Blogging our Way to Digital Literacies? A Critical View on Blogging in Foreign Language Classrooms

(… is thinking about …)

Peter Schildhauer

Ours is the time of digital media. Today's students are and will be faced with tremendous societal changes in all fields of life – and they will have to be able to master a range of digital practices along the way. Consequently, educational setups that teach literacies cannot focus on print media as well as reading and writing standard language alone anymore, but have to prepare students for the challenges ahead by addressing a diversity of (digital) genres and registers. In this article, I focus on Foreign Language Teaching (FLT) and argue that the personal weblog is a genre that lends itself to teaching digital literacies in FLT. I use the pedagogical principles suggested by the New London Group in their seminal work on multiliteracies to analyse and evaluate various authentic classroom blogging scenarios. With this critical view on the practical examples, I aim at encouraging and providing impulses for future classroom blogging scenarios in FLT.

Introduction[1]

Example 1: Cover of the magazine *mobil* in June 2015, © DB.

A couple of weeks ago on the train from Bielefeld to Halle, an issue of the magazine *mobil* fell into my hands. It was entitled *Total digital. Ein ganzes Heft über die digitale Revolution: Wie sich Leben, Arbeiten und Reisen verwandeln, und was das für Sie bedeutet…* Not only does the headline voice the impression that ours is a time of digital media. It also presupposes that our lives are changed profoundly by them.

---

[1] This paper is based on a talk I gave at Bonn University in June 2015. I am very grateful to Uwe Küchler for inviting me and also for encouraging me to step out of my linguistic comfort zone. I would also like to thank the students at Bonn University, who challenged themselves to ask as many critical questions as time would allow (they lived up to that challenge) and, thereby, contributed much to the thoughts I present here. Jana Pflaeging constantly provided feedback while I was working on the talk and this paper, and I am more than thankful for that.
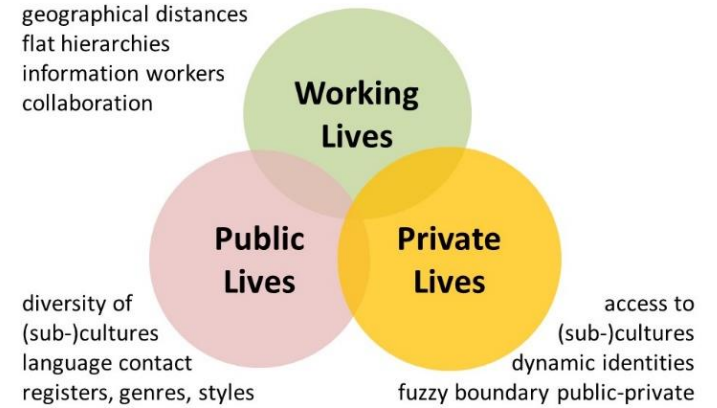

Figure 1: Changes in several social spheres (New London Group 1996: 65-71; see also Cope & Kalantzis 2009a: 168-174).

What was captured so neatly for a lay public in *mobil* also features centre stage in the academic study of literacies: In particular, a seminal article by the New London Group (1996; see also Cope & Kalantzis 2000; Kress 2003; Jewitt 2008) points to profound societal changes connected to, among others, "new communication media" (The New London Group 1996: 64).[2] These changes have implications for how we define literacy (or, more adequately: litera*cies*)

---

[2] I have quoted the New London Group here to frame their argument appropriately. However, I agree with Martin Luginbühl, who writes in his opener to this issue of *10plus1* that digital media can "hardly be described as 'new media' any longer in the second decade of the 21st century" (Luginbühl in this issue: 9).

(Legutke, 2008: 68; Cope & Kalantzis 2009a; Gillen & Barton 2010: 6; Mills 2013: 362; Søby 2013), i.e. key competences to be acquired in school and university.

Researchers and practitioners alike have proposed the implementation of various digital genres into classroom settings in order to meet the challenge of evolving concepts of literacy (e.g. Fielko 2010; Richardson 2010; Hoffmann 2011; Jones & Hafner 2012). Most certainly, this is also an issue for foreign language teaching (FLT). Partly due to my own research interests in personal weblogs (e.g., Schildhauer 2014, forthc.), I will focus on this genre and try to relate my research findings to issues of FLT here. My main concern is to review some classroom blogging scenarios from a digital literacies perspective in order to encourage and provide impulses for future classroom blogging scenarios in FLT.

Profound Social Changes – The Challenge of Diversity

The New London Group suggests two interrelated societal changes, both linked to the rise of new digital media:

- To a growing extent, information is presented by means of several, interrelated modes such as written and spoken language, image, layout, but also sound and video. Texts have become increasingly multimodal and, thus, more complex from a semiotic point of view.[3]
- The second change comprises a development towards diversity in the social domains of private, public, and working lives (see Figure 1). All three fields are characterised, among others, by a growing linguistic diversity. This tendency is fuelled by digital media: Tweeting, writing business e-mails, composing forum entries, and updating one's Facebook status are certainly different communicative practices with varying conventions[4] and belong to one or more of these spheres.

