

THE EFFECT OF THE PRIVATE CLASSROOM BLOG ON THE ACQUISITION OF
FORMAL WRITING PROFICIENCY WITH SPANISH III HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS

by
Olga G. Glymph
Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Liberty University
June, 2012

THE EFFECT OF THE PRIVATE CLASSROOM BLOG ON THE ACQUISITION OF
FORMAL WRITING PROFICIENCY WITH SPANISH III HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS

by Olga G. Glymph

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

June, 2012

APPROVED BY:

Dr. Gary W. Kuhne, Committee Chair

Dr. Brian Mann, Committee Member

Dr. Glenn R. Holzman, Committee Member

Scott B. Watson, Associate Dean, Advanced Programs

THE EFFECT OF THE PRIVATE CLASSROOM BLOG ON THE ACQUISITION OF
FORMAL WRITING PROFICIENCY WITH SPANISH III HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS.

ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of a private classroom blog implemented as an instructional technology on student writing proficiency in a world language with the focus on formal writing. The nonequivalent control-group, pre-posttest design was used to determine if the use of the private classroom blog in teaching world language formal writing affected student writing proficiency with the specific focus on task completion, comprehensibility, level of discourse, vocabulary, and language control. This research study used a convenience sample of sophomore, junior, and senior students in a Georgia public high school. Independent raters evaluated students' writings using the Fairfax County Public Schools writing analytic rubric for level three. The researcher used ANCOVA to compare the posttest mean of the experimental group to the posttest mean of the control group in each category. No statistically significant differences were found between the two groups in any of the categories. Study limitations are outlined and suggestions for future research are included.

Keywords: blogging, instructional technology, formal writing, proficiency, world languages, assessment

Acknowledgements

This dissertation is dedicated to my family.

I would like to thank my family and colleagues for their endless support, patience, and encouragement throughout my dissertation journey.

To God, thank you for strengthening me and renewing my spirits.

To my Mother Alevtina, thank you for always loving me and believing in me.

To my dearest husband Jay, thank you for your love, patience, and support.

To my son Trey, thank you for always being such a strong fighter against your type 1 diabetes.

To my child Christine Marie, thank you for being a wonderful, loving, and sweet daughter. I hope to serve as a life-long learner model for you and your brother Trey.

I would like to thank my colleagues: Ms. Gustavus, Ms. Aponte and Ms. Abreu and all research study participants. This dissertation would not have been possible without you.

I would like to show gratitude to Dr. Kuhne for being such a supportive dissertation chair. Your expertise and guidance were invaluable.

I would also like to show appreciation for my committee members Dr. Mann and Dr. Holzman as well as Dr. Holder and Dr. McDonald for their input and encouragement.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	ii
List of Tables	v
List of Figures	viii
List of Abbreviations	ix
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background.....	1
Problem Statement.....	2
Purpose Statement.....	2
Significance of the Study.....	2
Definitions.....	3
Research Questions.....	6
Research Hypotheses	6
Research Plan.....	8
Identification of Variables	10
Assumptions and Limitations	10
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	14
Introduction.....	14
Conceptual or Theoretical Framework	15
Review of the Literature	16
Sources of Data.....	16
Methodologies of the Literature.....	17
Summary of Quantitative Research Methodology.....	17
Summary of Qualitative Research Methodology.....	18
Summary of Mixed-Method Research Methodology	18
Benefits of Blog Use.....	19
Learners' Outcomes and Perceptions.....	28
Teacher Professional Development	34
Summary	37
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	39
Introduction.....	39
Participants.....	40

Setting	41
Instrumentation	42
Procedures	43
Research Design.....	45
Research Questions and Null Hypotheses	45
Data Analysis	48
 CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS	 49
Demographics	49
Results.....	50
Hypothesis one.....	53
Hypothesis two.....	55
Hypothesis three.....	57
Hypothesis four	60
Hypothesis five	62
Inter-Rater Reliability	64
Results Summary	71
 CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION.....	 73
Statement of the Problem.....	73
Summary of the Findings.....	74
Discussion of the Findings.....	76
Study Limitations.....	82
Methodological and Practical Implications	85
Recommendations for Future Research	86
 REFERENCES	 88
 APPENDIX A Forsyth County Approval Letter	 99
APPENDIX B IRB Approval E-mail	100
APPENDIX C Consent Form	101
APPENDIX D Writing Prompts	103
APPENDIX E Fairfax County Public Schools Level III Presentational Tasks (Writing)	
Analytic Rubric	107

List of Tables

Table 1.1: Between-Subject Factors for Mean Converted Score.....	p. 50
Table 1.2: Unadjusted Pre-test/Posttest Means and adjusted posttest means.....	p. 50
Table 1.3: Descriptive Statistics by Posttest Mean Converted Score.....	p. 51
Table 1.4: Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances for Posttest Mean Converted Score.....	p. 51
Table 1.5: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects.....	p. 52
Table 1.6: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects Significance.....	p. 52
Table 2.1: Between-Subject Factors for Task Completion.....	p. 53
Table 2.2: Descriptive Statistics for Task Completion Mean_Post.....	p. 53
Table 2.3: Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances for Task Completion Mean_Post	p. 54
Table 2.4: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Task Completion Mean_Post.....	p. 54
Table 2.5: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects Significance for Task Completion.....	p. 54
Table 3.1: Between-Subject Factors for Comprehensibility.....	p. 55
Table 3.2: Descriptive Statistics for Comprehensibility Mean_Post	p. 56
Table 3.3: Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances for Comprehensibility Mean_Post.....	p. 56
Table 3.4: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Comprehensibility Mean_Post.....	p. 56
Table 3.5: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects Significance for Comprehensibility Mean_Post.....	p. 57
Table 4.1: Between-Subject Factors for Level of Discourse.....	p. 58

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics for Level of Discourse Mean_Post.....	p. 58
Table 4.3: Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances for Level of Discourse	
Mean_Post.....	p. 58
Table 5.1: Between-Subject Factors for Vocabulary.....	p. 60
Table 5.2: Descriptive Statistics for Vocabulary Mean_Post.....	p. 60
Table 5.3: Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances for Vocabulary	
Mean_Post.....	p. 61
Table 5.4: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Vocabulary Mean_Post.....	p. 61
Table 6.1: Between-Subject Factors for Language Control.....	p. 62
Table 6.2: Descriptive Statistics for Language Control Mean_Post.....	p. 62
Table 6.3: Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances for Language Control	
Mean_Post.....	p. 63
Table 6.4: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Language Control Mean_Post...	p. 63
Table 6.5: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects Significance for Language Control	
Mean_Post.....	p. 64
Table 7.1: Inter-Rater Reliability.....	p. 65
Table 7.2: Case Processing Summary for Total Converted Score.....	p. 65
Table 7.3: Reliability Statistics for Total Converted Score.....	p. 65
Table 7.4: Item Statistics for Total Converted Score.....	p. 66
Table 8.1: Case Processing Summary for Task Completion.....	p. 66
Table 8.2: Reliability Statistics for Task Completion.....	p. 66
Table 8.3: Item Statistics for Task Completion.....	p. 67

Table 9.1: Case Processing Summary for Comprehensibility.....	p. 67
Table 9.2: Reliability Statistics for Comprehensibility.....	p. 67
Table 9.3: Item Statistics for Comprehensibility.....	p. 68
Table 10.1: Case Processing Summary for Level of Discourse.....	p. 68
Table 10.2: Reliability Statistics for Level of Discourse.....	p. 68
Table 10.3: Item Statistics for Level of Discourse.....	p. 69
Table 11.1: Case Processing Summary for Vocabulary.....	p. 69
Table 11.2: Reliability Statistics for Vocabulary.....	p. 69
Table 11.3: Item Statistics for Vocabulary.....	p. 70
Table 12.1: Case Processing Summary for Language Control.....	p. 70
Table 12.2: Reliability Statistics for Language Control.....	p. 70
Table 12.3: Item Statistics for Language Control.....	p. 71

List of Figures

Figure 1: Scatterplot of Pretest and Posttest Means for Level of Discourse.....p. 59
Figure 2: Hypothesis Test Summary for Level of Discourse.....p. 60

List of Abbreviations

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)

Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA)

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC)

Georgia Performance Standards (GPS)

Performance Assessment for Language Students (PALS)

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background

Writing is a demanding task for many students. Writing in a language different from the mother tongue appears to be even more taxing for students. However, it is a critical academic area where higher order thinking skills and literacy are vital to success. Blogging, text messaging, and microblogging (i.e. Twitter) offer convenient ways to teach and practice writing skills in a different language.

The theoretical framework for this study embraced social constructivism of Piaget (1955) and Vygotsky (1978), who were proponents of an active learning approach where students learn best by doing and collaborating in their social groups. Awodele, Idowu, Anjorin, Adedire, and Akpore (2009) stated that social software tools support a social constructivist approach to e-learning by providing students with personal tools and engaging them in social networks. The social constructivist approach implies that humans build knowledge from their interactions with each other and sharing of ideas. Up to the present time, the majority of studies that addressed the relationship between blogging and writing in a world language were qualitative in nature. In addition, some researchers provided descriptions of exploratory programs or courses where they gathered some preliminary insights on possibilities of using blogs for writing in a world language. Consequently, there is currently a lack of quantitative research conducted in this particular area. This study provided quantitative insight on how private classroom blogs as instructional technology can contribute to formal writing proficiency in a world language.

Problem Statement

Byrne (2007), Sun (2010), Taylor, Lazarus, and Cole (2005), and Ducate and Lomicka (2008) conducted studies to identify the positive impact of new instructional technologies on student motivation to learn. However, very few studies focus on the relationship of instructional technology integration and student academic achievement. Even fewer studies focus specifically on integration of new technologies in world language teaching and learning. Blogs, as one of many possible instructional technologies, suggest an interactive and engaging way to learn and practice formal writing in a world language. Therefore, the findings of this research benefit world language educators and students across the world.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of the private classroom blog implemented as an instructional technology on student writing proficiency in a Spanish III high school course with the focus on formal writing. The extent and consistency with which world language learners used the blog for writing practice should have had a direct and measurable influence on Spanish III students' formal writing proficiency.

Significance of the Study

This research problem was worth studying because it provides an insight on how to improve teaching formal writing and student literacy in a world language. From the review of the previous research, this researcher established that very few quantitative studies were conducted, and they were limited in scope. The majority of research was qualitative in nature. This quantitative study was a needed addition to understanding the

phenomenon of blogging effects on the acquisition of formal writing proficiency accurately and completely. Findings of this study provided educators with data on how to use blogs as an effective instructional strategy in teaching and mastering formal writing skills in a world language. Previous research, as discussed in the literature review, showed that blogs contribute to increased student motivation and engagement to learn. This particular research study evaluated possible blog effects on the improvement of formal writing skills; thus, it connected instructional technology and student achievement. It can therefore make a contribution to the assessment of formal writing skills.

Definitions

Prior to the discussion of this study, it is vital to define some key terms that the researcher used often over the course of this research:

ANGEL- the software used by K-12 schools and districts, community colleges, universities and proprietary schools to create Virtual Learning Environments for online learning and to offer hybrid or blended (web-enhanced) classes.

Blog- a website that allows users to reflect, share opinions, and discuss various topics in the form of an online journal where readers may comment on posts.

Blog competence survey- a survey designed to measure students' prior experience of using blogs as well as their ability to use blogs successfully and efficiently.

Blog time-delayed feature- a tool that allows one to write and save the blog post but publish it online at a later time.

Circumlocution- a term used to describe indirect ways of expressing things.

Class blog- the result of collaborative work of all the students in a class.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) or Communicative Approach- an approach to the teaching of second and foreign languages that emphasizes interaction as both the process and the ultimate goal of learning a language.

Comprehensibility- measures the degree to which the sympathetic reader needs to interpret the student's response.

Distributed cognition- a psychological theory developed in the mid-1980s by Edwin Hutchins. The framework emphasizes the social aspects of cognition and involves the coordination between individuals, artifacts, and the environment.

E-learning- learning conducted via electronic media, especially via the Internet.

Foreign language- any language used in a country other than one's own. It is a language that is not a mother tongue. A foreign language is also defined as a language indigenous to another country.

Language control- measures how accurate the student's language is.

Level of discourse- measures the degree of linguistic sophistication used to communicate ideas.

Private classroom blog-a blog visible and accessible only to students and the teacher of record of a particular classroom.

Prompt writing- a writing on given prompts.

Second Language (L2) - any language learned after the first language or mother tongue. Sometimes educators refer to it as an auxiliary language. In education, a distinction is made between a second language and a foreign language, the latter being learned for use

in an area where that language is not generally spoken. It is imperative that we do not use foreign language and second language terms interchangeably.

Selection-instrumentation threat-a learning gain that might be observed from pretest to posttest because the nature of the measuring instrument has changed.

Selection-maturation threat- results from differential rates of normal growth between pretest and posttest for the groups.

Selection-mortality threat-a loss of research participants during the course of the experiment.

Target language- a foreign language that an individual intends to learn.

Task completion- measures how thoroughly the student completes the required task.

Technology-based instruction- an instruction which uses technology to deliver training and educational materials.

Web 2.0- a new generation of Web services and applications with an increasing emphasis on human collaboration.

World language – a term used by teaching professionals to describe a “foreign language.” The researcher used this term throughout the study.

Writing proficiency- an ability to express ideas and thoughts clearly and correctly. It is measured on a scale outlined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

Writing prompt-a statement or question designed to get students to think about a topic in depth and motivate them to produce their best, most expertly expressed writing.

Research Questions

1. Does private classroom blogging positively influence task completion in world language formal writing on given prompts?
2. Does private classroom blogging positively influence comprehensibility in world language formal writing on given prompts?
3. Does private classroom blogging positively influence level of discourse in world language formal writing on given prompts?
4. Does private classroom blogging positively influence vocabulary in world language formal writing on given prompts?
5. Does private classroom blogging positively influence language control in world language formal writing on given prompts?

Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis one: There will be a significant difference in task completion between students who write formally on given prompts through a private classroom blog and students who write formally on the same prompts in a paper-pencil format as measured by the Fairfax County Public Schools writing proficiency rubric for Spanish III.

Ho1: There will be no significant difference in task completion between students who write formally on given prompts through a private classroom blog and students who write formally on the same prompts in a paper-pencil format as measured by the Fairfax County Public Schools writing proficiency rubric for Spanish III.

Hypothesis two: There will be a significant difference in comprehensibility between students who write formally on given prompts through a private classroom blog

and students who write formally on the same prompts in a paper-pencil format as measured by the Fairfax County Public Schools writing proficiency rubric for Spanish III.

Ho2: There will be no significant difference in comprehensibility between students who write formally on given prompts through a private classroom blog and students who write formally on the same prompts in a paper-pencil format as measured by the Fairfax County Public Schools writing proficiency rubric for Spanish III.

Hypothesis three: There will be a significant difference in level of discourse between students who write formally on given prompts through a private classroom blog and students who write formally on the same prompts in a paper-pencil format as measured by the Fairfax County Public Schools writing proficiency rubric for Spanish III.

Ho3: There will be no significant difference in level of discourse between students who write formally on given prompts through a private classroom blog and students who write formally on the same prompts in a paper-pencil format as measured by the Fairfax County Public Schools writing proficiency rubric for Spanish III.

Hypothesis four: There will be a significant difference in vocabulary between students who write formally on given prompts through a private classroom blog and students who write formally on the same prompts in a paper-pencil format as measured by the Fairfax County Public Schools writing proficiency rubric for Spanish III.

