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Improving EFL Students' Writing Skill through a Directed Blog

Case of Students at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements for
The Master of Arts Degree in Language Sciences.

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Dedication

This work would not have been possible without the loving support of so many people. I find myself overwhelmed in offering them all my thanks in dedicating this work to them. The following is not a hierarchy since each person made his/her own unique contribution and none could stand above the others in that regard.

To my mother and father, source of my happiness and success in life. May Allah bless them.

To my family and the many friends, who have been so supportive and encouraged the fulfilment of this work.

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Abstract

Writing is one of the must-have skills that every EFL student needs to master, it is lively used in many contexts, therefore, most of EFL learners face many writing difficulties due to its cognitive complexity. Providing the students with the needed tools may rise their cognitive awareness towards writing and lead to improving their production not only at the formal setting but also at home or at any other place with access to the World Wide Web using blogs, where they would find lessons, explanations and assignments. This study focused on the use of blogs with English LMD students at the University of Biskra, to help them improve their writing skills and make written expression module more than just a course that they need to pass. Findings from this study revealed that providing students with a controlled blog worked well for publishing academic style writing lessons and provided them with a live source of information available at hand. Conclusions derived from this research included that English students involved in this study felt comfort in obtaining their additional knowledge about writing methods of improvement. However, a minority of the students leant towards the traditional academic learning where the course ends in the class. Through a blog, the instructor may compensate for some missing points that were not thoroughly explained in class.

List of abbreviations

CMC: Computer Mediated Communication.

CMS: Content Management System

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

FTP: File Transfer protocol (used to transfer computer files from one host to another)

HTML: HyperText Markup Language (the standard markup language used to create web pages)

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General introduction

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Introduction

Foreign/second language teachers continuously search for new and better ways to help their students learn a new language. One area that has provided much excitement in recent years is the use of advanced technology that supports both synchronous and asynchronous communication. The growth of advanced technology in the teaching of composition has been impressive in second language teaching. In the past few decades, writing and technology have focused on a variety of computer applications as well as a variety of tools, from word processors, e-mail, to online chats, bulletin board discussions, and Web page projects. Not only has advanced technology supported communication for second language learning, but it has also expanded the methods used in teaching writing.

Writing in a foreign language is one of the most challenging skills for almost all learners. Developing the writing skill is thought to be highly complex if not the most complex in comparison to listening, speaking and reading. This study aims to use technology assets to improve students' second language writing. Though a blog, students will be provided with lessons about written expression course, these lessons are relative to different aspects of writing which include content, organization, vocabulary, language use, spelling, punctuation and accurate capitalization and paragraphing. The main key is to analyse students view towards using such non-traditional manner and to make sure that they approve the whole process.

1. Statement of the problem

Writing a coherent text is often a challenge to EFL learners due to the complexity of the aspect of this skill, thus they face difficulties producing mistake-free paragraphs and essays even though they have been taught the main technics of writing step by step. Furthermore, writing can be difficult and frustrating, therefore students would need all what the teacher can provide; whether in the academic setting or at home, students' progression toward the betterment of writing requires the teacher to provide them with the needed knowledge at any time and place. With the use of the blog the teacher might help the students improve even at home and with no time limitation. In addition, student may be able to provide the teacher with a constant feedback, this latter is essential to keep the willingness to work. Moreover, time pressure is a challenge to every educator i.e. finishing the lesson at the available time does not always guarantee the fulfilment of the lesson, teachers often deal with the main points of the course which may leave some undiscussed technics that might be in the favour of the student. Using a blog the teacher may be able to explain the missing pieces of the lesson.

2. The aim of the study

The present study aims at investigating the possibility of using a blog to help English students at the University of Khider Mohamed Biskra improve their writing ability. Recent research has shown that web-publishing offers powerful support to the English language learning process in terms of strengthening writing skills. This Study would provide data on the role of blogging in the development of the students' awareness towards writing, the blog would be guided by the educator to ensure that the materials provided are relevant to learners' official course.

The results from this research will give an insight to teachers of the University on how much they can help their students improve their writing skills through additional explanations

and assignments provided on the blog. Furthermore, the students would have a digital version of what they studied accessible at any time and with the ability to ask questions anonymously to avoid the embarrassment that often hinder students from asking questions during class which effects the student negatively.

3. Hypotheses and research questions

The present study is an attempt at answering a few questions that pertain to improving university students' performance on writing using a directed blog. The objectives of the investigation can be expressed in the following research questions:

- Would blogging be beneficial to the students' writing performance?
- Would it help change the students' attitude towards written expression module?
- Would the blog be a helpful tool for teachers to insure the fulfilment of the course?

All these questions can be expressed in terms of the following research hypotheses.

Hypothesis one:

We hypothesize that with the help of the blog students will be able to improve their writing competency.

Hypothesis two

We hypothesize that with the use of blogs the teacher may provide more materials to students to be accessed at any time and used to improve the students' writing competency.

Hypothesis three:

We hypothesize that students will feel comfortable using a non-traditional method to improve their writing competency.

4. Tools of research

Concerning data collection, we would administer two main questionnaires; a pre-questionnaire, and a post-questionnaire.

Since it is not possible to deal with all the English students at the Department the pre-questionnaire would be given to 80 student mostly from second and third year chosen randomly from the Department of English at Mohamed Khider University – Biskra. This number of students constitutes the sample of this research. The pre-questionnaire would discuss students' views toward improving their writing skills through internet.

The post-questionnaire would be given to the same sample who answered the pre-questionnaire fifteen (15) days after. Most of the students who volunteered to answer the first questionnaire would be located with the help of group number and name provided in the pre-questionnaire. The aim of this questionnaire is to investigate whether the students benefited from the blog and whether they would access it regularly to check for updates; moreover, the analysis of this questionnaire would check the validity of the research hypothesis.

5. Structure of the study

The present research will be basically divided into three main chapters. Chapters One will be devoted to explain writing. Chapter two will be explain everything about blogging. Chapter Three will be about the analysis of both quantitative responses and the results obtained from the pre and post-questionnaire.

The first chapter will be devoted to the skill of writing. It will comprise a description of writing; what writing is about; the criteria that make for writing a good paragraph/essay; and

the reasons for teaching writing. We will also try to shed light on the relationship between writing and other language skills including speaking and reading. In this chapter, we will also try to explore the resources of the writing skill and the different writing approaches.

The second chapter would serve to unveil some of the technical concepts concerning blogging, potential benefits to the learner and some other uses to the teacher. Moreover, it would describe the platform used along with a full explanation about WordPress. Lastly, we would fully describe the blog we used for this study.

Finally, the last chapter of the proposed research will be mainly an investigation of the improvement of LMD students' writing skill through the blog we created for this purpose.