---

[3] Siefkes' article in this issue provides a good impression of the complexity of text reception if several modes come into play.

[4] I am aware of the fact that each of the practices that I have mentioned is diverse in itself depending on a whole range of other factors. There are, for instance, several blog genres; even to a single genre such as the personal weblog, only few stylistic characteristics appear to apply generally (Schildhauer forthc.: ch. 6.4.2). However, my focus here lies simply in highlighting the role of digital media in these developments.

Multi- and Digital Literacies

Against this background, being literate acquires a new meaning. In a classical view, literacy means the ability to read and write. Reading and writing, in turn, were traditionally associated with standard language and confined to print media. However, being print-literate does not necessarily entail being Twitter-literate, blog-literate, or in general digitally literate. As an answer to this situation, the New London Group propose the concept of *multiliteracies*. At its core, this concept encompasses

- the ability to draw on a range of semiotic resources that are available in a situation in order to realize communicative interests and
- the ability to think critically about communicative patterns, which includes a broadened view on their social, cultural and ideological context.

However, the New London Group do not stop there but formulate a vision. Multi-literate individuals will develop the ability to be creative and innovative and become active designers of social futures.

Digital Literacies – the ability to...

...use several resources to create meaning

...engage with new technologies creatively

...mix and modify existing products

...think critically

...engage in social networking

...adopt appropriate social identities

...work jointly towards solutions

Figure 2: Core facets of digital literacies.

The term *digital literacies* that I am thinking about here relates to this tradition of the New London Group. However, it focuses even more on the new or at least enhanced possibilities offered by *digital* media, such as potentials of using multimodal means, of mixing and modifying existing products and blurring traditional distinctions between consumers and producers (Jones & Hafner 2012: 12; see also Cope & Kalantzis 2009b). The term *digital literacies* furthermore

acknowledges the pervasive presence of digital media in our lives (Sefton-Green & Erstad, 2013: 179), which is also foregrounded by the *mobil* issue mentioned in the introduction. With Jones & Hafner (2012: 11), digital literacies can be defined as:

> not just as the ability to operate a machine or decipher a particular language or code, but as the ability to creatively engage in particular social practices, to assume appropriate social identities, and to form or maintain various social relationships [by using digital media, P.S.].

I would like to complement this definition by the thoughts on *multiliteracies* formulated by the New London Group, which results in the core facets of digital literacy skills and competences that I have listed in Figure 2. My main point here is that educational setups addressing literacies in some way can and should not ignore the diversity of genres and registers that have arisen in the digital age. Focussing on standard language and print media alone does not do justice to the challenges students face and will face to an increasing extent in all spheres of life.

A Pedagogy of Multi- and Digital Literacies

The question now arises of how these multi- and digital literacies can actually be taught. The New London Group (1996: 82-88) suggest a pedagogy of multiliteracies which is based on the four principles below (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Principles of a multiliteracies pedagogy.

Situated Practice:	immersion in experience, connecting teaching to students' life worlds and providing simulations of, for instance, new workplaces.
Overt Instruction:	using a metalanguage to analyse and describe how meaning is designed with different resources.
Critical Framing:	interpreting ways of language use in relation to their social, cultural and ideological context.
Transformed Practice:	transferring acquired knowledge and acting on a new level of reflection.

Kalantzis & Cope (2000: 241-242) point out that these principles, which originate in several pedagogical schools, should not be thought of as a succession of steps but rather as several angles from which a subject matter can be approached and which complement each other. However, applying them in the order I have listed them here is, of course, possible (see Example 2).

I could also imagine that these components are addressed more than once, which would lead to some kind of circular arrangement leading to deeper insights and higher levels of reflection. Later on, I'll use these principles as a framework through which potential and actual scenarios of classroom blogging can be analysed. My rationale in doing so is the following:

- In line with what was said above, I assume that being digitally literate entails competences in a variety of (digital) genres.
- This competence includes knowledge about the specifics of these genres, the ability to put this knowledge to practice and a level of reflection that tells students when a certain genre is appropriate or not. Instantiating a genre in a new

Multiliteracies in Practice: Pop Songs in a Year 9 English Class (Highschool)

Situated Practice

- students bring favourite songs and listen to them
- music questionnaire: favourite five songs, their styles, their own favourite style and specifics of that style (lyrics, music etc.)

Overt Instruction

- discussion of the lyrics of a song (in written form), discovering conventions of poetry, predictions about style of music
- discussion about the song after listening, predictions about video
- students bring song reviews they found in magazines, together they examine how reviews describe songs as multimodal complex, but also how reviews are organised in general

Critical Framing

- analysis of the music survey to work out which students like which style of music – what does that say about their identity?
- comparing different styles of music – what are the messages of each style? – and reviews from different kinds of magazines – what kinds of people read each kind of magazine?

