



Anne Davis

A Vision for Classroom Blogging

Students working together as a learning community to create a new culture of learning and teaching through blogging positively affects learning in many ways. I've found the following process effective in accomplishing this goal.

Creating a class blog to model blogging for students is an exciting way to introduce students to blogging. Use conversations, both verbally and on blogs, to encourage students and yourself to think deeper about what matters for learning. Then have the students comment on the class blog to begin the process of building a space where students feel valued and safe taking risks in their thinking and writing. A WebQuest for introducing blogs to elementary students and wikis on blogging concepts and safe and responsible blogging are linked from the Lessons Learned link in the resources.

Next, have students create individual blogs to learn about topics of interest to them or to pursue their own passions. Blogs give students ownership of their own learning. They provide opportunities for their voices to be heard and let them see that people care about what they have to say. Provide choices within a wide range; take time to discuss any inappropriate choices that might be made. Just make

students a part of the conversation *and* the solution for classroom blogging. Talk about the differences between personal and classroom learning blogging. Let them help shape it. Then make connections. Connecting new to the known extends the learning. The conversations you have in your classroom will help the learning stick. It will even make them want to learn more.

Encourage others to comment on student blogs. The connections made through comments from someone who reads their work makes the learning even more meaningful and relevant. Write to learn and see what opening doors to a wider audience offers. The community will begin to grow and thrive. In the project with university students blogging with elementary students, it was amazing how the students learned from each other and how the university students helped the younger students see things from different perspectives and achieve new goals. Receiving comments is a strong motivating force that inspires students to continue blogging.

Reflection by students is another important piece of blogging and is really a strategy for learning that needs to be nurtured in the classroom. Let them write their way into their own understandings and discover answers

to the questions they need to ask. Let them be creative, off the wall, and branch out with their thoughts.

Make it fun! Make it exciting! Think outside the box. Celebrate learning in innovative ways. It is possible to stay within your prescribed curriculum. Be creative on the class blog but focus on the students and the learning. Encourage the use of Web 2.0 tools to spice up the posts! Podcasting short thoughts from the students tells them their ideas are worthy. They are indeed.

Go build that blogging community that will transform your classroom in ways you never thought possible!

Resources

- Improving Instruction through the Use of Blogs Wiki: <http://adavis.pbwiki.com>
- Learn to Blog: Blog to Learn: <http://k12online-conference.org/?p=176>
- Lessons Learned from Blogging with Elementary and University Students: <http://necc-poster2007.googlepages.com/home>
- My Weblog Projects: <http://anne.teachesme.com/my-weblog-projects/>
- Putting the Pedagogy into the Tools: <http://k12onlineconference.org/?p=160>

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