

## **Fostering blogging communities for learning: case studies**

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#### **General Introduction**

Edublogs—blogs in educational settings—have increasingly gained a foothold in educational institutions across many countries. This is in part due to its inherent appeal to our “information-age” students who enjoy Internet connectivity and interactivity. In fact, the growth of online school participation involving various ICT-enabled forms of communication and collaboration has been described by one educator—Jim Hirsch—as “explosive” (Hirsch, 2005), and he is not alone in calling for educators to adopt these learning tools that are more in line with the learning preferences of the modern digital-age students. In Singapore, following the mandate from the then Prime Minister Mr Goh Chok Tong that “[o]ur schools must use more IT in teaching and learning”(Goh, 1996), the Ministry of Education (Singapore) launched a masterplan for the use of IT in schools with the key objective of using IT “to help equip our young with learning skills, creative thinking skills and communication skills” (Ministry of Education 1997). Subsequently, Masterplan II for IT in Education (Ministry of Education, 2002) was developed to further leverage technology to enhance teaching and learning.

Recognising the pedagogical potential of blogging within this educational context and landscape, this symposium brings together three papers on the use of edublogging in Singapore.

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## **Building a group blog for learning**

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**Abstract:** This paper aims to explore the potential of using group-written blogs (“group blogs”) for learning. Learning points are drawn from the National Interschool Blogging Championship organised in 2005 to raise the awareness of blogging as an emerging technology to both students and teachers in Singapore. We discuss from the students' perspective their motivations to blog and how blogging can benefit them. This paper also highlights the challenges faced and provides some suggestions when building a group blog for learning.

**Keywords:** group blog, edublog, learning community, blogging, education

### **Introduction**

This paper presents the qualitative analysis of group blogging in which the aim is to understand the benefits of using group blogs for learning. The report is based on a study of students' survey responses after their experience with group blogging over 3 months in a national interschool blogging competition. The analysis is based on their responses to the questions: (1) How is group blogging different from blogging in personal blogging? (2) Does having themes helped in group blogging? We analysed students' perspective of group blog, the benefits, the motivations, the challenges faced, and the effects of themes on group blogs. The discussion focuses on the benefits of group blog for learning and practical considerations for implementations.

### **Related Works**

Weller, Pegler and Mason (2005) identified three primary uses of blogs in education, namely group blog, academics keeping blogs and students using blogs. He explained that in group blog, “an online community can be established, where members post articles of interest [around specific subject areas] and discussion arises around these” (p.63). This is “one example of a community of practice, as many of the participants are the recognised experts in the field, and students get to partake in a legitimate peripheral form of participation in that community.” Academics blogs allow the immediate publication of academic writings on the web for dialogue and debate with other academics; students can employ blogs for pedagogical benefits when they use blogs as a personal journal or portfolio to demonstrate their thoughts, to engage in reflections or discussions on a subject area. In the later section,

we examine students' perspective of group blog and suggest how blogging within subject areas can be beneficial for learning.

Nardi, Schinao and Gumbrecht (2004) mentioned "small-group blogs with multiple authors collaborating on content" (p.9) and suggested "educational and work project blogs" could "benefit from features allowing one to identify and sort posts by contributor and topic". Our study elaborates on the benefits of collaboration and the importance of organisation of posts within a group blog.

In their study on the use of blogs as learning spaces, Williams and Jacobs (2004) found that "blog increased the level of meaningful intellectual exchange between students" (p.8) in, other words, blog increased student interactivity. At the same time, blogs appears to have the potential to "provide students with a high level of autonomy while simultaneously providing opportunity for greater interaction with peers" (p.12). Our study looks into how the increased number of audience in a group blog can benefit the interaction and motivation within the blog.

### **Methodology**

This study used a qualitative approach to address the central research question: What are the benefits of using group blog for learning? To explore the potential of blogging for learning in a group blog, we obtain the learning points from a national interschool blogging competition.

#### ***National Interschool Blogging Championship (NIBC)***

The NIBC competition was jointly-organised by the Ministry of Education (Singapore) and local communications company the SingTel Group. The main objective of the competition was to raise the awareness of blogging as an emerging technology to both students and teachers. Schools are invited to join the competition, and student leaders were chosen by the schools to lead their peers in the blogging process.

To set a focus for the competition, the students were blogging on the themes "Pet peeves and inspirations" and "Technology and me" that were pre-defined. A blogging platform<sup>1</sup> was made available to each participating school, and students in the schools were encouraged to sign up for free accounts to join in the blogging. Student leaders act as administrators for the blog and they are allowed to customise their blog titles and colour schemes.

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<sup>1</sup> The blogging platform is available at <http://campusmoblog.com.sg>

Throughout the 3-months duration of the competition, student leaders in respective schools led other students to blog on topics which they can freely define based on the themes set for the competition. Students' participation can either be blogging new posts or posting comments to posts blogged by their peers.

The schools competed in two categories, namely the secondary schools category and the junior colleges category. Towards the end of the competition, students are allowed to cast votes to select the "Most popular blog" for each category. Judging by a panel was carried out on all the participating blogs to choose the very good blogs. The blogs were judged based on criteria which included perspectives and depth of thinking in posts, organisation, use of multimedia to enhance meaning etc. These judging criteria were made known to students at the start of the competition. Top prizes were awarded to schools that had maintained content-rich blogs.

At the end of the competition, a survey was conducted where 115 students responded (N=115). There are 28 questions in the survey; classified into 2 main categories, the questions sought to find out more about (1) the organisation of the competition (2) what the students think about the blogging experience based on the competition.

To answer the research question, a qualitative analysis of the students' feedback to two of the survey questions was carried out:

- (1) How is group blogging different from blogging in personal blog?
- (2) Does having themes helped in group blogging?

## **Results**

In this section, we organise the discussion according to the survey questions. First, let's begin by looking at the first question: "How is group blogging different from blogging in personal blog?"

### ***How is group blogging different from blogging in personal blog?***

We examined the main themes that arose from the students' responses to the first survey question.

#### ***1. Students' perspective of group blog***

The students perceive a group blog as a space which "allows different people to post on the same site". As they read through the postings, the experience is "like a book being written by many people" and the ideas "just flow". Some students view it as "more like a forum than a blog" or "sort of like a chat room with the posts" as there

are many members communicating with each other in the same space. At the same time, it gives them a feeling of “community, almost like fellowship”. They understand that in a group blog, there is “an objective to achieve” and their discussion would surround the topic of interest or subject area (e.g. theme).

## **2. *Blogging in a community***

Group blog helps to create in students “a sense of belonging” like in “a class blog”. They felt that they belonged to a community within the environment where they “can share views together”, learn and support each other. As one student puts it, “We share our opinion in group blogging and learn from each other compared to my personal blogging, which I did not learn anything since there was only my postings. I enjoyed learning in group blogging, it tells me many other opinions not just one-sided view.” The members can support each other, for example they believe that the members will “cover each other's backs in times of need”.

If a blog belongs to a group, all the members can help to maintain it. As such, it does not depend on “just one person to keep it 'alive'” and it can be “very frequently updated”. The students understand that a blog has to be updated regularly to keep its momentum and to sustain it for people to visit and read. They know that it is about “GRP [group] work, not some individual work!”

In contrast to a personal blog, in a group blog, the students focus less on themselves and more on others. The discussions in the entries are usually “addressed to people in the group” i.e. they “blog more about issues that pertain to the group at large” and “less [on] personal issues”. They think of it as “a place where [they] congregate among "ourselves" and where it “enables [them] to know how others feel”. They can “catch up with one another, keep in constant contact and are able to be a form of a listening ear or just being there for a friend in need.”

The notion of mutual understanding among the group members can also be observed. One student mentioned “you can convey a message that would concern this particular group only and they [the group at large] wouldn't be annoyed about receiving it”. They feel that their group members would understand them even if they are not polite with their messages. They can “share with each other what's been going on in [their] lives” and “how [they] feel or the problems [they] might have and the rest in the group [would] respond.” This helps to build up and “enhance [their] relationship as [they] work together”, they are also comfortable talking about issues (personal or otherwise) together.

### **3. *A ready audience***

There is always a pool of readers in a group blog, which are the members of the group. Hence, students are motivated to write because they know there is an audience to read their postings. They “enjoy posting for an audience” knowing “there will sure be a lot of people” to read their postings. They realised the benefit of “more participants” means that it comes with “more opinions” and the members “can have different views”. At the same time, they can read “the entries of fellow group-mates”.

