

## **The Effect of Blogs on Jordanian EFL Eighth-grade Students' Achievement in English**

**Hamza Al-Maharmah**

The World Islamic Sciences and Education University  
Language Center, Amman, Jordan

**Jibrel Al-Saudi**

The World Islamic Sciences and Education University  
Faculty of Arts & Sciences, Department of English & Literature  
Amman, Jordan

Corresponding Author: [Jibrel.alsaudi@wise.edu.jo](mailto:Jibrel.alsaudi@wise.edu.jo)

Received:11/08/2022

Accepted:03/08/2023

Published: 03/24/2023

### **Abstract**

This quasi-experimental study assesses the usefulness of blogs as teaching and learning tools for the EFL at Jordanian schools in Amman. The study focuses on the increased significance of the English language for the international competence of Jordan and its workforce. The study also assesses the benefits that blogs can provide for eighth-grade students. To answer the question of what effect do blogs have on improving reading and writing skills, the researchers used a sample of students from two schools in Amman, and undertook a quasi-experimental study by applying a pretest-posttest design. The researchers selected a sample of 72 eighth-grade EFL students in Amman and divided them into control and experimental groups. The regular EFL curriculum was administered in both groups, but supported with a blog component for the experimental group. The results indicated a significant improvement in the students' reading comprehension skills and writing competence when using blogs. The study recommends that teachers promote active participation of the students on blogs.

**Keywords:** Blogs, English achievement, EFL 8<sup>th</sup>-grade students, reading comprehension, writing competence

**Cite as:** Al-Maharmah, H., & Al-Saudi, J. (2023). The Effect of Blogs on Jordanian EFL Eighth-grade Students' Achievement in English. *Arab World English Journal*, 14 (1): 369- 378.

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol14no1.23>

## Introduction

The use of blogs and Information Communication Technology (ICT) is a central element of the transformation in all aspects of life. Web 2.0 presents significant opportunities by employing the internet and online applications in an interactive manner. Using blogs can provide a practical tool for supporting learner-centered interactive learning. The use of blogs can also give teachers feedback, which is a useful role in the language learning process. This suggests that blogs can have a big impact on how EFL students perform. Blogs can give a practical learning environment for the students through an active and social learning approach. Further, blogging offers a beneficial tool for constructing knowledge from past experiences, and developing ideas collaboratively with peers and teachers; hence it can provide EFL students with a more influential learning environment.

Furthermore, the feedback given in blogs is characterized by permanency and the capacity to encourage group knowledge, offering the opportunity for a safe environment of greater student participation. The ease of accessing these blogs as a learning tool can also influence their use and applicability. Besides, the feedback given by the teachers affects the perceptions of the students, which indicates that the outcomes of Jordanian EFL students can be significantly influenced by the utilization of blogs and how they are perceived.

Learning English today requires learning how to read, write and communicate effectively in an electronic environment. Blogs have been promoted as teaching and learning tools for Jordanian students because they are perceived as highly beneficial and exciting tools. A recent study (Mohamed et. al., 2023), reveals that adopting electronic blogs can help secondary school students raise their self-esteem. The study shows that the use of electronic blogs in the classroom influences self-esteem and the development of secondary students. According to Zarei and Al-Shboul, (2013), some key benefits of using blogs include improving the level of the obtained feedback and the students' English language skills. This paper argues that blogs can improve the processes of English language learning, which increases their relevance as tools for promoting student outcomes in Jordan.

Therefore, the concern of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of blogs as a tool for teaching and learning English language. The study aims at investigating the use of blogs at EFL classrooms in two schools at Sahab District in Amman, Jordan, and how blogs can improve the outcomes of the students in learning English, which is important in modernizing the country and preparing EFL students for the global workforce. It is also significant in that using blogs in teaching and learning English at EFL 8<sup>th</sup>-grade classrooms is considered as a valuable tool that could create more interactive and collaborative classrooms and provide a beneficial framework for future implementation. In this regard, the following research objectives are set as:

1. To investigate the effect of blogs in improving English language reading competence of EFL students in Jordan
2. To find out the effect of blogs in improving writing competence of Jordanian EFL students
3. To assess the impact of blogs in promoting interactions and feedback between teachers and students in the EFL classroom

In this vein, the following research questions spring from the previous research objectives:

- How can the use of blogs improve achievement in reading for EFL students in Jordan?
- What is the significance of blogs as a learning tool for improving the writing competence of Jordanian EFL students?

