



# The Power of Blogging in the Academic English Classroom



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SYDNEY AUSTRALIA



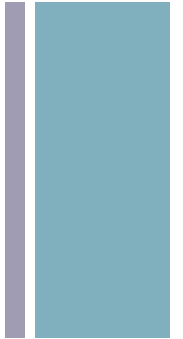


Since the beginning of history, human beings have formed communities that share cultural practices **reflecting their collective learning:** from a tribe around a cave fire, to a medieval guild, to a group of nurses in a ward, to a street gang, to a community of engineers interested in brake design.

(Wenger 2010)

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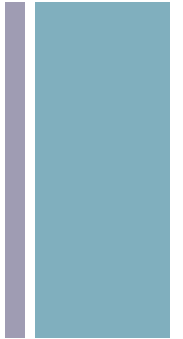
- Action Research {cycle 1 and cycle 2}
- Rationale
- Tasks
- Students' work
- Evidence + Results + Issues







# Blended Blogging



Can **blogging** be used effectively with our students ?

- Subjective & Reflective
- Travelling, cooking, commenting but ...
- Academic English ????? Why not ?
- **Reflecting** the personality of the author
- What if communities of learners are created during and following learning events ?
- Text evolved → text, visual, audio, video  
→ **immediate** knowledge → **immediate**  
audience → **immediate** feedback





How does social media such as **Blogging** increase new forms of communication and student interaction between members of the culturally diverse classroom community

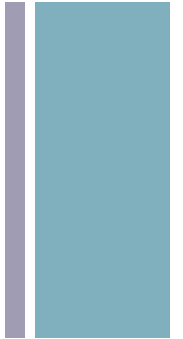
*interpret, analyze, and evaluate ?*

Research

Question



# Inspiration








- **Communities of practice** are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn **how to do it better** as they interact regularly (Wenger 2010).
- An **electronic portfolio** is “a digital container capable of storing visual and auditory content including text, images, video and sound...designed to support a variety of pedagogical processes and assessment purposes (Abrami and Barrett 2005).
- **Cultivating digital media** and **21st century literacy skills** in classrooms can cultivate new modes of participation that can change the teacher-centered patterns of classroom discourse (Applebee, 1993; Cazden, 1988)

# + Basic Requirements

- Mutual engagement
- Joint enterprise
- Shared repertoire

Wenger, 1998 cited in Macdonald & Viehbeck, 2007

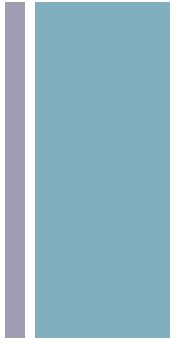
| Course level             | Course length            | Course Requirements  | Assessments  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|--|
| Foundation English<br>4B | 64 hours<br><br>80 hours | Level 4 Course book<br>Book of Readings<br><br>Understand concepts of urbanisation, climate change and the effect of global emissions in developing and developed countries. | Essay assessment, portfolio tasks, speaking, listening and reading / writing exams |

| Challenges   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| Journal readings are complex and abstract.<br><br>Layers of meaning embedded<br><br>Process requires lengthy explanations and discussion | New Concepts, contexts and terminology require cultural understanding.              | High level skimming / scanning skills<br><br>• critical thinking<br><br>• problem solving | Numerous worksheet activities are linked to the readings.                             | Copying direct from journal articles  |
|   |  |       |  |  |
| Learning is teacher centered   | Misunderstandings   | Repeating information   | Question and answer style may not confirm or reinforce learning and or meaning        | Paraphrasing and summarising  |



# Example of a dense text

## Excerpt from *Building Greener Cities*



*Even in cities, however, people remain **vulnerable to mismanaged urban planning** and **poor infrastructure** for housing, electricity, waste disposal and water supplies. They are also affected by **groundwater extraction** and **land reclamation**. Cities of all sizes face greater air pollution, traffic congestion and the **accumulation of waste**, with rising CO2 emissions. While the **influx of rural migrants** into cities can be beneficial to existing residents, it can also **spur discord** as competition increases for already **scarce environmental and social services**.*

*(Building Greener Cities 2010)*

# + Action Research: Cycle 1

## **Where do we start ?**

### **Firstly - setting up blogs:**

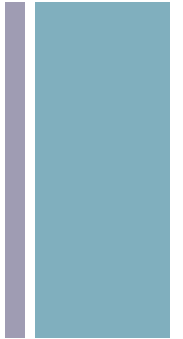
1. Students view some training videos
2. Wordpress - created with email

Training Edublogs 3.5 mins  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oDxg5ODEXEQ>





# Students' Projects



1. Something about me
2. Choose a city that is taking some action on climate change
3. Debates
4. News articles

<https://wordpress.com/posts/thecoolestenglishgroup.wordpress.com>

Firefox

- <https://thecoolestenglishgroup.wordpress.com/>

Examples:

- <https://thecoolestenglishgroup.wordpress.com/2015/06/24/climate-change-in-ho-chi-minh-city/>

# 1. Something about *Me*

JUNE 25, 2015 / BEINGRJ / EDIT

## Introducing Myself-RJ

Hi friends I am RJ. I come from a industrial city named Biratnagar of my beautiful country Nepal, which also has the highest peak(Mount Everest) in the world. I came to Sydney on 10th Feb 2015 and since then i have loved everything here. People are really friendly, good internet, good transport, awesome security. My favourite food is Chowmein, Pizza and Momos. One of my best experience of Sydney is what I experience every single day I come to UTS:INSEARCH. Its mainly because of my awesome teachers and amazing friends without whom my life would not be so cool.

Sydney you make me feel home away from home... 😊



## 2. Choose a city that is taking action on Climate Change

JULY 1, 2015 / PANHALONG / EDIT

### **Costa Rica - likely to be 1st carbon-neutral country**

Costa Rica, a small country in Central America, uses renewable energy for the first 75 days in 2015. The face behind this is the geography of Costa Rica, it is a heavily rain-forested country. The energy it most gets is from hydroelectric plants. However, the reason why for the first time this energy could power the whole country is the fact that there were unusual heavy rains generating so much energy which surpasses the demand of energy supply; this couldn't apply to anywhere else. The problem with using hydroelectric plant is that it requires constant rainfall and may can only be usable in the tropic region of the world.