The audience in the group blog often comes from varied background and possess very different learning behaviours. Some members may have had similar views while others may differ in their opinion on the issues discussed. Members with similar views respond to these postings with agreement, encouragement and support which can motivate the authors of the posts. Students enjoy “reading the entries of fellow group-mates with similar interest” and they appreciate members who “share ... something in common that put [them] together”.

Members in the group can also contribute different or alternative views in their entries. As a result, there is a collection of “different views” on the same topics. The students find it “enjoyable to read the different styles and content” of the postings to the topic and are amazed that they are “able to see different views of different people in a single blog!” Some students find it “fun” reading “about many different happenings on the same page, sometimes it can be like a conversation of sorts when different bloggers blog about the same issue”. One student mentioned that postings with different views are “more complicated” to read.

### **4. *Interacting with audience***

Group blogs provide opportunities for students to “interact with others, and know more friends”. In fact, students feel that there are “more interaction” and “more views” present in group blog than in personal blog. The students are able to read a variety of opinions which can help them “widen [their] perceptions of things”. For the novice members, this can be a motivation for them to blog as it “gives [them] ideas on what to blog”.

Group blogs not only allow one to read other people's postings but it also gives the members “an opportunity to comment” on the posting. The comments can be an agreement or disagreement to the authors' posts. One student mentioned, “If we do not agree to his/her stand on certain topic, we're able to post our point of view onto the similar blog.” They can “reply to one another in their postings” too.

### **5. Responsibilities**

The students find that they “tend to have a more united spirit”. Unlike in a personal blog, they feel that they “owe it to the people you're blogging with to take care to stay either on topic or, at least, [be] civil. Hence, you can't just go nuts and post what you like, as you like”. The blog belongs to the community and the members have a shared responsibility. One student mentioned “this blog does not belong to me only. So I have to discuss and ask for opinions before every change I made”.

There appears to be an element of peer pressure and responsibility when students blog in group blogs. Students understand the importance of being sensitive to others and respecting others, thus they would be more conservative in their blogs. In addition, knowing that others are viewing their post, students would want to present a good image of themselves as they blog. This requires them to think before they blog. Most students find this pressure a “sort of motivation to post because you don't want to disappoint the people in [their] group”. At the same time, they try to be careful in their expressions. One student expressed it as “I have to take care of my languages” in group blog. In comparison with personal blog, the student expressed the constrain as “In my personal blog I run wild with my views jutting all over the place but with a group blog, I'll take a bit more time to organise my thoughts, write in a more acceptable manner and try very hard to write about topics that would not only interest fellow members of the blog but motivate them to air their own views on their own blog entries.”

### **6. Challenges**

Some of the challenges faced by members of the group blog are (1) time factor (2) stagnation due to existence of themes (3) constraint of ideas. Time is required if one wishes to read all the postings. As one student puts it, “One [disadvantage] about group blogging is that if there are too many posts at the same time, it's hard to find time to read them well”. This is generally noted when technologies are introduced to students, “they were enjoyable but time consuming” (Weller, Pegler & Mason, 2005).

In group blogs, there is usually a theme or specific areas for discussion. However, sometimes the students may run out of ideas for discussion. This is noted in, “Group blogging usually stagnates after a while, as interest is usually lost”. The topics defined by leaders of the group may also restrict the freedom of some other students to write what they want, “Group blogging is a lot more restrained in my opinion”. (This concern is addressed further in the later section on “Themes”). While some students find the theme restricting their thoughts to blog, others find that there are many open

possibilities / opportunities like “In group blogging, they have more topics to chat about”.

### ***Does having themes helped in group blogging?***

The students’ responses to the question, “Does having themes help in group blogging?” are analysed. From the responds of 114 students, 58% (N=66) of the students found that defining themes for blogging is helpful, 19% (N=22) found that the themes restricted their blogging thoughts, and 23% (N=26) of the students found that the themes are both helpful as well as restrictive. We shall elaborate on these opinions in the following sections.

#### ***1. Themes are helpful to blogging***

The students found the competition themes helped them to:

suggest topics to blog.
generate ideas to post.
have a head start on what to blog.
write in depth 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.

The themes help the students to suggest topics to blog and guide them to generate ideas for blogging. At the same time it provides opportunities for students to have a “head start” on what to blog, this also prevents students to get lost in the blogging process. With a topic to focus on, the students can describe the ideas in more depth after they research on it.

The “topics” feature in the blogging platform helps the students to organise their entries into the different categories. This enables the students to read and follow the ideas of the different posts continuously under each topic. At the same time, the search for any topics and ideas was made easier. Most important of all, the students know the purpose of posting to the blog as there is a theme to focus on.

#### ***2. Themes are restrictive to blogging***

The students found the competition themes restrict them because:

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

When the students find the themes restricting their thoughts, it was because they can blog on any topics in their personal blog without feeling restricted. As one student puts it, “they still see blogs as a form of online diary where [they] can ramble randomly” and “distress themselves”. These students are unable to distinguish the difference between group blogs and personal blogs.

In group blogs, students had to put in effort to think on the relevance of ideas before they would post it, this appears to limit their creativity to write. Some found that the topics defined by their peers were limiting. This did not allow them to explore their ideas fully and their thoughts on what they could blog and comments were controlled by it.

### 3. *Suggestions on implementation of themes*

Some students feel that there is a need to have a theme but the theme also causes restriction on what they can blog on. These students suggested some ideas for improving the theme:

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.

Themes are like “a double-edged sword, posing both an area of focus, yet limiting creativity”. The students prefer to have a theme which allows a wider scope for discussion, in order words, a theme which enables them to generate topics and ideas. Such themes are usually not too specific or the students already must have some basic knowledge to help them to have initial triggers for thinking and researching.

## Discussions

Based on the above analysis of students’ response, it may indicate trends that may be observed in group blogs in general. The students perceive group blogs as a learning space where members communicate within the same space to discuss topics of interest. The

members discuss like in a forum and at the same time, they are able to read it like a book written by different authors. From the above learning points, we can now address our research question on “What are the benefits of using group blog for learning?”

### ***Benefits of using group blog for learning***

#### ***1. A platform for formation of learning community***

Group blogs can be an effective platform for discussion and exchanging of ideas. The present findings suggest the students are able to share their views, opinions and learn from each other as they discuss and comment within the same space. They form a community within the environment that supports each other. At the same time, the members collaborate with each other to maintain the blog with the knowledge that group effort is required. Their discussions would be more focused because of the presence of a theme,

#### ***2. A platform with a ready audience for collaborative learning***

A ready audience in group blog is a motivation for students to write because other members exist to read their postings. At the same time, the members contribute their views and opinions; these can be supporting views or alternative views. The variety of opinions can provide the students with a wide range of perspective for their considerations. Another motivation in group blogs is the interactivity with the audience. It provides opportunities for members not only to contribute their own ideas but to read and comment on the ideas of others.

#### ***3. A platform that encourage sensitivity to others***

There is an element of responsibility or peer pressure present in group blogging. The members understand the importance of being sensitive to the feelings of others. They need to think before they post their comments, e.g. they would take care of their language.

### ***Practical considerations for implementation***

#### ***1. More time is needed for reading and interacting***

Students enjoy reading posts and interacting in the group blogs. However, time is needed to read through the posts by different contributors. Even more time is needed if the student intends to blog a post or to leave a comment in reply. In a classroom context, where students are divided into multiple groups, inter-group blogs interaction can be very rich and reflective, but the amount of time to transverse all the posts will increase significantly.

## 2. *Allow negotiation and interpretation of main theme(s)*

In a classroom context, a teacher needs to focus learners on different themes and/or topics inline with the teaching objectives. Although students would like minimum control from the teacher, there still exists a need to focus them on the learning task. Teachers can exercise control and give freedom to students by defining the broad themes where necessary, and allow students to define their own sub-topics for their posts. In doing so, a teacher encourages creativity in students as they negotiate, interpret and make meanings among themselves. A group blog would thus become a learning-cum-social space.

## 3. *Monitoring of interest level*

As students interact and make meaning in their group social spaces, a teacher should monitor the activities in the group blogs as a whole. If the teacher notices a drop in the interest level in terms of the number of posts and comments generated, it is timely to ‘intervene’ by introducing a new theme or to suggest a new topic to rekindle the flame. As a student suggested, it is good to introduce “a different one every 2 weeks or so, blog entries would be more varied that way”.