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Introduction

In order to learn a foreign language, there are four skills that must be required. Language teachers often use a specific order; starting with teaching, listening, speaking, reading and then writing. The reasons for leaving the writing skill till the end, are that it is the most essential, difficult and complicated one compared with the other language skills. Therefore, writing is a fundamental skill in the process of language learning, yet, it is a difficult skill that requires a considerable effort and a serious practice to reach a proficient level. In this chapter, the reader will have a general idea about the writing skill with different definitions, the qualities of a good written product and the reasons why writing should be taught, Furthermore, we will go through the different writing approaches.

1.1 Characteristics of writing

Writing is a group of letters or symbols written or marked on a surface as a means of communicating ideas by making each symbol stand for an idea, concept, or thing, by using each symbol to represent a set of sounds grouped into syllables (Collins, 2015). This definition suggests that writing is the activity of producing a piece of written language which is designed to be read. However, writing is more than being a matter of transcribing language into symbols. Just as speech is more than producing sounds, writing is much more than the production of graphic symbols; these symbols have to be arranged according to some conventions to form words, and to combine them to form sentences. A sequence of sentences, short or long, but coherent is an adequate means of communication. According to Collins and Gentner (1980: 62), the learner/writer should consider the four structural levels in writing starting with the word structure, sentence structure, paragraph structure, and overall text structure. Coordinating all these aspects is a staggering job that is definitely more than a simple activity of putting symbols together.

In addition to the complexity of structure, other psychological, linguistic and cognitive related issues interfere to make writing a complex activity for both native speakers and language learners. Byrne (1991: 4) explains that writing is a difficult activity because it is neither a natural nor a spontaneous activity and that “the problems related to writing are usually grouped under three headings which overlap to some extent: psychological, linguistic and cognitive.”

Moreover, writing is directly linked to people’s roles in society. According to Tribble (1996: 12) to be deprived of the opportunity to learn how to write is “to be excluded from a wide range of social roles, including those which the majority of people in industrialized societies associate with power and prestige.” In the same direction goes Kress (1989; in Tribble, 1996), emphasizing that learning to write is not just a question of developing a set of mechanical ‘orthographic’ skills but it also involves learning a new set of cognitive In terms of pedagogy, writing is a central element in the language teaching setting as students need to write down notes and to take written exams. Yet, over the years it has seemed that writing has been seen as only a support system for learning grammar and vocabulary rather than a skill in its own right. However, trainers and methodologists have looked again at writing in the foreign language classroom and acknowledged the importance of writing as a vital skill for speakers of a foreign language as much as for everyone using their first language (Harmer, 2004).

1.2 Aims of teaching writing

Almost all human beings grow up speaking their first language (and sometimes second or third) as a matter of course. Spoken language, for a child/learner is acquired naturally as a result of being exposed to it, whereas the ability to write has to be consciously learned. Harmer (2004: 3) agrees that writing should be learned because it could not be naturally acquired like speaking, though, he provides more reasons to teach writing for EFL learners which include reinforcement, language development, learning style, and most importantly, writing as a skill in its own right. Harmer (1998: 79) illustrates the reasons for teaching writing as follows:

- Reinforcement: Some learners acquire languages in a purely oral way, but most of them benefit greatly from seeing the language written down.

- Language development: The mental activity learners go through in order to construct proper written texts is all part of the ongoing learning experience.

- Learning style: For many learners, producing language in a slower way is something they appreciate. Writing provides time and ease for learners more than face-to-face communication does.

- Writing as a skill: Learners need to know how to write essays, how to put written reports together and how the writing system operates (for example, in terms of conventions such as punctuation, paragraph construction) just as they need to know how to pronounce language appropriately.

1.3. Effective writing

Writing in English within an academic context requires some criteria of acceptability relative to different aspects of writing which include organization, vocabulary, language use, punctuation, accurate capitalization and paragraphing. According to Starkey (2004), an effective piece of writing is the one that is organized, clear, and coherent, with accurate language and effective word choice.

1.3.1 Organization

In the process of writing, information should be presented to readers in a structured format; even short pieces of writing have regular, predictable patterns of organization. The astonishing advantage of organization is to help the reader to believe what you are saying, and to willingly follow your lead. Starkey (2004: 2) states that “By following an organized method of writing, you will guide your reader from your first to last sentence. He or she will be able to

see how the various points you make in your piece of writing work together and how they support your thesis”.

Organization is usually decided upon through certain techniques that precede the actual act of writing. In other words, the writer decides about the organization of his written work before engaging into the physical act of writing through some prewriting techniques including mainly free-writing and brainstorming. The use of the prewriting techniques helps at making an effective plan that guarantees the organization of the written work because a plan is usually made after reading and classifying the notes gathered from the prewriting activity. According to Chelsa (2006), Creme and Lea (2008), and Galko (2002), free-writing and brainstorming are effective for shaping the learner’s thoughts allowing some time to make connection with the assigned subject noting everything and anything that comes to mind. The two preceding techniques are similar in that they are timed, and flowing exercises meant to elicit many thoughts and ideas on a given topic. However, free-writing requires putting whole sentences or phrases on paper whereas brainstorming involves creating a list that might contain various individual thoughts that make sense in a particular order.

1.3.2 Clarity

The learner’s goal when writing in an academic context is to convey information to including the fact that he can write well (Starkey, 2004: 11). Clarity is an essential element of writing the learner should become skilled at in order to make his writing readable, and guarantee that those who read it understand exactly what he means to say. Murray and Hughes (2008: 86) emphasize the importance of clarity as a fundamental element in making one’s writing easy to be read and accessible. According to them, the key to achieve clarity is to make sentences short and to the point, the learner/writer should be relevant, make every word count, and try not to express more than one idea in each sentence. In order to achieve clarity in writing, according to Starkey (2004: 12-9), the learner should:

- Eliminate ambiguity by avoiding words or phrases that have more than one possible interpretation. The learner should focus on what he means and keep away from any language structure that could mislead the reader.

- Use powerful, precise adjectives and adverbs. One way to accomplish clarity is to use powerful and specific adjectives and adverbs. The right modifiers (adjectives and adverbs) help out the learner to convey his message across in fewer, more accurate words

- Be concise, this means getting right to the point without unnecessary spinning around, worthless repetition or wordiness. Starkey (2004: 15) sees that: “wordiness is boring, and it takes up valuable time and space... there are two equally important approaches to more concise writing: eliminating unnecessary words and phrases, and using active voice whenever possible.” Moreover, he provides two reasons for avoiding repetition of ideas and information in one’s writing.

