

**EFL LEARNERS' PERCEPTION OF BLENDED WRITING CLASS: BLOG AND
FACE TO FACE**

Nazmi TASLACI

MA THESIS

English Language Teaching Program

Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Aysel BAHÇE

Eskişehir

Anadolu University

Institute of Educational Sciences

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**ELT ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN KARMA YAZMA BECERİLERİ DERSLERİNE İLİŞKİN
ALGILARI**

Nazmi TASLACI

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

İngiliz Dili Öğretimi Programı

Danışman: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Aysel BAHÇE

Eskişehir

Anadolu Üniversitesi

Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü

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To My Grandfather Mehmet Ali BOZKURT

ABSTRACT**EFL LEARNERS' PERCEPTION OF BLENDED WRITING CLASS: BLOG AND FACE TO FACE**

The purpose of this study was to investigate student perception of blended writing classes. The study was conducted with 55 intermediate level EFL learners from two different writing classes in the preparatory school at Anadolu University. Data was collected by means of students' written reflections at three different phases. The first reflection was about their writing class experience during the first term and this was used to state the problem. The second set of reflections was written throughout the blended writing process. The last reflections written by the students were upon the completion of the study. These reflections were lead by means of open-ended questions about the medium, writing practices, journals, homework and visual aids. Although in their first reflections the majority of the students stated that they perceive writing class negatively, their perceptions were positive in the second and third reflections after they experienced the blended writing class. The results of the data analysis indicated that blended writing class was very supportive to create a positive attitude towards writing lessons as 94 % of the communication units in the second reflections and 99 % of the communication units in third reflections were positive about blended writing. Moreover, students' second and third reflections indicated that the online platform provided opportunities for reflective thinking skills, personal enjoyment, academic development, authentic language exposure, up-to-dateness, authenticity in purpose and audience, variety of visual aids, extended interaction, learner responsibility, and learner centeredness. As a result, the findings in this research offer some insights for course and task design, in order to build up a bridge between the classroom practices and the real life, which will be leading to a meaningful and from-life authenticity based classroom practices.

ÖZET

İNGİLİZCE HAZIRLIK ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN KARMA YAZMA BECERİLERİ DERSLERİNE İLİŞKİN ALGILARI: BLOG VE YÜZYÜZE YAZMA

Bu çalışmanın amacı İngilizce hazırlık öğrencilerinin karma yazma becerileri dersine ilişkin algılarını saptamaktır. Çalışmaya Anadolu Üniversitesi Hazırlık Okulu “ İngilizce orta düzeyde iki ayrı sınıftan toplam 55 öğrenci katılmıştır. Kullanılan veriler de öğrencilerin üç farklı aşamada yazdıkları yansılardan elde edilmiştir. Öğrencilerin yazdıkları ilk yansımalar birinci dönemdeki yazma becerileri dersine ilişkin görüşleri ile ilgili olup sorun tespitinde kullanılmıştır. İkinci aşamada yazılan yansımalar ise karma yazma uygulamaları esnasında düzenli olarak kullanılan web ortamında yazılmıştır. Son yansımalar ise çalışmanın tamamlanmasından hemen sonra yazılmıştır. Yazılan yansımaları öğrenciler, karma yazma ortamına, yazma uygulamalarına, günlük yazma uygulamalarına, ödevlere ve görsel malzeme kullanımına yönelik açık uçlu soruları yanıtlayarak hazırlamışlardır. Öğrencilerin büyük çoğunluğu yazdıkları ilk yansımalarında yazma dersiyle ilgili olumsuz görüş bildirmiş olmalarına rağmen blog uygulamasından sonra yazılan ikinci ve üçüncü yansımalarındaki yorumlar büyük bir çoğunlukla olumlu yönde olmuştur. Yapılan bu araştırmanın sonucu öğrencilere sunulan yeni ortam İnternet’in karma yazma dersi uygulamalarında önemli bir destek olabileceğini gösterdi. İkinci yansılardan elde edilen yargıların % 94’ü, üçüncü yansılardan elde edilen yargıların % 99’u karma yazma dersine ilişkin olumlu yargılar içermektedir. Bunun yanında, hazırlık okulu programındaki yazma becerileri dersine bir destek olarak kullanılan bu çevrimiçi platform yansıma odaklı düşünme, bireysel eğlence, akademik gelişim, yazma dersi içeriği, güncellik, gerçek dille etkileşim, gerçek amaçlı ve gerçek hedef kişilere yazma fırsatları, görsel öge çeşitliliği, yer zaman bağımsız etkileşim, öğrenci sorumluluğu ve öğrenci merkezlilik gibi konularda fayda sağladığını ortaya koymuştur. Sonuç olarak ta, elde ettiğimiz bulgular, gerek ders gerekse uygulama desenlemede, anlamlı ve hayattan ders içi uygulamalar sağlayarak sınıf uygulamalarıyla gerçek hayat arasında bir köprü kurmaya yarayacak yeni bir bakış açısı kazanılmasına aracı olmuştur.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
TITLE (English).....	
TITLE (Turkish).....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
M.A. THESIS ABSTRACT.....	iv
YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZ ÖZÜ.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
JÜRİ VE ENSTİTÜ ONAYI.....	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii
LIST OF TABLES.....	xi
ÖZGEÇMİŞ.....	xii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	4
1.3 Research Question.....	6
1.4 Significance of the Study.....	7
1.5 Terminology.....	7
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	10
2.1 Web as a Communicative Medium.....	15
2.2 Web-based Communication Tools.....	16
2.2.1 Forum.....	17
2.2.2 Mail groups.....	17
2.2.3 Podcasts.....	18
2.2.4 E-portfolios.....	18

2.2.5 Chat/Messengers.....	19
2.2.6 Web logs.....	19
2.3 The Principle of the Online Platform: Web log.....	23
2.4 The Rationale behind the Online Platform: Web log.....	24
2.5 Choice of Online Platform: Web log.....	24
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY	26
3.1. Subjects.....	26
3.2 Procedure.....	26
3.3 Application of the Online Platform.....	27
3.4 Web Page Practice Process.....	28
3.5 Weblog Task Categories.....	28
3.5.1 Real life Homework.....	28
3.5.2 Journal.....	29
3.5.3 Reflection.....	29
3.5.4 Useful Links.....	30
3.5.5 Your Questions.....	30
3.5.6 Writing Hits.....	30
3.5.7 Interactive Component.....	31
3.6 Sessions.....	31
3.6.1 Training Session.....	31
3.6.2 First Session.....	31
3.6.3 Second Session.....	32
3.6.4 Third Session.....	33
3.6.5 Fourth Session.....	33
3.6.6 Fifth Session.....	33
3.6.7 Sixth Session.....	34

3.6.8 Seventh Session.....	35
3.6.9 Eighth Session.....	35
3.7 Instruments.....	35
3.8 Data.....	36
3.8.1 Data Collection Procedure.....	36
3.8.2 Data Analysis.....	36
CHAPTER 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	38
4.1 Introduction.....	38
4.2 Categories.....	38
4.3 2nd Reflections of the Students about Webpage (Instant).....	41
4.4 3rd Reflections Derived from Cover Letters.....	46
4.5 Discussion.....	50
CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS	60
5.1 Summary.....	60
5.2 Conclusions Based on the Analysis of the Results.....	60
5.3 Implications.....	64
5.4 Suggestions for Further Study.....	65
REFERENCES.....	65
APPENDICES.....	69

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
<i>Table 4.1 The distribution of issues in the students' instant web reflections.</i>	42
<i>Chart 4.1 The distribution of issues in the students' instant web reflections.</i>	42
<i>Table 4.2 The distribution of issues in the students' final reflections.</i>	46
<i>Chart 4.2 The distribution of issues in the students' third reflections.</i>	47
<i>Table 4.3 Categories identified in the students' reflections.</i>	51
<i>Chart 4.3 Categories identified in the students' reflections.</i>	54

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Writing in the classroom was regarded as a means of practicing English in a different mode; the written one. Such a perspective to writing neglected the interactional purpose of writing, and underemphasized the communicative function of the language targeted. However, through the decades the main focus became the communicative function of language, thoughts and understandings about writing, so teaching writing changed both for those writing in their native language and those writing in any language other than their native tongue. Therefore, especially, writing in a first and second language became an important area of research, investigating all sorts of factors influencing this difficult task. From one point of these new trends, as Boughey (1997) stated writing is also considered as a process of creating ideas through a clear representation of one's linguistic knowledge so as to cause a flow of processed ideas from a writer to a reader.

“In its nature, writing seems to bear only one-way flow of information, where there seems to be no genuine interaction between the writer and the reader. However, looking from a functional perspective, the text itself acts basically as a medium of negotiation between the writer and the reader because the writers' attempts to express their ideas and thoughts clearly match with readers' expectations and readiness in trying to understand what the writer has to say, and hence comes about the interaction- one that arises from the desire to exchange ideas through a written text. Since there is a meaningful exchange of ideas, writing gains more credit on the side of both the writer and the reader, between whom a linguistic link is already established. Looking closely at how classroom writing changed over the years, one sparkling difference is the realization of communicative power of language.” (Anderson, 1993: 471)

Massi (2001) states that such an approach would not only motivate the students to write, but also encourage them to use the target language for interactional purpose and reveal communicative application of the language mastered.

Besides this, Kim (2005) claims that such realization brings about a need to show both students and teachers that writing is essentially a way of communication through which writers express their feelings and ideas and readers absorb those that the writer intends to pass through. According to Kim(2005), applying such an approach in EFL context where writing is internalized as a way of communication, rather than plainly linguistic representations on a paper would mean that writing in the classroom moves away from monotonous practice of writing set of words, phrases, or sentences on papers to meaningful, communicative and genuine text that aims at presenting ideas, rather than representing a linguistic awareness or competence on paper.

However, one of the problems that hinder the process most of the time is that the classroom setting on its own fails to provide the opportunities for writing for meaning to communicate through text for genuine audience. In other words, classroom environment usually fails to provide the essential context boundaries in which the reader and the writer interacts in the real life. In classroom setting, most of the time students write either for their teachers or peers as their audience. Therefore most of the classroom writing lacks one of the most essential and natural aspect of writing, namely writing to address a specific audience for a predefined purpose.

Therefore, however contextualized and engaging the writing task may be, students may find classroom environment demotivating and dull if they perceive no sense of belonging to the context in which they operate. In other words, artificially created classroom practices lacking the reality aspect may fail to provide a motivating and encouraging atmosphere.

Unlike most of their ESL counterparts, many EFL students lack access to native speakers for authentic communication, be it speaking or writing. As soon as they leave the classroom,

they re-enter a world full of speakers of their own first language, leaving them with little opportunity to use what they have learned. Various approaches to overcoming this problem have led EFL practitioners to design and implement pedagogic strategies incorporating the Internet based communicative activities, such as the use of keypals, tandem language exchanges, chat, message boards, and discussion forums. Recently, the use of weblogs in the classroom is yet another such approach; one in which students publish their writing and receive comments from outsiders, potentially leading to discussion and further use of the target language. Indeed, several recent papers (Duber 2002, Campbell 2003, Godwin-Jones 2003, Johnson 2004, and Dieu 2004) have appeared in the literature highlighting the possible uses of weblogs for language learning. Fiedler (2003) defines the weblog as a 'reflective conversational tool for self-organized learning', which best captures the constructivist spirit with which the tool can be used for fostering autonomous, self-directed learning approaches. To move towards that reality which does not exist in the EFL writing classrooms, classroom practitioners might blend regular classes with some Internet bounded classroom practices.

Comparing writing in the 1st language with that of 2nd or 3rd, writing in 1st language is basically writing to exchange information with a set of audience who are ready to internalize a text written for them for a purpose. In EFL classrooms, unfortunately, writing with a real purpose and for a real audience are the missing components. These restrictions might be possibly overcome by designing writing tasks in which students would be interacting with their genuine audience for a real purpose on internet, a hybrid context, which would bring the missing components, making EFL classrooms more authentic, interactive, meaningful, real and functional. When designed carefully, and carried out systematically, the Internet and computer technology can easily be integrated to language classroom use. There have been early examples of integrating computer / computer technology / internet to the classroom. These attempts brought about a new understanding to teaching, namely blended learning.

Blended learning in its most plain term is a systematic shuffle of elements and teaching approaches to be followed in one class, in which students expose to different environments. (Scagnoli, 2005) In blended learning and teaching, the principles behind classroom teaching and the general classroom practices are kept as they are; however, new elements are integrated to the course. These elements function differently depending upon the desired goals and objectives of the program. Blending new elements to the existing course can operate at different dimensions; however, one important consideration to make is to what extent the new elements are perceived useful by its primary users.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

One of the complaints about writing lessons is students' unwillingness to participate in the classroom practices. The writing teachers asked their students to write a reflection on what really prevents them from writing, based on their first semester writing course. As analyzing through the findings from the reflections about the first term, it was found that the main concern of the students was about the category named as "writing course context". The student extractions from these reflections signaled that the current classroom –bounded tasks might be a source of students' passive behaviors in the writing classes. These tasks are perceived as "meaningless", "routine", "classroom–bounded", "teacher-oriented", "mechanic", "isolated" and "neither functional nor useful" by the students. When separately considered negative views, the highest one was the concept about isolated writing class with the percentage of 19, 3%. This is followed by concepts "meaningless" with 15, 9% and "teacher-oriented" with 15, 3%. The issue comes after these was "useful and unfunctional" which bears 14, 5 % among the total student total views. The least percentage among these negative views is about the issue "routine/boring" with 13, 5 %. Putting all these facts together, the negative views about the first term writing course is 78, 5 %, which may mean that there may be an emerging issue about this course.

Despite this negative picture in the students' minds, there were some students who had some positive views about their writing course context. The highest portion among these positive utterances was about the concept "interesting" with 6, 5 %. This was followed by concepts such as "useful/functional" with 5,4 % and "student-oriented" with 4,7 %. The issue came after this was "meaningful" with 4 %. The least percentage among these positive views was about the issue "real life" with a very low percentage as 0, 7 %. Putting all this information together, the positive views about the first term writing course was 21, 5%, which may mean that primarily "real life" component of the writing course may be in need of being promoted.

Hence, students are unwilling to write, and usually non-participating in most of the writing tasks or show poor involvement in the production phase of the written classroom practices, leading teachers to seek ways for more engaging and lively classrooms where students might fully involve in producing the targeted written language. Besides, the students have been questioning whether any of the covered genres have real life value, even though the tasks practicing these genres were adapted from real-life situations to fit their future goals. For example, students practice job application letter, which they will need to write in their senior year, though the students have difficulty in internalizing the relevance of the chosen genre. This brings the question of whether the tasks cater for students' real needs or for the classroom practices. This is not unique to the present context.

As Morgan (2005) mentioned, recently, there is an ongoing debate on how EFL students can be diverted to writing for real situations for a real purpose and genuine audience, breaking through regular writing classroom practices that heavily rely on unreal situations written barely for pedagogical purposes to their imaginary audience or addressing the classroom teacher.

Alternatively, blending a web log platform may promote the involvement of the students in the writing classes and possibly shape the way students see the writing practices reframing their current ideas about this productive skill. This study will focus on how students perceive the writing practices that have boundaries to outside world through the hybrid context the Internet, and whether these web-based writing practices lead the intermediate level EFL students to a better understanding of the writing process, and change their perceptions towards writing.

In the classroom practices the lacking of these components lead students to be demotivated. As result of this unwillingness, the production phases of the classroom might have failed.

