

# A comparative analysis of face to face instruction vs. telegram mobile instruction in terms of narrative writing

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*The emergence of computer technology in English language teaching has paved the way for teachers' application of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) and its advantages in teaching. This study aimed to compare the effectiveness of the face to face instruction with Telegram mobile instruction. Based on a TOEFL test, 60 English foreign language learners with intermediate level of language proficiency were selected and randomly assigned to the class attendees group, which received the intended treatment program in a classroom environment, and the Telegram group which received the treatment in a virtual environment. Two pre-tests and post-tests were administered before and after the treatment. Related non-parametric statistics were applied, and the results were encouraging for the Telegram group. Moreover, the findings of the study might support the claim that innovative instructional approaches and Telegram mobile-learning/teaching specifically could provide new opportunities for the teaching-learning process and that teaching/learning through new mobile-based methods, Telegram m-learning/teaching in particular, helped Iranian students to perform better on narrative writing tasks. The result of this study would be valuable for methodologists, teachers, and learners.*

**Keywords:** Comparative Analysis, English narrative essays, Face to face instruction (FFI), Labov's model, Telegram mobile instruction (TMI).

## 1. Introduction

It is well known that human life is dependent highly on information technology and **143**

that technology has affected various aspects of today's human society. Considering this fact, it is vital to benefit from the advantage of the modern technological facilities to aid English language teaching and learning (ELT/ELL).

One term which is frequently used today is mobile learning (m-learning). Winters (2006) presents a definition for m-learning as any form of learning mediated by a mobile device. Also, according to Kukulska-Hulme and Shield (2008), m-learning happens when the learner is not at a fixed and predetermined location or occurs when the learner benefits from the learning opportunities provided by mobile technologies. It has been proven that m-learning is effective in enhancing language skills, as well (Sorayyaei Azar & Nasiri, 2014).

Another term, which has gained recent popularity is mobile assisted language learning (MALL) which has provided a teaching/learning tool for second/foreign language (SL/FL) education. Based on Valarmathi (2011), MALL is "an approach to language learning that is assisted or enhanced through the use of a handheld mobile device" (p. 2). "Mall is gaining popularity everywhere, especially in Europe, the United States and parts of East Asia that are of English medium" (Mastura, Nor, & Posiah, 2012). Moreover, MALL is rapidly developed among learners because of its ubiquitous availability without educators' physical presence and this can lead them to be more autonomous (Samsiah & Azidah, 2013).

Messenger apps are instances of communicative modern media, which have facilitated communication among people. It seems advantageous to use these modern facilities for instructional purposes as they can economize time, money, and energy. This study attempts to address this issue to suggest new economical instructional approaches to improving the teaching-learning process.

Regarding the above-mentioned related areas, a new opportunity which has been provided by technology is Telegram messenger software which is Internet-based and can be used for educational purposes. With respect to the extent use of this software among people in general, and students in particular, it can be an important issue to examine whether this application can be employed as an instructional tool to improve language teaching/learning. In order to be able to make decision in this regard, its possible efficacy must be researched. The current study attempts to shed some light on this newly emerged issue.

## 2. Literature review

Regarding the investigation of the effectiveness of face to face instruction (FFI) and Telegram mobile instruction (TMI) and in order to situate the present study in the research area, some of the previous and related studies will be discussed. Concerning learners' preparedness for and their usage pattern of m-learning, Stockwell's (2008) study showed that 36.1% of the learners intended to use the mobile phones for completing the activities and 63.9% did not. Demouy and Kukulska-Hulme (2010) found that the learners in an undergraduate distance-learning French language program at The Open University (UK) adapted to the use of iPods and MP3 players quickly.