Transformed Practice

- students write a song, perform it, make a video clip
- students write their own music reviews and create a class music magazine

(Kalantzis & Cope 2000: 243-248)

Example 2: A multiliteracies scenario.

context in a modified way is also only possible on that basis.

- I am convinced that applying a mixture (or succession, or circular arrangement) of all four components of multiliteracy pedagogy is a promising way to exactly that sort of competence.

Before entering this analytical step, however, I would like to use the next section to give reasons for why I have chosen to focus on blogs in this paper. I could draw on a common argument and state that adolescents use blogs (actively) in their free time; therefore, implementing blogs in lessons of any kind would establish connections to the students' life worlds. However, reality turns this argument on its head: The current JIM study found that only 3% of the German adolescents who took part in that study (n=1200) posted and/or commented on blogs (JIM 2014: 30).[5] Such a low degree of familiarity also entails higher efforts (and lesson time!) to be invested on guiding students towards

blogging in the first place. Is it worth the effort, then? In the next section, I will argue that blogs can count as an *exemplary* genre for the development of digital literacies and, thereby, answer this question with a clear *yes, it's worth it.*

Blogs and Digital Literacies –
An Ideal Match!?

From my point of view, the answer to the question *Why focussing on blogs here?* is a rather simple one: Blogs provide an ideal match with core aspects of digital literacies (see Figure 2). In what follows, I will therefore use some data from my own research on blogs to show that blogging makes use of a range of semiotic means, practices critical thinking, shapes identities, often entails creative mixing and blending, and builds communities.

In the following, I make a distinction between *blog* as a term for a technical tool on the one hand, and as a label denoting a particular social practice on the other hand. In the first sense (technical tool), *blog* refers to blog systems such as Blogger, Wordpress and others as software environments that are nowadays typically used for blogging. In

		Blog-Pages	Postings	Tokens
Weblogs	1997-2000	30	775	ca. 34,075
Personal Weblogs	2002-2005	100	1,091	ca. 224,025
	2006-2008	100	786	ca. 211,420
	2009-2012	100	901	ca. 302,017
	Total:	330	3,553	ca. 771,537

Figure 4: DIABLOC (Diachronic Blog Corpus).

the second sense, *blog* is an umbrella term for blog genres such as personal weblog, corporate blog and others, with the personal weblog being "undoubtedly the best known, perhaps the prototypical representative" (Mauranen 2013: 7). Whenever I make statements about personal weblogs and their development, I do so on the basis of the DIABLOC, the diachronic blog corpus which I compiled as part of my PhD project. An overview of the corpus is provided in Figure 4.[6]

---

[5] See Bündgens-Kosten (forthc.: ch. 4.1) for a similarly critical view on the adolescents-blog-argument and citations of respective voices. In fact, I am indebted to Bündgens-Kosten for her idea of using the JIM study. Bündgens-Kosten draws on the 2012-JIM, which reports that 4% of the adolescents (aged 12 to 19) use a blog.

[6] For further information on corpus compilation and setup, which I cannot give here due to limited space, as well as a complete list of hyperlinks to the (personal) weblogs of the DIABLOC, please see www.pschildhauer.com/corpus and Schildhauer

MATCH 1: BLOGS PROVIDE A RANGE OF SEMIOTIC RESOURCES TO CREATE MEANING.

From a technical perspective, many blog systems such as Blogger, Wordpress and

"I've got a new love baby, a new love, oh, oh oh" …besides my new husband that is… and it is Smoked Marlin Ceviche. Now I don't know how something they is already cooked can be a ceviche, but I am gonna let this one slide because it is so freaking good. There were

Example 3: Language and image in *Jenn's Travel Close Up* (DIABLOC 2009).

(2014: ch. 4, ch. 11). In Schildhauer (forthc.: ch. 2.3), I also give a detailed account of why I use the term *personal weblog* instead of the shorter form *personal blog.* For a definition of the analytical unit *blog-page*, please see Schildhauer (2014: 37-38).

Tumblr enable their users to upload and post images. Videos can also be embedded easily, often however via a detour to YouTube. In practice, personal weblogs seem to rely on language as primary mode. In fact, personal blogging is an elaborate and mainly language-based activity. However, images are also used to an increasing extent (Schildhauer forthc.: ch. 6.4.4). Personal weblogs employ both language and image and exploit the possibility for complex links between both sign systems. Images are often used to illustrate and verify the contents of the verbal text as in Example 3: The image creates the impression of sitting at the table instead of the author and provides proof for the claims of the verbal text. Beyond the individual posting, blogs offer several other modes of meaning construction such as the choice of themes, font colours, and customising the header image.

MATCH 2: BLOGGING MEANS (AMONG OTHERS) MIXING AND BLENDING EXISTING PRODUCTS.

