Social media for enhancing student engagement: The use of Facebook and blogs at a University of Technology

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Abstract
This work investigates the promise of Facebook and blogs for enhancing students’ levels of engagement in learning. This issue warrants investigation because there is little published empirical work on the subject. The researchers applied a learning ecology perspective to study the potential of Facebook and blogs in enhancing student levels of engagement in learning. In-depth interviews with lecturers who use Facebook and blogs and focus groups with their respective students were carried out to establish: usage in teaching and learning; the context of use; challenges encountered in usage; and whether these technologies enhanced student learning. A significant finding of the study was that appropriate use of blogs and Facebook groups, if accepted by students as a learning tool, enhances students’ engagement in learning activities of an academic nature on- and off-campus. The article also suggests strategies for the implementation of Facebook and blogs in ways that are likely to have a positive impact on student levels of engagement.

INTRODUCTION
Universities in South Africa continue to experience low levels of student success and poor throughput rates (Scott, Yeld and Hendry 2007; Strydom, Mentz and Kuh 2010). To address these issues, university teachers need to explore innovative ways of teaching and learning, particularly ways that promote student engagement. International research shows that student engagement can enhance student learning; as well as other desired outcomes such as the efficiency and effectiveness of higher education systems (Strydom, Mentz and Kuh 2010; Kuh 2009; McGarity and Butts 1984; Sandholtz, Ringstaff and Dwyer 1994). Student engagement in this article is defined as the amount of physical and psychological energy¹ that a student devotes to the academic experience (Astin 1984). Indicators of student engagement include taking initiative, self-motivation, independent experimentation, spontaneous
collaboration and peer coaching, and enthusiasm or frustration (Sandholtz, Ringstaff and Dwyer 1994). The study investigated the potential of using Facebook and blogs as an innovative way of promoting student levels of engagement in learning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on student engagement
A large number of international research studies on university student development shows that the time and energy students devote to educationally purposeful activities is the single best predictor of their learning and personal development (Astin 1993; Kuh 2009; McGarity and Butts 1984; Pascarella and Terenzini 1991; Pace 1980; Sandholtz, Ringstaff and Dwyer 1994). In South Africa, there is a growing body of research on student engagement (Strydom, Mentz and Kuh 2010; Ivala and Kioko 2009) encouraged by the South African Survey of Students Engagement (SASSE) commissioned by the Council for Higher Education and carried out nationally in 2009 (Strydom, Mentz and Kuh 2010). Results of these studies are being used to develop context-specific interventions that can help improve student engagement and further improve the conditions required for student success. The investigation of the potential of Facebook and blogs to enhance student engagement at a university of technology is one such intervention.

Web 2.0 and student engagement in learning
The advent of Web 2.0 applications, collectively known as social media, presents schools and universities with the opportunity to go beyond traditional delivery formats and develop learner-centred personalised learning environments (Sigala 2007). Social media include social networking sites, such as Facebook, blogs, podcasts, wikis, e-portfolios and so on. They have great promise for teaching and learning because they are strictly web-based and typically free, support collaboration and interaction, enhance students’ learning experiences through customization and personalization, provide rich opportunities for networking, are responsive to the user, and have great potential for use in a way that is learner-centred (McGee and Diaz 2007; Bryant 2006).

As stated earlier, this study will focus on the use of Facebook and blogs for enhancing student engagement. Therefore, an overview of what these technologies can offer for teaching and learning will be provided in the subsequent section.

Facebook and blogs for enhancing student engagement

Facebook
Facebook was created in February 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg at Harvard University. While its membership was originally limited to Ivy League University students, membership was later (since 11 September 2006) extended to anyone worldwide with
a valid e-mail address (Torgeson 2006) and it has over 130 million active members Worldwide (Minocha 2009). Facebook attracts and supports networks of people and facilitates connections between them (McLougling and Lee 2007). Facebook is a representative of what Gee (2004) calls affinity spaces, where people acquire social and communicative skills, and at the same time become engaged in the participatory culture of Web 2.0. In these spaces, youth engage in informal learning, and creative, expressive forms of behaviour. Facebook has also been used for formal learning with academics setting up open or private groups for classroom practices (Minocha 2009). In this regard, Facebook can be used to send course related information to students; to provide a space where success and failures in studies can be shared and discussions can take place; to improve communication between students and lecturers and provide a forum where the lecturer can answer any academic questions, offering an open-ended way of consulting which may produce interesting or unanticipated points of view that other approaches may not elicit; and consultation which reaches students who may not normally have participated in giving feedback (Minocha 2009).