Another line of inquiry was undertaken by Begum (2011) who found that despite some challenges, cell phones have great potential as instructional tools. The researcher investigated the effect of applying SMSs on the appropriate use of prepositions in an EFL university classroom of Bangladesh. Likewise, Oberg and Daniels (2013) attempted to find how a student-centered mobile learning instructional method affects language acquisition within a Japanese university and found that the participants who received materials with the use of

received the materials in a group-oriented classroom environment. Chen (2013) reported that Chinese university students' attitudes toward the usability, effectiveness and satisfaction of tablet computers were quite positive which shows the willingness of learners to use mobile technologies for language learning. Considering narrative writing which is the focus of this study, Abdel-Hack and Helwa (2014) revealed that applying digital storytelling and Weblogs instruction are effective approaches to enhancing EFL narrative writing skills.

Ahmad Zaki and Yunus (2015) concluded that m-learning has high potential in teaching ESL academic writing. Almost in line with Stockwell (2008), Dashtestani (2015) stated that Iranian EFL students were generally positive about m-learning. Of direct relevance to the present study is Lai's (2016) research, which explained that there was a significant correlation between an individual's chat frequency and vocabulary gain within the mobile group.

The review of the related literature demonstrates that the issue of using messenger apps in general and Telegram messenger app in particular as instructional tools has escaped the research attention of scholars especially in the area of learning and teaching English. Therefore, this study aimed at investigating teaching and learning writing within a virtual synchronous communicative environment provided through the Telegram messenger app in comparison with a traditional classroom. To put it more clearly, the current study compared face to face instruction (FFI) and Telegram mobile instruction (TMI) within a writing classroom with particular attention to narrative writing.

Narration can be defined simply as the telling of a story. Whenever someone recounts an event or tells a story, s/he is using narration. According to Labov (1972), narrative "is a method of recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which actually occurred" (pp.359-360). However, the definition of narrative is not clear-cut and scholars have not come to a consensus on its meaning (Gulich & Quasthoff, 1985).

Labov and Waletzky (1967) proposed a structure of personal narrative consisting of three elements: Orientation, complication, and evaluation. Later, Labov (2013) refined this structure and added additional elements to it: abstract, resolution, and coda. As he argues, a fully formed narrative involves these six elements. Table 1 presents the six elements along with their definitions.

Table 1. The six elements proposed by Labov (2013) for a personal narrative

Abstract	This stage prepares the readers for the text that follows.
Orientation	This stage provides preliminary information about participants in the story (who), the setting in space (where) and time (when) and the actions that were under way before the onset of complications (what).
Complication	This stage involves a problem culminating in a crisis.
Evaluation	It establishes the point of the narrative.
Resolution	In this stage the protagonist manages to resolve the crisis.
Coda	It often creates a sense of finality by its circular return to the starting point of the narrative.

Drawing on existing literature, the current research attempts to answer the following question:

- ✧ Is TMI more effective than the FFI in terms of teaching Iranian university students how to write narrative essays?

### 3. Method

The Research design used in the present study was a quasi-experimental one with pre-test, treatment, and post-test. The treatment program was presented to the participants during three sessions, each lasted for 90 minutes and the post-test was administered one week after the last session of the treatment program.

#### 3.1 Participants

By administering TOEFL PBT, and based on the mean (M) score and standard deviation (SD) of the tests, 60 male and female Iranian University EFL students who were majoring in English Translation and were at an intermediate level of English language proficiency were selected as the participants of the current study. The M and SD were 24.18 out of 50 and 3.20 respectively. The participants' age ranged from 18 to 22 years old with the average age of 20. However, age and sex were not taken into account as variables. All participants were native speakers of Persian and had studied English for approximately six years at school and around two years at university. The participants had not any previous narrative writing experience in English or Persian, but in addition to some common courses (namely, Grammar, Conversation, Reading, Study Skills, and Linguistics), they had already passed a Paragraph Writing course (a two-credit course) in previous semesters.

#### 3.2 Instrumentation.

**3.2.1 TOEFL PBT.** An extracted version of the TOEFL test available on <http://elibrary.bsu.az/kitalar/1095.pdf> was applied in order to ensure the homogeneity of the participants of the study in terms of their general language proficiency.

