

Using Blogs to Share Learner-Generated Content

***** On the Internet *****

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Abstract

Learner-generated content (LGC) has always been produced as part of the learning process; however, it often generally goes no further than the teacher. Research has shown that by exposing LGC to a wider audience, students are motivated to produce work of a higher quality. The process of publishing and sharing LGC also helps students develop key 21st century skills. Furthermore, LGC becomes a valuable learning resource for peers as using the resources ensures that the peers are learning within their zone of proximal development (ZPD). This paper describes how blogs have been used to allow students to publish and share LGC. It also outlines how quality-control mechanisms have been used to ensure that any shared LGC is of appropriate, high-quality content.

Keywords: Learner-generated content, blogs, microblogs

Introduction

Blogs, more formerly known as web logs, have been around since the 1990s. Research done by NMIcrite (2012) indicated that there were over 181 million blogs around the world at the end of 2011, up from 36 million only five years earlier in 2006. The early blogging platforms, such as Open Diary and Live Journal, were simple online diaries that consisted of a stream of posts, made by the blog owner, and comments on these posts, made by both blog readers and owners. In the early 2000s, new blogging platforms such as Blogger and WordPress, added extra functionality, such as extra pages and widgets, turning them more into interactive websites rather than the original online diaries.

More recently, microblogging platforms such as *Tumblr* have been gaining in popularity. According to *Tumblr* (2013), it hosts over 116 million blogs. Microblogging platforms differ from traditional blogging platform by emphasizing short posts containing multimedia content built into a social networking environment. Whereas traditional blogging platforms tend to follow a “one-size-fits-all” design, microblogging platforms have moved into niche areas. For example, *LinkedIn* creates a network of microblogs for

professionals and businesses, whereas *Edmodo* provides a similar service for educators and students.

The last decade has also seen a significant rise in the number of blogs (and microblogs) being used in education and this is reflected in the growing body of research into the educational use of blogs (Trajtemberg & Yiakoumetti, 2011; Yang & Chang, 2011). A quick search in Google Scholar for the words “blog use in the EFL classroom” over the last ten years produced over 2,000 search results. Blogs are also being used in a variety of ways. The advanced features of current blogging platforms can be used by students to keep ePortfolios (Shao-Ting, 2012) and by educators to design content management systems (Dowling, 2011 & 2012). However, the early functionality of blogs as online diaries, with simple posts and comments, remains core to a good blog. These features of blogs can be used by teachers to post lists of their daily learning activities, by students to keep a record of their daily work, and by both teachers and students to keep lines of communication open at all times. These features can also be exploited by EFL teachers to give students more opportunities to participate in their learning, either by commenting on posts made by teachers or by creating their own blogs to be read and reviewed by their peers. The result of this process is learner-generated content (LGC) that can be shared to enhance student learning.

The aim of this paper is to show how blogs and microblogs can be used to allow students to participate in their own learning by giving them opportunities to not only produce learning content but, more importantly, share it with their peers. First, the paper will provide an overview of LGC: what it is, how sharing it can be used to motivate and enhance students’ learning, and how blogs can be used to make LGC available to a wider audience. Then, there is a detailed discussion on how two English lessons, one in blended-mode and the other in fully-online mode, have used blogs to allow students to share their learning content.

Learner-generated content (LGC)

What is LGC?

Despite the fact that both educators and students are using the internet and web-based tools on a daily basis, both to consume and to produce content, the uptake of these technological advances in education has been slow (Clarke et al, 2009; Dowling, 2011). Perhaps the main reasons for this are the traditional teaching practices still occurring in the classroom – “pre-packaged learning materials, fixed deadlines, and assessment tasks designed by teachers” (Lee & McLoughlin, 2008, p. 1). Content focus in this scenario is ***teacher-generated***. This is particularly the case in paper-based classrooms; however, it can also happen when enterprise-level learning management systems (LMS), such as Blackboard and Moodle, are used to deliver courses online, as these LMS have been designed based on traditional teacher-centric pedagogies (Lane, 2009; Lee & McLoughlin, 2007; Mott, 2010).

