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Investigating Marketing Students' Perceptions of Active Learning and Social Collaboration in Blogs

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Web 2.0 technology has found a niche in education. In response to students' comfort level in using social media, many business educators have explored the use of Web 2.0 applications in courses. Research on the use of Web 2.0 tools to determine effectiveness for learning is still in its infancy. The authors describe one such experiment in which students used blogs in several courses. Application of blogs in courses, and assessment of this technology in regard to affecting learning behavior, as well as perceptions of students toward blogs were studied. Recommendations, challenges, opportunities, and strategies for use of blogs in courses are provided in this research.

Keywords: active learning, online learning, social media, technology acceptance, Web 2.0

Businesses are paying attention to social media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter to establish a brand presence and connect with customers. They are taking a proactive approach to marketing their products and services by targeting a wider audience that feels empowered by using social media tools such as blogs. The new generation of consumers is characterized by an always-on connection to the Internet, and a need for interaction and socialization in the digital environment by using smartphones, netbooks, and other mobile devices that no longer require a wired connection to the Internet. Brewer and Brewer (2010) observed that the management and distribution of knowledge in a technologically driven environment is getting increased attention in business and education because it offers tremendous competitive advantage. As Hedberg and Brudvik (2008) noted, the social nature of Web 2.0 transforms users from consumers to producers of information. In a world obsessed with constant movement and action, Web 2.0 technology gives individuals the opportunity to interact with their world. Daugherty, Eastin, and Bright (2008) observed that Web 2.0 technology has made it possible for an ordinary consumer to use blogs that can significantly influence a mass audience. Companies have gone beyond solely a web presence under their own

domain name, and are seeking out popular blogs and social media sites that primarily have user generated content to market their products and services (Guinan & Parise, 2008). These venues enable companies to add value and build trust with customers (Thompson & Doherty, 2006), which due to its significant impact in the marketplace can be considered justification to teach about blogs in marketing courses. Here we investigated whether business students are aware of blogs, and if blogs can be used to create an effective active learning environment that can promote students' interaction, motivation, and higher order thinking skills. We also explored whether age, gender, and work experience could impact the use of blogs.

To leverage the use of social media platforms, employees of companies that use social media need proper training to interact in this virtual world that includes blog posts and tweets. Businesses are seeking employees who understand the new medium and rules of engagement within the medium. By learning about application of these tools in the classroom, marketing students can understand the dynamics of interacting in social media networks and recognize how to collaborate with other participants who share a common interest. The use of active learning techniques to develop critical thinking skills and promote higher order learning in a traditional face-to-face classroom has previously been demonstrated (Dalal, 1994; Jenkins, 1998; Page & Mukherjee, 2007). Here we focused on understanding if students can be motivated to learn in a technology-mediated team environment, so business educators can design course materials

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with learning objectives tied to meaningful activities that can promote active learning, which in turn can lead to mastery of content and targeted learning outcomes. By using blogs, students can reflect on their writing and make intelligent analyses that can motivate them to be engaged with course material, enhance their decision-making skills, and promote teamwork (Ellison & Wu, 2008; McInnis-Bowers, Chew, & Bowers, 2010). "The social context of a group can also motivate students to work hard" (Deeter-Schmelz, Kennedy, & Ramsey, 2002, as cited in Aggarwal & O'Brien, 2008, p. 256). Research has also shown that group projects can enhance a student's self-esteem and sense of accomplishment through cooperative learning. The team environment allows students to work together to solve complex problems and help them develop interpersonal relationships, presentation skills, and leadership abilities (Aggarwal & O'Brien).

Because of their rich interactive environment, blogs have a potential to help students experience better learning and engagement in a media-rich platform (Davies & Merchant, 2007; Du & Wagner, 2006). Strategies and methodologies are needed to assess applications of Web 2.0, specifically the value of using blogs in courses, and its impact on influencing student learning. Granitz and Koernig (2011) stated that students carrying out analyses of one another's blogs could assess the information and then post their evaluations publicly in a blog comments area.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the efficacy of using blogs in marketing courses. Further, we also investigated students' self-referent perceptions of the blog environment. This was done by having students enrolled in marketing courses complete a questionnaire that asked for input on use of blogs and its effect on the four constructs of active learning, motivation, teamwork, and technology use.

