



Pestalozzi

Training Resources

Media Literacy (ML) Literary blog-training

by

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The Pestalozzi Programme
Council of Europe Training Programme for education professionals

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Theme: Extending teachers' familiarity with blogs and their consciousness about ways to bridge the gap between students' use of the new media at home and at school

Expected outcome

- to make pre- or in-service teachers more competent in and more comfortable with the use of a web 2.0-application
- to make participants more aware of certain human right issues in this setting
- to connect "media literacy" to the broader notion of "literacy", i.e. to combine blogging with other types of literacy in school subjects such as reading (literature) and writing (book reviews, recommendations, discussions of all kinds - on the blog)
- to make teachers reflect about how they can contribute to bridging the gap between students' use of the media at home and at school (and why it would be good to try to do so).

Target group

Type of training	School level	Subject area
pre- and in-service teacher training	Primary and secondary	Literature, history, languages but also adaptable by teachers of other subjects

Brief description of the unit

The aim of this training session is to make teachers feel more comfortable with using a web 2.0-application such as a blog. The trainer makes the blog an integral part of the training session by combining the media (web 2.0) with other type of literacy work like reading (literature) and writing (comments on books, book reviews, etc.) and thus enhances overall media literacy. In the introductory session the trainer initiates a discussion about how a blogging project may promote critical judgement in the teachers on aspects of social networking. Among other issues, the trainer and the teachers discuss how such a project may be interesting with regard to bridging the gap between home use and school use of media. It is also discussed how or to what extent a similar type of blog project would reflect students' own normal way of communication, their media habits and needs.

After the participants have tried out guided blogging in class, and individual blogging at home, the training session is concluded and evaluated by the teachers with the help of a cooperative poster session.

Methods/techniques used

Presentations, brainstorming, online discussion, cooperative group work, consensus building through creating a poster

Time 4 hours

Activity 1: Introductory session in class	▶ 90 minutes
Activity 2: Teachers do reading and try-out blogging outside class. About 5-10 min/post for the trainer to respond	▶ 60 minutes
Activity 3: Debriefing and evaluation	▶ 90 minutes

Tips for trainers (or teachers):

- It probably raises the number and motivation of the participants if the trainer connects the blogging to an activity that the teachers are doing anyway (questions, discussions etc. about a topic that is relevant in a course, or before an exam), or the task could be made a compulsory part of a course or a longer training event.
- Trainee teachers and teachers would probably participate more easily and more actively if blogging in class is incorporated in the training sessions with computers available for all.

Resources


A novel selected in accordance with the participants' interests	
PCs and a projector	
The text	Appendix 1

Activity 1 Introductory session about blogging



90 minutes

	Notes
<p>▶ General aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ to inform about and discuss with the participants the challenges and possibilities there are in using web 2.0 applications for them and for their (future) students. ➤ to start a process in the participating (pre-service) teachers to raise their awareness of the differences and similarities of the school setting and the home setting of a social network type of medium. <p>▶ Specific aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ to inform (trainee) teachers of the aims and organization of the sessions. ➤ to introduce blogs in general: purpose and technicalities. ➤ to give participants their assignment (what they are supposed to do with the blog at home alone) 	
<p>▶ Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ a PC, projector for the trainer ➤ pre-made blog with post ➤ one PC per two or three participants 	
<p>▶ Practical arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Create the blog, choose a novel appropriate for the participants' needs and interests, and post the starting message well in advance. ➤ Try out PC, projector and blog before showing it to the participants. 	

► Grouping: (whole class) (group work) (pair work) (whole class)**► Instructions/procedure:**

1. With a show of hands, participants answer the following questions:
 - How many of you have already seen/read other people's blogs?
 - How many of you have made comments on or responded to comments on others' blogs?
 - How many of you have your own blogs?
2. Participants exchange information about their first impressions of or experiences with blogs in groups of three and then present some of the most interesting outcomes or discoveries of their discussion to the whole group.
3. The trainer presents the blog to be used by the group with the help of a computer and a projector.
4. The trainer explains the aims and organization of the sessions: in this particular blog-project, the blog will be the sole way of asking questions from the trainer. In addition, in order to be allowed to ask one or more questions, the participants must contribute a comment or raise an issue in connection with the novel.
5. The trainer shows the first post in the blog, setting the stage for the blogging.
6. The trainer explains how participants can respond or make comments and raise questions on the blog.

