

Editor's Note: As social media and blogging play an increasing role in everyday life, they are being adopted for educational communications for successful teaching and learning. This study shows improvement in motivation and achievement.

## Motivating low-performing 11<sup>th</sup> graders through blogging: A case study

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### Abstract

As low-achieving students face difficult time at school and usually experience low motivation to learn, blogging in the classroom might be used as a possible way of motivating them through its use as an e-portfolio (show-case blog) for students to show their work. The researcher used case study approach to examine 11<sup>th</sup> grade class (n=22) Arab male low-achieving students in a secondary vocational school in east Jerusalem during the first semester of 2012/2013 academic year. Through continuous observation, content analysis and interviews with teachers and students the researcher studied the students and their individual blogs that they used to submit assignments from their official curriculum. The research results show a positive correlation between student blogging and student motivation, but there is more important consideration for the setting since low-achieving students are different, like type of assignment used, authenticity of assessment, and teacher efficacy.

### Introduction

High school teachers face a challenge to keep their students motivated (Lengye, 2010), but it's more difficult to motivate low-performing students, they lack motivation more than regular students, they are at-risk of dropping out of schools, and their motivational incentives are different from regular students. High school teachers must then break the cycle of failure, they need to use creative methods to motivate their students. By offering a greater amount of choices to the students, providing more authentic assessments, and allowing students to take a more active role in their education, intrinsic motivation of secondary school students will improve (Albrecht et al., 2012). These objectives might be achieved by working with low-performing students to create personalized blogs for each one of them, a blog can serve as an online portfolio to showcase student work throughout his/her academic year. Yet there are special conditions to consider, like teacher efficacy during classroom blogging and his/her method of selecting assignments for blogging, or his method of assessment his students. These and other conditions may also play a role in motivating students to learn through blogging.

The study aims to explore the effectiveness of blogs in a high school classroom setting on the motivation of low-achieving students to be engaged in learning, it also aims to investigate the design and usability issues of the designed blog under the previous conditions. Therefore the study will try to answer the following question: Could blogging provide an opportunity to help low-performing students become more motivated and actively immersed in learning and under what conditions would blogging achieve its goals considering low-performing secondary male students? This study is significant since it investigates the conditions and the interactions of low-

achieving high school male students in a web 2.0 technology setting inside the classroom, then it studies its relationship with their motivation to learn.

### **Terminology**

**Low-performing, low-achieving and students at risk** are terms that can be used interchangeably (Barley et al, 2002), (Lengyel, 2010). In this study, the definition of a low-performing student will be based on the opinion of the participating teachers (Maele, 2006).

**Motivation** refers to “a student’s willingness, need, desire and compulsion to participate in learning, and to be successful in learning” (Feng& Tuan, 2005). Within Motivation there is **Extrinsic and intrinsic goal orientation** – Extrinsic where the motivators that focus on social comparison such as grades, rewards, or praise. While Intrinsic where the desire within students to want to learn for learning’s sake; the cause of an individual to complete a task because he/she finds the task interesting or enjoyable (Madrado, 2010).

**Teacher efficacy** refers to teachers’ confidence in their ability to influence student learning and motivation (Alderman, 1990).

**Web 2.0:** Refers to a range of technologies that allow users within web-based communities to both access and contribute to website content and web-enabled events. Web 2.0’s participative and collaborative attributes distinguish it from earlier web functionality, which was largely ‘read-only’ (Wardlaw, 2010).

**Authentic assessment:** authentic assessment aims to evaluate students' abilities in 'real-world' contexts. Students learn how to apply their skills to authentic tasks and projects. Authentic assessment does not encourage rote learning and passive test-taking. Instead, it focuses on students' analytical skills; ability to integrate what they learn; creativity; ability to work collaboratively; and written and oral expression skills. It values the learning process as much as the finished product (Teacher Vision, 2012).