## 3. Evaluation – Costa Rica

Evaluation: From a small point of view, Costa Rica seems to be doing a lot in terms of tackling climate change, however, if we take a look at a big picture from major point of views of other major countries, it is in tiny amounts. Given the beneficial natural geography of the country, nature does all the work in helping it to use clean energy by using hydroelectric powers to generate energy. While this is great, it can not be applied to other countries due to regional differences (e.g. climate, size and location).

Costa Rica provides a model for other countries perhaps to those in the tropical regions with plenty of rainforest to harvest what can be harvested and to do what can be done.



+

Data

# FOUNDATION ENGLISH CLASS



THE COOLEST ENGLISH GROUP

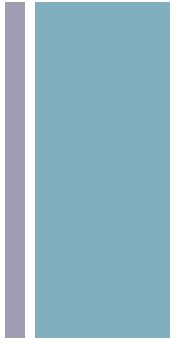
Nuclear Power Debate

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IsmVLRdklcg>

<https://youtu.be/IsmVLRdklcg?t=29>



# Data Analysis: My Observation

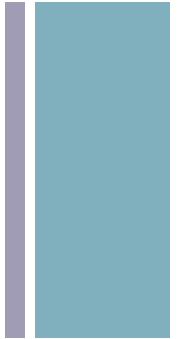


My Journal entry:

- I have observed during class their **motivation, excitement and attention placed** on learning through digital devices.
- I have observed the **social interaction** between students has increased dramatically especially amongst different COO's.
- **This trust in the classroom** equates to a deeper understanding of climate change has become more evident and I didn't **have to work so hard or drill to explain** the terms and abstract meanings.
- Learning has become **more student centred** as a result and students' position of mitigation and adaptation have evolved and grown over time. Also learning how to **construct a blog** was also a successful outcome of this first cycle. Using the social media device - **Wechat** also meant that I could communicate homework and class work instantly rather than emailing.



# Analysis of Student Data



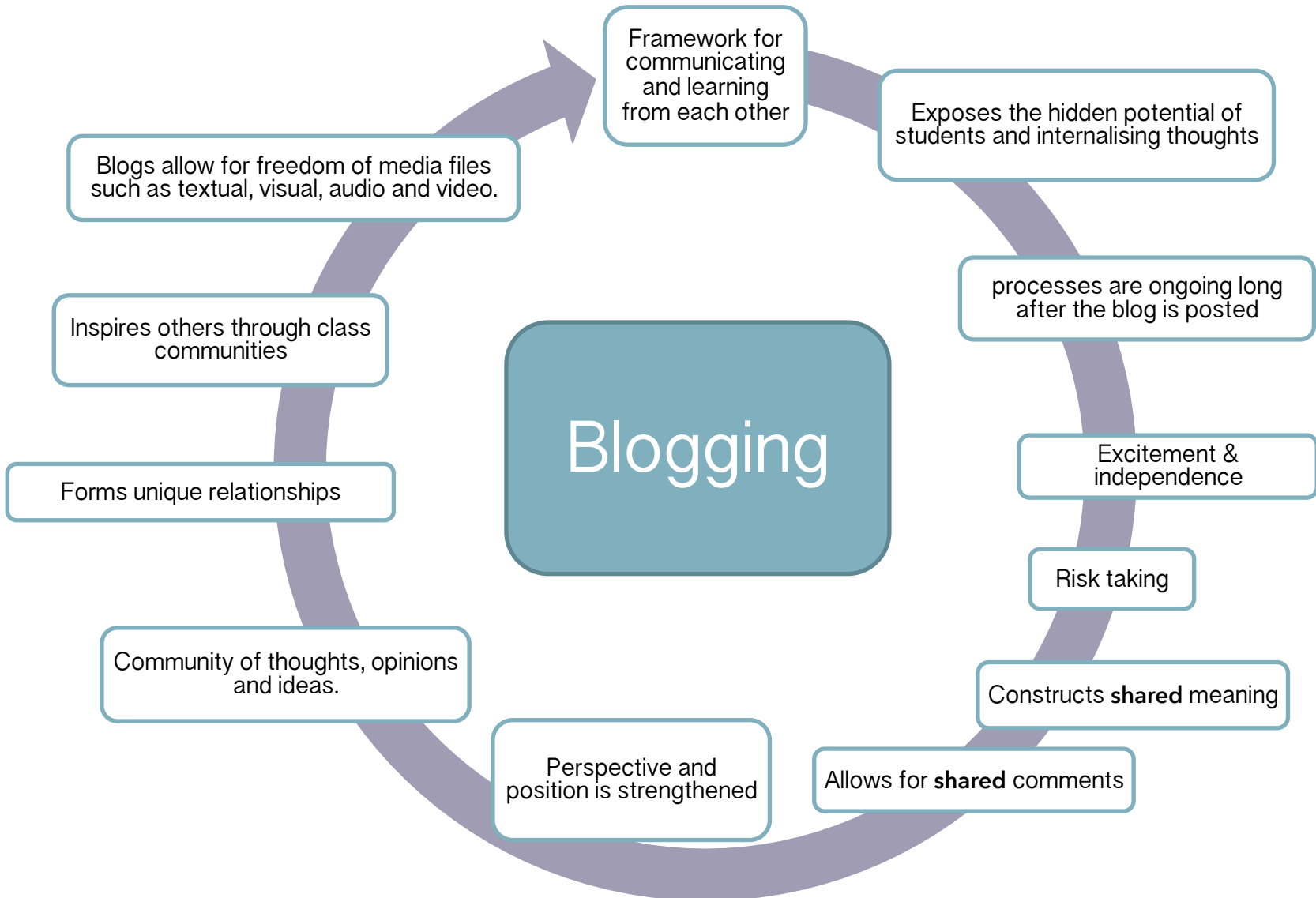
## Evidence through observation

- [AR Questionnaire cycle 1.xlsx](#)
- Inside outside & beyond





# Analysis of Student Data





# Feedback

*Deb*

*I found the students Task 1 in the Speaking Exam where they commented on articles found in print or on-line national and international newspapers, primarily The Guardian and the SMH to be thought provoking and engaging. The language provided by several of the students was comparatively more sophisticated when compared to performance in previous speaking exams.*

