

Giving voice to learners: using private blogs to develop self-reflection

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Giving voice to learners: using private blogs to develop self-reflection

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Overview

- Background and context
- What we did – methods of data collection
- The findings from the two institutions
- The analysis – reflection and development
- What next – future research projects and follow up



The Main Messages:

- Development of deeper reflection, and much broader reflective practice
- Development of reflective practitioners
- Sharing of reflections and personal development
- Developing a community of practice for reflection
- Increasingly independent reflections



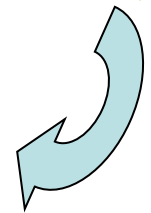
Background

- 1/3 in university and 2/3 in schools on two separate placements
- Sheffield Hallam and Nottingham Trent Universities over the last 18 months in the use of reflective diaries with Education students using a web log (blog).
- Previous research on reflection using public blogs found the openness of blogs limited the reflection that took place inside them (Divintini et al., 2005 & Oti and Clarke, 2007)
- Private blogs for self-reflection on professional development – accessed by lecturers during the year to provide feedback on reflections
- Small action research case study, data collected included blog transcripts, (with permission from trainees and assurance of anonymity), interviews with trainees and questionnaires



So what's a blog then...?

- A blog is a user-generated website where entries are made in journal style and usually displayed in a reverse chronological order.
- **Benefits**
 - Can upload text, images, videos, sound
 - Blog spaces are usually customisable
 - Individualised
 - Can comment
 - Notification of new entries



It's a random name generator, I have found it works really well getting all the class looking in one direction as they are somewhat kept on their toes.



Link

2 comments | Leave a comment

Starter activities

[Dec. 5th, 2007|09:15 am]

Hello,

I was pointed to by a teacher at my placement school, to a folder FULL of starter activities related to DIDA (but could easily be applicable to BTEC and just about anything to). Thought I would share these with you, as I don't know if anyone is like me but I am struggling to keep my starters and plenary's shorter than 10 minutes...this for me then knocks the timing of the lesson out.



I think these may cure it though. I have uploaded them to my own webspace which can be found here:

<http://www.meangasoline.co.uk/starters/>

There are 48 in total I do believe.

I will make them available to download for you all until June time when the course finishes, after which I will take the folder down. All the files added together only equal 8mb so it might be worth downloading them?

Hope you are all well, I will post a full blog entry soon.



Link

Leave a comment



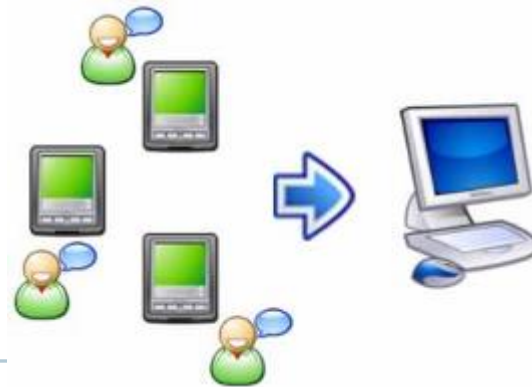
Why do it?

- An alternative to reflective journals/diaries – use of media appropriate for trainees and increase in digital fluency
- Support work based placements
- Tutors can comment on blogs to provide formative feedback
- Collaborative opportunity to use two similar cohorts to compare findings
- Potential for cascading use in schools
- A lens on reflection is provided by windows of opportunity either by or through blogs



Data Collection

- Two sets of blogs collected for each cohort in each institution
- Statistical data on number and dates of entries
- Trainees interviewed at the end of the year
- Analysis based on literature review – thematic approach
- Questionnaire

