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Using electronic writing to promote students' writing

Munirab Abdullah Alanazi
Eastern Washington University

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USING ELECTRONIC WRITING TO PROMOTE STUDENTS' WRITING

A Thesis

Presented To

Eastern Washington University

Cheney, Washington

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree

Master of Education, Instructional Media and Technology

By

Munirah Abdullah Alanazi

Fall 2013

THESIS OF MUNIRAH ABDULLAH ALANAZI APPROVED BY

Sean W. Agriss, PhD., Committee Chair

Date _____

Tara Haskins, PhD., Committee Member

Date _____

Gina Petrie, PhD., Committee Member

Date _____

MASTER'S THESIS

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to promote students' writing by using electronic writing (e-writing) tools. Formal writing can lack the use of imagination and fun; thus, it is important to combine formal writing strategies and digital tools to offer a more enjoyable experience for students via the world of technology. This study examines the following research questions: 1) How might using e-writing increase students' motivation to write? and 2) How might informal e-writing promote formal writing? A review of the literature showed the following important categories of investigation: the importance of the writing process, writing to learn, writing for knowledge transformation, using e-writing to increase motivation, student e-writing outside of class promoting formal writing, using e-writing in writing instruction, and motivational electronic writing platforms. The subjects of this study were seven senior students in an English Department who created blog sites and shared their pages through a class website on Google Sites. Students completed the study's requirements including pre and post-surveys, self-directed informal writing exercises, and a self-reflection paper. The effect of electronic writing to promote students' motivation to write was measured and showed that Blogger was an effective and easy tool for engaging students, helping them find and build new skills, and revealing writing talent. The subjects made statements in the post-survey and reflection exercise very similar to previous reports showing that allowing students to write what is personally interesting and valuable to them is key in helping them begin the transition from informal to formal writing and my project significantly corroborated that finding. Using technology, interactive tools, and electronic publishing platforms was a motivator that enabled the project's subjects to become active writers who began to enjoy the process of writing itself, even reporting they would continue writing after the end of this

project. Students found the e-writing practice promoted their formal writing by increasing their writing skills overall. The subjects in the study reported that e-writing both motivated and inspired 100% of them, and nearly 86% of them reported that they gained formal writing skills by the end of this project, even those who wrote in the pre-survey that they did not like to write. E-writing helped the subjects to write faster and encouraged them to believe they would be successful as formal writers and 85.7% of the participants enjoyed the writing process according to the post-survey. The data showed that using electronic writing does increase students' motivation to write, and informal electronic writing does promote writing enjoyment and builds experience that fosters positive self-esteem and the acceptance of formal writing tasks. Students need to enjoy the process of writing, and electronic tools have been shown to motivate and inspire the writing process. The importance of writing should not be ignored; it is a major component of learning and knowledge growth throughout school and a successful future.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Background

Do you have experience in writing? Do you enjoy writing? Are you one of those people who are keen to write on a daily basis? I asked these questions to my peers and they all responded that they prefer not to write.

One of my friends told me that writing is a difficult task, if not impossible. My friends, Saudi friends, believe that a writing task requires a great effort and that only a few are able to write well. One of them said, I can write five informal pages, but cannot write five formal lines. When I asked why, she told me that formal writing needs a lot of time, thinking and planning, using difficult strategies, and personal skills; but informal writing does not need it. She completed her speech by saying: just close your eyes and think about what you want to write, see a pretty picture of it in your mind, and put your fingers on your computer's keyboard and just start to write with no worries about strategies, skills, the time, and how many pages you will do.

However, when I asked those same people related questions, their answers changed. I asked questions such as: Do you have accounts online? Do you use e-mail, Twitter, Facebook, or any other website to connect with people and express yourself? How long does it take you to select your ideas and words to write across a website? All of them answered that they use websites to communicate with others through writing. They also express their opinions, thoughts and feelings through these websites. While people initially responded that they did not like to write, they soon realized that they write everyday via the Internet.

In Saudi Arabia, I received my Bachelor's degree in Arabic. I had to rely heavily on personal skills more than strategies for rhetoric imagination. A lot of people find it difficult to write in Arabic, even in formal writing classes because we do not follow strict rules for organization or strategy. This is what makes writing more difficult in our culture.

Official writing in the K-12 Saudi education system is taught during one class a week. During that 40-minute class, the teacher determines the title, what they will write about during class, the aspects the teacher wants them to cover, and then students begin writing dependent on their own personal skills. There is no specific strategy for organizing or planning that the student is given in order to write well. A student who innately possesses the talent will have an easy time writing a good paper while the student who finds it difficult to cover the aspects or lack personal writing skills will get the least grade.

When I arrived in America, I began to see the strategies that are used to teach English. Strategies such as essay structure and content prompts allow writers to excel at writing with little or no use of their own imagination as they begin to develop their skills. The Kashmir Monitor (2012) reported that blogging and electronic writing, or e-writing, can help increase students' narrative and imaginative writing skills. Additionally, the researcher cited, Barak, found that e-writing also boosts morale and reduces anxiety. Adding blogging and e-writing in an educational platform would be a highly effective tool for teachers and would function as a prompt for students.

Access to and use of high quality educational resources in the classroom are significant factors that a professional preparation system needs to be highly effective

(International Reading Association, 2012). Standardized expectations, adequate ratio of teacher to students, and additional strategies for students who need more time to become effective writers, are all important best practices throughout a school district (Ibid., 2012). It is important for educators to motivate their students to write by showing them appropriate strategies so that they will be successful in writing. Teachers of basic writing need to give many different kinds of writing assignments in order to discover their students' strengths and weaknesses and the Internet has many tools to help in this determination (Stine, 2010).

Researchers from the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute have developed a course model for learning that Stine stated is part of a successful writing strategy. This strategy uses the OctoPlus platform which states that the student be given the opportunity to “connect, reflect, share, learn, practice, experiment, and apply” (2010, p. 40). This particular framework uses Internet sources to involve students at any learning level and their subsequent success will increase their drive to continue writing. Matas and Allan found that using small, repetitive assignments will reduce writing anxiety while increasing narrative writing skills over time (cited in Stine, 2010, p. 41). This will develop skills to enable all students to write; a student who does not originally have talent and superior skills can still become a successful author.

Significance of this Study

Lenhart, Smith, Macgill, and Arafah (2008), noted that 93% of teenagers are using technology and social networking writing for fun with technology. Students prefer electronic writing much more than formal writing. Sixty percent of teenagers do not think that electronic writing is "writing" and teens enjoy non-school writing, unlike their

writing for school (Lenhart et al., 2008). When we use technological tools to write, it feels like we are writing for fun. This medium allows us to express our feelings and thoughts with our friends and family. We are allowed to choose our topics and how we write. This means that formal writing is not that fun for students (Ibid., 2008). As teachers, we must help students find pleasure in the writing elements of formal writing. In the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Fred Rogers Center (NAEYC) *Position Statement of 2012*, they stated that “technology and interactive media are here to stay” and “with guidance...technology tools can be harnessed for learning and development” in school (p. 2).

Imagination is important to create our own stories and learn to write our own narratives, and since “there is no limit to the human imagination” (Spencer, 2003, p. 546), it should be easy to engage students who are eager to write. Spencer wrote “Students should be able to implement a new strategy and use it effectively to develop their own stories. The strategy can get the benefits of life as students apply these skills in their writing” (Ibid., p. 546).

Students believe that their formal writing within school is devoid of fun unlike their electronic writing (Lenhart et al., 2008). Yet electronic devices can be very effective because students already like using them to write; teachers could use them as part of a new framework of strategies that promote formal writing, as my friend said. This paper will investigate using electronic writing to promote students' writing efforts. The goal of this study is to highlight the use of electronic writing, already a part of everyday life for many, as a mechanism for motivating students to become successful formal writers. Using e-writing, with familiar electronic devices and publishing platforms, to engage the

learners' imagination while guiding them in their development of effective narrative skills, building upon students' current writing talents, will lead to engaged writers and learners.

Technology can encourage and strengthen learning (Prensky, 2001). It does so by stimulating creativity, allowing easy access to information, and offering tools to help us get organized. Electronic tools can be harnessed for learning and skill development during the school day (NAEYC, 2012). Students can be more motivated by the use of technology in the classroom (Prensky, 2001). Additionally, they often enjoy learning about new technological devices and tools. The iPad, touch screen technology, Smartphones, and associated applications have proven that mobile technology is especially desirable. Today's children have grown up in a world in which technology is everywhere. Now, technology is their language. They are what are referred to as digital natives (Prensky, 2001). Using these technologies, students can create an informative, well-prepared, detailed and interesting paper with ease. They will be more likely to have fun creating the paper as well. Teachers can give them this opportunity and ensure writing success without too many changes in their curriculum.

Statement of the Problem/Area of Focus

The purpose of this study is to promote students' writing by using electronic writing tools. Google Sites will be one of these tools; the study's introduction to the project will be based at Google Sites and the students will have a choice of similar platforms. Formal writing can lack motivating factors, so it is important to combine formal writing strategies and digital tools to offer a more motivated experience for students via the world of technology. Garret and Moltzen (2011), Klein and Rose (2010),

and Myles (2002), among others, have noted that it is easier to write about something one already knows about. This type of informal writing, writing short narratives about a previous occurrence or event, in a journal format, is a good way to lead into formal writing later. Having a regular scheduled informal writing period, self-directed as to time and length, is assumed to be a springboard into formal writing. Students will realize that they can enjoy writing tasks. Using Google Sites, Wikispaces, Protopages, Blogger, and similar platforms will motivate students to produce formal writing texts. Writing to Learn, as Forsman (n.d.) phrased it, is writing to learn to think, along with support and guidance, while publishing written works online; to “improve students comprehension and memory of text” according to Lee (2006), cited in McPherson (2006), Panteli, Yan, and Chamakiotis (2011). Using both qualitative and quantitative analysis, this approach will be analyzed for efficacy in promoting formal writing and knowledge building.

Research Questions:

- How might using e-writing increase students' motivation to write?
- How might informal e-writing promote formal writing?

Possible Limitations

My aspirations for this study are not limited to the completion of my thesis. My hope is that I will be able to carry this research with me into my teaching career. I want to adopt the use of electronic writing in all schools and classrooms in public and university education, including within Saudi Arabia. One of the difficulties or limitations of this study is the difficulties that students may have in learning these new technological tools. So, I will choose some common tools that they are already currently using on a regular basis.

In Saudi Arabia, there is very limited access to technology, such as computers with fast Internet connections, especially within the school system; this is true in many rural areas around the world. Knowing about this deficit in technology access is what gave me the idea that every student needs this technology, and access to these educational tools, because it will help generate enthusiastic work efforts in the creation and development of their own narratives via an account from home. Students can share their stories, their experiences and their writings on the class website. The feedback will enhance their skills and their investment in building their own skills.

There may be problems in promoting the use of e-writing, even if it has been shown to be very effective in education. Teachers may be unfamiliar with these newer tools and the amount of time required for teachers, and students, to learn these new tools may be an issue. In addition, there are those who do not believe in integrating the culture of education with technology and others who do not see the benefit of connecting technology and formal writing. However, it is important to increase the availability of technology for all students and this study can add to the rationale of why it is a significant factor in education. This study was undertaken during the summer quarter and throughout the fall quarter of 2013. The results will be ready to publish in December, 2013.

Definition of Terminology

Google Sites: The company's definition of Google Sites is the electronic tool "to make information accessible to people who need quick, up-to-date access" (Google Sites, n.d., para. 1). According to Cavender (2012):

Google Sites is a good choice for students to create their portfolios. Students were already using Google Documents for their essays, so the interface was reasonably

familiar to them. Google Documents integrates well with Google Sites, so it was very easy for students to embed their essays in their portfolios. Google Sites allows for easy customization, for any student who might want to get creative with site design. Using Google Sites along with Google Documents makes it very easy for students to control who's allowed to see what. I created two "reader accounts" in Gmail, and students were expected to share all of their documents with both me and the readers, and to make their sites accessible to us. Beyond that, who could see their work was entirely up to the students. (para. 3)

E-Writing: Electronic writing; writing by using technology such as social networking, Blogger, Protopage, and Wikispaces. Text messages, Yahoo, Gmail, Hotmail, Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp, along with other tools that access modern technology and smart phone technology, are all examples of successful electronic writing tools that can motivate students to write quality narrative texts.

Digital Native: Those who are "native speakers" of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet" (Prensky, 2001). Students are native speakers, much more than teachers and parents, because they were born into the time of technology usage; electronic tools are part of their native language. Digital natives use technology daily. While these students may have different and varied ways that they personally access and use technology in general, digital natives use it to write about their ideas and opinions as well as for research and their unique reading choices.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter includes studies and opinions about the writing process, writing to learn, writing for knowledge transformation, technological tools, and expansion of the two research questions: 1) How might using e-writing increase students' motivation to write? and 2) How might informal e-writing promote formal writing?

The Importance of the Writing Process

In the summer of 1966, more than 50 American, British and Canadian educators met at Dartmouth College for the Anglo-American Seminar on the Teaching of English. In seeking to define English as an important school subject, identify quality teaching models and methods for best practices, the conference highlighted student-centered learning as a way to activate student engagement and improve the framework of learning. Harris (1991) stated that the conference's impact, nearly a half century ago, "was how the old model of teaching centered on the transmission of skills (composition) and knowledge (literature) gave way to a "growth model" focusing on the experiences of students and how these are shaped by their uses of language" (cited in Stearns, 2006, Abstract).

Muller (1967), tasked with writing the complete analysis of the seminar, stated that the conference's ideal education system was identified as one that provided "for the different needs of different regions, kinds of schools, kinds of students, and the individual student—the unique individual who is prized" (p. 11) within the school room or group. He reported that societal needs for "literate, informed, critical citizens" (p. 19) drove the focus toward effective English curriculum and teachers that would support the emotional

and intellectual development of students who would be able to read, write, and listen at a high level; English classes, from the elementary level forward, were felt to be crucial for helping students to become critical thinkers, responsible citizens, and socially well-adapted members of a vigorous society. Using electronic devices and publishing platforms can ease the transition from informal writing to formal narratives that enhance learning and advance education toward this goal.

