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Blogging to Enhance the Classroom Experience

An Action Research Report by Christine M. Schmitt

Blogging to Enhance the Classroom Experience

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In fulfillment of final requirements for the MAED degree

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St. Paul, Minnesota

Advisor _____

Date _____

Abstract

The purpose of this research study was to determine the effects blogging had on the sixth grade reading classroom. This examination took place during the first five weeks of school in a public school classroom setting with four rotations of around eighty-eight sixth graders total. Data was collected using student self-assessment rubrics, student input questions, observational participation tallies, and teacher field notes. The self-assessment rubrics showed students initially ranked themselves higher than their actual work, but with time, they became more accurate evaluators of their work. Classroom conversations about the rubric also showed increased understanding of the expectations and self-evaluation in general. The student input questions shared the overall positive impact students felt blogging had on their participation and skill development.

Observational tallies of in-class and blogging participation showed no specific increase or decrease on participation in general. Teacher field notes included student successes from using the blog and student suggestions for improvement, amongst other topics. Overall, it seems blogging made a positive impact on the reading classroom. Going forward, students will be given more control of their learning and the work itself. One way is through students creating the discussion questions. Further research topics include teaching proper technology usage and etiquette and student choice within the classroom as both were needs seen during the study.

Prior to the start of the 2014-2015 school year, I had completed six years teaching reading and language arts, three in sixth grade and three years prior to that in seventh and eighth grade. Each of those years, I found it very difficult to find the time or classroom situation which would allow all learners to share their thoughts on a reading with all classroom participants. Time can be restrictive with an average of less than sixty classroom minutes per class per day. This can be cut down even further with transitions and time spent reviewing what was read. Therefore, an addition or alternative needed to be considered. Adding additional time during the school day is not feasible, so utilizing time both in and out of class that would allow the needs of twenty first century learners to be met is necessary. According to Stutzman (2006) and Huffaker (2004), blogs (online chronological communication tools) extend opportunities for learning in many ways, including: discussions, practice, and research. Although this type of technology is relatively new to the classroom setting and always evolving, literature reviews and numerous studies of blogging in the classroom have been conducted. These have found educational blogs to have many benefits, many similarities to how things are currently done in classrooms, and offer students a familiar format, as they are already utilizing in similar technologies outside of school.

Students from the entire sixth grade will participate in blogging. They will complete posts and replies during reading class. They will also be given additional opportunities to post outside reading class and at home through the use of a one to one iPad program. These students will help to determine what effects blogging has on classroom discussions and the development of reading skills in a sixth grade reading classroom. I hoped

blogging would show increased opportunity and comfort in discussing assigned readings and increased skill development due to the change in format and opportunity.

The learning benefits are seemingly endless when using blogs in educationally-sound ways. There are benefits to blogging based upon the structure, as well as many other benefits.

Because blogs are based online, they are accessible from nearly anywhere, allowing the teacher and the students to extend the learning beyond the confines of the classroom (Huffaker, 2004; Seaton & Bodell, 2009). Blogs also allow students to take as much time as they need to gather and share their thoughts, however they would like. According to Jimoyiannis and Angelaina (2012), the structure also allows students to take on different roles, including, at times, the role of the primary leader. Depending on the teacher's expectations, students can be as active as they would like to be on the class blog, allowing additional practice or interaction for those who would need or desire it. The students can also help one another with less attention needed from the teacher. Seaton and Bodell (2009) and Davis and McGrail (2011) had students who experienced noticeable enjoyment because the online structure of blogging allowed them to write to an audience beyond the teacher that could relate to them and provide feedback for them. Because they are writing for others they knew they could interact with in an ongoing manner, Davis and McGrail (2011) also noted students seemed more reflective and careful with their writing than if they had been writing for a standard teacher only audience.

There are many other educational benefits of student blogging. Davis and McGrail (2011) found that the students in their study received the unanticipated benefits of

increased motivation and confidence while learning through blogging. Jimoyiannis and Angelaina (2012) cited improved writing skills as a result of their study of student blogging. Blogging supports collaboration among students and between students and others in the world (Clyde, 2005). Students can use blogs as a source of information or support for research (Clyde, 2005). Du and Wagner, as cited in Stutzman (2006), report the benefit of increased student engagement while educationally blogging. Blogging can develop stronger relationships among students and, therefore, create a sense of community (Davis & McGrail, 2011).

