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THE EFFECT OF WEBLOG INTEGRATED WRİTİNG INSTRUCTİON ON PRİMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS WRITING PERFORMANCE

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This study investigated the effect of weblog integrated writing instruction on students writing performance. Also students perceptions toward weblog used in their writing courses has been examined Seventy undergraduate students in the Department of Primary Education at Marmara University participated in this study. Data were collected through students, written products and weblog perception questionnaires. The finding indicated that weblog integrated writing instruction improved the writing performance of students. Moreover students had a favorable perception towards weblog use.

Key Words: blog, writing, educational technology, writing skills, internet and education

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a critical skill for student in school, college, and lifelong according to the recent report published by the National Commission on Writing (2006) writing proficiency for new learning and the knowledge acquisition. Although developing fluency in the writing process has always been a fundamental goal of schools, the most recent data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (2002) indicate that two thirds of the nation's students performed below certain proficiency level in writing.

This general agreement on the importance of writing in language skills has led educators and researchers to find ways for effective writing instruction. Two conditions have dominated the research related to teaching writing effectively in language education (White, 1993; Brien, 2004). One of these conditions is the emergence of approach process which focuses on the writer as an independent individual and lays particular stress on a cycle of writing activities which move

learners from the generation of ideas and the collection of data through to the publication of a finished text (Tribble, 1996).

The other condition is the spread of computers, internet and the advent of the different applications of the internet in the language learning. One of the newest and most promising internet applications with regard to the effective writing instruction is weblogs, also known as blog, which are defined simply as "online diaries; logs of thoughts, reflections; a space for individuals to write whatever they choose with an option for readers to comment on what they have read" (Eastment, 2005) are one of the newest and the most promising one with regard to effective writing instruction. So the major purpose of this study is to this study primarily sets out to investigate how the use of weblogs integrated in a writing course affects the students' writing performance and their attitude.

What Is Blog or Weblog?

The term weblog refers to a personalized web page, kept by the author in reverse chronological diary form. As a "log on the web", it is kept first and foremost on the web, either on a static web page, or via a database-backed website, enabled through "blogging" software. As a "log of the web", it easily refers to other Internet locations via hyperlinks (Eastment, 2005).

According to the Wikipedia, "*A blog is a website where entries are made in journal style and displayed in a reverse chronological order. […] A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, web pages, and other media related to its topic*".

A web log or blog has been classified as a communication and publishing hybrid that makes online interactive activities simple and accessible. In writers terms it might be described as a "virtual gathering place in which words, pictures and sounds can be freely exchanged" (Tipic Inc. & motime.com, 2003). Winer (2003) gave a more technical definition as "a hierarchy of text, images, media objects and data, arranged chronologically, that can be viewed in an HTML browser." Winer, also added that Donna Wentworth, co-editor of Web Logs at Harvard Law offers the following definition: "A web log, or blog, is a website updated frequently with links, commentary and anything else you like. New items go on top and older items flow down the page. Blogs can be political journals, news digests, and/or personal diaries; they can focus on one narrow subject or range across a universe of topics."

Blogs were introduced to the general public through their use by journalists, technologists, and large media companies. The "moment to moment" publishing aspect of blogging has attracted many to this medium. In addition, the

availability and simplicity of free, ad supported, and open source blogging software has enabled huge development in the number of blogs posted on the internet. Documentation of the use of web logs within the field of education is growing (Conhaim, 2002; Lohnes, 2003).

Weblogs and Writing Instruction

Likewise, Campbell (2003) discusses the possibilities of integrating weblogs into educational context, especially in language teaching field and mentioned about three types of blogs that are likely to be beneficial for language learners.

The first type is *tutor blog* through which the class teacher can produce special texts for reading and vocabulary activities by considering the students proficiency levels. Creating a tutor blog, the language teacher can also direct the students towards English websites and guide them in their self-study by creating "links to online quizzes, English news sites, key-pal networks, audio and video files for listening practice and interactive websites" (Campbell, 2003).

The second is learner blog run by individual learners. Campbell (2003) claims that this type of blog "may be best suited for reading and writing classes" and he explained the function of learner blogs in writing as follows: Individually, blogs can be used as journals for writing practice, or as free-form templates for personal expression. The idea here is that students can get writing practice, develop a sense of ownership, and get experience with the practical, legal, and ethical issues of creating a hypertext document. In addition, whatever they write can instantly be read by anyone else and, due to the comment features of the software, further exchange of ideas is promoted (Farmer, 2006).