**3.2.2 Administering pre- and post-essay writing.** Since the subjects' homogeneity might influence performance on the two writing tasks, different topics for the two writing tasks were used (Uysal, 2008). It should be mentioned that it was tried to choose topics in which participants had experience and with which most people could identify.

**3.2.3 Model texts.** Four model texts were presented to the participants. These narrative texts were taught, emphasizing on Labov's (2013) model of narrative structure, by the researchers to the participants. Four narrative texts were selected by searching the Internet. To fit the research purpose, the following rules were taken into account when choosing the model texts. First, the narrative structure of the texts had to be similar, straightforward, and easily identifiable, according to Labov's model. Second, the four texts had to have all of Labov's elements and needed to be approximately the same lengths.

#### 3.3 Treatment

The treatment program was the instruction of Labov's (2013) model. This model involves  
146 six stages: *abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution, and coda*. After selecting

the participants, the researcher seated them randomly in two groups: the FFI group and the TMI group. Each of these two groups received the treatment separately, which is discussed below. It should be mentioned that the FFI group received the intended treatment in the physical classroom context while the other group, i.e. the TMI group, received it in a virtual context, which has been provided through Telegram messenger app. It should be mentioned that this app is a synchronous communication app and the participants were able to express themselves through text messages, voice and stickers within the virtual class.

Regarding the FFI group, on the first day of instructional sessions, the participants were explicitly taught about the six stages of the aforementioned model. Each stage, its function, and some lexical forms, which could be used in each stage were explained. In the other two sessions, the participants were provided with four model texts. The six stages of Labov's (2013) model had been specified in different colors for easy recognition. The participants read these samples with the help of their teacher and a discussion was conducted on the stages. It should be mentioned that these texts had been given to the participants before the next session was started in order for students to read them and specify their narrative moves and then discuss them in the following session in the class. All sessions were held from 23rd November to 7th December, 2016.

In order to start the other group, first a Telegram group was created, and then the participants joined the group. They were asked to be online on November 17 at 6 pm. In this virtual meeting, the rules and restrictions of the use of Telegram group were set, and the times of instructional sessions were determined. For instance, the learners in this group were told to check their phones on a special date and time. Moreover, they were told not to send messages that were irrelevant to the stream of the discussion and that like their peers in the FFI group, they should speak and write in English. They were also advised against interrupting each other or the teacher. Like the FFI group, the TMI participants were familiarized explicitly with Labov's (2013) model of narrative structure in the first instructional session and then the model texts were given to them for discussion in the following sessions. All sessions were scheduled and took place from 21st November to 5th December, 2016.

As an example of the teaching process, the participants of the two groups were asked to determine the move of *resolution* in the first model text. They determined the following statement as the *resolution*: "*Finally, I decided that I was going to fight back. Then, I screamed really loud and attacked him*". After that, this move and why this statement is the *resolution* move of the intended narrative text were discussed.

### 3.4 Scoring procedure

To determine inter-rater reliability, one of the researchers worked with another rater who was an EFL instructor. Since he was unfamiliar with the design and purpose of the study, the researcher familiarized him with Labov's (2013) model by showing him definitions and specific examples from the model texts.

The researcher and the colleague rater scored the essays independently as well as analytically in terms of the six moves of Labov's (2013) model. It should be mentioned that other criteria like grammatical structures were not taken into consideration during scoring the essays. Theoretically, it seemed that analytic scoring was more relevant to the current study since it could evaluate the narrative elements based on Labov's model. Moreover, according to Zimmaro (2004), many experts prefer analytic scoring over holistic scales for a number of reasons. Firstly, it gives more reliable diagnostic information about learners' writing

ability. Secondly, it is especially useful for those EFL learners who show unstable standards across different features of writing. Thirdly, the training of raters on using analytic scoring scales is easier than that on using holistic methods. Finally, in the analytic scoring method, relevant and direct feedback can be given to writers because of the clarity of analytic scoring steps. All assigned scores were treated statistically to find if there were any significant differences between the participants of the two groups based on their average analytic scores.