Depending on these findings it can be clearly said that more than three quarters of the students' view writing classes negatively,

1.5 Research questions

- How is the blended writing course perceived by intermediate EFL learners?

1.4 Significance of the study

Since writing is a writer responsible way of communication, and a means of conveying a message either through presenting or exchanging ideas, the students as writers will hopefully start understanding the true role of writing and their real life responsibilities, through the tasks in operation. The web-based platform designed for this study may not only give a critical view of the context where language operates, but also it may activate students' perceptions that really operate in real-life practices. Task exhibited on the Internet, the hybrid context, operates as a bridge our reality lacking EFL classroom environment to a virtual ESL environment, rich in authenticity and real-life boundaries required for reader-writer

interaction. Students who have the chance to exhibit their work in a world-wide context will probably be more engaged in writing tasks and have a positive attitude towards writing since it is from the life itself, but not from a formal pedagogical classroom environment perceived tedious and routine. Besides, using alternative task design in place of tasks, which have been reported as the source of students' unwillingness to participate, may turn students' negative perceptions towards writing and the writing course into positive ones. In turn, the teacher's role in writing classroom will change away from the authority and evaluator towards a moderator and editor of the web-based tasks as long as the teacher feels the necessity of establishing a real life connection with the students' writings.

1.5 Terminology

Internet bounded classroom tasks: Tasks which students need to fulfill on the web platform in the production phase of their writing class practices.

Internet-mediated real-life tasks: Tasks, requiring an interaction with authentic audience and real life purpose, which students need to fulfill on the web platform in the production phase of their writing class practices.

Web-based tasks: This concept is used interchangeably with the term "Internet bounded classroom tasks."

Blended writing: The writing activity that has outside classroom boundaries,

Blended learning: "Blended Learning" is really the natural evolution of e-learning into an integrated program of multiple media types, applied toward a business problem in an optimum way, to solve a business problem. (Bersin, 2003)

Online Platform: Web log: A blog is a user-generated website where entries are made in journal style and displayed in a reverse chronological order. Logs often provide commentary or news on a particular subject, such as food, politics, or local news; some function as more personal online diaries. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, web pages, and other media related to its topic. The ability for readers to leave comments in an

interactive format is an important part of many blogs. Most blogs are primarily textual although some focus on photographs (photoblog), sketchblog, videos (vlog), or audio (podcasting), and are part of a wider network of social media.

Blog: This term is used with word “Web log” interchangeably.

Hybrid: In the technologic term this word refers to a myriad of products that combine two or more different technologies like hybrid car and hybrid computer. In this study it refers to combination of EFL and ESL environment.

Context: The circumstances in which an event occurs; a setting.

Hybrid Context: web as a platform which connects EFL learners to ESL setting

Task: Activities that learners need to fulfill on the web log.

Session: Time intervals when students fulfill the tasks on the web log

Visual Aid Support: The visual aids used on the web log which are indirectly related with the classroom elements in order to provoke picture association.

Constant Comparison Method: Using relevant data bits and communication units drawn out from the raw data to form categories (Dye et.al., 2000).

ESL: English as a Second language.

EFL: English as a Foreign Language.

Learner Centeredness: In learner-centered class, the teacher should shift his/her role from dominantly cramming linguistic knowledge such as vocabulary items and grammatical structures into students’ mind to guiding the students to apply what they have acquired to practical communication. It implies that the role of the teacher means a lot more than merely providing instructions and guidelines for students. In various types of classroom activities of language teaching, the teacher’s behavior and functions will be quite different. In language classroom “the modifications which teachers make to their language, the questions they ask, the feedback they provide and the types of instructions and explanations they offer can all

have an important bearing, not only on the effective management of the classroom, but also on the acquisition by learners of the target language” (Nunan, 1991:7).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical background of the research is constructed from many different viewpoints; the common point is constructivist approach to learning. According to Jonassen (1995) learning environments should emphasize the following characteristics: active, constructive, collaborative, conversational, complex, contextualized, reflective, and intentional, and technology should be used to complete these qualities.

Constructivist Theory

Sherman (1995) states that basically, constructivism views that knowledge is not 'about' the world, but rather 'constitutive' of the world. Knowledge is not a fixed object, it is constructed by an individual through her own experience of that object. Constructivist approach to learning emphasizes authentic, challenging projects that include students, teachers and experts in the learning community. Its goal is to create learning communities that are more closely related to the collaborative practice of the real world. In an authentic environment, learners assume the responsibilities of their own learning, they have to develop metacognitive abilities to monitor and direct learning and performance. When people work collaboratively in an authentic activity, they bring their own framework and perspectives to the activity. They can see a problem from different perspectives, and are able to negotiate and generate meanings and solutions through shared understanding. The constructivist paradigm explains how learning can be facilitated through certain types of engaging and constructive activities. This model of learning emphasizes form-meaning connections through active participation in socially, culturally, historically, and politically situated contexts.

In sum, the contemporary constructivist theory of learning acknowledges that individuals are active agents, they engage in their own knowledge construction by integrating new information into their schema, and by associating and representing it into a meaningful way. Constructivists argue that it is impractical for teachers to make all the current decisions and dump the information to students without involving students in the decision process and assessing students' abilities to construct knowledge. In other words, guided instruction that puts students at the center of learning process, and provides guidance and concrete teaching whenever necessary is suggested. Perkins (1991) indicates that students may easily get lost in management without any experience to guide them through the information jungle.

There are, however, two major strands of the constructivist perspective. These two strands, cognitive constructivism and social constructivism, are different in emphasis, but they also share many common perspectives about teaching and learning.

What is Social Constructivism?

Social constructivism emphasizes the importance of culture and context in understanding what occurs in society and constructing knowledge based on this understanding (Derry, 1999; McMahon, 1997). This perspective is closely associated with many contemporary theories, most notably the developmental theories of Vygotsky and Bruner, and Bandura's social cognitive theory (Shunk, 2000).

Assumptions of Social Constructivism

Social constructivism is based on specific assumptions about reality, knowledge, and learning. To understand and apply models of instruction that are rooted in the perspectives of social constructivists, it is important to know the premises that underlie them.

Reality: Social constructivists believe that reality is constructed through human activity. Members of a society together invent the properties of the world (Kukla, 2000). For the social constructivist, reality cannot be discovered: it does not exist prior to its social invention.

Knowledge: To social constructivists, knowledge is also a human product, and is socially and culturally constructed (Ernest, 1999; Gredler, 1997; Prat & Floden, 1994). Individuals create meaning through their interactions with each other and with the environment they live in.

Learning: Social constructivists view learning as a social process. It does not take place only within an individual, nor is it a passive development of behaviors that are shaped by external forces (McMahon, 1997). Meaningful learning occurs when individuals are engaged in social activities.

What is Cognitive Constructivism?

Many educational psychologists found the behavioral approach unsatisfying. In the areas of problem solving and learning strategies they became more concerned with what was unobservable - what was going on inside the brain. These theories are based on the work of educational philosopher John Dewey, and educational psychologists Lev Vygotsky, Jean Piaget, Jerome Bruner among others. They propose that children actively construct knowledge relying on what they already know about the world and genuine information they receive through interaction. The methods of constructivism emphasize students' ability to solve real-life, practical problems. Students typically work in cooperative groups rather than individually; they tend to focus on projects that require solutions to problems rather than on instructional sequences that require learning of certain content skills. The job of the teacher in constructivist models is to arrange for required resources and act as a guide to students while they set their own goals and 'teach themselves'. (Roblyer, Edwards, and Havriluk, 1997, p. 70)

Jonassen (1994) proposes that there are eight characteristics that differentiate constructivist learning environments:

1. Constructivist learning environments provide multiple representations of reality.
2. Multiple representations avoid oversimplification and represent the complexity of the real world.
3. Constructivist learning environments emphasize knowledge construction instead of knowledge reproduction.
4. Constructivist learning environments emphasize authentic tasks in a meaningful context rather than abstract instruction out of context.
5. Constructivist learning environments provide learning environments such as real-world settings or case-based learning instead of predetermined sequences of instruction.
6. Constructivist learning environments encourage thoughtful reflection on experience.
7. Constructivist learning environments "enable context- and content- dependent knowledge construction."
8. Constructivist learning environments support "collaborative construction of knowledge through social negotiation, not competition among learners for recognition."

By putting the theory into practice, language classrooms should be rich in interactional practices driven from real life situation and promote the construction of knowledge through a collaborative environment in which the learners and the teacher share the responsibility of teaching and learning. According to Jonassen, (1995) learning is meaningful only when learners actively participate in it, and when they are responsible for their own learning. Learners have to have skills and possibilities to construct new experiences and knowledge in a broader world of experience. Ahonen et. al. (2003: 9) state that the collaborative and meaningful quality of learning and this broader experience can be achieved with the strength of internet based platforms. The interaction with the help of online devices cannot be compared to face-to-face situations but the online device can provide the possibility to interact with each other no matter how far learners are from each other. A meaningful learning process requires also intentional action from the learner. With the help of Internet the learning process can also be contextual and situational and these elements support the intentional

learning process. This indication dates back to communicative competence in language learning from a socio-linguistic point of view.

Communicative competence has been a central concept in foreign language teaching since the early 1980s and it is by now widely accepted that the language classroom is a place where learners should develop the ability to communicate in a foreign language. This means that we want to enable our learners to interact with communication partners with different social and cultural backgrounds, to use foreign language in different contexts and situations in oral and written form, receptively and productively, in order to negotiate meaning and exchange messages. In order to prepare language learners to communicate in real-life situations outside the classroom, we have to create a learning environment that allows for communication inside the classroom.

Language is used for communication. For this reason, CLT makes use of communication to teach languages. Whereas traditional language teaching places a lot of emphasis on grammar rules and verb conjugations, CLT emphasizes real-life situations and communication in context (Galloway, 1993).

No doubt, communicative language teaching (CLT) has contributed significantly to making the language classroom a lively environment. Still, the approach has its limitations: For a long time it has put its emphasis on oral competency. There may be limited opportunities for teachers and learners to establish contacts outside the “closed community” of the classroom – have lead to a reduction of the term “communication”. In the context of language teaching it has generally been linked to spoken, face-to-face interaction between teacher and student or between two or more students in the classroom.

However, if the acquisition of communicative competence is considered as overall learning and teaching aim, all aspects of communication have to be taken into account when a communicative learning environment is designed and prepared for learners for real-life communication. One way to achieve such an environment is to set up web based platforms in which learners may interact with their peers, teachers and the real world.

2.1 Web as a Communicative Medium

Web can be visualized as a set of principles and practices that tie together a veritable solar system of sites that demonstrate some or all of those principles, at a varying distance from that core. Moreover, The Web is a place where one can read and read, and then read some more – without being forced to respond in ways that demonstrate learning. Much of what is on the Web is ideal for learners who are successful as passive learners. A highly motivated learner may thrive on vast amounts of Web information. Any element of this core might turn to be a potential interactional tool, in which learners may interact with their peers, teachers and the real world, if properly implemented in pedagogical settings since the Web can be very interactive. Its greatest intrinsic power for teaching is that it encourages branched, nonlinear instruction. Not only can students jump around among the materials that you have created for them, they also can access materials created by others. Indeed they can create useful materials. (Brooks, 2001; 20)

The Web is a communications tool that all professionals use in similar ways. The most powerful learning experiences are those that engage students deeply in meaningful ways. They force active learning, and they provide realistic environments that have a way of nurturing motivation. Real-world activities are limited and still relatively unusual as far as being included within routine school-based instruction. (Brooks, 2001; 22)

Now that web as a new communication tool is finding their ways into schools and language classrooms, there is an opportunity to reconsider the concept of “communication” in the context of language learning. In order to demonstrate what impact the use of communication tools has on communication in the foreign language classroom, it is essential to define what “communication tools” mean and to what extent typical features of computer-mediated communication present these tools. (Brooks, 2001; 29)

2.2 Web-based Communication Tools

“Communication tools” are all those tools that use an electronic network (internet or intranet) to establish contacts between two or more communication partners on connected computers. Communication tools are: e-mail, chat, forums, web logs, guest books, online telephoning, and video-conferencing. The fact that these tools allow us to communicate at relatively little cost with people all over the world is revolutionizing human interaction in business, education, and personal life. (Shetzer & Warschauer 2000)

A whole new form of communication has been developed, which is generally referred to as computer-mediated communication (CMC). It is however important to be aware of the fact that each communication tool has its specific characteristics. Each tool has been designed and is used to fulfill specific communication purposes. Consequently, the choice of the communication tool shapes the character of communication as asynchronous and synchronous communication.

A basic, very important distinction can be made between synchronous CMC and asynchronous CMC. The former means that all participants communicate in real time, at the same time. Typical tools are chat or video-conferencing. The latter refers to situations where

communication partners interact in a delayed fashion by computer. Typical tools are e-mail or forum.

Still, there are some features that all forms of CMC share, disregarding the choice of the tool.

Computer-mediated communication

- shows characteristics of both, written and spoken communication
- has some characteristics that are unique to the computer medium. (e.g. own forms of greetings, special uses of abbreviations and symbols; forums: own complex rules of turn-taking and topic shifting)
- reduces social context, clues related to gender, race, handicap, accent, status as well as non-verbal cues, such as frowning and hesitating. (Warschauer & Shetzer 2000)

The web-based communication tools are presented with brief descriptions..

2.2.1 Forum

Forums fall into the category of asynchronous communication tools. There are public forums, which are freely accessible for any user and there are private forums, which are only open for a defined group of users.

2.2.2 Mail groups

A mailing list is a list of people's names and addresses which is managed by the list owner. When messages are sent to the list, they are electronically distributed by means of a software package which sends a copy of the original message to each of the subscribers of the list. Copies of messages may be saved in files which are known as list archives for future reference. The owner of the list decides on policies regarding the use of the messages which he owns. (Nagel, 1999)

Using a mailing list is the best way to go about interactive classroom e-mailing as this also provides the opportunity to follow different discussion threads by way of utilizing the log files of the mailing list. A log file is a disk file containing everything that was written on the list in a given month or week. The database can be searched to return a copy of messages related to a particular subject or messages which match the search criteria.

The alternative route is to make use of mailing groups. This way messages can be sent to a group of people by creating a mailing group (or "alias") containing their names in the address book of the e-mailer. Multiple groups can be created, and contacts can belong to more than one group. (retrieved from <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Nagel-Email.html>)

2.2.3 Podcasts

Podcast is an **audio file** that can be downloaded from the Internet. After downloading it, it can be listened to on the computer or on an MP3/portable music player such as an iPod or iRiver. When subscribed to a podcast, it is delivered automatically each day, just like a newspaper. (retrieved from http://www.eslpod.com/website/podcast_info.php)

2.2.4 E-portfolios

One definition of ePortfolio is a “digital representation of self on characteristics of interest to a community.”

The community context can be represented as a template into which the portfolio creator places text, audio, and video files (digital artifacts) and is encouraged to include a description, rationale, and discussion around each entry in the template. Taken together, the software

feature-set makes ePortfolio a powerful tool for the new 3Rs, representation, reflection, and revision.

This same “feature-set” presents a high-level view of the process that institutions and individual faculty often subscribe to as a method for helping students learn and demonstrate that learning has occurred. (retrieved from <http://campustechnology.com/articles/40147/>)

More recently, there has been increased attention paid to e-portfolios as a more economical and dynamic alternative to paper portfolios. What is the difference between the traditional and the e-portfolio? The principle of the e-portfolio is similar to the traditional portfolio. The main difference is the way students’ work is collected and compiled. When the eportfolio is employed, students’ work is collected and made accessible on the World Wide Web or simply a CD-ROM, and multimedia can be used, such as the “hypermedia programs, databases, spreadsheets, and word-processing software, as well as CD-ROMs and the Web” (Kahtani, 1999, p. 262). Furthermore, information in the e-portfolio can be presented in “graphics, videos, sounds, images, text, or any other multimedia format” (Kahtani 1999, p. 262).

