



## **EFFECT OF USING THE GLOGSTER TECHNOLOGICAL MODEL ON ENHANCING THE PERCEPTIONS AND SPEAKING PROFICIENCY OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS STUDENTS**

Ghada Awada  
American University of Beirut  
[ghadawada@gmail.com](mailto:ghadawada@gmail.com)  
American University of Beirut  
P.O. Box 11-0236  
Beirut Lebanon

Abir Abdallah  
Lebanese University  
[abirabdallah@gmail.com](mailto:abirabdallah@gmail.com)  
Lebanese University  
Faculty of Sciences  
Beirut Lebanon

### **Abstract**

The present paper reports the results of a study that examined the relative effectiveness of the Glogster educational tool in improving the speaking proficiency of university students enrolled in Communication Skills class in Lebanon and on increasing their levels of motivation for delivering presentations. The study is based on the assumptions that glogging provides an excellent opportunity for teachers to enhance students' creativity while conducting and presenting their projects. Descriptive statistics were computed and a series of independent sample and paired samples t-tests and a content analysis of the qualitative data regarding the participants' perceptions of their glogging experience were carried out. The results of the study indicated that the use of Glogster proved the credibility of the study assumptions.

**Key words:** ESL, Glogster, speaking and presentation proficiency, technology, communication.

### **1. Introduction**

Technological tools can be used in the arts and the sciences classes and in universities and colleges as well to improve lesson planning and other aspects of the teaching and learning environment. The visualization tools tremendously enhance the teaching and learning processes (Viegas, Wattenberg, McKeon, Van Ham & Kriss, 2008). Web-based tools tremendously improve learning and boost the development of critical reading skills specifically, and the use of authentic texts will be ensured; accordingly, students will develop great awareness of the good online texts, for students will be writing texts for authentic purposes as well (Larson, 2010; Zawilinski, 2009). Glogster facilitates the conveyance of the social information in different fields such as art, music, photography and eases project creation and class assignments, and the integration of technology in the classroom provides a richer experience for students (Ohler, 1999). The use of various technological tools makes the conduct of projects and data manipulation feasible to students especially that various types of graphic displays showing quantitative outcomes are easily provided by different technological tools (Roblyer, 2003).

Glog is an "...interactive poster that is accessed online through the website Glogster® (<http://edu.glogster.com/>). Similar to a webpage, glogs can be created with a theme or a particular concept in mind" (Baker and Willis, 2013, p.324). Picardo (2012) added, "Glogster is an internet tool that allows users to create and share interactive posters composed of text, graphics, sound and videos" (p.2). Therefore, Glogster is an interactive poster display that provides opportunities for collaborative student centered learning. Glogging is considered as a powerful communication tool that helps communication skills, for the task-based language learning promotes communication and social interaction (Ellis, 2003 and Kent, 2010). Pedagogic tasks should be developed and organized to



increasingly serve the needs of the real world target tasks (Robinson, 2001). Moreover, Glogster could be a good publishing, educational tool which could be used in many English courses (Kent, 2010). The Glogster poster project could be a useful technological tool which facilitates a synthesis of projects in one e-portfolio form, especially that web-based learning has turned into an essential approach of teaching and learning, and it should be incorporated into the classroom educational activities (Kent, 2010; Carroll and Edwards, 2012). One more advantage of using Glogster is that the cooperative and communicative work using Glogster leads to the successful application of the constructivist learning approaches in the language classroom especially when the projects are based on the use of real life experiences of students (Kent, 2010). Furthermore, Carroll and Edwards (2012) asserted that glogs can be used as "...student portfolios, easy to mark assessments and provision of timely feedback. From the students' point of view, we discovered high engagement, interactive, imaginative and creative expression; positive peer relationships as boys helped and mentored each other and motivated learners who were able to express themselves" (p.17). Kent (2010) summed the advantages of the glog as "...each student group come to rely on the strengths and skills of individual group members to develop material based on learner characteristics, with students taking control over their own learning and at times providing peer coaching" (p.160). Podcasting and Glogster are just a few of the digital multimedia tools that can be used to draw in the attention of the students throughout the process of creating, sharing, and critiquing their final projects (Kent, 2010).

