Chapter 3

Investigating Adolescent Bloggers from the Perspective of Creative Subculture

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the phenomenon of adolescent bloggers’ creativity from adolescent peers’ viewpoints. The participants are five twelve- to eighteen-year-old adolescent bloggers who continue managing their blogs. Online questionnaire and semi-structure interviews have been conducted to get participants’ ratings on their perceptions of creativity about themselves and peers. The results suggest that (1) the definition of creativity among adolescent bloggers is novel, useful, and valuable; (2) creativity can be enhanced from doing learning activities and practicing; and, (3) blog serves as a place where adolescents can present their works and also communicate with peers.

1. INTRODUCTION

Currently numerous studies have focused on the use of Web 2.0 technologies such as blogs in educational settings (Weller, 2007; Kerawalla, Minocha, Kirkup, & Conole, 2009; Chong, 2010). Most of existing Web 2.0 in education researches claim blog as facilitation role in learning environment to enhance students’ learning, or to provide opportunity for learners to discuss or interact with others (Liu & Chang, 2010; Pachler, Daly, Mor, & Mellar, 2010; Petrakou, 2010; Wang, 2009; Richardson, 2006; Wells, 2006; Flatley, 2005; Williams & Jacobs, 2004; Seal & Przasnyski, 2001). In recent years, with the popularity of computer and internet, adolescents are spending much more
time online (Lupac & Sladek, 2008), especially some of them use blog as a tool writing diaries and presenting their thoughts.

The advent of the internet has changed the traditional conditions of personal identity. As the physical interaction detached from face-to-face communicate environment in the online environment, it becomes possible for individuals to interact with others online in the disembodied text approach. Moreover, anonymity makes it possible for individuals to withhold personal information, such as name, gender and residence. The combination of disembodiment and anonymity on the one hand creates a new kind of personal identity production emergence, on the other hand creates a safety place for individuals to express themselves (Bargh, McKenna, & Fitzsimons, 2002; Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin. 2008). Recently, studies related to adolescent identity development shifted from face-to-face situation to the online environments (Derks, Bos, & Grumbkow, 2007; Huffaker & Calvert, 2005; Herring, Schedit, Bonus, & Wright, 2004; Groenvant, 1998). For example, Danet and colleagues focus on online usage of emoticons. Results indicate emoticons play an important role in online communication environment to make up the lack of disembodied effect (Danet, 1998; Danet, Ruedenberg, & Rosenbaum-Tamari, 1998). However, few studies focus on spontaneous bloggers, especially adolescent bloggers, how they present thoughts and creativity on their blogs.

The central purpose of this study is to investigate adolescent bloggers from the perspective of creativity subculture. More specifically, based on the key concerns of Web 2.0, this study was undertaken in order to understand how adolescent bloggers define and aware creativity, and how them evaluate the creativity they and their peers have. This study may lead a better understanding of adolescent subculture from the perspective of creativity, from both aspects of self awareness and peers’ viewpoint.

For these objectives to be achieved, the article is structured as follows. The first section deals with a review of literature, addressing both theoretical and empirical aspects of the role of blogging, adolescent subculture, and creativity; after which research methodology is carried out, with details of a statement of the specific research questions, the participants in the research, and the procedures used. Results are then presented following each of these descriptive sections. Finally, discussion and conclusion are drawn, and suggestions are also made for further research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Blogging and Learning

Web 2.0 communication practices change the attitudes toward issues such as authorship, copyright, knowledge production, and expertise (Dohn, 2009). It is not only a technological revolution, but also a social revolution where knowledge can both be discovered and constructed by everyone (Downes, 2005; Freedman, 2006). Four key concerns of Web 2.0 are: user participation, engagement, sharing, and interaction (O’Reilly, 2005; Dohn, 2009). Users are empowered to edit the web page, which enable them to play the role as both a reader and an editor. With the authority to be an editor, users participating in generating content which they are interested in to express themselves, some of them could possible frame the virtual community of interest (Fisher, 2001); with sharing thoughts and comments online, opinions can be expanded and spread out immediately; with online interaction, sense of belonging can be build up.

Knowledge can be well-organized and maintained through the use of Web 2.0 practices, e.g. blog. With these well-organized blog articles, learners can learn what they interest and engage in the environment. Generally, blog can be easily