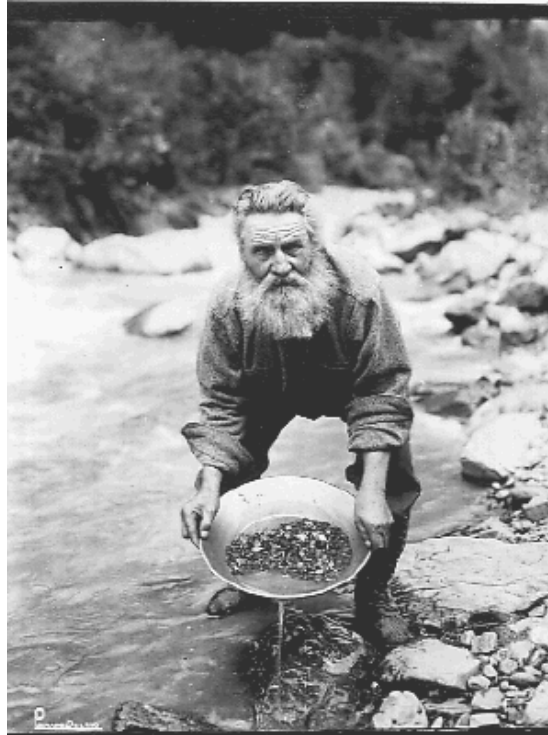


Analysis of data

- Thematic analysis of blog transcripts – (Oti and Clarke 2007)
- Development as a reflective practitioner
- Emerging professional identity as a teacher



Findings – did we strike gold?



Findings



Reflective practice entries variable – from descriptive to truly reflective, and this also improves towards the end of the second placement. Some are very good at this by the end of the course – critical, reflective, analytical and evaluative.

Evidence of development as professionals within transcripts

Builds up through both placements – a definite progression seen



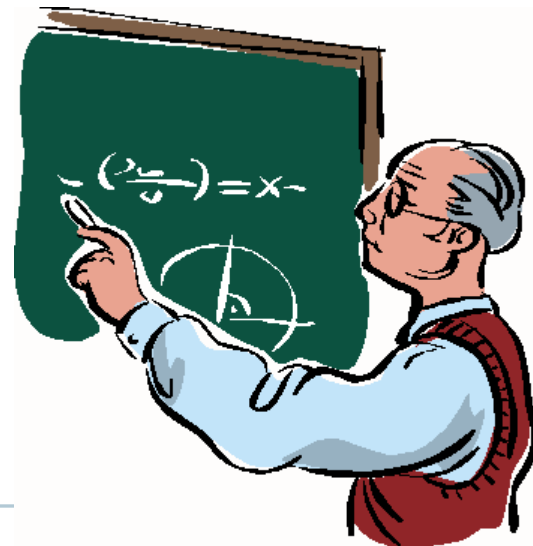
What they said in terms of reflective practice...

- “[...]in recent weeks [I] have been more decisive. I feel that as a result, students are more responsive and more productive.”
- “but I find myself a lot more patient than I use to be!...”
- “I feel I have a better understanding of the goals of each course...”



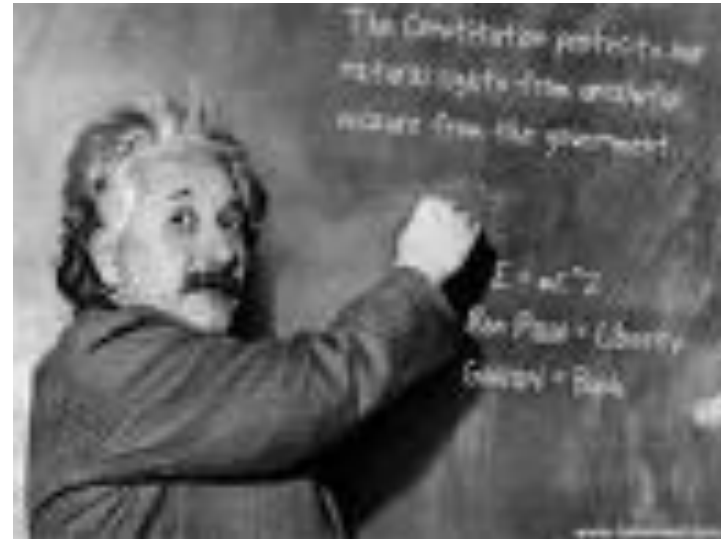
What they said in terms of development as professionals...

- “[...]they address me as ‘miss’”
- “[...]they see me as being in charge as opposed to a teaching assistant”
- “At TP2 students see me as just another teacher”.