- What is the impact of blogs in promoting interactions and feedback between teachers and students in the EFL classroom?

### Literature Review

Technological tools are not only preferred as pedagogical strategies, but are also highlighted as more effective than traditional learning environments. It is also considered a preferred learning environment for the present generation due to their preference for technology. In the recent age where the internet has become ubiquitous, teachers should learn how to use it to get more practice for their students in their learning environments. Blogs, also called weblogs, are online journals that can be easily updated by the user. While they were not initially developed as a learning tool, they can provide teachers with opportunities to familiarize their students with online strategies. They also help students to create a threat-free environment to put their newly discovered skills to the test (Aliakbari & Mohammadi, 2016).

The benefits of blogs in creating learning environments are associated with promoting learning autonomy. Blogs provide authentic learning contexts for EFL learners with limited opportunities for expressing themselves in the target language. They can express themselves more effectively in this learning environment because they do not face the inhibition or intimidation that may be present in face-to-face settings. Further, Noytim (2010) argued that there are three types of educational blogs that can be implemented for teaching. These include learner *blogs*, *tutor blogs*, and *class blogs*. Based on the purpose of the instructor in formulating the blog, other categories of blogs are literature response blogs, classroom news blogs, and mirror blogs. According to research conducted, blogging allows students to experiment with new languages without stress. As a result, students will be able to improve their writing fluency, and they can be introduced to different perspectives and develop persuasion and reasoning skills.

Aljumah (2012) published an empirical study examining student perceptions and attitudes towards the use of blogs as educational tools. The sample for this survey was Saudi students majoring in English, and the results indicated a positive perception of using blogs in English writing classes. Learners recognize the benefits of using blogs, including motivating students to use the language by facilitating interaction with peers (Sad, 2013). Abdel-Haq and Al-Sobh (2010) conducted a study concerning the assessment of positive perceptions and associated benefits of e-learning in the Jordanian context. An experimental design focused on the web-based writing program for EFL students. A statistically significant difference was found in the test scores of the students in the experimental group.

The usefulness of blogging was examined in terms of opportunities for writing practice both inside and outside of the classroom (Kazanc & Caner, 2020). Learners' attitudes toward its use in writing classes and blogging were also investigated. Students completed English writing assignments online and used blogs to interact with their peers. The results showed its effectiveness in improving students' writing achievement. The findings in other settings have shown similar findings regarding the use of class blogs as indicated in Alenezi (2022). The study used a sample of Saudi EFL students learning using Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). A major aspect of the conclusions was that the students' perceptions about the usefulness of blogs were based on their experience in using them.

A sample of EFL students in Palestine showed that blogging had a significant and positive effect on their writing skills. Using a pre-post quasi-experimental design, the use of blogs has proven effective in creating a collaborative writing environment. It also improved not only their writing skills, but also their level of active participation in writing tasks. Although many studies

have been conducted in Arabic-speaking countries to evaluate the usefulness of blogs in teaching EFL students, there is no generalizable study evaluating the applicability of blogs in Jordan. In short supply. For instance, Zarei and Al-Shboul (2013) evaluated students' perceptions of their speech and language learning process using blogs. To assess the effectiveness or significance, it is crucial to conduct thorough research. It is important to conduct detailed research to measure the effectiveness or importance of blogging for teaching and learning English to the beginning-level EFL students.