Although student blogging requires modern technology, teachers can utilize many practices and techniques similar to what they are already doing to help create even stronger student outcomes. Santos (2011) believes blogging and other technology “will not replace, but rather augment, the traditional classroom experience.” Jimoyiannis and Angelaina (2012) describe the students in their study as having enhanced communication opportunities with their teacher and classmates through the use of a class blog. This open communication also supports the philosophy of a student-centered classroom instead of one that is teacher-centered. Learning is something the students can explore and develop more on their own instead of being completely dependent on the teacher and the limited time in class to develop those topics (Santos, 2011). The teacher can determine specific requirements or questions on the blog, similarly to what could have been done in a classroom discussion; students can also develop their own ideas and help educate one another on the blog (Jimoyiannis & Angelaina, 2012).

Keefer, Zeitz, and Resnick, as cited in Clark (2009), share the four most productive components to support group discussions that would all translate easily to a class blog

discussion. The teacher should begin by modeling appropriate and expected behaviors for interacting just as they would for an in class discussion to create a blog that fosters quality class discussions (Clark, 2009). Combining classroom time and discussion with the use of student blogs produces blended learning that can be an enhanced, yet similar in structure, to what teachers are already doing in their classrooms (Jimoyiannis & Angelaina, 2012). It has always been the job of teachers to prepare their students to have successful futures. Now, that includes preparing them to see the many uses of digital technologies beyond being solely social media tools (Scott, 2012; Stutzman, 2006).

Online social media tools, such as blogging, are already very popular with school-aged students. In fact, adolescents makeup a large part of the blogging population according to Huffaker (2004). Scott (2012) shares that many students are already coming to school with, at least, a basic, working knowledge of many different types of technology. Blogs, for example, can be very easy to use and allow for a lot of creativity, making them appealing to school-age children (Santos, 2011). Using technologies for educational purposes, potentially with specific parameters, is the only way teachers need to adapt what students already know and do. Resnick, as cited by Huffaker (2004), states “...digital fluency will be another prerequisite for sociability, lifelong learning and employment opportunities.”

If students are already using this technology, and they will be expected to use them properly in the future, it is becoming the responsibility of educators to make sure that happens. Because students are already using this technology, it is also important to consider teaching proper e-safety (Mitchell, 2013). Stutzman (2006) reminds that everyone has their own digital identity, so supporting students in creating a positive and

safe digital identity is a top priority when using technology in education. Approving posts to the blog prior to online viewing and creating rules for the blogs are two e-safety suggestions Mitchell (2013) makes about classroom blogs specifically.

Students are also already practicing skills and techniques that will be developed more completely using blogs. Clark (2009) found in her study that students of all reading abilities independently displayed questioning, evaluating, and interpreting strategies when participating in a group discussion. This provides further support that refining skills students are already using will create even stronger educational results.

Student blogging is one way classrooms can evolve with ever changing technology. Blogging has many benefits due to its structure, including connecting students with others who can support their learning and giving students a potentially unlimited audience for their thoughts. Blogging has many other benefits for learning including increased student motivation, self-guided learning, and preparedness for their futures. Blogging within the classroom can be done relatively easily as many quality teaching techniques can be transferred over to this digital format. Finally, using technology is something most students are already doing to connect with the world around them, so it is wise for educators to encourage this interest by teaching students to use them in proper ways.

Description of Research Process

My research was completed using the following methods: teacher observation in the form of field notes, teacher observation in the form of a tally of student participation,

student self-assessment in the form of a rubric, and student input through the use of student input questions. These were completed chronologically with some time overlap.

Throughout the entire project, I, as the teacher took observational field notes. Daily, I converted my shorthand notes to more complete summaries of my observations. I also categorized the notes according to the part of the project they connected with best. The notes included issues with technology, student comments, impressions, and my reactions to class discussions.

To begin, I set up a separate blog for each of my class rotations because they were each reading a different class novel, and it was the only fair way to compare in-class and online participation. Students each have a school-issued iPad mini that remains in their possession for the duration of the school year. These iPads were loaded with an app called Kidblog which took each student directly to his or her own class blog after an initial log-in process. Students practiced logging in, creating a comment, and creating a post before the class novel was discussed. We discussed that the expectations for each question were included in the body of the initial post. We also discussed the rubric as a tool for completing their work properly. As a class, students examined practice posts and critiqued how well they had followed directions to learn from mistakes before they began blogging about the novel.

Reading the novel was a focus during this time as well. We mostly read the novel as a class to begin, which allowed for reviewing reading strategies. This also allowed the students the opportunity for in class discussions prior to having online discussions on the blog. We practiced making predictions, having appropriate disagreements, and supporting ideas with evidence from the text.

Also during the first week of blogging practice, while also waiting for parent opt-out forms to be returned, students responded to a key question about how often they chose to participate during class discussions. They had to decide if it was: often, sometimes, rarely, or never. Two students who selected “often” and two who selected “never” were chosen from each class to be tallied to compare in-class versus online participation as well as week to week participation totals (Appendix A).