## **Conclusion**

In this study, we explored the potentials of employing group blogs in teaching and learning context based on feedback from students who participated in a competition. Through the qualitative analysis of the students’ survey responses; we gathered that group blogs have potentials to serve as platforms for formation of learning community. The ready audience within (and without) each group blog is present for collaborative learning to take place. Not only can a teacher encourage the flourishing of creativity and diversity in the students’ meaning making process, students can possibly learn the importance of being sensitive to others’ feelings. Such learning is for students to experience and make meaning of it. As with any other technology, practical considerations do exist for the introduction of group blogs into the classrooms. However, these can be overcome when the teachers are aware of them. In summary, group blog has the potential to become a 21<sup>st</sup> century tool (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2003) that moves both teachers and students into learning for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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## From blogging to self-regulated learning in music

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**Abstract:** Having done two differently-designed pilot studies on the use of blogging in teaching music theory and analysis, I draw upon Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) to re-examine the two studies in order to propose ways to motivate learning that go beyond “learning about” to “learning to be” in the subject.

**Keywords:** music, blogging, self-determination theory, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, self-regulated learning

### Introduction

I begin with two educational ideals dear to the hearts of educators. First, it is the ideal of being able to motivate students in their learning to the extent that they become self-regulated learners—an educational objective which has become increasingly important in the modern knowledge-based economy which calls for life-long learning. Second, it is the subject-disciplinary aim of inducting students into the discipline in question. As Jerome Bruner once said about physics teaching: “we should teach physics rather than teach *about* physics” and by that he meant teaching “the mode of thought ... rather than a collection of facts that can be got out of a handbook” (Bruner, 1972, 124).

As a teacher of music theory and analysis, both aims are easier said than done. Most music students are primarily interested in performing music, a handful are interested in composing, but few come with a natural interest in music theory or music analysis. For music education students, the tertiary level of music theory and analysis is often seen as being too specialized for their teaching needs. In short, I could hardly expect a high level of natural motivation from my students let alone expect them to, on their own accord, go beyond fact-learning to *become* a thinking musician capable of deep analytical musical understanding and able to communicating that—two assets I consider essential for any music teacher, teaching at whatever level. Hence, I explored using blogging as a means to make the course more appealing to and engaging for my students who, in the case of my institution, are increasingly being exposed to ICT-enabled modes of learning.

Two differently-designed pilot studies were previously conducted on the use of blogging in teaching music theory and analysis (Chong & Soo, 2005a, 2005b). Table 1 summarizes the essential features of each study:

Table 1: *Two Pilot Studies on Blogging in Music Teaching*

	1 <sup>st</sup> Pilot Study	2 <sup>nd</sup> Pilot Study
Technological setup	Student-owned blogging strategy	Group-owned blogging strategy
Sample size	6 individuals	2 groups of 3
Blogging tasks	At least 4 out of a choice of 6 for each individual: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Comparative analysis of given musical excerpt and one chosen by student</li> <li>ii. short composing task + peer evaluation with justifications</li> <li>iii. choice of two self-reflection tasks</li> <li>iv. critical reading and response</li> <li>v. mini-research task</li> <li>vi. analysis of pop song</li> </ol>	Free-choice of group project on pop songs or musicals; to include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. background information on song, composer and/or singer</li> <li>ii. song analysis</li> <li>iii. compositional response</li> </ol> Presentation mode: information booklet or website
Learning objectives	Higher-order thinking in the form of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• application of knowledge</li> <li>• lateral transfer of knowledge</li> <li>• synthesis of knowledge: theory + listening + composing</li> <li>• metacognitive reflection</li> <li>• peer comments and evaluation (an element of collaborative learning)</li> </ul>	Similar to those for 1 <sup>st</sup> pilot study but with an emphasis on more collaborative learning and less on metacognitive reflection
Post-study survey	Conducted	Conducted

In a self-reflective consolidation that followed, I derived two pedagogical maxims that can help achieve engaged learning through blogging (Chong, 2006):

- i. allow students to take ownership
- ii. teacher needs to be involved throughout

To refine this pedagogical distillation, I now re-examine the two studies using the lens of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 2001; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2002) to propose ways to motivate learning—not just one that is self-regulated (Deci & Ryan, 1996), but one that goes beyond “learning about” to “learning to be” in the subject.

**Need satisfaction, self-determination and self-regulation: an SDT perspective**

Educational psychologists have long recognized the role of intrinsic motivation in human actions. Operant theory (Skinner, 1953) believes that motivation stems from positive reinforcements and the rewarding nature of the activity itself whereas learning theory (Hull, 1943) understands it primarily in terms of physiological or psychological needs being satisfied. Along this latter line, Deci and Ryan draw upon deCharms's notion of perceived locus of causality (deCharms, 1968) to develop their Cognitive Evaluation Theory as part of their broader Self-Determination Theory (Deci, 1975; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan, 1982). They initially highlighted two basic innate needs that are relevant in accounting for intrinsically-motivated behaviours:

i. the need for autonomy

When people's intrinsic need to be self-determining is met—that is, when there is an internal perceived locus of causality, intrinsic motivation for the behaviour concerned is supported and can be enhanced

ii. the need for competence

When people's intrinsic need to be competent and to master optimal challenges are met (within the context of some self-determination)—or, more specifically, when there is perceived competence—intrinsic motivation for the behaviour concerned is supported and can be enhanced

But while emphasizing that *both* the freedom and the ability to engage in a particular activity are essential for self-determination, without which intrinsic motivation will be undermined, Deci and Ryan, nonetheless, do not deny the fact that interesting activities in themselves can satisfy other basic needs as well.

At the same time, Deci & Ryan (1985) are realistic in recognizing that not all activities are inherently interesting, hence there is a place for extrinsic motivation. However, unlike deCharms (1968), they do not see extrinsic motivation as invariantly non-autonomous, instead they contend that there can be a continuum of autonomy involved. In their Organismic Integration Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2002), another sub-theory of SDT, they propose a four-level classification, differentiating the different degrees of autonomy with respect to extrinsic motivation:

- i. external regulation – the behaviour is controlled by external demands or externally-imposed rewards
- ii. introjected regulation – the behaviour is driven by ego or self-esteem
- iii. identified regulation – the person has identified with the goals and values of the regulated activity and hence accepts the external regulation
- iv. integrated regulation – the identified regulation is fully internalized such that the extrinsically-motivated behaviour becomes a self-determined one, the activity is now volitional and valued by the self

For educational contexts, they further propose the broader category of autonomous self-regulation, one which subsumes both intrinsic motivation as well as identified or integrated regulation—any of these can underlie self-regulated learning (Deci & Ryan, 1996).

A third aspect of SDT is its recognition of the interpersonal dimension (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Acknowledging the presence of intrinsic motivational tendencies in humans, Deci and Ryan nonetheless argue that these inherent organismic propensities need appropriate external conditions as catalysts, that is, they need interpersonal events and structures that foster a sense of autonomy and feelings of competence. In educational settings, such informational—as opposed to controlling, or worse, amotivating—events and structures allow for choice and provide information useful for the learner to engage in the learning task. As such, the classroom setup and the teacher’s orientation both play a part in supporting intrinsic motivation. The teacher needs to offer optimal challenges, effectance-promoting feedback, and non-demeaning evaluations—all these within an “open” classroom structure that offers choice in learning within appropriate limits (informational limits). Needless to add, such informational environments will also foster the personal-identification or internalization of extrinsic motivations, nudging students towards self-regulated learning: “In classrooms this means that students’ feeling respected and cared for by the teacher is essential for their willingness to accept the proffered classroom values” (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In subsequent discussions, Deci and Ryan more explicitly relate this interpersonal dimension, in part, to a third innate psychological need—that for a sense of relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2002; Ryan, Stiller, & Lynch, 1994).

### **Methodology: Evaluating the level of self-regulated learning**

Before proceeding with our re-examination, the basis for evaluating self-regulated learning in SDT terms must be clarified. In general, to examine the level of motivation in learning, psychologists have generally used one of two methods—examining free-choice behaviours and relying on self-reports. In our case, the present attempt to take a second look in SDT terms is an afterthought, hence neither the element of free-choice behaviour nor that of self-report by participants have been formally built-in into the study. However, we can consider my personal, admittedly subjective, class observations, as well as make some inferences about students’ motivational levels based on their blog discourses and post-experiment survey feedback. Additionally, one of the students from the second study had, on his own accord, chosen to do an independent survey with his fellow classmates to write his term paper for a course on academic writing in the following semester (Lim, 2006), the survey done thus provided us additional evidence—objective insofar as it was initiated by the student and not done under my purview.