1.3.3 Coherence

Coherence is an important element in any kind of writing. It is particularly crucial in academic writing, where success or failure may depend upon how clearly the learner has managed to communicate his ideas and points of argument to his reader. No matter how insightful or original those ideas may be, if he is not able to present them in a clear and logical way, their meaning and value is lost. Kane (2000) and Creme and Lea (2008) among others, agree that coherence has a great role in making a good piece of writing. According to them, coherence has to do with arranging and linking one’s ideas in a way that makes them most easily understood by the reader.

Murray and Hughes (2008: 45) notice that a good writer is the one “who sticks his ideas together as links in a chain, each link connecting the one before it with the one after. If any links are missing, the connections become unclear and the argument structure breaks down.”

1.3.4 Word choice

The best way for the learner to accurately convey his ideas in writing is to choose the right words. Doing so ensures that the reader understands what the writer is really writing. According to Starkey (2004) and Kane (2000), there are two aspects the learner's should consider while choosing between the words to be used: denotation and connotation. Denotation is the basic or literal meaning of a word. Learners should make sure of the correctness of their words, because sometimes some confusion may stem from words that sound or look similar but have very different meaning, words and usages that sound correct but in fact they are not considered standard English, or words that are misused so often that their usage is thought to be correct. Connotation "is a word's implied meaning which involves emotions, cultural assumptions, and suggestions" (Starkey, 2004: 21). The learner should confirm that each used word means exactly what he intends to it, considering connotation requires the learner thinking beyond the dictionary, to what might be implied or inferred by his writing. According to what has been said before, both denotative and connotative meanings must be considered when making word choice. However, this is not all, the learner should also consider whether the used words might confuse or possibly offend his audience. This means avoiding informal language like slang words.

1.3.5 Mechanics

In composition, 'mechanics' refers to the appearance of words, to how they are spelled or arranged on paper. "The fact that the first word of a paragraph is usually indented, for example, is a matter of mechanics" (Kane, 2000: 15). Conventions of writing require that a sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with full-stop punctuation (period, question mark, or exclamation point). These types of conventions or mechanics are very significant in putting together a good quality piece of writing because no matter how original are the learner's ideas, if he cannot express them in a clear and accurate manner. Starkey (2004) addressed writing

mechanics in terms of grammar, spelling, punctuation and capitalization. Grammar is a key element not only in writing, but in language as a system of communication in general. Having a good knowledge of the parts speech, the structures of the language and its rhetorical devices and knowing how to manipulate them in order to write comprehensively is what writing requires.

1.4- Writing and other language skills

1.4.1 Four language skills working together

Writing is not an isolated skill. Four language skills work together to enhance the development of each other: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Listening and reading are the receptive skills (taking in information), and speaking and writing are the productive skills (giving out information). Language skills enhance each other; i.e. the development of individual language skills improves the development of others. For example, listening and hearing other people use language enhances one's ability to speak, reading helps students become better writers, and writing helps in developing phonic knowledge and enhances reading fluency.

1.4.2 Writing and speaking

Both writing and speaking are clearly productive activities in that they create language outcomes just as listening and reading are both passive activities. When it comes to communication, Kress (1989; cited in Tribble, 1996: 12) sees that speaking and writing are complementary skills and emphasizes that “the person who commands both the forms of writing and of speech is therefore constructed in a fundamentally different way from the person who commands the form of speech alone.” However, the physical act of speaking and writing are

very different. What follows is a summary of some differences between writing and speaking as seen by Brown (1994):

- Performance: oral language is transitory and must be processed in real time, while written language is permanent and can be read and re-read as often one likes.
- Production time: writers generally have more time to plan, review and revise their words before they are finalized, while speakers have a little or no time to do this.
- Distance between the writer and the reader in both time and space eliminates much of the shared context that is present between speaker and listener in face to face contact and this necessitates greater explicitness from the part of the writer.
- Orthography in writing carries a limited amount of information compared to the richness of devices available to speakers to enhance a message for example: stress, intonation, pitch, volume, pressing.
- Complexity: written language tends to be characterized by longer clauses and more subordinators, while spoken language tends to have shorter clauses connected by coordinators, as well as more redundancy (repetition of nouns and verbs).
- Formality: because of the social and cultural uses of which writing is ordinarily put, writing tends to be more formal than speaking.
- Vocabulary: Written texts tend to contain a wider variety of words, and lower frequency words, than oral speech.

Harmer (2004) makes the difference between writing and speaking in terms of time and space of communication, participants, process, organization, language, signs symbols and product. However, he sees that in some contexts, these differences between writing and speaking fade away. For example, the use of written language in text messaging and internet

chatting seems to be more like speech than written discourse where speakers seem to be speaking while using written words. As another example, is the degree to which a formal speech follows the rules of writing in terms of structure, organization, and use of language; such types of speech seem to be more writing rather than speaking.

1.4.3 Writing and reading

From a historical point of view, reading was more emphasized than writing in education. In Britain, for example, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, reading took the primary attention in education before writing, and this is because Foggart (1993; cited in Tribble, 1996: 11) states: “it is desirable that the majority should read in the way they can be given instructions and can be educated into a particular ideology; writing on the other hand, assumes the giving of instructions and the formation of views about society.” In an industrialized society, reading is a survival skill which enables you to react to range of social demands (reading is a pervasive requirement: looking at an alarm clock, glancing at the newspaper, or checking the departures board). Writing, in contrast, is a less necessary skill but one which can lead to more proactive roles.

When looking at the nature of writing and reading, it seems that the two skills are separate in that reading is a passive activity and that writing is a productive one; still, these two language skills are complementary and can be closely developed. As it is seen by Johnson (2008: 7), the apparent relationship between the preceding skills is that reading helps students become better writers. Through reading, students have incidental contact with the rules of grammar, so they develop a sense for the structure of the language and grammar and increase their vocabulary. Therefore, Reading in the writing classroom is understood as the appropriate input for acquisition of writing skills because it is generally assumed “that reading passages will somehow function as primary models from which writing skills can be learned, or at least inferred” Eisterhold (1990: 88).

The nature of this reading-writing link, though not well-defined is often thought to be like Krashen's notion. Krashen (1984: cited in Eisterhold, 1990) claims that the development of writing ability occurs via comprehensible input with a low affective filter. He theorizes that writing competence derives from large amounts of self-motivated reading for interest and/or pleasure.

The evidence that there is an existing relationship between reading and writing is the results of the correlational study carried by Stotsky (1983) that came out with the following results:

- 1- There are correlations between reading achievement and writing ability. Better writers tend to be better readers.
- 2- There are correlations between writing quality and reading experience. Better writers read more than poorer writers.
- 3- There seem to be correlations between reading ability and measures of syntactic complexity in writing. Better readers tend to produce more syntactically mature writing than poorer readers.

1.5 Approaches to teaching writing

In the early 1960's, writing was a neglected skill; it was argued that language is most important in its spoken form and less important in the written one; and for this reason, writing was not given much attention. When writing was first included in teaching curricula, it was viewed as a simple reinforcement of what students learned to say.