**Blogs**

A blog is a website that contains dated entries in reverse chronological order about a particular topic. Functioning as an online journal, blogs can be written by one person or a group of contributors (Minocha 2009). They are noted for being the unedited, published voice of the people (Ferding and Trammell 2004). Through the use of blogs, academics have the opportunity to make material accessible for subsequent reflection and analysis, allowing students to revisit and revise their artefacts, thus enriching the learning experience. Publishing students’ creative work and the fact that blogs can be commented on, offer the opportunity for feedback, which in turn, scaffolds a learner in his/her quest for knowledge construction (Ferding and Trammell 2004). Blogs can also draw together small virtual groupings of individuals interested in constructing knowledge around a common topic within a community of practice, and supporting each other. Through personal or group blogs, data sharing is enabled and experts and novices alike can make their work available to the rest of the online world. Therefore, learners do not only participate in an activity and acquire skills, but also produce shared outcomes and advance the intellectual capital of the group.

**Facebook, blogs and student engagement**

Although there is evidence of the potential of Facebook and blogs in teaching and learning, there is currently little published empirical research on use of these tools for enhancing student engagement internationally and as well as in Africa. Studies that exist stem largely from fields outside education such as sociology, anthropology and communication studies (Greenhow, Robella and Hughes 2009; Bosch 2009). However, research in the field of education shows that students use social media such as Facebook and blogs in their everyday lives and believe that more use of such technologies in academic contexts would lead to increased preparation and
engagement (DeGennaro 2008; Lenhart et al. 2008; Rambe 2009; Solomon and Schrum 2007; Spire, Lee, Turner and Johnson 2008). At the same time, evidence indicates that university teachers have not utilized these technologies to the same extent as the students. This means that students live in separate realities from those of their teachers, who are typically not motivated or rewarded by institutional incentives to change their practice (McGee and Diaz 2007). Some university teachers assume that students’ online social activities are devoid of substantive intellectual activity and distract students from academic activity. As a result, many universities block the use of social networking sites (Bosch 2009), especially Facebook, in their institutions. Contrary to this assumption, the researchers in this study confirm the National School Boards Association’s (2007) findings that student activities in some social networks sites involve education and learning, although we acknowledge that further research on the potential of Facebook and blogs in enhancing student engagement is required.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was informed by a learning ecology perspective (Barron 2006; Bronfenbrenner, Kessel, Kessen, and White 1986) which is based on socio-cultural, activity and situated learning theories (Cole 1996; Engeström 1987; Greeno 1989; Vygotsky 1978). The notion of a learning ecology suggests that:

- Individuals are simultaneously involved in many settings (in this case, they can be simultaneously involved in academic and social activities);
- Individuals create learning contexts for themselves within and across settings (in this case, students engage in academic activities on-campus and off-campus);
- The boundaries among settings can be permeable (in this case, academic activities started on-campus permeate the students’ contexts off-campus and vice versa); and
- Interest-driven activities can span contextual boundaries and be self-sustaining given adequate time, freedom, and resources (Barron 2006) (in this case, an activity students are interested in, such as Facebook, can transfer from a social context to an academic context and vice versa).

The above framework draws upon the view that learning is a social process, requiring social and cultural factors to be considered during instructional planning. Put simply, this means that learning begins with the students’ existing knowledge, past experiences, and other current situations to conduct activities in such external contexts as the school, home, workplace, internet etc. Therefore, the learning ecology framework assists in better understanding how learning outside university relates to learning within universities or other formal organizations, and how learning in university can lead to learning activities outside university. This is vital
because a better understanding of how learning takes place, across settings, and of the possible synergies and barriers between them, may help educators find ways to supplement university-based opportunities. The framework helped the researchers in this study to investigate whether the use of Facebook and blogs in teaching and learning promoted student engagement with academic materials, from the initiative of the learner and his or her companions across time and settings. According to the ecology framework, the self-initiated processes of learning that take place across contexts are new opportunities for activity and knowledge building relationships, and for the pursuit of learning resources that are found outside the primary learning settings (such as the university). The framework suggests that interest in learning may originate within and outside the university and that students have a significant role to play in sustaining their own development and learning (Barron 2006). This notion played a vital role in the researchers’ attempt to understand the potential of Facebook and blogs in enhancing student engagement with their studies on- and off-campus.