In terms of evaluating the nature and level of motivation, Harter's motivation scale offers a useful point of departure (Harter, 1981). She defines five subscales in terms of an intrinsic and an extrinsic pole:

- i. learning motivated by curiosity versus learning in order to please the teacher
- ii. learning motivated by desire for personal satisfaction versus being motivated by grades
- iii. showing a preference for challenging schoolwork versus preference for easy assignments
- iv. desiring to work independently versus dependence on the teacher for help
- v. having internal criteria for success or failure versus depending on external criteria such as grades and teacher feedback to determine success or failure

Without quantifying our assessment for each sub-scale level as Harter does (since ours are pilot studies with too small a sample size for making any statistically-valid generalization), we shall only make qualitative observations along the lines suggested by Harter. At the same time, inline with our adoption of Deci and Ryan's definition of self-regulated learning, we shall admit the possibility of extrinsic motivation being identified with or internalized. But, for any of our observed self-regulated learning, it will be difficult to distinguish between the intrinsically-motivated ones from those that stem from identified/internalized extrinsic motivations.

For the purpose of determining the extent of "learning to be", we shall additionally cast our eye on any manifestation of "modes of thought" essential to music theorizing and music analysis. But it must be borne in mind that, given that the blogging tasks were crafted to promote the exercise of such modes of thinking and knowledge construction in the first place, it would be difficult to determine whether or to what extent any such manifestation was the result of the use of blogging as a mode of learning as opposed to due to the nature of the academic task itself.

### **Edu-blogging from an SDT perspective**

The present research is premised on the belief that blogging appeals to our digital-age students. However, one cannot assume that this is true of everyone of this IT-generation, nor should we forget that blogging out of personal interest and blogging to fulfill academic obligation are two different things (Downes, 2004). As one student put it bluntly: "[I] can't be bothered to go online unless necessary" and "[i]t's only because it's our assignment that we're forced to access it regularly" (Lim, 2006). Such sentiments were certainly expressed to varying extent by students in both studies but their often lengthy postings and their post-experiment feedback—admitting personal benefits from the blogging exercise, expressing a willingness to adopt edu-blogging in their own teaching later on—suggest that such reluctance may have been overcome to a good extent. Or, in SDT terms, sufficient motivation must have been present despite the likely absence of intrinsic motivation on the one hand and, it should be added, the

clear presence of extrinsic motivating factors and even amotivating factors on the other. How could this be possible?

Let us first identify the extrinsic motivating and amotivating factors which, according to SDT, can potentially undermine intrinsic motivations. First of all, all the blogging tasks were course requirements involving deadlines and grades, both of which are classic controlling factors antagonistic to intrinsic motivation. Secondly, because blogging was done in the public domain, any mistakes made would appear before the rest of the class (and any visitor to the blog); indeed some of the students had expressed hesitations to blog for fear of losing-face: “having the fear to make mistakes, especially stupid ones” (2<sup>nd</sup> survey). And worse, one of the blogging tasks in the first study even explicitly required the students to peer-evaluate: researches have cautioned that mere expectation of evaluations is sufficient to decrease intrinsic motivation (Inagaki, 1984, cited in Deci & Ryan, 1985; Shalley, 1985)! We may also note that the free-choice and open-ended nature of the tasks not only caused some anxiety for some students, but over challenged some students at times. Finally, from the students’ complaints and their inability to adhere to the sub-task deadlines (especially in the first study), it was clear that their generally heavy study workload (as an inhibiting factor) made it challenging for them to find sufficient time for the blogging assignments; the situation appears even worse when we factor in the students’ complaints about IT-related problems encountered or the scanning and uploading of musical excerpts being time-consuming!

Under such circumstances, it was fortunate that there were sufficient mitigating factors to save the situation. The element of choice—in terms of choosing the blogging tasks in the first study or choosing the group-project focus in the second—meant that the students’ personal musical interests and their innate need for a sense of autonomy were met to some extent (“I get to choose what I want to study”—from the 1<sup>st</sup> survey). Many of the students’ enthusiasm for the music chosen for analysis and discussion was at times very evident in their blog entries—this was certainly more apparent when one compares their discourse here with that for the first blog assignment in the first study where the music to be discussed was in part chosen by the teacher. At the same time, within the time period dictated by the given set of deadlines for the tasks, the students had the flexibility of doing the assignments “at your own time and pace” given the 24-hour availability of internet access.

Apropos the need for competence, there was admittedly a lack of perceived competence in some cases especially with respect to the tasks involving music analysis. While the blogging tasks were designed to go hand-in-hand with the course coverage as far as possible such that as much of the relevant technical knowledge and skills were anticipated and taught so as to enable the students in their tasks (especially in the case of the first study), I was mindful of the potential problem in allowing students to choose their own music for analysis: they might

choose music that was beyond them at their stage of learning. I had therefore made it clear to the students at the start as well as repeatedly thereafter that they should feel free to pose questions or seek clarifications in their blog entries as part of this collaborative learning process, and that, when necessary, I would step in to guide as I deemed fit. This latter teacher intervention is a form of effectance-relevant information necessary for developing competencies. In SDT's understanding, students are more likely to internalize extrinsic motivation (which was inevitably present in both studies) if they have the relevant skills or knowledge to succeed in the task. At the same time, in retrospect, I realize that my conscious effort to be encouraging—for example, seizing opportunities to applaud students' correct technical readings and insightful interpretations— had possibly helped to raise the students' perceived competence.

We turn next to the students' psychological need for a sense of relatedness, which is equally important both for self-determination to be supported as well as for autonomous self-regulation to be fostered. Now, it may be true that co-operative learning settings are more intrinsically motivating in the first place (Deci & Ryan, 1985), and indeed both our studies did have a co-operative element in terms of peer-learning and/or it being a group-based project, but this in itself will not ensure a sense of relatedness. In both cases, I had consciously aimed to help the students cultivate a positive mindset towards this mode of ICT-enabled learning and constantly encouraged them not to feel embarrassed to seek clarifications or make mistakes. When responding to the students' blogs, besides trying to sound encouraging, I also pointed out any mistakes in a tactful way. In short, on reflection, these attempts can be seen as helping to make the students feel willing and comfortable as members of the learning community they are in. It was therefore not without cause that in the students' feedback many conveyed positive feelings towards their peer-learning experiences, with one even expressing "great joy to have responses to your blog" (2<sup>nd</sup> survey). These, presumably, may be taken as indirectly reflecting a certain degree of success in the engendering of a sense of relatedness; the general tone of collegiality in all the blog exchanges further testifies to a positive climate of interaction.

More specifically, we may attribute the success in establishing a more positive learning climate to informational supports, which worked hand in hand with autonomy-supporting conditions. Besides the providence of choice elements and effectance-enhancing information as well as a deliberate effort at fostering a sense of relatedness, my attempts at persuasion also involved acknowledging conflicting feelings. I was very upfront with the students with it came to anticipating reservation or even fear towards the use of ICT. However, I assured them that this was natural and understandable, I then urged them to adopt an open mind and be willing to learn. With the second group, the ultimately positive experience of the first group was also mentioned as an encouragement for them. With respect to the potentially detrimental effects of being peer-evaluated in public, I explained the rationale, namely, to give them the practice of

assessing since they would soon become teachers themselves. Hopefully, this understanding helped them accept the peer evaluation more positively; thankfully, their blog-responses suggest that they did take it in good spirit. To be true, their peer evaluation comments did sound somewhat apologetic in some cases and perhaps not critical enough, but (from a teaching point of view) the justifications they had to provide to substantiate the grades given for their fellow students' compositions presumably made them think more deeply when assessing, even if they did not reveal everything in their posted comments.

Finally, if intrinsic motivation was not spontaneously occurring in the students, there was at least one element in both studies that could have acted as a motivating factor—learning with an expectation to teach others (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Benware & Deci, 1984). In the spirit of collaborative learning, I had encouraged the students to respond to each other's postings including answering any questions raised or pointing out mistakes. One student, in the first survey, wrote at length on how “stepping into a teacher's shoes” when responding to fellow students' entries “force[d] me to constantly reassess my understanding of fundamental concepts and provide[d] reinforcement for my learning.” In general, the level of detailed technical discussion and at times extensive exchange in the peer discussion suggest that the students were indeed engaged—and presumably motivated—to varying extent.

### **Evaluating the learning**

Now, the presence of a conducive enough learning environment and even indications of engaged learning is one thing, whether the learning is self-regulated and of the learning-to-be kind is quite another. That the students have affirmed having learnt much—even describing their blog-based learning experience as “interesting and exciting” and “great”—is no direct evidence. Given the mandatory nature of the assignments, it is difficult to determine whether any engaged learning observed was intrinsically or extrinsically motivated. We have, at best, some circumstantial evidence of either intrinsic motivation or internalized external motivation, which allows us to infer some possible contributory factors. In contrast, we are on comparatively firmer grounds determining the extent of learning-to-be.