ELT Teacher

- The CONVERSATION
- <http://theconversation.com/forget-siestas-green-micro-breaks-could-boost-work-productivity-42356>

+

## First Cycle: Limitations

- New to most students
- Set up may take time
- Needs to be kept **activated /alive**
- Plan to integrate into curriculum – 2 hours per week
- Free word press has limitations----- upgrade



## + Action Research: Cycle 2

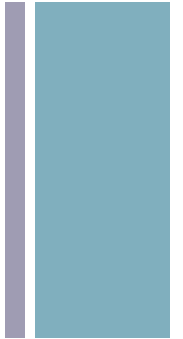


### Radical Transformation → deeper level

- ‘Net –Geners” express themselves in digital ways (*that only **they** know*)
- Comfortably collaborate in any digital environment.
- Learning in the form of Blogging initiate, motivate and focus students throughout the course.



# Blogging Tasks



1. Write a short summary - Something About Me
2. Choose a global city that is taking action on climate change
3. Debate - Nuclear Energy ( videoed and posted)
4. Reading and summarising News articles
5. Commenting on blogs.

**Debate :The conservationist, consultant and the scientist**

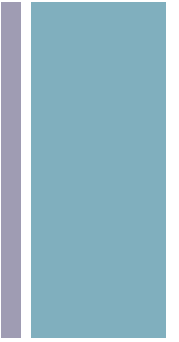
[https://myawesomeclass.wordpress.com/2015/08/21/our-class-debate-on-nuclear-energy-20-august-2015/?preview=true&preview\\_id=155&preview\\_nonce=857627c164](https://myawesomeclass.wordpress.com/2015/08/21/our-class-debate-on-nuclear-energy-20-august-2015/?preview=true&preview_id=155&preview_nonce=857627c164)

[https://myawesomeclass.wordpress.com/2015/08/21/our-class-debate-on-nuclear-energy-20-august-2015/?preview=true&preview\\_id=155&preview\\_nonce=857627c164](https://myawesomeclass.wordpress.com/2015/08/21/our-class-debate-on-nuclear-energy-20-august-2015/?preview=true&preview_id=155&preview_nonce=857627c164)

12.22-time

+ Blogging

■ News articles



# Reading and summarising news articles



## CITIES ARE THINKING AHEAD ON CLIMATE CHANGE



Posted on 04/09/2015

[Edit](#)

*Lovely images.  
I learnt a lot from this  
article.  
Well done Ali.*

The global cities are making many innovative methods to reduce climate change, from great sea walls to "sponge zones" and floating communities. Urban areas have a reason to act. Many are already dealing with impacts such as rising sea levels and extreme weather. They're suffering more frequent floods, and heat waves. "The trend for climate change is a major dynamic that cities will be reckoning with over the next several decades," says Bryna Lipper, vice president for relationships at 100 Resilient Cities, a nonprofit organisation. There are different ways of thinking about both mitigating and adapting to climate change, from the roads to the treetops.





# INFLUENCES ON NEW YORK CITY CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is becoming a serious issue in the world and it can effect many cities, such as New York. Reducing carbon emissions is more difficult to achieve. Pollution will effect people's health because of industrial facilities' releasing toxic chemicals into the air. Due to toxic chemicals, the U.S. built an Emergency Planning and Right to Know Act to defend its' citizens. The article states that New York has just 45 per cent of days in the year which has good air quality.

Posted on 04/09/2015

Edit



*Cool summary and a nice image.  
Good on you mate.*



*Evidently is preferred  
than obviously in  
writing ^.^  
This is just tips!*

## ShangHai is making changes to its environmnet due to climate change

In the last three decades, because of climate change, China has experienced significant impact on unbearable heat, especially in Shanghai. According to the report of government, the data shows that an average

🕒 2 months ago





## SUMMARY OF GLOBAL CITY'S CHANGING.



*“One house, one tree” is a great idea. It can increase people's attention and understanding about climate change.*

In the article *'Thinking Global, Acting Local: Makassar city's Quest for clean air and greening urban development'* notes that Makassar's a spatial green planning regulation which is 'one house, one tree' due to climate change. This programme encouraged planting trees since 2006. Therefore, Makassar had increase around 7 per cent green place in early 2012. Although some people might think one tree cannot help to reduce climate change, little step could be make difference. Indeed, people should not ignore small participation can be a great source of strategy and also people's focus is major driver.

# THE STRATEGIES IN HANGZHOU



China as the biggest

developing country, has many environmental issues caused by climate change like air pollution .Hangzhou is one of the most beautiful cities in China, but it's beautiful view was not built in a short time. In the last several decades, Hangzhou is suffering from air pollution because there are too many cars in the main city. However, the authority has made plans and has taken lots of measures to solve the environmental problem. They limit the amount of cars so that there will be less greenhouse gas (GHG). These kinds of ways are efficient and encourage people to become more environmentally friendly.

Posted on 04/09/2015

[Edit](#)





# STRATEGY AGAINST GLOBAL WARMING IN SEOUL



Recently, global warming is becoming a serious problem, so Seoul is trying to take responsibility and implement strategies for improving these problems. Actually, Seoul doesn't create a lot of CO2 emissions compared with other countries. First, they keep measuring CO2 emissions

Posted on 04/09/2015

[Edit](#)

annually for managing CO2 emissions effectively. Second, they encourage citizens to use public transport instead of their own vehicles. The Seoul council put the bus station in the middle of the road and made a bus lane only.

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[← The strategies in Hangzhou](#)

[Hong Kong →](#)

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# VANCOUVER AND CLIMATE CHANGE



Posted on 04/09/2015

[Edit](#)

Vancouver City has adopted a comprehensive Climate Change Adaptation Strategy to ensure that Vancouver remains liveable and resilient in the face of climate change.

The landmark strategy recommends 9 primary actions and over 50 supporting actions that the City of Vancouver can take to incorporate climate change adaptation measures into new projects and daily operations for all City businesses.

