The Kindness of Blogging

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Editor's Note

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

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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/] 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] (conference co-organiser) and Anne-Marie Scott at a QAA Scotland

Enhancement theme meeting (note to self – should write a blog 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 as 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.

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 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.
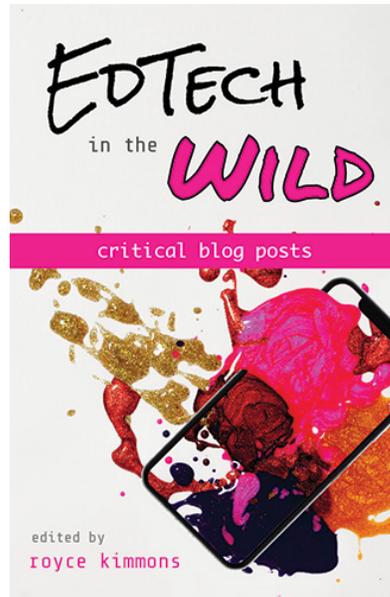
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