### 3.5 Data analysis

Several statistical procedures were employed in analyzing the data. In order to determine the inter-rater reliability, the Pearson correlation coefficient was used separately for pre-tests and post-tests. Moreover, to find if there were any statistically significant difference between the written essays, and since the data did not follow the normality assumption, the Mann Whitney U Test was applied between-group comparisons. All these statistical procedures were conducted through SPSS, version 16.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Calculating inter-rater reliabilities

Because of the possibility of scoring essays subjectively, the consistency in assigned scores (scorer reliability) between raters was examined. The computed Pearson correlation coefficients for scoring the English essays showed a high positive relationship between the scores rated by both raters. The computed Pearson correlation coefficients for scoring the English pre-narrative essays of the FFI group and the TMI one were .96 and .92 respectively. Likewise, these values for scoring the English post-narrative essays of the FFI group and TMI one were .97 and .89 respectively.

### 4.2 Comparing the participants' English narrative essays in terms of the Labov's model of narrative structure

In order to examine the research question, the participants' English pre- and post-narrative essays written in terms of the Labov's model of narrative structure were compared.

**4.2.1 Within-group comparisons of the narrative essays.** Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the pre- and post-tests of the FFI group and the TMI one.

As Table 2 shows, the mean scores of the two groups have been improved in the post-tests. This means that both groups improved their narrative writing performance. In order to determine whether this improvement was statistically significant or not, Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test were used (Table 3).

Table 3 shows that there is not a significant difference between pre- and post-narrative essays of the FFI group as the probability level of pre- and post-tests is .06 which is larger than the significance level of .05. However, the probability level of the pre- and post-tests of the TMI group is .00, which is less than the significance level of .05 and this shows that there is a significant difference between the pre- and post-narrative essays of the TMI group.

Table 2. The analysis of English pre- and post-tests of the FFI group and the TMI group, descriptive statistics

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. deviation</b>
FFI group			
pre-tests	30	10.21	4.79
post-tests	30	12.63	4.34
TMI group			
pre-tests	30	9.95	3.58
post-tests	30	15.14	3.64

Table 3. The analysis of English pre- and post-tests of the FFI group and the TMI group, Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test

<b>Pre- and post-tests</b>	
FFI group	
Z	-1.842
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.066
TMI group	
Z	-3.921
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

Note. The alpha level for the analysis was set at 0.05 for test of significance.

**4.2.2 Between-group comparisons of the narrative essays.** Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics of the pre- and post-tests of the FFI group and the TMI one.

Table 4. The analysis of the pre- and post-tests of the FFI group and the TMI group, descriptive statistics

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. deviation</b>
Pre-tests			
FFI group	30	10.21	4.79
TMI group	30	9.95	3.58
Post-tests			
FFI group	30	12.63	4.34
TMI group	30	15.14	3.64

Table 4 shows that the participants of the FFI group have had a better performance on the pre-test than their peers in the TMI group. However, this was not the case about post-test, and the performance of the participants of the TMI group has been better on the post-test. Mann-Whitney U Test was used to determine whether these differences in the performances of the participants of the two groups were statistically significant or not (Table 5).

Table 5. The analysis of pre- and post-tests of the FFI group and the TMI group, Mann-Whitney U Test

<b>FFI group – TMI group</b>	<b>Pre-tests</b>
Mann-Whitney U	426.000
Wilcoxon W	891.000
Z	-.355
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.722
	<b>Post-tests</b>
Mann-Whitney U	310.000
Wilcoxon W	775.000
Z	-2.075
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.038

Note. The alpha level for the analysis was set at .05 for test of significance.

According to Table 5, while there is a significant difference between post-narrative essays of the FFI group and the TMI one ( $p < .05$ ), the pre-tests of the two groups are not statistically different ( $p > .05$ ).