Learner-generated content (LGC), on the other hand, is content created or found by students as a result of doing learning activities (Boettcher, 2006; Perez-Mation, Maina, Guitert & Romero, 2011). Boettcher (2006, p. 2) also refers to this type of content as “student performance content”. This type of content has always been present in

learning, but by using web-based tools such as blogs, the last stop for LGC is no longer the teacher but a wider audience, an audience which can then exchange ideas or evaluate and assess their peers' work (Dippold, 2009). However, it's important to note that LGC doesn't just involve students posting to blogs without guidance, particularly when students' English skills are weak or they are in the early stages of the learning cycle. In addition, some students may be unwilling to make their work public without their teacher's reassurance (Light, 2011). Therefore, it's important that an appropriate quality control mechanism (Ehlers, 2009; Perez-Mation et al, 2011) is applied to the process in which students generate learning content.

Why share LGC?

There are three main reasons for sharing LGC. The first is to increase students' motivation levels; if students must interact with a wider audience, they will be motivated to be more careful about what they write, which will result in work of a higher quality (Ciftci & Kocoglu, 2011; Magnifico, 2010). The second is to help students acquire "21st century skills" such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and information literacy (Buchem and Hamelmann, 2011, p. 4; Rotherham and Willingham, 2010, p. 17; Dohn, 2009). The third is that LGC can become valuable learning resources for other students (Farhat & Raven, 2013; Trajtemberg & Yiakoumetti, 2011). This works particularly well when the LGC is produced and shared by "more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1987, p.86). The learning of the less capable peers is more effective as it is taking place within their ZPD, or zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). However, using blogs to share LGC means that the ZPD model has been altered slightly. Rather than content simply being transferred from one peer to another, the content has been transferred through a process of "social/collaborative learning" (Narayan, 2011, p.893).

How can blogs be used to share LGC?

Blogs can be used in a number of ways to help share LGC. As mentioned, it's important that LGC passes through quality control mechanisms before it is shared. Blogs can play an important role in these mechanisms. First, they can be used to deliver teacher-generated content, such as texts, worksheets, assessments, etc., that is used to guide students through the learning process. In addition, the comment feature of blogs can be used to support learner activity. The comments can also be used for students to display their LGC. For example, a blog post could contain a learning activity that requires students to submit their work as a comment. Teachers can moderate these posts, ensuring that the LGC is acceptable, both in terms of content and quality.

Another way of using blogs is to encourage students to keep their own blogs. While the comment feature of teacher-generated posts is useful for submission of opinions and short pieces of work, when students have larger pieces of work spread over a term, it is best to have students post this work to their own blogs and have their peers comment.

By sharing LGC on blogs, either through short comments or individual student blogs, the LGC becomes a valuable learning resource for other students, motivating them by providing an audience, giving them a sense of ownership and participation in their learning, and creating a greater sense of community.

Discussion

Having discussed the key features of LGC and how blogs can be used to share it, the next part of the article presents two detailed case studies that show how blogs have been used to share LGC in two different teaching and learning situations. The first is in a traditional face-to-face classroom but with all students using laptops; the second is in a fully online learning environment.

The Blogging Platform

In both case studies, the blogging platform used was the public version of WordPress. I use this platform for course delivery, training websites and personal portfolios as the vast array of tools and plugins available makes personalizing blogs very easy. For example, extra pages can be used for additional information and widgets can be added to sidebars that add functionality and personalization (see figure 1).



Figure 1. A sample WordPress.com blog

There are some downsides to using *WordPress* (and most free blogging platforms). As the standard *WordPress* blogs are free, they can be subjected to unwanted advertisements, particularly if they become popular, which could be problematic with a class of students; however, for a fee of \$30 a year, advertisements can be removed.

Alternatively, *WordPress* could be installed on your own server; however, this entails heavy IT overhead or the help of a service provider (additional costs).

Case Study 1: Using blogs to produce LGC in a face-to-face classroom

The Setting

The first case study was done in a federal, tertiary-level institution in the United Arab Emirates. The class of twenty students were Emirati nationals, male and recent high-school graduates. As the language of instruction at their high schools was Arabic, and the language of instruction at the institution was English, the students needed to do a preparatory English class, which in their case covered four semesters (two academic years). This case study was done in their second semester, when the students were at the advanced beginner stage of their English studies.

All students in this preparatory programme had laptops and faculty were encouraged by the institution to actively use technology as part of the teaching and learning process. Our learning management system, *Blackboard Vista*, was the main tool for delivering learning materials and assessment; however, I favoured a blend of using blogs to display content and *Blackboard Vista* for student assessment.