The successful teacher would recognize that engaged students will be active learners while it is the teacher's job to give them structure and support while invigorating their quest for information and knowledge. Creber (1967), in writing about the conference, wrote that English teachers had a responsibility beyond their own selves and they must resist their own personal wishes and start "selecting material with little reference to any absolute aesthetic standard but with the closest attention to the child's own interests and capacity" (p. 160). Creber stated that "our task, being to whet the appetite, involves extending the child's interests and abilities" (p. 160), this being one of the goals of the Dartmouth conference.

Writing and reading skills took on an importance not previously identified and the Anglo-American Seminar on the teaching of English asked teachers to meet that imperative. However, currently many youth and adults report being poor writers or not being interested in writing and it is not a task many students enjoy; the conference was not as instructive as it might have been. Graham and Harris (2005) stated that:

Current educational reform, as reflected in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), places little emphasis on writing...an unfortunate oversight, as writing is critical to school success. It is the primary means by which students demonstrate their

knowledge in school (but even more important, it provides a flexible tool for gathering, remembering, and sharing subject-matter knowledge as well as an instrument for helping children explore, organize, and refine their ideas about a specific subject. (p. 19)

Newell, Beach, Smith, et al. (2011) reported that “over 40% of the students at Grade 8, as well as a third at Grade 12, report writing essays requiring analysis or interpretation at most a few times a year. This is problematic since it is this type of more complex writing that is needed for advanced academic success in high school as well as college course-work” (p. 276).

Writing to Learn

The importance of learning effective writing skills is as imperative today as it was in 1966 and it should have more of a focus. A highly effective writing curriculum is the Writing to Learn model, which Forsman (n.d.) referred to as “Writing to Learn Means Learning to Think” and said that “if students are encouraged to try a variety of thought processes in classes, they can, regardless of their ages, develop considerable mental power. Writing is one of the most effective ways to develop thinking” (cited on WAC website, 2013, para. 3). This writing strategy has been shown to promote higher cognition overall according to research (e.g., WAC website, 2013; Newell, 2006; Fulwiler & Young, 1986; Klein & Rose, 2010; Klein & Samuels, 2010). Fulwiler and Young (1986) said that writing to learn helps us “to order and represent experience to our own understanding. In this sense language provides us with a unique way of knowing and becomes a tool for discovering, for shaping meaning, and for reaching understanding” (cited on WAC website, 2013, para. 2). Newell (2006) found that “Writing to Learn”

activities compel critical thinking and successive knowledge building, particularly as students interact with their peers and present their research using electronic platforms (cited in Klein & Rose, 2010, p. 434). The specific subject area or the language it is written in is not a significant factor; it is the guided process of the writing of the texts that is important.

According to Shu and Wang (2001), “young adults in the digital age devote more time to accessing digital-media information than information from traditional printed texts” (p. 68) suggesting that instructors will need less time promoting new learning strategies; students will likely enjoy accessing technology as part of the classroom. This can be a positive strategy for building writing skills for those students who feel unable to write. Dalsgaard (2006) referenced many studies that found that many effective learning models are those where students are in charge of their own learning and problem-solving processes. Hannafin et al. (1999) said "the individual determines how to proceed based on his or her unique needs, perceptions, and experiences, distinguishes known from unknown, identifies resources available to support learning efforts, and formalizes and tests personal beliefs" (cited by Dalsgaard, 2006, para. 14). Allee (1997) wrote that "resources are media, people, places or ideas that have the *potential* to support learning. Resources are information assets – data points organized by an individual or individuals to convey a message” (cited by Dalsgaard, 2006, para. 15) and inspire critical thinking, new ways to conceptualize ideas; this is how knowledge is built.

Klein and Rose (2010) reported that knowledge transformation occurs when students effectively use available online sources to acquire information, hold debate-like conversations in class or within a group, organize their thinking and develop their texts,

in order to deliver a persuasive argument or persuasive analysis of their topic in writing. Klein and Samuels (2010) found that the more extensive this process is, the more students learn compared to those who do not use a writing to learn framework (cited in Klein & Rose, 2010, p. 434). Using the Internet and technological tools motivates and engages students; they have higher-level learning and successful knowledge building at every grade level. Klein and Rose (2010) also found that a skilled teacher was a significant factor in a writing to learn model; they provided the prompts and support needed for students who write to learn and think.

Writing for Knowledge Transformation

According to Alhaisoni, Flower, and Hayes (1981), “people start out writing without knowing exactly where they will end up; yet they agree that writing is a purposeful act” (p. 79). Teaching students how to organize their papers should be very helpful. However, Kantor (1987) stated that writing is a creative process that emphasizes the “relationships among speaking, reading, writing, listening, and thinking” (p. 172) and noted that the process often includes activities such as prewriting, collaborating, and many revisions before a final paper is produced. Kantor suggested that writing focus on being informative, entertaining and enlightening as well as being personally educational; electronic publishing helps ensure this.

Wiesendanger, Perry, and Braun, in the study, *Suggest-Choose-Plan-Compose: A Strategy to Help Students Learn* (2011, p. 455), noted that, “students should be able to implement a new strategy and use it effectively to develop their own stories. The strategy can produce benefits for life as students apply these skills in their writing.” Writing to learn activities, teacher support in organization and other effective writing strategies help

students learn to enjoy writing and presenting formal texts, both online and for their peers. Those strategies show students how easy it can be to effectively arrange their ideas, develop ideas in creative and imaginative ways, and produce an impressive paper or publication while significantly building their own knowledge base and test scores.

Williams and Jacobs (2004) analyzed the “potential educational value of blogs as means to promote deeper learning and integration of learning experiences from inside and outside the classroom” (cited in Mohd Hashim, 2012, p. 200). Dron (2003) wrote that blogs serve “as a collaborative or reflective space to support students' reflection” (Ibid., p. 200) on their work and it is the reflective writing portion that this project intends to analyze. Davis and Waggett (2006) said that “reflective writing that includes self-assessment and pushes the writer to deeper self-knowledge” (Ibid., p. 200). Electronic writing tools, and a blogging format, should be a positive support for the writing and learning experience.

When the educators met at Dartmouth in 1966, or when Kantor wrote his assessment on the writing process in 1987, it was felt that students were being taught under a very narrow paradigm that was mainly product-based and formulaic in a one-size fits all format. Kantor, and many others, felt that writing should not be a solitary activity using a linear process because it ignored the student's own unique knowledge and creativity and did not recognize individual learning styles. Many students still believe that writing is not enjoyable or interesting, only produced for a teacher who would assess it by narrow guidelines, further stifling the writing process. Fortunately, there are new models for teaching writing, enhanced by electronic tools, that accommodates a wide range of learning preferences. Boticario and Santos (2007) found that e-learning

protocols, such as electronic writing and publishing formats, “provide a learning scenario adapted to the particularities of each learner along the learning process” (p. 1), providing efficient activities to enhance the learning process for every student no matter their skill level or learning style.

Stine (2010) referred to the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and their online course model for writing that is called the OctoPlus with eight stages in the process: “connect, reflect, share, learn, practice, personalize, experiment, apply” (p. 40). This corresponds to the Writing to Learn process that is promoted by research data (e.g., Klein & Rose, 2010; Klein & Samuels, 2010; McPherson, 2006; Stearns, 2006; Graham & Harris, 2005). Stine noted that a basic writing course should begin with a basic grammar overview and then it would have students write in a journal about what they already know about the topic before sharing with the class what they have decided to write about. Moving past this informal writing task, the student is guided toward using effective organizational strategies, practicing them in multiple drafts and revisions as they get feedback and gain more knowledge, having multiple discussions about their topic and learning process, experimenting with this new knowledge and sharing it again, finally applying it to a paper, or online project, free of grammatical errors. Students would continue to share and comment on classmates' work and build knowledge as they share with each other and those reading the electronic platform space. Writing in small sections, a few sentences at a time, in a series of “small, repetitive assignments like this reduce student anxiety and improve writing, technology, and cognitive skills, while guiding... towards more critical self-reflection” (Matas & Allan, 2009; cited in Stine, 2010, p. 41). Technology and electronic writing tools have made it possible for students

with a variety of learning styles or individual needs to become creative, capable, and successful writers. Saeed, Yang, and Sinnappan (2009) suggested that blogs and electronic writing technologies improve education because individual learning styles are supported and best expressed; allowing personal choice from amongst a certain set of possible ones, builds motivation and ownership for the student and they are more likely to continue being engaged and building knowledge.

The importance of writing should not be ignored or denied; whether in science, history, math, or language class, writing to learn is not just putting words on paper. The critical thinking process involved in writing for an electronic platform promotes higher-level learning in a motivated and engaged student who will get better grades and continue learning long after they have finished school. Targeted News Service of Washington, D.C. (2012) reported on a forum held to address the growing influence of the world marketplace and how it has spurred a global recognition for the need of superior educational technology, devices and tools that can be accessed anywhere and anytime; in the 21st century, e-learning needs to be sustainable as well as high quality. E-writing is a significant factor in improving skills for all students, across subject matter and grade levels.

Using Electronic Writing to Increase Students' Motivation to Write

One of the most significant motivating factors of becoming an engaged writer is one's own imagination as Spencer (2002) reminded readers in the paper, *What More Needs Saying About Imagination?*, Spencer was the featured speaker at the 19th World Congress on Reading in 2002 and she spoke about the importance of imagination as a critical factor in children's learning; especially for their reading and writing skills. She

believed that a descriptive vocabulary can put more than one object into one context because there are so many relationships that language can capture (Spencer, 2002, p. 546). Imagination also gives children more than just a better ability to read and write; it is a highly motivating factor, according to Spencer. Writing from the imagination, putting those words onto paper, helps to create new ideas, renew or relive all experiences, and defines or elaborates on one's hopes and desires, feelings and ideas. Letting young writers tell their own narratives, in their own words and chosen context and meaning, begins a process that generates both introspection and a broader external perspective.

Spencer specified her rationale for defining imagination as a core component in children's learning to read and write. Referring to Richard Rorty (2000), Spencer noted the fact that the "human imagination has no limits" (cited in Spencer, 2002, p. 547) and stated that the imagination is not something that can be separated from learning. Spencer then pointed out that "creativity is cognitive consciousness and imagination" which motivates higher-level learning (2002, p. 547). Refining the importance of imagination, Spencer wrote that the "metaphor is at the heart of children's learning" (2002, p. 547) and young students should be given the freedom to assign their own word meanings or to use their own made-up words when writing their stories; by working out the meanings of words they are enlarging their world, expanding their vocabularies, building a successive knowledge base, and become engaged in the writing process.

Spencer referred to a philosophy she shares with Terry Eagleton (2000) that "*imagination* is one of the good words for what is called 'the global reach of the mind'" (cited in Spencer, 2002, p. 547). Spencer noted that imagination is often associated with lies and myths but that its real value lies in the fact that fantasy is a substantial spark for

inspiring learning. Lacking a specific definition, or appreciation, for the broad world of the imagination we rely on descriptions, examples and metaphor; using those tools appropriately can stimulate vocabulary building and higher learning. O'Harrow wrote that it is important to remember how children learn best, it's "mostly by play, experimentation and exploration" (1997, p. 4), so students will be motivated to write, using electronic tools, when a teacher allows students to be inspired by their own imagination and follow their own interests.

Cobanoglu and Berezina (2011) found that students were more engaged, motivated, and active participants in class when they used blogging activities for assignments. They found that students used more words in their assignments when they posted it on a blog and turned in more assignments than were required. Krause (2005) found that "having students keep a journal...in writing courses...has probably been my most effective use of blogs with students" (p. B35) and it is an effective tool for motivating writing assignments. Richardson (2006) found that "blogging allows a new type of writing that forces writers to read carefully and critically, demands clarity in construction, and links to sources of ideas. What he has called "connective writing" is closely aligned with the information inquiry activities" (cited in Lamb & Johnson, 2006, p. 41). Because of the "specific critical and creative thinking that occur in this learning environment" (Ibid., p. 41), students are focusing on reading, writing, and processing skills with an emphasis on clear writing tactics linking ideas and proving points. Hall and Davison (2007) wrote that paper journals have long been used in writing classes to promote individual reflection on writing and skills; now "blogs share with these traditional journals the affordances for reflective thinking and have the potential to excel

as tools for promoting learning” (cited by Deng & Yuen, 2009, p. 95).

The process of writing, using technology, is important not just to accommodate all students' learning styles and needs but because 21st century students are digital natives. According to Prensky (2001), digital natives are born into a world surrounded by technology, and “students *think and process information fundamentally differently* from their predecessors. These differences go far further and deeper than most educators suspect or realize” (p. 1) and they are significant. Because digital natives have been immersed in technology from the time they were born, their cognitive development is different; their brains are more flexible, adaptive, and can skip around without losing information (Prensky, 2001). Digital natives can often think faster, look up information easier, quickly imagine new scenarios, and create elaborate mental images. Given these innate attributes of a 21st century student, they will be able to learn faster and enjoy creating elaborate narratives when allowed to use the electronic tools they know so well (Ibid., 2001). Because digital natives are already skilled in electronic writing, such as on Facebook or Twitter, through texting and other social networking, they can use it for formal writing assignments as well; with guidance they also can become engaged writers in school. Speaking to them in their own language, technology, will enhance learning, motivate students, and allow them to develop creative writing projects; this success can be used when transitioning into formal writing projects. Students continue to use similar online sources and publishing platforms, expanded but more defined or organized within a writing-to-learn framework, while they seamlessly make the conversion to becoming skilled and capable formal writers.

