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IMPLEMENTING GMAIL DOCS AND BLOGS FOR ENHANCING MOTIVATION
TOWARDS WRITING IN ENGLISH

ACTION RESEARCH REPORT

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Abstract.

This action research paper dealt with how to increase motivation towards writing in English through blogs and gmail docs in a private school in Medellín, Colombia. It was necessary to explore the concepts of *social interaction, motivation and reasons for writing* to understand how blogs and Gmail docs favored English writing improvement and increase in this group. A questionnaire to the whole group, interviews to two students, teacher`s journal entries and students` samples (blog) were used to collect data. These instruments were carried out at the beginning and at the end of the project. Conclusions were drawn concerning certain criteria and some strategies to actually increase motivation and willingness in this group of teenagers.

Key words for retrieval

Action research, motivation, English writing, gmail docs, blogs, social interaction, reasons for writing

Preface

This research project is the outcome of a six month action research required for graduation at the Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana in Antioquia, Colombia. Through this report, I present a proposal for implementing Gmail docs and blogs that increases and fosters motivation towards writing in English in a group of 11th grade students at a private school located in El Estadio, a neighborhood in Medellín, Colombia. The focus was to deepen my perspective related to how students can increase their motivation towards writing in English by using technological applications and how the teacher could approach contents and activities; taking into account learners´ awareness about the different uses and the applicability writing in English has in their present as well as in their future. The need to write application letters to universities, chat with

friends and people worldwide, write in the future business and have the possibility of getting better jobs and communicating with other people.

Through using gmail docs and blog I wanted to show students they can, actually, write in English and improve their motivation towards it, with the different abilities and skills they have acquired through their schooling life and experience. In this work, the reader will find the description of the context, the description of 11th C students, the problem, the research question, main and specific objectives, literature review, planning and development of actions, data analysis with its methodology, findings and interpretation of the data. Besides, at the end of the paper, there will appear the conclusions, a reflection, and references.

Context

It is a school located in El Estadio neighborhood, on the seventieth avenue. It is surrounded by the Atanasio Girardot sports complex, the Estadio metro station and a public high school. The institution belongs to the Society of Jesus (*Societa Iesu*,) which is well known to its worldwide presence in the educational field: schools, universities, and teaching principles. In Colombia, the school has been part of the society since 1885. The school location was moved in 1975 to its actual setting, and in 1994 the school started being coeducational. The core of the school philosophy, vision and mission is the Ignatius spiritual teaching and the Society of Jesus principles and teaching proposal that stand for being better to server better. This means: to form holistic human beings through a holistic formation in order to serve others in the historical moment they are living in.

Rights and obligations are presented and explained in the *manual de convivencia*. Students can easily understand the language used and its layout is clear and well presented. The institution is

divided into two different locations. *La sección infantil (Estadio neighborhood)* four blocks from the main section *sección mayores* (located on the seventieth avenue with forty-eight street). To be practical, it will be only described the *mayores* section since is the one, in which the students concerning this project study and remain. The school has a big library, five labs (one for English), three chapels, three auditoriums (150-200-1.200 people) two audiovisual rooms, five computer labs many sport fields and courts, classroom with TV, DVD and tape player for English classes, 4 rooms with video beam, an English resources library and a coliseum to practice sports.

Students belong to fourth, fifth and sixth socioeconomic statuses (strata) and they come basically from high social class neighborhoods of the city (Poblado, Laureles, Los Colores and El Estadio). The school principal is a Jesuits whose role is to administer the school. The syllabus for English courses in 11th grade is aimed at understanding, interpreting and producing oral and written argumentative texts in English, in diverse and concrete communicative situations historically and socially situated, promoting at the same time, the reflection on the foreign language linguistic system and standing and defending their opinion and viewpoints. Performance indicators are aimed at assessing students on their abilities: to compare, to ask questions, and to extract main and specific ideas, as they explore thematic through topics or contexts. The school has a preset method (Communicative approach) and tutors prepare learners for taking the ICFES and international tests.

The group

The group that was selected to carry out this research was 11th grade. It is composed by 15 students (4 girls and 11 boys). This group was chosen because it has been the one that has shown a very big compromise and engagement in the English classes through the months we have been working. Besides, it is the group in which most of the students were with the teacher researcher two years ago, so he knows them a little bit more since he had already shared with them for a whole year. Moreover, when they were asked to help with the research, all of them agreed and showed a great enthusiasm and willingness to participate. And the last aspect is that most of the students in this class have good English competence level and, actually, they like English and English classes.

