terms, the

learners were randomly placed into classes according to the grades they received on the AIU School of Foreign Languages A2 completion examination, through which the learners were tested on their listening, language use, reading, speaking and writing skills. They were then ready to take their B1 level courses. Therefore, all of the learners were at the level of B1 with respect to the criteria of the *Common European Framework of References for Languages* (*CEFR*, 2001); gender difference was not taken into account.

Once the groups were confirmed, learners were asked to write an essay in order to be used as a pre-test activity. The procedures and instruments used in the study will be given in detail in the following section. Before the study, all the learners were informed about the purpose of the research. They allowed the researcher to use the data collected during the study by signing a questionnaire according to which the written material on the blogs created by the learners would only be used for academic purposes and their names and web addresses would be kept confidential.

3.4. Data Gathering Instruments

The learners level was determined by three examinations applied by AIU School of Foreign languages. The first one was the proficiency exam applied in the beginning of the academic year to decide on all the level of learners. The second one was an A1 completion exam applied after the first 8-week module to find out whether the learners fulfilled the needs of A1 and the last one was an A2 level completion exam after 2 8-week modules. The other instruments used to collect data were writing tasks, questionnaires, pre-test and post-test scores. A detailed description of the data gathering instruments will be given in the following section.

3.4.1. Proficiency Exam

This was a computer-based exam conducted by the AIU School of Foreign Languages at the beginning of the term to determine the levels of all of the learners in the program. In order to have a valid exam, multiple-choice questions were used, as there were more than 900 participants.

3.4.2. A1 Level Completion Exam

After the 8-week module, the A1 level completion exam was prepared by the testing and evaluation department of AIU School of Foreign Languages. This exam type is for basic level English language learners, which evaluates learners' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

3.4.3. A2 Level Completion Exam

After the 2 8-week modules, the A2 level completion exam was prepared by the testing and evaluation department of AIU School of Foreign Languages. This exam type is used for English language learners who are considered to be ready to be an independent user of the language, and it evaluates learners' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

3.4.4. Pre-Test

After the first two weeks of the third term of English language education, a pre-test, which included two essay questions, was applied. Learners were taught necessary information and procedure for writing an essay before the pre-test. The aim for the pre-test was to determine whether there was a difference between the control group and the experimental group. To ensure reliability, the English teacher giving the writing lesson, the class teacher and a research assistant from Akdeniz University Department of English Language

Teaching evaluated the papers. According to the results, there was no statistically significant difference between the groups. The mean score of the control group was 40.5, and the mean score for the experimental group was 41.1. The scores of the control group ranged between 30 and 66, while the standard deviation was 6.90. Similarly, the scores of the experimental group fell between 31 and 59, and the standard deviation was 7.12.

3.4.5. The Internet Use Questionnaire

In order to collect data from the learners about their Internet use and frequencies, a questionnaire including 14 items were applied to both the control and the experimental group. The questionnaire was adapted and renewed through reviewing related studies in the field (Kazancı, 2012, Bashir & Mahmood & Shafique, 2008; Malik & Mahmood 2009). The participants were asked to answer items on a 5-point Likert scale with options ranging from totally agree (1) to disagree(5). In the analyzing process, the-end points were merged to see positive and negative tendencies in general. Therefore, responses for "agree" and "totally agree" options were collected under one section as "agree"; similarly, responses for "disagree" and "totally disagree" fell under one section as "disagree". The questionnaire shows the learners' attitudes towards the Internet, their knowledge and usage of the Internet, blog pages, e-mails and using the Internet for homework purposes were surveyed (see Appendix A). It was concluded from the questionnaire that there were no significant differences between the control group and the experimental group in terms of their Internet use or their attitudes and knowledge about using blogs. Hence, the participants have similar attitudes and knowledge, which shows no significant differences, could impact the study.

The Analysis of the Questionnaire for the Control Group

		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
	Questionnaire Items	%	F	%	f	%	f
1	I think the Internet is useful	100	14	0	0	0	0
2	The Internet makes my life easy	93	13	1	7	0	0
3	I log on the Internet every day	93	13	0	0	7	1
4	I do my homework by using the Internet	64	9	29	4	7	1
5	I read comments on the Internet	93	13	7	1	0	0
6	I write comments on the Internet	43	6	36	5	21	3
7	I check my e-mails everyday	57	8	36	5	7	1
8	I like communication via e-mails	50	7	36	5	14	2
9	I send at least 1 e-mail everyday	29	4	14	2	57	8
10	I know how to use blogs	50	7	36	5	14	2
11	I find the information on blogs helpful	86	12	14	2	0	0
12	I follow blog pages	29	4	21	3	50	7
13	I read comments on blog pages	50	7	36	5	14	2
14	I write comments on blog pages	7	1	43	6	50	7

The Analysis of the Internet Use Questionnaire for the Experimental Group

		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
	Questionnaire Items	%	F	%	f	%	f
1	I think the Internet is useful	100	14	0	0	0	0
2	The Internet makes my life easy	100	14	0	0	0	0
3	I log on the Internet every day	86	12	7	1	7	1
4	I do my homework by using the Internet	57	8	36	5	7	1
5	I read comments on the Internet	79	11	21	3	0	0
6	I write comments on the Internet	43	6	43	6	14	2
7	I check my e-mails everyday	50	7	50	7	0	0

8	I like communication via e-mails	57	8	36	5	7	1
9	I send at least 1 e-mail everyday	29	4	21	3	50	7
10	I know how to use blogs	50	7	36	5	14	2
11	I find the information on blogs helpful	72	10	21	3	7	1
12	I follow blog pages	43	6	36	5	21	3
13	I read comments on blog pages	50	7	36	5	14	2
14	I write comments on blog pages	14	2	36	5	50	7

3.4.6. Teacher and Learner Blogs

In order to conduct the study, learners were introduced to www.wordpress.com, a major blog provider which is available free of charge (Tomberg, 2013). In the beginning, learners were taught how to sign up to wordpress.com using their e-mail addresses (see Appendix B). After that, the teacher blog was set up in advance and shown to the experimental group. Finally, the writing teacher demonstrated how to post blog pages and comment on others in class using a class computer. The aim for creating a teacher blog was to help learners collect data, get inspiration for their writing topics, to show them sample diagrams and outline sheets (see Appendix C) and to make them feel the collaborative studying environment. In addition, learners followed the deadlines and had a chance to see in-class materials in case they were absent.

3.4.7. Post-Test

After applying classical writing lessons for 5 weeks to the control group and the blog-integrated writing lessons to the experimental group, a post-test that is identical to the pre-test was administered to both groups. (see Appendix E). The results were evaluated by the same two English teachers at AIU School of Foreign Languages as well as a research

assistant at Akdeniz University Department of English Language Teaching. The results revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the control and the experimental group. While the mean score for the control group was 46.4, the mean score for the experimental group was 62. The scores of the control group are between 37 and 71 and the standard deviation is 7.32. However, the scores of the experimental group are between 43 and 81, and the standard deviation is 7.65.

3.4.8. The Blog Use Evaluation Questionnaire

A questionnaire was applied to the experimental group after a five-week period of study. At first, there were approximately 75 questions prepared by the researcher by reviewing questionnaires in the related literature. The second step was to combine similar questions and eliminate extra and some unrelated ones. After this phase, the number of items on the questionnaire was reduced to 35. This 35-item questionnaire was examined by three researchers: an experienced instructor in questionnaire development from Akdeniz University Department of Educational Sciences and two English language instructors. Consequently, the number of items was finalized as 22 and was used as a data collecting instrument to evaluate the attitudes of the learners towards the use of blog for writing lessons in the current study (see Appendix F). Learners evaluated the use of blog application for writing lessons after 5-weeks in a writing course through the questionnaire and according to the results, most of the students in the experimental group found using blogs for writing lessons beneficial. The post-test scores of the group also supported the results of the questionnaire.

3.5. Data Collection

At the beginning of the study, a pre-test and the Internet usage questionnaire were administered to the control group and the experimental group to assess their writing skills and to check their attitudes and awareness related to the Internet.

During the study, the control group was taught classical writing lessons which consisted of activities such as doing the exercises in the pack, completing diagrams and writing drafts. On the other hand, the experimental group had the same lesson with additional blog support. Both groups had the same teachers for general English, reading and writing lessons. After a five-week study process, a post-test was applied to both groups. In addition, the experimental group was given a questionnaire for evaluating the blog use method of teaching writing.

3.6. Reliability And Validity

An expert in field was asked to assess the items in the questionnaire to ensure validity of the survey questions. Upon the expert's recommendations on the clarity of the items, necessary revisions were done and the final forms of the items were decided.

The reliability and validity are two significant factors in research which deal with the consistency of data and appropriateness of the methods used in a study. Reliability is defined as replicability of scientific outcomes of different studies after being repeated under consistent conditions while validity deals with the accurate measurement of scientific findings (LeCompte & Goetz, 1983).

A writing assessment's reliability "should be independent from who does the scoring and the results should be similar no matter when and where the assessment is carried out"

(Jonsson & Svingby, 2007, p. 133). However, this is highly ideal as there are factors that may affect the reliability such as the genre of the written product, the physical conditions of the place in which writing activity takes place and the rubric used for scoring. Moreover, as Moller (1982) explained, writing is examiner-based rather than language-based and if it is combined with unclear criteria, it is inevitable that errors occur.

To increase the validity and the reliability of a writing assessment, physical conditions ought to be arranged to make students feel comfortable, the topic and the genre of the writing assignment should be limited, scoring rubrics should be prepared carefully by teachers who have proper training in testing (Hamp-Lyons, 1987; Hughes, 2003).

In this study, the success of the participants were evaluated through an essay that each student wrote in order to reflect their writing abilities. This assessment was used to evaluate students' success in opinion essay writing. The same procedure was also followed at the end of the study under the same conditions. The data collected from the scoring of the students' written products gave a clear understanding of the enhancement in students' writing. This data were used to find and answer the research question that is whether the use of blogs has an effect on learners' writing skills. Hence, to have a reliable score for the participants' written products, the same genre, the same conditions and the same raters were used during the study. In terms of genre type, students were asked to write an opinion essay discussing if people should go abroad or young people should go to university.

Another tool that strengthens the study is triangulation. It can be defined as gathering data from different sources for the aim of improving validity and reliability of research (Golafshani, 2003). As blogs provide feedback for learners not only from their peers but also from their teachers, using them to improve students' writing performance makes them

a proper resource. In this respect, participants' feedback from their peers and teacher were recorded.

According to Wang (2009), grading students' written products has two important factors in terms of reliability, which are inter-rater reliability and intra-rater reliability. The former refers to the level of agreement of two or more raters on the scoring of the same written product while the latter deals with the degree of agreement of the same rater's scoring of different written products. As McIntyre (1993) explained, training sessions are necessary to reduce the discrepancy and establish a consensus among raters. Several procedures have been applied to score a product. To begin with, raters score the product individually; their scores are compared, and then their agreements and disagreements are discussed. If the level of disagreement is more than allowed, the training session goes on until a common agreement is reached. Once the training sessions are completed, raters are ready to score the written product of the participants.

In this study, the raters had training on how to evaluate a writing paper to ensure reliability. In addition, two of the raters were chosen from among the experienced writing teachers who work in the same institution and for the same level of students. The other rater was a research assistant at Akdeniz University the Department of English Language Teaching who completed his master's degree. After all, these three different raters evaluated the students' written products.

Validity is defined as the degree to which a study measures what it intends to measure (Kelley, 1927). For the data collected to be valid in the current study, questionnaire items were prepared and revised with opinions and guidance of the experts in this field. The final

questionnaire that included 22 items was used as a data-gathering instrument to evaluate attitudes of the learners towards using blogs for writing lessons in the current study.

3.7. Procedure

3.7.1. Preparation for the Study

The first term of English language education at AIU School of Foreign Languages lasted 8 weeks. During this period, students studied the sentence structure. They learnt how to form basic grammatical and meaningful sentences with words and information given. Then, they wrote very short paragraphs using these sentences to introduce themselves and other people. In the second term, students studied linking sentences to express their opinions in a paragraph. In the paragraph phase, students learnt how to brainstorm and organize their ideas for the aim of understanding paragraph structure and organization. Students were given theoretical information about creating an outline and writing in a well-structured way. In the third term, the groups were determined according to the A2 completion examination scores and then, two classes were chosen randomly. Once the groups were determined, the preparation period, which lasted for 15 hours worth of lessons consisting of the first 3 weeks of B1 level instruction, began.

In order to teach pre-programmed writing lessons, the first three weeks of the term were used for preparation during which learners continued to receive instruction. The first week of the preparation period was spent to know for teachers and students to get to know one another. Also, a pre-test and a questionnaire started to be prepared. In the second week, the writing package started to be used and exercises were completed one by one in the lesson time. These exercises included linking words, conjunction exercises, completion exercises and paragraph completion. Preparing an essay outline, diagram creation and completion

were also studied to comprehend essay structure. Moreover, learners were taught how to write main idea and supporting details properly. During this time, a pre-test and a questionnaire were prepared depending on previous studies and expert opinions.

In the third week, while the learners were taught how to create a main idea and organize their supporting details accordingly, the pre-test and the Internet usage questionnaire were administered to both groups, and the pre-test was evaluated by two English Language instructors at AIU School of Foreign Languages, as well as a research assistant who had completed his master's degree at Akdeniz University Department of English Language Teaching. The pre-test results revealed no significant difference between the groups. While the mean score for the control group was 40.5, it was 41.1 for the experimental group. As there was no statistically significant differences were found, the groups were assigned randomly as the control and the experimental groups. After the groups were determined, the Internet use questionnaire was administered and its results showed that there were no statistically significant differences between groups in terms of the Internet use habits and experience.

After the experimental group was decided, the researcher discussed with the experts and decided to use www.wordpress.com, which is a free and user-friendly blog source. Once the blog provider was chosen, a teacher blog was created and sample writings, diagrams and useful links were uploaded to it. Before the study started, the learners were informed about the 5-week study. Then, they exchanged their e-mail addresses and phone numbers to communicate with each other until everybody in the experimental group completed creating their blog pages. In order for this creating-blogs period to be smooth and problem-free, a short training session about how to create and use blogs was provided to the learners via a PowerPoint presentation prepared by the researcher. Some practice sessions out of

class time were held to practice posting and giving comments on others' posts. After completing these procedures, the participants and the researcher began the study process.

After the 3-week preparation period, the study was conducted for 5 weeks and included 10 sessions, which were equal to 25 hours of lesson time; the duration of each lesson was 50 minutes. Each week consisted of two separate sessions: 3 successive lesson hours on one day and 2 successive lesson hours on another day. The details for the weeks and for each session will be given in the following section.

3.7.2. Application of the Study

Week 1

After three weeks of preparation and determination of the groups, the participants started to be taught how to write short essays in the first week.

Session 1

This session lasted 3 successive hours of the lesson time. The topic of the first week was writing an opinion essay. For both the experimental and control groups, similar lessons were done. In order to teach learners how to write opinion essays, the topic "health", specifically "how to stay healthy", was given in the writing package. During the session, learners brainstormed ideas about different ways to stay healthy and completed some exercises in the pack related to the topic, such as reading, vocabulary exercises, open-ended questions and true/false activities and were asked to fill in their diagrams. Then, learners were introduced to a diagram concerning bullet points for the main idea and supporting details. They were also given tips and hints to complete their diagram as well as linking words that they might use in their drafts.

Session 2

In this session, which consisted of 2 successive hours of lesson time, learners were supposed to exchange ideas and offer suggestions. They were asked to create two different diagrams concerning ways to stay healthy as they were expected to create as many ideas as possible before writing their draft. The learners were asked to find a main idea for their diagram. Moreover, they were supposed to come up with supporting ideas, minor details and a conclusion sentence.

Week 2

During the second week of the study, the learners had to complete diagrams. Then, they were given 5 days to write their first essays.

