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Directed blogging with community college ESL students: its effects on awareness of language acquisition processes

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DIRECTED BLOGGING WITH COMMUNITY COLLEGE ESL STUDENTS: ITS EFFECTS ON AWARENESS OF LANGUAGE ACQUISITION PROCESSES

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This dissertation is dedicated to Peet's Coffee.

VITA

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ABSTRACT

English as a Second Language (ESL) students often have problems progressing in their acquisition of the language and frequently do not know how to solve this dilemma. Many of them think of their second language studies as just another school subject that they must pass in order to move on to the next level, so few of them realize the metacognitive processes that are involved in learning another language. This dissertation focused on the use of blogs with intermediate community college ESL students to see if this could help them become more aware of these language learning processes by doing various directed blogging assignments throughout their semester at Pasadena City College in California.

Findings from this study revealed that directed blogging worked well for publishing academic style writing and for reporting on activities done offline. It also was a useful tool for evaluating the portfolio of assignments done throughout the semester. Directed blogging was not, however, seen as particularly valuable for non-traditional type assignments, as students tended to report that they felt these were somewhat of a waste of time.

Conclusions derived from this research included that the students of this study felt more comfort in doing directed blogging activities of a more academic nature (such as posting practice essays) and that publishing these types of products motivated them in terms of effort expended, but that this type of blogging did not necessarily cause them to think *outside of the box* about their language learning processes. Also, it was concluded that the blogging activities of this study did help students become more metacognitively aware of their language learning processes; however, there was no real indication that these students would likely change their study habits as a result.

Future research in terms of both broadening the scope a study on these topics while focusing more tightly on just one type of blogging activity, as opposed to the various types of activities explored in this study, is recommended so that a better understanding of this phenomenon can be reached.

Chapter 1. Introduction

This study examines something that may be missing in current methods of teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) at the community college level as it explores some new ways to utilize computer technology in order to help students who are having problems in their English learning experience, expressly in learning how to learn. I am a long-time teacher of ESL in community colleges and have observed that many foreign students struggle a great deal in mastering the language. As a result, some new ways to assist these learners in overcoming their problems have been attempted–the efficacy of which will be examined in detail here.

The study is based on examining selected Chinese students' actual language learning experiences as recorded in personal blogs (web-based journals) as well as through field notes that I, as the instructor and now as researcher, kept during my classes. Because language learning and use is more of a qualitative process than a quantitative one (as compared to perhaps more objective subjects such as mathematics or the sciences), this study utilizes a qualitative approach based on the principles of human sciences. The goal of human sciences is to present people's lived experiences–how they perceive the world and their experiences in it–so that others may gain insight from them (Gadamer, 1989; Van Manen, 1990). In particular, this study examines how the practice of blogging about thoughts on personal language learning experiences enhances use of metacognition, or awareness of one's learning processes and preferences, and how that can apply to helping ESL students become more conscious of their own second language learning development.

Background of Study

A common situation unfolds. Ying, a student in her early 20s comes to the U.S. with her family in order to build a new life for themselves. She has studied English in high school in her country and has done well enough on both the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and the Language Department's proficiency assessment test to be placed into an intermediate level ESL (English as a Second Language) class at her local community college. During her first semester, she makes plenty of new acquaintances, the majority of whom come from her home country. In her ESL class, her attendance is good and she tries to pay close attention to what the teacher says and writes on the board. She almost never speaks during class time because she feels nervous and is not sure how to ask a question about what she may not know–mainly because she usually can not pinpoint that which she wants to ask about. Although she is not sure exactly how to do it, she studies the best she can and even meets with an on-campus tutor once in a while. Despite her efforts, she continues to receive mediocre scores, at best, on both the grammar tests and the class writing assignments. She is on the border between passing and not passing the class at the midterm of the semester and this saddens her. She has yet to request an appointment time to meet with her teacher in order to discuss ways in which she could possibly improve her class performance and overall confidence in learning and using English.

Her ESL class meets twice a week for two and a half hours per meeting. During class time, students learn about various grammatical rules, vocabulary words, reading strategies and academic writing approaches. Most of the students believe that these are the necessary keys to their English fluency and that if they somehow master them, they will instantly be proficient in this second language. They are very accustomed to the

practice of memorizing rules, definitions and explanations on the road to taking, and hopefully passing, whatever exam happens to lie in front of them. Many of these ESL students seem to think that their mere presence in the classroom, as a warm body sitting in a desk passively paying attention (or even not paying attention), is enough to learn English. Of course, some are more skilled than others in their class performance, but many if not most of them seem fixated simply on passing the class in order to move to the next level as quickly as possible, as opposed to being genuinely interested in actually learning the language itself and putting it to use in their daily lives outside of the classroom.

Ying feels ashamed. Her family is proud of her for being a first generation college student in this country. Her parents depend on her to help them communicate and translate for them, but she feels like she can barely understand English herself. When she wants to converse, the words do not seem to come out and when she tries to listen, she feels that native speakers just talk too fast. Even though she sincerely wants to improve her English, she frankly does not feel that she knows how to incorporate any learning from class into her daily routine outside of school, and does not even know where to begin to do so. Second language learners often feel at a complete loss as to how good learners arrive at effective and preferred language learning strategies and, frankly, may not even know that such strategies exist. They often lack faith in their own abilities to improve and do not usually realize that the belief that they will never learn their target language is actually a myth and that the patterns of failure can be broken just by finding the right processes (Thompson & Rubin, 1996).

Finally, Ying decides to make an appointment to speak with her teacher. At this conference, she declares, “I can’t do well in this class or outside of class. No one understands me and I can’t understand them. I feel like I do everything you assign me to do, Professor. I always come to class, read the textbook, and do the grammar exercises. I listen carefully every day and try my best on the tests, but I can’t seem to make progress with my grades or with English in general. I get so nervous and frustrated. I feel lost. What should I do to improve my English?”

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to explore practices that allow community college ESL students to reflect upon why they are studying English, how they are using the language in their lives, and what methods they are employing, or should try to employ, to match their own particular learning preferences. Participants in this study published their experiences, thoughts, opinions and conclusions to personal blogs in order to share these encounters and revelations with others, feel more responsible for their own language acquisition processes, and see how their active contributions make a difference in their learning. According to Gass and Selinker (2008), learners who are determined to experience as many encounters as possible in an attempt to gain a grasp on their target language are more liable to achieve success in second language learning situations, so this blogging experience could add a new dimension of understanding and accomplishment to these students’ quest for English proficiency.

Recent research has shown that web-publishing offers powerful support to the English language learning process in terms of strengthening writing skills (Eastment, 2005; Johnson, 2004; Jones, 2006; Read, 2006), for promotion of collaboration and community (Campbell, 2004; Godwin-Jones, 2003; Huang, Jeng, & Huang, 2009;

Kárpáti, 2009; Leslie & Murphy, 2008; McCarty, 2008; Rasulo, 2009; Redekopp & Bourbonniere, 2009), and in various other capacities as a learning tool (Campbell, 2003; Downes, 2004; Kraemer, 2009; Shin, 2009; Ward, 2004; Xie & Sharma, 2004). Overall, this study aims to find out if the practice of publishing thoughtful insights to blogs about personal journeys with English learning can help students more carefully consider and become more aware of their own second language learning development. Since these blogs will be seen not only by their teacher, but by fellow classmates and others alike, I believe that students may more carefully think through their own beliefs, attitudes, motivations, and goals concerning English acquisition and use, therefore gaining more valuable knowledge about how they individually learn and how they can actually improve their learning for both present and future–thus offering one possible answer to the age-old, often heard question from student to teacher: "How can I improve my English?" The specific research objective for this study is to explore how publishing thoughts about language learning experiences to personal blogs impacts community college ESL students' metacognitive awareness of their own language acquisition processes.

Statement of Problem

My personal teaching experiences in college ESL over the years have shown me that second language students often lack the tools and strategies necessary to better their English and to transfer what they learn in the classroom into authentic real world use of the language in their daily lives. This lack of knowledge about how to learn, of course, is not a problem exclusive to second language learners; however, not having skills in learning how to learn can greatly affect non-native English speakers in their pursuit to master the language. This combined with culture shock from their new environment and

anxiety over communicating in a new language can noticeably impair their abilities to thrive in their new home (Gass & Selinker, 2008).

Process Orientation, or focusing on *how* something is learned (process) as opposed to focusing only on *what* is learned (product) requires recognition of and reflection upon the powers of learning strategies, language learning strategies (LLS) in particular (Oxford, 1990). Students and teachers alike can overlook the importance of these skills or feel that they do not belong in the same classroom where the target language is being presented and that integrating them would just take away from the limited time necessary to get through the content curriculum (Rubin, Chamot, Harris, & Anderson, 2007).

For many educators, the pressures of time discourage the desire and/or ability to incorporate new and useful objectives into the curriculum. Consequently, however, time spent teaching grammar rules, new vocabulary, writing approaches and the like can all be for naught if students are merely concentrating on taking tests and passing the class as opposed to aiming for ways to achieve a deep understanding of the target language and gaining the ability to put it to use (Rubin et al., 2007). Research has shown that the practice of metacognitive strategies in conjunction with that of cognitive tactics (i.e., both product and process being taught side-by-side) within a course curriculum is believed to be critical to successful language learning (Anderson, 2002, 2005; Rubin et al., 2007; Wenden, 1998). As Nunan (1995) suggested, language classrooms need to have a dual focus by not merely teaching the content of the target language, but by simultaneously including the promotion of student awareness of learning processes as well.

Another reason why LLS are often not included as part of the language learning curriculum is that many experts can not agree on a definition of what a language learning strategy is, let alone on which ones work best or are most effective (Gu, 2003). This makes the teaching, learning and use of these approaches troublesome at best. It is more frequently through trial and error that students and educators hit upon acceptable tools for incorporating these strategies–if they are attempted at all. Educators can often eliminate opportunities for students to work on learning strategies as a result of the unclear nature of their development and implementation. However, it has been found that when teachers help students attain self-awareness of how they learn best as well as a means by which to get the most out of their learning, students' language learning efficiency and success both in and out of the classroom are greatly enhanced (Oxford, 1990).

Significance of Study

This study aims to add valuable content to current literature on best practices for the teaching of ESL by exploring the use of technology, specifically blogging, to help students think more deeply about their experiences with English acquisition processes and their goals for present and future learning. Although research has been done concerning blogging's effects on non-native students' writing processes and writing quality (Eastment, 2005; Johnson, 2004; Jones, 2006; Read, 2006) and on collaboration, community and social networking (Campbell, 2004; Godwin-Jones, 2003; Huang et al., 2009; Kárpáti, 2009; Leslie & Murphy, 2008; McCarty, 2008; Rasulo, 2009; Redekopp & Bourbonniere, 2009), more needs to be done specifically on the efficacy of having an online presence through blogs in order to promote deeper self-exploration of English learning methods and how this encourages students' motivation to find their preferred LLS.

The results of this study will be of interest and value to both second language educators and learners who would like to use technology in their efforts to discover better language learning awareness through effective strategies, as well as to researchers in the areas of emerging technologies and language studies. Since it is a relatively new and certainly ever-changing field, there is yet plenty to uncover concerning the use of technology within the world of second language acquisition.

Overview of Methodology

This study will adhere to a qualitative research design within the realms of human science, specifically phenomenology and hermeneutics (Van Manen, 1990). Qualitative research methods permit the gathering of data on intricate human behavior in natural settings that can be very difficult, if not impossible, to obtain through use of quantitative methods. Qualitative research methods are fitting for this study due to the fact that they allow for deep description, offer a holistic view, and lend themselves to more flexibility than quantitative methods do (Creswell, 1994). Phenomenology and hermeneutics complement the qualitative methods in that they work together toward exploration of such non-objective phenomena as human behavior, but still retain the scrutiny and impartiality of scientific methods (Gadamer, 1989; Heidegger, 1962, 1982; Husserl, 1963, 1989, 2001a, 2001b; Van Manen, 1990).

This proposed research design will lend itself well to the goals of this study which are to better understand the challenges faced by community college ESL students and their lived experiences in trying to learn their target language and to hopefully help them break through these deterrents. The setting where this study takes place is that of the English as a Second Language Program at Pasadena City College in Southern California. The population for this study is made up of those students enrolled in this program, with

the target population being the students who were in the researcher's Fall 2010 sections of an intermediate ESL grammar and writing class that was paired with an "*ESL Learning Through Computers"* class. The sample consists of those students from the target population who were of Chinese descent (since they made up a majority of those enrolled in these classes). It is assumed that all participating students were appropriately placed in this intermediate level pair.

The data for this study comes from two pre-existing sources: directed student blogs and instructor field notes. A formal coding process appropriate for hermeneutic phenomenological studies will be used to analyze both data sources.

Conceptual Foundation and Definition of Terms

Existing research about learning processes and specifically those for language learning provides the foundation for this study. In addition, literature about instructional strategies enhanced with the continuing evolving technological advances provides further support.

Below is a list of terms central to the areas of focus of this study. They are grouped into the main categories of this research: language learning, learning processes and technology.

Language learning. Language learning terms that appear in this study include:

- *Authentic language* (also known as *real world language*) is language that adheres to the norms of the target language and which has a purpose that is consistent with these conventions (Stiefvater, 2003).
- *English as a Second Language (ESL)*, also referred to as *English to Speakers of Other Languages*, or *English for Non-native Speakers*, is that English

which is being studied by a person whose first (native) language is not English.

- *Native language (NL),* also known as *L1* (first language), is the language one learns first as a child as opposed to an *L2* (second language) which can be acquired after one's native language is established (Gass & Selinker, 2008).
- *Second language (SL) r*efers to a language that one is learning or has learned after his first (native) language is already established. This second language can also be referred to as *L2* and is distinguished from a *foreign language (FL)* in that the second language has "social and communicative functions within the community where it is learned" (Oxford, 1990, p. 6).
- *Second language acquisition (SLA)* is the learning of a language beyond that of one's native tongue (Gass & Selinker, 2008).
- *Target language (TL)* refers to the language a learner is attempting to acquire (Gass & Selinker, 2008).

Learning processes. Terms related to learning processes that are incorporated in this study include:

- *Language learning strategies,* or *language learner strategies, (LLS)* are the effective actions a language learner takes to expand his learning abilities (Oxford, 1990).
- *Learning styles* (or *learning preferences*) are defined by Stewart and Felicetti (1992) as those conditions which allow a student the most likely possibility to learn best. They include but are not limited to visual, auditory and kinesthetic learning styles (advanogy.com, 2004).

- *Metacognition* is the conscious act of thinking about and monitoring one's own cognitive processes in terms of memory and overall comprehension (Flavell, 1979).

Technology. Technological key terms mentioned in this study include:

- *Blog,* a contraction of the word *Weblog*, refers to an interactive personal website which is easily updateable and to which an author can instantly publish content to the Internet (Richardson, 2006).
- *Blog Assisted Language Learning (BALL)* is the practice of using blogs to assist in the language learning process (Ward, 2004).
- A *Blogger* merely refers to one who blogs.
- *Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)* is the general concept of learning a language by employment of computers (Beatty, 2003b).
- *Directed Blogging* and *Blogging* are used interchangabley throughout this paper. *Directed Blogging* refers to blogging with a decided focus in assignments.

