Blogging in Higher Education: A Tool for Student Engagement and Personal Development

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Annual Speak Up Report Released
Filed under: cyber school, education, high school, INACOL, Project Tomorrow, Speak Up survey, virtual school — mkbw @ 2:21 pm
Tags: cyber school, education, high school, INACOL, Project Tomorrow, Speak Up survey, virtual school
I saw this posted in one of the INACOL forums over the past few days. Normal concerns about the nature of the sample should apply.

The 2010 Speak Up National Report polled students, parents, teachers, and administrators on their experiences and opinions regarding educational technology. The survey revealed that students want more interactivity and collaboration in their studies, and parents are much more accepting of online learning than they were just a few years ago—but there are still many gaps in how students and their parents view educational technology and how educators view ed tech.

Listen to the Speak Up 2010 National Findings for K-12 Students and Parents and learn about the new Speak Up report. The New 3 Es of Education: Enabled, Engaged and Empowered — How Today’s Students are Leveraging Emerging Technologies for Learning released during a Congressional Briefing in Washington, DC on April 11, 2011. During the podcast, you will hear Julie Evans, Project Tomorrow CEO, discuss the national findings and a panel of students and parents share their perspective about mobile learning, online and blended learning and e-textbooks.

Download and listen to the podcast at http://www.tomorrow.org/speakup/;

April 10, 2011
Live And Interactive Webinars This Coming Week In Elluminate
Filed under: high school, education, cyber school, virtual school, webinar, Classroom 2.0 — mkbw @ 2:45 pm
Tags: cyber school, education, high school, virtual school, webinar, Classroom 2.0
Nothing specific to K-12 online learning this week, but the iPad in e-Learning session may be of interest. And as always the online leadership session too.

A message to all members of Classroom 2.0
Below are this week’s public, free, and interactive Webinars through LearnCentral.org, the social learning network for education that I work on for Elluminate.

The time of the events below will show up automatically in your own time zone when you are registered in LearnCentral and when you have chosen your time zone in your profile, or you can check the new event time converter on the event page. Event recordings are posted and available after the events if you aren’t able to attend them live. If you are looking for an easy calendar import / RSS feed for these events, you’ll now find a link on your calendar page or the calendar page of specific groups.

We hope you will consider hosting your own public webinars using the free LearnCentral public room—instructions are available by joining the “Host Your Own Webinar” group on the main announcement tab (http://www.learncentral.org/group/3432/host-your-own-webinars).
• Rural Education Special Interest Group of AERA
• Breaking into the Academy
• Rock Ruminations
• AECT Conference Interns Blog
• AECT Blog Track: Hanging Out My Shingle
• AECT Blog Track: Virtual Schooling
• The Program
“The content of the blog may be less worrisome than the fact of the blog itself. Several committee members expressed concern that a blogger who joined our staff might air departmental dirty laundry (real or imagined) on the cyber clothesline for the world to see. Past good behavior is no guarantee against future lapses of professional decorum.”

• Ivan Tribble, (a pseudonym of a humanities professor at a small liberal-arts college in the Midwest), a 2005 piece for the job seekers advice column in the Chronicle of Higher Education entitled, “Bloggers Need Not Apply”
Should You Blog?

“The promise of blogging for academics is great – exposing them to new ideas and colleagues, provoking new ideas of their own – but it brings with it the risk of the “ever-present death”, an awareness of the fleeting and fickle nature of the self, which can undermine the very attempt to establish one’s academic self online, or even off.”

(Ewins, 2005)
Why Blog?

“These issues of reputation cost and impact on careers have to be taken seriously. As well as overt attempts by an institution to constrain the content of blogs some of my bloggers felt that others – peers in the discipline, or managers the institution would see their blog as not academically serious enough. Perhaps it should not be surprising that academic institutions can be as sensitive as commercial institutions about what their employees publish. It is professionally safer to perform an academic identity that does not bring you into conflict with your employers.”