### **Theoretical background**

Schools have long been focused on ensuring that all students succeed in life and participate effectively in society. Yet there are students who are low-achieving due to many factors. The term “at-risk” is used to describe students who are in danger of not meeting educational goals such as graduating from high school or acquiring the skills necessary to become contributing members of society, they tend to exhibit disruptive behavior that interferes with their learning and their background characteristics may place them at or below the poverty level, other characteristics include low grades and tests scores, abundant absences from school.

At-risk students are usually overwhelmed by the content covered in high school and may also have learning disabilities that make reading and writing difficult (Madrado, 2011). So how can we motivate these students? But first how can we know that they became motivated?. According to Palmer (2007) once they are motivated they pay attention, they begin working on tasks immediately, they ask questions and volunteer answers, and they appear to be happy and eager. Technology can be used to motivate these students (Madrado, 2011; Barley, 2002), research reveals how feelings of autonomy, extrinsic and intrinsic goal orientation, and task value are related to increased motivation among at-risk students (Madrado, 2011).

Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) have been widely perceived as the lever that would lead to significant educational and pedagogical outcomes and support students’ development on the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the 21st century society, where the graduates of secondary school needed to have for the digital literacy requirements (i.e. ICT skills, Critical thinking skills, and ethical skills). Web 2.0 applications including blogs, wikis, social networking, social bookmarking, RSS, podcasting, media sharing etc., have enabled students to

master many parts of the digital literacy requirements. Academics, researchers, educators and policy makers have advocated that the emerged Web 2.0 applications have the potential to offer enhanced learning opportunities for both students and educators and support lifelong competence development (Jimoyiannis & Angelaina, 2012).

Based on Web 2.0 Technology is the Blog. In fact, using blogs in the classroom can help increase student learning using student's preferred learning style, personal interest, and engagement. It also encourages self-reflection for the student and critical thinking. The online fast publication of a blog and a whole world audience increases student motivation for writing. Student blogging bridges that gap between home and the classroom and creates an unlimited learning environment. It allows collaboration which promotes constructive environment. And for low-achieving students blogging can give the "silent student" a voice by allowing them the opportunity to write on topics of interest (Sawmiller, 2010). Teachers also play a role in promoting motivation in their students, teachers who perceive themselves efficacious will spend more time on student learning, support students in their goals and reinforce intrinsic motivation (Bandura, 1993, p. 140). Teachers with a high sense of efficacy feel a personal accomplishment, have high expectations, feel responsibility for student learning, have strategies for achieving objectives, a positive attitude about teaching and believe they can influence student learning (Ashton, 1984, p. 29).

The proposed framework will combine two advantages; first it promotes motivation by using ICT and blogs specifically which is a Web 2.0 technology, and secondly it enhances digital literacy requirement for the secondary students through practicing ICT skills, Critical thinking, and self-reflection which promotes lifelong learning.

### ***What is a blog?***

A weblog, or blog, is a personalized website that is a collection of entries. The entries may be commentaries, videos, pictures, or similar to journal entries. Readers can stay updated on new entries by subscribing to the blog. Blogs allow individuals to share writing samples, pictures, and videos with friends, family, and strangers. Other people may leave comments on a blog, allowing for collaboration. Using a blog in the classroom can also increase motivation, challenge critical thinking skills, aid in differentiated instruction, extend the classroom walls, and cash in on student interest in technology (Sawmiller, 2010). As for types of blogs used in School, Zawilinski (2009) suggested four common types of classroom blogs even for elementary level; classroom news, mirror, showcase and literature response blogs.

A Classroom News blog are used by students and parents to keep everyone up to date with what the classroom is doing. This allows parents to be involved in their Childs learning to help their child stay on track. While mirror blogs are designed to allow teachers and students to post their own reflective thinking, while also allowing other bloggers to view, reflect, or add additional comments or ideas to the post. For students, Mirror blogs could be used for making comments or thoughts about lessons or content learned. This allows the teacher to see what each students thinking and also allows for teachers to respond and encourage deeper thinking. A Showcase blog is one that students post projects, podcasts and other writings for students to see. This helps students to develop a sense of pride in their work and also see their peers ideas, that could inspire other ideas of their own. Finally the Literature Response blogs is the online version of literature response journals, which are commonly used in elementary schools. The teacher can post a prompt and invite student responses. If teachers would use some form of these blogs in their classroom, it would definitely help curb this media literacy problem we are facing in our schools today (Zawilinski, 2009).

