



ISSN: 0975-833X

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### TEACHING AND LEARNING THROUGH BLOGGING

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#### ARTICLE INFO

##### **Article History:**

Received 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2011  
Received in revised form  
24<sup>th</sup> October, 2011  
Accepted 27<sup>th</sup> November, 2011  
Published online 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2011

##### **Key words:**

Blog, Edublog,  
vblog,  
Sketchblog.

#### ABSTRACT

Twenty-first century technology has changed the way tools are used to support and enhance learning and instruction. Teaching in today's classroom is technology driven. To be a successful learner, students need to develop skills in self-directed learning. To transform the students from being passive receivers to active investigators of knowledge, multiple web tools such as wikis, podcast, virtual world tools etc are presented to learners for interaction and exchanging ideas. The educational affordances of blogs offer opportunities for students to become self-directed learners. The term blogging is the use of a blog on the internet, which has undeniable educational benefits that enable dynamic activities, creativity, enriching and innovative tasks and communicative learning. Blogs are widely popular in education, as evidenced by 400 thousand educational blogs hosted by Edublogs. The benefit of the use of blogs in education has certainly made a radical change in the learning community. Thus, this paper discusses on the importance of blogging and how it supports the learning community.

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#### INTRODUCTION

Blogs have become widely popular in education, as many thousands of educational blogs have been hosted by Edublogs. Blog technology as developed the fastest, the reason being it is easy to use, and it is individual-centred, making attraction to students. Blogs support teachers in teaching and learning since years. Through years of practice, a common understanding has formed around the benefits of the use of blogs in education. Blogs give students, ownership over their learning and an authentic voice, allowing them to articulate their needs and inform their own learning. Blogs have been shown to contribute to identify-formation in students (Bortee, 2005)

#### A BLOG

A Blog is often a mixture of what is happening in a person's life and what is happening on the web. A blog is a type of website or a part of a website. Blogs are usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order. It is a web publishing tool that allows authors to quickly and easily self-publish text, artwork, links to other blogs or websites, and other content. Blogs are organized like mainstreamed websites, with navigation links, and other basic website features. A special feature of blog is blog posting. Blog postings are text entries similar to a diary or journal, which include a posting date and may include comments by other than the author, photos, links, or other digital media. Postings are often short and frequently updated. They appear in reverse chronological order and can include archived entries. Blogs

are surprisingly to use. They require minimum technical knowledge and are quickly and easily created and maintained.

#### TYPES OF BLOGS

Blogs are of different types. They differ not only in the type of content, but also in the way the content is delivered or written.

##### **Personal blogs**

This is the most common and popular type of blog. The content usually revolves around a person's experience. It is an ongoing diary or commentary by an individual. Personal blogs are mostly liked because of its varying content or topics. It can be written on any topic from hobbies, to arts and crafts, to tech and geek. One type of personal blogs, referred to as a microblog, is extremely detailed and seeks to capture a moment in time.

##### **Organizational blogs**

A blog can be private, as in most cases, or it can be for business purposes. Blogs used internally in a corporation to enhance the communication and culture or extremely for marketing, branding or public relations purposes are called corporate blogs. Blogs are maintained by educational institutions as well.

##### **Blog by genre**

Blogs focus on some specific subjects, such as politics, travel, temples, house, projects, education, fashion, music, quiz blogs etc.

### Blogs by media

A blog comprising videos is called vblog, one comprising links is called a link log, a site containing sketches is called a sketchblog, comprising photos is called a photo blog.

### BLOGS CATEGORIZED UNDER THEIR FUNCTIONING

#### Blogs of institutions/organizations

It is Blogs about their programmes and activities.

#### Blogs for commercial purpose

It is blogs of particulars about products, demonstration with youtube.

#### Blogs of individual

It is blogs created by individuals based on their interest alumini, research, travel, and personal experiences, innovative ideas. The main purpose is sharing of ideas.

#### Blogs for educational purpose

It is blogs of teachers, researchers, follow-up activities, administration and evaluation etc.

### BENEFITS OF BLOGGING

- **Blogging enhances literacy skills.** Literacy skills are clearly being exercised as students are writing reports and diary entries, planning, recording interviews and evaluating their work. Students are able to exhibit a keen awareness of audience, by putting messages on their pages for visitors to their blogs.
- **Blogging supports learning in many areas:** Blogging improves their ICT skills. Students get to grip with a range of peripherals in taking responsibility for generating the multi-media content for their blog entries. Blogging creates interest and makes them to develop design skills on their pages.
- **Blogging is enjoyable at the primary phase:** Blogging is enjoyed by the students in using a range of multimedia to personalise their pages. Watching the videos and listening to the weird space noises that was selected by them, make them lively. Blogging encourages the children to have their own work on the pages. It makes them interested in recording their voices and adding them to their blog entries.
- **Sharing and evaluating blog:** Reading and evaluating work done by their classmates becomes a key element of the project in every school. This makes them extend their learning about different topics by reading each other's work. Students also enjoy in adding animated 'stickers' to their friends pages.
- **Blogging promotes home-school links:** Blog enhances the home-school relations, as the teachers encourage the students to their blogs with parents, so that the parents will be included in the part of the

child's learning. Feedback from parents naturally becomes extremely positive.