Alenezi (2022) investigated how Saudi EFL students felt about enhancing their writing skills through blogging. It was also intended to assess how useful blogs are as a tool for improving students' writing skills. Five of her EFL sophomores from the English department of a Saudi educational institution participated in this study. Participants had completed a writing skills course, which was a prerequisite for study. During data collection for this case study, we conducted semi-structured interviews to explore students' blogging experiences. Data from semi-structured interviews were analyzed thematically. The results showed that students rated the use of class blogs positively as a useful strategy in EFL writing lessons. Others also admitted that the blog helped them write more effectively in English. They also highlighted how blogging has helped them create an interactive learning environment where they can learn from each other and share their experiences and perspectives. Finally, the study highlights the importance of introducing blogging into EFL writing classes and suggests including blogging in college writing curricula.

In addition, Siddique et al. (2023), measured how well blogging helped high school students strengthen their writing skills. Students' English writing was assessed based on text structure and content. Using real-world experimental methods, the study compared the effects of blogging and pen-and-paper tools at a public boys' high school. Sixty-eight sophomores were randomly assigned to two mixed ability groups; post-pretest blog (n=34) and pen and paper (n=34). During the 8-week treatment period, students in both groups produced 24 texts (essays, summaries, and character sketches) from the lectures according to the experimental timetable. Six experienced English specialists were part of the group that reviewed the pre- and post-tests. A similar-structured posttest was administered eight weeks after therapy to establish any differences. Two raters assigned different weights to each component of the created rubric when assessing students on both assessments. Each participant received an average score determined by two raters. Peer reviews and peer critiques set blog groups apart from the rest. The conclusion of the study showed that blogging has a significant impact on the structure and content of writing. Kids were motivated to write with enthusiasm by technology, the internet, peer review and peer feedback.

Mohamed et al. (2023) examined how the use of e-blogging in the classroom affected self-esteem and development in middle school students. A quasi-experimental methodology (experimental) was used in this study. There were also a dependent variable (EFL self-esteem development) and an independent variable (Internet blog use). A group of first-year secondary school students was the study's subjects. Researchers used Internet blogs to teach them. The self-esteem scale was the instrument used to answer the research questions. The study revealed that the use of e-blogging can improve the self-esteem of middle school students.

## Methodology

The study follows a positivist approach where the researchers assume that truth is objective and quantifiable. The ontological assumption of this study is that truth is measurable and defined in a manner that is scientifically evaluated. In line with this philosophy, a positivist approach was

adopted in the study where statistical analysis would be undertaken to test a defined hypothesis (Baskarada & Koronios, 2018). The study follows a deductive approach. The authors seek to test a theory about the association between using blogs and the English language competence of eighth-grade students in Jordan.

The study was designed as quasi-experimental research with a control and experimental group to determine the effect of blogs as tools for teaching English language to eighth-grade Jordanian EFL students. The study design was influenced by an empirical approach that aims to assess how interventions affect student performance. A quasi-experimental design was implemented by randomizing participants and using probabilistic methods to test associations between dependent and independent variables (Cohen et al., 2013; Saunders, et al., 2019).

### ***Participants***

The research participants in the study were eighth-grade students in Jordan undertaking EFL. The reason behind choosing eighth-grade students was that they had not been studied in previous research. Studies assessing the use of blogs in teaching EFL have focused on secondary schools and tertiary institutions in the academic year 2021/ 2022. The current study addresses this issue by targeting elementary school students in the upper primary levels where they may be able to apply blogs in their learning activities (Mackey & Gass, 2005). The participants of the study were sought from two schools at Sahab District in Amman, Jordan. The sample was derived randomly from two schools in the district and the eighth-grade students were selected for the control and experimental groups. The two schools had 72 students in the eighth grade, which provided an effective sample for the study. Participants were randomly assigned to the study and divided into control and experimental groups at both sites. The experimental group consisted of 36 of her students, 16 of them from one school and 20 of them from the other school.