Ho4: There will be no significant difference in vocabulary between students who write formally on given prompts through a private classroom blog and students who write

formally on the same prompts in a paper-pencil format as measured by the Fairfax County Public Schools writing proficiency rubric for Spanish III.

Hypothesis five: There will be a significant difference in language control between students who write formally on given prompts through a private classroom blog and students who write formally on the same prompts in a paper-pencil format as measured by the Fairfax County Public Schools writing proficiency rubric for Spanish III.

Ho5: There will be no significant difference in language control between students who write formally on given prompts through a private classroom blog and students who write formally on the same prompts in a paper-pencil format as measured by the Fairfax County Public Schools writing proficiency rubric for Spanish III.

Research Plan

The nonequivalent control group design was conducted to determine if the use of the private classroom blog in teaching world language formal writing affected student writing proficiency. One class of 14 students was the control group, and one class of 20 students was the experimental group. The treatment (use of the private classroom blog to practice formal writing on given prompts in a world language) consisted of a series of lessons administered during a six-week period. Each week students had a Spanish 3 course four times a week (three 50-minute classes and one 90-minute class). Formal writing practice happened during one 90-minute class weekly. The teacher focused on task completion, comprehensibility, level of discourse, vocabulary, and language control as essential parts of a well-organized and cohesive formal prompt writing. The teacher

provided weekly prompts for students to practice formal writing in a world language. Students in the control group wrote using the traditional paper-pencil format. Students in the experimental group posted their writings electronically on the private classroom blog. A private classroom blog was used during the research study. This blog was a part of the ANGEL program widely used in the Forsyth County School System. The blog was password protected and visible only to the classroom students as well as the teacher of record. The blog included a draft feature where students could use special characters and Spanish diacritical marks. Once completed and proofread in a draft window, the blog post could be copied and pasted into the final post window. All students in the control group had an opportunity to see each other's work, provide commentary, self-reflect, and revise writings. However, they did not see students' work from the experimental group. Similarly, students in the experimental group had access to each other's work, but not the works from the control group. They also could provide commentary, self-reflect, and revise writings. The researcher trained two other language teachers to score students' pre- and post-writings. Those teachers used the same formal writing proficiency rubric for level three developed by Fairfax County Public Schools while scoring all student writings. The researcher selected this particular rubric because it was designed and field-tested by the Fairfax County Public Schools. This school system has been a national leader in developing and perfecting a performance assessment program since 1995. The chosen writing analytic rubric for level three is part of the program called Performance Assessment for Language Students (PALS). The program PALS is aligned with proficiency guidelines established by the American Council on the Teaching of World

Languages (ACTFL).

The researcher used an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to compare the posttest mean of the experimental group with the posttest mean of the control group where the pretest scores were used as a covariate.

Identification of Variables

The independent variable was the use of the private classroom blog as an instructional technology to produce formal writing on given prompts in a world language. In this proposed study, the researcher trained the teacher of record on how to utilize private classroom blog writing as an instructional technology.

The dependent variable was student formal writing proficiency in a world language with the specific focus on task completion, comprehensibility, level of discourse, vocabulary and language control. It was measured with the rubric developed by the Fairfax County Public Schools.

Assumptions and Limitations

Assumptions. It was the researcher's assumption that the theoretical frameworks of social constructivism, the communicative approach, and distributed cognition would fit the observed data and would be an accurate reflection of the phenomenon studied. The nonequivalent control-group design was a good research study to determine the impact of the private classroom blog as an instructional technology on student formal writing proficiency in a world language. It is the most used quasi-experimental design in educational research. It was not possible to assign students randomly to the control and experimental groups during this study as students had been already placed in their

courses. The analysis of pre-test and posttest results yielded useful knowledge on the effects of the private classroom blogging on the acquisition of formal writing proficiency on Spanish III high school students. The researcher believed that the evidence gathered by the study methodology would be sufficient to confirm previous research findings on instructional technology, the communicative approach, distributed cognition, and social constructivism. This study has relevance for all world language teachers and students. It is also assumed that no instructional technology by itself may replace or substitute direct teacher instruction of writing.

Limitations. The results of this study must be interpreted with caution. The researcher did not use random sampling. It is difficult to conclude that the effects can be generalized to a broader population because the experiment was conducted at a single high school in a very affluent county in metro Atlanta. However, the findings may be generalized from participants of the study to other students who share similar characteristics and circumstances.

During this research study, students learned and practiced only one type of formal writing (prompt writing) using blogs. It would also be appealing to use private classroom blogs to teach all types of writing; however, only prompt writing was used in this study. Finally, one must mention that the results obtained in this study will only pertain to the short-term effects of the private classroom blog practice, and that the sample size is relatively small. Additional studies over longer periods might add strength and generalizability to the results.

In order to ensure internal validity, the researcher must avoid a selection threat.

A selection threat is any factor other than the program that leads to posttest differences between the experimental and control groups. Since the study took place over a period of six weeks, the researcher can exclude the selection-maturation threat and selection-mortality threat. It was very unlikely that students would drop out of the Spanish III course during six weeks of the experiment. Physical and psychological changes occurred in the research participants; however, they were not significant over the six-week period. Therefore, the researcher could exclude the selection-maturation threat. Two Spanish teachers were trained on how to score formal writings using the writing proficiency rubric. The Fairfax County Public Schools writing proficiency rubric is a standardized rubric used nationally. The importance of consistency in scoring procedures was explained to ensure reliability and avoid measurement error. The classroom teacher and the two independent scorers graded student writings from both groups to avoid the selection-instrumentation threat. Additionally, students in the control group could have perceived blogging in a world language as a more interactive and new way of writing practice. Therefore, they might have attempted access to the treatment. In order to avoid this situation and the experimental treatment diffusion, the researcher explained to all teachers involved in the study how important it was to minimize the contact between the groups to the most possible extent. This helped to avoid compensatory rivalry by the control group as well. The researcher also attempted to lessen the special attention to all participants of the study. The researcher was able to generalize the findings of this study to the experimentally accessible population: students of this particular high school.

The following chapter provides the review of the literature related to this study. Chapter three reviews the methodology utilized in this study. Chapter four presents the collected and analyzed data. The final chapter five provides the researcher's interpretations of the findings, study limitations, methodological and practical implications, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The proposed research study was driven by the lack of comprehensive quantitative studies examining the impact of blogs on student formal writing proficiency in a world language. Students studying world languages need more opportunities to produce language actively and more chances to use it as a tool of communication inside and outside of the classroom. Instructional technologies provide just such an opportunity, and they create multiple ways to express and share ideas with natives and non-native speakers of a particular language.

This research study focused on advanced world language writers. According to ACTFL Writing Proficiency Guidelines, advanced world language writers are able to write routine social correspondence and join sentences in simple discourse of at least several paragraphs in length on familiar topics. They can write simple social correspondence, take notes, and write cohesive summaries and resumes as well as narratives and descriptions of a factual nature. These writers have sufficient writing vocabulary to express themselves simply with a degree of circumlocution. They may still make errors in punctuation, spelling, or the formation of nonalphabetic symbols. Advanced writers have good control of morphology and the most frequently used syntactic structures (e.g., common word order patterns, coordination, subordination), but they make frequent errors in producing complex sentences. They also use a limited number of cohesive devices, such as pronouns, accurately. Writing may resemble literal translations from the native language, but a sense of organization (rhetorical structure) is

emerging. Their writing is understandable to natives not used to the writing of non-natives.

This chapter will begin by detailing the theoretical framework. Then, sources of data will be analyzed, followed by the summaries of the examined quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method research methodologies. The review of the studies will follow with the focus on the examined trends: benefits of blog use, students' outcomes and perceptions, and teacher professional development. Finally, the summary of the reviewed literature will be presented.

Conceptual or Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for teaching writing using instructional technologies such as blogging embraces the social constructivism of Piaget and Vygotsky. These researchers supported an active learning approach where students learn best by doing and collaborating in their social groups. Awodele et al. (2009) stated that social networks support a social constructivist approach to e-learning by providing students with personal tools and engaging them in social networks. Gunawardena, Hermans, Sanchez, Richmond, Bohley, and Tuttle (2009) included social networking as an important part of a theoretical framework for building online learning communities. Angeli (2008) stated that the framework of distributed cognition serves as an analytic framework for explaining human aspects of cognition related to design or problem-solving tasks with computers. The distributed cognition framework can be used to examine the role and contribution of each constituent part (the teacher, the learners, the tools, and the artifacts) in the learning process. This examination will aid to better understand factors that may

obstruct the successful integration of technology in the classroom. Blogs are asynchronous computer-mediated communication (CMC). Users can work at their own pace due to the blog time-delayed feature. Blog readers and writers can reflect and refine their content.

Review of the Literature

Sources of Data

The researcher conducted the literature search in two stages. First, she analyzed literature found in electronic databases using blog writing descriptors. The researcher used EbscoHost, Academic OneFile, and Google Scholar Beta. The search descriptors included blogs, foreign language writing, foreign language Web 2.0, language learning, foreign language virtual writing, foreign language virtual learning, foreign language writing assessment and evaluation, instructional technology, foreign language writing curriculum, foreign language writing rubric, foreign language e-learning, computer-based foreign language writing course, blog teaching/instruction, and instructional technology in education. The researcher expanded her search to other writing technology tools such as microblogging (i.e. Twitter) and electronic mail to enhance writing instruction as well as other subjects or courses where blogging was used as a writing tool. Second, she searched for articles cited in some of the reviewed articles. The researcher reviewed 102 articles and deleted 49. They were discarded because they were about speaking, listening, and reading proficiencies and not specific to a writing proficiency in a foreign language. In addition, the researcher excluded the articles that confirmed the positive findings of previous research in the relationship between instructional technology use and student

motivation. The focus of this research study was to determine the impact of blogs upon student writing proficiency in a world language and thus to determine the blogs' impact on student achievement.

Methodologies of the Literature

The researcher began with the summaries of research methods used in the reviewed studies. She analyzed 15 qualitative, seven quantitative, and nine mixed-method research studies. In conclusion, the researcher can state that the majority of studies reviewed were qualitative in nature. Many researchers provided descriptions of exploratory programs or courses. In the researcher's opinion, there was not enough quantitative research conducted in this particular research area.

Summary of Quantitative Research Methodology

The researcher found only seven research studies that used quantitative analysis: Wheeler and Lambert-Heggs (2009), Gregersen (2006), Lee and Krashen (2002), Bouldin, Holmes, and Fortenberry (2006), Furukawa, Matsuzawa, Matsuo, Uchiyama, and Takeda, M. (2006), Blau, Mor, and Neuthab (2009), Saeed, Yun, and Sinnappan (2009). Those studies used questionnaires, surveys, and blog entries to collect data. They used multiple regression analysis to examine the impact of each independent predictor as well as all predictors combined. The correlational research design was a good choice as it is highly useful to study problems in education and to analyze relationships among variables in a single study.

Summary of Qualitative Research Methodology

The researcher reviewed 15 qualitative studies. Several studies were action research projects: De Almeida Soares (2008), Shih-Hsien (2009), Carlino (2009), and McCorkle (2010). The other studies were case studies: Slaouti and Barton (2007), Colombo, M. W. and Colombo, P. D. (2007), Lee (2009), Davis and McGrail (2009), Luehmann and Frink (2009), Pop (2009), Frye, Trathen, and Koppenhaver (2010), Borau, Ullrich, Feng, and Shen (2009), Georgescu (2010), Kerawalla, Minocha, Kirkup, and Conole (2009), Barone and Wright (2008). Those researchers evaluated only one particular feature or course and provided descriptions. Only some analysis of experimenter bias, member checking, or triangulation was found. This necessitates caution as some authors were conducting research in their own classrooms. However, use of instructional technologies such as blogs and Twitter is relatively recent. It is vital to use a variety of qualitative research methods and measures to understand the phenomenon fully and correctly.

Summary of Mixed-Method Research Methodology

Nine reviewed articles used a mixed-method design: Goh, Chin Joo, and Ong Kim (2010), Huei-Tse, Kuo-En, and Yao-Ting (2009), Gonzalez-Bueno and Perez (2000), Sagin Simsek (2008), Peters, Weinberg, and Sarma (2009), Hui-Yin, Shiang-Kwei, and Comac (2008), Hauck and Youngs (2008), Sun (2010), Liang (2010). The researchers utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods to collect and analyze data. They used multivariate analysis of variance to analyze responses as well as pre- and post-surveys of student opinions and perceptions. Multivariate analysis of variance is useful as it allows a

researcher to see the collected data in a multivariate perspective. It also helps to conceptualize and analyze the nature of interrelated characteristics and determine how the groups being studied differ on them. When it comes to the analysis of data using a qualitative descriptive approach, the researchers must consider experimenter bias and subjectivity of sampling.

Benefits of Blog Use

Warschauer (1997) identified advantages that the text-based nature of the language produced through computer-mediated communication (CMC) offers. He stated that the written performance is available for detained revision and accuracy development. This makes it unique when compared to other communication media. Warschauer continued that computer-mediated communication is an effective pedagogical tool as it encourages collaborative learning in the language classroom. He added that online communication increases the chances for interaction with other people because there are no time or place constraints. Warschauer further suggested that CMC creates the opportunity for a group to construct knowledge together, thus linking reflection and interaction. However, Walther, Anderson, and Park (1994) pointed out that certain online communication tools lose rich face-to-face communication. The researchers also contend that CMC hinders the development of grammatical and lexical accuracy.

In their experimental design, Gonzalez-Bueno and Perez (2000) compared electronic dialogue journal writing with the traditional paper-pencil journal writing in a world language. The independent variable was the use of electronic mail as a communication medium between instructor and students. The dependent variables were

grammatical and lexical errors and number of words per message. Gonzalez-Bueno and Perez found that the only aspect in which subjects in the experimental group significantly outperformed those in the control group was for language produced. The difference between the two groups was not statistically significant in regards to grammatical and vocabulary errors. From survey responses, the authors elicited students' positive views of electronic mail as a tool to improve their world language learning and attitude towards Spanish. The researcher noticed that the amount of time allotted to in-class journal writing was only ten minutes compared to an unlimited electronic mail time. In addition, the study was conducted during only one semester. These two factors may have influenced the results but were not included in the analysis. Gonzalez-Bueno and Perez suggested using form-focused writing activities (compositions) to improve grammatical and lexical accuracy. Prompt writing is the focus of this research study.

Renzulli and Reis (2007) reported their research findings stating that technology provides true differentiation, matching unlimited resources to individual needs. The authors also concluded that technology produces a higher level of engagement, which results in greater learning. Painter (2009), Blair and Godsall (2006) found that authentic, technology-based assessments allow students of all abilities to show their progress throughout the year no matter their beginning level of competency because these assessments give time for personal reflection and growth. Sun (2010) investigated extensive writing through blogging and compared the writing performance in the first and last blog entries written by undergraduate students learning English as a foreign language in Taiwan. The goal was to measure students' improvements in writing through

examination of the syntactic complexity of the entries, learners' self-perception of progress, and rating of the blog entries. The small group size of only 23 participants yielded low statistical power. The most frequent blogging behavior was reviewing the blogs before uploading them to the web. Students also focused mostly on their spelling, vocabulary, grammar, and organization respectively. Participants found blogging to be valuable for their language development. Sun concluded that blogs help establish good writing habits, build language awareness, develop learner autonomy, and promote confidence and motivation.