Chapter Summary

Adult ESL learners, who need to become proficient in English in order to be successful in this country, have in the past been offered limited means for acquiring their second language and therefore have often struggled with its real world use outside of the classroom. As an experienced instructor of community college ESL, I believe that the promotion of metacognitive abilities in these ESL students through use of directed blogs to publish personal language learning experiences can help them more carefully consider their learning processes and how they learn best. This will hopefully aid in conquering

their struggles against stagnation in the target language. The next chapter will take a look at the literature related to the topics of this study.

Chapter 2. Review of Literature

Chapter 2 will present a review of the literature and general historical background information for each of the three main subject areas of this study: second language acquisition, educational blogging, and metacognition. It is no wonder that language learners can at times feel lost in their pursuits; there has been deep confusion throughout time over how to teach and learn language.

History of Second Language Acquisition

In order to understand where the study of second language acquisition is today, it is necessary to look at its complex and controversy-filled past. Although viewed as a relatively new discipline–and the formal study of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) essentially is viewed in that way–it is not, in fact, a new field as many believe. The actual learning of second and foreign languages has obviously been around for as long as people have had the need to communicate with and benefit from others who do not share their native tongue. In order to know where the field of SLA currently lies and where it is headed, particularly in terms of English language teaching and learning, it is important to look at its early origins and to explore the various beliefs and techniques which have molded it over time into what it is still evolving into today–an often debate-filled science concerning ever-changing perspectives on how to best teach and learn language.

Early history. The recorded history of language teaching and learning goes back as far as Roman times, when the target second language was Greek (Swain, 1996). Beginning around 200 BC and forward, a Roman could only be considered fully educated if he had received schooling in both Latin and Greek simultaneously, as a bilingual education. Only the wealthiest of families could afford this luxury. By their having Greek servants or slaves at the family home, school aged children could increase their

proficiency in Greek by spending time with these native speakers and thereby practicing the target language with them beyond school hours (Swain, 1996).

During the Middle Ages (400-1600), one finds that second language acquisition centered around Latin, primarily Latin for the clergy, some of whom–often bishops, for example–were highly educated and had attended universities abroad where they learned the language. Other less educated clergy members, such as vicars, who had minimal power in the church, learned the Latin elements of Mass and sacraments merely through rote memorization at a local monastery (Newman, 2001). Latin lasted as the international language until the early 1700s, when French, especially as the language of diplomacy and commerce, had taken a stronger hold as such (Price, 1985).

The 18th and 19th centuries. French remained the unrivaled lingua franca for the next few centuries, usually noted as such from the 17th to the mid-20th Century. It was most commonly studied by the elite and used primarily in learned circles (Price, 1985). Use of the English language began to spread throughout the world during the 18th Century, both voluntarily and imposed, one result of the British Empire's expansion (Marshall, 1998).

During the 18th Century an approach to second language teaching known as the Grammar-Translation Method dominated SLA. This method had been around in one form or another since the classical languages of Greek and Latin dominated, which is why it was also referred to as the Classical Method (Chastain, 1988). It continued to reign as what was believed to be the most effective foreign and second language teaching method until the end of the 1700s, when opponents began to challenge it. The Grammar-Translation Method's proponents, primarily Ahn, Fick, Meidinger, and Ollendorf

(Howatt & Widdowson, 2004), upheld that foreign languages were best learned through drills, rote memorization, and direct translation–usually of literature–from one's native tongue to the target language and vice versa (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). There was no real emphasis on using language in real world settings with this method.

Later in the 18th Century, according to Howatt and Widdowson (2004), questioning of both the teacher's role and the teaching methods in SLA began to emerge. Up until this point, an instructor's role, especially as demonstrated through the Grammar-Translation Method, had been that of the authoritative and wise sage, regarded as the one who held the keys to knowledge and learning, if students were to merely listen and follow (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). However, according to Howatt and Widdowson (2004), some scholars of this time, Jacotot being a main advocate, started to promote the idea of teacher as facilitator, there to aid and encourage learning, not just declare how everything should be done. With such thought starting to take root, it is of no surprise that opposition to the prevailing Grammar-Translation Method would also begin to emerge. The preliminary foundations for the Reform Movement of language teaching had been laid.

The pre-reform movement. As the practical need for learning second languages grew in importance–the result of industry, commercial life and immigration–the need to look for more functional ways of teaching language also arose. Dissatisfaction over how second languages were being taught made it clear that the days of blind faith in the Grammar-Translation Method were gone. Come the mid-1800s, some language experts, such as Gouin, Jacotot, Marcel, and Prendergast, were initiating a stray from the norms of the time (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). Although this Pre-Reform Movement was scattered and never took hold as its own movement per se, the individual scholars and

language teachers involved paved the way for more significant changes that were to take place during the last two decades of this century (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). Though none of these individual early reformers gathered real followings or founded solid schools of thought–or even ever teamed up with each other–the mere challenging of the status quo with the employment of new and different methods rattled the system and helped lead to the real change that was to come.

Disillusionment with contemporary schools' failure to meet people's practical language learning needs, especially those of less educated immigrants, sparked ways of seeing language acquisition processes through different eyes (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). The association of second and foreign language learning with other branches of knowledge, such as with philosophy by Jacotot and psychology by Prendergast, and making comparisons with children's native language acquisition processes, by Gouin and Prendergast, brought about new discoveries for SLA instruction (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004).

The reform movement. What is now known as the Reform Movement of language teaching took place during roughly the last twenty years of the 19th Century. Unlike its prior pre-movement, this era saw a banding of forces, cooperation for common goals, attraction of followers, and a surge in professional associations, societies and publications (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). Phonetics, a new science at the time, played a major role in both theory and practice of the Movement and, by association, gave the field of SLA credibility as a valid discipline. This was largely the result of the involvement of four principal phoneticians, Viëtor, Passy, Jespersen, and Sweet (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004).

The Reform Movement started quite suddenly with the publication of Viëtor's (1882) *Der Sprachunterricht Muss Umkehren!* (Language teaching must start afresh!) pamphlet . It was founded on three main principles which were very different from those of the Grammar-Translation Method: "the primacy of speech, the centrality of the connected text as the kernel of the teaching-learning process, and the absolute priority of an oral classroom methodology" (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004, p. 189). In lessons, speech and correct pronunciation were stressed first and foremost due to the focus on phonetics and concern among teachers over inclusion of authentic language. The use of forced grammatical examples to demonstrate the target language was also evident. Translation to and from mother tongue–the previously embraced method–was to be avoided as much as possible, if not directly banned (Richards & Rodgers, 2007).

Sweet, a reputable phonetician, designer of an applied linguistic approach to language teaching, and author of *The Practical Study of Languages* (Sweet, 1899)–a classic work of the Reform Movement–was concerned with finding the most efficient and economical way to learn language and felt that phonetics was the key. Even more interesting in retrospect, however, was his view of the partnership between linguistics and psychology–no one before him had explored this to the same depth. Sweet also adhered to associationism, a dominant theory of psychology at the end of the nineteenth century, which proclaimed that "the learner's central task was to form and maintain correct associations both between linguistic elements within the language, and between these elements and the outside world" (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004, p. 203). The older rote memorization methods were being displaced by the need for meaning and authenticity in language, but there were still disagreements over how to achieve this.

The natural method. Also referred to as the Direct Method, the Conversation Method or the Communicative Approach, the Natural Method was popularized–especially for adult learners–in the last half of the 1800s, the best-known proponent of this method being Berlitz. Unlike the Reformers' more logic driven approaches, the underlying philosophy of the Natural Method is that language learning is not a process which is rational or which can neatly be organized and compartmentalized into a clear step-by-step order (Richards & Rodgers, 2007). This method reflects the belief that language acquisition is intuitive and innate in humans, given the proper conditions; those conditions being: someone to talk to, something to talk about, and the desire to be understood. The basis of this method was interaction through meaningful, authentic, real world communication (Sauveur, 1874), with the most essential rule being no translation. In fact, this method got its name because meaning is supposed to be conveyed *directly* in the target language with no reference to the students' native language (Diller, 1978).

Berlitz Schools sprang up everywhere to meet the common language learning needs of common people. In the United States, the end of the century saw a huge influx of immigrants from all over Europe. Most of them were ordinary or even poor people coming in search of a new life. They were not all educated, so the existing school system did not cater to their needs (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). They needed survival English in order to get by in the everyday life of their new environment. Berlitz answered this need with his Direct Method language schools, where all instructors were native speakers, no translation was allowed, oral work was emphasized, and detailed grammar explanations were to be avoided (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). The realization of the importance of reaching ordinary people and their basic second language needs had taken

root and the Natural Method has survived well past this late 19th century period in language learning history.

20th century English language teaching and learning. If there are two overriding themes in 20th century SLA studies, they are: (a) the emergence of English Language Teaching (ELT) as an autonomous and distinct profession, and (b) the overwhelmingly rapid spread of English as a world language. Other standout events and circumstances which significantly affected English teaching and learning during this century include the two World Wars and their aftermaths, the rising rate of movement around the globe due to emigration and improved transportation, and the introduction and omnipresence of technology in people's everyday lives later in the century.

Becoming a true profession. From the turn of the century until the First World War, due to the lack of any strong or well-defined professional fraternity, those teaching English abroad were relatively isolated, with little if any support from or contact with others experiencing their same situation. Ad hoc devices and trial and error methods were common among these instructors in the classroom at this time. The profession of teaching English to non-native speakers was scattered and lacking a true feeling of connection among colleagues who could have potentially shared similar goals (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004).

But that was about to change with a handful of what became classic ELT publications, especially those by Palmer (1917, 1921a, 1921b), an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructor who later became the Linguistic Adviser to the Japanese Ministry of Education, and Hornby (1954; Hornby, Gatenby, & Wakefield, 1963), another prominent figure in language teaching and applied linguistics at the time

(Richards & Rodgers, 2007). Their writings sparked the catalyst for change to this dilemma and helped lay the foundations for the development of ELT as its own independent and known profession.

In these writings and through their experiences, Palmer (1917, 1921a, 1921b) and Hornby (1954; Hornby, Gatenby, & Wakefield, 1963) took advantage of the recently developed resources of "systematic approaches to the lexical and grammatical content of a language course . . . and . . . worked to create a comprehensive methodological framework for the teaching of English as a foreign language" (Richards & Rodgers, 2007, p. 38). By doing so, they, among other language specialists, were able to set a trend for more practical teaching methodology of the English language (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004).

Around this same time, while working on a policy report for English teaching, West (1926), an educationalist and teacher trainer working in Bengal, made a clear distinction between learning a foreign language and learning a second language . Palmer's, Hornby's and West's contributions lead to EFL and ESL joining forces to form a unified profession which would later–after World War II–come to be labeled as ELT (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). Thus were what most see to be the beginnings of a recognized ELT vocation.

English becoming lingua franca. The desire and/or needs of people from all backgrounds and from all around the world to learn English increased exponentially as English spread and eventually took over French as lingua franca. What is viewed by many as a turning point for English was the fact that the Treaty of Versailles at the end of World War I was written in both French and English. And later with the end of the

Second World War, the United States had become a world power. The economic and cultural influence that the U.S. possessed made the need to learn English more pressing around the world (Richards & Rodgers, 2007).

The demands to learn English had become strong, even before the World Wars, as more and more people, both emigrants and refugees alike, were relocating themselves around the world and this, in turn, lead to the need for more *English for Immigrants* classes–as they were often referred to for quite some time–to be offered for both adult and younger language learners (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). Questions and disputes arose over how to best serve these newcomers' needs. One development at the time, the publication of Ogden's *Basic English*, which used only 850 words with a few grammar rules (Ogden, 1930), seemed brilliant to some and disturbing to other more orthodox teachers of the time like West (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004).

Thus the tradition of disagreements over best methods and approaches for SLA in general, and for EFL and ELT specifically, continued throughout the century and still exists today. Below is an overview of prevalent language teaching methods by decades throughout the 1900s and beyond.

Early 20th century: the Direct Method. The Grammar-Translation Method began falling out of favor near the end of the 19th century, chiefly as a result of the Reformers' support of naturalistic principles of language teaching and learning–the belief that second languages could best be learned in the same manner that one's native language was learned. They embraced what became known as the Natural Method, a method which upheld the benefits of a monolingual (target language) approach to teaching without translation. Demonstration was to replace lengthy explanations and grammar was to be

taught inductively to students (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). These natural principles laid the foundation for the Direct Method.

The Direct Method was extremely successful in commercial language schools (where, consequently, motivation to learn English was very high for the paying customers), despite reformers' criticisms. Opponents to the Direct Method proclaimed that it "lacked a rigorous basis in applied linguistic theory" (Richards & Rodgers, 2007, pp. 12-13). They also believed it was counterproductive in that, for example, teachers would have to go to great lengths to avoid using the students' native language when at times a brief explanation would have been more efficient (Richards & Rodgers, 2007). Due to the tedious nature of the techniques and restricted time available in a school day, the Direct Method of language learning never caught on in noncommercial schools, and by the 1920s American educators were encouraged by a government report to focus on reading of foreign languages as opposed to speaking (Coleman, 1929).

Because of its lack of a strong methodological basis and less academic approach, the Direct Method eventually experienced a decline as the most widely used way to teach English. In the 1920s and 1930s, applied linguists decided to use the earlier Reform Movement's principles in a systemized manner. This new direction led to the development of the Oral Approach (also known as Situational Language Teaching) in England and Audio-Lingualism in the U.S. (Richards & Rodgers, 2007). This also marked the start of the *methods era* in language teaching, where debates over how to effectively teach a second language ran amok and continue to do so to this day.

Mid-20th century. A significant turning point in ELT came with the United States entering World War II. A unique language training curriculum, the Army Specialized

Training Program, was set up in 1942 to try to fill the need for people who were fluent in European and Asian languages. Conversational skills were the number one goal; therefore, an intensive, oral based approach was employed (Richards & Rodgers, 2007). This program was highly successful and convinced many prominent linguists of the power of this approach in foreign language learning.

By the time World War II ended, the United States had emerged as a world "superpower." As a result, demands to learn English greatly increased. Foreign students were flocking to the U.S. to educate themselves and this helped lead to an American approach to ESL known as the Audio-Lingual Method. The crux of this method involved learning a language by "intensive oral drilling of its basic sentence patterns" (Richards & Rodgers, 2007, p. 52) with repetition and *practice makes perfect* as its main foundations.

Contrastive analysis also came into being in the U.S. at this time. With this method, similarities and differences in grammar and phonological patterns between a learner's native language and the target language are identified and specifically addressed. By doing so, linguists believed that they could reduce the number of potential problems that come with learning a second language (Fries, 1945). According to Lado, (1957) the formulator of this method, "those elements which are similar to [the learner's] native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult" (p. 2).

The Audio-Lingual Method served as most influential for language teachers well through the 1950s. With the incorporation of a heavy focus on linguistics, emerging psychological learning theory of the time–especially behaviorist psychology–and the nation's increased attention to foreign language learning, this decade saw radical change

and the reevaluation of language teaching methods (Richards & Rodgers, 2007). Language experts declared their innovations in SLA to have transformed language teaching from an art into a science which was both more effective and more efficient than any way previously used (Richards & Rodgers, 2007). Behaviorists also proclaimed victory over cracking the code to the secrets of human learning with conditioning as the way for learners to "overcome the habits of their native language and form the new habits required to be target language speakers" (Larsen-Freeman, 2003, p. 35).