The Lesson

While the lesson could have been delivered via a blog post, I decided to make use of an additional blog page. This allowed the grouping of a full semester's lessons into menus on the menu bar (see figure 2).

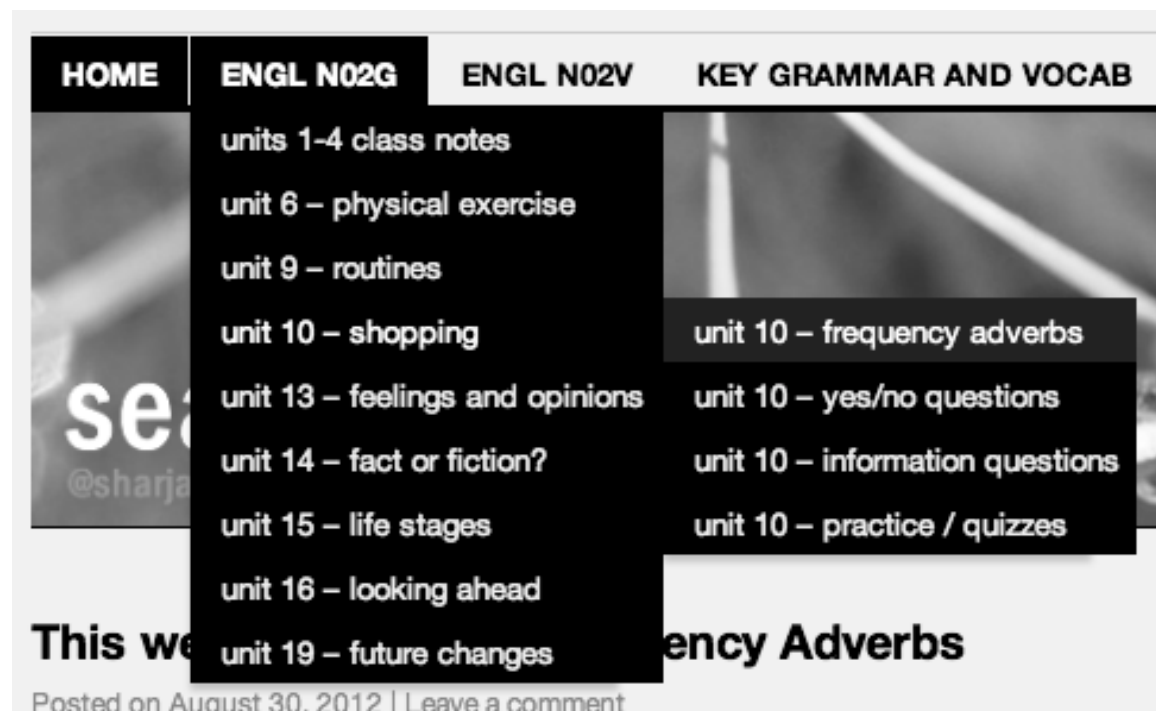



Figure 2. Lessons grouped into menus

The lesson (see figure 3) used in this case study lasted fifty minutes, with a follow-up in a later class. It was a typical “focus on form” (Harmer, 2007, p. 53) lesson, i.e. the students would focus on one particular grammatical form, frequency adverbs. As the lesson was a focus-on-form style lesson and the students were at a beginner level of English, a traditional present-practice-produce (PPP) methodology could be used (Harmer, 2007).

unit 10 – frequency adverbs

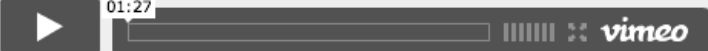
Activity 1: Watch the video about how to use frequency adverbs.



Frequency Adverbs (using the present simple)
from SHC EdTech

Unit 10

Frequency Adverbs
(with the present simple)
by Sean Dowling



Activity 2:

- Go to page 98 in your textbook.
- Do activities A and B.
- [Click here to see the answers.](#)

Activity 3:

- Write **6** sentences about yourself.
- The sentences must use ***always / usually / often / sometimes / hardly ever / never*** at least once.
- Add these sentences to the comment area of this page.

Next Lesson: [Unit 10 – simple present yes/no questions.](#)

Figure 3. Lesson on blog page

However, an extra stage was added to this model, **publish**, which would enable LGC to be shared by peers on a blog. Figure 4 shows the 4P, model. This extra stage of publishing and sharing adds value to the learning process by increasing students' motivation, helping students to acquire key 21st century skills and providing valuable learning resources for peers.