On the other hand, Swisher (2007) highlighted that the technological tool might be only effective when the "...the instructional methodology supports the medium" (p. 11). Swisher (2007) added, "...it is not the use of media which necessarily enhances learning; it is the way in which media is used which makes the difference. Instruction can certainly be conveyed effectively through the use of visual media, but pedagogy – instructional methodology – is what determines whether the tool is effective or not" (Swisher, 2007, p. 11).

## **1.2 The Present Study**

The present study was conducted at a private university in Lebanon where English is used as the language of instruction. The importance accorded to studying EFL in the context of this study is based on the perceived vitality of English as an important world language used extensively in the domains of communication skills. Presently, there are no previous studies which investigated the effect of the Glog educational tool in improving the communication skills of Lebanese learners of EFL and increasing their motivation. Consequently, the purpose of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of using Glogging in communication skills course designed for improving the oral presentation skills and proficiency of the experimental group participants. The study is based on the rationale that there is a scarcity of research on the use of glogs in English communication skills classes.

In the present study, participants will use the glog to do tasks that foster their speaking and presentation skills. Specifically, the study addressed the following questions:

1. What is the relative effect of using the Glogster in comparison with traditional research paper in improving the oral presentation of university learners of EFL?
2. What are the perceptions of the participants in the experimental group of their experience in using the Glogster technological tool in their communication skills class?

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested in order to address the questions raised in the study:

Ho 1: There is no statistically significant difference in the posttest oral presentation scores of the experimental and control group at the  $p \leq 0.05$  alpha level.

Ho 2: There is no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the participants in the experimental group of their experience in using the Glogster technological tool in their communication skills class.

## **2. Literature Review**



John Seely Brown (2001) asserts in his speech *Learning in a digital age* the significance of using information as communications technology (ICT) when Brown (2001) said, “Today’s digital kids think of information as communications technology (ICT) as something akin to oxygen. They expect it. It’s what they breathe, and it’s how they live. They use ICT to meet, play, date, and learn. It’s an integral part of their social life. It’s how they acknowledge each other and form their personal identities” (p.70).

Social media expedites students’ interaction and engagement in different experiences (Ray, 2013). Many students enjoy using social media tools while conducting academic and business tasks. Social media tools are also used to boom slow business and to get more customers to visit stores and businesses especially when such media tools are used to promote discounts and sales online (Mitra & Steffensmeier, T. 2000). The integration of social media tools such as videos, blogs, digital stories and glogs in classrooms significantly improves learning and teaching processes (Mitra & Steffensmeier, T. 2000; Ohler, 2009). Ohler (2009) added that a video can display a science process; a blog can produce an organic, integrated discussion about a certain piece of writing; games, documentaries, and digital stories can provide information about complex social issues.

Glogster is “a modern twist to the classic glue and construction paper method for creating posters” (Ohler, 2009, p. 4). It can be used in the classroom to create book reports, research projects, character analysis, historical timelines, and any other class or group projects. It is a creative way for students to present information beyond the typical written report. Therefore, the Glog is an online informational poster which can foster creativity through the interaction with elements such as audio, video, images, data, and graphics (Ohler, 2009).

As such, Glogster supports all formats, images, audios, videos and hyperlinks, and Glogster promotes creativity. The Glogster helps students design a poster combining various multimedia formats and activate students’ cognitive processes. Glogs can be employed by teachers especially when they prepare a play through which such teachers demonstrate their knowledge of music and arts. Glogster allows teachers and students to experience innovative and creative learning since the glogster can be valuable as a model for future teaching as it is said that novice teachers refer to their learning experiences when starting their teaching careers.

### **3. Methodology**

The study employed a pretest- posttest control design. Two intact classes were randomly assigned to control and experimental conditions and the treatment lasted for 4- weeks of instruction at the rate of 3 class periods per week to teach the research and communication skills of cultural awareness and critical thinking in an integrated manner.

#### **3.1 Participants**

The study was conducted in a private leading university in Beirut, the capital of Lebanon. A convenient sample total of 22 EFL learners participated in the study. The participants were randomly assigned to control and experimental conditions, and the sample included a total of 6 males and 16 females. All the participants are native speakers of Arabic and came from similar socio-economic backgrounds. They were studying study skills comprising research and communication skills at a rate of 3 hours per week in accordance with the curriculum requirements proclaimed by the university Remedial program. A total of 22 students had been assigned the fulfillment of the four courses of the Remedial program comprising study skills, Ethics, Introduction to Business and Introduction to Psychology courses to be able to get back to the university regular program. The participants are the students taking a course titled “Study Skills”, and one of the basic requirements of this course is delivering presentations and conducting a research paper. The participants are students enrolled in the Remedial Program of the university which is implemented to make the students whose GPA is low to be eligible to get back to the



regular program of the university upon the completion of the requirements of the four courses that form the program. Finally, there were 11 students in the control group and 11 in the experimental group, and the age of the participants ranged from 19- 23 years.

