“I can upgrade my writing power:” Online Writing in a 6th Grade EFL Classroom

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ABSTRACT
I recently worked as an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher in a public elementary school in Seoul, Republic of Korea. There was a large emphasis placed on English education, in the school and in Korean culture and workplace, and students are pressured to learn English from a very young age, with some students first learning English in kindergarten. In my sixth grade EFL class, writing in English was only done by copying sentences and words directly from the textbook. I decided to use Glogs, online interactive posters, to see how they would affect students’ writing skills, as well as their confidence and motivation. I used quantitative and qualitative methods over a three month period to collect data from the students and my co-teacher. The data showed that students’ writing skills slightly increased, and their confidence and self-esteem in regards to writing also slightly increased. Students’ motivation initially increased, but as the intervention went on it decreased.

Keywords: Online writing, writing skills, action research, glogs

Introduction
Each year, the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education (SMOE) hires hundreds of native English speakers to teach in their public school system alongside Korean English teachers due to the large emphasis placed on learning English. Families with enough monetary funds can send their children to English kindergarten hagwons (academies) to get a head start in learning English. Others may start learning the language in their after-school hagwons that they attend after their regular school day from elementary school through university and future career (hagwons are for all ages). All students throughout Korea start learning English in third grade. English is one of the four subjects on the exam to get into universities, and the exam is only offered once a year, thus placing a huge amount of pressure on students. The university someone attends in Korea can truly change the course of one’s life. Students feel the pressure even at a young age to study English.

I was a Native Speaking English Teacher at a public elementary school under SMOE for three years. The school has a small population compared to others within SMOE, with about 500 students. All of the students and faculty at the school, with the exception of me, were Korean and native Korean speakers.

Context
In order to fully understand the action research, it is important to know the context in which it took place. This research focused on one of my sixth grade classes. I taught English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to the sixth graders three days a week for forty minutes per class. Before I implemented the project, we typically spent about 75% of class time doing activities from the textbook. There were many limits of the textbook within the curriculum. The students
did not extensively read or write in English in or out of the classroom. Additionally, technology was only used by the teachers in the classroom.

I wanted to motivate the students to get them excited about learning English. I especially wanted to bring technology into the classroom for motivation. Prior to this, the writing portion of the English textbook only asked students to write a few sentences. The additional activities that were presented also did not expand much on the textbook. Finally, I decided to expand and drastically change the writing days of the English lessons. I decided to have students make Glogs, online posters, to give students the opportunity to use technology, English, and writing all together. I hoped that by going to the computer lab and encouraging students to be more creative in their writing that this would motivate the students and improve their English.

**Research and Rationale**

My original research question asked, “What are the effects of using Glogs in a sixth grade EFL classroom?” Glogs are online interactive posters that can include text, pictures, videos, sound clips, etc. on the poster. As I progressed through the research, I began to see that students did not have prior experience writing in such a way, whether in their native language of Korean or in English. I continued to focus on this question, but I changed my approach.

We used Glogs as the writing portion of three units in order to expand those writing sections beyond the usual one day devoted to writing per lesson. The Glogs were used to allow more time for the writing days, therefore allowing for more experience and creativity in writing, as well as a new way to write in the English curriculum that allowed for more expansion. I hoped to see students demonstrating and improving upon their writing skills through the Glogs. I also wanted to see more of the students’ personalities shine through in their writing, because I thought this would be more motivating to students than simply writing the few key phrases multiple times, as they usually did for the writing classes.

This question was quite significant in my classroom because students did not usually use technology themselves in the English classroom, and they typically had only one class per two week unit that focused explicitly on writing. The students were exposed to technology throughout their day in a variety of ways but not hands-on in the English classroom. They were also expected to achieve a certain level of English in order to gain admittance to universities. I believe this question was important so that I could give students a different motivation to learn English, a more internal motivation that would help them become life-long learners, not just learning in order to pass a test. Additionally, this question pertains to the wider audience of all Korean students in the Korean public school system, as they all attend English class in the same way with one of a few mandated government textbooks. Classroom routines and activities may vary across the country, but all students are expected to pass the test to earn admission to university.

**Significance**

The curriculum for the EFL classes focused on one of the four skills of English, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, for one class period each within one unit. Therefore, the students specifically focused on writing for less than 40 minutes over a two week period. The writing that students typically did was not creative; the students usually copied the text, changing one or two words to slightly change the sentence.