Session 3

This session, which consisted of 3 successive hours of lesson time, shared the same procedure with the previous one except that learners had to complete filling in their diagrams until the end of the session. The learners used the necessary information they learned through the writing pack and ideas they exchanged in the previous session to create their diagrams.

Session 4

This 2-successive-lesson-hour session started with peer checking of diagrams created by the learners in the previous session. To do so, the learners formed groups and commented on each other's diagram in a communicative and encouraging environment. The learners redesigned their diagrams after getting feedback from their peers. Peer reviewing was held to enhance the learners' process of idea sharing. Afterwards, the learners showed their

second version of diagrams to their teacher to get his feedback. Teacher feedback is believed to be effective for learners as they are guided to use their ideas in their writing in an organized way. After teacher feedback, the learners were ready to write their first drafts, which was given as homework.

The students of the control group wrote their first drafts about the ways to stay healthy using classic pen and paper method and were asked to get their peer feedback within 2-3 days. Meanwhile, the experimental group students posted their first drafts about the same topic on their blog pages and were asked to post peer feedback within 2-3 days. Some related materials and a few quotations from some famous athletes were uploaded to the teacher blog in order to be used by the students in the experimental group. In addition, a sample diagram was created by the teacher using the ideas of the learners and also uploaded to the teacher blog.

After getting feedback from their peers, the students of the control group wrote their second drafts and gave their written product to their teacher. The teacher reviewed the second drafts of the learners and gave them back within 3-4 days. On the other hand, the participants of the experimental group posted their second drafts on their blogs once they got peer feedback. Then, the teacher posted his comments on learners' post in 3-4 days.

Finally, while the participants of the control group gave their final drafts to their teacher, the participants of the experimental group posted their final drafts on their blog pages.

Giving and posting the final drafts phase were the last responsibility of all the participants for the first essay, which was about how to stay healthy.

Week 3

During the third week of the study, the participants of both groups reviewed and discussed the essay writing process to improve their writing products and started to learn compare-contrast essay.

Session 5

This session lasted 3 successive hours of lesson time. In this session, the participants from both the control and experimental group discussed their first essay writing process. They shared the problems and difficulties they experienced in order not to have those in the next essay writing. The teacher gave advice to the students to make them feel more comfortable and confident during writing. Moreover, the students were briefly introduced to the next writing topic, which was compare-contrast essay.

Session 6

This session consisted of 2 successive hours of lesson time. The topic of the third week was writing compare-contrast essays. For both experimental and control group, similar lessons were done. In order to teach learners how to write compare-contrast essays, the topic "the similarities and differences between our generation and grandparents' generation" was given in the writing package. During this session, learners brainstormed ideas about different generations and completed some exercises in the pack related to the topic such as reading, vocabulary exercises, open-ended questions and true/false activities and were asked to fill in their diagrams. They were also given tips and hints to complete their diagram as well as linking words that they might use in their drafts.

Week 4

During the 4th week, learners were expected to complete filling in their diagrams and to be ready to write their first draft.

Session 7

In this session, which consisted of 3 successive hours of lesson time, learners were supposed to exchange ideas and offer suggestions. They were asked to create two different diagrams: one of them explaining the similarities and another one explaining differences between our generation and grandparents' generation, as they were expected to create as many ideas as possible before writing their draft. The learners were asked to find a main idea for their diagram. Moreover, they were supposed to come up with supporting ideas, minor details and a conclusion sentence.

Session 8

This session, which consisted of 2 successive hours of lesson time, shared the same procedure with the previous one except that learners had to complete filling in their diagrams until the end of the session. The learners used the necessary information they learned through the writing pack and ideas they exchanged in the previous session to create their diagrams.

Week 5

During week 5, learners were expected to write their drafts and give feedback to their peers as well as discuss the essay types they learned.

Session 9

This 3-successive-lesson-hour session started with peer checking of diagrams created by the learners in the previous session. To do so, the learners formed groups and commented on each other's diagram in a communicative and encouraging environment. The learners redesigned their diagrams after getting feedback from their peers. Peer reviewing was held to enhance the learners' process of idea sharing. Afterwards, the learners showed their second version of diagrams to their teacher to get his feedback. Teacher feedback is believed to be effective for learners as they are guided to use their ideas in their writing in an organized way. After teacher feedback, the learners were ready to write their first drafts, which was given as homework.

The students of the control group wrote their first drafts about the similarities and differences between our generation and grandparents' generation using classic pen and paper method and were asked to get their peer feedback within 2 days. Meanwhile, the experimental group students posted their first drafts about the same topic on their blog pages and were asked to post peer feedback within 2 days. Some related materials such as videos were uploaded to the teacher blog in order to be used by the students in the experimental group. In addition, a sample diagram was created by the teacher using the ideas of the learners and also uploaded to the teacher blog.

After getting feedback from their peers, the students of the control group wrote their second drafts and gave their written product to their teacher. The teacher reviewed the second drafts of the learners and gave them back within 3 days. On the other hand, the participants of the experimental group posted their second drafts on their blogs once they got peer feedback. Then, the teacher posted his comments on learners' post in 3 days.

Finally, while the participants of the control group gave their final drafts to their teacher, the participants of the experimental group posted their final drafts on their blog pages.

Giving and posting the final drafts phase was the last responsibility of all the participants for the first essay, which was about differences in generations.

Session 10

In this 2-successive-lesson-hour session, the participants reviewed what they learned in this term in terms of writing. They discussed their experiences, some positive sides as well as some difficulties. The teacher gave advice to the students to make them feel more comfortable and confident while writing.

3.8. Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed through a pre-test, the Internet usage questionnaire, a post-test and the blog use evaluation questionnaire.

First of all, the learners' essays were graded by three English teachers as a pre-test analysis. Two of the English teachers were already English language instructors at AIU Higher School of Foreign Languages, and the other English teacher was a research assistant who had completed his master's degree at Akdeniz University Department of Foreign Language Education. Moreover, Microsoft Excel program was used to define the mean score for the individual and class grades. Secondly, an Internet use questionnaire was administered to find out learners' attitudes toward Internet use and blog awareness. After the blog use application, a post-test was applied to both groups to understand their progress as well as whether blog use application had a positive effect on the experimental group

learners' writing skills. Lastly, a blog use evaluation questionnaire was administered to have learners' opinions on the use of blog application for their writing lesson.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

This study sought to answer whether using blogs in writing courses improves the writing performances in English. For this aim, the pre-test and post-test results were analyzed by using Microsoft Excel program interpreted with the help of an expert. Two questionnaires, the Internet use questionnaire and the blog use evaluation questionnaire were also analyzed by Microsoft Excel program and interpreted with an expert. Data were analyzed and interpretations will be given.

4.2. Proficiency Levels Of The Learners

Proficiency levels of the learners were determined by A1 level completion examination at the end of the first term and A2 level completion examination at the end of the second term, both of which were prepared by AIU School of Foreign Languages. After learners succeeded in these two levels, they started their B1 level education before the onset of the study.

4.3. Pre-Test Scores

Before beginning to apply the blog use into groups' writing courses, a pre-test was administered to determine learners' writing skill proficiency and according to the pre-test mean scores, there was no statistically significant difference between their writing skills. Each participant's paper was graded by three different assessors and the collected data was entered into Microsoft Excel program to obtain a final grade. The results were analyzed

with an expert, and the mean score for each group was found. The mean score for the first group was 40.5, and 41.1 for the second group. The lowest grade for first group was 30; it was 31 for the second group. The highest grade for the first group was 66, while it was 59 for the second group.

4.4. The Internet Use Questionnaire

Once the control and experimental groups were chosen, the Internet use questionnaire was administered to both groups to find out whether there was a difference in the participants' Internet use habits and experiences in each group. The results of the questionnaire were analyzed with the help of an expert in the field. The analysis of the questionnaire revealed that all the participants use the Internet for both personal and educational reasons, and they think the Internet makes their life easier. However, the results also pointed out that although the participants are familiar with the Internet and use it for different purposes, they rarely use blogs. Yet, it was concluded that there were no statistically significant differences between the groups that would possibly affect the study. The following table briefly shows the Internet use habit and experience profiles of the participants. Even tough the questionnaire was administered as a 5-point Likert scale, the participants' responses were interpreted under three main categories, which were "agree", "not sure" and "disagree".

Table 1

The results of the Internet use questionnaire.

	Questionnaire Items	The Control Group			The Experimental Group		
		Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
		%	f	%	%	f	%
1	I think the Internet is useful	100	0	0	100	0	0
2	The Internet makes my life easy	93	1	0	100	0	0
3	I log on the Internet every day	93	0	7	86	7	7
4	I do my homework by using the Internet	64	29	7	57	36	7
5	I read comments on the Internet	93	7	0	79	21	0
6	I write comments on the Internet	43	36	21	43	43	14
7	I check my e-mails everyday	57	36	7	50	50	0
8	I like communication via e-mails	50	36	14	57	36	7
9	I send at least 1 e-mail everyday	29	14	57	29	21	50
10	I know how to use blogs	50	36	14	50	36	14
11	I find the information on blogs helpful	86	14	0	72	21	7
12	I follow blog pages	29	21	50	43	36	21
13	I read comments on blog pages	50	36	14	50	36	14
14	I write comments on blog pages	7	43	50	21	36	50

4.5. Post-Test Scores

After the courses were handled, a post-test was applied to both groups and results were compared and analyzed accordingly. During the study, the control group used a writing package for their writing lessons. On the other hand, the experimental group had their writing lessons based on their packages and was also supported by using blogs and materials uploaded. To answer whether the use of blogs enhanced the learners' writing skills, a post-test was applied to both groups at the end of the 5-week study. The post-test

exam was the same one used for the pre-test. Each participant's post-test was graded by three different assessors and the mean score for each learner and for each group were finalized by using the Microsoft Excel program. The lowest score was 37 for the control group and 43 for the experimental group. The highest score for the control group was 71, while it was 81 for the experimental group.

4.6. The Blog Use Evaluation Questionnaire

After all the writing duties were completed through the end of the study process, the learners were asked to answer the blog use evaluation questionnaire in order to determine their attitudes toward using blogs for their writing lessons. Using the questionnaire, the researcher aimed to find out whether the learners found using blogs beneficial and whether it affected or enhanced the learners' writing skills. The results of the questionnaire revealed that the learners mostly found using blog application in their writing class beneficial.

The blog use evaluation questionnaire consisted of 23 items, which the participants were supposed to answer. There were four kinds of questions. The items from 1 to 4 were demographic and asked about the learners' gender, departments, computer knowledge and the Internet usage frequencies. The results and the analysis of this part were omitted, as this information was not evaluated in the study.

Hence, the results and the analysis of the questionnaire included other sections of the questionnaire, which learners evaluated during the writing courses using blogs.

Other sections of the questionnaire had emotional, communicational and pedagogical items that the participants were asked to respond to. Items from 5 to 22 concerning emotional, communicational and pedagogical aspect of using blogs were asked to the participants for

the aim of learning their opinions about using blogs for writing classes. The details of the analysis of the items in the questionnaire are presented as follows.

The fifth questionnaire item asked the participants to rate the question "Using blogs in writing lessons contributed to my writing skill." Of the participants, 86% chose "I agree", 7% chose "not sure", and 7% chose "disagree". One of the participants commented that he improved himself a lot because he tried harder than he used to as his writing was online. The nineteenth questionnaire item, "Using blogs in writing lessons did not affect my writing positively" was the reverse of fifth questionnaire item. For this time, 79% found it effective even though this figure was 86% on the fifth item. 14% answered that they were "not sure" although this figure was 7% on the fifth item. Lastly, as in the fifth question, 7% said it was not useful.

Table 2

The results of the questionnaire items 5 and 19.

		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
Item No		f	%	f	%	f	%
5	Using blogs in writing lessons contributed to my writing skill.	12	86	1	7	1	7
Item No							
19	Using blogs in writing lessons did not affect my writing skill positively.	1	7	2	14	11	79

The sixth questionnaire item was "I consider using blogs in writing lessons a good method," and, 86% agreed, 14% were "not sure," and nobody disagreed. One of the

participants commented that using blogs is a very good method and it should be integrated into every term.

Table 3

The results of the questionnaire item 6.

		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
Item No		f	%	f	%	f	%
6	I consider using blogs in writing lessons a good method.	12	86	2	14	0	0

In the seventh questionnaire item, "I benefited from my peers' feedback on my blog posts", 64% of the participants considered peer feedback to be beneficial, 29% were "not sure," and 7% did not benefit from peer feedback. This item was crosschecked in the questionnaire item seventeen, which reads "My peers' feedback to my posts on my blog were not beneficial ". On this questionnaire item, 64% of the learners agreed as on the seventh item, however, 22% were "not sure", and 14% disagreed. One of the participants wrote that peer feedback really helped him to see his grammar mistakes. Another participant said that peer feedback was not very beneficial as the comments written on the posts by her peers were not as detailed as the teacher.

Table 4

The results of the questionnaire item 7 and 17.

		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
Item No		f	%	f	%	f	%
7	I benefited from my peers' feedback on my blog posts.	9	64	4	29	1	7

Item No							
17	My peers' feedbacks to my posts on my blog were not beneficial.	2	14	3	22	9	64

In the eighth questionnaire item, the participants were asked to answer whether they enjoyed doing their homework using blogs, and 72% said "yes," 21% were not sure, and 7% said "no." In the last item of the questionnaire in which the participants shared their ideas, two of them wrote they liked using blogs and they didn't imagine they would have such fun while doing their homework.

Table 5

The results of the questionnaire item 8.

		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
Item No		f	%	f	%	f	%
8	I enjoyed doing my writing homework via blogs.	10	72	3	21	1	7

The ninth questionnaire item, "Using blog in writing lesson improved my writing skill." was supposed to find out whether using blogs for writing lessons improved their writing skill. Of the participants, 93% said there was an improvement and 7% said they were not sure.

Table 6

The results of the questionnaire item 9.

		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
Item No		f	%	f	%	f	%
9	Using blog in writing lesson improved my writing skill.	13	93	1	7	0	0

The tenth questionnaire item, "Giving feedback to my peers contributed to my writing skill", aimed to shed light on whether giving feedback had any positive effect on the participants writing skills. 79% agreed, 14% were not sure and 7% disagreed. Despite some disagreement, it can be concluded by this result that giving feedback was considered to be beneficial. Some participants also shared their comments on the last item of the questionnaire. One of them said by giving feedback, she could spot her peers' grammar mistakes easier, which also helped her to be more careful about her own grammar in her writing because she didn't want to make the same mistake that she found. Another one said, giving feedback put the responsibility on his shoulder as it was his job to find problematic parts, and this made him more cautious while writing his own posts.

Table 7

The results of the questionnaire item 10.

		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
Item No		f	%	f	%	f	%
10	Giving feedback to my peers contributed to my writing skill.	11	79	2	14	1	7

On the eleventh questionnaire item, "I offer writing lessons via using blogs to my friends." 72% of the participants said "yes", 21% of them were not sure and 7% of them said "no".

On the comment section, one of the participants stated that he already mentioned using blogs to his friends studying at different universities.

Table 8

The results of the questionnaire item 11.

		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
Item No		f	%	f	%	f	%
11	I offer writing lessons via using blogs to my friends.	10	72	3	21	1	7

On the twelfth questionnaire item, "I felt more comfortable while doing my writing homework via using blogs," 65% of the participants' responses were "yes," 35% were "not sure," and nobody said they were uncomfortable while doing their homework using blogs.

Table 9

The results of the questionnaire item 12.

		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
Item No		f	%	f	%	f	%
12	Doing my writing homework via using blogs makes me feel more comfortable.	9	65	5	35	0	0

In the thirteenth questionnaire item, the respondents were asked to answer, "I was motivated to write again after reading my own posts on my blog." Of the participants, 50% said "I agree," 43% were "not sure," and 7% said "disagree."

Table 10

The results of the questionnaire item 13.

