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The use of Weblogs to students' learning engagement: A case study of brick and mortar course

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this case study was to determine the effect of the easy-to-use and cost-free Weblog as an instructional tool on students' engagement in their learning process. Weblogs are a new and effective platform for information sharing and interaction among the bloggers (Marlow 2004) and was introduced in Pre-University IT course. This course was offered in a traditional class environment but the coursework and group discussion/communication occurred virtually. Weblogging enabled students to share their work with each other online, and make it available from and to any computer that is connected to the Internet. The curricula were designed to support learning: to be exciting, be based on real-word problems, requiring students to work collaboratively beyond the school classroom. A total of 95 students participated in this study. After submitting assignments, 95 students were given an online survey, and 14 students (were chosen from the total of 95 students) completed a paper-based questionnaire to assess their use of Weblogs for skill acquisition and their general acceptance of this technology. This paper will report on the (1) use of Weblogs, (2) reasons using an online method and (3) recommendations for those who are considering the use of Blogosphere for their courses.

INTRODUCTION

Universities are facing increased pressures to demonstrate the effectiveness of their educational efforts (Du & Wagner 2005). Covering specified topics in a course and focusing on the passing rate for courses will not widen students' knowledge horizon. According to Clasen (1974), educators need to demonstrate that assessment and learning are aligned ("assessment for learning"), and that students have a more active role in the learning process ("student centred learning") when they are aligned. Instructors who are predominantly worried about "covering the syllabus" (subject oriented learning), and "maintaining control" (teacher oriented learning) can contribute to the lack of a lasting learning impact (Felder & Brent 1996).

As the unit leader and lecturer in an IT course, I never stop searching and identifying ways that technology can be used to enhance students learning process at our university. With the vision "look ever forward", our university, an Australian offshore campus, is committed to engage students in learner-centred applications. However, using technology appears to be a "new" way of learning for these students, who have spent years of learning in traditional and teacher directed ways.

"A learner-centred application is based upon the assumption that an explicit awareness of what is expected from the learners cognitively will better provide for the support of the complexity inherent in the learning activities involved" stated Land (2000). Oblinger (2003) pointed out that learners who have grown up in the information age with technology, and developed skills, aptitude and attitudes will work collaboratively and thrive on interactivity; and they have an expectation of immediacy, not just in problem-solving and knowledge acquisition, but from their instructors as well.

Based on the collaborative constructivist model, more effective learning can be achieved through interaction and cooperation with group work. When students are passive towards collaborating and participating in their group work, a barrier of learning is created (Beeland 2000). A method of delivering instruction that engages students in their learning process is the use of Weblogging. A Weblogging assignment was introduced to my IT course students as the Weblogs is free web based editor, no server account was needed and it has collaboration-supporting features like hyper

linking, web publishing, and instant feedback and posting. Furthermore, it is a convenient and effective medium for students to carry out their assignment. Weblogs provide opportunities for diverse perspectives, and enrich the student's learning experience (Ferdig 2004). Students required minimal training to publish their blogs. As for workload issues of lecturers, Weblogging can greatly reduce their workloads. The maintenance for this Weblogging assignment is distributed to the blogger software and to the students.

An inherent goal is to meet outcomes of this University and provide opportunities for students to acquire graduate attributes that cater for self-directed and collaborative learning where students are actively engaged in the learning process. Furthermore, to be innovative in teaching, technology should be blended with the skills sets being developed in core discipline areas.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Nowadays, many form of technology are available for use by instructors/lecturers with their students in their class assignments or group assignments, Weblog may provide a significant potential for meeting the needs of students with diverse learning style and for engaging students during the learning process.

They are many definitions for Weblog. For the case study purposes, a Weblog is a regularly updated page or section of a site that is maintained through a simple web interface. The administrator (anyone who has registered as a user) of the Weblog might be the only person adding content, or it might be open to multiple authors, even a whole class.

Some of the definitions and explanations that have been applied in this paper are as follows: 'A weblog, or *blog, is a frequently updated website consisting of dated entries arranged in reverse chronological order so the most recent post appears first (see temporal ordering). Typically, weblogs are published by individuals and their style is personal and informal. Weblogs first appeared in the mid-1990s, becoming popular as simple and free publishing tools became available towards the turn of the century. Since anybody with a net connection can publish their own weblog, there is great variety in the quality, content, and ambition of weblogs, and a weblog may have anywhere from a handful to tens of thousands of daily readers' (Walker 2003).