One hoped-for outcome of my action research was increased student participation in some form. Students who were self-declared as “never” participating were good participants to monitor because any perceived increase in participation, online or in class, would be a positive benefit. At the same time, ideally, introducing online discussion should not decrease participation in students, so students who were self-declared as “often” participating were monitored to see how the introduction of blogging affected their participation. Data was collected daily during novel discussion times to see how often each student chose to participate without specifically being told to share. Times the student was called on without volunteering first or during a time when all students were expected to give an answer, were not included. The required online discussion components were also not included.

Students then began blogging about the class novel. For the first two weeks, I provided two topic options. Students chose which question they wanted to respond to, but the expectations for their comments were standard across all options. Students were allowed and encouraged to answer both options if they felt they had something meaningful to contribute. From the third week on, students were required to comment on

one specific question but given a choice of which additional question to respond to and which topic to respond to peer comments.

If a student was observed to be struggling with the process or expectations, I tried to work with them to improve. I also suggested all students look at what others were doing on the blog, which contained many strong examples. Length of a post was less important than the content it contained, but often longer length posts included greater clarity. Some time was spent in class discussing what students found on the blog and allowing students to praise each other for particularly insightful posts.

Throughout the entire process, students were given a minimum number of posts and comments to make but were also given the option and opportunity to create and respond to more. Students were required to self-assess and submit their assessment twice using a rubric (Appendix B). To complete this assessment, students used a screenshot of the rubric document I created. They inserted the screenshot into an app called Educreations which functions a lot like a digital whiteboard. They circled the sections they felt fit their work the best, and they took a screenshot with their markings included. Students could also type to help explain their choices. When they were finished, they submitted their self-assessment through the school e-mail program app directly to me. Students could have used that same rubric to self-assess more frequently if desired. Technology was utilized for students to self-assess and submit assessments.

Results of the self-assessments were compiled and evaluated. These assessments were compared to my perception of their success each week. The results, including successes and struggles, were discussed each week to help further student success. This

information was also used to reference, compare, and conference with students about their progress once they had completed five weeks of blogging.

The final portion of data I collected came from student input questions (Appendix C). All students in my reading classes responded to these questions on their iPads using Excel Survey through their One Drive school e-mail accounts. Students were able to have a direct link to the questions, which they answered anonymously. The questions focused on students' impressions of the blog and how it affected their participation in reading class. The first two questions contained written answer choices, so they were evaluated for frequency of selection. The answer choices for the third and fourth questions were in numerical form. I was able to average the numbers, and if needed, found that the average was simply between two responses. I also looked for the mode answer for each question. The most frequent response is sometimes different than the average, and it is important to be consider because the average can sometimes distort the results. The fifth question was an open response question, so responses to the fifth question had to be examined individually and categorized as best as possible. The rubric provided the basis for many categories including changes to the timing or grammar expectations.

Analysis of Data

Data was collected from observational and student reflection methods. Observational data included teacher field notes and tallied student participation. Student reflection data included rubric reflection and student input questions. Data was collected and analyzed from all sources following five full weeks of school. During this time, students

participated in three blog experiences. They also had the opportunity to contribute in classroom novel discussions revolving around on at least ten days.

During the first week of the study, students were asked to report whether they felt they willingly participated in reading class discussions often, sometimes, rarely, or never. Two students from each class who responded never and two students who responded often were selected at random to be monitored to see if due to their participation on the blog, their in-class participation increased. In three rotations, only one student or no students chose the response of never, so students who chose rarely were used instead. In some cases was not possible to obtain, but a balance of genders was used whenever possible.

Over the five weeks, students were monitored during in-class novel discussions happening no more than three days a week. If one of the monitored students volunteered to share orally during a time when complete class participation was not required, that student received a tally on the chart. During the three blogging opportunities, all students were encouraged to participate beyond the required number of replies. A monitored student who made an additional reply was given one tally per post. The tallies were totaled into one number and entered in to table 1.

Table 1

Student Participation Totals on Kidblog and In-Class

Student ID– participation frequency	Observation Week 1		Observation Week 2		Observation Week 3		Observation Week 4		Observation Week 5		Total Per Student
	<i>BP</i>	<i>I-C</i>	<i>BP</i>	<i>I-C</i>	<i>BP</i>	<i>I-C</i>	<i>BP</i>	<i>I-C</i>	<i>BP</i>	<i>I-C</i>	
Rotation One											
A-never		0	1	0	0	0		1	0	1	3
B-never		1	1	1	1	0		2	0	1	7
C-often		1	1	1	2	3		2	1	1	12
D-often		2	2	2	1	2		3	0	2	14
Rotation Two											
E-never		1	0	1	0	0		0	0	1	3
F-never		0	0	1	1	2		1	0	0	5
G-often		1	1	1	1	2		2	0	1	9
H-often		0	0	2	2	0		1	0	1	6
Rotation Three											
I-never		0	0	0	0	1		0	0	1	2
J-never		0	0	1	0	Moved and left the school district after writing initial post for the week				1	
K-often		2	1	2	1	2		2	1	2	13
L-often		1	1	1	2	2		2	1	1	11
Rotation Four											
M-never		0	1	1	0	0		0	0	1	3
N-never		1	0	0	1	0		1	0	0	3
O-often		2	2	2	2	1		3	1	1	14
P-often		0	2	1	1	2		3	0	2	11