		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
Item No		f	%	f	%	f	%
13	I was motivated to write again after reading my own posts on my blog.	7	50	6	43	1	7

In the fourteenth questionnaire item, the participants were asked to rate "My in and out class communication with my peers improved thanks to using blogs in writing lessons." 72 % agreed," 28% said "not sure," and nobody disagreed. One of the participants said that he was a shy student, but thanks to using the Internet and the blog method, he became friends with more people than he did in the previous terms.

Table 11

The results of the questionnaire item 14.

		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
Item No		f	%	f	%	f	%
14	My in and out class communication with my peers improved thanks to using blogs in writing lessons.	10	72	4	28	0	0

In addition to their peer feedback items in the seventh and seventeenth item, the participants were also asked to answer the teacher feedback in the fifteenth item, "I benefited from feedback that I got from my teacher by using blogs." Of the participants,

93% agreed that the teacher feedback was beneficial, 7% stated that they were not sure. The results were the same in the reverse item, which is the eighteenth. One of the participants said the teacher feedback was really clear, understandable and helped her to improve her drafts.

Table 12

The results of the questionnaire item 15 and 18.

		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
Item No		f	%	f	%	f	%
15	I benefited from feedback that I got from my teacher by using blogs.	13	93	1	7	0	0
Item No							
18	I did not benefit from feedback that I got from my teacher by using blogs.	0	0	1	7	13	93

In the sixteenth item, "If I had this lesson again, I would rather use blogs again.", the respondents were asked whether they would prefer to use blogs again if they repeated the course. 79% of the participants said they would still prefer blogs, 14% said they were not sure, and 7% said "no". "If I had this lesson again, I would not rather use blogs again." was the reverse question of sixteenth questionnaire item. However, 86% of the participants said they would again prefer blogs this time, 7% said "not sure", and 7% said they still wouldn't.

Table 13

The results of the questionnaire item 16 and 20.

		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
Item No		f	%	f	%	f	%
16	If I had this lesson again, I would rather use blogs again.	11	79	2	14	1	7
Item No							
20	If I had this lesson again, I would not rather use blogs again.	1	7	1	7	12	86

In the twenty-first questionnaire item, the participants were asked if they had problems while using blogs. None of the participants said “yes”, while 14% were “not sure” and 86% said “no”. The reason why none of the participants reported problems is probably because before the study, the researcher made sure that each participant had a personal computer and Internet connection. Also, the preparation process was given significant importance for the participants to comprehend every detail related to study before blogging.

Table 14

The results of the questionnaire item 21.

		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
Item No		f	%	f	%	f	%
21	I experienced problems while using blogs.	0	0	2	14	12	86

Taking all the responses of the participants into consideration, it can be claimed that the learners found using the blog application in the writing lesson beneficial and they mostly believe the blog use enhanced their writing skills in the preparatory program.

The comments written by the participants to the open-ended question on the questionnaire also supported that using blogs in the writing course improved the learners writing skills. One of the participants said using blogs was not only beneficial but also a very entertaining way to learn and practice writing. Another participant stated that she felt like a news reporter while using blogs and she took every draft of her writing seriously for this reason.

Table 15

Pre-Test and Post Test Results of the Control and the Experimental Groups.

CONTROL GROUP SCORES				EXPERIMENTAL GROUP SCORES			
Participants	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Difference	Participants	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Difference
A	30	40	10	1	39	53	14
B	35	42	7	2	32	55	23
C	37	39	2	3	43	70	27
D	32	38	6	4	35	43	8
E	34	42	8	6	32	61	29
F	40	49	9	7	55	68	13
G	51	58	7	8	43	68	25
H	66	71	5	9	33	61	28
I	39	37	-2	10	38	62	24
J	35	40	5	11	37	56	19
K	37	42	5	12	59	77	18
L	42	56	14	13	58	81	23
M	49	50	1	14	31	52	21
MEAN SCORE	40.5	46.4	5.9	MEAN SCORE	41.1	62	20.9

The first research question mentioned in the introduction part of the study was trying to answer whether the use of blogs for writing lessons improves the writing performances of the students. In order for this aim, a- pre-test, an Internet use questionnaire, a blog use application, a post-test and a blog use evaluation questionnaire was administered, respectively.

The study took place in the third term of the academic year, which has four terms in total. The first 3 weeks of the term was used as a preparation period. Then, the experimental and the control group were chosen randomly after it became clear that there were no statistically significant differences between the groups in terms of the results of the pre-test scores and the interpretation of the Internet usage questionnaire. During the five weeks of the study period, the learners of the experimental group used blogs as well as their writing package whereas the control group studied only using their writing package. After ten sessions of using blogs for writing course, a post-test was applied. The results of the post-test revealed that using blog application for writing lesson enhanced the learners' writing skills and writing success. Moreover, their comments on the last blog use questionnaire item supported their improvement.

In their comment section, the learners stated that using blogs is a very new and different experience for them to improve their writing skills. Furthermore, they considered feedbacks, both given and received, very beneficial. One more reason is that they think being online makes them feel more responsible because they have actual readers instead of just a teacher; therefore, they were more motivated and cautious while writing; they gave more effort to their posts. Moreover, the learners became friends with their peers in the classmate easier thanks to online communication. This also helped the classroom atmosphere be energetic most of the time.

4.7. Discussion

Writing is a challenging skill and it requires effort to learn and develop (Chen, 2002). To make writing lessons more effective for learners, this study investigated whether using blog integrated method improved learners' writing skills. In addition, learners' attitudes were also investigated in terms of whether they had positive attitudes towards using blogs for their writing courses. The present study aimed to make writing lessons less difficult and more entertaining through the use of blogs, meanwhile enhancing learners' writing skills and helping them increase their success.

The level of the participants in the study was B1 as determined by the CEFR (2001). Their levels were determined by A1 completion exam, which was applied after the first 8-week module and A2 completion exam, which was applied after the second 8-week module. These exams were prepared and conducted by AIU School of Foreign Languages. At the beginning of the study, the learners were asked to write an essay that was used as a pre-test. Once it was found that there were no statically differences between two classes, they were randomly chosen as the control and the experimental groups. The score of the pre-test were 40.5 for the control group and 41.1 for the experimental group. After the groups were determined, both groups were administered an Internet Use Questionnaire to find out attitudes of the learners towards using the Internet. The results showed that there were no statistically significant differences between the groups. After the treatment was completed, the learners were asked to write an essay that was used as a post-test, to find out the effects of using blogs. The post-test mean score for the control group was 46.4 while the experimental group's mean score was 62.

Two writing lesson teachers and one research assistant in Akdeniz University Department of English Language Teaching graded the pre-test and the post-test. In order to be reliable in terms of inter-rater agreement (Wang, 2009), grading was done by different raters. In addition, a rubric was used in the study to provide reliability and prevent the problems that Moller (1982) stated such as unclear criteria and insufficient training of the raters (see Appendix G). Moreover, the raters were trained before the study to be reliable in terms of intra-rater agreement. The results were assessed by the raters and also analyzed by an expert. The standard deviation of the pre-test scores for the control group was 6.90, and 7.12 for the control group. Likewise, the standard deviation of the pot-test scores for the control group was 7.32, while it was 7.65 for the experimental group. The standard deviations were high, possibly due to the fact that the scores given by the raters were spread. Accordingly, the highest score of the control group for the pre-test was 66, while the lowest score was 30; the highest score of the experimental group for the pre-test was 59, while the lowest score was 31. This spread was also seen in the post-test assessment. The highest score of the control group for the post-test was 71, while the lowest score was 37; the highest score of the experimental group for the post-test was 81, while the lowest score was 43. Taking the pre-test and post-test assessment into consideration, it is obvious that the mean scores of the both groups were similar and there was no statistically significant difference between the groups; however, their writing skills may be different from one another.

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beginning of the study, the learners were asked to write an essay that was used a pre-test. Once it was found that there were no statically differences between two classes, they were randomly chosen as the control and the experimental groups. The score of the pre-test were 40.5 for the control group and 41.4 for the experimental group. After the groups were determined, both groups were administered an Internet Use Questionnaire to find out attitudes of the learners towards using the Internet. The results showed that there were no statistically significant differences between the groups. After the treatment was completed, the learners were asked to write an essay that was used as a post-test, to find out the effects of using blogs. The post-test mean score for the control group was 46.4 while the experimental group's mean score was 62.

In order to find out the participants' attitudes toward using blogs for writing lesson, a blog use questionnaire was administered. The analysis of the questionnaire revealed that the learners considered using blogs entertaining and beneficial as well as helpful to enhance their writing skills. To ensure validity, a pool of questionnaire items were created first, and with the help of experts who gave their opinions on the questions, a 22-item questionnaire was created.

As conclusion, the progress of the learners' in both groups was compared and analyzed and it became clear that using blogs affected learners' writing skills positively. Furthermore, the analysis of the blog use evaluation questionnaire showed that using blogs increased the learner motivation and helped them become more eager to write. Also, using blogs created an online environment where the participants got to know each other very quickly and therefore, peer collaboration improved.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1. Introduction

The present study is summarized in this chapter. First of all, there will be an overview of the study. Next, the results from the pre-test, the Internet use questionnaire, the post-test and the blog use evaluation questionnaire will be discussed. Then, the pedagogical implications of teaching writing via using blogs for teacher will be given. Finally, further study suggestions will be presented

5.2. Overview Of The Study

This study was conducted at Antalya International University School of Foreign Languages in the 2015-2016 academic year, with 28 participants whose levels were determined as B1 by passing the A2 completion level examination prepared by the testing and evaluation department of the school. In this study, the following research questions were endeavored to be answered:

1) Does the blog use in English preparatory class improve the writing performance of students in their writing classes?

2) What are the students' attitudes toward to the blog use in their writing classes at preparatory school?

The instruments used in order to gather data for this study were the pre-test, the Internet use questionnaire, the post-test and the blog use evaluation questionnaire.

Three different English teachers assessed the scores of the pre-test and the post-test using Microsoft Excel program. The mean scores were analyzed by the assessors and an expert in the field also interpreted the progress of each group.

To determine the experimental group, the Internet use questionnaire was administered before the study, and it was also evaluated by an expert in the field. No statistically significant differences were found regarding the questionnaire results.

The blog use evaluation questionnaire was applied to the experimental group to find out the participants' attitudes toward using blogs in writing lessons. The results were analyzed with an expert using Microsoft Excel program. The analysis part is given in the following section.

5.3. Conclusion

This section will address the findings of the study in the light of the research questions. In order to find the answers to the research questions, the researcher used 28 EFL students from two different classes whose English levels were determined by Antalya International University School of Foreign Languages A2 completion exam in 2015-2016 academic year at the end of the second term. The students were randomly placed in two different classes regarding their exam results. After choosing the control and the experimental groups, the study was carried out and the participants' writing scores were compared.

With the first research question in mind, the data gathered from the pre-test and the post-test indicated that blog integrated writing lessons enhanced learners' writing skills. Even though there is a progress to mention for each group, the comparison of their progress is in favor of the learners of experimental group, increasing their writing scores by 20.9% against those in the control group, increasing by only 5.9%. Moreover, there is a student in

the control group who didn't improve his writing score and but rather decreased his score. Also, the student from the control group who was given the best score in the pre-test made the fourth least progress in his group. This might be the indication for text-based writing lessons to have little or no effect on learners' progress when compared to technology integrated writing lessons.

In addition, the study focused on the learners' attitudes towards using blogs in writing courses through the blog use evaluation questionnaire. 86% of the learners considered the blog use application beneficial for their writing lessons and believed that using blogs for writing lessons was a useful method. Moreover, 72% of the participants offered blog integrated writing lessons to their friends.

The open-ended question item, in which the learners shared their opinions about using blogs in the questionnaire, supported the findings of the questionnaire. The learners stated that giving and getting feedback in an online environment from their peers as well as teacher feedback on their posts was beneficial to improve their writing skills. It is also clear from their answers that they found using blogs a different and a motivational tool. These ideas and beliefs of the participants were also supported by their post-test results.

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the use of blogs for writing courses affects learners' writing skills positively. Oravec (2002) claimed that blogs could provide analytic and critical thinking skills, which improves students' self-confidence. In addition, the results also revealed that the learners found using blogs very entertaining and their peer-communication also improved. Furthermore, it can be claimed that blogs create a different learning atmosphere for learners to enhance their writing skills. In addition, using technology in classroom has been an important part of language education, and as

Bitner & Bitner (2002) claimed; it is teachers' duty to adapt new teaching paradigms based on technological advances. Therefore, using blogs creates an innovative and engaging platform to help students' improve their academic writing knowledge.

Besides the opportunities that using technology such as blogs provides in enhancing writing skills, they also increase the motivation of the learners through establishing a collaborative and enjoyable learning environment

In conclusion, the current study, which investigated the effect of using blogs concerning success rate and learner attitudes, showed that blog integration does not need any changes in terms of teaching methodology. Moreover, technological tools such blogs provide an authentic and entertaining learning atmosphere, increasing motivation and peer communication.

5.4. Pedagogical Implication And Suggestions For Further Research

The present study demonstrated that using blogs for writing lessons has been beneficial. However, the study was limited to 28 participants from Antalya International University School of Foreign Languages writing course. Hence, this study ought to be applied in other universities and might be adapted for different skills.

In addition, this study was limited to a 5-week term. For better results, similar studies ought to be carried out for a longer period such as a whole semester.

The study consisted of B1 level students; similar studies ought to be conducted at different levels.

There are many opportunities that using blogs offers pedagogically for both learners and teachers. They do not require any knowledge of programming to create and are easy to

integrate into teaching. Therefore, teachers and learners can use blogs without facing significant problems. Blogging relies on constructivist theory as they provide engaging social atmosphere for learners to interact with each other. Moreover, peer interaction gives learners a real audience for their written products to be read and commented on, which empowers the motivation to write and enhance the content of their writing. Hence, this study claims that the use of blogs for writing lessons affects learners' success positively thanks to peer interaction and teacher feedback.

Blogs are motivational and entertaining tools as well as beneficial for learners' success. They create an authentic learning environment and since they are online tools, they also provide out-of-class learning, and thus, learning could take place anytime.

Finally, integrating blogs into their teaching may be considered as a suitable medium to improve learners' writing skills. This study claims that using blogs helps learners to enhance their writing proficiency, and it is up to teachers to find a more authentic environment for an effective writing course.