The beginnings of blogging[7] lie in the mid-to-late 1990s. Back then, bloggers used their

---

[7] Actually, the term *weblog* originated not before 1997 (coined by Jorn Barger) and was clipped to *blog* even

sites mainly for *filtering* the World Wide Web: They posted hyperlinks to interesting websites they came across and commented on them briefly. The comments usually indicate an author's expertise in a certain field. As Example 4 and Example 5 show, filter postings might mix and blend hyperlinks to several sources and play with coherence gaps that create additional incentives for their readers to follow the links:

New Frontier sites: Calvary Presbyterian Church, Barreau du Québec, The Pixel Pen.
It seems like I'm pointing to HotWired's Packet channel every day. Today's piece by Simson Garfinkel is an invaluble explanation of how MAE West works. Our ISP, Conxion, is linked into MAE West, which means that DaveNet and Scripting News come thru the MAE system (I think…).
ZipIt is a Macintosh program that zips and unzips archives in a format fully compatible with PKZip for the IBM and zip implementations on other systems. It's vastly easier to use than the Windows equivalent program, WinZip, which is a

---

later, in 1999, by Peter Merholz (Rosenberg 2009: 101). I have adopted the label *blog* here for reasons of brevity and use it also to refer to sites that only later were called *(web)log* by their authors (e.g. Dave Winer's famous *Scripting News*). See Schildhauer (forthc.: ch. 2.3) for a detailed discussion of the labels *blog, weblog* and *personal* weblog.

dauntingly complex maze of wizards and vacuous help files.
[ZipMagic](#) -- use zip files without unzipping them. (Windows)

(*Scripting News*)

Example 4: Filtering the web in *Scripting News* (DIABLOC 1997).

Could this be why WebTV (ahem, Microsoft) [dropped support](#) for Java?

(*Camworld*)

Example 5: Filtering the web and coherence gaps in *Camworld* (DIABLOC 1998).

Even though filtering has lost its importance over the years, this type of blog posting is still the third most popular in the corpus period 2009-2012 and can be found in more than one third of the DIABLOC texts in general.

MATCH 3: BLOGGING PRACTICES CRITICAL THINKING AND SHAPES IDENTITIES.

The filtering practice is certainly also an exercise in critical thinking (see also Duffy & Bruns 2006), particularly as the commentary on the filtered sources is often evaluative (as in Example 4). Other types of postings also

practice this essential skill. *The* core posting type in my corpus after the millennium is labelled *sharing experience*: Bloggers report and reflect on subjectively important events – sometimes not only on a personal but even on a more general level as in Example 6:

2.28.00
some more musing about living online. i was in the salon on saturday waiting for my sister to get done with a client (so she could dye my hair purple), and sat talking to my step-mom, who was also waiting for my sister to get done with the paying client. anyway, she mentioned that it was surprising that it hadn't rained that much today, i responded with "oh, is there supposed be a storm coming in?". when she said yes, it hit me that other people tune in to the weather and get a forecast of what the weather will be like for the next couple days. i just walk out my door and see what it's like. the weather doesn't matter online. 22:14

(*EatonWeb*)

Example 6:
Sharing experience in *EatonWeb* (DIABLOC 2000).

The everyday life experience of a conversation at the hairdresser's leads to reflections about the author's way of life and also on *living online* in general. Both activity types – narrating and reflecting – often occur in a dual-structure, as exhibited by this example.

This reflective element is also present in other posting types. It can be assumed that this amount of reflection plays an important role in finding and shaping one's own identity. This identity construction is fostered by the temporal structure of blogs – writing (and writing your own identity) becomes a dynamic, ongoing process.

MATCH 4: BLOGGING IS SOCIAL NETWORKING.

Again from a technical perspective, blog systems offer several features to support interaction: *Permalinks* enable pointing to individual entries and thus referencing them on other blogs. *Trackbacks* are links that appear on a blog (or below entries) when an entry was referenced on another one. Permalinks and trackbacks encourage decentralised discussions on several blogs. Additionally, the *comment function* evolved shortly after the emergence of blog systems and supports discussions on one and the same blog. Collaboration on one blog is also supported by options of multiple authorship offered by many blog systems.

A blog's sidebar can be used to display a *blogroll*, i.e. a list of links to other blogs which the author affiliates with. In the last two corpus periods, blogrolls are frequently com-

plemented by follower-widgets. Both blog-rolls and follower-widgets make visible a community that either emerges around a specific blog (follower-widget) or into which a blog is embedded (blogroll). Blogs build communities.

In sum, blogging appears to be suitable to address several facets of digital literacies. As one of the oldest genres of the World Wide Web, the personal weblog can serve as an example to develop digital literacies.

(ELT) Classroom Blogging
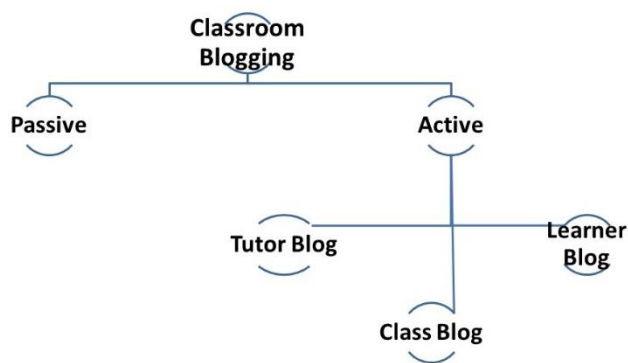## from a Digital Literacies Perspective

Figure 5: Typology of Classroom Blogging (based on Campbell 2003).

