BLENDED LEARNING FOR THE TEACHING OF STORY WRITING: AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

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Candidate of **Master of Philosophy** at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis **Blended Learning for The Teaching of Story Writing: an Experimental Study** submitted by me in partial fulfilment of MPhil degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

I also understand that if evidence of plagiarism is found in my thesis/dissertation at any stage, even after the award of a degree, the work may be cancelled and the degree revoked.

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ABSTRACT

Thesis Title: Blended Learning for the Teaching of Story Writing: an Experimental Study

Blended learning is immensely used in higher education for the last few decades. The study investigates the effectiveness of using blended learning and online collaborative learning tools for the teaching of story writing. The objectives of the study are; to find the effectiveness of blended learning for the teaching of story writing ,the experience and response of the learners who were taught through blended learning and the ways in which collaborative blended learning environment is helpful in teaching story writing skills. An experimental study was conducted on 50 undergraduate learners distributed into control and experimental group; 25 participants in each group. Experimental group was taught through blended learning and control group was taught through face to face teaching methods. The treatment to the experimental group was given in the form of both face to face classroom sessions and online sessions. Online sessions included the use of Wattpad, Wikispacesclassroom, Story bird and Penzu. The findings of the study revealed that the experimental group showed significant difference in the scores ($\alpha = 0.05$) of Pre-Test and Post-Test and also in the scores compared to the Post-Test scores of control group. Test scores, classroom observations and interviews revealed the effectiveness of collaborative blended learning environment for the teaching of story writing. The findings of the study revealed that interactivity, variety in the ways of teaching, collaboration among students for writing stories, exposure and interaction with the communities of practice, feedback of instructor and peers were the factors responsible for the high scores and performance of learners in experimental group. Therefore based on the findings the study recommends the use of blended learning approach for the teaching of story writing skill.

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I dedicate this thesis to hazarat **MUHAMMAD (PEACE BE UPON HIM)**(the paramount of knowledge for the whole Universe), **MY BELOVED MOTHER** (For the undaunted motivation to the pursuit of knowledge, I inherited from her unfathomable love for knowledge), **MY ESTEEMED FATHER** (my role model in all spheres of life, and few special people in my life.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The field of information technology had tremendously grown in the last few decades, which in turn has influenced every sphere of life. These advancements have brought changes not only in our lives, workplace, lifestyles, and media of communication, but have also influenced our approaches towards doing things. The traditional ways of doing work have been modified due to the facilitations provided by technology. The field of education has also been influenced by technology and new trends in emerging technology have modified our traditional ways of teaching and learning both in theory and practice which in turn have influenced all aspects and fields of teaching and learning including both teachers and learners.

The role of two learning environments; online and face to face classroom learning as two separate distinctive learning setting have been modified. Both physical classroom learning environments and virtual environments have been blended for providing quality education to learners especially in higher education. Classroom teaching and virtual teaching environments have been criticized separately for their lacks and deficiencies. Face to face classroom settings have been criticized for their lack of innovative learning methods and lack of utilization of online resources for learning purposes and virtual learning has been criticized for excluding the physical interaction of teacher and learners and even learners with learners. Therefore, blended learning offers a flexible approach that blends all the components of both online settings and traditional classroom learning settings.

Blended learning has been adopted by several disciplines for enhancing teaching learning process and to achieve their learning goals. It has also been used for language

teaching including: vocabulary, speaking skills, writing skills, collaborative writing and interactive learning.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The current modern technological era demands efficient use of information communication technology due to its deep penetration into every sphere of life. Survival in this competitive world is only possible if we keep ourselves current and updated with the modern trends and demands. Many countries of the world are developing and modifying their education systems through the use of modern technologies and methods of learning in order to keep pace with the advancement and achieve satisfactory learning outcomes. Pertaining to the current demands of the society from the educational systems it has become the need of time to modify our curriculum and teaching practices. Therefore, it is very important to bring some improvements in our andragogical practices and expose our learners to current trends and ways of teaching so that we will be able to fulfil the demands and requirements of today's world.

Blended learning approach to teaching advocates the use of technology in online learning environment along with the traditional learning setting (face to face classroom settings) and utilization of online tools and resources to maximize learning as it turns the setting from teacher centered class into student centered class. This helps in improving the quality of teaching-learning process, by engaging both face to face and online learning settings.

The present study aims at conducting an experimental study on the use of blended learning for the teaching of story writing skills to undergraduate EFL learners. Blended learning; online collaborative learning environment and face to face classroom sessions together can help EFL learners in improving and polishing their story writing skills as the collaborative online tools available to teachers and learners can facilitate the teaching learning process. The reading and writing practices made on story writing forums and sharing that with the same community of practice can motivate the learners in improving their skills and also the corrective feedback provided by peers on the style, diction, grammar and language within the same community and by the teacher can bring improvements in their story writing skills. Collaborative blended learning environments including both on the net and off net resources of knowledge provide opportunities for interactive learning ,creativity and novelty during the construction of knowledge through

interaction and sharing of experiences .Hence utilizing blended learning environments including both face to face classroom settings and online setting can enhance the story writing abilities of learners.

1.3 Research Questions

Q1. What is the performance of the learners who participated in the Collaborative blended learning environment?

Q2. What are the experiences and responses of learners who participated in a collaborative blended learning environment for the learning of story writing skills?

Q3.Which factors are effective in improving story writing skills in the collaborative blended learning environment?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The present study aims;

1. To analyse the performance of learners after the use of the collaborative blended learning environment and online learning tools for improving story writing skills.
2. To examine the experience and responses of learners who are taught in collaborative blended learning environment.
3. To identify the factors that are helpful in improving story writing skills in a collaborative blended learning environment.

1.5 Research Hypotheses

The Hypotheses which are tested in the present study are:

Main Hypothesis:

H0: There is no significant improvement in the story writing skills of learners who were taught in a collaborative blended learning environment as compared to the learners who are taught through face to face classroom settings.

H1: There is significant improvement in the story writing skills of learners who were taught in a collaborative blended learning environment as compared to the learners who were taught through face to face classroom settings.

Subsidiary Hypotheses:

H0: There is no significant difference in the scores of Pre Test of both experimental group and the control group.

H2: There is a significant difference in the scores of Pre Test of both experimental group and the control group.

H0: There is no significant difference in the post test scores of both experimental and control group.

H3: There is a significant difference in the scores of Post Test of both experimental group and the control group.

H0: There is no significant difference in the post test scores of the experimental group.

H4: There is a significant difference in the post test scores of the experimental group.

1.6 Rationale of the Study

The researcher is an English Language Teacher at University level and has been teaching English to English language learners at undergraduate and masters level for the last five years. During her teaching experience she noticed that a lot of emphasis has been on the development of communication skills; reading, writing and in writing major emphasis was on formal academic writing, speaking, listening. Classroom based andragogical methods were used for the teaching of these skills to learners. Less attention was paid to the creative writing, although it was taught as a course but it lacked creativity in ideas, exposure to reading creative texts as reading and writing skills go side by side and style of writing as they were not provided with an environment which could enhance their creative writing skills.

Although technology is used in the form of ICT tools for teaching language skills in classrooms but it can also be used for dynamic purposes and in a number of ways for learning purposes. Our educational systems are based on either face to face andragogical practices inside classrooms or online teaching outside classrooms. Both settings have its own strengths and weaknesses, but a blend of both can effectively be used for enhancing the language skills and resulting in effective construction of the knowledge. Therefore, this study is an attempt to find out the effectiveness of using a module which could blend both

face to face pedagogical teaching and online methods of teaching. Numerous studies have revealed the effectiveness of using blended learning for the teaching of language. A lot of work has already been done on the use of blended learning for the teaching of writing skills, but less work is done in enhancing the creativity of learners by using a blended learning approach. The emphasis of the current study is on the use of collaborative blended learning for the teaching of story writing skills to the learners in a way which could develop the interest and motivation of learners and enhance their story writing skills by exposing the learner to different styles of story writing using online resources and through the interaction of learners with the same community of practice.

1.7 Delimitations

The present study has following delimitations;

1. The present study is restricted to the story writing genre of creative writing.
2. The research site for the experimental study is Karakorum International
3. University Gilgit Baltistan.
4. The research participants selected for the present study are undergraduate English language learners.
5. The experimental study was conducted for Four weeks.
6. The cut off date for the present study is 19th January 2017 as the synopsis was approved on this date, therefore the researcher will not be responsible for any work published after this date.

1.8 Operational Definitions

- **Blended learning**

Blended learning is an approach towards teaching and learning process which advocates the blend of physical classroom learning setting with online learning settings in order to enhance and the learning experience of learners and also to extend the knowledge of learners by providing unlimited learning resources keeping the learning styles of the learners into considerations. Hence blended learning utilizes several modes deliveries of knowledge.

Blended learning according to Osguthorpe and Graham's (2003) definition is:

> Blended learning combines face-to-face with distance delivery systems… but it's more than showing a page from a website on the classroom screen… those who use blended learning environments are trying to maximize the benefits of both face-to-face and online methods.

- **Traditional Learning**

Classroom learning based on face to face classroom methods of teaching and teacher centered learning.

Collaborative Blended Learning Environment

Collaborative blended learning environment is a kind of learning environment where learners use both synchronous and asynchronous learning modes and learners collaborate, interact and learn with each other. Collaborative learning is a pedagogical approach to education that is based on the idea of group learning in problem solving and learners are involved in discussions, team works and create their own intellectual learning framework but that is done in collaboration with others. Learners get the opportunity to interact with peers, argue, debate, exchange ideas, hence they actively engage in all activities. (Srinivas, 2011).

- **Online Collaborative Learning Tools**

Wattpad

Wattpad is an online story writers' forum where learners have the opportunity to be a part of the online story writing community, read the published stories of different writers around the world, and familiarize themselves with different genres of story.

Penzu

It is an online free personal journal which is used for both formal and informal writings.

Wikispacesclassroom

Wikispacesclassroom is used as online classroom and a discussion forum where all the students are registered and enrolled with their email Id's. This forum is used for sharing reading material in any format audio, video, text etc, assignments, tasks, projects and discussing queries related to tasks and assessments.

Story Bird

Story Bird is an online story writing website where the learners register themselves and complete stories based on images presented on the website. This provides learners with opportunities and ideas for writing stories based on different images provided to them online.

1.9 Structure of Thesis

The present thesis dissertation is comprised of five major chapters that give an in depth understanding of this research.

Chapter One is an introduction to the current research. It deals with introducing the background of the study, problem statement, research questions that are addressed in the study, objectives to be achieved, and hypotheses of the study, the significance of this study and how this study is different from previous studies on blended learning. In short, it gives a brief overview of the whole study.

Chapter Two gives an overview, review and discussion of the existing literature, both theoretical and practical, in the area of blended learning. It critically analyses the existing studies related to this area of research which helped in identification of gaps in the existing literature.

Chapter Three discusses in detail the theoretical and methodological frameworks used in the current study, the type of research design used, the population of study, the data collection and analysis tools used in the study and finally it discusses the ethical consideration of the study.

Chapter Four gives a detailed discussion and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data of the current study, the findings and a summary of the study.

Chapter Five gives a detailed critical discussion on the findings of the study, conclusion, recommendations and suggestions and finally the contribution of the research.

1.10 Significance of the Study

Writing is one of the productive skills which has greatly been emphasized in language learning. An error free piece of writing shows the command of the learner on the structure and grammar of the language. This is one of the aspects of becoming proficient in writing skills. Another aspect of becoming proficient in writing skills is jotting down

ones ideas and knowledge in such an effective way that it has an impact and effect on the mind of the reader. It is a mode of expressing one's ideas, knowledge and thoughts, hence making ones thinking visible to others. Creative writing is taught at all levels of education, but is mostly taught in the traditional ways of face to face teaching. Story writing is one of the genres of creative writing.

The present study is significant as it blends the face to face teaching of story writing with online teaching in a collaborative online learning environment utilizing the digital resources available through online blogs, websites, software, writing journals and online story writing practice sessions.

The present study is significant for English language teachers to organize an effective teaching and learning environment for the teaching of creating writing to learners. It has a contribution to the existing literature as it has identified the ways in which learners can be taught story writing skills which can motivate and develop the interest of the learners towards the writing stories In addition, it has provided ways of utilizing online resources and multimedia for developing collaborative learning environments which could foster the writing skills of the learners.

The study is significant as it reveals the effects and outcomes of using blended learning and online collaborative tools for the teaching of story writing Therefore, this study is helpful for teachers in improving their teaching methodologies and modifying their andragogical skills utilizing numerous online resources related to creative writing.

The study will be helpful for the learners as it highlights the ways in which online resources can be used for writing stories. Online exposure and interaction with other international writers and publishing their stories on different blogs can help learners in becoming familiar with the styles and ways of expressions of different writers which in turn can help the learners in improving their rhetorical skills of story writing. Learners can write in their personal journals like Penzu, writing forums, and keep a record of it, they can also share it with the instructor and other peers and can also be saved there. Wikispacesclassroom is an online classroom dashboard which gives learners exposure to online learning environments and timeless interactions of learners with their instructor and peer whenever they find feasible and important. Watt pad, as a story writers' forum, helps to interact with the online story writers' community where millions of writers are writing stories in different genres of story from all over the world. This exposure will enhance their knowledge and skills of

story writing. Such communities of practice can be accessed for the teaching of other skills as well. Therefore, this study is highly significant for learners as it reveals how learners can do self-regulated learning according to their interest, pace of learning and the feasibility of time as it provides access to learning beyond time and space. The use of online forums for like Wikispacesclassroom, Wattpad can effectively be utilized by both teachers and students for improving creative writing skills of language learners and for the students to explore new media and forums for sharing their creativity and getting feedback on their skills from writers of the same community of practice.

This study is significant for language trainers who can train the language teachers on using different modules and models of blended learning for the teaching of creative writing to learners. It is also significant for syllabus designers who can modify and organize their syllabus according to the current demands of teaching and learning, emphasizing on the designing of curricula which can include teaching methodologies, content, activities, task and assessments based on the blended learning scenarios. This will also be helpful in making our teaching more learner-centered than teacher-centered. The present study is significant as it has addressed the gap in existing literature on blended learning related to the teaching of story writing in a blended learning environment.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1Blended Learning

Technology has deeply penetrated in almost every sphere of life. Use of technology has become so common that our lives do not seem easy without their use. Due to the abundant dependency on these technology tools and gadgets the expectations of the society have increased to a greater extent and wants its members to keep updated, current and advanced by developing skills and expertise in utilizing these technological tools. To keep pace with the demands on the current trends, there is pressure on educational institutions to equip their students, according to the changing demands and expectations of the society. Therefore, educational approaches have also got influence of the new technological proliferation and have resulted in a need to utilize available online internet resources and communication technology in order to provide interactive pedagogical experiences to the learners. Face to face teaching and online teaching at two different poles play their part in the field of education on the other hand, if both types of learning settings are well blended it can satisfy the educational demands of the day.

Blended learning is an approach that blends face to face teaching and online teaching for the enhancement of classroom experience and the extension of learning by using multiple modes of information communication technology. It is the blend of both virtual and physical resources for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the teaching learning process. According to Procter (2003) “blended learning is combining of effective modes of delivery, educational methodologies, techniques and strategies according to the needs and demands of the learners”. This andragogical approach combines socialization

opportunities available in classroom settings and the active learning resources and opportunities available in online settings.

The emergence of blended learning is traced back to the beginning of 2000.However, there is a rapid change in increased inclination in researches on the use of blended learning approaches within last ten years. Introduction of new technological tools have reduced the gap between classroom teaching and distance learning and virtual learning which in turn has modified the learning environments, andragogical approaches, educational resources and tools, for making teaching learning enhanced and effective.

Blended learning approach takes the strengths of both type of learning settings; face to face classroom learning and online learning into consideration. It involves different ways and levels of blending for making the learning process effective.

2.2 Levels of Blend

Blended learning not only concerns with the mixing of methods rather it involves blending at different levels; theoretical level, methodical level, media of communication. It involves combining different theories of learning like behaviorism, cognitivism, constructivism, connectionism etc. It can be the blend of pedagogical methods like autonomous learning, instructor based, leaning, online learning, face to face learning, experiential learning, and cooperative learning. It can also involve the use of different media of face to face interaction and online interaction through videos, blogs, using technology gadgets, books etc. The first study on blended learning began in 2000 and the use of blended learning term appeared first in the study conducted by Cooney et.al.(2000) they worked on blended activities of play and work in a pre-kindergarten school.

Osguthorpe and Graham's (2003) define blended learning as an approach that combines two learning systems not merely showing a web page in the classroom. It involves utilization of two learning environments to its fullest to maximize learning by taking benefits from both online and face to face methods of teaching of both face-to-face and online methods. Blended learning involves careful integration of both online and face to face learning experiences. This integration should be made in a way that the strengths of both learning environments can create a unique fruitful learning experience which could

maximize the learning and achieve the intended learning outcomes is the thoughtful fusion of face to face and online learning experiences. Garrison & Vaghn (2012, p.5).

The current study blends the following theories for addressing the problem area of the present study. The theories of social constructionism; for collaborative learning, developing and interacting in communities of practice , cognitivism; utilizing technology and online resources as cognitive tool, multimedia learning and connectionism; utilizing online networks as a resource for interconnected learning. According to the theoretical framework of the present study the story writing skills of the learners can be enhanced when a learner is taught in such an environment in which he/she can interact with each other, learn from others' experiences and share his own, all learners participate in a collaborative and technologically enriched learning environment and interact with same communities of practice. Therefore blended learning can be made at different levels for making learning more enhanced and effective.

Different researchers and practitioners have presented different blended learning models which can be suitable according to different learning and contextual settings.

2.3 Blended Learning Models

The effectiveness of blended learning on learning practices at different levels of education has been presented by in four models of blended learning. Morgan (2007)

Model 1: In this model face to face classroom session is the major mode of interaction. Online resources are used in order to support and facilitate the classroom face to face session. Face to face session is given major emphasis as compare to the online session

Model 2: There is a balance between the online sessions and face to face classroom sessions. Material is provided online and discussion is made of those materials which leads to increased participation of the learner. It includes pre and post class sessions.

Model 3: Material through online resources is provided to the learners and knowledge is incorporated in the follow up session in the classroom. Personal Learning objectives are given priority in both online and face to face sessions by bringing theory into practice. Learners are given assignments and team discussion tasks.

Model 4: In this model learning outcomes is given attention and priority through individual and group projects in both online and classroom settings.

Based on the learning needs, contextual settings, feasibility and availability of the resources any of the above mentioned models can be used for the teaching of story writing skills to learners. The researchers used Model**4**in the present study as the major focus of the study was the learning outcome in terms of the performance of the learners. Hence benefit from both learning settings have been taken for improvement in the story writing skills of the learners.

Based on the type of learning activities, learners, types of instructions three types of blending models have been suggested by Osguthorpe and Graham (2003).

First model suggests that same students are provided activities from both face to face and online learning environment, hence providing maximum benefit to learners from both learning environments.

Second model involves interaction of students in face to face learning settings with the students of online learning settings.

Third model, students learning in the face-to-face classroom settings can get benefit from the instructors teaching in an online learning environment.

The researchers has used two blended learning models one from Morgan (2007) **Model 4** and **The First Model** from Osguthorpe and Graham (2003) in order to meet the objectives of the present in the study.as the major objective of the study is to use a blended learning environment which could take maximum benefit from the two different types of learning setting; face to face and online and improve the performance of the learners. Hence the blended model followed in this study focuses on learning out comes by maximum utilization of both types of learning environments.

Apart from blending at different levels and the models which can be implemented for creating a blended learning setting one needs to keep into consideration the dimensions in which blended learning take place.

2.4 Dimensions of Blended Learning

Singh (2003), mentions different dimensions in which blending can take place; face to face and online, collaborative and self-regulated, set content based and unlimited content, instructor based and student based. Technology has changed the perspectives of learning and provided innumerable options, therefore all these, modes can be utilized for organizing, supporting and enhancing the learning outcomes of different programs.

In order to make blended learning successful and effective blended learning course, must be designed and implemented after making an analysis of the learning objectives, that's what kind of objectives will be achieved, the difficulties and challenges, the evaluation procedures, the skills to be taught, level of the knowledge, that is to be delivered, course content to be taught, the infrastructure required and the most important a suitable blended learning model. The model selected for the blended learning needs to be monitored, evaluated and measured throughout the sessions so that its effectiveness can be tracked.

There are some guide lines provided by Al-Huneidi (2012) related to the blending Learning framework which serves as a guide to plan model. It includes; identification of the learning objectives, designing the learning plans the strategies to be implied and the plan for execution and evaluation, measurement of the learners' skills, the infrastructure required for implementation, blended learning model suitable according to the course and learning objectives and finally the evaluation and follow up sessions.

2.5 Ingredients of Blended Learning

Based on the learning theories cognitivism, performance and constructivism five ingredients have been identified as the major blended learning ingredients. (Carman, 2005)

The five major ingredients in blended Learning process are;

1. **Live Events:** It is live virtual classroom session, which is Synchronous and is based on the instructor-led learning events and all the participants of the session participate at the same time.

2. **Online Content:** Learners are given the opportunity to experience online learning sessions by providing them space and time for learning at their own pace and feasibility. It may include completing tasks individually or team work.

3. **Collaboration:** Brown (1998) states: “Humans are social beings, and, as posited by the constructivist theory of learning, they develop new understandings and knowledge through their social interactions with a community of others. “It involves collaborative learning environment where learners interact with each other’s, share their experiences and knowledge through discussions, online chats, emails etc. There can be two types of collaborations peer to peer and peer to instructor.

4. **Assessment:** Different modes of assessments are used which, check out the learners' state of knowledge, usually there are two kinds of assessments pre assessments and post assessments. They are made before and after the delivery of knowledge in order to check what the learners already knew and what they have got after the delivery of the knowledge.

5. **Reference Materials:** Reference material in the form of pdf, ppt, images, videos, and text are shared with the learners related to the topics of discussion which serves as an extension of the knowledge already shared with the learners.

The blend learning environment used in the present study incorporates all these major ingredients of components for the effective learning of story writing skills. Both the synchronous learning has been blended with the asynchronous learning settings. The live events took place in online sessions in the form of discussions with peers, instructors and story writers' community around the globe. Similarly, learning is not restricted to space, where it is taught, and time, when it is taught, a learner can learn at any time whenever he wants to and at his own pace. The limitation of his physical presence in the classroom settings and completing the learning tasks within a limited classroom timings has been removed by providing the learner with the opportunity and flexibility of time and space. Collaboration is a distinguishing feature of blended learning as the learners are not learning individually rather he/she is teaching in collaboration along with his/her peers which makes learning easy, interesting and multi-dimensional. In addition, assessments can be made in a systematic way through online resources and a lot of reference material can also be given in the form of video and video, pdf, web links and other online reference material.