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APPENDICES

1. **Appendix A -** The Internet Use Questionnaire

2. **Appendix B -** Introduction to www.wordpress.com

3. **Appendix C –** Sample Diagrams

4. **Appendix D –** Student Blogs' Samples

5. **Appendix E -** Sample Pre-Test and Post-Test Papers

6. **Appendix F –** The Blog Use Evaluation Questionnaire

7. **Appendix G -** Rubric

Appendix A

The Internet Use Questionnaire

The Internet Use Questionnaire

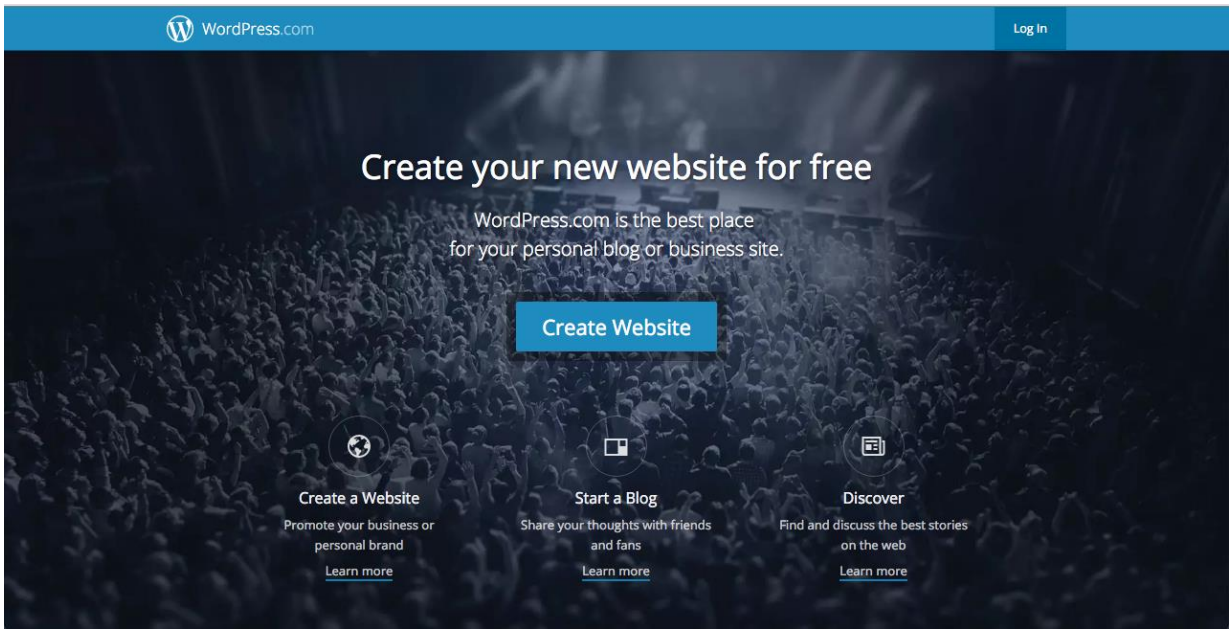
Age: **Gender:**

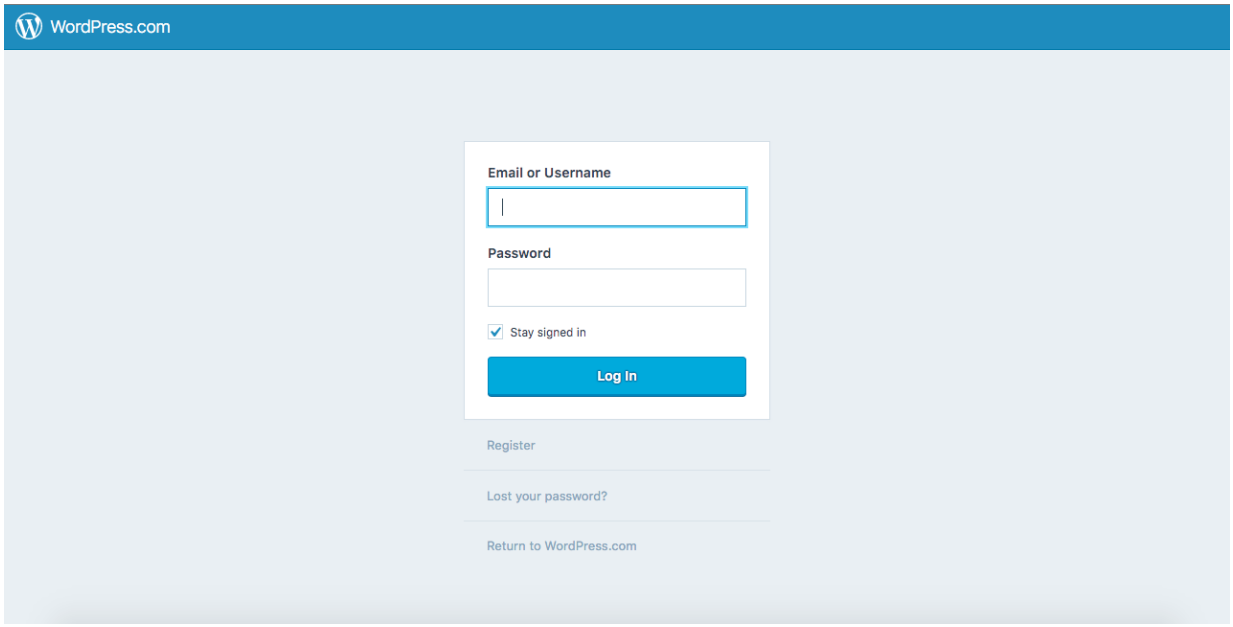
Please circle the best option that applies to you.

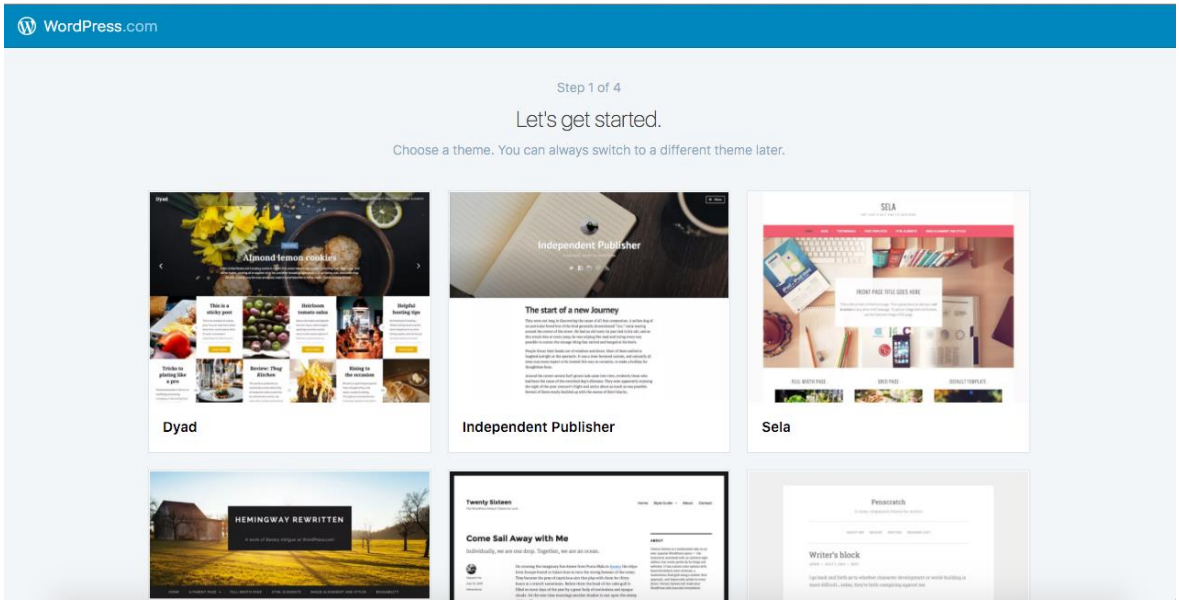
		1. Totally Agree	2. Agree	3. Not Sure	4. Disagree	5. Totally Disagree
1.	I think the Internet is useful.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	The Internet makes my life easy.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I log on the Internet every day.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I do my homework by using the Internet.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I read comments on the Internet	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I write comments on the Internet.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I check my e-mails everyday.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I like communication via e-mails.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I send at least 1 e-mail everyday.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I know how to use blogs.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I find the information on blogs helpful.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I follow blog pages.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I read comments on blog pages.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I write comments on blog pages.	1	2	3	4	5

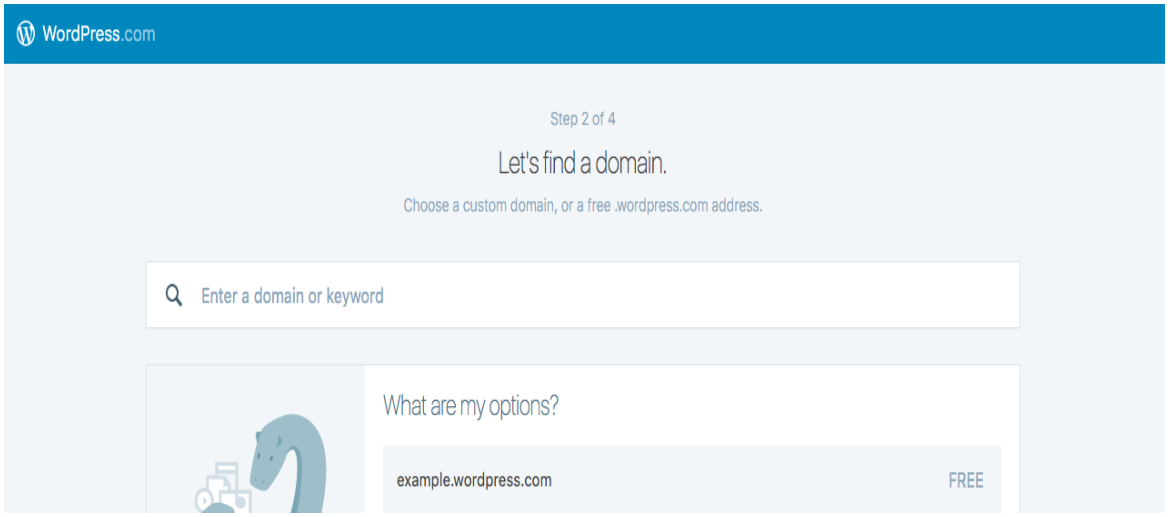
Appendix B

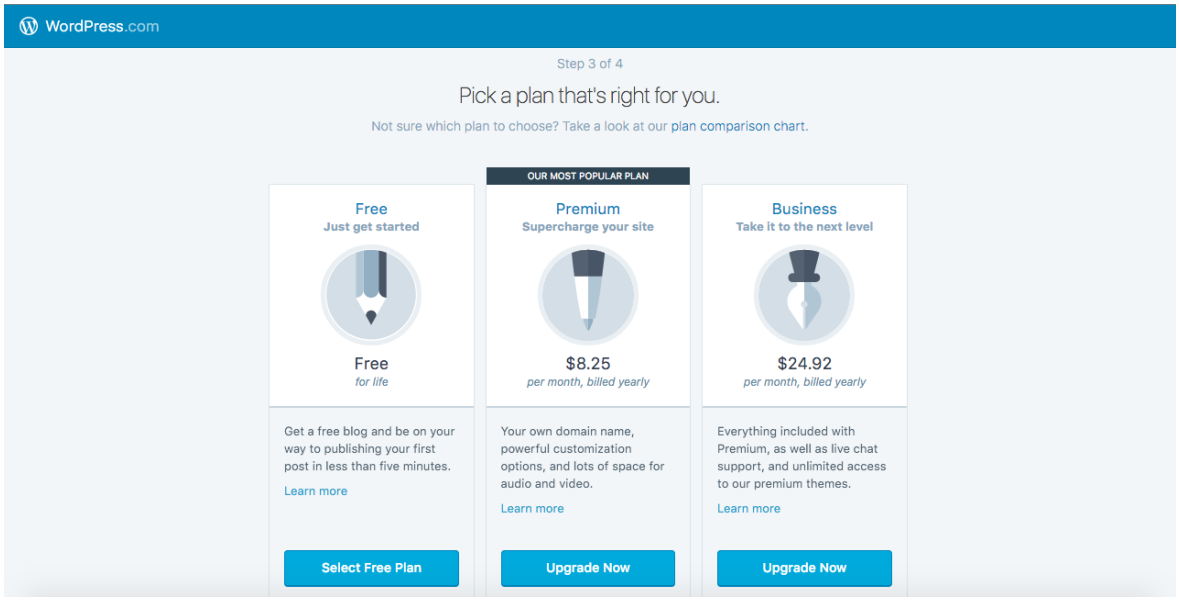
Introduction to www.wordpress.com






WordPress.com
Step 1 of 4
Let's get started.
Choose a theme. You can always switch to a different theme later.
Dyad
Independent Publisher
Sela
HEMINGWAY REWRITTEN
Twenty Sixteen
Come Sail Away with Me
Writer's block


WordPress.com
Step 2 of 4
Let's find a domain.
Choose a custom domain, or a free .wordpress.com address.
Enter a domain or keyword
What are my options?
example.wordpress.com
FREE