### ***Research Instruments***

The eighth-grade students in the two schools were subjected to the regular EFL curriculum. However, to answer the research questions posed, the experimental group received an EFL curriculum supported by a blog maintained for the class as a platform for interaction and discussion by students and their teachers. Throughout the course of the program, which took six weeks, the researchers asked students to write two English essays, each consisting of a first draft, a second and a final draft. The two essays were of the compare and contrast type and a definitional essay. Students' reading comprehension was also assessed using reading comprehension tests administered before and after the intervention period. A structured questionnaire was used to assess students' perceptions and views of their interactions with teachers, as well as the feedback students received on their assignments and discussions on their blogs. A pretest was also conducted before the study to provide a comparative basis for evaluating the impact of the intervention on student outcomes.

### ***Findings***

Two groups of participants underwent a standard English reading and writing test. Pre-test literacy scores were measured for the two groups and differences between them were reviewed using t-tests for equality of means of independent samples. The analysis indicated that the two groups did not differ significantly. The p-values for the independent samples tests for writing and reading were .102 and .158, respectively, indicating that the groups were relatively similar.



The control group continued with the regular curriculum, and the writing was graded by the teacher and returned to the teacher for revision. The experimental group used the blog for sharing ideas and peer reviewing each other's work. The final essays were graded and used to assess the writing competence of the students in both groups.

### ***Post-test Outcomes***

The posttest was presented to the students to assess their performance in the two areas of EFL competence and English language achievement. The mean scores for the control and experimental group are presented in table two in the appendices section. The results indicated a significant difference in the mean scores of the two elements for the control and experimental groups. Writing competence differed significantly as shown by the independent sample test where the mean score for the experimental group was 72.55% compared to 64.68% for the control group. The p-value of the t-test indicated that the means and variances of the writing competence for the control and experimental groups differed significantly. The same was true for students' reading scores, with a post-test score of 61.82% in the control group compared to 65.90% in the experimental group. The t-statistic for reading comprehension was 3.854 (p-value = .000). The results indicated that after the intervention, the experimental group performed better than the control group on the two aspects of reading and writing competence.

The other element of the research was to assess how the intervention influenced the competence of the students by comparing the pretest results and the posttest outcomes. The writing competence scores for the students increased from 63.53% to 70.26%, which indicates that the intervention played a significant role in changing the respondents' writing competency level. Regarding reading competency, the test results increased from 59.17% to 65.03% after the intervention. The comparison was made for the experimental group, and the results of the independent samples test show that the improvement was significant for the group. The t-statistic for the independent samples test for writing competence was 3.082 (p-value = .000), indicating a significant improvement in the post-test results. The test results for reading competence increased significantly as shown by the t-statistic of 2.714 (p-value= .000), revealing a significant positive impact of the EFL curriculum with blog support.

The feedback and interactions between the teachers and students through blogs were investigated. The structured questionnaire responses indicate that 75% of the respondents felt that blogs provide a practical framework to increase interactions with teachers. The level and perceptions of the students about the feedback indicate that they considered it to have a significant impact on their learning outcomes and relations with the teachers. Seventy-eight percents of the students reported that blogs allowed them to use English in a formal academic manner as opposed to chatting. Almost 80% of the respondents considered the blogs a beneficial platform for relating among themselves.

### **Discussion**

Given the above findings of the study, and based on the research objectives and questions mentioned in the introduction of the study, this section discusses the findings of the study. The questions include: the significant role of blogs as a learning tool in improving reading and writing competence of Jordanian EFL students, and the impact of blogs in promoting interactions and feedback between teachers and students in the EFL classroom. To answer these questions, the results of this study revealed that using blogs as a tool for teaching EFL in Jordan is a beneficial

tool. These findings are in line with those of Aljumah (2012) regarding the positive perceptions of students and teachers on using blogs as a teaching and learning tool. The web-based writing program used in this study appears to provide a useful tool for teaching and learning EFL to 8<sup>th</sup>-grade students. One of the critical aspects of blogging as a tool for teaching and learning EFL is that it allows students to practice using the language in and out of class. In this case, the approach is presented as highly beneficial in improving the writing and reading skills of the students.

