The Impact of Blended Differentiated Instruction on Critical Reading Skills in Middle School English as a Second Language Classrooms

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Abstract. This research paper probed the impact of critical reading instruction through a differentiated technology-based approach on the participants' performance in critical text analysis and written expression. One hundred seventy-three Middle School English as a second language participants were divided into control and experimental groups. Ninety-seven of them received a blended differentiated critical reading instructional program whereas fifty-seven students were taught using a semi-traditional critical reading instructional approach over one academic year. The experimental group filled out a questionnaire and twenty of them were interviewed. Some classroom dynamics were documented. In addition, posttest pretest design was used and students' writing samples were analyzed. The data revealed that blended differentiated teaching enhanced students' critical reading skills. Strikingly, most participants agreed that a blended differentiated approach via a virtual platform made them more engaged and responsible for their own learning which improved their critical reading skills. Finally, T-tests, test item analyses and students' written work showed a noticeable improvement in critical text analysis after the implementation of the study. However, a few participants saw no value in integrating technology with differentiated instruction to enhance critical reading skills.

Key Terms: Achievement Level Tests, Assessment Criteria, Asynchronous, Blended Learning Program, Compacting, Complex Instruction, Higher Order Thinking Skills, Learning Stations, Mono-logical Thinking, Multi-logical Thinking, Synchronous, Tiered Activities

INTRODUCTION

Despite the several attempts made to update the Lebanese curriculum in order to incorporate critical thinking components since 2005, the Lebanese curriculum still lacks higher order thinking skills which is revealed in the purpose of the Lebanese official exams as Obeid (2015) asserted. This problem is also manifested in the Arab world according to Abdkadir, Nsubki, Jamal & Juhaida (2014); Al Balushi & Osman (2013); Al Oqaily (2007) and El Maleh (2006). Accordingly, there is a call for a new educational paradigm to enhance students' critical thinking skills in reading and engage students to be able to move to a new globalization era as Friedman & Hicks (2006) suggested. However, the question of whether critical thinking skills are inborn or taught has been debatable.

Supporters of critical thinking instruction believe that critical thinking must be taught as a set of skills to be acquired (Emerson, 2013; Halpern, 2009; Brookfield, 2005 and Paul & Elder, 2002). Experimental researchers, in particular, explored teaching critical thinking through an approach designed to evaluate EFL/ESL learners' competencies in analyzing arguments (Bensley, Crowe, Bernardts, Buchker & Allman, 2010; Saiz & Olivares, 2015; Liu, Frankel & Roohr, 2014 and Heijltjes, Gog & Pass, 2014). Opponents of critical thinking instruction, on the other hand, argue that it is quite impossible for people to master critical thinking skills (Gelder, 2005 & Brandsford, 2000).

This paper supported researchers who claimed that higher order thinking skills can be developed through specific teaching methods and practices thus it sought to explore the effect of blended differentiated instruction on critical thinking skills in Middle School English as a second language reading classrooms. It dwelled on several links that had been drawn between differentiated instruction, reading comprehension and critical thinking skills, or between blended learning, reading instruction and higher order thinking skills such as Rapivati (2016), Schechter, Kazakoff & Bundschuh (2016) Schechter, Maracuso, Kazakoff & Brooke (2015), Ableidinger, Han, Hassel, C. & Hassel (2013), Reed (2013), Stearns (2012), Mclaughlin (2012), Behjat, Yamini & Bagheri (2012), Barone & Wright (2008) and Al Jarf (2007). However, no previous research had been done on the impact of blended differentiated reading instruction on critical reading skills. The studies on integrating technology into reading instruction argue that it addresses the needs of both low achievers and high achievers and enhances their analytic skills, it helps students gain background knowledge, it is based on inquiry and discovery through which students use their critical thinking skills, and it saves times as well as addresses individual needs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Kerres & De Witt (2003), blended learning is a mixture of distinct teaching approaches (exposition, presentations, discovery learning, and cooperative learning…) and ways of delivery (personal communication, publication, blogging…). It is one of the current teaching approaches that has positively impacted English language teaching according to Krasula (2017). It has been referred to as personalized teaching, differentiated instruction, hybrid learning, technology-mediated instruction, web-enhanced instruction and mixed mode instruction (Krasula, 2017). A blended learning model includes instructor-delivered content, e-learning webinars, conference calls, live or online sessions with instructions and media events such as Facebook, email, chat rooms, blogs, podcasting, Twitter, Youtube, Skype and web boards (Krasula, 2017). Researchers have debated over whether blended learning was beneficial or not, pinpointing pros and cons of applying a blended learning approach in reading classrooms.

Adopting blended learning has many benefits as it offers more opportunities for collaboration among students, increases engagement and improves performance, develops autonomous learners, aids differentiation, improves students' and teachers' attitudes towards learning, improves communication between teachers and students, it decreases expenses, caters for gifted learners and initiates personalized learning. Blended learning was selected to increase students' motivation and engagement, improve students' academic performance and differentiate efficiently (Krasula, 2017; Blackboard, 2009; Carman, 2005; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2011; Dzubian et al. 2004 & Singh et al. 2001).

Although many researchers and practitioners have proven the usefulness of blended learning, opponents of technology-based instruction highlighted its constraints. First, blended learning relies on technical tools which may fail and cause learning to be lost. Second, blended learning demands students to be IT literate. Third, it makes managing group work in virtual setting difficult. Fourth, it can bombard students with materials such as lecture videos that they might not watch on time in asynchronous settings, it can be time consuming and expensive in terms of feedback through electronic media and the use of virtual platforms. The last impediment is that can be inaccessible to a good network infrastructure hindering learning in the process (Krasula, 2017). Despite all the risks that blended learning may impose, this paper incorporated it into a differentiated learning setting for maximizing learning and promoting higher order thinking skills.

The diversity of students and their mixed abilities, interests and readiness levels in one classroom necessitated a method that addresses each and every learner's needs. Therefore, educators developed the differentiated learning approach which encapsulates modifying teaching materials, assessment, curricula and tasks to suit all learners' needs according to Brighton et al. (2005) and Hertberg-Davis (2009) quoted in Taylor (2017). Differentiation can be done based on content, product, process and the learning environment according to Tomlinson (1991) quoted in Koeze (2007).

Differentiating according to content is based on designing learning tasks taking students' readiness levels into consideration, which vary from one content area to another. Differentiating based on process and product is based on students' learning profiles which include their preferences, learning styles, gender, culture and intelligence preference (Koeze, 2007). Different modes of differentiation can be facilitated through blended learning, which is a mixture of face to face and internet mediated instruction, due to the varied ways of delivery and distinct styles of instruction that it can offer according to Koeze (2007). Therefore, this paper examines how blended differentiated reading activities can promote critical reading skills such as: breaking information into parts to explore understandings and relationships, comparing, organizing, deconstructing, interrogating, finding, justifying a decision or course of action, checking, hypothesizing, critiquing, experimenting, judging, generating new ideas, products or ways of viewing things, designing, constructing, planning, producing and inventing.

PURPOSE

The main objective of this paper is to examine how blended differentiated instruction may impact critical reading skills in middle school classrooms. The significance of the study is to highlight the need to teach toward critical thinking through the use of a mixed instructional approach.

The Blended Differentiated Model

This research paper adopted the blended learning curriculum designed by Davis (2014) which included online links such as *flocabulary.com, readwritethink.org, zunal.com, jeopardylabs.com, readtheory.org, vocabtest.com, googledocs.com*, *youtube.com* and *eschoolhome.com*.