The 1960s. Entering the 1960s, the Audio-Lingual approach began to lose favor, particularly due to its lack of results for learners who, more often than not, were unable to transfer the language learned in the classroom to real life situations in the real world (a problem that has followed second language learning throughout time and still exists today, including among many of the ESL students who took part in this researcher's study). Yet another reason why loyalty to the Audio-Lingual paradigm began to subside was that Chomsky (1959, 1966a, 1966b), one of the most influential fathers of modern linguistics, sharply challenged the behaviorists' approach to language learning, on which Audio-Lingualism had been based. Chomsky (1966b) wrote that "language is not a habit structure. Ordinary linguistic behavior characteristically involves innovation, formation of new sentences and patterns in accordance with rules of great abstractness and intricacy" (p. 153). His revolutionary ideas about how languages are learned, which were in line with nativist and cognitivist approaches of the time, included such concepts as that of Universal Grammar, the idea that all humans innately share universal grammar principles which exist across each language, and the Language Acquisition Device

(LAD), a specific part of the human brain that Chomsky proposed was responsible for language learning (Chomsky, 1966a).

These ideas led to the development of Cognitive-Code Learning Theory, which put forward the concept that the learning of language is "a process of acquiring conscious control of the phonological, grammatical, and lexical patterns of the second language, largely through study and analysis of these patterns as a body of knowledge" (Carroll, 1966, p. 102). This theory, advocated by such cognitive psychologists and applied linguists as Carroll (1966) and Chastain (1969), also gave attention to deep level structure (i.e., meaning of the sentences) in lieu of surface level structure, which the behaviorist approaches had focused on.

While never leading to any particular language teaching methodology, Cognitive-Code Theory was temporarily embraced as an alternative to Audio-Lingualism (Jakobovits, 1970; Lugton, 1971). All this change sent the world of SLA into a crisis of confusion with which many say it is still struggling today (Richards & Rodgers, 2007).

It was also during this decade that SLA came forward as a serious field of inquiry, largely attributed to the development of modern cognitive science and its contributions to the area (Doughty & Long, 2005) and to the founding of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), a professional association for English language teachers in the U.S. (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004).

The 1970-1980s. A result of educators' questioning the way things had been done, the 1970s and 1980s were a time for great shifts in views on how to teach and learn language. There was a noticeable move away from grammar focus with a new focus on communication skills. The goal became competent use of authentic language outside of

the classroom environment, which had been greatly lacking (Richards & Rodgers, 2007). Being able to communicate required more than linguistic competence; it required communicative competence within a social setting (Hymes, 1971). Thus started the Communicative Movement along with its related approaches.

The most prominent methods and approaches to ELT during this time period were the Silent Way (Gattegno, 1972), Total Physical Response (Asher, Kusudo, & De La Torre, 1974), Community Language Learning (Curran, 1976), Suggestopedia (now known as Desuggestopedia) (Lozanov, 1978), and the Natural Approach (Krashen & Terrell, 1983), all of which emphasized language learners as whole people with human needs (Larsen-Freeman, 2003). These Humanistic Approaches had a strong focus on the importance of authentic language for communication and social interaction. They incorporated ways to lower the affective filter that many adult learners experience when learning a new language by encouraging self-confidence and comfort, in an attempt to also mimic the natural way children learn language (Richards & Rodgers, 2007).

Turn of the Century to Present

The last few decades have witnessed new practices in the teaching methods and approaches to learning second languages in that what has become most important is not only a more humanistic way of teaching, but also a strong promotion of authentic and meaningful language use through communicative activities that reflect real world situations in line with learners' needs (Richards & Rodgers, 2007). Using purposeful and meaningful language is seen as the key to learning--learning a language as a means unto itself alone is rarely, if no longer, considered acceptable for most. The goal for language teachers to help language students achieve has become learner autonomy and accountability, especially while interacting with each other on common tasks (Richards &

Rodgers, 2007). Language is seen as whole in terms of the necessity to integrate its parts--reading, writing, speaking, and listening--holistically in the learning experience, as promoted by Whole Language instruction, which had caught on in the 1980s (Rigg, 1991).

Though most teaching trends of this time focus on the importance of communication, two that stand out as placing the most importance on this are Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Cooperative Learning. CLT, which originally started in the 1970s, aims to solve the common problem of students being able to produce language accurately during lessons, but not being able to use it in order to genuinely communicate outside of the classroom (Larsen-Freeman, 2003). True communication requires more than merely linguistic competence, but calls for communicative competence as well. Learning to perform certain social functions appropriately, as in knowing what to say to whom and how and when to say it in specific situations is essential (Larsen-Freeman, 2003).

Cooperative Learning (also referred to under the umbrella of Collaborative Learning) encourages language learning through communicative participation and interaction within a learning group (Johnson, Johnson, & Johnson-Holubec, 1988). Students are accountable for both their own learning and for the learning of their peers– they learn from each other and through pair- and group-work, as well (Jacobs, 1998). Again, as common for the day, natural and purposeful communication within a small collaborative community of learners is the key to success (Richards & Rodgers, 2007).

Other current teaching approaches which aim to prepare ESL students for dealing with real world situations in line with their daily needs are that of Content-Based

Instruction, Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL), and Project-Based Learning (PBL). With Content-based Instruction, the idea is that the English language be learned as a by-product of another discipline's content, which is being presented in the class. In other words, non-native English speakers use English to learn about art history, science, or math, for example. Language learning is integrated with learning of other subject matter, often of an academic nature (Larsen-Freeman, 2003). As described by Krahnke (1987), Content-Based Learning is "the teaching of…information in the language being learned with little or no direct or explicit effort to teach the language itself separately from the content being taught" (p. 65). This, it is hoped, diminishes the artificialness of studying English as only a means unto itself and prepares students to live effectively through English use both inside and outside of the classroom (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989).

Proponents of TBLL (also known as Task-Based Learning or Task-Based Instruction) profess that the best way to learn a language is for groups of learners to work together on common tasks. Through authentic and purposeful interaction in the target language, efforts at problem-solving while using that language as a vehicle inevitably lead to more meaningful language learning (Willis, 1996). This natural setting approach brings about more engagement and motivation on the part of those who are participating in it (Richards & Rodgers, 2007). It is believed that when faced with a common mission and/or the opportunity to exchange ideas and contribute to a group effort, learners invest more and take more initiative in their own learning process while seeing how real use of the language helps them meet their needs for the real world, as well (Green, 1993).

Project-Based Learning involves student-centered use of in-depth projects to facilitate learning. Students use technology in order to inquire about and problem solve a

complex issue. Within the PBL framework, students collaborate in order to make sense of what is going on. The main idea of PBL is that real-world problems attract student interest and cause critical thinking as the students apply new knowledge within the context of the problem-solving assignment. Results of PBL projects are often presented publicly, such as on blogs for example, and are therefore open to public appreciation and critique. Teachers who strictly adhere to traditional educational methods tend to judge PBL as being ineffective as a core approach to teaching and learning and view it as a passing phase (Zhao, Pugh, Sheldon, & Byers, 2002). Numerous studies, however, have shown the success and validity of this approach in the classroom (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991; Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Katz & Chard, 1989; Penuel, Korbak, Cole, & Jump, 1999).

Another movement that has taken hold at the turn of the millennium is that of recognizing and catering to the uniqueness of each student in terms of their own different strengths and learning preferences. Much research has been done on the effects of incorporating Multiple Intelligence theory (Gardner, 1983) into the ESL classroom with findings showing a positive relationship between its implementation and the advancement of language learning (Christison, 1996, 1999; Haley, 2001). Increased motivation and heightened abilities to reach students who may not have been engaging in prior class work were also seen to be results of including a Multiple Intelligence approach in language lessons (Christison, 1996, 1999; Haley, 2001). Language Learning Strategies are also of interest to this study and will be discussed in the Metacognition section of this chapter.

As can be seen, common themes for SLA instruction during the last two decades or so have been language authenticity, collaborative learning, learning preferences, and active learning based instruction, to name a few. Perhaps nothing has impacted language teaching of this time, however, as much as the widespread incorporation of technology has.

The use of technology in education has a considerable history reaching back to the 1950s; this history includes educational radio, film, and television (Saettler, 1990). Eventually, of course, digital technologies and the emergence of personal computing took hold and finally the Internet and World Wide Web took over. In terms of language education, we have come a long way since the audio technologies that were once a cornerstone of language training. With the growth of the Web over the last few decades and with the constant availability of its Web-based tools, guaranteed access to authentic language resources of all kinds increases daily. Never before have language students had so many opportunities to practice their language skills both inside and outside of the classroom. Furthermore, research has shown that classroom practice which includes use of technology, is grounded in sound pedagogical reasons, and includes an understanding of the necessary relationship between content and technology can promote successful blending of that technology into the learning process (Mishra & Koehler, 2006).

One form of computer based learning known as Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has had a relatively long history in the world of language acquisition (Saettler, 1990). CALL offers a language learning approach where computers and computer-based resources such as the Internet are incorporated into classroom practice so as to present and reinforce that which is to be learned (Delcloque, 2000). After the

periods known as Behavioristic CALL (during the 1960s and part of the 1970s) and later Communicative CALL (during the late 1970s and all of the 1980s), we are now in the age of what is being called Integrative CALL. This latest period started in the 1990s and has had a strong emphasis on the integration of multimedia and the Internet (Barson & Debski, 1996). What used to be "essentially adaptations of traditional textbook exercises and did not take advantage of special features of the computer" (Beatty, 2003a, p. 19) is now defined by a more task-oriented model which promotes interactivity and opportunity for creative input by language students (Beatty, 2003a).

While the behavioristic days of CALL relied heavily on drill and practice in the 1960s and 1970s, and CALL in the 1980s was based on communicative approaches, trying to incorporate authentic language opportunities through use of technology (Warschauer, 1996), with the 1990s came true computer mediated communication. Students and educators alike could now use computers by way of the Internet to communicate authentically with each other and with others through discussion boards, instant messaging, and email, to name a few (Warschauer, 1996). Through the World Wide Web, students have nonstop access to information to match their interests. This time has also marked the starting point of the ability for anyone to publish content to the Web. This integrative stage of CALL has helped to create an environment where authentic and creative communication can effectively be integrated into all aspects of a lesson (Warschauer, 1996), and nothing exemplifies this powerful trend more than the use of educational blogging.

Educational Blogging

The Read-Write Web, which allows users easy creation of content through the use of online applications, took hold at the turn of this century and the possibilities for full

participation in and contribution to the Internet truly emerged (Richardson, 2010). One conduit to the Read-Write Web has become the blog. A blog is a type of online journal that users, known as bloggers, can update at any time (Matheson, 2004). Blogs offer a user-friendly interface that makes it simple for anyone to set up and maintain one without having to understand HTML or any sort of programming. Users can also easily add various kinds of files like pictures or audio to their blogs in order to enhance its appearance and functionality. Furthermore, a blog's interactive state allows readers to respond with comments to anything that has been posted (Rodzvilla, 2002). The simplicity of claiming one's Web space was quickly realized and personal blogs for creative expression and for sharing of personal experiences suddenly thrived (Lenhart & Fox, 2006). Due to all their advantages, the inclusion of blogs in education has not been overlooked.

Blogging in general education. The implementation of the Internet and its technologies such as blogging has revolutionized classroom practices (Carlson, 2003; Wrede, 2003). Despite the fact that blogging is a relatively new trend, there already exists a wide variety of both student and teacher activities and materials that incorporate the use of blogs. Richardson (2010) suggests many benefits of blogging in the classroom which include, but are certainly not limited to, increased student confidence and motivation and a strong fostering of community among participants.

One way that blogs are used to promote awareness of learning processes is in acting as online journals for learners. Journaling in and of itself has been proven beneficial in learning (Andrusyszyn & Davie, 1997; Blood, 2002; Loke, Wong, & Wong, 1997; Powazek, 2002; Robbin, 2001). Writing about personal experiences helps students

think critically and gain clarity over assumptions that could be interfering with their learning (Griffith & Frieden, 2000). With blogging comes the introduction of journaling online and its public aspect offers the feeling of immediate publishing for an instant virtual audience (Kennedy, 2003). The act of journaling in a reflective manner, whether on paper or online, can help students become more actively involved in learning and can enable them to get a better grasp on their personal learning processes (Moon, 1999). As pointed out by Godwin-Jones (2003), blogs serve well as forums for journaling reflections about relevant daily life experiences.

Blogging for ESL. As technology has flourished in the classroom, so too have blogs become a popular alternate and/or supplemental platform for language teachers and learners (Richardson, 2010). Blogs have lent themselves well to the needs of non-native speakers in several ways. First, one advantage is that they give students the opportunity to communicate without the inhibitions that can come with face-to-face encounters. The perceived distance that being online can allow helps these students feel less social anxiety (Roed, 2003), which is good for lowering their affective filters and helping them to relax more in their pursuit of the target language.

Ward (2004) noted that language teachers need to prepare their students for communicating and participating in this online age we are now in. In so doing, they should not neglect blogging in the curriculum due to all the benefits it offers. One way to take advantage of this medium is to use it to enable students to look more carefully at their language learning experiences, processes and preferences by recording thoughts related to metacognitive discoveries in blogs.

Metacognition

A prevalent trend which has gained a lot of attention from educators in general and from teachers of second languages as well, is that of utilizing metacognitive skills in learning, especially with focus on the different types of learning styles and preferences which students possess. Exposure to and practice with metacognitive strategies lead to more steady, long-term learning achievement (Carrell, Gajdusek, & Wise, 1998; Chamot, 2004; Cohen, 2003; Tang & Moore, 1992).

Metacognition, or thinking about one's thinking and cognitions (Anderson, 2002; Flavell, 1979), is not merely a single simple concept, but a complex one (Dunlosky & Metcalfe, 2009) and is commonly grouped into three categories: metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive monitoring, and metacognitive control (Dunlosky & Metcalfe, 2009). Metacognitive knowledge, or knowledge about how learning works and how to improve it, is related to people's "declarative knowledge about cognition" (Dunlosky & Metcalfe, 2009, p. 2) and is described as including beliefs and facts about cognition that can be verbally stated (Dunlosky & Metcalfe, 2009). Metacognitive monitoring, which is known as the ability to evaluate the present state of a cognitive action, aids a person in judging how well they are understanding something that they are learning and can help someone know if they are reaching a solution to a problem or not. Lastly, metacognitive control, the regulating of cognitive activity to match the needs of specific situations, helps people decide when and where to use or change up a tactic in order to solve a problem. All three of these components work together to promote self-reflection and self-awareness (Dunlosky & Metcalfe, 2009).

History of metacognitive studies. Once questioned if possible to achieve at all, metacognition is now certainly a known entity in education, although a relatively new

term. In the late 1700s, Comte, a French philosopher who founded positivism, posed the quandary over how an organ (i.e., the brain) can both observe itself and be observed simultaneously (Nelson, 1996). However, as the concept of introspection took hold at the turn of the 19th to 20th centuries, the rebuttal that "for concurrent introspection to occur, just a portion of the mental organ was needed to look back upon itself" (Dunlosky & Metcalfe, 2009, p. 12) began to resonate with scholars. Later, but still in the first half of the 1900s, critics adhering to the school of behaviorism--Hull, Skinner, and Tolman, among others--argued that the idea of introspection was largely inadequate. Watson (1913) declared that consciousness, which he referred to as only analyzable through introspection, could not be studied experimentally or in any standardized manner due to its excessive subjectivity.