**RESEARCH METHODS**

To gather data for this study, the researchers investigated the use of Facebook and blogs in three courses at a South African university of technology: 1) first year Extended Curriculum students in an Engineering discipline taking a course in communication, 2) third year Design students, and 3) fourth year Design students and their respective lecturers. In-depth interviews with the three lecturers who teach using Facebook and blogs were conducted and two focus group interviews per course were carried out with students, comprising an average of 6 students per focus group. Document review was done on literature in the subject under investigation to ascertain the kind of research that exists and the gaps that would inform the direction of the current study. Facebook walls and blog postings were analyzed to investigate the learning activities students engaged with and the context (within university or outside of the university) in which the students used the technology. Focus group interviews were utilized to probe further findings gathered from the lecturers, Facebook walls and blogs posts to elicit new information on the subject. All interviews were recorded on tape and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Data analysis focused on the identification of conceptual themes and issues emerging from the data, using techniques such as clustering, contrasts and comparisons (Miles and Huberman 1994).

In the next section, we present the findings and discussion on how lecturers and students participating in this study used Facebook and blogs for teaching and learning, the contexts of usage, challenges encountered in usage; and whether these technologies enhanced student engagement with their learning. For clarity, lecturers and students will be referred to as Engineering lecturer and students, Design 3 (third year) lecturer and students and Design 4 (fourth year) lecturer and students.
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Usage of Facebook and blogs for teaching and learning

Findings showed that all the lecturers utilised Facebook groups and class blogs as a supplementary teaching and learning resource to face-to-face teaching. The purpose for utilising Facebook groups and blogs for teaching and learning varied from lecturer to lecturer. For instance, the Engineering lecturer used a blog to motivate students to read; initiate dialogue (everyday communication) and develop students’ writing skills by posting a collaborative story written by staff and students in monthly instalments. The story focused on an interracial relationship within Cape Town, South Africa, a topic discussed in one of the face-to-face conversation classes. Students were supposed to comment and to voluntarily write individual chapters of the story. In this course, a Facebook group was employed as a forum for students to continue discussions on the issues discussed in the face-to-face conversation class and for the lecturer to send information to students on updates on the blog.

The Design 3 lecturer used a blog as a course management tool, that is, to post course news, announcements, briefs, study guides and the course content. In the process of using the blog, the students requested the lecturer to duplicate all the resources in the blog into a Facebook group. The lecturer revealed that unlike the blog which promoted one way communication from the lecturer to the students, the Facebook group promoted interactive student discussion.

The Design 4 lecturer designed a class blog for information sharing, encouraging a sense of belonging and peer learning. In addition, students set up their own blogs which acted as an online portfolio for reflecting on their learning on the four weeks of industry internship. These blogs fed information to the lecturer on the students’ experiences during the internship which the lecturer in turn fed back to respective employers to improve the internship. Students also shared their experiences with each other through the blogs and marketed themselves to prospective employers using their blog.

The above results indicate that Facebook and blogs can offer an alternative way of organising learning opportunities in order to encourage students to participate and benefit from such activities (Kuh et al. 2005). Additionally, the findings also support Minocha’s (2009) argument that Facebook and blogs can be used for formal learning.

With regard to sites of use, all the lecturers and most of the students accessed Facebook groups and blogs both on-campus during available time and off-campus. The students accessed the applications on-campus in their dedicated computer laboratory and in their residences, while most of the student access off-campus was at home, through their cell phones. It is currently cheaper and easier to access Facebook through a cell phone than on a computer. This point is best illustrated in the following discussion amongst Design 3 students:

Interviewer: Do you mainly access Facebook on-campus, off-campus or both?
B: Anywhere
A: Anyone who has a phone basically could access...

D: I think it’s because you always have your phone on you ... so you can do it anytime and there’s times like when the lecturers ... they post something like at 9:00 at night and you maybe hear from somebody else that hey there’s a post you must go check it out and then you can quickly access it ... so I think ... ja ... well for me it’s more from my phone than anything else.

Interviewer: And you have enough credits on your phone to access it?
A: It’s not that expensive.

These results concur with the learning ecology perspective notion that individuals create learning contexts for themselves within and across settings (Barron 2006). Learning on campus can lead to learning activities outside of the university, and the boundaries between settings can be permeable. Additionally, the results confirm Pearce’s (2010) argument that in many developing countries, the main form of internet access is from cell phones; this can explain the increased use of mobile technology to promote student interaction and greater engagement with the learning materials.