## 5. Discussion

The goal of this study was to compare two instructional methods: FFI and TMI, and that which group of learners (Telegram group or class attendees group) performed better on writing narratives. The study made within-group and between-group comparisons of FL essays in terms of rhetorical narrative elements.

Comparing English pre- and post-narrative essays of the participants of the class attendees group, it was revealed that there was not a significant difference between these two sets of narrative essays. Moreover, it can be concluded that there had not been any improvement on the participants' English narrative writing performance in the class attendees group. In other words, the treatment program did not have any considerable influence on the participants' English narrative writing performance in the class attendees group.

Comparing English pre- and post-narrative essays of the participants of Telegram group, it was revealed that there was a significant difference between these two sets of narrative essays. The analysis showed that the participants performed better on writing post-narrative essays, and this can be understood from the greater mean score of the post-test. Therefore, it can be concluded that there was an improvement on the subjects' English narrative writing performance in the Telegram group. In addition, it can be understood that unlike the traditional instructional approach, i.e. FFI, the new instructional one, i.e. TMI, was an effective method. Two samples of narrative writing of one of the participants of the TMI group in pre- and post-tests have been presented below.

### Pre-test

The best day of life

As you know, we are able to divide our personal life into two different parts. These two



parts are the events that surely happen in our life and remains lots of memories which are both pleasant and unpleasant (*abstract*).

One of the best days of my life was the time that I (*orientation*) was able to give my last presentation in an English class (*orientation*) without pausing during the presentation.

As I know myself, one of my biggest weaknesses in my life was giving my English presentations in an unsuccessful way (*complication*). I can mention several reasons for this problem, but one of the main reasons was low level of my self-confidence (*complication*). To put it more simply, I had a Phobia, fear of speaking in front of large number of people (*complication*).

### Post-test

The first day at university

What important days do you remember in your life? (*abstract*)

I (*orientation*) remember my first day at university (*orientation*) very clearly. I felt excited and happy (*evaluation*). At the same time, I was very nervous (*evaluation*) because I did not know anyone (*complication*). However, my first day at university was memorable (*evaluation*).

At first, I was confused and did not know where I had to go (*complication*). Then I asked a person (*orientation*) where freshmen were going to meet. That person was very polite and showed me the way (*resolution*).

Later, we began our class. Our teacher (*orientation*) talked for a while and then we introduced ourselves. Although we came from different provinces, we had a lot in common. We spent the rest of the day together until it was time to leave.

Anyway, I think it is natural that we feel nervous at the first day of university, but difficult experiences often have happy ending. That is why I say my first day at university was memorable (*evaluation & coda*).

Comparing the narrative essays, it was revealed that the subjects of the two groups had approximately similar performances on writing pre-English narrative essays. Comparing the English post-narrative essays, the results showed that there was a significant difference between these two sets of narrative essays of the class attendees group and the Telegram group in such a way that the Telegram group showed a better performance on narrative writing. As mentioned before, using mobile devices, instruction through Telegram messenger software was an effective instructional approach and helped the participants of the Telegram group to improve their narrative writing to some extent.

Our findings correlate somewhat with those of Begum (2011), who argued that cell phones had great potential as instructional tools. The findings are also in agreement with Sorayyaei Azar and Nasiri (2014), whose study revealed the effectiveness of using cell-phone based audiobooks for Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension. According to Keegan (2003), "the mixing of distance learning with mobile telephony to produce m-learning will provide the future of learning" (p. 167). The results of the present study and also Chen's (2013) study, which reported the effectiveness of using tablets for language learning, support this statement and its importance.

