

Using blogs to enhance student learning

Information sheet for parents



The DET blogging tool - blogED

As part of its ongoing commitment to enhanced student learning outcomes through the use of technology the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) has developed a blogging tool known as blogED. BlogED was developed in accordance with DET policies and guidelines and has incorporated feedback from students, teachers and parents.

Students access blogED through their DET student portal. When using the DET blog students are able to:

- use the same login they use for email and Internet browsing
- experience the same filters that are currently applied to the use of email and Internet browsing
- be guided by current permission forms regarding confidentiality and privacy
- be protected by DET standards of acceptable use of online communications.

What is a blog?

A blog (an abbreviation of weblog) is a personal website, organised like a diary or journal, which shows the author's most

recent additions first. It enables the author to write regular entries expressing their view of events.

Depending on the permission levels set for a blog, the readers (audience) of the blog are able to 'post' to a blog or 'comment' on a post. For some blogED types moderation is mandatory.

What is an educational blog?

An educational blog is an online journal where a student writes (makes posts) about their learning, which may be commented on by other students, the teacher or a wider audience as approved by the teacher.

Students can add, link to or embed copyright compliant media such as photographs and videos to their blogs. DET blogs can only be set up by teachers. Teachers are able to moderate posts and comments on the blog.

Why use blogs in education?

Some of the main benefits of using blogs for teaching and learning are:

Engagement - students are familiar with online communication and are motivated to learn with online tools.

Audience - feedback adds authenticity to the learning activity. Students and teachers across all subject areas can find an appropriate and wider audience for their blogs. This may

include at their choice, other students in the class or school, parents, students from other schools, and experts in the field from around the world.

Responsibility for learning – students are able to articulate their own learning in a blog and to strengthen a sense of ownership of the contents.

Learning communities - students and teachers can connect through their blogs, so they can read and comment on one another's understandings and opinions, and answer one another's questions, developing a network of support for learning.

Literacy skills - writing to communicate ideas, and integrating images and other media is integral to blogging.

Digital literacy - blogging combines technical and communication skills, which are entry level skills for most careers.

Critical literacy - students learn to evaluate and assess the credibility of what they read online, especially in other blogs.

Using a blog as a learning tool also makes it possible for parents to read and comment on their child's work (if the blog is made public). Blogs can allow parents to gain a deeper understanding of the explicit teaching and learning in which their child is engaged.

More information on using blogs in education

A-Z of technology - Blogs, "CLICK, a technology guide for parents" NSW DET

http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/news/technology/aztechnology/b_tech.php

Blogs - keeping parents posted, "CLICK, a technology guide for parents" NSW DET

<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/news/technology/usingtechnology/yr2009/blogs.php>

Why Use Blogs In Education, by Stephen Downes

<http://halfanhour.blogspot.com/2009/04/blogs-in-education.html>