The modern study of metacognition was put on the back burner throughout the era of behaviorism, which dominated through the first half of the 20th century, and did not reemerge as a legitimate research focus until the 1960s when the Cognitive Renaissance fostered a renewed interest in the mind and its inner workings (Dunlosky & Metcalfe, 2009). The resurgence of metacognitive topics such as attention (Broadbent, 1958); imagination processes (Paivio, 1969); and memory (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968; Hart, 1965, 1966, 1967; Mandler, 1967); not to mention the publication of three seminal books on mental process by Miller (1962); Miller, Galanter, and Pribram (1960); and Neisser (1967) were all influential in promoting cognition among educators of that time (Dunlosky & Metcalfe, 2009).

The 1970s were witness to the true rise of the study of metacognition and were actually the beginning of the Metacognitive School of Psychology, during which time

controversies over the validity of research on metacognition were addressed by such prominent scholars as Brown (1978); Brown and Smiley (1977); Flavell (1970, 1979); Kroll and Kellicutt (1972); Lieberman (1979); and Newell and Simon (1972), with Flavell being the most influential of all (Dunlosky & Metcalfe, 2009). His landmark article *Metacognition and Cognitive Monitoring: A New Area of Cognitive Developmental Inquiry* (Flavell, 1979) helped set the stage for recognition of the importance of metacognition, especially in relation to the understanding of cognitive development and also defined the basic components of metacognition while offering many testable hypotheses for how they may actually develop (Dunlosky & Metcalfe, 2009).

Throughout the 1980s, psychologists such as Cavanaugh, Borkowski, and Perlmutter (1980; 1982) and Kluwe (1982) continued to refine the definition of metacognition, what mental activities it entailed, and how understanding could lead to a fuller comprehension of human behavior (Dunlosky & Metcalfe, 2009). Since the 1980s, researchers in many various domains–from psychology to child development–have adopted the metacognitive approach (Dunlosky & Metcalfe, 2009). One area that understands the value of metacognitive strategies is that of education.

Metacognition and education. Being aware of one's own thinking and learning is strongly directly tied to metacognition, and successful learners have more effective and more frequent use of this metacognitive awareness. Experience and interpretation of that experience guides meaningful learning; by revising an interpretation of an experience, one can attain new ways of thinking (Mezirow, 1990). According to Rollins (2007), in order that deep learning be achieved, learners need to discover their true meaning of a

situation and how that situation affects them personally. She also points out how essential it is for students to constantly explore their values, feelings, and past experiences in the search for understanding.

There are three phases to ideal thoughtful and self-regulated learning, all of which involve the use of common metacognitive strategies. In phase one, also known as the forethought phase, learners set goals and plan which strategies to use in order to get where they want to go. They self-motivate and generate outcome expectations. During phase two, or the performance phase, students employ various processes like self-observation to reach the goals they identified in the first phase. In the last phase, referred to as the self-reflection phase, learners reflect upon and evaluate the learning process and whether or not they achieved their expected outcomes (Zimmerman, 2002). The ability to consciously put this three-phase process into practice would greatly help many students who are struggling to learn English as their second language.

Metacognition and language learning. The relatively new metacognitive field of Language Learning Strategies (LLS) began in the 1970s with the renowned article, *What the "Good Language Learner" Can Teach Us* by Rubin (1975). This field has since had somewhat of a controversial history in that it has been difficult for experts to agree upon what actually constitutes a learning strategy and which strategies are best for whom and for what situations. For example, some psycholinguists promote the idea that an L2 learning strategy is a "specific plan, action, behavior, step, or technique that individual learners use, with some degree of consciousness, to improve their progress in developing skills in a second…language" (Oxford & Schramm, 2007, pp. 47-48). According to this perspective, a strategy is effective only if the learner can use it to achieve

"internalization, storage, retrieval…and greater learner autonomy…for the L2 tasks at hand" (Oxford & Schramm, 2007, p. 518). On the other hand, the sociocultural perspective on LLS points to society's effects on the individual as the main impetus in second language acquisition. According to this viewpoint, an LLS is defined as a "higher order mental function…which the L2 learner develops with the help of a more capable person in a sociocultural context" (Oxford & Schramm, 2007, p. 48).

Regardless of these disagreements, including metacognitive skills such as LLS in classroom practice can greatly improve the second language learning experience. Instead of merely focusing on the teaching of the target language and its grammar rules, language instructors should promote thinking about what happens during the language learning process. Use of LLS is a very important metacognitive skill and students who are more skilled in various metacognitive strategies have more success in the TL than other language students who are less skilled in these areas (Vandergrift, 2003). It is possible to instruct students of all language ability levels to accurately evaluate their own learning processes (Kruger & Dunning, 1999) and to become more metacognitively aware in terms of knowing what to do when they feel like they are struggling. The improvement of learners' metacognition has been recommended by many a researcher of learning strategies (Anderson, 2002; Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary, & Robbins, 1999; Rubin, 2001; Wenden, 2002) and the use of metacognitive skills and strategies which allow for the planning, controlling, and evaluating of learning play a very central role in relationship to learning effectiveness (Graham, 1997).

Chapter Summary

This literature review chapter has served to unveil some of the history and background of the field of Second Language Acquisition, with all its passionate debate

and disagreements over how to teach and learn languages. We see that there are practically as many different approaches as there are languages. Current trends in SLA seem to have focus on authenticity and meaningful real world language, collaborative learning, active and student-centered learning, metacognitive skills related to understanding learning preferences and strategies, and last but not least, the huge impact of modern day technology and the Read-Write Web, which of course includes blogging.

Research on blogging is still relatively in its infancy. In terms of existing research, there appears to be a number of studies on the use of blogs to aid second language learners in communication, the writing process, collaboration, and community, especially at the K-12 and university levels. Much research up to now has also been basically descriptive in nature–to define blogs and look into bloggers' demographics (Gardner, 2005; Herring, Scheidt, Bonus, & Wright, 2004; Lenhart & Fox, 2006; Trammell & Ferdig, 2004), and according to Lee and Oxford (2008) although awareness of thinking and learning processes are of high importance in second language acquisition, few studies have been done on learners' metacognitive awareness. Therefore, it is clear that more research on blogging for community college ESL students in terms of fostering their metacognitive skills and in order to understand their language learning processes more deeply would be of use. The following chapter will describe in detail the methodology of this research study.

Chapter 3. Methods

This chapter discusses the research methodology, data collection and data analysis procedures that were used in this study, along with the rationalizations for employing them. Participants and setting are also among the topics to be described here. This research explored English as a Second Language (ESL) students' thoughts on their language learning journeys. These thoughts were recorded in personal directed blogs by the students while they were in the researcher's ESL classes during the Fall 2010 semester at Pasadena City College (PCC) in Pasadena, California. Additional data was derived from field notes maintained by the researcher during the term while the courses were being delivered. The focus of the analyses and interpretation as a whole was on exploring ways for ESL students to become more aware of the ways they learn and for educators to have additional tools with which to promote students' metacognitive abilities in studying and learning a second language.

Research Purpose and Design

The principal purpose of this research was to investigate community college ESL students' metacognitive processing in terms of becoming aware of their language learning experiences by way of directed blogging. The objective was to explore how publishing thoughts on language learning experiences to personal blogs impacted ESL students' metacognitive awareness of their own language acquisition processes. Since this study examined the behavior of human beings, it employed a qualitative approach, specifically that of hermeneutic phenomenological design (Gadamer, 1989; Heidegger, 1962, 1982; Husserl, 1963, 1989, 2001a, 2001b; Van Manen, 1990). Using a qualitative approach makes more sense than a quantitative one in this instance as it is difficult, if not

impossible, to quantify human experiences, or *lived* experiences (Creswell, 1994; Van Manen, 1990), and human experiences are what are being studied here.

Very generally, phenomenology refers to the methods used to acquire qualitative data about an experience or phenomenon, while hermeneutics refers to the methods used to analyze and interpret that data (Gadamer, 1989; Heidegger, 1962, 1982; Husserl, 1963, 1989, 2001a, 2001b; Van Manen, 1990). This type of study is guided by exploratory design and the principles of human science, which are aimed expressly at presenting individuals' lived experiences in context, ultimately so that others may examine and learn from their behavior (Gadamer, 1989; Van Manen, 1990), which is precisely what this study intended to do.

One of the difficulties in qualitative studies is verifying the data (Creswell, 1994). One method often used to overcome this problem is the gathering of multiple information sources from various perspectives whose findings can then be used in triangulation to confirm and supplement each other (Creswell, 1994; Van Manen, 1990). Using two different data sources (the students' blogs and the researcher's field note observations) should have provided sufficient data to allow as objective and accurate a presentation of the students' learning experiences as possible, as well as to validate any findings.

When seeking to learn about the manner in which participants experience and attach meaning to a process, qualitative methods are best in that they allow for the discovery and emergence of new themes and points of view during the course of a study. Qualitative methods have a "common . . . goal of generating new ways of seeing existing data . . . [and] do justice to [participants'] perceptions and the complexity of their interpretations" (Richards & Morse, 2007, p. 30).

As noted, this study utilized a hermeneutic phenomenological approach. The ultimate goal of this type of study is not to draw specific conclusions or recommendations, but to gather together the experiences of individuals and present them in context so that others can come to their own conclusions.

Qualitative research design. Qualitative research and exploratory design within the realms of human science acted as foundations in this research study. Together, they aided in the process of finding the most likely explanations for the observed problems faced by many ESL students as they get stuck and plateau in their English learning. Exploratory design is effective when looking at relatively new kinds of situations or combinations of elements within situations–such as those of this study on blogging, metacognition and second language acquisition–that little is known about so far and where not much similar research has been done to offer insight (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Qualitative research methods are appropriate for natural settings since they allow for rich description, are interactive, humanistic, and flexible to unfolding changes in the process, and are well-suited to offering a holistic view of multifarious social phenomena (Creswell, 1994)–all characteristics that fit this particular study's needs.

Qualitative methods also allow researchers to obtain information about the variations of complex human behavior in context that would be difficult–if not at times virtually unachievable–through quantitative methods, which are useful for gathering and measuring objective, statistical data such as test scores or Likert scale surveys, for example, neither type of which were used in this study. Quantitative methods are not as suitable for capturing the essence of intricate and complex human behaviors and/or lived experiences as qualitative methods are (Creswell, 1994).

Overall, the research design for this study has been chosen in hopes that, through these methods, the findings will ultimately allow both educators and researchers alike to better understand the common problems associated with second language learners' feeling lost in their English acquisition processes. It is also this researcher's hope that second language instructors might benefit from the results of this study so that more of them will be able to achieve new clarity in relation to the reasons behind the problem, as well as gain insight into how to help students work through their impediments in ways that suit them best.

Human sciences. Human science, the category of science under which this type of research falls, is a term used to refer to the examination of human life and behavior in order to gain a fuller understanding of the entirety of life experiences (Van Manen, 1990). Pioneered by such thinkers as Husserl (1963, 1989, 2001a, 2001b), Heidegger (1962, 1982), Gadamer (1989), and Van Manen (1990), human science is a concept, or perhaps more of an approach, that allows for more flexibility than the rules of natural science allow. It acknowledges that a person's life, his or her lived experiences, are more than what can merely be measured objectively. The human sciences are an attempt to allow for the existence of subjectivity in interpretations of human behavior (Van Manen, 1990). Phenomenology and hermeneutics work together within the context of human science to promote a methodology that can look at such non-objective phenomena as the behavior of human beings, but still maintain the objectivity of a scientific method (Gadamer, 1989; Heidegger, 1962, 1982; Husserl, 1963, 1989, 2001a, 2001b; Van Manen, 1990).

Hermeneutic phenomenology. A hermeneutic phenomenological approach involves the process of gathering data related to the lived experiences of people going

through a phenomenon that the researcher wishes to understand (Ihde, 1986). Lived experience refers to a circumstance, condition or series of incidents that exist for someone but which cannot easily be measured quantifiably or described in terms of black and white (Gadamer, 1989; Heidegger, 1962, 1982; Husserl, 1963, 1989, 2001a, 2001b; Van Manen, 1990). The idea of the lived experience is one of the core concepts of phenomenology (Gadamer, 1989; Van Manen, 1990). In this case, the study's content is focused on the experiences of several non-native English speakers studying this language in intermediate level ESL courses at a community college in Southern California. These experiences involve intricate details that are more complex than those which can be represented by statistical data alone.

Different students have different backgrounds, which lead to different kinds of experiences–both good and bad–in their English learning encounters from both past and present. Through phenomenology, each student's reflective descriptions of their own experiences can be recorded, analyzed, and reported so that other educators may use the information to understand the processes students report going through while attempting to learn and use English and what these experiences mean for them.

While phenomenology is portrayed as the art of describing lived experiences or other human phenomena, hermeneutics is defined as the art of interpreting them (Creswell, 1994, 1998; Van Manen, 1990). As a study of the process of discovery, hermeneutics serves as a common form of inquiry used within phenomenology and allows for the process of analyzing and interpreting data which can not otherwise be objectively quantified (Gadamer, 1989; Heidegger, 1962, 1982; Husserl, 1963, 1989, 2001a, 2001b; Lauer, 2004; Van Manen, 1990). It is a discovery-oriented approach to

analysis and understanding of how individuals experience themselves and their world while offering a more flexible way of going about research without the confines of formal deduction or prescribed steps (Lauer, 2004), although specific and documentable processes are certainly required.

Despite the fact that there are formal procedures to establish the processes that research takes, hermeneutic procedures are generally guided more by perspectives and questions, not governed by strict rules. As a result, researchers have more freedom to take multiple viewpoints on what is being investigated and, therefore, are more likely to uncover new associations which lead to new understandings and insights (Lauer, 2004). As a process of inquiry, hermeneutic procedures can also be described as starting with an awareness of a difficulty and then exploring that unknown, experiencing some subconscious incubation, and ultimately achieving illumination (Young, Becker, & Pike, 1970). All characteristics described match the circumstances and needs of this study in that a noticed difficulty clearly exists (i.e., ESL students' struggles with their language learning processes) and exploration of this problem will hopefully lead to eventual illumination of its underlying causes.

Rational for chosen methods. The methods chosen for this research study are congruous with its goals given that the researcher was aimed at delving into selected ESL students' lived language learning experiences within the context of a real classroom setting. A hermeneutic phenomenological approach was best suited for this particular study due to the nature of the sample being used, the type of research questions being asked, and the overall goals of the research.

This research study focused on examining community college ESL students' language learning experiences, both past and present, for the benefit of other second language learners and teachers, and for helping both these groups to have a better understanding of the common predicament of feeling stuck in the process. The purpose was to achieve a better grasp of how college-level ESL students, specifically those from China, see their own English-learning journeys. Attempts to understand this phenomenon occurred by way of the researcher's analysis of student directed blog entries recorded during Pasadena City College's fall semester of 2010. The exploration looked at the ways that students viewed their own language learning processes in terms of preferred learning styles and strategies, past memories and present feelings about studying a second language, realizations of how they actually may learn best, and thoughts on how and when they use English–their target language–in authentic real world situations.

Role of the Researcher

My interest in looking at the challenges of English language learners comes from my own personal experiences as both an ESL teacher and as a second language learner. Since I teach ESL at a community college, I see firsthand the slow progress, or even stagnation, that many students get stuck in while enrolled in our program, and not always for lack of trying. The most common question ESL teachers hear from their students is: "How can I improve my English?" We see students come to class every day and sit at their desks, even score high on examinations, but still not be able to communicate proficiently with people in English.