Flocabulary helps autonomous learning with its ample resources of songs, videos, activities and quizzes on literature, reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary and research skills. *Readwritethink* is helpful in reading and writing for it aids in organizing ideas through several graphic organizers. It also offers activity-based lesson plans for teachers to adopt. *Zunal* is constructive for inquiry based learning, offering ready-made web quests. *Jeopardy labs* is a link where both teachers and students can create jeopardy games which are engaging and can be based on any skill and in any subject matter. *Readtheory* offers a range of texts to suit all ability levels. *Vocab test* incorporates free vocabulary games, tests and quizzes for students. *Google docs* facilitates communication among teachers and students. It helps teachers create and share documents online with students and monitor students' work in groups. Every student has access to edit documents and add their own contribution. Last, *youtube* has tutorial videos that help develop autonomous learning.

PARTCIPANTS AND CONTEXT

One hundred seventy-three middle school English as a second language students participated in the study. Ninety-seven of them received a blended differentiated reading program whereas fifty-seven received a semi-traditional differentiated approach. The context of the study includes the English language program, the courses given, the leveled classrooms, the critical reading objectives, the resources and classroom activities.

The English Language Program

The Middle School English language program extends from grade six to grade 9. It offers both the Lebanese and American programs. The Lebanese program prepares students for Brevet Official Exam and for college and is implemented fully only in year 9. It includes challenging themes through diverse literary texts that aim to develop critical thinking and cultural awareness. The American program offers a variety of authors and genres to help learners read, reflect, interact, link as well as evaluate types of literature.

The Leveled Classrooms

The setting of the study is a child-centered school that caters for below average, average and above average students through multi-leveled curricula. The classes are made up of four levels. Level one is for struggling learners, level two is for EFL students, level three is for on-level students and level four is four advanced learners. However, students in each class are not homogeneously grouped, they are a mixture of different levels.

The Critical Reading Objectives

The critical reading program allows students to identify main ideas, scan supporting details, use graphic organizers, build academic vocabulary, make use of context clues to identify meaning of unfamiliar words, summarize and paraphrase information, distinguish facts from opinions, make inferences and predictions, identify author’s purpose and tone, discuss and respond to content orally and in writing, examine evidence or arguments, evaluate arguments and evaluate author’s style.

Paper-based and Online Resources

The blended differentiated program made use of different kinds of resources to teach critical reading. The main material used was the textbook which varies among levels. Levels 1 and 2 textbook is “The Interactive Adapted Reader”. Level 3’s textbook is “The Elements of Literature, Holt Reader” for some classes and “Collections” for others. Teachers also prepared worksheets specifically for this course. As for online course material, all links adopted from Davis (2014) were shared through the eschool virtual learning platform which is a school information management system that facilitates communication among teachers, parents and students.

METHODS

The study employed a mixed method combining features of quantitative and qualitative approaches. It is an action research that adopted quantitative approaches through survey research to pinpoint students’ and teachers’ perceptions about their experiences, learning and teaching in a blended differentiated learning environment, and to measure students’ performance through comparison of pre and posttests. It also adopted qualitative approaches to analyze students’ and teachers’ interviews, record and analyze classroom observations and interpret students’ work samples in relation to critical thinking skills.

Data Collection Tools

The quantitative data for this paper was collected based on Jara et al.'s (2008) ready-made students' questionnaire, Wipple (2012)'s teachers' questionnaire, students' grades before and after the implementation of the study. SPSS Program was used to calculate statistical measurements. Correlational analysis and factorial ANOVA statistical analyses were applied. Correlational analysis was implemented to test whether there is a positive or negative relationship between blended differentiated teaching and critical reading development. T-tests were also used to compare pretests and posttests. Factorial ANOVA was adopted to test for interaction effect between critical thinking and blended differentiated teaching.

The qualitative data was gathered from students' and teachers' interviews and evidence of students' work which was analyze based on rubrics adopted from Brown (2007). The qualitative data showed learners' and teachers' experiences which further elaborated on the quantitative results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After juxtaposing pre and post test results, students' perspectives on virtual learning environments and teachers' perspectives and experience in blended differentiated instruction, blended differentiated teaching proved to enhance critical reading skills and increase students' motivation. It provided meaningful learning through developing autonomy via resource-based learning, technology-based approaches, individualized learning or peer teaching classroom based methods and curriculum based approaches (Wang, 2011).

Comparing the control and experimental diagnostic results

Both control and experimental groups sat for diagnostic tests to measure their critical reading abilities before intervention took place. Grades 6 & 7 sat for iLEAP standardized test samples whereas grades 8 & 9 sat for PSAT test samples. Both tests are made up of questions that are stratified based on Bloom's taxonomy. The main competencies tested were: identifying main ideas and supporting details, analyzing words using context clues, analyzing text, drawing conclusions, making inferences, understanding cause/effect relationships, recognizing comparisons and contrasts, understanding characterization, recognizing patterns of organization, making predictions, identifying conflict, determining author's purpose, determining point of view, establishing sequence of events, interpreting information, understanding plot and synthesizing information from multiple resources.

Table 1

Group Statistics

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
marks for grade 6	control pre	11	61.34	7.35	2.22
	experimental pre	28	71.09	6.95	1.31

Table 2

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
marks for grade 6	Equal variances assumed	.481	.492	-3.88	37	.000	-9.75	2.51	-14.84	-4.661
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.78	17.5	.001	-9.75	2.58	-15.18	-4.326

The above tables show that the mean for grade 6 in the control pre-exam is 61.34 and that of experimental is 71.09. The p-value is less than 0.05, which demonstrates that the group means are statistically different. However, this result did not only include critical reading per se which constituted 75 grades, but also language usage part which was over five and writing skills which were over 20. Accordingly, an item analysis was done to discover students' level in critical reading skills, and the results were as follows: On the first section, writing elaborate paragraphs, which was over 20, the grades were divided based on a rubric made up of five criteria: content, vocabulary, organization, language and mechanics. The control group of grade 6 scored an average of 50.04 on writing in general. The second section which is language usage, was made up of 10 questions altogether with 0.5 points each. Students' average on grammar and usage was 42.72. The last and biggest section was the critical reading section which was made up of 25 questions with 3 points each. The grade 6 control group scored an average of 59.02 on critical reading with 78.78% on identifying central themes and ideas, 45.45% on analyzing point of view, 78.78% on understanding relationships, 70.45% on identifying meaning of words and phrases in context, 63.63% on making inferences and drawing conclusions, 77.27% on citing textual evidence, 59.09% on analyzing text structure, 36.36% on analyzing characters, 48.48% on summarizing ideas, 18.18% on analyzing word choice and 72.72% on analyzing and relating multiple texts. Therefore, the critical reading skills average of the grade 6 control class was 59.09 whereas the total average of the class for the whole test was 61.34.

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As for the experimental group, they scored an average of 79.53% on writing skills which is significantly higher than that of the control group because they had a higher command of language and mechanics. As for the language usage section, they scored an average of 96.64%. Last but not least, the experimental group scored a total average of 62.06% on critical reading skills which shows that there was no significant difference between their critical reading abilities and those of the control group. The class average on the test as a whole was 71.08. The respective averages of the experimental group's varied critical reading skills were as follows: 72.61% on identifying central themes and ideas, 50% on analyzing point of view, 75% on understanding relationships, 75% on identifying meaning of words and phrases in context, 71.42% on making inferences and drawing conclusions, 73.21% on citing textual evidence, 83.92% on analyzing text structure, 33.92% on analyzing characters, 47.61% on summarizing ideas, 32.1% on analyzing word choice and 76.85% on analyzing and relating multiple texts.

In conclusion, the control group was notably better at identifying central themes and ideas as well as analyzing and relating multiple texts. The experimental group, however, was remarkably better at analyzing point of view, identifying meaning of words and phrases in context, making inferences and drawing conclusions, analyzing text structure and analyzing word choice.

As for grade seven, there has been no difference between the control and experimental group diagnostic test results as shown in figures 3 and 4 which exhibit that the mean for grade 7 in the control pre-exam is 67.96 and that of the experimental pre exam is 66.47. The p-value is greater than 0.05, which is an indicator that the group means are not statistically different between control and experimental groups although the high achievers, 703 class were part of the control group.