The last type Campbell (2003) advises for use with language classes is class blogs a collaborative work through effort of an entire class. It can serve like a free form bulletin board for learners to share thoughts on a common topic assigned as homework. It can also prove to be useful for an international language exchange.

Possibilities of weblog use in language teaching are only limited to the ability of creativeness of the user and although it can be applied in all language skills; weblogs seem to be an extremely valuable tool for current writing instruction especially since it is directly related to writing something. Such developments as the appearance of the communicative approach, cognitive and socio-cognitive views of language teaching have affected the writing instruction just as they have influenced computer applications and caused the advent of weblogs (Wright, Knight & Pomerleau, 1999).

Ward (2004) expresses the place of weblog in writing instruction as: For the language teacher, the weblog is a timely arrival which can fulfill many of the needs identified for the effective teaching of writing. The weblog provides a genuine audience, is authentically communicative, process driven, peer reviewed, provides unusual context and offers a completely new form with un-chartered creative potential. By forming a learner blog, the writing teacher can make use of blogging in all the stages of writing process from drafting to publishing and assessment. In drafting stage, the students can share their writings through blog pages and this will ease the feedback process.

All the class members and the teacher can reach the drafts at any time and place so they can give feedback easily. Since the drafts are on the net, there will be no time restriction (as it is in classroom context) and peers can examine the drafts as long as they want. Appreciating the value of weblogs in writing class, Levey (2003, cited in Ward, 2004) claims that "blogging has some of the best aspects of peer review built on it".

Apart from reviewing their peers' writings, weblogs allow the students to see the feedback given by the teacher to the other students and this is assumed to contribute to their understanding of successful writing. The opportunities offered by the weblogs are not restricted only with the teacher and peer feedback; it is also likely that an awareness of the audience is aroused in the students depending on open-to-anyone nature of the internet. The concept of awareness of the audience is continually emphasized in the writing instruction with the claim that if the students know what they have written will be read by someone other than the teacher, they will produce more meaningful and successful texts. However, in a school setting, it is not so easy to create the opportunities for the students to write for a real audience.

According to Ward (2004) when the students write only for their teachers "they may not only have difficulty adjusting their writing to fit the reader but may have trouble getting started because, aside from the final grade, what they write does not mean anything to them because it does not need to mean anything to anyone else". Integrating weblog into the course has potential to change this situation since students will feel the possibility of being read by any internet user. When writing for a weblog, Kitzmann (2003) observes that "the (online) audience is not anticipated but expected, and thus influences and structures the very manner in which the writer articulates, composes and distributes the self document"

More important than all these are that the weblog supported with the writing course may contribute to the student awareness of the process-driven nature of

writing. Continually, updating a weblog may be helpful for the writing student to appreciate that the writing is an ongoing process (Ward, 2004).

These are the benefits that are probable to be obtained from the learner blogs. In addition to the learner blogs, teachers can make use of blogging by setting a tutor blog through which they can provide their students with lots of materials internet includes, so they can create opportunities for extra studying for the students. The students can choose among the materials referenced by the teacher according to their own needs, and this will lead to the individualization of learning (Stepp-Greany, 2002).

When the choice of material to study is left to the students, they will take much more responsibility for their learning and develop a sense of autonomous learning, which is assumed to increase success in writing.

With all these potential benefits, weblogs have been experienced by an increasing number of teachers and researchers who want to measure the effectiveness of weblogs in language teaching, in general, and in the writing instruction, in particular.

METHOD

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following questions. First question is "İs any difference between the writing performance of students who received in-class writing instruction and that of those who received the weblog integrated writing instruction?"

Second question is "What are the perceptions of students towards using weblog in writing performance?"

Research Model

This study is an attempt to disclose the potential effects of weblogs on the learners writing proficiency through writing course. Two research designs were used in this study: a quasi experimental design and a survey design. As the first study, it seeks mainly to find out the impact of weblog integrated writing process instruction on writing performance. Therefore by assigning the students randomly to experimental and control groups, a quasi experimental design was adopted. This study also aimed to measure the students' perceptions towards the use of weblogs in their writing process. Therefore, a survey design was adopted.