Many of these students have a history in their home countries of passive learning experiences where they have not been encouraged to put much introspection into their educational development. Students who take a passive approach to learning are less likely

to be successful in the classroom than active learners who perceive themselves to be more engaged with the lessons and, therefore, more motivated to learn (Benware & Deci, 1984). If students do not attempt to take more of an active role in their learning, improvement in a second language can become very frustrating for them. It can also be frustrating for the teacher, who may feel that, despite all of her efforts, he or she is not making much ground.

The second reason that I am attracted to this topic is because I lived abroad for three years in Japan and faced many of the same kind of problems that my students face, especially in terms of second language learning and use. However, I never felt as stuck as many of them seem to feel and have wondered why. I came to the conclusion that learning a new language is not as much a matter of intelligence or talent for languages, although those can definitely play a part in the process, as it is about being resourceful, feeling positive and recognizing responsibility for one's own learning experience. According to Oxford (1990), learners should feel comfortable with taking responsibility in their language learning, and self-directed students gain more confidence and eventually more proficiency. I wanted to find ways to teach this type of thinking to my own students.

Study Setting

This study focused on students who were enrolled in the English as a Second Language Program at Pasadena City College during the 2010 fall semester. The semester lasted 16 weeks and took place from late August to mid-December of that academic year. All of these students were enrolled in sections of a paired class–one section each of ESL 122, an intermediate grammar and writing class and ESL 459, an online *ESL Learning Through Computers* class–that were taught by the researcher, a tenured full-time

associate professor at that school.

PCC is a community college in Pasadena, California, an ethnically diverse suburb of Los Angeles that has a population of close to 150,000, 45% of whom speak a language other than English at home ("Pasadena Statistics," 2010). This college was originally founded in 1924 and was known as Pasadena Junior College until it later merged with another junior college nearby to become Pasadena City College in 1954 ("College History," 2003). The mission statement of PCC is “to provide a high quality, academically robust learning environment that encourages, supports and facilitates student learning and success” ("Mission and Values," 2010).

There are approximately 110 community colleges in California, 21 of which are in the Los Angeles area ("Community Colleges," 2010). As part of the Pasadena Area Community College District, which is the third largest single-campus community college district in the United States ("International Students," 2009), PCC offers both Associate in Arts (AA) and Associate in Science (AS) degrees in over 60 academic majors and 76 vocational programs ("Institutional Planning and Research Office," 2009)**.** According to fall semester 2009 statistics, there was a total enrollment number of close to 30,000 (26,237 credit students and 3,502 non-credit students). The gender breakdown of all credit students was 47% male and 53% female with the non-credit percentages being 36% male and 64% female ("Institutional Planning and Research Office," 2009).

Solely looking at the entire PCC credit student population, of which participants for this study were a part, fall 2009 percentages in terms of ethnicity were 36.1% Hispanic, 29.8% Asian or Pacific Islander, 20.2% White, 6% African American, 4.9% Filipino, 0.6% American Indian, and 2.3% Other, with 2,441 students declining to state

("Institutional Planning and Research Office," 2009). As for residency status of all PCC credit students during that semester, 78% were listed as U.S. citizens, 15% were listed as immigrants, 2% were listed as refugee/asylee/parolee, 4% were listed as international F-1 visa students, and the rest were listed as *other* or *unknown* ("Institutional Planning and Research Office," 2009). The number of foreign students enrolled in the fall 2009 semester was 1,100 ("Institutional Planning and Research Office," 2009).

Table 1

Pasadena City College Student Characteristics

	Fall 2009 Credit Students		Fall 2009 Non-credit Students		Fall 2009 Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Total Students	26,237		3,502		29,632	
Gender						
Male	12,336	47.3%	1,271	36.3%	13,560	46.0%
Female	13,762	52.7%	2,228	63.7%	15,931	54.0%
Unknown	139		3		141	
Ethnicity						
African American	1,439	6.0%	206	6.6%	1,632	5.9%
Native American	140	0.6%	7	0.2%	146	0.5%
Asian/Pacific Islander	7,083	29.8%	740	23.8%	7,787	28.4%
Filipino	1,177	4.9%	20	0.6%	1,195	4.4%
Hispanic	8,591	36.1%	1,553	50.0%	10,112	36.8%
White	4,811	20.2%	512	16.5%	5,314	19.4%
Other	555	2.3%	65	2.1%	1,256	4.6%
Unknown	2,441		399		2,190	
Citizens/Immigrants						
US citizen	20,039	78.2%	1,587	59.9%	21,570	76.6%
Immigrant	3,816	14.9%	695	26.2%	4,478	15.9%
Refugee/asylee/parolee	376	1.5%	65	2.5%	434	1.5%
International student	1,073	4.2%	33	1.2%	1,101	3.9%
Other	314	1.2%	269	10.2%	581	2.1%
Unknown	619		853		1,468	

(continued)

	Fall 2009 Credit Students		Fall 2009 Non-credit Students		Fall 2009 Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Residency						
PACCD residents	7,940	30.3%			7,940	30.3%
State residents	16,849	64.2%			16,849	64.2%
Out-of-state	348	1.3%			348	1.3%
Foreign students	1,100	4.2%			1,100	4.2%

Note. Missing data reflects original table published by Pasadena City College ("Institutional Planning and Research Office," 2009).

Population and sampling plan. The population for this study came from PCC's English as a Second Language Program, which consists of both a credit and a non-credit program. Credit classes take place on the main campus, while non-credit classes are held at the Community Education Center (CEC) campus, which is located in another area of the city. The credit program was designed to build students' language proficiency levels in all four areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in order to ready them for non-ESL college level courses. All participants in this study were credit students.

Demographics of PCC's credit ESL students as collected for the 2008-2009 academic year are as follows (see Table 2).

Table 2

PCC ESL Department Student Characteristics

2008-2009 ESL Credit Students	
	Count
Male	2,341
Female	3,672
Unknown	27
Total	6,040
African American	16
Asian	4,284
Pacific Islander	4
Hispanic	362
White	209
Unknown	1,165
Total	6,040

Note: "Institutional Planning and Research Office," 2010.

The PCC ESL program is made up of five core courses, ranging from beginning to advanced levels (ESL 420, 422, 122, 33A and 33B), the two most advanced of which are transferrable to four-year schools. If a student has not taken and passed any college ESL classes prior to entering PCC's program, he is placed into an appropriate level ESL class by taking the Levels of English Proficiency (LOEP) placement test, a test designed to measure English skills for students who are non-native speakers of the language ("Assessment," 2006). Elective classes in such subject areas as reading, vocabulary, pronunciation, and speaking and listening, for example, are also part of the program ("Languages Course Catalog," 2007). *ESL Learning Through Computers* (ESL 459) is one of the courses offered as an elective and focuses on students' use of computer programs and the Internet as tools to use and practice English ("Languages Course Catalog," 2007). Students in this class participate in task-based assignments and projects–

including the personal blog component related to this study–that are done as individuals, pairs and small groups throughout the 16-week semester.

Target population. The target population for this study consisted of students enrolled in the researcher's courses during the 2010 fall semester, who were all matriculating PCC students enrolled in credit ESL classes. They had either been placed there through the LOEP test or had passed the proceeding beginning level core course in order to move on to the intermediate level. Each set of paired classes taught by the researcher consisted of one *Grammar and Writing Level 3* course (ESL 122) and one *ESL Learning Through Computers* course (ESL 459). Some demographic information on the students from the aforementioned semester is as follows:

- Total students: 53
- Total paired class sections: 2
- Age range of students: 17-41 years old
- Number of countries represented: 8 (China 39, Vietnam 6, Iran 2, Korea 2, and Algeria, Japan, Thailand and the USA [a deaf American Sign Language student] all with one student each)

Sampling Techniques and Sample

The target population was first stratified based on nationality, with China being the chosen country of origin for students. It was decided to narrow the focus of this research to Chinese language learners because there were not enough students of any other nationality to compose a fair representation (roughly 74% of the students were from China, whereas the next highest numbered group–students from Vietnam–only made up 9% of the class total). Also, there are a variety of cultural differences in second language teaching and learning, so a single more homogeneous group would allow for more

consistency in results. There are also benefits to focusing on this particular ethnic group in that it is a group that makes up a noticeable portion of the population both within the PCC ESL program and the college as a whole; therefore, study results will be more useful to other local educators who work with ESL students.

To gain a representative sample for study, 10 Chinese students were randomly drawn from the group of 39 Chinese students. The sampling of 10 students represented about 20% of the targeted population of 53 and 25% of the total number of Chinese students. This number provided a manageable number of blogs to analyze in depth for this study.

Data Sources and Collection

The data for this study came from two sources, both of which were pre-existing artifacts. This data consisted of: (a) the experiences of students from the researcher's intermediate ESL classes at PCC as recorded and published online in personal blogs, and (b) the field notes which were related to the ESL 459 blogging assignments, the semester's experiences, and the reactions of both the students and the instructor as recorded by the researcher. At the time the students enrolled in the researcher's classes, they were made aware of the public nature of their online blogs and were informed that the blog entries could later be studied and/or presented by the researcher. A signed consent form was collected from the students indicating that their class activities may later be used in research or publication (see Appendix A). All students within the targeted population agreed and signed the form.

Directed Student Blogs

Entries from 10 of the sample students' blogs acted as a primary data source for this research study. These directed blogs were all published online as public domain

artifacts. All blog entries were from class assignments developed for the intermediate level group of ESL students who were enrolled in the researcher's Fall 2010 classes.

Students in these classes created and maintained personal online blogs where they posted all assignments throughout the semester. They were given ten assignments, with each being worth ten points. Points were given based on students following instructions and on evidence of showing careful thought and effort, not on correct grammar or spelling. One of the goals of the *ESL Learning Through Computers* class was to promote more relaxed English use and fluency and, therefore, hopefully increase students' enjoyment for writing in order to express themselves. Except for the essay rewrite assignments, grammar, spelling, and compositional organization were not considered in the scoring of these directed blogging assignments since students often feel nervous and restrained when worrying about writing *correctly* in that way. It was the researcher's desire that students spend their energies on creative and deep reflection instead and on trying to express their uncensored thoughts, "writing what [their] mind actually sees and feels, not what it *thinks* it should see or feel" (Goldberg, 2005, p. 9).

The blogs also acted as a sort of e-portfolio for the collection of up to four essay rewrites on topics related to learning reflections. These rewrites were for in-class essay tests from the ESL 122 *Grammar and Writing–Level 3* class, the other class involved in the researcher's class pairs. Doing rewrites was always optional, with students having the chance to raise essay test scores by editing and publishing their papers if they chose to do so. All of these rewrites were included in this study and analyzed for content.

The possibility of blogs helping ESL students to reflect more deeply on their language learning is important since many of them do not seem to realize how they learn

best, and therefore do not progress in their classes or overall in learning English, their target language. These students are often at a loss as to how to improve their studying and their English fluency in general. Using blogs, however, to get them to think about their learning preferences and processes, as well as simply to document their triumphs and difficulties might possibly help them in their quest to achieve proficiency. Various positive powers of blogging for ESL students have been well documented. Adding blogging activities to the ESL classroom curricula has proven beneficial in that it can be motivating, can help students' thinking, and can positively affect attitudes toward learning and toward sharing of experiences with an audience of their fellow classmates, teachers, and anyone else who visits their blog (Campbell, 2003, 2004; Dieu, 2004; Godwin-Jones, 2003; Johnson, 2004; Jones, 2006; Kárpáti, 2009; Kelley, 2008; Kraemer, 2009; Opp-Beckmann, 1999; Shin, 2009; Ward, 2004; Xie & Sharma, 2004).

The aim of the blogging assignments involved in this study was to get students to think about their learning processes, styles, strategies and preferences–both past and present–especially in terms of their English learning. Of all the student blogs, 10 of those created by Chinese adult students were selected at random to be examined. Identifying information was removed from the selected blogs and each student was assigned a number for identification purposes. Each blog had a word count ranging from approximately 1700 to 2500 words.

Each directed blogging assignment's instructions, given weekly or every other week over the 16-week semester period, were both posted on the instructor's website and discussed in the face-to-face paired grammar and writing class, which met twice a week for a total of 5 hours per week. By both posting and discussing the blogging assignment

directions, the instructor could make as sure as possible that students understood what was being asked of them, and that questions and confusions–whether over technical matters, specific instructions' details or language difficulties–could be addressed. Another benefit to taking advantage of our face-to-face class time was that students could have some time to discuss projects together, especially if they needed to collaborate with a partner or group or just merely wanted help from each other in general on an assignment. Posting instructions on the instructor's website was also helpful in that students could refer back to them whenever they felt necessary if clarification was needed.

Since the blogs were public on the Internet, both the students and instructor had access to them at any and all times. Each individual's blog could easily be reached through an online portal where the instructor posted links to all classmates' blogs. The students were sometimes required to leave comments on each other's blog postings, but sometimes voluntarily did so as well. It has been found that exchanging comments and replies gives students a sense of audience and collaboration, which can be motivating for students in their learning (Jones, 2006; Kennedy, 2003; Opp-Beckmann, 1999; Stiler & Philleo, 2003; Ward, 2004).

The blogging tool chosen for the classes was Blogger.com due to its overall user friendliness, its easy integration with other Google tools that students were asked to use for class, its resemblance to Microsoft Word's word-processing functions, and the availability of free accounts. Blogger.com blogs also have many features that were useful, such as a convenient commenting tool, date and time stamps for each blogging

entry, and different graphical layout choices so that students could personalize the look of their individual blogs.

Researcher Field Notes

The second primary source of data for this study was the researcher's field notes. As an experienced instructor, my instructional practice has regularly included the recording of class activities throughout each semester. I record these activities in terms of a brief description of them along with an informal analysis of how successful I believe that they were.

One advantage of using field notes to gather data is that if the researcher is intertwined with the participants–such as in this study where I was also the participants' professor–she sees everything firsthand and her insights and/or concerns can be recorded efficiently and immediately as they are revealed throughout the study's time period (Creswell, 1994).

The field notes for this study were recorded throughout the 2010 Fall semester in the form of a journal that included the researcher's thoughts (as professor) on students' directed blogging assignments and experiences. In these notes, the researcher reflected upon the effectiveness of the blogging projects in terms of what seemed to work well, what did not seem to work well, how students reacted to what they were working on, and whether or not the proposed goals of each blogging assignment had been met, more or less, based on the researcher's opinion.

Field note entries were made at least weekly as well as at any time that a particularly noteworthy insight occurred. These notes were first recorded very casually, then rewritten in a more organized and chronological manner by actual assignment over the 16 week semester. Miscellaneous related thoughts were included as seen pertinent.

First, there was a description of the instructions for each assignment, and then notes were added to explain how the researcher felt the assignment had gone in terms of students' reactions and abilities to match the directions given and in terms of how well the researcher felt each assignment worked to help students reflect upon different aspects of their learning. Struggles and potential improvements for future were also copiously noted.

Human Subjects' Considerations and Study Approval

This study's application for Exempt research status was reviewed by Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The study met federal criteria for research considered exempt from full review since it involved a review of artifacts generated by adult participants who were not of a protected group (see Appendix B). The subjects were not exposed to any dangers and all of them were informed at the time of participating in the college courses of the possibility of subsequent research of their student work. Their identities will remain completely confidential with minimal possible risk should disclosure of any data ever happen to occur outside of the study place where it was collected. Last, only the researcher will have access to the data, which will be kept in a secure place for 5-10 years, as recommended by Richards and Morse (2007), as well as Seidel (1998).