These actions will guide the way City streets are built and maintained, sewers, building infrastructures, parks and green spaces to ensure they



It is a nice image, if you choose an image about a strategy, that will be much better. Good on you, James.

## HONG KONG

As an international city, Hong Kong has devoted to the adaptation of climate change. Hong Kong is a coastal city which is totally surround by sea. Therefore, climate change can lead to sea-level rise and then cost catastrophic result. But Hong Kong does not. In order to deal with the changing climate, city has warning systems and there are forecasting service every public area. The younger generation are being educated to focus on water conservation. The government held an consultation from September to December in 2010 which targets to reduce approximately 60% by 2020 compared with 2005 level. Hong Kong is trying its best to combat climate change with maintaining the economy growth.





## Deeper insights into blogging posts

### WHAT DOES MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION LOOK LIKE ?

<https://myawesomeclass.wordpress.com/what-does-mitigation-and-adaptation-look-like/>

# Posting visuals

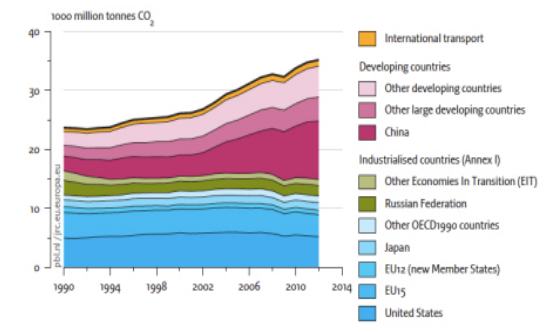


<https://myawesomeclass.wordpress.com/2015/08/27/adaptation-with-2-images/>





Figure 2.1  
Global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per region from fossil-fuel use and cement production



Source: EDGAR 4.2fT2010 (JRC/PBL, 2012); BP, 2013; NBS China, 2013; USGS, 2013; WSA, 2013; NOAA, 2012



Flickr / CIAT International Center for Tropical Agriculture 2012



# + Class Blog Survey

## Survey

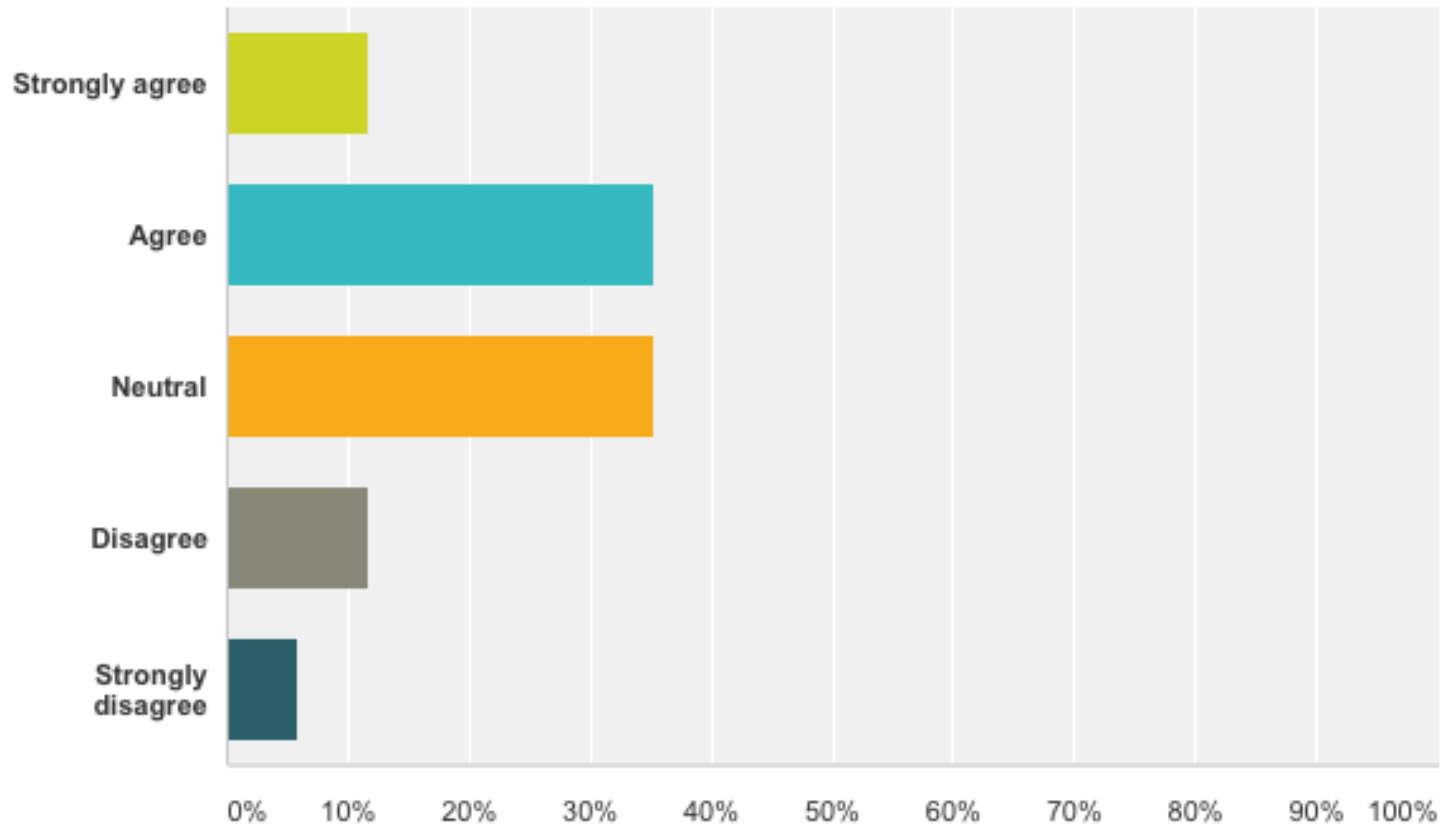
- <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZHDRF9W>