2.2.5 Chat/Messengers

Unlike forums and web logs, chat represents a synchronous form of CMC. Conversation takes place online, in real time between two or more people. Chat can work in three different modes: text, audio and/or video.

2.2.6 Web logs

In the well-known homepage of blogging systems “ www.blogger.com “ the blog or web log is defined as a private website which usually has the form of an online diary. It is generated automatically: the user types the text directly into a text-area and by clicking on a button the

entry is instantly published on the Internet. Moreover, Godwin-John (2003) considers web logs as second-generation web which is a collaborative environment that has gained high popularity recently.

They are becoming more popular because of some reasons as Johnson (2004)

- pen and pencil use is fading away in the real life
- available computer labs with Internet access in the schools
- extended material submission and feedback
- flexibility of blogs for providing various applications

According to Duber, J. (2002), the educational applications of these popular second generation web platform are defined as;

- a source of annotated links to websites of interest in the TESL/TEFL field
- the cheapest way to keep online presence
- a great collaborative tools for projects.
- a host to post daily lesson plans
- a calendar-based automatic archiving system for storage
- multimedia blogging with the help of recent advances

These popular innovative learning-teaching tools, logs, can be designed in mainly three types as Campell (2003) suggests: These types and their uses are presented below.

The Tutor Blog: Tutor driven;

- It gives daily reading practice to the learners.
- It promotes exploration of English websites.
- It encourages online verbal exchange by use of comment buttons.
- It provides class or syllabus information.
- It serves as a resource of links for self-study.

The Learner Blog: Learners themselves or by small groups of learners driven;

- It is a common reading assignment for reading and writing classes.
- It is to encourage the use of search engines and net surfing
- Individually, it can be used as journals for writing practice, or for personal expression.

- It provides writing practice, and develops a sense of ownership
- It provides further exchange of ideas by comment features.
- It stores a collection of student blogs

The Class Blog: Entire class driven;

- In conversation-based classes for learners it is a platform to post messages, images, and links related to classroom discussion topics.
- Class blogs might also be useful for facilitating project-based language learning, where learners can be given the opportunity to develop research and writing skills by being asked to create an online resource for others.
- Class blogs could also be used as a virtual space for an international classroom language exchange.
- Gathered ideas can be addressed to the world as a public voice

One of the recent detailed studies about the blogs Davies (2005) reveal the facts that from blogs are very beneficial if blended in the pedagogical environments,

Using blogs has many advantages for students and teachers. Campbell (2003) mentions the following benefits

- They can provide a bridge between lessons, teachers can post materials that recycle and review vocabulary and topics presented during lessons.
- They can save the teacher time as information about schedule changes, homework assignments etc. may be posted on the blog rather than during class time.

Ward (2004) sets out the following

- Blogs provide a genuine audience
- The content is authentically communicative
- Content is process driven
- Content can be peer and teacher reviewed
- Blogs provide a forum that is not inhibiting

Johnson (2003) mentions that the chronological nature of blogs means students are able to observe how their writing changes over time. Kennedy (2003) writes that blogs are

advantageous since they provide opportunities for collaborative learning, and that they encourage feelings of ownership and responsibility.

Bunari (2004) writes about the usefulness of journal writing for students, citing the work of Kerka.

- Journal writing is less formal and students are able to write with fewer inhibitions
- Journal entries show real evidence of thought processes
- They are tools for developing critical analysis skills

Research by both Ward (2004) and Campbell (undated) has shown that most students find blogging a positive experience and believe that it helps them to improve their second-language skills.”

The implementation of blogs in the classrooms leads to the issue blending learning which is defined by Scagnoli (2005) as

“Classroom+Online Learning = web-enhancement; hybrid learning; mixed mode

In this study is used as “Transformation of two or more things that when blended become one product different from the original product”

Blended learning has to be about

- learning;
- helping students learn how to build up new knowledge, combining the use of new and traditional tools to explore, select, and evaluate sources;
- learning to present, share and collaborate with others in real and virtual spaces

because we are preparing students for the world outside the classroom

..... and that world is already using web technologies for information, communication, collaboration,.. but the change has transformed teaching and learning quite yet.”

2.3 The Principle of the Online Platform: Web log

While deciding on how to implement web logs in the syllabus the following principle was the source inspiration of the study.

'A good educational web site satisfies two sets of criteria: a winning formula would be one which combined excellent use of the medium with excellent content. In fact we find different configurations: enthusiastic use of the medium but poor pedagogical quality, sound pedagogy making little use of the potential of the medium, and variations along the way....' (Lamy 1997: 27).

The blog used in this study functioned as a medium letting students interact by means of different tasks with real life boundaries, rather than simply presenting some information for pedagogical purposes or set of rules which gives no interaction opportunity or feeling of an online society membership to the learners involved in the learning process. Furthermore, Eastment (1999) critically evaluates the current web sites by stating:

'This leads to the conclusion that material written for the Web too often replicates what is done by its non-digital predecessors; 'at the time of writing [...] a shelf of EFL workbooks and course books would offer far more in terms of exercises, activities and ideas than the whole of the World Wide Web' (Eastment 1999: 234).

Regarding the opinions above, the platform used in this study serves as a potential medium in which students achieved some tasks and interacted with the teacher, their peers, authentic texts and authentic audience. In other words, the web medium has not hosted any restricted course book like activities as Eastment (1999:234) suggested. Such a blogging system is affordable and easy to set up; however, one of the concerns is whether it is really useful for language learning or it is just a gimmick. Like all resources, its benefits to learners depend on how it is used, and this depends to a large extent on how it is set up by the teacher. The rationale behind the web blog designed for this study serves not only as a tool for self-development, but also serves useful learning opportunities for language learning.

2.4 The Rationale behind the Online Platform: Web log

For learners of the English language in particular, there has always been a sort of circular motivation for using the Web: As highlighted by Warschauer and Whittaker (1997), using the Web serves learners needs of learning a language, as well as providing them the tools for

more effective web use with all its content and rich in functional learning environment. It is cyclic in that the more skills one have in making use of Internet, the more learning opportunities there exist. This indicates that another motivational aspect of using the Web for language learning is the acquiring of electronic literacy skills. Especially for learners from countries whose languages have little Web presence (e. g. those from Turkey or Ukraine), English is the default language through which to do this (Mishan, 2004: 246).

Considering the ideas above, an “online component” has been designed to accompany the writing syllabus. This term refers to the sessions carried out in the PC lab in order to enrich the writing classroom practices by pre-designed web-based activities, which are parallel to the writing syllabus and the teacher-student or student- student interaction on the internet platform in use.

2.5 Choice of Online Platform: Web log

A blog is an easy-to-use web site where thoughts, ideas or a variety of information can be posted for interaction with people. Moreover, the blog is a voice on the web. It is a place to collect and share experience and information that you find interesting like political commentary, a personal diary, or links to bookmark web sites to be remembered. Many people use a blog just to organize this data to open it to worldwide audiences of thousands. This is provided by a couple of servers where people can easily build up a window to world wide audience. In this research www.blogger.com is the service provider. The established blog was used to accompany writing courses where learners can share their ideas primarily with their instructor and peers. Besides benefiting from a pool of ideas, this platform also acts as an interactive medium through which learners take the advantage of the web-based tasks and meaningful practices with the benefit of presenting their products to thousands of Internet users around the world. That means it functions as a blended learning tool by combining the

actual class environment with web-based practices. Originating from these points it might be worth creating a blended learning environment in the writing classes to observe how students will perceive such innovation. (see Appendix A)

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Subjects

The number of subjects involved in this study was 55. All were native speakers of Turkish and were in the Intermediate Level English accordingly a placement test administered by the School of Foreign Languages after the first term was over. These students were of various departments in the university so the only reason they were grouped in these two classes was their English proficiency levels. The language program they were enrolled in their first year at prep-school follows an intensive skill based curriculum in which they studied four different language skills, speaking-listening, writing, reading and grammar separately. None of them had online learning experience prior to the study.

3.2 Procedure

This research was carried out by two different intermediate level writing classes at Prep school in Anadolu University in order check if internet based meaningful tasks through blended learning are a source of stimulant for the students' perceptual change. Therefore, students had to join computer lab practices which were blended in the syllabus. There were nine sessions, including a training session, they had to join. The frequency of computer lab activity depended on the production phase of the weekly schedule. When a unit was covered and it was time to produce the targeted genre they studied in the class, students were taken to the lab in order to fulfill the tasks that the teacher prepared and published on the web log in advance.

Then students involved in the innovative web log application on weekly basis. As they each time fulfilled tasks on the web log, they were required to write an instant reflection on the

practice they had that particular day. After the term and web practices were over, they wrote a final reflection evaluating the whole term. As a final stage, these reflections were compared with Constant Comparison Method.

3.3 Application of the Online Platform

To have a better understanding of the process, terms like “task” and “session” should be clearly identified and understood. In this process, the word “task” refers to activities students are required to fulfill on the online platform. The word session indicates the time intervals students were in the PC lab to fulfill the tasks. The total number of sessions held throughout the term was eight, excluding a training session at the very beginning. The total number of tasks completed during the term was 19. The intervals of the sessions were parallel to the writing syllabus. The number of the tasks in each session was also various depending on the production needs in the syllabus.

This process included various steps. The very first one was that the teacher registered for the blogging system and build up the web platform. After the platform was ready to post tasks for students, students registered for the page to be able to post on the platform used for the writing class. Once the participants were ready to involve, the first introductory posts were submitted by the teacher and the platform was launched to serve for the writing course. Within the term, eight PC lab sessions were held to complete this web based process.

3.4 Web Page Practice Process

The process started with two hour training is session in the PC lab. Here subjects learnt how to register and submit comments to fulfill the teachers and course requirements. (see

Appendix B). When familiarity to this innovation was approved, eight separate 2-hour sessions were held in the PC lab. The frequency of these sessions depends simply on the web-based elements derived from the course syllabus. During the session the teacher walked around, monitors and led students and assisted them if a necessity occurred. In the warm-up at the beginning, a five-minute icebreaker, teacher sometimes let students check their e-mails, or any other job they had to do online. Sometimes a useful function of the search engine “Google” was introduced. These warm-ups heavily depended on the creativity of the teacher like in regular classes. At the end of each session if any extra time were left, students completed tasks they could not in the earlier sessions, or some problems were discussed such as recovery of students’ forgotten passwords to let the session smoothly flow.

3.5 Weblog Task Categories

Actually the tasks students were assigned in the blogging platform were chronically published since they accompany the writing syllabus. When the purpose they serve for is considered, we can group them as in the following. (see Appendix C)

3.5.1 Real life Homework

This group basically aims at transferring the regular class practices into an authenticity driven context in which writers expose a certain amount of authentic text types as they analyze and synthesize a certain amount of data about the genre they will produce at the end of the task. Moreover, upon the process is over, they have the audience for whom they can establish their product to fill a gap in the real life, which naturally formed by the writing task itself. On our web platform, there are two activities of this type,” Turkish Wedding” and “Death Penalty”. (see Appendix E)

3.5.2 Journal

Actually this was an icebreaker activity introduced at the very beginning of the sessions which was used primarily to warm the students up about blogging system, and secondarily to transfer the journal writing component of the regular classroom practices into this new platform. This particular task aiming at interacting with a web page and getting information about themselves, and comparing it with their own personality served as more than a warm up activity because it was more than a regular journal topic assigned in the classroom, for which they are to write a journal entry on a separate piece of paper for a prompt like “Write about your first impressions about Eskişehir.” The activity on the platform was named as “The Second Journal”

(see Appendix E)

3.5.3 Reflection

This part aims at letting students to share their ideas about the innovative process they go through. As they achieve the web-based tasks one by one, they wrote their ideas about their experiences. This was designed to get instant information about the web-based component in order to reform and refine the future goals of the new platform and the writing course in terms of students changing need in their learning environment. To do this, the language used to reflect was their native language, Turkish, since the main focus was their ideas, not their writing skills in English. However, some students preferred to write in English.

(see Appendix E)

3.5.4 Useful Links

The main goal of this part is to have students share some interesting links they have found, which may be either beneficial for their daily live or educational needs. Another objective of this activity is to have students think about; if the links they have found can be used in a similar way to the links used by the teacher for web-based writing purposes, to form student

driven activities. To have a look at the shared links see the part “Useful Links” (see Appendix E)

3.5.5 Your Questions

Since the teacher was not available all the time like in the regular classroom context, there was a need for a part where students could ask for clarification about the question marks in their minds from primarily the teacher and their peers. This would let go the online practice smoothly. Another point this part might contribute was that; if there is a frequent question on the same subject, the teacher might feel the need of checking the prompts published, and revising them. To examine what kind of assistance students required, “Your Questions” part was the way. (see Appendix E)

3.5.6 Writing Hits

This part functions as the notice boards in regular classes. Upon the completion of tasks assigned, the top works of the students were chosen by the teacher, could be posted on the online platform by the students. This would provide two major benefits for learners. Firstly, they have the satisfaction of writing the best task and sharing it with both their peers and the real audience. Moreover, these samples are long lasting there for the students and teachers for future needs. (see Appendix E)

3.5.7 Interactive component (comments)

Beside classroom activities, there were two types of duties learners needed to cover during this innovative application in the writing class. The first one of these jobs to be completed outside the class is the Questions and Useful links part. In the “Questions” part learners could ask for clarification about tasks to both to the teacher or their friends. The second type of duty is to complete the classroom based tasks if only they could not finish in the computer lab

session because of time constraints or being absent in the session. Moreover, learners were free from time and place boundaries flexibly. This let them actively involve in the tasks whether or not they were in the classroom or not.