WordPress.com
Step 3 of 4
Pick a plan that's right for you.
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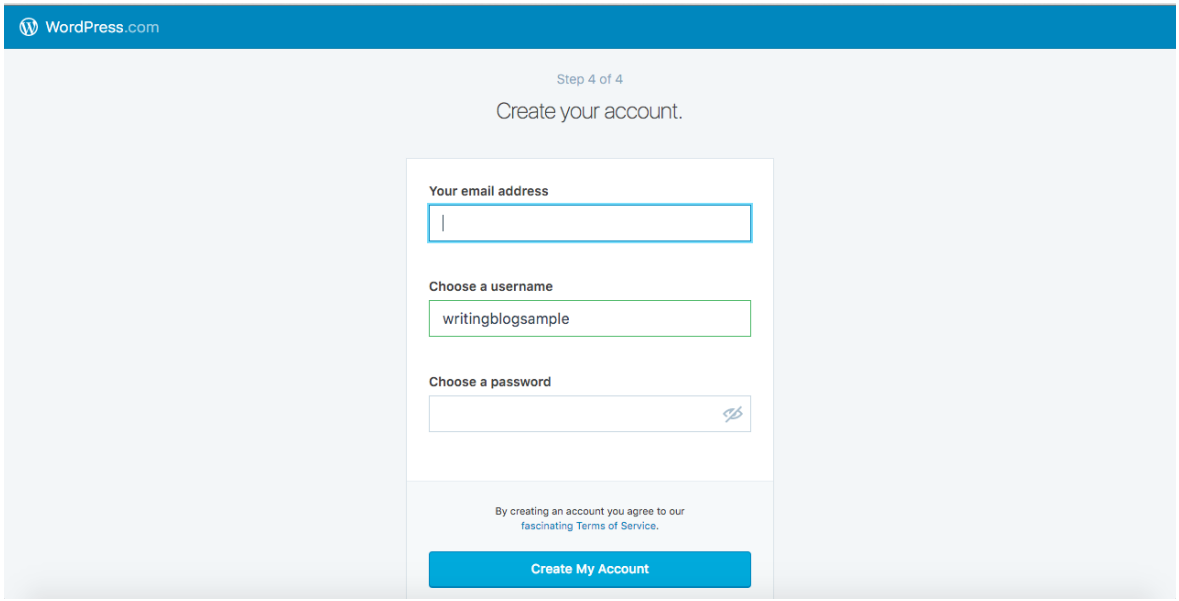
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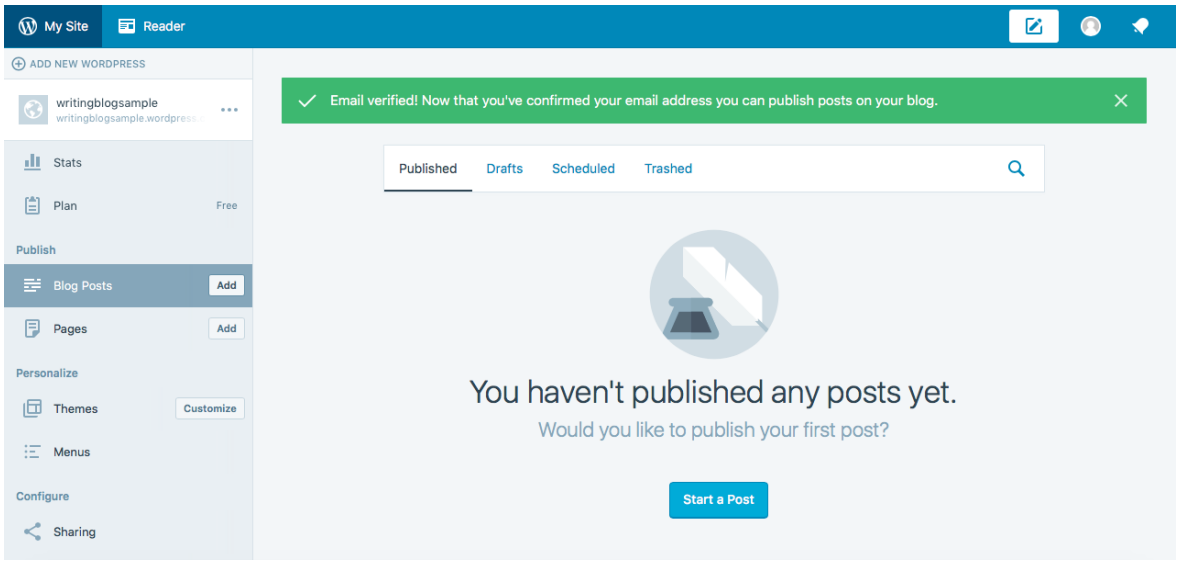
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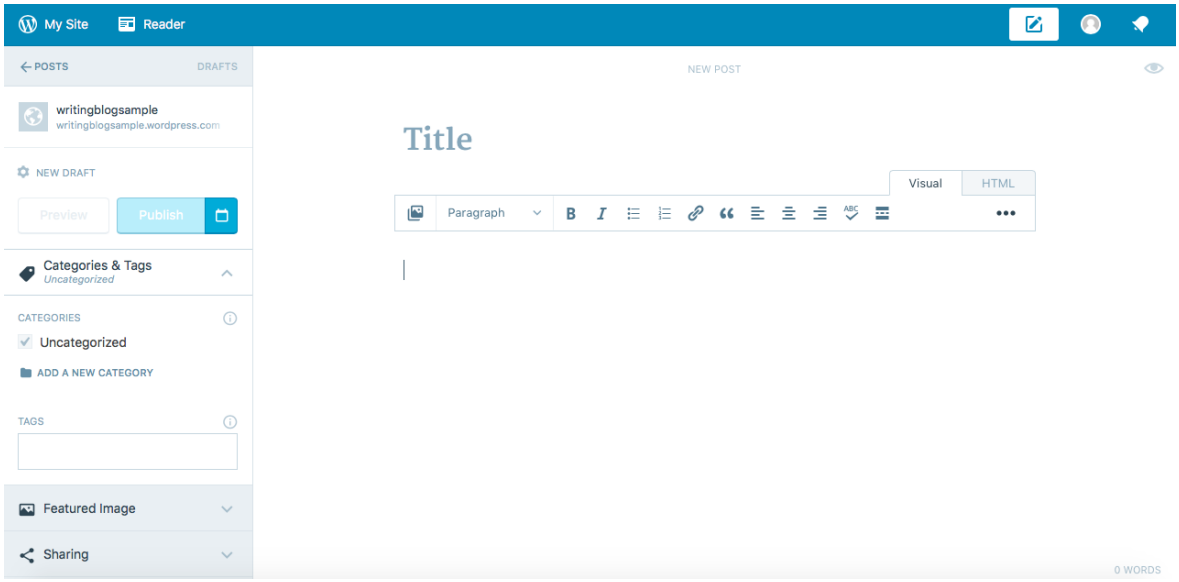
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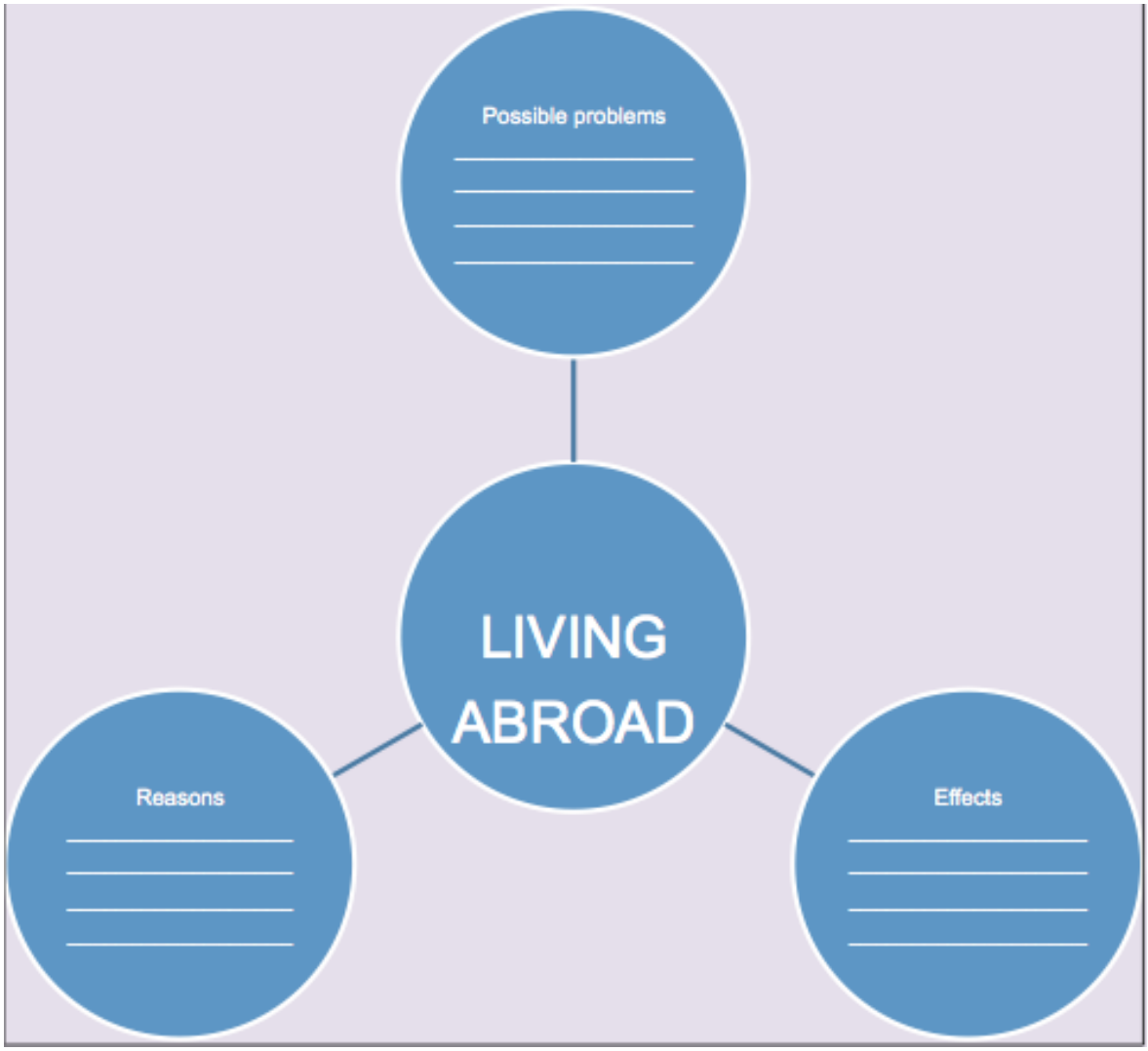
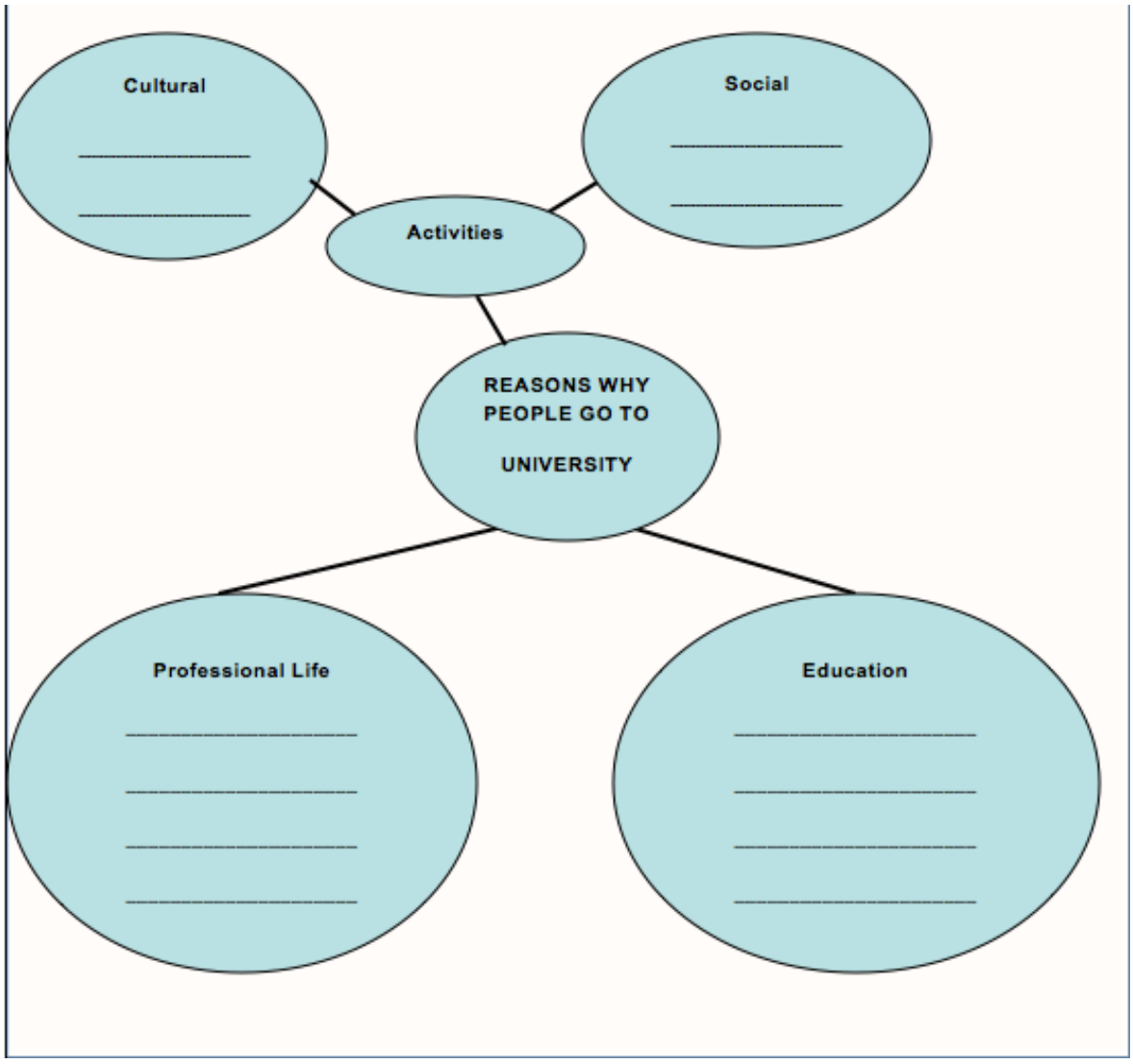
Appendix C

Sample Diagrams

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REASONS WHY PEOPLE GO TO UNIVERSITY
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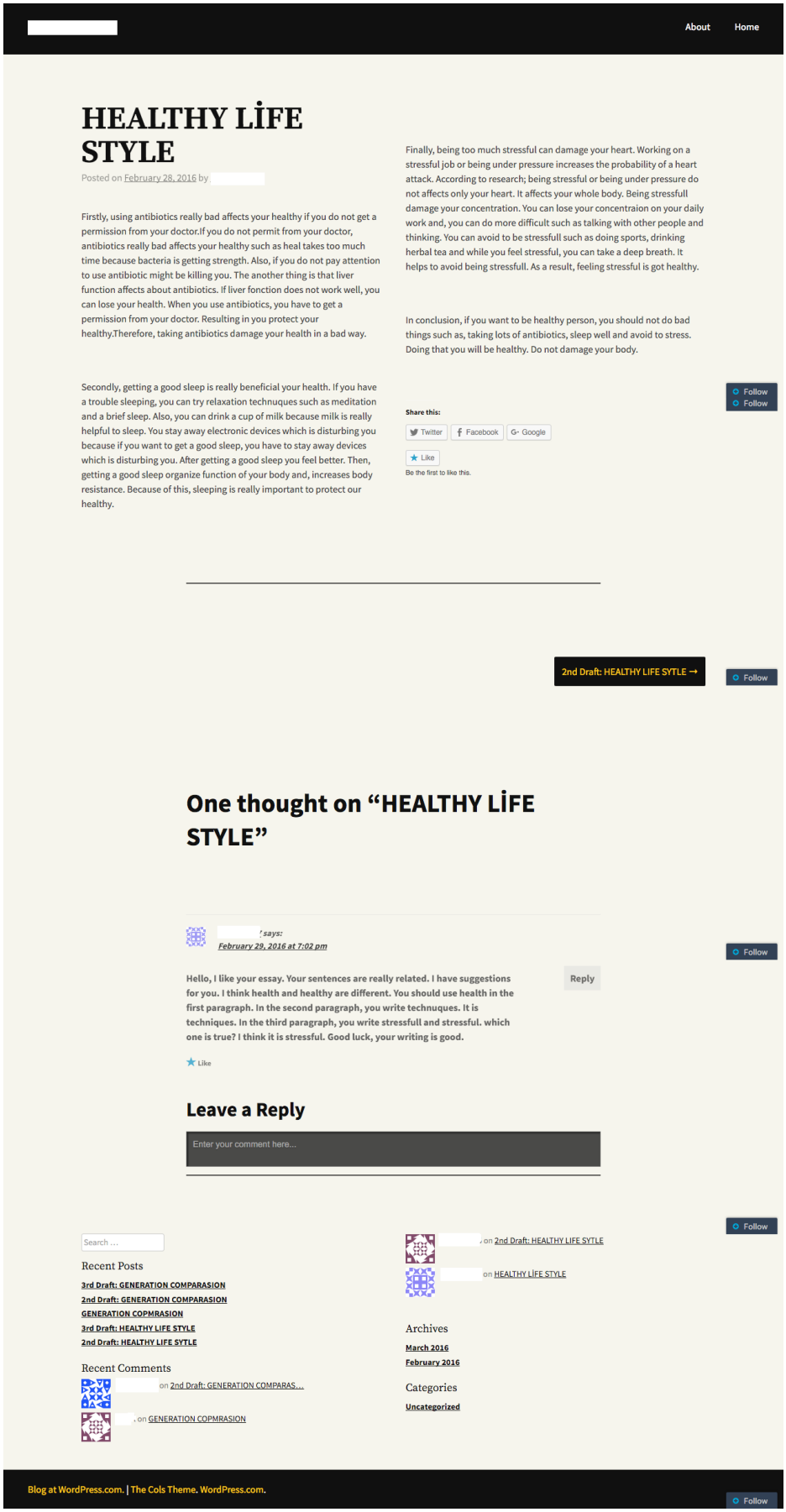
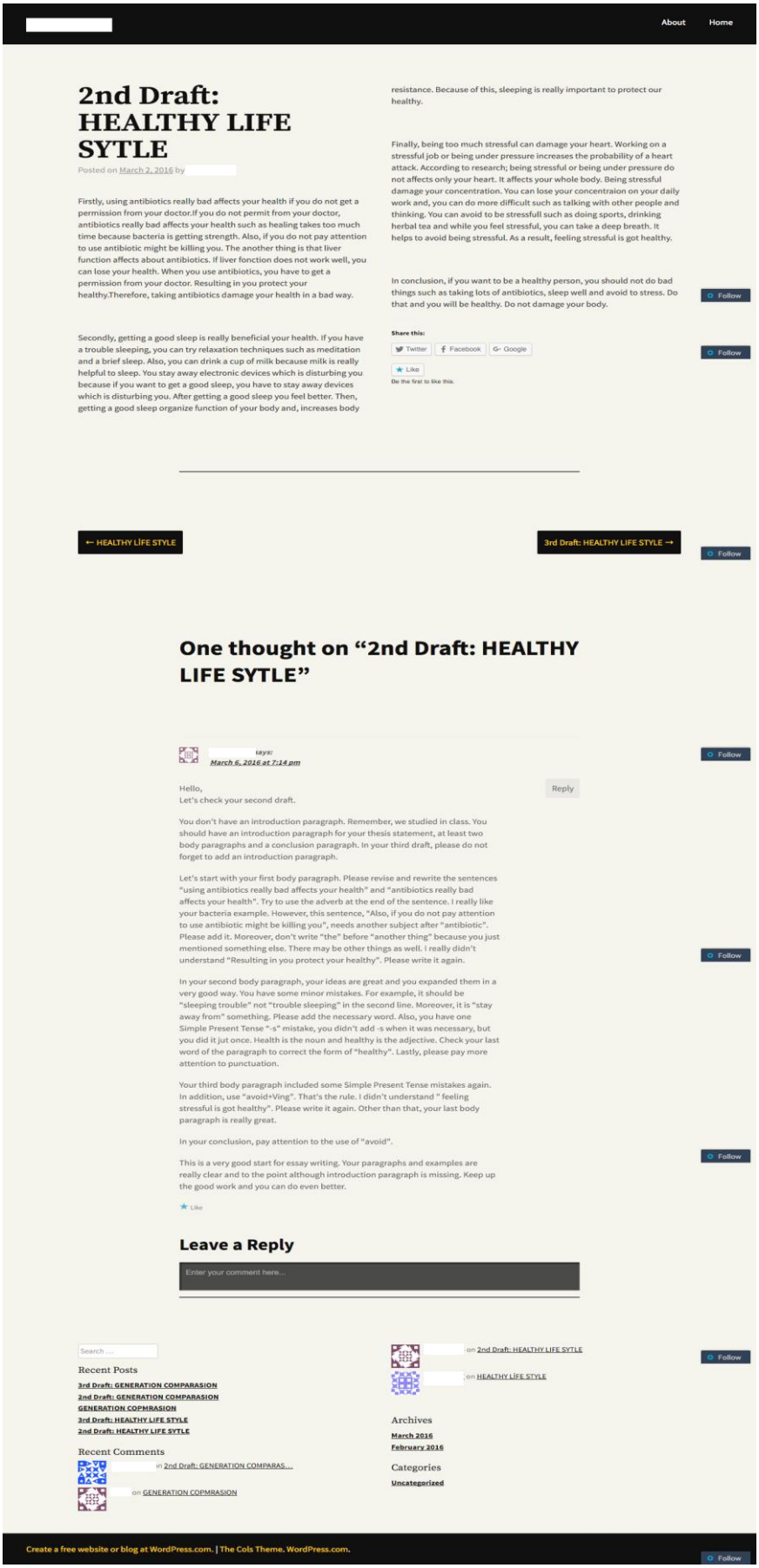
Appendix D