Table 3

Group Statistics

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
marks for grade 7	control pre	24	67.96	11.51	2.35
	experimental pre	14	66.47	5.63	1.51

Table 4

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
marks for grade 7	Equal variances assumed	5.213	.028	.452	36	.654	1.49	3.30	-5.20	8.174
	Equal variances not assumed			.534	35.2	.597	1.49	2.79	-4.17	7.151

The average of writing skills for the control group was 51.08% and that of the language usage was 53.75%. As for critical reading skills, the total average of the control group 7 was 68.24% divided as follows: 69.44% on identifying central themes and ideas, 72.91% on analyzing point of view, 86.11% on understanding relationships, 79.16% on identifying meaning of words and phrases in context, 62.5% on making inferences and drawing conclusions, 93.75% on citing textual evidence, 72.91% on analyzing text structure, 54.16% on analyzing characters, 59.72% on summarizing ideas, 12.5% on analyzing word choice and 87.5% on analyzing and relating multiple texts. The class average on the whole test was 67.95%.

The item analysis done for the grade 7 experimental group diagnostic test, showed nearly equal results in critical reading skills. The total average of critical reading was 66.28% which is not significantly different from that of the control group which was 68.24%. The class average of the test as a whole was 66.46% which was close to that of the control group which was 67.95%. The experimental grade 7 group scored an average of 55.15% on writing skills and 52.14% on language usage. As for critical reading per objective, the averages were as follows: the experimental group had an average of 71.42% on identifying central themes and ideas, 67.85% on analyzing point of view, 85.71% on understanding relationships, 66.07% on identifying meaning of words and phrases in context, 59.52% on making inferences and drawing conclusions, 89.28% on citing textual evidence, 64.28% on analyzing text structure, 53.57% on analyzing characters, 64.28% on summarizing ideas, 21.42% on analyzing word choice and 85.71% on analyzing and relating multiple texts.

To conclude that the control group surpassed the experimental group in analyzing point of view, identifying meaning of words and phrases in context, citing textual evidence and analyzing text structure. The experimental group, on the other hand outshone the control group in summarizing ideas and analyzing word choice.

Grade 8 showed no significant difference between the control and experimental group in terms of the diagnostic PSAT test results.

Table 5

Group Statistics

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
marks for grade 8	control pre	16	37.19	8.94	2.23
	experimental pre	32	40.88	9.49	1.68

Table 6

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
marks for grade 8	Equal variances assumed	.330	.568	-1.29	46	.203	-3.69	2.852	-9.429	2.054
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.32	31.80	.196	-3.69	2.795	-9.381	2.006

The p-value(0.203) is greater than 0.05,this indicates that the group means are not statistically different. Thus the students' mean in the control and experimental pre exam is the same. However, an item analysis was also done, taking the critical reading section only.
It is worthy to note that the passing grade for the PSAT exam is 50, unlike the iLEAP exam's passing grade which is a 60. the total average of critical reading skills of the grade 8 control group was 37.16% in the pretest. The percentages were distributed as follows: 46.87% on identifying meaning of words and phrases in context, 21.87% on analyzing word choice, 36.87%
on citing textual evidence, 38.54% on analyzing text structure, 56.25% on summarizing ideas, 52.94% on analyzing characters, 22.91% on making inferences and drawing conclusions, 43.75%
on understanding relationships, 56.25% on analyzing arguments, 31.25% on analyzing quantitative data, 62.5% on analyzing point of view, 28.12% on identifying central themes and
ideas and 33.3% on analyzing and relating multiple texts.

Similarly, the grade 8 experimental group scored an average of 40.8% on the critical reading
pretest. The averages per critical reading objectives as shown in figure 12 were: 46.87% on identifying meaning of words and phrases in context, 14.06% on analyzing word choice, 35.62%
on citing textual evidence, 50% on analyzing text structure, 43.75% on summarizing ideas,

54.54% on analyzing characters, 41.66% on making inferences and drawing conclusions, 43.75%
on understanding relationships, 53.12% on analyzing arguments, 46.09% on analyzing quantitative data, 40.62% on analyzing point of view, 33.59% on identifying central themes and
ideas and 30.20% on analyzing and relating multiple texts.

We can conclude that the control group vanquished the experimental group in analyzing word choice, summarizing ideas, analying characters, and analyzing point of view. The experimental group surpassed the control group in analyzing text structure, making inferences and drawing conclusions, analyzing quantitative data and identifying central themes and ideas.

Finally, grade 9 results showed that the mean was the same for both groups for the PSAT test as a whole.

Table 7

Group Statistics

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
marks for grade 9	control pre	24	41.92	14.11	2.88
	experimental pre	23	41.96	15.06	3.14

Table 8

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
marks for grade 9	Equal variances assumed	.972	.329	-.009	45	.993	-.04	4.255	-8.610	8.530
	Equal variances not assumed			-.009	44.5	.993	-.04	4.261	-8.625	8.545

Tables 7 and 8 depict that the mean in the control pre-exam is 41.92 and that of experimental is 41.96. The p-value (0.993) is greater than 0.05 which indicates that the group

means are not statistically different. Thus the students' mean in the control and experimental pre
exam is the same. As for the item analysis of the control group, the critical reading class average was 41.89% with 55.97% on identifying meaning of words and phrases in context; 32.60% on analyzing word choice; 44.34% on citing textual evidence; 44.20% on analyzing text structure; 34.78% on summarizing ideas; 43.75% on analyzing characters; 43.47% on making inferences and drawing conclusions; 43.47% on understanding relationships; 39.13% on analyzing arguments; 42.39% on analyzing quantitative data; 47.82% on analyzing point of view; 32.60% on identifying central themes and ideas and 20.28% on analyzing and relating multiple texts.

The critical reading average for the grade 9 experimental pretest was 41.98% almost the same as that of the control group. The averages per critical reading objectives were: 52.71% on identifying meaning of words and phrases in context; 28.26% on analyzing word choice; 39.13% on citing textual evidence; 46.37% on analyzing text structure; 21.73% on summarizing ideas; 39.58% on analyzing characters; 43.47% on making inferences and drawing conclusions; 47.82% on understanding relationships; 52.17% on analyzing arguments; 48.91% on analyzing quantitative data; 47.82% on analyzing point of view; 34.78% on identifying central themes and ideas and 28.98% on analyzing and relating multiple texts.

Comparing control pre and experimenta pre grade 9 pretest results, it can be concluded that the
control group were better at citing textual evidence and summarizing ideas, whereas the experimental group were better at analyzing arguments, analyzing quantitative data and analyzing and relating multiple texts.

Comparing the control and experimental group post-tests

After implementing the intervention program, the results were as follows:

Table 9

Group Statistics

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
marks for grade 6	control post	11	60.46	9.92	2.99
	experimental post	28	75.65	5.49	1.04

Table 10

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
marks for grade 6	Equal variances assumed	5.724	.022	-6.12	37	.000	-15.19	2.48	-20.2	-10.17
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.80	12.5	.000	-15.19	3.16	-22.1	-8.327

The above tables show that the mean for grade 6 in the control post-exam is 60.46 while the experimental post exam is 75.65. The p-value is less than 0.05. This manifests that the group means are statistically different between control and experimental groups. This suggested that students who were taught using blended differentiation instruction were able to improve their critical reading skills in comparison to those who didn't.