3.6 Sessions

The word “session” indicates the time intervals students were in the PC lab to fulfill the tasks. (see Appendix D)

3.6.1 Training Session

The first step of a term long process was presenting the event and registering for the web page in which they would be busy with the activities. Then they were introduced to web-based project with in a 2-hour PC lab session. Throughout this session they learnt how to register www.blogger.com and how to write comments monitored by the teacher. Only after each learner registered in the web page, they could post their comments. Upon all learners were registered and learnt how to post, they typed the web address, they simply viewed what job to do, and right after they completed the mission logging in the system they could send their products in the comments thread. In this part they were to complete the very simple tasks which were about the definitions of “writing, paragraph and essay”. These were the very first online tasks to warm the students up for the next applications. The only job they were required to achieve was to associate the picture with the relevant subject matter, and post their comments on the target definition of the given concept. These concepts were Writing, Paragraph and Essay in this first session. (see Appendix D)

3.6.2 First Session

After completion of these three tasks, learners were ready to carry out more complicated tasks. This time journal writing part of the regular classroom was transferred into Internet

medium. Rather than giving them a regular journal prompt, “Write down your first impressions about Eskişehir.” learners were required to visit a page, where they could draw a pig through which they could have a personality analysis. After they got the results, they wrote their comments about how realistic the analysis was. When these tasks were over, it was the time for learners to reflect on their first web based experience in the REFLECTION part. The language they chose while reflecting was Turkish, however, some learners wrote in English. (see Appendix D)

3.6.3 Second Session

Later on when it was the time to produce a well organized paragraph, they were to find out the target writing prompt on the published page. Since this was the introductory task, it did not require anything complicated both cognitively and technically. The primary purpose of this activity was not only to provide a necessity for blog use by publishing one of the classroom requirements on the blogging page, but also to lead students to an online research on the web so that they could gather some information about the issues they were unfamiliar with in the given task and share the information in the comments thread.(see Appendix D)

3.6.4 Third Session

After two sessions, students were used to using the system properly. Now that they were, two more parts added in order that they could ask questions about the difficulties they faced, and they could add links that might be worth sharing.(see Appendix D)

3.6.5 Fourth Session

Upon paragraph writing in the syllabus was over a writing hits session was introduced in order to present their best works. Essay writing was the next step in the regular classroom so

two more tasks about the essential elements of strong essays were designed for the learners to complete. The very first task was to associate the picture with “Thesis Statement” and write effective statements to share with others on the given topics. Picture association was another tool for meaningful writing by carrying out the elements of writing to the real life. As a second vital element of the essay writing, learners this time had to transfer their regular classroom practice experience on introduction paragraph into real life by associating it with a box of Kinder Surprise chocolate in the given pictures. The reflections were submitted at the end of the session. (see Appendix D)

3.6.6 Fifth Session

The beginning task in this session was the “Background Information” activity to support the way they interpreted the background types covered in the course content. Each picture sent in this task represents four different types background students mastered in their essay writing process. Learners here were required to associate the pictures with the background types. For each association they made up, stating their rationales behind it was another requirement to post as a comment. Like other critical thinking activities, this activity aimed at the fact that they could internalize the classroom content linking it to real life, their here and now context. Following this, a similar duty on “Process Essay” is assigned for the same purpose mentioned above.

The first meaningful task to a real audience introduced as “THE SECOND HOMEWORK” was originally a classroom task for which a process essay submission was required. The prompt given was designed in such a way that the final product would be a source information for a web page about traditional weddings all over the world, in which Turkish traditional weddings were mentioned in a few sentences. Finding a gap to fill was a very easy way to make up real purpose and address to authentic audience on the net for meaningful writing

practices. Additionally, outlining one of the wedding ceremonies on the page was an opportunity to analyze the target text type in a real context. The session ended with the reflection comments about the session and the tasks. (see Appendix E)

3.6.7 Sixth Session

This time type of essay being covered in the syllabus was “Comparison and Contrast Essay”. As a result, an accompanying task to practice similarities and differences at the sentence level was designed and published on the online platform. In this task the very up-to-date OPET TV advertisement was to compare to the very old TV serial “Knight Rider” in terms of characters, stories and cars used looking at the pictures extracted from videos. The purpose of this exercise was to help students produce variety of comparative and contrastive sentences.

The second mission to be completed in this session was about linking words. Like in the other visual aid activities, picture association was the main focus. However, there was an additional link to download a table of most commonly used linking words in “pdf” format. The session ended with the reflection comments about the session and the tasks. (see Appendix E)

3.6.8 Seventh Session

This was the very last session of the semester long web based practice. The final genres “Opinion Essay” and “Argumentative Essay” were the issues. The opinion essay part was designed again for both picture and genre association, and fun. Unlike other critical thinking tasks students had to solve some riddles giving their opinions. Sharing ideas on the riddles students try to figure out the function of “Opinion Essay.” (see Appendix E)

3.6.9 Eighth Session

Fulfilling this mission, a similar task was on due to internalize what an argumentation was. Here the only requirement was to post comments about why that particular snapshot was on the spot in “Argumentative Essay” part. The very last activity of the term was very similar to “Turkish Wedding” task in terms of authenticity in audience and purpose. Since students are required to submit an e-mail including an “Argumentative Essay” about “Death Penalty” to share their ideas. In this part, there were some useful links from which they can grasp some for or against ideas to outline their argumentation. To do this they searched on the given web pages to pick up the information they needed to strengthen their arguments. In the end lots of essay outlines were submitted to comments parts as a result of analyzed and synthesized data. (see Appendix E)

3.7 Instruments

Three instruments were used in this study. They are:

- a) Reflections about first term
- b) Instant Reflections during the study
- c) Reflections about the 2nd term.

3.8 Data

The data of this study consisted of three reflections collected at different times, one at the beginning, one during web-based practice, and one at the end of the semester.

3.8.1 Data collection procedure

The data were collected in three different phases. In the first phase, students’ perceptions and ideas about the regular writing course they had in the first semester was taken through open ended questions. In the second phase, after each web-based task in each session was

completed, students were required to reflect on the task they completed and the session they participated in. In addition to this step-by-step spontaneous reflection, as a part of classroom evaluation, students were asked to put a reflection page in the portfolios in which they criticized the term they passed through.

3.8.2 Data Analysis

The analysis of the reflections were done using “**Constant Comparison Method**” technique (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, cited in Dooley & Murphrey, 2000; Dye et al, 2000; Barksdale-Ladd et al 2001; Lockhart & Ng, 1995; Zepeda & Mayers, 2002). Constant comparison model is applicable to form categories or emerging themes to interpret large qualitative data. The aim is to derive at categories that can reflect the generalities in participants’ responses and present scattered, messy data into organized, precise data. The underlying principle of constant comparative analysis is very-well outlined by Goulding (2002). Goulding (2002, 68-69) states that:

Comparative analysis is a general method, like statistical experiments, and like other methods it can be used for social units of any size (Glaser and Strauss, 1968). It involves comparing like with like, to look for emerging patterns and themes. Comparison explores differences and similarities across incidents within the data currently collected and provides guidelines for collecting additional data. Analysis explicitly compares each incident in the data with other incidents appearing to belong to the same category, exploring their similarities and differences. (Spiggle, 1994: 493– 4). This process facilitates the identification of concepts. Concepts are a progression from merely describing what is happening in the data, which is a feature of open coding, to explaining the relationship between and across incidents. Incidents in the data need to be checked against each other in order to validate interpretation (Corbin, 1998). By comparing where the facts are similar or different properties of categories that increase the categories’ generality and explanatory powers can be generated (Glaser and Strauss, 1968: 24).

To analyze the data two raters were used. To determine the inter-rater reliability following formula, suggested by Tawny & Gast (1984) was used:

$$\frac{\text{The number of agreements}}{\text{The number of agreements x disagreements}} \times 100$$

First of all, the 40% of the data was analyzed by two different raters separately to test the inter-rater reliability, which was found 94%. Then, raters reviewed each reflection to come to a consensus. To have the categories, all the data was put into communication units. A communication unit is defined as “a unit being a separate expression about a thought or behavior” (Langer & Applebee, cited in Aydın and Bahçe, 2001 p. 5). Then, the similar communication units were grouped. After that, these groups were named which were decided with the co-rater to form the categories.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The aim of the study was to find out students' perception of blended writing classes in which blog and face-to-face instruction was blended. To achieve this, intermediate level EFL students in two writing classes participated in a blended writing class throughout the spring term, and wrote reflections during and at the end of this period. These reflections were divided into communication units and analyzed by two raters using Constant Comparison Method (Glasser & Strauss, 1967, cited in Dooley & Murphrey, 2000; Dye et al, 2000; Barksdale-Ladd et al 2001; Lockhart & Ng, 1995; Zepeda & Mayers, 2002) in order to answer the following research question;

- How is the blended writing course perceived by intermediate EFL learners?

In this chapter, the categories emerged from the data coming from instant reflections from weblog (2nd reflections) and final reflections coming from cover letters (3rd reflections) and the findings are presented.

4.2 Categories

An interpretative analysis of these reflections revealed that seven major themes characterized blended learning experiences described by students. Reading through students' responses to the question about their experiences, following categories were derived. In this section these categories will be defined and exemplified by using excerpts from students' reflections.

- **Reframed Attitudes:**

This category refers to the ideas grouping around the utterances which indicate the fact that some major changes took place in the way students view the writing class in general.

“writting dersini artık daha çok seviyorum.

“writting dersini artık daha çok seviyorum.writing dersini sevmeye başlamamın tek sebebi bu oldu.”

“my writing teacher made me love this lesson”

- **Personal Enjoyment:**

This category refers to the ideas grouping around the utterances which indicate the fact that writing class was a source of fun for students.

“walla bugün çok eğlendim!”

“Your lessons were very enjoyable. If the lesson gives enjoyably , it becomes permanent.”

- **Academic Skill Development: Computer Skills, Research opportunities**

This category refers to the ideas grouping around the utterances which indicate the fact that the blended writing innovation has contributed to Academic Skills which are “all about helping you learn how to be a more effective learner and develop the research skills that will help you now and in the future”. (retrieved from 2003 University of Southampton web page)

“i love the course because i m progreasing my keyboard”

“We need information while we are writing something.

“We cannot find out everything.Internet is useful for us.When we search a thing,we just find.I like touch to keyboard of a computer.I like speed...”

“Particularly using computer lab is a magnificient idea.I liked it very much because it gives us opportunities for examle we could research what we need for our homeworks”

- **Up-to-dateness: Technology Era, Real life value**

This category refers to the ideas grouping around the utterances which indicate the fact that the innovation introduced in the writing classes has some operational value in the real life and compatible with rapid technological changes in today’s world.

“Zaten artık Dünya bu yöne gidiyor.Bilişim ve teknoloji çağı.”

“Writing i ingilizcenin bir kısmı olarak değil de hayatın bir parçası olarak göstermeye çalışmak ve bunu günümüzün en kullanışlı ve gerekli aleti bilgisayarla birleştirmek,bu güne kadar türk eğitim sisteminde gördüğüm en akıllıca yapılan yenilikti..”

“writing lesson is very technological.”

“I think books are boring and have only classical opinions or informations we learnt about real life We wrote to all around the world because we had an internet page”

- **Reflective Thinking: Appreciation of Teacher, Future Suggestion, Confessions/Self-evaluation, Reflection Use**

This category refers to the ideas grouping around the utterances which indicate the fact that students have a critical eye on the Blended Writing Course Context they have experienced and the performance they have shown.

“Böyle bir olaya önderlik yaptığınız için sizi kutluyorum hocam.”
 “bunun tam olarak işlevsel olması derslerde daha sık bilgisayar labaratuvarına gelmemize bağlı sanırım..”
 “umarım bizden sonra gelecek öğrencilerde bundan yararlanır.herşey için saolun hocamm”
 “aktiviteleri baştan savma yaptığımı düşünüyorum kusura bakmayın”
 “everybody should use computer lab like us.This method is value for our country’s future.
 “we could go to lab and write ou journals”
 “Keeping this in mind, half of the lessons can be carried out in the computer lab english is a global language If we want what is happening in the world,we must learn it “
 “Thanks a lot for everything”
 “Reflection is nice. This refer that our ideas are important”

- **Writing Course Context: Lesson, Method, Activities**

This category refers to the ideas grouping around the utterances which indicate students’ personal judgments on the lesson, method, web activities, and pictures, which are regarded as components of the writing course context.

a. Positive views: Productive, Creative, Deductive, Innovative, Interesting etc.

“Aldığım yazma dersi kesinlikle ilerideki hayatım için gerekli kim ne derse desin”
 “Değişik türlerde yazı yazmak dersi çok zevkli bir hale getiriyor yoksa çekilir bi tarafı yok”
 “mesela journal konularını seçmekte serbesttik buda ilgi alanımıza gore yazmamızı sağlıyordu.”
 “Hayata yönelik bişeyler yapmak bizi çok heveslendiriyor. Mesela iş başvurusu teknikleri gibi.”
 “valla bu derste öğrendiklerim sayesinde artık derdimi rahatca yazılı olarak anlatabiliyorum final sınavında geçebilirim bence”
 “bence bu şekilde ders işlemek normal dersten daha verimli”
 “bilgisayarla ve bir site de journal yazmak çok yaratıcı bir fikir bence”
 “i think this is very good for improve writing lesson.”
 “we learned many things such as commenting for a picture, and thinking about a picture to relate an essay or a paragraph”
 “journal aktivitesinden sora bu da çok ii oldu bnce”
 “ben ömrü hayatımda böyle bişi görmedim;)”
 “I think it was the most interesting lesson at this year.”
 “Bence bu seçim çok mantılı.”
 “I think this application is very usefull”
 “en azından bi çok şeyi tekrar ettik like background..”
 “bence çok iyi internet üzresinden yapmamız çünkü kağıtların kaybolma ihtimali var ewde”
 “o gün dersle ilgilenmemeniz için geçerli bir sebebiniz olsa bilekendinizi farkında olmadan dersin içinde aktif bir şekilde bulabilirsiniz.”
 “we were resembling hardworking bee when we studied computerlab. we had to use our curriculum but thanks to you I did not understand”
 “I believe myself to right good essay to pass the final exam” “no paper no pen”
 “going to computer lab was brilliant idea”
 “This lesson was more productive than others.”
 “Using internet was useful.”
 “this semester was very different because of some different activities like internet
 “everyday I added something in my mind.”
 “we studied lessons visual we went to computer lab. photographs which were put by nazmi hoca were related to the essay, for example photo of queen bee was related to thesis statement.”
 “writin journal at computer is a good thing”
 “I realized a reform in writin class”

"It was very creative"

b. Negative views: Teacher-Oriented Meaningless, Boring, Useless

"Konular ve yaptığımız çalışmalar saçma geliyordu."

"Zorunlu olan bişey ne olursa olsun sıkıcıdır öğrenci için."

"öğretmen gelir müfredatta o hafta işlenecek konuyu bize verir yapılması gereken açıklamalar varsa yapar yoksa iyi çalışmalar der bizi çalışmamızla başbaşa bırakırdı."

"Zorunlu tutularak yazılan yazıların pek bir getirisi olduğunu düşünmüyorum. Çünkü bunlar sınıf içinde yapılan aktivite olmaktan başka bir işe yaramıyordu."

"her yazdığımda kendimi tekrar ediyorum. Kendime yeni bişeyler katamadığımı düşünüyorum"

"İngilizce yazmak ise hem sıkıcı, hem gereksiz, hem de yapamadığım için zorlu geldi bana."

"But, sometimes it was boring"

- **Interactional Opportunities: Personal voice, Goodbye Utterances**

This category refers to the utterances that are grouping around the theme that indicates students' natural interaction with friends, the teacher or the outside world.

"we shared our paragraphs and essays with other classes on the net."

"int-6 daki muzaffer arkadaşşıma katılıyorum:)"

" Sarhoş oldum mu aklım azalır;

Ayıldım mı sevincim dağılır.

Ne sarhoş, ne ayık bir hal var ya?

En güzeli öyle yaşamaktır..."

Diyeceğim budur kardeşim"

"I think, this is the last time which we came here.HOŞÇAKALIN!:)"

After categorizing the issues mentioned in the reflections, the frequency of each issue was counted as well. Out of the total number of utterances and frequencies of utterances gathering around a theme or category, the percentages were defined as follows.