Weblog allow a group of students to contribute, to create a classroom learning community around whatever topic given by the instructors' need without the extra overhead of learning a complex technology. Creating a community for students is an excellent way to improve their learning experience (Distance Learning Systems 2002)

A public web site where users post informal journals of their thoughts, comments, and philosophies, updated frequently and normally reflecting the views of the blog's creator. (World Wide Learn n.d.) This is a publicly accessible personal journal for an individual. Similar to a personal diary, but shared over the web. The activity of updating a blog is "blogging" and someone who keeps a blog is a "blogger." Blogs are typically updated daily using software that allows people with little or no technical background to update and maintain the blog. Postings on a blog are almost always arranged in chronological order with the most recent additions featured most prominently. (5 Star Supports 2006)

 '…personal Webpublishing technologies and practices can be conceptualized as a reflective conversational learning tool for self-organized learning. Beyond the examination of the theoretical basis for such a claim, initial ideas for specific learning environment designs on the basis of a 'conversational framework' are presented.' (Gahran 2004)

'…Weblog supports learning by building a local and global community, inclusive of teachers, parents, and other students, expanding the learning environment' (McCombs 2000).

The term "Weblog" encompasses a range of ideas and implementations. A Weblog or blog is defined as "a frequent, chronological publication of personal thoughts and Web links" (O'Rourke

2002). This indicates the normal use of a blog as a personal online diary. Weblog can be a teaching and learning tool for instructors/lecturers and students to post messages to a single blog. A definition of a software program called "Blog" captures the advantages of using a Weblog: "An automatic web log program which allows you to update your site without the hassles of HTML editing and having to use a separate program to upload your work" (Northern Lights Internet Solutions, 2000-2001).

Technology provides opportunities for instructors/lecturers to meet the needs of students with various learning styles through use of multimedia (Bryant & Hunton, 2000).

The Participants
A total of 95 students enrolled in Information Technology (IT061, which is being taught as one of the first semester units in the Pre-University program). This Unit introduces students to the basics of Information Communication and Technology concepts. These concepts and skills are required by students to enable them to apply these tools in their tertiary studies. This Unit provides an integrated approach to Commerce studies together with the other Pre-University Commerce units. All 95 students completed a 16 questions online survey and a sub group of 14 chosen students also completed 8 paper-based questionnaires to obtain qualitative data on their percentages of Weblogs.

Number participants in a group
95 students have been divided into small group of 4-6 students for the Weblogging assignment.

The group assignment case study
Each group will be given an assignment case study associated with the IT course unit outline. (Appendix 1)

The Weblog-the 100% paperless assignment
A blog was introduced to help the students to build a classroom community of learners to promote collaboration. It was used for an IT group assignment, incorporating reflective learning and regular group engagement.

Students have to accomplish a case study on a particular topic using the Internet and networking tools. This assignment was 100% paperless based, where students had to work collaboratively in their groups and contribute their thoughts and opinions in the pre-assigned assignment case study in the Weblog area (Appendix 1). It served to extend discussions between group meetings, assist in collaboration and accommodate the highest level of flexibility. This assignment case study was used often for the course activities: literacy inventories, such as lists, purposive reading, observation notes, and linguistic analysis. Students from the same group were encouraged to bring in ideas, useful website links, resources, terminology and methodology from their other courses.

The mark reward Scheme
The mark reward scheme was part of the assignment evaluation criteria (15 marks) where there were two major parts in this mark rewards scheme –the first part- Frequency of contribution: the active contributors would receive more marks (5-10 marks) and the second part-Quality of Contributions: the quality of contributions would determine students marks rewarded (5-10 marks). (Appendix 2.)

The Weblog Design
Posting of students' work online enables students to make contributions to their groups, promotes peer learning, and encourages quality in work.

Students can make a visible contribution to the course and to their group members when their work is posted online. For instance, students were divided into group and given assignment case study among group members. Each student from a group can be responsible to post one's answer/ comments/opinions online. This enables each student to make a key contribution towards one's

group assignment topic given, where each group with the different assignment case study are posted online and available to all.