Borau, Ullrich, Feng, and Shen (2009) affirmed that Twitter as a form of microblogging is suitable to develop communicative and cultural competence anytime, anywhere, without face-to-face interaction. In a broader scope, this work contributes to the research on using Web 2.0 tools for learning. This is also referred to as e-learning. The researchers reported that students used Twitter frequently and spent between one to 10 minutes to create short Twitter updates and between five to 30 minutes on reading other students' updates. About 70% of students stated that they found it easier to communicate in a foreign language after using Twitter.

Pop (2009) outlined that integrated reading/writing/speaking/listening Web 2.0 activities provide adult students the opportunity to experience real-world communication and authentic interactions, to expand language learning use and exposure, and to enhance correctness and involvement while promoting student-centered autonomous learning. Georgescu (2010) stated that problems that may prevent students from using blogs are students' access to computers and the Internet, their level of computer literacy,

plagiarism, the time necessary to instruct them on using a blog and to educate them on blogs' content issues, and the appropriateness of the language. McCorkle (2010) built his college low-level writing English course on blogging and found that educators must expose students to the range of possibilities of digital literacy so they realize their full potential to become active participants in today's modern technologies and literacy.

Based on the action research project findings, Carlino (2009) recommended the use of electronic discussion because it generates less anxiety than face-to-face communication, and it is an inexpensive device. The researcher added that written messages allow more control over the vocabulary and structure than oral messages. The data analysis showed that electronic discussion added to learning and teaching from two perspectives: pedagogical and literary. From the pedagogical perspective, electronic discussion facilitated participation of all students, motivated interpersonal communication and collaboration, gave rise to more sophisticated arguments, and showed that errors can be a positive source of new learning. From the literary perspective, electronic discussion provided literary interpretation, literary meaning as a negotiated construction, embedded text in the context, and personal appreciation impact on the reader.

Shih-Hsien (2009) proposed the use of blogs as ways to monitor and assess students' work in addition to interaction between students as well as between students and teachers. The researcher suggested that teachers should use blogging in order to pose questions, share viewpoints, and discuss issues and concerns as well as to establish a particular topic of mutual interest. Shih-Hsien continued that blogs can be treated as

virtual language classrooms. Blogs combine several of the most recommended pedagogies from learning theory: scaffolding, student-centered learning, multiple perspectives, and the use of learning communities. Shih-Hsien's research study reported that blogs led to students' critical reflection because they generated more inquiries and took students' ideas and thoughts further. The author pointed out that anonymity is a significant issue when grades, friendships, cultural difference, and educational backgrounds are considered. Students were hesitant to critically evaluate each other's blog posts. We must consider that the researcher did not evaluate participants' comfort level and prior experience with blogs prior to conducting the research. This variable is important as it may interfere with student critical reflection postings. It is difficult to generalize these findings to our research focus as these participants are mature adults who have already mastered a foreign language. Nevertheless, it provides an insight on how to create a community of learners.

Efimova and Fiedler (2003) viewed a blog as a small learning community. They stated that blogs create a relatively learner-centered environment that allows students to learn at their own pace. Bouldin, Holmes, and Fortenberry (2006) viewed blogging as a writing aid to increase an active involvement in learning and to foster critical thinking or a "questioning attitude." They utilized blogs for reflective journaling to determine if students understood the course content as well as areas where they needed more clarification and assistance. The authors pointed out the advantages of a blog reflective journal over a hardcopy version: automatic time and date stamps, superior portability, and the friendliness of spelling check. However, the researchers noted that 19% of the class

students saw no value in blog reflective journaling and viewed it as “busy work.” This led them to suggest that perhaps blogging has a limited life as a learning tool. They continued that sometimes students do not value the importance of self-reflection. Bouldin et al. summarized that the greatest advantage of blogging in that course was the uncovering of supplemental examples and resources for the class by both the instructor and other more motivated students. The researchers expressed caution in regards to the study’s snapshot limitations as the interpretation of attitudes was very limited and may represent bias due to social pressures, time constraints, and the stress of the end of the semester.

Frye, Trathen, and Koppenhaver (2010) pointed out that national standards push for the design of technology-enhanced experiences with the focus on the content. They created a social studies unit focused on pirates for a fourth grade class. The authors used blogs to publish, share, and manage information gathered through the unit research. Frye et al. utilized blogs to further classroom dialogue and develop student ownership. The researchers believed that the use of blogs helped student writing to mature and increased the quality of produced work. They also stated that knowledge is socially constructed in blogs as collaborative electronic discourse. Colombo and Colombo (2007) expressed that blogs expand instructional time by providing teachers with a user-friendly online format to reinforce strategies, to introduce new topics and to review. Audio files or podcasts allow students to listen, and video files or vodcasts let them access the material in a combination of video and audio formats. All of this provides additional visual and audio support for learners. It is critical for learners of other languages to be able to work on and monitor their pronunciation and vocabulary.

Davis and McGrail (2009) examined teacher-created podcasts as tools to improve proofreading and revising of student writing. In this research study, students were expected to learn how to communicate with a real audience through blogging. Podcasting and blogging rely on two senses: hearing and seeing. Audio and text are merged through a reader, who is different from the student-creator. This allows the writer to see the reader's reaction to the writing. In other words, it helps the writer to understand what was actually written, as opposed to what the writer intended to express. The researchers' idea of testing the communicative effectiveness through podcasts is worthy of attention. They combined revision and copy editing in proof-revising. They also approached blogs, podcasts, and vodcasts as a multisensory approach that stimulates learning and provides timely feedback.

Johnson (2010) recommended authors' blogs as a way to enrich students' engagement with literature and develop the depth of knowledge about a particular author. They also help to better understand authors' perspectives and thoughts on various issues. Furthermore, authors collaborate with their readers through live blogging. This provides an opportunity for students to express their reactions to the literature studied. Johnson viewed blogging as a reciprocal process that requires as much reading as it does writing, listening or speaking, all necessary core skills for language development. The author recommended the use of blog partners to ensure that every student receives feedback. She also suggested that student responses must include analysis and synthesis of multiple sources of information along with personal reflections and experiences in order to ensure the deeper understanding of the content and response to the text.

Furukawa, Matsuzawa, Matsuo, Uchiyama, and Takeda (2006) determined that users who repeatedly read a blog with a certain topic also tend to repeatedly read other blogs that are targets of action by the owner of that blog. In addition, the researcher stated that users circulate around the bookmarks in a blog network. For their study Hui-Yin, Shiang-Kwei, and Comac (2008) chose to use audioblogs because of their ease of use, affordability, easy archiving of assignments for further evaluations, compatibility with other multimedia file formats, and easy interaction facilitation. The researchers noted that challenges were class size and the disparity between the grading policy and student blog participation. They recommended the use of audioblogs to conduct formative and summative assessments, to utilize multimedia formats of content, to provide individual feedback, and to construct an online learning community. The authors also pointed out audioblogs as a way to build student e-portfolios. Further, Hui-Yin et al. concluded that the interaction between the instructor and students is vital. The instructor should post and check blog entries regularly and constantly help students correct their mistakes as well as seek ways to motivate them.

Lee (2009) promoted blogs and podcasts as a way to develop global communication and intercultural awareness. In the qualitative study of Spanish and American students communicating through blogs, the researcher determined that there was quite an interactive collaboration, which brought a plethora of opportunities for the users. Lee continued that reading blogs written by native speakers gives students a chance to improve cultural understanding from a different perspective. The researcher suggested that mobile learning via podcasts allows students to explore the target language and

culture at their own pace and improve their listening skills. Lee pointed out that learning about the target country and culture from native speakers is more meaningful to learners than the traditional information in the textbook. The author recommended a task-based approach as the solid foundation along with best teaching practices to guide the successful implementation of blogging and podcasting in a foreign language classroom.

Castleberry and Evers (2010) recommended the usage of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach to ensure that all students can learn a foreign language successfully. They stated that the three principles of UDL are to support learning by providing multiple, flexible methods of presentation, expression and apprenticeship, and options for engagement. Technology provides the support for students with diverse needs. The researchers suggested blogging because it allows students to be metacognitively aware of their learning process. They also noted that oral directions and lectures could be recorded via podcasts so students and their parents can have access to them at any time.

From the results of their quantitative study Blau, Mor, and Neuthab (2009) concluded that interpersonal interactions were affected by the feeling of nearness which confirms the theory of electronic propinquity. Electronic propinquity refers to electronic proximity or presence. The researchers also stated that nearness in bloggers' posts influenced the interactivity in interaction with various blogger behaviors. The feeling of nearness along with the blogger's own comments elicited peer commentary. The authors also found out that blog interactions did not depend on offline relationships among users compared to the wiki groups. Blau et al. recommended projecting nearness to the

audience, sharing work and learning experiences, inviting feedback, and responding to peers in order to encourage user interactivity.

Wheeler and Lambert-Heggs (2009) viewed blogging as a tool to produce reflective learning. The authors stated that reflexivity as an essential part of blogging is vital for mentoring. In blogs, conversation is built over a period of time. Users can carefully draft and post their ideas and comments. The researchers focused on pre- and in-service trainee teachers who are encouraged to reflect regularly. They continued that blogging offers certain advantages: immediacy, provisionality, and persistence. By immediacy, the researchers meant more personalized and warm responses due to blogs' reciprocal self-disclosure. Blog users complete most editing prior to final posts as part of the provisionality feature. By persistence, Wheeler and Lambert-Heggs saw accurately stamped posting history. Furthermore, the authors provided practical recommendations on using blogs for mentoring purposes.

Learners' Outcomes and Perceptions

Lee and Krashen (2002) suggested focusing on an increased emphasis on reading, teaching the basics of the composition process, and reducing apprehension. The results of their study and multiple regression analyses revealed that increasing the amount of writing would not have a positive impact on writing development. Teachers should instead strive to reduce anxiety. Lee and Krashen also stated that writing itself could make strong contributions to cognitive development when the writers are dealing with problems that are challenging and of real interest to them. Nonetheless, we must note that in their research study, there is no control for previous knowledge of language. It is

necessary to determine if study participants were different in their writing proficiency prior to the conducted study. The other drawback of their study is the limited power of their measurements. Questions included only yes/no responses. Certainly, the measurement instruments need to be reliable and valid. Grades are assumed as a valid measure of writing competence. Nevertheless, it is common knowledge that grades are often very subjective in nature. It will be valuable in our research to use free voluntary reading or reading for pleasure as an excellent predictor of writing competence as well as other aspects of literacy. Blogs are not only for writing but also for reading other participants' postings. The other recommendation of Lee and Krashen which is valuable for our research is the focus on content and organization during revision and delay of editing (grammar, spelling, and punctuation) until all ideas are clearly expressed.

De Almeida Sores (2008) used Exploratory Practice, which is based on the principle that teachers can collect information about a topic they wish to investigate while students are actively involved in a language learning activity. De Almeida Sores utilized several potentially exploitable pedagogic activities as part of the exploratory practice conducted. The researcher wanted to know if students see blogs as a learning tool that enables them to communicate with students outside their classes and if blogs foster the use of written language to express their thoughts and ideas. From the analysis of the survey created by the author, it is evident that the majority of blog users range from pre-intermediate to advanced level writers. 13 out of 16 reported using blogs as a personal tool in their instruction. This implies that blogging in education reflects one's interest to try rather than institutionalized practice. The researcher found from the survey responses

that, in most cases, blogging is not mandatory. De Almeida Sores warned about technical problems. Even though students may be computer literate, it is not guaranteed that they will be at ease when using blogs. The researcher did not find a positive relationship between the amount of posting done and the value students gave to blogging. The author confirmed that exploratory practice as data collection gave students an opportunity to explore blogging and use the foreign language in meaningful learning activities. We should accept these findings with caution as they do not represent a true research study. Certainly, we should not exclude the author's bias and subjectivity in opinions, descriptions, and created measure instruments. The researcher did not include information on participants. Therefore, we are not able to determine how well the research conclusions will apply to the general population.

Hauck and Youngs (2008) found that the asynchronous context of blogs allowed students to develop closer relationships with their learning partners as opposed to synchronous audio-conferencing. They also stated that the extent to which telecollaborative partners can benefit from an exchange depends, to no insignificant degree, on their individual multimodal communicative competence levels. The design of tasks that systematically develop learners' electronic literacy skills and their online intercultural communicative competence is vital.

Liang (2010) warned that synchronous online peer response groups might be ineffective if instructors do not focus students' attention on revision-related discourse. The results of this study show that the relationship between revision-related discourse and discourse-related revision are not straightforward. Liang recommended that instructors

utilize modeling of student responses as a strategy, connecting prior experiences with current writing pedagogy. Gregersen (2006) researched the relationship between foreign language anxiety and learners' recognition of their proficiency differences across reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. She pointed out that affective variables did not determine learner achievement in foreign language but certainly had a major influence on a learner's failure. She recommended creating more authentic integrated programs that would minimize foreign language anxiety such as the Participatory Approach, task-based instruction, and Experiential Approach based on Dewey's principles. The Participatory Approach uses meaningful content and issues of concern to students. This enables teachers connect lessons to students' lives. Task-based instruction focuses on communicative tasks through interaction while completing a task. The Experiential Approach utilizes inductive learning. Students are responsible for their own learning progress. Certainly, blogging can incorporate all these approaches and therefore present a better chance to reduce anxiety in foreign language learners.

Kelly and Safford (2009) stated that complex sentences are a marker of mature and thoughtful writing. In their research project, they analyzed the vocabulary choices and phrases as well as sentence types. Furthermore, the researchers proposed that blogging in conjunction with a temporary, global event (The World Cup) provided a chance for linguistic empowerment. However, their short research project served as an example of integrated technology based on an authentic task. Peters, Weinberg, and Sarma (2009) determined that the participants of their research study found instructional technologies useful. Students preferred less mediated and more authentic activities

completed individually. The researchers also suggested that the traditional types of computer-assisted activities such as listening, grammar, and vocabulary practice are more appreciated than Web Quests and blogs. The authors continued that the most popular instructional activities are viewed as the most useful by students. Students must clearly see a link between an innovative technology, language class content, and overall language learning.

Shiang-Kwei and Hui-Yin (2008) noted that during their study the participants learned characteristics of different populations from stories contributed by their classmates. Therefore, blogging provided fewer restraints in discussing such sensitive topics as cultural diversity. Churchill (2009) reported the results of his qualitative case study on how social networking impacts student achievement. He stated that students were engaged in blogging because it was a required part of the course and served as part of final assessment. However, students indicated that they would discontinue the use of blogging if the instructor did not require it. His research data indicated that blogging facilitated and contributed to students' learning. However, the author did not describe any particular issues associated with the case study. He focused only on the positive impact and failed to pose questions for further inquiry or improvement of his own course.

Luckin, Clark, Graber, Logan, Mee, and Oliver (2009) categorized learners into four categories: researchers, collaborators, publishers, and producers. The authors also noted that even though all students expressed positive interest in using social networking sites during their study, they also expressed some reservations toward uses other than supporting familiar classroom activities. The researchers argued that there was very little

criticality, self-management, and meta-cognition. Certainly, higher-order thinking skills need to be accented and reinforced. Sagin (2008) investigated students' attitudes toward the use of information and communication technologies in a reading skills course in Turkey. The researcher found that students were overall pleased with the technology use outcomes and developed positive attitudes toward online learning.

Goh, Chin Joo, and Ong Kim (2010) studied students' perceptions of the learning benefits of blogging in an East Asian context and found that Singapore students' views on blogging are significantly different from students in Western countries. The authors suggested that this might be due to the influence of Asian values such as practicality, pragmatism, and public harmony based on Confucianism. These students really appreciated the convenience and efficiency of blog communication during group projects as it made it possible not to meet in person. The researchers noted that these students did not feel comfortable in expressing their views publicly. Goh et al. also stated that students' pragmatism outweighed personalization as they chose not to customize their school blogs. The researchers determined that the findings of their research did not fully confirm previous studies about collaborative learning through blogging because students were afraid to post personal views. Students were afraid of their comments being perceived as incompetent or offensive.