Each unit had the same structure, with a focus on about four different sentences. Students tended to become quite bored when we worked through the textbook. Working with the same
structure each unit, and thus many redundant activities and games, the students were bored and unmotivated.

The technology that was used in the classroom was only used by my co-teacher and me (running the CD-ROM that accompanies the textbook, running games, etc.). South Korea is quite a tech-savvy country, and more than half of the students had smart phones and used computers on a daily basis. In general, I believe the schools are becoming more technology focused, and if the students have the opportunity to use technology for education, I think it is important to do so in order to prepare them for their futures that will inevitably involve technology.

I chose to do a Glog project for a few reasons. First, I wanted to expand the writing portion of each unit in hopes of increasing students’ writing skills. Second, I wanted to build students’ self-esteem in their writing. Third, I wanted to bring more technology into the English classroom. Lastly, by using technology and an online writing program, I wanted to motivate students to write in English more quantitatively and creatively.

This project was significant in that it was the first time the students used the computers in the EFL classroom. I soon discovered that it was also the first time that the students were learning and practicing the writing process as well (I discovered that the students were unaware of a writing process and that thus far in their Korean Language curriculum they had not learned of any writing process). This project would hopefully go beyond my classroom, as it could help students to build their writing skills in Korean, as well as other subjects. Additionally, students throughout Seoul and Korea in the public school system have relatively the same EFL curriculum, so what is learned from this research could benefit all the students in the public school system.

**Literature Review**

The students’ motivation in the EFL classroom was quite low, which was one of the driving factors of bringing technology into the classroom in an attempt to motivate students. Witte (2007) wrote about her experience with a blog writing project in an article titled, “That’s online writing, not boring school writing.” The title is taken from a quote of one of her students discussing the writing project. This immediately grabbed my attention, as the writing in our classroom is typically boring because it is always the same simple format from the textbook, and I wanted to motivate students through the online project. Al-Jarf (2004) found that online writing improved motivation, among many other positive aspects, such as self-esteem. After the initial Glog project, each time I told the students we would be doing another project, the students cheered and ran to the computer room. Initially, this made me very happy, as I thought the students’ motivation was growing. However, I then reflected on Salaberry (2001) that showed learners had positive experiences and attitudes while using technology and writing, but that this may not necessarily show student growth or progress. They were always excited to go to the computer lab and start their work, but I questioned if actual progress was being made. I saw some students off task with their projects, making simple errors, and not focusing on the actual writing of English.

As the time passed, I began to worry that students were not improving in their writing skills, which was one of the reasons for the intervention, because they were continually making small errors. In Al-Jarf (2004), which compared a group of college students using traditional writing and an experimental group of students using a combination of traditional and online writing, he mentioned that the experimental group’s writing skills were also lacking. For example, the students made many errors in capitalization and punctuation. My students also frequently made these errors, and I initially thought the students needed more time writing
traditionally to really solidify these skills before we could move on to the computer. However, Al-Jarf (2004) continued to use the combination method with these students, and their writing skills increased dramatically. The results showed that students who used the combination “scored significantly higher than the control group” when analyzing the pretest and posttest scores (Al-Jarf, 2004, pg. 9). For me, this meant that even though students were making errors in capitalization and punctuation, the project could still be successful for students as they could improve in other important ways, i.e. motivation, enhanced self-esteem, etc.

For Al-Jarf (2004) and these college age students, the online writing was successful. Additionally, the case study by Eva Lam (2000) entitled “L2 Literacy and the Design of the Self: A Case Study of a Teenager Writing on the Internet,” showed that writing abilities greatly improved with the online writing. Eva Lam points out the importance of students finding their voice in their own way; this is also something I wanted to bring awareness to for the students, as they do not write creatively or express their own ideas, hopes, thoughts, etc. in English. The students may be a bit young to begin developing a voice in this way, but I think it is important to at least show them that they can use their English in more fun and engaging ways than their simple textbook phrases. I was a bit hesitant, as my students were a few years younger than this participant and the college age participants in Al-Jarf (2004), and they were not living in an English language culture, so their experiences drastically differed.

