



Blog, Blog, Blog

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the use of blogging among graduate students enrolled in several Masters' of Education and Education Specialist n programs in order to determine if the use of the blog—one Web 2.0 tool—would encourage depth of reflection, discourse, and classroom application. Drawing from course content, cultural issues, immigration, and second language teaching became the basis for blogging, reflection, and blog entries. Students were assigned readings and were asked to respond to open-ended items as the foundation of their blogging.

Based on the intent of the study, the purpose of this presentation is to:

1. Discuss the utilization and integration of Blogs in graduate education classes as a means for engagement and inquiry as well as to bring a fresh, updated perspective to foundations, multicultural, and methods courses.
2. Examine example curriculum structures that may be duplicated in undergraduate and graduate coursework across disciplines.
3. Present findings regarding graduate students' engagement, perspectives, and practices while using blogs in order to engage in reflective discourse. The researchers intend to engage participants in a discussion of blogging as well as other Web 2.0 possibilities for graduate inquiry. The study was structured with a set of overarching research questions—as appropriate for qualitative methods. The overarching questions served as the framework for the study.

Questions included:

1. How did the use of blogging assist students in engaging in the practice of reflective journaling?
 2. What differences and/or similarities emerged between blogging and online forum discussions and did these differences/similarities hinder, deter, promote, or encourage reflective blogging and journaling?
 3. What demographic factors—if any—emerged (experience in the classroom, Ed.S. students, M.Ed. students, practicing teachers, etc.) that had a potential impact on depth of discourse and insight and how did these factors promote reflective blogging and journaling?
 4. What role did technology play in enabling depth in discourse and detailed exploration of educational foundations, cultural issues, and methods application?
 5. Did any patterns emerge among participants, depth of discourse, and technological literacy and if so—what was gleaned from this information that may assist future online course designers and instructors?
- Significance and Contributions to the Field
The study provides additional insight to course developers, professors, teachers, and curriculum designers in terms of the successes, perceptions, and applications of using the Web 2.0 tool of blogging within higher education coursework. In addition, the structure and curriculum integration of blogs provided a model for participants—who are practicing teachers—to duplicate in their own classrooms.

Overall and general benefits of the study include:

1. Providing insight for other faculty members who design online courses.
2. Providing insight for other faculty members who teach online courses.
3. Offering suggestions to improve online discussion forums.



4. Offering suggestions and insight for others who are considering using blogs in the structure of the teaching and learning process.
5. Sharing findings in order to assist practicing teachers in meeting the challenges posed by cultural diversity and linguistic diversity in classrooms.
6. Utilizing the findings to improve practice.