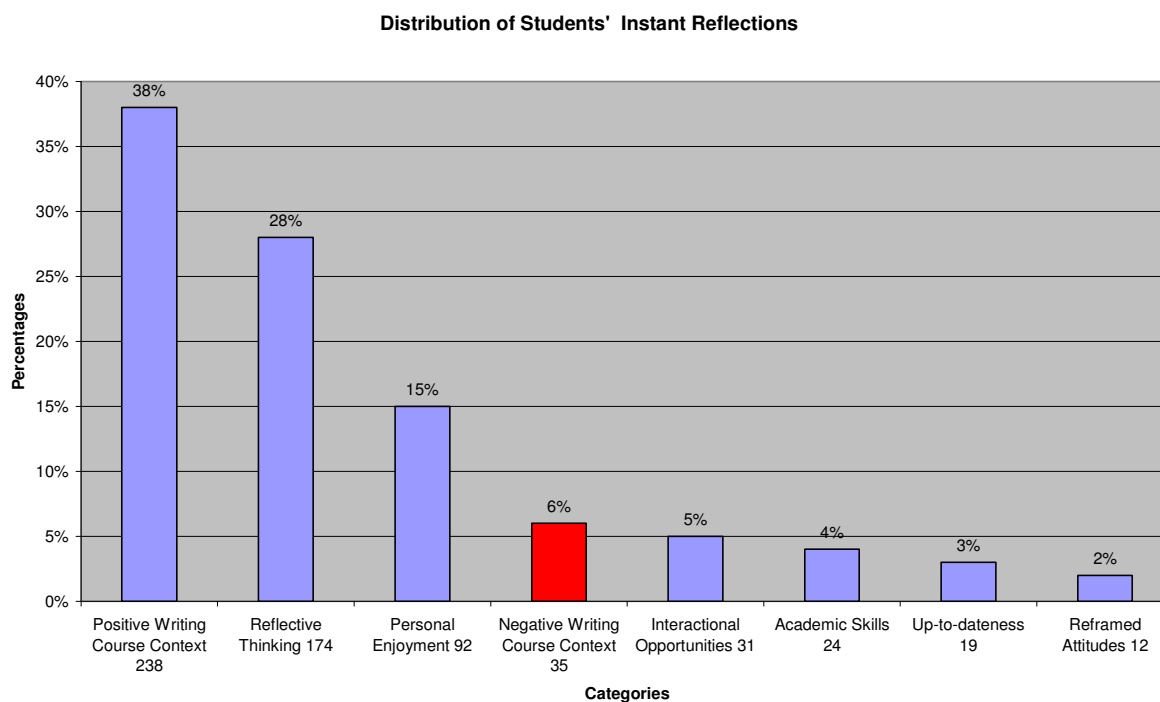
4.3 Instant Reflections of the Students about Webpage

The following chart shows how subcategories and categories are formed out of students' instant reflections about blended writing class. Unlike the reflections for the first term where the only emerging category was "Writing Course Context", in the instant reflecting process, there were some more emerging categories beyond such as "reframed attitudes", "personal enjoyment", "academic development", "up-to-dateness", "reflective thinking" and "interactional opportunities".

Table 4.1: The distribution of issues in the students' instant web reflections.

Category				Raw Number	Percentage
Writing Course Context	Positive	238	%38	273	<u>44%</u>
	Negative	35	%6		
Reflective Thinking				174	<u>28%</u>
Personal Enjoyment				92	<u>15%</u>
Interactional Opportunities				31	<u>5%</u>
Academic Skills				24	<u>4%</u>
Up-to-dateness				19	<u>3%</u>
Reframed Attitudes				12	<u>2%</u>

Chart 4.1: The distribution of issues in the students' instant web reflections.



The first top category that expresses that the web platform innovation has worked on the basis Writing Course Context went up to 44 %. The portion of this category in the first reflections

of the students was 21, 5 %, which means that innovation doubled the positive views about Writing Course Context. The following student excerpts like

“Aldığım yazma dersi kesinlikle ilerideki hayatım için gerekli kim ne derse desin”
“Değişik türlerde yazı yazmak dersi çok zevkli bir hale getiriyor yoksa çekilir bi tarafı yok”
“mesela journal konularını seçmekte serbesttik buda ilgi alanımıza göre yazmamızı sağlıyordu.”
“Hayata yönelik bişeyler yapmak bizi çok heveslendiriyor. Mesela iş başvurusu teknikleri gibi.”
“valla bu derste öğrendiklerim sayesinde artık derdimi rahatca yazılı olarak anlatabiliyorum final sınavında geçebilirim bence”
“Aldığım yazma dersi kesinlikle ilerideki hayatım için gerekli kim ne derse desin”

were describing the Writing Course Context as productive, creative, deductive, visually effective, good, interesting, involving, logical, useful, comfortable, and opportunity rich for course revision. The changes in the positive views is supported with negative views as well because if critically looked there is rapid change in the view of students about their negative views as well. The portion of negative views in the first student reflections was 78,5 %. However, in the second reflections it turned out to be 6%. The following student excerpts like

“Konular ve yaptığımız çalışmalar saçma geliyordu.”
“Zorunlu olan bişey ne olursa olsun sıkıcıdır öğrenci için.”
“öğretmen gelir müfredatta o hafta işlenecek konuyu bize verir yapılması gereken açıklamalar varsa yapar yoksa iyi çalışmalar der bizi çalışmamızla başbaşa bırakırdı.”
“Zorunlu tutularak yazılan yazıların pek bir getirisi olduğunu düşünmüyorum. Çünkü bunlar sınıf içinde yapılan aktivite olmaktan başka bir işe yaramıyordu.”
“her yazdığımda kendimi tekrar ediyorum. Kendime yeni bişeyler katamadığımı düşünüyorum
“İngilizce yazmak ise hem sıkıcı, hem gereksiz, hem de yapamadığım için zorlu geldi bana.”
“But, sometimes it was boring”

formed the negative views which can be identified with perceptual motives such as boring and useless. From the most popular to the least, they can be ranked as well;

One of the first time occurring emerging issue in the second reflection was the category “reflective thinking” with the percentage of 28 %, almost half as popular as Writing Course Context. In this category the descriptive motives used were “appreciation of teacher”, “future suggestions” and “confessions/self-evaluation”. Therefore, it may be concluded that interestingly the weblog innovation might have given them an opportunity to think more reflectively unintentionally. The following students’ excerpts exemplify students’ reflective thinking.

“Böyle bir olaya önderlik yaptığınız için sizi kutluyorum hocam.”
“bunun tam olarak işlevsel olması derslerde daha sık bilgisayar laboratuvarına gelmemize bağlı sanırım..”

“umarım bizden sonra gelecek öğrencilerde bundan yararlanır.herşey için saolun hocamm”

“ aktiviteleri baştan savma yaptığımı düşünüyorum kusura bakmayın”

“everybody should use computer lab like us.This method is value for our country’s future.

“we could go to lab and write ou journals”

“Keeping this in mind, half of the lessons can be carried out in the computer lab english is a global language If we want what is happening in the world,we must learn it “

“Thanks a lot for everything”

“Reflection is nice. This refer that our ideas are important”

The second first time existing category was personal enjoyment with a percentage of 15. For this category the descriptive motive was the word “fun”. After implementing the innovation students continuously reported in their reflections that they had fun in the weblog platform bounded applications. The following students’ exemplify student’s enjoyment.

“walla bugün çok eğlendim!”

“Your lessons were very enjoyable. If the lesson gives enjoyably , it becomes permanent.”

Another the first time existing category in the second reflections was the category academic development with the portion of 4 %. For this category the descriptive motives were “developing computer skills” and “opportunities for research” when the following students’ excerpts put into consideration.

“i love the course because i m progreesing my keyboard”

“We need information while we are writing something.

“We cannot find out everything.Internet is useful for us.When we search a thing,we just find.I like touch to keyboard of a computer.I like speed...”

“Particularly using computer lab is a magnificent idea.I liked it very much because it gives us opportunities for examle we could research what we need for our homeworks”

What comes next as another newly emerged category was up-to-dateness with the portion of 3 %. For this category there were two descriptive motives which were “compatible with technology era” and “with real life value. This category is as small as the academic development category; however, the innovation made students think that writing has something to do with up-to-dateness when the following students’ excerpts were put into consideration.

“Zaten artık Dünya bu yöne gidiyor.Bilişim ve teknoloji çağı.”

“Writing i ingilizcenin bir kısmı olarak değil de hayatın bir parçası olarak göstermeye çalışmak ve bunu günümüzün en kullanışlı ve gerekli aleti bilgisayarla birleştirmek,bu güne kadar türk eğitim sisteminde gördüğüm en akıllıca yapılan yenilikti..”

“writing lesson is very technological.”

"I think books are boring and have only classical opinions or informations we learnt about real life We wrote to all around the world because we had an internet page"

The most interestingly there was a number of utterances of students in their reflections which formed the category named as Interactional Opportunities which was 2 % of all. This category includes the descriptive motives such as "personal voice", and "goodbye utterances" when the following students' excerpts were put into consideration.

*"we shared our paragraphs and essays with other classes on the net."
 "int-6 daki muzaffer arkadaşşıma katılıyorum:)"
 " Sarhoş oldum mu aklım azalır;
 Ayıldım mı sevincim dağılır.
 Ne sarhoş, ne ayık bir hal var ya?
 En güzeli öyle yaşamaktır..."
 Diyeceğim budur kardeşim"
 "I think, this is the last time which we came here.HOŞÇAKALIN!:)"*

The personal voice may mean that students need to bring something from themselves into regular classes to reflect their point of views or personal choices. The web platform provided them with opportunities to write whatever they want when they are not linked to the class mentally. The good bye utterances was another unexpected outcomes, which were generally written either at the end of each web log application or at the end of semester.

The last first time existing category with a portion of 2 %, was "reframed attitudes" in the second reflections. It was about students' explicit statements of a change in the view of their writing class". The following students' excerpts exemplify this category.

*"writing dersini artık daha çok seviyorum.
 "writing dersini artık daha çok seviyorum.writing dersini sevmeye başlamamın tek sebebi bu oldu."
 "my writing teacher made me love this lesson"*

This may indicate the fact that the changing the views takes a long time as they are formed in the long times.

As a result, the issues mentioned in their second reflections by the students had a rapid change after the web log was implemented in the classroom practices. Because of the innovation they

posed, in addition to the single category “language environment” in the first reflections, students seemed to be concerning about more emerging categories such as reframed attitudes, personal enjoyment, academic development, up-to-dateness, reflective thinking and interactional opportunities in their second reflection with an indication of a change in the way they see the writing course.

4.4 Reflections Derived From Cover Letters

The following chart presents categories from students’ third reflections about the innovation which was introduced in their writing class.

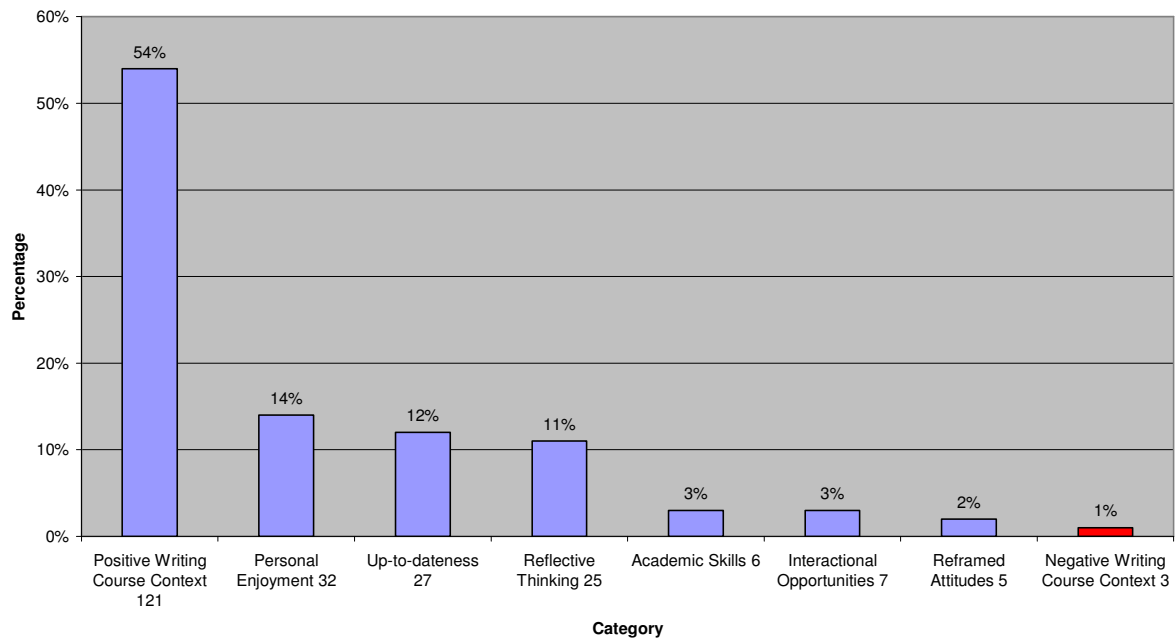
Table 4.2 *The distribution of issues in the students’ final reflections.*

Category				Raw Number	Percentage
<i>Writing Course Context</i>	<i>Positive</i>	121	54%	124	55%
	<i>Negative</i>	3	1%		
<i>Personal Enjoyment</i>				32	14%
<i>Up-to-dateness</i>				27	12%
<i>Reflective Thinking</i>				25	11%
<i>Academic Skills</i>				6	3%
<i>Interactional Opportunities</i>				7	3%
<i>Reframed Attitudes</i>				5	2%
<i>Total</i>				226	100%

Like their 2nd reflections, in the 3rd reflections there were the same emerging categories which were “writing course context”, “reframed attitudes”, “personal enjoyment”, “academic development”, “up-to-dateness”, “reflective thinking” and “interactional opportunities”.

Chart 4.2 *The distribution of issues in the students’ third reflections.*

Distribution of Students' Final Reflections



The first top category expressing the fact that the web platform innovation worked was the Writing Course Context and it went up to 54 %. The portion of this category in the second reflections of the students was 38 %, which means that innovation kept on increasing the positive views about Writing Course Context till the end of the term. The ideas gathered here were describing the Writing Course Contexts productive, creative, deductive, visually effective, good, interesting, involving, logical, useful, comfortable, and opportunity rich for course revision when you consider the following excerpts from student reflections.

“Activities improved our writing skills”
“Activities speeded our brains up”
“Activities were creative”
“Activities were imaginative”
“Activities were interesting”
“Activities were very informative”
“Computer class was a high point”
“Computer was very deductive”
“Materials were helpful”
“Materials were useful”
“I did not feel any writing class “

The changes in the positive views were supported with negative views as well because if critically looked there is still a change in the view of students about their negative views as well. The portion of negative views in the second student reflections was 6 %. However, in

the third reflections it turns out to be 1%, which can be considered as a change . The motives that formed the negative views can be identified with concepts such as boring and useless.

The analysis showed that mostly all categories and subcategories did exist except for category “Interactional Opportunities” and the subcategory “reflection in use” under the category reflecting thinking in the third reflections. From the most popular to the least, they can be ranked as well;

Unlike the second reflection, the top ranking category was personal enjoyment with the portion of 14 % .For this category the descriptive motive was the word “fun”. After implementing the innovation students continuously reported in third their reflections that they had fun in the weblog platform bounded applications when the following excerpts were taken into account.

“I learnt that a problem can be solved in many ways”

“I was happy”

“Journal was entertaining”

“Enjoyable lessons lead to permanent learning.”

“Internet use was enjoyable”

This rate of this category was 15 % in the second reflections. Although there was only 1 % slight decrease in the rate, it can be still concluded that the personal enjoyment issue was permanently placed in the students’ reflections after the term was over.

Thirdly emerging in the third reflections was up-to-dateness with the portion of 12 %. In the earlier reflections of students in their second reflections, the rate of this category was 3%.

Following student excerpts are the examples showing how up-to-date was the innovation.

“English is necessary to learn what is happening around the world.”

“If you can think writing is part of your life, you will be write about everything”

“Technology use attracts students’ interests.”