# Question 1:

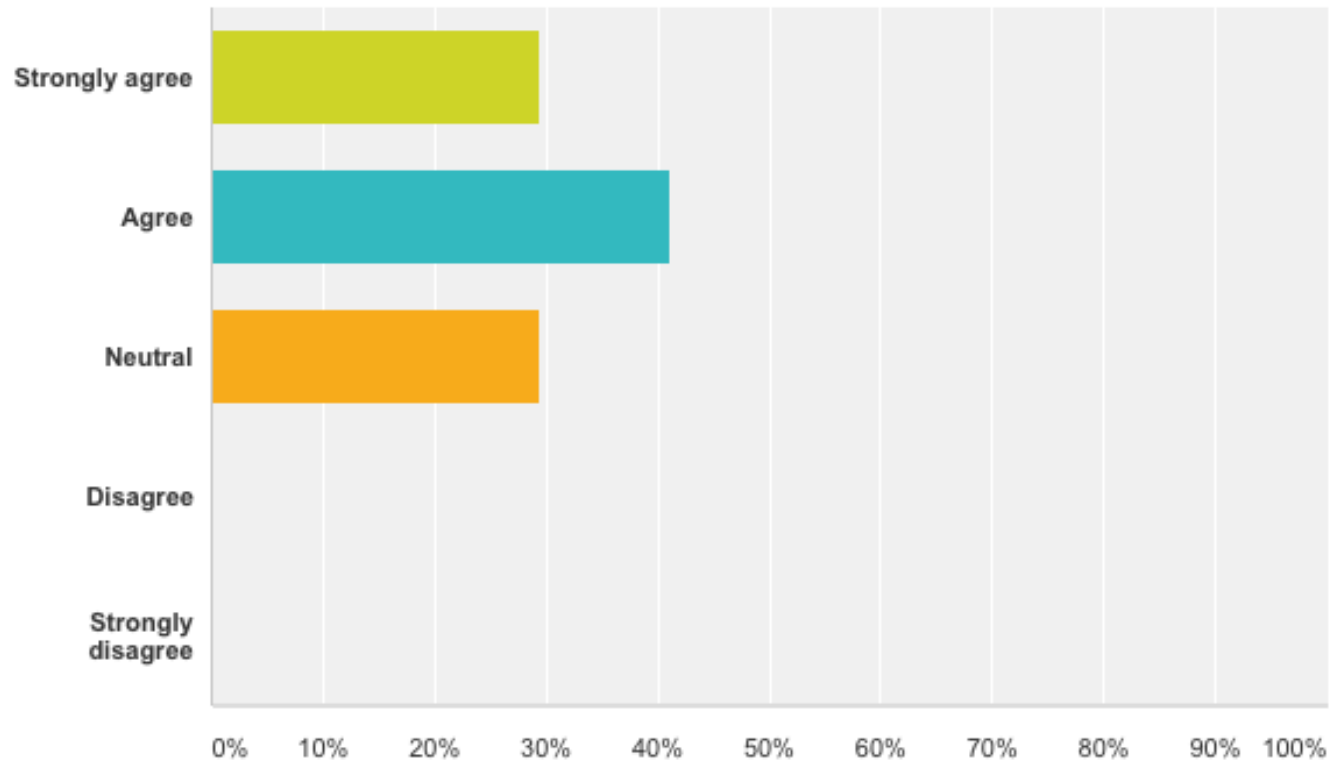
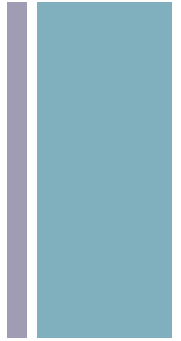
*Is it easy to set up a Blog?*





## Question 2:

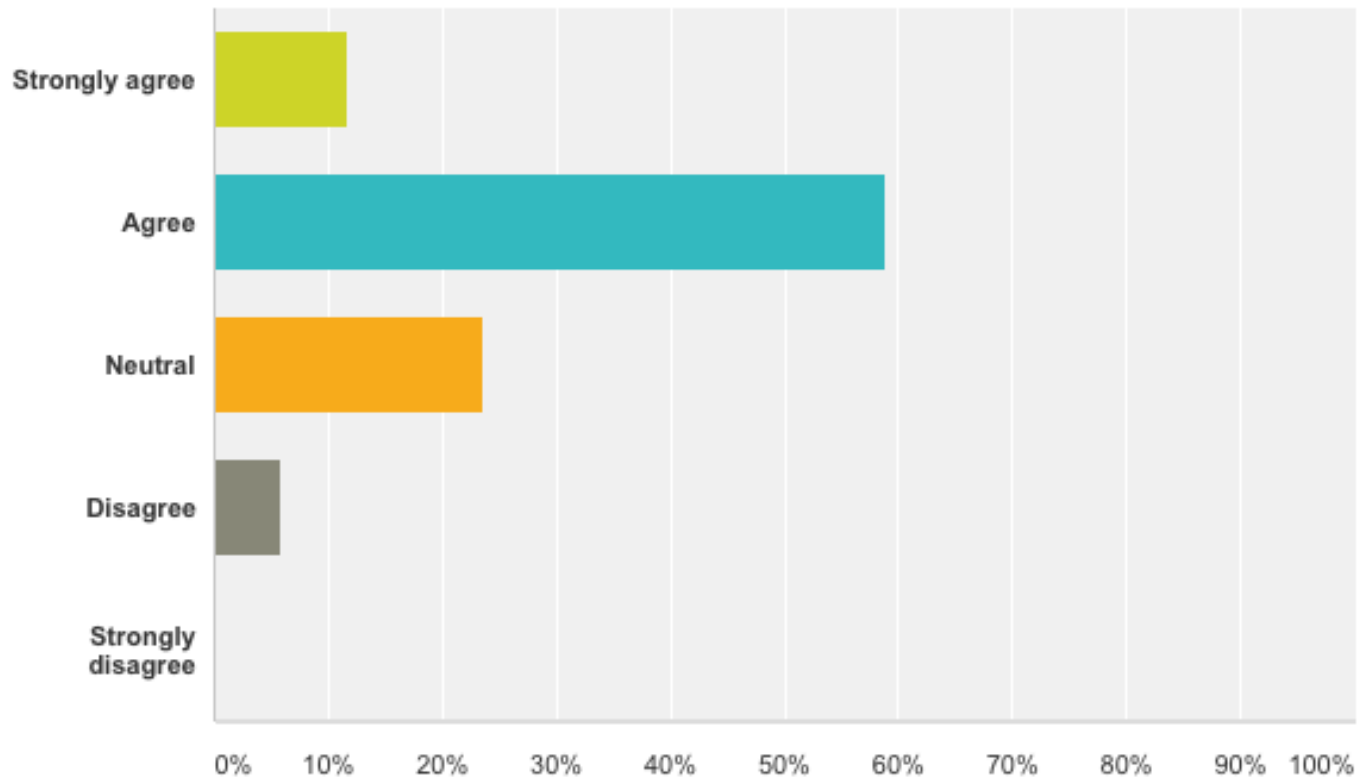
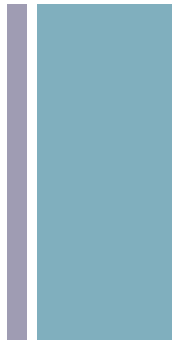
*Sharing ideas on a Blog helps me to develop skills in analysing and critiquing.*