In addition, a theory in favor of blogging regarding its impact on reading literacy is that it provides an opportunity for students to engage in written communication in a formal way. Interacting with peers and teachers online empowers students to express their thoughts with confidence. Another noteworthy aspect of the blog as a tool for teaching and learning is that it is more interactive than the traditional class. The interactive nature of learning on blogs is supported as being more effective because it promotes the student's autonomy. The learning that takes place in computer-mediated environments is more learner-centered. Instead of the teacher being the sole producer of knowledge, the students also engage actively by commenting on peers' work and responding to feedback from the teacher, which manifests a positive and significant impact on writing skills, as indicated by Kazancı and Caner (2020) and Alenezi (2022). These students have been focused on older students in secondary and tertiary institutions; however, the research shows that they are applicable to eighth-grade as well. The significant improvement in student reading and writing skills presents support for the different opportunities that it provides for the students. Blogging allows students to work with colleagues and develop formal writing skills. In line with previous findings, using blogs promotes confidence in the students and develops their language capabilities through active participation and feedback (Soufi, et al., 2017).

In line with the responses to the questionnaire, blogging is appropriate for improving the level of interaction and feedback in class. This can motivate students to learn as they can receive feedback in a relaxed environment. Blogs also allow sharing of ideas; hence the students reported that they felt they were learning more in this case than in the traditional platform alone. One of the key responses was that students favored a blended learning approach in which the regular curriculum was enhanced with blogging elements.

## Conclusion

This study is concerned with evaluating the effectiveness of blogging as a tool for teaching and learning English reading and writing skills, in particular. The purpose of this study was to examine the use of blogs in EFL classrooms of two schools at Sahab district in Amman, Jordan, and how blogs improved student outcomes in learning English language, contributing to the modernization of the country. The study concludes that blogs are a useful and effective tool for teaching EFL. A study of eighth graders in Jordan showed that incorporating blogging into the regular curriculum significantly improved learning outcomes for EFL students. It should be recognized that blogs are added as an element to enhance student learning, not to replace traditional classroom strategies. It provides a framework for sharing knowledge and practicing ones writing skills through discussions. Blogging allows students to share information freely and makes interactions less anxious than in face-to-face settings. In this case, the benefits of blogs in promoting learning outcomes on the identified elements are clear.

### Recommendations

The study proposes some key recommendations that can be derived from this research. These include the need to integrate a class blog in EFL programs. Teachers should be encouraged to get their students to actively share on these platforms to enhance their reading and writing skills. The modalities of sharing can be aligned with the competence of the students in reading and writing where they can undertake peer review of each other's work and also provide helpful feedback. The platforms can be used in evaluating reading comprehension and undertaking discussions that consider the role of the students as active producers and consumers of knowledge.

### About the Authors:

**Dr. Hamza Al Maharma** is an assistant professor at the Language Center at the World Islamic Sciences and Education University in Amman, Jordan. His research interests include Language Acquisition, TESOL, TEFL and CALL. ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1533-9659>

**Dr. Jibrel Harb** is an assistant professor of Linguistics at Department of English, Faculty of Arts and Sciences at The World Islamic Sciences & Education University (WISE) in Jordan. His research interests include Semantics, Sociolinguistics, Discourse Analysis, Translation, Morphology, Syntax, Language Learning and Acquisition. ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3326-9332>

