Annotated Bibliography and Literature Review
Integrating UDL Principles in a Wiki and Blog Enhanced Social Studies Classroom

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Literature Review Word Count: 1491

Annotated Bibliography

Beck, D. and Eno, J. (2012). Signature pedagogy: A literature review of social studies and

technology research. *Computers in Schools 29*(1-2), p. 70-94. doi:

10.1080/07380569.2012.658347

This literature review examines social studies instructional practices and emerging

technology trends. This study is of particular interest because it is current and relevant to

both blogging and wiki use in the classroom.   As well, the review is focused authentic

personalized learning and highlights the benefits of using technology to achieve critical

thinking, while also indicating drawbacks to technology use. The authors conclude by

stating current high stakes testing and multiple choice exams do not adequately assess for

critical thinking skills, which are developed in constructivist student-centred

environments. This review supports my belief for change in high school social studies

pedagogy, moving from a teacher-directed classroom to a student-centred one.

Bouck, E.C., Courtad, C.A., Heutsche, A., Okolo, C.M., and Englert, C.S. (2009). The virtual

history museum: A universally designed approach to social studies instruction.

Teaching Exceptional Children 42(2), p. 14-20. Retrieved from

http://journals.cec.sped.org/tec/

This mixed-methods study examines how universal design for learning is present in the

Virtual History Museum (VHM). Although the VHM is not a blog or wiki, it is a technology

web medium and its affordances could be applied to a blog or wiki. This study examines

and applies the UDL framework to VHM. The researchers argue the VHM places more

emphasis on higher order thinking skills than traditional instructional methods, while

applying UDL principles . VHM is read/write Web 2.0 technology (like a blog or wiki), thus

encouraging critical thinking and application of knowledge.

Frye, E. M., Trathen, W., and Koppenhaver, D.A. (2010). Internet workshop and blog

      publishing: Meeting student (and teacher) learning needs to achieve best practice in

      the twenty-first century social studies classroom. *The Social Studies, 101*(2), p. 46

      -53. doi:10.1080/00377990903284070

Frye, Tranthen, and Koppenhaver (2011) provide anecdotal evidence of the impact blogs

have on higher-order thinking skills in the social studies classroom. The authors highlight

the benefits of blogs as a tool to engage students and extend the learning beyond fact recall.

This paper provides evidence and practical suggestions for how blogs can effectively meet

social studies standards while utilizing technology in an elementary classroom.

Heafner, T. and Friedman, A. (2008). Wikis and constructivism in secondary social studies:

      Fostering a deeper understanding. *Computers in the Schools 25*(3-4), p. 288 – 302.

      doi: 10.1080/07380560802371003

The authors present a mixed methods study of wikis in high school social studies. The test

group completed a WWII unit using a Wiki, while the control group had traditional lecture

focused instruction from the same teacher. The researchers highlight benefits and

drawbacks to using wikis in the secondary social studies classroom. Quantitative results

show students in the control group achieved higher on the end of unit multiple-choice

standardized test than students in the test group. This is contrary to the qualitative

evidence indicating increased student engagement and learning in the test group. Long-

term cognitive gains were found to occur for the test wiki group, and not for the control.

The authors conclude by stating assessment practices need to change in order to encourage

teachers to use constructivist student-centred technology learning environments.

Kliegman, K. (2010). Step aside Karl Rove! These kids are tech savvy. *Learning and*

   Leading with Technology 37(7), p. 34-35. Retrieved from

   http://www.iste.org/learn/publications/learning-leading

A "Meet the Candidates" wiki project is shared by Kliegman in this case-study. Fifty

educators from across the United States participated in a collaborative wiki project in

order to critically examine the presidential election and students' relationship to media.

Students were critical examiners of media messages and utilized multiple literacies to

participate in this authentic learning experience. Classes across the country communicated

with each other via wikis, video-conferencing and Google maps. According to survey

results, students gained digital literacy skills and knowledge about the political process.

Surprisingly, this is one of the few articles I found on collaborating with other social studies

classes. The findings support the implementation of wikis in social studies, as well as their

use for collaboration between schools.

Meo, G. (2008). Curriculum planning for all learning: Applying universal design for

   learning (UDL) to a high school reading comprehension program. *Preventing*

   School Failure 52(2), p. 21-30. Retrieved from

   http://www.udlcenter.org/resource_library/articles/hs_reading

This case study describes the practical application of UDL principles to a grade 9 social

studies class. Recognizing the UDL principles of multiple or flexible representations of

information, expression, and engagement enable teachers to meet the needs of all students.