In respect of intrinsic motivation, one student from the second study revealed that she had been “wondering much about the ‘strange’ harmony used in [*The Phantom of the Opera*] but ha[d] never gotten round to taking a closer look at the scores”, hence “it was great” that she could benefit from the analysis done by her classmates. Presumably, her engagement was in part motivated by curiosity which (following Harter) would suggest some intrinsic motivation involved. Other students have also variously expressed their appreciation for the different analytical perspectives gained from reading each other's blogs: one may again presume that this positive reception is suggestive that the musical-intellectual pleasure of being enriched by alternative analytical readings was experienced. In yet another instance, one student's

recommendation to a fellow student to “[p]lay that bar, listen to the effect and *enjoy* the magic of the falling bass line” (italics mine) likewise hints at the personal pleasure experienced. Optimistically speaking, such betrayals of curiosity and pleasures—manifestations of a “self-driven thirst for understanding” (Brown, 1988)—could well have resulted in some degree of intrinsic motivation that led to self-regulated learning.

Apropos Harter’s third sub-scale, we may again note that there were indeed a couple of instances where the students clearly chose challenging pieces to discuss despite my recommendation that they find something they could manage. In the case of the compositional-response task, one of the students in the first study took up the challenge of pushing tonal boundaries and playing with more complex rhythms as opposed to writing a simple tonal melody to meet the minimum requirement. Another student decided to compose a teaching piece which “will ambitiously contain ALL of the augmented 6<sup>th</sup> chords” he had learnt and in the end, he ended up writing three very different pieces for this purpose. Yet another, in the second study, went beyond just composing the melody to provide the full piano texture. The students were clearly going beyond what was called for in their assignments. With regard to the students’ independence in learning, it was difficult to ascertain the level, but by and large, I did not perceive an unhealthy dependence on me for help even though there were certainly occasions when the students needed extra help with the technical work involved and they made this known on their blog. As for their criteria for success, there was, alas, no opportunity for the students to express their thinking on this nor did they happen to explicitly reveal that in their survey feedback, hence no inferences may be drawn here.

As mentioned above, we do however have some grounds to infer the extent of the students’ learning-to-be. As illustrated in more detail elsewhere (Chong & Soo, 2005a, 2005b), the encouraging evidence of higher-order thinking clearly points to their learning beyond facts. Whether it was their deliberating over analytical issues (even to the extent of engaging in compositional speculation to explore alternatives), or responding to fellow students’ musical interpretations and musical compositions, or even articulating what they did not know or are uncertain of, these were the kinds of musical thinking—part of learning to be a thinking musician—a music teacher would like to cultivate in their students. Unfortunately, the extent to which such manifested modes of disciplinary thinking became more permanently assimilated remains to be investigated.

### **Closing remarks**

Admittedly, the small sample sizes here forestall any valid generalization. However, there were sufficient evidence of engaged learning and arguably self-regulated learning to warrant a more extensive (and perhaps quantitative) study on the motivational effects of blogging as an instructional strategy (separating, of course, this pedagogical efficacy from that arising from

the nature of the academic tasks themselves). For now, the present re-consideration of the pilot studies using SDT whilst only affirming to some extent the validity of the two pedagogical maxims obtained from the earlier consolidation, does offer a more refined understanding of their operations, helping us to be more aware of what some of the motivating factors, both intrinsic and extrinsic, are and the conditions under which they can operate optimally. Table 2 lists some recommendations stemming from this understanding as discussed in the preceding sections:

*Table 2: Some recommendations to motivate learning*

SDT considerations	Some general recommendations
For intrinsic motivation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pertaining to the need for a sense of autonomy</li> </ul>	Design assignments that offer students choices, preferably catering to their personal interests (but informational limits as opposed to controlling ones can be set)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pertaining to the need for perceived competence</li> </ul>	Task must be sufficiently but not overly challenging  Enable students through prior teaching and/or sufficient scaffolding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pertaining to the need for a sense of relatedness</li> </ul>	Respect the students, connect with them, establish a sense of being a member of a learning community
More generally in terms of informational supports	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dealing with external regulation</li> </ul>	Be assuring and encouraging, give positive feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• concerning introjected regulation</li> </ul>	Help students feel positively connected within the learning community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fostering identified and integrated regulation</li> </ul>	Make the whole learning journey/experience pleasurable

For a teacher who wishes to embark on blogging as an instructional strategy, she can be more critically aware of how she may create an informational learning environment that is supportive of the three innate psychological needs identified by SDT to be the basis for self-determination. At the same time, given the inevitable presence of extrinsic motivating factors such as the mandatory nature of the assignments and the need for grades to be awarded, she would also know how to administer these without inhibiting autonomous self-regulated learning.

To close, we do well to take cognizance once again that our digital-age students may be IT-savvy and prefer ICT-based learning, but that does not mean that edublogging will

automatically bring about motivated learning, not to mention learning of the kind desired. The teacher needs to pay heed to the effects of intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors as well as of the learning environment on the one hand, and craft the kinds of assignments that do foster learning-to-be on the other.

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## 網誌 -- 網上傳意寫作新模式

### Blogging as a tool for learning communicative writing in Chinese

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the potential of blogging as a tool for learning writing in Chinese. It examines how blogging can be used as an interactive tool for online writing and how blogging can facilitate and promote the development of communicative writing. It involves the study of 161 students from 4 different schools in Singapore.

【關鍵字】網誌，寫作，寫作歷程，社群

#### 緒言

互聯網在教學上已經是越來越重要的資源 (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2003)。其中一個原因就是互聯網允許任何人做出貢獻，尤其是網頁編輯器及文檔傳輸工具讓教師及學生輕而易舉地進行網上出版的工作。而網誌的出現，更是讓大家無需具備任何編寫網頁與使用文檔傳輸工具的技能，誰都可以上傳作品。

何謂網誌？簡單地說，就是 Blog。Blog 是 Weblog 的簡稱 (Rebecca, 2000)，是 Web 和 Log 的組合詞。顧名思義，說的是網上任何形式的流水記錄。Blog 的中文譯名不一，大陸常見的是“博客”，臺灣則普遍稱為“部落格”。

近年來，網誌已成為網上傳意寫作的主流。從小學生到成年人，不少人深受網誌文化薰陶，熱衷於通過相片、圖畫和文字來記錄生活，發表意見。網誌作為一個開放式的寫作空間，以個人為中心，教師和學生都可以自由地在各個免費的服務公司上開設帳戶，因此學生的動力大，互動效果也較良好。

目前網誌已經有很多服務站點，例如：Msn Spaces, TypePad, Blogger, wordpress 等，而且網誌在教育領域中被廣泛地應用；但網誌畢竟不是為了教學而設，它在教學效果上有何特點？它是不是真的有效？

研究者意在探討如何將網誌融入寫作訓練，以發展出一套理想的網上寫作模式。

#### 研究問題

研究者希望通過這研究可以解答下列的問題：

- (1) 在“網誌”環境下，網上寫作社群如何組成？其活動及組成模式為何？老師的參與是否影響學生的交流？

(2) “網誌”對新加坡中學生的寫作能力與態度有什麼影響？寫作表現有何轉變？

### 理論架構

#### (1) 寫作歷程

1962年，Wallas 首先提出寫作的思維過程可分為四階段：預備（Preparation）、孕育（Incubation）、啓發（Illumination）、驗證（Verification）。1963年，Braddock, Lloyd-Jones 以及 Schoer 建議通過直接觀察法和個案研究法研究寫作思維過程；此後學者們便對研究寫作過程深感興趣，並致力於研究寫作究竟包含些什麼。（Hillocks, 1986）

然而，在這方面以 Hayes & Flower（1980）提出的寫作模式最為廣泛使用。他們將寫作歷程模式分為三個部分，即寫作者的長期記憶、寫作環境和寫作歷程：

- I. 寫作者的長期記憶：指寫作者儲存在長期記憶中有關主題，讀者和寫作計畫的知識，包含寫作者對文法、標點符號、文體等知識。
- II. 寫作環境：指所有影響寫作表現的外在情境，包括主題的描述、讀者的意向、刺激線索以及已完成的文章等。
- III. 寫作歷程：Hayes & Flower（1980）認為寫作大致可分為計畫、轉譯和回顧三個主要歷程。計畫，指的是產生文思、組織和目標設定。轉譯，是將構思轉換成可接受的符號。回顧，包括評估和修改。回顧用於評估寫出的內容是否符合原先的目標，並檢視是否需要重寫或修改。