7. The trainer gives the teachers the following information about the blog and their role in the activity:
 - The blog is found at this url: ... (for an example see: <http://spraakliv.blogspot.com/>)
 - You will have to post a comment to my initial message about the novel
 - Your comment should consist of an interesting observation or a piece of information you want to share with the group about the novel.
 - Then you may ask one or two questions.
 - I will respond by answering your questions and posting a new comment on the blog.
 - After the practice sessions, there will be no other way of asking questions about the novel.
8. In order to gain some practice in posting comments, participants form pairs and brainstorm in pairs. When they have finished, the pairs add their comments to the blog.
9. The trainer shows on the projector how he or she will respond to comments and questions.
10. As part of this introductory session, the trainer initiates a discussion about how a blogging project may promote a critical perspective in students on aspects of social networking. He or she also discusses with the (pre-service) teachers how such a project may be interesting with regard to bridging the gap between home and school use of media. Questions you may want to use for the discussion:
 - To what extent does such a school initiated blogging reflect your own normal way of communication, your media habits and needs?
 - How or to what extent could a similar type of blog project in a primary or secondary class reflect the students' own normal way of communication, their media habits and needs?
 - In what way does such a school setting blog project differ from your private use of the blog or other web 2.0 applications, and in what way is it similar?
11. To close this face-to-face session, the trainer explains what participants will have to do as an assignment at home: read the longer post uploaded by the trainer and respond to the questions (see Appendix 1).

► **Tips to trainers:**

- The starting post may be a picture (see example shown here) or a short quote from the novel and the participants have to guess how the passage continues

[Ett öga rött - innlegg av Ingebjørg](#) ('An Eye Red' – post by Ingebjørg)



► **Debriefing/reflecting:**

- What are some implications if the home and school settings are very different and the school does not address these issues? (for example: socioeconomic background may decide level of media literacy)
- How is a teacher supposed to handle very different levels of knowledge about web 2.0 applications in a class (from no knowledge to better knowledge than the teacher's)?

Evaluation and assessment

The trainer asks participants to write a one-sentence summary of the session and a question about blogging in general on a piece of paper. The trainer collects these and uses them to inform his or her further planning of the online blogging phase and the final debriefing session.

Activity 2 (outside class) The participants try out the blog on an individual basis






60 minutes

	Notes
<p>▶ Specific aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ For the participants to become more familiar with a web 2.0 application for professional use 	
<p>▶ Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ a PC with internet connection at home or in a library or self-access centre 	
<p>▶ Comments:</p> <p>The instructions are given in the previous activity, but the trainer may decide whether the activity should be undertaken under supervision in class or after class on an individual basis. The (pre-service) teachers' make comments on the novel on the blog, and may then post as many questions to the trainer as they please, also on the blog.</p>	

Activity 3 Evaluation of the blogging project



90 minutes

	Notes
<p>► Specific aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ To evaluate the blogging project ➢ To gently push the participating (pre-service) teachers further in their thinking about the various types of media use, at home and in school, and about how schools should deal with the arising human rights issues. 	
<p>► Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ a classroom, preferably with projector and internet, in case of a need for illustrating issues in the discussion 	
<p>► Practical arrangements:</p> <p>  (individual)  (group work)  (whole class) </p>	
<p>► Instructions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The trainer introduces the activity by briefly evaluating the participants' contributions to the blog. 2. Then the blogging-project is evaluated by the participants (individually first). Distribute or project the questions discussed in the introductory session (together with the added new questions): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent does such a school initiated blogging reflect your own normal way of communication, your media habits and needs? Has anything changed in your practice since the introductory session? - How or to what extent could a similar type of blog project in a primary or secondary class reflect the students' own normal way of communication, their media habits and needs? Have you learnt more about this since the introductory session? 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In what way does such a school setting blog project differ from your private use of the blog or other web 2.0 applications, and in what way is it similar? - What are some implications if the home and school settings are very different and the school does not address these issues? (for example: socioeconomic background may decide level of media literacy). Have you developed or received new ideas to help even out the differences between school and home uses of web 2.0 tools? - How is a teacher supposed to handle very different levels of knowledge about web 2.0 applications in a class (from no knowledge to better knowledge than the teacher's)? What have you learnt in this blogging project that may be useful in your practice? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. After some individual reflection, participants share their views in groups of 3 or 4 and create a group poster to illustrate their most important answers and discoveries. (Roles such as time keeper, artist, scribe, and presenter can be given to the group members in each group to make sure everybody has an important responsibility and an equal chance to contribute.) 4. Posters are presented to the whole group in about 5 minutes each, followed by a discussion. 5. The trainer asks the whole group whether everybody's most important points and questions were included in the group presentations. Any remaining issues are discussed and questions answered. 6. Participants fill in a written evaluation form (see ideas under Assessment below). 	
<p>► Tips to trainers (or teachers)/anticipated difficulties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Don't distribute big texts, prefer notes and pictures. ➤ Be there to inspire groups. 	