Huay and Qiyun (2009) examined how blogging affected student critical thinking and pointed out the degree to which the availability of information is vital to that process. Therefore, they concluded that the choice of topic may not change students' way of thinking, but the availability of information may. They continued that there is more

negative criticism when the information is limited. Overall, the researchers concluded that weblogs have the potential to promote critical thinking skills. Saeed, Yun, and Sinnappan (2009) used a learning style survey which helped them analyze dominant learning styles, correlations between all styles, and frequency distribution. They stated that correlations within all learning styles demonstrated strong relationships between verbal and reflective as well as intuitive and global learners. In their study, students preferred both asynchronous and synchronous communication. The researchers suggested that today's learners are willing to stretch their learning styles to match a variety of teaching methods as well as to use new technologies for communication and study. The authors also characterized intuitive learners as students who prefer discovering possibilities and relationships and are ready to test new things. They prefer blogs to Blackboard and email. Saeed et al. (2009) agreed that a web-based virtual learning environment was good for learners of all types as no significant differences were found in their grade achievement.

Teacher Professional Development

Pop (2009) stressed that new technology-based learning in foreign language education is slow and faced with resistance by many teachers due to lack of awareness, more comfort with printed materials, limited computer literacy, and the frequent belief that technology by itself does not ensure educational success. Barone and Wright (2008) warned that the biggest problem when connecting new technologies and student learning is that most assessments evaluate traditional literacy and content knowledge. In their case study, most teachers utilized only classroom-based assessments that matched the new

literacies. The researchers summarized the key elements for successful implementation of new literacies such as access to sufficient technology, time for teachers and students to learn the technological applications, technological support, teacher knowledge and attitude, and development of new assessments.

Slaouti and Barton (2007) explored the experiences of newly qualified foreign language teachers who used information and communications technologies as a tool to support foreign language learning. They found that foreign language departments need to develop a sense of shared purpose not only through discussing how they see technologies as a tool for foreign language teaching but also through systematic planning. Educational leaders are influential as they provide encouragement and necessary support for teachers to integrate technologies into instruction successfully. This support can also be offered through rigorous professional development. Colombo and Colombo (2007) suggested that schools could increase access to science expertise through blogs. Highly qualified science teachers should create blogs, podcasts, and vodcasts and then disseminate and train other teachers on how to use them with students. This seems to be a good plan considering the shortage of qualified science personnel. It is important to note that these researchers thought that blogs would not be successful if they were considered as an add-on to a full-time teaching schedule. Successful blogging certainly required science teachers to rethink traditional teaching and choose only the most effective technologies.

Shiang-Kwei and Hui-Yin (2008) recommended that teachers should provide sample questions and posts at the beginning of any blog activity, connect in-class discussions with related blog posts, link additional resources to blog posts, provide

adequate technology training, and send reminders to read and respond to blog posts.

Kerawalla, Minocha, Kirkup, and Conole (2009) noted that the diversity of learning tasks through blogs imposes a big challenge to teachers. The authors established commonalities in blogging behaviors: carrying out course-directed activities only to share; carrying out course-directed activities only for oneself; keeping a learning journal; blogging as self-motivation; and creating a personal online store. Kerawalla et al. recommended guidance on the pedagogical and technology-related aspects of blogging in order to help students understand the role of blogs in a course and in a conjunction with other Web 2.0 tools.

From the results of their mixed research study, Huei-Tse, Kuo-En, and Yao-Ting (2009) established that, in most cases, teachers' interactions in the blogs were sharing and comparison of information. Thus, the authors recommended focusing on a problem-solving approach while training teachers on blogging. They also suggested that leaders in charge of teaching staff development should focus on blog characteristics and social knowledge construction. Luehmann and Frink (2009) examined how teachers defined goals and created specific activity structures for their classroom blogs. They determined that there was some evidence of student-centered engagement in blogging when activities created by the teachers were aligned with stated course goals and seen as relevant by students. Blogging offers the potential for scientific work to emerge due to student initiative when it provides additional resources such as hyperlinks, larger audiences, and communication. The authors confirmed that even though blog possibilities are limited by the teacher's instructional design, they could be expanded through the live nature of the blog discourse.

Summary

This literature review is valuable for teachers who wish to use blogging to teach writing in their world language classes. Certainly, they can learn from other educators' experiences in using instructional technologies. It is hoped that this review will help them avoid certain pitfalls and ensure successful blog use. Overall, the review offers some best practices to consider while facing the challenge of teaching writing in a foreign language. Of course, considering the narrow scope of research methods and limited data collected, it is necessary to state that this review will not provide a comprehensive overview of best practices and learners' outcomes because very few studies have been conducted in this particular area. Readers should proceed with caution in their practice and think critically about how the described research findings will be applicable in their own classrooms. MacArthur (2009) recommended critical and proactive evaluation of new communication technologies. He viewed multimedia in writing, writing online, and networking online to be the most important skills for the near future. However, he noted that much more research is needed in the area of new instructional technologies and literacies.

The research on foreign language teaching and technology integration is worth conducting because it will provide an insight on how to improve teaching formal writing in a world language. This literature review will aid future studies by providing direction and focus. Specifically, researchers will understand the need for more quantitative research studies and the quality of qualitative studies. They will identify the weak points in earlier research that should be addressed. Certainly, the review will also help researchers to avoid roadblocks in previous studies and perfect their choice of research

design, methodology, and instruments for data collection and analysis. One must note that, in order to obtain a more comprehensive picture of blog impact on student writing in a world language, researchers must include students' pragmatic and sociolinguistic competencies.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of the private classroom blog implemented as an instructional technology on student writing proficiency in a world language with the focus on formal writing.

According to the Georgia Performance Standards and World Language Teaching Philosophy, a teacher of a world language at any level is expected to use that language as the principal means of communication in the classroom. Teachers must utilize the language for most of their instructional time and employ instructional strategies that allow and encourage students to practice using the target language. Central to this concept is a student-centered classroom with the teacher in the role of facilitator. The goal of language instruction is to have students use the target language for specific communicative purposes. Integration of instructional technology is a way for teachers to provide multiple opportunities for students to use the target language inside and outside of the classroom. Blogging is a technology used for teaching and learning. The use of blogging as an instructional strategy to teach formal writing in a world language fits well into the Georgia Performance Standards Framework. The extent and consistency of the private classroom blogging should have had a direct and measurable influence on students' formal writing proficiency in a world language. Chapter three describes the methodology used to complete this study. It includes the description and characteristics of participants and the setting, instrumentation and procedures, research design, a

statement of the research question, null hypotheses to be examined, data analysis, references, and appendices.

Participants

For this research study, the researcher used a convenience sample. The population consisted of sophomore, junior, and senior students in a Georgia public high school. Spanish III students were the population of interest for several reasons. Students had completed two consecutive years of Spanish prior to their participation in this research. Furthermore, they had had prior experience with blogs in English. One class of 14 students was the control group, and another class of 20 students was the experimental group. These 34 students thus comprised the sample of this study. The researcher anticipated 30 to 32 students in each group; however, many parents did not give consent for their children to participate in the study. That was the main reason for low sample size. None of the students had practiced formal writing in a world language via blogs prior to the research study. The teacher of record had taught Spanish for 10 years. She was highly qualified and certified by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission to teach K-12 Spanish, AP Spanish Language, AP Spanish Literature, and IB Spanish. The instructor had used instructional technology successfully prior to the study. This teacher was enthusiastic about using a private classroom blog as a tool to instruct and practice formal writing with students on a weekly basis.

The researcher informed all participants about what would occur during the study, the information that would be disclosed to the researcher, and the intended use of the collected research data. Students' parents or legal guardians, school principal, and the

school board of education received the consent form. If they agreed to the conditions of this research, they signed and returned a copy to the researcher, keeping a copy for themselves. Since some participants declined to participate in this given study, the rest of the sample was considered to be volunteer participants.

Setting

The study took place at a public high school in the Forsyth County School System. The researcher chose this particular high school because of the teacher's interest in research participation and treatment delivery. The school had 1580 students enrolled with the ratio of 49% male to 51% female. The teacher-student ratio was 1:16. The school demographics consisted of 68.8% Caucasian, 4.87% African-American, 11.71% Hispanic, 11.65% Asian, and 2.97% other. Spanish III was an elective, advanced world language course where formal writing was an essential part of the curriculum. Formal writing was integrated into each unit of the study. Students enrolled in the level III language course if they passed the prerequisites. World language courses were not required for high school graduation in Georgia; however, they fulfilled the post-secondary admission requirements. Most colleges and universities accept the minimum two credits of high school world language. Some higher education institutions require three credits or more to demonstrate completion of advanced courses. The Spanish III course, whose AY 2011-2012 fall and spring iterations were the subject of this study, was 36 weeks in duration. Students had three 50-minute classes and one 90-minute class per week. Students earned one high school graduation credit at the completion of this course. Students in the experimental group used the private classroom blog through the ANGEL

software. ANGEL was regularly used in all Forsyth County schools. The blog was password protected and visible only to the classroom students as well as the teacher of record. The blog included a draft feature where students could use special characters and Spanish accents. Once completed and proofread in a draft window, the blog post could be copied and pasted into the final post window.

According to Georgia Performance Standards, level III world language courses focus on the continued development of communicative competence in the world language and understanding of the culture of the people who speak the language. Students gain confidence in revisiting learned material of the language, creating materials in the language to express their own thoughts, interacting with other speakers of the language, understanding oral and written messages, and making oral and written presentations in the world language. They utilize many of the more complex features of the language.

Instrumentation

The Nonequivalent Control Group Design was conducted to determine if the use of the private classroom blog in teaching world language formal writing affected student writing proficiency. The independent variable was the implementation of private classroom blogging to practice formal writing in a world language. The dependent variable was the student formal writing proficiency in a world language. The researcher examined each component of writing proficiency: task completion, comprehensibility, level of discourse, vocabulary, and language control.

Pre- and post-student writings were graded using the writing analytic rubric for Level III by two independent, trained teachers. The writing analytic rubric for Level III

was developed by the Fairfax County Public Schools. The researcher selected the rubric because this particular school system is and has been a national leader in developing and perfecting a performance assessment program since 1995. The chosen writing analytic rubric for Level III is part of the program called Performance Assessment for Language Students (PALS). The program PALS is aligned with proficiency guidelines established by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). The rubric's focus was on task completion, comprehensibility, level of discourse, vocabulary, and language control of formal writings on given prompts.

Procedures

Having received IRB approval, the researcher conducted the proposed research study. The researcher kept a study journal to document important information and details pertinent to the focus of the study. The teacher of record removed real names of all participants from their writings. The researcher and the two raters always received anonymized writing entries for the analysis. All research records were stored securely in a locked file cabinet in the teacher of record's classroom.

Prior to the first week of the study, the researcher reserved the computer lab to ensure the access to blogging technology during all designated writing weeks. The two independent raters practiced on selected benchmark writing samples for level III high school Spanish courses in order to assure inter-rater reliability. The instructor reminded students about the importance of the study for improving formal writing in a world language and the advantages of participating in educational research.

During the week of November 17, 2011, students in both groups completed the pre-test formal prompt writing. Two independent, highly qualified teachers graded the pre-test student writings using the Fairfax County Public Schools writing analytic rubric for Level III. During the research study, all prompt writings were graded for the purposes of earning the course grade. No participants received monetary incentives. Six designated weeks for writing were spread out from November 17, 2011, and February 9, 2012, due to holidays and school breaks. All writings were completed and turned in for grading during class time. All groups received identical weekly writing prompts to practice formal writing. The students in the control group completed traditional paper-pencil format writings on weekly prompts. The experimental group students wrote private classroom blog posts on weekly prompts. Both groups were offered an opportunity to revise their writings based on feedback from the instructor and/or peers. On the last day of week six of the research study, students in both groups completed the post-test prompt writing that was graded by the same two independent, highly qualified teachers using the Fairfax County Public School writing analytic rubric for level three. The researcher was available at each writing session to aid with the technical aspects of the blogging software, if necessary. The teacher of record assisted students with language questions. Students utilized a self-checklist prior to submitting work in both groups. The teacher of record did not correct students once the writings were turned in for grading through either blog posts or paper format. The teacher of record graded all student writings. However, she also allowed students to choose the best one out of the first three writings and another best one out of the last three writings for gradebook purposes. Students in both groups

were informed that all six writings would be collected and analyzed during this research study. Students in neither group saw the grading of the two independent raters. Students were not required to respond to other classmates.

Research Design

The Nonequivalent Control Group Design is built as a pretest-posttest randomized experiment but without the random assignment of subjects. In this particular research design, the researcher utilized experimental and control groups that were similar or comparable but not equivalent. That is why this research design is called the Nonequivalent Control Group Design. One of the main objectives was to select groups that were as similar as possible in all respects so the treatment's impact on the study subjects could be analyzed. Nevertheless, one can never presume that the groups are comparable. The researcher must critically evaluate all possible conditions that may interfere with data analysis and interpretation. The researcher chose to use the Nonequivalent Control Group Design because it was rather complicated to utilize random sampling in an educational setting in addition to finding a teacher willing to implement private classroom blogging for formal writing in a world language as part of his or her course. During this study, the researcher studied the quality of formal writing in a world language through private classroom blogging as an instructional tool compared to the traditional paper-pencil format of writing.

Research Questions and Null Hypotheses

The following questions were addressed in this research study.

Research question one: *Does private classroom blogging positively influence task completion in world language formal writing on given prompts?*

Hypothesis one: There will be a significant difference in task completion between students who write formally on given prompts through a private classroom blog and students who write formally on the same prompts in a paper-pencil format as measured by the Fairfax County Public School writing analytic rubric for Spanish III.

Ho1: There will be no significant difference in task completion between students who write formally on given prompts through a private classroom blog and students who write formally on the same prompts in a paper-pencil format as measured by the Fairfax County Public School writing analytic rubric for Spanish III.

Research question two: *Does private classroom blogging positively influence comprehensibility in world language formal writing on given prompts?*

Hypothesis two: There will be a significant difference in comprehensibility between students who write formally on given prompts through a private classroom blog and students who write formally on the same prompts in a paper-pencil format as measured by the Fairfax County Public School writing analytic rubric for Spanish III.

Ho2: There will be no significant difference in comprehensibility between students who write formally on given prompts through a private classroom blog and students who write formally on the same prompts in a paper-pencil format as measured by the Fairfax County Public School writing analytic rubric for Spanish III.

Research question three: *Does private classroom blogging positively influence level of discourse in world language formal writing on given prompts?*

Hypothesis three: There will be a significant difference in level of discourse between students who write formally on given prompts through a private classroom blog and students who write formally on the same prompts in a paper-pencil format as measured by the Fairfax County Public School writing analytic rubric for Spanish III.

Ho3: There will be no significant difference in level of discourse between students who write formally on given prompts through a private classroom blog and students who write formally on the same prompts in a paper-pencil format as measured by the Fairfax County Public School writing analytic rubric for Spanish III.

Research question four: *Does private classroom blogging positively influence vocabulary in world language formal writing on given prompts?*

Hypothesis four: There will be a significant difference in vocabulary between students who write formally on given prompts through a private classroom blog and students who write formally on the same prompts in a paper-pencil format as measured by the Fairfax County Public School writing analytic rubric for Spanish III.