### ***Research limitation***

The Research is conducted in the first semester of the academic year 2012/2013 in a Vocational Arab, all male, school in East Jerusalem. The student blog will be used as a show case blog.

## Literature review

### ***Students' motivation***

In (Albrecht, 2009), the paper describes a program for increasing students' intrinsic motivation in an effort to increase academic achievement. The targeted population consisted of secondary level students in a middle to upper-middle class suburban area. The students of the targeted secondary level classes appeared to be disengaged from learning due to a lack of motivation. The previously mentioned issue had a tendency to lead to negative classroom behavior and a hindrance of academic progress. A review of current literature indicated significant low motivation among secondary level students as well as coexisting behaviors. Further evidence was gathered in the project supporting the existence of this problem including academic records as well as anecdotal records of student behavior. The problem as defined by professional sources and educational literature led to the development of the following three interventions: student autonomy, goal-setting, and positive teacher feedback. By offering a greater amount of choices to the students, providing more authentic assessments, and allowing students to take a more active role in their education, intrinsic motivation of secondary school students will improve and a mentality of learning for mastery as opposed to extrinsic rewards will be instilled. This result is supported by Lengyel (2010) where the study found that direct reading instruction and student choice prove to be both motivating to students as well as having a direct influence on reading comprehension. As for low-achieving students previous research done in regular education setting supported the idea that achievement among lower performing students is tied to the students' sense of autonomy and feelings of competence (Madrazo, 2010). As Deci, et al. (1992) studied 450 students from non-mainstream (self-contained) classrooms who had handicapping codes of either learning disabled (LD) or emotionally handicapped (EH), researchers examined the effect that limiting students' autonomy and sense of competence has on motivation. Findings concluded that students with learning disabilities, because of often experienced frustrations and failures with school work, need tasks that increase feelings of competence. Because students identified as emotionally handicapped are less likely to experience frustrations academically but are more likely to experience negative feedback based on self-regulation, they desire a greater sense of autonomy.

### **Preparing students for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills through ICT and Web2.0 technology**

In Larson et al. (2010) High school students spend much of their educational journeys immersed in "old" literacies of paper, pencil, and print books. But outside of the classroom, they are exposed to information and communication technologies--such as blogs, wikis, Internet browsers, multimedia, social networking sites, and a wide range of software--each of which demand new literacies. This disconnect is a serious problem for schools because it reflects a decline in school's relevancy to students' futures, and the gap between how schools teach and how students learn will only grow over time. It may be understandable for teachers and leaders to be a bit behind in the use of technology, but it is no longer adequate or appropriate to hold students back. These new required Literacies are as Davidson & Stone (2009) mentioned that each student must graduate from high school with the "new" basic skills for life in the 21st century, they include: (1) innovation and imagination; (2) communication, collaboration, team work, and critical thinking skills; (3) adaptability and agility; (4) interactivity and information analysis; and (5) initiative and self-direction<sup>1</sup>. And as UNESCO (2011) put it: ICT user skills are those that should be learnt by all citizens of the knowledge society in order to:

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<sup>1</sup>Self direction is a 21<sup>st</sup> century skill, it involves self-discipline, curiosity, independence, persistence, goal orientation, responsibility, and enjoyment in their learning (Chee et al., 2011, p.8).

- Select and apply ICT systems and devices effectively.
- Utilize common generic software tools in their private lives.
- Use specialized tools for work.
- Flexibly adapt to changes in infrastructure and applications.

The most important components of digital literacy are common for future computer users and ICT professionals: accessing, managing, evaluating, integrating, creating, and communicating information individually or collaboratively in a networked, computer supported, and web-based environment for learning, working, or leisure. These skills are directly related to basic competences; therefore, digital literacy is as relevant as traditional literacies – such as reading and writing, mathematics, or the management of social behavior (Ibid, p.4).