Trends within the data were inconclusive. The number of students who participated in-class and on the blog varied week to week without specific impact seen in any certain category. Possible explanations for this include students misjudging or misreporting their participation habits, classroom time and balance restrictions, and the short duration of the project.

All students completed two self-evaluations of their work using a teacher-created rubric, Appendix B. Overall trends were fairly clear and consistent. During the first round of self-evaluations, a majority of students, 77%, ranked themselves as earning a perfect score, of fifteen out of fifteen. An overall score of fourteen out of fifteen was chosen by around 18% of the students, and only around 2% of the students chose a score under twelve out of fifteen. Prior to this, the rubric had been explained in class and examples had been discussed.

After their self-assessment, students each received an email with a teacher-evaluated rubric marked for their work. As a class, patterns of problems were discussed, and good examples from the week were shared. Students were given the opportunity for one-on-one time to ask questions about scoring over the next two days. Few students utilized this opportunity, but in class discussions seemed to reveal a more clear understanding of the rubric and therefore the assignment expectations.

The problem areas in the first round focused on the “Response to Teacher Post-Grammar” and “Response to Student Post- Content” lines. Students struggled to write complete sentences in the digital format of the blog. Other work in all core classes had students practicing complete sentences, so the electronic nature of the work seemed to be the cause of the problem. Students also focused their responses to their peers on agreeing

or disagreeing with classmates, without adding anything new for everyone to consider to the post.

The second round of self-assessments followed a different trend than the first round. Students seemed to rank themselves lower in the rubric categories that had been teacher-evaluated as lower-scoring categories in the first round. These struggles had been pointed out following the first round of posts, so that consideration was likely in students' minds while filling out their second round rubrics. Though, these areas were still lower for some students, a larger number of students had fixed their prior problems. In some cases, this meant students lacked in a different category, but generally student work improved from the first to second post. The most frequent self-evaluation score for the second round was a fourteen out of fifteen with around 65% of the students selecting it. Of those scores, the most frequently marked missed point was in the "Response to Student Post-Content" category. Many students still selected a full score of fifteen out of fifteen, but for the second round around 13% of students gave themselves a score of less than twelve. All but one of these were marked with a score of plus two for each of the categories for a total of ten points out of fifteen.

After three rounds of blog posts and almost five weeks of school, eighty-one students completed five input questions each through the use of an Excel Survey. Their answers were submitted anonymously, and the questions were assessed individually and as a whole.

The first question asked how blogging had affected their in-class participation. A majority of the students felt it had a positive effect on their participation with nearly 70% stating it made them "more likely to participate" or "much more likely to participate".

Five students felt it had a negative impact on their participation with responses of “less likely to participate” or “much less likely to participate”. The complete comparison of responses can be seen in *Figure 1*.

