

The Middle Space: The Role of Blogs in Blended Learning

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Abstract

As blended learning (BL) becomes a new normal in higher education, there is a growing need to understand and improve the pedagogy adequate to this new context. As reflective blogs were found to support student teachers' (STs) and teacher educators' (TEs) professional development, the current study aims to explore STs' and TEs' perceptions regarding the contributions of integrating blogs into BL modality. Applying a qualitative approach, analyses of STs' blog posts and transcriptions of focused groups with STs and TEs revealed that a reflective blog may be perceived as mediating between the face-to-face component and the online component of BL for both TEs and STs. For STs, the blog as a mediator served for (1) keeping sequential learning, (2) supporting self-directed learning, (3) supporting peer learning, and (4) promoting theoretical understanding and meaningful learning. For TEs, the blog as a mediator served for (1) tracking STs' distance learning, (2) revealing misconceptions, (3) keeping sequential learning, and (4) increasing motivation and critical thinking. Implications relate to the ways of integrating blogs in BL. The study concludes that blogs may foster meaningful and effective learning experiences in the context of BL, thus, supervisors should embrace digital platforms such as blogs that support reflective practices and assist in assuring the coherence of BL design courses.

Keywords: blended learning; blogs; coherence; teacher education; reflection