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# Crynoldebau / abstracts

Who’s afraid of using forums and blogs?

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The pedagogical advantages of forums and blogging as innovative teaching and learning tools are multiple: both are open spaces that encourage everybody to publish articles. But what are the differences between blogs and forums, and then what is the purpose for teachers to use it as a pedagogical tool? To answer to this question, we propose to define the notions of blog and forum, and then to summarize the many differences between them. Our intention is to raise the issue of the effectiveness of these innovative tools, and see whether students really take the opportunity to use forums and blogs, in what ways, and what is the rate of success. This paper is based on examples drawn from my limited experience as teacher, and also as a student.

From a broader perspective and for further development, if we look closely at some variables, we recognize Dell Hymes’ speaking model or Firth’s context of situation, and the basic principles of sociolinguistics. Because forums and blogs are forms of communication, when we develop this kind of tools, we have to take into account that their mechanism of functioning is the same as in all human communication. Therefore, the success of a forum or blog depends not only on pedagogical design, but also on environmental factors.

In conclusion, how can we be successful with forums and blogs in teaching and interaction with students? We propose to abandon the decontextualized theoretical discussion about blogs, and look at participants, teaching aims and setting instrumentalies (online teaching, in presentia, normal academic or Lifelong Learning) to find solutions. To conclude, the idea of our presentation is that the key to successful forums and blogs as teaching tools depends on the diversity and adaptation to environmental heterogeneity.