### ***ICT and motivation***

In (Gan, 1999) Malaysian at-risk students were trained in using computers and Internet for search activities. These activities were structured to incorporate individual accountability, positive interdependence and interaction. The study found that Motivation was improved, as well as self-confidence, learning attitudes, and achievement. But according to Madrazo (2010) Student motivation was at its highest levels when the technology present was used in creative ways that could not be done in any other form via video editing, iPod self-pacing, and/or web 2.0 project collaboration. It is not enough, therefore, to simply place work on a laptop, teachers must shift their deep rooted preferences for worksheets, lecture, and assessment to include alternative approaches to learning through meaningful creation, social media, and project driven curriculum. And for student at risk ICT can bring more to them: as Gan (1999) research showed that Malaysian at-risk students trained in information-technology skills were appointed to lead cooperative-learning groups engaged in computer-search activities. Activities were structured to incorporate individual accountability, positive interdependence and interaction, collaborative skills, and group processing. Motivation, self-confidence, learning attitudes, and achievement were improved. These results are also supported by BECTA document where Researchers have pointed to well-crafted use of technology benefiting, for example:

- increased learner effectiveness or performance gains.
- increased learner efficiency.
- greater learner engagement or satisfaction.
- more positive student attitudes to learning (BECTA, 2009, p.5).

### ***Blogs and motivation***

In (Lin et al., 2007) the study examined an electronic portfolio design based on blog services and program called blogfolio. Results showed that students expressed the feature of easy to use and their willingness to maintain their portfolios. Portfolios using Web 2.0 technology can be maintained much easier and updated much faster. It can include multimedia files like graphs and audio/video clips. It is much easier for teachers to view blogfolios to many students and provide feedback. Teacher can subscribe to RSS reader in order to get immediately updates about changes in students portfolios. It was confirmed that collaborative learning has positive impact on students' learning so viewing peers portfolios can be considered one type of collaborative learning where students have a model to reflect upon and learn. Building a portfolio with personal style in simple steps will enhance students' motivation in maintaining their portfolios. As Tekinarslan (2010) puts it: blogs can be used as supplementary mediums to promote achievement and knowledge acquisition of students, as well as information searching and sharing skills, within a learning community. The results are also supported by the research conducted by Hume (2012) where an examination of current literature found a rudimentary number of papers canvassing the

role of online blogging in advancing student learning. The research examines students over four years including six semesters and their responses to the use of blogs and discussion boards as a key part of learning and reflection. The paper adopts the classroom and the organization and looks at how the blogging process moves students from a single-loop learning process to double-loop learning and reflection and enhances the learning and reflection for the educator. The research adopts an organizational learning approach and demonstrates an increased student satisfaction as measured by student evaluations and increased self-reflection on content specific knowledge, improved individual learning and overall classroom learning. Not to mention the advantage that blogs bring to classroom in terms of differentiated instruction for diverse students which was the focus of a research made by Colombo & Colombo (2007) where the authors discuss how the instructional impact of science teachers can be extended by using blogs, which allows teachers to differentiate their instruction for students with diverse needs. It's easy for teachers to establish class blogs that contain text, audio, and video postings on a particular subject. The paper discusses how to use blogs to improve differentiated instruction for diverse students.

### **Teacher efficacy**

According to Williams & Williams (2011) the five key ingredients impacting student motivation are: student, teacher, content, method/process, and environment. For example, the student must have access, ability, interest, and value education. The teacher must be well trained, must focus and monitor the educational process, be dedicated and responsive to his or her students, and be inspirational. The content must be accurate, timely, stimulating, and pertinent to the student's current and future needs. The method or process must be inventive, encouraging, interesting, beneficial, and provide tools that can be applied to the student's real life. The environment needs to be accessible, safe, positive, personalized as much as possible, and empowering. Motivation is optimized when students are exposed to a large number of these motivating experiences and variables on a regular basis. That is, students ideally should have many sources of motivation in their learning experience in each class.

