

Sanjaya says, "Let's Give 'em Something to Talk About!"

A Beginning Blogging Workshop for Elementary School Teachers

What is a blog?

A blog is an easy way to create a simplified web site on which you write whatever you want on an ongoing basis and others can respond to your writings. Your writing is automatically displayed in chronological order so visitors can see what is new at first glance.

What can I do with a blog?

For your personal use, a blog can be an online journal, personal diary, a collection of links, a place to collaborate or discuss personal or educational issues, a place to participate in professional growth, or whatever else you want it to be.

As a teacher, a blog can be a place to post homework, classroom assignments, projects, parent communication, current events, online portfolios of student work, or classroom activities.

For students, a blog is a place for responding to questions, quotes, or thoughts posed for discussion by the teacher, practicing editing skills, showcasing creative writing, sharing research findings, doing literature reviews, sharing book talks, solving problems, sharing thoughts about current events, journaling, collaborating with classmates, and much more.

A blog can help you and your students build online communities that enable you to reflect and interact with others. The possibilities for blogging are only limited by your imagination.

This website gives step by step directions for what to consider when starting a blog.

<http://www.teachersfirst.com/content/blog/openingdoorsblog.cfm>

Where can I see examples of blogs?

Below are some blog sites that might be useful in helping you decide the focus of your own blog.

Elementary Blog sites:

<http://www.pb5th.com/>

http://itc.blogs.com/thewriteweblog/2004/11/who_says_element.html

<http://historyiselementary.blogspot.com/search/label/Blog%20Visits>

<http://mustangblog.typepad.com/mrsbrittonsclass/>

http://www.teachers.answers.com/main/teachers_weblogs.jsp

<http://mrsd.tblog.com/>

http://consilience.typepad.com/our_stories

<http://blogs.writingproject.org/nwpHelp/newsItems/departments/k5>

<http://jhh.blogs.com/blogwrite/> This site is an excellent source for seeing what can be done with blogging in the classroom with a focus on the 6 traits of writing.

<http://shelbyteacher.edublogs.org/category/uncategorized/>

General list of Teacher Blogs

http://blog2learn.org/Teacher_Blog_List.html

http://www.seedwiki.com/wiki/teaching_with_blogs/teaching_with_blogs.cfm#Blogging%20in%20Secondary%20School

What should I do before allowing my students access to blogging?

- Be sure you have a focus for student blogs.
- Get parental permission before starting. Make sure your parents understand what a blog is, how you will be using it, and what protections are in place.
- Make sure students understand the importance of not giving out personal information (e-mail address, phone number, home address, school).

This website offers some good tips.

<http://www.blogsafety.com/>

This is a high school lesson plan on responsible blogging.

<http://outsidethecave.blogspot.com/2005/05/responsible-blogging-lesson-plan.html>

Make sure students understand blog "netiquette".

What are some ideas for blogging in the classroom?

These ideas can be used at almost any level with modifications.

- Blog a sentence with mechanical and grammatical errors and have students retype the sentence correctly.
- Provide a journal prompt for students to finish.
- Provide a math problem and have students explain the steps to completing the problem.
- Have students write a book review.
- Have students give an online book talk.
- Have students view a United Streaming video and write a response or a fact they have learned.
- Have students post creative writing or poetry.
- Have students collaborate to write a story.
- Have students blog about what they learned in science or social studies.
- Have students explore an interesting web site and write an interesting fact about something they have learned.
- Have students share opinions by blogging about a current event. (Britannica at AVL has good current events.)
- Have students do daily or weekly free-choice journaling.
- Have students explain what they think a quote or idiom means.
- Have students take turns writing summaries of classroom activities.
- Post student artwork, pictures of classroom activities, etc.
- Have students debate sides to an issue at school (homework, lunch, hall, teasing, bullying, etc.)
- Have students post a joke or riddle of the week.
- Have students pretend to be characters in a book or historical characters and have online conversations.
- Use blogs to have students think of metaphors for the 6 traits of writing.
- Create a book study for a book being read and engage in online blogging with the book's author.

How can I create my blog?

The first step in creating your blog is to find a hosting site. Some are free and others cost for either software and/or the host site.

Please note: If you choose to use a host site other than Blogger, you must request permission from Tommy Whitten at Computer Services.

Examples of host sites are:

<http://www.blogger.com/> - This site is free and has very easy to follow instructions for creating your blog. It has a "comment moderation" feature that will allow you to review all comments made before posting.

<http://www.classblogmeister.com/> - This free service is especially designed for schools. It allows you to set up class lists and review comments before posting. Teachers establish a blogging account for use in publishing their own articles, and can then set up blogging accounts for their students. Teachers maintain full publishing control.

<http://www.edublogs.org/> - This is a free service for schools that allows teachers to set up student blogs and review posts.

<http://www.gaggle.net/> - This is also a free service in which teachers decide if access to students' blogs is restricted to within the school or district, or opened to the outside world. The teacher can also restrict who can comment on the blogs, hide full names and email addresses, prevent pictures, and much more.

iWeb- This is a basic website authoring program from Apple that offers drag and drop blogs, pod casts, and pictures with canned templates. This program costs \$99 per year.

Recommended Reading:

Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts, and Other Powerful Web Tools for Classrooms — Will Richardson

Classroom Blogging: A Teacher's Guide to the Blogosphere — David F. Warlick

Digital Storytelling: Creating an eStory — Dusti D. Howell and Deanne K. Howell

DigiTales: The Art of Telling Digital Stories — Bernajean Porter

Integrating Technology: Effective Tools for Collaboration — Shan Glandon

Literacy Learning in Networked Classrooms: Using the Internet with Middle-level Students — Mary L. McNabb

Making Literacy Magic Happen: The Best of Learning & Leading with Technology on Language Arts — Mark Gura, Editor & Rose Reissman, Editor

Raw Materials for the Mind (4th ed.) — David F. Warlick