

Building a Group Blog for Learning

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Objective

To understand the benefits of using *group blogs* for learning

The Study

- Students experiences with group blogging over 3 months in the *National Interschool Blogging Championship 2005*.
- The analysis is based on students' responses to the survey questions:
 1. How is group blogging different from blogging in personal blogs?
 2. Does having themes helped in group blogging?
- 115 student responded



The image is a screenshot of a web banner for the Campus Moblog website. The banner has a corkboard background. At the top left is the 'Campus MOBLOG' logo. To its right is a navigation bar with yellow buttons for 'Home', 'About', 'Campus Bloggers', 'Group Blogging', 'Help', and 'Contact Us'. In the top right corner, there are links for 'Login' and 'Register Now'. The main content area has a dark red background with yellow text for the event title and dates, and white text for the duration. A vertical sidebar on the left contains the text 'GROUP BLOG' in white. At the bottom, the website URL is displayed in yellow.

Campus MOBLOG

Home About Campus Bloggers Group Blogging Help Contact Us

Login | Register Now

GROUP BLOG

National Interschool Blogging Championship (NIBC)

1 June to 31 August 2005

<http://www.campusmoblog.com.sg/>

Objective of NIBC

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To raise the awareness of
blogging as an emerging
technology to both
students and teachers

Theme

Voices of Singapore Teenagers

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**Preliminary
Round**

Sub-Theme

**My Teenage Years:
Pet Peeves and
Inspirations**

**Final
Round**

Sub-Theme

**Technology
and me**

URL: <http://campusmoblog.com.sg/>

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The screenshot shows the 'Results of Interschool Blogging Championship 2005' page on the Campus Moblog website. The browser window is Microsoft Internet Explorer. The website has a corkboard-themed header with navigation links: Home, About, Campus Bloggers, Group Blogging (circled in orange), Help, and Contact Us. The main content area is titled 'Results of the Interschool Blogging Championship 2005' and lists winners under two categories: 'Sec Sch Winners' and 'JC Winner'. The 'Sec Sch Winners' list includes Nanyang Girls High School as the champion, Raffles Girls' Secondary School as the 1st runner up, Hougang Secondary School as the 2nd runner up, and Canberra Secondary School and Pasir Ris Secondary School as consolation winners. The 'JC Winner' list includes Victoria JC. A sidebar on the left contains a search bar, a student login section, and a link to send internet SMS. The footer mentions 'Powered by SingTel'.

Campus MOBLOG

No. of Members : 12894
No. of Groups : 857
Find like-minded individuals like yourself.

☐ mobloggers ☐ Groups

Student Login Here

Mobile No.


Password

[Need your Password?](#)


Send Internet SMS
Powered by SingTel.

Results of the Interschool Blogging Championship 2005

Sec Sch Winners

-  **Sec School Champion**
[Nanyang Girls High School](#)
-  **Sec School 1st Runner Up**
[Raffles Girls' Secondary School](#)
-  **Sec School 2nd Runner Up**
[Hougang Secondary School](#)
-  **Consolation**
[Canberra Secondary School](#)
-  **Consolation**
[Pasir Ris Secondary School](#)

JC Winner

-  **Victoria JC**

Most Popular Sch Blogs

-  **Victoria JC**
-  **Yishun Town Secondary School**

Results

(1) How is group blogging different from blogging in personal blogs?

- ***Students' perspective of group blog***
- ***Blogging in a community***
- ***A ready audience***
- ***Interacting with audience***
- ***Responsibilities***
- ***Challenges***

Students' perspective of group blog

*A space which
"allows different
people to post
on the same site"*

*"Like a book
being written by
many people"
and the ideas
"just flow"*

*"More like a
forum than
a blog"*

*"Sort of like a
chat room with
the posts"*

*Gives a feeling
of "community,
almost like
fellowship"*

*There is "an
objective to
achieve".*

Blogging in a community

Group blog is able to create an environment where members

- *find a sense of belonging*
- *can share views together, learn and support each other*
- *find many opinions and views*

In my personal blog I did not learn anything since there was only my postings.

Bloggging in a community

Group blog is able to create an environment where members

- *help to maintain the blog*
- *work together as a group not individually*
- *blog on issues pertaining to the group and less on personal issues*
- *learn to understand how others feel*

Group blog helps to build up and enhance their relationship as they blog together.

A ready audience

... A pool of readers

... A pool of writers

- *Motivation to write – “sure a lot of people to read”*
- *Support of readers with similar views – agreement & encouragement*
- *Enjoyable to read – “different opinions & views”*

Posting with
different view are
more complicated
to read



Interacting with audience

- *Opportunities to interact with others*
- *More interactions and more views than in personal blogs*
- *Wider perceptions of views – provide ideas to blog*
- *Comments on postings*

If we do not agree on certain topics, we're able to post out point of view onto similar blog.



Responsibilities .. Understands

- *the blog belongs to the group*
- *they have a shared responsibility*
- *the importance of respecting and be sensitive to others*
- *they want to present a good image of self*
 - ⇒ *think first before blogging*

Challenges

- Time factor
 - too many posts to read
 - difficult to find time to read
- Stagnation due to themes
 - run out of ideas for discussion
 - interest is lost
- Constraints of ideas
 - restricts freedom

Time
Consuming

However, others find
there are “more
topics to chat about”

Results

(2) Does having themes help in group blogging?

- ***Defining theme for blogging is helpful (58%)***
- ***Themes restricted their thoughts for blogging (22%)***
- ***Themes are both helpful as well as restrictive (23%)***

Themes helped students to

- suggest topics to blog.
- generate ideas to post.
- have a head start on what to blog.
- write in depth the details about the topic.
- research on the topics.
- post ideas to the different topics.
- categorise and organise the entries.
- read and follow the ideas through the posts.
- search for the topics.
- have a purpose to work towards.

Themes restrict students because

- they want to blog on topics of personal interest.
- they need to think whether an idea was relevant before posting.
- it limits creativity when they have to write within the theme.
- there were not enough topics to allow exploration of ideas.
- it controls their thoughts and comments.

Ideas for Themes

- provide a theme with a wider scope.
- avoid theme which is too specific.
- have a theme which can enable discussion to sustain.
- have more than one theme at a time.
- allow students to blog on topics of their choice.

Benefits of Group Blog for learning

- A platform for formation of learning community
- A platform with a ready audience for collaborative learning
- A platform that encourage sensitivity to others

Practical considerations

- More time is needed for reading and interacting
- Allow negotiation and interpretation of main theme
- Monitoring of interest level

Conclusion

Group blog has the potential to become a 21st century tool that moves both teachers and students into learning for the 21st century.

Q & A

This set of slides and the paper can be downloaded via <http://eduBlog.NET>

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Thank you