Statement of the problem

After teaching writing classes, sharing with students, observing what they produced; and applying a survey and an informal interview; it was found some situations that the teacher researcher want to address in this research.

The first situation found out is learners always look for excuses in order not to write what they are asked for. For example they do not like carrying out book activities or writing reviews and they always ask if they can do oral activities since they prefer to speak than to write.

Second, students always want either games or oral activities because they say that writing in English is not easy and that if they travel abroad what they will need is to speak, not to write and to communicate orally since they are not going to write anything there.

Third, students do not have notebooks, they only write in other pieces of papers like napkins or recycling papers but not in notebooks since most of them do not even have one and they write wherever they can. They only write when they need a bonus provided by something

called the follow up, a score that almost always help them to get the score they need to pass the subject at the end of the term.

And fourth, students mention that writing in English is important but they do not have clear why and what they write for, since most of them just know they will have to write letters or e-mails (to communicate with others) in their future but they do not actually find English writing as something connected to their present lives, likes or needs but to external necessities or requirements either from the teacher or from the school. Besides, they do not write frequently in English and they say school topics are not related to their necessities or topics appealing, and they just write because they need to pass the subject, because the teacher asked them to practice the grammar and vocabulary learnt and not because they really like doing it or because they feel that while writing, they can express what they think or like. In fact, just two students mentioned in the recording and in the survey that they use English for expressing feelings and ideas.

Then, bearing in mind the situations mentioned above, the purpose of this research was to raise students` motivation towards writing in English, by inviting them to write more and to have real and meaningful reasons to write. When students use English to write using gmail docs and blogs that are technological applications in which they can share with others the information they write, their feelings and ideas and which are closer to their reality, context, likes and lives; learners write more, they show more willingness to write and they can share their compositions and papers with others, something they do not like or they do not usually do with other kind of texts they create.

The research question

It is because of the situations explained above that the following research question is stated: How can Eleventh graders' motivation towards English writing can be increased and fostered through *gmail* docs and blogs during the second semester of 2009?

Main Objectives:

1. To evaluate the impact of creating and sharing materials written by students on Internet to foster and to increase students' motivation towards English writing.

Specific Objectives:

1. To create and share information written by students on the Internet to foster and to increase students' motivation towards English writing
2. To implement activities like creating reviews, papers, and compositions via gmail docs and blogs.
3. To compare students' progress in English writing proficiency and motivation level after implementing gmail docs and blog.

Literature review

Social interaction

To start, I present the sociopsycholinguistic paradigm as a stance that includes both the social and individual psychological aspects of language learning which are essential to explain the main concepts that support this project. This is an approach with principles (Whitmore & Goodman, 1996) in which language is used as a vehicle for communication, reflection and education; learning is universal, because all people are able to “think symbolically” and they have a common need to communicate; the teacher becomes a means to support learners' ownership of

their own learning; curriculum is built from an integration of all diverse aspects of the curriculum and at the same time about themes and inquiries; and there are social principles that deal with teachers who take into account cooperative “learning communities” and who create an environment in which it can exist a “shared involvement”; with a language that should be brought from “the outside world” into the classroom by linking learners’ own life experiences with the one shared in the classroom.

Teachers of English as a foreign language may find in the *Principles for success* book written by Freeman and Freeman (1998) the path that will allow them to implement the principles described above and understand that learning proceeds from whole to part and it should engage students in social interaction; lessons should be learner centered and have meaning and purpose now, developing both oral and written language, supporting student’s first languages and cultures and showing faith in the learner to expand students’ potential. That is why I believe students learn English when they are in a safe context, in which they are motivated, they can also participate, take risks and make errors and mistakes without feeling embarrassed. Besides, learners should be in an environment in which they know why English is important for and how they will be able to use it in their present as well as in their future life. Finally, I have always considered that the four modes, speaking, listening, writing and reading are important to be developed as a whole. But considering students will take international test and ICFES test whose focuses are reading comprehension and writing, I think, these two modes should be fostered the most.

