

Guidelines for Writing a Post for the Changing Education Blog

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Changing Education Blog Team

This document contains instructions to guide you in the process of writing for the Changing Education blog. This document should be used in combination with the form for submission called “Changing Education Blog Post Submission Form”.

The blog is a project initiated by a group of students of the Master of Changing Education (CE) at the University of Helsinki, and it is managed by the first international student association of the Faculty of Educational Sciences, One Step Ahead ry (OSA). The project is supported by the steering group of CE, as well as the teachers who have encouraged students to make use of the blog to publish their coursework. The aim is to gather and publish information on the topic of education. To fulfill this objective, the blog needs you!

Submissions (the filled in form for submissions) should be sent to:

changingeducationblog@helsinki.fi.

We appreciate your input and contributions! If you have any questions about the blog, please contact us via the abovementioned email.

Summary of the most important guidelines

Length of post: between 500 and 1500 words long. However, if you can justify writing a post that is considerably longer than this, say 2000 words, let one of the Blog Team members know! For example, if you want to do an in-depth examination of a current event or happening, and it would not make sense to split it into several posts.

Topic of post: education. There are no restrictions on what level of education, whether it is informal or formal education, or which specific subject related to education you can write about. If you feel unsure about the subject of your intended post, please feel free to discuss with us!

Media: we welcome content of different types. If you're good with videography and editing, and feel like making a short video essay, feel free! The most important thing is that the format and the content are aligned. If you submit a text, we encourage you to include copyright-free graphics, images, photographs, or schemes where relevant. They could help grab the reader's attention or help the reader understand a complex argument or concept.

Language: the post should be written in English. Furthermore, the language should strike a balance between formal and informal. In other words, the blog should be more accessible than scientific articles, but still communicate research findings and arguments effectively.

References: All key claims in the blog post must have a reference, although APA style is not used. All in-text citations are in form of hyperlinks, which you may choose to insert yourself (Examples below) or clearly state the source for each statement for the editors to create links (such as using comment tool in Word or any other preferred way).

Include the references in a reference list (such as in APA) at the end of the blog post.

Examples of in-text citations (both acceptable):

- In their [2014 study](#), Baum and colleagues found that long-term effects of sleep deprivation include impaired mood
- [One study](#) found that long-term effects of sleep deprivation include impaired mood

Table of Contents

Who can write a blog post? 4

What should the blog post be about?..... 4

What should the blog post look like? 5

Using references in a blog post 6

Sample blog posts..... 6

How do I submit a post?..... 7

What if I want to contribute with another type of media?..... 7

References 7

Who can write a blog post?

Anyone! If you are interested in contributing to the blog and have an idea of what you would like to publish, we are happy to receive it! We hope that many of you will want to do so, because not only will you help make the blog better, you will also get to publish your work for others to enjoy.

What should the blog post be about?

In short: education. The blog will reflect the diversity of fields and subjects of study in education, just as the degree. In other words, you can write a blog post about a social justice issue in education, sustainable education, motivation, test anxiety, about educational policy in Finland or any other country, educational projects, early childhood education, teacher education, adult education, sexual education, the politics of education, and anything else related to education. You are encouraged to use the topics of your coursework in the degree as inspiration!

Although we are not aiming to create a blog that functions as a news platform, we are eager to cover current developments and news related to education. Whenever possible, consider the current circumstances and forces which influence education in different ways. For example, the pandemic is something that has had and continues to have a profound impact on how education is delivered and experienced. We want the content of the blog to always be up to date, so try to incorporate an element of current news in your writing.

Finally, we know that having a wide range subjects covered in one blog requires a clear red thread (a central theme or connecting aspect between content). As the name of the blog is “Changing Education”, we would like that red thread to be the changing characteristic of education. By this is meant two things: firstly, education as a construct that is dynamic and that has and will continue to transform, and secondly, the act of changing education with innovations and reforms. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to incorporate either or both or one of these ideas into your post. You can do this in many different ways, and it’s up to you to decide which is most appropriate for your content. You can propose a solution for addressing a problem in education, analyze a new policy or project, discuss how historically changes have come about, pose a question for the future of education, examine existing projects, interventions, products etc. in the field of education innovation, and many more. Your analysis could include direct references to existing policy documents, research, public debate, etc. to provide the reader with background information and further reading.

What should the blog post look like?

