ENRICHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS VIA BLOGGING ACTIVITIES FOR EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS: A PRELIMINARY STUDY

Haniza Othman
International Islamic University College Selangor
43000 Bangi, Kajang, Selangor, Malaysia
Tel: +60-019-212 1556, +603 8911 7000
E-mail: hanizaothman@kuis.edu.my

Ima Shanaz Wahidin
Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)
Perak Darul Ridzuan
Tel: +60-13-510 0925, +605 374 3512
E-mail: ima90603@perak.uitm.edu.my

Shahrul Ridzuan Arshad
International Islamic University College Selangor
43000 Bangi,Kajang, Selangor, Malaysia
E-mail: shahrulridzuan@kuis.edu.my

Khirulnizam Abd Rahman
International Islamic University College Selangor
E-mail: khirulnizam@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The enormous rapid technology in education landscape to date has pedagogically transformed how teachers and student acquire knowledge. Conventionally, pen and paper were used as a primary aid during classroom lesson where the students were exposed to traditional teaching and learning styles. Nowadays, with the immense advent of technology, both teachers and students are able to retrieve information ubiquitously. Hence, this paper explores the preference of blogging in enriching English language skills among the tertiary students for employability skills. A study has been carried out to investigate the preference of blogging activities among fifty (n=50) respondents. Based on the preliminary finding, blogging activities have evidently encouraged the students to use and practice English language maximally. Recommendations and future impacts are put forth at the end of the paper.

Field of Research: blogging, learning preference, ubiquitous.

1. Introduction

The vast technology in education has transformed language teaching and learning pedagogically. Those days, pen and paper were used by both teachers and students in the classroom setting. At the present time, it seems that students are very passive in expressing their ideas and discussion due to afraid of making mistakes in front of their friends because the lack of vocabulary and mispronunciation. Therefore,
these future workforce are not well equipped with the communicative skills sought by the prospective employers. Hence, the aim of this study is to identify the features of blogs to enhance language mastery for employability skills among the tertiary students.

**Current Scenario**

The issue of poor command of English language among graduates nowadays has been prominent due to the fact that graduates are unable to communicate effectively using English language.

**Components of Employability**

![Problems Faced by Employers in Hiring Fresh Graduates](source)

**Figure 1: Problems Faced by Employers in Hiring Fresh Graduates**

Source: 1. [www.jobstreet.com](http://www.jobstreet.com)
2. The National Graduate Employability Blueprint 2012-2017

Prominent elements identified by employers are poor command of English (55.8%), poor character, attitude or personality (37.4%), asking for unrealistic salary/benefits (33%), mismatch of skills (30.2%), choosy in job/company (27.7%), no demonstrated ability to solve problems (25.9%) and skill knowledge not in-depth enough (23.8%). (The National Graduate Employability Blueprint 2012-2017).

**Past Researches**

Social network has come a long way since 1978, and with all witness its evolution for years to come, forever changing into the sophisticated way people connect with each other. It is the new millennium brings the world closer, (Danah & Nicole et. al., 2010).

A weblog (blog) is a simplified form of web publishing that allows anyone with a computer and internet connection to post content online (Gurzick & Lutters, 2006). A blog is actually a short form of weblog. Blog
are websites or homepages, frequently updated with almost daily new entries in a reversed chronological order consisting of the most recent post and offer many links to related information (Mercado, 2006). For instance, blog can contain commentary or news on a particular topic, such as food, politics, or local news. Unlike websites, blogs are written in an informal style that reflect the interest, view and personality of the bloggers. According to Mercado (2006), blogs usually allow room for readers’ comments, and because they often contain numerous links to other blogs and websites, they each acts as a unit in a dynamic community. Together they form an interconnected whole of the intellectual cyberspace which bloggers called the “blogosphere”. Information flow in the blogosphere has its own way: personal, fast, connected and networked. (Herring et. al., 2004)

The term weblog or blog refers to a type of website, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video, Zhang Di (2009) and Helen and Christian (2005).


**Practice of Blogs in Classroom**

![Figure 1: Interface of Blog](image_url)
Elements of Effective Weblog Practice

The elements proposed by various scholars in Helen and Christian (2005) to perform effective weblog activities in classroom setting are:

i. Non-anonymity.  
   Enable students to publish their entries and also to be responsible for it.

ii. Individualised and personalized feedback.  
   Comments from the blog walkers about one issue will enable situated forum discussion.

   Students are able to self-evaluate themselves vividly.

iv. Active knowledge construction.  
   Students retrieve current information for one specific issue.

v. Self-directed learning.  
   Reflection of each lesson can be made thoroughly.

Table 1: The utility of the Social Network Sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Do not use</th>
<th>Use rarely</th>
<th>Use very often</th>
<th>Use quite often</th>
<th>Use often</th>
<th>This is primary way to use this service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Find some information</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get opinions</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialize</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep up-to-date with friend’s life</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share experience</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancement of writing communication skills</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium of self-presentation</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posting writing assignments</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uploading text, pictures, videos or presentations</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upload quality posts</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 exemplifies the utility of blog. The respondents marked both “find some information” and “entertainment” 33% consecutively. This shows that majority of students prefer to use blog to retrieve information.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

Social network sites are essential for all students to keep in touch with their family and friends and majority of them chose Facebook as medium of communication with others due to the fact that Facebook offers friendly features, free and can surf or browse it ubiquitously. Therefore, it can be summarized that social network sites are the best medium of communication.

Based on the findings, evidently social network is web-based services that allows individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system as supported by Haythornwaite, (2005).

Based on the findings, the researcher concluded that the tertiary students were extremely to utilize blogs in various purposes, the utmost reason is particularly to enhance their English language mastery. In conclusion, the students prefer to utilise blogs in enhancing their English language mastery specifically in reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Findings of this research portrays that the utilisation of blog in education is effective. Evidently, blogging is a practical way for students to express their ideas and thoughts actively to improve their English language learning experience for employability skills.

**References**


Online materials