Lecturers’ and students’ perceptions on the usage of blogs for teaching and learning

Since blogs were used for different reasons in the various courses, feedback from lecturers on the usefulness of blogs for teaching and learning differed from course to course. The Engineering lecturer reported that the blog enabled her to model good writing style; empowered students to be comfortable with English and not be afraid to make mistakes, while the students pointed out that the blog helped them improve their reading pace and communication, brought understanding, cohesion and appreciation of different races and cultures. One of the Engineering students stated:

A: I just think it basically help us understand one another better and teaches us, slightly teaches us on how certain people are doing certain things ja ... it just teaches us socially. It teaches how to appreciate one another, just put it like that.

The researchers infer that the use of the blog may not have worked for these Engineering students because the lecturer was using it to model good writing style (English) and good communication skills; subjects with different ways of knowing than those practised in the Engineering field. As Boughey (2005) points out, the value of generic skills courses in Foundation programmes is questionable, as the nature of knowledge of a particular subject is best explored using the actual academic content of the subject (Gee 2003). As a result, the researchers in this study echo McKenna’s (2010) suggestion that students should learn to read and write the language of their disciplines, and need to be taught by someone who is fluent in the language and expectations of the discipline, and who will make that language explicit to the disciplinary novice student.
The Design 4 lecturer revealed that the lecturer blog was useful in that it served as a platform for pointing students towards innovation and good practice in the particular field of practice, and served as a link to the sites where students had been placed. The student blogs gave students an opportunity to reflect on and track the process and progress of their internships. The students further indicated that they used their blogs for marketing themselves.

Despite the expressed usefulness of the blog for enhancing teaching and learning, both students and lecturers asserted that the class blogs served more as a one-way communication channel from the lecturer to the students as very few students commented on the postings. The few students who commented on the class blogs and the Design 4 students who had to create their own blogs indicated that it gave them the opportunity to create content and express their ideas. Two students commented:

**Engineering student E:** ... it helps you socially because you get to commenting and say now you comment on that thing and someone’s comments assist with yours and they agree on something and you are actually communicating with each other. ... it is my first time to go through this stuff and I start enjoying commenting and writing stories ...

**Design 4 students A:** The idea of one’s blog was quite exciting ... and the idea of what it’s trying to do. I mean essentially it’s promoting your thoughts, your opinions, your works ...

The above results show that students were engaged in content creation through self-initiated learning processes and that students played a significant role in sustaining their own learning (Barron 2006).

Both lecturers and students participating in the study indicated that the use of the blogs in teaching and learning enhanced student interactions with one another. The following quote from an Engineering student could be taken to speak for all:

A: ... there are some guys who are so enthusiastic about the story they come to the cafeteria, they want to talk about the story ... some guys, it’s all what they want to talk about ... what will happen next, when he phoned her and they were meeting ...

The lecturers opined that participation of shy students in course activities was enhanced through the use of the blog:

**Design 4 lecturer:** [There is] this quite shy girl, a returning student ... she didn’t know the group and never really participated in class, never said a lot ... and yet she created this blog and named it after her childhood imaginary friend called Lisa ... which is quite revealing, I thought, and quite a brave thing to do ...

Students made the point that the use of blogs did not change the participation of shy students in course activities substantially, even on the course where students were expected to create their own blogs. One Design 4 students explained:

A: I think actually it’s like you said those who are more vocal in class were more active on the blog. I think about this one guy that we are friends with ... he was the same ... like he wasn’t more active ... he’s quite an introvert, a quite a, he doesn’t...
speak much and it’s always the same with his blog ... so ... his posts were very limited, blunt, short ...

The above comments by the students fail to acknowledge that students engage in, shape and interpret tasks in very different ways and that meaning making is determined by the knowledge which the creator and the interpreter bring with them to the text. Furthermore, content is socially constructed by the discipline’s members and ‘intimately related to the rhetorical process underlying the reading and writing of the text’ (Geisler 1994, 211; Street 1993). Hence, the researchers suggest that the contributions of the shy students need to be respected as these students bring with them background knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and values (multi-literacies), which if taken into consideration in the academic literacy of the specific discipline, can make meaning making successful (Bernstein 2003; Gee 1990) and greatly influence what students pay attention to and thus the knowledge they construct (John 1997).