Motivation

For the purpose of this research, motivation is considered as students’ willingness, need and desire to participate in a specific classroom activity. The principal elements of this motivation are

optimism, enthusiasm, curiosity and interest. According to these authors, there are two kinds of motivation: Extrinsic and intrinsic. The former is when student perform tasks or activities in order to obtain rewards or prizes and the latter is when aspects such as curiosity, desire or challenge push learners to perform a task on their own (Harris 1991, and Lumsden 1994).

Burke, C and Short, K. (1991) states that when we deal with motivation, there are some elements that should go hand by hand and that are developed by working on some axes. The first is motivation, which deals with the curiosity and sociability elements, as it was mentioned previously; all these concepts are interrelated and they make students be invited to take risks, to reflect and to work with others, these, at the same time, have also some functions such us, reduce tension, increase reflexivity and make knowledge be more connected. These axes and concepts are closely related in a dual process in which, as I just mentioned, one should affect the other.

Reasons for writing

Writing is an activity less and less common among people every day. In fact, writing is becoming restricted to text messages and emails; texts which have some rules but that are not formal writing and texts that avoid punctuation, capitalization, and appropriate spelling most of the time. Besides, people are not sending letters to their friends any more through the post.

However, we do still write from time to time. When we write, occasionally we write love letters to friends and family, letters to the bank manager or application letters. Some of us write for other reasons too, often related to work such as work reports, project proposals, recommendations, project assessments or sets of instructions. And occasionally, some of us write for our own pleasure, when we write short stories, poems, novels or autobiographies.

Writing can not only be seen as a way to express feelings, to share information or to write letters with specific purposes like the ones mentioned above, but as a skill that can contribute to interact and learn with a variety of text that allow users to improve and practice other skills such as listening, reading and speaking.

For the reasons mentioned above, gmail docs and blogs can become a very useful way and vehicle to express and give students new forms and reasons to create, express, share and write their ideas, opinions and feelings on internet or through these applications so many other people can make comments and improve their products easily, fast and more dynamically .

Gmail docs

It is a gmail application in which its users can share papers, write papers together and correct papers from other users. Besides, members of this web mail can share other kind of files such as pictures, images and PowerPoint presentations.

Among its different applications, *gmail docs* allow its users to create, edit and upload papers to internet quickly; to access and edit papers from anywhere just by using an internet search engine, saving them safely on-line and sharing and updating papers on real time.

Gmail docs have been used before as a technological application for education, one of the best examples is the TLT group which is a community of people who has used technology for teaching and learning by the mean of explaining how to use Google docs and documents with educational purposes. They give lesson plans, activities, conferences, forums and prompts that can be used and useful for teachers via gmail and Google docs about a wide variety of topics and themes connected to education.

Gmail doc is a very useful application for this project since it allows me as a researcher to correct students` compositions in real time, send writings back and make learners correct them until get a good product without mistakes or coherence and cohesion problems.

Blogs

It can be defined as a type of web site or a private place on Internet where people can share and write their ideas, or according to Chris Brady, it is the place where you can “translate your thoughts into words” (Brady,2009). Blogs have some characteristics that make them different from other types of websites or on-line sites where people publish, share and upload both personal and social information.

Normal blogs have some special characteristics, among them we have: content is published in a chronological fashion, content is updated regularly, readers have the possibility to leave comments and other blog authors can interact via trackbacks and pingbacks.

Blogs have been used before as a technological tool for teaching and learning, one of the best examples is the DigEnt: Digital Entrepreneurship defined as “an individual who uses the Internet as a tool to create commercial opportunities, disseminate information, and collaborate with clients and partners.”(Wikipedia). This blog allows members to interact and to talk about similar interests, education and business in this case. That is the one of the main purpose of a blog since it is also defined as a *collaborative webs* (Horizon, 2008) which are applications that help people to share interests and ideas, work collaboratively and cooperatively in projects, get help and contact with other members, specialists or teachers to elaborate new projects, ideas or to get scholarships in real time, with the aim of getting a collective and communitarian progress.

Blogs and gmail docs are the basic tools in this research paper since they allow the sharing and publication of students` papers and students` writings on line. Besides, it allows those learners to give and receive opinions and to expand and improve their own writings via Internet.

Development of Actions

Although the development of actions was a process that lasted more than four months (from August to November), the process will be summarized in the appendix 1. This organizer helped the teacher-researcher to articulate the school 11th grade syllabus for English with this project. On it, it is presented the grammar, topics, the purpose and resources, and the activities of each one of the actions implemented in 11 C during the second semester of 2009.