PPP = Present + Practice + Produce

4P = PPP + Publish

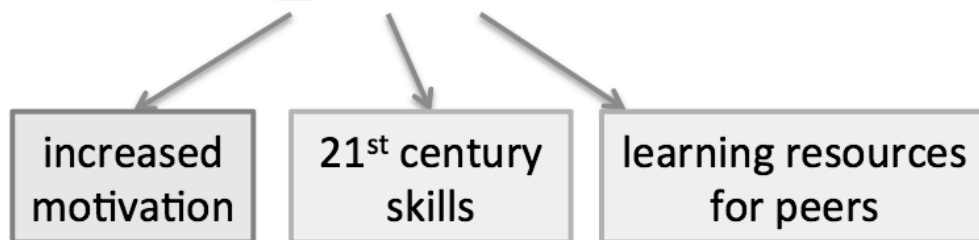


Figure 4. 4P Model

The lesson was divided into six parts: **present 1** and **2**, **practice**, **produce**, **publish** and a **follow up**. In the first *presentation* stage, the students were engaged and implicitly introduced to the grammar point by using some simple activities in the course book. This was done in traditional face-to-face, paper-based format. Part 2 of the *presentation* stage was where students started to use the blog. This involved watching a video, which explicitly focused on the grammar point. Students could, and did, watch the video multiple times. (Note: *Screenr* was used to record the short video, which was then uploaded to my channel on *Vimeo*). The third part, *practice*, involved the students doing a controlled writing activity in the course book, checking their answers with the correct ones provided on the blog. In the fourth part, *produce*, the students did a freer writing activity.

Up to this stage in the lesson, the blog, in conjunction with the course book, was mainly used to deliver teacher-generated content. This was important as it acted as a scaffold for students' learning. Some LGC was produced in the controlled and freer writing activities, but this had yet to be shared even with the teacher, let alone a wider audience. In the next stage, *publish*, the comment feature of the blog was used to publish the LGC from the freer writing activity. However, this content would not be made public until it was moderated by the teacher. As students were working at their own pace, the teacher was able to check individual students' work, and provide more individualized help to weaker students, before they submitted, thereby ensuring that the quality of the content

was of an acceptable standard. Even if a student submitted without the content being checked by the teacher, it wouldn't be made public until the teacher approved it via the blog administration page.

It's also important to note that some mistakes were deliberately allowed to go unchecked. Figure 5 shows an example of a student comment. The teacher also added a comment reminding the student(s) of the correct use of a full stop. Other mistakes, such as "go to shopping", were addressed in a general teacher comment (see figure 6).



Sultan | [November 8, 2010 at 8:59 am](#) | [Reply](#) | [Edit](#)

I always go to hall games
I often go to club
I never late in my college
I sometimes i go to shopping with my friend
I hardly ever smoke
I usually go to land

Sean Dowling | [November 8, 2010 at 9:06 am](#) | [Reply](#) | [Edit](#)

Remember to use a full stop (".") at the end of every sentence.

Figure 5. Student comment with teacher's explicit correction

Sean Dowling | November 8, 2010 at 9:21 am | [Reply](#) | [Edit](#)



Hi guys,

Good work today but there were some general problems.

Full stop (“.”)

1. always put a full stop at the end of a sentence.
2. never put a space between the last letter and full stop (“*mall .*” -> “*mall.*”)

“go” + noun

1. *go shopping / go home*
2. *go to the mosque / go to college*

adverb + verb – no “ing” with verb!

1. “*I hardly ever **smoking***” is wrong. “*I hardly ever **smoke***” is correct.
2. “*I never **cheating***” is wrong. “*I never **cheat***” is correct.

Spelling

Look at these words and remember the spelling!

friend / friendly, website, breakfast, play, college
always, usually, often, sometimes, never

Can you remember them?

[Click here for extra activities on SpellingCity \(for laptops/PCs\).](#)

[Click here to play a spelling game on Super Speller \(for the iPad\).](#)

Figure 6. Teacher’s general comments and links to practice material

The final stage of the lesson, the *follow up*, was done in a later class. This was done for a number of reasons. First, it ensured that the students did indeed read their peers’ comments. Second, as the comments were within the students’ zone of proximal development (ZPD), they became learning resources at the “just-right” level for students and would effectively reinforce the learning point. Third, by reading and discussing the

specific and general comments made by the teacher, students were exposed to a further round of teacher-generated content in which they were made aware of their mistakes. The links to the extra practice materials also gave students opportunities to correct common spelling mistakes.