After the 1960's, writing gained importance and was considered central in the language learning context. Its understanding and use became largely valued in every discipline, each of which requires a specific method of teaching. Consequently, a great number of approaches and

methods of teaching have come out. Although none of these approaches can be considered as ideal, they have all proved to be successful in one period or another.

1.5.1 The controlled-to-free approach

In the 1950's and 1960's, when the audio-lingual approach prevailed, writing was taught only to reinforce speech where speech was considered primary. It was believed that the mastery of grammar rules would lead to the improvement of the spoken form of a foreign language, and this is the reason for allocating grammar teaching to writing. In this approach, students are not supposed to create their own texts, the only writing learners do is to write grammar exercises, the controlled-to-free approach is sequential: students are first given sentence exercises, then paragraphs to copy or manipulate grammatically by changing questions to statements, present to past, or plural to singular. Only after having improved this type of highly controlled-writing students can move to free composition in which they can express their own ideas.

Probably, one of the most outstanding attributes of the controlled-to-free approach is that it emphasizes accuracy rather than fluency or originality, It focuses on the structural aspect of the language and neglects its communicative aspect as Raimes (1983: 76) states: "this approach stresses three features: grammar, syntax and mechanics."

1.5.2 The free-writing approach

The free-writing approach is essentially based on the belief that when we write freely and frequently, we improve our ability in that language skill. Free writing means that the students write without teachers' interference, and are encouraged to emphasize content and fluency first (Raimes, 1983).

This approach stresses writing quantity rather than quality. Teachers who use this approach assign vast amounts of free writing on given topics with only minimal correction. The emphasis in this approach is on content and fluency rather than on accuracy and form Once

ideas are down on paper, according to Raimes (1983), grammatical accuracy, organization and the rest will gradually follow. Contrary to the controlled to free approach, the role of the teacher is limited to reading learners' productions and sometimes making comments on the expressed ideas. In other words, pieces of writing should not be corrected, but possibly read aloudly and the content commented upon.

1.5.3 The product-oriented approach

Broadly speaking, a product-oriented approach, as the title indicates, is concerned with the final result of the writing process. According to Matsuda (2003), it is mainly based on activities which require from the learner to be engaged in imitating and transforming model texts. Indeed, the imitation of a model was seen as crucial, it is always taken as the starting point. It is studied and analyzed from all points of view: structures of grammar, content, sentences, organization, and rhetorical patterns. After manipulating these features, students are given a new topic and invited for a parallel writing task.

The interest of such an approach is in the correct use of form. Naturally the role of the model is important in the sense that it leads students from a point of departure to an end with a task to replicate. The model then comes first and shows a completed text as well.

1.5.4 The process-oriented approach

According to Matsuda (2003), this approach shifted the attention from the traditional view of looking at writing purely as a product to emphasize the process of writing. Students need to realize that what is first written down on paper is not the final product, it is only the beginning. The process approach depends on giving students time to work on what they want to write, going from pre-writing activities to the final draft. The major aim of this approach is to train students how to generate ideas for writing, plan these ideas, and take into account the

type of audience, draft and redraft in order to produce a final written paper that is likely to communicate their ideas.

The process approach according to many scholars may include identified stages of the writing process such as: pre-writing, writing and rewriting. When the first draft is created, it is refined into subsequent drafts with the assistance of peer or teacher conferencing.

1.5.5 The genre approach

The genre approach to teaching writing is mainly concerned, as the name indicates, on teaching particular genres that students need control of in order to succeed in particular situations. This might include a focus on the language and discourse features of the texts as well as the context in which the text is produced.

According to Hyland (2003), the fundamental principle that underlies the genre-based approach is that language is functional; that is through language that we achieve certain goals. Moreover, language is a contextual based tool of communication; language is always occurring in particular social and cultural contexts, and thus, cannot be understood outside its context. The need for teaching writing through a genre-oriented approach then, is because language is functional: it is meant to serve functional purposes.

Conclusion

From what has been said before, we come to a conclusion in which we say that writing is a difficult skill that requires both learners and teachers to have some necessary knowledge and information that would reinforce and make of the teaching/learning of the writing skill easier and important. One way to achieve this is to look at writing as a process that contains different stages rather than a product of accurate use of grammar and syntax and good range of

vocabulary. In the following chapter, we have will have a general idea on the whole concept of blogging by providing a clear definition and explanation about the terminology and the virtual environment that will tend to improve the students writing skills.

CHAPTER TWO: Understanding blogs

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Introduction

Blogging can improve students' writing skills and build their confidence as writers. By blogging, students can take ownership of their writing, become better observers of others' writing, and develop a more immediate and powerful understanding of audience. Blogs encourage experimenting and risk-taking, seriousness and play, and they foster an increased awareness of private and public writing. Blogging blends both the freeing aspect of short pieces that can be written in a relatively low-stakes environment with the sense of claiming one's own voice and learning how to develop analysis and articulate ideas to a larger public. Guided by clear expectations of what is required in a class blog, students can see their writing develop over the course of the term. . In this chapter a definition of blogging will be clearly provided and the use of blogging in learning whether for the instructor or the student.

2.1 What is a blog?

A Blog is a web page that is made up of information about a particular subject, in which the newest information is always at the top of the page (Longaman, 2015). Weblogging, or blogging, is “the act of adding articles or updates to such a site at regular intervals” (Stauffer, 2002, p. 4). Blog software is an asynchronous interactive computer-mediated-communication (CMC) tool. It is similar to a Web site except that where Web pages are static, blogs are dynamic. Blogs differ from emails, chat rooms, and discussion boards, although they are somewhat related. The entries are updated in a linear, time-based way, similar to a personal journal or diary. Additionally, the contents are meant specifically for the public and are presented in reverse chronological order (Blood, 2002; Stauffer, 2002), with more recent postings on the top and older information pushed to the bottom. A blog post frequently consists of a title, link, comment, date and time of the post, and archival information (Blood, 2002; Stauffer, 2002). The blog structure (Figure 1) allows a reader to see immediately how recently

the blog has been updated, and it allows them to search the archives by keyword, by date, or by category.



Figure 1: The blog's homepage

2.2 Students and Blogs

Students are used to writing and communicating in the digital landscape whether it be Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, or email. While reading their fellow students' blogs and comments, and responding online with their own comments, students recognize the value of clarity and what makes for strong and engaging posts. Students have the opportunity to practice writing and analytical skills in their own blogs that will transfer into essays and other writing endeavors. Students are able to see their own writing as something “real” with a practical application. Creating a blog can be a bridge for students between the familiar digital world and what is being asked of them in academic essays, projects and other university-based assignments. Blogging can be seen as a gateway experience for students who will likely be using digital technologies and media in their future endeavors regardless of their discipline.