The blog post should be easy to read, to the point, and effectively communicate the subject at hand. The idea is to provide content that is educational and attention grabbing for people interested in education. The posts should be long enough for the writer to be able to make their point effectively, but short enough to maintain the reader's attention. The word count ranges from 500 to 1500 words, but more important than the numbers, is that you keep the text compact and clear. If your post communicates the point or argument, you want it to communicate without a lot of unnecessary details, that is perfect for the blog. But don't worry, we will have a team of editors who will be able to help in this process. Images are encouraged as well, so feel free to include relevant, copyright free images (perhaps conceptual schemes you have created yourself to better communicate complex arguments). Just make sure to attach them to the email with the filled-out form, and include the sources of those images so we can credit them appropriately on the blog!

However, try to keep your post as compact as possible, and beyond 1000 words, consider the value added of writing a longer post. If you feel like you would need considerably more words, try first to think about whether you can divide that post into multiple pieces or if the additional info can be provided as links for further reading.

While your post should be based on facts and existing research to the largest extent possible, make the language accessible instead of too academic or scientific. Remember, one of the aims of the blog is to promote education research in a more digestible way. Avoid using too much jargon, and be diligent with defining concepts that might be difficult to understand or ambiguous. Include the information that helps the reader understand the main point, and eliminate irrelevant or overly detailed information.

Below is a brief list of what should be included in your submission (the form has individual boxes for each component):

1. Title – should be clear and concise, relevant to the content and grabbing the reader's attention. Titles including arguments, questions or quotations or a suggested solution are often engaging. For example: "Learning Corruption: What Are the Implications of Classroom Corruption for Democracy?" by Alexandra Biris, 2021.
2. Lead – a short introduction (one or two sentences, max. 50 words) communicating the main idea of the post. Consider adding a question that might prompt the reader to continue reading the post.
3. Your name and a short (1-2 short sentences) description about yourself. For example, the degree(s) you have, your job title, a short description of your research interests.
4. Date
5. Text (with relevant graphics, and source of any images used) – the main text should follow a clear structure, for example introduction, main, and conclusion. If needed, include descriptive sub-headings to clearly divide the post into manageable chunks.
6. Bibliography (such as in APA style).

7. A sentence or two summarizing the main point or key question, used to promote the post on our social media platforms. This could be the same as the lead if you like, the important thing about this is that it should attract attention on social media!
8. Key words (for the creation of tags, making up categories of subjects on the blog) – add a small number (3-5) of relevant key words we can use to categorize your post.

As mentioned, there will be a form for submitting posts to the blog, where each component will have an individual box where you can copy and paste it (see section “How do I submit a post?” for more information). For more concrete examples, see Sample blog posts below.

Using references in a blog post

All key claims in the blog post must have a reference, although APA style for the in-text citations is not used. You could mention the name of the author with a year, but this is not required. All references will be made into hyperlinks either by highlighting the author names (if mentioned) or key words. You can choose to insert the links to the articles yourself (Example below) or clearly state the source for each statement for the editors to create links (such as using comment tool in Word or any other preferred way). When referring to articles, the hyperlinks should lead to the doi website.

Include the references in a reference list (such as in APA) at the end of the blog post.

Examples of in-text citations (both acceptable):

- In their [2014 study](#), Baum and colleagues found that long-term effects of sleep deprivation include impaired mood
- [One study](#) found that long-term effects of sleep deprivation include impaired mood

Sample blog posts

For inspiration, feel free to have a look at published articles on the platform:

- [Early Childhood Education: Children First, but What About Employees?](#), by Inka Tähkä, 2021
- [5 Questions About Music Therapy Answered by Neuroscience Research](#), by Alicia Lucendo Noriega, 2021
- [Hidden Risks of the COVID-19 Crisis for Early Childhood Education](#), by Natalia Stalchenko and Zoi Vasileiou, 2021

How do I submit a post?

To contribute to the blog with a post (in the format of an article), please fill out the form provided by the Blog Team. Once you have filled in the form, email it to changingeducationblog@helsinki.fi.

We will read through all the submissions, edit if necessary (together with you if you prefer) and publish it!

What if I want to contribute with another type of media?

We welcome other types of media as well! If you want to create a video or graphic, we are happy to receive your submission. In terms of subject matter, the same guidelines apply as for blog articles. Please remember to mention your sources regardless of the format (including for pictures and video). If making a video or graphic, make sure your material is copyright-free (either by using copyright images and video, or by taking/filming your own). If anyone appears in the submission, you must ask for their explicit consent.

We are aiming to make the blog a dynamic platform that contains much more than just text. As long as the format of your choice makes sense with the content, feel free to be creative! If you would like to contribute to the Changing Education podcast, contact Alexandra Biris at alexandra.biris@helsinki.fi.

References

Baum, K. T., Desai, A., Field, J., Miller, L. E., Rausch, J., & Beebe, D. W. (2014). Sleep restriction worsens mood and emotion regulation in adolescents. *Journal of child psychology and psychiatry, and allied disciplines*, 55(2), 180–190.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.12125>