### **Design and methodology**

This study investigates the effect of low-achieving students' individual blogging using assignments from the official academic curriculum on their motivation to learn. It explores the motivation of these students against different methods of assignments recording: writing in their notebooks, using e-mails or publishing the assignment directly to their own blogs. The students are 11<sup>th</sup> graders (n=22) all males in one class (Computer Maintenance Class) in a vocational school in Arab East Jerusalem where the academic curriculum used is the Palestinian curriculum.

Data was collected during the first semester of the 2012/2013 academic year.

Data sources for this case includes one semester's worth of blog content, Classroom observation, both students' interviews and teachers' interviews to uncover their perceptions of classroom blogging practices.

The strategies used to store data moved forward for testing them, triangulating tentative findings, identifying patterns, and work systematically in order to identify significant truths. Case studies "generate rich subjective data, can bring to light variables, relationships and processes that merit further investigation and provide good stories, human interest and a more humanistic method of delivery compared to the quantitative method" (Burns, 1994). Punch (1998) asserts that "properly conducted case studies, especially in situations where our knowledge is shallow, fragmentary, incomplete or non-existent", have a valuable contribution to make (Punch, 1998, p.155).

There was prolonged contact with informants, including continuous validation of data.

### ***Limiting bias in interpretations***

Search for negative cases is conducted, using members of the research team to critically question the analysis.

## **Results and discussions**

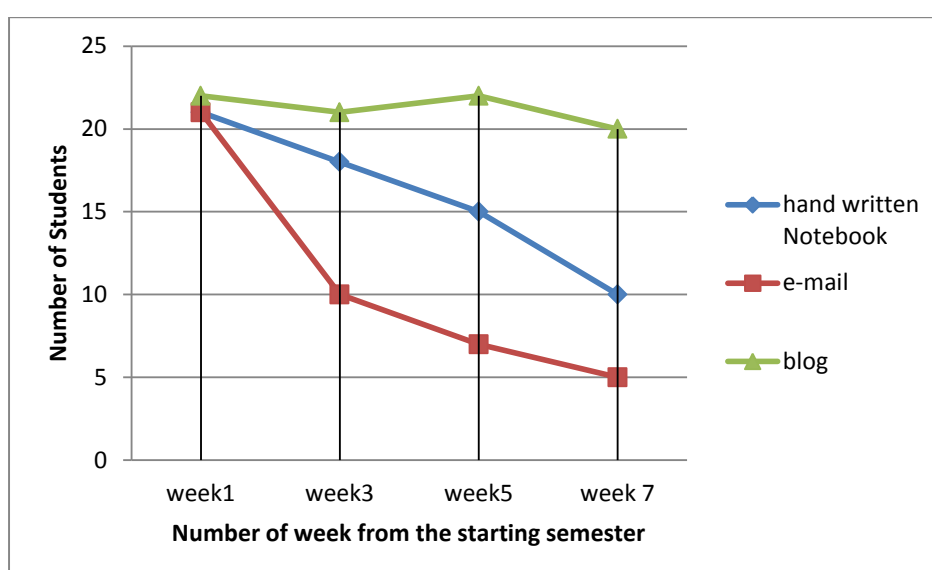
### ***Content of the blogs***

With the supervision of their teacher, the students used blogger.com to create free blogs to each one of them. They submitted 14 assignments to their blogs in September, 15 assignments in October and another 14 assignments in November. These assignments vary from drawings of PC cases, motherboards, electrical circuits, and electrical components. There are also some edited photos that demonstrate their ability to copy, merge photos, add text and manipulate size and orientation of photos. There are some assignments in word processing like edited text and tables where students were required to submit answers to text-book questions. There are some assignments that required using worksheet software to draw charts. The selection of assignments that require drawing or photo editing made them more inclined to work because differentiation between assignments is obvious, and there is a room for creativity, and self-reflection. Some students copied and pasted some of their assignments from their peers, first because these assignments are similar to each other, they are simply direct answers of textbook questions, and secondly as the students said it was easier for them. As Teacher B puts it “So blogging is great but it lacks authentication”.