2.6Blended Learning Dimensions of the Present Study

In order to meet the demands and needs of learners in any learning environment, one needs to have a blend of approaches, strategies, modes of delivery, variety of content in order to satisfy learners according to their learning styles. Blended learning programs serve the same purpose of incorporating a variety of learning tools, models, and content such as classroom based activities and content, online experiences, and material hence addressing both synchronous and asynchronous procedures and ways of learning. There can be so many dimensions in which effective blended learning process can take place.

The dimensions of blended learning used in the present study are based on modes of delivery, technology, andragogy and chronology. Delivery modes included the face to face mode of delivery like providing the material, content and instruction in classroom settings and online modes, utilizing internet resources for instruction, supplementary material and content, discussions, tasks, assessments, interaction with writers in story writing forums, publishing work online and getting feedback etc. Another dimension is that of media of learning. It utilized technology and different media tools for learning purposes. It also included real time interactions and asynchronous approaches to learning.

Blended learning environment provided to the learners in the current study is a blend of both off line and online learning which included face to face learning in classrooms and online learning sessions on the internet. It also included self-paced or collaborative learning which involves either learning alone at his own pace and feasibility or in collaboration and cooperation along with his peers. It also include structured learning or unstructured learning by providing structured content and material to learners or unstructured provided on demand. Another dimension is practice and performance support by providing tasks for the learners.

2.7 Blended Learning Framework

A number of factors need consideration for designing an effective blended learning environment which could meet the learning demands of the learners**.** A systematic organization leads towards smooth implementation of the blended learning programs. According to khan (2012) there are eight factors that need careful consideration for the creation of effective blended learning environment**.** The framework provided by Badrul Khan is named as Khan's Octagonal Framework for blended learning.

2.7.1 Khan's Octagonal Framework Blended Learning Framework

There are eight dimensions that need to be addressed in creating an effective blended learning environment.

1. Pedagogical Dimension

This involves issues related to teaching and learning like the content to be taught and delivered, the needs of the learners, the learning objectives and finally the design, method and strategies used for its implementation.

2. Technological Dimension

This dimension of the blended learning framework addresses the issue related to the technological tools and infrastructure that will be needed for the implementation which includes both hardware and software. It examines and analyses the issues related to technological infrastructure, hardware and software tools required in blended learning settings and planning and management of the different content delivery modes.

3. The Interface Design

Interface design refers to the user interface of each blended learning element. The learner is allowed to choose the type of learning delivery mode from the available options. It includes class sessions, online sessions, content, structure, navigation and course design the purpose is to make the learner able to get benefit from both online and class session equally in the blended learning environment.

4. Evaluation

It includes evaluation of three types: student evaluation, instruction, evaluation and blended learning model, the mode of delivery and environment evaluation. This will be helpful in evaluating the effectiveness and outcomes of the program.

5. Management

It includes the management of the whole blended learning environment, content, delivery, follow up, infrastructure, modes of delivery, registrations, schedules etc.

6. Resources Support

This includes online and off line resources available to the learner for meaningful delivery of the content. Support can be provided online through chat or emails and live as well.

7. Ethical Considerations

Diversity should be kept in mind while designing the blended learning program as the program may have learners from different cultures and nationalities and they might have different opportunities available to them, therefore opportunities should be provided in a way that they address the diversity in the settings.

8. Institutional Dimension

All the institutional issues related to administration, academics, learners should be addressed. As management of the needs of learners, infrastructure and availability of the content need support and management of the institution.

2.8 Learning Theories and Blended Learning

Learning theories provide a set of principles that explain how the process of learning takes place, considering learning as a process not merely a product. These theories explain how information/knowledge is acquired or learnt, processed and retained in memory for future use. These principles are helpful in organizing, designing and implementing methods, techniques and tools in teaching and learning process. Major theories which have important contributions in blended learning settings are: Social Constructivism. Cognitivism and Connectionism.

2.8.1 Constructivism

The basic idea behind constructivism is that people construct their knowledge based on their personal experiences. Blended learning scenarios based on constructivist approach put emphasis on learner as being the active processor of knowledge constructing it either individually or socially. This knowledge construction is based on the interpretations of experiences. Teachers are considered as facilitators who understand learners' interpretations of their knowledge and experience and provide guidance and assistance in improving the quality of knowledge they have constructed**.**

Blended learning environments emphasize on the utilization of ICT tools, both asynchronous and synchronous in order to facilitate collaboration, cooperation, communication and construction of knowledge through exchange and interaction among learners. Learning environments should foster collaboration and interaction among learners for the construction of shared knowledge among learners. Both synchronous and asynchronous sessions are necessary for the participation of every kind of learner; who can actively participate in face to face discussions and those who are passive learners and they can interact and contribute through asynchronous sessions. Hence, collaborative learning believes on knowledge construction through collaboration, social negotiation, interaction and exchange of experiences. In constructivism based blended learning environments, innovative ICT tools play a significant role as they provide a variety of online interactive

systems for the construction, interaction, communication and exchange of knowledge. They provide both self-paced and collaborative learning.

When the learners are taught in an environment which supports and enhances the interaction of learners with instructor, peers and learning communities it has a positive effect on the performance and outcomes of learning. Therefore blended learning environments based on collaboration, interaction, active participation of learners, being a member of learning community at different story writing, forums, can improve their story writing skills as they are exposed to multiple learning tools, settings and experiences.

2.8.2 Cognitivism

Cognitive theorists believe that learning is not merely the result of responding to stimuli and behaviour formation rather it is a result of brain's internal processing of knowledge. It focuses on the mental processes that take place inside the learner's mind. Behaviour and change in behaviour indicate what is happening in mind, hence learning involves processing of stored information, its reorganization and replacement due to the learning of new knowledge and new experiences. The learner is considered as the processor of information who experiences and acquires knowledge, processes it in the brain and stores in memory for future use.

Cognitivism advocates about human cognition and intelligence and their role in learning process. Piaget has propounded four stages of cognitive development. These stages are the learning stages the learner passes through and develops schema in his mind. Whenever a learner acquires new knowledge or gains any new experience, he relates it to the existing knowledge (schema) and modifies it (assimilation) and makes readjustments (accommodation) and finally reaches a state of equilibrium which has the knowledge after assimilation and accommodation hence a learner passes through these stages and goes through the learning process.

2.8.2.1 Technology as a Cognitive Tool

Technological use for learning purposes is not a new idea since its emergence and propagation it has been incorporated in pedagogy as a tool for drills and practice. The current perspective on technology is that it considers technology as a cognitive tool for learning and learners is no more the passive recipients of knowledge rather he constructs knowledge through active participation. Technology can be used for developing critical thinking and for higher order learning and problem solving skills.

2.8.2.2 Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning

Cognitive theory of multimedia learning states learning is deeper and longer lasting if it is a combination of words and images, not words alone. (Mayer, 2002 p. 47). Instructional material should be organized keep the cognitive abilities of humans into consideration. The theory proposes three main assumptions related to multimedia learning;

1. There are two different channels for the processing of information; one is auditory and other is visual that's why this theory is also called Dual-Coding Theory.
2. Each channel has the limited capacity of bearing the load (cognitive load)
3. Learning involves acting processing of selecting information, filtering it, organizing it and finally interpretation based on the prior knowledge.

Mayer suggests that the brain doesn't only process the information as it is rather it has a dynamic way of interpretation thus resulting in storage of information in memory for a shorter and longer period of time. Hence new information is always integrated with the prior information.

Incorporation of Technology and online resources of learning act as a cognitive tool and help in enhanced learning of the learners. The present study focuses on the effective utilization of online learning resources along with the face to face learning. Teaching story writing by using multimedia and different form of content, both visual, verbal and abstract can enhance the creativity of the learners.

2.8.3 Theory of Connectivism

The internet is the most common source of developing and sharing information and knowledge in this era. It provides a network of information resources for those who want to generate or consume knowledge across the globe. Specific information can be accessed by simply clicking links which make connections across connected web links hence making the internet a rich source of providing access to enormous resources of knowledge. The growth of web 2.0, web 3.0 and web 4.0 has brought a shift as it has not only provided easy access to knowledge it has also made knowledge more interactive and interconnected.

Theories of learning describe the principles and processes involved in the learning process. Driscoll (2000) defines learning as "a change in human performance or performance potential [which] must come about as a result of the learner's experience and interaction with the world" (p. 11) hence learning is considered as a phenomenon which governs human potential of performance, which is the result of the experiences which the learner passes through and the kind of interactions learners have lived in the world of complex entities and phenomena. All learning theories believe that knowledge is achieved through experiences or reasoning. Learning theories provide the theoretical assumptions behind the learning process. It deals with the issues related to learning as a product and learning as a process. There are a number of theories which have played an eminent role in explaining how learning takes place. The most eminent theories are; behaviourism, constructivism and cognitivism. These theories provide models that how and in what ways learning should be dealt in our educational settings.

Gredler (2001) expresses behaviourism in terms of its assumptions regarding learning. Behaviourism talks about observable behaviour, stimulus and response and learning are all about changes in behaviour. Cognitive theories view knowledge as a symbolic mental construct in learner’s mind. Constructivism pays special attention towards the role of social actors and the kind of interaction in generating an individual's knowledge. Knowledge is created, recreated, shaped, learnt and shared within the social context.

The theoretical assumptions of connectivism draw its basis from the biological models that talk about the role of neural networks in brain in generating, storing and retrieving knowledge. Downes (2005) discusses the epistemology of connective knowledge by relating it to pedagogy and technology. Learning is based on networking and networks are considered as the connections that exist between entities (nodes) which can be ideas, individuals, groups, systems, or communities hence learning takes place due to the connection between nodes and networks.

Connectivism sees knowledge as residing in networks which is stored in the human mind or non-human appliances. It is always present in the form of interconnected networks. Networked theories of learning (Goodyear, 2001) explain the impact of ICT (information communication technology) on education and talks about the integrating technology for learning purposes in formal and informal context.

2.8.3.1 Connectivism as a Theory of Digital Age

George Seimen considers Connectivism as the theory of learning in the digital age which is considered as the successor of the theories of learning; behaviourism, cognitivism, and constructivism. He identifies the limitations of previous theories. According to him previous theories have an interpersonal view towards learning. It lacks its attention towards learning within technological settings ignoring the contributions of the knowledge rich environments (Seimen, 2004).

The principles of connectivism are; learning and knowledge is acquired through diverse sources, it is a process of connecting specialized nodes of information sources, utilization of nonhuman sources of knowledge, making connections important for continual learning.

The internet has become unavoidable and enriched source of interconnected knowledge which has led to a broad level creation and sharing of knowledge. Therefore, learning in educational settings has also got influence from internetworked technologies. Widespread awareness and utilization of online resources for seeking knowledge has broadened the delivery of knowledge, hence exceeding the limits of the classroom. Web enabled learning has made learners more independent seekers of knowledge within different social settings. It has enabled learners to access knowledge according to their own ease and learning preferences. Learners can get benefit from online digital libraries, archives, web blogs, forums, virtual learning environments (VLE), Web CT, Learning management system (LMS), social networking sites etc.

Hence all the three major theories of blended learning settings emphasize on the role of social interaction, collaborative learning, knowledge and ideas sharing by reading to the stories written by other peers and writers around the globe enhance the learning abilities and creativity of the learners. Collaborative blended learning environments based on blended learning scenarios foster collaboration, group work, writing through learning the stories of other writers, exposure to multiple ways and styles of story writing enhance the story writing skills of learners.

2.9 Pedagogical Approaches to Web Based Learning

There are different learning theories which provide theoretical basis for learning mechanisms and learning processes. These theories perform a vital role in shaping the teaching learning process. They reflect philosophical beliefs related to the knowledge. The

theories of teaching and learning are strongly influenced by different epistemologies (which is the basis on which we know or believe something to be true). Epistemology itself does not address issues related to teaching and learning rather it sets the basis or beliefs on which teaching theories are set.

Three epistemologies; Objectivism, Constructivism and Connectivism play a vital role in the application of web 2.0 tools and web 3.0 tools. Objectivist teaching is more applicable in natural sciences as it has its roots in the belief that truth exists outside the human mind dealing with principles and concepts which are constant and independent of personal beliefs (Popper, 1972). Constructivists believe that knowledge is the result of human construct as the laws and principles which scientists believe in one time may change later due to the agreement through discussion therefore all knowledge is relative, dynamic and personal. Constructivists see learning as both personal and social activities as teaching is the process of observation, questioning reasoning and relating the new concepts with old ones. This approach is found in almost all subjects most commonly social sciences, education and humanities.

Connectivism argues that the nature of knowledge is transformed by the internet technology .Siemens (2008) argue about the role of collective intelligence, according to him, knowledge is advanced and transformed by the contribution of those elements which are connected to particular network which in turn are connected to further networks. This interconnectivity allows learning to take place. For Siemens it is important to connect to the right nodes in order to get the right knowledge than to remain outside network or with old knowledge to get connected to networks which are less useful.

The designs of teachers using web 2.0 tools will be influenced by any of the epistemological positions which will in turn provide guidance on the choices the teachers will make in using web 2.0 tools. Web 2.0 not only provides tools that are helpful in bridging the gap between the modern lifestyles of learners and the requirement of academic contexts, but also provides a basis for modifications and restructuring the roles of learners, teachers and; learning environments, pedagogical approaches, structuring and implementation.

2.9.1 Web 2.0 Tools for Teachers

Innumerable web 2.0 tools can be used by teachers to find interest in incorporating technology in language teaching. These tools can be put to use in order to enhance the

learning skills, developing digital literacy and keeping pace with the new trends and the needs of the 21st century. Web 2.0 provides speed web based software and applications. A number of instructional and communication tools in web 2.0 technologies have been used by different instructors for different pedagogical purposes across the world.

Social networking sites play an important role in social communication. These are used on mobiles, computers and laptops for communication, sharing content and social interactions. It can be used for formal and informal purposes. Most popular social networking sites are; Face book, My space, LinkedIn, Twitter etc. Such social networks can be used for pedagogical purpose like maintaining e-portfolios, reviewing documents, developing learning communities etc.

Wikis are another web 2.0 tool that is used by teachers for learning purposes through wiki's knowledge can be created through interconnected web pages, creating an online collaborative learning environment where the users and team members can edit and create pages and content. These are more frequently used for multimedia collaborative writings.

Learning management systems are also used for well-defined learning purposes, for example Course management system (CMS), and Moodle (Modular Object Oriented Dynamic Learning environment). They can be used to manage paths, trace learners' performance, their activities, creation and sharing of content, assessment and evaluation, collaboration and interaction among learners. Different Blogs are also used by teachers for creating learning environments for collaborative learning like Edublogs, Blogger, and Wordpress etc.

Web 2.0 tools are not only the source of getting knowledge rather they can be utilized by both teachers and students for a number of learning purposes like they can be used for interactive learning, generating the content using multimedia, sharing it with others, collaborative learning, assessment etc. Hence, these can be used for enhanced teaching, learning purposes by increasing professional collaboration among teachers and also between teacher and students. Most frequently used web 2.0 tools is Edmodo which is a platform for teachers and students to collaborate and connect for sharing content, discussion, assessment of work, grading etc. YouTube is the most frequently used websites for billions of people around the world, it is a forum that provides educator opportunities to record lectures, tutorial and distribute it to uncountable users across the world. Wikispacesclassroom is also used by educators for learning purposes, especially for

writing. Audacity, which is used for audio recordings, generating MP3, WAV or AIFF sound files. Moodle is a course management system which is also called learning management system which is used by teachers for creating online learning sites.

2.9.2Web 2.0 and Web 3.0

A web 3.0 technology is the transformed version of web 2.0 technologies. The most distinguishing features of web2. 0 were social networking and channelling and collaboration with the creator of knowledge and the user. Web 3.0 is a step ahead to web 2.0 and shares the features of natural language processing, machine based learning its involves the features of 3D visualization, intelligent or semantic web, openness in terms of program applications, information access across the web, high data storage capacity. All these features have provided facilitation in the field of education as it has provided a number of means regarding delivering lectures, keeping records, assessments, documentation, course development and execution through semantic web showing positive impacts on teaching and learning in e-learning environments.

The current study has focused on the significance of using collaborative blended learning environment by incorporating web 2.0 and web 3.0 tools in its present study which includes; Wikispacesclassroom, Storybird, Penzu and Wattpad for the learning of story writing skills. These web tools provide learners with opportunities to write creatively, share their stories with their peers and Instructor and they can also publish their stories online where story writers from any part of the world can read their story and give feedback too. This not only develops the interest and maintains the motivation level of the learners but also helps them in improving their writing styles and ideas.

2.10 Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning is a pedagogical approach to education that focuses on active engagement of learners with their peers in completion of tasks, active discussion inside classroom, learners work as teams and every individual contributes to the learning process. Hence it involves the construction and transformation of knowledge of the active engagement and interaction of learners with each others. According to Ted Panitz (1999) Collaboration is a philosophical approach towards teaching and learning that involves personal life style of the learner and his interaction, in which learners are responsible for interaction, their roles, learning choices, abilities and contribution in collaboration with their peers. It is a learning environment which highlights the individual involvement and

contribution of learners in group learning. It involves the concepts of communities of learning.

Collaborative learning involves a social constructivist approach to learning. It lays its emphasis on construction and reconstruction of knowledge through interaction, collaboration, social negotiation and experience sharing. The role of technology is very significant in this aspect as it has made social interactions easier and effective by providing different modes of interactions and creating global communities of practices. According to Weigel (2002) technology has a significant role in strengthening collaboration and in providing facilitation of collaborative learning and deeper understating and sharing of learning experiences with others.

2.10.1 Use of Web 2.0 Tools for Collaborative Learning

A number of web 2.0 based tools can be used for collaborative learning like RSS, Blogs, Wikis, social bookmarking, podcasts, newsgroup forums etc. All these tools make learning more active, visualized, reflective and shared. Wikis are used as a collaborative website where content can be generated and edited by the people who have access to the website. It is used for both personal information and knowledge management and collaborative learning management. Blogs have also been used by people across the world for online publishing for different purposes like personal diaries, knowledge blogs organizational blogs, etc. (Kelleher and miller, 2006). RSS which is the abbreviation of (real simple syndication). It allows the users to get updated with the latest updates of the websites which are having RSS enabled content instead of browsing for information on different websites on a daily basis. A podcast is used by a number of teachers in the classroom for learning purposes. A number of podcasts are available on internet having educational content. Lectures and content can easily be downloaded in portable devices and can be accessed any time. Google Docs is also used for collaborative works like building and completing projects. Students share their ideas and contribute to the work which is available to others for review and examination.

2.10.2 Web 2.0 Driven Learning Frameworks

Web 2.0 based learning is associated with several technologies, which is the reason that it has taken control over modern e-learning trends hence resulting in making learning more socialized and collaborative by putting the learner in online communities of learning and practice. Web 2.0 is providing opportunities and perspectives to handle the weaknesses

of traditional methodologies and learning settings. According to Chatti et al. (2007) there are three core components of web 2.0 drawn learning frameworks:

1. Networking and Collaboration
2. Intelligent Search
3. Knowledge Creation

Social aspect of learning is one of the major aspects of learning which places emphasis on the creation and learning of the knowledge, building communities of learning and practice in a social context through collaboration and networking as learning is not an isolated process. Therefore, in order to build communities and networks one needs to extend the dimensions of learning by making it more participatory, interesting, creative, shared, engaging and involving more people in the process of learning. Information overflow on the internet is on one hand very helpful in accessing to innumerable sources of knowledge, but it is only effective when one needs to know the intelligent searching techniques or tools. Intelligent search ensures access to reliable sources, communities of practice and expertise (Chatti et al. 2007). Another important aspect of this web 2.0 based learning framework is knowledge creation as knowledge can easily be created, modified, transformed and shared as knowledge is created and shared through collaborative work within communities of practice.

The usefulness of utilizing different teaching and learning methods is presented in the form of a learning Pyramid in one of the researches conducted by the National Training Laboratories in Berhel, Maine. The figure is as follows:

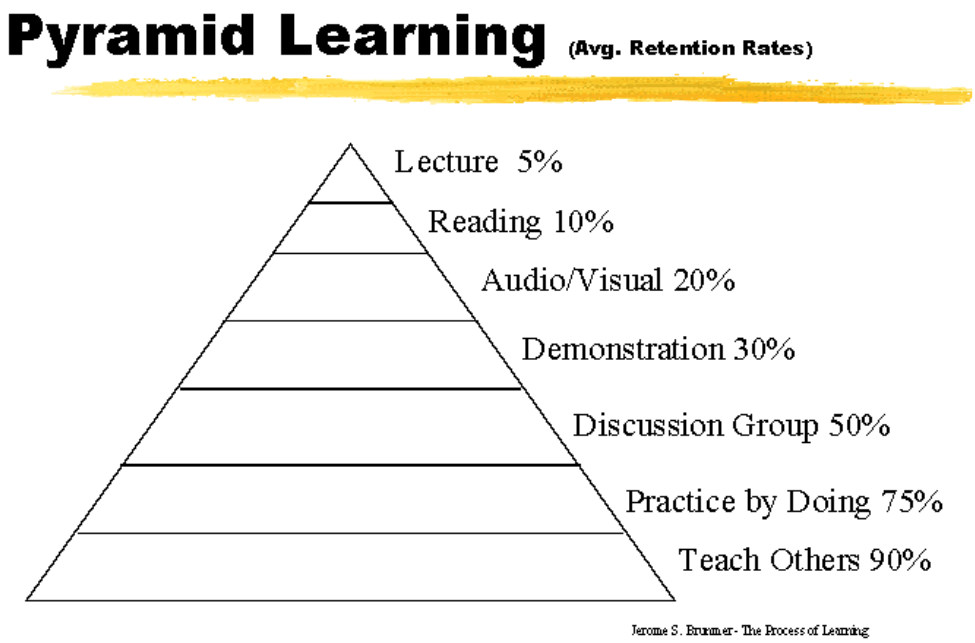

Figure 2.1: Pyramid of Learning

According to the research the most common method of teaching "Lecture" is considered to be the last contributor to the teaching and learning process in higher education. Self-study based on readings contributes almost 10% to the learning. Audio/visual forms of learning contribute 20% to learning. On the other hand, learning through collaboration in the form of demonstration, discussion, practice by doing, and teaching others has a maximum contribution in maximizing learning. Therefore, our educational institutions need to provide such learning environments which could foster the practice, discussions and collaborations oriented environments among learners and teachers utilizing both online settings and face to face classroom settings. So that the learner gets maximum benefit from different learning media.