It was intended that students from different groups would know what their classmates were working on and this encouraged them to interact with each other by sharing some useful idea or resources and students could share their classmates ideas in the blog where every group will have different assignment topic and carry out revisions for their IT examination. The Weblogging assignment gives each student a depth of insight into each group's assignment topic, and a breadth of knowledge about the topic from studying the online "contributions" of his or her group members.

Peer learning and interaction are made possible through student's ability to read the work of other group members who have posted online. Students from different background and experiences often explain concepts differently. Reading the explanation from classmates /peers can be useful supplements to help students see the concepts from a different angle.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The purpose of this action research study was to determine the effect of the use of the Weblogging as an instructional tool on students' participation/collaboration. The following research questions were addressed:

Does the use of Weblogging as an instructional tool affect students' participation/collaboration?

To what extend does mark rewards scheme in which a Weblogging is used as instructional tool in this Weblogging assignment affect the degree to which students are participating/collaborating?

My hypothesis was Weblogging, a simple technology that can be used to construct and improve collaborative learning, would promote engagement in learning. It would fulfil information sharing and acquisition, and interaction and guidance between learner and lecturer for knowledge construction.

MEASUREMENT AND DATA COLLECTION

Students had to post their ideas and resources in the respective group assignment in Weblogs. Guidelines about contributing to Weblogs have informed students about the frequency of contributions and quality of contributions was provided to justify their quality of work. (Appendix 2)

Students were given four weeks to complete their group assignment. The same lecturer graded all online learning logs. The assessment criteria were divided into two major parts: -part 1 was to evaluate the content and part 2 was to evaluate the frequency and quality of individual contributions of students within the group.

In order to address whether or not Weblogging engages students during the learning process. Data from an online survey (95) and paper-based (14) questionnaires were collected based on all the 95 students after they have completed their case study assignments.

Students' participation and motivation to learn new IT skills was analysed using two evaluation formats. A WebCT based survey (online survey) was given to students immediately following the submission of their Weblogging assignment. The survey questions were based on a modified version of the Student Evaluation of Weblog Assessment task from the MSTU2000 Music Subcultures and the Media, Convenor (Jean Burgess 2004). As for the paper form questionnaires questions, it was based on a modified version of the Computer Attitude Questionnaire originally created by Dr. Rhonda Christensen and Dr. Gerald Knezek (Christensen & Knezek 1997).

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Online Survey

The data collected from surveys and questionnaires was analysed to determine to what extent students engage during the Weblogging session. The results were then compiled to determine whether Weblogging is an effective tool for instruction delivery and to find out whether mark reward scheme can motivate student to learn and to be active in participation and collaboration.

The results collected in this study are to evaluate students' participation and motivations in the learning process when Weblogging is used in their group assignment as an instructional tool. Table 1 below indicates the summarized results of the responses for each question in the 16 questions online survey by 95 participants. Each question has four response options –a, b and c and a '-' means no option has been selected. Each questions and response is explained in detail below.

Title	N	Frequency			
		-	a	b	c
OVERVIEW	95	1	47	46	2
LEARNING OUTCOMES 1.Networking with others students	95	1	15	80	-
2.public nature	95	1	56	39	-
3.Network literacy	95	1	20	75	-
4.Difficulty	80	16	80	-	-
5.Greater Depth	95	1	9	86	-
6.Final version	95	1	17	78	-
7. Interaction with others	95	1	14	81	-
8. Enjoy own online space	95	1	6	89	-
TECHNICAL MATTERS_1.Sufficient knowledge	94	2	38	56	-
2.Technical Support	95	1	69	26	-
FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS_1. Should be included ?	95	1	22	73	-
2.Weightage	95	1	52	43	-
3.Whole semester activities?	95	1	45	50	-

Table 1:Results collected from WebCT survey.

Survey Questions Explanation

The survey were participated by 95 students. (Appendix 3)

Question OVERVIEW was to find out students responses for the Weblog assignment. Based on the Table 1, 47 students enjoyed the task and feel that it enhanced their learning experiences and 46 students gave neutral responses and 2 felt that the Weblog was an added burden on their time that added little to their learning experience.