The item analysis of grade 6's control's posttest shows a class average of 60.54 whereas the critical thinking average was 53.92 which show no significant difference compared to the pretest. The specific averages per objectives were as follows: 59.20% on writing skills, 92.72% on language usage, 75.75% on identifying central themes, 40.90% on analyzing point of view, 72.72% on understanding relationships, 61.36% on identifying meaning of words and phrases in context, 57.57% on making inferences and drawing conclusions, 68.18% on citing textual evidence, 45.45% on analyzing text structure, 31.81% on analyzing characters, 48.48% on summarizing ideas, 27.27% on analyzing word choice and 63.63% on analyzing and relating multiple texts. The areas that were below level were: analyzing point of view, analyzing text structure, analyzing characters, summarizing ideas and analyzing word choice.

The experimental group's post test results, on the other hand, showed a significant difference than that of the control group. Figure 20 depicts that the class average on the test as a whole was 75.66% whereas the critical reading total average was 69.26% which was remarkably different than that of the control post average which was 53.92%. The averages per objectives were as follows: 78.87% on writing skills and 96.78% on language usage. As for critical reading, the averages were: 71.42% on identifying central themes and ideas; 51.78% on analyzing point of view, 73.80% on understanding relationship, 83.92% on identifying meaning of words and phrases in context, 67.85% on making inferences and drawing conclusions, 80.35% on citing textual evidence, 87.5% on analyzing text structure, 57.14% on analyzing characters, 59.52% on summarizing ideas, 46.42% on analyzing word choice and 82.14% on analyzing and relating multiple texts.

Comparing both control and experimental post tests for grade 6, we can deduce that the experimental group notably improved in analyzing point of view, identifying meaning of words and phrases in context, making inferences and drawing conclusions, citing textual evidence, analyzing text structure, analyzing characters, summarizing ideas, analyzing word choice and analyzing and relating multiple texts.

Grade 7 was the only classroom where the results were problematic since the experimental group did not actually improve much in comparison with the control group in the test as a whole. The tables below show that the mean for grade 7 in the control post-exam is 68.17 and the experimental post exam is 71.52. The p-value is greater than 0.05, this indicates that the group means are not statistically different between control and experimental groups with respect to post-tests wholly.

Table 11

Group Statistics

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
marks for grade 7	control post	24	68.17	11.00	2.24
	experimental post	14	71.52	7.00	1.87

Table 12

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
marks for grade 7	Equal variances assumed	1.972	.169	-1.02	36	.313	-3.35	3.28	-10.0	3.292
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.15	35.6	.259	-3.35	2.92	-9.28	2.575

However, the item analysis showed the following: although the class average of grade 7 control group was 68.17%, the critical reading average was 68.66%. The averages were divided as follows: 51.57% on writing skills, 60.83% on language usage, and 68.66% on critical reading with 73.61% on identifying central themes and ideas, 70.83% on analyzing point of view, 80.55% on understanding relationships, 72.91% on identifying meaning of words and phrases in context, 62.5% on making inferences and drawing conclusions, 93.5% on citing textual evidence, 75% on analyzing text structure, 54.16% on analyzing characters, 63.88% on summarizing ideas, 20.83% on analyzing word choice, and 87.5% on analyzing and relating multiple texts. The only area that was below level was analyzing word choice.

As for grade 7's experimental group, the class average was 71.5% whereas the critical reading average was 72.56% which is different than that of the control group which was 68.66%. The averages were: 54.92% on writing skills, 59.28% on language usage and 72.5% on critical reading divided as 78.57% on identifying central themes, 67.85% on analyzing point of view, 88.09% on understanding relationships, 76.78% on identifying meaning of words and phrases in context, 69.04% on making inferences and drawing conclusions, 85.71% on citing textual evidence, 71.42% on analyzing text structure, 53.57% on analyzing characters, 71.42% on summarizing ideas, 42.85% on analyzing word choice and 92.85% on analyzing and relating multiple texts.

The experimental group scored higher on critical reading skills in total. They surpassed the control group in identifying central themes and ideas, understanding relationships, making inferences and drawing conclusions, summarizing ideas, analyzing word choice and analyzing and relating multiple texts. The control group, however, outshone the experimental group in analyzing point of view and citing textual evidence.

As for grade 8, the posttests' indicate a difference in favor of the experimental group:

Table 13

Group Statistics

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
marks for grade 8	control post	16	38.75	7.38	1.85
	experimental post	32	52.44	6.23	1.10

Table 14

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
marks for grade 8	Equal variances assumed	.161	.690	-6.75	46	.000	-13.69	2.028	-17.8	-9.604
	Equal variances not assumed			-6.37	26.0	.000	-13.69	2.148	-18.1	-9.271

The mean for grade 8 in the control post-exam is 38.75 while the experimental post exam is 52.44. The p-value is less than 0.05, which stipulates that the group means are statistically different between control and experimental groups. Thus, those students who undertook the blended differentiated language instruction program had improved than those who didn't. An item analysis was also done to both control and experimental pre and post exams in grade 8.

The grade 8 control post exam test result shows that the critical reading class average was 38.79% with 55.46% on identifying meaning of words and phrases in context, 25% on analyzing word choice, 44.31% on citing textual evidence, 45.83% on analyzing text structure, 25% on summarizing ideas, 53.12% on analyzing characters, 37.5% on making inferences and drawing conclusions, 20.31% on understanding relationships, 12.5% on analyzing arguments, 40.62% on analyzing quantitative data, 18.75% on analyzing point of view, 33.03% on identifying central themes and ideas and 18.75% on analyzing and relating multiple texts.

The result of the grade 8 experimental group post test result, however, shows a significant difference than that of the control group. The total average of critical reading was 52.44% with 66.01% on identifying meaning of words and phrases in context, 53.12% on analyzing word choice, 40.62% on citing textual evidence, 44.27% on analyzing text structure, 59.37% on summarizing ideas, 73.43% on analyzing characters, 38.54% on making inferences and drawing conclusions, 42.96% on understanding relationships, 68.75% on analyzing arguments, 58.59% on analyzing quantitative data, 40.62% on analyzing point of view, 58.03% on identifying central themes and ideas and 60.93% on analyzing and relating multiple texts.

Comparing both control and experimental post tests for grade 8, the experimental group proved to perform better in all critical reading skills except for citing textual evidence, analyzing
text structure and making inferences and drawing conclusions.

Grade 9 posttest results showed the following:

Table 15

Group Statistics

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
marks for grade 9	control post	24	44.21	13.65	2.79
	experimental post	23	58.52	12.18	2.54

Table 16

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
marks for grade 9	Equal variances assumed	.062	.804	-3.79	45	.000	-14.31	3.781	-21.93	-6.699
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.80	44.8	.000	-14.31	3.771	-21.91	-6.717

The mean in the grade 9 control post-exam is 44.21while the experimental post exam is 58.52. The p-value is less than 0.05, which indicates that the group means are statistically different between control and experimental groups. Thus, those students who undertook the blended differentiated instruction had improved compared to those who didn't in the test performance as a whole. The item analysis of the post test results for the grade 9 control group showed an average of 44.25% on critical reading skills in general. The l students scored 57.06% on identifying meaning of words and phrases in context, 54.34% on analyzing word choice, 59.92% on citing textual evidence, 48.55% on analyzing text structure, 39.13% on summraizing ideas, 41.30% on analyzing characters, 43.47% on making inferences and drawing conclusions, 28.26% on understanding relationships, 21.73% on analyzing arguments, 46.73% on analyzing quantitative data, 13.04% on analyzing point of view, 24.84% on identifying central themes and ideas and 15.21% on analyzing and relating multiple texts. All areas were faling except for identifying meaning of words and phrases in context, citing textual evidence and analyzing word choice.

The item analysis results of the grade 9 experimental group's post test depicts that the experimental group's result was notably higher than the control's group result with an average of 58.56% in contrast to 44.25% which proves that the blended differentiated program improved critical reading skills. The averages of critical reading objectives varied as follows: 73.36% on identifying meaning of words and phrases in context, 76.08% on analyzing word choice, 49.80% on citing textual evidence, 51.44% on analyzing text structure, 56.52% on summarzing ideas, 82.60% on analyzing characters, 47.82% on making inferences and drawing conclusions, 47.82% on understanding relationships, 63.04% on analyzing arguments, 69.56% on analyzing quantitative data, 47.82% on analyzing point of view, 55.27% on identifying central ideas and themes and 52.17% on analyzing and relating multiple texts.