Student Blogs' Samples

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2nd Draft: HEALTHY LIFE SYTLE
Posted on March 2, 2016 by
Firstly, using antibiotics really bad affects your health if you do not get a permission from your doctor.If you do not permit from your doctor, antibiotics really bad affects your health such as healing takes too much time because bacteria is getting strength. Also, if you do not pay attention to use antibiotic might be killing you. The another thing is that liver function affects about antibiotics. If liver fonction does not work well, you can lose your health. When you use antibiotics, you have to get a permission from your doctor. Resulting in you protect your healthy.Therefore, taking antibiotics damage your health in a bad way.
Secondly, getting a good sleep is really beneficial your health. If you have a trouble sleeping, you can try relaxation techniques such as meditation and a brief sleep. Also, you can drink a cup of milk because milk is really helpful to sleep. You stay away electronic devices which is disturbing you because if you want to get a good sleep, you have to stay away devices which is disturbing you. After getting a good sleep you feel better. Then, getting a good sleep organize function of your body and, increases body resistance. Because of this, sleeping is really important to protect our healthy.
Finally, being too much stressful can damage your heart. Working on a stressful job or being under pressure increases the probability of a heart attack. According to research; being stressful or being under pressure do not affects only your heart. It affects your whole body. Being stressful damage your concentration. You can lose your concentraion on your daily work and, you can do more difficult such as talking with other people and thinking. You can avoid to be stressfull such as doing sports, drinking herbal tea and while you feel stressful, you can take a deep breath. It helps to avoid being stressful. As a result, feeling stressful is got healthy.
In conclusion, if you want to be a healthy person, you should not do bad things such as taking lots of antibiotics, sleep well and avoid to stress. Do that and you will be healthy. Do not damage your body.
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One thought on “2nd Draft: HEALTHY LIFE SYTLE”
says:
March 6, 2016 at 7:14 pm
Reply
Hello,
Let's check your second draft.
You don't have an introduction paragraph. Remember, we studied in class. You should have an introduction paragraph for your thesis statement, at least two body paragraphs and a conclusion paragraph. In your third draft, please do not forget to add an introduction paragraph.
Let's start with your first body paragraph. Please revise and rewrite the sentences "using antibiotics really bad affects your health" and "antibiotics really bad affects your health". Try to use the adverb at the end of the sentence. I really like your bacteria example. However, this sentence, "Also, if you do not pay attention to use antibiotic might be killing you", needs another subject after "antibiotic". Please add it. Moreover, don't write "the" before "another thing" because you just mentioned something else. There may be other things as well. I really didn't understand "Resulting in you protect your healthy". Please write it again.
In your second body paragraph, your ideas are great and you expanded them in a very good way. You have some minor mistakes. For example, it should be "sleeping trouble" not "trouble sleeping" in the second line. Moreover, it is "stay away from" something. Please add the necessary word. Also, you have one Simple Present Tense "-s" mistake, you didn't add -s when it was necessary, but you did it jut once. Health is the noun and healthy is the adjective. Check your last word of the paragraph to correct the form of "healthy". Lastly, please pay more attention to punctuation.
Your third body paragraph included some Simple Present Tense mistakes again. In addition, use "avoid+Ving". That's the rule. I didn't understand " feeling stressful is got healthy". Please write it again. Other than that, your last body paragraph is really great.
In your conclusion, pay attention to the use of "avoid".
This is a very good start for essay writing. Your paragraphs and examples are really clear and to the point although introduction paragraph is missing. Keep up the good work and you can do even better.
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3rd Draft: HEALTHY LIFE STYLE

Posted on March 9, 2016 by

Life is difficult and stressful. Everybody want to be healthy. There are some ways to be healthy. They are using antibiotics, getting a good sleep and being too much stressful.

Firstly, using antibiotics affects your health really bad if you do not get a permission from your doctor.If you do not permit from your doctor, antibiotics affects your health really bad such as healing takes too much time because bacteria is getting strength. Also, if you do not pay attention to use antibiotic, this might be killing you. Another thing is that liver function affects about antibiotics. If liver fonction does not work well, you can lose your health. When you use antibiotics, you have to get a permission from your doctor. Results protect your health.Therefore, taking antibiotics damage your health in a bad way.

Secondly, getting a good sleep is really beneficial your health. If you have a sleeping trouble , you can try relaxation techniques such as meditation and a brief sleep. Also, you can drink a cup of milk because milk is really helpful to sleep. You stay away from electronic devices which is disturbing you because if you want to get a good sleep, you have to stay away fro devices which is disturbing you. After getting a good sleep you feel better. Then, getting a good sleep organize function of your body and, increases body resistance. Because of this, sleeping is really important to protect our health.

Finally, being too much stressful can damage your heart. Working on a stressful job or being under pressure increases the probability of a heart attack. According to research; being stressful or being under pressure do not affects only your heart. It affects your whole body. Being stressful damage your concentration. You can lose your concentraion on your daily work and, you can do more difficult such as talking with other people and thinking. You can avoid being stressfull such as doing sports, drinking herbal tea and while you feel stressful, you can take a deep breath. It helps to avoid being stressful. As a result, feeling stressful affects your health bad..

In conclusion, if you want to be a healthy person, you should not do bad things such as taking lots of antibiotics, sleep well and avoid stressing. Do that and you will be healthy. Do not damage your body.

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GENERATION COPMRASION →

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FEBRUARY 29, 2016

health

As you know, Marcus Valerius Martilialis said “Life is not merely being alive but being well!”. Health is the most important think for our life, and we have to interested in our health for continue to live. However, as you can see being or remaining healthy is quite difficult nowadays because of our life style. I have some solutions to stop this course such as; going on diet, doing sport and sleeping regularly.
Let’s to begin with our nutrition habits. As you know, we are in a involution and there is a lot of bustle in our life because of our routine. Somehow, we forget to eat something regularly. We have to get up early as working or studying people. Therefore we cannot spare the time to breakfast. So, we feel hungery untill the evening, and we blow up while we are eating our dinner. That’s a good idea to stop this circular reasoning for being healthy.
In addition, as Marcus Tullius Cicero said “Exercise is the only thing to feed the soul and keep the brain dinamic.”. We have to do exercise regularly to keep fit and to be healthy. As you know, our organs which we dont use can be useless day by day, and it can be their end. I know it is hard to find time to do sports during this challenging life but walking jast half an hour can keep you fit.
To sum up, we should get enough sleep regularly for being healthy about our physical and mental health. We are always in a harry to reach our dreams, and it is sometimes very tiring. Although life is tiring, and it takes us a lot of time, we shouldn’t miss enough sleep.
Taking all those points into consideration, I firmly believe that, we can lead a healthy life despite the hustle and bustle of life. It is possible to live healthy by going on a diet, doing sport and sleeping regularly.

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[SECOND DRAFT] HEALTH

One thought on “health”

March 2, 2016 at 6:28 pm

I like your quotations! They are great.
You have vocabulary mistake. For example, hungery. It is hungry. For example, harry. It is hurry.
Teacher said you should have ideas. You have ideas, its nice you write well
I say go on. This is your style. Go on your style.

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MARCH 3, 2016

[Second Draft] Health

As you know, Marcus Valerius Martilialis said "Life is not merely being alive but being well!". Health is the most important think for our life, and we have to interested in our health for continue to live. However, as you can see being or remaining healthy is quite difficult nowadays because of our life style. I have some solutions to stop this course such as; going on diet, doing sport and sleeping regularly.
Let's to begin with our nutrition habits. As you know, we are in a involution and there is a lot of bustle in our life because of our routine. Somehow, we forget to eat something regularly. We have to get up early as working or studying people. Therefore we cannot spare the time to breakfast. So, we feel hungry until the evening, and we blow up while we are eating our dinner. That's a good idea to stop this circular reasoning for being healthy.
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One thought on "[Second Draft] Health"

March 6, 2016 at 7:42 pm

Hello,
Let's check your second draft.

I like they way that you started with a quotation. That was a really good idea to grab the reader's attention.

In your introduction, you wrote "Health is the most important think for our life". I think you didn't want to say "think" because it is verb. I think you tried to say something else. What should you actually write? Other than that, you have a wonderful introduction.

In your first body paragraph, you have a sentence, "Therefore we cannot spare the time to breakfast". Spare is the wrong word here. Which verb should you write instead of spare? Moreover, please change the verb "blow up" in your sentence "we blow up while we are eating our dinner". It is not the suitable verb for this sentence.

Your second body paragraph is really great. Just please more attention to punctuation.

Your third body paragraph starts with "to sum up". You should use "to sum up" in the conclusion paragraph. Please change it. Again, I really like your ideas in this paragraph.

Your conclusion paragraph is a very good summary of what you have written.

I want to congratulate you for your first essay. After you revise it according to feedbacks, it will be much and much better. Please keep up the good work.

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MARCH 9, 2016

[Third Draft] Health

As you know, Marcus Valerius Martilialis said "Life is not merely being alive but being well!". Health is the most important thing for our life, and we have to interested in our health for continue to live. However, as you can see being or remaining healthy is quite difficult nowadays because of our life style. I have some solutions to stop this course such as; going on diet, doing sport and sleeping regularly.
Let's to begin with our nutrition habits. As you know, we are in a involution and there is a lot of bustle in our life because of our routine. Somehow, we forget to eat something regularly. We have to get up early as working or studying people. Therefore we cannot spend the time to breakfast. So, we feel hungry until the evening, and we be crazy while we are eating our dinner. That's a good idea to stop this circular reasoning for being healthy.
In addition, as Marcus Tullius Cicero said "Exercise is the only thing to feed the soul and keep the brain dinamic.". We have to do exercise regularly to keep fit and to be healthy. As you know, our organs which we dont use can be useless day by day, and it can be their end. I know it is hard to find time to do sports during this challenging life but, walking jast half an hour can keep you fit.
Furtermore, we should get enough sleep regularly for being healthy about our physical and mental health. We are always in a hurry to reach our dreams, and it is sometimes very tiring. Although life is tiring, and it takes us a lot of time, we shouldn't miss enough sleep.
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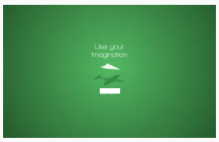

GENERATIONS

March 15, 2016

What do you think about your grandparent's lifestyle? Is it so boring or interesting? Would you want to live in those years? Some clothes or accessory can be interesting for you. However, some rules can be hard. Some values are still same in our days. And also there are so many new notions. There are several similarities and differences between our generation and our grandparent's generation.
Our grandparent's generation and our generation can be similar in some aspects.First similarity is, both of them have similar sense of fun and relationship. Beforetime, people have a good time with their friends. Now, almost all people have good relationship too. Another similarity is, old time women was follow fashion like now. They were pay attantion their clothes and almost all lady want to be beautiful and swell. There are some similarities like these.
There are some differences between both generations. First diffence is education. Nowadays, children can get a good and long term training. But beforetime, girls couldnt get training. Also now, education is more developed than before. Second difference is about using technology. Grandparent's generation didnt have got phone, social media and so on. İn our days, almost all people is using phone. They have social accounts and they are active.
İn conclusing, it is to hard to accommodate with old term people. However, everbody have to respect to each other.

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ONE THOUGHT ON "GENERATIONS"

SAYS: Hi

I enjoyed your essay. I can say I like my mother's colthes. They are very good. They are like hippies:)

I think your body paragraph can longer. Your ideas are superb but you need a some more.

Also, conclusion is too short. Teacher said you write summary for conclusion. You write very short.

Anyway, this is very good ideas and organazied essay.

Good work.

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March 18, 2016 at 9:29 am • Reply »

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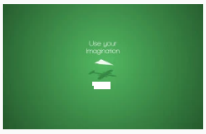

SECOND DRAFT GENERATIONS

March 18, 2016

What do you think about your grandparent's lifestyle? Is it so boring or interesting? Would you want to live in those years? Some clothes or accessory can be interesting for you. However, some rules can be hard. Some values are still same in our days. And also there are so many new notions. There are several similarities and differences between our generation and our grandparent's generation.

Our grandparent's generation and our generation can be similar in some aspects.First similarity is, both of them have similar sense of fun and relationship. In the past, people had a good time with their friends. Now, almost all people had good relationship too. Another similarity is, old time women was follow fashion like now. They were pay attention their clothes and almost all lady want to be beautiful and swell. There are some similarities like these.

There are some differences between both generations. First diffence is education. Nowadays, children can get a good and long term training. But beforetime, girls couldnt get training. Also now, education is more developed than before. Second difference is about using technology. Grandparent's generation didnt have got phone, social media and so on. In our days, almost all people is using phone. They have social accounts and they are active.

In conclusing, it is to hard to accommodate with old term people. However, everbody have to respect to each other. There are some similarities and differences between our generation and our grandparent's generation and we should keep in mind that respect is significant.

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← Generations

THIRD DRAFT Generations →

ONE THOUGHT ON "SECOND DRAFT GENERATIONS"

SAYS: Hello,
Let's check your second draft.

Your introduction is well-designed and makes readers to read more. I really like it.

Your first body paragraph is also very good with cool ideas. However, you have problems while using past tense. Sentences like "old time women was follow fashion like now. They were pay attention..." have this problem. Please rewrite them using past forms of the verbs and do not use verb to be if not necessary.

Your second body paragraph in which you talked about differences is really well. Just pay more attention to capital I's. It does not have dot on it in English.

You summarised your essay in an excellent way in your conclusion. I really enjoyed reading your essay. Keep up the good work!

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March 21, 2016 at 6:14 pm • Reply »

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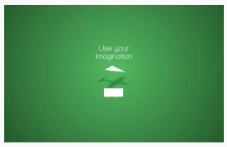

THIRD DRAFT GENERATIONS

March 23, 2016

What do you think about your grandparent's lifestyle? Is it so boring or interesting? Would you want to live in those years? Some clothes or accessory can be interesting for you. However, some rules can be hard. Some values are still same in our days. And also there are so many new notions. There are several similarities and differences between our generation and our grandparent's generation.

Our grandparent's generation and our generation can be similar in some aspects.First similarity is, both of them have similar sense of fun and relationship. In the past, people had a good time with their friends. Now, almost all people had good relationship too. Another similarity is, old time women followed fashion like now. They payed attention their clothes and almost all lady want to be beautiful and swell. There are some similarities like these.