2.2.1 Possible uses for instructors

According to Campbell (2003) Blogging may be used for :

- Communicating announcements and assignments in a format that students may perceive to be more “friendly” than the classical techniques.
- Sharing instructor-generated exercises or prompts
- Community building
- Creating a public place where student work can be “published”

2.2.2 Possible uses for students

Kennedy (2003) Students may use blogging for Responding to readings , maintaining a writer’s notebook or journal And posting personal, reflective, exploratory, or open entries (campus observations, pictures from home, or favorite book or piece of writing). Furthermore they can use it for sharing student-generated research or links to class-related articles or for exploring visual rhetoric, practicing writing , developing voice, working on titles conciseness or even for considering tone, also , they can use it for brainstorming, drafting, facilitating peer review and for creating a showcase for final projects

2.3 Blogs versus traditional web pages

The advantages of blogging over the traditional method of creating Web pages include simple software and minimal training. The traditional method of creating a Web page involves using an HTML editor or Web site programs such as Microsoft FrontPage, Dreamweaver, or Microsoft Word Web page. Some online Web site programs are less complicated such as

Geocities. In addition to designing Web pages, a user needs a file transfer program (FTP) to load the Web files. For a teacher to create a Web page by the traditional method, he or she would need access to a PC with an HTML editor and FTP program. With group projects, a teacher with full access to the Web page file could write over the Web page with another file or an empty file and cause other teachers' work to be lost (Blood, 2002; Johnston, 2002). There are potential problems to managing Web page files; for example, teachers might modify the Web page file with incompatible editors, work on the wrong version of the file, and transfer the file to an incorrect server directory. Additionally, the teacher's attention will be on Web page design such as the layout, background, fonts, and color. What is published is a final product of a project (Blood, 2002; Johnston, 2002; Stauffer, 2002). The blogging way, on the other hand, allows teachers to independently contribute to a class Web page with minimal training. The tasks of appending the lesson to the blog file, and publishing it to a host server, are distributed among the individual teachers. In other words, once the blog is initiated and team members are enrolled, the class Web page "manages itself." The instructor does not upload the class Web page and students can visit the web page to see the lesson (Johnston, 2002). In summary, the blog method of posting lessons online is easier to initiate, train, maintain and revise than the traditional method. Publishing lessons online enables teachers to make visible contributions to the class.

2.4 Choosing a platform

"A blogging platform is the software or service that turn a regular site into a functioning blog. A blog platform is a specific form of a content management system" Haines (2015, April 20). Several user-friendly blogging platforms are commonly used in classrooms. No one platform is better suited to a specific discipline. Mostly the choice depends on the instructor's comfort level and personal preference when trying out each platform. For example, Tumblr works well for sharing images, quotes or brief chunks of text, or consolidating and linking to

other sites. Google's Blogger is one of the top blogging platforms; it is intuitive and easy to start up, and allows for flexibility with color palettes and multiple fonts. Blogger and WordPress are both widely used by teachers to provide certain materials for their learners.

2.5 About WordPress blogs

WordPress is an all-purpose platform with multiple dynamic design templates ("themes") and high capacity for text, images, and video. Learners, often, appreciate the extensive "how-to" features and video tutorials available on WordPress websites. Kennedy (2003) WordPress is the most commonly used content management system (CMS) in the world, so there is a fairly good chance that students will use it again later in their lives, for blogging or just hosting a website of any sort. Both Blogger and WordPress allow for text, images and video, distinction between the two might be that WordPress allows for sorting posts by author, which Blogger does not, meaning that, a student can select to see only the lessons published by one specific teacher other than all the teachers' lessons at once.

2.6 About the blog used

As mentioned before, blogging is a very powerful tool in and of itself. Whether it's a personal or professional blog, blogging has the power to liberate learning, reflection, and communication. Even more, a blog can help spread words and ideas to a wider audience and, as a result, a wider reach. The content on our blog Biskenglish.com is based on the effective writing skills discussed in the first chapter of this study. The website is constantly updated with lessons on how to use various writing technics such as the right use of punctuation marks. Furthermore, the look of the blog is highly taken into consideration due to the importance of the visual attractiveness to keep the process more enjoyable to the students. According to

Smoak (2015, April 30), the look of the website is the key to attract more student to the website and to keep them browsing through its content, therefore, a simple layout was used for the whole website with and easy-to-use surface with no distractions.

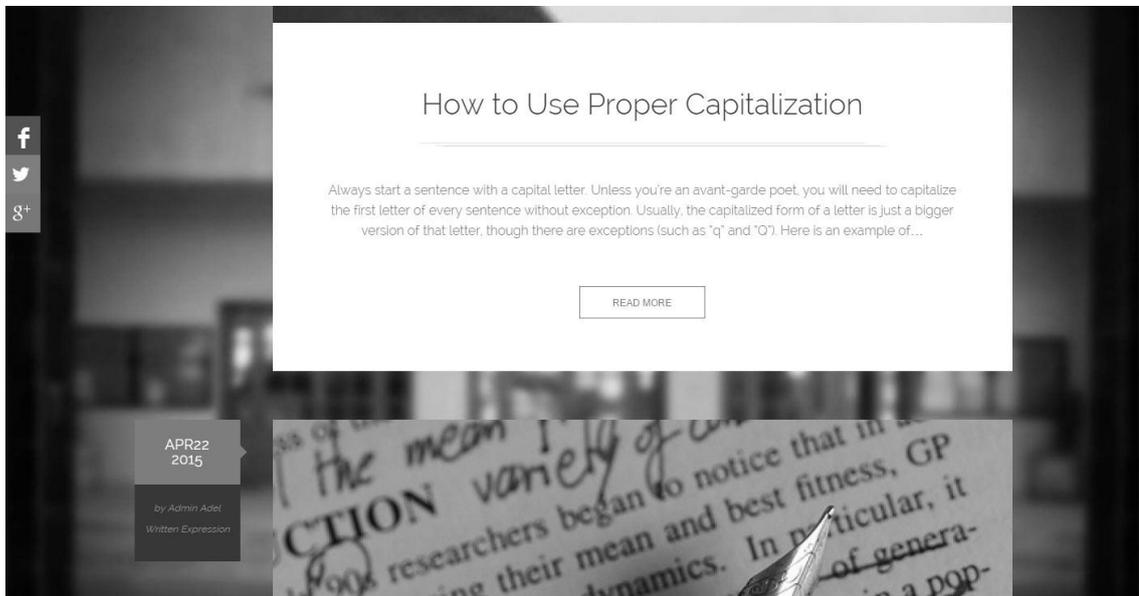


Figure 2: Blog's Layout

Conclusion

This chapter has served to unveil some of the technical concepts concerning blogging, potential benefits to the learner and some other uses to the constructor. Furthermore, it clarified that the content of the website will work on improving students' writing through enhancing the qualities of effective writing discussed in the first chapter. Using a simple layout, the materials would be more interesting for the learners. In the next chapter the two questionnaires, used in this study, will be thoroughly discussed along with a full analysis to the findings that would answer the hypotheses of the study.