Participants

Seventy undergraduate students in The Department of Primary School Education at Marmara University participated in this study. Because of the curriculum and administrative limitations of the school where this study was conducted, it seemed difficult to have random sampling; therefore, convenience sampling procedures which "involve choosing the nearest individuals to serve as respondents" (Cohen & Manion, 1994) were applied in drawing sample for the study. One of the two classes of students was assigned as experimental group according to their opportunity in accessing internet, and the other class served as control group. For each group, the number of participants and their ages and other demographic variables are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants demographic variables

Groups	*Gender*	*Number*	*Age*	*Number*	*Using Blog*	*Number*
Experimental Group	Male	15	18	1	Yes	4
			19	7		
			20	5	No	11
			21	2		
	Female	20	18	3	Yes	3
			19	8		
			20	7	No	17
			21	1		
Control Group	Male	13	18	0	Yes	5
			19	3		
			20	7	No	8
			21	3		
	Female	22	18	3	Yes	1
			19	10		
			20	8	No	21
			21	1		

Instruments

To gather necessary data, writing performance task, questionnaires and interview were used. In the following section, these instruments are further described.

First instrument in this research is Writing Performance Task, which examines the existing ability of the participants in writing. The students both in experimental and control groups were asked to perform a writing task as a pre-test. The task provided the students with choices on the topics and paragraph types that they were going to learn throughout the term. The participants were

required to write a paragraph on the topic they chose. After the treatment, the same task was repeated as a post test. Two lecturer of writing were selected to evaluate the participants written products by using a rubric which was constructed in accordance with Composition Profile. The evaluators were trained with the Reader Guide in the use of rubric.

So as to answer the second research question, "What are the perceptions of students towards weblogs as a means of writing?" consequently researcher constructed questionnaire was used the questionnaire consisted of 24 statements adapted from Kızıl (2005). The statements modified in accordance with the objectives of this present study asked about students' perceptions of weblog use on following five aspects: (1) effect on writing performance (2) effect of feedback and revision (3) interest and motivation (4) communication (5) independent learning, and (6) technology use.

FINDINGS

Effect of Weblog Use on Writing Performance

The purposes of this study are to investigate the impact of the weblog integrated in writing instruction on the writing performance. With this aim in mind, two hypotheses for the research question one, that is "is there any difference between the writing performance of students who received in-class writing instruction and that of students who received the weblog integrated writing instruction?", were formulated. The hypotheses were there is a significant difference between the writing performances of students who received in class writing instruction and that of students who received the weblog integrated writing instruction. Integration of the weblog into the teaching of writing improves writing performance. The necessary data for the answer of the first question were collected through a Writing Performance Task which measures the students writing proficiency in the paragraph writing. Through Writing Performance Task, the students both in experimental and control groups were asked to write a paragraph on a chosen topic from the task at the beginning of the study and the same task was repeated as a post test at the end of the treatment.

The paragraphs produced by the participants were evaluated by two lecturers on the basis of a rubric called Composition Profile. The mean of the scores given by the raters to each student determined the level of the writing proficiency of each participant. The results obtained through pre and post tests were analyzed in SPSS computer program. Two different analysis techniques were used: Paired sample t test and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). The analysis of paired sample t test was used to analyze the difference between the writing

performance pre and post tests scores in the control and experimental group respectively. Table 2 presents the results as follows:

Table. 2 Paired Sample t-test Results for Writing Performance Scores in Each Group

	n	*Pre-test*		*Post test*		*t*
Groups		M	SD	M	SD	
Control	35	47,17	8,92	60,09	7,25	-6,321
Experimental	35	44,15	12,02	72,29	12,29	-16,197

Based on results a significant difference detected both in the control group; t= -6,321, p < .001 and in the experimental group; t= -16,197, p < .001 after the treatment. As seen in the table, the control group increased their test scores from a pre-test score mean 47, 17 to a post-test score mean 60, 09. In the experimental group, an increase from a pre-test score mean 44, 15 to a post-test score mean 72, 29 was observed as well.

These findings indicated that both in-class process writing instruction and weblog integrated writing instruction had positively affected students writing performance as the subjects in both groups improved their writing performance. As shown in the results of the t-test analysis, there observed a difference in the post test scores of the attendant groups. A subsequent ANCOVA was applied to analyze this difference of the post test writing performance scores between the control and experimental groups, and to identify the source of the difference with the pre-test writing performance scores as a covariate. Covariance analysis (ANCOVA) is a complicated data analysis technique which presents source of change in the post test results. Table 3 shows the results of ANCOVA.