2.11 Studies on Blended Learning

Challab; Bakar & Latif (2016) in their study analysed the effects of collaborative blended learning and writing environment for students writing apprehension and performance of EFL learners in Malaysia. The study was conducted for thirteen weeks using both online and face to face learning modes; class blogs, Viber discussion. Participants completed different tasks in face to face session and online session. Interviews, observations and learning diaries were used to collect data. Participants recorded their

feelings, perceptions, experiences and the issues and problems they faced during the study. One of the major objectives of the study was to investigate the perceptions of learners towards the use of blended and collaborative learning environment for writing skills, its usefulness in writing process and apprehension and also to identify the factors that positively affect their writing skills in a collaborative blended writing environment.

The results indicated, all students found a collaborative blended writing environment positively affected the writing abilities and performance of learners. The study identified two main reasons for the effectiveness; first the role of collaborative writing activities Second use of blended learning. Hence the use of Collaborative blended learning environment for improving writing performance and reducing writing apprehension were supported by the findings of the study supported.

Liu (2013) in his study used blended learning environment for the teaching of the English writing course. Mixed method research was used to evaluate its use in course designing, implementation and student teachers' reflection on it. The findings of the study revealed that blended learning played a significant role in increasing interaction, motivation autonomous learning and improving academic writings of the learners.

Majid, Hameed, Stapa & Keong (2015) conducted an experimental study on blended scaffolding strategies through Facebook for learning and improving the process and performance of writing. The study was conducted for 14 weeks with Pre-Test and Post-Test. The experimental group underwent through treatment in the form of scaffolding strategies using Facebook for improving writing process and writing performance. The findings of the study revealed improvement in their writings and also the learners favored the use of blended scaffolding strategies as a learning method using Facebook.

A similar research study was also conducted by Tananuraksakul (2014) using qualitative research methods of exploring perceptions and experiences of learners on using Facebook in writing classes. The findings proved the effectiveness of using Facebook as an effective blended learning tool for learning writing skills.

A considerable number of researches have been conducted on the use of wikis in teaching and learning due to its easy use and less technicalities. Wikis provide a number of functional aspects like reading and editing, tracking edits, threaded discussions use of multimedia for creating pages through videos, sounds, and graphics. Apart from the use of wikis for general pedagogy it has been effectively used by instructors and researchers in

their studies, especially for collaborative writings, peer reviews, classroom projects, assessment and evaluations. (Parker & Chao, 2007). Wikis provide opportunities to learners engaging them in collaborative tasks, increasing social interactions by maximizing student's active participation and engagement.

A research study was conducted by Mabuan and Ebron (2016) and explored the use of blended learning approach for the teaching of writing in ESL classroom using e-mails. Students were given written tasks of sharing their ideas and knowledge regarding different topics and were asked to have discussions on emails once in a week. E-mail was used as an academic, social and technological tool for enhancing writing abilities of learners and attitudes towards collaboration and interaction with other learners.

A survey was conducted by National Writing Project (2010), on the effectiveness of using digital technologies in improving students' writings revealed that teachers in high schools found digital technology very helpful in writing, sharing and writing in collaboration with other learners. 50% of the teachers were satisfied in using digital technology for improving writing and grammar usage.

Liu (2013) in his research paper explained and evaluated the use of blended learning in the academic English writing course. The course was designed and implemented using a blended learning approach. The findings of the study showed high satisfaction levels of students with the use of blended learning in the course as the course promoted interactions among students and also made student teacher interaction effective, making learners more independent and enhanced writing abilities.

Awada and Ghaith (2014) examined the role of educational blogs in improving learners writing skills in English for specific purposes course. Learners shared their perceptions regarding their blogging experience and proved the credibility for the use of educational blogs for enhancing and promoting writing skills. A similar study was conducted on the use of blogs and feedback checklists for online collaborative writings for ESL learners. Grami (2012) reported the experience of Saudi female ESL learners who participated in a collaborative online writing environment for four weeks. The responses and experiences of the learners revealed that the interactive features of weblogs helped learners in peer review and collaboration in writing. The learners found this experience very effective in developing critical thinking.

Miyazoe and Anderson (2010) conducted a research on learning outcomes and perceptions of writing online through blogs, forums, and wikis in settings based on blended learning approach. A mixed method study was conducted, including Qualitative textual analysis of the writings of learners on the forum and wiki showed progress in different writing styles, interviews regarding the perceptions of learners related to the activities in writing activities using forums, wikis and blogs. The learners showed positive perceptions and found this setting interesting for writing in collaborations with their peers.

Chandra and Fisher (2009) conducted a study on the perceptions of high school learners about blended learning web based environment and it was revealed that web based learning environments is convenient, it develops positive interaction and learning environment, develops motivation for learning, easy to follow and understandable and promotes autonomous learning on the other hand the learners were of the opinion that it's more feasible to ask queries face to face than using emails for that. So and Brush (2008) conducted a study in health education in which the course was taught in a blended learning format focusing on satisfaction, social presence and collaborative learning. The findings of the study revealed that the learners who showed collaboration at higher level were more satisfied with the blended learning course. It was suggested that social interactions and psychological distances play a significant role in collaborative learning settings.

Therefore, the studies on blended learning reveal that learners do favour web based learning environment effective but face to face classroom learning cannot be completely substituted by online learning only. Hence blended learning incorporates the benefits of both online and face to face learning and its effectiveness has been measured by different variables like achievement, outcomes, attitude, motivation, critical thinking, satisfaction, dropout rates, in different studies. However, studies have also revealed no important difference in the achievement of learners between face to face and online learning media, but satisfaction, motivation, attitudes and knowledge retention level is observed to be superior.

Blended learning approach has also been implemented and experimented for the teaching of language skills by different researchers. Apart from language skills it is also used in different disciplines. This approach has also been used for teaching English for Academic purposes and academic writings etc. Teaching writing skills is a great challenge for language teachers and it has been taught in traditional methods but due to the influence of technology a number of experimental studies have been conducted for checking the

effectiveness and outcomes of teaching writing skills through blended learning using online platform ”Moodle” by(Ada and Bakir 2013).Writing tasks were given to learners on this platform and they were assessed and evaluated .The results of the experimental group and those of controlled were compared , analysed and there were significant differences in the achievement scores of experimental group.

Similar studies have also been conducted for improving writing skills using multimedia environments as motivation by Kris Buyer (2000) and the results also favoured the use of blended learning for improving writing using multimedia.

The effectiveness of blended learning in developing English writing skills by Ismail Ibrahim Harb (2013) also came with the similar favouring results after conducting an experimental research on Palestinian tenth graders.

Similarly blended learning has also been used for the teaching of creative writing. A two year pilot study was conducted by Morgan and Conway-Herron (2009) in a creative writing program at the undergraduate level at Southern Cross University in Australia. The findings of the pilot study provided important data in relation to student satisfaction, institutional constraints, teaching technologies, pedagogical considerations, faculty workload issues, and costs associated with the planning and implementation of blended learning settings for the teaching of creative writing.. A considerable amount of work has been done on the use of blended learning for the teaching of language skills and academic writings.

2.12 Research Gap

After going through a detailed study of the existing literature on the use of blended learning approach the researcher found the following gaps in the existing literature; the first gap which was identified was research gap as it is was found that a lot of work has been done on the use of blended learning approach in different fields including both social sciences and natural sciences .In social sciences particularly in English language research a lot of work is done on vocabulary learning, language skills and academic writings, students writing apprehension and performance of EFL learners, blended scaffolding strategies through face book for learning and improving the writing process and writing performance, on exploring perceptions and experiences of learners on using face book in writing classes, effectiveness of using digital technologies in improving students writings, learning outcomes and perceptions of writing online through forums, blogs and wikis in

blended learning settings. The researcher found a gap in the existing literature that no work has been done on the use of blended learning for the teaching of story writing skills. Latest researches have also been explored by the researcher but this area has still not been addressed by researchers. The researcher found this area important for the study as it deals with narrative writing, which is a part of both formal and informal writings and it is an important genre of writing which should not be neglected. Therefore an experimental study was conducted in this area to find out the effectiveness of using a blended learning approach for the teaching of story writing. Second Gap, the second identified gap was; the contextual gap as most of the researches were conducted in western and Asian context, but a very few have researched in Pakistani context especially the area of creative writing is least explored. The third gap which this study has addressed is a methodological gap that most of the researchers have addressed blended learning and used wikis, blogs, collaborative learning environments, etc. In different researches on the other hand, this study is multidimensional in terms of the use of online resources in one research setting. This research has experimented on the ways in which online resources can be utilized to a maximum level so that it would enhance learning. The current study has also addressed the gap related to the ways in which story writing can be taught to the learners by utilizing online resources and collaborative learning techniques.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains all the conceptual and methodological framework of the present study. It includes the research paradigm, research approach, and method and research design employed in the present study. Moreover, it gives a detailed explanation and description of the population and sample of the study, the research instruments, data collection and analysis procedures used in the current study. In the end it discusses several important methodological considerations such as validity, reliability of research methods, instruments for data collection, and ethical considerations of the study.

3.1Theoretical Framework of the Study

The pedagogical foundations of blended learning are rooted in learning theories, especially the theories that explain learning within technological context. The following major theories are the theoretical basis of the present study, which explain how technology impacts learning and learning process. Theoretical triangulation is used in the present study for the complete understanding of learning theories involved in collaborative blended learning. The theories used as theoretical framework for the present study are: Constructivism as major theory of learning addressing the research question on the effectiveness of using collaborative blended learning environment for the teaching of story writing skills to learners. Cognitivism and connectionism as the supportive theories for addressing the role of online resources, multimedia in blended learning setting for learning story writing skills.

3.1.1 Constructivist View of Learning

The proponents of the constructivist school of thought believe that learning is the result of the construction of knowledge which is based on interaction and learning within a

social context. Learners construct new knowledge by relating it with previously learnt knowledge. (Carnell & Lodge, 2002; Jonassen, 2000).

The constructivist schools of thought related to the present study are;

1. Social Constructivism
2. Communities of Practice
3. Collaborative learning

Social Constructivism believes that learning takes place when the learner constructs his knowledge in relation to their interaction with the real world relating the new knowledge to the previously learnt knowledge. Blended learning environments based on constructivism emphasize on increased students' interactivity and participation focusing on learning of new knowledge relating it to the previously learnt knowledge and experience of the learner. Learners are actively engaged in such activities which incorporate learner's previous experiences within a social context. Constructivist based blended learning environments utilize ICT tools including both synchronous and asynchronous learning technologies for enhancing collaboration, interactive learning, creation and sharing of knowledge.

According to Lave and Wenger (1991) the process of learning involves the active participation of learners in a community as people learn from interaction with others having similar ideas and interests which collaborate with each others for the creation of knowledge incorporating their experiences. Hence knowledge construction is the result of sharing, interaction and participation within the same community of practice. The guidance and support provided by the experienced ones in the community, encourage and support the participation of the learner.

Collaborative Learning involves learning in an environment that fosters collaboration, group work, interaction and sharing of experiences and knowledge for achieving common goals and objectives. Online resources and Web 2.0 tools facilitate collaborative learning. Blended learning environments based on a collaborative approach to learning utilize both synchronous and asynchronous systems for learning through exchange, communication and collaboration. Collaborative learning pays emphasis on peer interaction organized and mediated by the teacher in an environment that enhances learning through discussion, presentation, group tasks, problem solving, concepts and information sharing and exchange of learning experiences. Use of blogs, wikis, discussion boards play

a significant role in collaborative learning, hence online learning platforms based on web 2.0 or Web 3.0 technology fosters collaborative learning.

3.1.2 Connectivism

The theoretical assumptions of Connectivism draw its basis from the biological models that talk about the role of neural networks in brain in generating, storing and retrieving knowledge. Downes (2005) discusses the epistemology of connective knowledge by relating it to pedagogy and technology. Learning is based on networking and networks are considered as connections that exist between entities (nodes) which can be in the form of individuals, groups, systems, ideas or communities hence learning takes place as a result of connections between the entities involves in learning process, connections between what is already learnt and the new knowledge. Connectivism sees knowledge as residing in networks which is stored in the human mind or non-human appliances. Networked theories of learning (Goodyear ,2001) explain the impact of ICT (information communication technology) on learning and education and it talks about the integrating technology for learning purposes in formal and informal context.

George Seimen (2004) considers connectivism as the theory of learning in the digital age which is considered as the successor of the learning theories; behaviourism, cognitivism, and constructivism.

The major principles that deal with connectivism are; learning is done and knowledge is acquired through diverse sources, it involves the process of connecting specialized nodes related to information sources, utilization of nonhuman sources of knowledge, making connections is important for continual learning.

The internet is one of the most enriched sources of interconnected knowledge which has led to a broad level creating and sharing of knowledge. Therefore, learning in educational settings has also got influence from internetworked technologies. Widespread awareness and utilization of online resources for seeking knowledge has broadened the delivery of knowledge, hence exceeding the limits of the classroom. Web enabled learning has made learners more independent seekers of knowledge within different social settings. It has enabled learners to access knowledge according to their own ease and learning preferences. Learners can get benefit from online digital libraries, archives, web blogs, forums, virtual learning environments (VLE), WebCT, Learning management system (LMS), social networking sites etc.

3.1.3 Cognitivism

Cognitive Theory deals with the cognitive processes which are involved in the process of learning and also deals with the changes that come in it with the passage of time due to increase in learning experiences and understandings. There are Five major theories of cognitive learning that explain the cognitive processes involved in blended learning/digital learning/online learning scenarios out of these five theories the most relevant to the present study is Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning.

- **Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning**

Cognitive theory of multimedia argues the significant role of multimedia in cognitive processing of the information and experiences. It favours the use of multiple representation of systems in the form of text, pictures, animations and other forms to build firm visual and concrete connection between the information so that the learners is able to retrieve it effectively whenever it is required. When learners are exposed to more than one media than they are easily able to comprehend and apply the knowledge. Hence, multimedia learning plays an eminent role in the construction and reconstruction of knowledge. The schema that is built in mind helps in quick retrieval of information as the schematic representation is a consistent and long term.

According to Mayer (2001).

> The mind processes information in the form of multimedia presentation through sensory memory, working memory and long term memory. The sensory memory selects images and words through the eyes and ears. These images and words are then processed in the working memory where they are organized and arranged in order to make meaning.

Technology has a great role to play in multimedia learning as learners are provided with multiple forms and sources of knowledge which helps them in active learning. Technologically enhanced blended learning environments bridge up the gap between the classroom experiences, having limited media involvement in learning and online learning which has an enriched environment for multimedia learning.

The cognitive theory of multimedia learning, hence support use of online learning resources as it provides a learning environment where a learner has access to multi modes of learning which facilitate the learning process.

- **Operational Framework**

Three theories of learning have been used as the theoretical framework of the present study: constructivism, Cognitivism and Connectionism. However constructivism is used as the major operational theory of learning in this study and cognitive theory of multimedia learning and the theory of connectionism have been used as supportive theories for the operational framework of the study. In the operational part of the data analysis chapter, the researcher has used the theory of Constructivism ; social constructivism, collaborative learning and communities of practice as the major framework for the use of collaborative learning environment and for the blended learning part, the theories of cognitivism and connectionism has been used. The collaborative blended learning environment which is the independent variable of the present study has been used in light of the theoretical frameworks of social constructivism, online resources and technology as cognitive tool for creating a blended learning setting. The performance of learners who are taught in collaborative blended learning environment is compared with the learners who were taught in face to face classroom settings only. The effectiveness of the use of collaborative blended learning for the teaching of story writing is analysed in the experimental study in which experimental group was taught in collaborative blended learning environment and the Control group was taught in the face to face classroom settings only.

3.2 Research Framework

The major components of the research framework of the present study are as follows: Philosophical world view, Research Paradigm, Research Approach and method, Research Design

Figure 1.1 A Framework for Research—The Interconnection of Worldviews, Design, and Research Methods

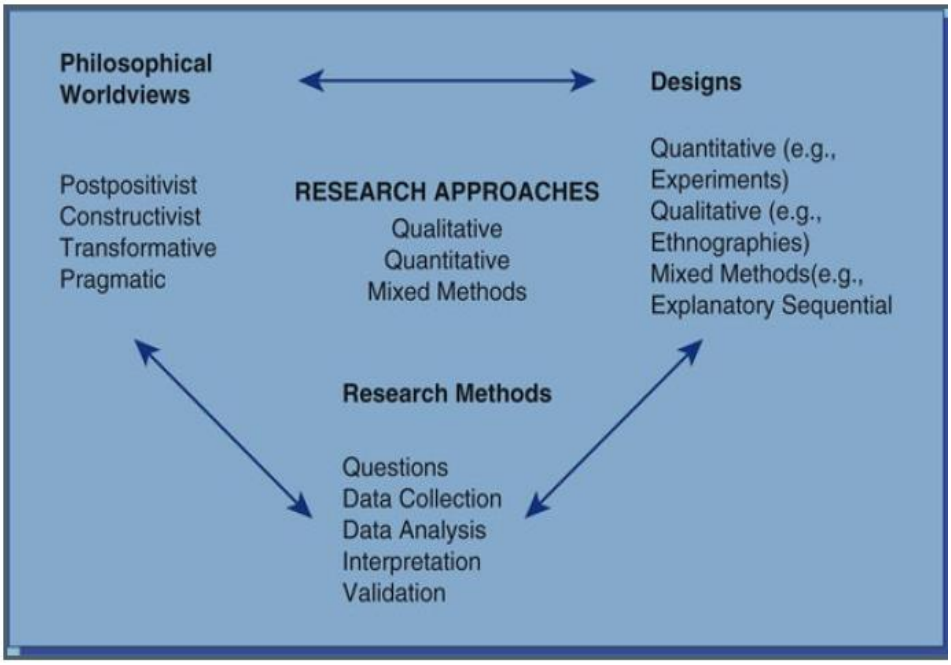

Figure 3.1 A Framework of Research (Creswell,2003)

3.2.1 Philosophical World View

The present research has its ontological basis in pragmatism .It does not deal with a single reality or a single area of philosophy rather it deals with multiple realities and philosophical underpinnings. The researcher has used pragmatic world view in the present study. The present research has its paradigmatic basis in pragmatism as it deals with deals with multiple realities and philosophical underpinnings. Pragmatism is applied in mixed method research in which the researchers have the freedom to choose methods, techniques, procedures for collecting and analysing data either only quantitatively or qualitatively rather the researcher has the choice to adopt any procedure that suits best for the understanding of the research problem. The epistemological basis of the present study is relational including both objective and subjective. The researcher has conducted an experimental study for finding the effectiveness of the use of blended learning approach for the teaching of story writing which includes objective analysis of the statistical data of

pre-test and post-test score of learners. It also involves the subjective interpretation of interviews about the experiences and responses of learners who participated in the experimental study and the observations of the learning settings of both control group and experimental group. According to Morgan, (2007) The researcher maintains both subjectivity in their own reflections on research and objectivity in data collection and analysis. For the mixed research, pragmatism opens the door to multiple methods, different worldviews, and different assumptions, as well as different forms of data collection and analysis.

3.2.2 Research Paradigm

Research paradigm deals with the set of beliefs and principles that are used to address any research problem. According to Khun (1962) research paradigm is "the set of common beliefs and agreements, shared between scientists about how problems should be understood and addressed. According to Guba (1990) research paradigms can be characterized through ontology, epistemology and methodology. There are currently three major research paradigms in education (and in the social and behavioural sciences). They are quantitative research, qualitative research, and mixed research. The present study has used mixed research paradigm as it deals with both quantitative and qualitative research due to the nature of the current study.

3.2.3. Research Approach

The three major approaches to research are: quantitative, qualitative and mixed method approach. Mixed method approach is used in the present study as it incorporates both approaches; quantitative and qualitative. The purpose of using this form of inquiry is that combining both approaches provides a detailed and comprehensive understanding of the research problem which cannot be achieved with a single approach alone.

The researcher has used mixed method approach as the researchers has used the quantitative research paradigm for one phase of a research study (experimental study) and the qualitative research paradigm for another phase of the study (Interviews and Observations).

3.2.3.1Mixed Method Approach

Mixed method approach uses Pragmatic worldview and both quantitative and qualitative data is collected sequentially. Using diverse type of data provides a detailed understanding of the research problem than relying on either quantitative or qualitative data alone. The combination of two or more theories, data sources, methods or investigators in

one study of a single phenomenon to converge on a single construct, and can be employed in both quantitative (validation) and qualitative (inquiry) studies.(Yeasmin & Rahman, 2012)

The present study has used Mixed Method approach for the following reasons; Firstly the present study investigates to answer two types of research questions, firstly to find out the effectiveness of using blended learning and online collaborative learning environment for the teaching of story writing skills of learners. This investigation is made through experimental research design using quantitative research method for analysing the performance of learners before and after the experimental study. Secondly, It investigated the experience, perception and feedback of learners regarding their experience of writing stories in collaborative blended learning environment. Thirdly, it investigated the factors which made the use of collaborative blended learning environment effective. Therefore, two types of research methods were used; quantitative and qualitative, two types of data were used; Quantitative data in the form of test scores (Pre-Test and Post-Test) for checking the performance of learners before and after intervention and qualitative data in the form of observation and focused group interviews. Two types of analyses were made; statistical analysis of the scores; means, standard deviations of the test scores of both experimental group and a control group and qualitative analysis of the interviews of learners regarding the perception and feedback of learners related to their experience of writing stories through blended learning and online collaborative learning tools. Finally, two types of interpretations objective and subjective related to the findings from the analysed data.

The Convergent /Parallel/Concurrent Mixed Method Design

The type of mixed method used in the current study is the **convergent**(Creswell,1999) **/ parallel or concurrent) mixed methods design** (Tashakkori &Teddlie, 2003) both quantitative and qualitative data is collected and analysed and the results are compared to understand a research problem. A basic rationale for this design is that one data collection form supplies strengths to offset the weaknesses of the other form, and that a more complete understanding of a research problem results from collecting both quantitative and qualitative data.