### **3.2 Research Context**

As indicated earlier, the research context of the present study is a private university in Lebanon. This context is characterized by enrolling students from different socio-economic background with good opportunities to use English for communication in daily life and outside of university. However, the importance of studying English is emphasized in the context of the present study both as a language of instruction in which all other university subjects are taught. This is because English is considered an important international language to be studied starting with kindergarten and up to postgraduate studies due to its recognized value in communication, education, and commerce. Yet, it should be noted that the majority of students in this study context, as well as in other private university contexts, can be considered largely as good English proficient (LEP) learners and with much access to computers and modern technology, especially that smart boards and computers are becoming more available in many private universities including the site of the present study.

### **3.3 Instruments**

Three instruments were used to collect data and measure the variables of oral presentation proficiency and perception under investigation. These included an oral presentation rubric and reflection logs. The oral presentation rubric was used to measure the pre-test and post-test oral presentation proficiency level of the participants in the control and experimental groups. It comprises three main sections: Organization, Content, and Presentation. Finally, reflection logs investigated the participants' perceptions of their experience in using the Glogster.

### **3.4 Treatment**

The treatment lasted for four weeks at the rate of three contact hours of integrated instruction per week. The study participants of both the control and experimental group were asked to perform a project presentation task which required conducting a research in response to a prompt which asked them to describe the touristic places of any country they choose. The project writing instructional component of the control group consisted of traditional research writing practices which included instruction in pre-drafting, drafting, and revision strategies. Specifically, the pre-drafting stage focused on enabling learners to explore their topics in order to generate ideas in addition to learning how to write up their ideas and revise their written products. Meanwhile, the experimental group learners practiced project writing through using the Glogster procedures which involve using computers to incorporate music, pictures, visual effects, word choice, font, and the design they like.

Participants were oriented to use a variety of authentic tasks. The experimental group participants learned how to create and use a Glogster (Online Poster). Participants were able to convey the powerful tools of technology that help students express freely and creatively their opinions. Participants used a Glogster assessment rubric to critique their products.

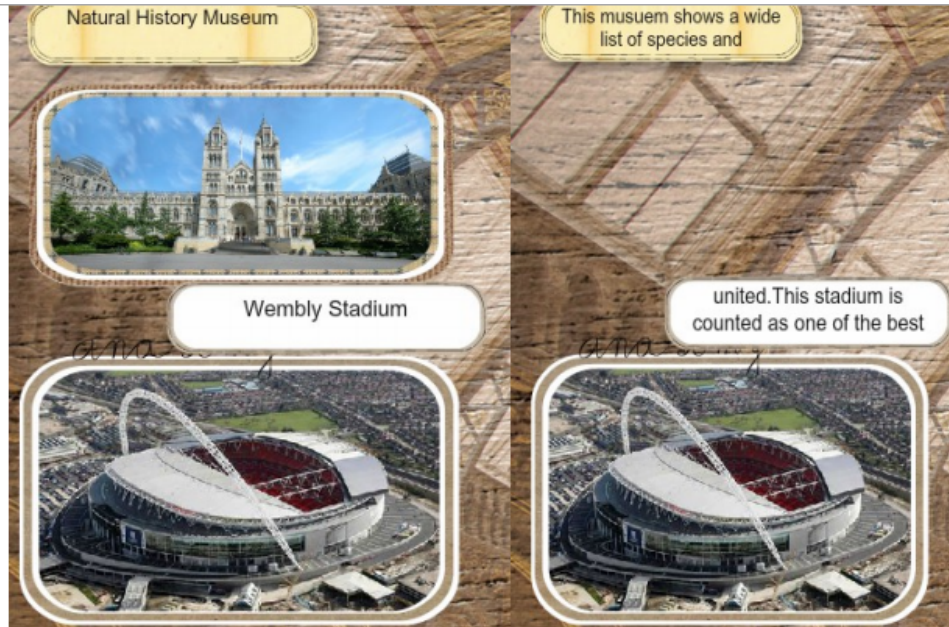
The addressed Technology (ISTE) Standards for Students were the followings :

1. Creativity and Innovation: Students demonstrate creative thinking, construct knowledge, and develop innovative products and processes using technology.
2. Communication and Collaboration: Students use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively, including at a distance, to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others.