From the above results on the usefulness of blogs for enhancing teaching and learning, the researchers suggest that blogs enhance student engagement in learning by promoting interactivity (such as the sharing of ideas and information); providing opportunities for active learning and creation of content, and to a certain extent peer-to-peer learning.

Lecturers’ and students’ perceptions on the usage of Facebook for teaching and learning

Of the two Facebook groups that were part of this study, only the Design 3 group integrated their Facebook group into their formal learning activities. Their lecturer indicated that Facebook groups enhanced teaching and learning by acting as an information repository for the students and improving communication between the lecturer and students. The students felt that Facebook groups helped them access academic and moral support from their lecturers and peers and improved the quality of their projects through feedback from students and lecturers. This point is vividly expressed in the following quotes from Design 3 students:

A: And the other thing I will say it created that relationship with the lecturers so I believe after this whole Facebook thing I understand like my lecturers better than I thought, you know ... and know I am free, I am free like to chat to them ... it created that.

B: The thing is, just coming back to the whole communication that you actually ... know your fellow students ... actually you can go to for advice ... not just highlighting the top students in the class ... gaining confidence in your fellow students not just asking [the lecturer] all the time.

Both Design 3 lecturer and her students indicated that Facebook groups enabled students to create content through their discussions with the lecturer and fellow students and resulted in students creating their own groups for other projects. Similarly, results on the enhancement of shy student participation on course activities were the same as those reported on the use of blogs.
Students reported that Facebook was an integral part of their everyday life, appreciated Facebook’s ease of access and the more mature Design 3 students saw no separation between their private and academic lives, as shown in the following quotes:

H: ... we just use Facebook most of the time because most of us are on it anyway for social, so it will just, when there is a notification or a brief it will pop up in your newsfeed while you are busy socializing, you’re always up to date ...

F: ... Another thing is, sometimes lecturers forget often and its human nature to forget about giving us work or something which is needed probably for the next day or for the weekend and maybe she will remember only to give to us maybe the night ... then she will post it, post it like on Facebook for us, 10:00 at night and most of us are awake till frikking 4:00 the morning ... its perfect.

However, the Facebook group set up by the Engineering lecturer was not successfully used for academic activities as students resented the invasion of their private lives by the lecturer.

A: I think students feel that’s their personal space away from class, that’s how I feel ... I don’t want it to be forced on me, that I have to go read there, I have to join this group ... this is my personal space, I don’t want to be forced to do something personal.

The above students’ resistance to the use of Facebook for academic purposes may have stemmed from the fact that Facebook has a particular meaning for the students, depending on the previous experiences, attitudes and meanings they have attached to it, which must be carefully taken into consideration in using Facebook for academic purposes-this is possible because ‘constructed knowledge can be deconstructed and reconstructed to serve different sets of interests’ (Morrow 2003, 8).

However, based on the above findings on the use of Facebook groups, the researchers conclude that Facebook groups have the potential of enhancing student levels of engagement in learning through its promotion of improved interaction and communication between lecturers and students and vice versa. It provides a space where members of a group can discuss and share their success and challenges, offering opportunities for active learning and an open-ended forum for student consultation that may allow students who are introverts in class to give feedback to their fellow peers and lecturers.

In summary, the researchers concluded that the use of Facebook groups and blogs in teaching and learning enables students to spend more time on their study subjects which may lead to deeper understanding of what they are learning (Kuh 2009) and may promote student retention (Doneen 2010). Furthermore the use of Facebook, especially by the mature students who saw no separation of academic and their social lives, supports the four notions of the learning ecology perspective (Barron 2006).
Challenges encountered in the use of Facebook and blogs for teaching and Learning

While the usefulness of Facebook groups and blogs for enhancing student engagement with their studies is demonstrated in this study, their use was met with several challenges:

- Students are disadvantaged by their insufficient internet quotas, especially the first year students who are given 50 mega bytes per month. Some students could not get into the blog or Facebook group once their internet quotas are exhausted.

- Lecturers had time constraint to update and visit the class blogs as regularly as they would have wished and had the challenge of encouraging all students to participate in the blog as participation was not compulsory.

- Other subject tests, assignments and general workload influenced the student voluntary participation on the blogs, with students participating more in the periods after recess.

- Limited computer facilities in the University, compounded with the blocking of Facebook in some of computer laboratories and the library, prevented students from accessing their Facebook groups and blogs on a regular basis.

