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Digital Literacy Practice: Blogs and Authorship in Developing Multilingual TESOL Professionals in a Graduate Program in the United States

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DIGITAL LITERACY PRACTICE: BLOGS AND AUTHORSHIP IN DEVELOPING

MULTILINGUAL TESOL PROFESSIONALS IN A GRADUATE PROGRAM IN THE

UNITED STATES

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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May 2012

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Title: Digital Literacy Practice: Blogs and Authorship in Developing Multilingual

TESOL Professionals in a Graduate Program in the United States

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This dissertation investigates the practice of blogging by multilingual graduate students in a TESOL program in an American context. The focus of the study is to understand the relationship between the practice of blog writing and the sense of authorship of the participants. The sense of authorship in this study mainly refers to how students see themselves as writers in blog environments. Using two sources of data, interviews and actual blog entries, this study offers a better understanding of the participants' varied perspectives toward the practice of blogging and their language use on blog entries.

The interviews offer insight into the participants' positive perspectives on blog features such as thematic organization, archives, and the comment function. The student bloggers' writing is accessible to not only the teacher but also to peer audiences, which made them feel ambivalent about writing on the class blog. Despite this issue, the participants prefer blogging to class discussion because they have more time to organize their thoughts and sentence structures than they do in class.

The analysis of blog entries showed the language choices and participation patterns of the participants. The participants preferred informal styles of writing over writing academically because they perceived blogs as a place where they feel relaxed and not forced to use conventional academic style. In addition, in the class blog, the students not

only wrote in order to express their thoughts, but also to engage readers and create relationships among blog members.

Cultural issues also play a role in this study; the diversity of languages, cultures, and ethnicities among the participants influenced the practice of blog writing. For example, some of the students were reserved in giving comments to other blog members in order to avoid potential conflicts among them. As a result, in-depth and extended discussions were limited in the class blog.

In conclusion, after experimenting with blogging in a class, students gradually developed a sense of authorship and saw themselves as writers in this online environment.