And from the interviews...

- The blogs were ok “for that touchy feely rubbish”.
- They gave a “broader view”.
- “Evaluation on the lesson plan was more descriptive and different from the blog because the blog had more on progression over the weeks”.



Overall the Findings

- Very positive from both institutions
- Some issues of double entries
- Private blogs allowed formative feedback to develop better reflection
- Limitations – sample size, ICT level of trainees was already high so no barrier there



Work in Progress: Futures

- Go to second phase and see if the use is cascaded in schools
- Iterative – to inform practice for future cohorts
- Changes to our practice
- Disseminate via seminars and conferences to other PGCEs and similar distance based learning programmes
- Included in M level assessment
- Community blogs – benefits, emoticons, images/photos, support
- Potential for studying the impact of more frequent tutor feedback during a blog



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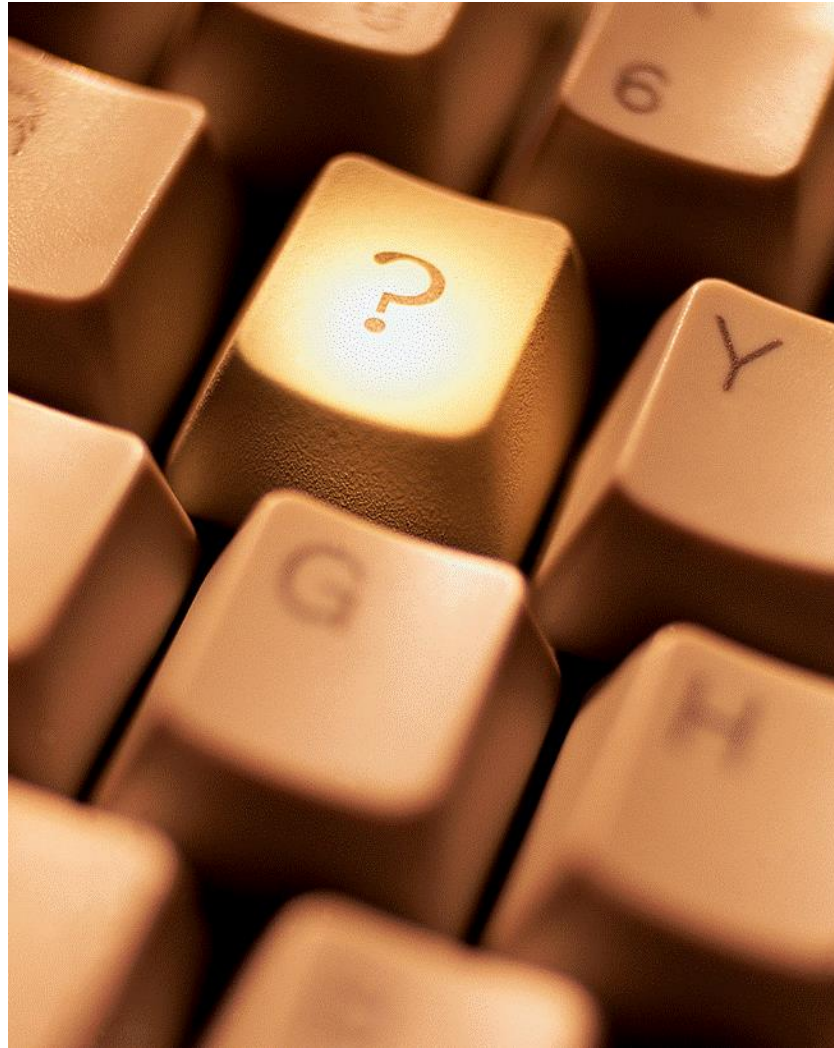


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- Divintini, M., Haugalokken, O., & Morken, E. (2005). *Blog to support learning in the field: lessons learned from a fiasco*. Paper presented at the Fifth IEEE International Conference on Advanced Learning Technologies (ICALT).
- Oti, J., & Clarke, R. (2007). *Dyslexia and online writing: Student teachers experiences of writing about themselves in a public forum*. Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference.



Any Questions?



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