The case study describes how one teacher used the UDL planning for all learners (PAL)

instructional process to design lessons focusing on goals, methods, materials and

assessments adapting to student needs and differentiating the lessons. This case study

indicates the PAL process improves learning outcomes for all students. This UDL lesson

planning process is practical and could be used for the design of social studies wiki and

blog learning environments.

Wilson, E., Wright, V., Inman, C.T., and Matherson, L.H. (2011). Retooling the social

studies classroom for the current generation. *The Social Studies 102*(2), p. 65-72.

doi: 10.1080/00377996.2010.484445

The researchers utilize a case study method and examine how one teacher used technology

in her high school social studies classroom. Two of three tools used are blogs and wikis.

The study highlights the affordances of both wikis and blogs in the classroom, particularly

the user-friendly nature, possibility of multiple mediums, access of content on the web, and

student engagement. Blogs and wikis were used for daily starters/prompts, collaborative

group projects, current events, reflective journals, portfolios, debate and discussions. The

case study also examines assessment possibilities and how they align to curriculum

standards. The researchers found traditional social studies content was delivered in

innovative and engaging ways via blogs and wikis, and students were able to take this

engagement and transform it into knowledge construction.

Literature Review

Introduction

Blogs and wikis will alter the twenty-first century social studies classroom, especially when combined with universal design for learning (UDL). CAST defines UDL as an educational approach ensuring accessibility for all learners through multiple means of representation, engagement and expression (as referenced in Bouck, Courtad, Heutsche, Okolo, & Englert, 2009). This literature review examines how UDL can be applied to social studies blogs and wikis in order to promote critical thinking, collaboration, creativity and communication.

Literature Selection

As a result of limited research found applying UDL to blogs and wikis, I have included only two articles discussing UDL. The other five studies chosen examine the impacts of blogs and wikis on twenty-first century skills in the social studies classroom.

Analysis, Synthesis and Critique of Literature

Pedagogy for Personalized Learning and Engagement

Current trends in education focus on student engagement through personalized learning. Six articles reviewed identify the importance of student engagement and personalizing learning through the use of technology while the seventh, Meo's (2008) case study, focuses on personalization through the application of UDL in a social studies classroom. Beck and Eno (2012) and Wilson, Wright, Inman, and Matherson, (2011) are critical of traditional history teaching practices of lecture and fact recall and their detrimental effects on long-term learning and motivation. Both articles encourage a change in pedagogy through inquiry-based technology integration. Bouck, Courtad,

Heutsche, Okolo, and Englert (2009) examine how the Virtual History Museum (VHM) applies UDL principles and engages learners by being equitable, flexible, intuitive, and allowing for multiple choices of learning tools. Integration of UDL in lesson planning can be challenging; however, Meo (2008) describes how teachers personalize learning and differentiate by focusing on goals, methods, materials and assessments. Beck and Eno (2012) argue blogs and wikis in the history classroom engage learners and personalize learning via interaction and analysis of content. The remaining studies focus on how blogs and wikis engage social studies learners through authentic and personalized learning (Frye, Trathen, & Koppenhaver, 2010; Kiegman, 2010; Heafner & Friedman, 2008; Wilson, Wright, Inman, & Matherson, 2011).

An underlying theme in these articles is the importance of applying the appropriate pedagogy to achieve personalization of learning and student engagement. Beck and Eno (2012) found current social studies instructional practices are primarily focused on traditional lecture formats. This correlates with my perception of current secondary classrooms. Research has proven students need to be both cognitively and emotionally engaged (Beck & Eno, 2012) in learning processes. Wikis and blogs afford the publication of content, projects, analysis and reflections to worldwide audiences, motivating students to engage in social studies inquiry (Beck & Eno, 2012; Frye et al., 2010; Heafner & Friedman, 2008; Wilson, et al. 2011). Similarly, the use of UDL in the VHM enables all learners to publish authentic material in the museum utilizing their preferred learning method (Bouck et al., 2009). Kliegman (2010) stipulates in her anecdotal study, students and teachers from across the country value the ability to debate and discuss the current

events via wikis and video-conferences, thereby engaging learners and promoting prolonged interest in social studies.

Twenty-first Century Skills

Collaboration, creativity, critical thinking and communication are essential to prepare students to be active citizens. Blogs and wikis afford instant and authentic communication, as well as collaboration between classmates and the teacher (Beck & Eno, 2012; Frye et al, 2010; Wilson et al., 2011). Both Heafner and Friedman (2008), and Frye et al. (2010) critique low-level thinking requirements of fact memorization and internet fact finding in social studies. Literature examined for this review reveals that blogs and wikis, when used as inquiry and collaborative tools, promote critical thinking (Beck & Eno, 2012; Frye et al., 2010; Heafner & Friedman, 2008). This is achieved through the "researching, evaluating, organizing, transforming, writing, and publishing" of knowledge in a blog or wiki for the world to view (Frye et al., 2010).