At the first of the semester and before making blogs the teacher tried to make the students send the assignments by e-mail so he taught them how to make e-mail using Gmail, yet some students said that they already have e-mail accounts from other providers like Hotmail, the teacher accepted from them to send e-mail this time on the condition that they create Gmail account, he explained to them the benefits of Gmail account like being able to create blogs and upload movies to YouTube. The enforcement strategy was to let students choose the medium for the assignment without stressing on any specific one. The first assignment was to send specifications of a PC in regards to its four main features, central processing unit CPU, the main board (Motherboard), Hard Disk, and Memory. The teacher already put on the whiteboard some hints. The students got excited since the work is new to them, and they need to type the specifications and send it by e-mail to the teacher. After few days the teacher requested another assignment asking them to send another e-mail about the specifications of the CPU alone, most of them responded well. Yet after another two assignments requested to be sent by e-mail the students felt the repetition process and not all of them had sent the e-mails, little by little the students motivation to make e-mail assignment were coming down as Figure one shows the systematic decline of number of students making e-mail assignments from week1 to week 7. Surprisingly, doing the assignment on their notebooks has fewer declines. Yet once the students started sending their assignments to their own blogs they kept feeling implicitly a sense of achievement every time they view their blog, another source of motivation was the continuous systematic assessment from their teacher since it was a requirement from their teacher to give them the grade. “Show me your work today in your blog and you will get the grade” the teacher used to declare very often holding a sheet in his hand with their names and today's date marking a check next to each name of a student who finished his work. That requirement was anticipating in the motivation to keep it running inside them; first for that sense of achievement and secondly for their fear of fail if they didn't do the required job which can be seen easily by the supervisor, the principal, their family, their peers and the ones they care about.

**Table1**  
**Number of participating students in the specific medium of assignment**

	Hand written	e-mail	blog
week1	21	21	22
week3	18	10	21
week5	15	7	22
week 7	10	5	20



**Figure 1: Number of Students making assignments over time**

### Description of the students

Most of them don't even like to carry a pencil, may be it reminds them with bad experiences they had, but definitely they are motivated to use PCs, after all they didn't have enough chance to use it in a school setting. But if you let them open whatever (acceptable) sites or programs they want, they will choose Facebook, YouTube and then to play collectively on Counterstrike (A fighting video game). But once they choose counterstrike it will be very hard to move them away (by themselves) to something else unless it is a new interesting thing. Some students chose graphics programs like Photoshop to work on photos for themselves and add artistic modifications. So enhancing these students' learning requires training exercises that involve using their physical body once an a while: standing up versus sitting down, holding a screwdriver versus holding a pen, opening a computer case versus opening a book. Since they are low achieving students, what matters for them most is their fear of fail and not their quest for success, they need tasks that increase their feelings of competence.

### ***Mobility, convenience and independence***

Student 2 found out that his PC is broken (is not booting) he then jumped on the next PC besides him which happened to be vacant and did his assignment and uploaded it to his blog without



teachers' intervention. One student (Student 21) turned to the instructor and explained that he will be absent the next two days and when he told he will be missing some important learning he replied that he will watch the blogs of his peers to do the missing assignments. In fact (Student 15) was sick for few days and did the missing assignments from home even without teacher's permission. Student 5 remade the assignment while he was sick, Student 9 also was sick and made the assignment later. Many students expressed their satisfaction of their digital portfolio. one student said it is a great way for students to keep a copy of their work without worrying about it getting lost, teacher A said they can keep their portfolio for years and add to what they have in order to see the progression that they have made over the semester and possibly over years.

### ***Students' personal touch in the assignments***

More choices for these students means infusing their personal feeling in their work. Student 21 liked to add his own photo (with special effects to some of assignments), same with student 15 and student 17 who changed the background and other setting for his blog.



**Figure 2 : The Personal touch made on the assignment**

### ***Promoting lifelong learning***

Student 15 opened his blog at home and without teachers requirement he then learned by himself how to change the profile and background colors, fonts and pictures. Students expressed their desire to learn about and work on these blogs even after class hours and at home, some of them improved their work at home and resubmitted it to their blogs, some of them said that they showed their work to their family members and that they felt a sense of achievement and pride of their work.