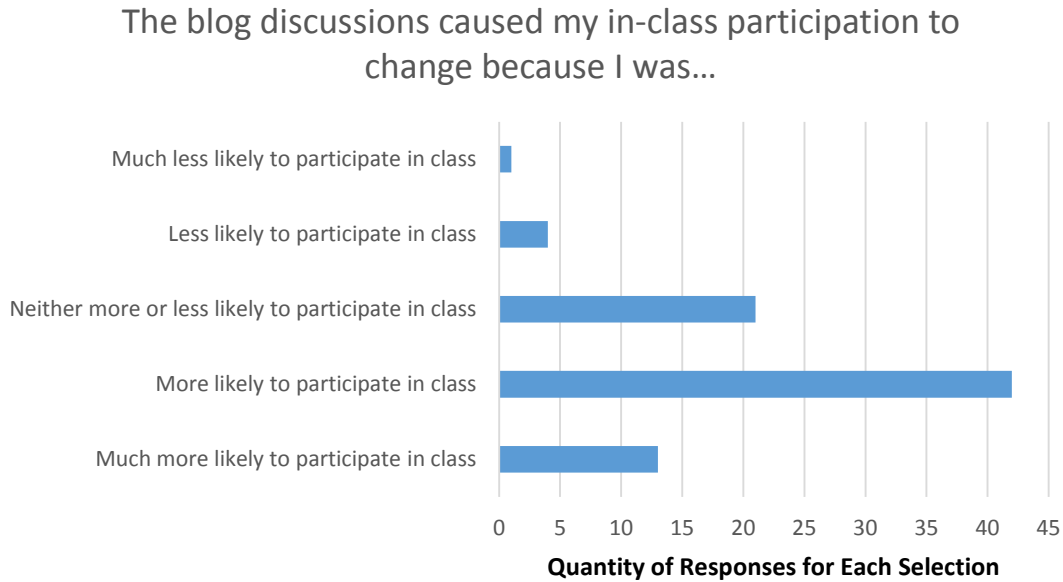


Figure 1. Student responses to Student Input Question 1.

This question was very subjective in nature, and it could potentially have been hard for students to answer accurately. The year started with technology, and Kidblog was introduced as a discussion method from the beginning. It may have been difficult for students to honestly determine the change in their participation between the new school year becoming more familiar, reading more of the novel, or the blog. It was possibly a combination of all three.

The second question asked students how comfortable they felt voicing their opinions on the blog. The most frequent response was “most of the time”, with 41% of the respondents choosing it. Once again, the average response was positive with 75%

choosing “most of the time” or “all of the time”. This question left me completely dependent on the students to share their feelings. They are the only ones who know how they feel, so although I could make my own assumptions based on their attitude and the content of their contributions, hearing from them directly was crucial. Complete responses can be seen in *Figure 2*.

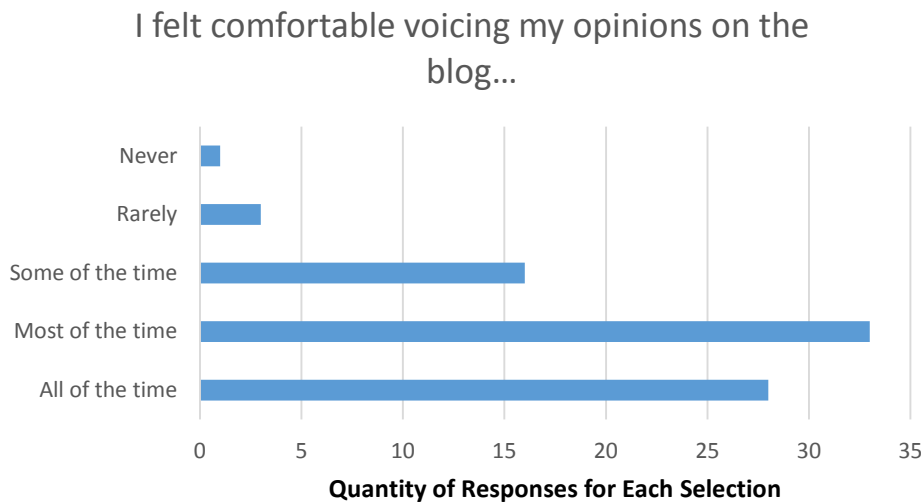


Figure 2. Student responses to Student Input Question 2.

The third question asked students to consider the blog and its impact on their reading and thinking skills. For this question, they were given the option of choosing any number from one to five, where one represented not helping at all and five represented very much. The average response was an impact between a three and four. The most frequent response fits with the average because thirty-nine students chose a four for their response. Students chose four or five 63% of the time, relating that they felt blogging had a noticeably positive impact on their reading and thinking skills. Full data for question three can be seen in *Figure 3*.

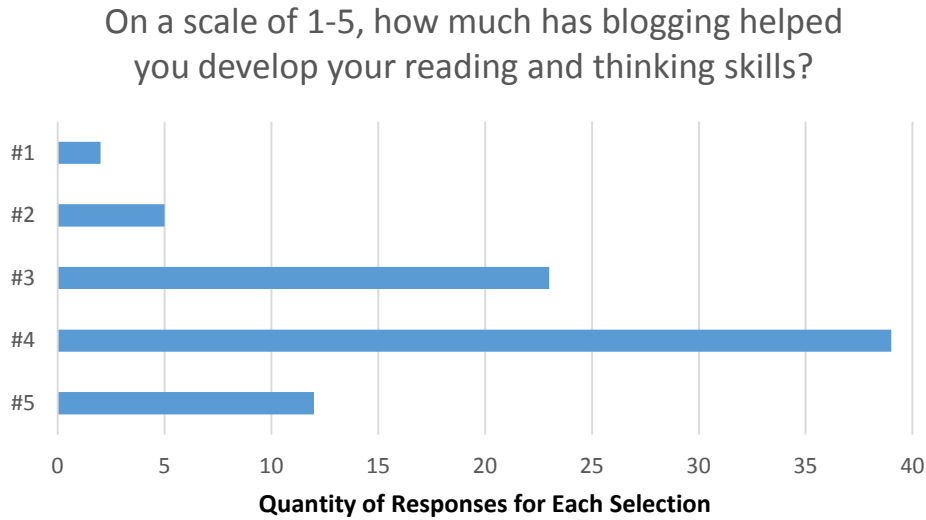


Figure 3. Student responses to Student Input Question 3.