## Question 3:

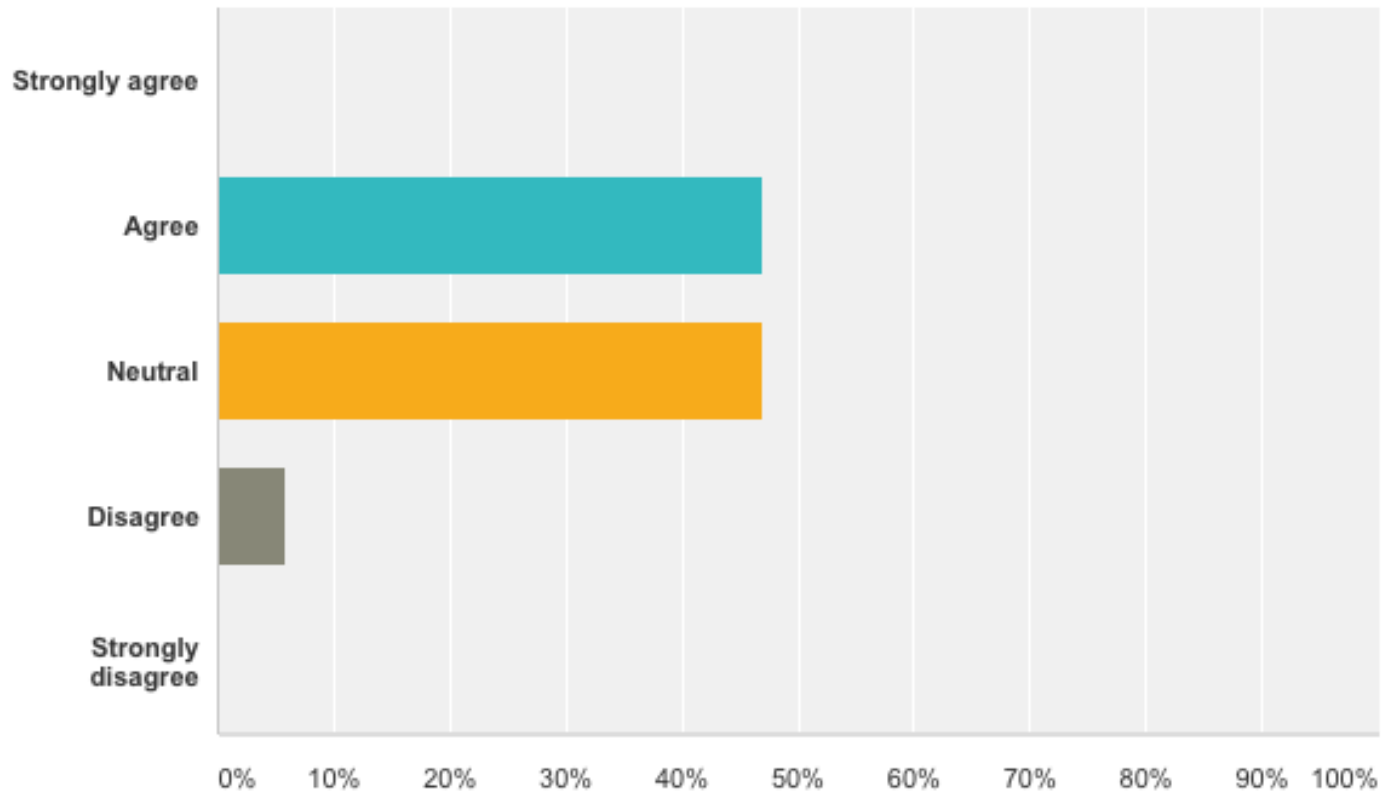
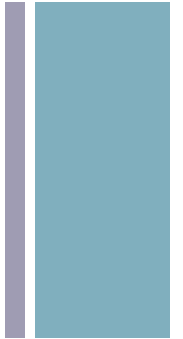
*I check my writing before I share my posts with my classmates.*





