

# Edu-Blogging as Metaphor

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# Overview

Definitions

Reasons for Using Metaphor

Goals of EduBlogging

Need for Typology

Assumptions of Typology

EduBlogger Roles — Who are student bloggers?

Metaphors of EduBlogging — What spaces do we want students to be blogging within?

# Poll: Are you an edu-blogger?

- Do you have your own blog?
- Are you a student blogger?
- Are you a teacher blogger?

# Defining EduBlogs

## **Edeblogs:**

- Learning spaces for creative expression for learners engaged in formal education programming.
- Tools for facilitating reflections, conversations, and dialogues, and encompass both self-talk of private blogs and discussions of public blogs.
- Includes the facilitation of open, shared interactions between individual learners and their instructors, learning companions, guest experts, mentors, and peers.
- Includes support and facilitation of conversations within a formal content management system.

# Defining EduBlogging

**Edu-blogging:** the learning processes used by student bloggers, their instructors, and their audiences while they engage in the act of connective writing to capture ideas, engage in conversations, and share meaning over time with self and others.

# Edu-Blogging as Metaphors

- Provide a means for expressing knowledge and context
- Act as prompts for reconsidering events
- Act as connections, or bridges, to unrelated ideas
- Influences the language used to imagine possibilities
- Metaphors provide “such a rich way to express a message or transfer knowledge and context together” (Arthur Shelley, 2009, blog post).
- "Metaphors are lenses which enable people to rethink and to give coherence to daily events that before seemed incomprehensible or troubling" (Popkevitz, 1984, p. 7).
- “Metaphors matter—the metaphor we use to understand learning influences the language with which we talk about learning, teaching, and education” (Tucker, 2008, blog post).
- Metaphors connect ideas together, and bridges unrelated ideas that previously had no connection before. Burrows (2009)
- Metaphors enable us to imagine something that is not (yet) present, to announce the way the world might be. (Burrows, 2009, blog post).

# Goals of EduBlogging

Providing learners with choices on how to engage self and others within a “participatory culture” (Jenkins, 2006), which offers a sustained, persistent and deliberate process of creative self and group expression and sharing.

Providing learners with a “reflective space”, in which individual learners engage in conversations to try on and share multiple, competing perspectives (Davies and Merchant, 2009).

# Need for EduBlogging Typology

- This typology provides a starting point for discussions about students' blogging expectations, past experiences, behaviours and fears , leading to a reduced number of reluctant, anxious student bloggers (Kerawalla, 2008).
- This typology identifies characteristics, behaviours and expectations of student bloggers, to more effectively meet learning goals.
- This typology considers the viewpoints of both learners and instructors, describing the authentic concerns, fears, and expectations of different types of student bloggers
- This typology draws on examples of excellent edublogging, as well as the actual stories of successful edubloggers