Exploring the two classroom discourses, it seems that the better performance of the Telegram group participants can be attributed to the increased interaction observed between the teacher and the students and among students themselves. One prominent

feature, which was observable in the Telegram group, was that most of the interactions were in the form of initiation- response- feedback/evaluation (IRF/E) and some extended forms of it. Unlike the participants of the class attendees group, the participants of the Telegram group initiated interaction with the teacher and other students much more readily and presented more responses and feedbacks. Moreover, the mentioned classroom structure was extended through providing some prompts by the teacher, which were mostly in the form of questions. To put it another way, the instructor used questions in the third move of the IRF/E structure and extended interaction and the intended discourse structure. In sum, the observed better performance can be attributed to the close classroom atmosphere created through IRF/E structure which made students feel more relaxed and did not consider their teacher as authority source and be active during teaching-learning process.

## 6. Conclusion

Regarding the comparison of English pre- and post-narrative essays, the results are encouraging for the TMI group. The subjects of the TMI group scored higher overall on their English final written products.

The results of the study justify the claim that the new instructional methods and Telegram m-learning/teaching specifically can provide new opportunities for the teaching-learning process and that Iranian students who are taught through new mobile-based methods, explicitly Telegram m-learning/teaching, might perform better on narrative writing. The study also shows more interaction in the form of IRF patterns of classroom discourse and more willingness to communicate within the virtual environment provided through the Telegram messenger app, which can be crucial factors in improving the stream of teaching-learning and are major issues which deserve attention in future studies.

The study concludes by suggesting that teachers might benefit from utilizing new mobile-based and internet-based methods and specifically the one introduced in this study, i.e. Telegram m-learning/teaching, to develop their students' language learning or writing skills in general and narrative writing ability in particular. Moreover, this form of learning and teaching can save time, money, and energy for learners and teachers.

### 6.1. Implications of the study

This study may have some implications. It may help to determine appropriate approaches to writing instruction for Iranian L2 writers. In other words, the result of this study could be valuable for methodologists, teachers, and learners.

Considering the approach to presenting the treatment, the results showed that the students who received the treatment through the Telegram mobile method outperformed their peers who received it through the traditional method, i.e. classroom instruction. This can be an encouraging factor for teachers, learners, and anyone concerned with education to benefit more from new opportunities provided by technology in the teaching-learning process.

This study suggests that teaching and learning English within online contexts specifically in the virtual environment provided by the Telegram messenger app, can easily and effectively be incorporated into educational programs. Teachers and learners can also benefit from this form of teaching and learning outside of formal instructional environments

and hours. Learners especially can learn English through this instructional approach at any time and everywhere.

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## Appendix A

### *The first model text*

When I was nine years old, I was the smallest student in my elementary school class. Also, I was the only Japanese-American child, so I looked very different from other students. So, other students noticed me more often and they would make mean comments about the shape of my eyes.

The largest boy in the class was a bully, and he often made fun of me. One day, he took my school lunch, and told me that he would beat me up if I told the teacher or my parents. Then, he started to take my lunch every day for about four months.

One day, I had forgotten my lunch. Then, the bully said he was going to beat me up, and I was afraid of him because he was so big. Next, he threw me on the ground and started punching me.

He continued to hit me and to my surprise, his punches didn't hurt so much. Finally, I decided that I was going to fight back. Then, I screamed really loud, and attacked him.

The bully was very surprised and quickly became afraid. Then, he suddenly gave up fighting. After that, the other children started to make fun of him, and started to call him bad names.

The bully started crying and ran home. I won the fight! I was happy, but I was also angry because I gave him my lunch for four months.

Then, I told the other kids that they should leave him alone. I said that they were being bullies like him and that it was wrong. Afterwards, I became very popular in class and made many friends. And then I lived happily ever after.

## Appendix B

### *The second model text*

154 Some people when came a cross painful experience they wish everyone in the face of the Earth get the same level of pain while other people wish all other people to avoid such

pain. I am going to recount my most painful lesson I experienced and I wish other people to avoid my experience.