Garrett and Moltzen (2011), studying gifted writers, found that even superior

writers started out writing about what they were interested in and used a lot of fantasy imagery and self-expression. These experienced writers initially wrote about themselves, in the early grades, often as fantasy figures, and expanded their scope of characters to involve family members, classmates and friends, and people in their own community. They felt this kind of personal writing, about what interested them specifically, inspired them and helped them become gifted formal writers as they moved into the upper grade levels. Many of the students surveyed in this study reported that “school-based writing... more focused on responding to a specific assessment brief to suit ‘teacher wants’” and they felt the teacher used too much “manipulation” of their work in the editing process (Garrett & Moltzen, 2011, p. 174). Piirto (2002; 1998) said, “the imagination can definitely be enhanced or repressed in teacher-directed writing opportunities” (cited in Garrett & Moltzen, 2011, p. 174). One student in the study said “it’s not in me to write according to a picture created by someone else” (Ibid., pp. 174-175). Another student had stubbornly created whole new worlds, and new words, in long texts, even though they were routinely returned as not acceptable by the teacher.

Allowing students to write what is personally interesting and valuable to them is key in helping them begin the transition from informal to formal writing (Garrett & Moltzen, 2011). Using technology, interactive tools and electronic publishing platforms is an additional primary motivator that encourages students to become successful writers as well as encouraging them to expand their knowledge base through the writing process. As new technology and devices are developed, teachers and school districts have successfully incorporated these tools into the learning environment while others see them as a fad or not important. Using writing as a tool for quality learning, with technology as

the platform for both research and play, students become actively involved in their own learning process. Alvarez (2012) found that technology and electronic writing tools can successfully “be used to overcome reading and writing problems” (p. 186) and that blogs have shown significant potential in helping students become skilled writers. Mullen and Wedwick (2008) shared their belief that technological tools are causing “an educational revolution...changing the face of learning and giving a voice to the everyday student” (p. 66); technology can significantly improve the process of teaching everyone to become skilled writers.

The Redondo Beach School District added new technology to their teaching process when it became available and they have reported that using iPads for elementary and middle school students has proven to be an effective teaching tool. The students became better motivated to write text and create narratives and the majority of teachers found the devices to be a highly engaging tool for instruction (Daily News, 2012, p. 5). Teachers who take advantage of digital natives' advanced cognitive development, with enhanced learning environments that were not possible before the introduction of technological tools, will significantly advance the education process for 21st century students.

Student E-Writing Outside of Class Can Promote Formal Writing

Writing has often been overlooked as a very important factor in the learning process. It must be better utilized so that students are allowed and inspired to develop their skills, learn proper writing styles, and build their vocabulary. These days, technology encompasses a large space in students' lives, and they use it often throughout their days. Students are keen on playing, reading, and writing by technology but it is

often used more for electronic writing than formal writing within the classroom. Teenage writings abound on social networking pages, emails, and instant messaging around the Internet and on their cell phones. Parents believe that their teen children are writing more than when they were at the same age. While writing for school may seem formal and boring to them, students actually enjoy using technology to write and it seems easy and interesting to them. In fact, “teens do not consider the writing they do online to actually be *writing*” (Lenhart et al., 2008, para. 6). This information must become accepted knowledge, as a factor in the teaching of the writing process; it encourages writing and it utilizes the technology the students already use. Using a writing to learn framework, while researching and developing ideas and theories, producing class webpages, wikispaces, and other online presentations for student projects, there is a mobilization of student learning and knowledge building wherein learning is enjoyable. What once was used for informal text can now be used for formal reports and presentations; to inform the readers and inspire further research and learning by the author and everyone visiting the page.

Lenhart et al., (2008) analyzed how teenagers felt about formal writing. Most teenagers spend a great deal of their lives composing texts to communicate through technology. Teenagers see a distinction between writing for school and out of school and they enjoy the writing, using technology, they do outside of school. The study found that 60% of teenagers do not think that electronic writing is "writing" and that while teens enjoy non-school writing most do not want to write in school. They found that just half of teens say they “enjoy the writing they do outside of school ‘a great deal,’ compared with just 17%” who like in-school writing (Lenhart et al., 2008, para. 24). Teens who reported

to enjoy writing tended to use more creative writing styles. The report noted that teens think “that the writing instruction they receive in school could be improved” (para. 25). Teachers can use informal writing tasks to help build student confidence in their writing skills and slowly begin expanding their abilities into formal writing. Students in the Garrett and Moltzen (2011) study, given the opportunity to produce electronically written texts, wanted to share their writing with their friends and classmates and they relied on the feedback process to become better writers; they were regularly checking their sites for comments and suggestions. As there is not that much difference between writing for school using “formal writing” and “informal writing” outside of school, it is simply another step in the writing process to give students effective and supportive feedback and writing strategies once they gain the confidence from their informal writing tasks. It can be a fluid process, using electronic tools, to guide students towards successful formal writing as they write to learn; as their knowledge increases along with their writing skills, both learning and writing seems without effort in this kind of classroom.

Using E-Writing in Writing Instruction

The importance of technology in education cannot be understated, especially given Prensky's information on the structural differences in the brains that are seen in digital natives; their brains have become more agile and active due to increased cognitive development through the use of technology (2001). In the 21st century, educators must utilize technology to encourage and inspire thinking and knowledge building; writing to learn is a platform that uses the digital students' active brains and guides them toward higher critical thinking and vigorous learning. Prensky (2001) has focused on the fact that digital students have brains that can be said to be already hard-wired for activated

learning and highly effective teachers will supply them with the strategies and skills needed to develop a broader knowledge base than digital immigrants might be able to achieve as easily. Using the different means of learning that digital natives have acquired on electronic platforms, often outside of school, can be integrated into the classroom along with the broader sources of knowledge and learning.

However, a focus on technology in education should not neglect or replace useful education programs. It would be counterproductive if electronic instruction tools are used alone, without teacher support and guidance, or simply as a way to get technology into the classroom (Smithee, 2012). While it should be a significant component of the learning process, it defeats that purpose if technological tools are used as a replacement for instruction or as a way to fill time during the school day. Teachers should have access to training on how to choose effective classroom technology sources and successful strategies for using these tools and they must be supported as they develop enhanced teaching strategies. Those that are unskilled in the use of educational technology, those who lack confidence in its usage, and those with other issues about these tools all need to be encouraged, with sufficient support, if it is to be successfully integrated into the 21st century's educational system.

Teachers can use technology as an educational tool in various undergraduate academic levels as well as at the university. In the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Fred Rogers Center (NAEYC) *Position Statement of 2012*, they stated that "Technology and interactive media are here to stay" and "with guidance...technology tools can be harnessed for learning and development" in school (2012, p. 2). In the primary stage, when the stories and games are an appropriate way to

teach the child, using a branching story, interactive stories, and e-books are highly effective for emerging readers and writers. The particular methods are those that gain the student's interest through technology. Some electronic games may be used by the students for educational purposes as well. Students at the elementary level will not learn only with technology, but with skilled educators, who are thoughtful and purposeful towards effectively developing students' comprehensive communication skills. The NAEYC (2012) paper reported:

The challenge for early childhood educators is to make informed choices that maximize learning opportunities for children while managing screen time and mediating the potential for misuse and overuse of screen media, even as these devices offer new interfaces that increase their appeal and use to young children.

(p. 3)

Using "skillful teaching and complementary curriculum resources," learning can be accelerated and helped to narrow achievement gaps (NAEYC, 2012, p. 4). The NAEYC *Position Paper of 2012* referenced Judge, Pucket, and Cabuk (2008) and Cross, Woods, and Schweingruber (2009), saying that when educators use technology appropriately, children from all income and cultural levels benefit significantly and scores become more equal between all groups (p. 4). Because equity and access vary by student and by neighborhood or school district, the correct use of technology helps narrow the achievement gap even for schools and families with few resources (p. 4). Writing to learn, supportive and encouraging teachers in 21st century education systems, and the effective use of technology will improve the writing and learning process for every grade level of student, no matter their background or experience.

IPads, and other technological tools, have been shown to enhance the learning process (Daily News, 2012). Panah, Yunus, and Embi (2013) reported that using Google for word searches is an effective tool for students who are learning another language or who are given writing tasks; research has shown that it is both motivating and effective as a learning tool (p. 230). Thus, vocabulary skills are improved with the use of the Internet and when combined with instruction and motivational e-writing tools, technology encourages and heightens learning by stimulating creativity and a thirst for information. Along with proper mentoring and instruction, students are encouraged to find information, plan and organize their thoughts, imagine and then develop a paper that will be interesting when shared with the rest of the class, and writing becomes a fun assignment instead of a hardship. Graham (2006) wrote that even “reluctant writers can overcome these deficiencies when writing is taught systematically using graphic organizers” (cited in Wiesendanger, Perry & Braun, 2011, p. 451), utilizing electronic writing platforms. Students need a supportive environment where they feel safe to collaborate and develop story aspects; this framework allows students to build writing skills, extend knowledge, and leads to significant learning and writing ability.

It seems apparent that technology, the writing process, and imagination are important ingredients to organize students' formal writing. Teachers can be valuable guides in helping students learn how to acquire knowledge, expand on their ideas, and help them broaden their thinking and learning processes, integrating instruction and digital technology. Students who are supported and guided toward becoming successive activated learners are also motivated to discover new information and build upon new ideas; both involve technology, motivation, encouragement, and an expansion into new

ways of thinking. All of this generates a natural love of learning or an innate quest for more knowledge. The electronically enhanced writing-to-learn process becomes a significant factor in building such momentum; using the digital native's own medium is the logical pathway for higher level education.

Blaschke (2012) referred to reports from The World Bank (2003) that corresponded with research from Kuit and Fell (2010) that found that “educators today are tasked with developing lifelong learners who can survive and thrive in a global knowledge economy – learners who have the capability to effectively and creatively apply skills and competencies to new situations in an ever-changing, complex world” (para. 2). Obviously, this goal of the Dartmouth Conference is still relevant in the 21st century. The focus on writing, as in the Writing to Learn framework, encourages critical thinking and higher-level knowledge building, from preschool to old age. The writing process, taught in enhanced classrooms, enables educators to meet the goal of producing high-level learners and thinkers who thrive in a complex world. When students read information, discuss it with their peers, are guided toward further research and analysis, and then prepare to write a detailed and persuasive analysis, for an audience beyond just the teacher, active and motivated learning occurs. Writing to learn is not just about composing five paragraphs of text; it is researching, analyzing, collaborating, debating, revising, building new ideas or refining one's opinions on current information, and compelling higher level thinking while writing about it.

Singh (2003) noted that “not all forms of learning imply a premeditated, structured, or formal learning program with organized content in specific sequence like chapters in a textbook...learning in the workplace occurs in an unstructured form via

meetings, hallway conversations, or e-mail” (p. 54). This project was built with a framework and expected writing tasks but the final analysis will be based on an unstructured assignment that is self-chosen and individually personal or defined. The project manager feels that this component of the research will utilize “connective writing” as Richardson (2006) defined it (cited in Lamb and Johnson, 2006, p. 41), enhancing learning. Hussein (2011) wrote that collaborative technology in the classroom has facilitated in helping students to be personally responsible for their own learning and gives them the ability to vary their creativity as they choose; “learning occurs in various times and in different behavioral, cognitive, and emotional aspects, and evaluation is done according to the real performance” (p. 44).

Some Motivational Electronic Writing Platforms

Ferdig and Trammel (2004) wrote that blogs "represent the potential to promote interactivity, provide opportunities for active learning, and improve ... relationships" (cited by Reinhart, Whicker, & Juettemeyer, 2005, p. 25) and as an educational tool, it supports learning and skill building. Godwin-Jones (2009) wrote that instructors use e-writing tools and online publishing platforms because they have found how easy it is “to provide a flexible and creative learning environment more in tune with today's students through the use of (mostly) free tools that allow for a customized set of resources and services” (p. 3). There is a wide variety of these tools; prominent examples are below:

Google Sites. Google, including Google Sites, is a great source of natural language patterns; helping to enhance writing ability (Conroy, 2010; Geluso, 2011; Sha, 2010; Shei, 2008, as cited in Panah et al., 2013). Google Sites, as an electronic tool, helps students to improve their writing skills because "children who engaged in blogging

showed great improvement in overcoming depression and low confidence levels as compared to their counterparts who either maintained a personal diary or did nothing" (Kashmir Monitor, 2012, para. 5).

Blogger. Blogger is another tool that teachers can use to encourage their students to write. It can be used to promote more formal writing online rather than the informal writing style of most electronic writing. The Blogger website states:

“A blog is a personal diary. A daily pulpit. A collaborative space. A political soapbox. A breaking-news outlet. A collection of links. Your own private thoughts. Memos to the world, your blog is whatever you want it to be. There are millions of them, in all shapes and sizes, and there are no real rules. In simple terms, a blog is a web site, where you write stuff on an ongoing basis. New stuff shows up at the top, so your visitors can read what's new. Then they comment on it or link to it or email you. Or not. Since Blogger was launched in 1999, blogs have reshaped the web, impacted politics, shaken up journalism, and enabled millions of people to have a voice and connect with others.” (Blogger, n.d., para. 2)

Protopage. Protopage is another tool used by educators. “Protopage is your own personal page that you can use for quick access to everything on the web that you go to most. You can use it to read news from your favorite news sites and blogs, keep bookmarks to your most frequently accessed web sites organize your day with to-do lists and sticky notes, create web pages, group pages, and intranets” (Protopage, n.d., para. 4). It is like creating your own magazine from pieces of other magazines. You can supplement your formal writing with multimedia such as pictures, videos, graphics and drawings, as well as links

to other resources.

Wikispaces. “By using Wikispaces, students can write, discuss, and build web pages together” (Wikispaces, n.d., para. 1). Students struggle to express themselves with written words and Wikispaces encourage students to write using this platform; even less successful students can be successful writers with wikis (Keith, 2006).

Wikispaces helps students to learn by collaborative problem solving, collaborative research, and collaborative writing (Lamb & Larry, 2007). McPherson wrote that electronic writing tools help students to learn “writing skills that emphasize negotiation, cooperation, collaboration, and respect for one another’s work and thoughts” (2006, p. 70). This important goal of the 1966 Dartmouth Conference is still just as relevant.