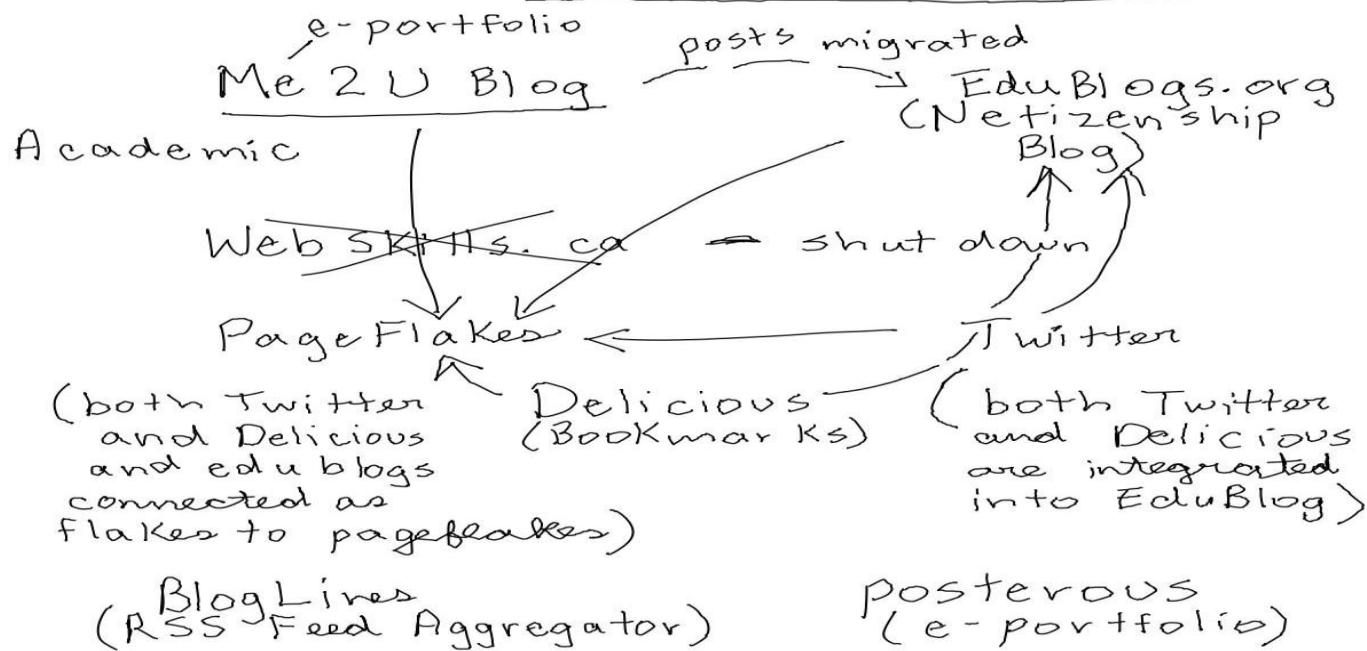
# Assumptions of Typology

Offers learners and instructors choices over blogging spaces that encourage engagement in resource network-building, support network-building, and self-sufficient edublogging

Encourages anxious, reluctant student (and instructor) edubloggers to engage in greater participation with others

Recognition of integral role of informal/formal personal learning networks supported by edublogging

Professional: College Intranet = Instructor Pages



# Assumptions of Typology

- Instructors play a central role for providing support, expert guidance, structure, and feedback to learners within formal edublogging spaces;
- Learners who blog under guidance in a sustained manner develop increasing motivation for blogging more frequently and more extensively;
- Requires student bloggers to engage in long-term guided learning over years, even decades;
- Learners who successfully begin blogging tend to self-identify with at least one role archetype, and shift to more than one as their blogging activity continues;

# The Scribe

Creates “Memoirs”, a collection of introspective thoughts, insights, narratives, reflections, drafts, tentative thoughts, snippets of ideas and “works in progress”

Such learners survey others’ blogs, and engage in private self-reflection.

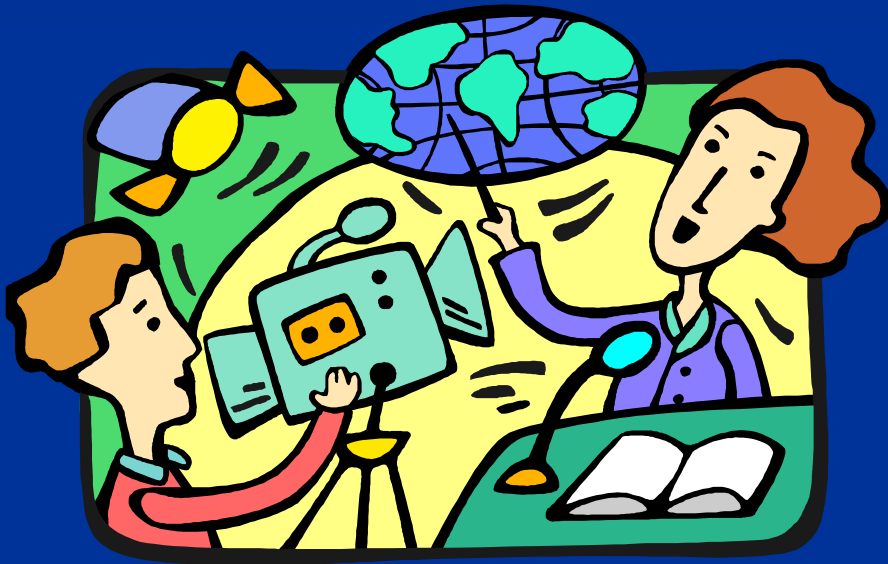
Restrict access to blog only for invited observers, learning partners, and guests; most content is never intended to be made public.

Educator plays support role, might be a mentor/witness if invited; offers examples, resources, guidance, encouragement;





# The Recorder



Learner creates “Snapshots” - reports, commentaries on events scrapbook pages; engages in discussions within talking circles

Content intended for specialized, academic audience; more time-intensive to track and respond to comments, content made public within several overlapping learning communities; use of balanced, critical, formal voice

Instructor participates as support and resource person, stands back and engages as full expert

Instructor participates with apprentices as partner, modeling appropriate language and rules of conduct

Examples: Inge de Waard’s IgnatiaWebs; Helene Blower’s LibraryBytes; Tony Bates’ elearning and distance education resources

# The Elder

- Act as coordinators and curators of “Legacies” or life-stories, shared narratives, and learning events;
  - Learners compose posts that are more comprehensive, polished, includes multiple perspectives, and often uses conciliatory, inclusive language;
  - Instructors/Learners engage others as co-learners and co-contributors of ideas to group of peers;
  - Content intended for public feedback and dialogue;
  - Commitment to reciprocity and shared intergenerational learning
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- Examples: Tony Bates’ elearning and distance education resources; Will Richardson’s WebLogg-ed, Nancy White’s Full Circle Blog; Barbara Ganley’s (The New) bgblogging

# The Performer

- Engages in “Stage Acts” and public performances; includes story-telling
- Content intended for critical readership as well as entertainment
- Learners interested in developing capacity to present ideas clearly and concisely and be able to defend ideas effectively
- Learners interested in developing capacity to distinguish between emotional content and academic discourse;
- Learners might opt to keep personal profiles hidden, but posts are public;
- Examples: Jenifer Jones’ Jentropy, Barbara Ganley’s Digital Explorations



# The Mentor

Content more polished, more embedded links, potential audience other than self, rough drafts, reflections, resource-sharing, both personal profile and posts are accessible to public.