I wanted to enhance students’ self-esteem or confidence in English writing with the extended writing time and writing through a different medium. Al-Jarf (2004) found that the online writing did improve the self-esteem and sense of achievement of the students. Additionally, the teenage participant in the case study by Eva Lam (2000) mentioned how his confidence in English went up as well, describing how he actually used to hate English but now did not have those feelings.

The research helped me to look more critically at my intervention to see if any modifications were necessary. Witte (2007) helped me to shape my research in terms of keeping me on track, as she wrote about the importance of clarifying expectations. I saw that even with rubrics, it seemed that throughout the project and throughout what I thought was much discussion of expectations, students still seemed unclear of the expectations. This article reminded me that even though we were doing a writing project, the students were using different literacy skills and building digital fluency. Therefore, the expectations should have been made clear to students as they were bombarded with distractions in the computer lab while trying to learn and use a new writing medium.

Additionally, I began to see that the students’ inexperience with the writing process was negatively affecting their work. Even after the first two Glogs, where we asked students to brainstorm first in their notebooks, I saw that most students were just talking to friends or drawing unrelated pictures. Those that did brainstorm with pen and paper did not use this work to help with their online writing in the computer lab. In the article “Finding Students Who Learn with Media,” the authors found four groups of learners: High technology/high content, High technology/low content, Low technology/high content, and low technology/low content (Bull, Alexander, & Ferster, 2010). This correlated to how I saw my students performing with the Glogs. The article states that the students in the bottom three categories require “a high level of structure to achieve success” (Bull et al, 2010, pg. 37). This helped me to reflect on how I was trying to use the writing process with my students. I then initiated a more intense and longer brainstorming session before the third and final Glog project in order to provide more structure. The students’ brainstorming this session was of much higher quality than before, and I was floored at how they were able to organize their thoughts and at how their writing seemed to improve. With more time and more guidance from teachers, the low content
students were able to produce much more writing and writing of better quality. These two studies pointed out weaknesses in my intervention that I was then able to address upon reflection.

**Materials and Methods**

Over a period of three months, I used quantitative and qualitative methods to gather data from the sixth grade students. As changes in the schedule quickly happened, I designed tools that could be used for different units so that the intervention could be completed with a number of different units. The participants and data collection are described below.

**Participants**

The participants of this study were 22 students in one of my sixth grade EFL classes. I chose this class of the four classes in the sixth grade because this class was assigned to clean my classroom during the lunch hour. This meant that a small group of students came to the classroom after lunch each day to clean the English Zone, and this group usually talked informally with me about a range of topics. These students were very comfortable with me, so I thought it would be easy and comfortable to talk with them about the Glog projects.

There were beginner, intermediate, and advanced English speakers in the class. The students who attended hagwons had a higher socioeconomic status (SES) than the students who did not, as they had enough money to attend the expensive after-school programs. In terms of Seoul, the students were not from a very wealthy area, but the city in general is quite well off, so the students are not in the lower class, but the middle class.

**Data Collection**

The research question focused on the possible outcomes of using Glogs in the sixth grade EFL class. To explore this, I used a variety of quantitative and qualitative data: questionnaires, a free write, self-assessments, teacher assessments, a focus group, and observations.

In mid-March, I introduced the Glog projects to the students, explaining that we would do three Glogs throughout the first semester (the school year starts in March and ends in February). Each Glog project would coincide with a unit from the book and highlight the same theme. We began with a pre-intervention questionnaire before the students began any work on the projects. I decided to give all of the questionnaires and self-assessments in Korean, as the students would feel more comfortable with these than with English versions.

I began every class with some sort of motivation, so we used a motivational game to get the students thinking about themselves, as the first Glog was “All About Me.” The game was a 3x3 “Getting to Know You BINGO” where students had to ask one another the questions in order to get a BINGO. We then showed a teacher example of a Glog to the students. We instructed the students to begin to brainstorm ideas for their first Glog, and we finished the class in the computer lab getting the students set up with using the Glog website. I also gave the students a Korean version of the English rubric that I explained in a presentation to the students. I went through each point of the rubric in English and Korean to explain and check for understanding. I reminded the students many times to refer back to the rubric periodically as they work. When the students were finished with their Glogs after a few class periods, they completed an online self-assessment to check their work. The following class the students were asked to free write about the project. I gave them no guidelines but simply told them to write about their experience with the Glogs in English or Korean, whichever they were most comfortable using.
We did not use the Glogs with each unit from the textbook; instead, we skipped a lesson or two between the three projects. Before Glog 2, I used examples of student work from Glog 1 to show the students. As a class, we went over each of the Glogs with the rubric, asking the students what is good about the Glog and what needs to be improved upon. Prior to Glog 3, I used examples from the Glog 2 project. I used Glogs from different classes in order to keep students’ anonymity, as well as blocking out their names.