Question four of the student input questions also asked students to rank the evaluation rubric from one to five. Results for this question were very similar to question three. The most popular response was once again four, and a majority of students still showed they felt a large impact by choosing answers of four or five. The same exact number of students selected one and two for questions three and four, with two and five students choosing them respectively. Complete data for question four can be seen in *Figure 4*.

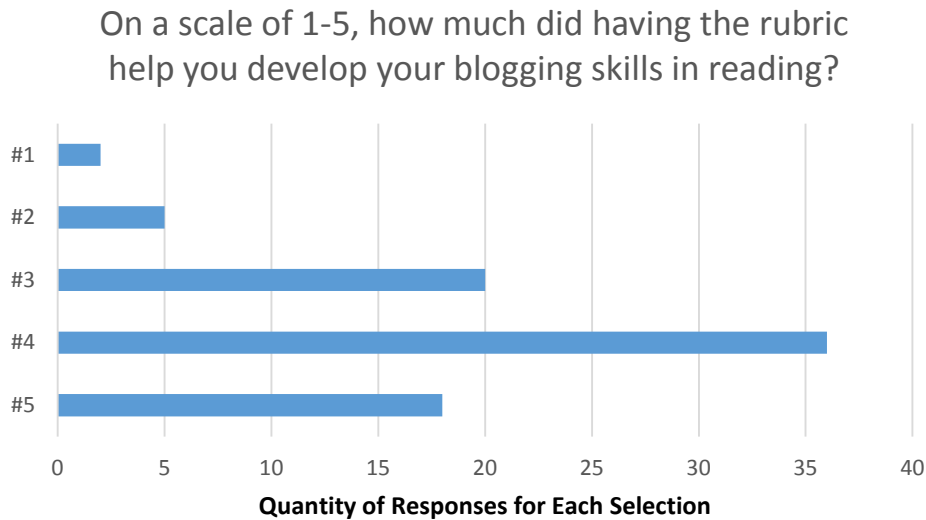


Figure 4. Student responses to Student Input Question 4.

Question five of the student input questions was a required open response question. Students were to give any ideas they had that would improve the blogging process for them overall. After reviewing the responses carefully, they were coded into six categories. These categories included: technical issues, classroom issues, content changes, frequency and format changes, other miscellaneous ideas, and no change suggested. Technical issues were problems or frustrations with the Kidblog app that could not be changed such as the default size of the font or where buttons are located within the site. Classroom issues included comments about in-class issues that were not directly connected to blogging, such as people wasting time or being loud. Content changes were suggestions about the style and difficulty expected for their blog responses. Frequency and format changes included ideas about the regularity and arrangement of the posts. Suggestions such as decreasing the frequency of the posts and answering with a partner fell under this code. Other miscellaneous ideas included any other suggestions students gave that did not fit under any other category. Most of these responses did not

fit with the question such as stating how the blog helped him/her remember details from the story. The final category, no change suggested, included responses that stated no changes were needed and things were already successful.

The most common response was no change suggested with 31 students writing a response under that coding. Around 25% of the responses included things that cannot be changed at this time including technical issues and other miscellaneous ideas. Full coding for the responses for student input question five can be seen in *Figure 5*.

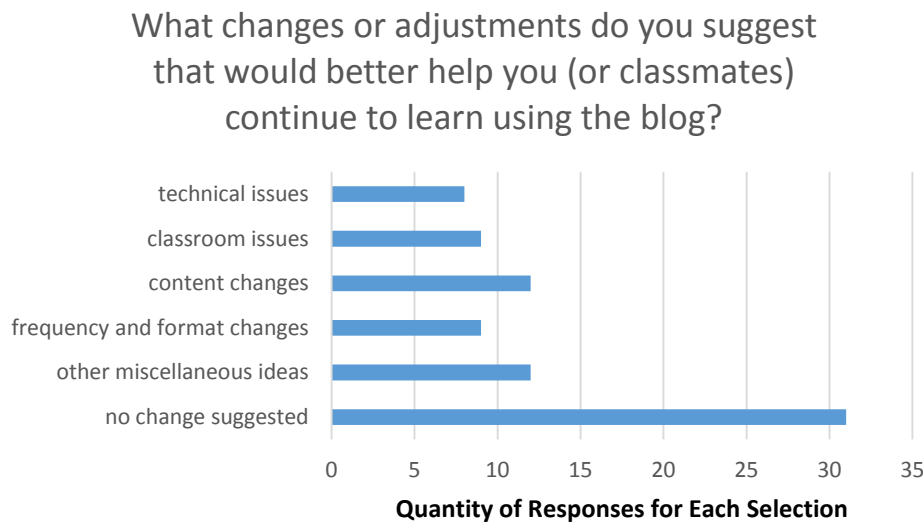


Figure 5. Student responses for Student Input Question 5.

