OD2 Reflection

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Blogging

The assigned readings for our “Online Discussion 2” were thought provoking, because they all shared various uses of blogging. They allowed me to create my own definition of blogging. Blogging is a way to share, publish, collaborate, and communicate thoughts, opinions, and facts with the world. The articles primarily focused on older learners, but David Warlick’s book provided complete directions and applications for even the youngest of classrooms. After discussions of the various reflections from my other classmates, I have chosen to reflect on evaluation, peer interactions, and the use of podcasts.

Every classroom teacher should evaluate not only their students, but their teaching methods and effectiveness, as well. Glogoff’s article, *Instructional Blogging: Promoting Interactivity, Student-Centered Learning, and Peer Input* focused on, “As a valuable e-learning tool, blogging can be used in a number of ways to engage students in discussion, exploration, and discovery” (Glogoff, 2005, p. 3). However, I believe that the article also showed how the teacher evaluated what worked in the use of blogs and changed his instruction to make bloging more effective. The article demonstrated how the instructor adapted his assignments to make the students engage in blogging to enhance their learning.

Hulburt’s article, *Defining Tools for a New Learning Space: Writing and Reading Class Blogs* gives statistics from Lenhart, Madden, Macgill and Smith that “93% of American teens use the Internet, and of those teens online, 28% have created their own journal or blog. Fifty-five percent of online teens have a profile on a social networking site such as Facebook or MySpace (2007, as cited in Hurlburt, 2008, p2). With these statistics you would think that it would be easy to transfer the students’ technology knowledge to educational applications. But, according to Hurlburt, there is a concealed flaw. “The potential for peer learning through technology is inherent neither in the technology itself nor in one’s familiarity with it (Hurlburt, 2008, p.2). I see this with my own daughter. She is proficient with her Facebook, but wants to have nothing to do with the “educational” aspect of blogging. However, I do believe that if the teacher structures the assignment of blogging so that the students are engaged with each other in a meaningful manner, then the students will transfer the educational value of blogging. This varies with age level. My early elementary students love to give and get comments on their blog. As students become older and more social, the assignments may need to be structured so that they do not feel self conscious about posting. One of my classmates mentioned the concept of mentoring. This would be a great way to engage students in the concept of blogging educationally, too.

In his book, *Classroom Blogging A Teacher’s Guide to Blogs, Wikis, & Other Tools that are Shaping a New Information Landscape*, he states “Podcasting is another way that the Internet has become a conversation” (Warlick, 2007, p. 155). Podcasting is a great way to begin blogging with the younger child. It is a way for early readers to express their thoughts and hear others with out the use of written expression. This is great for kindergarteners. Early readers can also practice reading with expression by recording their stories and publishing them on a podcast.

In conclusion, “Teachers use blogs to promote conversations about topics and experiences in school and to post highlights from the class and the work of students” (West et al, 2006, p. 55). Blogging is a different venue for sharing students’ work. Our discussion board in this class is an inclusive form of blogging. We are engaged, produce for an audience, and communicate with each other; Blogs promote students to be engaged, produce for an audience, and communicate with the world outside their four walled classroom.

References

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