

Enhancing Learning Outcomes Through Blog-Based Pedagogy: A Comprehensive Approach For Higher Secondary Education

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the development and implementation of a blog-centered approach to teaching and learning methods, leveraging appropriate technology at the higher secondary educational level. By harnessing technology, educators can create an environment conducive to fostering higher-order thinking skills in students. The blog-based teaching methodology promotes active participation and interactivity, enabling students to significantly enhance their proficiency in generating diverse forms of content, including text, images, and video. This paradigm shift empowers the learner-blogger, as authority transitions away from the traditional classroom teacher towards a broader audience. The findings strongly advocate for the integration of blogging as an integral component of the educational curriculum, underscoring the need for pedagogical considerations in the development of blog-based instructional materials. Key terms: blog, teaching, learning, technology, higher education.

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INTRODUCTION

Cambridge dictionary explains 'Blog' as a regular record of your thoughts, opinions, or experiences that you put on the internet for other people to read.

Technology can provide the appropriate medium for teachers to nurture higher-level thinking in students, a key element of the 21st century skills for learners by means of carefully structured activities (Shelly, Gunter &Gunter, (2012).

However, most of the time, technology in education is used as a source of information rather than as a process-based means for knowledge construction. Innovation in this domain is related mostly to hardware and software (Lim et al., 2013) and consequently, research has focused principally on matters of practical implementation and design (Yashwantrao Ramma, 2017).

BLOG

Barger first used the term "weblog" in 1997 (Blood, 2000); Merholz shortened the term to 'blog' in 1999 (Loving, Schroeder, Kang, Shimek, & Herbert, 2007). Stefanac (2006) defines a blog as an "easy to update website characterized by dated entries displayed in reverse chronological order". A blog is a kind of social media tool that allows one to share ideas with authentic audiences and to engage those audiences in conversation. Most of the blogs look something like journals, with a series of "posts" appearing on the blog in reverse chronological order (newest posts at the top, older posts below). Blogs can address any number of topics, from travel to food, parenting to politics, and they can be written by single authors or by groups of writers. Typically, blogging software is very easy to use, but also flexible enough to allow for customization in both style and structure (Oliver & Coble, 2016).

Weblog (Barger, 1997) or blog is one of the applications of Web 2.0. Doctorow et al. (2002) defined that a simple webpage consisting of brief paragraphs of opinion, information, personal diary entries, or links, called posts, arranged chronologically with the most recent first, in the style of an online journal. "Blogs, a journal style website that combines text, images, and links to other web pages, are one new technology that has played a large role in reshaping our literate environment". (Brune, 2008).

BLOG HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

Blog services were first invented in 1997, which experienced rapid increases in popularity in the years that followed. Later developments, especially that of Web 2.0 in 2004, contributed significantly to the rise of blogs and its eventual replacement of traditional personal homepages. This second generation of the Internet in the form of Web 2.0 is considered to have two core functions: the ability for users to read and write (and thus, create), which implies a much higher demand for social interactions on the web than was previously possible (Xianhui Che, Barry Ip, 2018).

COMPONENTS OF BLOG

- Post Date — date and time the post published
- Category — category the post is labeled with (can be one or more)
- Title — main title of the post
- Body — main content of the post
- Trackback — links back from other sites
- Comments — comments added by readers
- Permalink — the URL of the full, individual article
- Footer — usually at the bottom of the post, often showing post date/time, author, category, and stats such as number of reads, comments or trackbacks.

Features of a Blog

- Visual Content - Written content is the most important aspect of boosting your search rankings. Visual content (info graphics, videos, slideshows, and images) is also a crucial feature that can take your blog to the next level.
- Regular Content - Make no mistake- blogging involves hard work. You need to do blogging on a consistent basis in order to stay relevant with your audience.

Advantages of Blogs in Education

- Weblogs are easy to setup and administrate in contrast to other technologies
- Weblogs makes easier to publish all types of resources (text, images, video, etc.) to the Web when compared to traditional web publishing

- Access to information posted in weblogs are 24/7 (anytime, anywhere)

METHODOLOGY IN BRIEF

A Blog was created with the web address as www.simplescience365.blogspot.in. Conventional method was adopted to teach the control group and teaching through Blog was adopted for the experimental group. On completion, a post test was conducted. Using the post-test and pre-test scores, the gain score was calculated.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. Based on the interest of the students and facility to use Blog only 240 higher secondary first year students were chosen as the sample.
2. There is a time variation in completing both the treatments, since the selected groups were allowed to undergo two different types of treatment.

DEVELOPING THE BLOG

The investigator has created a blog for the present study in blogger.com. A Blogger is a blog-publishing service that allows private or multi-user blogs with time-stamped entries. Creating a blog in blogger is very simple, for which one need to have an account in Google (an email account). On entering into <http://blogger.com>, one will be prompted to enter their email and password that they have created in Google and just by signing in with their email, they could create a blog for themselves in blogger.com. One can also keep track of other blogs just by clicking 'follow this blog' option in their blog.