### BLOGS IN EDUCATION

As the Internet becomes an increasingly pervasive and persistent influence in people's lives, the phenomenon of the blog stands out as a fine example of the way in which the Web enables individual participation in the marketplace of ideas. Teachers have picked up on the creative use of this Internet technology and put the blog to work in the classroom. The education blog can be a powerful and effective technology tool for students and teachers alike. Blogs provide a communication space that teachers can utilise with students whenever there is a curriculum need to develop writing, share ideas and reflect on work being undertaken in the classroom.

#### The scope of Blogs in Teaching and learning

1. Blogs serves as informational instructional resources.
2. For frequently asked questions and other course updates
3. Blog serves as a tool for learners to establish their own journals, portfolios and personal reflections for presentation to their teachers and peers
4. It is a course/subject journal compiled over the period of delivery with course related reflections
5. Blogs are used to showcase personal works and achievements (eg an arts portfolio)
6. It contributes to a wider body of knowledge (eg people from beyond your provider can benefit from reading your blog)
7. Blog acts as a class portal where learners can access supplemental materials, curriculum, links, videos, podcasts, homework, assessment task and other peer/trainer feedback
8. It is an ongoing content where materials and resources can be archived online for easy locating in the future.
9. Blogs help in establishing a curriculum vitae.
10. It serves as the basis of an assessment.

#### THE PRIMARY STEPS FOR Developing BLOGS

There are a number of free blogging tools available. One can make use of these services for developing their own blogs. It is very simple and self explanatory.

1. Start with one of the free blogging sites (Blogger at [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com) is a very popular one).
2. Provide the necessary information requested like user name and password
3. Create a title for your blog.
4. Accept terms and select a template and then Publish.

#### IMPORTANCE OF A BLOG IN EVERYDAY CLASSROOM TEACHING

A class blog is a wonderful way to blog with class students. Introducing the students to blog and educating them through online, increases their skill in learning, gradually. Initially, the teacher has to initiate the students by himself/herself posting their writing and then encouraging the students to respond in

comments. When the students start to demonstrate their interest and responsibility, help them in giving their 'blogging license', where they can have right to write posts on the class blog or get their own student blog. Ultimately even if each student have their own blog, it is always a good idea to have a class blog. Blogging isn't just posting own writings alone, it is about showing their learning and reflecting on what they have learnt. Such a class blog encourages the students to read others post, Interact and comment by exchanging their thoughts and replying to the other posts. The class blog is a central hub that connects the student's blog together, making learning easier and provides global guidance.

## TYPES OF BLOGS IN EDUCATION

### 1. Teacher blogs

This is open to students, to peers and to parents. Here they share ideas, tips, feelings, experiences, methodologies, web resources etc.,. Online readings are discussed. Comment on the presentations help them to improve in their quality. Teacher blogs find many uses such as building communities of practice with other teachers and professionals all over the world, finding partners to work on collaborative projects, summarizing what's going on in the classroom, having an online conversation with parents, posting homework and class summaries, discussing a topic etc.

### 2. Class blogs

This encourages the teacher and the students to write in the main area. Extension of class activities and discussions on the topics chosen makes it interesting.

### 3. Student blogs

It is a own personal online space, free choice of content and design, which is linked to class or the teachers blog.

### 4. Administrator blogs

The purpose of Administrator blog is to encourage blogging among teachers and students to build a school learning network. This also engages in blogging themselves to present and discuss with parents about school behaviour rules, school goals and students projects. It also announces and gives the possibility to react to celebrations, meetings, sport activities, field trips, introduce staffs, comment on issues related to children and education, interact with students, parents, staff, school; community etc.

## EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS OF BLOGGING

- Blogs are highly motivating to students, especially those who otherwise might not become participants in classrooms.
- It provides excellent opportunities for students to read and write.

- It serves as a powerful tool to enable scaffolding learning or mentoring to occur.
- It makes their learning independent from time and place.
- Blog makes education demand oriented, participant-centred.
- Blog encourages every learners to be active throughout the course period,
- Blog captures changes in thinking and encourages with new ideas.
- Makes education more informal
- Blogging involves external people also.
- It facilitates the use of images and
- It also reduces the costs of learning.

## CONCLUSION

Though Blogs in education is relatively new context, it helps students to become subject-matter experts and provide opportunities for diverse perspectives, both within and outside of the classroom. Critical studies of blogging are still in their infancy, but the available literature suggests that "blogging has the potential to be a transformational technology for teaching and learning" (Williams and Jacobs, 2004). In particular, it is claimed that blogging is a useful practice for the development of higher order learning skills, active, learner centered pedagogy, authentic learning, associative thinking, and interactive learning communities (O'Donnell, 2006; Farmer, 2006). The benefits of blogging in teaching as a practice encourage deep and continuous learning. It allow the students to inform and be informed. Learning is independent and is allowed to learn at own pace. Normally, Students come to school everyday, raise their hands for a safety question and keep heads down to be unnoticed, But now, through blogging they have a strong voice to share their ideas through global network. As Eide Neurolearning Blog 2005 quotes that Blogging combines the best of solitary reflection and social interaction, let us build our younger generations with all the benefits of edublogs and make them a powerful promoter of creative, intuitive and associative thinkers and learners.

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