“Web use was a reform”

“Activities were relevant to our needs”

“Activities were useful for our life”

If we consider this increase, after the term was over, we can say that students considered the category up-to-dateness four times more emerging than they did in the second reflections. For this category there were two descriptive motives which were “compatible with technology era” and “with real life value. The innovation made students think that writing has something more to do with up-to-dateness.

The following category was “reflective thinking” with the percentage of 11 %, while the rate for this category was 28 % in the second reflections. In this category the descriptive motives used were “appreciation of teacher”, “”, “future suggestion”, “confessions/self-evaluation” and additionally “reflection in use” when following student excerpts were taken into account.

“Lots of things changed in my life”
“Reflections mean that our ideas are important”
“We have developed ourselves perfectly”
“We do not need to rely on the books in our departments”
“Web was a freedom.”
“Thank you teacher web materials substituted the books well”
“Web method can be used in other classes”
“Next semester web should be used”

Although one more extra subcategory was added into this category, there was a great decrease when compared to the second reflections.

Another category that changed in the third reflections was the academic development with the portion of 4 %. The interesting point was that the rate stayed the same as well in 3%. Students were almost consistent in their ideas both in their second and third reflections that this innovation stably contributed them in their academic skills. For this category the descriptive motive were “developing computer skills” and “opportunities for research” when following student excerpts were taken into account.

“I am interested in computers”
“We can search for information”
“We reached the foreign sources”
“I developed my computer skills”
“Paper is not the only medium to write”

Although this category is not very big in term of percentages, it indicates that the web platform used in the study contributed unintentionally to students' computer and research skills, which might be missing in the writing courses. These skills were not mentioned in the first reflections, bur they were still on the agenda after the innovation was over, which might be indicating that they were essential for the students.

The last still remaining category, with a portion of 2 %, was “reframed attitudes” in the third reflections, which was about students' explicit statement of a change in the view of their writing class” when following student excerpts were taken into account.

“Lots of things changed in my life”
“Now writing is not a lesson”

Interestingly the portion of this category did not change in second and the third reflections. Although this little percentage may indicate the fact that the changing the views takes a long time as they are formed in the long times the ones who were ready for change did.

As a result, the issues mentioned in their second and third reflections by the students had a change after the web log was implemented in the classroom practices.

4.5 Discussion

Writing course is considered as one of the problematic courses from students' views in their reflections. Based on their negative views, the blended writing course implemented resulted in more positive views both in during and after students' reflections. These perceptual views present that the blog is to be blended in the writing classes in order to contribute in the writing class.

Table 4.3: Categories identified in the students' reflections.

EMERGING ISSUES	PERCENTAGE OF EACH ISSUE					
	1 ST Term Reflections		Instant Web Reflections		Cover Letter Reflections	
	Negative %	Positive %	Negative %	Positive %	Negative %	Positive %
	N	N	N	N	N	N
Writing Course Context	78.5	21.5	6	41	1	56
	216	59	35	204	3	117
Personal Enjoyment	—	—	—	15	—	14
				92		32
Academic Skill Development	—	—	—	4	—	3
				24		6
Up-to-dateness	—	—	—	3	—	12
				19		27
Reflective Thinking	—	—	—	28	—	11
				174		25
Reframed Attitudes	—	—	—	2	—	2
				12		5
Interactional Opportunities	—	—	—	5	—	3
				31		7

While categorizing the students' reflections, the table above will be the main instrument to show in the graphs what the major issues in the regular classes and how they changed throughout the second term as students have participated in the web-based activities. The analysis of 1st reflections indicated that students perceived the writing class negatively. 78.5 % of the total communication units expressed negative views, while the rest 21, 5 % expressed a positive one. Examining excerpts from student reflections, it can be concluded that 78,5 % of students describe the writing class as

- *Meaningless, routine/boring, teacher-oriented, isolated, not useful/unfunctional*

On the other hand, examining such extracts from student reflections, it can be concluded that 21,5 % of students described the writing class as

- *Meaningful, interesting, student-oriented, real life, useful/functional*

The analysis of 2nd reflections indicated that students perceived the writing class positively. The 94 % of the students described innovative writing class positively, while the rest 6 % described negatively. Examining such extracts from student reflections, it can be concluded that 94 % of students describe the writing class as;

- *Fun, Computer Skill promoting, Research opportunity rich, Technology Era compatible, Having real life value, Logical, Productive, Creative, Deductive, Effective, Innovative, Interactional, Interesting, Involving, Comfortable, Useful*

and they also added some views gathering on the following categories indirectly indicates that innovation was contributinal, because there was

- *Appreciation of Teacher, Future Suggestion, Goodbye Utterances, Change of View in writing class, Personal voice, Confessions/Self-evaluation, Goodbye Utterances*

Beside these positive views, there still were negative views with a total amount of 6% in the 3rd reflections. It can be concluded that 6% of students described blended learning innovation as

- *Useless, Boring*

The analysis of 3rd reflections indicated that students perceived the writing class positively. The 99 % of the communication units described innovative writing class positively, while the rest 1 % described negatively. Examining such extracts from student reflections, it can be concluded that 99 % of students described this innovation as;

- *Fun, Research opportunity rich, Technology Era compatible, Having real life value, Logical, Productive, Creative, Deductive, Effective, Innovative, Interactional, Interesting, Involving, Comfortable, Useful*

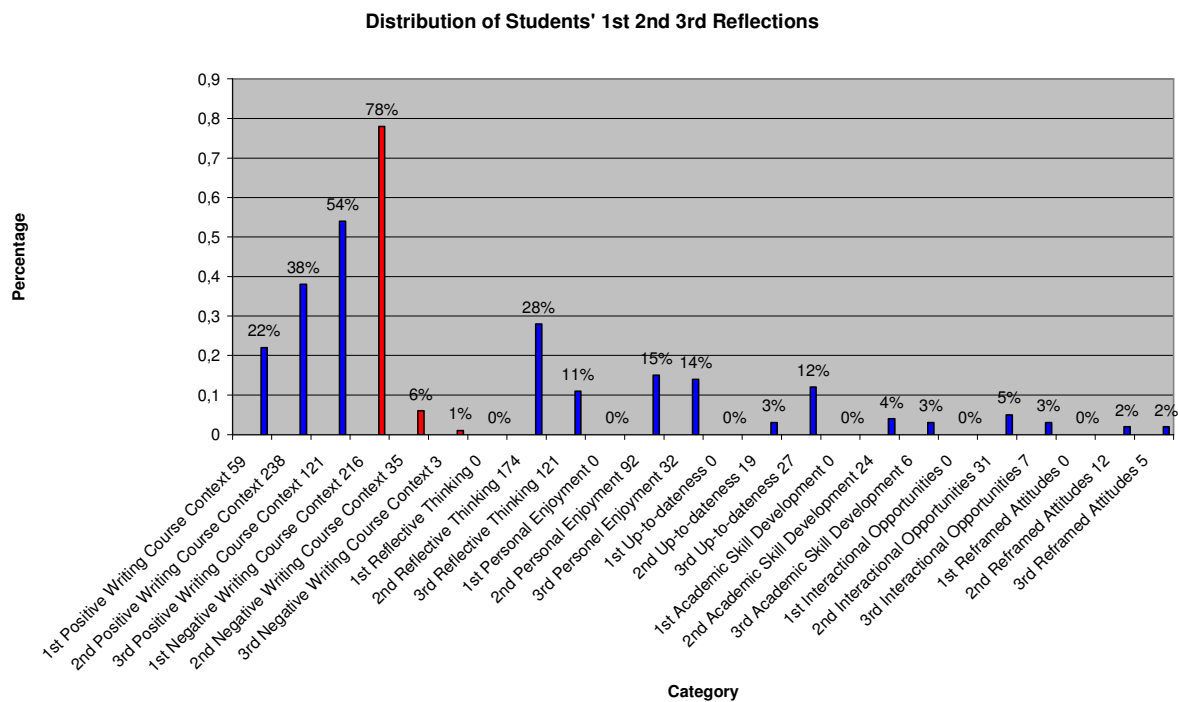
and they also added some views gathering on the following categories indirectly indicates that innovation was contributinal, because there was

- *Appreciation of Teacher, Future Suggestion, Goodbye Utterances, Change of View in writing class*

Beside these positive views, there still were negative views with a total amount of 1% in the 3rd reflections. It can be concluded that 6% of students described blended learning innovation as

- *Useless, Boring*

Chart 4.3: Categories identified in the students' reflections.



In this final graph, three different reflections, written at the beginning, during and at the end of the research, including the emerging categories and their distributional values in percentages can be examined.

The only category that emerged in the first reflection language learning had both positive and negative views. The rate of positive views in the first reflection was 21.5%. It went up to 41 % in the second reflection. Moreover, their rate became 56 % in the final reflections. This means that the innovation promoted the positive views about writing course context from the beginning to the end. In addition, the rate of the negative views in the first reflections about writing course context was 78, 5 % which sounded quite considerable. This negative view went down to %6 percent in the second reflections; moreover, it was just 1 % in the final reflections. This means that there was a change in the students' negative views directly supporting the findings from the changes in positive views. These findings indirectly suggest that the way students perceive the writing course changed.

There were no categories other than Writing Course Context emerged in the first reflections. This might mean that the other categories which later occurred in the second and third reflections did not matter in the students' perceptions of their writing class. Moreover, after the blended writing was introduced, students added some emerging categories in their reflections. This might lead to a conclusion that they had new perspectives to comment on their writing class because except for one category, which actually defined as interactional opportunities, categories remained the same till the reflections ended at the end of the study although their percentages went up and down as stated separately in the earlier reflections. The rates of these emerging categories such as writing course context, reflective thinking, personal enjoyment, academic development, up-to-dateness, can be indirectly linked to the idea that students changed their views throughout the blended learning practices they experienced. The directly stated ideas forming the category reframed attitudes also support these perceptual changes directly. Therefore, it can be said that in this study the blended web platform is innovative in the way students perceive writing classes.

Jonassen (1995) described an effective learning environment as active, constructive, collaborative, conversational, complex, contextualized, reflective, intentional, and technology bounded. The findings in this study were almost the same. Students described the weblog application as involving, interactional, from real life, reflective, technologic, useful, productive, creative, and innovative. This means that according to the students participated in this study the innovation was successful in creating an effective learning environment. Moreover, Jonassen (1995) adds that such environments lead to meaningful learning and broader world of experience. Students in this study stated at the beginning that the writing class was meaningless. Even though after the innovation, they did not directly indicate that the writing class was more meaningful, at least, they did not view it meaningless. They also continuously stated that the activities were different and innovative which may lead to a broader world of experience.

After these effectiveness findings, it can be concluded that, from a sociolinguistic point of view as Ahonen et. al., (2003: 9) suggests the web platform provided an interaction opportunity with no place and time boundaries because there was a category emerged in the 2nd reflection as interaction opportunities.

As Brooks, (2001; 20) stated, beside these opportunities, students were able to address world wide audience and research for the information they may need as they indicated in their reflections. He also claims that this type of realistic environment nurture the motivation. The findings in this study presents that students negative views turned to positive ones after the web innovation was applied. Lamy (1997: 27) states a language web platform should not be like a course book simply giving you information. In this study, the platform never served as a plain source of information, but as a medium on which students were able interact with the real world, other classes, their peer, and their teacher because like Johnson (2004) defines, the

blog was aiming at fading the pen and pencil use away like in the real life and providing the flexibility of various applications.

One of the recent detailed study about the blogs by Davies (2005) reveal the facts that from different points blogs are very beneficial if blended in the pedagogical environments, (Ward (2004), Campell (2003), Kennedy (2003), cited in Davies (2005)) state that weblogs

- are practical
- are a bridge between lessons
- provide genuine audience
- have authentic content
- are process driven
- are interactional
- are collaborative learning
- encourage feelings of ownership and responsibility.
- develop critical analysis skills
-

Scagnoli (2005) states the profits of blended Classroom+Online” learning as,

- helping students learn how to build up new knowledge, combining the use of new and traditional tools to explore, select, and evaluate sources;
- learning to present, share and collaborate with others in real and virtual spaces

This study has also shown that students find blogging a positive experience and believe that it helps them **because** “we are preparing students for the world outside the classroom

..... and that world is already using web technologies for information, communication, collaboration,.. but the change has transformed teaching and learning quite yet.” as Scagnoli (2005) suggests.

The following categories were the main perceptual issues revealed about blended writing practices in this study.

Writing Course Context: It was positively viewed more in the end than during the innovation. This may mean that there was a continuous increase in students' positive views as the application went on.

Personal Enjoyment: The category stayed almost the same in both reflections that may mean students did not forget the fun they had during the weblog.

Academic Skill Development: Another remained same category was this skill which may mean that some students really benefited from this and they think that these skills are to be part of writing class. The web platform used in the study contributed unintentionally to students' computer and research skills, which are here considered as academic skills. These skills were not mentioned in the first reflections; however, when they are introduced some research activities online, they have mentioned about this blended learning innovation quite a lot in their reflections. Therefore, some new ways should be found in order to promote the research and computer skills that students may need, instead of simply ignoring them in the classes.

Up-to-dateness: Students interestingly were 4 times less aware of the currency and real life value of the web log during the study than they were in the end. This may indicate that when they were within the context, they could hardly see the benefits of some applications. Therefore, while evaluating something, it may be a good idea to do it at different times.

Reflective Thinking: Here in this category it is just the opposite the views about this category dropped into half in the end. This may originate from the fact that reflection was a requirement in the web page.

Reframed Attitudes: The direct indication of the fact that students changed their mind was the same in both reflections. Although there was a great increase in the number of positive views about the innovation, the directly uttered views about this change was really little. This may indicate the fact that reframing ideas take a long time as it took long to frame them.

Interactional Opportunities: This category had a decrease in the end as well. This may be because of the fact that the platform they write their reflection in the 2nd one was more Interactional than the third one which was written on the paper as a cover letter.

In the first reflections through which the problem was foreshadowed students only stated their views about “writing course context”. However, when they wrote their second reflections the extra categories emerged such as reflective thinking skills, personal enjoyment, academic development, reframed attitudes, interactional opportunities, and up-to-dateness. This may indicate that because of the nature of weblog and opportunities it provided, such views were placed in students’ minds and widened their views about the writing class. As a result of this, students might change their expectations from the writing classes they will take in the future.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study was carried out at Anadolu University with English Prep-School students. The purpose of the study was blending web based writing practices into the regular classes. The reason why this platform was introduced into the writing course was to understand what students' perspectives were about blended writing. Even though students mainly indicated that regular writing classes were routine meaningless and boring, they thought blended writing practices were interesting, meaningful and useful. To come to this conclusion, students were required to write reflections about the blended practices they had. Finally, these reflections were analyzed using Constant Comparison Method.

5.2 Conclusions Based on the Analysis of the Results

Based on the findings of this study it can be concluded that the changing needs of life bring up new issues. Although the paper and pen are the vital instruments for writing, in the digital era medium of communication is also transformed into digits and bytes. In order to catch up with these rapid changes and to prepare our students into real life, some variations like our blogging innovation can be inserted into our course syllabuses or school curricula. Blended learning environment has either directly or indirectly contributed positively in the following categories.

