

The Kindness of Blogging

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Editor's Note

This was originally posted to [Sheila MacNeill's blog](https://edtechbooks.org/-ezL) [https://edtechbooks.org/-ezL] on February 6, 2019.

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Photo by [Robert Baker \[https://edtechbooks.org/-JAP\]](https://edtechbooks.org/-JAP) on [Unsplash \[https://edtechbooks.org/-gwu\]](https://edtechbooks.org/-gwu)

My blog is always at the back of mind, quite often I deliberately put it there as I haven't found the time to write anything and post! Last week, a couple of things made me start to reflect on my blog and my blogging journey (again).

Firstly the next [PressEd conference \[https://2019.pressedconf.org/\]](https://2019.pressedconf.org/) call for submissions is open. I watched this twitter conference from a bit of a distance last year and felt the very positive tsunami of twitter love for it from both presenters and delegates. Then I was in a room with both [Natalie Lafferty \[https://edtechbooks.org/-LuZ\]](https://edtechbooks.org/-LuZ) (conference co-organiser) and Anne-Marie Scott at a QAA Scotland Enhancement theme meeting (note to self - should write a blog

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post about that). They very skilfully shepherded a conversation to a point where I almost talked myself into submitting something.

Later in the week Lorna Campbell wrote, probably [the best post \[https://edtechbooks.org/-wqY\]](https://edtechbooks.org/-wqY) about academic blogging I've read, based on her own experience and the work she is leading at Edinburgh just now. If you've ever thought about blogging but still are a bit unsure -just read the post and go for it.

In the post, Lorna mentions a few of her favourite academic bloggers and I was thrilled to be included in there, to feel valued by my peers and community. That made me think again on notions of [academic kindness \[https://edtechbooks.org/-ttm\]](https://edtechbooks.org/-ttm) which I reflected on after the recent SocMedHE conference. For me one of the most rewarding parts of blogging is when people either link to a post of mine, or when colleagues like [Kate Bowles \[http://musicfordeckchairs.com/\]](http://musicfordeckchairs.com/) point their students to my blog, or when people take the time to leave a comment. When colleagues such as [Frances Bell \[https://edtechbooks.org/-gbj\]](https://edtechbooks.org/-gbj) leave a comment on a post, they always enrich the original post and push forward my thinking.

All these acts of engagement with my, often quite rambling posts, is such a motivator to keep writing. It helps validate my thought processes and my own sense of worth and value.

I think that that level of open, reciprocal acknowledgement is a key part of academic practice in our digital, or even post digital age. We all need to support and encourage as diverse a range of voices as possible to be heard.

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In this respect, Maha Bali's blog has been a revelation to me, reminding me of inequalities, [dominant voices](https://edtechbooks.org/-cPn) [https://edtechbooks.org/-cPn] and the need to think beyond my global north norms. Connecting with her through her blog has expanded my horizons hugely and allowed me to connect with a wider community and hear more diverse narratives around many, many aspects of educational development and practice.

I'll never forget the first time I met Maha in person at the OER17 conference. She mentioned my response to a pre conference blog post she had written. We had a hug in the middle of her keynote. I know not everyone is a "huggy" type of person, but to me that personified academic kindness. We connected (and continue to do so) through our shared (and different) perspectives on a range of topics from digital capabilities to [what to wear](https://edtechbooks.org/-cxyX) [https://edtechbooks.org/-cxyX] at a conference keynote to open education.

There is also so much hope to be found in Maha's writing too. That kindness of critically sharing different perspectives is what I aspire to, and what I see in so many blogs from my network.

Blogging for me has never been about SHOUTING or stats-though data about your blog can be "interesting". It's about sharing experiences, about enacting open practice through sharing work, thoughts, hopes and fears.

Although I have been blogging for quite a while now, I do still struggle to keep in the blogging habit. Time is always the enemy, and over the last year I have been spending a bit of my writing time on somethings else. Also, having spent many years finding my voice, recently the world has seemed such a crazy

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place that it has [almost silenced me](https://edtechbooks.org/-KgF) [<https://edtechbooks.org/-KgF>].

However there is something about the freedom of writing in a blog that just keeps me going. I love the freedom from the norms and standards of the tyranny of a peer reviewed academic article. The freedom to think aloud and have the power to publish when and where I choose to.

On reflection, I feel that my sustained engagement with blogging has been a key part of personal and professional and personal development process. The act of blogging has been a critical part of my own agency and sense of continuously developing, reflecting and understanding of my own praxis.

So I think I may have now just about convinced myself that I should submit to pressed this year, and I want to thank you, dear reader for all your kindness in reading this blog over the years.

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