There are several options in blogger to customize one's blog. There is an area called dashboard in blogs where several options are available like 'new post', 'edit post', 'comments', settings', etc. By selecting new post option and by filling the necessary details one can make a new post.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BLOG CREATED

1. Care was taken by the researcher in choosing a free blogging software (Blogger.com)

2. The investigator signed up to create a blog at Blogger.com which had three steps, such as
 1. Creating an account.
 2. Naming the Blog and
 3. Choosing the template.

Creating an Account

As the investigator had been already maintaining a Google account from Gmail, just the process of 'signing in' was made with the user id and password.

Naming the New Blog

Here the Blog title and the Blog address (URL) were entered. The investigator created a Blog address, the URL of the blog is www.simplescience365.blogspot.in. This URL (Universal Resource Locator) address can be used by the investigator and others to read and link to the author's Blog.

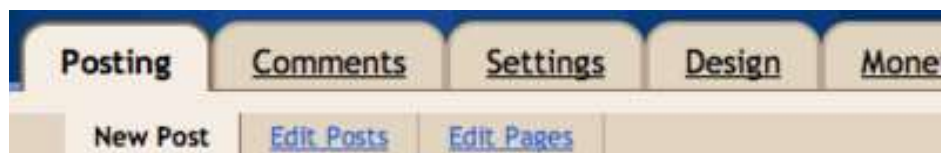
Choosing a Template

The researcher has created his own Blog. The Blog is ready to add posts to it and to associate the blog with the investigator's personal blog profile. Each time, the investigator posted on the blog, a Google share box will notify the followers that new blog content is available. If the followers like to share, they can or re-share the post to their own friends on Google. This ripple effect exposes links to one's content to a wider audience.

Now the investigator was ready with his blog with the URL address www.simplescience365.blogspot.in which was ready for the posting to be made.

INVOLVED IN POSTING THE MATERIALS

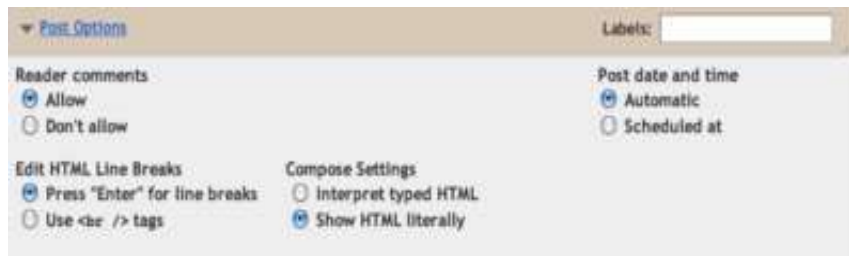
1. Once the blog was ready, the investigator created new Blog post, edit post and edit pages from under the 'Posting' tab.



2. On clicking the tab 'New post', the title box and the posting box appears. The title of the posting made was entered. The investigator proceeded with the title "Education" and then the body of posting was entered into the "Compose" text editor, where it accessed basic text editor functions such as font size, text, colour, the ability to insert links.

Title:

3. The "Post Options" section located underneath the "Compose" text editor enabled 'Reader comments' and 'Post time and date'.



The screenshot shows the 'Post Options' section of a blogging interface. It contains several settings: 'Reader comments' with 'Allow' selected, 'Post date and time' with 'Automatic' selected, 'Edit HTML Line Breaks' with 'Press "Enter" for line breaks' selected, and 'Compose Settings' with 'Show HTML literally' selected. There is also a 'Labels' input field at the top right.

4. The option "save now" was selected to save the posting made. "Preview" tab previewed the posting before publishing and "Publish Post" tab published the posting directly to the newly created blog.

PUBLISH POST **SAVE NOW** **PREVIEW**

VALIDATION OF THE BLOG CREATED

Video links of you tube, visual and design aspects of the slides created, which were posted on the blog. In order to ascertain the content validity the subject experts were consulted. The technical disparities have been carried out on the basis of suggestion given by the experts in the concerned field. Appropriate changes have been made on the slides created based on the suggestions given by them. After the verification and satisfied outcomes from the experts, the prepared slides were made ready to be posted in the blog, as 10 parts, for the learning convenience of the experimental group students.

Finally in a school a set of Higher secondary I year students have been selected and requested to go through the Blog at

their own time and to provide their views, accordingly certain changes with regards to content, size of the video, font sizes have been changed. Now the Blog, www.simplescience365.blogspot.in was ready with its contents to post.

CONCLUSION

This paper has outlined the development of a blog tailored to individual learning styles, integrating suitable technology for the higher secondary educational level. Through rigorous testing, the study affirms the blog's efficacy in facilitating meaningful learning experiences for students. This innovation holds promise for optimizing teaching and learning dynamics within higher secondary educational settings, placing a heightened focus on pedagogy and technology integration. As a widely embraced platform for self-expression, blogs mitigate technical hurdles, rendering them an accessible and user-friendly tool for learning. The blog environment demonstrates significant potential in bolstering student proficiency across essential learning domains. This endeavor marks a significant stride towards advancing education in the digital age.

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