### ***Obstacles while working on blogs***

The students didn't have any idea of how to create blogs in Google so the teacher had to do it to each one of them. About 4 students forgot their e-mail password or user name the next day and they had to do the whole process again. One student kept forgetting his user name. After two months of blogging none had discovered the comments section feature or used it to comment on other blogs. And after one month of work many couldn't memorize the subdomain blogspot.com. The teacher tried to use the minimum possible specifications like using p3/256 mb with Winxp sp2 and Firefox3.6 to run blogs on, but then he said we had to send their work drawings as e-mail attachments since such an old browser is not supported fully by blogger.com. Total of three students forgot their user names or passwords in blogger so the teacher had to change their blog addresses. Many students were sending their work from paintbrush while the file is open which result of sending empty attachment.

### **Overcoming difficult tasks**

Many students perceived some of the tasks to be difficult to achieve and did not participate. One example was the design of a laptop flyer using Photoshop. For low achieving students regular assignments make them get bored very quickly. One strategy was used is to divide the same assignment into small chunks and giving them each chunk once at a time. Another strategy used was to simplify the work, reduce it, summarize it, and simplify it to let them understand and apply their learning.

### **Deprivation as a source of motivation**

In week 2 of November students had an exam in the first two sessions, and after that they were given another assignment to post to their blog which was question 1 and 2 from the exam (drawing circuits) some of them felt annoyed and didn't want to do the assignment, they didn't like to work under pressure or maybe they felt exhausted after the exam, so some of them copied the assignment from other students because the instructor warned that if they didn't make the assignment they will risk not playing on their favorite game counterstrike, hence the video game becomes a motivation to do the assignment, also their fear of failure (failing the class, expulsion from school, calling their parents) was driving them to do the assignment.

Blogs promoted motivation through the following settings:

1. **Student choice:** Students had the choice to work in their time the way they decide, at their own pace, and they have the choice to choose what to include in their blogs, and the way their blog will look like.
2. **The fast result of publishing on the Internet for all to see:** Blogging provided for these students immediate, "click-to-publish" results. Student work is available immediately for peers to review and for others on the Internet to see. All of these factors were motivating for these students to learn. In fact low-achieving students tend to have less patience than high-achieving ones, coupled with the fact that teen have less patience than adults due to their psychological development we then can appreciate the immense value of fast publishing on the students motivation to learn, besides the feeling that their work can be seen by everybody and outside class walls.
3. **Promotion of reflective-learning:** As student browse his blog he reflects upon his work which supports his engagement in learning. As confirmed by Lin et al. (2007): by viewing peers' portfolios, especially someone who has better learning performance, a kind of collaborative learning is achieved. In such a manner, students have a model to reflect upon and learn. As cited in Luehmann & MacBride (2008) The long-term and ongoing access of blog posts makes materials available for subsequent reflection and analysis, allowing for students to revise their work, thus enriching the learning experience.
4. **The enjoyable experience:** Students enjoyed blogging throughout the semester. In a study made by Wang et al. (2012) which was to explore the individual difference antecedents of perceived enjoyment and examine how they influence blogging intention through the mediation of perceived enjoyment. Based on previous literature, the Big Five personality traits (ie, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience), as well as computer self-efficacy and personal innovation in information technology, are hypothesized as potential antecedents of perceived enjoyment in the acceptance of blogging.
5. **Authenticity of Assessments:** Evaluating students in real-world context means providing students with assignment from real-world context like editing photos of themselves or

photos of their friends, designing flyers of real-life examples, and publishing real-life examples of their work for the world to see.