Summary

Every human being deserves to be an educated individual according to Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Students in the 21st century, as digital natives, have the right to have a teacher interested in the best ways and means of providing appropriate and highly effective education. The child in primary school has the right to have stories and games that are used in an enhanced classroom by an invested instructor who is also a guide and mentor. The research cited here have shown that using technology has a substantially positive effect on today’s learners and it is imperative that teachers and school systems integrate technology and programs to best serve these digital native students. We need to access and accommodate those unique cognitive development levels to improve the efficacy of their instruction systems. Additionally, Burress and Jenkinson (1982) wrote that the educational system “is to prepare self-reliant, self-directed adults who are able to decide for themselves how to conduct their

lives...the school system must encourage self-reliance and independence from the very first years of education” (p. 3).

Kuit and Fell (2010, para. 2) reminds us that “educators today are tasked with developing lifelong learners who can survive and thrive in a global knowledge economy – learners who have the capability to effectively and creatively apply skills and competencies to new situations in an ever-changing, complex world.” The data from current research has verified that using electronic tools, in the Writing to Learn framework, does exactly this. It is imperative that education systems and educators implement these tools and strategies to best serve both learners and community members. In a complex world, we must have complex thinkers; we can create a higher level of learning for all students using electronic tools and the writing process.

The research reviewed in this chapter shows the importance of using technology to write led by teachers who support and promote electronic writing. As a medium that students are already vigorously using, electronic writing in school becomes an effective method for motivating students to write more formally. Success in writing can lead to a better sense of confidence, increases vocabulary, promotes the quest for knowledge and therefore builds success that is sustainable and rewarding long-term. Having both teachers and students engaged in the learning process, in an enhanced classroom with guidance of the writing process, as an integral component in higher level learning, education becomes invigorated to a new plane of thinking. The goals of the Dartmouth Seminar more than a half-century ago can now be met when quality instructors use e-writing, in the writing to learn process and a variety of technological tools and programs, to engage digital natives and activate enhanced learning in the 21st century classroom.

Chapter 3

Method

This chapter includes the methods covered by this mixed-methods research project, the steps taken by the participants in the study, including the questions and tasks that the participants are required to do, the experiences of the participants, and the processes undertaken for this project. The study relies on two research methods; the mixed methods analyses include the pre and post surveys, and students' assignments, including the Self-Directed Writing Exercise. Using statistics and surveys, the results will contribute to clarifying the data and the data collection, including for the discussion question section results.

Participants

Institutional Review Board. As a project investigator/researcher, currently obtaining a Master's degree at a university, I am required to submit my project to the institution, as well as to the university's Human Protections Administrator, those on the university's Institutional Review Board for approval before implementation of the project and analysis. Included in that request for approvals are the documents required by the university. Required forms have been sent to the Review Board for Human Subjects Research (the IRB application form is for approval to conduct a study on humans). This project commenced when it met the accepted guidelines and was granted approval by the school's Office of IRB advisors and professors.

This application has been submitted with all of its components and content, including the study tools such as surveys, instructions for entering the experiment site, and the participant consent form. Also included is the purpose and rationale of this study;

including methods, study tools, and alternative solutions. This study has followed the conditions and guidelines required the university and the research process, in order to gain approval and begin commencement of the project.

Subjects. In this study, seven students have signed consent forms and agreed to be participants in this research project to assess the value of e-writing tools in a supported writing program. The subjects are undergraduate college students in their senior year of study in the Secondary English Education program in the English Department.

Instructor. The instructor for this project is in the English department. He has achieved his Ph.D. and has experience as an advisor for other projects.

Where and When. The project took place in the English course lab. It was equipped with up-to-date computers with high-speed Internet access, adequate project space, projector and viewing equipment, white board, and printers. The class meets two days a week, three hours a day, from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon.

The Sample. The purpose of the sampling is to analyze the writing process using electronic writing platforms to determine if e-writing can activate successful writing and enjoyment in the process. Over the course of this project, students agreed to produce writing assignments which will be informally written and published on the electronic platform they choose. These choices include Wikispaces, Protopage, Blogger, and Google Sites. Students will produce written text, as usual, for the class, but in addition, seven students have consented, in writing, to produce informal writing narratives with the use of electronic writing programs, devices, and other e-publishing tools available in the Computer Lab.

This course was designed for those who wish to teach writing and composition strategies. It covers a general process for teaching writing strategies that enhance writing skills and overall satisfaction from successfully taking the needed steps, using current knowledge and analysis of new information to deliver a clear and informative written narrative. There are seven missions required, and agreed to, for each participant, assigned during the course, with a guideline for each writing assignment. These seven are: responses, narrative essay, informative/explanatory essay, argument essay, mini-lesson teaching exercise, self-directed writing project, and learning letter.

Measures

This project will use surveys, questionnaires, and analysis to determine the efficacy of electronic tools and electronic writing for motivating and inspiring students towards become engaged in the writing process. Analysis will be conducted at the end of the project, and includes data compiled from participant efforts in a seven-step survey and response activity. Pre and post surveys will assess student knowledge and self-analysis. Assessments will be used to determine if students felt their learning was enhanced through the process of writing using e-writing programs; including Google Sites, Wikispaces, Blogger, and Protopage. Feedback, interactive comments, discussions, pre and post self-analysis surveys, enjoyment levels and whether the participants had lower anxiety levels as the study progressed. Analysis will attempt to rate levels of satisfaction, enhanced learning, anxiety reduction, motivation or inspiration levels, changes in ideology about writing, writing improvement assessment, and experiential comments.

Research Design

As explanatory research, this project seeks to determine if there is a correlation between the use of electronic tools and increased enjoyment in the writing process. It determined if there is a viable causal chain linking the two elements. Performing quantitative and qualitative analyses, I evaluated survey data and observational deductions to test the theory that electronic tools raises the enjoyment level for in-school writing; enhancing motivation and increased engagement in the learning process. Using deductive reasoning, this study attempted to support the propositions of the hypotheses; in essence it tests whether students become more engaged, skilled writers through the use of e-writing tools. Social surveys and experiential reports were evaluated against the statistical data and analysis to test if the theory is compelling. The findings, along with prior research on the use of technological tools in education, could alter the learning experience of digital native students and how they are taught in the 21st century classroom.

Having used Google Sites previously, to set up a site to promote my educational portfolio, I found it easy to use, with all the features of Google (i.e., interface allows personal language choice and translation capabilities, Google search capabilities, Google document programs, various writing and research tools). Google Sites was an effective electronic writing platform but is this, and similar programs, useful in a writing skills class? As I explored in chapter two, current research has found that such enhanced e-writing can be highly effective in teaching writing strategies, building satisfaction and enjoyment while skill-building, as well as being imperative in the overall process of learning, this study analyzes this assumption.

I began the literature review, defined my research project, refined the relevant questions and hypotheses, created a website and developed measuring tools, solicited participants and submitted permission forms. My advisor read my literature review as the research continued to support my research premise and it was suggested that an English course would be used to facilitate this project. The enrolled students in this class agreed to participate. Students were given the standard array of required assignments, earned grades for on-time completion, efforts, and participation while I was given access to relevant data that enabled me to test this study's hypotheses or prove the validity of my assumptions about the efficacy of electronic writing. I accessed the subjects' completed class assignments, evaluated their electronically published writing, had multiple opportunities to observe and analyze student interaction, and gathered information about their usage of electronic tools in the classroom and for assignments. Beginning on the first day of the course, I introduced the project, explained the tasks and how their responses to the required assignments would be used, I received signed commitments and consent from all seven students. The data collection process began that same day as the participants completed the pre-survey form designed to self-evaluate their usage of electronic devices, written interactivity online, writing satisfaction levels, and attitudes about writing in general and by type.

Using Google Sites, I created the main website the subjects would access and used a linking page to all written text published this quarter. I used these assignments, produced according to their class requirements, to gather information and data for analysis and evaluation. I created the project's website for use during this project; it was not connected to any university class website. This research project website gives access

to the instructor's seven assignments including due dates, weekly expectations and achievement level details. The seven assigned tasks for the course were: responses, narrative essay, informative/explanatory essay, argument essay, mini-lesson teaching exercise, self-directed writing project, and learning letter. With consent of the class, and signed declaration of intent forms by each member, I was able to use their responses as a component of this study.

The project's website included class information and links for easy access on one webpage (Appendix A). Class information and links included the class syllabus, required assignments, a course calendar, the course description and course objectives, course evaluation methods, expectations, and required texts. The two required texts were: *A Writer Teaches Writing*, Edition Two, by Donald Murray, and *Teaching Grammar in Context*, by Constance Weaver. Other links and tabs lead to information about the instructor, his office, email address and phone numbers, methods for contacting and setting appointments, and a map showing the location of the class and office.

Using the template selected for this project's website, I created the navigation links and tabs; including Home, Tasks, Syllabus, Assignments, Class Calendar, More Stuff, Class Surveys, Contact Me, and helpful tip links. Using Google Drive, the seven assigned writing tasks required by the professor were uploaded and made visible to the students in class. Every student in the class signed consent forms to allow this researcher to observe, collect data, and evaluate findings gathered from the class assignments and their participation and interaction. The participants accessed the website to complete the pre-survey assessment, first, before publishing their writing on their chosen online sites.

The post-survey assessment link was activated on the last day of the project, enabling completion on the last day of the class.

The “More Stuff” tab included helpful tips, forms, documents, useful templates and other links, and provided linkage to each student participant website or publishing platform. Because the goal was to motivate students to write, there were useful links for electronic tools, usage directions with video instructions, directions for creating a Google Sites account, tips for publishing on similar platforms, and general information about using electronic writing and publishing tools. The emphasis of this study was to engage writers, reduce anxiety, encourage daily writing, heighten satisfaction with the written product, and facilitate publishing of text online. The project website had instructions and suggestions for the following platforms: Protopage, Wikispaces, Blogger, and Google Sites. Student participants were instructed to use the electronic tools of their choice, that best fit them, and one that would help in their writing experience. There were links for MLA formatting, writing strategies and suggestions, and helpful tips. On the first day of the course, the students were given instructions about the research project, asked to participate, signed consent forms, and given website access for the class. They received information about Google Sites (Appendix B), how to create an account, as well as the title of the page to go directly to the course site and a brief tour of the course website.

Procedures

Responses. Throughout the class’s summer session students were expected to complete seven assignments, approximately one each week, and each task required a written response; these assignments were based on course content as defined by the instructor. The accompanying required responses were to be completed by the specified

due date (listed on the project's website and class syllabus) and then published to each student's chosen platform on the Internet. After all responses had been turned in, published, there was a one-half hour group discussion period on the date due. In that discussion, the students were encouraged to interact about the assignments and what they learned in their readings. The most significant element of these discussions, as the explicit purpose of this project, would be gained through researcher observation and self-reflective responses of the students about their current level of satisfaction with their writing skills and abilities. They assessed the assignment as it related to their skill development, knowledge or satisfaction improvement, details regarding their writing and composition, and any changes in anxiety or enjoyment levels. Completion of these assignments was essential to an individual's success and to their colleagues' success. Class participation and considered reflection helped the class as a group, and me, as this project investigator. Together, the data collected in this class was used to further research to enhance the body of knowledge and add to the focus of activated learning through the use of electronic writing tools. Each of the subjects in the study agreed that the course assignments were intended to give them an opportunity to think and reflect on the content matter and to engage in enlightening group discussions on the day that they are due.

Narrative Essay. Student wrote extended narratives about real or imagined events, of at least five double-spaced pages. The class had group discussions that focused on strong narrative writing criteria. Narratives were to focus on one event, explaining it in significant detail; using strong narrative writing throughout. The class reviewed, brainstormed, and devised additional characteristics together as a group. See Appendix C for assignment instructions.

The students performed this essay task over two weeks, covering four complete class periods. Beginning at the pre-writing stage, the instructor asked the students to imagine a timeline of their lives to date. The students were asked to arrange their ten most important events along that line in historical sequence. They were then asked to share their experiences relating to that one event with their classmates. This assignment was very well received and the students reported that they enjoyed the process, including sharing it with the entire group. The instructor then asked them to write about their chosen event and subsequently share their written narrative with the class. The instructor also explained writing strategies and expected conditions that should exist in this assignment, as to characters, place, and time. They were to begin writing this essay individually, in the classroom, during the last half-hour of day one.

The following day, the instructor asked students to participate in workshop type groups of two, lasting forty minutes. During this activity one student read his paper aloud while the other student recorded observations, notes, and comments. Then they reversed the order and the other student read aloud while being observed, including written notes and comments. Each set of students, each member of each team, took time to reflect on the other member's story and then everyone was given a half hour to organize, refine, and rewrite the final version of comments and notes about the partner's narrative.

On the fourth and final session of this assignment, during Week 2, the instructor repeated the work group divisions and requested that each member explain the rationale for using the two grading procedures each student was asked to choose, out of many, at the end of the prior day's session. Each member explained the benefits of the two chosen evaluation methods or why, in particular each member chose those two. The professor

was then brought into the work group discussions and finally each student read the narrative paper and assessed it based upon the chosen evaluation methods. The class enjoyed this activity and it helped build their knowledge base related to the various skill sets involved. On the second day of the second week, the students began writing their final drafts of the narrative essay.

Informative/Explanatory Essay. Students were instructed to write an informative/explanatory essay that considers various viewpoints of a current issue or area of concern on a school-related topic. The essay was to be grounded in research conducted by the student. It needed to be at least five pages double-spaced and include at least five research sources, cited in MLA format. This assignment can be found in Appendix D.

The Informative/Explanatory Essay assignment began on the second day of Week 2, in a pre-writing activity. The students started as a collective and in Week 3 they broke up into work groups. Later in the week, they returned to a whole group formation as the class members introduced their papers, beginning with an explanation of their chosen electronic devices, publishing platform, or technological tools they used for their presentations. While each student presented their electronically written assignment, the rest of their classmates recorded their observations and shared comments. A group discussion activity followed, between the student presenting and the other class members, relating their observations, comments, and notes. After the essays were presented and then discussed, the students were given a worksheet that the professor had designed. Each student was expected to reflect on and then answer four questions on the worksheet. The questions were: 1) Does the author examine complex ideas and information? If so, how? If not, what suggestions do you have for the author? 2) Does the author convey these

(complex) ideas and information clearly and accurately? If so, how? If not, what suggestions do you have for the author? 3) Examine the sources that author selected. Do you consider these sources “scholarly?” Why or Why not? 4) How is the essay organized? What suggestions do you have to improve the organization of this essay?