After the intervention, the experimental group exceeded the control group in all objectives except for analyzing text structure and analyzing point of view.

Analyzing Students' and Teachers' Questionnaire Results

Jara et al.'s students' questionnaire's major themes emphasized in the survey relate to the integrity of the overall course design; how embedded the use of technology is within the overall course design, to what extent students view the online and class-based components as part of an integrated course offering, helping them to meet the learning objectives and assessment outcomes, or do their perception of them as totally distinct and unrelated parts of the course.

Analyzing the results of the questionnaire showed that students had a positive outlook on eschool in terms of its ability to promote collaboration among students. 53.6% agreed and 12.4% strongly agreed which is a good indicator. However, few (30.9%) agreed on eschool's role in holding debates among learners and very few strongly agreed (12.4%). This is logical since debates cannot be held easily through an asynchronous communication channel. As for its capacities for enhancing study habits, there has been no dispute among students regarding that, for 43.3% strongly agreed that eschool is flexible for learners in terms of their study needs and 38.1% agreed to that. It also helps students prepare well for class sessions according to 30.9% who strongly agree and 40.2% who agree. In terms of its ability to build relationships between the teachers and students, eschool does not cater for close relationships according to students but it allows teachers to be accessible outside of school for students' queries. 34% strongly agree and 29.9% simply agree to that. The last and most important aspect tested is students' points of view regarding eschool's contribution to differentiated instruction. 23.7% strongly agreed and 38.1% agreed to the assumption that a virtual learning environment helps the instructor address individual learning needs, and 37.1% strongly agreed while 36.1% agreed that a virtual learning environment enables the instructor to provide a wide variety of learning resources for students.

As for Whipple (2012)'s teachers' questionnaire, it had been altered to integrate technology use as well in the understanding and implementation of differentiated instruction. The main objective behind it was questionnaire was to discover what teachers understand about blended differentiated reading instruction and to see how blended differentiated reading instruction was being implemented across middle school classes. Teachers' questionnaire proved that blended differentiated teaching enhances critical reading skills and critical thinking patterns in general as well as engages learners due to the wide range of choices it offers from the grouping methods to the tasks given to the diverse modes of expression \ facilitated by the internet which bestows various resources for teachers and learners alike. Blended differentiated instruction ensures meaningful learning for it fostered autonomy through the five methods needed for developing autonomous learners according to Wang (2011); it embodied resource-based learning, technology-based approaches, individualized learning or peer-teaching, classroom based approaches and curriculum based approaches (Wang, 2011).

Students' and Teachers' Interviews

The interview was composed of eight questions to discover how technology was being used in reading/literature classes, if all activities were completed throughout the literature sessions, if blended reading classes had any advantages for students, how active students were in their learning process, students' attitudes toward blended reading sessions, whether online resources could help learners further think, analyze, evaluate and create, what changes students would suggest to the literature sessions and whether virtual learning environments such as eSchool helped students in their learning process and how.

Students' interviews revealed a shared belief in the multiple benefits of a blended differentiated reading program. It reflected how involved they were in their own learning process due to the high level of awareness that they showed of what their needs were and their suggested methods to meet them. Their ability to reflect on their own learning process is the first sign of the critical thinking skills that they have developed and enhanced. If students were actually able to evaluate their reading program and teaching methods, then they have actually become active participants in the design of their instructional programs.

Teachers' interview results show that they believed in the significance of integrating technology in reading classes to differentiate teaching to cater for students' needs, levels, preferences, interests, cultural background and learning styles, as a means of achieving student-based learning, which in itself develops critical thinking skills.

Analyzing Students' Work Samples

Samples of students' writing were analyzed based on the five general criteria of writing: content, vocabulary, organization, language and mechanics. The general essay rubric followed is shown below in figure 1.

Criteria	Excellent/ very good	Good /Average	Fair	Needs Much Improvement
Content	knowledgeable, substantive development of thesis, relevant to assigned topic	sure knowledge of subject, adequate range, limited development of thesis, mostly relevant to topic but lacks detail	limited knowledge of subject, little substance, inadequate development of topic	does not show knowledge of subject, not many details, not relevant to assigned topic, or not enough to evaluate
Vocabulary	sophisticated range, effective word/idiom choice and usage, word form mastery	adequate range, occasional errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage but meaning understood	limited range, frequent errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage, meaning somewhat confusing or not understood	essentially translation, little knowledge of English vocabulary, idioms, word form or not enough to evaluate
Organization	fluent expression, ideas clearly stated/supported, succinct, well-organized, logical sequencing, cohesive	Somewhat choppy, loosely organized, but main ideas stand out, limited support, logical but incomplete sequencing	Not fluent, ideas are confusing or disconnected, lacks logical sequencing and development	does not communicate, no organization or not enough to evaluate
Language	effective, complex sentences, few to no errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions	effective, but simple sentence construction, minor problems in complex constructions, several errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns,	major problems in simple/complex sentences, many errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions and/or fragments, run-ons, deletions,	almost no mastery of sentence construction rules, many errors, ideas not understood, or not enough to evaluate

		prepositions, but meaning understood	meaning confused or not understood	
Mechanics	few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization and paragraphing	Some errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization & paragraphing, but meaning understood	frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, poor typing, meaning confused	many errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, poor typing, or not enough to evaluate

Figure 1

Rubric Adapted From: Reid, J. (1993). Teaching ESL Writing. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Regents.

Experimental Group Work Samples

Nineteen samples of students' work were analyzed. Two of which are the following:

One Last Time

Now Soto being a young Mexican lad,
thought about baseball, girls, even his dead
dad.
He drove with his mother early morning to the
field, cut off grape vines until his palms and
skin peeled.
He promised his mom a beautiful copper
teapot,
and he promised to work hard until he does
rot.
He was thoughtful and caring which,
To prove, gave his mom the first sandwich.
He spent his days cutting cotton under the sun,
And for a young lad like Soto, it was pretty

fun.
He wasn’t the brightest kid at school,
But enjoying working with a sharp cutting
tool.
His hippie friend Rick and he went to the
field, and now this rhyme,
It won’t last long, and Soto cut the grapes for
‘one last
time’.

Figure 2

The figure above shows a grade eight student’ summary of *One Last Time*, a personal essay by Gary Soto using poetry rather than prose. The student’s objective behind using poetry was to make the summary poetic, rhyming and as brief as possible to convey the story in the most concise manner and make it engaging. The student kept the original title. He addressed students of his age, recounting Gary’s personal story. The student was able to show how Soto spent his days working at the field, and how exhausted he used to be “cut off grapes and vines until his palms and skin peeled” and “he promised to work hard until he does rot”, but he failed to stress the negative feelings that he had while working for a very low income. Despite that, like Soto, the student used excessive imagery to let the reader visualize and experience what Soto himself did while working hard. Examples of imagery used are: “He drove his mom early to the field, cut off grape vines until his palms and skin peeled”, “He promised his mom a beautiful copper teapot”; “He spent his day cutting under the sun”. As for other poetic devices, the student employed hyperbole to emphasize how worn out Soto was while at work. Examples of hyperbole are: “cut off grapes and vines until his palms and skin peeled” and “he promised to work hard until he does rot”. The tone of the speaker is sympathetic with Soto’s early lifestyle. The theme of the poem is the value of hard work, but it didn’t show the central theme of the personal essay that it is not worth enslaving yourself all day long in order to earn very little money.