Blogs

Blogs play an important role for businesses in today's environment. The banking industry and retail industry are using blogs as a means to strengthen their current marketing plans (Bielski, 2007). The travel industry is using five critical areas of promotion, product distribution, communication, management, and research as an integral part of their marketing plan (Schmallegger & Carson, 2008). Handbooks and informational items are now being disseminated on blogs rather than sending these via traditional corporate emails (Stephens, 2006). Marketers can make use of blogs to reach their audiences. For a perceptive marketer, previous knowledge on the use of blogs increases motivation to keep their company's name intact through constant scrutiny of outside blogging sources. Connections made in academia can also strengthen businesses' informal marketing efforts. New technologies are the new face of media and are likely to be the continued trends in product promotion.

The field of marketing has changed because of the virtual environment and Web 2.0 tools. In order for graduates

of business schools to prepare for this new virtual marketplace, they must obtain knowledge of these Web 2.0 tools, as businesses have come to rely on these collaborative environments to serve customers. Raab (2009) discussed the keen ability of marketers to search through blogs for interests of consumers. He stressed the importance of understanding trends as this can provide a clear understanding of business growth. Educators have the ability to emulate this collaborative and interactive environment of blogs in courses. However, new technologies are adopted by educators without proper research foundation on efficacy of these tools, research often lacks practice, and large-scale educational outcomes are not realized by implementation of these tools (Ehrmann, 2002). Porter and McKibbin (1988) had observed that business schools are using antiquated pedagogical models for teaching, and there is a need for updating the curriculum as well as faculty preparation and development. Arning and Ziefle (2007) called for investigation of factors affecting utilization behavior of technology in the context of psychological and educational perspectives that affect areas such as marketing, ergonomics, psychology, and pedagogy. Similarly, Ellison and Wu (2008) also asked for more research to determine how "new technologies can be incorporated into the classroom as pedagogically sound practices" (p. 100). Students can potentially benefit from the advantages offered by a technology-mediated learning environment that promotes active learning.

Research Questions

Rather than try to establish a cause/effect relationship between use of blogs and learner outcomes typically measured by achievement scores, this study focused on the efficacy of blogs to impact learning behavior. Based on the review of literature, the researchers identified four dimensions critical to the use of blogs. These dimensions (constructs) were then placed under categories of active learning, motivation, teamwork/collaboration, and technology use. The dimensions formed the framework of the survey instrument. Individual items under each dimension were then derived or adapted from review of literature and previous empirical research studies.

The Research questions guiding this study were the following:

Research Question 1: What is the contribution and relationship between constructs of active learning, motivation, teamwork, and technology use on learning behavior when using blogs? How well can these constructs affect learning behavior?

Research Question 2: What is the effect of moderating variables such as age, gender, and work experience on attitude toward use of blogs?

Research Question 3: What is the general perception of students' use of blogs for course assignments?

METHODOLOGY

The study included 102 undergraduate marketing students enrolled in the College of Business a state university in South-eastern United States. The university is a land-grant public university with approximately 11,000 students and 600 faculty members. For freshman applicants to the university, the minimum SAT and ACT score requirements are: SAT Critical Reading 430 and SAT Math 410; ACT English 17, and ACT Math 17. The university offers 115 programs of study leading to certificate, bachelor, master, or doctoral degrees. The student-to-faculty ratio at the university is 20:1; an average undergraduate class has 28 students. The university is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award bachelor, master, education specialist, and doctoral degrees. The College of Business is also accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business.

The instrument designed for this study was made available to students after they had used blogs for several assignments. All students enrolled in multiple sections of the course completed the questionnaire, and students were given credit for the assignment. Students were required to create a new blog at the beginning of the semester. They formed groups for a semester research project, and each student's group members' blogs became the ones that he or she would follow throughout the semester. The students were given introductory information about the rationale for using blogs in online courses (e.g., "they can promote critical, creative and associational thinking, and a potential for increased access and exposure to quality information"), as well as the benefits of blogging in the business world (example: "building community, easy web publishing, higher search engine rankings, and lower costs than regular web sites"). Throughout the semester, students shared their opinions on or experiences with various assigned topics. For example, after the topic of observational methods of marketing research was taught, each student blogged about what he or she learned, which methods they thought to be most effective, and which they found most surprising. After writing their individual blog posts, students were also required to respond to their group members' blog posts on each topic. This was done so students could get experience with the use blogs to form follow-up opinions based on information presented in blogs and dialogs as a result of initial posts. Students were instructed to spend a significant amount of time on blog postings ("elaborate, clarify, elucidate, explain") for both their original posts and their responses to other posts. They were also informed that more effort put into their blogs (e.g., use of technology enhanced features such as pictures, links, videos, or any element that added aesthetic appeal) would result in higher scores.