After completing this session, answering the worksheet questions and discussing it with a partner, each author-subject got the opportunity to share his evaluations with another author-subject and was evaluated by that partner. This activity took 40 minutes of class time.

On Day 2 of Week 3, the students performed a grading procedure similar to the Narrative Essay assignment. The class was divided into groups of two, to discuss the Essay assessments for a ten minute time period. Returning to the larger group, the students discussed the assessment process and evaluation tactics for this assignment for 20 minutes. Returning to the partner groups, one partner made the final evaluation of the other student’s paper using one of the assessments; this activity took approximately 40 minutes. In Week 4, the final draft of the informative/explanatory Essay was published in each student’s online platform for final evaluation by the professor.

Argument Essay. The students were asked to draw upon their informative/explanatory essay and write an argument essay that addressed a current issue or area of concern on a school-related topic. It was to be grounded in research, considerate of the audience, and written as a persuasive paper. They needed to be at least five pages double-spaced and include at least five research sources, cited in MLA format.

On Day 1 of Week 4, the instructor requested that all students research and write about an educational issue, as a prewriting activity for the argument essay. On Day 2 of

Week 4, the students were given discussion time to raise issues or ask for input on their particular issue, in partner groups, for 10 minutes. Returning to the group discussion format, all students discussed and debated these issues for half an hour. This publication activity, determined by the class and each student as a very important piece of the entire writing process, alongside class participation and discussion, because each student found that it helped refine their focus on a specific point of the issue, making for a more persuasive argument essay. This prewriting activity, preparing for writing the argument essay, took 40 minutes of class time (See Appendix E).

Mini-Lesson Teaching Exercise. The students got the opportunity to teach an aspect of writing during the course, teaching a 30 minute mini-lesson focused on writing instruction. Their classmates chose to be a junior high school or high school student for the lesson. Each 'teacher' would provide the class with a lesson plan for his/her mini-lesson followed by a feedback session, to discuss what areas worked well and what should have been improved upon. Each student completed a self-evaluation after reflecting on his/her teaching effort. See Appendix F for assignment handout.

Self-Directed Writing Exercise. An informal Self-Directed Writing Exercise was taken outside of class, to define each student's individual choice of electronic platforms. After generating a list of possible platforms in class, students chose one of the e-writing platform options to publish their self-directed writing project that had been committed to at the beginning of the project. See Appendix G for assignment directions.

Learning Letter. At the end of the course, each student was required to complete a course reflection in the form of a learning letter to the project manager. Subjects were asked to reflect on the process of writing throughout the project. See Appendix H for

assignment instructions.

This project was in part inspired by the fact that many friends, acquaintances, and cohorts reported that they hate writing and felt they were unable to be write effectively or well. I watched people walking on campus, studying in the library, or riding the bus and many people seemed to be regularly communicating via their smartphones or other devices. New sites, website texts, blog reports, and emailed narratives were accessed routinely by many, daily. It appeared that people enjoyed interactive written communication via their electronic devices; they laughed, smiled, and seemed positively engaged. Others routinely used devices to find information, look up cases or news reports, and research questions or current events. How was it possible that so many people report disliking writing or being poor writers? I began thinking about electronic devices as a writing tool and began investigating if electronic tools could be used to enhance and promote students' writing and engagement in the process.

First Day of the Project. The class started with an introduction to the course period before the instructor asked the students to write, writing prompt to discuss, for free Fischer minutes. They were then given the definition itself. The class was given more time to introduce each other and to tell personal experiences with writing, how or when they wrote, and how writing had affected them. This activity lasted one half-hour, at the beginning of the class, and also part of the daily scheduled activity. Additionally, the students were given ten minutes of free writing time and twenty minutes for discussion on a daily basis. After the instructor distributed the syllabus, he explained the required assignments and the class calendar; this took 40 minutes from 9:30 to 10:10 a.m. at which time the class took a break of about twenty minutes from 10:10 to 10:30 a.m. At that

point, I was introduced and I began by discussing this research project and gave a detailed explanation of the study, including what would be required of each student, how to can access the Google Sites class, distributed written instructions, and demonstrated the project website, links and tips. The instructor distributed the consent form to each student which they would sign if they chose to give their approval to participate to the study. All students in this course agreed to participate, returned their signed consent forms, and then completed the pre-survey. This activity took one half hour and the last hour of that first day was dedicated to course standards and expectations.

After the first class, each student began searching through the numerous options available to them; which electronic writing tools, publishing outlets, and formats would best suit their particular style and needs. They would begin using it as soon as they made the choice, throughout the length of the course. On Day 1 of Week 4, the ninth day of the fifth week of the study, the instructor submitted a new version of the consent form; I typed it up, presented it to each person in the group and asked them to sign this updated version following clarification by the Human Protections Administrator at EWU. This form was formula specific and required for the conduct of research study, involving humans.

The Project's Second Day. On the second day of the class, the students were given the proposal for self-directed writing exercise (See Table G) and each student explained the idea of their own project. This activity occupied the allotted first half-hour period, separated from the scheduled class writing and group discussion of the topic sessions. Following those daily activities, the instructor divided the students into groups to discuss their responses for to chapters one, two, and three in the Murray textbook.

After small group discussion the professor brought the students back together and everyone began to discuss and debate the first three chapters of Murray's book; this activity took forty minutes. After a twenty-minute class break, the instructor led a discussion about each student's proposal idea and asked for the rationale for choosing the topic; this activity took the remaining class time. Course information, the timeline, and project activities are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Using E-writing to Promote Students' Writing Project Timeline

Date	Assignment	Time
6/25	Intro, Syllabi	3 hours
6/27	Response for Murray Ch. 1, 2, 3; Self-directed Writing Exercise Proposal due	3 hours
7/2	Response for Murray Ch. 5 and 9 due	3 hours
7/4	Narrative Essay, In-class Writing and Workshop	3 hours
7/8	2 nd Draft of Narrative Essay, Murray Ch. 6 Response	3 hours
7/10	Final Draft Narrative Essay, Response Ch. 2 Weaver	3 hours
7/15	Informative/Explanatory Essay	3 hours
7/17	2 nd Draft Informative/Explanatory Essay, Response Ch. 4 Weaver	3 hours
7/22	Final Draft Informative/Explanatory Essay, Response Ch. 5 Weaver	3 hours
7/24	Argument Essay	3 hours
7/29	2 nd Draft Argument Essay, Response Ch. 6 Weaver	3 hours
7/31	Final Draft Argument Essay, Response Ch. 7 & 8 Weaver	3 hours
8/7	Mini-lesson Teaching Exercise	3 hours
8/12	Mini-lesson Teaching Exercise	3 hours
8/14	Learning Letters/Plans of Action due; Self-directed Writing Exercise due	3 hours

Note. Alanazi, M. A., 2013.

For the purpose of this research project, the most significant component for data analysis and evaluation, to determine the efficacy of electronic writing and motivation levels, was based on the outcome of the Self-Directed Writing Exercise, the seventh assignment. The students completed the assignments for a grade in the course and I used their responses as part of this study's evaluation. The students answered questions after the task was completed. They rated their level of interest in the use of electronic writing tools for informal writing narratives. After evaluating the written assignments and other data, reading informal narratives published on the students' own sites, using regular observation tactics, and listening to the discussion groups, I was able to finalize an answer to the dominant question of this project: do informal electronic writing tasks promote an engagement in the process of writing and heighten their presumed abilities to successfully perform formal writing tasks? After the Self-Directed Writing Exercise, it was expected that the answer to the second research question would become more apparent: did informal writing more easily promote formal writing?

Survey. The second most important issue studied, for the purpose of this project, was whether students' use of electronic tools for writing would improve their perception of their abilities and increase their performance levels during writing tasks. The two surveys, the initial or pre-project survey (Appendix I) and the post-project survey (Appendix J), were completed on the first and final day of the course. These surveys added insight on the usefulness of e-writing tools to promote writing and learning. In the pre-survey, students answer ten questions, including gender, age and ID number, but anonymity is preserved publically. By using their student ID numbers, we can link pre-survey data with the post-survey data to determine efficacy of electronic writing tools to

improve learning and writing skills. The third question, asked in both the pre- and post-surveys, asks how much the participant enjoys writing? This has a potential of five points, from 1-5, to allow the students to determine their own level of enjoyment in the writing process. They will rate their assessment by ranking their feelings about writing: level 1-- I Hate Writing, to level 3-- I Am Indifferent, to a rank of 5-- I Love Writing. This ranking system allowed this researcher to define a distinct level of enjoyment, overall, that the subjects have in their writing endeavors; they will be analyzed and compared, pre and post-survey, from the beginning of the project until the end, seven weeks later. The findings helped to determine if electronic writing supported the process of informal writing and increased motivation for formal writing.

The fourth question on both surveys asks about the participant's daily writing: do you write daily, and in what ways? Knowing if the subjects write daily, or not, and what generates their daily writing (such as diaries, stories, poems, or if it is on a formal or informal basis) is important. This question was meant to clarify for the researcher and the student whether their writing is considered informal, easy and simple, or formal, difficult and formulaic. It defined whether informal writing is considered simple and non-stressful compared to formal writing that is anxiety-causing and difficult. Is an informal writing activity performed simply because it is enjoyable and personally rewarding while formal writing is stressful and subject to criticism? Can formal writing be shown to have many positive benefits and is enjoyable, as well? Will successful informal writing tasks help students to understand that e-writing can increase motivation, joy, and one's overall knowledge?

The fifth question in the both pre and post-surveys is about the number of pages written daily. The five options identified, for the subjects to choose for the option that best fits their average writing level, range from: Never, Less Than One Page, Up to One Page, 2-4 Pages, and More Than 5 Pages. Analyzing each participant's reported level of daily writing can approximately measure each subject's level of self-assessed successfulness, enjoyment, or inability, difficulty, in their writing performance. As a researcher, it helped in the final analysis to compare the rate of daily writings before the study began and the rate of daily writing at the end of the study.

The sixth question of the pre-survey asks about the amount of formal writing performed, daily, by the student. How much of your daily writing is formal? This question is meant to highlight the specifics of formal writing and informal writing and to define the differences. While it is assumed that most people prefer informal writing over formal writing, this question is meant to verify that assumption; it asks for a defined level of the amount of formal writing and informal writing performed daily. This question was not repeated in the post-survey because students will undertake both formal and informal writing tasks throughout the course. It is important to assess at the beginning of this course how students were writing, both formally and informally, on a daily basis.

The seventh question, on both surveys, asks: do you, the participant, use technology daily? This question helped me, the researcher, to know how much the students rely on technology, how much they are actively engaged in using it, and their level of enjoyment and acceptance of technological tools, before they begin the course and after participating in this research. To answer this question, subjects chose either a yes or no answer. They were asked about the types of technology tool they use or that

they prefer. They were given examples which include games, social networking sites, email, text messages, iPhone, Skype, etc.

Both pre and post-surveys ask if the participant uses technological tools to write. Participants were asked to explain if they used various types of technology for writing tasks or not as well as the types of writings that they practice; text messages, emails, blog or social media posts, etc.

The last question of the pre-survey is this: have you ever used e-writing as a formal part of class? The answer to this question helped define whether or not the students are accustomed to the use of electronic writing, for formal writing assignments in a school setting. Asking for examples, of the class subject or lesson type further defined how each person used e-writing, in which subjects, inside of school instead of just outside of the classroom.

The ninth question in the post-survey is: did you enjoy using e-writing to write for this course? This question determined how the participant assessed the use of electronic writing, throughout this course, and whether it was enjoyable or not. The answer is chosen from five options, starting at: 1--I Hate It, to 3--I Am Indifferent, to 5--I Love It.

The last question, question number ten, of the post-survey is: did using e-writing increase your motivation to write? There are five ranks, beginning with 1--Not At All, to 3--Sort Of, to 5--Definitely. Subjects were asked to answer the second part of this question: how did e-writing motivate you to write? OR Why did e-writing not motivate you to write? The participants were asked to explain and illustrate how electronic writing either did or did not increase their motivation to write.

The questions on the pre and post-surveys enabled analysis of the participants' thoughts about writing, technology, and electronic writing, and whether using electronic writing has the potential to enhance students' motivation and enjoyment of formal writing. Did the electronic writing during this project lead to a higher level of enjoyment for writing; was enjoyment directly linked to the type of writing assignment; were informal writing assignments reported as fun while formal writing assignments were seen as hard? Finally, do electronic writing activities lead to an increased enjoyment and motivation level for motivated writing and learning? Do electronic writing tools motivate students to enjoy the process needed to become skilled formal writers? By easing the transition from enjoyable informal e-writing to formalized writing via an electronic framework, it seems likely that the answers to those questions would more often be "yes" and should be embraced as part of teaching the writing process in a way that encourages the student at every point in the overall process, without lessening students' enjoyment.

Data Analysis

An often repeated aphorism, and proven many times, is that "a spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down." The fundamental assumption of this research is that by combining a practice that digital natives, and most people, consider a fun and easy activity, electronic communication and informal writing (the sugar) with formal writing assignments and strategies (the medicine), it will be much easier to motivate students to become eager, productive formal writers. Within a framework of strategic guidance and supported practice, from an early age, electronic informal writing can transition into interactive quality formal narratives that the student finds both enjoyable and educational;

it becomes almost seamless to activate higher learning at every grade level by encouraging students to become successful writers.

How Might Using E-writing Increase Students' Motivation to Write?

Hypothesis. Technology is a significant part of many students' everyday lives and they consider it fun and informative. Electronic tools are routinely used by students actively engaged in informal writing activities. E-writing is considered easy, enjoyable, simple to do, and engages their attention and interaction. Digital natives already enjoy the writing process, sharing their written communication, in that communal learning environment. By expanding the use of digital devices into the classroom, it should be easy to engage students in many different writing activities in school. This project is intended to measure whether students' writing skills can be increased, using electronic writing, without it seeming a chore.