During PCC's 2010 fall term, the researcher (who was also the professor of the participating classes) distributed consent forms to all ESL 459 students (see Appendix A). This form included mention of the researcher's goals and intention to possibly use the students' blogs in post-course research activity and/or professional presentations. Signing the consent form was voluntary, with students having the option not to agree to participate while suffering no negative consequences in the class or elsewhere. Students

were also informed that the professor was the only person who would be handling these forms and that their identity as potential study participants would remain completely confidential, with the signed forms not being linked in any way to the study's data (Richards & Morse, 2007). All students chose to sign the consent forms. A copy of this form was posted online on the professor's class website for future review by students if they chose to do so. All signed forms will be stored in a safe place, which is only accessible by the researcher, and will be kept for a period of seven years after this study has concluded.

Data Analysis Methods and Procedures

Data for this research came from the directed student blogs and from the field notes. A coding process was used to identify standout topics and themes from each of these sources of data and repeated until accurate and reliable interpretation was achieved. Once the two sources were thoroughly reviewed and pertinent themes identified, comparisons between sources was made. The thematic analysis of all data will be presented in chapter four.

Coding process. There is an accepted, formal coding process that has been developed for hermeneutic phenomenological studies (Creswell, 1994, 1998; Richards & Morse, 2007; Van Manen, 1990). It is cyclical and to be repeated during the data analysis process as many times as necessary in order to come up with reliable descriptions of the situation at hand. Researchers in the human sciences have outlined the guidelines used for this process and the several basic steps involved (Creswell, 1994, 1998; Richards & Morse, 2007; Van Manen, 1990). One way to describe this qualitative data analysis (QDA) process is in terms of the *Noticing, Collecting, and Thinking Model* (Seidel, 1998).

1. The researcher gets a full description of the phenomenon being studied (Noticing). As professor of the participating students, the researcher was already familiar with the individuals involved due to having spent an entire 16-week semester working with each of them in the two sections of two paired courses. More detailed descriptions of personal experiences and reactions of both students and the instructor began to surface, however, during the first round of perusal of the data sources.

2. The researcher finds poignant statements about the participants' experiences in the collected data (Noticing). After the initial read through, all data was more carefully examined a second time, and basic themes and topics were listed as they were uncovered. This step was repeated several times so as not to miss any important elements of what was being looked for.

3. The researcher groups the select statements into the identified themes and topics (Collecting). Individual statements from the data sources were categorized according to discovered themes and topics. Additional themes that perhaps had not been apparent during the first few read-throughs of the data were pinpointed, as well.

4. The researcher reflects on the experience, process and discoveries so far (Thinking). Next, all data was reviewed in-depth once again. In order to "link [it] with information, topics, concepts, and themes" (Richards & Morse, 2007, p. 135), topic coding was used to analyze the data. Using this QDA process, passages of text were reviewed in order to find patterns that showed up and were related to different areas of metacognition in the language learning experience.

5. The researcher creates a description of the possible meaning of the experiences (Thinking). A preliminary analysis of the categorized data was written up

and organized around each found theme and topic. This analysis was also repeatedly compared to the research objective of this study so as to keep findings focused on and pertinent to that specific purpose. Here, the goals were to make sense out of what had been collected from the data, look for relationships and patterns in the observable trends that had been found, compare and contrast key points in search of both similarities and differences, and make general discoveries about the issue being studied (Seidel, 1998).

6. Steps 1 through 5 are repeated with a colleague in order to ensure reliability of interpretation. The findings from steps 1-5 were checked and crosschecked for consistency in relation to the research objective and with another colleague so as to aid in the credibility of the process and results (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Criteria for data. As mentioned earlier, this study attempted to explore how publishing thoughts about language learning experiences and preferences to personal blogs could affect ESL students' metacognitive awareness of their own language acquisition processes. In order to determine the impact of directed blogging on this goal, the chosen 10 blogs were read, reread and coded according to steps 1-6 above in order to find common themes in certain criteria–specifically evidence of such things as:

- memories and feelings from past and present language learning situations;
- reflections upon ways they preferred to learn English;
- self-evaluation of perceived strengths and weaknesses in their English learning; and
- types of language learning strategies they were already employing and/or would like to start using.

As soon as all student blogging entries were sufficiently coded, further information related to those found themes was uncovered by analyzing the teacher's field note entries in the same manner that had been used to analyze the student blogs. Criteria to look for this time included such areas of interest as:

- Did the instructor feel that students seemed to grasp the aim of a given assignment and how may that have affected its outcome?
- Did the instructor believe that students enjoyed certain assignments more than others and how may that have affected results?
- Did the instructor think that students struggled more with some assignments than others and why may this have been so in terms of the goals of this study?

Credibility of Study

An essential element of good research is establishing credibility. To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of this study, certain techniques that lead to both reliability and validity were implemented so as to assure the truthfulness and accuracy of results. Potential bias and error were also carefully considered, with attempts made to try to prevent their possible occurrence.

Reliability and validity play a different kind of role in qualitative studies than they do in quantitative ones (Leininger, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 1992; Sandelowski, 1993; Sparkes, 2001). According to Richards and Morse (2007), qualitative methods are "subjective, interpretive, and time and context bound, 'truth' is relative and 'facts' depend upon individual perceptions" (p. 189). In qualitative research, validation of findings, or in other words, evaluating their accuracy, truthfulness and credibility, also does not hold the same meaning as it does in quantitative research, but is, of course, just as valuable and necessary a component (Kvale, 1989; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The

strategies of triangulation of data sources and having a peer look over the data, as recommended by qualitative research experts (Creswell, 1994, 1998; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Kvale, 1989, 1995; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Richards & Morse, 2007; Van Manen, 1990), were utilized for this study to help ensure its validity.

No one source of information should receive serious thought without it being triangulated with others (Creswell, 1994, 1998; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Kvale, 1989, 1995; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Richards & Morse, 2007). Multiple data sources involved in this study (i.e., blog entries and field notes) allowed for this triangulation, and therefore led to more credibility for the findings.

Furthermore, as mentioned, collaborating with a colleague who is not taking part in your study but is knowledgeable in the area can help unveil possible problems related to reliability and validity. This other person can scrutinize the data and findings for inconsistencies, confusing details, and/or unrealistic conclusions (Creswell, 1994). For this study, the researcher met regularly with a fellow PCC colleague who also teaches ESL and who recently completed her own dissertation for a doctorate in education. This interaction gave the researcher the opportunity to discuss and critique content and results as they unveiled themselves, while also leaving evidence (i.e., an *audit trail*) in the form of a record of events and decisions during the research process (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

Assumptions and Limitations

Assumptions the researcher made for this study were that:

- all ESL student participants were non-native speakers of English,
- all students enrolled in the sampling classes were appropriately placed at the intermediate level, and

One of the limitations of this study includes potential language barriers that could have lead to misunderstandings of blog assignment instructions and/or explanations during the semester. Other limitations involve the fact that the focus is on no more than one ethnic group, Chinese; and that results were limited to just one community college's ESL program and only one professor's students–all at the intermediate level–within that program.

Chapter Summary

This chapter on methods discussed the qualitative and exploratory research design for this study. Qualitative research methods are fitting for natural settings–such as the classroom–due to their descriptive, flexible, and holistic qualities (Creswell, 1994), while exploratory studies are appropriate when research focuses on a relatively new phenomenon that few other previous studies have (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010)–such as the use of blogs to help community college ESL students with metacognitive awareness. A hermeneutic phenomenological approach focusing on human lived experiences also guided this study since it allowed for more flexibility and open discovery than the more stringent rules of natural sciences (Van Manen, 1990).

In terms of the data collection and analysis procedures, data for this study was gathered from a small sample of college students of Chinese descent who were in the researcher's Fall 2010 ESL classes. This primary data came from directed student blogs and teacher field notes. All of this data was coded and analyzed according to steps and methods recommended by Creswell (1994, 1998), Richards and Morse (2007), Seidel (1998), and Van Manen (1990). Procedures that were taken to ensure the credibility of this study were also noted.

Chapter 4. Results

This study sought to examine the potential influence of directed blogging on metacognitive awareness of language learning processes for intermediate community college ESL students. As described earlier, for second language learners, the adverse effects of feeling lost in their quest for English fluency can stem partially, if not greatly, from a lack of introspection over the methods they employ in their attempts to master the language. They frequently have problems finding ways that could work better than the often unsuccessful ones they are currently utilizing.

After a thorough review of the literature and consideration of the greater framework relevant to this topic matter, the research objective–to find if directed blogging as a Web-based interactive tool for publishing personal thoughts and insights could be an effective procedure to promote deeper thought concerning language learning processes–emerged as the focus for this research. This study looks at how blogging on the subject of thoughts on and practices of personal language learning and related experiences enhances metacognitive awareness of one's learning processes and preferences, and how that could apply to ESL students becoming more conscious of their own second language learning development.

This chapter presents the findings of the textual analysis of the student blogging assignments and instructor field notes. Ten directed blogging assignments, every other week or so, plus four essay test rewrites were given by the instructor throughout the Fall 2010 semester at Pasadena City College in Pasadena, California. The ten sample students participated throughout the term and textual analysis findings for each of these 10 students are presented below. Please note that any grammatical errors within the student

blog excerpts have intentionally been left in as they were posted by students. Students are identified with a numerical ID only. Reflections based on the instructor field notes are also included.

Directed Blogging Assignment Results

The 10 assignments are listed in Table 3 below, as well as the number of sample students who completed each of these assignments. At the beginning of the term, 10 sample students were participating in the blogging, and all 10 remained in the course throughout the term until it ended.

Table 3

Blogging Assignment Participation

Assignment number	Title	Number of students participating
1	Three questions	10
2	First experience learning English	10
3	Comments	10
4	Learning styles surveys	10
5	Plans to use English on campus	10
6	Practice essay	10
7	Comments	10
8	Daily English	10
9	Daily English	10
10	Blog evaluations	10
Throughout semester	Rewrites	10

Directed Blogging Assignment 1: Three Questions

This first blogging assignment presented students with three questions concerning their English studies and usage:

1. Why are you studying English? Explain with details.

2. Do you use English very much when you're not in this class? Explain what situations you need to use it in.

3. How do you feel when you use English? Are you sometimes nervous, comfortable, or...? Explain.

These questions were meant to spark insight and metacognitive awareness into the why's and how's of students' English learning and use.

Reasons for studying English: Question 1. The first question was intended to promote deeper consideration on why a student had chosen to make the effort to learn English. Students' answers about why they were studying English generally focused on the theme of the importance of English for both their daily lives and their potential success in their new home, the United States. English was often mentioned as the international language used throughout the world, but more common were comments which explained how English was necessary to excel or just to get by in their new environment. One student described her reasons for learning English as such:

> When I was young, I really hate studying English; nothing could be awful than studying English. When I was in high school, I realized the importance of learning English and why I should learn English. I clearly knew that . . . if I do not study hard, the day in America will be tough. (Subject #2)

A few other comments demonstrated reasons for studying English that were not directly related to the students themselves. A couple of people revealed that they were

taking English classes because their parents thought it was important for them or in order to help their parents:

> If I don't studying English, my father will be lost in his life, just because he don't know any English. (Subject #7)

My field notes stated that this question was useful in that it got students to truly think about something that many of them had been taking for granted. It was noted that, after the assignment, a number of students told me they had not been thinking about why they were learning English–they just figured it was something they had to do.

Use of English in daily life: Question 2. The second question prompted students to consider the amount of English they actually use when they are not in their ESL classes. Most of the answers revealed that little English was used when not in class:

> [E]nvironment is the biggest hinder of learning English. Wherever place we are, there must be many Chinese speakers around us. We speak Chinese instead of English automatically, so we cannot practice English that much most of the time. (Subject #4)

They explained that English had not been fully integrated into their lives, if at all, and that since Chinese was everywhere around them, it was hard to escape its convenience:

> We have not been made English into our lives. We like to watch dramas, read newspapers, and write down things in our native language. The only way we can conquer it is to change all of them to English and make our lives get connected with America. (Subject #7)

Field notes stated, "Writing about this [topic] made many of [the students] realize how little they use the language which they are trying to learn–therefore, their progress may be quite slow." As instructor, I also had hoped to promote the idea of thinking about English not as merely a school subject, but as something ESL students needed to both get by and to flourish in their lives here.

Feelings while using English: Question 3. The third question brought out a number of revelations about the difficulties in using English and the resulting feelings when students tried to use it in real world situations. Most stated that they felt some sort of discomfort. A common statement was that they felt apprehensive, especially due to the fact that native speakers could not understand them because of their Chinese accent. One student suggested that, despite her occasional troubles with the language, in order to improve her English usage, perhaps she should try not to worry about what other people think so much (Subject #3).

Feelings about blogging for language learning. At the end of the semester, students were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of all the assignments they had done for their blogs. A common opinion about this first assignment was that it had been helpful in the pursuit for meaning in relation to their English studies:

> This assignment helped me because I can think of the reason why I learn English and how often I use English in my daily life. It can make me think a lot of methods how to speak English outside the class and have confidence to talk in English with the other people. (Subject #10)

My field notes also proclaimed that, overall, assignment one seemed a useful first assignment in terms of getting students to tap into metacognitive processes in order to ponder where they stood with their English. I noted that it set the stage for introspection about students' language learning processes and how to hopefully improve their English by paying more conscious attention to how they learn and use it.

Directed Blogging Assignment 2: My First Experience Learning English

For this second directed blogging assignment, students were asked to reflect upon their very first experience learning English. The vast majority reported on early formal school scenarios in China. Results were mixed between those who had good memories

and those who did not, though the positive recollections outweighed the negative ones. My field notes noted that the objective of this assignment–students looking at the foundation of their English learning and the ways they felt about it–would hopefully help them realize how their first experience could still be influencing the attitudes which they carry today about this language and learning it.

Past negative experiences. Of those who described negative experiences, most mentioned an incompetent or boring teacher:

> My first experience learning English was boring. The class can't speak anything in English. Most people like speaking Chinese, and the teacher teaches the English in Chinese. The English that he spoke sounds crazy. Sometimes I can't understand what the English teacher is talking about. (Subject #7)

Others remembered their first English learning experience as scary. They had been made to feel uncomfortable, ashamed, or afraid to make mistakes. Some students even mentioned receiving punishments for incorrect English used in class:

> Once, I had been ordered to answer [my teacher's] questions, but I was so nervous that I could not calm down to answer what he asked me. So, I got a punishment which is recorded the question and answer for 25 times. That is really a big punish for me. (Subject #9)

Overall, the students who reported unfavorable learning situations, mentioned that these experiences had been a waste of time, that they had left the class with little if any English having been learned, and/or that their bad experiences had made them dislike the language.

Past positive experiences. There were a variety of positive memories mentioned for this assignment. Most were related, again, to the teacher and to the student's feelings toward him or her. Mentions of interesting types of activities that their first teachers had

used, such as games, videos, fairy tales, singing, and multimedia, also ranked high in occurrence here.