Table 3. ANCOVA Results for Writing Performance Scores as Function of Instruction Method

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*Sig.*
Corrected Model	3655,94	2	1827,97	26,55	0.001
Intercept	3944,20	1	3944,20	57,29	0.001
PRE-TEST	1849,17	1	1849,17	26,86	0.001
GROUP	2322,31	1	2322,31	33,73	0.001
Error	3236,06	47	68,852		
Total	228670,00			50	
Corrected Total	6892,00			49	

As is seen in the table, both the pre-test results and the treatment (weblog use) had effect on post-test results. After taking the pre-test results under control through covariance analysis, it was identified that the treatment had a statistically significant impact on the post-test results (F (1, 47) = 33. 73, P <

.05). As stated in the table 3, the experimental group had a higher post test mean score (M=72, 29) than the control group (M= 60, 09).

These findings revealed that weblog integrated writing instruction was more effective than in class writing instruction. In other words, students in the experimental group improved their writing performance significantly more than those in the control group.

Another ANCOVA was employed to analyze the differences of the post test scores on five writing components between the control and the experimental groups. The writing performance of the participants were evaluated and scored by focusing on the *content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics* of their writings. These were the components of a successful writing as identified in the rubric used in the study. Analyzing the difference of the post-test scores on these five writing components with the pre-test scores as a covariate was to give an idea about the influence of weblogs on writing performances in detail. The following section is devoted to the ANCOVA results for five writing components and their interpretations. Table 4 presents the post test means, standard deviations, and ANCOVA results for scores of content as a significant component of successful writing.

Table 4. ANCOVA Results for Writing Performance Scores: Content

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*Sig.*	*Descriptive*	*Statistics*	
CONTENT PRE-TEST	17,496	1	17,496	2,058	,158	Groups	X	SD
GROUP	180,672	1	180,672	21,248	,000	Experimental	22,14	3,28
Error	399,650	47	8,503	Control	18,52			2,48
Total	21552,000							50

a: R Squared =, 312 (Adjusted R Squared =, 282)

As seen from the descriptive statistics, the experimental group differed from the control group in terms of content level post test mean scores. The post test mean in content for experimental group is 22, 14, and for the control group 18, 52. To find the source of difference, the pre-test content scores were controlled through ANCOVA, and it was identified that the integration of weblogs into the course had a statistically significant impact on the content of the writings by experimental students ($F(1,47) = 21.24$, $p<.05$). Such a difference in content scores can be interpreted in connection with awareness of audience in the students raised through weblog use.

The following table illustrates the post-test means, standard deviations, and ANCOVA results for the scores of organization as one of the components of successful writing.

Table 5. ANCOVA Results for Writing Performance Scores: Organization

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*Sig.*	*Descriptive Statistics*		
ORGANIZATION PRE-TEST	47,655	1	47,655	7,510	,009	Groups	X	SD
GROUPS	83,527	1	83,527	13,164	,001	Experimental	14,77	3,20
Error	298,229	47	6,345	Control	12,34		1,89	
Total	9749,00	50						

As indicated in the table, a difference between the experimental and the control group in the organization scores was observed. The post test score mean for the experimental group was 14, 77, and for the control group 12, 34. Though the difference did not seem too important numerically, it was significant statistically (F (1, 47) = 13, 16, p<, 05).

Therefore, after taking the pre-test scores under control through covariance analysis, it can be asserted that the weblog use improved the organization of the writing more than in-class- instruction. Referring to the rubric used in the scoring of the writings, writing performances of the experimental students in connection with the organization of their paragraphs could be characterized as *good to average* which means that students adequately used supporting sentences and transitions; they used inviting beginning and effective sequencing; there was a satisfying sense of resolution.

The fact that they fell into fair to poor mastery level in the pre-test indicates that the study had a positive effect on their performances with regard to organizing their writings. An increase in the organizational knowledge of the control students was also observed though no change occurred in their mastery level in the rubric. The students in the control group began the term as fair to poor writers (x= 9, 25) and they ended the term in the same category; however, they raised their scores (x= 12, 34). This increase in the score can be interpreted as the positive outcome of the in-class process based writing activities. The next category on which the effect of blogging was questioned the vocabulary use in the writings of the students. Table 6 presents the post-test means, standard deviations, and ANCOVA results for scores of vocabulary use.