Using a tool that digital natives already use; creatively, skillfully, and routinely, is an incredible opportunity for teachers looking for effective activities to better teach and promote writing skills. This study seeks to determine if digital natives' enjoyable e-writing activity can be guided as a counterbalance, allowing them to enjoy writing tasks in the classroom; staying engaged in the writing process without becoming overwhelmed. "A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down." Sugar, added to medicine, makes it easier to tolerate and in essence, this project will determine the efficacy of linking an activity that is fun and beloved together with a task that is not well liked or that seems too hard to do; making the writing process seem more acceptable.

How Might Informal E-writing Promote Formal Writing?

Hypothesis. Students already produce a lot of electronic writing; everyday, many times a day, again and again. They really like this form of writing activity, they do not even think of it as a writing task, and it is very easy for them to produce. It can be difficult for them to refrain from this form of electronic writing. They choose their own topics and can write for hours in this manner. It shouldn't take much effort to build upon the digital native's informal writing skills, gradually expanding their abilities and talents, until they are performing quality formal electronic writing tasks without noticing, because it was an easy and enjoyable transition because of technology. This study's assumption is that electronic writing tools will ease the transition to formal writing skill development as students realize that they can be as successful as they have been with their informal compositions.

Electronic tools allow formal writing to be an acceptable addition to student learning and they will be motivated to become skilled at this type of writing activity as well. This project seeks to determine if digital natives can be easily coaxed into producing many different types of writing and eased into formalized writing, without anxiety, through the use of technological devices and programs. It is assumed that it will not take much effort to help students realize that producing formal compositions is as enjoyable a task as their informal writing activities are.

Chapter 4

Data Collection

This chapter includes the project data with an explanation of the data accumulated from the students' platforms, weekly assignments, self-directed writing exercise, and the pre and post surveys.

Students' Platforms

These participants are between the ages of 21 and 44 years old. Four of the subjects are female and three are male. All seven students chose to use blogs for this study. Two of the subjects had previously used the site Blogger in other classes. The students who did not have previous experience using electronic sites, for helping promote writing or for any other reason, wrote about that on the pre-survey. By the end of the project, all students had completed their Blogger sites; they added pictures, completed their accounts, assigned themselves names, added their own quotations, and used their own Blogger settings, such as personal themes and colors. All assignments were written using computers; students posted their writings on their Blogger sites. Students posted their writings on Blogger sites by themselves. None of the subjects needed help to post their assignments online.

Weekly Assignments

The assignments completed for this class were: Narrative Essay, Informative/Explanatory Essay, Argument Essay, Mini-Lesson Teaching Exercise, and Learning Letter. Those assignments that required hardcopy found that five of the students (71.4%) were writing electronically through MS Word and Google Drive; they were printed out and brought to the instructor. Two of the students (28.6%) posted their

assignment online, to their own blog pages. This option to post these assignments was not a requirement for this study rather it was a requirement for the course. However, two students completed all of this project's tasks by publishing them onto their own sites.

While the assignments entitled responses, mini-lesson, teaching exercise, and free writing were not requirements for this study (these assignments were only required by Dr. Agriss to pass the course), all of the subjects (100%) who participated in this study, completed them and then posted them on their Blogger sites.

The self-directed writing exercise is a required task for this study and it proved to be significant. According to the third question of the post-survey and students' self-directed writing reflection papers, all students (100%) had completed their self-directed writing exercise. Three students chose journaling (42.85%), three students chose to write a short story (42.85%) and one chose to write poetry (14.3%), according to students' self-directed writing proposals and reflection. One of the students wrote that they had procrastinated in their writing but all reported the intention to write weekly according to their reflections' papers. All students posted their chosen writing format in their proposals on their Blogger sites first week of the course and all students completed this section.

Self-Directed Writing Exercise.

Students were asked to complete the self-directed writing exercise reflection (See Appendix I).

Commitment to the exercise. All students (100%) completed the assignments included in this project. All subjects reported that while they were committed to this project they also noted time issues, problems with procrastination, feeling insecure and occasions of weaker commitment. One of the students wrote, "I do not want my writing

to be available online, because I plan to sell it" (Subject #2, 2013, p. 2) but reported that the project was "very useful" and "did promote my formal writing...it made me want to perfect my writing" skills (Ibid., p. 3). Subjects noted interference due to work, class schedules, family or personal issues, and illness. One student wrote every day and others reported the difficulty in meeting a rigid writing schedule. All noted their continued perseverance.

Your process of completing the exercise. While some subjects wrote daily and others did not, all reported that after completing the project, they enjoyed it. All appreciated using technology, especially the blogging platform, as a tool to encourage, improve, and promote their writing process. One student wrote that he enjoyed the process of journaling about "all manner of events and emotions and for me it truly helped in my process" (Subject #4, 2013, p. 2) and that it helped to have a permanent journal online but if something was too personal for sharing with the world, "I could save it but not publish it. For me this was a great option" (Ibid., p. 2). Another student wrote that there was an initial problem with the daily writing commitment for the journal exercise, but once started, "I was able to write pretty easily. I noticed that my mind was thinking faster than my fingers could type" (Subject #5, 2013, p. 2). These students, and two others, reported that they believed this exercise significantly improved their writing ability overall, their formal writing skills, and felt this project appreciably increased their confidence in their writing abilities.

Your successes and failures as you worked on the exercise. Only one of the subjects surveyed stated that writing is enjoyable, and that subject is the only participant self-reporting to writing on a daily basis. The remaining six subjects reported that they do

not write daily, do not enjoy writing, and report being indifferent about writing. One student reported that "I also wanted to do some creative writing such as poetry or some brief narrative. I think I failed in these two areas because my writing was public" while another student wrote that this project "has changed my perspective on writing." Another student, who had not enjoyed writing previously, felt stressed and incapable before finally deciding to just begin writing something. They reported "what happened next shocked me. I ended up writing about 4 single-spaced pages without stopping" (Subject #7, 2013, p. 1). This student felt compelled to continue writing and journaling long into the future. Subject #2 wrote that "my greatest success is that I found a story that I really want to tell, and I am excited about writing it. I know I will continue working on this story even after the [project] is over" (2013, p. 2). Others noted that it was the ease of the online platform, the ability to choose whether to keep their writing anonymous, the project expectations and their own commitments that resulted in immense satisfaction and improved writing skills. While 100% of the subjects reported overall satisfaction of writing improvements, most reported being surprised at their gains in abilities, skills, and product, including intangible benefits.

Difficulties and inspirations as you worked on the exercise. Six of the participants reported having time conflicts and scheduling issues. Two subjects (28.6%) said it was "pretty hard" or a "HARD" assignment in the beginning. One subject stated that it "took four weeks to begin." While 71.4% of the students reported significant enjoyment of the process in the post-survey, saying "I loved it" or "This was a great option," the remaining students chose: "I found it very useful." Some students noted their intention to use some version of the assignments during their career. One student wrote

that “my blog allowed me to fully express my feelings and thoughts...this exercise...allowed me to think that I had something to write about and say” (Subject #5, 2013, p. 2). Subject #3 said that “writing a story is hard” (2013, p. 1) but that the project helped to focus on the story itself, “I had to sit back and think about grammar, punctuation, and make sure I stayed focused” (Ibid., p. 2). This student reported that it was not immediately significant for formal writing, “my awareness of my own writing could help my formal writing in the future” (Ibid., p. 2) and noted a significant gain in self-esteem.

Subject #1 wrote about the difficulty of the chosen writing assignment, poetry, but learned perseverance and an appreciation for the Internet and technological tools “when you try and try and try, you can get it” (2013, p. 2) and intended using similar tasks later, as a teacher.

Did this informal e-writing exercise promote your formal writing for this class in any way? If so, how? If not, why do you think it didn't? “This informal assignment helped me learn to have more fun with writing, which I think translated into my formal writing to an extent.” “I loved the fact that we had the freedom to do whatever we wanted for this.” “Completing this self-directed writing exercise has been an eyes-opening experience.” All students with 100% said this writing help them with formal writing.

Survey

Pre-Survey. According to the students' answers on the first and second pre-survey questions (Appendix L), this study involved seven students; three male and four female subjects. Students' ages average between 20-44 years of age. The third question, about how they enjoy writing, was strongly ranked between 4 and 5; six subjects (85.

7%) chose point *four*, ranking their enjoyment of writing between “I am indifferent” and “I love writing” while one student (14.3%) chose point *five*, reporting “I love writing” (see Figure 1).

The fourth question asked “Do you write daily” and only one student answered “Yes” while the other six subjects answered “No” (Figure 2). On the second part of this question, “In what ways” do they write, only three students (42.85%) answered. Their answers on the pre-survey, about assignments for classes, journaling at home, creative writing activities, class work involving writing, and other writing tasks (Appendix L) found that two of these three students used electronic writing as a part of their writing; including social media, texting, and messaging. Two of the seven students stated that writing, using technology, was a part of their daily writing (28.6 %). 71.4% of subjects said they wrote for fun using technology daily.

“How many pages do you write daily?” This is the fifth question in the pre-survey (Appendix L). There were five options for the students to choose from: Never, chosen by two students (28.6%); Less than one page, chosen by two students (28.6%); One page, chosen by two students (28.6%); 2-4 pages, no one chose this option (0.0%); More than 5 pages, reported by one student (14.3%).

The sixth question asked “How much of your daily writing is formal?” One student reported that “Most writing is formal” (14.3%); “Not a lot of formal writing, it is only for classes” was the response of two students (28.6%); “Most of my writing is informal” was the response of one student (14.3%); “Daily writing is formal because it is only for classes and assignments” was the response of one student (14.3%); “50% of daily writing is formal” was the response by two students (28.6%).

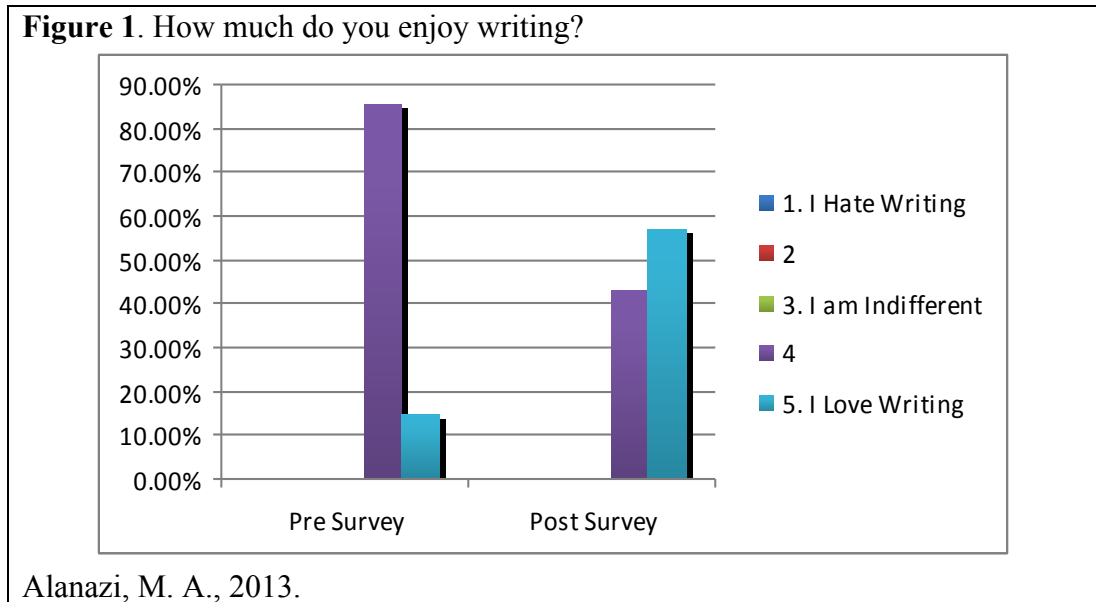
The seventh question was about technology and the use of technological tools. All students answered yes to the question: "Do you use technology daily?" Question number eight on the pre-survey asked "What types of technology do you use?" Here, all students reported they used cell phones or smart phones (100%); all students reported using a laptop or personal computer and accessed the Internet (100%); one student reported using an iPod (14.3%); one student noted TV usage (14.3%). The subjects felt comfortable using technology in their lives and used it daily.

Question number nine was "Do you use technology to write?" (such as for texts, publish posts, etc). Six students responded "Yes" (85.7%). One student answered "No" (14.3%). The second part of the question asked "In what way" do you use technology to write? The answers stated they use Blogger, email, for assignments, for text messages, to post messages and information on social media outlets (such as Facebook), and they used Microsoft Word for many writing assignments.

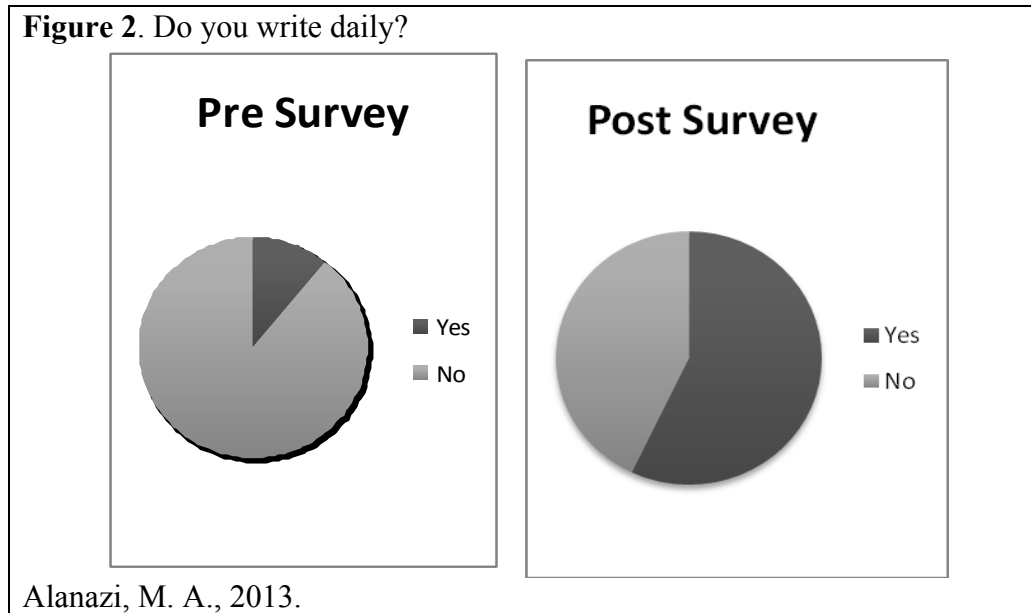
"Have you ever used e-writing as a formal part of class?" This is the tenth and last question in the pre-survey. One student responded with "Yes" (14.3%) while six students chose "No" (85.7%). The second part of the question, "In what ways" do you use e-writing formally, had only one student responding; the subject who chose "yes" answered this question. This response stated: "I take a lot of online classes where all the writing is e-writing."