One student stated how learning English for his first time helped supplement his growing interest in American culture, which in turn complemented his interest in learning the language so he could learn more about the culture:

> I remembered English taught me some wonderful things about western culture . . . After my first English class, I learned a lot about the western world. I really wanted to learn more and more about United States culture especially and I could enjoy English for that! (Subject #2)

Feelings about blogging for language learning. There was not one negative comment posted about this second assignment in the end of semester blogging assignment evaluations. One can not be sure if this happened because students were just trying to please the teacher; however, some negative comments were posted elsewhere by some students in their evaluations, so it seems believable that this assignment was a success for getting students to reflect upon their first English learning experience.

Many students reported that this assignment sparked the pleasure of remembering their younger days and how the associated English learning events had been enjoyable:

> This assignment was useful and interesting. This can made me think of my first time learning English . . . . My English teacher helped me a lot in my English improvement so I liked it. (Subject #10)

A smaller but noticeable number of others described this assignment as beneficial in that it had allowed them to learn more about writing processes in a relaxed situation:

> [This assignment] is very help my essay because when we do this the teacher explain very detail about how to written about good essay so I understand more how to do. (Subject #5)

The field notes stated that, in general, this assignment appeared to have been a success in meeting its objective.

Directed Blogging Assignments 3 and 7: Comments

For both assignments 3 and 7, students were asked to leave a comment by posting a question related to the preceding assignments on two classmates' blogs. Common types of questions which students left tended to be more of the cut-and-dry variety, asking about basic specifics. When posting questions about the "First Experience Learning English," common inquiries were, for example, where the school had been, what kind of songs they sang, or if they liked their teacher. When posting questions about the later "Plans to Use English on Campus" assignment, asking about what exactly they would do at the mentioned place on campus, or if they would continue to do these things in the future were common types of questions. There were few questions posted that delved into deeper, more thoughtful types of subject matter. A couple *why* and *how* questions leaned in that direction but these types were few and far between.

Sharing and collaboration. Of those who expressed the ideas of sharing and collaboration in their evaluations of these two commenting assignments, the most frequent idea was that of getting to know classmates and their opinions better. More specifically, students mentioned that it was good to get another student's feedback so they could know if their blogging entry had been understood. One student also mentioned he had related to one of his classmate's first experiences of learning English. He also stated that he learned from both partners' feedback as to the way he had written his post:

> I didn't know how I wrote and the others understood [my assignment 2] or not. Followers can checked my mistakes in my essay. We can read the followers' essay and share the happiness or sadness in the first time learning English. (Subject #10)

For the comments on "Plans to Use English on Campus," sharing and collaboration as being helpful were also common:

> I love reading comment, because I could know if my writing is good or bad, and then I can improve it…I also could learn more about my friends. (Subject #6)

Feelings about blogging for language learning. Reactions to these commenting assignments–both times–were mixed, with there being much fewer positive reactions to these two assignments than to other assignments. While some felt commenting had been useful for them, most others felt it had not been a valuable or enjoyable activity for various reasons such as that they felt uncomfortable commenting on a classmate's blog or receiving comments from classmates if they did not know them well, that it had not helped them practice English enough because there were only a few short comments, or that they had not felt the need to put effort into these tasks because it had not seemed necessary:

> Honestly, this assignment did not helped me a lot. I just needed to make a comment for anything, so I did not really read their essay. (Subject #3)

For these two assignments, my field note entries did not match the student evaluations well. Both were assessing the value of the assignment; however, while I had thought it to be a worthwhile student-centered undertaking in promoting, for one thing, deeper thought through community, my analysis that comments would be better thought out since they were published online did not, in retrospect, turn out to be true for a number of students, as seen by the example blog entry of Subject #3 quoted above. Also, I was under the often false impression that:

> [Students] could . . . realize the power of publishing in that assignments are not only seen by their teacher, but by anyone who visits their blog. This seems to cause a sense of pride in their work and more careful consideration of the ideas that they post . . ." (Researcher Field Notes)

Directed Blogging Assignment 4: Learning Styles

For assignment 4, students were asked to take two online surveys–one about learning styles and the other about multiple intelligences–in order to gain an understanding as to which ones were a fit for them. After completing the surveys, they then posted their results on their blogs so as to remember them and reflectively think about how well suited they thought these findings had been for them.

Feelings about blogging for language learning. Common positive evaluations of this assignment mentioned that the survey results could help them understand how to learn faster, more efficiently and more enjoyably. Some reported that they were surprised by the results, while others had predicted what the outcomes would be more or less. The idea of finding their strengths and weaknesses was also mentioned by a few:

> [These surveys] helped me to realize myself. I love to do these kinds of surveys. They let us know our strength and weakness. (Subject #4)

According to my field notes, most of the students discovered something completely new about their learning and said they were excited to put this information to use in the future.

Directed Blogging Assignment 5: Plans to Use English on Campus

Assignment 5 asked students to venture onto campus in order to come up with new ways to practice English in their surroundings and then explain their experiences and ideas on their blogs. They were to identify three places (and not the predictable library or language lab) and briefly describe how they could use or learn English there.

Sharing and collaboration. One positive aspect mentioned by a few students in their evaluations of this assignment was that of enjoying working with their classmates for learning since this was a group project:

> The group work can make more conmeucations from other people. . . [and] . . . helped me improve a lot English skill and know more things about how to use English at our school. (Subject #7)

The field notes mirrored this opinion by mentioning that a couple of students had posted that they benefited in their learning from the collaboration. Examples of this included getting more ideas about how to use English in new ways and finding ways to agree upon ideas through careful communication with group members in English.

Feelings about blogging for language learning. Both field notes and student blog posts alike confirmed that this was not a popular assignment. According to my field notes, it had been a bit frustrating to try to teach the value of getting out of the classroom in order to find ways to practice English. In my notes, I explained that:

> The students didn't really get the value of going around campus to find ways to use English (although it was of interest to me that, in general, they presented their assignments in a positive manner on their blogs). Maybe I need to spell out the goals better, or maybe it's just not a worthwhile assignment. (Researcher Field Notes)

Common student comments, such as the ones below, concurred with the field notes:

> This assignment did not help me . . . I firmly believe the best to learn English is to memorize . . . I am only willing to go to the [Learning Assistance Center] and the library. (Subject #2)

> [This assignment] did not help a lot in learning and practicing English. Because even we know that what place in the Campus can help us to improve our English, but honestly we won't really do that normally. (Subject #1)

Directed Blogging Assignment 6: Practice Essay

As a follow-up to the fifth blogging assignment, "Plans to Use English on Campus," students posted practice essays on the topic of making plans to practice English

at Pasadena City College for their next assignment. Although many students had often spoken of how they did not enjoy writing, several mentioned that they appreciated and gained from this assignment, knowing that it was a necessary part of their college education to learn the writing process, and that posting essays on their blogs had been a pleasant way to practice this skill:

> The best way to learn is practice. When I write the essay on my blogger, I need to think carefully about my ideas and how to explain each idea. I always need to think 'how' and 'why' when I do the explanation part. (Subject #2)

A few other students pointed out that not only had the online writing practice been good for them, but that the thinking about making plans to use English around campus in order to post them on their blogs had also been beneficial:

> It really needs some exercise to realize how to write in 3-paragraph essay, like practice to my blog. This topic also let me think about . . . how to use English efficiently. (Subject #9)

> This blog assignment helped me a lot because I could practice my writing skill to show on the internet. In addition, it was practical . . . it also made me think about [my plans to use English at PCC]. I would follow that in the future. (Subject #3)

It was of interest to me, as recorded in my field notes, that although both the previous assignment (#5) and this assignment (#6) had been on exactly the same topic—using English on campus—the students gave noticeably higher ratings to this essay writing blog assignment as opposed to the one where they were asked to describe leaving the classroom as a group in order to venture onto campus. I mentioned in my notes that I had felt that the reason was because they were still more content learning in the comfort and safety of the academic classroom setting and felt somewhat apprehensive of trying new, more non-traditional approaches to learning or using English in the reality of the outside world.

Directed Blogging Assignments 8 and 9: Daily English

For assignments number 8 and 9, students were asked to record a brief statement daily reporting on something they had done that day to use, practice, or learn English and to include one thing, big or small, that they planned on trying to do the next day. All postings were to be about activities outside of school only.

According to the field notes, my goal was to inspire and prompt incorporation of more English into their regular lives, or at least to help them realize how much or how little they were using the language when they were not in their ESL classes. Overall, this was a very successful and by far the most popular assignment completed in the semester as denoted in my field notes, student evaluations, and a later essay on the topic of useful blogging assignments.

Feelings about blogging for language learning. Many students indicated that they had really thought about how to involve English more in their lives as a result of these "Daily English" assignments:

> This helped me to figure out how do you learn English in your daily life. I try to find some ways in learning English in the beginning of everyday. (Subject #9)

One student wished that we had done this assignment throughout the entire semester instead of only during the two weeks that we did it, while another student spoke of the goal to continue the practice of posting this type of information each day beyond the end of the semester:

> I think I will keep writing every day even though this semester is end because I think it is a very good way to practice my English. (Subject #8)

Common types of ways to use English that were posted included going shopping, reading books or magazines, talking with relatives who are good at English, watching movies and listening to music, among others.

Directed Blogging Assignment 10: Blog Evaluations

For assignment 10, students were to write up a brief evaluation of each of the ten directed blogging assignments they had completed over the entire semester. They were instructed to explain whether each assignment had been helpful or not in thinking about their English learning processes and why or why not.

On the whole, as reported in my instructor field notes, the students liked reviewing and evaluating all they had done in the ESL 459 class for this assignment. It helped them to see the big picture–see all they had accomplished and how they had progressed over the semester. Students' blog entries reflected the same:

> There are many projects we have done, it is really amazing to see those previous works. That means you are progressing. These blog assignments make us improve our English in daily. (Subject #9)

> I can review all the things I wrote on my blog. I knew what I like and dislike. This is good for me to know what I like to do in learning English. (Subject #10)

Common themes mentioned within these blog assignment evaluations as being appreciated by some students over the semester were increased goal setting, improvements in writing, and more daily English use. These were all related to the metacognitive awareness aimed for in this study.

Posted Rewrites

I have always given my students the chance to rewrite their essay tests for possible additional points onto their grades. In the past, I had required them to type rewrites on paper to turn in, but this semester I had them post all four of their essay rewrites on their blogs. All 10 sample students chose to post the 4 essay rewrites.

Feelings about blogging for language learning. According to my field notes, in the past, I had felt that rewrites in general had not been very successful because it seemed

that students just wanted the points and realized that I was the only one who was going to see the rewritten essays. However, also as stated in my field notes:

> Posting rewrites for all to see [on blogs] is more effective than just typing them on paper for only the teacher to see. It leads to much more conscientious attempts to make their work better and more satisfaction and pride in the resulting improved essay which is then on display. (Researcher Field Notes)

Additionally, as reported in my field notes, many students mentioned that posting rewrites on their blogs had been highly helpful for them, not only because they had been concerned with trying to correct their essays' grammar and organization, etc., but also because they were publishing their rewrites for others to see and possibly comment on.

Lastly, in the students' final in-class essay on what about the semester's blogs had been helpful to their English studies, posting rewrites on blogs was the second most often mentioned assignment in terms of being useful for thinking about learning processes. Many mentioned how publishing their rewritten essays made them think carefully about fixing their mistakes and looking at what kinds of essay elements they needed to work on. My field notes also noted that lots of students had said that quite a few classmates proclaimed having their rewrites online where everyone could see motivated them to try harder on their writing processes to get it right so as to feel proud of what they published, or at least so as not to feel embarrassed.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the results of the textual analysis of directed blogs used with intermediate level community college ESL students in order to see if they became more metacognitively aware of their language learning processes. Data from both the student blogs and my instructor field notes were incorporated.

The major findings from the data, which are presented in this chapter, fell into the following groupings: those assignments dealing with writing with blogs, those related to non-traditional activities through blogs, and those pertaining to reporting and evaluating within blogs. Chapter 5 will provide a summation of these findings as related to the objective of the research. Additionally, conclusions and recommendations will be presented.

Chapter 5. Discussion

This research study has explored a problem that many adult ESL learners have– that is, the troubles they experience when trying to progress with their acquisition of English. This problem is often due to a lack of metacognitive awareness of the processes involved. Most non-native English speakers realize the importance of mastering the language in order to become successful in this country, but they are often not sure how to go about doing so. The research objective of this study was to look at the possible effects that directed blogging about thoughts on language learning experiences has on metacognitive awareness of language learning processes for intermediate community college ESL students.

Throughout the history of second language teaching and learning, there have been debates, which still continue today, over best practices for SLA, including the role of metacognition in education and language learning. These debates have helped frame this study. The literature on SLA reflects various methods that have been tried, promoted, and/or shunned, but it is clearly still an ongoing journey.

It is clear that technology plays a role in education today and that we must prepare second language students to get by, not only in the target language, but also in an online world and age (Ward, 2004). Blogging itself is a very recent phenomenon, and its use in SLA is still very new and relatively unexamined. While many studies have been done on the effects of blogging on such second language topics as communication, the writing process, collaboration, community, journaling, and motivation (Gardner, 2005; Godwin-Jones, 2003; Herring et al., 2004; Kennedy, 2003; Lenhart & Fox, 2006; Moon, 1999; Richardson, 2010; Trammell & Ferdig, 2004), there have been few studies on

metacognition in relation to blogging (Lee & Oxford, 2008), especially for ESL students and at the community college level.

The literature on metacognition in education in general, another ever-evolving area of frequent dispute, shows that the promotion of metacognitive strategies with second language learners can be quite useful and beneficial (Anderson, 2002; Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary, & Robbins, 1999; Kruger & Dunning, 1999; Rubin, 2001; Vandergrift, 2003; Wenden, 2002). There is, however, a gap in the knowledge base on the subject which this dissertation addresses: the use of technology, specifically personal blogs, and in this case–directed blogging tasks--to achieve more metacognitive awareness of language learning processes for individual second language students. This gap, along with limitations in the current literature on the use of blogs for students' awareness of second language learning, led me to investigate the issues at hand here.

A qualitative and exploratory research design that was guided by a hermeneutic phenomenological approach focusing on human lived experiences was used for this study. The primary data came from two pre-existing sources: the personal blogs of Chinese students enrolled in the researcher's Fall 2010 ESL classes and instructor field notes from those same classes. Seidel's (1998) Noticing-Collecting-Thinking coding model was used to analyze these data sources.

Key Findings

The purpose of this study was to look at the use of blogs to see if they could aid intermediate community college level ESL students in becoming more metacognitively aware of their second language learning processes. All in all, the results proved to be of interest because they provided evidence of the usefulness of directed blogging for thinking and learning about learning–in other words, metacognitive awareness. The

results of the study showed that most of the students involved had positive experiences with blogging during PCC's Fall semester of 2010. The findings are divided into three categories: writing with blogs, non-traditional activities through blogs, and reporting and evaluating within blogs.

Writing with blogs. The semester directed blogging assignments that dealt with writing included #1 ("Three Questions"), and #2 ("My First Experience Learning English"), both unstructured and reflective in nature; and #6 ("Practice Essay") and the four rewrite assignments, which were all structured, formal essays. All writing assignments were evaluated positively as useful for increasing metacognitive awareness of both writing processes and language learning processes by a noticeable majority of the students in the sample and found to be effective by me, the instructor, as well. Blackstone, Spiri, and Naganuma (2007) found that posting writing assignments on blogs motivated students to make improvements in both organization and content and to correct what they judged to be careless mistakes.