The first drawback faced during the implementation of this research project was related to time, since many of the lessons planned were not carried out because of some extracurricular activities, students` responsibilities and teachers` meetings.

It was also used commenting on the blog and informal commenting in the lab, regular class sessions and teacher`s journal, that were a check process in which students gave their opinions about their classmates` compositions and in which they also replied directly or indirectly to some prompts. It was asked students to give opinions every time they entered the blog, but due to some technical problems, only some of them could actually do it and some students participated while others could not.

The first activity implemented related to vacations and modals was a composition that students started in class session and then they typed on the lab. The idea was to write about the best vacations they had ever had and most of them mentioned the excursion they had just had to

Dominican Republic with their classmates and friends. All compositions were checked, but I selected just four to be uploaded to the blog; mentioning at the same time that compositions would be selected from different people every time. After that, students made comments about this composition and suggestions to the writer.

The second activity was also a composition connected to inventions, passive voice and to a simple prompt: *if I won the lottery*. The teacher knew many of the students were going to write about houses, cars, and travels since the class had already had a discussion about the same topic, so It was asked to create a paper following that prompt, but this time the whole process was carried out at the lab from the ideas, the typing and the editing (made by me the teacher).

The third activity was also using gmail docs and was connected to professional future and personal future. This time, the methodology was changed and by studying more about the gmail doc application, I restricted the people who could type the opinion to one or maximum two students by time, this allowed me to have a better control of the activity since at the beginning of this exercise, some students were typing inappropriate or obscene vocabulary and it was becoming a chaos, but then with the restriction I had all the control over the activity and one by one students were giving their opinions, ideas, comments or examples to the text until I had a product.

Finally, and bearing in mind the moment of the year in which eleventh graders were, almost finishing the year, they did not want to work and the only idea in their minds was to finish high school, it was decided to implement a new way to deal with gmail docs. This time, I just opened a gmail doc file in the main computer and I asked student by student to add an idea to the writing;

some of them were asked to edit and some of them to correct punctuation. Then I checked the paper and uploaded it to the blog.

Data Analysis

For this action research, four different data gathering techniques were used: two multiple-choice open ended questionnaires, two interviews, journals, and students' artifacts (blog), with the aim of having students and teacher's perspective for approaching the information, at the same time, to triangulate it in order to find recurrent issues.

In the first questionnaire, 15 students participated and in the second 14 from 11th C. Some questions changed from the first to the second one, while other remained the same because the first aimed at exploring student's ideas about their perception and motivation to write in English while the second one was intended to confirm and to come to conclusions about the process, motivation, attitude, new ideas, reasons, and goals while writing in English by using gmail docs and blogs in the English class.

Two students were selected for participating in individual interview sessions in which one of them liked writing in English while the other one did not, according to what they had answered in the first questionnaire. I replicated the questions used in the first interview and add some others in order to deepen on students' ideas and to further explore learners' opinions and feelings. This second interview also allowed a better understanding of students' answers and ideas expressed in the second questionnaire that had been applied just some time before.

The class observations registered in the teacher's journal allowed me to have a systematic recording of what it was notorious on students' attitudes and behaviors while writing in English

and while using gmail docs and blogs; In my journal, I was able to reflect on the way the work with the applications was being perceived, students` attitude, as well as, mood and the adjustments needed in order to improve or to achieve what it has been proposed to motivate English writings in my students.

The blog was the final product of students` production, it was composed by several publications of members` writings plus many comments done to those publications; those comments and papers allowed me to have more information about students` attitudes, perception, improvement, and motivation towards the work, the writing in English, and the activities done. Here, all students participated in one way or another: some of them published their papers while some others made comments and the rest made part of the papers created by using gmail docs application.

After triangulating the information gathered, based on the constant comparison method, through all the instruments, and having found some patterns, the following categories came up.

<i>CATEGORY</i>	<i>DEFINITION</i>
<i>1) Motivation and Attitude towards writing in English.</i>	Reasons to write in English. Publishing as a way for students to express ideas and opinions. Creating more complex, longer and better structured compositions and papers without asking students to.
<i>2) Blogs and gmail:</i>	Using gmail docs and blogs. Requirements using these applications.
<i>3) Social interaction.</i>	By writing in English and using gmail docs and blogs, students improved their social interaction by correcting, editing, giving and adding ideas to other people`s papers.