Questions LEARNING OUTCOMES was asking students to indicate their agreement with the following statements.
- Networking with other students online built a sense of community in the class. 80 students agreed with the statement and 15 students disagreed with this statement.
- I felt inhibited by the public nature of this form of assessment. 56 students disagreed and 39 students agreed with this statement.
- My network literacy and communication skills have improved as a result of this task. 20 students said No and 75 students said Yes.
- I had difficulties with this task because it required an unfamiliar mode of communication. 80 students said No and 16 students said Yes.
- The Weblog helped me to take up issues from the course content in greater depth. 9 students said No and 86 said Yes.
- The Weblog helped me to develop and refine my ideas for my assignment in Final Version. 17 students said No and 78 students said Yes.

- Interacting with others online helped me to learn more effectively. 14 students said No and 81 students said Yes.
- I enjoyed having my own online space. 6 students said No and 89 students said Yes.

Questions TECHNICAL MATTERS was asking students for the following questions.
- Did you have sufficient technical expertise to carry out this task? 38 students said Yes and 56 students said No and 1 student did not response.
- Did you receive adequate technical support when you asked for it? 69 students said Yes and 26 said No.

Questions FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS were asking students opinions.
- Should the Weblog task be included as part of the assessment in future semesters? 22 students said No and 73 students said Yes.
- If included in the future, should the Weblog be given more weight? 52 students said Yes and 43 said No.
- If included in the future, should the Weblog be a whole-semester activity? 45 said No and 50 said Yes.

Summary online survey

The online survey was divided into four parts, mainly overview, learning outcomes, technical matters and future recommendations.

The feedback from the students has shown that students enjoy the Weblogging and would prefer to have the Weblog task to be given more weight and be included as part of the assessment in future semesters.

PAPER-BASED QUESTIONNAIRE

A total of 14 students participated in this study also completed open-ended questionnaires. The questions and findings are included as below.

Q1. Describe what you like most when a Weblog is used in the assignment.

Most of the students said it is more interesting and is a new way of doing assignment. They commented that this method has saved much of their time from having frequent face-to-face meetings and they have found that it is fast and convenient for them to carry out discussions and post their comments. In addition, students stated " Weblog is accessible on line even at home, at anywhere else with the Internet connection, so I can complete my work anywhere through it, even at my friend's house, so I would not be burden by bringing tones of paperwork with me. Thus, we should keep up with the IT era", "I like to give a lot of comments, where everyone can read and take the good comments, which are useful for them as sources of information", "…I like variety in my work".

Q2. Describe what you like least when a Weblog is used in the assignment.

Students have listed out a few points. Several students (4/14) indicated the Internet line connection problems at the computer labs. One of the students mentioned that they have to check the Weblog from time to time. A few students (5/14) mentioned that the have to log in (sign in by using one's user name and password) to the Weblog as a weblog member to check and contribute to the group postings.

Q3. Do you believe you are able to participate better when a Weblog is used the assignment?

All of the students responded affirmatively to this question. Students mentioned that they could participate better on the Weblog and discuss the information they have found and contribute straight away if they have found the relevant sources of information. One student stated, "I will feel less tense because Weblog is more of a discussion –like section rather than a serious assignment."

Q4. Does the use of a Weblog in the assignment help you to be able to collaborate with your group members?

Most of the students (13/14) said the Weblogging creates a more flexible environment for their group discussion and the Weblogging has encourage the group members to participate and collaborate on information searching. For example, one of the students stated, " …whenever I see my friend posted up many of their comments, it pushes me to search more information on the topic so that I can post more comments in the Weblog". However, one student said, "Not really, it is not that easy to collaborate when people are slow to reply."

Q5.Does the use of a mark reward in the Weblogging participations help you to be able to be productive in your contributions towards your group assignment? Why and why not?
All but one of the students said the mark reward scheme will make him/her feel tense and it is like a duty for him/her to do so, when actually it is his/her interest. The rest of the students agreed that the mark reward scheme encouraged them to participate more and accordingly, they worked hard to get more marks. It appears Weblog motivated them to be more productive.

Q6. Does the use of a mark reward in the Weblogging participations encourage you to share your resources in your contributions towards your group assignment? Why and why not?
More than half of the students (9/14) responded positively for this question. They have stated that Weblogging can avoid any "free riders" for the group assignment and thus, encourage teamwork among team members to have better understanding of the topic given. For example, one of the students commented that some of the views are critically criticized and he/she found it not encouraging if nothing is given in return. However, one student disagreed with the mark reward scheme, as it would make the situation looks a bit "unreal". This student thought everyone should share things online voluntarily to make it interesting rather than a duty. A few students (3/14), wanted to get individual marks for their contributions instead of sharing the marks with the group members.