- Reflective thinking skills
- Personal enjoyment
- Academic development
- Writing Lesson Context
- Reframed attitudes
- Interactional Opportunities
- Up-to-dateness

Nunan (1979: cited in Mishan 2004:70-71) distinguished between the terms ‘real-world’ tasks and the more traditional ‘pedagogic’ tasks. The former ‘require learners to approximate, in class, the sorts of behavior required of them in the world beyond the classroom’ (Nunan 1979: 40). ‘Pedagogic tasks’, on the other hand, engage learners in tasks they are unlikely to perform outside the classroom (ibid.). An example of a ‘real world’ task might be to read a newspaper article and write a letter to the newspaper editor about it. The corresponding ‘pedagogic task’ would be to read a newspaper article and answer comprehension questions on it. The rationale for ‘real-world’ tasks is, of course, that they constitute a rehearsal for real-world situations. Pedagogic tasks, on the other hand, traditionally have their justification as practice in specific skills, language forms and so on. The activities used in the blended writing class more like to be real world tasks than pedagogic ones.

In the comparison of regular classes and online component, it is important to understand that the difference is not on methodological or approach basis, but on how the classes is carried out and how classroom activities are conducted. There is a brief summarization of how the classes are carried out emphasizing the differences and bearing a critical evaluation of both classroom practices.

The first difference is that the tasks on online component are aimed at spotting a gap on the online context and filling these gaps with students’ works to achieve a real life goal, addressing authentic audience. The tasks in the regular classes are teacher-driven prompts, aiming at fulfilling a pedagogical need, targeting at either classroom teachers or peers.

The second difference is the continuous reflection on the process. In regular classes, students have only a single chance to evaluate the process, writing a cover letter submitted in their portfolios at the end of each term. The online component allows students to reflect on the

course process on session basis, as well as a final one at the end of the semester. These reflections allow the classroom teacher to observe the student experience, and manipulate the course to meet the changing needs of the students. Since motivation is one of the biggest problems in language classes, through these reflections, teachers can find new elements of student interest to reframe the course.

The third difference is on the online component itself. All students' works are published on the website, and students can always visit their works to see their own progress, as well as understand the teachers' guiding role in the writing process. Portfolios in regular classes aim at achieving the same effect, however the accessibility is only restricted to their classroom teacher. Besides, it is clear that the online component reduces the paper work associated with the regular writing classes. Since the presence of a lot of paper work is sometimes demotivating for teachers and students, the online component also function as a way to make writing courses more engaging, and long-lasting. The papers kept in archives fade away in the dusty shelves of either the teachers' or the students' cupboards. However, the online component, which is digitally stored, is more accessible and lively to recall in times of need. The students can look back on their works not on semester basis, but throughout their lives, flashing back at memories in the Prep- School.

The fourth difference lies in the actual writing process itself. Writing is a skill in which students need to analyze and synthesis the information for which researching is a vital element. The online component motivates students to interact with the cyber data, which they can access by clicking around the net. Since students are online, Internet becomes less and less scary for them, and become a source of enriched content. The content is not only limited to the vast amount of information online, but also bears the peer component, allowing students to benefit from the shared ideas of peers strengthening the collaboration and mutual

understanding that writing is an interactive language skill. The regular classes, of course, do not neglect the importance of research, however since the students are not linked to the online world, classroom boundaries restrict the research opportunities for a certain extend.

Finally, the online component is a tool for teachers to address their students' immediate needs, as well as a way to show the students that writing is a part of life, not a set of skills aiming at producing isolated genres or text types. As stated earlier, the online component guides the students in all phases of the process. Of course, there is also guidance in regular classes, therefore, in such classes, the teachers can only bring outside class material to guide students, and however students' sources are limited with those the teacher brings to class. However, on the online component, the sources are authentic, and they are the immediate evidence that the writing do exist in the real life, it is not just a class to take. Students grasp the role of writing in real life, along with the models that represent the target genre. This way guidance becomes stimulant, and also functions to bridge the form with the use. In regular classes, this bridge may not be effectively presented. Since students understand how language in written form is associated with real life, their reflective thinking skills are unintentionally touched upon through the process.

As a conclusion, it is clear that the online component does not require changes in teaching methodology or the approach internalized to teach writing. The online component brings along some advantages for both teachers and students as summarized above, and function as a tool to make writing fun, as well as more realistic for authentic audience, bearing more interaction, critical eye as both readers and writers and research orientation.

5.3 Implications

Although there is a small sample size in this study, students reflection on the blended writing web platform has certain implications for teachers and course developers.

First of all, teachers must be aware of the fact that when there is an issue in the classroom context, the solution may not be within the classroom. Sometimes it is good to get out of the context in order to identify where it originates from. This can be provided by developing alternative ways of bringing something from real life to the classroom context and taking something from the classroom to the real world. Especially in the productive skills, the output may need to be addressed to an authentic audience, which probably leads students to have an authentic purpose and more interest in doing the task.

The other issue that may be a concern is that keeping the class up-to-date highly depends on the teacher. With the changes in the technology, needs in the real life might change so are the tools. In order to keep with these changes, the teachers need to revisit their roles in the classrooms and improve their skills in these innovative areas to make use of such platforms which has no place and time boundaries for further classroom activities.

The third implication of this study is that the writing classes do not promote research or computer skills. In order to overcome this problem, before students write they might be required to do certain amount of research in advance. Moreover, for computer skills they may also be required to write their any written work on the computer rather than with pen and paper.

Another issue is that students like reflective thinking and reflecting on what they do. Therefore, the classroom environment should promote constant reflecting opportunities in

order to sort out the problems occur in the classes or to let some issues emerge, which the teacher might have never thought about earlier.

The final point is that such web platforms must be encouraged in the other courses in order to form a blog portal of the school.

As a conclusion, in order to let students benefit from the writing practice, both teachers or course book designers need to link the classroom and the real life by designing real life bounded activities, tasks or course books.

5.4 Suggestions for further research

Results of this study indicate a number a number of areas that need further investigation. First of all, as this study was conducted on Intermediate students, there need to be made other studies on other levels as well.

Furthermore, as this study covered only the writing class, a similar study can be carried out for speaking classes with a purpose of “speaking for real life or listening for real life”.

Also, this study was conducted in a limited time period, so more studies might be done in a whole semester, or a whole year. Further more, some other studies may be conducted in longer periods like two or more years, and the results may be compared and contrasted.

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Web Pages

<http://www.blogger.com>

<http://campustechnology.com/articles/40147/>

http://www.eslpod.com/website/podcast_info.php

<http://iteslj.org/Articles/Nagel-Email.html>

<http://unctlt.typepad.com/fridayreport/assessment/index.html>

<http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Johnson-Blogs/>

APPENDICES

Appendix A www.nazmihoca.blogspot.com

Appendix B Training Session

Appendix C Writing Club Page

Appendix D Sessions

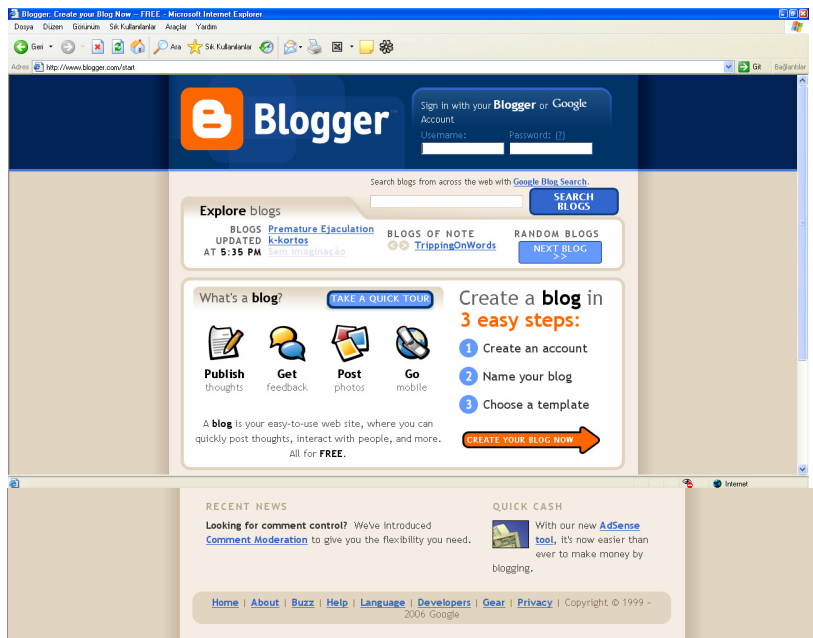
Appendix E Schedule and Activities

Appendix A

www.blogger.com

Appendix B Training Session

Step 1



Step 2

1 Create an account

Choose a user name You'll use this to sign in for future visits.

Enter a password Must be at least 6 characters long.

Retype password Enter it again just to be sure.

Display name The name used to sign your blog posts.

Email address We will never share your address with third parties without your permission.

Acceptance of Terms I accept the [Terms of Service](#) Indicate that you have read and understand Blogger's Terms of Service

CONTINUE

Step 3

2 Name your blog

Blog title Enter a title for your blog.

Blog address (URL) http://.blogspot.com You and others will use this to read and link to your blog. [Check Availability](#)

Word Verification Type the characters you see in the picture.

OR

Advanced Setup Want to host your blog somewhere else? Try [Advanced Blog Setup](#). This will allow you to host your blog somewhere other than Blogspot.

CONTINUE

Step 4

3 Choose a template

Choose a custom look for your blog. You can easily **change the template later**, or even create your own custom template design once your blog is set up.

Alltime Created by: Douglas Bowman [preview template](#)

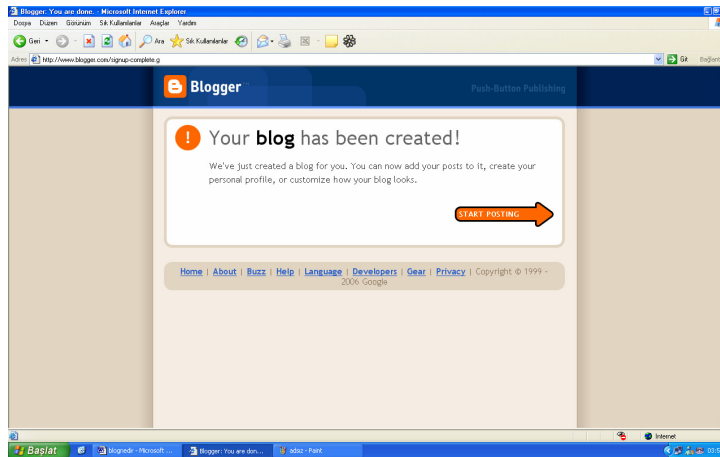
Alltime Black Created by: Douglas Bowman [preview template](#)

Alltime Blue Created by: Douglas Bowman [preview template](#)

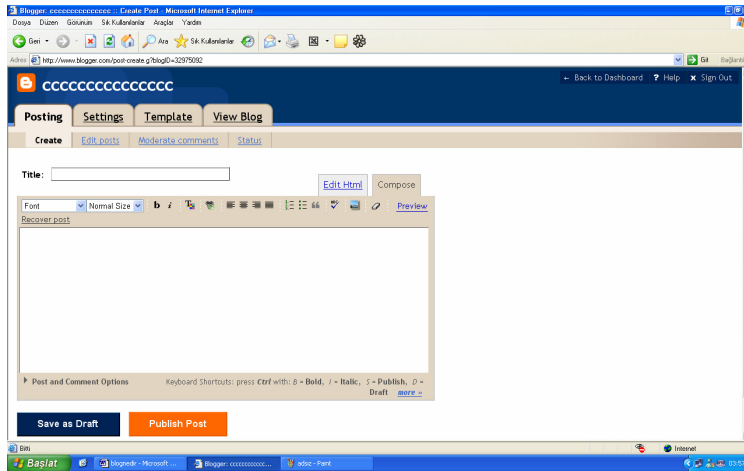
Alltime Purple Created by: Douglas Bowman [preview template](#)

CONTINUE

Step 5



Step 6



Appendix C The Writing Club Page

The screenshot shows a Blogger page for 'WRITING CLUB' published on February 10, 2006. The page features several sections:

- Home Page:** A green header with the title 'WRITING CLUB' and a sub-header: 'This page is published in order to promote writing skills by providing real and meaningful classroom practices.'
- Homework:** A section with a picture of a silver capsule and the text: 'Have you tried the writing homework assigned? Preferred your class is putting together a time capsule. It might not be opened by anyone for 100 years or more. This time capsule will tell people in the future what life on earth was like in the 2000s. You can choose one thing to go inside. Explain what you will choose and why.'
- Journals:** A section with a drawing of a pig and the text: 'While surfing on the net, I have found a very interesting website that I want to share with you. On the website you are asked to draw a pig and based on your drawing, there are 100 questions about your personality. For example, I am a pessimist and optimistic person. Your task is, of course if you accept, not only to visit that page and write about yourself, but also to write a journal entry comparing your results comparing them with your actual personality. If the website gives some class about yourself, give me some examples. If not, let us know you are confused. Remember I also did the test and found a bit about myself there. Here is it! Click on the link below: <http://www.example-drawingquestions.com/>
- Essay:** A section with a handwritten note titled 'Ramon Carr' that reads: 'Resolving our earth clean and green can begin right at home. Look at all the things that we use to clean our house. Cleaners look like green planners and even air fresheners. These things make things look and smell clean, but they can have chemicals in them that harm the air, water, and even your health. It is how unsafe they are. You need to find other natural ways to clean your home. Do you know that a product made with oranges can be dangerous to our breathing and the environment? You can use vinegar to clean your windows and a mixture of baking soda and salt to scrub the pots and pans. ... We, the person making one change will make a difference in our air, water, and land.'
- Paragraph:** A section with a picture of a person and the text: 'A paragraph ...'
- Writing:** A section with a picture of a pencil and the text: 'Writing ...'

The right sidebar contains an 'About Me' section, 'Links', 'Previous Posts' (listing various writing topics like 'ARGUMENTATIVE PROCTURE', 'ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY', etc.), and 'Archives'.

Appendix D Sessions

First Session

Writing



Writing is...

posted by nazmihoca @ 2/28/2006 06:04:00 PM 72 comments

Post a Comment On: **WRITING CLUB**

"Writing"
72 Comments - [Show Original Post](#)
[Show all comments](#)

seranhoca said...
Writing is an innately there skill which needs to be enhanced through formal instruction and personal involvement. We learn as we write as well as we write to learn.
12:46 AM

comment deleted

nilay6 said...
oren-im6 said...
taskin6 said...
writing is a way that we can write what we want
9:25 AM

evren6 said...
Writing is an action. You can do it with your pencil, or ur keyboard
9:26 AM

Leave your comment
You can use some HTML tags, such as , <i>, <a>

This blog does not allow anonymous comments.

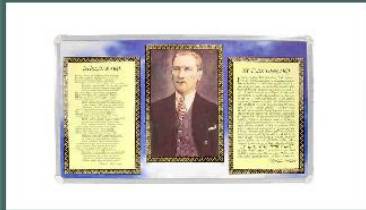
Choose an identity

Blogger

USERNAME
PASSWORD

No Blogger account? [Sign up here.](#)

Paragraph



A paragraph is....

posted by nazmihoca @ 2/28/2006 06:13:00 PM 52 comments

Post a Comment On: **WRITING CLUB**

"Paragraph"
52 Comments - [Show Original Post](#)
[Show all comments](#)

muzaffer6 said...
gerçekten mükemmel bir paragraf.Umarım biz de sette sonunda böyle paragraflar yazabiliriz.
9:13 DK

nazmihoca said...
gokhan_kan5 said...
I have never seen hunky dory essay until I see the "gençlige hitaba"
before I didn't analyze it carefully but I understand one thing it is incredibly super essay.
Atatürk is the best leader also he is good teacher for everyone especially for turk youth we never forget Atatürk and their jobs everytime we follow his way and elements....
7:18 DK

gokhan_hayat6 said...
selinzengin6 said...
paragraf which contains related sentences. There must be connection between these sentence like gençliğe hitaba.
9:13 AM

Leave your comment
You can use some HTML tags, such as , <i>, <a>

This blog does not allow anonymous comments.