There are some differences between both generations. First diffence is education. Nowadays, children can get a good and long term training. But beforetime, girls couldnt get training. Also now, education is more developed than before. Second difference is about using technology. Grandparent's generation didnt have got phone, social media and so on. In our days, almost all people is using phone. They have social accounts and they are active.

In conclusing, it is to hard to accommodate with old term people. However, everbody have to respect to each other. There are some similarities and differences between our generation and our grandparent's generation and we should keep in mind that respect is significant.

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DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES BETWEEN YOUR AND YOUR GRANDPARENT'S GENERATION

MARCH 15, 2016 ~

Have you ever thought what the differences and the similarities between your generation and your grandparent's generation are? According to some research, many people say that our grandparent's generation was better than our generation today because people like to eat pure food, not food with GMO. A comparison between your generation and your grandparent's generation reveals some surprising similarities and differences.

Firstly, there are several similarities between your generation and your grandparent's generation. For instance, both in your generation and your grandparent's generation people have to work for living. People want money for food, clothes and housing. Money always had a huge amount of significance in our life since Lydian's. Due to that, People work for money and buy with that needs. Secondly, not only in your generation but also in your grandparent's generation, people needs to have a religion because religion gives people confidence and give answer for some questions, such as "where I come? ", "where I'll go after death? ". There are a lot of religion varieties, such as Christian, Muslim and Jewish. Thirdly, in your grandparent's generation people lived in houses also in your generation people lived in houses. The structure is different but the aim is the same.To be protected from bad weather and protect your privacy from others.

Despite the similarities, there are a variety of differences amongst your generation and your grandparent's generation. To start with, people from your grandparent's generation are more social than now in your generation. In the past, people travel for a long distance just to visit relatives or friends. However, today in the modern world, people send messages or mails to friends either cognate instead to visit them. Another differences is that, in the 21st century nearly all people eat once in their life fast-food. In the past, people ate mostly healthy things at home but now people eat and drink a lot of detrimental things such as hamburger, French fries, Coke, Nuggets. There are also other differences between these two generations such education. In your grandparent's generation, mostly rich people had the opportunities to study and poor people start to work in the average age of 10-12 because their family need money. While rich kids went to school, poor kids worked in farms or shepherding.

Taking all those points into consideration, there are a number of similarities and differences between your generation and your grandparent's generation. If I had a chance to travel in the time, I would live in my grandparent's or maybe older generations due to healthy food and sociability.

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One thought on "DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES BETWEEN YOUR AND YOUR GRANDPARENT'S GENERATION"

MARCH 17, 2016 AT 9:05 PM

Hello, your compare-contrast essay is very good.
Especially your similarities are true. I wrote similar issues.

You wrote People in 2nd paragraph. P should be small. It is not important mistake.

Your organization is also very well.
Congratulations!

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2nd Draft – DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES BETWEEN YOUR AND YOUR GRANDPARENT'S GENERATION

MARCH 18, 2016 ~

Have you ever thought what the differences and the similarities between your generation and your grandparent's generation are? According to some research, many people say that our grandparent's generation was better than our generation today because people like to eat pure food, not food with GMO. A comparison between your generation and your grandparent's generation reveals some surprising similarities and differences.

Firstly, there are several similarities between your generation and your grandparent's generation. For instance, both in your generation and your grandparent's generation, people have to work for living. People want money for food, clothes and housing. Money always had a huge amount of significance in our life since Lydian's. Due to that, people work for money and buy their needs. Secondly, not only in your generation but also in your grandparent's generation, people need to have a religion because religion gives people confidence and give answer for some questions, such as "where I come? ", "where I'll go after death? ". There are a lot of religion varieties, such as Christian, Muslim and Jewish. Thirdly, in your grandparent's generation people lived in houses also in your generation people lived in houses. The structure is different but the aim is the same.To be protected from bad weather and protect your privacy from others.

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One thought on "2nd Draft – DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES BETWEEN YOUR AND YOUR GRANDPARENT'S GENERATION"

MARCH 21, 2016 AT 6:00 PM

Hello,
Let's check your second draft.

I really liked your introduction. It is a good start before you expressed your ideas.

In your first body paragraph, the sentence "Money always had a huge amount of significance in our life since Lydian's" has a tense problem. It should be present perfect tense because you used since. Moreover, the sentence, "Thirdly, in your grandparent's generation people lived in houses also in your generation people lived in houses." has also tense problem. If your are talking about past, it is OK to use past tense, of course.. However, if you are not talking about past but now, you should the proper tense, either present simple or present continuous.

Your second body paragraph has wonderful ideas with examples and and has a clear and understandable meaning. Only thing I want to say is that by writing "cognate", I think you mean "relative".

Your conclusion is an excellent finish for an excellent essay. I really enjoyed reading it. Keep up good work!

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MARCH 23, 2016 ~

Have you ever thought what the differences and the similarities between your generation and your grandparent's generation are? According to some research, many people say that our grandparent's generation was better than our generation today because people like to eat pure food, not food with GMO. A comparison between your generation and your grandparent's generation reveals some surprising similarities and differences.

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Appendix E

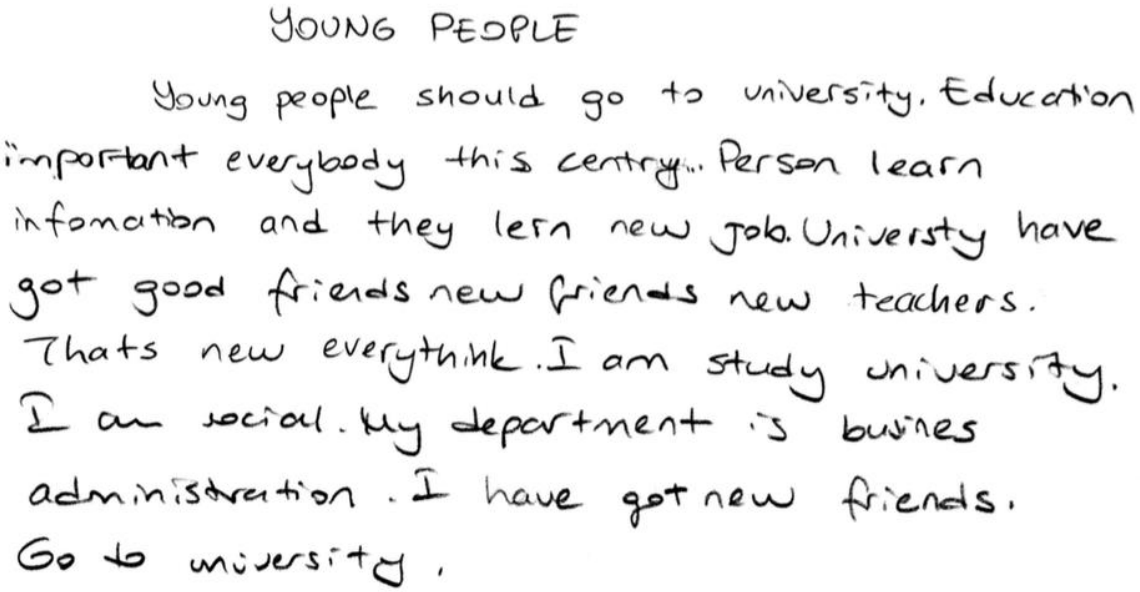
Sample Pre-Test and Post-Test Papers

WRITING PRE-TEST

ID: Sample 1a

Choose ONE of the topics and write an essay.

1. Do you think people should live abroad? Why or why not?
2. Do you think young people go to university? Why or why not?



YOUNG PEOPLE

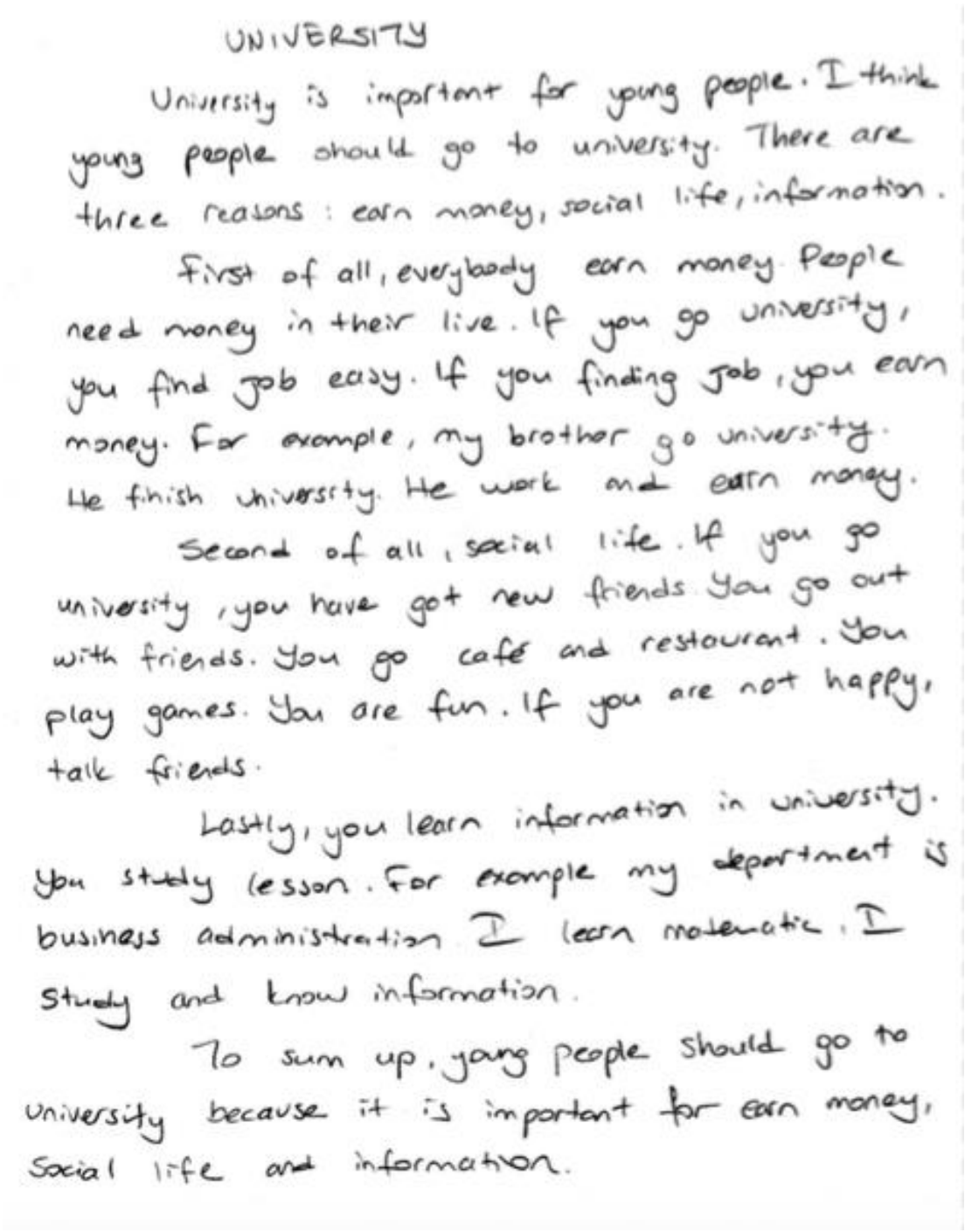
Young people should go to university. Education important everybody this centry... Person learn infomation and they lern new job. Universty have got good friends new friends new teachers. Thats new everythink. I am study university. I an social. My department is buines administration. I have got new friends. Go to university.

WRITING POST TEST

ID: Sample 1b

Choose ONE of the topics and write an essay.

1. Do you think people should live abroad? Why or why not?
2. Do you think young people go to university? Why or why not?



UNIVERSITY

University is important for young people. I think young people should go to university. There are three reasons : earn money, social life, information.

First of all, everybody earn money. People need money in their live. If you go university, you find job easy. If you finding job, you earn money. For example, my brother go university. He finish university. He work and earn money.

Second of all, social life. If you go university, you have got new friends. You go out with friends. You go cafe and restaurant. You play games. You are fun. If you are not happy, talk friends.

Lastly, you learn information in university. You study lesson. For example my department is business administration I learn materatic. I study and know information.

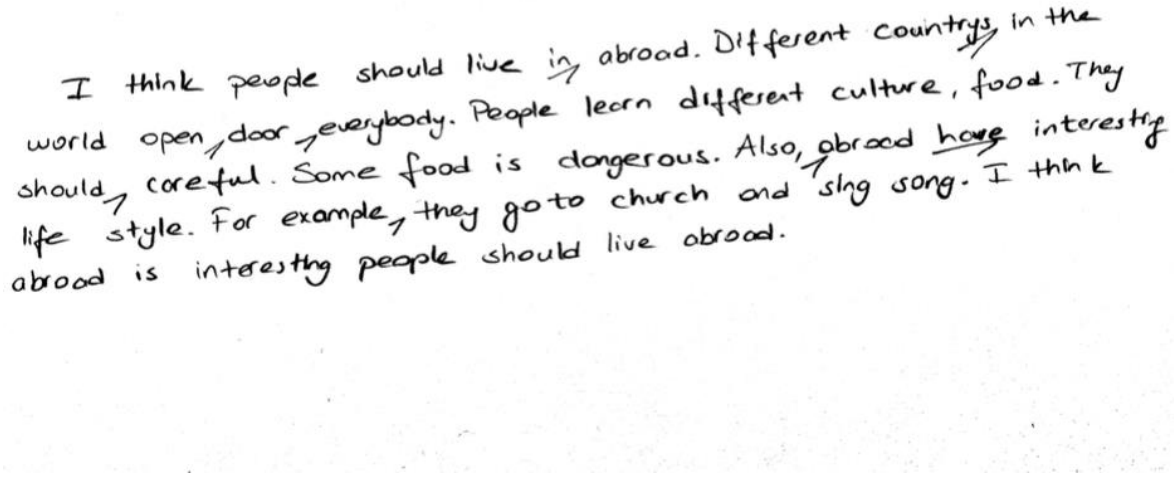
To sum up, yang people should go to university because it is important for earn money, social life and information.

WRITING PRE-TEST

ID: Sample 2a

Choose ONE of the topics and write an essay.

1. Do you think people should live abroad? Why or why not?
2. Do you think young people go to university? Why or why not?