Participants were taught how to create a Glogster account and a new Glogster using Google.com . Participants were given directions to create a new Glog .

Participants were guided to create and name a new Glog. They were encouraged to select Glog templates, such as Glog Project (see Figure 1.).





The Natural History Museum that exhibits a vast range of specimens from various segments of natural history.

**Figure 1**

They were instructed to click "Images" to upload an image from their computer. Participants were asked to add text boxes by clicking "Tools" and selecting "TEXT"; they were able to edit the text inside the text box and place the text box where they desire(see Figures 2 and 3).

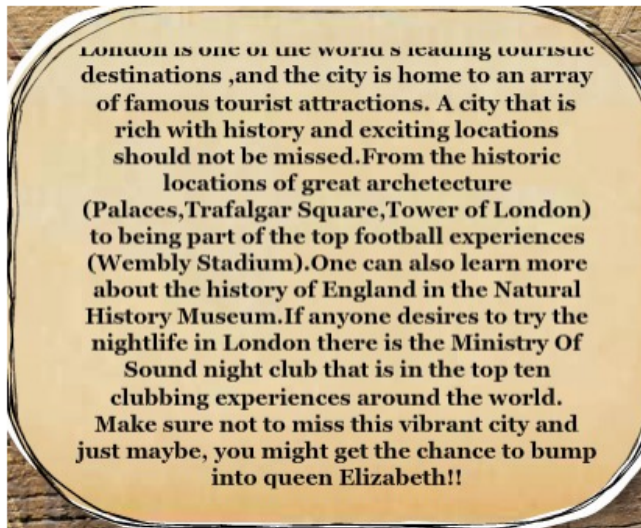
The London Eye that is located in the heart of London is a giant Ferris wheel that is 135m that allows tourists and citizens to see most of London.



**Figure 2**



Tower of London: Known as the Majesty's Royal Palace and Fortress which is a historic castle.



**Figure 3**

Participants were encouraged to add Graphics to improve the project (see Figure 3).

**London's Tower Bridge is one of the most recognizable bridges in the world. Its Victorian Gothic style stems from a law that forced the designers to create a structure that would be in harmony with the nearby Tower Of London.**



Westminster: The meeting place of the house commons and the House of Lords that was built in the middle ages.

**Figure 4**

Using Glogster, participants were able to upload videos to use them while presenting (see Figure 5).





**Figure 5**

The Glogster project could be comprehensive enough to help improve the presentation skills of the participants, for it could include the images, graphics, text, videos and music (see Figure 6.)



**Figure 6**

### 3.5 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (Means and Standard Deviations) were calculated on the pre-test and post-test performance scores of learners in the control and experimental groups, following which two independent sample t-tests and two paired samples t-tests were conducted to investigate the differences in



oral presentation proficiency prior to and subsequent to the intervention between the groups of learners in the control and experimental groups. The treatment conditions (control vs experimental) were used as an independent variable and oral presentation proficiency and as dependent variables.

In addition, content analysis was used as the method of data analysis of the qualitative data gathered from learners written reflection logs about their perceptions of the Glogster experience. These logs were used to write up the study results regarding learners' perceptions.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Findings on oral presentation proficiency

We found that, prior to intervention; there was no significant difference in the oral presentation proficiency of the participants in the control group and the experimental group.

Conversely, after the intervention, the experimental group outperformed the control group, which suggests a highly significant gain in proficiency from an educational point of view. Therefore, the first null hypotheses of the study regarding difference in the posttest writing oral performance of the control and experimental group were rejected.

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics of pretest scores of the control group ( $M = 12.09$ ,  $SD = 1.44$ ) and the experimental group ( $M = 10.77$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ). An independent-samples  $t$ -test was conducted using an alpha level of .05 in order to examine whether the experimental group and the control group differed significantly in the pretest scores. As table 1 shows, there wasn't a significant difference between the mean value of the experimental group and that of the control group with  $P(t(20) = 2.42, df = 20) > .05$ .