We continued to brainstorm before Glogs 2 and 3; however, I noticed that the students were not writing much in their notebooks for the brainstorm. Additionally, they were not using what they did write while in the computer lab. I came to find out from my colleagues that the students did not know about the writing process, as they do not learn this in their Korean classes up until this point. Because of this, for Glog 3, I dedicated more time in the classroom to brainstorm. First, we did a class brainstorm with the unit’s theme, showing how we would arrange our sentences in a Glog. I stressed to students that they are not just writers, but designers as well, so that they could see how their ideas flow together, and this visual representation can become a Glog. Students then brainstormed in their notebooks, and they wrote more than the one or two sentences they previously did for the first two Glogs.

After Glogs 2 and 3, the students again completed the self-assessment, the same one as after Glog 1. Due to time constraints, the students did not complete free writes after these last two Glogs. After the Self-Assessment for Glog 3, the students completed the post-intervention questionnaire, which was exactly the same as the pre-intervention questionnaire.

I gave the students a score for each of the Glogs the day after they finished. The score came from the rubric that the students were given in Korean. The scores were given on the Glog website so the students could see their score when looking at their Glog.

In addition to the free write, I collected other qualitative data as well. Throughout this whole process, I documented my discussions with colleagues about the process. I also documented my observations of the class, as well as informal discussions with students throughout the class period. Lastly, I had focus groups with the students when they came up at lunch to clean and play.

In order to analyze the data, I first looked for recurring themes across the different types of data. First, I compared the answers from the pre- and post-intervention questionnaires. The free write also helped me to see what the students were thinking. Second, I used the self-assessments and the teacher assessments to look at the students’ writing skills. Additionally, the brainstorming done by students for Glog 3, along with observational notes about brainstorming for Glogs 1 and 2 also helped me to look at students’ writing skills. Lastly, I analyzed the focus groups and observations to look for themes. From this data, I hoped to pull out recurring themes that would answer my research question. I was interested to see if there was any effect on students’ confidence and self-esteem. I also wanted to see how students’ motivation changed with a new type of writing activity. Lastly, I was most looking forward to seeing how students’ writing skills changed throughout the intervention.

Results and Discussion

I used quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the research question. Findings from the students’ responses, as well as teacher’s assessments, focus groups, and observational notes revealed three themes: writing skills, motivation, and confidence and self-esteem in writing.
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Writing Skills

In order to follow the progress of students’ writing skills throughout the intervention, I assessed each of their Glogs using the rubric I had given them. Additionally, the students completed a self-assessment with Likert Scales after each of the three Glogs. The questions on the self-assessment directly reflected the rubric. As the intervention progressed, I discovered that students were not accustomed to or even aware of a formal writing process. We did not have time in the curriculum to fully explain and practice it, so I tried to go over the process of writing with students the day before we would go to the computer labs. These were the same days we would look at examples from the previous Glog project and look them over using the rubrics to find strong and weak points. Due to time constraints, we only had one day before Glog 2 and one day before Glog 3 to go over the process again and begin to brainstorm for the next day in the computer lab.

Students were asked to use vocabulary from the unit to expand on the Glog’s theme and to practice using the content vocabulary. Students did use more vocabulary progressively throughout the intervention, but it was a small improvement.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary Item Use</th>
<th>Glog 1</th>
<th>Glog 2</th>
<th>Glog 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I creatively used vocabulary from the unit, as well as additional vocabulary from past units.</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next point on the rubric and the self-assessment addressed writing in a logical sequence. Students also advanced, albeit slightly, in writing in a logical order.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing in a Logical Sequence</th>
<th>Glog 1</th>
<th>Glog 2</th>
<th>Glog 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I wrote in a logical sequence.</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The self-assessment also reminded students to look at and analyze the mechanics of their work. Students were asked about the capitalization and punctuation use in their Glogs, answering yes or no.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanics: % of students who answered “yes”</th>
<th>Glog 1</th>
<th>Glog 2</th>
<th>Glog 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I capitalized the first letter of every sentence.</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I correctly used punctuation.</td>
<td>75.3</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I tried to emphasize the importance of constantly self-checking one’s work as they write, whether they are working in their books, on worksheets, or on the Glogs. Additionally, I also encouraged to students to look over and edit their work multiple times. Students reflected on
self-checking and looking their work over in the self-assessment. These questions were asked on a Likert scale.