This task necessitated synthesis of ideas from a range of sources (Soto’s biography, different essays by the same author, resources on poetic devices), careful planning, wise choice of words and simplified language, composition of a creative poem; reaching creativity which is the highest level of Bloom’s taxonomy.

Swearing: A Blessing or a Curse?

It is neither unusual nor surprising for anyone to swear in our modern world. It has become as normal as eating and drinking and almost as common. At any corner you turn to, you can always find someone swearing. These foul words have gotten to kids as well as adults, and tend to slip at any moment of pain or anger. Scientists and psychologists have studied the effect of swearing on the speaker and the audience and have come up with some interesting results. Swearing can have a positive impact on its speaker in certain social situations.

At any time or any place, the feeling of pain or anger sparks up the need to swear. Although many people say their words tend to slip, it is not by accident. Our brain is programmed for a self-defense reaction for the body’s safety, which strings along swearing. Imagine you burned you touched a very hot surface. Your hand immediately retracts as a self-defense mechanism, and swearing plays a big role in reducing the pain. Although it is astonishing and unbelievable, scientists have confirmed that swearing makes us endure. As an example, Richard Stephens of Keele University in England conducted a study that showed how long 67 college students could keep their hands submerged in ice water. The group of students was encouraged to yell profanities for one controlled testing, and then to use non-swear words while undergoing the same test. The 67 volunteers endured the cold temperature for 40 seconds longer while screaming obscenities. This group also stated that it felt less pain overall. Stephens even went so far as to say, “I would advise people, if they hurt themselves, to swear.” However, although swearing is only words, it can reflect badly on you as well as hurt your reputation. Some people find foul language unappealing and unattractive and tend to stay away from people who use it. However, on the contrary, reducing pain and anger is much more important than what others think. Be who you want to be, not what others want to see.

Another scientific study shows that swearing makes one feel more powerful and much more resilient. Through Stephens’ studies, he discovered that cursing amplifies aggression. So why is this important? It downplays people’s weakness to make them actually appear and feel stronger than they are. It’s mind over matter in this situation. Starting with the idea of being a coping mechanism, cursing makes you feel as if you can endure anything. So next time you want to get pissed off at your personal trainer, just remember all he’s trying to do is encourage you to reach your full potential. On the contrary, swearing can give a wrong idea about you to others. Your words show what is truly in your heart, and swearing shows aggression, hatred and what we say doesn’t simply reflect the type of person we would like to be, it reflects the type of person we already are. Even if you use bad language simply because others do it, copying their example reveals that you “follow after the crowd” and that you’re not your own person. On the other hand, people who have weak characters or weak physique have swearing as an ally. They may use it as a substitute to fighting, and a way to prove that they are strong. People with weak characters will always find a way to get out of facing a problem.

When you have a strong feeling inside you, or you want to explain an idea, but the other is not understanding, you feel like you need to swear to explain properly. Hence, swearing is like poetry. It is expressive of your true feelings as well as being innate. It shows what’s really in your heart. Timothy Jay, a psychologist at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts has spent the last 35 years studying the use of profanities. His view on the subject matter is “It allows us to vent or express anger, joy, surprise, happiness. It’s like the horn on your car, you can do a lot of things with that, and it’s built into you.” Sometimes everyday language isn’t enough to convey what you are trying to say, which is why the need for exaggerated phrases involving curse words is the route we use. Why else would people scream obscenities when trying to express excitement or anger? Unfortunately, this depends on who you are explaining to. If swearing takes place at work or while carrying out a presentation, it might get you in deep trouble. It also shows disrespect to the person who is saying it. Although it feels so good, swearing can be a factor that makes you lose your battles rather than winning. Though most people believe actions are louder than words, the wrong words at the wrong time can cause the wrong actions. Swearing may incite anger in others making them respond to you either verbally or physically, putting the swearer at risk. But then again, it is like a pressure valve that lets out everything in you. It is very healthy for the soul and mind, yet be careful on who you release it on.

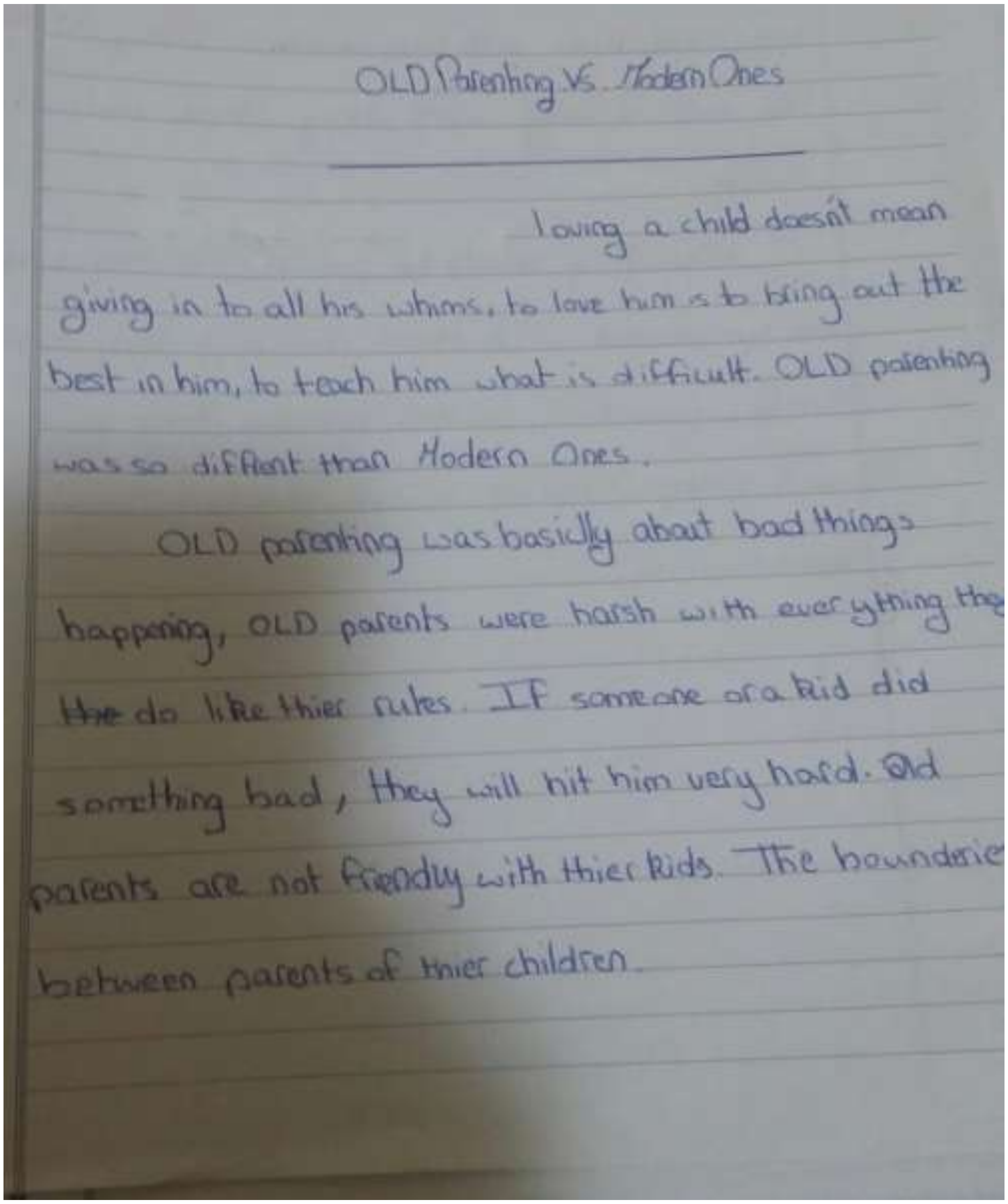
In conclusion, swearing has both positive and negative sides. It make one feel more powerful, it relieves pain and anger, as well as helping one express his true emotions. However, it can be disrespectful to others, even one’s self, and can ruin the speaker’s reputation and image in front of others. Overall, it is just amazing. The people who use swear words are slowly increasing, and taking it in a lighter way. But one must be careful how, where, and when he swears. It is a weapon that is deadly when used right. But when used wrong, it is a destructive entity.