Post-Survey. (Appendix M). The second question asked subjects to rank their enjoyment of writing at the conclusion of the project, after using e-writing platforms to promote their writing. All chose rankings between 4 and 5; three subjects chose point

four, between “I am indifferent” and “I love writing” while four chose a five ranking, “I love writing” (42.9%: 57.1%). See Figure 1 for pre- and post-survey results.



The third question was the same one asked in the fourth question on the pre-survey: “Do you write daily?” See Figure 2 for pre- and post-survey results. In this survey, the post-survey, the students’ answers showed a significant change. Four students (57.1%) answered “yes” while three students (42.9%) responded with “no.” The pre-survey responses were 14.3% to 85.7%; one student wrote daily while six did not. The second part of the question is: “In what way?” and it was answered by five subjects. Four students reported their daily writing experience as: “Writing daily in a journal” and “Write occasional texts, e-mails, messages, and emails.” The fifth student wrote “I did write probably 70-80% of my week. I wrote enough to make a difference in myself as a writer and a teacher of writing.”



The fourth question in the post-survey asked, “How much of your daily writing is formal?” The post-survey had seven text responses written by the subjects. The results are: “Most writing is formal” reported one student (14.3%); “Not a lot of formal writing, it is only for classes” said two students (28.6%); “Most of my writing is informal” responded one subject (14.3%); “About one-fourth of my daily writing is formal” stated one student (14.3%). One subject reported that 50% of all daily writing is formal and another said that “All daily writing is informal”.

“How many pages do you writing daily?” This is the fifth question in the pre- and post-survey. The post-survey found that the students’ answers had changed from their pre-survey answers. “Never” was not a response by any subject (0.0%); “Less than one page” was chosen by one student (14.3%); “One page” was the choice of three students (42.9%); “2-4 pages” was the option chosen by two students (28.6%); “More than 5 pages” was the response of one subject (14.3%).

The sixth post-survey question was “Do you use technology daily?” All students involved with this project said “yes”. The seventh question asked “What types of technology do you use?” Smart phones, text messaging via cell phone, computers, tablets, the Internet, video cameras, and a Kindle Fire were noted as the technology tools or types of technology that this project’s subjects use on a daily basis. When the eighth question on the post-survey asked: “Do you use technology to write?” six students chose yes, (85.7%) while one answered “no” (14.3%).

“Did you enjoy using e-writing to write for class?” This is the ninth post-survey question and it has a 5 point Likert ranking system. One of students chose the third point, saying “I was indifferent” (14.3%); five students chose the fourth point (between the third rank of “I was indifferent” and the fifth ranking point of “I loved it” (71.4%); one student chose the fifth point, stating “I loved it” (14.3%).

The last post-survey’s question is “Did using e-writing increase your motivation to write?” Four students chose to rank this at number three or “Sort of” (57.1%); one student answered by choosing point number four, between “Sort of” and “Definitely” points (14.3%); two students chose the fifth point for “Definitely” (28.6%). The second part of this question is “How did e-writing motivate you to write? OR why didn’t e-writing motivate you to write?” According to the six students who answered this part of the question, they stated: "I could easily go back and review my work and change things as needed" and "I felt like it wasn't much different than what I had done before. I should actually say that I had published on a blog before, so that's why it didn't motivate me any more than I was already motivated" or "I was definitely more motivated to write using my blog than if I had to hand-write everything. Especially the daily morning writing

prompts. I was able to write way more for ten minutes typing than I would handwriting because I can type faster than I can write." Another said: "E-writing kept me accountable for actually writing, but it also made me share less than I normally would because I was conscious that others would read it." Another response was: "E-writing mainly motivated me to write by keeping me accountable. I wrote in a daily journal, and I posted each entry online to show my commitment to the exercise." One stated: "I don't really like typing for reflecting or journaling." These statements were written by this study's subjects.

Chapter 5

Findings and Data Analysis

This chapter includes the project's findings, data analyses, recommendations, applications, implications, and the study's conclusion.

Findings

This project helped students to learn how to write their own narratives in a comfortable space. They became eager and motivated writers who felt an increase in ability, confidence, and understanding of a better process to achieve the writing product one is happy about. The assignments let them do what Wiesendanger et al. (2011) and others suggested teachers do; to let students use their imagination to create their own stories and learn to write their own narratives. Since "there is no limit to the human imagination" (Ibid., p. 546), Blogger proved to be an easy tool for engaging students and helping them find and build new skills and writing talent. Wiesendanger et al. said "students should be able to implement a new strategy and use it effectively to develop their own stories. The strategy can get the benefits of life as students apply these skills in their writing" (Ibid., p. 546).

As discussed in chapter one, when we use technological tools to write, it feels like we are writing for fun. This medium allows us to express our feelings and thoughts with our friends and family. We are allowed to choose our topics and how we write. The findings corroborated other research, including Prensky's (2011). The use of electronic writing, already a part of everyday life for many, served as a successful tactic for motivating students to become vigorous and active writers; improving self-esteem and building formal writing skills. E-writing, electronic devices and publishing platforms

online did engage the subjects' imagination while developing their effective narrative skills. Building upon students' current writing talents in a self-chosen writing format helped to engage the students as writers, even those who reported low levels of enjoyment in writing tasks. The online publishing and sharing platform was positive and motivating as Prensky (2001) stated. The project stimulated creativity, helped students focus, refined writing skills and led to significant increases in enjoyment, confidence, and writing abilities.

The subjects were not graded on their blog content for the quality of their informal writing activities. They were expected to use e-writing for their assignments and to share those productions with the other subjects. The final self-reflection concerning the entire experience included an analysis of the use of e-writing, informal writing tasks, and whether the project affected their formal writing skills. Even accounting for some internal motivational levels, none of the subjects reported to initially liking to write but it seems the project increased everyone's enjoyment of the process of writing overall. Five of the seven subjects reported that their formal writing skills were definitely improved.

The subjects made statements in the post-survey and reflection exercise very similar to those made by Fulwiler and Young (1986) who said that writing helps us "to order and represent experience to our own understanding. In this sense language provides us with a unique way of knowing and becomes a tool for discovering, for shaping meaning, and for reaching understanding" (cited on WAC website, 2013, para. 2). Forsman (n.d.) said that "if students are encouraged to try a variety of thought processes in classes, they can, regardless of their ages, develop considerable mental power. Writing is one of the most effective ways to develop thinking" (Ibid., para. 3). Garrett & Moltzen

(2011) stated that allowing students to write what is personally interesting and valuable to them is key in helping them begin the transition from informal to formal writing and this project significantly corroborated that finding. Using technology, interactive tools and electronic publishing platforms was a motivator that enabled the project's subjects to become active writers who could enjoy the process of writing itself.

Analysis of Data

According to the surveys and the self-directed writing exercise, the subjects reported sustained motivation to continue writing after the end of this project. All stated, to varying degrees, that they found the e-writing practice promoted their formal writing by increasing their writing skills overall. "I was already motivated" (one student reported in the last question on the post-survey) but all reported higher levels of motivation and confidence. "I was definitely more motivated to write using my blog than if I had to hand write everything. Especially the daily morning writing prompts" (a student wrote in response to the last question of the post-survey). While all students used e-writing platforms, all choosing Blogger, for the class, they first wrote text using MS Word and Google Drive. Two students published everything assigned, including non-required texts, on their Blogger sites. All students published the responses, mini-lesson teaching exercise, and free writing segments to their Blogger sites. All subjects used e-writing, especially for their blogs, for the mini-lesson teaching exercise. The group had significant concerns about their privacy during the informal writing segment but this issue was easy to solve by using the platform's privacy system setting. This allowed them to feel comfortable and safe when informally writing and this was reported to be another motivational action.

According to the surveys, 100% of subjects used technology daily; 85.7% of subjects used technology to write by text messages, social media posts, Microsoft Word, and emails. However, 85.7% of the subjects have not used e-writing as a formal part of class. "I can type faster than I can write" (a student wrote in answer to the last question of the post-survey). All students, even those who stated they do not like to write, are using technology daily because technological tools are easier and quicker for them when practicing writing. "I was able to write way more for ten minutes typing than I would handwriting" (one of the subjects wrote in answer to the last question in the post-survey). E-writing helps students to write faster and encourage them to promote formal writing.

Informal writing helped all students with formal writing to some degree, and 85.7% of the subjects enjoyed it, according to the self-directed writing exercise. The students wrote stories, journals, and poetry. Some students said they faced difficulties in the beginning, or to find the time to write, or had concerns about the confidentiality and their privacy. Each student, who had faced a difficulty or a problem, reported using the Internet or other technology tools to search and find solutions to problems and finish the task. Some reported they used technology for inspiration. Informal writing tasks, as performed for this study, helped 100% of the subjects, and 85.7% of the subjects stated enjoyment and confidence. This project intended to analyze whether e-writing and students' informal writing practices, non-graded, would motivate students to write and then promote their formal writing skills. The data shows that e-writing both motivated and inspired 100% of the participants and nearly 86% of them, six of the seven subjects, reported to gaining formal writing skills at the conclusion of this project.

Recommendations

As an international scholar, and this project's manager, I see that researchers can implement the use of electronic writing in all schools, across subject and grade levels, around the world, even in my country of Saudi Arabia. Students are proficient in the use of technology and writing can be made easier and even fun when using electronic tools.

I suggest each class of students create a class web page that includes the schedule, the assignments, the course's calendar, and has students' links to their own pages. Each student does not need to carry a bag containing many books leading to body fatigue nor will they be stressed or feel overwhelmed by looking at a big collection of papers and notebooks. Giving each student an account using online technological tools, such as Google Sites, and giving each class member the opportunity to create individual accounts and blogging type spaces, they can participate, collaborate, be inspired and motivated by e-writing and sharing texts electronically. Students just need to create their own accounts and start building their sites.

Applications

Electronic writing tools are numerous and people can find accounts and sites that suit them. In educational settings, these tools enable students to enjoy using them for learning. As the project manager, I used Google Sites for this study, but I have practiced with a variety of electronic writing tools. Google Sites is a good choice because it comes with a format that includes many languages making it accessible for international students anywhere in the world. Additionally, it has many themes' and templates available or one can create a site with a completely unique theme. This aspect helps build motivation because it is unique, and important, to the author from the start.

Blogger was the students' choice in this study. It also can be written in many different languages and has a wide choice of themes. Also, there are many different electronic tools to use for writing, such as Wikispaces or Protopage. These tools make it easy for students to write text, add pictures and videos, draw tables, add graphs, add links, and include written documents. This ease and variety allows students to create their own individual electronic spaces and is inspiring to them to continue working on them.

Implications

As mentioned in the recommendations section, using electronic writing tools has benefits far beyond what would fit into a student's book bag; they motivate students into a space more conducive to writing and that is motivational for writers at any level. It is important to remember the students who are not fluent in English as they may have difficulty using some of the tools that do not support languages other than English. However, technology speaks a more universal language and electronic writing can be successfully utilized with appropriate platforms.

Also, there are schools without Internet access; that negatively impacts the teachers and students, and stalls activating classrooms and learning. For those in these school districts, it will be a significant barrier for the teacher and classroom to using e-writing tools. There are teachers who lack training or support in the use of e-learning tools and they will have more issues in using those electronic tools that help in the classroom to connect with students and follow their writings.

Conclusion

In this study, we have analyzed students' writing process and asked if their formal writing skills were improved by the practice of electronic writing and informal writing

activities. This project intended to promote students' formal writing by actively practicing informal e-writing, allowing students to become comfortable and positive about their own writing capabilities. Subjects self-reported their problems with procrastinating and other issues, their initial fears about being able to produce acceptable writing, and more...until they reported their own surprise about their internal feelings of success and pride. Informal writing practice, that is student driven with minimal parameters, led the subjects to use electronic tools for producing narratives and regular texts. These subjects became engaged in the process of writing, through e-writing and online technology, and they reported increases in learning about writing, better understanding for superior writing ability, increased understanding about the writing process, improved self-esteem, and a willingness to undertake writing assignments after this experiment. The subjects found their own writing talent and felt compelled to expand it, overall. The project seems to verify prior research surrounding electronic tools and giving students control over their own writing.

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Appendixes

Appendix A

English 408 Site

Home

- Assignments
- Syllabus
- Contact Me
- Class Surveys

More Stuff

- Class Announcements
- Class Calendar
- Useful Links
- Forms and Docs
- Links to Student Sites

Home

This site has been created, as a thesis project, to help promote student writing through the use of digital tools. It will serve as a useful tool to you and (hopefully) help encourage you to write. You will find many resources about the class here, including syllabus, mini-lessons, essay requirements, as well as other assignments.

Course Description:

Study and analysis of the cognitive steps taken and of the general process usually followed when a person writes clearly and effectively. Designed especially for those who interested in the teaching of composition.

Required Texts:

Murray, Donald. *A Writer Teaches Writing*. 2nd ed. Boston: Heinle, 2004.

Weaver, Constance. *Teaching Grammar in Context*. Portsmouth, NH: Boyton/Cook Heineman, 1996.