3.2.3.2 Triangulation

Triangulation was employed in the present study. Triangulation was done at two levels; theoretical triangulation and methodological triangulation in order to address the current research problem in detail .The triangulated theories acted as a framework for the analysis and interpretations of the findings revolved around the following major theories of learning; social constructivism, cognitivism and connectivism . These theories explain the importance of interactive learning, interaction with the communities of practice, utilization of multimedia for enhanced learning instead of using a single mode of learning and finally the role of collaborative learning which plays a vital role in learning by practicing with others in a collaborative learning environment. Denzin (1970: 472) distinguished four forms of 'triangulation': data 'triangulation' (retrieve data from a number of different sources to form one body of data), investigator 'triangulation' (using multiple observers instead of a single observer in the form of gathering and interpreting data), theoretical 'triangulation' (using more than theoretical positions in interpreting data) and methodological 'triangulation' (using more than one research method or data collection technique).

Concurrent Triangulation

Two or more methods used to confirm, cross-validate, or corroborate findings within a study. Data collection is concurrent. Generally, both methods are used to overcome a weakness in using one method with the strengths of another.**(Creswell,et al., 2003).**The present study has used more than one research design in the present study: Experimental research design and survey design. More than one data collection was used in the present study in order to address the research questions and objectives of the present study. The data for finding the performance of the learners before and after the experimental study were collected through Pre Test and Post Test.

The qualitative data were collected through observation and interviews. Classroom observation of the control group was conducted in order to observe the teaching, learning scenario in the traditional settings so that it would be compared with the teaching learning settings in the collaborative blended learning environment. Focus group interviews were also conducted in order to find out the perception and responses of learners based on their experience of participation in the collaborative blended learning environment for the learning of story writing skills.

Both quantitative data and qualitative are collected at the same time, but is analysed separately, then the results of both are compared and analysed. This helped in validating quantitative findings with Qualitative data. As the study was intended to use Quantitative instruments (Pre Test and Post Test) to measure the relationship between blended learning approach (Independent Variable) and Dependent Variable (story writing skills). The findings are explored in detail with the help of Qualitative data (interviews and observations).

3.3 Research Design

The experimental research design was used in the present study in which the experimental group received treatment in the form of teaching in collaborative blended learning environment and control group received no treatment hence was taught story writing through face to face classroom andragogical methods and strategies.

3.3.3 Type of Research Design

True Experimental Design research design was used in the study was. It is a traditional design in experimental studies which involves the randomized distribution of participants in two groups; Experimental Group and Controlled Group and the treatment is provided to Experimental Group only. The Experimental Group was taught story writing through blended learning while the control group was taught via traditional methods. The experiment lasted for four weeks.

3.4 Research Site and Population of the Study

The research site of the present study was Karakoram International University, Gilgit Baltistan. The population of the study consists of undergraduate learners from the Department of Modern Languages, Karakoram International University who were taking the course creative writing as a regular course offered to them in 7th Semester which comprised of two sections including 25 students in each section. Karakoram International University caters students from linguistic and cultural backgrounds including the learners from different provinces of Pakistan. Therefore the participants of the experimental study shared more or less similar characteristics of the learners from other universities of Pakistan.

3.4.3 Sample of the Study

Two types of sampling strategies were used in the present study First, Purposive sampling second, random sampling. Purposive sampling, was used as the semester of the undergraduate program selected for the experimental study was the one in which creative writing was offered as a course. Therefore 7th semester of undergraduate program was purposively selected for the study. Random sampling strategy was used for dividing the sections into the control group and experimental group. The participants might be selected by random selection or random sampling.7th semester of the undergraduate program had two sections and both were offered creative writing therefore, through random sampling section A was considered the experimental group and section B was considered the control group. Section A was taught the story writing in collaborative blended learning environment by the researcher and Section B was taught in the face to face classroom setting by another teacher. The participants were assigned to the control and experimental group on the basis of simple random sampling. The sample of the study consisted of (50) students distributed in two groups; Experimental Group consisted of (25) students and Control Group included (25) students. The sample was randomly selected and distributed to both experimental and control groups. Therefore on the basis of random distribution there were (9) females and (16) males in the experimental group and (14) males and (11) females in the control group. As the study did not take gender as variable therefore, the participants were not distributed on the basis of gender secondly, the class section A and B was randomly considered the control group and the experimental group hence and there is unequal presence of male and female learners in the groups. The homogeneity of the characteristics of the groups based on their learning abilities was checked through Pre-Test.

Table 3.1*The Distribution of the Sample According to the Groups*

Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Total Participants
No. of Sample	25	25	
Male	16	14	
Females	9	11	50

3.5 Variables of the Study

In order to find out the effectiveness of using blended learning for the teaching of story writing an experimental study was conducted. Blended learning was taken as an independent variable which was the cause and story writing skill was taken as independent variable which was the outcome variable. Learners were taught in a blended learning environment and its effect on the learning outcomes was measured through their performance in the form of test scores.

The study includes the following variables:

Independent Variable

The independent variable is the blended learning approach used for the teaching of story writing skills to learners.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in the present study is the story writing skills of learners from an undergraduate program.

The purpose of the study was to analyse the impact of blended learning approach and online collaborative learning environment on the story writing skills of learners. To examine the difference between the story writing performance of learners who have taken story writing classes in blended learning and online collaborative learning environment and those who were taught through traditional face to face learning methods.

3.6 Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

Data Collection and Analysis Tools

In order to address the first research question of the study regarding the performance of the Learners who were taught in collaborative blended learning environment as compared to the learners who were taught in face to face classroom settings only. The tools used for the collection of quantitative data were: Pre Test and Post Test.T-test was used for the testing of hypotheses of the present study. In order to address the research questions regarding the experience and response of learners who were taught in blended learning environment and the factors which were effective for the learning of story writing skills the qualitative tools which were used in the study are;

a. Focus Group Interviews

b. Observation

c. Analysis of the stories written by learners using online tools.

The study was conducted in two phases;

Experimental Phase

Post experimental Phase

In order to find out the effectiveness of using collaborative blended learning environment for the teaching of story writing skills an experimental study was conducted which was the first phase of the study. After the completion of the experimental phase a second phase of the study was conducted which included conducting interviews from the participants of the experimental study in order to find out and analyse their experience and perceptions about the use of collaborative blended learning environment for the teaching of story writing skills.

3.6.1 Experimental Phase

The present study aims to investigate the effectiveness of collaborative blended learning environment for the teaching of story writing skills. In order to analyse the effectiveness of the use of blended learning approach and use of collaborative online learning tools for the teaching of story writing an experimental study was conducted on EFL learners at undergraduate program 7th semester who were offered the course of creative writing. There were two sections of the class, therefore randomly one section was

considered the experimental group and the second one control group. Total 50 students participated in the study, 25 in experimental group and 25 in control Group.

The participants of the experimental group were taught through a blended learning approach utilizing online collaborative learning tools and face to face classroom sessions as it was a blend of two phase teaching face to face and online sessions.

The participants in the control group were taught through face to face classroom teaching methods of writing and received the materials, instructions, and feedback merely through traditional methods.

3.6.1.1Data Collection Tool for Experimental phase

Pre-Test and Post Test

The participants of the experimental Group as well as the control group were given Pre-Test in order to analyse their story writing skills of the learners at the beginning of the study. For this purpose the learners were asked to write a story on a given topic, which was analysed later through Story writing rubric. (Annex A)

The participants of the experimental group underwent through the treatment (the teachings of both face to face and online blended sessions of story writing). The whole session comprised of four weeks, including face to face teaching and online teaching. There were two classes in a week comprising 30 minutes face to face session and 1 hour for online collaborative writing.

In face to face sessions the content related to story writing was shared and discussed, instructions were given and for online session forums like Wattpad, Wiki space classroom, Story Bird was used for discussions, assignments, sharing of their stories, peer reviews, comments and feedback.

T test was used to compare the results of both the experimental and control group. An independent sample T test was conducted to test the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the Pre-Test scores of experimental group which was taught story writing through a collaborative blended learning environment and control group which was taught through the traditional methods of classroom teaching.

A Paired-Sample T test was conducted to test the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the Pre-Test and post test scores of experimental group which was taught story writing through collaborative blended learning environment.

A One sample T-test was conducted to test the two null hypotheses first, there is no significant difference in the post test scores of experimental group which was taught story writing through a collaborative blended learning environment and control group which was taught through traditional methods of classroom teaching. Second, Null hypothesis, there is no significant improvement in the story writing skills of learners who were taught through collaborative blended learning environment and those who were taught through traditional methods in the classroom.

In order to find out the effect of treatment which was given to experimental group the post test results of both the groups were compared.

Observation

Observation tool was also used in the present study in order to observe the attitudes, responses and learning environment, role of instructor, student involvement etc. in both experimental group and the control group. In the control group, the researchers used non participant observation technique and observed the classroom sessions of the control group, recorded the observations in the form of an observation check list, field notes and memory sparks. (Annex B)

In experimental group the researcher did not conduct a structured observation rather used participant observation technique as the experimental study, including both face to face sessions and online sessions were conducted by the researcher herself. Observation was recorded in the form of memory sparks and field notes.

Data Collection Procedure in Experimental Phase

The experimental phase was further divided into three phases;

Pre Experiment

During Experiment

Post Experiment

Pre Experiment

The following steps were taken in the pre experiment session.

1. All the content and activities which were pre tested during the pilot study were organized and scheduled. These were planned according to the days, duration of sessions, both face to face and

online. The activities and content which were to be shared and discussed in face to face and online session accordingly. (Annex C)

2. Time allocation according to the timetable of the course, timings and day allocation for lab rotation.
3. Participants of the study were divided into two groups; experimental group and control group.
4. Conducting Session regarding the introduction and objectives of the study and experiment, the format of the study, instructions, online registrations.
5. Filling and signing consent forms by the participants in the control group.

During Experiment

25 students participated in the experimental study. The study comprised of 4 weeks. Two classes of 1 and half hours were conducted in a week. 30 minutes of the class were for face to face discussions and instruction and general feedback remaining 1 hour was allocated for online writing sessions.

Face to face sessions included general discussions related to tasks, Queries and instructions related to tasks. Online sessions were conducted in a lab where students were provided with internet facility and were assigned a story writing tasks. Before the commencement of the study the participants of both groups were given a Pre-Test based on writing a story on a topic in order to check the story writing skills of the learners before the experimental study.

Activities, Content and Online Resources Used During the Experimental Phase

The online resources in the form of forum and websites which were used in the present study were as follows.

1. Penzu (The personal online writing Journal)
2. Wikispacesclassroom
3. Story Bird
4. Watt Pad

The above mentioned online resources were used in the experimental study. Penzu was used for writing stories, completing tasks and writing assignments which the learners could save for future use plus they share their stuff with the instructor through Penzu. Personal feedback to the participants on the tasks and assignments related to stories was also given through Penzu.

Wikispacesclassroom was used as online classroom and a discussion forum where all the students were registered and enrolled with their online Id's. This forum was used to share content related to story writing, deadlines, assignments, tasks and discussing queries related to tasks.

Story Bird is an online story writing website where the learners registered themselves and completed stories based on images presented on the website. This provided learners with opportunities and ideas for writing stories based on different images provided to them online. This also ensured learners' spontaneous writing and also bring creativity in their ideas of story writing.

Watt Pad was an online story writers' forum where learners had the opportunity to be a part of the online story writing community, read the published stories of different writers around the world, and familiarize themselves with different genre of stories.

Activities and Content

The activities and content that were used during the experimental study included;

1. Writing stories based on outlines
2. Writing stories based on themes
3. Writing stories based on images
4. Designing and incorporating the elements of a story
5. Story completion individual task and group tasks
6. Reading the stories from watt Pad and writing reviews on them
7. Collaborative story writing activities (Writing in Groups)
8. Designing characters, settings and plot
9. Collaborative story writing in groups
10. Strip story organization.

Post Experimental Phase

This phase included two data collection tools;

1. Post Test
2. Interviews (Annex D)

1 Post Test

After the completion of the experimental session of face to face and blended online learning the participants of the experimental group and controlled group both were assessed through Post Test. Both groups were tested with the same Post Test which was given to the learners in the form of writing a story based on a theme to determine the amount of progress they had made. For that purpose they were asked to write a story on a topic. The story, written by the learners was later graded according to the rubrics of story writing.

3.7Pilot Study

Before conducting the actual study a pilot study was conducted for two main reasons; First to check the all the set of procedures for data collection, checking the validity of data collection tools, finalizing the framework and feasibility of conducting the experimental study. The second objective was to use the results of the pilot study as a baseline for conducting the major study. Therefore the pilot study was conducted on 10 participants who participated in the study. These participants were divided into two groups; control group and the experimental group. Five participants were randomly assigned to experimental and 5 participants were assigned to the control Group. Pre and post Test was conducted in order to check the story writing performance of the learners and the validity of rubrics for testing the stories written by the learners were tested and finalized under the supervision of four Assistant Professors of English linguistics and Literature. The study was conducted for three weeks and after the completion of the study the Pre-Test and Post-Tests of the participants of the experimental group and the control group were analysed.

From the results of the Pre-test and post test scores the null hypotheses were first tested to check the significant performance difference between experimental and control group in both Pre-Tests and Post-Tests. The purpose was if the null hypothesis on post test scores was rejected in the pilot study, then the researcher would test the directional hypotheses in the main study according to the direction shown by the date of the pilot study. The descriptive statistics and inferential statistics of the pilot study rejected the null

hypothesis for Post-Test and was accepted for the null hypothesis in the Pre-Test which led to the testing of the directional hypotheses in the actual study.

3.8Validity, Reliability and Trustworthiness

Validity and reliability in all aspects of the research help in assuring trustworthiness and credibility of the research. One needs to be aware of the tactics and strategies that needs to be adopted in order to avoid the potential threats and risks to the validity and reliability of the research findings.

Validity is concerned with the accuracy and truthfulness of scientific findings. According to Campbell and Stanley (1986) there are two major forms of validity; internal validity and external validity. Internal validity refers to the type of validity, which ensures that the results and findings of the research are the true reflection and representative of the reality on the other hand external validity refers to how valid the findings are that it could be the representation and reflection of the reality of other groups.

Reliability is concerned with consistency, stability and repeatability of informants' accounts as well as the investigator's ability to collect and record information accurately (Selltiz et al 1976:182). Hence it deals with the repetition of the same results after repeated testing periods.

The validity and reliability in the present study are ensured through the following ways;

- The validity of the research instruments which were used in the study were already tested in the pilot study.
- The validity of the stories written by the participants was ensured by giving different topics for writing stories during lab rotation during the online session in order to ensure that the learners are not sharing already written stories.
- Topics were for Pre-Test and Post-Test were spontaneous and the same strategy is used for testing story writing skills by different language practitioners in creative writing classes.
- The rubrics for assessing the stories written by learners was designed based on the rubrics used by language practitioners which was also checked by a panel of four Assistant Professors of Literature and Linguistics.

- The validity of the finding was ensured through supporting evidences from the existing literature.
- In order to ensure the unbiased distribution of learners in control and experimental group random sampling technique was used so that all the participants get equal chances of participation irrespective of any biasness.

Two important techniques were used in order to ensure the credibility of the study and trustworthiness of the findings:

- Prolonged Engagement
- Triangulation.

Prolonged engagement with the participant in the experimental study for almost 4 weeks developed a friendly interaction and understanding, therefore the participants felt free and relaxed in sharing their experience with the researcher as the researcher was engaged with them. Another technique which is used to establish credibility of findings was data triangulation as the data was collected through Pre Test and Post Test, Focus interviews and participant and nonparticipant observation.

3.9Ethical Considerations

Ethics are basically the moral beliefs and principles that deal with and govern the behavior of any person towards others and real life experiences. Ethics are therefore an integral part of our moral being and our interactions in any sphere of life. According to Creswell (2003) researcher has the responsibility to respect the values, beliefs, faith, rights, and feelings of the informants.

In research a considerable attention is paid towards ethics in addressing the issues related to fairness, transparency, confidentiality, respecting the knowledge and procedures adopted during research. Therefore, ethical consideration is very important in research. According to Silverman (2000) when a researcher does reach it means he is entering the private space of their participants as he is in the process of collecting actual data.

The ethical considerations made in the present study are as follows;

- Participants of the experimental study signed an informed consent that including the objectives of the experimental study and their role in the study. (Annex E)

- Privacy, anonymity and confidentiality were addressed by not revealing the names of participants and their work. Secondly, fake names were assigned while doing the statistical analysis of their data.
- Approval was taken from the university to conduct the research in their settings. (Annex F)

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter deals with the description results of the study of a set of procedures adopted for selecting data collection tools, data collection procedure and analysis of the data.

4.1 Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

The present study used mixed method; using both quantitative method and qualitative method for addressing the research questions of the present study. Quantitative research method was used to investigate the effectiveness of using collaborative blended learning environment for the teaching of story writing skills through statistical analysis of the test scores of the experimental group and the control group. Spss 20 Version was used for statistical analysis of the results. Triangulation was used at three levels of the study: Theoretical triangulation, methodological triangulation and data triangulation in order to enhance the validity of the findings and results of the present study. The tools used in both phases of the study were as follows:

1. Pre-Test and Post-Test
2. Observation
3. Interviews
4. Content Analysis

4.2 Quantitative Analysis and Results

The participants of the experimental study were given Pre Test in order to analyse the story writing skills of the learners before teaching story writing skills to both groups. The null hypothesis was tested using T-test using SPSS program. The Independent Sample

T-test was run to calculate the means, standard deviation, mean difference and significance value.

Null Hypothesis 1

The Null hypothesis tested through independent sample T test is: **There is no significant difference in the scores of Pre Test of both experimental group and the control group.**

Table 4.1 *Group Statistics*

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
PreTest	Experimental	25	11.4000	2.04124	.40825
	Control	25	11.7600	1.58850	.31770

Table 4.2.*Null Hypothesis 1:There is no significant difference in the scores of Pre Test of both experimental group and control group*

Independent Samples Test

		Levene'sTestfor Equalityof Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std.Error Difference	95%Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
PreTest	Equal variances assumed	1.385	.245	-.696	48	.490	-.36000	.51730	-1.40010	.68010
	Equal variances not assumed			-.696	45.269	.490	-.36000	.51730	-1.40173	.68173

Results and Analysis

An independent sample T test was conducted to test the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the pre-test scores of experimental group which was taught story writing through a collaborative blended learning environment and control group which was taught through the traditional methods of classroom teaching. In order to find out the homogeneity of both groups in terms of their level story writing skills the Pre-test was conducted so that the level could be ensured before the treatment.

The table 4.2 shows the results of the Pre Test of both Control and Experimental Group. The test was significant and the results of the test favour the hypothesis as the P value for the significance is (0.406) which is greater than the p value (0.05) hence the null hypothesis is accepted that says there is no significant difference in the scores of the pre-

tests of both control and experimental group. This shows that all the learners at the beginning of the experiment were having the same level of story writing skills.

Null Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the Pre and Post test scores of Experimental group

The hypothesis was tested using Paired sample Test in order to find out the effectiveness of collaborative blended learning environment for the teaching of story writing skills.

Table 4.3*Paired Samples Correlations*

Paired Samples Correlations

Group			N	Correlation	Sig.
Experimental	Pair 1	PreTest & PostTest	25	.927	.000
Control	Pair 1	PreTest & PostTest	25	.853	.000

Table 4.4.*Null Hypothesis 2.There is no significant difference in the Pre and Post test scores of Experimental group*

Paired Samples Test

Group		Paired Differences					T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Experimental	PreTest - PostTest	-4.20000	.81650	.16330	-4.53703	-3.86297	-25.720	24	.000

Results and Analysis

A Paired sample T test was conducted to test the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the Pre-Test and Post-Test scores of experimental group which was taught story writing through collaborative blended learning environment In order to find out the effect of treatment which was given to the experimental group in the form of collaborative blended learning environment on the story writing skills of the learners the Pre-Test and post test scores of the learners were compared.

The results of the paired sample T test that the Mean score (M= 4.20, SD=0.816) and the (p = 0.000) indicate that there was significant difference in the scores of the Pre-Test and Post-Test of the experimental group as the p value (0.000) was less than 0.05 which means the hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference in the pre and Post-Test scores of experimental group is rejected As the results indicate that there is significant difference in the test results of the experimental group.

Null Hypothesis 3 and 4

3. There is no significant difference in the post test scores of both experimental and control groups.

4. There is no significant improvement in the story writing skills of learners who were taught in a collaborative blended learning environment as compared to the learners who were taught through traditional method of teaching.

Table 4.5 *There is no significant difference in the post test scores of both experimental and control groups*

One-Sample Statistics

Group		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental	Post Test	25	15.6000	1.60728	.32146
	Content Post Test	25	3.9200	.49329	.09866
	Organization Post-test	25	3.8000	.40825	.08165
	Language and Style Post Test	25	3.6400	.75719	.15144
	Conventions Post Test	25	4.0000	.81650	.16330
Control	Post Test	25	13.7600	1.56205	.31241
	Content Post Test	24	3.9167	.50361	.10280
	Organization Post Test	25	3.5600	.50662	.10132
	Language and Style Post Test	25	3.0000	.40825	.08165
	Conventions Post Test	25	3.9200	.70238	.14048

One-Sample Test

Group		Test Value = 0					
		T	Df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Experimental	Post Test	48.529	24	.000	15.60000	14.9365	16.2635
	Content	39.733	24	.000	3.92000	3.7164	4.1236
	Organization	46.540	24	.000	3.80000	3.6315	3.9685
	Language and Style	24.036	24	.000	3.64000	3.3274	3.9526
	Conventions	24.495	24	.000	4.00000	3.6630	4.3370
	PostTest	44.045	24	.000	13.76000	13.1152	14.4048
	Content	38.100	23	.000	3.91667	3.7040	4.1293
Control	Organization	35.135	24	.000	3.56000	3.3509	3.7691
	Language and Style	36.742	24	.000	3.00000	2.8315	3.1685
	Conventions	27.905	24	.000	3.92000	3.6301	4.2099

Table 4.6.*Null Hypothesis 4: There is no significant improvement in the story writing skills of learners who were taught in collaborative blended learning environment as compare to the learners who were taught in traditional settings.*

Results and Analysis

A One sample T test was conducted to test the two null hypotheses first, there is no significant difference in the post test scores of experimental group which was taught story writing through a collaborative blended learning environment and control group which was taught through traditional methods of classroom teaching. Second, Null hypothesis, there is no significant improvement in the story writing skills of learners who were taught through collaborative blended learning environment and those who were taught through traditional methods in the classroom. In order to find out the effect of treatment which was given to experimental group the post test results of both the groups were compared.