The instrument had 20 items under the categories of active learning, motivation, teamwork, and technology use. Demographic data related to age, gender, work experience, previ-

ous blogging experience, and college classification was also collected. Before administering the instrument, items were validated by a group of Business School faculty who were proficient with the use of technology for course assignments. Recommendations made by faculty to modify items they considered unclear or ambiguous were incorporated before the final survey instrument was administered to students. This provided content validity to the instrument. The instrument was also tested for convergent and discriminant validity.

The items used in the survey instrument were the following:

Active Learning

1. Use of the blog assignments enhanced my learning in the course.
2. The blog assignments were useful in helping me get a deeper understanding of the topic.
3. I retained more material as a result of using the blog.
4. I participated in assignments more because of using the blog.
5. Use of the blog helped me develop my analytical and problem-solving skills.

Motivation

6. Benefit of using the blog is worth the extra effort and time required to learn it.
7. I would recommend classes that use blogs to other students.
8. I would prefer online classes that use blogs over other online classes that do not use blogs.
9. I am motivated to explore the use of blogs in the future.
10. I stayed on task more because using the blog was interesting to me.

Teamwork/Collaboration

11. I liked seeing other students' interaction with material I posted in the blog.
12. Use of the blog for the assignments helped me interact more with students than I would have otherwise.
13. The blog created a sense of camaraderie within my group.
14. I learned more because of information posted by other students in the blog.
15. Use of the blog promoted collaborative learning.

Technology

16. The blog interface and features were overall easy to understand.

17. Benefits of using the blog outweighed any technical challenges of its use.
18. Browsing information in the blog was easy.
19. Compared to WebCT (CourseDen) discussion board, the blog was easier to use.
20. Technical features in the blog helped enhance my learning.

The previous items were presented randomly to respondents of the survey. Data were collected using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) as anchors. Based on scores of the above category items, a new variable, blog index (BI), was created by using a composite summated score of the four categories. Previous research (e.g., Hazari, North, & Moreland, 2009) had shown the use of active learning, motivation, teamwork, and technology use can impact learning. The BI is used in this study to determine efficacy of blog use that impacts learning behavior. It should not be considered as an achievement score that measured learning outcomes of the course. This distinction is important because there is a difference between how students feel about a learning experience, and actual learning as a result of an intervention.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

There were 102 respondents to the questionnaire. Demographic information is shown in Table 1.

Reliability and validity of the overall instrument as well as individual subscales was calculated. Cronbach's alpha, a measure of internal consistency, was the following: active learning had an alpha of .89, the motivation alpha was .92, the teamwork alpha was .83, and the technology alpha was .77. All subscales exhibited good internal consistency. Nunnally (1978) and Thorndike (1996) stated that overall Cronbach's alpha of .8 is considered acceptable criterion for internally

TABLE 1
Demographic Information

Measure	Item	<i>n</i>	%
Gender	Male	54	52.9
	Female	48	47.1
Age (years)	18–21	34	33.3
	22–25	57	55.9
	> 25	11	10.8
Work experience (years)	0–5	91	89.2
	6–10	7	6.9
	> 10	4	3.9
Classification	Freshman	0	0.0
	Sophomore	0	0.0
	Junior	12	11.8
	Senior	90	88.2
Previous use of blogs	Yes	28	27.5
	No	74	72.5

TABLE 2
Correlation of Constructs

	Active learning	Motivation	Teamwork	Technology
Active learning	—			
Motivation	.76**	—		
Teamwork	.76**	.70**	—	
Technology	.66**	.77**	.72**	—

**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

consistent scales. Item analysis was conducted to determine instrument validity. As recommended by Gerbing and Anderson (1988), the convergent and discriminate validity of the scale was investigated where each item was correlated with its own scale (with the item removed), and then with other scales. Item analysis showed that all items were highly correlated with their own scale in comparison with items in the other subscales therefore supporting validity of the measure.

Research Question 1

The survey included four constructs: active learning, motivation, teamwork, and technology. Each construct was represented by measurable indicators in the survey. Table 2 shows correlation between the four constructs was significant.