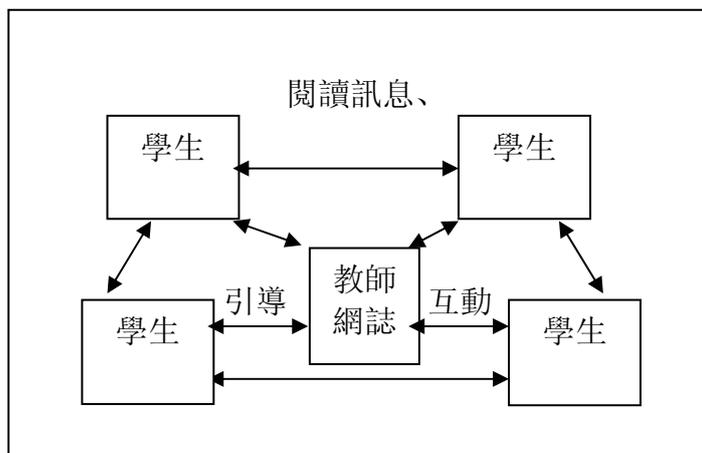
Hayes & Flower 並於 1986 年提出“過程導向”的寫作教學模式，開始注重在學生的寫作過程中提供引導和協助。

#### (2) 網誌寫作社群

互聯網學習群體指的是學習者在互聯網上進行聊天、知識討論、資訊交流、經驗分享等，因此這是一種知識分享的概念，這個社群裏的每一分子都可能是知識的給予者或接受者。（Collins & Bielaczyc, 1997）

網誌寫作社群具開放性結構，學生寫作時開創了無限的讀者參與空間。學生不但可以在自己的網誌中發表知識和見解，其所具備的“分享”功能，也可讓其他有相同興趣或同樣學習範疇的同學參考，還可以做出評論，讓學生可以把自己的學習與周圍的群體交流結合在一起，而學生就可以在群體的分享和交流中有更進一步的認識。

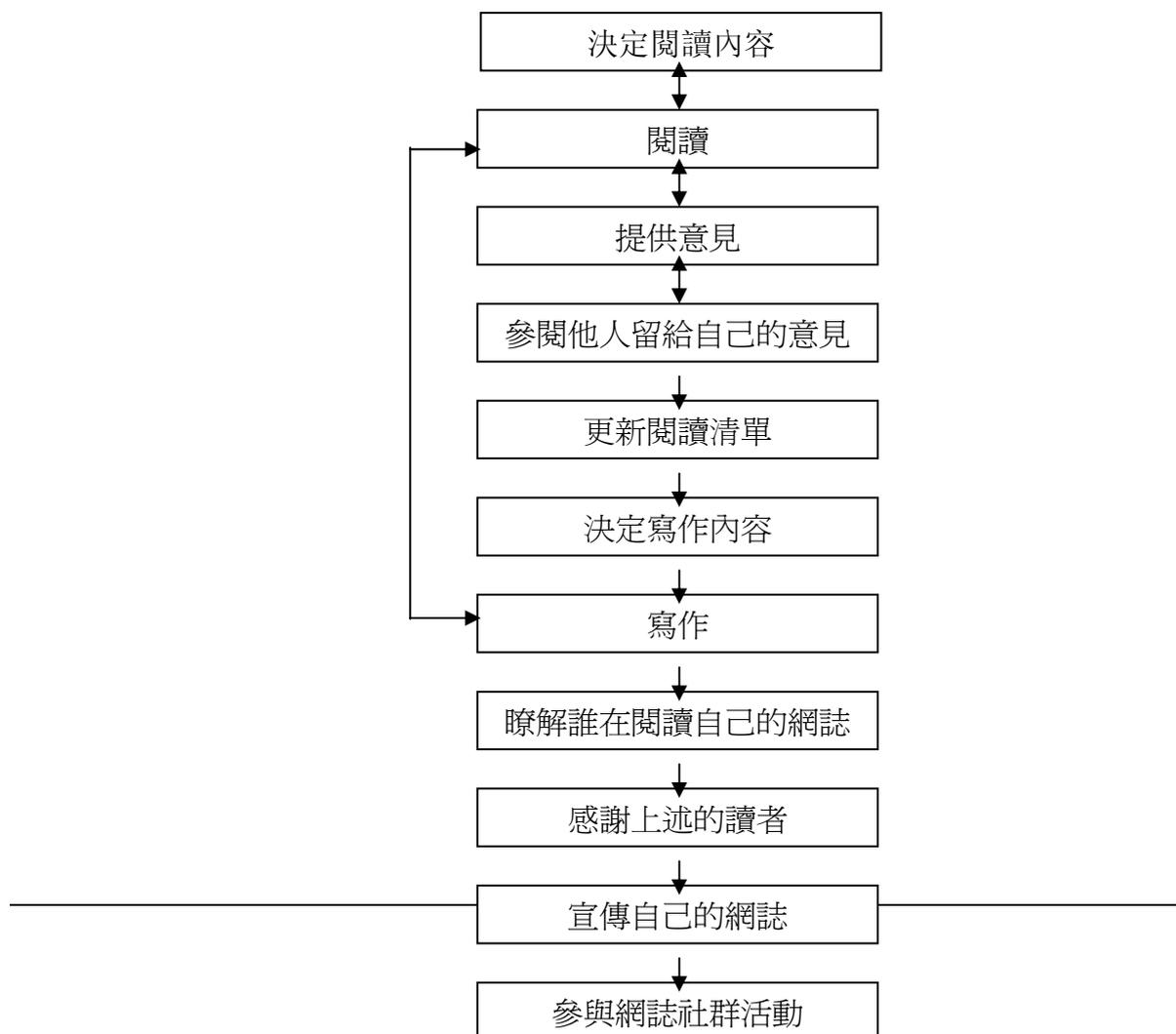
本研究主要研究新加坡中學生的網誌寫作，因此研究者構想出一個網誌群體的寫作情況。教師和學生在一個網誌寫作社群裏，主要是起著引導的作用，而這樣的教學活動是以學習者為中心。知識的來源分散在學生及教師身上，可經由討論、溝通、協商、分享與交換的過程，使得原本分散在各處的知識可以集中，社群成員的知能水準得以因知識分享而提升。（張基成，1998）



圖一：網誌寫作社群

(3) 網誌寫作模式

中國“博客”開路先鋒毛向輝先生（2004）曾基於一般網誌的寫作現象進行整理，提出網誌的寫作過程。



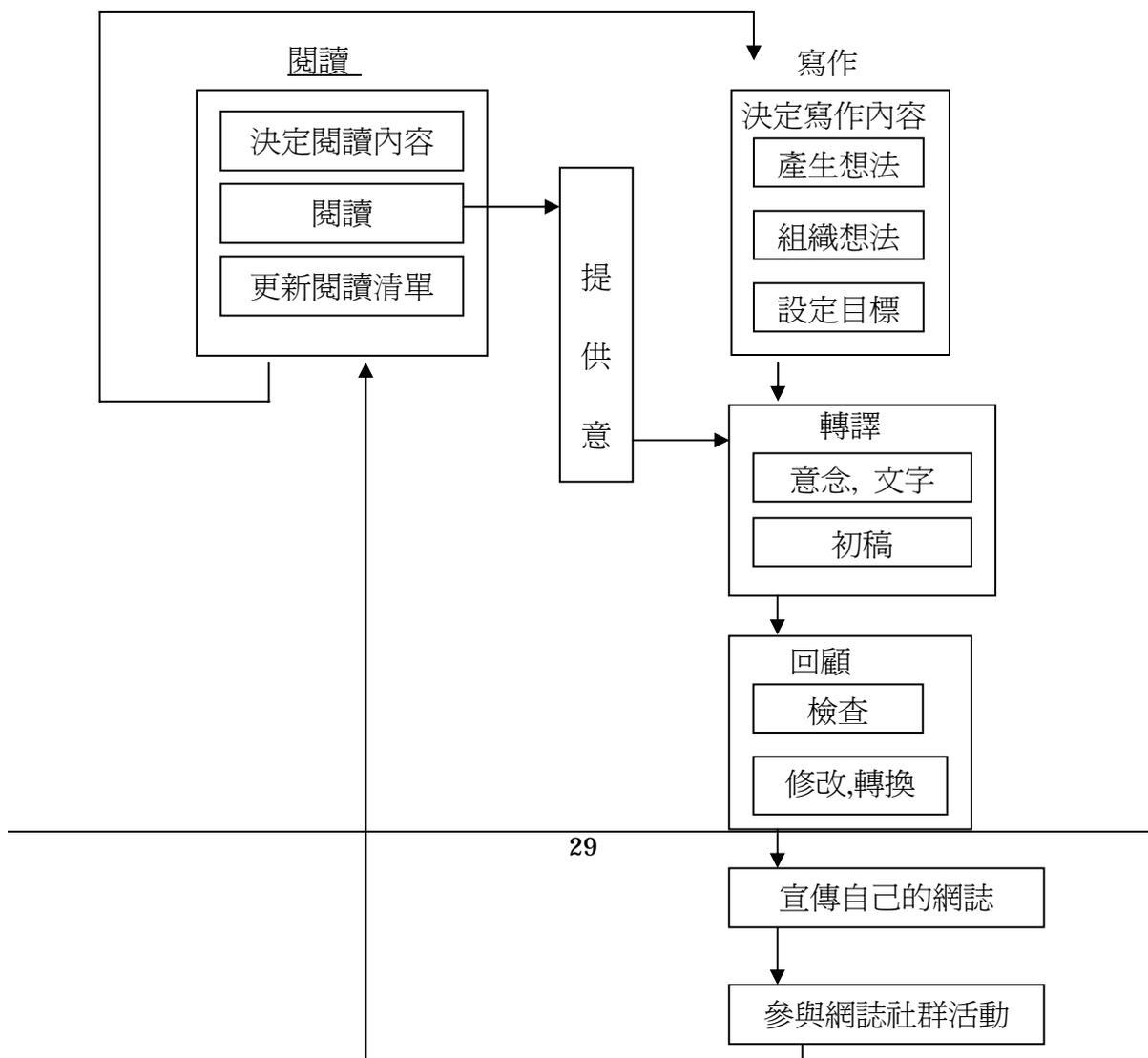
圖二：網誌過程 (毛向輝, 2004)