Q7. Did the paperless assignment on the Weblog help you to upgrade your IT skill? Why or why not?
The majority responded that they have learnt and have been exposed more to IT skills because of using Weblogs and 2/15 said they have previously participate on Weblogs on their own and one student said he/she has the necessary skills required for the discussion. Only two responded that they had difficulty following the group discussion. Student responded," I learn to blog and conduct discussion online, I now find it interesting and I have become active in online discussion. It has changed my view on online discussion. "...It improves my searching skills on the Internet efficiently", "it helps me to use the Internet properly to find information and resources. Besides that, it opens up my mind on how to use the Internet efficiently", another stated "… especially my typing speed. Not only that I learn that Weblog is a website which we can share our comments and works as well to get more information".

Q8. Does having the opportunity to create and manage the Weblog and interact virtually with group members affect/improve your learning? Why or why not?
The majority of students (13/15) responded positively except two students said there was not much interaction between the group members. The positive feedbacks received were students share different opinions and ideas among the group members and learn from each other and sharing ideas on how to manage Weblog. For example, "…It improves your learning style indirectly you become more of an independent learner". "…This is because we get to share things first hand and I improved my English too".

Summary for paper-based questionnaire
The paper-based questionnaire has specifically asked the chosen 14 students in details about their Weblogging assignment in the aspect of motivation, mark rewards, collaboration and IT skills.
It was concluded that students disliked logging in to the Weblog for participation. However, this is to keep track students' participations on the Weblog and to avoid any free rider for group assignment. Most of the students were motivated to contribute in the group assignment as they could post their contributions straight away once they had found the relevant information and this could speed up the process of finalizing the group assignment. The spirit of collaboration had been formed

unconsciously as they were working towards the same objective-to get more marks for their assignment.

As for the mark reward scheme, this is part of the evaluation criteria where student has been informed that not everyone will get equal marks for group work. It is important to avoid any free rider, and to create a " what you post is what you get" environment for students to be active in doing group assignment.

The practice make perfect spirit has sharpened their IT skills. In order to fulfill the requirement, where only relevant and quality contribution and postings will be rewarded with high marks, students have revised IT skills learnt and put into practice to look for quality resources for their assignment.

Overall, the paperless assignment by using Weblog has improved students' enthusiasm about doing assignment.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this case study was to determine the effect of the use of Weblog as an instructional tool on student participation and collaborations in their learning process.

The first research question for this study was: Does the use of Weblogging as an instructional tool affect students' participation/collaboration? Based on the results collected from both online survey and written questionnaires, students agreed that the Weblogging tool affects their participation and collaboration. Survey questions no. 1,3,4,5,6,7 and 8 have shown that students agree that Weblogging has changed their nature of participation and collaboration among themselves.

The second research question for this study was: Does the mark rewards scheme in which a Weblogging is used as instructional tool in this Weblogging assignment affect the degree to which students are participating/collaborating? Based on the written questionnaires from the students, they agreed that the mark reward scheme has motivated them to be more participative and collaborative in their Weblogging group discussion towards earning more marks for their group assignment.

Learner-centred environment.
Weblogs encourage students to be more active and initiative in reviewing their course materials, sharing and explication of knowledge, and search for extra sources.

Benchmarking and healthy competition
The public Weblogs encourage participants from each group to benchmark their work against the other group. Participants from different group viewed other groups' work; hence self-motivational and healthy competitive spirit appeared among themselves, and to promote group members be more active in their group and seek more sources of information for their group assignment.

The reasons are students have strong pride for themselves and do not want to be embarrassed when classmates read their blogs. Another reason is a sense of responsibility to fellow students who are counting on each student to make an adequate contribution to the group assignment posting which will be graded and serves as revision materials for examinations.

LIMITATIONS

Control treatment
The study did not employ any control group as control treatment. Future studies may include a control group (e.g. to have a group from the same course to carry out their assignment without using Weblogs), and compare the students learning outcome.

