Chapter 7

Blogging as a Supportive E-Pedagogical Strategy in the Teaching Methodology of Economics

Micheal M. van Wyk
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5536-1362
University of South Africa, South Africa

ABSTRACT

In the past decade, Web 2.0 technologies, such as blogs, Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp, emerged as online tools for teaching and learning. One particular Web 2.0 e-learning tool, blogging, has emerged as a technology-integrated teaching strategy to engage and support students learning in contact, blended, and open distance learning spaces. The purpose of this chapter is to determine to what extent does blogging as an e-pedagogical strategy supporting students in the Teaching Methodology of Economics. A pragmatic approach, an exploratory mixed methods design and purposively sampled postgraduate students (n=209) in Teaching Methodology for Economics were selected. Results have shown that students do visit the blog platform for support daily. Furthermore, blogging as an e-pedagogical strategy supporting students in the Teaching Methodology of Economics showed statistically significant differences using blogging as a supportive e-pedagogical strategy in an open distance-learning context.

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INTRODUCTION

Learning is complex and every student experiences the learning process differently. With reference to Generation Z, lecturers must accommodate these students in the planning of each learning experience as well as the context. An increase in the context of learning spaces has emerged over the past decade, in particular ubiquitous learning spaces. Through these ubiquitous learning spaces, students are afforded learning opportunities to study anywhere and at any time to suit their specific learning needs. Ubiquitous learning has become a “situated learning space” prevalently used in the form of Web 2.0 technologies such as blogs, Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp as online platforms for teaching and learning. According to Van Wyk (2018a) one particular Web 2.0 e-learning tool, “blogagogy” as a ubiquitous pedagogy has been used as a technology-integrated teaching strategy to engage and support students’ learning in an open distance learning context. Van Wyk (2018a) argues that “blogs served as personal social networking but more for educational purposes” to advance the purpose of quality education. In this case, arguments concluded that more support structures for e-pedagogical strategies, in particular blogs as a Web 2.0 technology must be implemented toward lifelong learning for an open distance learning context (Tomas, Lasen, Field, and Skamp, 2015). Furthermore, Van Wyk (2018a) reported in a study that blogs proved to be a useful online tool in the teaching methodology of economics, through collaboration and active engagement of users for the purpose of self-directed learning. On the other hand, drawbacks of insufficient support for students studying at a distance surfaced. The e-News staff letter for the University of South Africa (Unisa) reported that student support is an important function of the institution as a distance learning university (Farrell, 2018). Additionally, there was an increase in voices in favour of more student support toward self-directed learning by using technologies in teaching and learning as modes of delivery. This prompted the researcher to further investigate blogs as a supportive tool in the course. In view of the challenges faced by students in terms of support, this paper provides an outline of what research was conducted to achieve the purpose of the study. Therefore, some questions were raised, namely:

(1) How often do students visit the blog platform for support during the course and why?
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