	How team work was improved by using gmail docs.
3) Improvement	How the perception about writing in English changed , how motivation was increased , and to what extent there were an improvement in students' writing complexity and length .

Findings and interpretations of data were focused and organized taking into account the order and the information presented in the chart above

Findings and Interpretations

1. Attitude towards writing in English

An evident aspect that appeared in the second questionnaire, in the second interview, and in the blog was students found new reasons for writing in English and they were writing more than before. At the beginning of this project, students only wrote in English because it was the lingua franca or the most important language in the world (first questionnaire,) but in the second questionnaire, and after the implementation of these applications, learners mentioned they had new reasons to write in English such as: “Writing is interesting” and “I enjoy writing in English,” “it is very necessary in business and to communicate with others,” “I use it to understand books, internet,” and to study,” “for chatting and researching” and “to apply for a career or for a scholarship,” ” it is very important for getting a job,” “for my professional life” and “to improve my language”. In the second interview, students apprentices also stated they had found new reasons to write in English, for instance, “I can share my writings with other people and I can learn more;” “it is also very important for my career” and “I feel I am writing for my future.” And in the blog, students showed they were writing so other people could read their papers and make comments. They were not writing because the teacher asked, but, because they wanted other people to make comments and suggestions to their papers as it was recorded in the teacher`s

journal, in the same instrument, students showed they were writing more in English than before, since in the first questionnaire; most students wrote in Spanish while in the second one, all students wrote in English. Connected to the increase in the continuity and amount of papers or compositions students wrote, 29% of the students in the second questionnaire compared with the 21% in the first questionnaire mentioned they were writing between 3 to 5 times a week, it means, more than before, and in the interviews, both students pointed out they were writing more in English than before.

Connected to publishing as a way for students to express ideas and opinions, students answered, in the second questionnaire and after using gmail docs and blogs that: “I can express my ideas in a formal way,” “I want everybody understands my ideas,” “I can express my feelings,” “I can be a better person” and “I need a good writing level to publish in the most important magazines my investigations”. In the interviews, students affirmed: “I like when I make comments about things I liked;” “most of the times I expressed my feelings about the paper and other students` compositions;” “I have noticed students who have low level have liked the publications since they feel they are contributing for a final product” and “they assure they are increasing their motivation and attitudes towards writing.” In the blog, students gave their opinions towards their classmates` writings and compositions. For instance, “*Hey very nice poem but stop trying drugs and don't be that selfish,*” “yes Juli, it was amazing!,” “*I envy you Toro, what a great vacations, I wonder if I could do a trip like that,*” and in all texts published, the expression of opinions was evident, for example, in the text *if I won the lottery, the best story ever or reflection on education* (see blog). And in the teacher’s journal, I also wrote comments like: “Students who wrote the chosen articles felt very happy to see their compositions published,” “one student was extremely

happy to see his text there; even though he does not have a very good level and he even phone his brother to tell him about it.”

When creating more complex, longer, and better structured compositions and papers without asking students to, I want to start with the blog, since it is the most relevant support for showing the attitude towards writing that students were showing. Most of these papers were longer than 200 words while in the past students never wrote more than 100 word papers, as it is stated in the teacher’s journal. Besides, students were more concerned about the cohesion 33%, in the first questionnaire than in the second one 23%, and less worried about the grammar 22%, compared to the 27 % in the first questionnaire; in their compositions and, in both questionnaires, there were not concerned at all about compositions length 0%. As well, in the second questionnaire, only few students wrote they felt problems with vocabulary while writing in English, and both students stated in the interviews that they felt compositions were not meaningless or as short as they used to be before.