I have to say it was a time in my life where there was no supervision. I was about 15 years old. My mom worked all day in her business. I was at home. Our neighborhood had a lot of robberies and my house got hit. I was in it when it happened. He knocked on my door. I lived in Costa Rica at the time, on a farm like town. Behind me was a coffee field, next to me was a duck farm. It wasn't poor, it was just simple.

When he knocked, I opened and he asked for a glass of water. I said sure, I let him in. I didn't think anything bad. Next thing you know he had my knife around my neck. And it was about a 20 min struggle. I was bound and tied, left for dead (I don't say sarcastically).

In a moment of clarity, I thought to hold my breath and black out. The predictor thought I was dead. He then took stuff and left. I waited for about 30 mins (maybe) and I untied myself ran out the back door and hide in the coffee field until I heard some neighbors knocking at my door and I heard them shouting out for me.

I was in the hospital for 2 weeks with a concussion, a broken nose, black eyes, 2 stab wounds and cuts throughout my body. I recovered, I saw the predictor again at least twice.

At age 20 I got clinical help in Oregon. If it wasn't for the program at OSHU, I wouldn't be able to live a stable and happy life today.

I love life, I think this experience made me appreciate life in a different way. And I'm thankful it happened because I have a high level of compassion for people and victims.

## Appendix C

### *The third model text*

I was in gym class when my teacher suggested we go outside and play softball.

As we made our way out to the field, my stomach slowly turned into a giant knot of fear. Softball is just not my game. I have a knack for always getting hit in the head by the ball. It doesn't matter where I'm standing. The ball just seems to find me.

My teammates gave me a glove and put me way out in left field. I didn't complain. I just wanted to make sure I knew when gym class ended so I wouldn't be left behind. Nothing happened the first three innings. Well, things happened but not in my little part of the softball field.

I started daydreaming. The next thing I knew, I heard the sound of a ball whizzing through the air. I put up my glove to protect my head, and an amazing thing happened. I caught the ball in my glove! Not only did I catch the ball, but I helped my team to win. I was a hero to my classmates for the rest of the day.

I learned something. I may not always see the flying balls that come my way, but I can always take a chance and try to catch one.

## Appendix D

### *The fourth model text*

Learning something new can be a scary experience. One of the hardest things I've ever had to do was learn how to swim. I was always afraid of the water, but I decided that swimming was an important skill that I should learn. I also thought it would be good exercise and help

me to become physically stronger. What I didn't realize was that learning to swim would also make me a more confident person.

New situations always make me a bit nervous, and my first swimming lesson was no exception. After I changed into my bathing suit in the locker room, I stood timidly by the side of the pool waiting for the teacher and other students to show up. After a couple of minutes the teacher came over. She smiled and introduced herself, and two more students joined us. Although they were both older than me, they didn't seem to be embarrassed about not knowing how to swim. I began to feel more at ease.

We got into the pool, and the teacher had us put on brightly colored water wings to help us stay afloat. One of the other students, May, had already taken the beginning class once before, so she took a kickboard and went splashing off by herself. The other student, Jerry, and I were told to hold on to the side of the pool and shown how to kick for the breast-stroke. One by one, the teacher had us hold on to a kickboard while she pulled it through the water and we kicked. Pretty soon Jerry was off doing this by himself, traveling at a fast clip across the short end of the pool.

Things were not quite that easy for me, but the teacher was very patient. After a few more weeks, when I seemed to have caught on with my legs, she taught me the arm strokes. Now I had two things to concentrate on, my arms and my legs. I felt hopelessly uncoordinated. Sooner than imagined, however, things began to feel "right" and I was able to swim. It was a wonderful feeling - like flying, maybe - to be able to shoot across the water.

Learning to swim was not easy for me, but in the end my persistence paid off. Not only did I learn how to swim and to conquer my fear of the water, but I also learned something about learning. Now when I am faced with a new situation I am not so nervous. I may feel uncomfortable to begin with, but I know that as I practice being in that situation and as my skills get better, I will feel more and more comfortable. It is a wonderful, free feeling when you achieve a goal you have set for yourself.