(Kirkup, 2010)
Why Blog?

• “the opportunity to write outside of the boundaries of traditional academic publication is appealing” (Davies & Merchant, 2007)

• “to write in *different* ways than... official academic writing, but often what I write on the blog subsequently bleeds overt into my ‘official writing’” (Saper, 2006)

• “that although the blog is ‘a supplement to my own activities as a writer, I hope there is a sense of risk and outrage that I don’t allow in my academic work’” (Saper, 2006)

• immediate publication allows for interaction with a potentially wide, diverse and dispersed audience (Bortree, 2005)
1. **Public Intellectuals:** “Many academic bloggers use their blogs as a platform for political debate based on theories of political science, feminism, discourse and media analysis, and so on.”

2. **Research Logs:** “The ‘pure’ research log is a record of research conducted and ideas that might be pursued.”

3. **Pseudonymous Blogs about Academic Life:** “The kind of title given to this proliferating branch of the academic blog is characterized by a tongue-in-check refusal to revere the ivory tower experience…”

(Walker, 2006)
Academic Bloggers

• *Disseminating content* – as a possible way to disseminate something they would like others to read

• *Expressing opinions* – to express opinions in a way that is seldom possible in other academic writing

• *Keeping up–to–date and remembering* – blogging to make the effort to read and discover new things in the field, and also find things that might have otherwise missed

• *Writing* – blogging to become a better writer

• *Interacting* – blogging to interact with others or have others interact with us

• *Creating relationships* – blogging to support the development of social networks or relationship management

(Kjellberg, 2010)
Schmidt (2007)

- **Rules**
  - Adequacy rules *(media selection)*
  - Procedural rules *(media use)*
    - Selection rules
    - Publication rules
    - Networking rules

- **Blogging episode**
  - Situative blog use to fulfill communicative goals
    - Information management
    - Identity management
    - Relationship management

- **Code**
  - allows for/constrains certain uses
  - recombinant and underdetermined
  - presupposes certain skills/competencies

- **Relations**
  - Hypertextual networks
    - provide visibility
  - Social networks
    - provide social capital

- **Code assists formation of relations**
  - Networks give feedback for continuous development

- Interdependence
- Framing/(Re)Production
The work of the academy should relate directly to the realities of contemporary life.

(Boyer, 1990)
Pedagogy Behind Blogs

Constructivist Learning Theory
• Social interaction and learning
• Collaboration and peer interaction
• Reflection, discussion and feedback

Deep Learning (vs Surface Learning)
• Critical analysis
• Connect new/existing knowledge/experience
• Apply knowledge to new contexts
Student Voice

- Students share their voices and ideas on blogs
- A place for marginalized and minority students to be heard by many
- Create debate and engage with public

Engagement in Discipline of Writing

- On-going writing, analysis, editing, experimenting
- Shaping ideas through writing
Pedagogical Possibilities

Sharing Course Information

- Post class times, assignments, exercises and suggested readings
- Note new/emerging research, current events

Group Blogs

- Complete course activities individually or collaboratively
- Multiple users contribute/provide feedback
Pedagogical Possibilities

Student Field Notes/Journals

• Record/report on experiences during practical or field experiences (e.g., work placement, internship)

• Receive feedback from students/instructor

Publishing Student Writing

• Practice writing skills

• Provide a real and authentic audience to write to

• Give and receive feedback in collaborative environment
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How to Blog

Commentary Entries

• news / current events items
• trackback entries
• promoting comments
How to Blog

Lists/Links Entries

• thematic
• daily
• weekly
How to Blog

Discussion Question

Entries

• on own blog
• on other blogs
How to Blog

Information Item Entries
• notices
• calls
• advertisements
How to Blog

Bells & Whistles Entries

- audio (podcasting)
- video (vodcasting)
- polling
Your Questions and Comments
Bibliography


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