6. **Teacher efficacy:** Teacher efficacy is important for these students because it increases their willingness to do the assignment, teacher B said, there is another teacher who is frustrated from his students results, his disappointment was reflected on his students, they don't learn with him, they keep giving him hard time and they play on PCs all time long and do not learn well from him. As Woolfolk-Hoy (2009) put it: Greater efficacy leads to greater effort and persistence, which leads to better performance, which, in turn, leads to greater efficacy. The reverse is also true. Lower efficacy leads to less effort and giving up easily, which leads to poor teaching outcomes, which then produce decreased efficacy.
7. **Selecting proper assignments:** As was shown throughout the semester students were motivated with assignments that are not very easy or very hard to do, that vary, they were motivated with assignments that require creativity and differentiation but within their abilities. Their motivation increases when they use ICT in a different way than others.
8. **Sharing skills in a learning community:** As students were working on their blogs many of them used to seek help from their peers, first in order to understand the required assignment, and second in order to understand how to implement it. Many of them were collaborating in their effort to finish the assignment, and when they were asked, they expressed positive attitudes towards sharing skills with their peers. So blogs can be used as supplementary method to promote achievement and knowledge acquisition within a learning community. As Yang & Chang (2012) tried to assess the effects of interactive blogging on student attitudes towards Peer Interaction, Learning Motivation, and Academic Achievements, the results suggested that students showed positive motivation to learn from peer work, regardless of whether blogs were interactive or solitary.

***Other Inter-related benefits of blogging:***

1. **Capitalizing on students' media literacies:** These students had previous digital literacies that vary in depth from one to another, but by using blogs they were able to strengthen their learning by capitalizing on their media literacies and their familiarity with ICT tools.
2. **Sustaining student engagement:** During the three months the students were engaged in learning in order to be able to send their work to the blog. So blogging allows for synthesis of content and helps sustain student engagement.
3. **Preventing failures:** These students had failed several times in their lives, but when they were blogging they were achieving tasks and this in itself enabled them to go out of circles of failures in their lives.
4. **Preparing students for the 21st century skills:** As 21<sup>st</sup> century skills include ICT skills so do using blogs require the use of ICT in order to be able to design the assignments which includes using photo editing software, and dealing with e-mail client (i.e. Gmail) for uploading images. Another 21st century skill was used is self-direction.

## Conclusion

Supported by a body of evidence from Literature, it is possible to motivate low-achieving students through their use of blogs. Individual blogging inside classroom offers students more choices, fast publishing, reflective learning, and enjoyment of work, it allows them to take a more active role in their education. There is also the advantage of preparing them to be citizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge society which also requires ICT skills along with critical thinking reflective learning, self-directed learning, and life-long learning. But such motivation is affected the contextual setting like types of assignments used, authentic assessment, and teacher efficacy which plays an important role in such a setting since it can enhance students learning and it can motivate these low-achieving students to work better.

## Directions for future research:

As this research was examining the use of low-achieving students of solitary blogs in their learning (i.e. showcase blog as an e-portfolio), it will be interesting to examine how these students will use the blog interactively (i.e. the use of web 2.0 tools like the comment feature, RSS..etc.) with or without teacher interventions and then relate these activities to the levels of their motivation for learning. The advantage to their 21<sup>st</sup> century skills can also be examined in details along with identifying the best settings for optimum correlation.

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## Appendix A

### List of Students blogs

1	STUDENT1	mtc1100.blogspot.com
2	STUDENT2	mtc1400.blogspot.com
3	STUDENT3	mtc26.blogspot.com
4	STUDENT4	mtc105.blogspot.com
5	STUDENT5	mtc25.blogspot.com
6	STUDENT6	mtc18.blogspot.com
7	STUDENT7	mtc850.blogspot.com
8	STUDENT8	mtc210.blogspot.com
9	STUDENT9	6mtc.blogspot.com
10	STUDENT10	8mtc.blogspot.com
11	STUDENT11	mtc100.blogspot.com
12	STUDENT12	mtc170.blogspot.com
13	STUDENT13	mtc4.blogspot.com
14	STUDENT14	mtc130.blogspot.com
15	STUDENT15	mtc1600.blogspot.com
16	STUDENT16	mtc243.blogspot.com
17	STUDENT17	mtc1600.blogspot.com
18	STUDENT18	mtc230.blogspot.com
19	STUDENT19	mtc2000.blogspot.com
20	STUDENT20	mtc17.blogspot.com
21	STUDENT21	13mtc.blogspot.com
22	STUDENT22	mtc30.blogspot.com

#### About the author

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