2) Blogs and gmail

The activity students liked the most was gmail docs with a 71% compared to 29% of the blog. Students affirmed in all the data collection instruments, they had preferred this application. For example, in the second questionnaire students mentioned: “Gmail docs is funnier than blogs,” “it is very interesting and I have learnt much,” “you can express your ideas and make corrections to write a better text;” “it is a new way to get ability” and “it lets us correct others and to improve own knowledge;” “I like it because it is interesting to make test with other people who have different ideas,” “they are more interactive than blogs because I see what others are writing and I can correct them” and “I learn new vocabulary”. In the interviews, students mentioned: “I love

using gmail docs because it is funny and dynamic,” “It is nice that everybody could support and help with opinions and papers and even correct;” and “I think that gmail doc is a fantastic application, a fantastic software since you can correct other people and everybody sees what you are writing” and since “everybody writes carefully when using gmail docs”. And in the teacher’s journal I wrote some ideas to confirm this preference towards Gmail doc application: “Students love using gmail docs,” “they seemed enthusiastic and responsible and all of them did excellent work,” “I have noticed students prefer gmail docs than blog because it is more interactive and funnier.” And in the blog, the longest article was written using gmail docs and it is very coherent, logical and students loved it. Likewise, the blog had some good points to be mentioned, for example, in the second questionnaire, some students mentioned: “I like the blog because I have learnt,” “I like the blog because I can learn the opinion from other people and because you can see interesting things”. In the interviews, students mentioned that “in blogs you can find much information and make comments to other people”. I designed the blog with many pictures in order to motivate students to make comments to other students` compositions. In my journal I wrote: “The blog has a nice design and students liked it,” “they like to make comments and to read their classmates articles.”

In order to use gmail docs and blog, it is necessary: Members of the blog have to create a BlogSpot account in order to make comments or to edit the blog; the creator of the blog has to set up the blog with very specific characteristics so just members of the blog could edit and make comments on it. To be a member of gmail docs, you have to create a gmail account and wait until the user or owner of the gmail docs send an invitation and then, everybody could be a member. As well, I could improve the work with all these applications by, first, adding images to the blog to make it more motivating, reducing the members, and their permission to publish, and adding a

survey; with gmail docs, allowing that just some students had access at the same time to the gmail docs while others could just observed the comments; something that allowed me to have a better and full control of the tool. All this information and requirements were recorded in the teacher`s journal.

3. Social Interaction

When I started this process, I did not consider this a category, but then in the second questionnaire, in the interviews, and in my journal it emerged as a clear outcome and result of writing in English by using the technological applications. In the second questionnaire, some students mentioned: “In gmail docs everybody participates,” “it is interesting to interact with others,” “it lets us know more about others;” in the blog, “I can learn the opinions from other people;” “writing in English helps me to express my ideas in a chat and social networks or to send e-mails to foreign countries.” As well, some students wrote, “now, I write in English to communicate with others on internet and in social networks I use it very much.” In the teacher`s journal it was expressed how gmail and blogs allowed a better social interaction since in gmail docs all students participated building up the different papers and having fun or even giving ideas to others about what they were suppose to write or how they could continue each article. In the interviews, students stated: the strongest point of gmail docs is its interactivity; you can interact with some friends in the school or to some people around the world and everybody sees what you are writing.

Social interaction and team work was also improved by using gmail docs and blogs as it was stated in the information gathered. For example, in the second questionnaire, students answered: “Gmail docs is a nice group work,” “it helps to improve team work,” “you can express your ideas

and make corrections to others in order to write a better text” and “it is a new way to get ability and it lets us correct others to improve own and their knowledge.” In the interviews, students stated that “by editing and correcting other students, they had improved their level,” “they had seen how people with low level were improving” and “how everybody wrote carefully when they were using gmail docs.” In the teacher’s journal, I also saw the improvement of team work since the paper students wrote were very good and all students felt they were participants and were contributing to a good final product. In all the papers built, the team work was present showing that it is possible to create a coherent, logical piece of writing made by 16 people with different ideas, opinions and conceptions about the topics proposed. Something important to mention is that every single student wrote at least one idea.

4. Improvement

There were many improvements with the application of gmail docs and blog but some of the more evident were: 100 % o students mentioned that writing was important for their lives in the second questionnaire compared to the 93% of students who mentioned the same in the first one and 93% of students answered that they were more motivated to write in English than before. Students thought that English was not as difficult as before, for example, in the first questionnaire 33% of students stated that writing in English was difficult while in the second one only 21% of students had that perception. The use of English on Internet also improved since in the first questionnaire 80% of students used it while in the second questionnaire 100% answered they were using it. Also compositions and papers were longer, as it was mentioned above, students compositions before this project were not longer than 100-120 words, but after the process, articles were 200 words and longer, as it was stated in the teacher’s journal. Another great

improvement was that students found new reasons and even excuses for writing in English and a higher continuity in the English writing process with more frequency on Internet and other places and more times a week, as they were stated above in the different data collection instruments. As well, students found many new audiences to direct their compositions to and a higher stimulus to create final products which were better, longer, and more complex compositions than before, as it was also affirmed above in the information collected. Team work (cooperation and interaction) was another aspect improved with the implementation of those technological applications as it was mentioned above too; and the desire, in general terms, for writing in English and using written English for many reasons, situations and moments were highly improved.

