Technology in ESL Classrooms

Editor
Faizah Mohamad, PhD
Chapter 3
Are you Ready to Blog?

Mah Boon Yih
Liaw Shun Chone

INTRODUCTION

Journal writing has been proven as an eminent and supportive teaching tool across the grades and the curriculum (Hopkins, 2003). It is also a common pedagogical technique in writing courses (Krause, 2005). Nowadays, the writing of e-journals or blogs is becoming progressively popular as it is one of the easiest ways – almost as easy as sending an email – to publish student writing on the Internet (Stanley, 2005). Given the nature and characteristics of blogs, educators have the opportunities to employ this innovative tool in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms, particularly to enhance journal writing with their students. In addition, if blogs have the potential for application in English Language Teaching (ELT), an investigation should be conducted to study this new educational innovation.

Blog is a coined word of Weblog or Web log, which serves as a noun and a verb. Blog was declared as the word of the year in 2004 by Merriam-Webster before it became the buzzword for 2004 (Lindroth, 2006). At present, weblog becomes well-accepted globally and some new words in English language like blog, blogging, bloggers, and the blogosphere have been generated. Due to its usefulness, easy-to-use (Mah & Liaw, 2008; Mah & Er, 2009; Mah, 2009), fast-growing, and globally well-accepted, weblogs in popular media are being called as “the next killer application” and “a replacement for email” (Krause, n.d.; Martindale & Wiley, 2005). Generally, a weblog consists of two components: the software that runs on a web server and generates the weblog pages; and the posting tool on how the comments are published on the software.