Teacher field notes were recorded from the beginning of the study to the end. At times, the topics of the notes varied greatly. In the beginning, they were focused more around the blog and beginning the work and later it was about specific issues and successes students were having with the blog. I coded my notes into four categories: technology or website work, student issue, student success, and student suggestion.

Technology or website work included comments about the website or app itself. They

also included what aspects of the Kidblog website I wanted to explain to students such as how to make a comment versus a post, or how to customize your work. *Student issue* included notes about concerns I had for students regarding their work in Kidblog. This could be failing to answer the question completely, concern about students grasping the skill imbedded in the question, or any other academic concern I had for an individual or group of students. *Student success* included notes about specific student achievements compared to in-class observations or previous work. These notes were included regularly because although many struggles occurred, students made successful achievements often through the blog. I also noted the quality of discussion under this code because ideas were often more carefully thought-out and shared on the blog versus our in-class discussions. *Student suggestion* included notes about student ideas or suggestions for improvement. These were taken seriously and recorded frequently because one hoped for outcome of this project was students driving their own learning, so therefore, their input was important. Many days included entries from multiple categories. Overall I recorded thirty-one occurrences in the four categories. The breakdown of their percentages is shown in *Figure 6*.

Field Notes Coded Occurrences

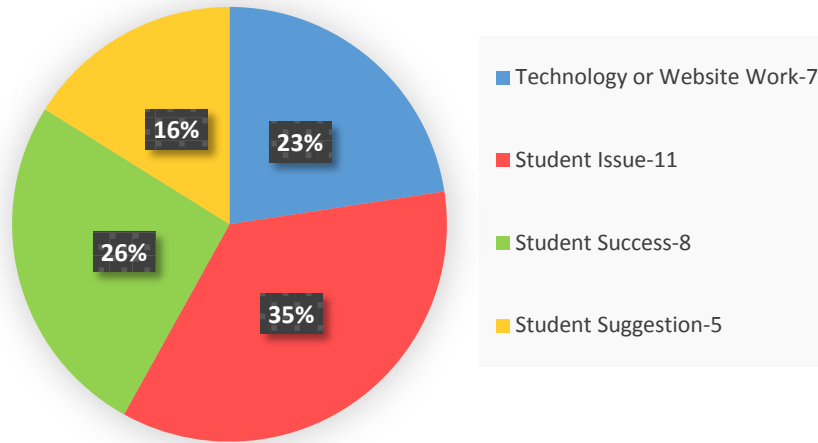


Figure 6. Percentages for Field Notes Coded Occurrences.

The data itself showed some contradictions, but overall I saw the blog have a positive impact on student learning. It allowed students an opportunity to continue their learning in different ways at different times. The blog provided more equity in the classroom because students were not limited by time or comfort restraints in the same way as an in-class discussion. The input questions show students feel a positive impact from the blog, and my observational field notes support that conclusion as well.

Action Plan

Following five weeks of action research, it is clear that blogging made many changes in my reading classroom. Students were able to contribute in a way that they have not been able to previously, which allowed students the opportunity to think and analyze before they shared their ideas. They were able to continue the conversation by replying to others in an open format, versus the style of the traditional classroom where responses are limited by time and often by the teacher allowing them.

I think the addition of blogging has impacted student learning in many ways. Going forward, blogging will definitely continue in my classroom. Students showed they felt an overall positive impact from blogging through their rubric self-evaluations and input questions. My observational field notes also shared that positive outlook. I have seen a change in how students discuss things, including topics unrelated to reading. They seem more comfortable speaking their mind and sharing their thoughts. Although some data seemed varied throughout my research, I had students who previously declared themselves as “never” or “rarely” contributing in class, choosing to share their ideas and continue the conversation.

Students began blogging with teacher-created questions and set guidelines shared through the use of a rubric. The rubric gave them direction for their work and also a way to more easily understand their final graded score. Both of these elements may change in the future however.