Table 3 shows descriptive statistics of posttest scores of the control group which used regular oral presentation ( $M = 12.5$ ,  $SD = 1.16$ ) and the experimental group which used glogsters in their oral presentations ( $M = 14.09$ ,  $SD = 1.51$ ). Another independent-samples  $t$ -test was conducted using an alpha level of .05 in order to examine whether the experimental group and the control group differed significantly in the posttest scores. As table 4 shows, there was a significant difference between the mean value of the experimental group and that of the control group with  $P(t(20) = -2.76, df = 20) < .05$  with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -2.79 to -.39.

The researchers also used two paired samples  $t$ -tests. The first paired samples  $t$ -test tested whether there is a significant difference between the pretest scores and posttest scores of participants in the control group. The mean of the posttest scores ( $M = 12.5$ ) of the participants in the control group was a bit higher than the mean of their pretest scores ( $M = 12.09$ ). Given an alpha value of 0.05, The  $t$ -test yielded a value of  $P(t(10) = -1, df = 10) > .05$  as indicated in Tables 5 and 6. Hence, it was concluded that there wasn't significant difference in the scores of the participants in the control group.

Another paired samples  $t$ -test was conducted to examine if there is a significant difference between the pretest scores and posttest scores of participants in the experimental group. As tables 7 and 8 indicated, the results showed an increase in the mean value from Time 1 ( $M = 10.77$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ) to Time 2 ( $M = 14.09$ ,  $SD = 1.51$ ). The results of the paired  $t$ -test, also, showed that such increase is statistically significant  $P(t(10) = -6.56, df = 10) < .05$  with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -4.44 to -2.19.

### 4.3 Findings on Perceptions of Glogster Presentation Experience

The results of the content analysis of qualitative data from reflective logs about learners' experience with the Glogsters suggest two aspects of interest: 1) the importance of using Glogster in the oral presentation process and 2) the usefulness of this educational tool in teaching EFL presentation skills, in general, and project presentation in particular. Specifically, the theme of the importance of the Glogster emerged from the data as many learners in the experimental group expressed their positive perception of this experience. A participant said, "The glog gave the ability to attach high resolution pictures which facilitated effective presentation. The glog gave the ability to upload videos with high





resolution. It gave me access to multiple templates. The glog gave good appearance to my presentation which looked appealing and attractive with an attractive background and layout." Glogging ensures, as indicated by another participant, "Private account for each student. Each student can upload images from any place. Each student can have complete protection from visual content outside the classroom environment. Each student can select images from glogster." A third participant asserted that Glogster is easy to use and fun at the same time. A fourth participant said, "In addition glogster is more vivid as a presentation which makes the presentation more attractive for users. Finally on PowerPoint you are not able to be very creative like you are in glogster it is very basic." Another participant said, "Glogster is a website used for helping people create a glog and present it with ease. It's really helpful because it has spaces for pictures, videos and a place to type. It also gives the presentation more efficiency and makes it look much better. It's a great website." As such, in alignment with the reflection logs given by the participants, the researcher could conclude that Glogster is a very useful website that helps students present their assignments and create a beautiful display. In addition, glogging gives access to previous projects for inspiration, and it also has an encyclopedia that students can benefit from its use. Another participant said, "After using the Glogster, I found it very easy to use. You can share your project with many people and it can be evaluated and graded. You can sum all your work (images texts video) in one slide. You can insert videos and this is not available when using power point." One more participant highlighted, "Glogster allows us to share our work. We use the glog to do homework and assignments. Glog helps us include pictures and texts at the same time. The advantages of using glogster, in addition to the fact that it is easy to access and use, is that on glogster, you can design your display and add various types of media like videos and audios that help to add color to your presentation."

On the other hand, the study participants highlighted some disadvantages for using the glog. A participant said, "The glog has limited space which does not allow a lot of information to be inserted." Another participant said, "The glog does not give not enough templates to choose from; thus, it makes some presentations repetitive." A third participant said, "We cannot create our own templates to give it a more unique display and touch". Another participant added, "The glog demands internet access." "It demands a lot of time." "Students who don't know what they are doing will by accident delete their work." "However, the only disadvantage is that we have 7 days for free then we have to pay for it. Glogster has an expiry date, so the use is limited unless you pay for your account." "In addition some people might find using glogster challenging since it is an online website, so the user must constantly have Internet access while using it." "Finally, glogster does not have a place to insert a bibliography which is necessary to ensure that the work is not copied. The only disadvantages I found when accessing to glogster are that it requires internet connection, and students can delete their work by accident."