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3.1 The pre-questionnaire

Introduction

The present chapter is devoted to the analysis of the pre-questionnaire and the post-questionnaire. In the first section of this chapter, we will deal with the students' pre-questionnaire and in the second section of the same chapter; we will analyze the students' post-questionnaire. The collected data and the obtained results will enable us to diagnose the teaching/learning of writing with its strengths and weaknesses departing from a real situation to suggest the appropriate solutions to the existing problems faced by students when they write.

3.1.1 Administration of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was given to 80 student mostly from second and third year chosen randomly from the Department of English at Mohamed Khider University – Biskra. The students answered the questionnaire in the classrooms, and this number of students constitutes the sample of this research. The administered questionnaire discusses students' views toward improving their writing skills through internet.

3.1.2 Description of the questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of nine (9) open-ended, close-ended and multiple-choice questions divided into two sections as follows: **Section One:** The Student's Profile (Q1-Q5): It serves to have an idea about how and where students use the internet and whether they have a regular access to it. **Section Two:** Students views towards using blogs to improve (Q7-Q9): It aims at exploring the views of students concerning using the website www.Biskenglish.com to improve their written production.

3.1.3 Analysis of the questionnaire

Section One: The student's profile

Question One

You are ?

a. 1st year Student

b. 2nd year Student

c. 3rd year Student

d. A mater Student

Option	N	%
a	11	14
b	36	45
c	30	38
d	3	3
Total	80	100

Table 1: Students involved in the study

Table number one shows that most of the sample are students from second year (45%) and third year students (38%) with the presence of the first year with (14%) and few master students (4%). Since they are not accustomed to writing so often, second and third year students might have more writing problems than master students. This would work in favor of the aims of this study.

Question two

In this question the students were asked to provide their names in order to facilitate the process of providing them with the post-questionnaire. Through the names also we were able to determine the gender of the students without questioning them which lessened the questions, the gender is represented in the following table and figure:

Gender	N	%
Males	21	26
Females	59	74
Total	80	100

Table 2: Students’ gender

As shown in table number two, the sample contains more females than males with (52%) which is thoroughly expected due to the higher number of females in each class at the department of English.

Question three

Your group number please

N:

A closed-ended question about the student’s group, this question tends to faster finding the students who answered the pre-questionnaire to provide them with post-questionnaire. Nine students though forgot to provide their group number:

Case	N	%
Provided G number	71	89
Forgot to provide	9	11
Total	80	100

Table 3: Students who provided their group number and who did not.

Question four

Do you have an access to the Internet at home?

a. Yes

b. No

If (Yes): How many hours do you spend using the Internet? (Daily)

If (No): Where else do you use Internet?

Option	N	%
a	58	73
b	22	27
Total	80	100

Table 4: Students who have Internet access at home.

As table four shows, most of the students have internet access at home (73%) which means that the chance of them using the website to gain knowledge about how to write better

is higher than the ones who do not have internet hotspot at home. However, they have other ways to access the internet and it varied between the university, cyber cafe and other places. The hours spent on the internet varied from two (2) to five (5) hours a day for each student.

Question five

Do you use the Internet for studying purposes?

a.Yes

b.No

c.Sometimes

Option	N	%
a	56	70
b	11	14
c	13	16
Total	80	100

Table 5: Students who use Internet to study.

From table number five, most of the sample participants admitted that they use internet to study (70%). Furthermore, (16%) of the sample pointed that they use it sometimes and in the other hand (14%) of them said they do not use it for learning purposes. These percentages prove that students are familiar with studying online and using websites to learn, hence, the chance for them to utilize our website is highly expected.

Section Two: Students views on using Blogs to improve

Question seven

In the following categories where do you see you level at Written Expression?

a.Bad

b.Good

c.Very Good

Option	N	%
a	33	41
b	31	39
c	16	20
Total	80	100

Table 7: Students' level in written expression.

According to table number seven, (41.25%) of the students believe their level at written expression is bad, closely a similar amount of students believe they are good in writing, moreover, (20%) of the students said that they are very good writers. Since our sample consist mostly of second and third year students, it is expected to see the percentages point this way.

Question eight

Do you think you can use the Internet to improve your current level in Written Expression?

a. Yes

b. No

If No please state why?

Option	N	%
a	68	85
b	12	15
Total	80	100

Table 8: Students' perception about their improvement in writing.

The eighth table shows that the majority of the students (85%) believe they can improve their writing competency through Internet, whereas (15%) of them think they cannot. These final percentages approve that students have the willingness to use the internet to improve their writing technics.

Question nine

Would like to access our website and blog through the various lessons?

a. Yes

b.No

Option	N	%
a	72	90
b	8	10
Total	80	100

Table 9: Students who would access our website.

On the ninth question, the majority of the students (90%) agreed on visiting the website www.biskenglish.com and browse through the lessons. Moreover, this latter percentage reveals that some students who did not believe in studying online have the intention to give the website a try. However, eight student refused to access the website.

Discussion of the results of the questionnaire

The analysis of the pre-questionnaire reveals that the students are accepting the idea of studying online and improving their writing ability through a website. In the first section, which is concerned with students profile, the findings show that most of the sample of this study is formed of second and third year English student; furthermore, the analysis also clarified that the majority of the students have a regular access to the net, specifically at home (73%) and (27%) have an access to the Internet other than home and it varied between university and cyber café mostly. Students with a regular access to the Internet would have the willingness to access the website. Moreover, the analysis of the first section proved that the students did use internet

for studying purposes with (70%) of them already using the web seeking knowledge about their courses regularly , yet only (14%) confessed that they did not use it as tool to study.

The analysis of the second section unveiled that most of the students are either bad (41%) or good (39%) which is expected result since most the sample is either second or third year student who are less experienced in writing than master students. Further analysis of the questionnaire shows that most of the students believe they can improve their writing competency with the help of the blog, this helps the fulfilment of this study to take place. The analysis of the last question presents a positive feedback since most of the students (90%) agreed on visiting the website and reviewing the lessons .

Conclusion

The analysis of the pre-questionnaire shows that students are accepting the idea of learning how to write better through the website with the help of lessons prepared by the instructor to help them deal with the different aspects like grammar, vocabulary, content and ideas organization as well as the other mechanics of writing, spelling and punctuation. The results of the pre-questionnaire strongly support the idea that students are willing to use the website.