## Question 4:

*Now that I know how to use a blog I will use it in the future.*

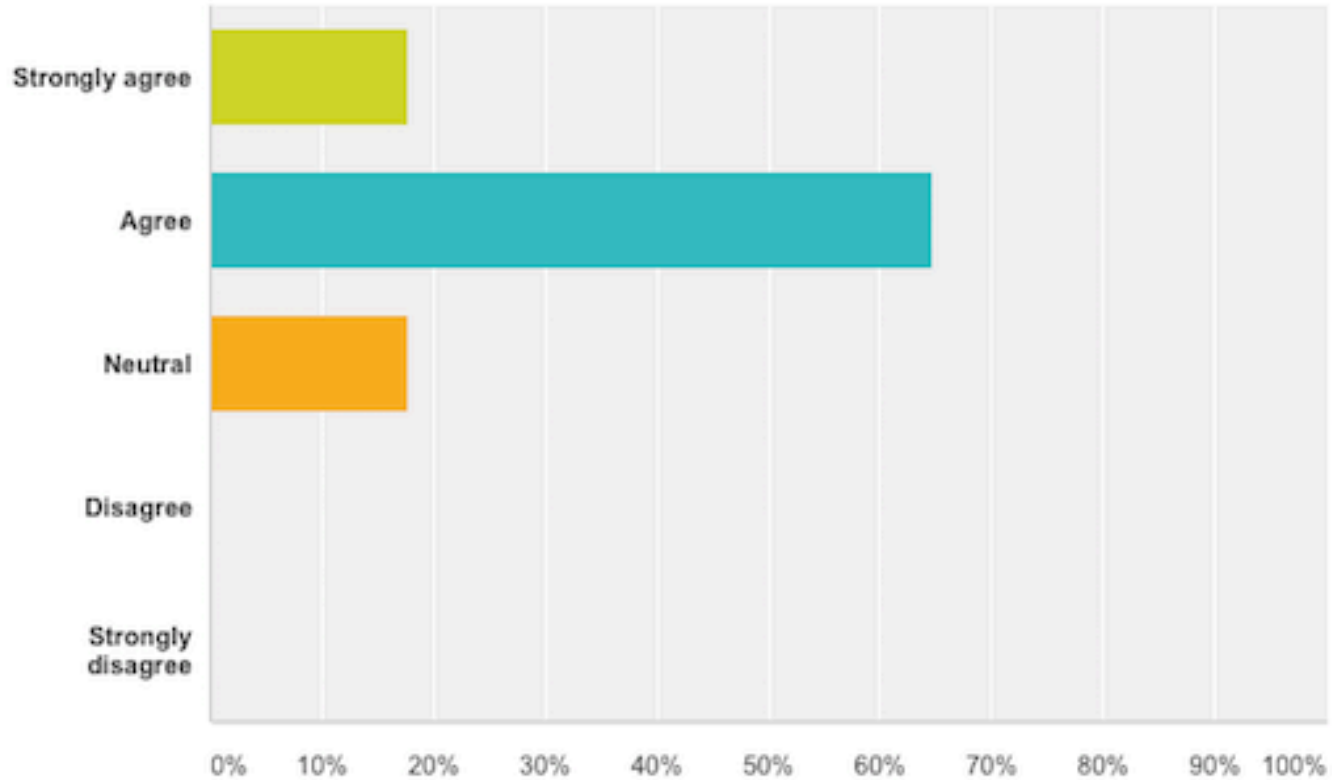
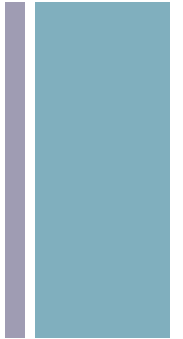






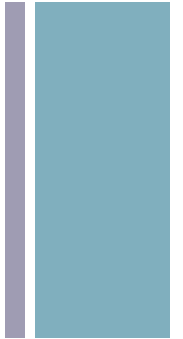
## Question 5:

*Posting blogs such as newspaper articles helps me to better understand course topics such as Urbanisation and Climate Change.*





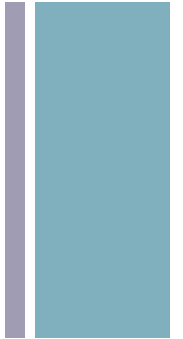
# Additional Comments from Survey Monkey:



- Blog is a great way to improve my reading, typing, vocabulary (when I read another blogs which are from my classmates).
- **Maybe it's too formal to play with.**
- I think use blog for our class is a pretty good idea that help us not only writing skills but also can see others works
- I've learnt something from it! Cheers!
- The Blogs improved my English skills a lot. Like it.
- It's was amazing experience



# Media Issues posted on Blog



<http://insideclimateneews.org/news/10082015/several-butterfly-species-could-go-extinct-2050-climate-change-drought>

Bill

Alice

Alice



[https://www.youtube.com/edit?video\\_id=G\\_VbaxflaMU&video\\_referrer=watch](https://www.youtube.com/edit?video_id=G_VbaxflaMU&video_referrer=watch)



*Hello Debbie, today I'm going to talk about several butterfly species to go extinct by 2050. The author is Bagley from Inside Climate News Website. This article is about a team of British researchers from that if GHG continue to climb at current levels, several butterfly species could suffer widespread extinction...*

<https://myawesomeclass.wordpress.com/speaking-part-1-2/>

# + Data Collection

- Questionnaires
- Surveys
- Observations
- Interviews

Final Questionnaire

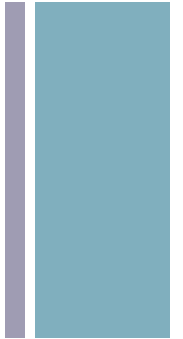
[final survey\final questionnaire \\_completed .docx](#)