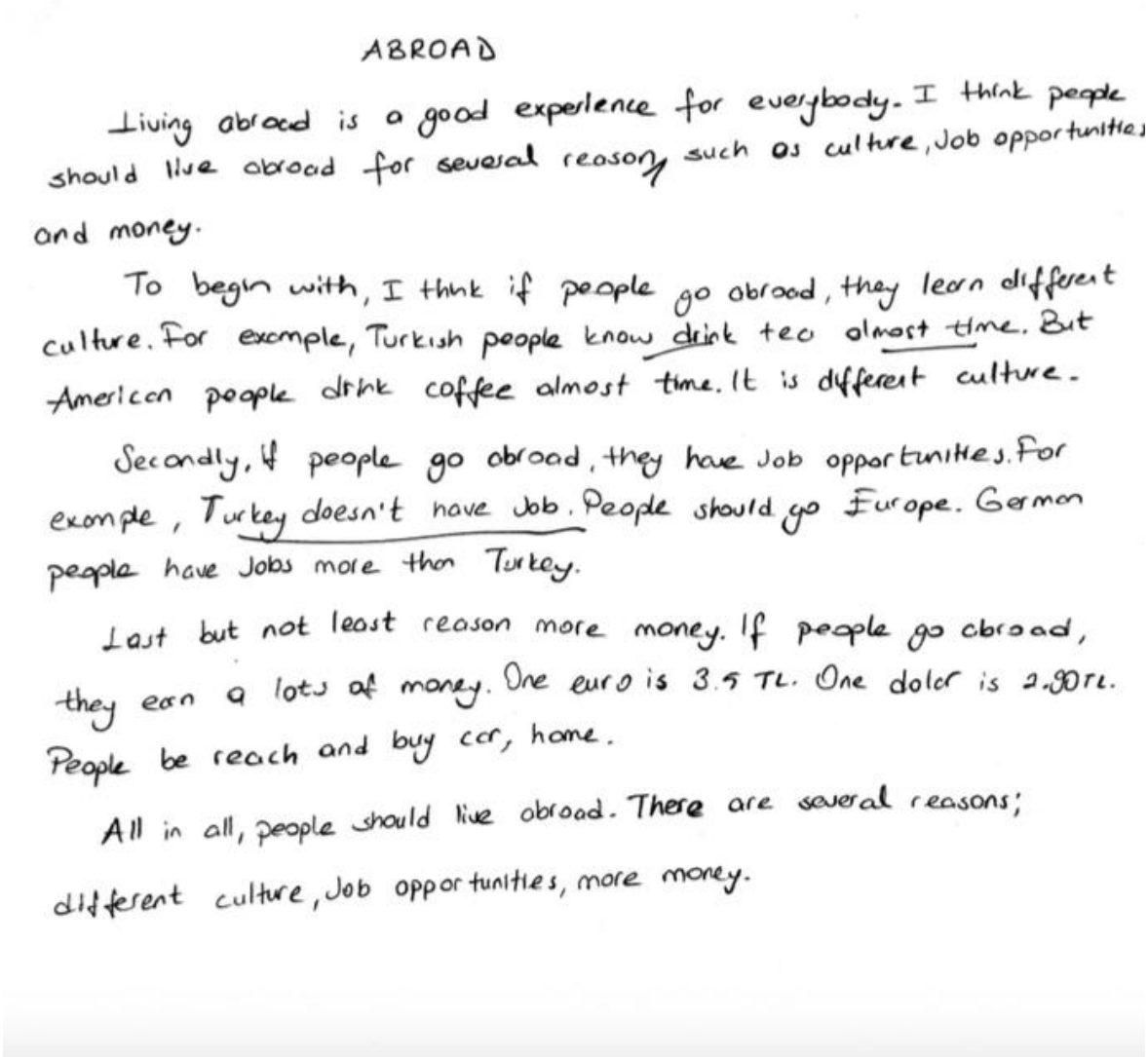
I think people should live in abroad. Different countrys in the world open door everybody. People learn different culture, food. They should careful. Some food is dangerous. Also, abroad have interesting life style. For example, they go to church and sing song. I think abroad is interesting people should live abroad.

WRITING POST TEST

ID: Sample 2b

Choose ONE of the topics and write an essay.

1. Do you think people should live abroad? Why or why not?
2. Do you think young people go to university? Why or why not?



ABROAD

Living abroad is a good experience for everybody. I think people should live abroad for several reasons such as culture, Job opportunities and money.

To begin with, I think if people go abroad, they learn different culture. For example, Turkish people know drink tea almost time. But American people drink coffee almost time. It is different culture.

Secondly, if people go abroad, they have Job opportunities. For example, Turkey doesn't have Job. People should go Europe. German people have Jobs more than Turkey.

Last but not least reason more money. If people go abroad, they earn a lots of money. One euro is 3.5 TL. One dolar is 2.90TL. People be reach and buy car, home.

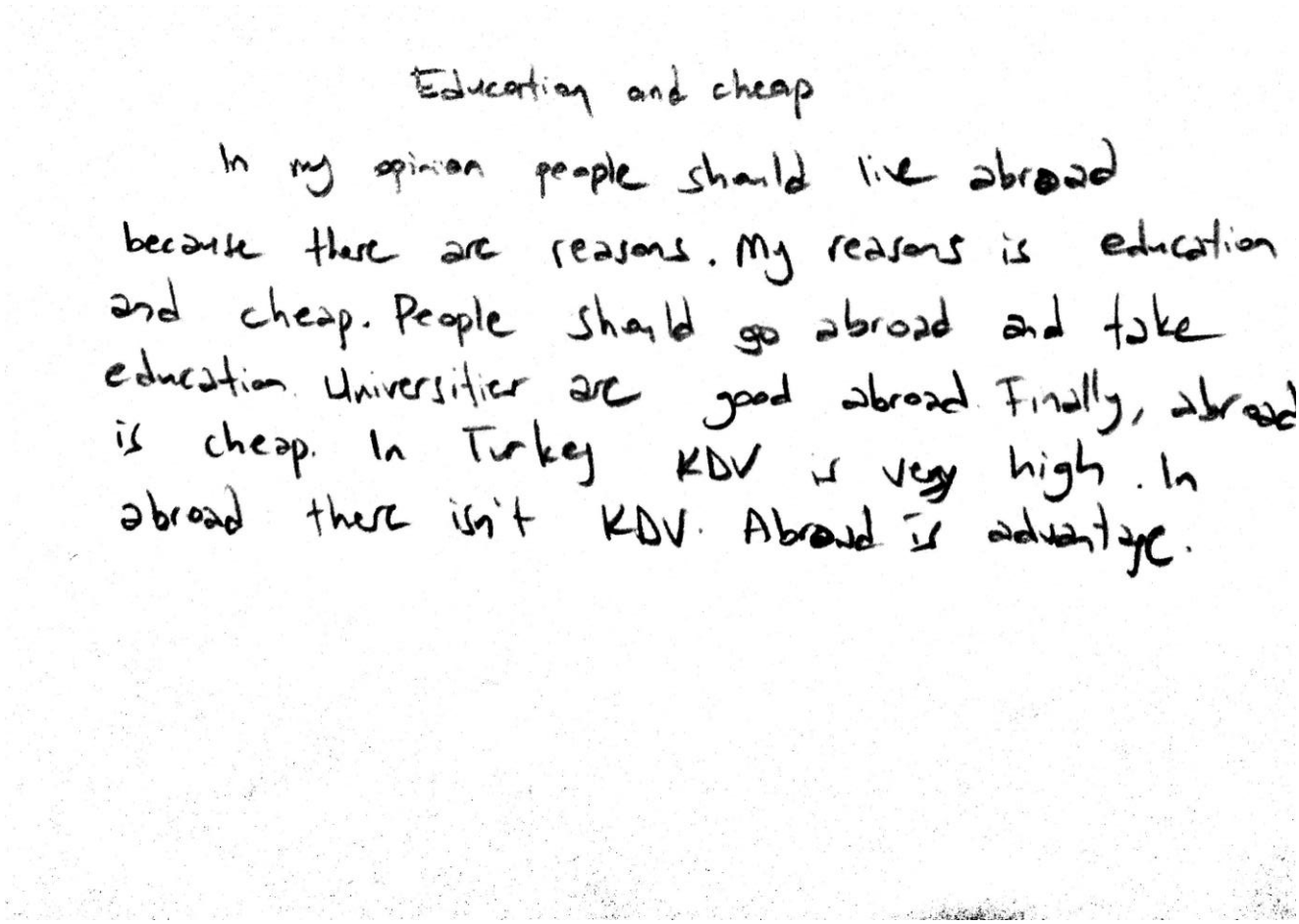
All in all, people should live abroad. There are several reasons; different culture, Job opportunities, more money.

WRITING PRE-TEST

ID: Sample 3a

Choose ONE of the topics and write an essay.

1. Do you think people should live abroad? Why or why not?
2. Do you think young people go to university? Why or why not?



Education and cheap

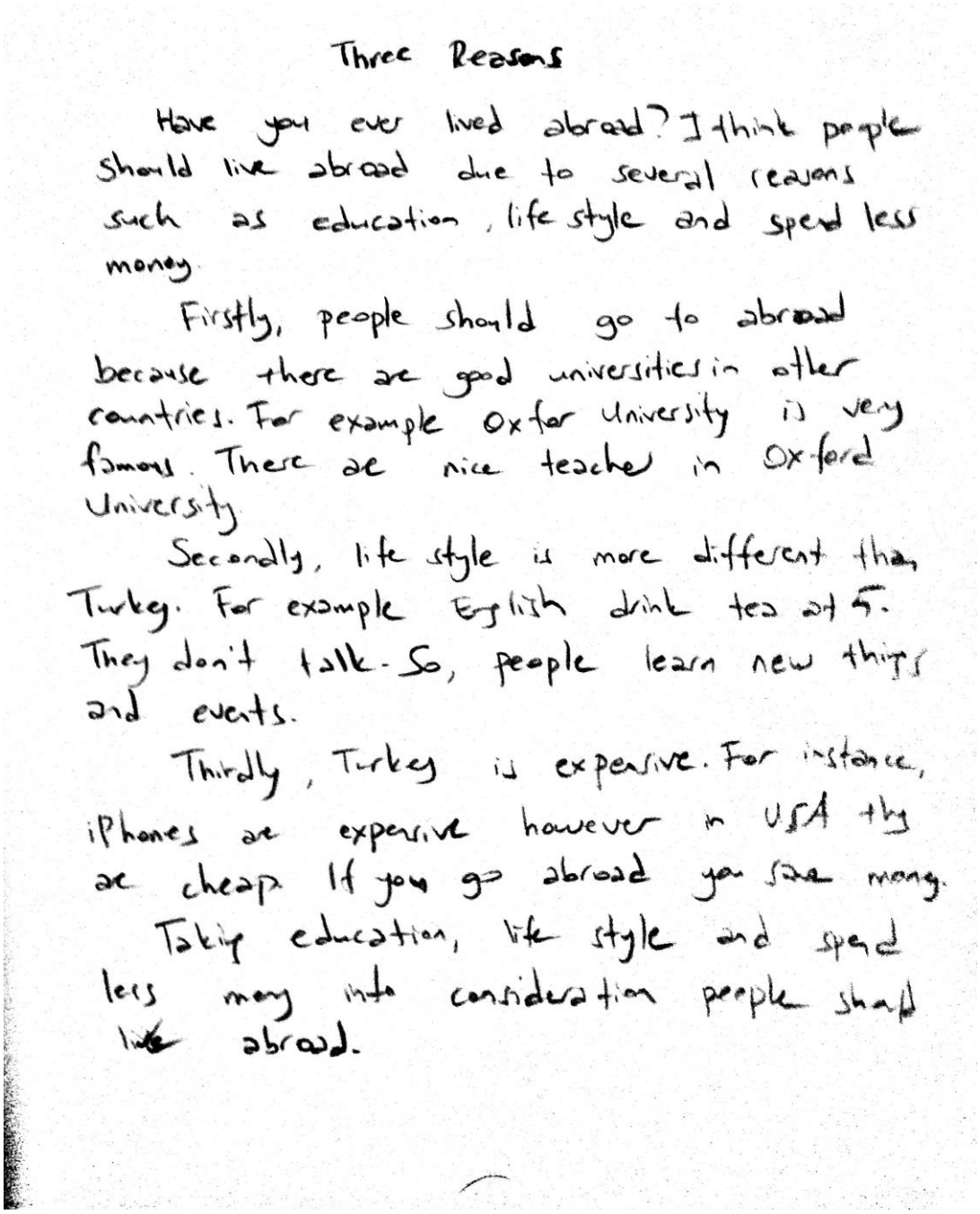
In my opinion people should live abroad because there are reasons. My reasons is education and cheap. People should go abroad and take education. Universities are good abroad. Finally, abroad is cheap. In Turkey KDV is very high. In abroad there isn't KDV. Abroad is advantage.

WRITING POST TEST

ID: Sample 3b

Choose ONE of the topics and write an essay.

1. Do you think people should live abroad? Why or why not?
2. Do you think young people go to university? Why or why not?



Three Reasons

Have you ever lived abroad? I think people should live abroad due to several reasons such as education, life style and spend less money.

Firstly, people should go to abroad because there are good universities in other countries. For example Oxford University is very famous. There are nice teacher in Oxford University.

Secondly, life style is more different than Turkey. For example English drink tea at 5. They don't talk. So, people learn new things and events.

Thirdly, Turkey is expensive. For instance, iPhones are expensive however in USA thy are cheap. If you go abroad you save many.

Taking education, life style and spend less money into consideration people shall live abroad.

Appendix F

The Blog Use Evaluation Questionnaire

The Blog Use Evaluation Questionnaire

This questionnaire was designed to evaluate the attitudes of the learners towards blog use in their writing classes. The data provided will be only used for a scientific study. Participation is voluntarily. Your grades you get from your lesson won't be affected. Thank you very much for your answers.

1.	Gender	Male		Female
2.	Department			
3.	How would you rate your computer skill level?	Competent	Mediocre	Beginner
4.	How often do you use the Internet?	Usually	Sometimes	Never
5.	Using blogs in writing lessons contributed to my writing skill.	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
6.	I consider using blogs in writing lessons a good method	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
7.	I benefited from my peers' feedback on my blog posts	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
8.	I enjoyed doing my writing homework via blogs	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
9.	Using blog in writing lesson improved my writing skill	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
10.	Giving feedback to my peers contributed to my writing skill	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
11.	I offer writing lessons via using blogs to my friends.	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
12.	Doing my writing homework via using blogs makes me feel more comfortable	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
13.	I was motivated to write again after reading my own posts on my blog	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
14.	My in and out class communication with my peers improved thanks to using blogs in writing lessons	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
15.	I benefited from feedback that I got from my teacher by using blogs	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
16.	If I had this lesson again, I would rather use blogs again.	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
17.	My peers' feedbacks to my posts on my blog were not beneficial	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
18.	I did not benefit from feedback that I got from my teacher by using blogs.	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
19.	Using blogs in writing lessons did not affect my writing skill positively.	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
20	If I had this lesson again, I would not rather use blogs again.	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
21.	I experienced problems while using blogs.	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
22.	Your further opinions and suggestion on using blogs for writing classes.			

Appendix G

Rubric

Rubric		
	Maximum Score	Actual Score
Format – 5 points Title centered (2), First line of each paragraph intended (2) margins left on both sides (1)	5	
Punctuation and Mechanics – 5 points Periods, commas, apostrophes and quotation marks (3) Capital letters (1) Spelling (1)	5	
Content – 20 points The essay fulfils the requirements of the assignment. (5) The essay is interesting. (5) The essay shows that the writer used care and thought. (10)	20	
Organization – 45 points The essay follows the outline, and it has an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. (5) **Introductory Paragraph:** The introductory paragraph begins with several general sentences and ends with a thesis statement. (5) **Body:** Each paragraph of the body discusses a new point and begins with a clear topic sentence. (5) Each paragraph has specific supporting material: facts, examples, quotations, paraphrased or summarized information, and so on. (10) Each paragraph has unity. (5) Each paragraph has coherence. (5) Transitions are used to link paragraphs. (5) **Concluding Paragraph:** The concluding paragraph summarizes the main points or paraphrases the thesis statement, begins with a conclusion signal, and leaves the reader with the writer's final thoughts on the topic. (5)	45	
Grammar and Sentence Structure – 25 points Estimate a grammar and sentence structure score.	25	
Grand Total	100	

ÖZGEÇMİŞ

Adı ve Soyadı: Uğur Üzer

Doğum Tarihi: 11.07.1989

Doğum Yeri: ANTALYA

Eğitim Durumu

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Lisans: Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi – İngilizce Öğretmenliği

Yüksek Lisans: Akdeniz Üniversitesi – İngiliz Dili Eğitimi

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1. TEFL Certificate, City University Of New York-Hunter College

Bilimsel Toplantı Sunumları

1. How to set up an online classroom in EdModo, 1ST INTERNATIONAL ELT SYMPOSIUM, İstanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, İstanbul, 2013, Özgür Deniz Yakut ile birlikte.

2. Distinctive Web 2.0 Tools for Language Teaching, THE 3RD BLACK SEA ELT CONFERENCE: "TECHNOLOGY: A BRIDGE TO LANGUAGE LEARNING", Ondokuz Mayıs University, Samsun, 2012, Özgür Deniz Yakut ile birlikte.

İş Deneyimi

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2011 – 2013 – İstanbul Kemerburgaz Üniversitesi, Okutman

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