Case Study 2: Using blogs to produce LGC in a fully online learning environment

The Setting

The second case study involves a lesson delivered in fully online mode. There were six students enrolled in the course: two from Korea and one each from Japan, Thailand, Columbia and China. They were all housewives, ranging in age from thirty-five to fifty, with their English ranging from low to high intermediate. At the start of the course, their familiarity with using computers and the internet ranged from beginner to advanced, but by the time the featured lesson was delivered, in week seven of a ten-week course, most issues in regard to using the technology had been resolved.

The Lesson

The lesson, or module, was part of a ten-module course. Each module contained the following activities – reading, listening, writing, blogging, tweeting, podcasting and presentation – to be done over a period of one week. Figure 7 shows the outline for module 7, the featured module for this case study.

module 7: the future (Jan 23 – Jan 29)

In this module, you will do the following

1. read about a person's job and future plans (text) and do a comprehension activity (1)
2. do a reading comprehension quiz
3. listen to 4 texts (1, 2, 3, 4) and do comprehension activities
4. do a listening comprehension quiz
5. write about your future plans
6. post at least 10 tweets on twitter - 5 about your learning
7. post in your blog about your future plans
8. make a podcast talking about your future plans
9. make a presentation in google docs about your future plans (group work)

Figure 7. Outline of featured module

While there was some focus on form in the lesson, it was more task-based; i.e. focus on completion of meaningful tasks through which students learn the language forms more implicitly (Harmer, 2007). The goal was to have students produce a blog post about a certain topic, which would be read and commented on by their peers, and then produce a group presentation. By the end of the task, it was hoped that the students would have a better understanding of the target grammar and vocabulary, as well as improving their reading, listening and writing skills. However, to ensure this, the lesson was designed

using three quality-control mechanisms: 1) use of teacher-generated content to guide students in producing their own content, 2) appropriate assessments, and 3) tracking and supporting learner activity (Dowling, 2011).

The teacher-generated content was in the form of web-based reading and listening activities and explanations about the featured language (see figures 8 and 9).

module 7 reading (10 points)

Turned in (6) **DUE: Jan 24**

You will need to do the following:

- 1) Go to <http://www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish-central-stories-assassination.htm>;
- 2) Read the text;
- 3) Do the comprehension activity at <http://www.learnenglish.org.uk/CET/flashactivities/learnenglish-central-stories-family-business.html>;
- 3) Go to <http://www.classmarker.com> ;
- 4) Do the quiz "module 7 - reading - family business".

module 7 listening (10 points)

Turned in (6) **DUE: Jan 24**

You will need to do the following:

- 1) Click on the four links below and do the listening activities;
<http://www.ello.org/english/Games/G063LifeGoals.htm>;
<http://www.ello.org/english/Games/G052Plans.htm>;
<http://www.ello.org/english/Mixer/62-Plans.html>;
<http://www.ello.org/english/0951/Q989-George...>
- 2) Go to <http://www.classmarker.com> ;
- 3) Do the quiz "module 7 - listening - future trip".

Figure 8. Teacher-generated reading and listening activities

Module 7 Grammar point - FUTURE tense

In this module, we will talk about the future in three:

- 1) using "WILL" + verb, eg. "will study"
- 2) using present continuous + verb infinitive, eg. "planning/going to visit"
- 3) using "WOULD LIKE" + verb infinitive, eg. "planning/going to visit"

1) WILL + verb

When you are 100% sure of doing something in the future, use WILL + verb.

"The children will have school on Sunday."

"I will go shopping at 10 o'clock."

"We will finish this module next Friday."

2) PLANNING/GOING + verb infinitive

When you are NOT 100% sure, maybe 70-90% sure, use PLANNING/GOING + verb infinitive. Something may happen so you cannot finish your plans.

"I am going to meet my friends this summer."

"We are planning to stay in the UAE for 3 more years."

"She is going to study in England."

3) WOULD LIKE + verb infinitive

When you not sure of something happening in the future, but you would like it to, then use WOULD LIKE + verb infinitive.

"I would like to go to Fiji [if I win the lottery]."

"My husband would like to work at Oxford University."

"She would like to have a handsome, rich husband."

Use all three types of future tense in the writing activity below.