As such, the researcher could conclude that the advantages of using the Glogster outweigh the disadvantages of employing such a technological tool, for the shortcomings of the Glogster are restricted to Internet connection and access.

## **5. Discussion**

The present study examined the relative effectiveness of the Glogster technological tool in improving EFL oral presentation proficiency and perceptions. As discussed earlier, the results proved to be positive given that the learners who produced EFL presentations using the Glogster outperformed their counterparts who produced the same content according to the dynamics of traditional research paper presentation. These findings corroborate those of Brown (2004), Masi & Winer (2005), McCombs & Lauer (1997), Mitra, & Steffensmeier (2000), Roblyer (2003), Rodriguez & Knuth (2000), Sousa (2011), Swisher (2007), Ohler (2009), Valdez, McNabb, Foertsch, Anderson, Hawkes, & Raack (1999), and Viégas, Wattenberg, McKeon, Van Ham, and Kriss (2008).



A probable explanation of the efficacy and positive attitudes towards the Glogster projects and presentations could be attributed to the provision of opportunities for students to conduct an oral presentation with reference to a variety of pictures, visual effects, music, animations, designs and text. However, future research should be conducted involving representative samples of different EFL populations and grade levels in order to determine to what extent the findings of the present study are generalizable as well as determine the effect of context-specific factors such as gender, linguistic composition, and levels of first and foreign language proficiency on the interface of technology and language proficiency and dispositions.

The present study revealed that university Remedial Program students were generally motivated and excited about the Glogster presentations although initially there were some hesitations due to lack of experience as well as skills in logging. Students also responded that the glogging project has raised their self-esteem, and they were more willing to express themselves using EFL.

## **6. Limitations**

The present study employed a relatively small and convenient sample size, which has negative implications for the generalizability of the findings into other contexts. Further research with a larger and more representative sample size should be conducted in order to test the generalizability of the findings as well as examine the interaction of the treatment effects of with other contextual variables such as students, level of language proficiency, gender, technology apprehension.

## **7. Conclusion**

This article reports the results of an experimental study that examined the relative effectiveness of the Glogster as a computer-assisted language learning tool versus traditional research paper in improving the English as a foreign language (EFL) oral presentation skills proficiency. The findings of the study revealed that the Glogster is a computer-based application that can be potentially useful in promoting learners' oral skills. Therefore, the Glogster tool may enhance students' motivation and interest in project presentations as well as increase their oral proficiency. It is probable in the future, that Glogster as a computer-assisted learning tool will continue to be an important component in teaching presentation skills. As such, language teachers should be fully aware of how computer-assisted language learning tools can benefit language teaching, learning and educational outcomes more generally.

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Table 1

**Descriptive Statistics of pretest scores**

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	C	11	12.09	1.44	.43
	E	11	10.77	1.08	.32





Table 2  
Independent Samples Test of Pretest Scores

		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)	Lower	Upper
Pretest	Equal variances assumed	1.22	.28	2.42	20	.025	.18	2.45
	Equal variances not assumed			2.42	18.51	.026	.17	2.45

Table 3  
Descriptive Statistics of Posttest Scores

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Posttest	C	11	12.50	1.16	.35
	E	11	14.09	1.51	.45

Table 4  
Independent Samples Test of Posttest Scores

		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)	Lower	Upper
Posttest	Equal variances assumed	.404	.532	-2.76	20	.012	-2.79	-.39
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.76	18.74	.012	-2.79	-.38

Table 5  
Descriptive Statistics of Pretest Posttest Scores of the Control Group

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest.control	12.09	11	1.44	.43
	Posttest.control	12.50	11	1.16	.35



Table 6

Pretest Posttest Paired Samples Test of the Control Group

		Paired Differences							
Pair		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pretest.control - Posttest.control	-.40	1.35	.40	-1.32	.50	-1.00	10	.34

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics of Pretest Posttest Scores of the Experimental Group

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest.exp	10.77	11	1.08	.32
Posttest.exp	14.09	11	1.51	.45

Table 8

Pretest Posttest Paired Samples Test of the Experimental Group

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair					Lower	Upper			
		Pair 1	Pretest.exp - Posttest.exp	-3.31	1.67	.50	-4.44	-2.19	-6.56