Figure 3

Figure 3 is an argumentative essay written by a ninth grader. He chose the title to persuade readers that swearing can have a positive impact on one's psychological health in certain social situations. The title sets the readers thinking of both sides of swearing; negative and positive. The introduction starts with a shocking/ unusual detail that detail that swearing has become part of daily life. Background information is given after which the author states his main claim/argument that swearing can be beneficial for psychological balance. The three body paragraphs explain different reasons that support the thesis. They also provide counterarguments and rebuttals of opposing viewpoints, explaining why those viewpoints are wrong. Each paragraph is based on logical reasoning to validate the thesis statement. The first reason given to support the main argument is that swearing is a self-defense mechanism which gives the speaker a sense of security. The author supports the first reason with facts by referring to a study held by a researcher at Keele University in England which proves that swearing provides a sense of security for people. The author then presents the opposing viewpoint that swearing can ruin one's reputation. However, he refutes that claim by stating that one's safety through reducing pain and anger is far more rewarding than listening to what others think of a person. The second body paragraph conveys the second reason that swearing can make one feel more powerful and more resilient. The author also refers to the previous study mentioned to prove that swearing increases violence which downplays people's weaknesses and strengthens them. The counterclaim given is that swearing gives the wrong impression about a person for it might reveal dormant aggression and hatred. The author then refutes the counterclaim by explaining that swearing may be a substitute for violence so it can actually help people avoid physical violence, especially for people with somewhat weak characters. The third body paragraph states the last and most important reason that swearing is a genuine expression of feelings that best describes the emotional state of a person, comparing it to poetry. The author then refers to another study which confirms that swearing allows people to express all types of feelings freely. Nevertheless, the author presents the counterargument which is that swearing can lead to unpleasant reactions by others. The author refutes the claim by claiming that despite its potential danger, swearing is very healthy for one's soul and mind, but the person has to be cautious and wise as to when and in front of whom to swear. In the concluding paragraph, the author summarizes the most important details of the argument and restates what the readers should believe and do.

In conclusion, the essay is organized which pinpoints the central idea or theme and supports it. Effective, transitions were used throughout the essay. Sentences are varied, grammatically correct and well-punctuated. Vocabulary is appropriate in compliance with the subject. This essay is a reflection of the critical thinking process for argumentation is closely related to critical thinking. Critical thinking is the process needed for argumentation (analysis, evaluation and creation), the highest levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Control Group Work Samples


OLD Parenting VS. Modern Ones

loving a child doesn't mean giving in to all his whims. to love him is to bring out the best in him, to teach him what is difficult. OLD parenting was so diffent than Modern Ones.

OLD parenting was basiclly about bad things happening, OLD parents were harsh with everything the the do like thier rules. IF someone or a kid did something bad, they will hit him very hard. Old parents are not friendly with thier kids. The boundarie between parents of thier children.

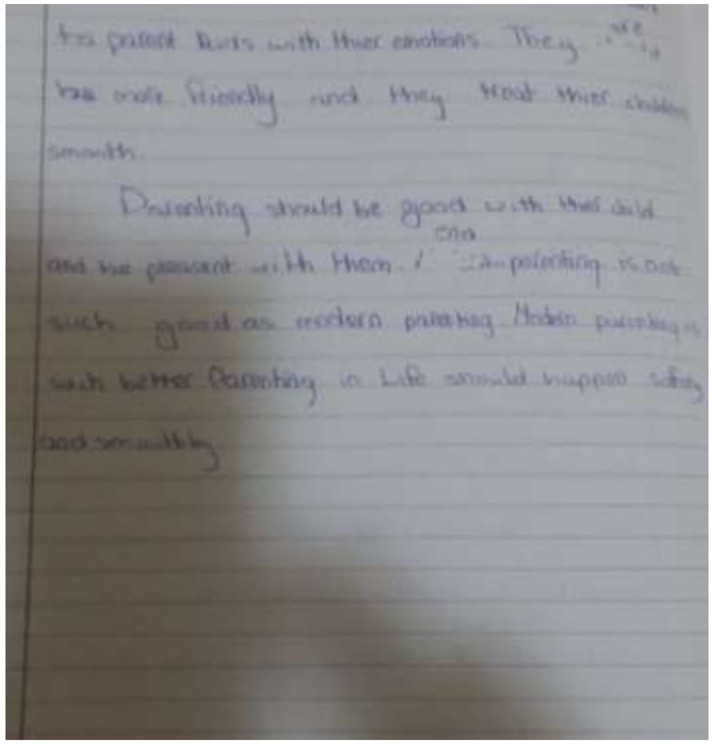
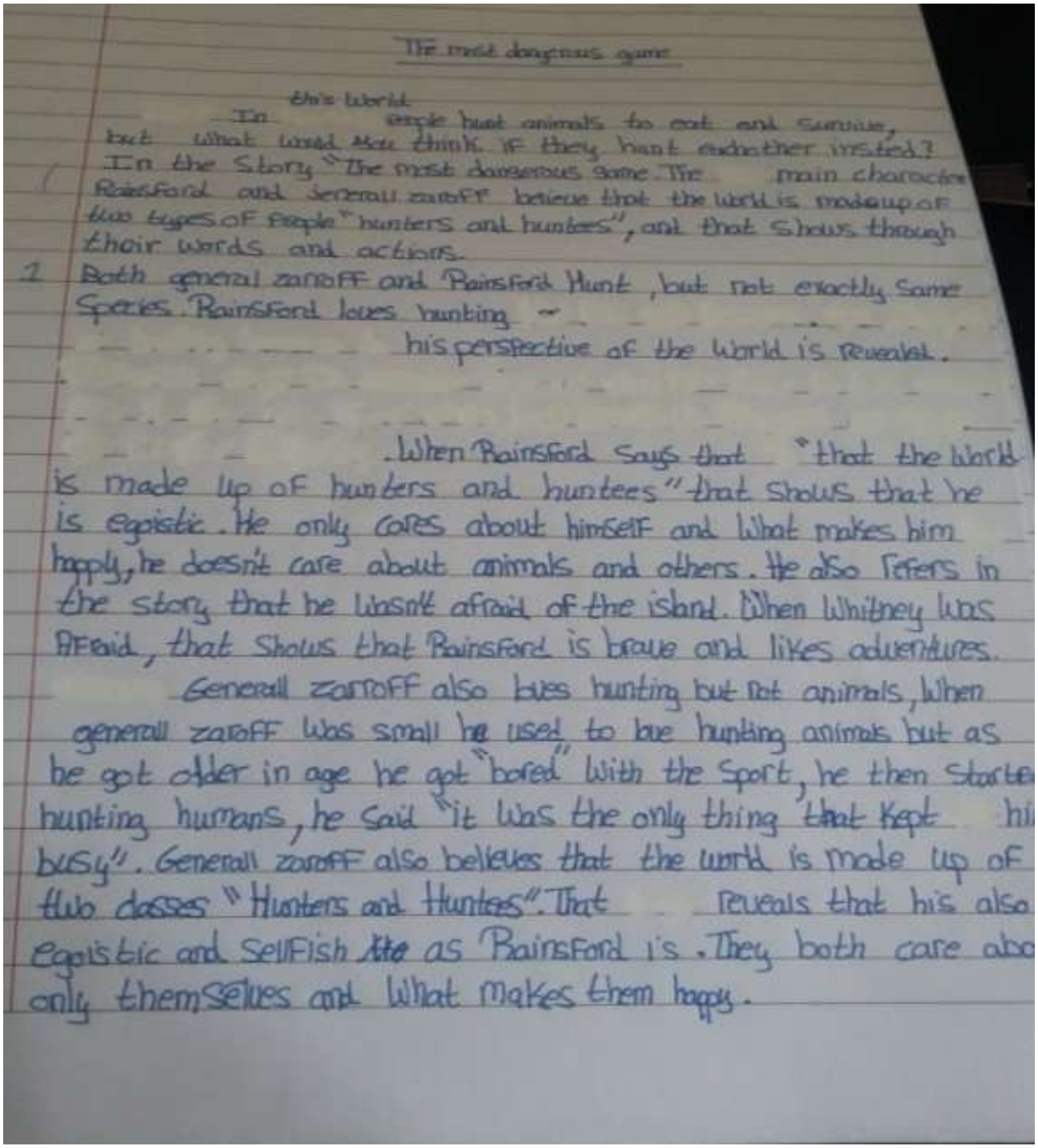