Figure 9. Teacher-generated grammar explanations

The teacher-generated content acted as a scaffold for student learning. Once students worked through these activities, it was time for them to start generating content. This was broken in three parts: a first draft, a final draft and the formatted blog post (see figure 10).

module 7 writing - first draft (7 points)

 Turned in (6) **DUE: Jan 26**

You need to do the following:

- 1) write about your future plans (100-150 word s).
- 2) you should use the FUTURE tense (see grammar point above)
- 3) turn-in by the due date.

On my blog, <http://seandowling68.blogspot.com/2010/01/in-2010-i-will-do-number-of-things.html>, I have written about my future plans. Click on the link to see what I have written.

module 7 writing - second draft (3 points)

 Turned in (6) **DUE: Jan 27**

You need to

- 1) correct first draft.
- 2) post by the due date.

module 7 blog (10 points)

 Turned in (6) **DUE: Jan 29**

You need to do the following:

- 1) Post about your future plans on your blog at <http://www.blogger.com>.
- 2) Comment on 2 other students' blogs.

Figure 10. Steps for generating learning content

The first two steps followed a traditional writing process: students reviewed a model text, wrote their first draft, which was corrected and marked by the teacher; students then made corrections and submitted a second draft, which was also marked and commented on by the teacher. This ensured that the quality and content of the drafts was appropriate. Students would therefore not have to worry about the content of the texts (perhaps being ridiculed by peers) and could focus on correctly formatting the drafts for publication on their blogs, where they would be read and commented on by their peers, the final stage in the process of using blogs to share LGC.

Throughout this process, students were being constantly assessed. Comprehension tests were used after the reading and listening, and students writing, blog posts and comments on other blogs were marked. Students were made aware of the number of marks per assessment at each stage. In addition, on the rubrics page of the blog, a detailed breakdown of the marking scheme was outlined (see figure 11).

Assessment: *writing* (10 points)

First draft (7 points)

- 1 point: posted on time in [edmodo](#)
- 1-6 points: [IELTS public writing bands 1-6](#)

Second draft (3 points)

- 1 point: posted on time in [edmodo](#)
- 1-2 points: corrections made

Assessment: *reading* - [ClassMarker](#) quizzes (10 points)

- 1-2 points: posted on time (2), one day late (1)
- 1-8 points: number of correct questions

Assessment: *listening* - [ClassMarker](#) quizzes (10 points)

- 1-2 points: posted on time (2), one day late (1)
- 1-8 points: number of correct questions

Assessment: *blog* – post on [blogger](#) (10 points)

- 1 point: posted on time
- 1 point: title included
- 2 points: content formatted correctly
- 1 point: picture included
- 2 points: commented on 2 other students' blogs
- 2 points: comment quality

Figure 11. Assessment rubrics

The final step in the quality-control mechanism was adequate tracking and supporting of learner activity. This could have been done using the main blog; however, this wouldn't have allowed the teacher to give detailed support. Instead, the microblogging platform *Edmodo* was used to track and support learning activity. Student activity was tracked using the *Edmodo* assignment tool. After completing the reading, listening, writing and blogging activities, students posted evidence of completion (see figures 8 and 10). The assignment tool allowed the teacher to track student submissions, grade them and return the corrected draft to students. The grades were automatically displayed in the *Edmodo* grade book, accessible to students. Open-ended and polling

questions (see figure 12) were also used as lead-ins to the reading and listening activities as well as making sure that students were on task.

Me to w2e

If you won \$1 million, what would you do? Why?

Use the "Reply" label below to send your answer.

Jan 22,



module 7



Mina L. - Is It tax free? I am going to Haiti and I share the money half . My family and me going to Moldive until no have money.

Jan 23, 2010

Show 5 more replies...



Sally Y. - i would divide the money in three parts, one part for my children; one part for my husband to make more profit and i think he is smarter than me on finance;one part to our parents but they might not want our money and i would spend with them.

Jan 25, 2010



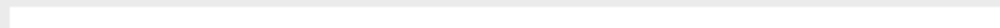
Type a reply...

Me to w2e



What do you think you will study in this module?

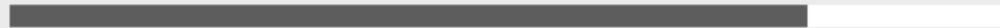
the PAST tense 0 vote(s)



the PRESENT tense 20%, 1 vote(s)



the future TENSE 80%, 4 vote(s)



Total votes: 5 (Refresh)

Figure 12. Open-ended and polling questions

Students could also send notes to their teacher and peers when they were having problems. Figure 13 shows an example of a student using an *Edmodo* note when having problems. Not only did the teacher try to solve the problem, a peer also contributed.