### References

- Al-Abed Al-Haq, F., & Al-Sobh, M. (2010). The effect of a web-based writing instructional EFL program on enhancing the performance of Jordanian secondary students. *Jaltcall journal*, 6 (3), 189-218. <https://journal.jaltcall.org/storage/articles/JALTCALL%206-3-189.pdf>
- Alenezi, S. S. A., (2022). The Effects of Writing in a Class Blog on Saudi EFL Students' Attitudes towards Writing in English. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) 2nd Special Issue on Covid 19 Challenges*, 2, 329-341. <https://docshunter.com/digital-marketing-materials/blog-writing-skills-235337>
- Aliakbari, M., & Mohammadi, S. (2016). EFL Learners' Perceptions of Blog Assignments and Instructors' E-Feedbacks. *International Journal of Web-Based Learning and Teaching Technologies*, 11 (3), 1-5. <https://www.igi-global.com/journal/international-journal-web-based-learning/1081>
- Aljumah, H. F. (2012). Saudi Learner Perceptions and Attitudes towards the Use of Blogs in Teaching English Writing Course for EFL Majors at Qassim University. *English Language Teaching*, 5 (1), 100-116. [https://www.academia.edu/98718848/Blogging\\_to\\_Enhance\\_Writing\\_Skills\\_A\\_Survey\\_of\\_Students\\_Perception\\_and\\_Attitude](https://www.academia.edu/98718848/Blogging_to_Enhance_Writing_Skills_A_Survey_of_Students_Perception_and_Attitude)
- Baskarada, S., & Koronios, A. (2018). A philosophical discussion of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research in social science. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 18(1), 2-21.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2013). *Research methods in education*: New York, NY: Routledge.
- Kazancı, R. & Caner, M. (2020). Weblogs in EFL Writing Course. *Journal of Narrative and Language Studies*, 8 (14), 151-163.
- Mackey, A., & Gass, S. M. (2005). *Second Language Research, Methodology and Design*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.



Mohamed, A. S., Seif Eldin, A. H., & Mohamed, H. M. (2023). Using Electronic Vlogs to develop self-esteem for first year Secondary Stage Students. *BSU-Journal of Pedagogy and Curriculum*, 2(3), 121-133. doi: 10.21608/bsujpc.2023.270989

Noytim, U. (2010). Weblogs enhancing EFL students' English language learning. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2(2), 1127–1132.  
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1140570.pdf>

Sad., A. (2013). Motivating low-performing 11th graders through blogging: A case study. *International Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning* 9 (12), 17-30.

Saunders, M. N. K., Thornhill, A., & Lewis, P. (2019). *Research Methods for Business Students*. Eighth Edition ed. London, UK: Pearson International.

Siddique, M., Rizwan, S., & Khan, Z. (2023). The Improvement in English Writing Skills Of Students Through Blogging At Higher Secondary School Level. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 1905-1916.

Soufi, N., Saad, K., & Nicolas, M. O., (2017). Blogs as a way to enhance EFL reading classes in a Lebanese tertiary institution. *Teaching English with Technology*, 15 (1), 31-47.  
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1140570.pdf>

Zarei, N. & Al-Shboul, Y. (2013). Participating in a Blog: Jordanian EFL Learners' Voices. *English Linguistics Research*, 2 (2), 53-59.

**Appendices**

**Appendix A**

**Pretest - Independent samples t-test**

Table 1. Pretest - Independent samples t-test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Writing competence test	Equal variances assumed	2.149	.051	0.696	70	.102
	Equal variances not assumed			0.696	69.761	.100
Reading comprehension test score	Equal variances assumed	1.207	.063	0.411	70	.158
	Equal variances not assumed			0.411	68.882	.159

**Appendix B****Descriptive statistics for posttest outcomes**Table 2. *Descriptive statistics for posttest outcomes*

	<b>Percentage score</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Std. Error Mean</b>
Writing competence test	Control	36	64.6757	8.9039	3.5584
	Experimental	36	72.5464	3.0050	.2151
Reading comprehension test score	Control	36	61.8881	7.2538	.8328
	Experimental	36	65.9002	2.6713	2.7189

**Appendix C****Descriptive statistics for pretest - posttest results for the experimental group**Table 3. *Descriptive statistics for pretest - posttest results for the experimental group*

	<b>Percentage score</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Std. Error Mean</b>
Writing competence test	Pretest	36	63.527	5.0231	1.3527
	Post-test	36	70.264	4.3590	.1032
Reading comprehension test score	Pretest	36	59.173	5.3518	1.2825
	Post-test	36	65.028	1.2713	.8049