Ho4: There will be no significant difference in vocabulary between students who write formally on given prompts through a private classroom blog and students who write formally on the same prompts in a paper-pencil format as measured by the Fairfax County Public School writing analytic rubric for Spanish III.

Research question five: *Does private classroom blogging positively influence language control in world language formal writing on given prompts?*

Hypothesis five: There will be a significant difference in language control between students who write formally on given prompts through a private classroom blog

and students who write formally on the same prompts in a paper-pencil format as measured by the Fairfax County Public School writing analytic rubric for Spanish III.

Ho5: There will be no significant difference in language control between students who write formally on given prompts through a private classroom blog and students who write formally on the same prompts in a paper-pencil format as measured by the Fairfax County Public School writing analytic rubric for Spanish III.

Data Analysis

The researcher used an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to compare the posttest mean of the experimental group with the posttest mean of the control group where the pretest scores were used as a covariate. This statistical practice allowed the researcher to attribute observed gains, if found, to the effect of the experimental treatment rather than to differences in initial pretest scores. The researcher also planned to use the Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances to determine the homogeneity of variance assumption as well as the Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test if that assumption was violated. The researcher used Cronbach's alpha to evaluate the inter-rater reliability.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of the private classroom blog implemented as an instructional technology on student writing proficiency in a Spanish III high school course with the focus on formal writing on given prompts.

This chapter is organized into three sections. The first section consists of the demographic data. The second section presents the results of the ANCOVA for each research question and examines the differences in writing proficiency for students who blogged and for students who wrote in the traditional paper-pencil format. It also shows the results of the ANCOVA for the mean converted scores as well as inter-rater reliability analyses. The third section provides the summary of the results.

Demographics

The participants for this study were 34 Spanish III students from a public high school in Forsyth County, Georgia. The researcher anticipated 30 to 32 students in each group; however, many parents did not give consent for their children to participate in the study. That was the main reason for low sample size. All of these students were in their third year of learning Spanish, having completed Spanish I and Spanish II courses as prerequisites. The control group consisted of seven males and seven females. 13 students were sophomores, and one student was a senior. The experimental group consisted of 20 students. There were nine males and 11 females in this group. One student was a junior, and 19 students were sophomores.

Results

The researcher used SPSS software for the statistical analyses. Group 1 was the control group and consisted of 14 participants. Group 2 was the experimental group and consisted of 20 participants. Table 1.1 displays the between-subjects factors.

Table 1.1

Between-Subjects Factors for Mean Converted Score

	Value Label	N
Entry ID 1	Group 1	14
2	Group 2	20

Table 1.2

Unadjusted Pre-test/Posttest Means and Adjusted Posttest Means

	Unadjusted Pre-test Mean	Unadjusted Posttest Mean	Adjusted Posttest Mean
Converted Score	85.80	83.36	83.357
Task Completion	3.20	2.79	2.794
Comprehensibility	3.15	3.13	3.125
Level of Discourse	3.01	2.43	2.426
Vocabulary	4.20	4.23	4.228
Language Control	3.87	3.74	3.743

Table 1.3

Descriptive Statistics by Posttest Mean Converted Score

Entry ID	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Group 1	85.693	9.4751	14
Group 2	81.723	7.2927	20
Total	83.357	8.3619	34

As we see from Table 1.3, the control group had a mean 3.97 higher than that of the experimental group with a standard deviation of 9.4751.

Prior to the ANCOVA test for the mean converted score, the researcher utilized the Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances. The results are shown in Table 1.4. A significance of greater than 0.10 indicates that the homogeneity of variance assumption is met and not violated, so the researcher can proceed with the analysis. In other words, pretest mean converted scores have similar variance. This was done to control for the initial differences between the control and the experimental groups to determine if the treatment (blogging) truly had effects on the formal writing proficiency in the experimental group. Table 1.4 demonstrates that the significance is 0.157, which is great than 0.10.

Table 1.4

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances for Posttest Mean Converted Score

F	df1	df2	Sig.
2.103	1	32	.157

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

a. Design: Intercept + MeanConvertedScore_Pre + EntryID

Table 1.5

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Corrected Model	577.024 ^a	2	288.512	5.169
Intercept	270.920	1	270.920	4.854
MeanConvertedScore_Pre	447.205	1	447.205	8.012
EntryID	5.626	1	5.626	.101
Error	1730.377	31	55.819	
Total	238554.643	34		
Corrected Total	2307.401	33		

a. R Squared = .250 (Adjusted R Squared = .202)

Table 1.6

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects Significance

Source	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	.012	.250
Intercept	.035	.135
MeanConvertedScore_Pre	.008	.205
EntryID	.753	.003

The model is significant and explains 25% (adjusted: 20.2%) of the variability between the groups. However, the p-value of 0.753 ($\alpha = 0.05$) indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups based upon the Mean Converted Score.

Hypothesis one. A one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to determine if there was a difference in mean scores on the task completion between students who practiced writing through blogging and students who wrote in a traditional paper-pencil way. Private classroom blogging served as the independent variable and consisted of the two methods: blogged and written in the traditional paper-pencil format. Table 2.1 demonstrates the summary of between-subjects factors.

Table 2.1

Between-Subjects Factors for Task Completion

	Value Label	N
Entry ID 1	Group 1	14
2	Group 2	20

Table 2.2

Descriptive Statistics for Task Completion Mean_Post

Entry ID	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Group 1	3.000	1.0561	14
Group 2	2.650	.8445	20
Total	2.794	.9384	34

Table 2.3

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances^a for Task Completion Mean_Post

F	df1	df2	Sig.
1.501	1	32	.229

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

a. Design: Intercept + TaskCompletionMean_Pre + EntryID

Table 2.4

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Task Completion Mean_Post

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Corrected Model	2.433 ^a	2	1.216	1.416
Intercept	6.911	1	6.911	8.046
TaskCompletionMean_Pre	1.424	1	1.424	1.658
EntryID	.539	1	.539	.627
Error	26.626	31	.859	
Total	294.500	34		
Corrected Total	29.059	33		

a. R Squared = .084 (Adjusted R Squared = .025)

Table 2.5

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects Significance for Task Completion

Source	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
--------	------	---------------------

Corrected Model	.258	.084
Intercept	.008	.206
TaskCompletionMean_Pre	.207	.051
EntryID	.434	.020

The model is not significant. The p-value of 0.434 ($\alpha = 0.05$) indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups based upon Task Completion score.

Hypothesis two. A one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to determine if there was a difference in mean scores on the comprehensibility between students who practiced writing through blogging and students who wrote in a traditional paper-pencil way. Private classroom blogging served as the independent variable and consisted of the two methods: blogged and written in the traditional paper-pencil format.

Table 3.1 demonstrates the summary of between-subjects factors.

Table 3.1

Between-Subjects Factors for Comprehensibility

	Value Label	N
Entry ID 1	Group 1	14
2	Group 2	20

Table 3.2

Descriptive Statistics for Comprehensibility Mean_Post

Entry ID	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Group 1	3.321	.6387	14
Group 2	2.987	.7366	20
Total	3.125	.7078	34

Table 3.3

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances for Comprehensibility Mean_Post

F	df1	df2	Sig.
.472	1	32	.497

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

a. Design: Intercept + ComprehensibilityMean_Pre + EntryID

Table 3.4

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Comprehensibility Mean_Post

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Corrected Model	4.579 ^a	2	2.289	5.938
Intercept	5.033	1	5.033	13.054

ComprehensibilityMean_Pre	3.660	1	3.660	9.494
EntryID	.415	1	.415	1.077
Error	11.953	31	.386	
Total	348.563	34		
Corrected Total	16.531	33		

a. R Squared = .277 (Adjusted R Squared = .230)

Table 3.5

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects Significance for Comprehensibility Mean_Post

Source	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	.007	.277
Intercept	.001	.296
ComprehensibilityMean_Pre	.004	.234
EntryID	.307	.034

The model is significant and explains 27.7% (adjusted: 23%) of the variability between the groups. However, the p-value of 0.307 ($\alpha = 0.05$) indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups based upon the Comprehensibility score.

Hypothesis three. A one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to determine if there was a difference in mean scores on the level of discourse between students who practiced writing through blogging and students who wrote in a traditional paper-pencil way. Private classroom blogging served as the independent variable and

consisted of the two methods: blogged and written in the traditional paper-pencil format.

Table 4.1 demonstrates the summary of between-subjects factors.

Table 4.1

Between-Subjects Factors for Level of Discourse

	Value Label	N
Entry ID 1	Group 1	14
2	Group 2	20

Table 4.2

Descriptive Statistics for Level of Discourse Mean_Post

Entry ID	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Group 1	2.554	.7977	14
Group 2	2.338	.4608	20
Total	2.426	.6201	34

Table 4.3

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances^a for Level of Discourse Mean_Post

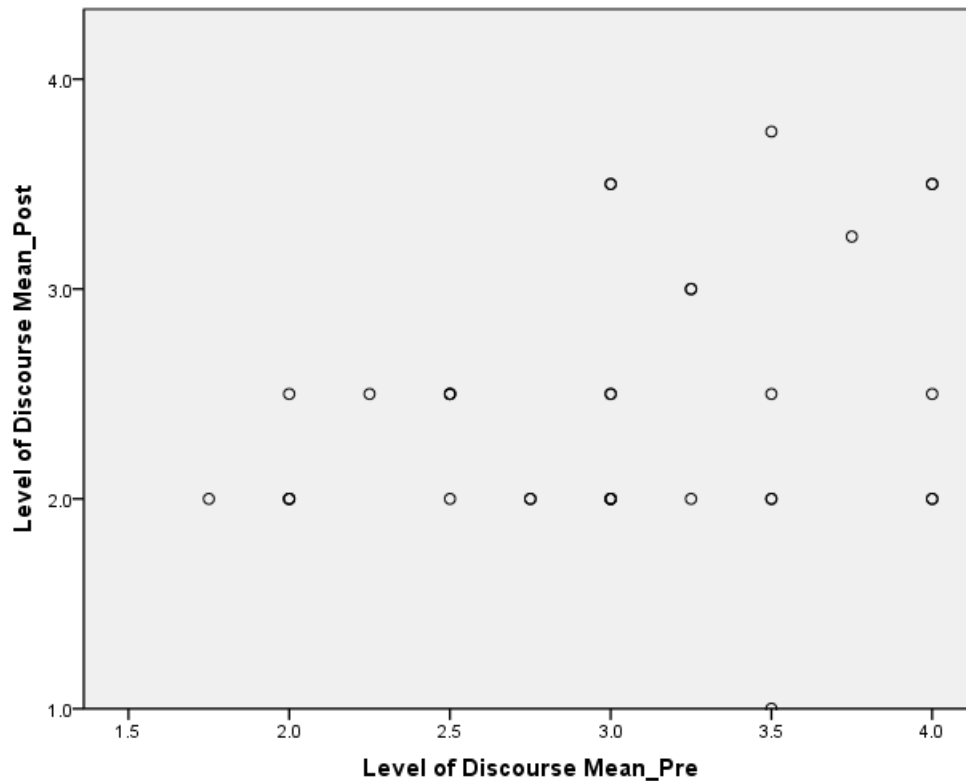
F	df1	df2	Sig.
4.307	1	32	.046

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

a. Design: Intercept + LevelofDiscourseMean_Pre + EntryID

The homogeneity of variance assumption is violated p-value .046 ($\alpha = .10$) so the ANCOVA analysis should not be viewed as reliable.

Figure 1. Scatterplot of Pretest and Posttest means for Level of Discourse.



As shown in Figure 1, since it did not appear to be a linear relationship between the pre and post scores, the researcher used a nonparametric analysis. The Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test was employed. Since the identified significance level was .340 ($>.05$), the null hypothesis was not rejected. Figure 2 shows the results of this test.

Figure 2. Hypothesis Test Summary for Level of Discourse

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Level of Discourse Mean_Post is the same across categories of Entry ID.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.340	Retain the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

Hypothesis four. A one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to determine if there was a difference in mean scores on the vocabulary between students who practiced writing through blogging and students who wrote in a traditional paper-pencil way. Private classroom blogging served as the independent variable and consisted of the two methods: blogged and written in the traditional paper-pencil format.

Table 5.1

Between-Subjects Factors for Vocabulary

	Value Label	N
Entry ID 1	Group 1	14
2	Group 2	20

Table 5.2

Descriptive Statistics for Vocabulary Mean_Post

Entry ID	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Group 1	4.393	1.2275	14

Group 2	4.112	1.0339	20
Total	4.228	1.1085	34

Table 5.3

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances^a for Vocabulary Mean_Post

F	df1	df2	Sig.
.507	1	32	.481

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

a. Design: Intercept + VocabularyMean_Pre + EntryID

Table 5.4

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Vocabulary

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	7.617 ^a	2	3.808	3.585	.040	.188
Intercept	4.100	1	4.100	3.860	.058	.111
VocabularyMean_Pre	6.970	1	6.970	6.561	.016	.175
EntryID	.005	1	.005	.004	.948	.000
Error	32.929	31	1.062			
Total	648.313	34				

Corrected Total	40.546	33				
-----------------	--------	----	--	--	--	--

a. R Squared = .188 (Adjusted R Squared = .135)

The model is significant and explains 18.8% (adjusted: 13.5%) of the variability between the groups. However, the p-value of 0.948 ($\alpha = 0.05$) indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups based upon the Vocabulary score.

Hypothesis five. A one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to determine if there was a difference in mean scores on the language control between students who practiced writing through blogging and students who wrote in a traditional paper-pencil way. Private classroom blogging served as the independent variable and consisted of the two methods: blogged and written in the traditional paper-pencil format.

Table 6.1

Between-Subjects Factors for Language Control

	Value Label	N
Entry ID 1	Group 1	14
2	Group 2	20

Table 6.2

Descriptive Statistics for Language Control Mean_Post

Entry ID	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Group 1	4.125	1.3183	14
Group 2	3.475	1.1177	20

Total	3.743	1.2286	34
-------	-------	--------	----

Table 6.3

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances^a for Language Control Mean_Post

F	df1	df2	Sig.
1.915	1	32	.176

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

a. Design: Intercept + LanguageControlMean_Pre + EntryID

Table 6.4

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Language Control

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Corrected Model	13.934 ^a	2	6.967	6.020
Intercept	5.758	1	5.758	4.975
LanguageControlMean_Pre	10.455	1	10.455	9.034
EntryID	.186	1	.186	.160
Error	35.876	31	1.157	
Total	526.063	34		
Corrected Total	49.811	33		

a. R Squared = .280 (Adjusted R Squared = .233)

Table 6.5

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects Significance for Language Control

Source	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	.006	.280
Intercept	.033	.138
LanguageControlMean_Pre	.005	.226
EntryID	.692	.005

The model is significant and explains 28% (adjusted: 23.3%) of the variability between the groups. However, the p-value of 0.692 ($\alpha = 0.05$) indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups based upon the Language Control score.

Inter-Rater Reliability

The researcher trained two independent raters to score the writings of the control group and blog posts of the experimental group. Prior to scoring the research study writings, the researcher stressed to the raters the importance of a high degree of consistency when scoring the writings. Both scorers discussed the scoring rubric and what each component meant as well as practiced scoring using sample writings in order to reach agreement and consistency. George and Mallery (2003) used the following correlation between Cronbach's alpha and internal consistency to assess the inter-rater reliability.