取自 <http://www.isaacmao.com>

這個網誌的寫作過程可以看出在網誌裏，一個讀者同時可以是作者，而且呈現出網誌的主要活動是閱讀和寫作。

網誌寫作可以從閱讀到寫作，再從寫作到閱讀；也可以反過來從寫作到閱讀，再從閱讀到寫作。博客在閱讀他人網誌的時候可以隨時提供意見，同樣的，別人亦隨時閱讀該博客的網誌，並留下意見。在閱讀的過程中，決定閱讀內容、閱讀以及更新閱讀清單之間並不一定是順序的，這些過程可以同時進行，或者倒序進行。

爲了更好地反映出網誌運用在學習寫作時的情況，研究者根據 Hayes & Flowers (1980) 的寫作歷程模式，在毛向輝 (2004) 的網誌過程上進行調整，強調了網誌中的閱讀與寫作不可分割的關係。



### 圖三：網誌的寫作過程

就“寫作”來看，圖三的網誌寫作過程，仍離不開三個部分：寫作前計畫、寫作與修改。寫作前計畫指的是產生、組織想法和目標設定，而作者想法的產生來自作者的長期記憶和寫作環境。組織是作者根據特定的目的或需要，將有用的材料加以組織，然後作者將意念、構思、寫作內容轉換成可接受的符號。網誌寫作裏的回顧，包括檢查和修改，但要注意的是，一般人在網誌上閱讀了其他人的反饋，主要在於交流，作者不一定即時修改自己的作品，但可能在下一次寫作時將這些回饋轉換成新的創作。最後，作者宣傳自己的網誌並參與其他網誌活動。

從網上寫作來看，作者和讀者是文本的共同創作人，經過作者和讀者的共同協商，網誌寫作的意義更為突現。因此，一名讀者不僅為讀者，其身份還包括作者，彼此之間的關係是互動的，甚至可以同時允許兩位或以上的作者一起寫作。事實上，讀者身份有時候是決定文章內容的重要因素，讀者的回饋可以讓作者知道自己的寫作是不是有效的（謝錫金、譚佩儀，2002）。

## 研究設計

### (1) 研究樣本

本研究以立意抽樣的方式以新加坡四所中學的四個班級為樣本。細節如下：

表一：研究樣本說明

學校	教師	試驗組及人數	控制組及人數
A	T1	S1 高級華文 (29)	無
B	T2	S2 快捷華文 (25)	S1 快捷華文 (27)
C	T3	S1 快捷華文 (27)	S1 快捷華文 (25)
D	T4	S1 快捷華文 (18)	S1 快捷華文 (17)

S1 指的是中學一年級，S2 為中學二年級；其中，高級華文組的學生的華文寫作能力要比快捷華文組的學生高。試驗組以及控制組由不同教師進行教學。

### (2) 研究工具

- I. 學生的網誌：網站上的資料記錄學生的寫作以及交流過程。
- II. 問卷調查：採用自編的“網上寫作態度問卷”，目的在瞭解學生在實驗前後，其寫作態度的差異情形。
- III. 訪談：分別和實驗班級學生進行訪談，每校六名，以瞭解學生使用網站的態度和觀感。
- IV. 前、後測：制定評鑒標準，分析實驗組每名學生前測及後測寫作能力。

## (3) 研究方法

本研究採用不等組前後測，准實驗研究法。

表二：研究方法說明

實驗組	控制組	前測	實驗變項	後測
G1	--	01		02
G2	G3	03	以網誌進行網	04
G4	G5	05	上寫作	06
G6	G7	07		08

新加坡中學一向要求學生隔周寫週記以及讀後感，因此在本試驗中，控制組的學生進行例常的週記和讀後感寫作，實驗班級的學生則利用網誌進行網上寫作以及交流。

實驗組的前後測採用學生在網誌上的第一篇文及最後一篇文。控制組方面，收集學生和實驗組第一篇文及最後一篇文差不多同時的作品。

四名教師首先開設自己的網誌，并鏈結了學生網誌。其中，前三名教師本身在這個教學網誌上佈置網誌寫作內容，T4 則是透過口頭要求。前三名教師中，其中兩名和教學緊密掛鉤，所要求的寫作形式和內容是在課程綱要里的。教師并要求學生都必須閱讀其他同學的網誌，并且進行交流，兩名教師在自己的網誌里開設話題讓學生進行討論。

研究者於 2005 年 3 月開始和教師進行具體地交流，針對實驗內容、實驗目的、實驗過程、具體方法等進行了協商，並根據情況不斷地對實驗方案進行調整。

## (4) 資料收集與分析

使用問卷、訪談、前測後測及量表等，從質和量兩方面收集資料。用 SPSS 作為基本的統計分析，輔以內容分析和個案分析等方法。

- I. 調查法：本研究同時採用面談訪問與問卷調查兩種方法。
- II. 自然式觀察：進行九個月的自然觀察，以及根據網誌的記錄，分析學生在網上與同學間書寫互動的情形。研究者記錄研究日誌，以便於資料的管理與分析。
- III. 訪談焦點學生運用網誌的情形：研究者認為和教師以及參與學生進行訪談，將能濾清研究者在觀察時可能產生的疑惑。在實驗期間，研究者將定期訪問教師與焦點學生，進行資料收集。
- IV. 收集學生的寫作成品：除了全班性的收集之外，也特別針對 16 名學生作比較深入的作品分析。焦點學生分別來自不同的學校，每校四名。焦點學生的資料收集主要根據學生背景、觀察、訪談，並對其作品進行廣泛、深入的分析，以求互相印證。

## 分析與討論

本研究的數據分析尚未完成，本文就只根據小部分問卷調查結果以及網上交流的現象觀察來討論。

表三：部分問卷調查結果

項目	同意 (%)	非常同意 (%)
你喜歡閱讀他人的寫作作品	64.9	7.4
你喜歡為同學的 Blog 提意見	52.1	6.4
你不介意老師訪問你的 Blog	53.2	25.5
你希望同學能為你的 Blog 提意見	57.4	24.5
你希望老師能為你的 Blog 提意見	53.2	23.4
同學為你提的意見對你寫作很有幫助	57.4	11.7
老師為你提的意見對你寫作很有幫助	62.8	18.1
在你的 Blog 裏，你很清楚自己是寫給什麼人閱讀的	64.9	16.0
你能針對讀者的需要來寫作	56.4	6.4
通過 Blog 寫周記/讀後感，因為讀者多，你會比較認真	51.1	8.5
自從 Blog 之後，你的寫作能力進步了	54.3	6.4
Blog 之後，你的辭彙量增加了	47.9	5.3