3.2 Post-questionnaire

Introduction

In an EFL context, it seems appropriate to give students the opportunity to express their Ideas not only by means of assignments, but via questionnaires as well. The aim of this questionnaire is to investigate whether the students benefited from the blog and whether they would access it regularly to check for updates; moreover, in the following analysis we will see the results of the students' post-questionnaire and check the validity of the research hypothesis.

3.2.1 Administration of the questionnaire

This questionnaire was given to the same sample who answered the pre-questionnaire fifteen (15) days ago. Most of the students who volunteered to answer the first questionnaire were located and answered the second questionnaire due to their full cooperation and big patience.

3.2.2 Description of the questionnaire

The post-questionnaire consists of eleven (11) open-ended, close-ended and multiple choice questions divided into two sections as follows:

Section one: students profile (Q1-Q4): it tends to provide information about the students and it is for making sure that the student had already answered the first questionnaire.

Section two: Students views about the website www.biskenglish.com (Q5-Q11) this section consists of questions aim to prove the hypotheses of this study.

3.2.3 Analysis of the questionnaire

Question one

Did you participate in answering the first questionnaire?

a. Yes

b.No

Option	N	%
a	71	100
b	0	0
Total	71	100

Table 10: Students who participated in the first questionnaire.

All the students who participated in this questionnaire had already answered the first questionnaire fifteen (15) days ago, however, nine (9) student were not able to answer the post-questionnaire.

Question two

You are?

a.1st year Student

b. 2nd year Student

c.3rd year Student

d. A mater Student

Option	N	%
a	10	14
b	32	45
c	28	39.5
d	1	1.5
Total	71	100

Table 11: Students involved in the post-questionnaire.

According to table eleven, the results from this question are quite similar to the ones from the pre-questionnaire. However a slight difference has been noticed due to the reduction in the number of students involved in the study from (80) student to (71).

Question three

In this question the students were asked to provide their names in order for us to be able to verify students' previous answers, moreover, it would facilitate the analysis of the final results. Note that all the students provided their names.

Question four

Your group number please

N:

Options	N	%
a	40	68
b	13	22
c	6	10
Total	59	100

Table 13: How far students went through the website.

Table 14 shows that most of the students (68%) went through all of the website and all the lessons, whilst (22%) went half way through the website and unfortunately 10% did not go more than homepage, this last percentage does not change the fact that most of the students surfed through the lessons which mean that they potentially benefited from the content of the blog.

Question seven

Did you find the lessons on the website beneficial?

a.Yes

b.No

Option	N	%
a	56	95
b	3	5
Total	59	100

Table 14: Students who benefited from the blog.

Table 14 shows a total agreement among the students toward the benefit of the website/blog, (95%) of the students who accessed the website found that the latter absolutely beneficial, however, only 3 students saw that the website was not beneficial to their writing ability.

Question eight

Have you used any of the techniques explained on the website in your writing lately?

a.Yes

b.No

Options	N	%
a	47	80
b	12	20
Total	59	100

Table 15: Students who used the lessons in their writing.

Table 15 shows that (80%) of the students used some of writing technics and tips explained on the website, yet, (20%) of the students stated that they did not use any of the technics, however , these results are thoroughly positive.

Question nine

Do you think you would check the website regularly?

a.Yes

b.No

Option	N	%
a	54	92
b	5	8
Total	59	100

Table 16: Students who would visit the website regularly.

Table 16 shows that (92%) of the students accept the idea of visiting the website regularly with only (8%) of them who said they would not. These results are harmonious with the results from the previous question.

Question ten

In addition to your class, do you think that studying written expression this way helps?

a.Yes

b.No

Options	N	%
a	55	93
b	4	7
Total	59	100

Table 17: Students who believe studying this way helps them.

Table 17 reveals that the majority of the students (93%) believe that studying this way, along with their official course, can help them improve their writing abilities, and in the other hand (7%) of them believes the contrary.

Question eleven

Other than writing lessons, would you like to see lessons about other skills?

a.Yes

b.No

Options	N	%
a	36	61
b	23	39
Total	59	100

Table 18: Students who want lessons about other skills.

Table 18 shows that (61%) of the sample agree on receiving more lessons on other skills like speaking and reading, nevertheless, (39%) of the students disagreed which mean that they prefer the website to be oriented only toward improving their writing competency.

Discussion of the results

The results from the post-questionnaire reveals that the majority of the students (72%) who participated in this study visited the website; furthermore, the analysis of the second section shows that (68%) of the students went through all the materials presented in the website, (22%) went through the half of the website whereas (10%) did not go further than the homepage.

Most of the students stated that the website was beneficial for them to enhance their writing skills and corrected some of their common mistakes. Most of the students, also, used some technics offered in the website in order to produce a better essays, and this might be the reason that most of them stated that they would visit the website regularly for more lessons and the total of (93%) answered that they believe studying this way can help them compensate for

some misunderstood technics related to writing, additionally, (61%) of them would like to see more lessons about other skills, whereas (39%) want the website to concentrate on one subject.

Conclusion

The analysis of students' questionnaire revealed that most of the students visited the website and went through all of the website and all the lessons. Furthermore, nearly all the students who visited the website/blog admitted that it was absolutely beneficial to them and used some of the lessons on their latest writings. Moreover, most of the sample welcomed the idea of receiving more lessons on other skills like speaking and reading and declared that they would visit the website/blog regularly for updates.

General conclusion

This conclusion will review and summarize the dissertation research, identify the main methods used and discuss the implications in the study. Writing in a foreign language is one of the most challenging and complex tasks for language learners. It is a difficult skill that requires considerable effort and practice on the learners' part to reach an acceptable level of writing. Due to the complexity of this skill, many students find it very difficult to produce an adequate piece of writing. The present study is based on an investigation about the improvement of writing skill with the use of a directed blog.

At the beginning of this dissertation, we tried to demonstrate the importance of the writing skill and the relation of this skill with other language skills, namely reading and speaking that serve all in the development of each other. We tried also to identify the main reasons for teaching writing and to present the major aspects that enable the student writer to build up an effective piece of writing. Then we explained, in details, the concept of a blog along with listing the potential benefits of a blog to the student and the teacher; furthermore, we provided a thorough description of the blog we created for this study.

It is by the means of two questionnaires (pre-questionnaire and a post-questionnaire) devised to students that we investigated the possibility of improving students writing abilities with the use of a blog and reached some findings. As a result of this research, one conclusion made is that LMD students of English at University of Biskra were comfortable with using our blog as a path for a better academic writing. One instance where this was evident was in their satisfaction with browsing through mostly all the content of the website and use some of the methods to structure better essays, which coincides with positive results on research involving blogging and the writing process (Eastment, 2005; Read, 2006). Therefore, it was seen that learning with blogs helped to spice up academic learning that could otherwise be viewed by students as tedious or dull, such as written expression. In agreement with researchers such

Blackstone et al. (2007), the powerful act of publishing lessons to blogs seemed to motivate students to check them and take the accountability to make the best of their writings.