Single assessment and limited studies

Only one assignment was carried out for this course. Future research may incorporate measures of more assessments in a course and to identify their frequency of references to the work of others in the same group.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicated that the Weblogging can be used in students assignments to increase students participation and collaboration in their learning. This study has shown students were motivated to participate in their learning process through Weblogging.

Weblogs allow students to express themselves creatively, to make visible for their contributions to the Weblog and to be held responsible for sources that they have found and being able to cite information sources accordingly. Thus Weblogging has minimized free riding among the participants and plagiarism.

Weblogs appear to be a better instructional tool for students' course work performance, where it helped students to digest the pre-assigned assignment case study thoroughly before posting up in the Weblogs. This has helped them to be more prepared for their final examination as the pre-assigned assignment case study were given to them based on the unit outline and similar questions will be asked in the final examination.

This research finding will be disseminated to all lecturers through internal shared Teaching and Learning session. Lecturers can adopt this user friendly and free Internet application in their respective teaching area. These results confirm my recommendation to lecturers to implement this free Weblog as part of assessment, but also to increase students' achievements through increased students participation and collaboration.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1
All the following sample case study questions were obtained from
Shelly.G.B & Cashman.T.J & Vermaat, M.E 2005, Discovery Computers 2006: A Gateway to Information, Web Enhanced, Completed. Retrieved January 12, 2006, from http://www.scsite.com/dc2006/index.cfm?action=home

This Weblogging assignment can be viewed online at http://paperlessassignment1.blogspot.com

Sample 1
A major national retain chain, where you are employed as a technology buyer, has grown enormously over the past few years. The growth has required the company to triple its storage capacity each year to keep pace with its expanding business. Your manager, who is up for promotion, wants to impress his boss by expanding the storage capacity by tenfold this year while staying under the budget earmarked for storage improvements. He has asked you to look into the latest cutting-edge storage technologies, such as holographic and heat-assisted storage. Use the Web and/or print media to develop a features/benefits breakdown that compares the latest storage technologies to the more traditional hard disk technology. What do the different technologies entail? Are they available today? If not, when? What are their costs? Prepare a report to summarise your findings.

Sample 2

Jounalist, attorneys, law enforcement officials, and students consider tape recorders and notepads essential components of their daily activities. An alternate means of capturing information is voice pen, which is a flash-memory-based recording device approximately the size off a small smart phone. Visit a local electronics store or view electronics Web sites to learn more about voice pens. Compare their features, cost, recording time, and warranty. Write a report summarizing your findings, focusing on comparing and contrasting the voice pens.

Appendix 2

Assessment Criteria-Mark reward scheme, from http://paperlessassignment1.blogspot.com

Category	Description	Marks (15%)
Frequency of Contributions	Contributions have been regular and varied without long lapses between postings	3-5
	Student has been present online but postings have been few and far between; student has been a lurker more than an active contributor	1-2
	Student is rarely or never present online.	0
Quality of Contributions	High quality contributions focused on given case study; strong evidence of student having generated discussion, analysed information, drawn conclusions/recommendations and helped create a lively debate.	8-10
	Contributions have been focused on given case study; some evidence of analysis, sharing and teamwork.	3-5
	Contributions have been minimal with little evidence of sharing and teamwork	1-2
	No contributions have been made toward the discussion or task	0

Appendix 3

Online Survey Questions
Overview
1. Overall, I enjoyed the task and feel that it enhanced my learning experience (Positive response).
2. Overall, I do not feel strongly one way or another about the usefulness of the Weblog task (Neutral response).
3. Overall, I feel that the Weblog was an added burden on my time that added little to my learning experience (Negative response).

Learning Outcomes
1) networking with other students online built a sense of community in the class
2) I felt inhibited by the public nature of this form of assessment
3) My network literacy and communication skills have improved as a result of this task
4) I had difficulties with this task because it required an unfamiliar mode of communication
5) The Weblog helped me to take up issues from the course content in greater depth
6) The Weblog helped me to develop and refine my ideas for the second essay
7) Interacting with others online helped me to learn more effectively
8) I enjoyed having my own online space

Technical matters
1) Did you have sufficient technical expertise to carry out this task?
2) Did you receive adequate technical support when you asked for it?

Future recommendations
1) Should the Weblog task be included as part of the assessment in future semesters?
2) If included in the future, should the Weblog be given more, the same, or less weight?
3) If included in the future, should the Weblog be a whole-semester activity?