Table 6. ANCOVA Results for Writing Performance Scores: Vocabulary

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*Sig.*	*Descriptive Statistics*		
VOCABULARY PRE-TEST	35,005	1	35,005	,230	,634	Groups	X	SD
GROUPS	29,732	1	29,732	,195	,660	Experimental	15,26	17,90
Error	7149,949	47	152,127	Control	13,59			2,22
Total	17530,000							50

As shown in the table, the post-test score mean concerning the vocabulary of experimental group was 15, 26, and the control group was assigned a mean 13, 59 in the post test score; however, this difference was not statistically significant (F (1,47) = .19 p> ,05). Therefore, according to ANCOVA results, the treatment did not have effect on students' word choice while writing their posts. The mean score for vocabulary in the writings by experimental students rose from pre-test score 8, 77 to post test score 15, 26.

Table 7 shows the post test means, standard deviations, and ANCOVA results for scores of language use.

Table 7. ANCOVA Results for Writing Performance Scores: Language Use

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*Sig.*	*Descriptive Statistics*		
LANGUAGE USE PRE-TEST	14,725	1	14,725	,039	,844	Groups	X	SD
GROUPS	59,487	1	59,487	,158	,693	Experimental	19,17	22,97
Error	17681,987	47	376,212	Control	16,85			4,27
Total	33820,000				50			

Though a difference in the means of the control and the experimental group was observed, as seen in the table 7, this difference was not statistically significant. When the statistical values for pre-test (0.84) and the treatment (0.69) were considered, it was identified that the treatment did not have any effect on language use of the students in their writings (F (1,47) = .15, p>.05), neither did the pre-test (F (1,47) = .03, p>.05).

One possible explanation of this result can relate to the fact that all the participant students took the same amount of grammar course in which they were explicitly instructed on the language structures. When the mean score for language use was interpreted according to the rubric, it was observed that students' performances in language use ranged from fair to poor. That is to say, there were some varieties in the sentence structures of the experimental students.

They had a strong control over the simple sentence structures but they were not so successful at using complex sentence structures. Tense error and mistakes in the wording were the least observed problems in language use of the students. The last writing component on which the effect of blogging was analyzed was mechanics which covers spelling, capitalization, and punctuation in the students' written text. Table 8 shows the post-test means, standard deviations, and ANCOVA results for scores of mechanics.

Table 8. ANCOVA Results for Writing Performance Scores: Mechanics

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*Sig.*	*Descriptive Statistics*		
MECHANICS PRE-TEST	,110	1	,110	,500	,483	Groups	X	SD
GROUPS	3,316	1	3,316	,015	,903	Experimental	3,91	,41
Error	10,382	47	,221	Control	3,88	,50		
Total	771,000	50						

As indicated in the table, almost no difference was observed between the means of the experimental and the control group in the mechanics component of their writings. So, it is obvious that blogging activities in process writing created no statistically significant effect on mechanics of the students writings ($F (1, 47) = .01$, $p>.05$).

The mean score for the mechanics of the paragraphs by experimental and control group corresponded to *good to average* mastery level in the rubric. In other words, there were occasional errors in spelling, capitalization and use of punctuation. There was no need to edit the writings in most cases. When the pre-test scores for mechanics for both group were taken into consideration, it was understood that neither the experimental group (x= 3, 81) nor the control group (x= 3, 70) showed a great improvement in their knowledge of mechanics after the study.

Table. 9 Paired Sample t-test Results for Students Perceptions Towards Weblog Used Writing Instruction

	n	*Pre-test*		*Post test*		*t*
Groups		M	SD	M	SD	
Experimental	35	50,24	13,90	82,29	14,29	-13,165

This results showed that there occurred a difference experimental group; $t= -13,165$, $p < .001$ after the treatment. As seen in the table, the experimental group increased their test scores from a pre-test score mean 50,24 to a post-test score mean 82,29. This situation displayed to student perception change is very well.