Conclusions

All the different activities, articles and papers created on the Internet allowed students to have a wider variety of reasons, purposes, context, places, and moments to write in English, tasks that increased their motivation towards English writing and towards creating longer, better, more complex and more meaningful compositions. Besides, students understood the necessity they had to write in English for their present and future and that the work with Gmail docs and blog was a good way to improve, to increase and to foster the skills they already had got for writing in English.

The activities created and implemented through these applications articulated the students` ideas, concerns, plans, and interests with the school syllabus and the reasons they had for writing in English; through these technological tools, there was a great improvement of students motivation and desire to write in English, to share ideas, to learn more about others, to expand their knowledge of written language, and to increase their writing proficiency and competent level.

Suggestions

As a plus of this project, I want to provide some guidelines that make the use of gmail docs and blog more productive for the rest of English teachers at this private high school. It could be done since these strategies allow teacher to use them with learners in different grades and language level, of course, taking into account group differences and making some arrangements (done by each teacher that tries to implement them). These guidelines will appear below in the **Appendix 2**

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Appendix 1

SCHOOL SYLLABUS		EVENTS FOR THE PROJECT	
		PURPOSES AND RESOURCES	ACTIVITIES
Grammar	Topics		
Modals	Travels	<p>Students wrote the story of their best vacations.</p> <p>Students retold the trip they had together as the 11th excursion.</p>	<p>Students, in the laboratory, typed the story of their best vacations; then I corrected and chose some of them to later upload them to the blog.</p> <p>After, other classmates could type and or give opinions about the stories published.</p>

	THE BEST STORY EVER	Computers Blogs Computers Gmail docs	Using gmail docs for the first time, the whole group of students and I created a crazy story and then I uploaded to the blog.
Passive voice	Inventions	Students looked for information about inventions and presented via oral and written. Paper and pen. Blog	Students wrote their opinion, in class, towards the prompt: If I won the lottery --they knew the best ones would be published--. Then, I chose some of them; I corrected and uploaded them to the blog. After, other classmates could type and/or give opinions about the stories published.
Future	Professional future	Students expressed via oral and written the way they perceive current education in Medellin and in Colombia and the way they see themselves as professionals in the near future. Computers Video Gmail docs	In the laboratory, based on a video about technology and education and using gmail docs application, the whole group of students and I as teacher created a three paragraph response about current education and the use of technology in daily life and education in our context. Then the writing was uploaded to the blog.
Conditionals	Global Issues	Students wrote their opinions and ideas about how to end up with the issues and problems that are affecting our planet. computers Gmail docs	In the laboratory, using gmail docs, students and teacher created a short writing about how to end up with the environmental problem the planet is experiencing. Then the writing was uploaded to the blog

Appendix 2

The strategies mentioned below for making gmail docs and blog more productive should be used in any single activity. They should take into account the way students write, the reasons they have for writing, their level and that they have to be articulated with the school syllabus as well. These strategies are:

- ✓ Ask students to create a gmail and a BlogSpot account.
- ✓ Look for a fast internet connection.
- ✓ You have to be the owner of the blog and the gmail doc browse; students are only members, collaborators and followers of the applications.
- ✓ Blogs have to be colourful and beautiful designed to call the attention from the students.

- ✓ Upload images, surveys and files to the blog so students can be more motivated to enter and can also make comments about it.
- ✓ Look for the configuration of gmail doc, set it up allowing that just some students could check or add ideas to the articles at the same time; the rest can be just observers while it is their turn. In the blog, just allow members to make comments.
- ✓ Always look for interesting and appealing topics for students to write, specially, topics connected to their present lives and future.
- ✓ At the beginning, pay more attention to the coherence and cohesion of the text than its grammar, it could be checked later or before uploading the articles.
- ✓ Always reward students` work and give credits to the creators when it would be the case in the blog or in the gmail doc.