Blogs: Supporting Staff Development

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Overview of Presentation

- Introduction
- Use of blogs in education:
  - Read, Write and Interact
- Educational blogging activities:
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  - Staff
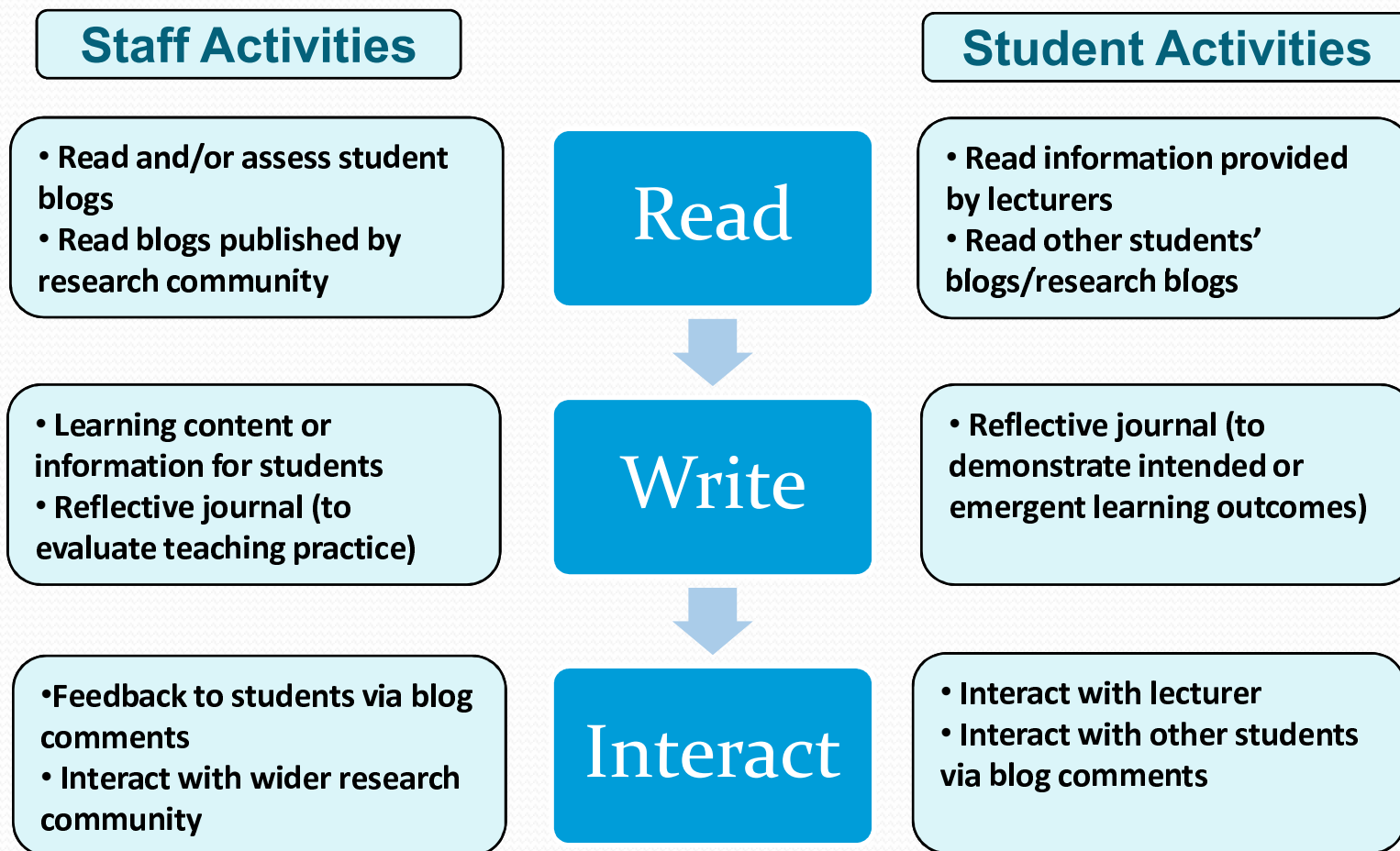   - Blogs and Staff Development
- Conclusion

Introduction

- A blog (or web log) is a website which contains dated entries in reverse chronological order

- Blogs often link together to form communities using features such as commenting and trackbacks

- In education, blogs are useful as a tool for both collaboration and reflection (Ferdig & Trammell, 2004; Williams & Jacobs, 2004; Du & Wagner, 2005)

Use of blogs in education

- Sandars (2006) summarised the three main uses of blogs in education as:
  - Read
  - Write
  - Interact
- Staff and student activities under each of these headings can be seen in Figure 1

Figure 1: Educational Blogging Activities

Staff Activities

Student Activities

Read

- Read and/or assess student blogs
- Read blogs published by research community

- Read information provided by lecturers
- Read other students' blogs/research blogs

Write

- Learning content or information for students
- Reflective journal (to evaluate teaching practice)

- Reflective journal (to demonstrate intended or emergent learning outcomes)

Interact

- Feedback to students via blog comments
- Interact with wider research community

- Interact with lecturer
- Interact with other students via blog comments

Blogs and Learning Outcomes

- Blogs can be useful in allowing students to demonstrate that they have met learning outcomes
- Any learning outcome that can be expressed in written form is suitable
  - Blogs provide new opportunities for regular, formative feedback
- Blogs which are used as reflective learning journals may be well placed to demonstrate emergent learning outcomes

Blogs and Staff Development

- Blogs are often used by staff for personal/professional development
    - Reflect on teaching practice (West, Wright & Graham, 2005)
    - Provide information/learning content for students
    - Interact with students
    - Interact with wider research community
- A number of staff development workshops on the educational uses of blogs have been conducted at WIT

Conclusion

- Blogs are useful for a variety of educational activities, both from a staff and a student perspective

- Blogs can promote a culture of reflective teaching and learning throughout an educational institution

- Blogs can encourage more frequent interaction between staff, students and a wider research community

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Questions?

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