A multiple linear regression was calculated predicting students' BI score based on their scores on subscales of active learning, motivation, teamwork, and technology. A significant regression equation was found, $F(4, 97) = 20653.4$, $p < .001$, with an R^2 of .988. Students predicted BI score = $-0.165 + 1.04(AL) + 1.03(MOT) + 0.86(Team) + .89(Tech)$, and the four factors to determine BI score accounted for 98.8% of the variance. All four constructs were significant predictors. The shared variance between the four constructs was not surprising although the magnitude of it suggests some halo effects taking place. The high shared variance makes it difficult to parse the constructs to determine causality. Further research is needed to elucidate which construct can best predict blog efficacy.

Research Question 2

Age was examined in relation to BI score. A weak correlation that was not significant was found, $r_s(102) = .037$, $p > .05$. Age was not related to BI score in this study. The three age groups for the study were categorized and had the following scores: age group 18–21 had 34 students with a mean BI score of 101.74 ($SD = 19.46$), age group 22–25 had 57 students with a mean score of 97.82 ($SD = 22.60$), and age group >25 years had 11 students with a mean score of 106.73 ($SD = 20.29$). To investigate the popular notion that younger students adapt to technology faster and are more accepting of new media (Prensky, 2001), further analysis was done regarding age and each of the subscales in the survey. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was computed to compare the BI score of students in different age groups. No

TABLE 3
Open-Ended Comments on Use of Blogs

Category	Comments
Active learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + There are no right or wrong answers. It gives you more freedom to express. + This is a new way of expression. + I liked how we could freely express opinion or understanding. - Commenting on other people's blog should not be required. - Blogs should not have a deadline since they are free form.
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + It was helpful to see someone else's point of view on my blog post. + It made me expand my mind on a topic. + I hope that future classes will utilize blogs. + I learned a lot by enabling comments in my blogs. + It was fun to post so everyone (other than the instructor) can see it. - Blogs do not help me stay on task. - I don't enjoy blogging, it is more work that has to be done in my mind.
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + I liked the interaction with other students. + Communication with team members is convenient. + Being able to collaborate with other students and voice opinions in a more creative way was great. - Some students in my group have not given me access so I cannot access their blog posts. - Replying to others is a hassle. - Several in our group can't get to each others blogs even though we are followers so some can't respond to others in the group! - I didn't like commenting on other people's blogs as an obligation. Sometimes I would comment just to comment because I agreed. I think that should be optional.
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + I liked the ease of use and the fact that the blogs could help with my grade. + I am a techie so there was no challenge as far as technical things go for me. I think it is a good tool. + Information can be easily created and edited. - Took a while to get used to after initial setup. - Step by step directions were not given. - I would rather send/receive information via email versus the blog. - Setup was the hardest part. - What I liked least about the blogs is that you have to go through your e-mail to find other students to respond to whereas on the discussion boards, everything is ready available.

significant difference was found, $F(2, 99) = 0.951, p > .05$. The students from three age groups did not differ significantly on the BI score.

For work experience, a moderate correlation that was significant was found, $r_s(102) = .29, p < .01$. Previous blog experience was studied in relation to BI score by using biserial correlation coefficient (r_b). A low correlation that was not significant was found, $r_b(102) = .14, p > .05$. Gender differences were investigated in this study because there is contradictory literature on whether women present higher level of anxiety or lower level of attitude toward use of technology when compared with men. Gender was examined in relation to BI score by using point-biserial correlation. Females scored higher on the BI scale ($M = 101.73, SD = 18.06$) as compared with men ($M = 97.64, SD = 23.90$). A low correlation that was not significant was found, $r_{pb}(102) = .11, p > .05$. The finding(s) concurred with earlier research findings such as Morris, Venkatesh, and Ackerman (2005), who found that female users are equally likely to use a technology-based system as male users.

Research Question 3

Gill (2006) noted that techniques used to measure overall effectiveness of a technology tool are only an approximation,

so other factors such as student satisfaction and participation should be used to evaluate any improvement in the learning process. The focus of this study was on behavioral outcomes (i.e., how the students felt about the blog experience rather than their scores or grade [achievement outcome] in the course). Because teaching and learning are not an exact science, Research Question 3 used open-ended questions that were included in the questionnaire to explore additional themes, insights, and perceptions that may have emerged as a result of use of blogs by students. Not all students provided open ended comments. The positive comments that were provided related to freedom of expression when using blogs, being able to see other students' posts and points of view, ability to piggyback on other students' comments, interaction and dialog with other students, communication with team members, collaboration with students, blogging for credit, blogs being a convenient tool for information sharing, ease of posting and editing information, and recommendations that other classes should use blogs. Negative comments related to requirement of replying to other students' blog comments, having replies posted by a set deadline, not being able to stay on task when blogging, blogs being more work than traditional assignments, initial technical issues (e.g., blog access problems), lack of step-by-step instructions, preference of email over blogs, and the blog user interface being different from

the course management system that was used for other course activities. A summary of comments is shown in Table 3.