Table 7.1

Inter-Rater Reliability

Cronbach's alpha	Internal Consistency
$\alpha \geq .9$	Excellent
$.9 > \alpha \geq .8$	Good
$.8 > \alpha \geq .7$	Acceptable
$.7 > \alpha \geq .6$	Questionable
$.6 > \alpha \geq .5$	Poor
$.5 > \alpha$	Unacceptable

Table 7.2

Case Processing Summary for Total Converted Score

	N	%
Cases Valid	68	100.0
Excluded ^a	0	.0
Total	68	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 7.3

Reliability Statistics for Total Converted Score

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on Standardized Items	N of items

0.865	0.865	2
-------	-------	---

Since the Cronbach's Alpha is $.9 > \alpha \geq .8$, the overall internal consistency in this research study is good.

Table 7.4

Item Statistics for Total Converted Score

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Rater 1	87.1000	8.45017	68
Rater 2	82.0618	8.38104	68

Table 8.1

Case Processing Summary for Task Completion

	N	%
Cases Valid	68	100.0
Excluded ^a	0	.0
Total	68	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 8.2

Reliability Statistics for Task Completion

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on Standardized Items	N of items
0.973	0.979	2

Since the Cronbach's Alpha is $\alpha \geq .9$, the overall internal consistency is excellent for task completion.

Table 8.3

Item Statistics for Task Completion

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Rater 1	2.9779	1.03099	68
Rater 2	2.9971	.88553	68

Table 9.1

Case Processing Summary for Comprehensibility

	N	%
Cases Valid	68	100.0
Excluded ^a	0	.0
Total	68	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 9.2

Reliability Statistics for Comprehensibility

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on Standardized Items	N of items
0.723	0.723	2

Since the Cronbach's Alpha is $.8 > \alpha \geq .7$, the overall internal consistency is acceptable for comprehensibility.

Table 9.3

Item Statistics for Comprehensibility

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Rater 1	3.5000	.81954	68
Rater 2	2.7721	.81238	68

Table 10.1

Case Processing Summary for Level of Discourse

	N	%
Cases Valid	68	100.0
Excluded ^a	0	.0
Total	68	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 10.2

Reliability Statistics for Level of Discourse

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on Standardized Items	N of items
.749	.753	2

Since the Cronbach's Alpha is $.8 > \alpha \geq .7$, the overall internal consistency is acceptable for level of discourse.

Table 10.3

Item Statistics for Level of Discourse

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Rater 1	2.9265	.83427	68
Rater 2	2.5147	.72776	68

Table 11.1

Case Processing Summary for Vocabulary

	N	%
Cases Valid	68	100.0
Excluded ^a	0	.0
Total	68	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 11.2

Reliability Statistics for Vocabulary

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on Standardized Items	N of items
.633	.633	2

Since the Cronbach's Alpha is $.7 > \alpha \geq .6$, the overall internal consistency is questionable for vocabulary.

Table 11.3

Item Statistics for Vocabulary

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Rater 1	4.5221	1.13767	68
Rater 2	3.9044	1.16625	68

Table 12.1

Case Processing Summary for Language Control

	N	%
Cases Valid	68	100.0
Excluded ^a	0	.0
Total	68	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 12.2

Reliability Statistics for Language Control

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on Standardized Items	N of items
.755	.761	2

Since the Cronbach's Alpha is $.8 > \alpha \geq .7$, the overall internal consistency is acceptable for language control.

Table 12.3

Item Statistics for Language Control

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Rater 1	4.0735	1.40698	68
Rater 2	3.5368	1.19800	68

Results Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of the private classroom blog implemented as an instructional technology on student writing proficiency in a Spanish III high school course with the focus on formal writing. The differences in task completion, comprehensibility, level of discourse, vocabulary, and language control for students blogging and for students writing in a traditional paper-pencil format were examined to determine if the mean converted scores of students who blogged were different from the mean converted scores of those who wrote in a traditional paper-pencil way. The research from this study indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the control and experimental groups based upon the mean converted score, task completion score, comprehensibility score, vocabulary score, and language control score. Due to the violated homogeneity of variance assumption (p-value .046 ($\alpha=.10$)), ANCOVA analysis should not be viewed as reliable for the level of discourse score. The null hypothesis was not rejected for the level of discourse based on the results of the Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test used for the level of discourse analysis. Statistical results appear to indicate that for all five research questions there was not enough statistical significance between the results to determine that blogging

implemented as an instructional technology was better at assisting students to improve their formal writing proficiency in Spanish III high school course than the traditional paper-pencil format.

The overall inter-rater reliability correlation coefficient is $.9 > \alpha \geq .8$. This testifies that the internal consistency was good and strengthened the statistical analyses. Therefore, all five null hypotheses were accepted. In the next following chapter, the reader will find a more detailed summary of the findings, a discussion of findings and the implications in the light of the relevant literature and theory, an outline of the study limitations, an implications section, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this chapter is to review the results of this quantitative research study and discuss them in the light of the relevant literature, theory, and teaching practice of world languages. The chapter is divided into the following sections: statement of the problem, summary of the findings, discussion of the findings, study limitations, methodological and practical implications, and recommendations for future research.

Statement of the Problem

The acquisition and development of writing skills has always been a difficult area for world language learners. Educators have used a wide variety of strategies and approaches to motivate and teach writing skills in a language different from the mother tongue. As discussed in chapter one, several studies were executed to identify the positive impact of new instructional technologies on student motivation to learn. Still, very few studies focused on the relationship of instructional technology integration and student academic achievement. Even fewer studies focused specifically on the integration of new technologies in world language teaching and learning. In the review of the literature chapter, the researcher established that there were very few quantitative studies conducted to assess the impact of new instructional technologies on student academic achievement. Thus, this quantitative research study focused on the effects of blogging as an instructional technology on the acquisition of formal writing proficiency with Spanish III high school students. In particular, this study examined the differences in task completion, comprehensibility, level of discourse, vocabulary, and language control posttest means for students who practiced formal writing in Spanish through blogging

and those students who practiced formal writing in Spanish in a traditional paper-pencil format. The impact of blogging as an instructional technology on student formal writing proficiency in Spanish III course was the focus of this study.

Summary of the Findings

Research question one. The first purpose of this Nonequivalent Control Group Design research study was to determine whether or not private classroom blogging positively influenced task completion in world language formal writing on given prompts. The convenience sample of 34 Spanish III students was chosen from one high school in the metro Atlanta area. The results of an ANCOVA test showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups based upon the task completion score since the p-value of 0.434 ($\alpha=0.05$) was present. Students who wrote in a traditional paper-pencil format had a mean score of 0.35 points higher than students who blogged.

Research question two. The second purpose of this research study was to determine whether or not private classroom blogging positively influenced comprehensibility in world language formal writing on given prompts. The researcher used the same convenience sample of 34 Spanish III students. The corrected model of the between-subjects effects test was significant and explained 27.7% (adjusted 23%) of the variability between the groups. However, the p-value of 0.307 ($\alpha=0.05$) showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups based upon the comprehensibility score. Students from the control group had a mean score of 0.334 points higher than students from the experimental group.

Research question three. The third purpose of this research study was to determine whether or not private classroom blogging positively influenced the level of discourse in world language formal writing on given prompts. The ANCOVA analysis was not viewed as reliable since the homogeneity of variance assumption was violated (p-value of 0.046 ($\alpha=0.10$)). The results of the Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test demonstrated that the distribution of the posttest mean scores for level of discourse was the same across categories of Entry ID; therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected. Students from the control group had a mean score of 0.216 points higher than students from the experimental group.

Research question four. The fourth purpose of this research study was to determine whether or not private classroom blogging positively influenced vocabulary in world language formal writing on given prompts. The corrected model of the between-subjects effects test was significant and explained 18.8% (adjusted 13.5%) of the variability between the groups. However, the p-value of 0.948 ($\alpha=0.05$) showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups based upon the vocabulary score. Students from the control group had a mean score of 0.281 points higher than students from the experimental group.

Research question five. The fifth purpose of this research study was to determine whether or not private classroom blogging positively influenced language control in world language formal writing on given prompts. The corrected model of the between-subjects effects test was significant and explained 28% (adjusted 23.3%) of the variability between the groups. However, the p-value of 0.692 ($\alpha=0.05$) showed that there was no

statistically significant difference between the two groups based upon the language control score. Students from the control group had a mean score of 0.65 points higher than students from the experimental group.

Discussion of the Findings

Overall, no statistically significant differences in task completion, comprehensibility, vocabulary, language control, and level of discourse were found among the control and the experimental groups. The results appear to be reliable since the overall inter-rater reliability is good ($.9 > \alpha \geq .8$). Similar to the findings of Gonzalez-Bueno and Perez (2000), the study showed that blogging on given prompts did not yield improved writing skills of Spanish III high school students. Gonzalez-Bueno and Perez researched the effects of dialogue journaling through electronic mail on the lexical and grammatical accuracy produced by Spanish learners at a community college in the Midwest. Lexical and grammatical accuracy are interwoven in vocabulary and language control components of the analytic rubric used in this research study and are represented as a similarity of both studies. On the other hand, the findings of this study do not correspond with the results of Sun's (2010) research of extensive writing in foreign-language classrooms through a blogging approach. Sun concluded that writing weblogs in an online environment improved learners' writing skills. Sun's research focused on syntactic complexity, an ability to produce writing that uses subordination and embedded subordinate clauses. Syntactic complexity is reflected through the level of discourse and comprehensibility components of the analytic rubric used in this research study. It is thus possible that blogging is more suitable for extensive writing rather than formal writing on

given prompts. However, there is a significant difference between private classroom blog and online environment blogs. Although this research confirms partial results of one research study and contradicts to some extent parts of another, it would be premature to argue for or against the further usage of blogging as an instructional technology for formal writing proficiency instruction and assessment due to the very small number of studies conducted and their limitations. In addition, this research study was unique and different from all studies reviewed in the literature section.

Since the researcher and the teacher of record were rather enthusiastic about the use of blogging as an instructional technology for writing in Spanish, they were puzzled to find out that there was no statistically significant difference in writing among students in both groups. The data analyses and findings for all five research questions elicited their surprise. Having analyzed the descriptive statistical results, the researcher concluded that the control group had a higher mean in task completion (+0.35), in comprehensibility (+0.334), in level of discourse (+0.216), in vocabulary (+0.281), and in language control (+0.65). Certainly, the control group's writing skills looked stronger than the writing skills in the experimental group. It is possible that the control group participants had slightly higher scores in all areas because they had had an extensive practice of writing in the paper-pencil format. It has been the traditional way of writing in a school setting and students were very familiar with it. It is also likely that the control group participants did not have any distractions from the writing itself. These students were not dependent on the computers' speed throughout the work session. Unlike the bloggers, the control group students did not have to spend any time on choosing and inserting Spanish diacritical

marks, copying their writing from the draft window and pasting it into the final post window. The control group did not have to be concerned about forgetting to save their work and rewriting, if the work was lost.

The almost complete lack of interaction among the bloggers did not support the social constructivism of Piaget (1955) and Vygotsky (1978). Students in the experimental group did not make use of the computer-mediated communication advantages identified earlier by Warschauer (1997). It seemed that the setting was rather ideal for the experimental group. There were no problems with access to computers, the Internet, and blog software. All students were blog literate; therefore, the teacher of record did not have to instruct students on using a blog. In other words, blogging itself was not a big challenge, and students were not majorly distracted from writing on a given prompt. There were no plagiarism incidents reported, and students displayed an appropriate blog and language etiquette. However, the researcher did not observe more vigor or interaction in blogging compared to traditional paper-pencil writing format. The data analyses confirmed this observation. Students in the experimental group did not post more than required on each given prompt. In other words, blogging did not increase the quantity and frequency of their writing. Surprisingly, there was almost no social interaction. Only two students posted blog comments on other classmates' writings during the entire research study period. Perhaps more interaction would be possible in informal writing settings rather than a formal writing environment. In addition, it is possible that there would have been more social interaction among bloggers if there was a larger blog audience. The research study used a private classroom blog, accessible only to that particular class and

the teacher of record, in order to protect the participants and follow the guidelines set by the IRB. It would also be helpful to examine the dynamics of classroom relationships in order to fully understand the almost complete lack of social interaction among the bloggers.

Even though blog software increased the opportunity for everyone to read other posts, it did not positively affect student writing in terms of task completion, comprehensibility, level of discourse, vocabulary, and language control. Blogging offered no constraints in time or space. Nevertheless, students in the experimental group did not value or use that feature since only two students chose to comment on other posts. No students posted non-required blog entries. All participants were encouraged to read each other's writings, comment, and improve their work based on peer commentary. This was encouraged but not mandated or monitored by the teacher of record. It was the intent of the researcher to allow freedom of decision for the participants in both groups. The findings of the research study could have been different if the peer commentary and editing were obligatory and enforced throughout the research study period. Perhaps, it is necessary for the teacher to scaffold with precision the interaction of the Participatory Approach where students work with issues that of interest or concern to them. Larsen-Freeman (2000) indicated that, by grappling with problems in their lives, learners are able to explore the social, historical, and cultural forces that influence them and at the same time improve foreign language literacy. To maximize the social interaction among the bloggers, the teacher of record should utilize the support system in accordance with the group dynamics and writing performance. Modeling peer responses strategies should be

employed and closely monitored from the very beginning of blogging in the classroom in order to prepare students for blog discussions and negotiation. It is likely that the bloggers would achieve higher levels in task completion, comprehensibility, level of discourse, vocabulary, and language control if the social interaction is present.

The research study covered the period of six designated weeks where writings were spread out from November till early February due to holidays and breaks. It is possible that frequent breaks, stress of the holidays, and end of the semester curricular responsibilities negatively affected the time students could afford for blogging as a learning tool.

Finally, the researcher was required to decide whether to reject or adopt the null hypothesis for each research question. The null hypothesis for research question one stated that there would be no significant difference in task completion between students who wrote formally on given prompts through a private classroom blog and students who wrote formally on the same prompts in a paper-pencil format as measured by the Fairfax County Level III writing analytic rubric. Having performed the ANCOVA test for task completion, the test failed to reveal a statistically significant difference between the posttest means of the control and the experimental groups. Having considered Type II error and assumed equal variances, the researcher declined to reject the null hypothesis for research question one. The researcher concluded that students in the experimental group did not score higher in task completion.

The null hypothesis for research question two stated that there would be no significant difference in comprehensibility between students who wrote formally on

given prompts through a private classroom blog and students who wrote formally on the same prompts in a paper-pencil format as measured by the Fairfax County Level III writing analytic rubric. Having performed the ANCOVA test for comprehensibility, the test failed to reveal a statistically significant difference between the posttest means of the control and the experimental groups. Having considered Type II error and assumed equal variances, the researcher declined to reject the null hypothesis for research question two. The researcher concluded that students in the experimental group did not score higher in comprehensibility.

The null hypothesis for research question three stated that there would be no significant difference in level of discourse between students who wrote formally on given prompts through a private classroom blog and students who wrote formally on the same prompts in a paper-pencil format as measured by the Fairfax County Level III writing analytic rubric. Having performed the Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test for level of discourse, the researcher declined to reject the null hypothesis for research question three. The researcher concluded that students in the experimental group did not score higher in level of discourse.

The null hypothesis for research question four stated that there would be no significant difference in vocabulary between students who wrote formally on given prompts through a private classroom blog and students who wrote formally on the same prompts in a paper-pencil format as measured by the Fairfax County Level III writing analytic rubric. Having performed the ANCOVA test for vocabulary, the test failed to reveal a statistically significant difference between the posttest means of the control and

the experimental groups. Having considered Type II error and assumed equal variances, the researcher declined to reject the null hypothesis for research question four. The researcher concluded that students in the experimental group did not score higher in vocabulary.