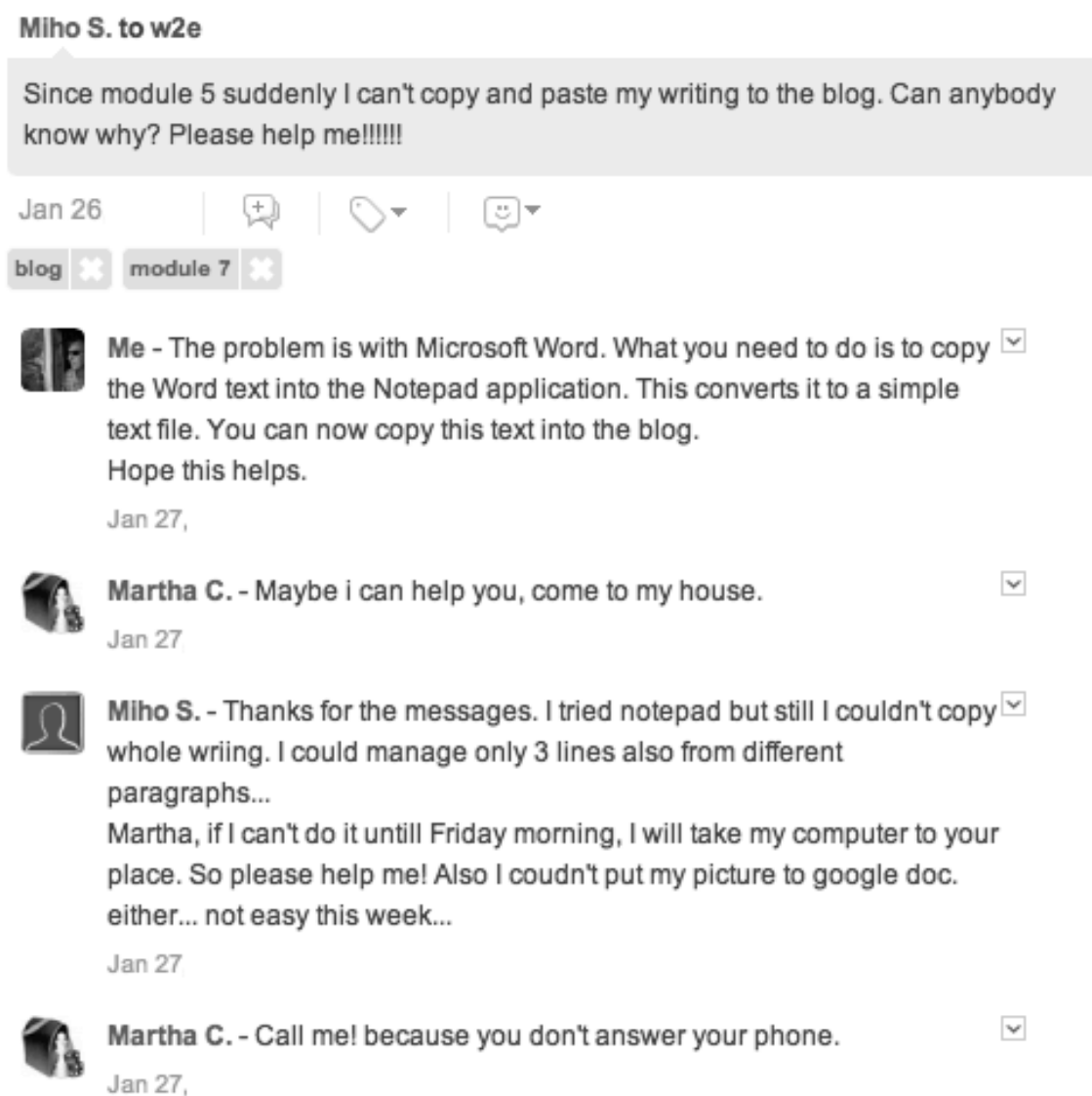


Figure 13. Using *Edmodo* notes to help solve a problem

While working through the learning materials, both teacher and students received *Edmodo* notifications when new posts or replies were added. This ensured that up-to-date tracking and support of student learning, a crucial factor in making fully online course more effective.