- Distraction of students from academic activities by use of Facebook was reported amongst the first year Engineering students.

- Blurring of social and academic life: especially the first year Engineering students resented the lecturer for forcing herself into what they perceive as their private social space (Facebook). However, more mature students, such as the third year Architectural Design students saw no need for a separation between their social and academic life.

- The need for lecturers to keep abreast of new technologies: what might be close to students’ lives today might not be the case tomorrow. While this year’s technologies at South African universities might be Facebook and blogs, next year’s technologies might be other tools, such as Twitter.

STRATEGIES FOR USING SOCIAL MEDIA IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

Based on the researchers’ experience with teaching and research on the use of technology in teaching and learning and the insights from the lecturers who participated in this study, strategies for implementing Facebook and blogs in teaching and learning, in order to have a positive impact on student levels of engagement in learning, are suggested. This includes the fact that:

- University teachers need to engage with these tools and gain a deeper understanding of their potential for enabling learning, choice, creativity and self-direction for learners and then clearly define and identify their objectives
for using Facebook and blogs in teaching while instructing students on how to make the most effective use of these technologies.

- The integration of Facebook and blogs in teaching and learning should be implemented as supplementary material or for creative use. Supplementary materials in the form of offering additional materials which may broaden or deepen students’ understanding by providing students with alternative perspectives on content previously delivered or enable further deeper exploration of topics. Adoption for creative use enables students to become more engaged in learning through constructing knowledge rather than receiving it. Lecturers should embed the use of Facebook and blogs in their teaching into the larger curricular framework and not see the use of technology as another tool to fit into an already full curriculum.

- Academics wishing to explore new technologies, should involve students from the outset in the choice of the appropriate technology. Different classes will respond differently to technologies and might have a preferred technology for use in the classroom. Student involvement and feedback will ensure students’ uptake of and engagement with the technology.

- Academics who wish to integrate Facebook and blogs in their teaching should also engage in collaboration with students to outline Facebook and blog etiquette (such as privacy issues and the question of befriending lecturers on Facebook or academic authority of blog postings). The involvement of students in drawing up these etiquette guidelines ensures that the students have ownership of the learning space and respect the rules of engagement.

- For a wider adoption of Facebook and blogs in teaching and learning, academics who are champions should share their experiences and insights with colleagues, create training materials and provide training, which in turn should encourage his/her colleagues to adopt these technologies. Lecturers should also be provided with ongoing support in terms of training workshops, ongoing technical support and release time to attend professional conferences. This is because unless lecturers are given the training and support to integrate technology, the positive effects of technology on student engagement may not endure (Sandholtz, Ringstaff and Dwyer 1994).

- Lecturers using Facebook groups for enhancing learning should not dominate the discussion. They should let students own the Facebook or blog platform as this may enhance student participation. However, lecturers should regularly check the Facebook groups to take note of what is being discussed and respond accordingly. Failure to respond to students queries in good time can make students lose interest.
CONCLUSION

Based on the use of Facebook groups and blogs in teaching and learning at a university of technology, this study highlights the potential of Facebook and blogs in enhancing student engagement in learning both on- and-off campus. The article suggests that technologies in the students’ everyday life, such as Facebook enhanced by cell phones, should be utilised in higher education to promote student interaction and greater engagement with learning materials. This increased engagement could lead to improved performance and student retention. However, there are differences in the uptake of social media tools across disciplines and maturity level of students, which will require further research. Further research will also be carried out by profiling the students engaged in this study in order to ascertain whether the student engagement demonstrated in this study was as a result of the use of Facebook and blogs or other underlying factors.

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ENDNOTES

1 It should be noted that the aim of this research was not to measure the amount of energy students spend on their studies as its difficult to measure, but focused on the time and effort students spend studying.

2 Zuckerberg was later (in 2007) taken to court over allegations that he stole the idea from Harvard classmates who were working on a similar concept for one campus, called ConnectU. The case was settled out of court for US$ 65 million (Bosch 2009).

3 A learning ecology is defined as the set of contexts found in physical or virtual spaces that provide opportunities for learning (Barron 2004). Each context is comprised of a unique configuration of activities, material resources, relationships, and the interactions that emerge from them.

4 Due to particularly low literacy levels of students in this class, the lecturer engages students in general conversation topics first before delving into more discipline specific discourses or literacy practices.

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