Conversely, a second conclusion from this research is that, despite what had been hoped, blogging did not appear to help some small group of students to think outside of the box in a more non-traditional manner about their language improving processes or learning methods, in this case writing. Not accessing the website, for example, demonstrated a fear of leaving their safety zone, these students seemed to be hanging on the old-fashioned language learning habits and definitely preferred to isolate the home from class. Lastly, and most directly related to the research objectives of this study, we have concluded that setting up a blog for our students at the department of English did help many of them improve in their writing. Besides, their acceptance to the idea of finding subjects on a website prepared by their teacher of written expression was highly admired. This can change students' perception towards writing expression from just another module they need to pass to a gratifying one.

Apparently learning through blogs is here to stay. Therefore, both teachers and students alike should seriously consider including them in their teaching and learning experiences. As a comparatively new and potentially powerful technological tool, the use of blogs within second language learning still leaves plenty to be discovered. Providing ESL students' needs through a blog offers significant potential for students to fully understand the personal language learning processes involved. Blogging takes little time and effort to get started and there appears to be something in it for everyone, so there is little reason not to explore the possibilities this influential tool offers to education.

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University of Biskra

Division of English



Student's First Questionnaire

Dear students,

You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire which is an attempt to gather information needed for the accomplishment of a master dissertation.

Through this questionnaire we would like to see your views on using a website/blog (www.Biskenglish.com) to improve your writing performance, note that a follow up questionnaire will be provided to you after two weeks from filling this one to check your opinions on the methods used in the website and whether it helped enrich your writing knowledge.

Please make sure to tire-off the attached small paper with the website's address, give as precise answers as you can. Tick (✓) your answer (s) in the corresponding box (es), and make a full statement whenever necessary. Be sure that the answers you provide will certainly remain confidential and will only be used for research purposes.

Thank you for your time and for your collaboration

Section One: The Student's Profile

Q 1: You are

1st year Student

2nd year Student

3rd year Student

A mater Student

Q 2: Your name please

First Name:

Last Name:

Q 3: Your group number please

N:

Q 4: Do you have an access to the Internet at home?

a. Yes

No

If (Yes): How many hours do you spend using the Internet? (Daily)

.....

If (No): Where else do you use Internet?

.....

Q 5: Do you use the Internet for studying purposes?

Yes

No

Sometimes

Section Two: Students views on using Blogs to improve

Q 7: In the following categories where do you see you level at Written Expression?

Bad

Good

Very Good

Q 8: Do you think you can use the Internet to improve your current level in Written Expression?

Yes

No

If No please state why?

.....

Q 9: Would like to access our website and blog through the various lessons?

Yes

No

Anything you add or suggest will be highly appreciated, feel free

.....
.....
.....
.....

Again, my gratitude and thanks go to you for your time and collaboration

Adel CHARROUF

April/2015

University of Biskra

Division of English



Student's Second Questionnaire

Dear students,

You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire which is an attempt to gather information needed for the accomplishment of a master dissertation.

This is the second questionnaire for those who answered the first one, please note that if you did not participate in answering the previous questionnaire you are not required to answer this one.

Please make sure to tire-off the attached small paper with the website's address, give as precise answers as you can. Tick (✓) your answer (s) in the corresponding box (es), and make a full statement whenever necessary. Be sure that the answers you provide will certainly remain confidential and will only be used for research purposes.

Thank you for your time and for your collaboration

Section One: The Student's Profile

Q1: Did you participate in answering the first questionnaire?

Yes No

If (No): please give this questionnaire to a student who did answer the first questionnaire.

Q 2: You are

1st year Student 2nd year Student
3rd year Student A mater Student

Q 3: Your name please

First Name: Last Name:

Q 4: Your group number please

N:

Section Two: Students views about the website www.biskenglish.com

Q 5: Did you access the website www.biskenglish.com ?

Yes No

If (No), is there a specific reason?

.....

Q 6: How far you went through the website?

Most of it Half way through Just the home page

Q 7: Did you find the lessons on the website beneficial?

Yes

No

Q8: Did you use any of the techniques explained on the website in your writing lately?

Yes

No

Q9: Do you think you would check the website regularly?

Yes

No

Q10: In addition to your class, do you think that studying written expression this way is help?

Yes

No

Q11: Other than writing lessons, would you like to see lessons about other skills?

Yes

No

Anything you add or suggest will be highly appreciated, feel free

.....
.....
.....
.....

Again, my gratitude and thanks go to you for your time and collaboration

Adel CHARROUF

April/2015

ملخص

الكتابة هي واحدة من المهارات يجب التي يحتاجها كل طالب إنجليزية كلغة ثانية ، فهي تستخدم في سياقات عديدة، وبالتالي، فإن معظم طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية يواجهون العديد من الصعوبات في الكتابة بسبب تعقيدها المعرفي. تزويد الطلاب بالأدوات اللازمة قد يرتفع وعيهم المعرفي نحو الكتابة، وتؤدي إلى تحسين إنتاجهم ليس فقط في إطار رسمي ولكن أيضا في المنزل أو في أي مكان آخر يحتوي على إمكانية الوصول إلى شبكة الإنترنت وتلك باستخدام باستخدام المدونات/المواقع، حيث أنهم سيجدون الدروس وتفسيرات والواجبات التي يحتاجونها لتطوير قدراتهم في الكتابة بشكل أفضل . تتمحور هذه الدراسة حول إمكانية استخدام مدونة مع طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة بسكرة، لمساعدتهم على تحسين مهاراتهم في الكتابة وجعل وحدة التعبير الكتابي أكثر من مجرد مادة التي يحتاجونها تخطيها. كشفت نتائج هذه الدراسة أن تزويد الطلاب بمدونة متحكم بها من طرف الأستاذ عملت بشكل جيد لنشر دروس حول أساليب الكتابة الأكاديمية و وفرت لهم مصدر من المعلومات المتاحة في متناول اليد. وتضمنت النتائج المستخلصة من هذا البحث أن طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية المشاركين في هذه الدراسة أبدوا إرتياحهم تجاه هذه الطريقة التي تصبو إلى تحسين مستواهم الكتابي. ومع ذلك، فإن قلة من الطلاب فضلوا طريقة التعليم الأكاديمي التقليدي و التي تعتمد أساسا على القسم. من خلال المدونات، قد يتمكن الأستاذ من تعويض عن بعض النقاط المفقودة التي لم توضح بدقة في الصف.