Learner interacts with instructor and small group of fellow student bloggers and others within institution;

Engaged in “Synergies” with others, and reciprocal learning

Extended conversations; dialogue, self-talk

Seeks to develop capacity to participate in and facilitate high-quality formal group discourse

Instructor contributes to controversial discussions, models process, and commits to engagement with other learners in mature discourse

Examples: Konrad Glogowski’s Blog of proximal development; Lilia Efimova’s Mathemagenic; Stanley Fish’s Think Again





# The Town Crier



**Personal blogger:** engaged in process of intense re-examination and review of life-roles, revising and culling of personal information network

**Creates “Commentaries”** - insights, observations on formal, public events, critiques, reviews of talks; articles

**Involved in self-making, reinvention, and seeking transformational (either epochal or transitional) perspective**

**Seeks opportunities to expand and shift one’s perspectives across professional, social and personal boundaries;**

**Mature, experienced, expert, well-respected global leaders whose word carries great weight in academic/professional circles**

**Examples:** Terry Anderson’s Virtual Canuck; Dave Cormier’s Educational Blog;

# Metaphors: Private EduBlogs

- Private Bloggers — seeking voice, building confidence;  
*“Blog as personal witness”*
- Incubator — protective, safe space
- Sanctuary — students’ privacy respected, students can choose when/with whom to share
- Vault — space to store ideas, photos, reflections for safekeeping; students hold own key to keep or destroy or move data

# Metaphors: Autonomous EduBlogs

- Autonomous Bloggers — “blog for themselves”
- SandBox — tentative, half-formed thoughts; works in progress
- Homestead — “cyberturf”, personal space to create, build, decorate, and be proud of as extension of self-identity
- Open Range — space to document personal “way-making” and “path-making” activities; celebrates nomadic blogging, with multiple topics and themes
- Examples: Alan Levine’s CogDogBlog; Stephen Downes’ Half an Hour

# Metaphors: Anonymous EduBlogging

- Anonymous bloggers —
  - Develop capacity to present ideas concisely and effectively, and defend these ideas;
  - Develop capacity to distinguish between emotional content and academic discourse
- Personal profile hidden, use of avatars; posts open to group
- Arena — debates, open discussions
- Stage — performers, shared creative work
- Confessional — cathartic, therapeutic self-disclosure

# Metaphors: Networked EduBlogs

- **Networked Bloggers** — goal-oriented, network-building, e-portfolios for professional, academic goals
- **Learners keep up with issues discussed;**
- **citing sources and filtering/presenting content**
- **“Snapshots” reports, commentaries on events; scrapbook pages; discussions within talking circles**
- **Arena** — exchange of arguments and clarifications in mature discourse
- **Parallel Conversations** — reading, reflecting, responding to others’ ideas while posting own thoughts
- **Examples:** The Learning Circuits Blog, Stanley Fish’s **Think Again**

# Metaphors: Embedded EduBlogs

- Embedded Bloggers
  - Based on reciprocity and commitment to open, respectful sharing;
  - Both personal profile, connections to other networks, and posts are accessible to public;
- Sharing Space - shared narratives; learning events;
- Stage - content intended for public feedback and dialogue
- Confessional - contribute shared reflections on practice, process and experiences;



# Metaphors: Personal EduBlogs

- Personal Bloggers
  - Develops capacity to transform learning conditions to suit own needs, and re-purpose the blog to her own requirements
  - “construct a virtual mirror, with audience of one”
- Legacies and Life-streams –
  - Engaged in intense re-examination and review of life-roles, revising and culling of personal information network
  - act as testaments of an individual’s life work
- Unfolding Spiral Path
  - process of reframing pre-existing self-limiting knowledge and habits which act as barriers to learning.
  - looping, cyclical process of learning/unlearning
- Middle-Space, or “Slow Blogging”
  - Develop capacity to move learners out of comfortable spaces into a holding space, a place to rehearse in safety
  - Requires learners to feel more comfortable moving between the different edublogging spaces

# Conclusion

“Offering learners choices in how they will engage in edublogging with others and self is crucial to fostering a thriving, dynamic participatory culture involving a wide range of learning events: self-making, utilitarian goal-seeking, debates, critical self-reflection, mentoring, role performances, sharing and support, and personal legacies.”



# Resources

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