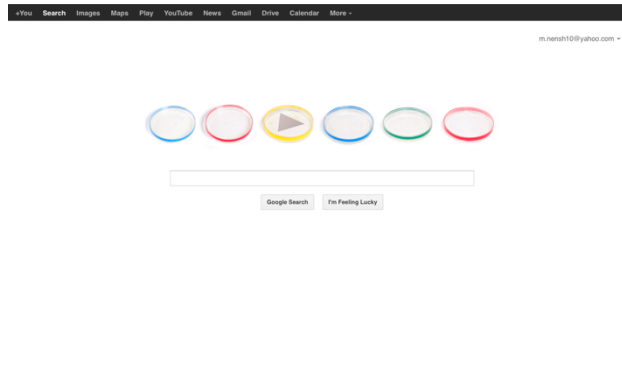
Subpages (1): [Class Surveys](#)

Appendix B

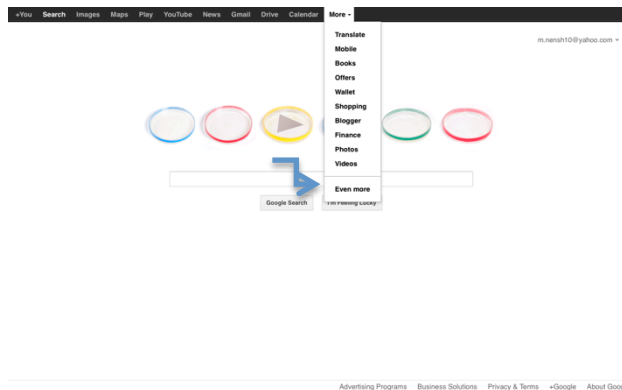
Instruction

- To Create your Google Sites:

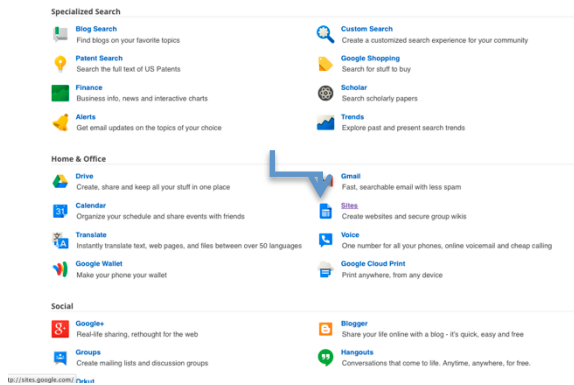
1. Go to Google.com <http://www.google.com/>



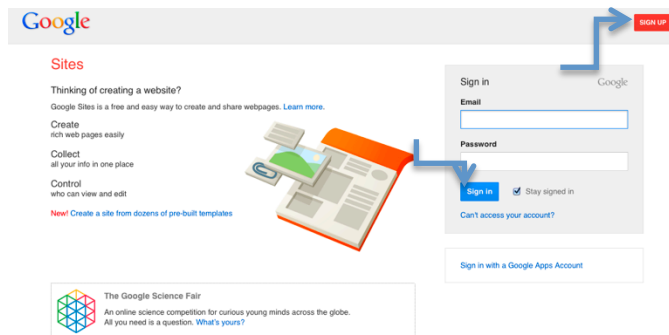
2. From More go to Sites OR search for Google Sites



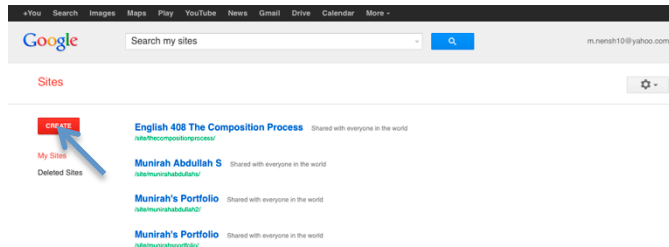
3. Go to "Sites"



4. Sign in (or sign up)



5. In your Google Sites account Click CREATE and choose your Site theme



And start with new site

6. To learn more go to these Videos:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1B_q_EiVHI

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QMokt7pAcPk>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HW3OElLssgE>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P7LNwaP1V3c>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=endscreen&NR=1&v=NP_wV9IGSoQ

Appendix C

Narrative Essay

For this assignment, you will take real or imagined events and write an extended narrative of at least five double-spaced pages. We will be discussing the criteria for strong narrative writing in class. Narratives should focus on one event and explain it in significant detail and should demonstrate strong narrative writing throughout. We will review, brainstorm, and devise these characteristics in class.

Narratives should take advantage of the complete writing process and be illustrative of your very best work. All drafts and workshop materials should be submitted with your final draft. Your Narrative will be worth 15% of the final grade for the course.

Additionally, and because this is a course about teaching writing, each student is required to complete a 2 pg. minimum reflective essay that addresses the process of completing this assignment from the perspective of a teacher. What did you learn from this process that will be helpful in your teaching with your own students?

Important Dates:

M 7/2—Narrative Essay prewriting

Narrative Essay in-class writing

W 7/3—Narrative Essay in-class writing

Narrative Essay workshop

M 7/8—Narrative Essay workshop

2nd draft of Narrative Essay

W 7/10—Narrative Essay publication

Final draft of Narrative Essay

Personal Narrative Essay Evaluation Rubric

____ / 50 Completion of Narrative Essay of real or imagined events of at least five double-spaced pages.

____ / 20 Creation of 2 distinct grading procedures

____ / 20 Completion of 2 pg. minimum reflective essay that addresses the process of completing this assignment from the perspective of a teacher.

____ / 10 Narrative takes advantage of the complete writing process and all workshop materials are submitted with final draft.

Appendix D

Informative/Explanatory Essay

For this assignment, you will write an Informative/Explanatory Essay that considers various viewpoints of a current issue or area of concern on a school-related topic. Your essay should be grounded in research you conduct. Informative/Explanatory Essays should be at least five pages double-spaced and include at least five research sources, cited in either APA or MLA format. It should represent your best attempts at both research and explanation. Your Informative/Explanatory Essay will be worth 15% of the final grade in the course. Your Argument Essay should take advantage of the complete writing process and be illustrative of your very best work. All drafts and workshop materials should be submitted with your final draft.

Additionally, and because this is a course about teaching writing, each student is required to complete a 2 pg. minimum reflective essay that addresses the process of completing this assignment from the perspective of a teacher. What did you learn from this process that will be helpful in your teaching with your own students?

Important Dates:

- M 7/15*—Informative/Explanatory Essay in-class writing
 Informative/Explanatory Essay workshop
W 7/17—Informative/Explanatory Essay workshop
2nd Draft of Informative/Explanatory Essay
M 7/22— Informative/Explanatory Essay publication
Final draft of Informative/Explanatory Essay

Argument Essay Evaluation Rubric

____ / 50 Completion of an Informative/Explanatory Essay that considers various viewpoints of a current issue or area of concern on a school-related topic in five double-spaced pages with at least five sources.

____ / 20 Creation of 2 distinct grading procedures

____ / 20 Completion of 2 pg. minimum reflective essay that addresses the process of completing this assignment from the perspective of a teacher.

____ / 10 Informative/Explanatory Essay takes advantage of the complete writing process and all workshop materials are submitted with final draft.

Appendix E

Argument Essay

For this assignment, you will draw from your Informative/Explanatory Essay to write an Argument Essay that addresses a current issue or area of concern on a school-related topic. Your essay should be grounded in research and considerate of audience as you consider various viewpoints of an issue and attempt to persuade your readers to consider or adapt your opinion or action item. Argument Essays should be at least five pages double-spaced and include at least five research sources, cited in either APA or MLA format. It should represent your best attempts at both research and argument/persuasion. Your Argument Essay will be worth 15% of the final grade in the course.

Your Argument Essay should take advantage of the complete writing process and be illustrative of your very best work. All drafts and workshop materials should be submitted with your final draft.

Additionally, and because this is a course about teaching writing, each student is required to complete a 2 pg. minimum reflective essay that addresses the process of completing this assignment from the perspective of a teacher. What did you learn from this process that will be helpful in your teaching with your own students?

Important Dates:

*M 7/22—Argument Essay prewriting
Argument Essay in-class writing*

*W 7/24—Argument Essay in-class writing
Argument Essay workshop*

*M 7/29—Argument Essay workshop
2nd draft of Argument Essay*

*W 7/31—Argument Essay publication
Final draft of Argument Essay*

Argument Essay Evaluation Rubric

____ / 50 Completion of an Argument Essay that draws from your Informative/Explanatory Essay to and addresses a current issue or area of concern on a school-related topic in five double-spaced pages with at least five sources.

____ / 20 Creation of 2 distinct grading procedures

____ / 20 Completion of 2 pg. minimum reflective essay that addresses the process of completing this assignment from the perspective of a teacher.

____ / 10 Argument Essay takes advantage of the complete writing process and all workshop materials are submitted with final draft.

Appendix F

Mini-Lesson Teaching Exercise

All students will have the opportunity to teach an aspect of writing during the course. Each student will be responsible for teaching a 30 minute mini-lesson focused on writing instruction. You will consider your 408 classmates as your students, and we'll be respectful junior high school students or high school students at your request. Please clearly identify the grade level for which this lesson is intended. Each student will provide the class with a lesson plan for his/her mini-lesson. Following each lesson, the class will participate in a feedback session designed to help us all consider what worked well and what can be improved. Additionally, each student will complete a self-evaluation after reflecting on his/her teaching. Note: The presenters need your participation to grow as teachers, and you will depend on their participation as well. Consequently, the class is responsible for participating in the lesson and the discussion following the lesson. The mini-lesson teaching exercise is worth 20% of the final grade for the course.

Specific requirements:

1. Each student will provide the class with a lesson plan for his/her mini-lesson. Prior to completing this project, we will discuss lesson plan templates that will be appropriate to use. This lesson plan will be a thorough explanation of what is planned and implemented.
2. Each student will complete a 2 pg. self-evaluation after reflecting on his/her teaching. In this self-evaluation, each student will:
 - Reflect on what was successful about the lesson and teaching,
 - Reflect on what he/she might do differently next time, and
 - Address issues that are brought up during the feedback session

It's expected that you use the content of the course thus far to guide your lesson preparation. This assignment is a great opportunity to take some risks and attempt things you haven't tried before. As a class, we are here to support and help each other to become better teachers. My hope is that you take this opportunity to do that.

Evaluation Rubric

The mini-lesson teaching exercise is worth 20% of the final grade for the course. Students will be evaluated by the following.

- ___/10 Lesson Plan
- ___/10 Effectiveness of Lesson Activities
- ___/10 Teacher Effectiveness/Poise/Presence
- ___/10 Level of Class Engagement
- ___/10 Self-evaluation Paper

Appendix G

Self-Directed Writing Exercise

Each student will complete *an informal* Self-Directed Writing Exercise, to be completed outside of class and on your choice of electronic platforms. We will generate a list of possible platforms in class, and you will choose from one of these platform options. You will suggest your own self-directed writing project to complete for this assignment. Early in the quarter, each student will be asked to commit to a Self-Directed Writing Exercise. The Self-Directed Writing Exercise is worth 10% the final grade in the course.

Self-Directed Writing Exercise proposals are due in class Wednesday, 6/27.

Additionally, each student is required to complete a 2 pg. minimum reflective essay. Reflective essays should address the following:

- Commitment to the exercise**
- Your process of completing the exercise**
- Your successes and failures as you worked on the exercise**
- Difficulties and inspirations as you worked on the exercise**
- And VERY IMPORTANT—Did this informal electronic writing exercise promote your formal writing for this class in any way? If so, how? If not, why do you think it didn't?**

Self-Directed Writing Exercise**Evaluation Rubric**

____ / 10 Proposal complete and on time

____ / 20 Completion of proposed exercise

____ / 20 Reflective essay

Appendix H

Learning Letter Assignment

Each student is required to complete a course reflection in the form of a letter to me (1 pg minimum). This letter should fulfill three major requirements:

- 1) Reflect on the work you've completed in the course (essays, mini-lessons, self-directed writing exercises)
- 2) Reflect on the theories and concepts we explored in readings and discussions
- 3) Reflect on how you think your participation in this course has influenced your thinking about yourself as a teacher

The process of continual reflection is essential to your growth as a teacher.

The learning letter is worth 5% of the final grade for the course, and it is due at our final meeting—Wednesday, 8/14.

Appendix I

Pre-project survey

*** 1. What is your ID number?**

*** 2. Are you male or female? & How old are you?**

Male

Female

Your age is.....

3. How much do you enjoy writing?

I Hate Writing

I am Indifferent

I Love Writing

*** 4. Do you write daily?**

Yes

No

In what ways?

*** 5. How many pages do you writing daily?**

never

less than one page

one page

2-4 pages

5 or more than 5 pages

***6. How much of your daily writing is formal?**

***7. Do you use technology daily?**

Yes

No

***8. What types of technology do you use?**

***9. Do you use technology to write? e.g texts. posts.. etc**

Yes

No

In what ways?

***10. Have you ever used e-writing as a formal part of class?**

Yes

No

In what ways?

Appendix J

Post-project survey

***1. What is your ID number?**

***2. How much do you enjoy writing?**

I Hate Writing

I am Indifferent

I Love Writing

***3. Do you write daily?**

Yes

No

In what ways?

***4. How much of your daily writing is formal?**

***5. How many pages do you writing daily?**

never

less than one page

one page

2-4 pages

5 or more than 5 pages

***6. Do you use technology daily?**

- Yes
- No

***7. What types of technology do you use?**

8. Do you use technology to write?

- Yes
- No

***9. Did you enjoy using e-writing to write for class?**

I Hated It		I was indifferent		I Loved It
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***10. Did using e-writing increase your motivation to write?**

Not at All		Sort of		Definitely
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How did e-writing motivate you to write? OR Why did not e-writing motivate you to write?

VITA

Author: Munirah Abdullah S. Alanazi

Place of Birth: Tabuk, Saudi Arabia

Undergraduate Schools Attended: Tabuk University

Degrees Awarded: Bachelor of Education, 2009, Tabuk University

Honors & Awards: King Abdullah scholarship to United States 2010- 2013

Professional Experience: Middle School Practicum, 2007-2008 Internship, 2013,

Eastern Washington University, Cheney,

Washington