Table 4

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Glog 1</th>
<th>Glog 2</th>
<th>Glog 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have self-checked my work.</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After finishing my work, I looked it over again x times.</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I assessed each of the students’ Glogs using the same rubric that students were given.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher’s Assessment</th>
<th>Glog 1</th>
<th>Glog 2</th>
<th>Glog 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students’ Average Scores from 1-5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Like the students’ rubric with 5 stars, the students were given 1, 3, or 5 stars for their work. The Glog website itself has a built in system to rate Glogs, with a rating of one to five stars. For continuity, we used stars on the students’ rubrics as well. I thought that five separate ratings would be too difficult for the sixth graders, so the scores would only be 1, 3, or 5 stars.

During a focus group between Glogs 2 and 3, students said that they did not think their writing skills were improving. After Glog 3, in another focus group, I asked students again if their writing was improving, and they answered ambivalently, there were no strong yes or no answers.

The data showed that throughout the intervention, students’ writing skills did increase, but only slightly. Students’ mechanics, vocabulary use, logical writing, self-checking, and editing/revision slightly increased from Glog 1 to Glog 3. My assessment of the students’ Glogs also only showed a small improvement after a slight decrease between the first two Glogs. This correlated with the research by Salaberry (2001) which showed that while the learners had positive experiences, it did not mean they grew or progressed. This is in opposition to Eva Lam’s (2000) case study that showed an increase in writing abilities.

Motivation

In order to delve into students’ motivation levels, I used a question from the pre- and post-intervention questionnaire, answers from the free write, focus group responses, and observational notes.

On the pre- and post-intervention questionnaire, students responded to the statement, “I want to improve my English writing on the computer,” by rating their feelings on a Likert scale, 1 was Strongly Disagree and 5 was Strongly Agree.
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Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Pre-Intervention</th>
<th>Post-Intervention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I want to improve my English writing on the computer.</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The students did not initially show a strong opinion, with an average exactly between No Opinion and Agree on the pre-intervention questionnaire. Their motivation to improve then went down throughout the intervention, as their post-intervention average was a 3.25, thus learning more towards No Opinion.

After Glog 1, students wrote a free write about their experiences. I did not ask any specific questions; I only stated that I wanted students to write about their experience. The vast majority of the class wrote about how they wanted to do the project again. One student simply stated, “I want to do it again.” Another student wrote, “We finished glogster yesterday. It was very exciting I want to this glogster project.” A student responded, “I found this project really exciting. I hope we get the opportunity to work on glogster again.” Along the same lines, a different student wrote, “It was Glog is very wonderful. I want to do Glog again.” One student likened the experience to playing and wrote, “I’m want play Glog again.” Other responses included the following: “I’m very very happy and fun So one more time please,” “I’m very x100 happy. I want to one more time,” “It was fun time to me. I want to do next time too,” and “I feel very happy, and I want to have more chance to use glog.” Lastly, one student summarized what they believed to be the feelings of everyone by writing, “I want to do Glog again. Everyone want to do glog.”

As the intervention progressed, students’ motivations changed. The free write responses seemed as if students were motivated to continue to do the Glogs, thus writing more in English. However, these feelings did not hold throughout the intervention. While preparing for Glog 2, students were very excited to go to the computer lab to begin the projects; in fact they were cheering and clapping while running to the computer lab. However, as this second Glog came to a close, many students said they were done earlier than I had anticipated. I reminded students to look at the rubrics and think about their work; I asked them how many stars they thought their Glog would earn. Many students replied that they should earn three stars, and I asked if they were okay with that or if they wanted to try for five stars. Many students responded that they only wanted three stars, and that they did not want to do any more work to get five stars.

