e-Teacher 2.0 assignment – Topic 1

Introduction / description

In this exercise I will work with the outline given in the description of topic 1 – sharing. Given miscommunication I have been forced to rethink this and the next topic. In shot this means that the time my students have had with the sharing tools have been limited.

Topic 1 – sharing

The concept of sharing knowledge have been around for a quite a while and with the introduction of computers and not least the wide availability of internet, sharing should be a must thing to do for students of all ages.

Parts of my curriculum are teaching searching for information, and the assessment of the validity and quality of what they find. Strangely there is no requirement for teaching them to share their knowledge. It is up to them to engage in the participation of sharing information.

For this assignment have chosen some of my first year students, which are between 16-18 years of age. My reasoning for this is that they have been introduced to computers and the practices of our school, but haven't lost their fondness of trying new tools and practices. The class I've chosen are already part of an IT experiment at school. They have all been provided with a MacBook Pro and a portable music player with video recording capability, and a software package that give them basic word-processing, image and video-editing, and presentation software.

The experiment

In the first lecture in 2012, I gave them the fairly simple assignment to create a weblog, customize it, and post what interesting assignments they have made during this autumn. They could share what they wanted, reports, essays, or more creative projects like movie translations or video podcasts.

On the technical side, I recommended blogspot.com but they could use any service or install their own, if they wanted.

Results

The students have worked with this exercise with varying degree of enthusiasm. The students which are open and talkative have taken this opportunity to start sharing. One of the students had created a blog before, and found it quite easy.

Unfortunately given my teaching subject, my students have focused more on designing their blogs rather than working on the content. With that in mind, there are examples of really good work these blogs can be seen here: cpedersen.info here: htx.cpedersen.info and here: isabellaskoleting.blogspot.com

Student evaluation

After the students have worked with their blog for roughly a week (given time restraints of this hand-in) I gave them a short survey which can be seen here:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?hl=en_US&formkey=dGZvT0s2OWxwYzQ4REh0amhacy16bIE6MA#gid=0

In the survey I ask them to evaluate blogs and podcasts (not used is this topic). I will focus on the evaluation of blogs. Please beware of the mix in languages the survey is in Danish but my evaluation will be in English.

The basic questions are

1. **Hvordan oplever du brugen af blogs i forhold til at lære noget?**
2. **Hvordan oplever du brugen af blogs?**
3. **Bedøm følgende udsagn: "Brugen af en blog motiverer mig til at lære/dele"**
4. **Hvordan påvirker brugen af blogs Jeres arbejde?**

In question 1, the results are:

Answer	no.
En stor hjælp	0
En lille hjælp	10
Ligegyldigt	7
En hindring	1

In question 2, the results are:

Answer	no.
Nemt	13
Mindre nemt	3
Lidt besværligt	1
Svært	1

In question 3, the results are:

Answer	no.
Helt enig	5
Lidt enig	5
Lidt uenig	2
Meget uenig	4
Ved ikke	2

In question 4, the results are:

Answer	no.
Forbedre arbejdet	4
Vanskeliggør arbejdet	3
Gør ingen forskel	11

Interpretation of the survey
Looking at the numbers it is possible to deduct that the students in general think that blogs can help a little in learning. 7 students are indifferent. Seeing the results I'm tempted in blaming the results in bad wording of the question. It should have been phrased more like: "Do you think other students will benefit from you sharing knowledge via a weblog?"

In question two I can conclude that for the most part working with blogs are easy. This is probably due to the user-friendliness of blogspot.

In question three the answers are a bit more indeterminate. Blogs may motivate some but by no means all. The explanation for this result might be in the short exposure my students have had with writing blogs but given my personal experience, I would claim blogging are not for everyone. It requires time and persistency a virtue not all students process yet.

Question four is quite interesting yet difficult for the students to answer. The survey shows that three thinks that writing a blog makes it more difficult. Four think that it will improve their work, and the rest think that it makes no difference.
The reason I this that his question is interesting is that, the students have to look upon their work, and critically estimate if using a blog would change their work. I for one would think that posting ones work online for all to see, would improve the quality of the work.

Conclusion

In conclusion I would claim a partial success in introducing weblogs to this class. They understood what the purpose of sharing was, but they aren't used to share other things than music, video etc. This might have been solved by exposing them over a longer period, and possibly interweaving the use of the weblog into other subjects. This would require an overall plan, and constant supervision to check if the students update their pages.

In relation to web2.0 technologies, I haven't got a doubt that they eventually will become more integrated within the classic classroom teaching. I personally use some of the tools in my teachings, I use Google docs, I'm an avid user of Dropbox and I have my own webpage where students can read my work done at school or other projects I've participated in.

Didactic planning for a learning session involving Web 2.0

Education	• What kind of education is the session related to? *Teaching session and subsequent personal work.* *I've chosen students from the first year, in the subject communication and information technology.*
Aim	• What is the general aim of the session? *The aim was to introduce the students to blogging tools and force them to create a weblog.* • What is the aim of the web 2.0 aspect? *Sharing and reflection on what they can use this tool for.*
Learning preconditions	• Who are the target group? Student at 1st class at a technical gymnasium (high school level) • How are their learning preconditions in general? *They all have laptops, access to internet. They are used to work in groups and for this class specifically; have a software package that allows them to work with video and audio*
Content	• What is the specific content? *Introduction to weblogs, with examples other students work. The specific contents of their weblog are work created during their 1. Semester.*
Timeframe	• What is the duration of this session? *Week 2 and 3 of 2012 roughly 6 lectures.* • How long do you expect the students to work with the web 2.0 aspect? *Throughout the whole project period, and hopefully also after that.*
Learning process: **Workflow**	• What is the general workflow in this session? *The students are working with an assignment, while teachers are coaching them. IE. They listen to my introduction and see my examples. Afterwards they start creating their own blog. If help needed they contact me.* • Does the web 2.0 aspect support specific learning styles? *The students are used to searching for knowledge online. Sharing their knowledge will not only help them improve their work, but may also inspire other students.* • What other parts of the education does this session's workflow have to coincide with? *The students work with parts of their ordinary curriculum*
Learning process: **Role of the participants**	• How do the students act in this session? *Given that the assignment was for each student to create their own blog, the only collaboration between them came when they had to figure out how blogspot worked.*

	• How are the students organised? *They work in small groups*
The teachers function	• How does the teacher act in this session? *Primarily as coach* • Is the web 2.0 aspect teacher-dependent or are the students able to work through it by themselves? Does the web 2.0 aspect require an introduction? Does the teacher evaluate the work of the students? *I introduced them to blogspot and showed how the basic elements worked. It is my opinion that most of the students are familiar with Facebook, I therefor expected them in no time, to decode the UI of blogspot.*
Resources	• What supplemental learning resources are available to the students? *None other than guides they can find on the internet or help from me.*
Evaluation	• How are the students evaluated in this session? *I make them answer a short survey, which is evaluated in this document.* • How is the web 2.0 aspect evaluated? *Their blog are posted on our internal messageboard and possibly one the school website.*