

ROLE OF BLOGS IN ELT Vis-à-vis STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Amitpal Kour

Asstt. Prof. Govt. Degree College Gandhi Nagar, Jammu, J&K, India

ABSTRACT

Blogs give freedom to learners to write freely and enjoy their writing. Blogs provide a communication space that teachers can utilize space with students whenever there is a curriculum need to develop writing, share ideas and reflect on work being undertaken in the class room. In the weblog students are free from embracement and can become the followers of their peer's blogs. Above all, it shows how students learn and what teachers teach. It seems that the communication via blogs enhances communication skills needed for cooperation with other people. When students read new posts they come across new words which they can add to their vocabulary list. Additionnally, blogs have the power to assist teachers in creating authentic communities of practice extending far beyond any individual teacher's classroom experience. It prepares students for a future driven by peer production and networked learning.

Key Words: Blogs, Teaching, Students and Classroom.

INTRODUCTION:

The use of digital technology in educational settings has been growing and teaching language has changed dramatically and a plethora of ICT tools allows for a more learner-cantered approach. Digital technologies allow attaining interactivity, quality of education, motivation, possibility of self-evaluation of the achieved level. Integrating technology into the class room can be an effective way to nurture love of education within students. Technology does not have negative connotation in the education world.

Blogs provide a communication space that teachers can utilize space with students whenever there is a curriculum need to develop writing, share ideas and reflect on work being undertaken in the class room. Blogs are useful teaching and learning tools because they provide a space for students to reflect. It helps students to understand the relations and contextual basis of knowledge.

THE LEARNING BLOGS:

These can use for a variety of writing assignments. They can be managed as a focus of projects by individual students or by a small group. This can also be a communication tool to share students reflection with the teacher and their peers.

PROJECT OR TOPIC BLOGS:

Blogs need not only be defined by their users. The subject of a blog is equally important. Teacher can create a blog for specific topic or project. The blog can be ongoing or they can be simply deleted when the project is over or move on to a different topic.

Blogs offers a way for students to engage in reflective writing on any topic. There are many benefits of using blogs as writing tools. According to writing on blogs:

- Encourages feedback and represents both writing and reading activities.
- Stimulates debates, critical analysis and encourages articulation of ideas and opinions.
- Offers opportunities for collaborative learning.
- Providing environment in which learners can develop skills of persuasion and argumentation.
- Creates a more student-centered learning environment.
- Offer informal languages reading.

WRITING SKILL:

Blogs help students in classes to nurture their creativity and encourage them to explore their thoughts and feeling through writing. Blogs is used as the strategy because it provides potential sources, feedback and authentic audience to enhance students writing performance. It help students to improve their sentence length, sentence structure and expression in writing. Students

found it easy to write long sentence. Retrieval feature allow students to enhance their autonomy in making correction and reflecting on their writing. In blogs students enjoy feedback as compare with the traditional feedback students feel embarrassed when his/her copy is underlined with red pen, crossing out some sentences, use of questionmarks, etc in the margins. So it results in writing with less pressure and more confidence. In the webblog students are free from embracement and can become the followers of their peer's blogs. Therefore, for English teachers blogging would appear to be a wonderful tool for creating a space to foster a diverse range of language skills that the traditional classroom may not be able to develop.

To encourage critical thinking and reflection, the instructors can comment on the student positings and can challenge their views by asking pertinent questions.

READING SKILLS:

Blogs can initiate students to establish a community of leaders by stimulating intensive reading in the target language. Language teachers have proven how important reading is in connection to writing. It providing authentic reading texts for learner to observe and analyse, making them aware of the conventions of writing-grammar, mechanics, unity, coherence etc. As readers of blogs they respond to their classmates' opinions and commentaries. It extends pupil's lexis and foster it by applying in the real context. It seems that the communication via blogs enhances communication skills needed for cooperation with other people. When students read new posts they come across new words which they can add to their vocabulary list. Moreover, a blog can serve as a free choice and a tool for increasing learner autonomy. This free choice reading is a powerful way to create readers. It allows 'easy reading' which is engaging, enjoyable and effortless. This enhances reading skill among the learners and is powerful predictor of

vocabulary, comprehension, general knowledge and cognitive structures. Blogs helps in creating book chat. As reading is not just a solitary activity.

Discussion on blog enable students to discuss an argue about points that have been brought up in the blog. Students have to think critically in order to give accurate reasons for arguments. Students show their eagerness for those discussions which they find more challenging and need some research and go through few reading process before they can participate In the discussion.

AS A TOOL OF DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS:

Blogs can serve as tool of interaction for teachers because it promotes community building. As they are constructed by people who share mutual interest to collaboratively discuss common issues. Ongoing interaction and collaboration in learning through the blogs would make the teaching fraternity feel connected to one another. To provide support and assistance to neophyte teachers this platform is the best. It assists teachers to see others teaching and trigger reflections on their own teaching as well. Moreover, on blogs self-monitoring can be done by posting documents about one's teaching activities or recording in order to review or evaluate teaching. In this way author is able to review their lesson plans, questionnaires and other activities.

CONCLUSION:

Indeed blogs are authentic, interesting and communicative resources that can serve as a variety of purposes in ELS or foreign language class room. It raises novelty and diversity of possible learning activities. Above all, it shows how students learn and what teachers teach. Additionally, blogs have the power to assist teachers in creating authentic communities of practice extending

far beyond any individual teacher's classroom experience. It prepares students for a future driven by peer production and networked learning.

Reference:

Brown, H.D. (2004), Language Assessment Principals and Classroom Practice. New York: Pearson Education.

Campbell, A. (2003), Weblogs for Use with ELS Classes. The Internet-TESL Journal. VolIX, No.2. February 2003.

Dieu, B. (2004), Blogging and Presence Online.

Prensky, M. (2001), Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants, on the Horizon, NCB University press, Vol.9, No.5, October 2001.