Scenarios of classroom blogging can roughly be categorised as suggested in Figure 5. A crucial differentiation in this typology distinguishes passive uses of blogs in the classroom from active ones. In passive blogging implementations, students read blog postings but they don't comment on them or write authentic postings on their own. The active branch of the typology can be subdivided according to authorship (see Campbell 2003). First, blogs can be mainly run by the teacher (tutor blogs), in which case they are often used as a portal providing students with information on syllabi, assignments, and sources (Hoffmann 2011: 10-11). Second, there are learner blogs kept by individual students. Finally, there are class blog in which both teacher(s) and students work collaboratively. In what follows, I'd like to address passive blogging as well as class and learner blogs in detail and analyse some practical examples that are documented in reports and studies through the lens of multiliteracies pedagogy.

Scenario I: Passive Blogging

Judith Bündgens-Kosten (2015) writes about passive blogging implementations:

> By reading such texts [here: novels, P.S.], you develop a feeling for the expectations held concerning these types of texts. [...] The same, I'd argue, applies to blogs, and especially to blogging in EFL. Of course, reading blogs is not only relevant when you plan to have students write blogs in class. In current English textbooks, publishers like to include 'modern' text types such as blog posts or emails. Yet, the imitation-blog posts and fake e-mails are sometimes so badly done, it is nearly hilarious [...]. Adding a blog post or two - printed on paper, if need be - can give students a better idea of how these texts look like 'in the wild'.

What is more, Bündgens-Kosten is currently creating a list of blogs worth reading in ELT[8] settings on her own blog.[9] One A1 / A2[10] blog in her list, for instance, contains letters to Santa Claus and can be used easily in pre-Christmas sessions with younger learners. It provides an authentic intercultural experience as well as insights into blogging at the same time.

---

[8] ELT = English Language Teaching.

[9] *Life, Language and E-Verything*: http://judithbuendgenskosten.blogspot.de/.

[10] A1 / A2 refer to the "common reference levels of language proficiency" as defined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/source/framework_en.pdf). A1 / A2 learners are labelled *basic users* according to that framework.

Reading blogs alone provides an instance of situated practice – students encounter an authentic digital variety and might even describe it (overt instruction).

Scenario II: From Passive to Active Blogging

Bündgens-Kosten (forthc.) points out that passive blogging might actually constitute only the prelude to a scenario of active blogging. In her interview study, she reports on a teacher who guides students to blogging via several small steps:

- reading blog postings (apparently on the teacher's own blog), which also give explicit information on the nature of blogging
(situated practice / overt instruction)
- introducing a blog software
(overt instruction)
- working on several small and highly structured blogging tasks – transition to active classroom blogging
(transformed practice)
- independent writing
(transformed practice)

This approach involves both situated practice and overt instruction, which serve as preparation of independent writing. The active tasks can be subsumed under *transformed practice* as the students obviously transfer what they have acquired in the first two stages to their own blogging practice. However, critical framing apparently does not take place in this scenario. Consequently, transformed practice is based on a rather limited level of reflection.[11] Also, it should not be forgotten that the scenario is based on the teacher's own blog, which was set up for educational purposes. From this point of view, the phases of situated practice are authentic only to a limited extent.

---

[11] I think that scenario II actually lends itself to a circular approach as the independent writing (transformed / situated practice) could serve as starting point for new descriptions (overt instructions) and enhanced comparisons as well as interpretations (critical framing) to reach an even higher level of transformed practice.

DONNERSTAG, JUNI 30, 2005

My feedback

Now I'm in the end of the book. Chapter XXVI was the last chapter. (chapter XXV was only the poem 'If you come softly' so I didn't wrote about it.)
I like the book really and it was a easy english, too. I have three other english books but I think 'If you come softly' has easier english.
Normaly I have to say that the end isn't correct because such a lovestory has to end with a happy end -in this book with a wedding. ^^
But I think the death blend better with the meaning of the book. I think the author would be call attention to the racism in the world. She would show what happen to a black guy and a white woman if they would be together. How wrong people can be if someone is different. So I think it's a good end (even if I cried).

This is a poem which I found and I think it's the perfect poem for the end. It could be for Ellie to give her bravery to lives her life without her Miah...her first and sole big love.

Example 7: Maria's learner blog (www.mariaB-9b.blogspot.com).

Scenario III: Learner Blog

Raith (2008) used learner blogs in the 9th grade of an all-girls *Realschule* as an alternative to a pen-and-paper reading journal in a lesson sequence on the novel *If You Come Softly* by Jaqueline Woodson. At the begin-

ning of the sequence, the students could choose which medium they wanted to work with. The respective blog or journal entries originated mostly as while-reading tasks and mainly served the purpose of reflecting on certain sections of the book. As a follow-up activity, the students exchanged and discussed their reactions on the readings. While the reading journal-group did so in face-to-face discussions, the bloggers used the comment function.