LIMITATIONS

One of the biggest limitations of this study was that blogs were created on a different system outside the university's standard course management system that was used by all other courses. This led students to learn an entirely new system which had a different user interface. Attitudes toward the technology component of the study could have been affected by this experience of learning a new system. One student commented: "It took a while to get used to the system after initial setup." Course management tool vendors should consider integrating social media tools as an integral part of the learning management systems. This would facilitate not only instruction, but also feedback and assessment in conjunction with other course assignments. The context of this study was at a single university with the same system used by all students giving similar contextual factors for all participants. Each participant may have brought different experiences into the context which was subsequently investigated using moderating variables such as age, gender, and previous blog experience. The purpose of this study was not to measure learning outcomes but instead focus on behavioral outcomes (e.g., student attitudes) that could result in higher student achievement. In this study, it would have been interesting to compare BI score of younger and older students to investigate technology adoption. However, the majority of students in the courses that used blogs were in the same age groups. We could have conducted focus groups to provide additional qualitative data regarding acceptance of technology by older students who may not be as proficient in using social media and Web 2.0 tools.

DISCUSSION

The goals for using blogs in courses were to help students demonstrate knowledge of subject matter, assist with development of critical thinking skills by working collaboratively, and improve communication skills in a technology-mediated group environment. Data showed that many students enjoyed the creative aspect of blogging (especially as compared with WebCT/CourseDen discussion board, which is used by the university as a course management tool). Students liked the aspect of blogs where they could be more imaginative with the layout (e.g., incorporating multimedia elements to inform learning). A student stated, "This is a new way of expression." Students also commented that only following a few blogs (and therefore having just a few posts to respond to) was easier for the students than reading through 60 or more discussion posts in the course management tool. Several students did not appear to grasp the concept of blogs. They did

not understand that a blog is continuous, and that they were supposed to write new posts within the same blogs; some students created an entirely new blog address for each post. Students showed originality, and the novelty caused students to be motivated when participating in the blog (e.g., "It made me expand my mind on a topic"). This aspect brought something new to the course that was outside of the course management tool. Assessment is always a challenge with new technology tools. Technology-based learning environments require alternate assessments to determine students' demonstration of higher order thinking skills (Olt, 2002). We found that blogs are more challenging to grade and this took quite a bit longer than grading discussions within a course management tool. However the assessment information resulted in data which the authors were able to use for making changes in teaching materials and methods (Stivers & Phillips, 2010). Also, Xu and Yang (2010) noted that social interaction has a positive impact on knowledge-development in student groups. We found that students are motivated in a technology-enhanced environment and had a positive attitude when interacting with other students in collaborative spaces such as blogs (sample comment: "Being able to collaborate with other students and voice opinions in a more creative way was great").

Based on our experiences, we would like to make the following recommendations to business educators who are interested in using blogs in classes. This can serve as a roadmap to educators contemplating the use of blogs in their courses. First, explain to students the relevance of blogs so that they do not feel as if they are simply conducting "busy work" as mentioned by one student who commented "Replying to others is a hassle." Then discuss the benefits of blogs, such as the fact that they can promote critical, creative, and associational thinking, as well as a potential for increased access and exposure to quality information, and likewise convey the benefits of blogging in the business world, including building community, easy Web publishing, higher search engine rankings, and lower costs than regular websites. Informing students of these benefits will emphasize the importance of blogs and generate excitement and interest in the assignment. It is helpful to be clear in your description of blogs as well as instructions for setting up the blog. This needs to be done to address comments such as "step by step directions were not given." Instructors should provide some explanation as to what blogs are, and for what purposes they are used. Surprisingly, there are many students who were not familiar with blogs. Explain that each student should create only one blog site (with one URL) and that they will "build" their blog throughout the semester by posting on instructor-appointed topics; this will eliminate the potential problem of students creating a new and separate blog URL for each assigned topic during the semester. Detailed, step-by-step instructions will provide a clear picture on how to create the blog and, if possible, provide a link to a screencast video that shows one being created. This not only aids the visual learners in the class, but demonstrates how easy the setup process can be. Educators