The results of the One sample test show that the mean of experimental group M (15.6) SD (1.607), t (48.529) was significantly different from the sample mean of control group mean M (13.76), SD (1.562), t (44.045). Hence the results reveal that there is a significant difference in the post scores of the experimental group and the control group as the P value (0.000) is less than P=) 0.05 thus rejecting the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference in the post test scores of the experimental and control group.

The results of the same test reveal that the learners who participated in the collaborated blended learning environment showed improvements in their story writing skills. The results of the categories of story writing reveal improvements in all the categories like improvements in content, organization, language and style, and conventions. When the t (48.529) of the experimental group was compared with the t (44.045) of control group it was indicated that learners in the experimental group have improved their story writing skills in all categories as compared to control group. Therefore the hypothesis that states that there is no significant improvement in the story writing skills of learners who were taught in a collaborative blended learning environment as compared to the learners who were taught through traditional methods of teaching is rejected.

Similar results have been found in other researches which investigated the role of blended learning in improving writing skills like (Adas & Bakir, 2013;Keshta & Harb, 2013;Shafiee et al.,2013; Arsalan, 2014; Abdulmajid, 2014.)The effectiveness of using collaborative blended learning for improving the writing performance of the learners has also been investigated by (Al-Ahmad, 2003; Taki & Fardafshari, 2012;Jafari& Ansari, 2012;Grami,2012;Shukor & Noordin, 2014) and the results of the studies have supported the effectiveness of collaborative blended learning environment and strategies for the teaching of writing skills.

4.3 Qualitative Analysis

4.3.1 Observation

In order to make a comparison of the learning environment for teaching of story writing skills through collaborative blended learning in the experimental group and traditional ways of learning in face to face learning scenarios in the control group. Classroom observations were made and compared.

4.3.1.1 Rationale for Classroom Observation

The purpose for conducting classroom observation was two folds first in order to make a comparative analysis of the learning environment and instructional strategies used for the teaching of story writing in control group which was taught through the traditional methods of teaching and learning environments and experimental group which was taught through the collaborative blended learning environment. Secondly, to triangulate the findings and results of the experimental study using multiple sources of data collection and analysis in order to validate the findings and results of the present study. Therefore, in order to take an insight into the teaching and learning in the control group a non-participant observation was made by the researcher and participant observation was made in the experimental group. No specific observation schedule was planned for the experimental group as the researcher herself was involved in the teaching process therefore field notes and memory sparks were recorded so that it will be compared with the observation made in the control group later.

4.3.1.2 Observation Tools and Procedure

The procedure adopted for the classroom observation of the control group includes the following:

1. Observation of the physical settings and learning environment
2. A running record of the events and happenings
3. Observation Checklist (Annex E)
4. Descriptive Field Notes (Annex F)
5. Reflective Comments
6. Post observation summary

The classroom observation of control group was conducted in order to observe the learning environment, methodologies used activities used and instructional aid used for the teaching of story writing skills. The observation consisted of the physical classroom settings, the demographic details of the students and learning environment. The descriptive record of all the data was recorded in the form of Field notes along with the reflective comments on the observations. A checklist form based on the focus of the classroom observation was made and it was also filled during the observation. At the end of the

observation a post observation summary was written regarding the observations made on each day.

4.3.1.3 Focus of the Observation

The focus of the classroom observation of control group revolved around the following aspects.

1. Lesson structure and content taught
2. Use of teaching methodology
3. Student engagement and role of teacher
4. Activities used
5. Use of Instructional aids
6. Feedback and assessment
7. Home tasks and supplementary material

4.3.1.4 Observation Analysis

The observation of the control group class is mentioned according to the days of observation in tabular form along with findings and critical Discussion on the observations made by the researcher.

Table 4.7Classroom Observation Day 1

Themes	**Observation**	**Codes**	
Physical Setting and Environment	• Control group comprised of 25 students. They all took classes in a classroom. The seating arrangement was in the form of rows. There was a White board on the front wall and a rostrum was one on side of the front wall and another side of was having	Students =25 Seating Arrangement in Rows	ST RWS

	multimedia. The class timings were 1hour and 30 minutes.		
Lesson Content and methodology	• This was the first classroom session on Story writing. The teacher came in the class and greeted students and after some time wrote the topic of discussion on board. “Introduction to narrative writing”. The teacher asked few Questions regarding narrative writing and the students gave different answers to the questions asked by the teacher. The students gave varying answers some of them said they have written, some of them were still writing.	Lecture And Discussion Story Writing Activity	LEC DIS STR WRT
Activity	• The methodology used by the teacher was lecturing method and discussion.		

Student Engagement and Role of Teacher	• The teacher then asked the students to write "a story based on their own childhood memories" • Then students stated writing on the topic of the story given by the teacher individually. Now the students got busy in writing story. The teacher took a round of the class. Students asked different questions related to the story • They were writing and the teacher answered to the queries.		
Use of Instructional aids	• The teachers only used white boards and a marker for writing the topic of discussion on board and later writing the topic of the activity. Apart from this no other instructional aid was used in the class.	White Board	WHT BRD
	• The class ended after 1and half hour the students completed the task and submitted it to the teacher. The teacher then ended the class after collecting the written activity and		

	informing the students about the next topic for the class.		
Home task or supplementary reading Material	• No home task was given by the teacher .No supplementary reading material was provided	No Home Task	No HME TSk
Feedback and Assessment	• No feedback was given on the activity as the student hardly managed to complete the activity during the class.	No feedback	NO FDB K

Analysis and Interpretation

The above mentioned table shows the details in the form of table related to the observation of the 1st day. The researchers used a checklist to mark the observance and non-observance of the different points mentioned on the checklist. Meanwhile field notes were written in descriptive form in order to record the observation made in one and half hour class. The researcher at the end of the observation wrote reflective comments at the end of class and later post observation summary was written regarding the observation made on the first day. The following interpretations were made from the observations of the first day

- The teacher used the lecture method for introducing the topic of discussion and then engaged class by asking questions related to the topic.
- No handouts or reading material was provided to the class before the session. It seemed students were not familiar with the topic of discussion.
- The classroom activity assigned to the students was individual task based on the experience of the students. The students for an initial 10 minutes were seemed to recall their childhood memories. Few asked the teacher regarding their queries in doing their activities.
- There was silence in the class most of the time and the teacher was roaming around in order to check what her students were writing. Few students were observed discussing with each other, but in very low tones.

- At the end of the class the teacher collected the written activity task from the students and asked to mark attendance and left the class by telling the next topic of the class.

Table 4.8Classroom Observation Day 2

Themes	**Observation**	**Codes**	
Physical Setting and Environment	• Control group comprised of 20 students. On the second day the class was taken in the same classroom. The seating arrangement was the same in the form of rows. Hence the physical setting of the classroom was same as the 1st day. The class timings were 1hour and 30 minutes.	Students =20 Absent= 5 Seating Arrangement in Rows	ST RWS
Lesson Content and methodology	• This was the second classroom session on Story writing. The teacher came in the class and greeted students and then returned the writing activity of the last class to the students. Then the teacher gave a general feedback on the stories written by the students and highlighted the areas which needed improvement. • Students noted down the points in their registers and	Lecture And Discussion	LEC DIS

Activity Student Engagement and Role of Teacher	this feedback session took almost 40 minutes of the class. • Then the teacher asked a student to switch on multimedia and connected the plug to her laptop and opened a power point presentation. • Then the teacher started her lecture on "the elements of story". • No individual or group activity was given to students. • The teacher was delivering a lecture and students were silently listening to the lecture. • Most of the students seemed busy in writing points on register related to the lecture. Few were reading the content on the slides and some were observed listening to the teacher. • The teacher was reading points from the slides and then discussing them in detail with the help of examples.	Story Writing Activity	STR WRT

Use of Instructional aids	• On the second day the teacher delivered a lecture on elements of story using PowerPoint slides.	PowerPoint Presentation	PPP
Home task or supplementary reading Material	• The power point presentation was shared with the students at the end of the class. Home task was given to the students to read a short story and identify the elements of the story	Home Task identification of elements of story	No HME TSk

Analysis and Interpretation

The observations made on the second day by the researcher are mentioned in the above table. The table gives a brief description of the physical settings and environment of the class, the mode of delivery of lesson, the use of instructional aids, and student engagement in the class, Observance of behaviours and interest of the learners towards the lecture and finally the ending of the class.

The interpretations of the second day's observation are as follows;

- The students were passive during the lecture, half of the class seemed busy noting down the points of the lecture delivered through power point presentation.
- There were few students in the front rows who asked a question related to the topic rest of the class was almost quiet till the end of the lecture.
- The session was more teacher centered and lecture based. Student's participation and discussion were negligent.

Table 4.9Classroom Observation day 3

Themes	**Observation**	**Codes**	
Physical Setting and Environment	• The classroom settings was the same as it was in the last two classes. The strength of the class was 23. 2 students were absent	Students =23 Absent= 2 Seating Arrangement in Rows	ST RWS
Lesson Content and methodology Activity Student Engagement and Role of Teacher	• The class started with greetings and then the teacher recalled the points of the previous class briefly by asking different questions related to it. • The teacher then asked the students regarding the home task given to them on identification of the elements of Story. • All together it was a discussion session based on the topics studied in the previous class and the home task.	Lecture And Discussion Story Writing Activity	LEC DIS STR WRT

	• No classroom activity only discussion on the home task. • The class participation was not much satisfactory as only those students who had completed the task were one by one sharing the theme of the story, plot, characters, climax, conflict, settings etc.		
Use of Instructional aids	• No use of any instructional aid only discussion was made on the home task		WHT BRD
Home task or supplementary reading Material	• No home task was given by the teacher • Few handouts were given to students as supplementary reading material on elements of the story.	No Home Task	No HME TSk
Feedback and Assessment	• Feedback was mixed with the discussion on the home tasks that were shared by the students		

Analysis and Interpretations

The observations made on the third day by the researcher are mentioned in the above table. The table gives a brief description of the physical settings and environment of the class, the mode of delivery of lesson, the use of instructional aids, and student engagement in the class, Observance of behaviours and interest of the learners towards the lecture and finally the ending of the class. The interpretations based on classroom observation are as follows:

- Overall the classroom session was based on discussion on the elements of the story. The students shared the task they had completed regarding identification of the elements of the story.
- The participation of the students does not seem satisfactory as all the students did not complete the task. The participation of the students in answering the questions was not much only the students sitting in the front rows were responding to the questions.
- Not all students completed the task. They gave different reasons for not doing the home task.
- Only 8 students one by one explained their home task and explained the title of the story, theme, characters, plot settings, conflict, resolution etc. The class participation was not much satisfactory as the students who complemented the task only they participated in the discussion and rest were listening to them.

Classroom Observation Day4

The observations made on the second day by the researcher are mentioned below. The table gives a brief description of the physical settings and environment of the class, the mode of delivery of lesson, the use of instructional aids, and student engagement in the class, Observance of behaviours and interest of the learners towards the lecture and finally the ending of the class.

Table 4.10*Classroom Observation Day 4*

Themes	**Observation**	**Codes**	
Physical Setting and Environment	• The classroom settings were same as it was in the last two classes. The strength of the class was 25.	Students =23 Seating Arrangement in Rows	ST RWS
Lesson Content and methodology Activity Student Engagement and Role of Teacher	• The teacher started the class with greetings and used a white board for writing an outline of the story on the board and asking students to complete a story based on the outline. • "Once I was driving my car and coming back to home from work suddenly" • The students were asked to complete the task individually. The teachers gave instructions related to the task. The teacher was roaming around the class and monitoring students' work.	Lecture And Discussion Story Writing Activity	LEC DIS STR WRT
Use of Instructional aids	• The teacher used a white board for writing the outline of story on the board.		WHT BRD
Home task or supplementary reading Material	• No home task was given • No supplementary material was given to students	No Home Task	No HME TSk

Feedback and Assessment	• The students did not complete the task during class timings therefore no time was left for discussion and feedback on story written by students.		

Analysis and Interpretation

The analysis and interpretations of the observation made on fourth day are as follows;

- The students didn't seem much interested in writing class as few students said" One more story writing task.." with an expression of feeling bored of writing stories.
- Individual task was given to the students. Almost all classes were busy writing their own stories.
- Few students were observed having discussions with each others.

Table 4.11 *Classroom Observation Day 5*

Themes	**Observation**	**Codes**	
Physical Setting and Environment	• The classroom setting was the same as it was in previous classes. The strength of the class was 18. 7 students were absent	Students =23 Absent= 2 Seating Arrangement in Rows	ST RWS
Lesson Content and methodology	• The teacher delivered a lecture on the language, tense aspects and style of narrative writing especially story writing. Students were given a handout on language, style and tense aspects in story writing and	Lecture And Discussion	LEC DIS

Activity Student Engagement and Role of Teacher	Does and Do not of writing stories. • Reading task was given to students. A student was reading handouts and the teacher was explaining it to the class. • One by one the students were reading and the teacher was explaining it to students.	Story Writing Activity	STR WRT
Use of Instructional aids	• Reading handouts		WHT BRD
Home task or supplementary reading Material	• No home task was given	No Home Task	No HME TSk
Feedback and Assessment	• No feedback and assessment as the task was not the written one, rather it was a reading task.		

Analysis and Interpretations

This session was based on reading related to the handouts which were given to the learners prior to the class. Handouts were based on the topic language, style and tense aspects in story writing and Does and Do not's of writing stories. Students were involved in reading session. One by one students were given the chance to read the hand out, then they had discussion on different points related to the topic. There were discussions related to the use of tenses, language, the style of story writing, diction students were reading the points and the teacher was explaining it to students.

Table 4.12*Classroom Observation Day*6

Themes	**Observation**	**Codes**	
Physical Setting and Environment	• The classroom settings was the same as it was in the last classes. The strength of the class was 18. 7 students were absent	Students =23 Absent= 2 Seating Arrangement in Rows	ST RWS
Lesson Content and methodology Activity Student Engagement and Role of Teacher	• This was the final session on story writing. Their teacher gave an outline based on a theme. • Story writing activity based on a theme. • Individual task was given to the learners and the teacher was supervising them.	Lecture And Discussion Story Writing Activity	LEC DIS STR WRT
Use of Instructional aids	• Only White board and marker was used to write the topic of the story on the board		WHT BRD
Home task or supplementary reading Material	No home task was given	No Home Task	No HME TSk
Feedback and Assessment	The Activity was the final assessment activity of the whole session on story writing		

Analysis and Interpretation

This was the final session on story writing. The teacher gave an assessment task on story writing. A theme was given to the learners and they were asked to write a story based on that theme. All the instruction related to the task was given by the teacher. The individual writing task was given to the learners Task was based on incorporating all the elements of the story in their writings. They were given one and half hour time for the completion of the task. This task was considered as the credit task.

Critical Discussion on Classroom Observations

The focus of the classroom observations revolved around the following aspects: Lesson structure and content taught, teaching methodology used, student engagement and role of teacher, activities and use of instructional aids, feedback , assessment , home tasks and supplementary material. After an analysis of the observations made on the above mentioned aspects it is was observed that story writing skills taught in the face to face classroom settings were mostly based on the lecturer based methods including some writing activities related to stories. The class setting was more lecture based and teacher centered. The content related to story writing was taught like a lecture using power point slides and the activities given to students were most of the time based on topics and situations. The students were asked to write stories on themes within the given classroom settings and timings. They were sometimes given themes on which students were asked to write stories.

The use of instructional aids was limited to white board and multimedia. Lectures related to story writing were given based on power point slides. Students were engaged in activities within the set timings of the class and no engagement was made with students after the class. Comparing the observation made in the face to face classroom setting with that of story writing in collaborative blended learning environment. The following were the limitations of the face to face classroom teaching of story writing:

1. Lack of variety in teaching story writing in face to face classroom settings did not motive and develop the interest among learners for writing stories. On the other hand, the blended learning settings provided the learners with variety of online tools and resources and gave access to interact with the same community of practice through story writing blogs, forums and sites. This played a vital role in enhancing the creativity of learners as maximum exposure to writers and

genre of stories gave the learners more ideas for enhancing their own creativity and writing which was missing in face to face classroom settings.

2. Learners were not provided with reading opportunities related to stories as reading skills supplement writing skills. Therefore learners lacked the opportunities of reading stories on different genre. Reading handouts were provided with sample reading stories but that was limited as compare to it the learners in experimental group were given access, through different online resources, to read stories on different genre by different writers on different blogs and forums which helped them in getting ideas, becoming familiar with different writing styles, genre and diction.
3. The learners in collaborative blended learning environment were having the autonomy towards learning choices like in story bird they were having a lot of options for writing stories based on a variety of images available to them. Similarly the learners can decide by their own choice and interest in selecting any genre of story.
4. Limited use of instructional aids, monotony in teaching style ,lack of variety in story writing activities made the classroom sessions more like content based lecture classes therefore the learners did not show much interest and motivation in writing stories in control group. The use of multimedia offered flexibility and choices in terms of learning options to the learners in blended learning settings which helped learners in making choices according to their own ease and pace of learning. It was an important factor for maintaining and increasing the interest of learner by every time providing them with more creative and innovative ideas of story writing they were not familiar with. On the other hand, learning within the same community of practice was also encouraging and effective as the learners could read the stories written by others and improve their own areas. The idea of collaborative learning was also helpful as learners were learning along with the peers, the comments on their work by the teachers and peer were appreciating and encouraging.
5. The idea of collaborative blended learning environment for the teaching of story writing skills was innovative, interesting and exciting as the learners who participated in it were enjoying their learning it was learning with fun therefore

it encouraged and motivated them to learn and write more creatively in blended learning settings. Learners were actively engaged in writing during the face to face session and also after the classroom according to their own choice, timing and feasibility.

4.3.2 Interview Analysis

In order to know about the perceptions of learners who participated in experimental study regarding the use of collaborative blended learning environment a semi structured interview was conducted. 12 participants from the experimental study were randomly selected for focus group interview.

In semi structured interview the researcher asked a series of open ended questions along with probing questions for more detailed data related to their experience. All participants were interviewed for almost 10 -15 minutes. The interview was recorded using sound recorder and later the interview was transcribed.

4.3.2.1 Inductive Approach to Qualitative Content Analysis

Qualitative Content Analysis has been employed in the present study for the analysis of focus interviews. Hsieh & Shannon (2005) Qualitative content analysis are defined as " a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes and patterns. (P. 1278)

Qualitative content analysis does not merely involve counting words or objective view towards text, rather it involves patterns, themes and meanings that may emerge from the text which in turn helps in subjective understanding of social reality in a scientific way. Inductive approach to qualitative content analysis involves a process which is designed to condense raw data into categories and themes based on valid inferences and interpretations. It involves inductive reasoning by which themes and categories emerge from data through careful examination and constant comparison.

4.3.2.1.1 Thematic Analysis

The qualitative data from the interviews were analysed following the following steps of designed by Yildirim and Simsek (2008).

a. Data Coding

b. Developing Themes

c. Organizing Codes and Themes

d. Defining and Describing the findings and interpretations (p. 228)

Qualitative approach to thematic analysis is applied to the analysis of interview data which is one of the widely used qualitative approaches for analysing, interviews. Braun and Clarke (2006). According to them, thematic analysis is a method used for 'identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data' (2006, p. 79).

The recorded interviews were transcribed and read again and again for codification of data this was the first stage of analysis. Coding according to Strauss and Corbin (1998) is defined as "the analytic process through which data are fractured, conceptualized, and integrated to form theory" (p, 3). Then the next step is of developing themes, organizing codes and themes. At the end these themes were used for describing and interpreting the findings.

4.3.2.2 Findings and Results

At the end of the experimental study focus interview of the participants of the experimental study was conducted in order to find out their perceptions and experiences regarding the use of collaborative blended learning environment for the teaching of story writing skills. Interviews of the participants were recorded through sound recorder and later they were transcribed. After a detailed study of the interview answers of the participants the following themes merged from the collected data.

Past Experience of Writing Stories

In order to know about the experience of learners who participated in the collaborative blended learning environment they were asked about their past experience of writing stories either online or on paper. Analysis of the focus group interviews and the responses of the participants revealed that some of the learners were having an experience of writing stories on paper some of them have been writing stories due to their personal interests and some of them wrote in school or college when they were asked to write a story in exam or classroom task. All the participants mentioned that writing stories online was their first experience. Two students mentioned that they have a personal interest in reading and writing stories and have read stories online and have also downloaded stories from the internet. But they also have not written any story on the computer or online. For few writing stories was a new experience as they had never written any story before neither on paper nor online. Hence all the participants had no past experience of writing stories online. Two

of them used online resources for reading stories either online or offline. The responses of the participants were as follows

P.1:

> "Yes, I do write stories, but I have never written any story online. I used to read and download stories from the internet. The stories I have written were based on whatever I feel like writing about without considering to incorporate all the elements of story writing in it. It was my first experience of writing stories online"

P.2 "Yes, I do write occasionally, but it was my first experience of writing online"

P3. "It was my first experience of writing stories online. I do write poetry, quotations and personal diary, but I have not written any story before."

P4. "It was my first experience of writing stories online. Before this session I have written stories on paper in school and college, but didn't receive any feedback on it"

Therefore, for all the participants online story writing was the first experience of their life.

Knowledge about Elements of Story Writing

Participants in the focus group interview were asked about their knowledge of the elements of the story. There were varying answers regarding the knowledge of learners about the elements of story i.e Plot, theme, Characters, settings, conflict, Resolution, ending. Almost all the participants were having knowledge about the elements of the story, but when they were asked about its implementation while writing stories there were varying responses. Out of 12 participants all said they do have knowledge about the elements of story, but 2 participants said they have incorporated these elements while writing stories rest were of the view that they never applied them. The responses of the participants are as follows:

P1: "Being the student of literature we have been taught short stories therefore we do have the knowledge about the elements of story writing, but we did not learn how to develop these elements while writing stories. Yes, I do include them in my stories, but in my own ways not adhering to the standards of its implementation"

P2. "Yes, I had knowledge about the elements of story writing, but I never used them

in My stories the way I have learned now how to incorporate them in stories"

P3: "Yes, I have the habit of reading novels, short stories therefore I am familiar

With these elements of the story, but I myself have never written any story incorporating these elements in it".