The null hypothesis for research question five stated that there would be no significant difference in language control between students who wrote formally on given prompts through a private classroom blog and students who wrote formally on the same prompts in a paper-pencil format as measured by the Fairfax County Level III writing analytic rubric. Having performed the ANCOVA test for language control, the test failed to reveal a statistically significant difference between the posttest means of the control and the experimental groups. Having considered Type II error and assumed equal variances, the researcher declined to reject the null hypothesis for research question five. The researcher concluded that students in the experimental group did not score higher in language control.

Study Limitations

The reader must consider several limitations in this study, the first of which is that it has very limited generalizability. The sample was selected from an accessible population because of the researcher's current employment status, so there was only one public high school that participated in the study. In addition, there was no random sampling at all. The researcher had to use the convenience sampling due to the following reasons: the sample was located near where the researcher worked; the researcher was familiar with the public high school setting; the high school administration and the

teacher of record expressed willingness to participate in the study. Once the approval for the study was received, the teacher of record chose two classes out of six to be the control and experimental groups. The teacher of record made the decision on which class would be the control group and which class would be the experimental group. It is possible that there was some teacher's bias present. The study would be stronger if random sampling had been utilized.

Because the research study was comprised of non-equivalent groups, it is necessary to consider a selection threat. The researcher used the pre-test scores as a covariate to help control the selection threat. Both control and experimental groups consisted of 30 students each. However, only 14 students chose to participate in the control group, and only 20 students chose to participate in the experimental group, respectively. The researcher was surprised by the low rate of the desire to participate in the research study. The limited number of students constituted a very small sample. The researcher used a cautious description of the sample for the purposes of generalizing the findings to the population by providing gender, grade level, and years of learning Spanish. Nevertheless, the sample size is very small, and no statistical power analysis was carried out. The researcher did not provide any subgroup analysis where all participants from the experimental group were compared to all participants from the control group. The sample was only representative of an affluent metro Atlanta public school. Therefore, the results may not be applicable to other high schools that have a different make-up in terms of geographical location and population subgroups.

Since the researcher has strong feelings about the implementation of instructional technologies in the classroom, all attempts to avoid the researcher's bias were made. The researcher minimized her conversations with all participants about the potential benefits of blogging. The researcher carefully trained the teacher of record in treatment administration, data collection, and storage. The researcher was present as an observer during the 90-minute class when the students blogged in the computer lab five out six weeks to ensure treatment fidelity. The researcher also trained the independent raters on how to use the analytic writing level III rubric to ensure the consistency and reliability of their scoring. Both scorers used student writings assigned prior to the research study as samples for their scoring practice. They thoroughly discussed the rationale of assigning a particular score to each area to reach understanding of the rubric and consistency in grading. Since no statistically significant differences were found between the control and the experimental groups, one can conclude that blogging as an instructional technology was not an effective strategy, and it did not affect positively the writing proficiency of Spanish III students. However, critics may suggest that the treatment was weak and that it was not implemented correctly. Questions may be raised about the lack of reliability of the level III analytic rubric for presentational writing tasks. The researcher searched extensively for a strong assessment tool for the study. Having reviewed various rubrics, the researcher chose the ones used due to the fact that they reflected research findings in the field of world language teaching and their wide and regular use across the country. In addition, this rubric has been used since 2004 by the Fairfax County Public School System, a national leader in world language curriculum, instruction, and assessment. In

addition, only one type of writing (prompt writing) was utilized. The study explored only the short-term effects of blogging. The researcher used the reliability statistics (Cronbach's alpha coefficient) to ensure the inter-rater reliability. No research participants dropped out of the study, so experimental mortality was avoided.

Methodological and Practical Implications

These study findings will help world language teachers and coordinators to determine whether or not blogging is a desired instructional technology for the acquisition of formal writing proficiency in Spanish in their schools. Blogging can be used as a classroom-based formative and/or summative assessment to target new literacy development. Certainly, the ability to post blogs on the Web in a world language adds to global competency. It will also aid educators in avoiding the described limitations as well as possibly improving the implementation of blogging for formal writing in the classroom. This study is useful for teachers who are dedicated to the assessment and evaluation of writing skills in the field of world language teaching. Blog posts in a world language can serve as a continuous portfolio of student writings. They are time-stamped and assembled. They demonstrate student progress in mastering writing skills. They may serve as a showcase of students' best writing pieces. There is a possibility of integrating the use of all four language skills through blogging. Having blogged on a given prompt, each student can work on reading skills while comprehending other bloggers' posts. Students can also participate in group or class discussions by commenting on each other's blog posts. When blog posts are being read, students can perfect their listening skills as

well. Daily end-of-the-class reflections can serve as another prompt writing activity via blogging.

The teacher's role in blogging should be prescribed in more detail. Perhaps, if a teacher posts blog entries, poses additional questions, and challenges students' ideas or opinions, the students' writing quality may improve. If a teacher finds that blogs lack interaction among group participants, then he or she may model and scaffold that interaction.

Recommendations for Future Research

More research is needed due to the study limitations and small number of quantitative studies conducted prior to this project. It is strongly recommended that random sampling and a larger sample size be utilized to ensure a more rigorous research study. The study was carried out during a limited time between November 16, 2011, and February 9, 2012. It is suggested for future research to extend the experiment over the entire school year.

It is essential to consider a more prescribed treatment and how a different individual teacher can influence the delivery of blogging as an instructional technology and its impact on formal writing proficiency in Spanish as a world language. In addition, future research should examine students' perceptions on blogging throughout the duration of the research study. This should help to assess the confidence level of writing in a world language as well as to offer the insights into the world of an individual writer. Longer research studies are needed to understand the long-term effects of blogging on formal writing proficiency in Spanish. Informal writing proficiency should be explored as

well since blogging originally started as an online personalized diary. Research on blogging as an instructional technology to improve writing skills in a world language class should be explored at all levels: beginning, intermediate, and advanced, to determine a possible relationship between blogging in Spanish and completed years of study. Furthermore, this research study needs to be conducted in other world languages to determine the effects of blogging on the acquisition of writing proficiency considering characteristics of various language families.

More research is desirable in order to identify quality blogging use in the classroom and its long-term effect on formal and informal writing skills. The quantity of generated blog entries needs to be researched as well as the length of each entry and frequency of posts. More qualitative research could reveal insights from high school students on the effectiveness of blogging.

Finally, teachers of world language constantly need research-based strategies and technologies to improve the acquisition of writing proficiency of high school students. Additional research is needed to determine if blogging can be an effective instructional technology that can enhance writing proficiency in world languages.

REFERENCES

- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. (2011). Retrieved from <http://www.actfl.org>
- Angeli, C. (2008). Distributed cognition: A framework for understanding the role of computers in classroom teaching and learning. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 34(3), 250-273.
- Awodele, O., Idowu, S., Anjorin, O., Adedire, A., & Akpore, V. (2009). University enhancement system using a social networking approach: Extending e-learning. *Issues in Informing Science & Information Technology*, 269-283.
- Barone, D., & Wright, T. (2008). Literacy instruction with digital and media technologies. *Reading Teacher*, 62(4), 292-303. Retrieved from <http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/ehost/detail?hid=111&sid=d0c0d934-4b6a-4e78-924b7dd6dcf526dd%40sessionmgr115&vid=1&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWWhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl>
- Blair, R. & Godsall, L. (2006). One school's experience in implementing e-portfolios: Lessons learned. *Distance Learning*, 3(3), 15- 24.
- Blau, I., Mor, N., & Neuthab, T. (2009). Open the windows of communication: Promoting interpersonal and group interactions using blogs in higher education. *Interdisciplinary Journal of E-Learning & Learning Objects*, 5233-246. Retrieved from <http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/ehost/detail?hid=113&sid=98>

ef3b5f-6db0-4d23-b82d-

cc2f989d8214%40sessionmgr104&vid=23&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWWhvc3QtbGl2ZS

ZzY29wZT1zaXRl#db=a9h&AN=48317317

Borau, K., Ullrich, C., Feng, J., & Shen, R. (2009). *Microblogging for language learning: Using Twitter to train communicative and cultural competence.*

Retrieved from <http://portal.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=1616127>

Bouldin, A. S., Holmes, E. R., Fortenberry, M. L. (2006). "Blogging" about course concepts: Using technology for reflective thinking in a communications class. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 70(4), 84.

Byrne, R. (2009). The effect of Web 2.0 on teaching and learning. *Teacher Librarian*, 37(2), 50-53.

Carlino, F. (2009). The electronic discussion visits the Spanish-as-a-foreign-language class: Backstage and insights from an action-research project. *International Journal of Research & Review*, 331-349. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&N=44900135&site=ehost-live&scope=sit>

Castleberry, G., & Evers, R. B. (2010). Incorporate technology into the modern language classroom. *Intervention in School & Clinic*, 45(3), 201-205.
doi:10.1177/1053451209349535

Churchill, D. (2009). Educational applications of Web 2.0: Using blogs to support teaching and learning. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 40(1), 179-183. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8535.2008.00865.x

- Colombo, M. W., & Colombo, P. D. (2007). Blogging to improve instruction in differentiated science classrooms. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 89(1), 60-63. Retrieved from <http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/ehost/detail?hid=122&sid=fa6871db-1c2f-4cf1-be44-18652322508b%40sessionmgr113&vid=5&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZSZZzY29wZT1zaXRl#db=a9h&AN=26553694>
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- de Almeida Soares, D. (2008). Understanding class blogs as a tool for language development. *Language Teaching Research*, 12(4), 517-533. doi: 10.1177/1362168808097165
- Davis, A., & McGrail, E. (2009). "Proof-revising" with podcasting: Keeping readers in mind as students listen to and rethink their writing. *Reading Teacher*, 62(6), 522-529. Retrieved from <http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/ehost/detail?hid=122&sid=fa6871db-1c2f-4cf1-be44-18652322508b%40sessionmgr113&vid=10&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#db=a9h&AN=37012213>
- Ducate, L., & Lomicka, L. (2008). Adventures in the blogosphere: From blog readers to blog writers. *Computer-Assisted Language Learning*, 21(1), 9-28. doi:10.1080/09588220701865474

- Efimova, L., & Fiedler, S. (2003). Learning webs: Learning in weblog networks. In P. Kommers, P. Isaias, & M. B. Nunes (Eds.). *Proceedings of the IADIS International Conference Web Based Communities 2004*, 490-494. Lisbon: IADIS Press.
- Frye, E. M., Trathen, W., & Koppenhaver, D. A. (2010). Internet workshop and blog publishing: Meeting student (and teacher) learning needs to achieve best practice in the twenty-first-century social studies classroom. *Social Studies*, 101(2), 46-53. doi:10.1080/00377990903284070
- Furukawa, T., Matsuzawa, T., Matsuo, Y., Uchiyama, K., & Takeda, M. (2006). Analysis of user relations and reading activity in weblogs. *Electronics & Communications in Japan, Part 1: Communications*, 89(12), 88-96. Retrieved from <http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/ehost/detail?hid=122&sid=fa6871db-1c2f-4cf1-be44-18652322508b%40sessionmgr113&vid=4&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhtbG12ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#db=a9h&AN=21299017>
- George, D., & Mallery, P. (2003). SPSS for Windows step by step: A simple guide and reference. 11.0 update (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Georgescu, C. (2010). Using blogs in foreign language teaching. *Petroleum - Gas University of Ploiesti Bulletin, Educational Sciences Series*, 62(1A), 186-191.
- Gall, M. D., Gall, J. P., & Borg, W. R. (2010). *Educational research: An introduction* (8th ed.). New York: Allyn & Bacon. ISBN: 978-0-205-48849-0.

Georgia Performance Standards. (2011). Retrieved from:

<https://www.georgiastandards.org/Pages/default.aspx>

Goh, J. P., Chin Joo, Q., & Ong Kim, L. (2010). An investigation of students' perceptions of learning benefits of weblogs in an East Asian context: A rasch analysis.

Journal of Educational Technology & Society, 13(2), 90-101. Retrieved from

[http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/ehost/detail?hid=122&sid=0d9fa29d-10e8-4232-8757-](http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/ehost/detail?hid=122&sid=0d9fa29d-10e8-4232-8757-f879f9df01d8%40sessionmgr104&vid=8&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZW9vc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#db=a9h&AN=52045406)

[f879f9df01d8%40sessionmgr104&vid=8&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZW9vc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#db=a9h&AN=52045406](http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/ehost/detail?hid=122&sid=0d9fa29d-10e8-4232-8757-f879f9df01d8%40sessionmgr104&vid=8&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZW9vc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#db=a9h&AN=52045406)

Gonzalez-Bueno, M., & Perez, L. (2000). Electronic mail in foreign language writing: A study of grammatical and lexical accuracy and quantity of language. *Foreign Language Annals*, 33(2).

Gregersen, T. (2006). The despair of disparity: The connection between foreign language anxiety and the recognition of proficiency difference in L2 skills. *Lenguas Modernas*, 31, 7-20.

Gunawardena, C., Hermans, M., Sanchez, D., Richmond, C., Bohley, M., & Tuttle, R. (2009). A theoretical framework for building online communities of practice with social networking tools. *Educational Media International*, 46(1), 3-16.
doi:10.1080/09523980802588626

Hauck, M., & Youngs, B. (2008). Telecollaboration in multimodal environments: The impact on task design and learner interaction. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 21(2), 87-124. doi:10.1080/09588220801943510

- Huay Lit, W., & Qiyun, W. (2009). Using weblog to promote critical thinking - An exploratory study. *Proceedings of World Academy of Science: Engineering & Technology*, 49431-439. Retrieved from <http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/ehost/detail?hid=111&sid=3a2a5cb1-556c-458b-bef7-2f02f846c901%40sessionmgr104&vid=6&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZW9vc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#db=a9h&AN=38214352>
- Huei-Tse, H., Kuo-En, C., & Yao-Ting, S. (2009). Using blogs as a professional development tool for teachers: Analysis of interaction behavioral patterns. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 17(4), 325-340. doi:10.1080/10494820903195215
- Hui-Yin, H., Shiang-Kwei, W., & Comac, L. (2008). Using audioblogs to assist English-language learning: An investigation into student perception. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 21(2), 181-198. doi:10.1080/09588220801943775
- Johnson, D. (2010). Teaching with authors' blogs: Connections, collaboration, creativity. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 43(3), 172-180. doi:10.1598/JAAL.54.3.2
- Kelly, A., & Safford, K. (2009). Does teaching complex sentences have to be complicated? Lessons from children's online writing. *Literacy*, 43(3), 118-122. doi:10.1111/j.1741-4369.2009.00501.x

- Kerawalla, L. L., Minocha, S. S., Kirkup, G. G., & Conole, G. G. (2009). An empirically grounded framework to guide blogging in higher education. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 25(1), 31-42. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2729.2008.00286.x
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (2000). *Techniques and principles in language teaching*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Lee, L. (2009). Promoting intercultural exchanges with blogs and podcasting: A study of Spanish-American telecollaboration. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 22(5), 425-443. doi:10.1080/09588220903345184
- Lee, S., & Krashen, S. (2002). Predictors of success in writing in English as a foreign language: Reading, revision behavior, apprehension, and writing. *College Student Journal*, 36(4), 532-543.
- Liang, M.-Y. (2010). Using synchronous online peer response groups in EFL writing: Revision-related discourse. *Language, Learning & Technology*, 14(1), 20-45.
Retrieved from
http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/gtx/start.do?prodId=AONE&userGroupName=vic_liberty
- Luckin, R., Clark, W., Graber, R., Logan, K., Mee, A., & Oliver, M. (2009). Do Web 2.0 tools really open the door to learning? Practices, perceptions and profiles of 11-16-year-old students. *Learning, Media, & Technology*, 34(2), 87-104.
doi:10.1080/17439880902921949
- Luehmann, A., & Frink, J. (2009). How can blogging help teachers realize the goals of reform-based science instruction? A study of nine classroom blogs. *Journal of*

Science Education & Technology, 18(3), 275-290. doi:10.1007/s10956-009-9150-

x

MacArthur, C. A. (2009). Reflections on research on writing and technology for struggling writers. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice (Blackwell Publishing Limited)*, 24(2), 93-103. doi:10.1111/j.1540-5826.2009.00283.x

McCorkle, B. (2010). English 109.02: Intensive reading and writing II, "Reading, Writing, Blogging". *Composition Studies*, 38(1), 109-119. Retrieved from <http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?hid=122&sid=fa6871db-1c2f-4cf1-be44-18652322508b%40sessionmgr113&vid=13>

Painter, D. D. (2009). Providing differentiated learning experiences through multigenre projects. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 44(5), 288-93. DOI: 10.1177/1053451208330900

Piaget, J. (1955). *The child's construction of reality*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Peters, M., Weinberg, A., & Sarma, N. (2009). To like or not to like! Student perceptions of technological activities for learning French as a second language at five Canadian universities. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 65(5), 869-896. doi:10.3138/cmlr.65.5.869

Pop, A. (2009). Quality standard and the new technologies (NT) in higher education foreign language instruction. *Annals of DAAAM & Proceedings*, 1721-1722.