The end product of the process was learner-generated blog posts and comments, containing the target grammar and vocabulary, of acceptable quality, and at the “just-right” level for students (see figures 14 and 15). By reading their peers’ blog posts and

comments, the students were working within their ZPD, which would reinforce the learning points, thereby ensuring deeper understanding.

My future plans



In 2010, I will do a number of things. First I will start to teach Amy and Ellen Thai. I will also do some more exercise. In addition, I will save some money.



There are also some things that I'm planning to do in 2010. I am going to go to Thailand in the summer time. When I'm there, I'm going to meet my friends. I'm also planning to buy some property in Thailand this year. Finally, I'm planning to visit Vietnam or Laos too.



In the long-term future, I would like to do some business in Thailand. I also would like to work when Amy and Ellen are grown up. I would like to go back to Thailand if my husband can work from home. Finally, I would like to travel to different countries.

Posted by Gai's Blog at 8:26 PM
Labels: My future plans

Figure 14. Learner-generated blog post

mina January 27.

Yes I want to teach my kids korean more.

Gai please you will buy beautiful place I want to go there sometimes! ha ha ha!
If you do business definitely will be a success.

sallygao January 27

I think I would like to go Thailand with JP to see your beautiful house. Gai, have you ever think about doing some business here?

miho January 27.

Yes, we are already looking forward going back to our home country... Is it difficult learning Thai reading and writing??

Gai 's Blog January 27.

Mina, If we buy a house in Thailand, I will invite you all.

Sally, I think starting the business in Thailand will be easier for me but not here.

Miho, It not too difficult to learn Thai. But it's difficult when they are get tired after school.

Martha January 27. :

I hope all your wishes come. I think is very important to have a property.

misook January 28.

Thailand has beautiful view I want to go there and If child grown up I want go back to my country as well It looks like people have instinct to return own home.

mina January 28.

In Korea have to pay tax twice a year. It is too much. How about thailand?

If you don't invite us don't worry I will found you in Udonthanil

Figure 15. Comments on the previous blog post

Conclusion

The last decade has seen the widespread use of blogs and microblogs. Educators are also more often using blogs as part of the teaching and learning process. One use is to make teacher-generated content (TGC) available online to students and their peers anytime and anywhere. Another use is to give students more opportunities to share their learner-generated content (LGC) with their peers and with a wider audience. By sharing LGC, students are more motivated and produce work of higher quality. In addition, the

process of publishing and sharing helps develop key 21st century skills in students. Finally, LGC can become valuable learning resources for other students as using them ensures that learning is taking place within students' zone of proximal development (ZPD). However, it's important to ensure that before LGC is published and shared, appropriate quality-control mechanisms have been applied to the creation process. These mechanisms include using TGC to guide students, appropriate assessment, and tracking and supporting learner activity.

This paper has looked at how sharing LGC can be used with different levels of learners and in different learning situations. For example, with beginner-level students in a face-to-face learning environment, the traditional PPP (present/practice/produce) model, with a focus on form, can be enhanced by adding an extra stage to the model, publish. This stage involves using the comment feature of a blog post to allow students to publish and share their work. In a more advanced, fully online class, a more task-based approach can be used. In this approach, students publish and share their work on their own blogs. In both examples, the process of publishing and sharing LGC has followed the key quality-control mechanisms listed, which has resulted in high-quality LGC that has become a valuable learning resource for students.

This paper has hopefully shown that blogs and microblogs can be used to effectively share LGC and enhance learning for different types of students and lessons. However, the sharing of LGC is not just restricted to blogs; other web-based tools such as wikis, portfolios, brainstorming tools, etc., can be used. And while this paper has specifically focused on (free) web-based solutions, traditional enterprise-level learning managements systems are now integrating their own communicative tools such as blogs, wikis and portfolios, thereby making them more appropriate for the sharing of LGC.

About the Author

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Appendix: Software cited

Blackboard Vista <<http://www.blackboard.com>>

Blogger <<http://www.blogger.com>>

Edmodo <<http://edmodo.com>>

Google Scholar <<http://scholar.google.com>>

LinkedIn <<http://www.linkedin.com>>

Live Journal <<http://www.livejournal.com>>

Open Diary <<http://www.opendiary.com>>

Screenr <<http://www.screenr.com>>

Tumblr <<https://www.tumblr.com>>

Vimeo <<http://vimeo.com>>

WordPress <<http://wordpress.com>>

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