Example 7 is an entry of one of the student's blogs in Raith's class. It contains typical features of learner language (e.g. the double past tense in *I didn't wrote* or the lack of 3rd person singular *-s* in *what happen*).

What is more interesting is its resemblance to authentic blogging language: Proximal deictic expressions link the entry to the *now* of the author (see Puschmann 2013: 91-92 on blog deixis, and Schildhauer forthc.: ch. 5.3 on the immediacy of personal blogging). There are emoticons such as ^^ and even elliptical constructions like *…her first and sole big love*. The entry is highly reflective (*think* occurs 5 times) and even addresses the author's emotions: *even if I cried*. It embeds an image and a poem that in the author's opinion relates well to the final chapter. The author generally makes use of different font colours, possibly to indicate different topical sections. There are some comments by other students, even partly off-topic:

> Hi Maria,
> your blog is very good. I think you will get a 1 for it. Maybe we can meet us for going to cinema in the next week. See you tommorow in the OEG. HDL

Example 8: Off-topic comment on Maria's learner blog.

This comment might serve to underline the positive effect on writing in English which Raith's project had. Raith (2008) highlights the role of a potential mass audience in particular:

Example 9: Class blog L'ORDINATUEUR (http://ordinatueurblogmso.weebly.com/blog---lordinatueur).

In der Wahrnehmung vieler Schülerinnen (mit und ohne Weblog) hat die potentielle Leserschaft des Internet als Adressat bewirkt, dass die Schülerinnen mit Weblogs über das Gelesene persönlicher reflektiert und häufiger ihre Meinung geäußert haben, als Schülerinnen mit handgeschriebenen Lesetagebüchern.[12] (Raith 2008: 308)

From the perspective of multiliteracies pedagogy, it can be assumed that Raith's students were introduced to using Blogger[13] as blog software (overt instruction). The autonomous blogging and commenting can be framed as situated practice. However, neither critical framing nor transformed practice can be detected in this implementation.

The lack of critical framing, in particular, becomes apparent when the off-topic comment cited above is reconsidered: The author of the comment is obviously not aware of the fact that arranging meetings online with no limitations as to who could get to

know about her plans might be highly dangerous. The issue is particularly sensitive as the students' blogs were not password-protected. The URLs of the blogs contain the students' names and grade (9b) – no pseudonyms. A critical framing stage could have raised awareness to the potential dangers of the Internet and ways of dealing with them (e.g., using pseudonyms, *not* giving away the when and where of meetings etc.).[14]

Scenario IV: Class Blog as Digital Portfolio

The first of two class blog examples is also centred on a novel. The scenario was implemented in an advanced French class on a German *Gymnasium* (10th grade). Other than Raith (2008), Rippberger (2014) included introductory sessions that did not only focus on handling the blog software (in this case: weebly.com) but highlighted issues of privacy and data protection. Both the teacher and her students were concerned about the correctness of contributions to their class blog because of the potential audience. Therefore, contributions were written in the draft-mode and peer-reviewed. The students also

produced a pod-cast and presented the audio-files on the blog. In the evaluation, some students mentioned the high amount of time spent on the project: The peer-reviewing phase often had to take place at home. Many of the students wrote their blog posts by hand first and digitalised them later.

After a phase of overt instruction (blog software, privacy, and data protection), the scenario moves on to the situated practice of performing the actual project tasks on the blog. The blog features as a digital portfolio, i.e. a showcase of final, reviewed and selected results (Rippberger 2014: 10) rather than a chronologically structured documentation of an individual working and thinking process as in Raith's (2008) example above.

Scenario V: Class Blog as Classroom Extension

Another class blog is the *Action6* project (de Almeida Soares 2008). In this scenario, the blog was meant to accompany the course work of a rather young learner group in Brazil as a learning tool to encourage writing, broaden vocabulary etc. For instance, students were asked to post assignments like mini sagas and recipes. The postings were usually proof-read by the teacher. The

---

[12] In the perception of many students (with and without weblog), the potential mass audience of the Internet has made the weblog-students reflect on their readings in a more personal way and utter their opinions more frequently than students who kept a handwritten reading journal.

[13] I assume that Blogger was used because of the URLs of the learner blogs which Raith (2008: 310) cites and which all point to Blogger's *blogspot* domain.

[14] Raith (2008: 309) himself addresses this issue at the end of his article as worthy of future discussion.

teacher also encouraged interactivity: She invited other teachers from e.g. Argentina, Portugal and the US to visit the blog and comment together with their students. Her students were then supposed to reply.

The teacher observed that the blog was used relatively seldom by her students. Only some of them posted assignments; comments were also rather rare. Her research revealed several possible reasons, as for instance the lack of an introduction to the technical basics of blogging and of guidance in general.