<p>► Debriefing/reflecting – Follow up activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Explore and make a list of hopes and failures of the educational system; ➤ Human rights as a common base in education; ➤ Compare: traditions – majority beliefs – human rights; ➤ What certain “DOs and DON'Ts”, show respect for diversity in schools? 	
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Evaluation and assessment

	<p>Notes</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This evaluation activity may take the form of a discussion or a written questionnaire, administered electronically or manually, where some of the same but also some other aspects could be dealt with. Select from the ideas below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>‘The used of Web 2.0 tool would not be possible in my classroom’</i> ○ <i>‘Students prefer to keep social networks for the private, playful use and not for learning in school’</i> ○ <i>‘I don’t feel knowledgeable enough to use web 2.0 in my teaching’</i> ○ <i>‘What I like the best is how web 2.0 will change my role in the classroom’</i> ○ <i>‘Teachers using new media in their teaching need to accept to relinquish some of their power’</i> ○ <i>‘I have learnt many new things in this course’</i> ○ <i>‘This course has made me more positive toward new media and it’s benefits for learning.’</i> ○ <i>Etc.</i> 	

References

- **Bueie, Agnete, Eva Michaelsen and Ingebjørg Tonne**, “Challenges in analyses of the interaction between development of literary and digital literacy”, paper presented at the NERA-conference, Trondheim, March 2009. (from a project with three classes of 5th grade students in a Norwegian school – a project which has served as an inspiration for the pre-service teacher blogging project described in this training unit for the Pestalozzi program)
- Mediappro / European Commission 2006, *The Appropriation of New Media by Youth*. Available at <http://www.mediappro.org/publications/finalreport.pdf>
- *Skjeveland, Erik (2009): "Utdanningsdirektoratet – Dynamo eller en klamp om foten?" In Norsk læreren nr 2.*

Appendix 1:

Now we're talking – in writing

In societies of old times where most communication was based on oral speech and dialogue, i.e. where there was little writing and reading, each bit of language use was placed in a situation. Another feature of oral communication then and now is that speech proceeds in time as one thinks of what to say, or it proceeds according to a memorized plan. The speech situation, i.e. the people and objects that are present, the topological features of the room or the natural environment in and around the speaker, affect what is said and how it is said. People and objects may be pointed to as further explication of who or what is meant by the words, gestures may emphasize certain utterances, etc. In the old times, the form of a formal speech was also influenced by the fact that it had to be memorized, often yielding a chronological structure.

Some say (e.g. Eric Havelock in *Preface to Plato*, 1963) that in the historic transition from orality to literacy, a shift which can be observed in Greek culture at the end of the 5th century, there was also a shift in the way of thinking. Writing does not require memorization, a written text does not need the memorizing help that a chronological structure may give. Hence writing is often organized by way of other principles than time, it is often structured by way of dichotomies like pro – contra, or by way of a subordinating structure, like general

point – examples, general point – arguments, etc., all of which are static ways of organizing thoughts, not temporal. Importantly, too, written texts are much less dependent on the situation of the writing act. In fact, writing *requires* that the writer is able to lift the form and the content of the text out of the particular act of writing, so that the text can be understood outside of that particular situation. It requires of the writer to take a step aside and look at the text from the outside, from a potential reader's viewpoint, and to adapt the text accordingly.

The shift from orality to literacy – writing and reading – promoted a distanced, non-situated, static way of thinking. It also promoted a one-way “communication” – corresponding to the monologue in orality – in the way that it is not possible to interrupt the text, i.e. impatient or disagreeing readers can stop reading, but the text is still there, as a whole. And the author of the text does not expect immediate replies (see Skjeveland (2009) for more on these aspects).

Today in a wide variety of writing acts, an immediate reply is exactly what one expects, for example, when emailing, SMS-ing, chatting or participating in other social networking. The texts of such communication may be accompanied by photos, pictures, videos etc, explicating and situating the written text in ways that resemble orality. Obama did it. It worked for him. Now every politician wants to communicate through the new media. But some of these politicians are still stuck in the old literacy way of thinking, i.e. they write non-situated, static monologues on the net. They do not open up and show their situation to the people out there for them to recognize and respond to.

Most young people in the West, on the other hand, are small Obamas in this respect. They use the new media, the social networking applications, more or less all the time. They know how to create a shared situation for text-sender and text-receiver, they know how to make the communication situation dynamic and not static, and they expect, encourage, prepare for and handle responses. Still, the communication consists of a lot of writing. This is then what we call new literacy.

Most young people are like Obama, yes, but not all. This is where teachers and schools come in. The “spreading” from teachers to students of practicing with Web 2.0 applications like the blog is one (small, but feasible) step toward obtaining better media literacy for all, which in turn is a prerequisite for Human Rights # 10 “Freedom of expression.” The problem is that some teachers and some trainee teacher are a bit like the old literacy politicians mentioned above, they are not aware of the differences between old literacy and new literacy. Also they do not know the technicalities of the new media and therefore try to avoid the whole issue.

Questions to think about:

	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How many a project like using the blog or other web 2.0 applications in school somewhat even out the differences in students' use of this kind of media? This variation in experience and use of the new media (viz. Mediappro 2006) is connected to socioeconomic differences in the student population. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Such school initiated web 2.0 projects may therefore be seen as enhancing HR # 10 in underprivileged groups of the student population. What are your thoughts about that? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Also, one must be aware of concrete human rights to be heeded when using web 2.0 applications - in school with the teacher present and at home when the students are left more to themselves. Some such human rights are Article 6 - Right to a fair trial, Article 8 - Right to respect for private and family life, Article 14 - Prohibition of discrimination, Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 - Protection of property. Do you have any ideas how a teacher should approach these issues in a school setting? 	