Experience of Writing Stories Online

In order to know about the experience of learners who participated in the collaborative blended learning online environment they were asked about their experience of taking part in this session which comprised of face to face session and online session. The participants of the study responded regarding their experience of writing stories online.

Table 4.13.*Experience of Writing Stories Online*

Themes/Categories	
Positive Experience	**Negative Experience**
1. New and Great Experience 2. Fruitful/Helpful 3. Fantastic Experience 4. Fun and Interesting experience 5. Wonderful Experience 6. Awesome Experience 7. Exciting Experience 8. Nice experience	

The Responses of Participants

When the respondents were asked about their experience of writing stories online most of the learners found it very exciting, innovative, exciting, interesting and fun. Two participants were of the view that it was challenging for them as they were not having good typing speed plus they never used online resources for learning therefore the registration processes, login etc. was challenging for them. It was difficult for them to adapt themselves to this new learning setting. One of the participants was the view that she did not like the idea of writing stories online as she was more comfortable writing stories, poetry etc. on

paper on the other hand, she appreciated the use of online resources for learning and reading stories and it was helpful in providing access to different types of stories. The responses of the participants are as follows:

P1: "It was a New and exciting experience of writing online. As I am interested in reading and listening to stories, but I never wrote any story myself, that's why I really enjoyed writing stories in different ways. The perception I had in my mind regarding story writing was we have to write any story based on any theme or idea. But I never thought stories can be written in such a variety of ways like in story bird using images. Also the idea of reading stories of others was very interesting, I read a lot of stories written by different people in different genres. I learnt a lot online through this session"

P2: "It was a new and wonderful experience of writing stories in a new style. I was used to writing stories on any idea or theme never thought of writing any story, poems and developing the characters of the story. The best part was writing the stories and publishing it as it gave me a sense of achievement when I got wonderful encouraging remarks on my creative writing. It was really an awesome experience"

P3: "It was really a fun writing stories and sharing with friends. Before this session, wherever I thought of sharing my personal written stuff with others I was fearful how people will react towards it. This experience was like a parachute which guided me to overcome my fear of sharing my creative work with my friends and teacher. It boosted my courage to write freely and share it with others. Their comments helped me in continuing my work making it more creative with new ideas"

P4: "It was good, but I like writing stories or such creative things in my diary on a paper because it was a bit challenging for me to think of ideas and then typing them on the computer I felt it tiresome. Reading the stories on different genre by different people was interesting. On the other hand, what I like about online writing was publishing our stories and sharing it with others that was very encouraging"

P5: "It was an innovative idea for us to write stories online as we were not used to of using online forum for creative purposes. Initially, it was a bit

> challenging understanding how to register and login later it became very easy and interesting. It was a fantastic idea of writing stories online plus reading the stories related to different genre written by writers across the world".

The overall experience of the respondents was very good they found writing stories online very interesting and exciting as it was the first experience of almost all participants of the study. The analysis of the interviews revealed that they have found this session very fruitful and enjoyable. As it was new and different from the typical tradition classroom teaching therefore they found it very interesting. Some of the students found it challenging as well as they were not familiar with the registration procedures therefore they had some issues during login.

Experience of Learning and Writing in Collaborative Blended Learning Environment

The respondents were asked about their experience of writing stories in a collaborative blended learning environment. Almost all participants found it very effective in improving their story writing skills, the learning environment was very encouraging and motivating for them. The idea of sharing their writing with instructor and peers was very new and encouraging for them as they felt a sense of achievement when their friends and teacher appreciated their work. The comments and remarks were very encouraging, therefore this feeling of achievement and encouragement motivated them in writing more stories. They found it very exciting to share and publish their stories it boasted their courage to write more creatively. One of the responded called it fun learning as they were not feeling that they are studying rather they are interacting with their friends and are sharing their stories the way they share stuff with friends on Facebook, twitter and other social networking sites.

Table 4.14*The Overall Responses of the Respondents are Summed up in the Following Table.*

Theme/Category **The Experience of Writing Stories in Collaborative Blended Learning Environment**
1. The learning environment was very encouraging and motivating 2. It was a conducive learning environment 3. It was very exciting writing stories and sharing with friends 4. It was fun writing stories and sharing with friends 5. It was an unprecedented experience 6. It was very helpful and effective in improving our writing skills 7. It gave us a Competitive environment

The Responses of the Participants

P1: "It was the best way of learning as we were in such a conducive environment e learning from others who are more or less of our level or even from the ones who have achieved a quality of standard in their writings. It was very exciting writing stories and sharing with others and getting positive, encouraging remarks on it. It was really a good feeling when someone was appreciating my work"

P2: "It was really a fun writing stories and sharing with friends. Before this session I was reluctant about sharing my personal written stuff with others I was fearful how people will react towards it. This experience was like a parachute which guided me to overcome my fear of sharing my creative work with my friends and teacher. It boosted my courage to write freely and share it with others. Their comments helped me in continuing my work making it more creative with new ideas"

P3: "The idea of writing stories through collaborative blended learning was unprecedented. It was awesome for two reasons: first we were using online resources for writing stories which provided us with enormous ideas of writing stories secondly the idea of collaborative learning was very helpful and effective in improving our writing skills"

P4: "The idea of collaborative learning was very great as it made us to learn with our friends it was like fun we didn't feel like we are studying rather we are sharing our creativity with friends the way we do on Facebook twitter etc. It helped us a lot in learning and improving our weakness in language and creativity"

Analysis of the responses of participants revealed that learners found the collaborative blended learning environment very effective for learning as they were writing stories and sharing with their peers which motivated and encouraged them a lot in learning and improving their story writing skills. The findings of the study by Granni (2012) regarding the use of online collaborative environment for the teaching of writing to ESL learners using blogs and online feedback also support the findings of the present study.

Use of Online Resources to Enhance Creativity

When the participants were asked about the use of online resources for enhancing creative writing skills their response was 100% positive as all participants agreed that online resources do facilitate in improving and enhancing their story write skills. The provided reasons for how it facilitates in improving their story writing skills. Firstly online resources provide access to unlimited resources for learning secondly, It is not boring it provides choices to learners which do not let him get bored, they learn with interest and according to their own preferences and choices. Thirdly, it provides a conducive learning environment where all learners learn and share together. Fourthly, it makes the learner, independent as they can learn themselves without even the support and presence of the teacher if they are properly guided at the beginning.

Table 4.15*The Most Common Response of Participants*

Theme/Category **Use of Online Resources to Enhance Creativity**
1. Yes, It does facilitate. 2. Gives access to unlimited resources 3. Makes learning interesting 4. Provides with a variety of ideas of learning, especially creative writing 5. Gives access to online creative writers' forums, blogs and sites 6. Can interact with the same community of writers like in Wattpad 7. Provides opportunities for independent learning

The Responses of the Participants

P1: "Yes, online learning resources facilitates a lot in creative writing firstly, it gives access to unlimited sources for learning, and secondly, it is not boring as it provides different ways which are not the typical traditional ones which we have seen for ages. Thirdly, it's learning with fun. Fourthly, when we learn together new ideas emerge from the ideas of others"

P2: "Yes, it does facilitate provides learning opportunities. We have come to know about unlimited sources that can be used for learning in an interesting way instead of learning in the typical styles which we have been studying through. It helps personalize learning is choosing your own ways an according to your style and mood"

P3: "Yes, they do facilitate especially the online forums for writing and sharing stories"

P4: "Yes, they do facilitate as there were so many ways through which we can improve our skills like spell and grammar check, reading stories from all over the world, feeling like a community. It helps in Self learning. We get a

lot of ideas from different forum for improving and enhancing our creative writing skills"

P5: " Yes, it has facilitated a lot in polishing our story writing skills. We explored a lot of sites which were helpful for our learning. Internet resources are making learning easy and interesting. We learn from others and making our own choices and setting a pace of learning"

The findings of the interview analysis revealed that all the participants agreed that online resources enhance their creative writing skills as it provides access to unlimited learning resources, makes learning interesting, can learn from the writings of other writers, can become part of the learning community and makes learners autonomous learners. The studies of Neumeier (2005), Donaldson and Haggstrom (2006) and Garrison and Vaugham (2008) support the positive role of online resources and technology in enhancing language learning and creativity in blended learning program. The findings of Bagheri,Yamini & Fatemah,Behjat (2013) support blending of technology in language learning in writing instructions.

Advantages of Using Collaborative Blended Learning Environment for Writing Stories

When the participants were asked about the advantages of using collaborative blended learning environment for writing stories their responses were supporting the use of the collaborative blended learning environment. All participants found such an environment conducive towards learning. They were of the view that such an environment provides more learning opportunities as they were learning together. It helped in developing and promoting ideas of story writing when they were reading the stories written by their peers. According to them reading the stories on Wattpad gave them opportunities to read different stories on the genre by different people all over the globe. It also encouraged them to write their stories and share it with friends. The comments and remarks of their peers and instructors motivated and encouraged them in writing more creatively.

Table 4.16*The Most Common Responses of the Participants*

Themes/Categories **Advantages of Learning Story Writing in Collaborative Blended Learning Environment**
1. Collaborative learning environment was very effective as it provided learning with peers. 2. Gave opportunities to read and interact with story writers all over the globe which gave us ideas about the language, style and organization of the stories especially in Wattpad. 3. We can write and Share stories with our friends and Teacher 4. We can judge and compare our stories with that of our friends' hence it provides a competitive environment of learning. 5. It gives us a sense of accomplishment and encouragement when we received feedback and appreciation from friends and teachers. 6. Sense of belongingness to the story writer's community. 7. Maximizes exposure to learning forums enhances and encourages to publish our work instead of keeping it to ourselves.

The Responses of Participants

P1: "Collaboratively blended learning was very effective as we were in an environment where we were learning together the comments give by peers and by our teacher helped us a lot in encouraging and improving our work. It helped in developing ideas, learning it from others. It gave us more time to interact with peers and have discussions with them even after class"

P2: "Read stories of others on Wattpad. We can Write stories and publish it and share it with others later getting comments on it was very helpful in improving our creativity"

P3: “Collaboration with peers is very helpful as it give a sense of accomplishment and encouragement. Feedbacks given are very helpful in bringing change and improvements. Being a part of online writing communities helps in enhancing our knowledge”

P4: “yes, it has helped a lot, especially being among the stories writers' community gave a sense of belongingness to the writers from all over the world were an inspiration. It gave us an exposure towards different styles of story writing reading different genre. Sharing our stories with friends was really encouraging and learning experience as it gave us to look at our work from the reader's perspective. We were writing and sharing like a family it was a wonderful experience”

P5: “It develops our interest in learning, hence motivating us to write more effectively. Learning with fun and at our own ease and mood whenever we feel like writing and then sharing with others”

The findings of the study supported the use of collaborative learning as compare to individual learning. The support of learners and sharing of knowledge and experience along with learners was encouraging and self-evaluating. Similar results were found in the studies of Jafari and Ansar (2012) and Larsen (2012) there were significant improvements in the writing skills and abilities of learners who write collaboratively as compared to the learners who write individually.

Experience of Using Penzu, Wattpad, Story Bird and Wikispacesclassroom

The respondents were asked to share their experience of writing stories through two online story writing, forums, a personal journal and wikispacesclassroom (online classroom settings).

The overall response of participants regarding the use of Penzu was as follows:

Penzu

Learners found Penzu very helpful not only for writing stories and keeping them safe for future use rather found it useful for writing assignments as well. Learners found it very useful as they can easily access it on their mobile phones as well. As a personal journal they found it best for writing and keeping a record of it.

Story Bird

Writing stories about story bird was a very fascinating experience for learners as they enjoyed writing stories based on images. For a lot of participants it was a new experience of writing stories based on the pictures as they have been writing stories based on themes, outlines and situations. According to them it was really a fun writing stories based on images. They found it very innovative and interactive as they were writing stories based on the characters and situations presented in the images.

Wattpad

According to the participants they had a great experience of using Wattpad as it was an online story writers' community forum where people from all over the globe write and publish stories on different genre. Therefore, Wattpad provided them the opportunity to get connected with the online story writers' community which helped a lot in reading the stories of other writers and improving their writing.

Wikispacesclassroom

The analysis of the interviews revealed that participants found Workspaces classroom best as a discussion board, getting information related to assignments, tasks and handouts. They found it very innovative and helpful as a classroom discussion board.

Table 4.17*The Common Responses of the Respondents on the Use of Penzu, Watt Pad, Story Bird and Wikispacesclassroom*

Themes/Categories: Use of Penzu, Story Bird, Wattpad, Wikispacesclassroom
Penzu: 1. Best as personal journal where one can write and save their written Stories. 2. The detailed feedback given by teachers through Penzu was very helpful in improving our story writing skills. **Story Bird:** 1. Writing stories on story bird was a very fascinating experience. 2. It was fun writing stories on story bird based on images. 3.It was very interesting and innovative idea of writing stories on Picture. **Watt pad:** It was very helpful in reading stories written by different people on different topics. It gave us a sense of relatedness with the story writers 'community. It boasted our courage to write stories as we found their writings similar to ours. Therefore, comparing our work with the stories already written was very motivating and encouraging. It was exciting to be part of story writers' community. **Wikispacesclassroom:** It was an innovative experience of being part of an online classroom where we had discussions related to different tasks.

The Responses of Respondents

P1: **"**It was an unusual method of writing stories on these plate forms. I found Penzu very beneficial in writing not only stories but for writing my assignments as well as we were writing it .I found it like my diary where I wrote and kept it save for the future. Story Bird was very fascinating as we learnt for the first time that we can write stories based on images and generate our own story. Wattpad was very also helpful as we got connected with the same community of story writers. Reading

their stuff helped us in checking our stories and got ideas for our own improvement. Wikispacesclassroom was best as we were in an online classroom where our instructor gave us tasks, assignment deadlines."

P2: " It was a great experience of writing and saving our stories in Penzu which we can access anytime, anywhere especially because it is available on mobile as well and I can access it at any time when I want to write something or when any ideas come into my mind. Story bird was fun writing stories using images available in story bird. Wattpad was best for me as I came in an interaction with the story writers from all over the world and it was very exciting to be a part of story writers' community.

Almost all participants gave similar responses on the use of Penzu, Wattpad, Story Bird and wikispacesclassroom.

Responses on Their Opinion Regarding Best Session for Story Writing: Face to Face, Online or a Blend of Both

All the participants favoured in the use of blended learning for story writing. The reason they gave for the use of blended session, including face to face and online, where it help in overcoming the weakness of one session with the help of another. Face to face is good for overall discussion of issues related to story writing and Online session helped in improving and enhancing story writing skills, it provides the learners with a variety of ideas related to story writing, online plate forms are best for sharing stories, for feedback and interacting with the same community of practice.

The Responses of the Participants

P1: **"**Blend of both as it facilitated in enhancing my writing skills in a variety of ways"

P2: "Blend of both as both were facilitating learning in different ways. Face to face was effective in getting instructions and discussion of issues. Online provided a platform for accessing knowledge, interaction and ideas"

P3: "Blended of Both as both were complimentary to each other".

The responses of the learners in the present study regarding the use of face to face session or online session or a blend of both. The learners favoured the use of a blend of both face to face and online session. Similar results were found in the study of Challob, Bakar & Latif (2016). Students favoured the combination of both face to face and online learning modes and activities in enhancing creativity in writing.

Challenges Faced in Collaborative Blended Learning Environment

The participants were asked about the challenges they faced during learning of story writing skills through collaborative blended learning. Most of the participants faced the challenges of registration and login to different sites as this was their first experience of learning through online forums and websites. Some students were having typing issues as their typing speed was not good. Few students were not confident enough to share their stories initially. One of the participants mentioned that working on online settings was initially challenging and frustrating for him. These challenges were faced by the participants in the initial phase later when they became familiar with the setup things become interesting than frustrating. As almost all participants mentioned that they were anxious initially as they were issues of connectivity, login, conscious about their writing and sharing it with friends openly. The most common responses of the participants to the challenges they faced in collaborative learning environment are as follows:

Table 4.17*Challenges Faced in Collaborative Blended Learning Environment*

Theme/Category **Challenges Faced by Learners in Collaborative Learning Environment**
1. Registration and login issues initially 2. Typing issues 3. Internet connectivity issue 4. Fear of sharing their stories openly 5. Learning online was a bit frustrating initially

Analysis and Interpretation

The analysis of the responses of participants revealed that almost all participants faced challenges initially related to login, registration, slow typing speed getting themselves familiar with blended learning settings, however they also mentioned that later when they became familiar with the setup of learning things became clear and interesting. One of the students mentioned that he was having internet issues, therefore he had to manage time at university hours to complete the task.

The Responses of the Participants

P1: "The initial face was a bit difficult as we had to register on different forum that was a new thing, therefore it was difficult, but with the passage of time we learnt how to manage everything. Due to slow typing speed it was a bit slow writing on the laptop which is much easier on paper. Apart from that it was interesting.

P2: "The login issues were disturbing initially, later we learnt how to do the things. When I wrote my story and was about to publish it there was a fear in me about the response of my fellows as I was sharing my personal piece of writing for the first time but later when I got compliments on it was a good feeling indeed"

Type of Affective Feedback: Face to Face, or Online

The respondents were also asked about their opinion regarding the feedback they received online and face to face that which one was more effective in improving their story writing skills. The respondents were in favour of the feedback that they received online, according to them it was more detailed one secondly, there were two types of feedbacks one that the learners received from the instructor and the second one they received from their peers in the form of their comments and remarks. They found both types of online feedback very helpful in addressing the issues that they had in their story writings. According to respondents almost all were of the view that the online comments and remarks of peer were very encouraging and motivating. Some of the respondents favoured face to face feedback as well, but for the overall discussion of issues related to story writing as a lecture but it lacked detail and did not address individual issues. Therefore the majority of the respondents were satisfied with the feedback they received online.

Table 4.18*Reasons for the Effectiveness of Types of Feedback Received in Collaborative Learning Environment*

Themes/Category **Reasons for the Effectiveness of Types of Feedback Received in Collaborative Learning Environment**
Online Feedback: 1. Online feedback was detailed one. 2. Comments and remarks of the peers were encouraging and motivating. 3. Individual issues were addressed privately and encouragement in the form of positive comments was given openly. **Face to Face:** 1. For overall discussion issues related to story writing in the class. **2.** Did not affective for individual feedback as it's not possible to address every student in one class timings**.**

Analysis and Interpretation

The analysis of the responses favoured the effectiveness of the online feedback and the reasons given by the respondents were that the online feedback was more detailed one and personalized therefore it did not reveal the weakness of the learner openly. The positive remarks and compliments of peers and instructor were very encouraging and motivating in maintaining interest in writing and also to improve the issues. Several other researchers have analysed and reported the positive role of feedback given by peers in online learning environments like (Ertmer et al., 2007; Macdonald, 2001; Van der pol, van den Berg, admiral, & Simons, 2008).

The response of the students in the face to face feedback and online feedback are as follows:

P1: "The face to face feedback in the classroom was not in detail as there was a limited time and teachers had to give feedback to all individuals, therefore for general discussion of issues face to face was ok but for individual detailed feedback online feedback was best. It helped us a lot in improvements. The second type of feedback was new for us the feedback and comments of peer that helped us in encouraging and motivating writing more creatively"

P2: "The positive compliments of class fellows were very encouraging and the detailed feedback of instructor was very helpful as it highlighted the issues on which I can work for improvement"

P3: "Online feedback as it was a detailed one and personalized. The encouraging open remarks of the teachers on my work were very encouraging. Similarly the comments of peers were also motivating"

The findings of So, Lee & Lee (2012) support the use of peer feedback in blended learning settings for learning L2 writings. Tseng and Tsai (2007) also indicated the role of suggestive feedback from peers in developing positive feelings towards their work hence useful and effective in the learning.

Motivating factors in a Blended Learning Environment For Story Writing

The respondents highlighted a number of motivating factors in the collaborative blended learning environment for the teaching of story writings. One of the motivating factors, according to the participants was the variety of ideas that the learners learnt from online resources for writing stories was very motivating as it did not let the learners get bored of writing stories all the time rather every time learners were writing a story in a way which they never thought of. This was very motivating and encouraging in maintaining the interest of learners. Other factors that motivated learners was reading the stories of peers checking their creativity with their own. Watt pad as a story writers' forum gave the learners a sense of belongingness to the online writers community and the Stories shared by people on different genre on Watt pad gave the learners' ideas regarding different styles and language use in writing stories.

Table 4.19*The Most Common Responses of Learners Regarding the Motivating Factors in Story Writing*

The Responses of Participants

Themes/Categories **Motivating Factors in Using Collaborative Blended Learning Environment for Writing Stories.**
1. Reading the stories of others, comparing our work with others and the positive and encouraging. 2. Different ways in which we can write doesn't make us feel bored like writing stories based on images, story completion tasks along with peers. 3. Publishing it gave me a sense of achievement. 4. Interacting with the same community of practice all around the globe, 5. Interaction and discussion with peers which developed a feeling of contentment and a sense of appreciation that motivated us to write more with new ideas. 6. The learning environment was very conducive to learning as it helped in looking at my stories and comparing it with my friends. 7. Wattpad was helpful in interacting with story writers and reading stories on different genre.

The Responses of Participants

The responses of participants on the motivating factors in collaborative blended Learning environment for the teaching of story writings.

P1: " The variety of ideas that we came across in online sessions for writing stories was very motivating as it made us to write with different ideas. Reading the stories of others, comparing our work with others and the positive and encouraging responses after publishing our work was very motivating"

P2: "Reading the work of others and comparing it with our own, different ways in which we can write doesn't make us feel bored. Publishing it gave me a sense of achievement"

P3. " Creative ideas, Interacting with story writers, comments and remarks of friends on our stories, publishing stories were the motivating factors in collaborative blended Learning environment"

Collaborative blended learning had positively affected the attitudes and perceptions of the learners and has resulted in increase in understanding and motivation towards writing stories, interacting with the same community of practice gave a sense of belongingness and involvement in the art of writing stories which has enhanced the creativity of learners. Similar responses were revealed by a study conducted by Liu (2013) in order to evaluate and describe the use of blended learning environment in an English writing course. The perceptions and responses of the students regarding their involvement, motivation and interest in learning writing skills in blended learning settings were evaluated. The results of the study indicated an increased motivation level of learners, increased social interaction and collaboration, autonomous learning and enhanced writing ability in English.

4.4 Findings

4.4.1 Pre Test and Post Test

In order to address the research question: to what extend collaborative blended learning environment can be helpful in the teaching of story writing skills an experimental study was conducted and the pre and post-tests results revealed the following findings.

