

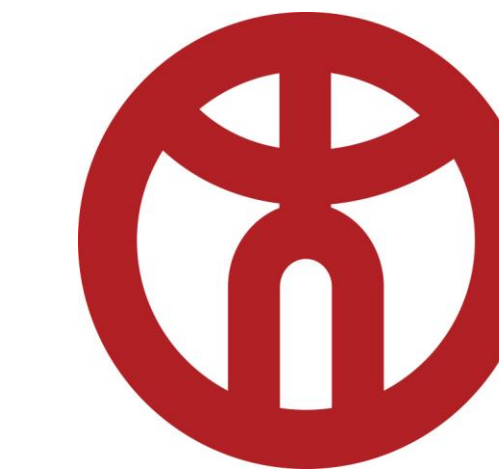
Blended Learning@EdUHK - Stories from the Frontline



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Description/Teaching Philosophy

Blogs are used as an online tool to enhance teaching in my various GE courses. In the GE course “Morality of the Water Margin” (GEA 1008), students form into separate small groups (about 4 students per group) to do reflection and data collection in regard to the characters which they choose from the novel of Water Margin. Each group writes a post on their blogs on a weekly basis for a period of 5 weeks, and they give one or two comments per week on the blogs of their classmates during this period. Here are a sample of blogs created by students in recent years:

2016 S2 Brain Science and the Ethics of Life and Death

Abortion 1: <http://geh2020group1.blogspot.hk/>
Abortion 2: <http://geh2020a2.blogspot.hk/>
Abortion 3: <http://geh2020a3.blogspot.hk/>
Euthanasia 1: <http://geh2020euthanasiagroup4.blogspot.hk/>
Euthanasia 2: <http://geh2020group4.blogspot.hk/>
Euthanasia 3: <http://ged2020e3.blogspot.hk/>
Animal 1: geh2020group2.blogspot.com
Animal 2: <http://geh2020group6.blogspot.hk/>
Animal 3: <http://geh2020group9.blogspot.hk/>
Animal 4: <http://animalq4.blogspot.hk>

2016 S2 Water Margin

1. 水滸傳與社會: <http://s1113100.blogspot.hk/>
2. 林冲: <http://shuihuzhuan1.blogspot.hk/>
3. 盧俊義: <http://gelujunyi.blogspot.hk/>
4. 李逵: <http://s1113545.blogspot.hk/>
5. 楊志: <http://geayeungzi.blogspot.hk/>
6. 史進: <http://s1113239.blogspot.hk/>
7. 吳用: <http://geg100201cwuyong.blogspot.hk/>
8. 燕青: <http://lawliliu.blogspot.hk/>

Blogs are worth using in many kinds of teaching. They will give students a site to consolidate their learning, and an opportunity to voice out views which some shy students may be reluctant to do in a traditional classroom environment.

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

We shall note that

- Teaching with blogs is a time consuming approach. Teachers and lecturers alike will need the assistance of student helpers or research assistants to regulate the traffic in the comments, to count students' rate of participation, and to give encouraging remarks in the right place when students are engaging with one another in a blog discussion.
- Inevitably, many students may also pay lip service to the blogs. They may only leave comments at the deadline; they may not write more than they are asked to do. They may say as little as possible, etc.
- To encourage a greater participation rate from students, teachers or lecturers need to give students an opportunity to talk about their work in a formal environment (such as a brief summary).
- Teachers should make reference to the blogs whenever possible in their ordinary teaching – that social recognition will be a different kind of reward beyond the mere giving of a grade.

Sample Activities and Artefacts

In GED 2020 Brain Science and the Ethics of Life and Death; students form into small groups (4-5 students per group) to present different topics of applied ethics. They are expected to do a mini-research in their chosen area, using blogs to write meaningful comments on the blog posts of other groups. Here are a sample of blogs created by students in recent years.

2014 S2 Water Margin

1. 林冲: <http://gea1008lamchun.blogspot.hk/>
2. 時遷: <http://shijinofwatermargin.blogspot.hk/>
3. 李逵: <http://likuigea1008.blogspot.hk/>
4. 楊志: <http://longshun218.blog.com/>
5. 戴宗: <http://taichungge1002.blogspot.hk/>

2015 S2 Brain Science and the Ethics of Life and Death

Abortion 1A: <http://geh2020abortionone.blogspot.hk/>
Abortion 1B: <http://geh2020abortion1.blogspot.hk/>
Abortion 2: <http://geh2020abortion2.blogspot.hk/>
Abortion 3: <http://abortion3.blogspot.hk/>
Euthanasia 1: <http://geh2020euthanasia1.blogspot.hk/>
Euthanasia 2: <http://2015euthanasia2.blogspot.hk/>
Euthanasia 3: <http://gedeuthanasia3.blogspot.hk/>
Animal 1: <http://geh2020animal1.blogspot.hk/>
Animal 2: <http://geh2020gp6.blogspot.hk/>
Animal 3: <http://geh2020animal3.blogspot.hk/>

Effectiveness and Lessons Learnt

Generally speaking, the better blogs are written by the students themselves. They record students' own path of learning and will help students prepare for the presentation, receive feedbacks, and write individual essays.

If the lecturer can remind students of his scheme of evaluation of blogs, some students will have the initiative to write comments themselves in each lesson.

In my earlier experience, when I have not been explicit in encouraging students to write their own views, students will generally tend to copy and paste materials from the Internet. This kind of work product allows a smaller scope for other students to participate and discuss in the commenting part of the blogs' posts.