In brief, both the students in the experimental group and the control group improved their writing performances at the end of the study. When the influence of blogging was measured, it was found out that blogging activities incorporated in a writing course designed in line with the process approach affected the students overall writing performance positively to a great extent. However, when the impact of weblog use on specific components of students writing was measured, it was identified that the blogging showed the 98 biggest influences on the content component of student writings and this was followed

by organization. In other words, students using the blogging produced more successful paragraphs in terms of content and organization that those who did not use weblog. Yet, the blogging created no effect on the word choice, the language use and the mechanics in the student writing (McCain & Jukes, 2001).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In an attempt to find answer to the question related to the impact of the weblog use on the students writing performance, two groups of students were compared with their writing performances. The writing instruction of the control group was limited to in the class activities; however, in the course design of the experimental group, the writing instruction was blended with the blogging activities (Smith, 2004).

The analysis of the data attained through writing performance pre-and post-test demonstrated that the students in both writing instruction methods groups improved their writing performances at a significant level. However, when the difference in the post-test results was taken into consideration, it was identified that the blogging integrated writing instruction proved to be more effective than in class writing instruction. Blogging affected students' writing performance of experimental students as a whole and it had a positive impact on the two components of their writings: *content* and *organization.* However, weblog use did not create a statistically significant difference between the *language use, vocabulary* and *mechanics* components of the experimental group and those of the control group. The finding that in class writing instruction was also effective on students' writing performance can be explained in connection with the writing approach. Previous studies have demonstrated that writing instruction have positive impacts on writing.

One possible explanation of weblogs being more effective on students' writing performance has to do with the language and writing input provided to the experimental students. Because of the limited course duration for the control group, the language input in the writing course was restricted in amount. In other words, they were given relatively less exercises on sentence structures used in the target paragraph types. Similarly, such materials used to teach the target types as sample paragraphs and relevant exercises were less than those used for the experimental students.

By means of blogging, the experimental students had the chance to be exposed to more language and writing input. The writing input in the weblog supported instruction was the web materials presented on one of the tutor blogs. Students received the writing input by surfing these web materials. They found the opportunity of examining many more model paragraphs than the control group

did. For the language input, through blogging, students had the chance to access lots of interactive exercises and to choose based on their own needs. Therefore, the experimental students having more chances to receive the necessary input may have caused the difference between experimental and control groups in the pos-test results. The findings pertaining to effect of weblog use on specific components of writing revealed an interesting result. In the analysis, when the pre-test scores in five components of writing were controlled through covariance analysis, it was found out that the component on which blogging was more effective was *content*. It was followed by *organization*. No effect of blogging was measured on *language use, vocabulary* and *mechanics* of students' writings. That is to say, the source of difference between the experimental and the control group students was that the experimental students paid much more attention to the content of their writings than the control students. The relation of this finding with blogging can be explained by referring to the fact that blogs had the potentials to arouse a sense of audience in the students, which caused better contents (Kitzmann, 2003; Wu, 2005). Due to the fact that time to be spent in class was limited for the control group, peer feedback sessions as one way of arousing audience awareness were not effective. In most cases, the students in the control group did not even carefully read their peers' writings. The exchange was mainly between the course teacher and the student. However, in the case of the experimental students, more effective peer feedback sessions were available as there was no time and place restriction owing to the use of weblogs. Students could examine their peers' drafts whenever and wherever they wanted. Additionally, some students had their own readers except their classmates. Knowing that their writings would be read by someone other than the teacher may have caused the experimental students to pay more attention to the content and organization of their writings than the control group students.

With regard to students' perception on blogging activities, it was identified that the students had a favorable perception of weblog use in their writings. This finding was consistent with previous research (Lindblom, 2003; Pinkman, 2005; Wu, 2005) in which the students positively commented on using blogs as an educational practice. The students perceived that weblog use had positively affected their overall writing performance and almost no student commented on the negative effects of blogging. Their perceived effectiveness was also confirmed by their actual writing improvement as shown by the Writing Performance Test. In addition, students' responses to the interview question about their general evaluation of weblog may further explain these findings. Providing a special learning space and open-to-anyone nature are among the advantages mostly uttered by the respondents. They felt that through these

aspects of blogging, they developed a sense of ownership and responsibility, which produced positive outcomes in their learning process.

The students also perceived a positive effect of blogging on specific writing components in their writings. They believed that weblog use improved the content, organization, vocabulary and language use in their paragraphs. In the analysis of the perception questionnaire, it was identified that the component on which the students felt the effect of weblog best was vocabulary. However, students' perception of such weblog use did not overlap with the analysis of their actual performance. In their actual performance, improvement in the content comes first, yet there was found no effect of blogging on the vocabulary of their paragraphs when compared with that of control group students.

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