- There was a significant difference in the scores of the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group. The experimental group which was taught in a collaborative blended learning environment showed significant improvements in their post-tests.
- The results of the study revealed that learners who participated in a collaborative blended learning environment showed improvements in their story writing skills. The improvements were seen in content, ideas, organization, language and style and conventions.
- The better performance of the learners in post-test of the experimental study may be attributed to following features of the collaborative blended learning environment:

a. Collaborative blended learning environment addressed the different learning styles of learners and provided a variety of story writing activities by incorporating multimedia in the form of pictures, text, power point slides.

b. The collaborative learning environment provided to the learners was interactive in nature which encouraged interaction, collaboration, team work and cooperation among students and between teacher and students resulting in active participation, motivation and interest in learning.

c. It enabled them to write stories freely and creatively as they participated by making their own choices from different online resources according to their learning styles and pace.

d. The feedback provided to learners helped in checking their writing and pace of learning by comparing it with their peers as there was feedback from Instructors and feedback from peer plus online personalized feedback and face to face general feedback.

4.4.2 Findings of Classroom Observations

Classroom observations of both experimental and control groups were conducted in order to analyse the lesson structure and content taught, use of teaching methodology, student engagement and role of teacher, activities used, use of instructional aids, feedback and assessment, home tasks and supplementary material used for the teaching of story writing skills. The study revealed the following findings;

- In the control group the teacher mostly used the lecture method for teaching instructions. Traditional methods of teaching were used for teaching story writings.
- The classroom teaching was teacher centered in the control group and student participants in the class was negligent. The class was less interactive, less opportunities were available for interactive learning and sharing of ideas.
- Less use of instructional aids or technology for learning purposes. There was a lack of variety and creativity in writing stories as most of the time the

learners were writing on any theme given to them therefore it lacked creative ideas of writing stories.

- The teaching methodology was same as the methodology used for the teaching of other content like reading material, handouts and power point slides. Most of the time a topic was given based on any theme and students were asked to write a story based on that theme. Learners were not exposed to a different genre and style of story writing, which became the cause of boredom among learners.

4.4.3 Findings of Interview

In order to address the research question related to students' experience, perception and responses to the use of collaborative blended learning environment for the teaching of story writing skills interviews of the learners who participated in the experimental study were conducted. The findings of the interviews revealed:

- Writing stories on computers and using online resources for writing stories was the first experience of the learners. Learners had the knowledge about the elements of story writing, but they never effectively applied them while writing stories.
- Learners found the idea of the collaborative blended learning environment and the use of online resources very exciting, innovative, effective, interesting and challenging as well. Challenging because it was their first experience therefore the initial phase was challenging till they got the idea of how to perform in this new learning setting.
- All participants found the collaborative blended learning environment very conducive for learning and effective for improving their story writing skills as the learning environment was very encouraging and motivating. Sharing stories with peers, their comments and remarks gave learners a sense of achievement.
- Availability of online resources like Wattpad, story bird provided access to a different genre of story writing, which gave learners' ideas for writing stories.
- A collaborative blended learning environment made the learners, independent as it provided online resources and peer collaboration even after the class which helped them in writing practice and improvements without the assistance of the teacher.

The support of learners, sharing of knowledge and experiences was encouraging and self-regulating and evaluating.

- Learners' interaction with peers and online story writers' community gave them a sense of belongingness to the same community of practice, hence motivated and encouraged them in writing stories more creatively.
- Teaching story writing through blended learning was very effective as learners tried to get benefit from both face to face and online sessions as both played a supplementary role in overcoming the weaknesses of both sessions hence played an effective role in reinforcing the learning.
- Collaborative blended learning was on other hand challenging as well as for almost all learners it was their first experience of using online resources for story writing and also because few were writing stories for the first time. Secondly, because learners were having less courage to share their written stories with peers openly, but due to appreciation, encouragement and comments and feedback from peers and teachers made them overcome their fear later.
- The type of feedback given online and face to face was also very encouraging and effective as face to face feedback comprised of discussion related to overall issues and problems learners were facing and online feedback was more detailed and individualistic in nature which highlighted the issues individual learners were facing and which was shared with the individual learners only.
- Learners identified a number of motivating factors in the collaborative blended learning environment for the teaching of story writing skills;

    a) Online resources provided variety of ideas for story writing, hence enhancing creativity and style of story writing. Variety and the interactivity made learning interesting and exciting.

    b) Peers' comments and remarks by teacher and peers were very motivating and encouraging

    c) Reading stories online on different genre and interacting with online story writers' community gave a sense of belongingness to the community of practice and also in developing learner communities of practice.

d) Variety, self-paced learning, collaborative learning, interactivity, affective feedback, encouragement and sharing their work with a sense of achievement were the motivating factors in the collaborative blended learning environment.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Discussion

The present research study was conducted to investigate the usefulness of the collaborative blended learning environment for the teaching of story writing to learners at undergraduate level. For this purpose an experimental study was conducted in which learners were placed in two groups; experimental group and control group. The experimental group was taught story writing through a blended learning approach and control group was taught through the traditional methods of teaching. The performance of the learners was compared through Pre Test and Post Test. Classroom observation of both control and experimental group was made and compared. At the end of the study focus group interviews of the learners who participated in the experimental study were conducted in order to know about the perception and experience of the learners regarding the use of the collaborative blended learning environment and the use of online learning tools for the teaching of story writing skills. The research questions of the present study dealt with two types of investigations; first dealt with the extent to which Collaborative blended learning environment can be useful and the effective ways for the teaching of story writing skills. The answer to this question was determined by Pre-test and Post-tests, which were conducted before and after the experiment respectively. Second question dealt with the experience, perceptions and responses of learners on the use of collaborative blended learning environment for the teaching of story writing skills. The results of the study revealed the following findings.

5.2 Critical Discussion

In order to find out the effectiveness and usefulness of the collaborative blended learning environment for the teaching of story writing skills the present study used a mixed method as the research paradigm using both quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry. In order to find out the usefulness of the collaborative blended learning environment for the teaching of story writing skills the performance of the learners was tested through Pre-Test and post test scores of experimental group which was taught in a collaborative blended learning environment and Control group which was taught through traditional method of teaching. The descriptive and inferential statistics revealed the significance of using collaborative blended learning environment for the teaching of story writing skills. The hypotheses were tested using T-Test. The results of the Pre and Post Tests supported the use of the collaborative blended learning environment as compared to traditional methods of teaching. The Significant difference in test scores in the Pre-Test ad Post-Test of experimental group and the difference in test scores of the post tests of experimental and control group revealed an improvement in the story writing skills of the experimental group as compared to control group. The two dimensional analysis of the test scores within subject analysis and between subject analysis supported the improvement in the story writing skills of the experimental group.

Triangulation (Creswell et al., 2003) was employed in order to assure the validity of the findings of the experimental study. It was achieved through the use of different data collection tools and methods. The qualitative data were collected through Observation and interviews. Classroom Observation of the control group was conducted in order to observe the teaching, learning scenario in the traditional settings so that it would be compared with the teaching learning settings in the collaborative blended learning environment. Focus group interviews were also conducted in order to find out the perception and responses of learners based on their experience of participation in the collaborative blended learning environment for the learning of story writing skills.

Triangulation was done at two levels; theoretical triangulation and methodological triangulation. The purpose was to address the current research problem in detail as the theoretical framework of the study, which acted as a framework for the analysis and interpretations of the findings revolved around the following major theories of learning; cognitivism, social constructivism, Connectivism and collaborative learning. These theories support the use of effective cognitive tools for learning purposes, the importance

of interactive learning, interaction with the communities of practice, utilization of multimedia for enhanced learning instead of using a single mode of learning and finally the role of collaborative learning which plays a vital role in learning by practicing with others in a collaborative learning environment.

The overall findings of the present study revealed the usefulness of using collaborative blended learning environment for the teaching of story writing skills in terms of improvement in the performance of the learners, increase in student-student and teacher-student interaction, increase in learners' interest, and motivation through collaborative learning. Collaborative blended learning environment supported and encouraged the learners to be more independent and autonomous. Similar results are also revealed in different studies on the use of blended learning settings like Kessler& Bilowski;2010 Kupetz & Ziegenmeyer, 2005; Roed, 2003; Wiebe &Kabata, 2010.

The improved performance of the learners and positive perceptions of learners in support of using collaborative blended learning environment for the teaching of story writing skills was based on a number of factors that were responsible for its effectiveness. The reasons for the effectiveness can be summed up as follows;

- The idea of collaborative blended learning environment for the teaching of story writing skills was innovative, interesting and exciting as the learners who participated in it were enjoying their learning it was learning with fun therefore it encouraged and motivated them to learn and write more creatively.
- CBLE was encouraging and motivating as well as competitive as the learners were writing stories and were sharing it with others by publishing on the forum and blogs. This was giving them a sense of accomplishment and appreciation which was helpful in writing.
- Use of online tools and resources helped in providing a variety of resources and giving access to interact with the same community of practice through story writing blogs, forums and sites which played a vital role in enhancing the creativity of learners as maximum exposure to writers and genre of stories gave the learners more ideas for enhancing their own creativity and writing.

- Online feedback was more helpful to learners and easier for the teacher as well. The teacher can easily comment on the work of learners by providing corrective and suggestive feedback even after the class which is usually not possible in a limited timing of class lectures.
- Peer to Peer interaction for reviewing the work of their peers, working collaboratively on collaborative tasks helped the learners in tracking their progress by comparing their work with their class fellows.
- Reading stories on different genre by different writers on different blogs and forums helped them in enhancing their knowledge and skills
- The idea of publishing the stories gave a sense of achievement to the learners.
- Interaction with the same community of practice on Wattpad gave the learners a sense of belongingness to the community and learning through their experience and writings were helpful in improving their story writing skills.
- Collaborative learning environment where teacher and students all were feeling like an online community, having interactions, feedbacks, comments on stories, discussions on different tasks were given
- The learners were having the autonomy towards learning choices like in story bird they were having a lot of options for writing stories based on a variety of images available to them. Similarly the learners can decide by their own choice and interest in selecting any genre of story.
- Self-paced learning was one of the reasons for its effectiveness as the learner can learn at any time according to his pace of learning and also according to his feasibility and choice of timings due to the online availability of resources and material.

When both collaborative blended learning environment and face to face classroom learning environmental settings were observed and analysed the face to face classroom environment lacked the above mentioned aspects which were found in the collaborative blended learning environment. The learners were not feeling motivated and interested towards writing, story drills due to lack of variety and creativity of the ideas. Lack of

individual feedback on their writings due to lack of time management for lecture and activities effective feedback was mostly not provided. Less exposure to different styles of stories did not make the learners aware of the writing style stories in different genre. Collaborative writing is an important factor which is helpful are effective in improving story writing skills of learners. The theoretical basis of collaborative writing rest on the work of Vygotsky (1978) which lay emphasis on the concept of communicative competence and on the role of social interaction in learning and As a collaborative writing provides opportunities to learners to not only practice literature review, academic writings and other forms of writing but it also helps group reflections, collaboration, critical thinking and knowledge sharing with each other. (Kim, Hong, Bonk & Lim 2009).

The theory of communities of practice also favours the idea that learners construct knowledge in relationship with others. (Wenger, 1998). Interaction with the communities of practice was one of the motivating factors for improving story writing skills as learners were able to read, write and interact with the story writers from all over the globe.

Web based learning provides learners with innumerable sources of getting knowledge. The variety of activities, modes of interaction, enhance the creativity of learners as web based learning provides more learning opportunities as compare to the traditional ways of classroom settings. Web-based learning provides a variety of learning experiences that are normally not found in the typically experienced traditional teacher centered classrooms. Learners in web based learning environments are encouraged to construct knowledge for themselves and to have the control of their own learning. Consequently, it motivates them to take control of their learning and learning process.

Several other studies, like Bahrani, 2011; Beaty, 2003; Roed, 2003; Vinther, 2011; Wiebe & Kabata, 2010 also support the use of computer assisted language learning environments as compare to the traditional classroom teaching and learning environments. Computer assisted and Web based learning environments provide flexibility in learning, increasing learners motivation and involvement, immediate feedback helps in bringing improvements. The use of hypermedia and multimedia make teaching, learning more innovative, inspiring and interesting.

Niles (2013) Blogs, wikis and forums are effective educational tools for learning. The use of blogs, discussion forums, writing forums also play an important role in improving and enhancing story writing skills of learners as learners were reading different

stories on the genre written by different writers across the world this help them in generating their own ideas, learning the writing styles, language and diction hence these blogs and forum give the learners exposure to the ones' who are having the same experiences and interests similar to them. A blog is a good tool for blending technology and writing both inside and outside the classroom because the format of the blog is similar to personal diaries, which provides a platform for enhancing self-expression, creativity and record of work. The interactions with other bloggers also establish relationships and connections with the same peer groups, hence interacting with the real world of similar experience and interest. A number of studies also assert the effective role of blogs in improving writing skills like Bakar & Ismail, 2009, Rezaee& Oladi, 2008;Pinkman, 2005, Zeqiri, 2013).

To sum up the discussion the use of multimedia in the form of blogs, discussion forums, writing forums, wikis provide learners with a variety of modes of learning and experience by enhancing their exposure to the learning experiences within the real world through interaction with the learning resources and communities. The use of multimedia offered flexibility and choices in terms of learning options which helped learners in making choices according to their own ease and pace of learning. It was an important factor for maintaining and increasing the interest of learner by every time providing them with more creative and innovative ideas of story writing they were not familiar with. On the other hand, learning within the same community of practice was also encouraging and effective as the learners could read the stories written by others and improve their own areas. The idea of collaborative learning was also helpful as learners were learning along with the peers, the comments on their work by the teachers and peer were appreciating and encouraging. Apart from encouragement they can judge their own learning by comparing their work with others. Hence the blend of synchronous and asynchronous modes of learning, the blend of media, self-paced learning and collaborative learning all play a vital role in blended learning environments for the improvements in the story writing skills of learners. When a blended learning program is rigorously planned, and effectively executed through proper planning and management, according to the feasibility and availability of resources it can be the best learning environment provided to learners for not only teaching writing skills but also other language skills.

5.3 Conclusion

The major objectives of the present study were: first, to evaluate the usefulness of the collaborative blended learning environment for the teaching of story writing skills. Second, to examine the experience and perceptions of learners who were taught in a collaborative blended learning environment Third, to explore the ways in which collaborative blended learning and online resources can be used for the effective teaching and improved performance of learners in story writing skills. Several conclusions can be drawn from the findings of the study. It was useful and effective to use collaborative blended learning environment for the teaching of story writing skills as the significant statistical difference in the performance of learners in the Pre-Test and Post-Test of the experimental group reveal that learners have improved their story writing skills as compared to that of the learners who were not taught in a collaborative blended learning environment. The collaborative blended learning environment and online resources provided learners with opportunities of learning with fun, creativity and variety towards learning which resulted in a significant achievement level of learners' performance.

The findings of the study also revealed the ways in which collaborative blended learning environment can be useful in teaching story writing skills. The results clearly showed that it is possible to integrate face to face traditional classroom teaching with online teaching settings utilizing modern technology to enhance the performance of learners. The findings of this study are similar to the findings of the previous studies on blended learning, revealing positive influences of blended learning on students' performance. The collaborative blended learning environment is enriched learning environment that provides a variety of ways of learning by addressing different learning styles of learners hence supplementing or complementing the traditional learning environment.

Blended learning environment developed the interest and motivation of learners towards the use of multimedia and online resources for enhancing learner's story writing skills through a blend of instruction based and self-assisted learning strategies and techniques as both synchronous and asynchronous activities are used for learning purposes. Collaboration, cooperation and interaction with peers and exposure to a different genre of story writing and communication with the community of practice were the major factors that helped in enhancing the ways writing stories and improving language, ideas, content, organization and conventions of story writing.

5.4 Recommendations and Pedagogical Implications

According to the findings of the study blended learning approach was found effective in the teaching of story writing skills to learners at undergraduate level as compared to the traditional classroom teaching. The collaborative blended learning environment provided a platform with a variety of multimedia and online resources for learners for enhancing their creativity and story writing skills. Blended learning environment was found interesting and enjoyable which showed positive effects on the story writing skills of learners.

The pedagogical implications of using a blended learning approach for the teaching of story writing skills to learners as follow.

- Teachers should do adequate planning for the implementation, execution and evaluations of the blended learning program. It should be designed according to the needs, wants, lacks and necessities of the learners and learning needs.
- Teachers should move from teacher centered classroom teaching and learning to learners centered teaching and learning, giving learners confidence and motivation towards self-paced autonomous learning.
- Interactive learning is very important as it promotes creativity and novelty duration the construction of knowledge through interaction and sharing of experiences which leads to the effective development of higher order cognitive abilities of learners. Therefore, teachers should promote interactive and collaborative learning environments which should include both on the net and off net resources of knowledge.
- Creative writing and its genre should be taught through a blended learning approach as face to face classroom teaching is not sufficient to teach creative writings. Teachers should use and promote the use of innovations and current trends in online and multimedia learning for the teaching of story writing skills.
- Blended learning modules can be planned, designed, implemented and evaluated with adequate planning and considerations, including both synchronous and asynchronous materials and resources.
- Blended learning approach broadens the horizons of teaching through space and time as this teaching and learning can be extended beyond the classroom wall and

the teaching time can be extended even after classes, hence making learning more effective and dynamic.

- Learners should be encouraged to share and publish their stories on different forums. This will motivate them and will give them a sense of achievement through the appreciation they receive from others.
- Teachers should make learners familiar with online personal journals like pence, which learners can use for creative writings and can also be used for both formal and informal writings and for keeping records of their work for future use.
- Teachers should use online classroom dashboards like wikispacesclassroom and Edmodo for classroom discussions, assignments, tasks, projects, assessment and evaluations and for sharing reading materials. This will keep the learners and teachers connected even after class timings.
- Learners should be exposed to online writers' communities hence making them part of the writers community all around the world which could flourish their writings when they will read the works of other story writers.
- Teachers must incorporate variety in their teaching as writing activities in classrooms are done for grades and students show lack of interest in creative writing. Therefore story writing should be taught through different ways like the use of images as done through story bird, using themes, collaboration and sharing hence motivating and developing learners' interest in learning.
- Blended learning approach should not only be used for story writing, it can also be used for the teaching of other language skills as it provides an effective learning environment for every kind of learning.
- Modern trends and innovations should be incorporated in teaching as technology has a major role in every field of life so its use has become the need of time. Therefore the use of innovations is irresistible in today's modern world.

5.5 Recommendations for Future Researches

The researcher identifies the following areas of research for further studies;

- A study can be conducted regarding the perceptions of teachers for the use of blended learning approach for the teaching of language skills to English language learners.
- Research can also be conducted in teachers training on the effective use of blended learning and its impact on the teaching of language skills.
- Similarly, research can also be conducted on the teaching of literature through a blended learning approach.

5.6 Challenges Faced in the Study

The researcher faced a number of challenges during the conduction of this research. There were a number of constraints that were taken into consideration and handled like; there were issues related to internet access as all students were not having internet facility at home, but this was managed by following Lab Rotation for online sessions plus the use of mobile access to the online forums, therefore learners were recommended to download mobile application of the online forums like story bird, pension and Wattpad. More time was spent on making the learners understand the experimental study; classroom sessions and online session. Online sessions were more challenging majority of the learners had no experience of using online resources for learning purposes but later they learnt the procedures and it was effectively managed and handled. There was a limitation of access to laptops or desktops as well.

5.7 Contribution of the Research

The present study has two major contributions; Theoretical contribution and Practical contribution. The First contribution is to the existing literature in blended learning research. A lot of research was conducted on using blended learning in teaching language skills especially writing. The gap that was identified through an extensive study of the existing literature on the use of blended learning for the teaching of writing skills was the gap in using blended learning for the teaching of story writing. It has contributed to the existing literature that blended learning can be used for the teaching of narrative writing one of the important genres of writing. Second its practical contribution is in the field of

English language teaching as well as Literature teaching as it provided a procedure through an experimental study that blended learning approach can effectively be used for the teaching of story writing. It can also be used for the teaching of other writing skills as well, which has also been proven by a number of other similar studies. Third, it elaborated the effective use of technology and online learning resources for teaching and learning purposes. For the first time this study utilized a variety of online resources for the teaching of story writing, focusing both on reading different genres of story, flourishing ideas and then implementing them while writing by interacting with online story writers' communities Wattpad and Story Bird. This study demands modifications in teaching trends by emphasizing that the modes of learning should be based on; interaction, collaboration, experiential learning, reflective and self-paced learning, evaluation and practice oriented hence emphasizing on making learning more interesting, dynamic and exciting with variety and learning choices for the learners..

The most important contribution is; when the findings of research proved the effectiveness of collaborative blended learning environment for the teaching of story writing. The blended learning module was implemented in the new semester by the Department of Modern languages and the responses from the learners were very encouraging. Blended learning approach was used for the teaching of functional English and other courses in English linguistics. Therefore, this proved the effective use of teaching story writing to learners using collaborative blended learning environment.

5.8 Limitations of the Study

There are some limitations of the study on the use of blended learning for the teaching of story writing;

1. The first limitation is the study was an experimental study and it was conducted on a sample of fifty students, therefore there is the constraint of generalization with the findings of this study. Future researchers can be conducted on a larger number of samples.
2. This study was conducted four weeks as the course of creative writing offered to the learners have allocated this much time for story writing. Therefore the experiment lasted for four weeks due to the time constraints.

3. The research site chosen was a convenient site for the researcher to conduct this research and it has learners from multilingual contexts which created a diverse collaborated learning environment and in developing communities of practice.
4. Elements of story writing were focused based on the writing conventions, organization and creativity of the ideas.