From a literacy perspective, the scenario is all situated practice (but without getting immersed in a passive blogging experience first). The lack of overt instruction, which the teacher points out herself (de Almeida Soares 2008: 531), is probably a crucial factor for the failure of this project.

(Some) Conclusions and (more) Questions

I have started this ... *is thinking about* ... with a review of some societal changes that are connected to the increasing influence of (digital) media on central social spheres. An important point was the following: No educational setup that deals with the development

of literacy – and therefore also FLT – can focus on standard language in print environments alone but needs to consider the growing diversity of genres and registers that is part of our everyday lives. I have drawn on the New London Group's thoughts on *multiliteracies* but highlighted the important role of digital media by adopting the term *digital* literacies instead. Digital literacies encompass proficiency in various digital genres and also entail meta-knowledge about their respective cultural, social, and ideological contexts. I suggested that implementing an adequate mixture of *situated practice*, *overt instruction*, *critical framing* and *transformed practice* as principles of multiliteracies pedagogy provides a promising way to achieve literacy in various digital genres. I focused on blogs as they appear to be a highly promising genre for the exemplary development of digital literacies in FLT. As well, I analysed to what extent several examples of classroom blogging showed traces of the principles of multiliteracies pedagogy.

My general impression is that many of the scenarios I looked at only featured situated practice and – sometimes – overt instruction. Not a single scenario applied a critical framing approach in order to highlight the social, cultural and ideological influ-

ences on (personal) blogging. Transformed practice, based on that enhanced level of reflection, was only part of scenario II (from passive to active blogging), however to a limited extent.

I think that there is a rather straightforward reason for that observable bias towards situated practice / overt instruction and the neglect of critical framing / transformed practice: Only scenario II actually focussed on the nature of blogging itself. In all other implementations, blogging featured rather as a means to an end than as a subject in its own right: As a digital portfolio in scenario IV, a substitute for a pen-and-paper reading journal with the particular thrill of a mass audience in scenario III and an interactive platform complementing "traditional" teaching in scenario V. Understanding the *hows* and *whys* of blogging in order to be able to engage in that practice in a more reflected way was simply not part of the game.

In this respect, it is furthermore questionable to what extent the scenarios IV and V provide a close-to-authentic blogging experience. I can easily imagine that scenario II (from passive to active blogging) might be extended to guide students to authentic, personal, reflected, and subjectively-important blogging. The learner blog in sce-

nario III with its high degree of personal reflection and even rather blog-like language use probably also testifies to such an experience. However, when blogs are merely used for their technological features (IV + V), experiencing and understanding (personal) blogging as a social practice is almost impossible.

I think that it is worth designing teaching arrangements that focus on blogging in its own right. It is worth experiencing and thinking about language use in digital media, and blogging as one of the oldest digital genres and probably *the* first web 2.0 genre can serve as a valuable example here. What is more, workplace genres such as corporate blogs make use of personal blogging features but modify the practice according to the specific situation (Puschmann 2010: 114). Reflecting personal and other kinds of blogging in connection to their respective context might therefore provide valuable insights for future workplace challenges (see also Harrison 2011: 4). Rebecca Blood's (2004: 55) words are therefore more true than ever: "Long live the Weblog!" – also in FLT. So, let's think about *how* to achieve that.

References

Blood, R. (2004). How Blogging Software Reshapes the Online Community. *Communications of the ACM*, 47.12, pp. 53-55. Retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/btg2yps.

Bündgens-Kosten, J. (forthc.). Das Tagebuch im Internet? Wie Lehrerinnen und Lehrer Blogs im Unterricht einführen. In C. Baechler et al. (Eds.), *Medienlinguistik 3.0.: Formen und Wirkung von Textsorten im Zeitalter des Social Web* . Berlin: Frank & Thimme.

Bündgens-Kosten, J. (2015). Reading Blogs in EFL – but which Blogs? Retrieved from http://judithbuendgenskosten.blogspot.de/2015/05/reading-blogs-in-efl-but-which-blogs.html.

Campbell, A. P. (2003). Weblogs for Use in ESL Classes. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 9.2. Retrieved from http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Campbell-Weblogs.html.

Cope, B. & Kalantzis, M. (2000). Introduction: Multiliteracies: The Beginnings of an Idea. In B. Cope & M. Kalantzis (Eds.), *Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures* (pp. 3-8). New York: Routledge.

Cope, B. & Kalantzis, M. (2009a). "Multiliteracies": New Literacies, New Learning. *Pedagogies: An International Journal*, 4.3, pp. 164-195. Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/15544800903076044.

Cope, B. & Kalantzis, M. (2009b). New Media, New Learning. In D. R. Cole & D. L. Pullen (Eds.), *Multiliteracies in Motion: Current Theory and Practice* (pp. 87-104). London: Routledge.

Retrieved from http://newlearningonline.com/_uploads/colenewmedianewlearningchapter.pdf.

de Almeida Soares, Doris. (2008). Understanding Class Blogs as a Tool for Language Development. *Language Teaching Research*, 12.4, pp. 517-533.