Final interview



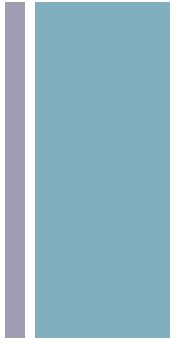
# Transcript of end of class interview



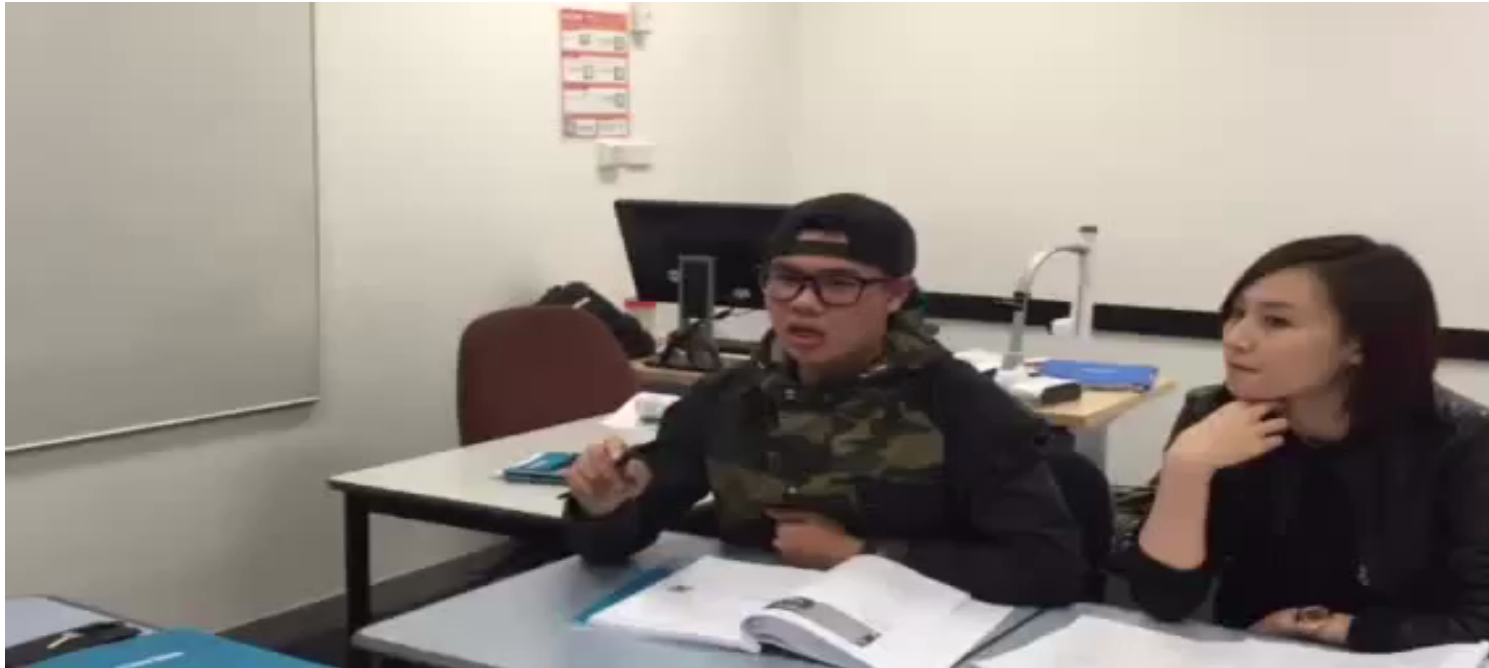
- At the beginning ...**I'm really afraid** because everyone can **see** my English level but now I'm really happy because it really improved my English and the teacher posts homework as well and its really easy to see because we use smartphones or ipads.
- In the beginning I spent **maybe 2 hours** but now I spend maybe **30 mins** to improve my writing its enough time. Its much easier now.
- Its easy to make comments online because sometimes we are **afraid to talk face to face** but people have different points of view in the way **you say something** and with the **writing**, if we see different articles we can get different results.

# + Awesome Class blogging tasks :

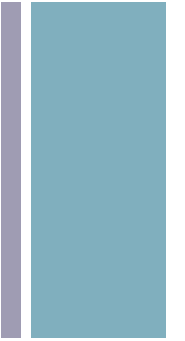
- journal article summaries
- a voice recording for the speaking exam
- **a videoed debate of nuclear power**
- my hometown summary
- summary of definition of mitigation and adaptation
- news summaries of climate change and urbanisation



# + The Scientist, the Environmentalist & the Consultant



**Korean, Saudi, Taiwanese, Chinese, Vietnamese**





# + Final Questionnaire:

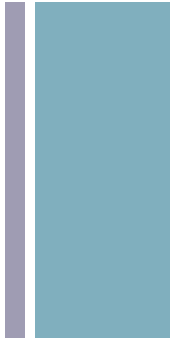
## *Students feedback*



- Yes because the internet is an **eternal place** and anyone can see it I can feel my improvement, now I have confidence.
- It is the best way to **improve your weaknesses** and find out ways to write summaries and essays.
- When I just submitted any writing to the teacher, actually, **I didn't focus** and check on my best, but when I posted something on the blog **I always focus and do my best** because if **I posted it** everyone is able to see it , that's why.
- Although **I am lazy** it is very interesting !
- Yes I can read other blogs and **open my mind**.
- Good for studying English, there is a **good community**.
- Yes because in my free time I am **always writing now** and I can put it on the blog and people can read and fix it for me.

# + Final Questionnaire:

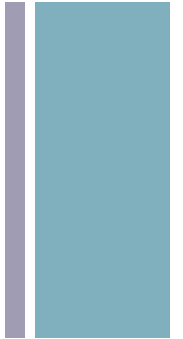
## *Students feedback*



- Yes because when I post to a blog, I must **read** it carefully, **check and find my mistakes**.
- It's a special course I have ever learned. We can help each other **by making comments** to each other. That makes it very interesting.
- I want to post an **accurate blog**, which means grammar and vocabulary should be correct.
- I don't want to post my writing with **many errors** so I always **check** my writing many times before I post.
- I think Blogging **improved** my English skills which is a **better way** to study English than just read and study vocabulary and grammar books.



# Research Implications



## **Implications:**

Blogging creates opportunities for updating resources, open shared discussion, interactive text construction and feedback, shared voices, valued comments and risk taking. Reduced copying and enhanced paraphrasing.

## **Conclusion:**

The teacher is central player –Offer guidelines  
How blogging is implemented is critical to its success.

- Quick and easy to publish
- Record of class work
- Students develop digital literacy at same time



**“Class, I’ve got a lot of material to cover, so to save time I won’t be using vowels today.**

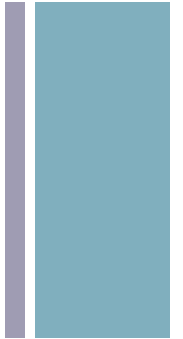
Reflecting the  
personality of  
the author





# How can I make it happen ?

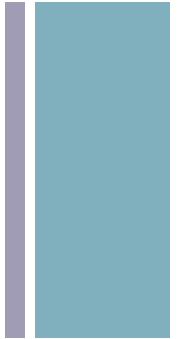
## Setting up a Blog with your class



- In groups brainstorm a plan to integrate Blogging as part of your Course work
- Set up a theme
- Form student groups - choose a student team leader
- Hours per week
- Topic – Theme
- Maybe .....Start with ‘something about me’



# Research Articles



- <http://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2012/jul/17/students-should-be-blogging>
- <http://www.edutopia.org/blog/blogging-in-21st-century-classroom-michelle-lampinen>
- <http://www.emergingedtech.com/2009/05/blogging-in-and-out-of-the-classroom/>
- <http://www.freetech4teachers.com/2013/03/picking-best-platform-for-your.html>