When we began Glog 3, like the beginning of Glog 2, students were excited to go to the computer lab. Students began to work right away, and I did not have to remind students to stay on task because they were very focused. Again, like Glog 2, as students finished their work, and I reminded them to look at their rubrics, they were content with three stars. Upon questioning students about their evaluation of their work, students shrugged their shoulders and said they were okay with three stars, happy with three stars, and that three stars was good for them.

After the last Glog, I asked students in a focus group to think about all three Glogs that we did, and what they thought about it altogether. One student responded, “A little bit boring now. Maybe I only want to do it one more time,” while others stated, “It’s good,” “I like it,” and “It’s fun.”

After the first Glog, students seemed very motivated to do more, because they all wrote positively about the experience on the free writes. However, from the beginning of the intervention to the end of the intervention, students’ motivation to improve their writing skills went down. It seems that after three Glogs, some students became bored of it and did not want
to do Glogs again. I was a bit surprised by this, as Al-Jarf (2004) found that the online writing improved students’ motivation.

Confidence/Self-Esteem

Lastly, in order to look at students’ confidence and self-esteem related to writing in English, I used a question in the pre- and post-intervention questionnaire, asked questions during focus groups, and looked through the results from the free write.

In the pre- and post-intervention questionnaires, the students replied to the statement, “I feel confident using English on the computer” on a Likert scale, 1 was Strongly Disagree and 5 was Strongly Agree. The students’ confidence only slightly went up.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Confident Writing Power</th>
<th>Pre-Intervention</th>
<th>Post-Intervention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel confident using English on the computer.</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the free write following the first Glog, only one student wrote about their confidence: “At first, I don’t have confidence at writing. However, by this time, I can upgrade my writing power. I feel very happy.” It appears this student’s confidence in writing did improve from before the intervention until after the first Glog.

Throughout informal discussions with students, I found neutral opinions on the students’ confidence. After Glog 1, a student mentioned that he was surprised how easy the program was to use and he felt confident and happy using English on the computer. After Glog 2, students expressed their ambivalence about their ability to effectively use English for the Glog projects. “My English is not good. I cannot do Glogs. But, I like to make Glogs because the pictures and words together.” Lastly, after Glog 3 I asked students their thoughts on writing in English on the Glogs. I asked if they felt good or confident writing in English on the computer, and the students responded, “So-so,” “Maybe”, and “A little bit.”

From before the intervention to after the intervention, students’ confidence in writing in English only slightly improved, and it is important to note that it went from Disagree to No Opinion, showing students’ possible ambivalence about writing in English. This particular project did not show a large increase in confidence in English writing. Al-Jarf’s (2004) learners showed an increase in self-esteem and sense of achievement. The Eva Lam (2000) case study participant also mentioned his confidence in English went up. It seems that even though students may have enjoyed the Glogs at some point during the intervention, their confidence in writing did not improve drastically like other research has shown.

Conclusion

Throughout this process, I have continuously reflected on how this will change my future practice. I initially was very positive about the Glog projects, so I was bit disheartened to see that like Salaberry (2001), my students had a somewhat positive experience with technology and writing, but this did not necessarily mean that they progressed academically.

The experience of this action research has helped me to think about how I could do action research in the future. I believe there were too many question items in the students’
questionnaires that did not directly elate to my research question. As students filled out the questionnaires, it seemed as if they were overwhelmed with questions and began to answer No Opinion for many of them, potentially changing the data. In the future, I would think more about the appropriate length of data collection techniques.

A hugely unexpected outcome of this project was the discovery that students did not learn any sort of writing process at the school up until this point. I was completely unaware of this, and I wrongly assumed that the sixth graders would already have practice with the writing process in Korean that they could then transfer to English. I tried to do the best that I could with the time constraints, but I learned that in the future I should not make assumptions about a system that I am not fully knowledgeable of. I need to think about the cultural differences between the education system that I am accustomed to and the Korean education system. Creative writing and writing assessments for university entrance do not seem to be deemed highly important. Additionally, there are sometimes different beliefs regarding plagiarism and what is and is not appropriate for writing.

All of the schools under SMOE have the same curriculum; therefore, this project could be replicated across the school system. However, I would not recommend it until students have an understanding of and have practiced the writing process. Internationally, this project could be replicated, and I would be very interested to see how Glogs affect students’ writing at different grade levels and across the curriculum.

References