Figure 4

Figure 4 is an expository essay written by a ninth grader comparing old parenting techniques to new ones using the block method. The title chosen suits the content of the essay, but it is plain. The introductory paragraph starts off with a hook that states what loving/raising a child is like. No general information about parenting techniques is given. Instead, the author directly states the thesis statement of the essay which shows that old parenting techniques will be compared to current ones. The first body paragraph has a vague topic sentence since it reveals that old parenting techniques were bad, but the phrasing of the sentence weakened it when the student added that "it was about bad things happening". The first supporting detail has a tense shift error. The physical abuse example given also includes a tense error. The aspect of harshness needed more examples. The second aspect mentioned was the unfriendly nature of the relationship between old generation parents and their kids yet it was not supported with examples. No closure was provided at the end of the paragraph. In terms of mechanics, body paragraph one has two spelling errors. The second body paragraph's topic sentence has a noun error, 'parents' should have been used instead of parenting. The sentence is weak in terms of vocabulary. The student should have chosen another word rather than 'good'. The little supporting details provided are incoherent. There are language errors such as using an adjective as an adverb: 'smooth'. There is a pronoun reference error: 'they' which readers mistakenly relate to the children. Spelling mistakes are present in the second body paragraph as well. As for the concluding paragraph, there is a repetition of the same noun error made in the previous paragraph. The author restated his idea using the same words. The last sentence of the concluding paragraph has weak word choice as well as spelling mistakes. The essay does not seem to be linked because the thesis statement is not fully developed in the body paragraphs. Each body paragraph must have clearly mentioned the aspects upon which the contrast took place.



The most dangerous game

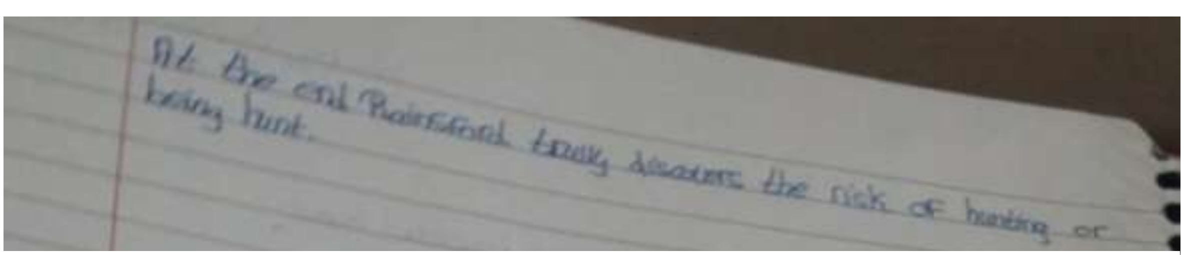
In this world people hunt animals to eat and survive, but what would you think if they hunt eachother insted? In the Story "The most dangerous game. The main character Rainsford and generall zaroff believe that the world is madeup of two types of people "hunters and huntees", and that shows through their words and actions.

1 Both general zaroff and Rainsford Hunt, but not exactly same species. Rainsford loves hunting ~

his perspective of the world is revealed.

. When Rainsford says that "that the world is made up of hunters and huntees" that shows that he is egoistic. He only cares about himself and what makes him happy, he doesn't care about animals and others. He also refers in the story that he wasn't afraid of the island. When Whitney was Afraid, that shows that Rainsford is brave and likes adventures.

Generall zaroff also loves hunting but not animals, when generall zaroff was small he used to love hunting animals but as he got older in age he got "bored" with the sport, he then starte hunting humans, he said "it was the only thing that kept hi busy". Generall zaroff also believes that the world is made up of two classes "Hunters and Huntees". That reveals that his also egoistic and selfish ~~the~~ as Rainsford is. They both care abo only themselves and what makes them happy.



At the end Rainsford truly discovers the risk of hunting or being hunt.

Figure 5

Figure 5 is a literary response to "The Most Dangerous Game" written by a ninth grader to show how both Rainsford and General Zaroff, the two main characters prove that the world is made up of two classes the hunters and the hunted. The student uses the title of the story to introduce his expository essay with no capitalization. The introductory paragraph provides the major reason why people hunt then poses a shocking sentence that hooks the readers and makes them ponder about the ironical situation. No general information is given, the author delves into the thesis statement which is adopted from the writing prompt itself. The first body paragraph has a topic sentence which is related to both Rainsford and Zaroff then the elaboration is all about Rainsford. Thus, the topic sentence of this particular paragraph should reflect how Rainsford shows his belief that the strong overpower theweak in the world. The author attempted to cite textual evidence but failed to do that. Instead, he quotes the same words given in the writing prompt itself. The first body paragraph does not end with a proper closure. It dwells on the positive qualities of Rainsford, 'brave and adventurous', unlike what has been elaborated in the paragraph that he is egoistic and insensitive. The second body paragraph tries to show Zaroff's perspective of the world yet the topic sentence is weak since it is vague. He should have started with the main character traits of Zaroff and then elaborated on that through his words and actions within the paragraph. Textual evidence is minimal, the author referred to Zaroff's words when he explained why he has shifted to hunting humans instead and that he got bored of hunting animals. There is no evidence related to Zaroff's actions which convey his psychopathic nature. The conclusion is very weak since it is made up of one sentence only, showing that Rainsford has changed since he has discovered the dangers of being hunted. The word choice is weak. For example, the author says when Zaroff was 'small' not 'little or young'. Mechanics wise, the author capitalizes when unnecessary and there are few spelling errors. In general, the essay fails to prove how both Rainsford and Zaroff share the same view of the world since there is little to no support provided.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Despite the fact that few participants resisted technology to develop critical reading, most said they enjoyed questioning the texts' assumptions and arguments and thinking differently about them through technological resources. In reference to the findings of this thesis, there are several implications for education in Lebanon. Blended learning provides multiple tools for language educators to design multifaceted differentiated reading activities that take all learning styles into consideration. However, for blended differentiated reading instruction to be effective and productive, school administrators and teachers have several steps to follow. School administrators are recommended to give training sessions for all the teachers and help struggling teachers in the use of blended learning, provide access to student information management to identify students' needs, characteristics and learning styles, offer technical training for all students to help them search the web effectively, conduct workshops for parents to involve them in their children's learning methods and to explain to them the significance of adopting a blended learning differentiated model, give teachers some time to experience and examine online learning to plan wisely and finally, allow teachers to plan together and share their reflections.

Language teachers who want to implement blended differentiated reading instruction are advised to administer internationally approved learning styles' test to discover students' preferred learning styles and plan accordingly, group students flexibly, allow students to cooperate and explore different texts and links related within a complex online learning environment to help students learn by sharing information and connecting with others, teach research skills, cooperate with other teachers and conduct peer observations to learn from others' strengths and weaknesses as well as identify one's teaching flaws and areas of strength, as well as set an action plan to remedy the weaknesses. Finally, teachers should use various assessment methods to evaluate and reflect students' progress.

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