Duffy, P. & Bruns, A. (2006). *The Use of Blogs, Wikis and RSS in Education: A Conversation of Possibilities*. Retrieved from https://eprints.qut.edu.au/5398.

Fielko, R. (2010). *Lernen mit Wikis, Blogs und Co.* Saarbrücken: VDM.

Gillen, J. & Barton, D. (2010). *Digital Literacies: A Research Briefing by the Technology Enhanced Learning Phase of the Teaching and Learning Research Programme*. Retrieved from http://www.tlrp.org/docs/DigitalLiteracies.pdf.

Harrison, D. (2011). Can Blogging Make a Difference? *Campus Technology*. Retrieved from http://campustechnology.com/articles/2011/01/12/can-blogging-make-a-difference.aspx.

Hoffmann, A. (2011). *Web 2.0-Technologien: Überblick, Diskussion und Vorschläge für die Verwendung im Englischunterricht*. Hamburg: Diplomica.

Jewitt, C. (2008). Multimodality and Literacy in School Classrooms. *Review of Research in Education*, 32, pp. 241-267.

JIM (2014) = Medienpädagogischer Forschungsdienst Südwest (2014). Jugend, Information, (Multi-) Media: Basisstudie zum Medienumgang 12- bis 19-Jähriger in Deutschland. Retrieved from http://www.mpfs.de/fileadmin/JIM-pdf14/JIM-Studie_2014.pdf.

Jones, R. H. & Hafner, C. A. (2012). *Understanding Digital Literacies: A Practical Introduction*. London, New York: Routledge.

Kalantzis, M. & Cope, B. (2000). A Multiliteracies Pedagogy: A Pedagogical Supplement. In B. Cope & M. Kalantzis (Eds.), *Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures* (pp. 239-248). New York: Routledge.

Kress, G. (2003). *Literacy in the New Media Age*. London: Routledge.

Legutke, M. (2008). Alte und neue Medien im fremdsprachlichen Klassenzimmer: Discourse – Szenario – Task. In A. Müller-Hartmann & M. Schocker-v. Difurth (Eds.), *Aufgabenorientiertes Lernen und Lehren mit Medien* (pp. 65-84). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

Luginbühl, M. (this issue). Media Linguistics: On Mediality and Culturality. *10plus1: Living Linguistics*, 1.

Mauranen, A. (2013). Hybridism, Edutainment, and Doubt: Science Blogging Finding Its Feet. *Nordic Journal of English Studies*, 13.1, pp. 7-36.

Mills, K. A. (2013). A Review of the 'Digital Turn' in the New Literacy Studies. In M. Pinsloo & M. Baynham (Eds.), *Literacy Studies* (pp. 361-388). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Puschmann, C. (2010). *The Corporate Blog as an Emerging Genre of Computer-Mediated Communication: Features, Constraints, Discourse Situation*. Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Göttingen. Retrieved from http://webdoc.sub.gwdg.de/univerlag/2010/GSI7_Puschmann.pdf.

Puschmann, C. (2013). Blogging. In S. Herring et al. (Eds.), *Handbooks of Pragmatics Volume 9: Pragmatics of Computer-Mediated Communication* (pp. 75.100). Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

Raith, T. (2008). Weblogs als Lesetagebücher im aufgabenorientierten Fremdsprachenunterricht – Ergebnisse einer Vergleichsstudie. In A. Müller-Hartmann & M. Schocker-v. Difurth (Eds.), *Aufgabenorientiertes Lernen und Lehren mit Medien* (pp. 297-310). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

Richardson, W. (2010). *Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts, and Other Powerful Web Tools for Classrooms*. 3rd edition. London: Corwin.

Rippberger, F. (2014). *Blogs im Französischunterricht – ein Mehrwert für handlungs- und produktionsorientierte Lektürearbeit im Fremdsprachenunterricht der E2?* (Päd. Facharbeit der Zweiten Staatsprüfung für das Lehramt an Gymnasien), Fulda.

Rosenberg, S. (2009). *Say Everything: How Blogging Began, What it's Becoming, and Why it Matters*. New York: Three Rivers Press.

Schildhauer, P. (forthc.). *The Personal Weblog: A Linguistic History*. Berlin: Peter Lang.

Schildhauer, P. (2014). *Textsorten im Internet zwischen Wandel und Konstanz: Eine diachrone Untersuchung der Textsorte Personal Weblog* (PhD Thesis). Martin-Luther-University, Halle-Wittenberg. Retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/schild2014.

Sefton-Green, H. N. & Erstad, O. (2013). Reviewing Approaches and Perspectives on 'Digital Literacy'. In M. Pinsloo & M. Baynham (Eds.), *Literacy Studies* (pp. 179-196). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Søby, M. (2013). Learning to Be: Developing and Understanding Digital Competence. *Nordic Journal of Digital Literacy*, 8, 134-138.

The New London Group. (1996). A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66.1, pp. 60-92.