Web Blogs for Foreign Language Learning: On-Line Learning Journals for FL Learners

One of the challenges that FL instructors would encounter in the physical classroom is to keep track of various learner needs, including the coordination of different learning paces, of the content levels, and of various language practice needs. These challenges not only might hinder learner motivation but also hamper the instruction. However, the advancing of computers and Internet technologies has provided both learners and instructors with new means to shorten the gap between the instruction and learner needs. Recent development of the web blogs has provided users with friendly virtual environments to keep the online journals and to display the daily events in reverse chronological order along with message box functions for other web viewers to respond to the blog owners’ journal entries. This new design provides possible means to overcome the above challenges that hinder both learning and instruction. Thus, this study engaged EFL learners at the beginner level in the web blogs to record their learning and virtual communication with advanced English learners, who served as the online tutors to polish the beginners’ language. Therefore, it is the purpose of this paper to explore English learners’ web blog journeys and to understand their learning styles. Qualitative paradigm was utilized for further exploration. 3 subjects with the most frequent web blog participation, along with their online tutors, were purposefully selected for further interviews. Data was collected from the audio-taped interviews, 12-week-long web blog entries and responses, and researcher’s web blog observation to triangulate the truthfulness and trustworthiness of the analyses. Results of this study show: (1) the strategies that were adopted by the web blog owners in using limited English to communicate daily events with advanced English learners; (2) learning motivation that was strengthened in the web blog activity; and (3) the aspects of foreign language that were polished through the web blog communication.