The literature indicates critical thinking ensues from collaborative discussions and debate in blog comment areas, and wiki collaborative writing projects requiring students to analyze and synthesize information (Beck & Eno, 2012). Activities designed to achieve higher order thinking were analyzed including Kliegman's collaborative wiki project between schools critically examining, deciphering and discussing political media messages from across the United States (2010). Beck and Eno (2012) assert digital historical narratives demonstrate a student's ability to locate and assess sources and defend a position in a public forum. Heafner and Friedman (2008) utilize secondary students' blogs on WWII to demonstrate understanding of cause and affect, and the ability to make connections. Wilson et al. (2011) explain how blogs are used to respond critically to

questions, current events, videos, and podcasts using the collective intelligence of the class. Furthermore, the study emphasizes how a collaborative wiki explorer project motivated students to locate, assess and synthesize sources to create an explorer biography (Wilson et al., 2011). Correspondingly, Frye et al. (2010) explain how one teacher used blogs for a collaborative project on government in which students classified, interpreted, and analyzed information to create poetry demonstrating their knowledge. These projects highlight the potential of blogs and wikis to promote twenty-first century skills in social studies; however it is up to the teacher to ensure the appropriate pedagogy and assessment is used.

Social Studies Pedagogy and Assessment

"For those who believe that it is time for a change in social studies pedagogy, technology offers exciting potential to move toward a student-centred pedagogy" (Beck & Eno, 2012, p. 72). Unfortunately, current standardized testing in social studies does not support student-centred learning environments with much of the learning evidence in the literature being presented anecdotally or qualitatively (Beck & Eno, 2012; Heafner & Friedman 2008). Heafner and Friedman (2008) found a traditionally taught WWII unit control group scored higher than the wiki group on the end of unit standardized test, which was contrary to the qualitative learning evidence they gathered throughout the unit indicating increased engagement and interest. Eight months following the unit, qualitative assessment indicated it was the wiki test group who gained long-term learning (Heafner & Friedman, 2008). In their literature review, Beck and Eno (2012) found similar results, indicating there is a need for assessments measuring twenty-first century skills and not facts. While UDL application affords for barrier-free and fair assessment of skills and learning (Meo, 2008), it is not regularly applied to standardized tests. Assessments must

match pedagogy. Teachers will not change pedagogy and integrate student-centred wikis and blogs into their teaching until they know their students will achieve on standardized exams.

When integrating wikis and blogs into the classroom, assessment must be determined prior to beginning the project. Most of the studies did not include an explanation of how to assess for twenty-first century skills. This is detrimental to their value and their strength of argument for wiki and blog use. Meo's case study does describe the UDL assessment expectation of goal setting, reflection, and on-going and flexible assessment (2008). Wilson et al. (2010) is the only study to include explanations of assessment; however, the assessment does not adequately determine learning. Of three standards assessed, only one addresses knowledge construction; the other two standards concern grammar and following instructions. In order for blogs and wikis to become integral learning tools, teachers need to deviate from assessing the use of technology, grammar and rote memorization, instead focus on metacognition and twenty-first century skills. Technology is the conduit to demonstrate learning, not the learning itself.

This literature review signifies a need to align social studies pedagogy with assessment. Frye et al. argue exemplary social studies programs encourage interpretation and assessment of sources; issue investigation and conclusion making; problem-solving and decision-making; and responsible collaboration (2010). If teachers focus on these tenets and their own specific curricular outcomes, then assessments will align with constructivist pedagogy and knowledge construction, not on rote memorization and not on technology. The study applying UDL to the VHM found teachers were able to go beyond basic skills and assess students' ability to interpret information and demonstrate knowledge construction

using multimedia. Considering the only technology study to appropriately apply and discuss assessment was the Bouck et al. (2009) VHM study, reinforces my belief that the principles of universal design need to be applied for effective and personalized student learning to occur using blogs and wikis in social studies classrooms.

Conclusion

Although I was unable to find an article applying UDL to blogs and wikis in social studies, I believe this literature review supports the notion of using blogs and wikis to achieve personalization of learning in social studies. Before implementing either technological tool, it will be essential to consider how the tenets of UDL can be applied to personalize the learning environment and engage students, what twenty-first century skills will be used in the blog or wiki project, and how the outcome will be assessed. Blogs and wikis have the ability to create a collaborative learning environment where social studies students are challenged and supported in their knowledge construction.

References

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