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ANNEXTURES

Annex A:Story Writing Rubric

	1 Needs Improvement	2 Satisfactory	3 Fair	4 Good	5 Exellent
Content 1. Story Structure 2. Character-ization 3. Ideas 4. Creativity					
Organisation 1. Cohesion 2. Coherence 3. Elements of story 4. Beginning and End					
Language and Style 1. Description 2. Word Choice 3. Narration					
Conventions 1. Grammar/ Punctuation 2. Spelling and Word Usage					

Annex B: Observation Check List

Techer:	Class:	Subject:	Time:
Venue:	No.of Students:	Lesson Topic:	Observation Day:

Focus of Observation:

1. Lesson Structure and Content & Methodology
2. Teaching Methodology Used
3. Student Engagement and Role of Teacher
4. Activities Used
5. Use of Instructional Aids
6. Feedback and Assessment
7. Home Tasks and supplementary Material

S#	SECTION 1	YES/No
1.	The teacher shared a brief outline of the topic of discussion	
2	The teacher shared some material related to class lecture prior to the lecture	
3	Lecture method was used	
4	Multimedia or any technological media used	
5	Class was interactive	
6	Group discussion	
7	Individual task was given	
8	Classroom activity was given	
9	Activity was based on Creativity	
10	Students were motivated and taking interest in lecture and activity	

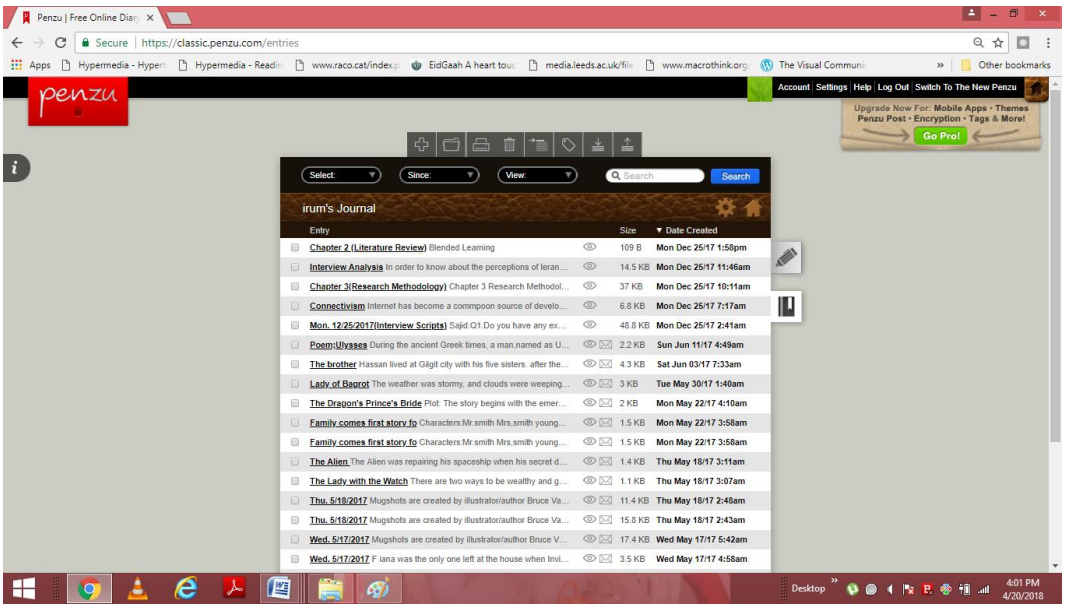
11	**Students were involved in classroom activity**	
12	**Teacher was engaging students**	
13	**Feedback was given on task /activity**	
14	**Individual feedback was given**	
15	**Assessment task was given**	
	Home or extension of classroom lesson was given	
16	**Material related to new class was given**	
17	**provided opportunities for independent or group learning to promote depth in understanding content**	
18	**Learners were given opportunity to reflect on the topic and task**	
19	**Choices for classroom activity was provided**	
20	**Purpose of the lesson explained**	

Field Notes

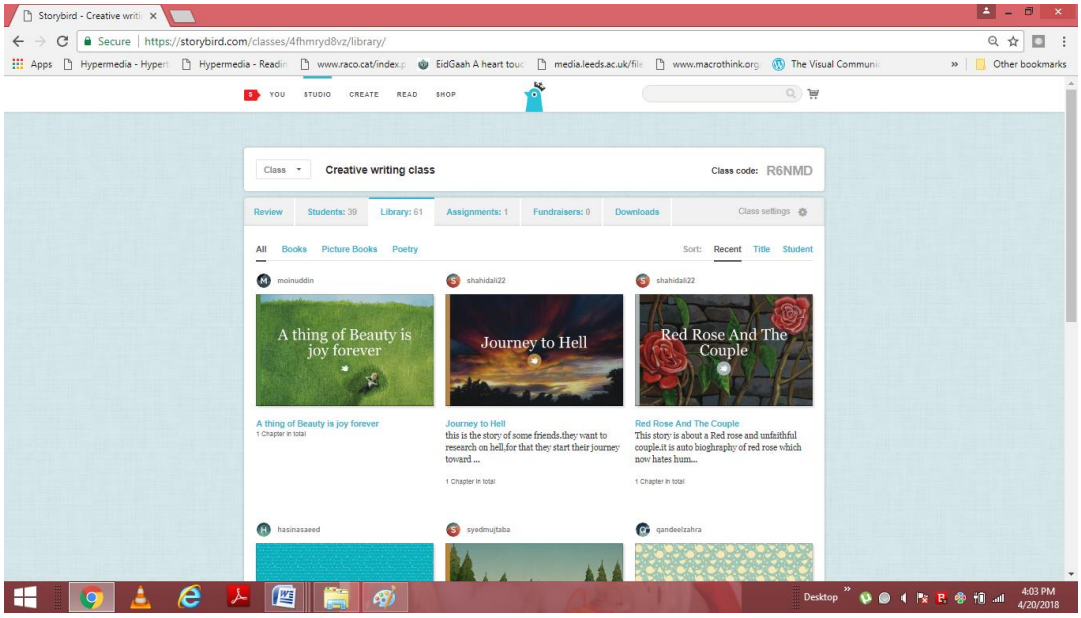
Decription of Observation	**Reflective Comments**

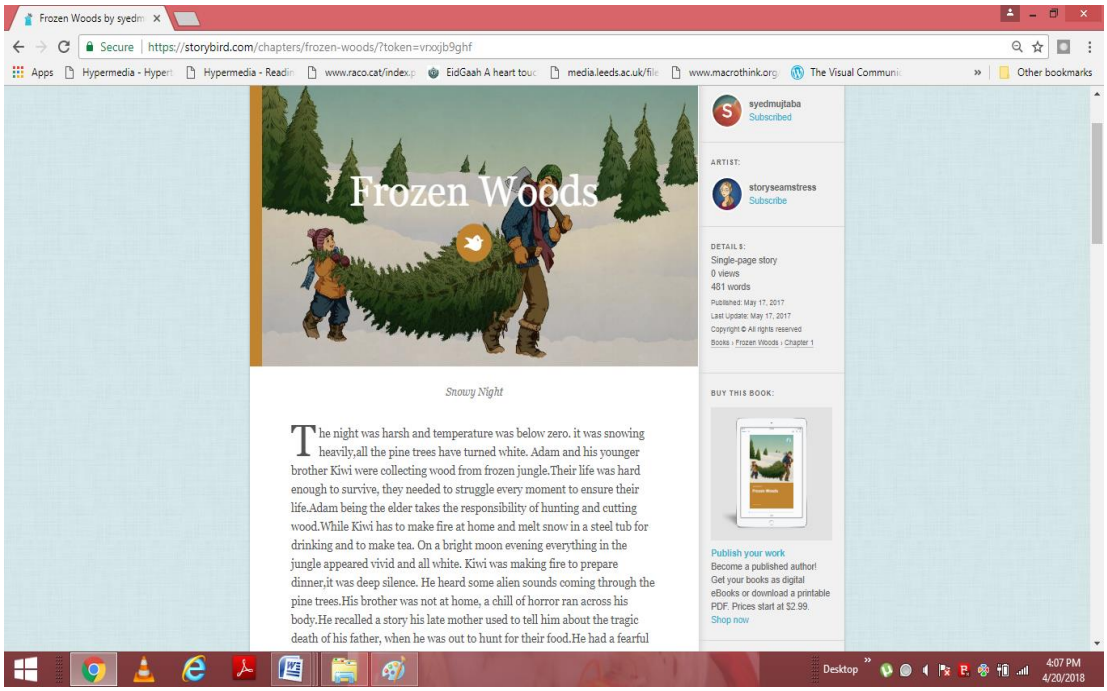
Post Observation Summary

Annex: C Online Forums Used for Blended Learning :Penzu online Personal Writing Journal



Story Bird

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481 words
Published: May 17, 2017
Last Update: May 17, 2017
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BUY THIS BOOK:
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Snowy Night
The night was harsh and temperature was below zero. it was snowing heavily,all the pine trees have turned white. Adam and his younger brother Kiwi were collecting wood from frozen jungle.Their life was hard enough to survive, they needed to struggle every moment to ensure their life.Adam being the elder takes the responsibility of hunting and cutting wood.While Kiwi has to make fire at home and melt snow in a steel tub for drinking and to make tea. On a bright moon evening everything in the jungle appeared vivid and all white. Kiwi was making fire to prepare dinner,it was deep silence. He heard some alien sounds coming through the pine trees.His brother was not at home, a chill of horror ran across his body.He recalled a story his late mother used to tell him about the tragic death of his father, when he was out to hunt for their food.He had a fearful
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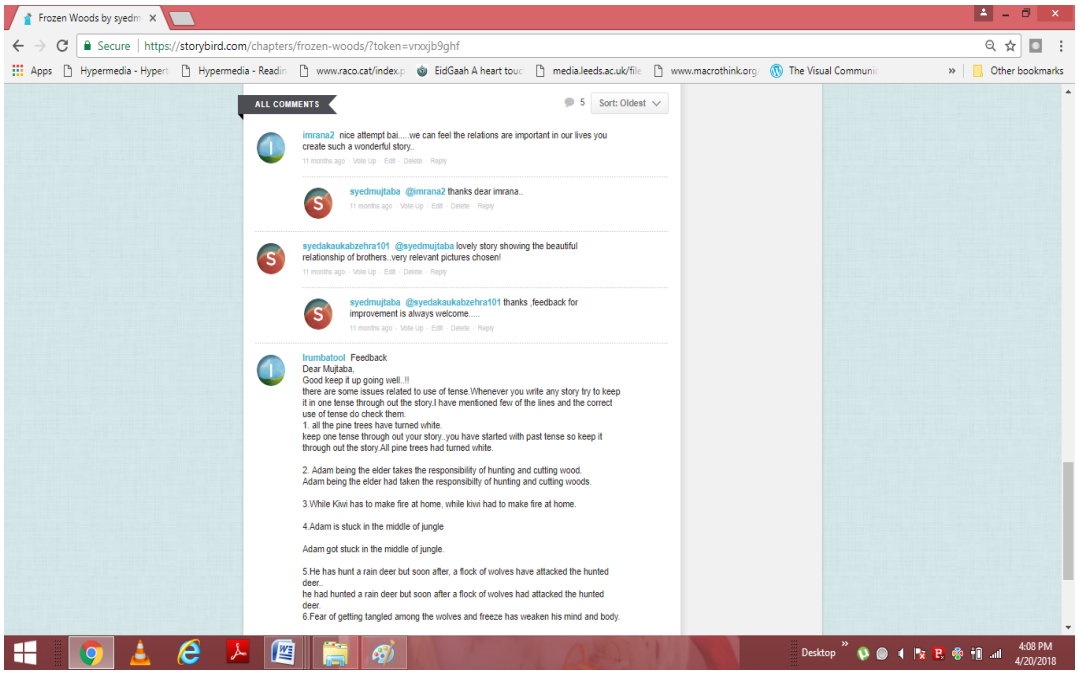
Frozen Woods by syedm
Secure | https://storybird.com/chapters/frozen-woods/?token=vrxxjb9ghf
Apps
Other bookmarks
ALL COMMENTS
5
Sort: Oldest
imrana2 nice attempt bai....we can feel the relations are important in our lives you create such a wonderful story..
syedmujtaba @imrana2 thanks dear imrana..
syedakaukabzehra101 @syedmujtaba lovely story showing the beautiful relationship of brothers..very relevant pictures chosen!
syedmujtaba @syedakaukabzehra101 thanks ,feedback for improvement is always welcome.....
Inumbatool Feedback
Dear Mujtaba,
Good keep it up going well..!!
there are some issues related to use of tense.Whenever you write any story try to keep it in one tense through out the story.I have mentioned few of the lines and the correct use of tense do check them.
1. all the pine trees have turned white.
keep one tense through out your story..you have started with past tense so keep it through out the story.All pine trees had turned white.
2. Adam being the elder takes the responsibility of hunting and cutting wood.
Adam being the elder had taken the responsibilty of hunting and cutting woods.
3.While Kiwi has to make fire at home, while kiwi had to make fire at home.
4.Adam is stuck in the middle of jungle
Adam got stuck in the middle of jungle.
5.He has hunt a rain deer but soon after, a flock of wolves have attacked the hunted deer..
he had hunted a rain deer but soon after a flock of wolves had attacked the hunted deer.
6.Fear of getting tangled among the wolves and freeze has weaken his mind and body.
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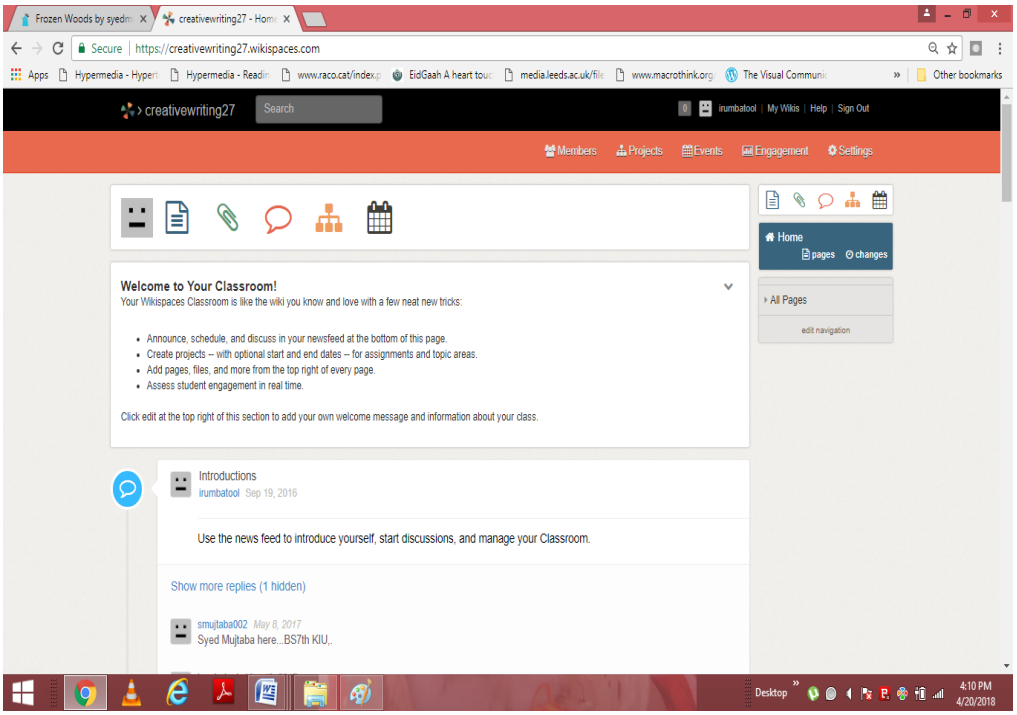
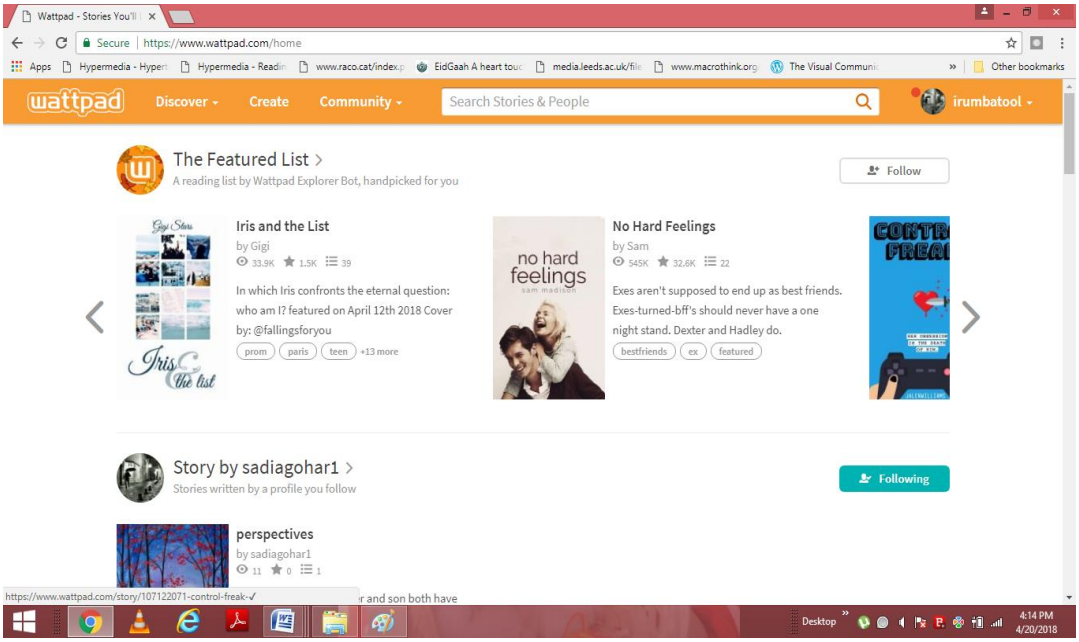
Wikispacesclassroom



Wattpad



Annex: D Interview Questions

Q1. Doyou have any experience of writing stories either on paper with a pen or online?

Q2. Do you have any knowledge about Elements of story writing and have you ever used them in your stories?

Q3. How was your experience of writing story online**?**

Q4.how was your experience of learning and writing stories through collaborative blended learning environment**?**

Q5. Does online learning resources facilitate in writing creatively?

Q6. How CBLE helped you in improving your story writing skills?

Q7. What advantages you have found in using CBLE for writing stories?

Q8. How was your experience of: Penzu, Wattpad, Story bird, wikispacesclassroom for Improving your story writing skills.

Q9. Which session you have found best for story writing: Face to face, online, blend of both?

Q10. Which type of feedback was more effective: given face to face or online?

Q11.what kind of challenges you have faced in CBLE for story writing**?**

Q12. What were the motivating Factors in CBLE which helped you in writing stories?

Annex: E Consent of Participation in Experimental Study.

I, Irum Batool (M.Phil scholar Department of English Studies. National university of Modern Languages, Islamabad,) am working on my M.Phil Thesis entitled **''Blended Learning Approach for The Teaching of Story Writing: An Experimental Study'.**

Purpose:

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of teaching story writing through blended learning approach (use of both face to face teaching and online teaching) and utilizing the collaborative online learning resources for the effective teaching and learning of story writing.

Procedure:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

1. Taking three weeks of learning story writing with the researcher which includes both face to face and online sessions. There will be three sessions in a week one face to face session and two inline sessions. Two online sessions will be conducted in computer laboratory. Each session will be of one and half hour.
2. This includes completion of tasks related to writing stories and utilizing online resources.
3. Data will be collected from the participants as written tests, interviews for feedback and observations.

Demographic Information

Name (optional)_____

Gender:male

_____female_____Qualification:_____

Age_____

You are selected as sample for this experimental study. Your response is very precious in completing this study on time. Your participation in this study will be highly appreciated. Once you participated in this study you cannot withdraw till the completion of the study.

Confidentiality:

- The data collected from the participants will not be used for any unethical purpose. It will be solely used for this research only.
- This study is anonymous. The researcher will not be collecting or retaining any information about your identity.
- The records of this study will be kept strictly confidential. Interviews will be recorded and will be kept confidential.
- Your identity will not be disclosed in the material that is published.

Statement of consent:

I have read the above information and I _____ give my consent of participation in this experimental research study. I have read the above information. I have asked any questions regarding the experimental procedure and they have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent to participate in this study and contribute in any tasks I am given during the experimental study: tests, interviews or written or verbal tasks I am assigned during the experimental study. I agree to my interview being recorded. I understand that in any report on the result of this study my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity.

Name of Participant_____

Date_____

Signature of Participant _____

Documentation of Informed Consent:I have had the opportunity to read this consent form and have the research study explained. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about research study, and my questions have been answered. I am prepared to participate in the research study described above.

_____

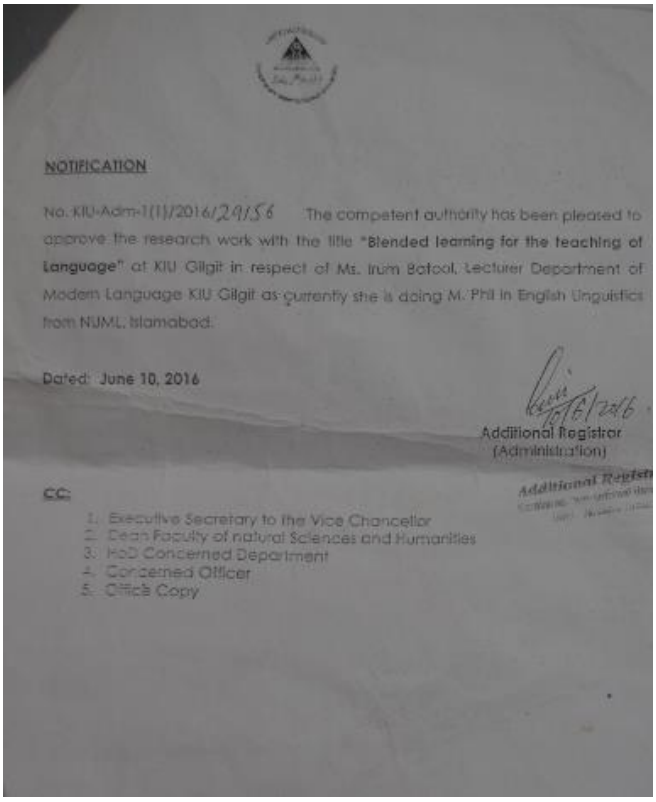
Participant'ssignature

_____

Researcher's Signature

Date

Annex: F Approval for Conducting Research at Karakoram International University Gilgit Baltistan



NOTIFICATION

No. KIU-Adm-1(1)/2016/29156 The competent authority has been pleased to approve the research work with the title **"Blended learning for the teaching of Language"** at KIU Gilgit in respect of Ms. Irum Batool, Lecturer Department of Modern Language KIU Gilgit as currently she is doing M. Phil in English Linguistics from NUML, Islamabad.

Dated: **June 10, 2016**

Additional Registrar
(Administration)

CC:

1. Executive Secretary to the Vice Chancellor
2. Dean Faculty of natural Sciences and Humanities
3. HoD Concerned Department
4. Concerned Officer
5. Office Copy