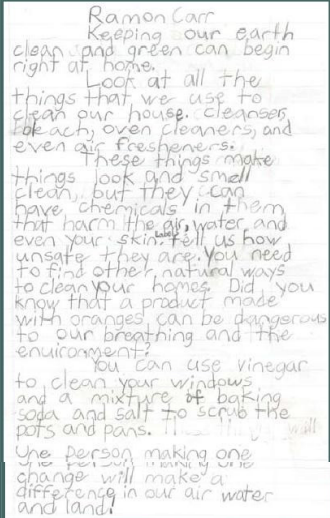
Choose an identity

Blogger

USERNAME
PASSWORD

No Blogger account? [Sign up here.](#)

Essay



1.3.3 Second Session
An essay is a piece of writing that.....

Post a Comment On: **WRITING CLUB**

"Essay"
51 Comments - [Show Original Post](#)
[Show all comments](#)

gamze said...
nazmihoca said...
gülçin heren1 said...
Hello! I'm so sorry but I didn't read some sentences.Her or his writing is very bad at the same time very interesting.I think he has make free writing because it has got irrelevant details:) hope my writings don't look like his writing:)Can I use his information in daily life?(in the first time I heard clean the window with vinegar:) take care until fiday:)
8:58 PM

nazmihoca said...
gizem_int6 said...
evren6 said...
vesile6 said...
selinzengin6 said...
comment deleted
gokhan_kan5 said...
burecu 6 said...
I read this essay and I can understand it, it has some irrelevant information but I like this essay:)

Leave your comment
You can use some HTML tags, such as , <i>, <a>

This blog does not allow anonymous comments.

Choose an identity

Blogger

USERNAME
PASSWORD

No Blogger account? [Sign up here.](#)

Second Session

Journals



Post a Comment On: **WRITING CLUB**


"Journals"
109 Comments - [Show Original Post](#)
[Show all comments](#)

gamze said...
omer 5 said...
nazmihoca said...
nazmihoca said...
sevkiye5 said...

Leave your comment
You can use some HTML tags, such as , <i>, <a>

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2006

Homework



Here you find the writing homework assigned.

First Homework

Pretend your class is putting together a time capsule. It might not be

Post a Comment On: [WRITING CLUB](#)

"Homework"
74 Comments - [Show Original Post](#) [Show all comments](#)

comment deleted
[aren-int6](#) said...
[uemre6](#) said...
 time capsul is interesting item for future.
 10:11 AM

[merve6](#) said...
[sezer6](#) said...
[evren6](#) said...
[onder6](#) said...

The 1989 Oxford English Dictionary defines a time capsule as "a container used to store for posterity a selection of objects thought to be representative of life at a particular time."

Time capsules are interesting to people of all ages and touch people on a world-wide scale. Properly prepared time capsules preserve the salient features of history and can serve as valuable reminders of one generation for another. Time capsules give individuals, families and organizations an independent voice to the future.

Leave your comment
You can use some HTML tags, such as , <i>, <a>

This blog does not allow anonymous comments.


Choose an identity
 Blogger

USERNAME
 PASSWORD

No Blogger account? [Sign up here.](#)

Third Session

YOUR QUESTIONS



You can ask questions about the writing class here..

posted by [nazmihoca](#) @ 3/03/2006 12:41:00 PM [14 comments](#)

Post a Comment On: [WRITING CLUB](#)

"YOUR QUESTIONS"
14 Comments - [Show Original Post](#) [Show all comments](#)

[gamze](#) said...
[nazmihoca](#) said...
[burcu](#) said...
[nazmihoca](#) said...
[duygü6](#) said...
[nazmihoca](#) said...
 comment deleted
 comment deleted
[sezer6](#) said...
 hi! nazmi hoca?
 why we dont study all lesson on computer lab ?
 10:19 AM

[burcu](#) said...
[nazmihoca](#) said...
 Dear Sezer,
 We cannot do it in the lab since the lab is not available all the time and this is a pilot study. If the results we gather from your reflections, we can allocate more computer based applications.
 12:01 AM

Leave your comment
You can use some HTML tags, such as , <i>, <a>


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USEFUL LINKS



You can add links that we can use for classroom practices like the [PIG PAGE](#).

Please remember to add a description of the page and how we can use it.

posted by nazmihoca @ 3/16/2006 01:44:00 PM 17 comments

Post a Comment On: **WRITING CLUB**

"USEFUL LINKS"
17 Comments - [Show Original Post](#) [Show all comments](#)

nazmihoca said...
This is a Maths trick. We can use this page to fool our friends and write about their reactions. Enjoy it.
[Click here to amaze your friends](#)
2:08 PM

evren6 said...
Yes teacher. This is a game which made by Flash. If u think about that, this symbol is always near the nine and the multiples of nine. Because after the subtract your total is always a multiple of nine!
I have an adress. If you click [this link](#), u can talk with God! Ask some question to God. For example "Do you know Ataturk?"
9:37 PM

duvuu6 said...


Leave your comment
You can use some HTML tags, such as , <i>, <a>

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REFLECTION



How useful/useless was this computer based classroom?
Tell me about strong and weak points of the lesson?
What suggestions do you have for the lesson?

posted by nazmihoca @ 3/02/2006 10:38:00 AM 156 comments

Post a Comment On: **WRITING CLUB**

"REFLECTION"
156 Comments - [Show Original Post](#) [Show all comments](#)

anil6 said...
walla bugün çok eğlendim! hep bunu tekrarlıyalım!
journal ak-tivitesinden sora bu da çok ii oldu bnce!
10:43 AM

sezer6 said...
eren-int6 said...
muzaffer6 said...
Bence bu seçim çok mantıklı.Zaten artık Dünya bu yöne gidiyor.Bilişim ve teknoloji çağı.Böyle bir olaya öndert.Lik yaptığınız için sizi kutluyorum hocam.
10:45 AM

onder6 said...
gokhan.baysal said...
vesile6 said...
cidden böle çoooooook güzel olup tek uyumadığım ders oldu bu

Leave your comment
You can use some HTML tags, such as , <i>, <a>

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THESIS STATEMENT



Thesis Statement is

On this part you are also expected to submit your thesis statements on the given issues below.

- WILD LIFE
- PLANETS
- POLES
- NATIVE AMERICANS

posted by nazmihoca @ 3/16/2006 02:17:00 PM 73 comments

"THESIS STATEMENT"
73 Comments - [Show Original Post](#) [Show all comments](#)

[duygü6](#) said...

[nazmihoca](#) said...

[sevkiye5](#) said...

[nazmihoca](#) said...

[selinzengin6](#) said...

Mother of essay is thesis statemet which contains topic, contra. idea and predictor.

4:15 PM

[nazmihoca](#) said...

[duygü6](#) said...

[nazmihoca](#) said...

[duygü6](#) said...

comment deleted

[nazmihoca](#) said...

[duygü6](#) said...

[seyma](#) said...

[seyma](#) said...

[burcu 6](#) said...

[selinzengin6](#) said...

[taskin6](#) said...

thesis statement is a focus of essay.how bee cover honeycomb ,sentences or paragraphs in essay rntate around thetic statement

Leave your comment
You can use some HTML tags, such as ****, **<i>**, **<a>**

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USERNAME

PASSWORD

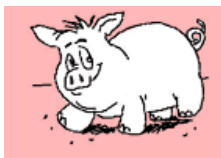
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Appendix E Schedule and Activities

1.3.6.1 February 2006



FIRST HOMEWORK: Pretend your class is putting together a time capsule. It might not be opened by anyone for 100 years or more. This time capsule will tell people in the future what life on earth was like in the 2000s. You can choose one thing to go inside. Explain what you will choose and why.



2nd JOURNAL ENTRY:

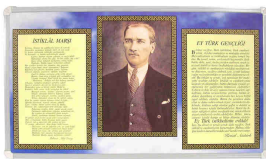
While surfing on the net, I have found a very interesting website that I want to share with you. On the website you are asked to draw a pig and based on your drawing, there are interesting clues about your personality. For example, I am a positive and optimistic person. Your task is, of course if you accept, not only to visit that page and learn about yourself, but also to write a journal entry reporting your results comparing them with your actual personality. If the webpage gives some clues about you, give me some examples. If not, tell us how you are different. Remember I also did the test and found a bit about myself there. Have fun! Click on the link below

<http://drawapig.desktopcreatures.com/>

Ramon Carr
 Keeping our earth
 clean and green can begin
 right at home.
 Look at all the
 things that we use to
 clean our house, cleansers
 for each oven cleaners, and
 even air fresheners.
 These things make
 things look and smell
 clean, but they can
 have chemicals in them
 that harm the air, water, and
 even your skin. Tell us how
 unsafe they are. You need
 to find other, natural ways
 to clean your home. Did you
 know that a product made
 with oranges can be dangerous
 to our breathing and the
 environment?
 You can use vinegar
 to clean your windows
 and a mixture of baking
 soda and salt to scrub the
 pots and pans.
 One person making one
 change will make a
 difference in our air, water
 and land.

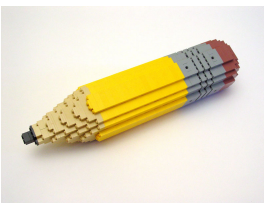
An essay is a piece of writing that.....

Write your definitions here.



A paragraph is....

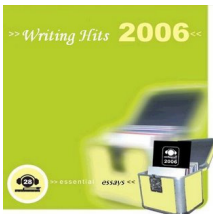
Write your definitions here.



106

Writing is...

Write your definitions here.



WRITING HITS: Here you can post your writing, suggested by your teacher so that visitors can read the Best of Writing from various students.



INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH: This picture represents the introduction paragraph of an essay.

How do you think this is related to introduction? Write your comments.



THESIS STATEMENT: How do you think this picture is related to the thesis statement?

In this part you are also expected to submit your thesis statements on the given issues below.



USEFUL LINKS: You can add links that we can use for classroom practices like the PIG PAGE. Please remember to add a description of the page and how we can use it.



YOUR QUESTIONS: You can ask questions about the writing class here..

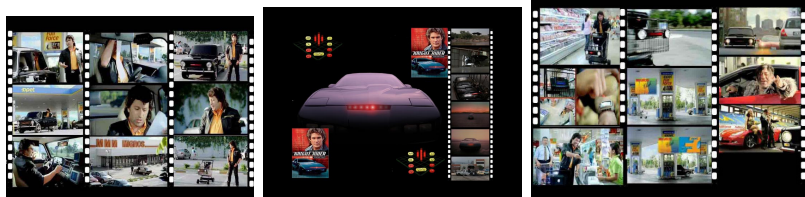


REFLECTION: How useful/useless was this computer based classroom?

Tell me about strong and weak points of the lesson?

What suggestions do you have for the lesson?

1.3.6.3 [April 2006](#)



GITT VS KITT: Remember the childhood series of yours " Knight Rider" and the very new OPET advertisement of Cem Yılmaz. Think about the cars used, missions completed and the drivers involved in these two films. Talk about the things they have in common and the points they differ. Hurry up to post your comments!



SECOND HOMEWORK: Surfing on the net, I have witnessed that the world wide wedding customs page has very limited details about Turkish Traditional Weddings, whereas most of other weddings are presented in details. Let's write how our traditional weddings are, send them an e-mail to tell them that our page can be a useful source for them.

PS: Regional slight differences are not our concern in your wedding processes.

Before you start, click on the page below to check Bulgarian and Turkish weddings!
Post your comments about the outline of the Bulgarian weddings. Remember the organizational structure of Process Essay.

CLICK THE LINK BELOW

http://www.worldweddingtraditions.com/locations/east_europe_traditions/turkish_traditions.html

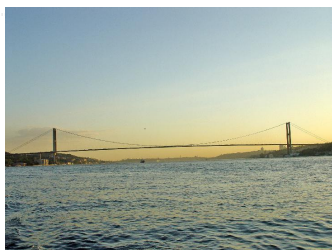


PROCESS ESSAY: What is the relationship between this picture and the Process Essay? Write your comments.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Looking at the pictures, write down your comments. How do you think they are related to types of background we write in the introduction paragraphs? Explain your ideas with your reasons.

1.3.6.4 [May 2006](#)



LINKING WORDS: What is the relationship with the picture and linking words?

Check the link below to find more about linking words

http://www.flinders.edu.au/SLC/Linking_words.pdf

1.3.6.5 [June 2006](#)



OPINION ESSAY: Answer the following RIDDLES. Write your opinions about the possible answers in the comments part.

- Pronounced as one letter, and written with three, two letters there are, and two only in me. I'm double, I'm single, I'm black, blue, and gray, I'm read from both ends, and the same either way. What am I?
- What other letter fits in the following series:
B C D E I K O X ?
- What's white when it's dirty?
- Six glasses are in a row. The first three are full of juice; the second three are empty. By moving only one glass, can you arrange them so empty and full glasses alternate?
- What's white when it's dirty?
- Six glasses are in a row. The first three are full of juice; the second three are empty. By moving only one glass, can you arrange them so empty and full glasses alternate?
- What is it that everybody does at the same time?
- The more you take away, the larger it becomes? What is it?
- What is so fragile even saying its name can break it?
- How could a cowboy ride into town on Friday, stay two days, and ride out on Friday?
- What turns everything around, but does not move?
- I am a box that holds keys without locks, yet they can unlock your soul. What am I?
- While walking across a bridge I saw a boat full of people. Yet on the boat there wasn't a single person. Why?
- What can you put in a wood box that will make it lighter?
- What word looks the same upside down and backwards?
- How far can a dog run into the woods?



How do you think this item is related to Argumentative Essay we have covered in the writing class?
Post your comments.



THIRD HOMEWORK: The Death Penalty

Currently Turkish Government has already come to a conclusion as "The death penalty should be abolished." However, some people still think "The death penalty should be administered for particularly heinous crimes." Stating your point of view write an argumentative essay in order to send to European Court of Human Rights

PS: You can send an e-mail, a fax or a letter to following addresses. Make use of the links below in order to gather information for your arguments

Address:

Council of Europe
67075 Strasbourg-Cedex
France

Tel: +33 (0)3 88 41 20 18
Fax: +33 (0)3 88 41 27 30

e-mail: webmaster@echr.coe.int

Some of the issues in this argument:

Is the death penalty an effective deterrent for heinous crimes?
What are the economic ramifications of the death penalty?
Is the death penalty the best protection from a murderer?
Are methods of execution reliable and practical?

Sources of Information:

Against the Death Penalty

Amnesty International

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) Death Penalty

National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty

Yahoo's Death Penalty: Opposing Views

Supreme Court Declares Juvenile Death Penalty Unconstitutional

Deterrence and the Death Penalty: The Views of the Experts

Death Penalty from justicepolicy.com

In Favor of the Death Penalty

S. C. bill: Execute 2-time molesters

Death Penalty links

ProDeathPenalty.com (in favor of the death penalty)

Yahoo's Death Penalty: Supporting Views

Informational Websites

Death Penalty Curricula for High School

Angel on Death Row from PBS's Frontline

Death Penalty Information Center

Focus on the Death Penalty: Index

The Death Penalty - American attitudes - Brief Article - Statistical Data Included