should choose a blog site that is easy to use and provides plenty of help to the blog creator (we used Google Blogger [<http://www.blogger.com>]). Additionally, links to help topics should be provided in advance by either providing direct links for the students, or conveying where online help can be found should students encounter problems while creating their blogs. While it may appear that this will take a great deal of time initially, once a user-friendly blog site is found, and necessary instructions and help documentation located, repeating the assignment for future classes becomes convenient. Once the blogs have been created, students should send the link to the instructor by the end of the first or second week of the semester (not having any actual posting assignments until the third week or later). Also students should be required to follow their group members' blogs by the same date. This will force the students to become familiar with blogs, review the instructions for creating the blog, and work through the creation process (and any problems they may encounter) so that they will be equipped and ready for their first blog topic when the time comes. From the comments it was observed that some students did not like to reply to other students.

Instructions should provide students with examples of (links to) several exceptional blogs so that the instructor's expectations are clear. When assigning topics for which students will create a blog post, choose course topics that students tend to find more interesting and ones that enable them to share their opinions on the matter. This not only provides additional appeal for the student writing the post, but also offers fellow classmates more to respond to. For example, after ethical issues in marketing research had been covered in class, students were given an ethical dilemma scenario in which some students placed on both sides of the argument, and were required to defend their position in their blog post. One student commented, "There are no right or wrong answers. It gives you more freedom to express." With larger classes, grading individual blog posts can be daunting unless instructors take the time at the beginning of each semester to get organized. This can be done by using a rubric. We suggest using a spreadsheet to list each student's name and corresponding blog link; also, categorizing students according to their groups (the students in the class who will be responding to each other's blog posts). This allowed the instructor to rapidly access each student's blog during the grading process as well as quickly reference which group members are commenting on others' posts. The spreadsheet can be used to make notes throughout the semester about individual blogs, record the number of responses to classmates' posts, and log grades for each assigned topic. Finally, students can be given extra points for additional effort they put into their blogs and/or their blog posts, such as referencing outside sources when it was not required or providing supplementary material and images that add interest to encourage students to have fun and be creative with their blogs. While most students indicated that they enjoyed the blogging activities and asserted that they learned more about course

topics as a result of the use of blogs (sample comment: "I hope that future classes will utilize blogs"), we are unable to quantify the extent to which this learning occurred in terms of course outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Because the use of Web 2.0 for teaching involves a different pedagogy, there will always be faculty resistance to using social media in the classroom. However, we must realize that most students access social media platforms daily, and it has become a primary means of communication. Educators can leverage this opportunity and integrate Web 2.0 tools for teaching and learning. The goal of this study was to explore the efficacy of using blogs and investigate student perceptions regarding the promotion of learning and engagement in courses. Using course assignments, we attempted to integrate pedagogical goals by providing course content that facilitated student engagement and dialog. Exposing students to tools such as blogs early in college courses can help them transfer knowledge into their work setting. Blogs can present opportunities as well as challenges to educators as discussed in this study. Previous literature (e.g., technology acceptance model and social information processing models) has shown that attitudes have an effect on acceptance and continued use of technology. When used effectively, blogs have a potential to improve student outcomes by fostering deeper learning and engagement in an interactive environment as it directly impacts how students use the web to interact in teams, and use social computing for increased learning. Ellison and Wu (2008) stated, "for today's student, online self-expression and media consumption is a deeply engrained, engaging part of their lives" (p. 100). Blogs offer an opportunity for students to construct knowledge by using cognitive structures and mental models. Interaction with other students can be used as part of constructive feedback and self-evaluation. The use of blogs will depend on types of assignments being used in courses and learning objectives of the course. Instructors must be willing to explore different tools that can be used in conjunction with blogs (e.g., video, polls, and surveys). Results of this study can help researchers and educators integrate learning environments that use constructs of active learning, motivation, collaboration, and technology to leverage the Web 2.0 medium for effective teaching and learning. This study can also provide theoretical guidance for further research. Additional research can be done to investigate which learning styles of students are best suited for collaborative communication, interaction, and discourse in the Web 2.0 environment. Future researchers should also look into changes in social and cognitive learning processes as a result of using other Web 2.0 tools, and its implications for practice. Educators must embrace the disruptive power of technology which can enhance students' classroom experience by promoting interaction with course content,

encouraging dialog within peer groups that can increase student participation, engagement, deeper-learning, critical thinking, and cognitive development in a media-rich environment.

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