### (1) 渴望交流

從一些問卷調查來看，學生渴望和同學交流對種種事情的看法，而從他們的網誌表現來看，雖然學生的內容不一定每天更新，但是他們卻可以和同學，甚至是偶然闖入他們網誌的不速之客，圍繞著這些文章和大家感興趣的問題，展開熱烈的討論。絕大多數的試驗組學生希望同學和老師能為他們的網誌提供意見，並認為這些意見對他們的寫作很有幫助。

此外，問卷的一個題目是：如果你比較喜歡訪問經常見面的朋友/同學的 Blog，為什麼？45.7% 的學生認為這樣能讓他更深入地瞭解朋友對某些事件的感受及他的私人生活。

### (2) 展現自我

網誌比起一般日記更具互動效果，因雙方是在平等關係上交流，不似寫周記般只是交功課。而作為一種更迅捷、真實，也更具有個性的寫作方式，網誌具備了一般寫作所沒有的魅力。網誌可以展現自己，又可以自由地表達自己不同的觀點、對事物的看法以

及各種各樣的思想，迎合了學生崇尚個性又崇尚自由平等的潮流。下面兩段文字來自試驗組兩名學生的問卷：

Blog 可以讓同學們看，而且當我不高興時，同學們來關心我時，他們可以看我的 blog，知道是甚麼事，而不是當我傷心難過時來問我，這會使我感到更傷心。如果我是用紙筆寫的話，我不可能把我寫下的心事或不高興的事拿給他們閱讀。(D10)

有時候在看別人或自己的 blog 時，會有許多感想，心難免會被內容吸引，從而立馬打出自己的感想。同時，用 blog 寫週記，也可以讀清一個人的內心世界，更方便，容易。筆記會消失，模糊，不見，也不方便攜帶，所以我喜歡用 blog。(A26)

### (3) 自我約束

試驗組里比較頑皮的學生，在試驗開始初期會在教師及其他同學的網誌里搗蛋，發表和討論無關的言論。有趣的是，在教師還未針對上述情況反應之前，這個寫作社群里的其他成員往往已經挺身而出，或嚴詞斥責，或規勸上述的學生守規矩。事實上，透過和教師的訪談，研究者了解教師僅在口頭上要求學生進行網誌活動，並無明文規定任何的網誌守則。

### (4) 持續發展的網誌互動模式

師生在網誌進行討論，展現了課室里未曾發生過的交流現象。取試驗組一名教師的網誌為例，他在自己的網誌上開設了一個討論題，該討論一共吸引了 83 則意見，而所有討論都在同一天完成。經過分析，研究者發現是次討論共分五個層次：

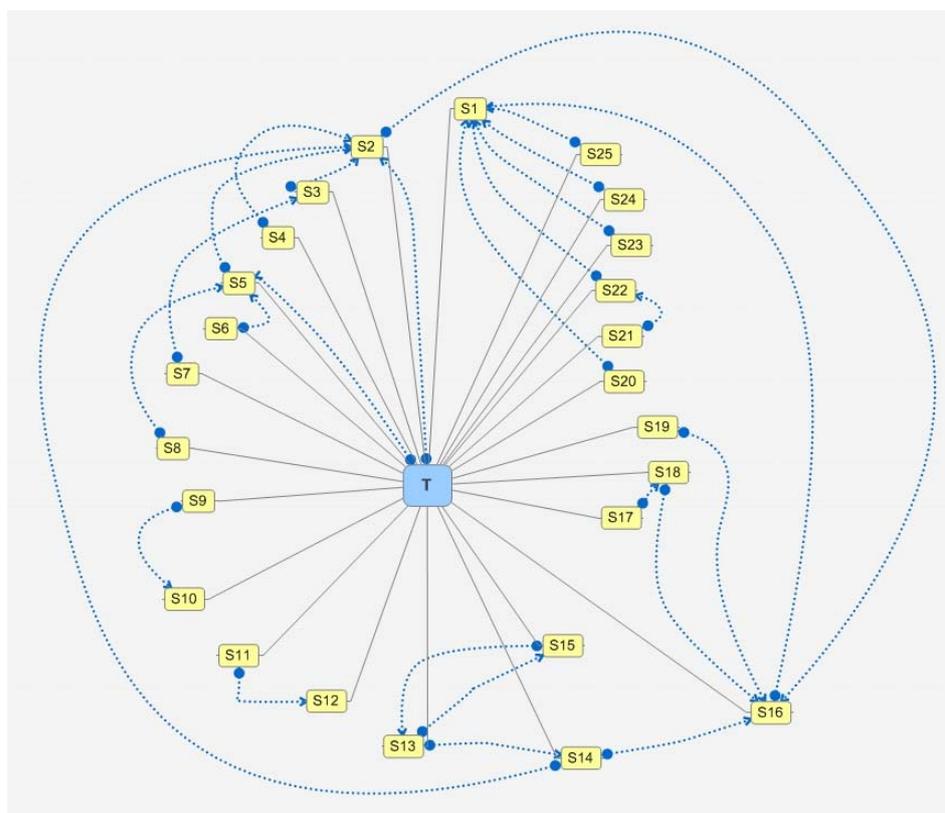
第一層：12:12PM (開設話題)

第二層：12:56PM - 3:49PM (討論初期，學生個別發表意見)

第三層：1:08PM - 1:33PM (討論高峰期)

第四層：1:26PM - 9:33PM (討論冷靜期)

第五層：6:03PM (教師總結)



圖四：網誌互動

上圖取其中 25 名學生發表的比較有意義的討論來進行分析。上圖所有實線是第二層的討論層次，中間的 T 代表教師開設話題，於是學生個別針對話題發表意見。虛線說明討論第三、四層次，討論高峰以及冷靜期間，各學生之間的討論關係。

#### (5) 寫作意義形成

正如 Kennedy (2003) 所言，網上出版提供給學生寫作的真實讀者，這是一個他們可以傳送及接受回饋的協作式環境。線上讀者其實不僅僅是讀者，他們不但願意參與，也被期望共同參與，網誌正在這方面提供了有效的溝通。

學生在傳統的教室里寫作文往往是苦差，因為他們的寫作動機不是為了自己有話要說，有些想法要表達，而是在寫完作文之後交給教師評改，這是學生的功課。學生不只是無法針對讀者而寫，他們甚至不知從何開始，因為除了分數之外，他們的寫作是沒有意義的。可是，當學生開始寫網誌之後，讀者便不再只是讀者，他們同時也是作者，寫作內容經過討論、交流，變得更為豐富，於是意義形成了。

80.9% 的學生很清楚自己的網誌是寫給什麼人閱讀的，62.8% 認為自己能針對讀者的需要來寫作。因為有讀者，有意義，學生的寫作意願提高了。

## (6) 寫作信心增強

學生的網誌作品是經過編輯、討論、評價以及修改而的，而持續不斷地更新網誌，透過和讀者的交流，是一種很好的寫作訓練。就有 60.3% 認為網誌讀者多，所以他們會比較認真寫作，這說明學生喜歡寫網誌，因為這些作品不再只是由他們的華文老師來評改，而是交由社群一起讀，社群的熱情反應是他們寫作的推動力，學生開始將注意力從寫作內容轉移到寫作技巧，因為良好的寫作表現吸引了眾多的讀者。

試驗組里有個例子，雖然老師認為該學生的中文程度非常差，但他卻很愛寫，因為他喜歡和同學溝通，而且認為自己寫得不錯。

Roed (2003) 在一篇文章里研究這個因素，並解釋：“相較於面對面談話，人們在網上交流的討論行為有著很大的不同。研究已經顯示，當人們在網上溝通時顯得較少抑制，顯示較少的社會憂慮，並且減少他們展示人前的自我意識。”

Roed 也描述透過互聯網交流可以是語言學習者的一個主要的優勢，因為這樣減少憂慮，並且幫助發展信心。

透過訪談，研究者也發現學生普遍認為利用電腦科技寫作，能減少他們的錯別字，提高寫作效率。

## 結論

網誌因為是傳意寫作，適合各種能力的學生，他們各有不同寫法，都能受益；而且對能力差的學生很有鼓勵作用，能引起他們的寫作動機。網誌使寫作變成了很容易的事情，寫作真正成爲了一項人人都可以參與的日常活動。問卷里，71.3%的學生表達他們比較喜歡用網誌來寫周記或讀後感。

網誌寫作時的讀者意識，可以提高作者的寫作能力。因此，未來的研究應該探討如何設計以讀者爲本的寫作課程，提高學生對讀者的認知。此外，我們不可忽視互聯網的作用。它提供寫作教學多元化的輔助功能，突破傳統教室所面臨的困境，不僅可作爲各種訊息的資料來源，亦可作爲合作、討論與發表的空間，以及提供新型式的學習方式。

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