In the "Three Questions" assignment #1, where students pondered their use of English and why they were actually trying to learn it, blog entries indicated that many students were mostly using their native language, Chinese, outside of the classroom, primarily due to comfort and convenience. Students also reported frustration and stress with trying to learn English and that this, paired with the frequent use of their native tongue, led to their lack of progress with the language. For assignment #2, "My First Experience Learning English," many students described in their blogs having enjoyed reflecting on the past, whether with fond memories or not, and most stated the positive value of practicing the writing process with a free essay here. This concurs with many

researchers who have found the positive aspects of reflective writing, either online or off (Andrusyszyn & Davie, 1997; Blood, 2002; Godwin-Jones, 2003; Loke et al., 1997; Moon, 1999; Powazek, 2002; Robbin, 2001).

For the sixth assignment, the more structured "Practice Essay," the students were asked to write a formal practice essay on their blogs about their plans to use English on campus in the future. Their evaluations were mostly positive, at least about the necessity of practicing the writing process and how important that was to them as college students. This coincides with Blackstone et al.'s (2007) research on blogs for teaching and learning writing, and how students felt the need to advance their academic writing. My students also reported, however, that although they enjoyed coming up with new ideas about how to use English on campus, many felt they probably would not really put these ideas into actual use because of their discomfort in doing so.

Lastly, students evaluated the rewrite assignments in a positive light. These were structured, formal rewrites of class essay tests, and such academic-type blog entries seemed to appeal to the students. Some students also reported pride in publishing the rewrites on their blogs and how that had made them try harder to think through and edit the essays the best they could since the product would be displayed online. These findings fall in line with the research which says that writing online and its public nature offers immediate publishing for an instant virtual audience (Kennedy, 2003), and this can motivate students to put more effort into their work and take more personal responsibility for it (Blackstone, et al., 2007).

Participating in non-traditional activities through blogs. Both the commenting and "English on Campus" assignments may have felt non-traditional to

these students for different, but perhaps culturally related reasons. Briefly, Asian students are often used to more formal, teacher-centered classroom scenarios in their schooling, but these activities did not match that to which they feel accustomed.

The commenting assignments—quite student-centered in nature—asked that the students themselves, not the teacher, critique their classmates' blog entries and many students felt dissatisfaction with this task. This in some ways goes along with Blackstone et al.'s (2007) research finding that "a student who lacks confidence may feel fear at having others read his/her thoughts, or . . . may be embarrassed by the prospect of others seeing his/her mistakes" (p. 16). Very few of them reported gaining much metacognitive awareness of their language learning processes either by reading or by relating to their peers' entries.

For assignment #5, "English on Campus," students were to go out onto the college campus looking for ways and places they could use to improve their English, without the crutch of their teacher or textbooks and without the comfort of the classroom. After going out, they were to post about their experiences on their blogs. The reviews of this assignment were also negative in that most believed the activity to be a waste of time and that the classroom was really the only place to learn English.

Reporting and evaluating within blogs. The third grouping of assignments involved reporting on and the evaluation of certain assignments in order to increase metacognitive awareness of the processes involved in those tasks. Assignment #4 ("Learning Styles") required students to contemplate and post the results of two online learning styles surveys which they had taken as homework. Results from this assignment showed that many students appreciated the metacognitive awareness gained by seeing an

assessment about how they preferred to learn. Quite a few stated in their blogs that they would consider what they had found out about their learning styles in order to attempt to improve the ways they try to learn English.

Assignments #8 and #9 (both labeled "Daily English") required students to publish a daily report on their blogs about both one way they had used English outside of school that day and one way they planned to use it the next day. This assignment was the most popular of the semester with the majority of students. They affirmed that it had helped them realize how much or how little they were using English when not at school. They described enjoying the freedom and creativity they could employ in posting what they had done and what they intended to do. These two directed blogging assignments also served as a sort of e-portfolio where students could look over their achievements and/or downfalls in an organized fashion over a period of time. This concurs with the findings of Xie and Sharma's (2004) research, which said that blogs provided a useful space where reflection and remarks could be organized and where changes could be recorded and observed.

The final directed blogging assignment required students to evaluate their entire semester's blog work. The findings for this assignment #10, "Blog Evaluations," showed that posting these evaluations was quite useful in the eyes of both the students and the instructor. When learners reflected upon and evaluated the learning process involved in a task and whether or not they had achieved their expected outcomes, they gained more insight into the meaning of their learning (Zimmerman, 2002). For this assignment, students gave a brief evaluation of each directed blogging assignment throughout the semester and how they believed it had been helpful or not for their becoming

metacognitively aware of their English learning processes. Overall, these evaluations made it clear that this assignment had been valuable because it helped them to see the big picture regarding their progress over the semester. Some mentioned appreciating looking over the collection of accomplishments they had produced and that the chance to review all assignments and rewrites gave them insight into what they had learned about their own learning processes. Xie and Sharma (2004) also found in their research that as students read their own blogs, they could see their improvement (or lack thereof) and that the ability to see those changes allowed them to reflect on their learning more effectively.

Conclusions

As a result of this research, one conclusion made is that these students were more comfortable with using blogs in an academic fashion. One instance where this was evident was in their satisfaction with using blogs for writing or rewriting structured essays, which coincides with positive results on research involving blogging and the writing process (Eastment, 2005; Johnson, 2004; Jones, 2006; Read & Fisher, 2006). Therefore, it was seen that teaching with blogs helped to spice up academic tasks that could otherwise be viewed by students as tedious or mundane, such as essay writing. In agreement with such researchers as Kennedy (2003) and Blackstone et al. (2007), the ostensibly powerful act of publishing assignments to blogs seemed to motivate students to put forward more effort and to take more pride in and accountability for their work.

Conversely, a second conclusion from this research is that, despite what had been hoped, directed blogging did not appear to help students think outside of the box in a more non-traditional manner about their language acquisition processes or learning methods. Their dislike in general, for example, of the assignment where they were asked

to go out into their campus surroundings to think of ways they could use English and then describe their experiences on their blogs demonstrated a fear of leaving their safety nets. Many of the students in my classes seemed to be clinging to rather old-fashioned language learning habits and definitely preferred blogging on subjects or activities tied to the classroom setting–or at least to traditional studying in general–where they appeared to be more at ease. As stated earlier, many Asian students come from an education system where the students are more passive and classes are more teacher-centered. Also, learning is often tightly tied to the academic setting of a formal classroom. Thus, when faced with tasks that are not teacher-centered or classroom oriented, many Chinese students can feel culturally uncomfortable.

Lastly, and most directly related to the research objective of this study, I have concluded that directed blogging did help many of my students become more metacognitively aware of some of their second language learning processes, as seen by the fact that two of their most liked assignments, "Daily English" and "Learning Strategies Surveys," dealt directly with this topic of thought–that is, thinking about thinking and how that can affect one's language learning. However, as a result of reading their blog evaluations and perusing my own field notes, I believe that many of the sample students will not actually change their ways. Although the mere act of thinking about thinking (and not that of tangibly changing habits) was the sole focus of this study, this is of interest nonetheless. Many of these students looked at ESL and learning English in general as just another school subject to pass, like math or history, and not as a life skill which needs to be acquired.

Limitations

This study looked at the use of blogs by one group of intermediate community college ESL students who were of Chinese descent. The focus of this study was on the use of blogs to promote metacognitive awareness of various language learning processes. The study has some limitations that impact the external validity. Since it focused on individual experiences, other participants and their unique contexts could most certainly be different. Nevertheless, conclusions do have some applicability to other settings and to other faculty attempting to instruct college ESL students.

Specific limitations of this study were that all of the participants were: (a) of one nationality, (b) from the same classes, and (c) at a single community college in Pasadena, California. Similarly, all participants were intermediate level students. In addition, all participants were students enrolled in only my classes, so my teaching style and experience could also limit the ability to apply the lessons of this study to other ESL classes. Lastly, as second language learners, the students' comprehension levels could at times have interfered with their understanding of the instructions or goals of the assignments, which might have limited the value of their responses.

Suggestions for Faculty of Second Language Learners

All in all, as an instructor, I found the use of directed blogging to be quite advantageous to my students in their ESL classrooms, and I think it would be of value for other second language instructors to include it in their lesson plans as well. This style of blogging aided students in accomplishing metacognitive awareness of the ways they had used to learn English in the past, the modes they were using to learn it now, and the techniques they planned on using to learn it in the future.

Through the course of moving toward a metacognitive understanding of their English learning processes, students also gained from a few other byproducts of directed blogging. For one, it seemed to offer something for all areas of second language learning: speaking, listening, reading and writing. It especially helped them to appreciate the writing process more. Therefore, such guided activities as freewriting, doing practice essays, and posting rewrites on blogs are highly recommended for ESL teachers to use with their students in order to raise interest in these tasks, which are otherwise often viewed as unpleasant. Another enjoyable activity that is worth incorporating into the ESL classroom is that of students recording their own progress over the semester onto their blogs, as was done with the "Daily English" assignment, for example. My students took great satisfaction in being able to review their blog entries in chronological order so they could see their improvements and to realize in what direction they were heading.

Another suggestion worth considering for teachers is to potentially start by blogging on a number of types of activities until you find out which are best suited for the needs of your particular students. Then you can focus on that type or those types of assignments for richer results. By having done a variety of activities for this research study, I now know which ones I will likely hone in on for my future classes, so hopefully there will be less *hit and miss*.

Lastly, if you sense that your students may be lacking inspiration to improve their English, I found that blogging in general was quite a motivational tool for my students. They definitely looked forward to any time spent in the computer lab and to any class time that was devoted to working on our blogging assignments. Be aware, however, that part of adding blogging to your lessons is ensuring that all students have access to the

Internet. Not everyone has their own computers and/or Internet access at home and although every campus nowadays offers the Internet to their students, not everyone has the time to stay on campus to take advantage of this service. Also remember that some students might need training in basic computer skills, so have resources ready to remedy this. One solution is to pair students up, especially more competent with less competent ones, in order to help each other.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study has served as an exploration into the role that directed blogs can play in students' quest to become metacognitively aware of ways to improve their English learning processes. It has added to the existing knowledge base (Andrusyszyn & Davie, 1997; Blackstone et al., 2007; Blood, 2002; Godwin-Jones, 2003; Kennedy, 2003; Loke, et al., 1997; Moon, 1999; Powazek, 2002; Robbin, 2001) by adding another empirical study on educational blogging. Also, this study contributes to the appreciation of metacognition in relation to language learning (Anderson, 2002; Chamot et al., 1999; Graham, 1997; Kruger & Dunning, 1999; Oxford & Schramm, 2007; Rubin, 2001; Vandergrift, 2003; Wenden, 2002).

However, many more studies focused in both these areas are necessary in order to continue filling gaps in the literature. There are a few specific issues that are worthy of pursuit for future research on the use of educational blogging to aid metacognitive awareness in language learners.

First, it would be of interest to see further research done on the topic of blogs for language learning awareness, but research which is focused on one specific topic, such as how publishing to blogs affects the essay rewriting process, as opposed to the many different types of topics I attempted to cover in a single study. Also, variations in

methodology for this kind of research might include, first and foremost, broadening its scope in terms of looking at more ethnic groups and English proficiency levels. This broadening could also include looking at gender or different age groups, such as K-12, four-year university, or adult school students. In addition, it would be valuable to expand to a larger sized sample of participants, such as by using multiple teachers and their classes, in future studies like this. The value would be to somewhat decrease the number of limitations that go along with only including the students of one professor's classes. A result of doing this would be more variety in teaching styles, which could help make the findings more able to be generalized as well.

I would also recommend adding post-interviews with students–and possibly teachers–to gain more insight into the processes they go through in this sort of blogging study. This type of information could greatly supplement that which is gathered from the blogs and field notes. Another potentially useful approach to take with this kind of study would be to have objective, outside observers' views regarding what is going on in the classes with the blogging. This would act to lessen the bias that can occur when the researcher is also the instructor of the students who are being studied.

Blogging as a educational tool is still relatively new and is constantly developing into new and innovative forms with unique uses, so there will definitely be different and better ways to both use and research this tool for the language classroom since blogging and other social network tools are constantly evolving. I advise any future researcher to take full advantage of all the latest advances that each new step of social media and the methods that spring up to evaluate its usefulness bring.

Closing Comments

Clearly Web 2.0 tools such as blogging are here to stay. Therefore, both teachers and students alike should seriously consider including them in their teaching and learning experiences. As a comparatively new and potentially powerful technological tool, the use of blogs within second language learning still leaves plenty to be discovered. Understanding intermediate ESL students' lived experiences through blogging activities offers significant potential for students to metacognitively understand the personal language learning processes involved. Blogging takes little time and effort to get started and there appears to be something in it for everyone, so there is little reason not to explore the possibilities this influential tool offers to education.

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APPENDIX A

ESL 459 Consent Form: Fall Semester 2010

I understand and agree that it is ok for Ms. Johnson to use parts of my blog after the semester is finished for possible research and/or professional presentations on the effects of blogging for ESL students. I understand that my name will never be used in any way. I also understand that this is voluntary and that there is no penalty if I do not agree to sign this form.

I agree that Ms. Johnson may contact me to volunteer for a short interview after the semester is finished. Again, I understand that my name will never be used in any research or presentations.

I understand that all information from my blog and about me will be confidential and that I can contact Ms. Johnson at any time if I have questions.

Print Name (in English): _____

Signature (In English): _____

Telephone #: _____

Email Address: _____

Today's date: _____

APPENDIX B

IRB Approval Letter

Pepperdine University
Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board
6100 Center Drive, Los Angeles, California 90045
310-568-5600

May 6, 2011

Cathy Johnson

Protocol #: E0311D15
Project Title: *Blogging with Intermediate Community College ESL Students: Its Effects on Awareness of Language Acquisition Processes*

Dear Ms. Johnson:

Thank you for submitting your application, *Blogging with Intermediate Community College ESL Students: Its Effects on Awareness of Language Acquisition Processes,* for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB). The IRB appreciates the work you and your faculty advisor, Dr. Kay Davis, have done on the proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations (45 CFR 46 - http://www.nihtraining.com/ohsrsite/guidelines/45cfr46.html) that govern the protections of human subjects.

Specifically, section 45 CFR 46.101(b)(4) states:
(b) Unless otherwise required by Department or Agency heads, research activities in which the only involvement of human subjects will be in one or more of the following categories are exempt from this policy:

Category (4) of 45 CFR 46.101, Research, involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be

reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit a **Request for Modification Form** to the GPS IRB. Because your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the GPS IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite our best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the GPS IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete explanation of the event and your response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the GPS IRB and the appropriate form to be used to report this information can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* (see link to "policy material" at http://www.pepperdine.edu/irb/graduate/).

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all further communication or correspondence related to this approval. Should you have additional questions, please contact me. On behalf of the GPS IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Jean Kang, CIP
Manager, GPS IRB & Dissertation Support
Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education & Psychology
6100 Center Dr. 5th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90045

cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Associate Provost for Research & Assistant Dean of Research, Seaver College
Ms. Alexandra Roosa, Director Research and Sponsored Programs
Dr. Yuying Tsong, Interim Chair, Graduate and Professional Schools IRB
Ms. Jean Kang, Manager, Graduate and Professional Schools IRB
Dr. Kay Davis
Ms. Christie Dailo