One change I thought of originally, but some students have also shared their interest in, is creating questions for the blog themselves. Before this could occur, all students would have to learn how to write quality questions while keeping in mind the many different skills questions can help practice. We have already discussed how the questions were created to be open, therefore allowing students to determine their own thoughts and have individual ideas instead of just one or two “right” answers. Students would have to keep all of these things in mind, as well as the context of the novel, so I think this would best be done in partners to start. Also, before questions are posted, they would have to be teacher approved.

Another change going forward would be the format and content of the rubric. Additional points and categories may need to be added as the year continues. Categories could include length requirements, providing support or proof from the story, and other skill-specific topics to practice. Length does not necessarily lead to a better response, but some students are struggling with writing too little to explain their points, and others are writing too much in an attempt to ensure they are clear. With the addition of categories and therefore expectations, points would need to be added to the rubric. I think a five-three-one point instead of the current three-two-one point scale might be appropriate in the future.

Through my action research, I found a number of areas for future research and educational focus. My students already felt a fair amount of ease with technology when we introduced iPad minis into the classroom. Because the iPads are now in their possession all the time, all students are continuing to become even more comfortable with them. Being comfortable is good, but students are easing into some bad habits with regard to being proper and professional with their writing on the blog. My coworkers and I tried to begin with clear expectations and discussions of appropriate usage, yet students still struggled to consistently use their devices appropriately. Further research could help me determine the best ways to teach students how to use technology responsibly and professionally when needed. Students now are born into a world of ever-changing technology and innovation. They are exposed to many different uses of technology by the time they get to sixth grade, so researching the best techniques to support quality use appropriate for different situations would be a good next step. This is a skill students will need for the rest of their lives.

Another further research idea is about choices in the classroom. One element of my project that received unintentional praise and focus was the weekly blog questions with choices. I included the choices because I wanted students to be able to pick what they felt connected to, and I wanted to provide some opportunity for divergence in responses. Students enjoyed having the choices, even if they chose to respond to both questions. I would like to research methods for including choice that do not create excessive work for the teacher. In the past, choices have led to much more time spent evaluating and grading. I also struggled with creating choices that practiced the same skills and standards. Choices on the blog were relatively straightforward to create, assess, and grade. I believe my students would benefit from additional quality choices in my reading classroom, and more study could help me to create those opportunities in a way that would be positive for everyone involved, including the teacher.

In the upcoming weeks and months, I believe the impact of blogging in the classroom will continue to be seen in different ways. Their overall writing ability should continue to increase which is a life skill that will help them in all school areas as well. Students who feel more reserved or restricted in the classroom may continue to develop confidence in sharing their opinions. With the addition of other skills, students would only have further exposure and support for classroom topics. Student-created questions would help develop their critical thinking skills. The full impact of blogging in the classroom is yet to be seen, but with additional research and changes, the outcome could be even better than what has been determined after five weeks.

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Appendix B

	High Level (+3)	Medium Level (+2)	Low Level (+1)
Response to Teacher Post- Timing	Written and posted Friday-Monday	Written and posted Tuesday-Wednesday	Written and posted Thursday
Response to Teacher Post- Content	Post reflects on all questions and contains an additional question or idea for others to consider	Post reflects on at least 50% of the questions and contains an additional question or idea	Post reflects on less than 50% of teacher questions/ideas and doesn't contain an additional thinking question
Response to Teacher Post- Grammar	Post is written using proper grammar-"non- texting" language and at least 75% of it is written using sentences	Post is written using proper grammar- "non-texting" language but less than 75% is written in sentences	Post is written using improper grammar- "texting" language
Response to Student Post- Content	Post connects to student's comments, question, or idea in a meaningful way. It provides something new to think about and/or leads to continued discussion	Post connects to some of student's comments, questions, or ideas, but either goes off topic or doesn't provide continued opportunity for discussion	Post is off topic and doesn't relate to student post
Response to Student Post- Grammar	Post is written using proper "non-texting" language and at least 75% of it is written using sentences	Post is written using proper "non-texting" language but less than 75% is written in sentences	Post is written using "texting" language

Appendix C

Please circle or fill in your answer for each of the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers, but please be honest. There is no need to put your name on it, and if you need more room, feel free to use the side or back.

1. The blog discussions caused my in-class participation to change because I was...
Much more likely to participate in class
More likely to participate in class
Neither more or less likely to participate in class
Less likely to participate in class
Much less likely to participate in class

2. I felt comfortable voicing my opinions on the blog...
All of the time
Most of the time
Some of the time
Rarely
Never

3. On a scale of 1-5 (1=not at all, and 5=very much) how much has blogging helped you develop your reading and thinking skills. _____

4. On a scale of 1-5 (1=not at all, and 5=very much), how much did having the rubric help you develop your blogging skills in reading. _____

5. What changes or adjustments do you suggest that would better help you (or classmates) continue to learn using the blog?