- Renzulli, J., & Reis, S. (2007). A technology-based program that matches enrichment resources with student strengths. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning*, 2(3), 57-64.
- Saeed, N., Yun, Y., & Sinnappan, S. (2009). Emerging web technologies in higher education: A case of incorporating blogs, podcasts and social bookmarks in a web programming course based on students' learning styles and technology preferences. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 12(4), 98-109.
- Retrieved from <http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/ehost/detail?hid=122&sid=0d9fa29d-10e8-4232-8757-f879f9df01d8%40sessionmgr104&vid=8&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#db=a9h&AN=44785101>
- Sagin Simsek, C. S. (2008). Students' attitudes towards integration of ICTs in a reading course: A case in Turkey. *Computers & Education*, 51(1), 200-211.
- doi:10.1016/j.compedu.2007.05.002
- Shiang-Kwei, W., & Hui-Yin, H. (2008). Reflections on using blogs to expand in-class discussion. *TechTrends: Linking Research & Practice to Improve Learning*, 52(3), 81-85. doi:10.1007/s11528-008-0160-y
- Shih-Hsien, Y. (2009). Using blogs to enhance critical reflection and community of practice. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 12(2), 11-21.
- Slaouti, D., & Barton, A. (2007). Opportunities for practice and development: New qualified teachers and the use of information and communications technologies in

- teaching foreign languages in English secondary school contexts. *Journal of In-service Education*, 33(4), 405-424.
- Sun, Y. (2010). Extensive writing in foreign-language classrooms: A blogging approach. *Innovations in Education & Teaching International*, 47(3), 327-339.
doi:10.1080/14703297.2010.498184
- Taylor, A., Lazarus, E., & Cole, R. (2005). Putting languages on the (drop down) menu: Innovative writing frames in modern foreign language teaching. *Educational Review*, 57(4), 435-455. doi:10.1080/00131910500278322
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind and society: The development of higher mental processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Walther, J., Anderson, J., & Park, D. (1994). Interpersonal effects in computer-mediated interaction: A meta-analysis of social and antisocial communication. *Communication Research*, 21, 460-487.
- Wang, L. (2005). The advantages of using technology in second language education. *The Journal*, 32(10), 38-42. Retrieved from
<http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/ehost/detail?hid=122&sid=d0945db1-4b7a-414a-ad4c-1843511c4872%40sessionmgr104&vid=4&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZS-ZzY29wZT1zaXRl#db=a9h&AN=17098788>
- Warschauer, M. (1997). Computer-mediated collaborative learning: Theory and practice. *MLJ*, 81, 470-481.

Wheeler, S., & Lambert-Heggs, W. (2009). Connecting distance learners and their mentors using blogs. The MentorBlog project. *Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, 10(4), 323-331. Retrieved from <http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/ehost/detail?hid=113&sid=98ef3b5f-6db0-4d23-b82d-cc2f989d8214%40sessionmgr104&vid=24&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWZWhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#db=a9h&AN=48792409>

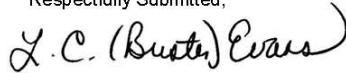
APPENDIX A Forsyth County Approval Letter

Dear Ms. Glymph:

RE: Research Study Approval – Effect of Private Classroom Blog on the Acquisition of Formal Writing Proficiency on Spanish III High School Students

This letter provides written approval for your quantitative research study examining the impact of the private classroom blog being implemented as an instructional technology for student writing proficiency within Forsyth County Schools. As stated in your letter to me, participation should be considered voluntary and will be conducted through student writing data collection. Your study sounds very interesting, and I applaud your efforts of continued education. If I can provide additional information to support this approval, please be encouraged to contact me at 770-887-2461 or lcevans@forsyth.k12.ga.us.

Respectfully Submitted,



L. C. (Buster) Evans
Superintendent

APPENDIX B IRB Approval E-mail



The Graduate School at Liberty University

October 20, 2011

Olga Glymph

IRB Approval 1165.102011: The Effect of the Private Classroom Blog on the Acquisition of Formal Writing Proficiency on Spanish III High School Students

Dear Olga,

We are pleased to inform you that your above study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fernando Garzon".

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.
IRB Chair, Associate Professor
Center for Counseling & Family Studies

(434) 592-5054



40 Years of Training Champions for Christ: 1971-2011

APPENDIX C Consent Form

Dear Participant and Participant's Parents/Legal Guardians,

The following information is provided to help you decide whether or not you wish to participate in the present educational research study. You should be aware that you are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with your instructor of Spanish, the researcher, Forsyth High School, or Liberty University. The purpose of this study is to examine if private classroom blogging positively influences student achievement in the area of world language formal writing. You will complete daily prompt writings through an ANGEL blog. ANGEL is a program used at all high schools in Forsyth County School System. Only the research study participants will have access to the blog. The blog is intended only for classroom use and is not open to public view. Thus, the research Internet environment is secure. All research participants are expected to follow and observe the Acceptable Use of Forsyth County Schools Computers and Network Resources Policy. All blog posts will be completed in class. The researcher has secured the laptop carts and Internet connection to ensure access to blogging technology. You will be asked to write and submit your writings for revisions via the ANGEL blog as well. You will also receive instructor and peer feedback for your writing through blog posts.

Data will be collected throughout the research study between September and February 2012. Data collection will involve the following documents: blog posts made by students and the instructor. Individuals involved in data collection will be the instructor

and Spanish III students. Do not hesitate to ask any questions about the study either before participating or during the time that you are participating. The researcher would be happy to share the findings with you after the research is completed. However, your name will not be associated with the research findings in any way, and only the researcher will know your identity as a participant.

There are no known risks and/or discomforts associated with this study. The expected benefits associated with your participation are the information about the experiences in learning quantitative research, the opportunity to participate in a quantitative research study, and your knowledge of blogging in Spanish.

Please sign your consent with full knowledge of the nature and purpose of the procedures. A copy of this consent will be given to you to keep.

Signature of the participant

(student): _____

Signature of the parent/legal

guardian: _____

Date: _____

Adapted from Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

APPENDIX D Writing Prompts

1. Escribe 150 palabras como mínimo sobre Qué harás en las vacaciones la semana que viene?

- Irás a un sitio divertido o estarás en tu casa?
- Mirarás la tele? Dormirás? Irás al cine?
- Con quién andarás? con tus amigos? con tu familia? con tus parientes?
- Qué cenarás el jueves?
- Irás al cine? a un concierto?
- Jugarás con amigos?
- Serán unas vacaciones divertidas o aburridas?

Acuérdate de: Escribir en párrafos.

Escribir la fecha.

Escribir un título.

Escribir con pluma negra o azul.

La hamburguesa – oración de introducción, oraciones con relación y oración en conclusión o transición.

Termina tu ensayo con una buena conclusión!

Write 150 words minimum about what you will do while on vacation next week. Will you go some place fun, or will you stay at home? Will you watch TV? Sleep a lot? Go to the movies? With whom will you be? Your friends? Family? Extended family? What will you eat for Thanksgiving? Will you go to a concert? Will it be a fun or boring vacation?

Remember to write in paragraphs. Remember the hamburger structure for building

paragraphs. Write the date. Write a title. Write in blue or black pen if you are not blogging. Remember to finish your essay with a good conclusion!

2. Tú escribes un artículo para el periódico de HS sobre la ropa que estará de moda en el invierno, primavera y verano del 2012. Escribe tu artículo de 150 palabras como mínimo. Usa verbos en futuro, condicional y presente. Puedes usar tus apuntes y un diccionario.

Describe la ropa de los chicos en el invierno, primavera y verano del 2012. Habla de colores, diseños y materiales de la ropa también.

Describe la ropa de las chicas en el invierno, primavera y verano del 2012. Habla de colores, diseños y materiales de la ropa también.

¡Recuerda de usar la hamburguesa! – Oración de introducción (pan), 2 ó más oraciones (carne y condimentos) y una oración de transición o conclusión (otro pan).

Revisa tu trabajo antes de entregarlo.

You are writing an article for the school newspaper about the clothing that will be in style this winter, spring and summer. Write a 150 word minimum. Use verbs in present, future and conditional tenses. You may use your notes and a dictionary/electronic translator to look up individual words.

- Describe the clothes guys will be wearing. Speak to the colors, fabrics, and designs.
- Describe the clothes girls will be wearing. Speak to the colors, fabrics, and designs.

Remember to use the “Hamburger” structure for your paragraphs – introductory sentence, 2 or more sentences and a transition or concluding sentence. Check your work before turning it in.

3. Escribe 150 palabras como mínimo (trata de escribir 200!) en una breve composición de sobre tu atleta hispano preferido. Escribe una introducción, organiza los datos en párrafos y escribe una conclusión de por qué te gusta el atleta. Contesta las preguntas en tu párrafo.

Quién es tu atleta hispano favorito?

Qué deporte practica? Qué posición juega? Qué hace?

Cuántos años juega? Para qué equipo juega?

Qué record tiene? Qué es diferente de él/ella a los otros en su deporte?

Por qué es tan bueno(a) en su deporte?

Por qué es tu atleta favorito?

Write 150 words minimum (try to write 200!) in a brief composition about your favorite Hispanic athlete. Write an introduction, organize your facts in paragraphs, and write a conclusion as to why you like this particular athlete. Be sure to include the answers to the following questions in your essay. Who is your favorite Hispanic athlete? What sport(s) does s/he practice? What position does s/he play? What does s/he do? How many years has s/he been practicing the sport? What teams has s/he played for? Does s/he hold any records? How is s/he different from other athletes in his/her sport? Why is s/he so good at this sport? Why is s/he your favorite?

4. Mira el dibujo. Este fin de semana llovió mucho. ¿Qué hicieron estas personas en el fin de semana? ¿Qué hiciste tú? ¿Qué hicieron tus amigos? Escribe 150-200 palabras sobre el fin de semana pasado. Usa pretérito.

Look at the drawing. This weekend it rained very much. What did these people do during the weekend? What did you do? What did your friends do? Write 150-200 words about your rainy weekend. Use preterit tense.

5. Es 2015. Estás en la universidad. Escribe una carta a tu familia de 150-200 palabras sobre todo lo que hiciste esta semana en la universidad en tus clases y con tus amigos. Usa pretérito.

It is 2015. You are at the University of _____. Write a letter home to your family (150-200 words) about everything that you did this week at school in your classes and with your friends. Use preterit tense.

6. Mira el dibujo. Fue una semana muy ocupada. ¿Qué hicieron estos vecinos el sábado? ¿Te invitaron a la fiesta? ¿Fuiste? ¿Qué hiciste tú? Escribe 150 - 200 palabras como mínimo. Usa pretérito y presente.

Look at the drawing. This week was a very busy week. What did your neighbors do on Saturday? Did they invite you to their party? Did you go? What did you do? Write 150-200 words minimum. Use preterit and present tense.

APPENDIX E Fairfax County Public Schools Level III Presentational Tasks (Writing) Analytic Rubric

Level 3 Presentational Tasks (Writing) Analytic Rubric

Task Completion

- Minimal completion of the task and/or content undeveloped.
- Partial completion of the task; ideas somewhat developed.
- Completion of the task; ideas adequately developed.
- Superior completion of the task; ideas well developed and well organized.

Comprehensibility

- Text barely comprehensible.
- Text mostly comprehensible, requiring interpretation on the part of the reader.
- Text comprehensible, requiring minimal interpretation on the part of the reader.
- Text readily comprehensible, requiring no interpretation on the part of the reader.

Level of Discourse

- Lists of discrete sentences, some repetitive; few cohesive devices.
- Variety of discrete sentences; some cohesive devices.
- Emerging paragraph-length discourse; variety of cohesive devices.
- Paragraph-length discourse; variety of cohesive devices.

Vocabulary

- Inadequate and/or inaccurate use of vocabulary.
- Somewhat inadequate and/or inaccurate use of vocabulary and too basic for this level.
- Adequate and accurate use of vocabulary for this level.
- Rich use of vocabulary with some idiomatic expressions.

Language Control

- Emerging use of basic language structures.
- Emerging control of basic language structures.
- Control of basic language structures.
- Control of basic language structures with occasional use of advanced structures.

Note: In an extreme case where the response is nonsensical, completely inappropriate and/or completely unrelated to the task, the response may be considered unratable.

Name _____

Task Completion	1/2	1	1 1/2	2	2 1/2	3	3 1/2	4
Comprehensibility	1/2	1	1 1/2	2	2 1/2	3	3 1/2	4
Level of Discourse	1/2	1	1 1/2	2	2 1/2	3	3 1/2	4
Vocabulary	1/2	1	1 1/2	2	2 1/2	3	3 1/2	4
Language Control	1/2	1	1 1/2	2	2 1/2	3	3 1/2	4

Raw Score: _____ /24

24	100 %	16	82.7 %	8	65.3 %
23.5	98.9 %	15.5	81.6 %	7.5	64.2 %
23	97.8 %	15	80.5 %	7	63.2 %
22.5	96.8 %	14.5	79.4 %	6.5	62.1 %
22	95.7 %	14	78.3 %	6	61.0 %
21.5	94.6 %	13.5	77.2 %	5.5	59.9 %
21	93.5 %	13	76.2 %	5	58.8 %
20.5	92.4 %	12.5	75.1 %	4.5	57.8 %
20	91.3 %	12	74.0 %	4	56.7 %
19.5	90.2 %	11.5	72.9 %	3.5	55.6 %
19	89.2 %	11	71.8 %	3	54.5 %
18.5	88.1 %	10.5	70.8 %	2.5	53.4 %
18	87.0 %	10	69.7 %	2	52.3 %
17.5	85.9 %	9.5	68.6 %	1.5	51.2 %
17	84.8 %	9	67.5 %	1	50.2 %
16.5	83.8 %	8.5	66.4 %	0.5	49.1 %

Converted % Score: _____ %

If you use points in your grade book, use Conversion Chart B or the following formula:

$$\text{converted \% score} \times \frac{\text{max score}}{100} = \text{student points}$$

(To divide by 100 move the decimal point two places to the left.)

FINAL GRADE: _____