## Blog

### Creating a Blog (80 minute lesson)

Adapted from Neil Rigler (Christel, Lesson Plans for developing digital Litaricies 2010,123)

#### SSRW (10 minutes):

Students should work on a book of a choice reading for 10 minutes, or write post reading reflections for the class reading log while the text is fresh in their minds.

#### Introduction (10-15 minutes):

What is a blog?

* A website containing a writer's or group of writers' own experiences,observations, opinions, etc., and often having images and links to other websites. (dictionary.com)
* Also reference [wikipedia.com](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blog) on blogs

Big picture questions to ask the class:

* What is a blog and what are they useful for?
  + Online publishing site in which the creator self publishes content for the world to read.
  + Communication
  + multimodal writing
  + self-publishing
  + writing for a variation of audiences
* Who writes blogs?
  + Technical term for blog writers: bloggers
  + Students
  + Teachers
  + People with special interests
  + Anyone and everyone who wants to write and publish a blog
* Why write a blog?
  + This is a way to self-publish without the constraints of publishers, editors or dealing with particular press.
  + Generate ideas that others can comment on.
  + Make connections with a larger audience.
* What are some blog sites that you know and use?
  + Blogger
  + Wordpress
  + Blog.com
  + Penzu.com
  + Tumbler
  + More at <http://stylecaster.com/best-free-blog-sites/>
* How can we as a class use blogs for communication?
  + Write responses to books
  + Publish papers online
  + Communicate with one another through postings
  + Post articles of interests
  + Share ideas

#### Activity (15-20 minutes):

Note: This activity can be expanded to a complete lesson for student unfamiliar with blogs and developed into a larger project understanding the variations and uses of blogs.

While most students will have some experience with blogs in their own lives, rather than lecture on the different types of blogs and reasons for using them have students look up different blogs and their uses. Some blogs sites may be blocked from the schools server but that should not limit students to using a google search and Wikipedia or you can direct students to the dearblogger.org link for a quick summary. Break the class into 10 groups (roughly groups of 3 or 4) and have them quickly search the 10 blogs provided below. As students look up the blog assigned to them have them answer the following questions:

* What is the purpose of this blog?
* Who would want to use this blog?
* Would this blog be appropriate for the use of our classroom? Why or why not?

Blogs

1. Wordpress.com
2. Blogger.com
3. Tumblr.com
4. Squarespace.com
5. Weebly.com
6. Medium.com
7. Hubpages.com
8. Joomla.com
9. Livejournal.com
10. Quora.com

Link to various blogs and summaries: <http://www.dearblogger.org/blogger-or-wordpress-better>

After each group has quickly searched for relevant information on the blog they were assigned have each group give a blurb about the blog to inform the class about what they were looking up. Each blurb should be no more than a minute.

* Blogger, is a google blogging site that allows users to publish posts and even videos and pictures. This would be a good site for our class because you can publish and have friends comment on your posts.
* Sruarespace is a professional blog site used by companies and professionals. Rather than allowing users to publish posts, this is more like a website developer tool. Since this site costs $8 and up this would not be a good site for this class to use.

#### Discussion and Practice (30-35 minutes):

* What blog sites are do you think that you would like to use for your own publishing?
* What are the benefits of blog writing? What are the limitations?
* Based on the blurbs that we just heard and the brief research that you did on a specific blog site; what are some of the pros and cons of various blogs?
* What other blog sites do you know of and use that may be appropriate for the context of this class?

This activity is geared at introducing students to a variation of blogs so that they have an idea of what blogs are available to use. Through this activity students should have an idea of what blog sites are available for them to use. Below is the assignment sheet (Appendix A) Students should spend the remainder of class looking at different blogs and then setting up their own account to begin blogging. This class time should be spent tinkering with the blog site to get used to using the site. As the majority of class responses will be published through the blog, students should be comfortable using the various features of the blog site that they have chosen.

#### Sites I prefer students to use:

1. Blogger.com: Easy to use, allows for users to develop custom page, and offers ways to publish multimodal posts.
2. Wordpress.com: Easy to use, allows for self-publishing and responses from readers.
3. Medium.com: More difficult to set up but allows for self-publishing and responses from readers
4. Livejournal.com: Easy to use and has a large readership which may allow for many a variation of different global readers.
5. Sett.com: More rigid in page development but is open to a lot of users which may allow for more responses globally.

#### Sites Students cannot use:

1. Google+ and Facebook notes: Though these are sites that students can create posts and have users comment on they are more geared at social networking rather than creating a wall of their own posts that readers can easily access
2. Pinterest: This site is mainly used for sharing interests and links to other websites rather than have users write and publish their own ideas
3. Tumblr: This site is geared at link sharing and interests rather than self-publishing. Also many schools have blocked this site for content reasons, which will making access difficult.
4. Weebly: This would be great for students up for the challenge but is targeted at web development rather than self-publishing and receiving readers’ comments
5. Hubpages: This is primarily used for social media rather than self-publishing and responding to posts.

#### Exit Ticket:

Students need to pair up with one to two other students (groups of 2-3). These groups will assign each students to those that they are paired with to be accountability partners. This will mean that to get full credit on regular blog posts each student is responsible for posting a response or responses to their accountability partner’s blog. This is intended to practice using multiple functions of blogs and blog writing. Later responses will require students to generate a conversation through the comments section of their blog.

#### Extension:

Students should be invited to write one to two blog posts a week. Blog posts should be related to reading, formal writing that is extended from in class journal writing, responses to lessons, and personal writing. While students should set up blogs in the beginning of the year, they will have the opportunity write regularly as part of the class. Extending with the use of accountability partners all students should regularly be checking on partner(s) blogs and responding to posts, as blog writing does not stop at the point of publishing. Students should also be engaged in writing responses to responses to generate a conversation between a post.

* Responses to other students posts
* Regular writing
* Responses to lessons
* Personal writing
* Paper published in a series of posts
* Multimodal writing (incorporation of video and/or pictures)

## Blog Post Assignment Sheet

Look up at least three blogs that you would consider using for the remainder of the year. You should spend more time than we did on class and figure out the pros and cons of each blog that you are considering. Once you have selected the blog of your choice create a blog using that website. Most blogs are user friendly to set up, however feel free to YouTube a tutorial on setting up a blog for your specific website. Once you have created your blog, customize the blog to represent you. I have used blogger for various reasons and each have a different look (<http://ianjmccreary.blogspot.com/>, <http://concertrevieworegon.blogspot.com/>). Make this your own. Once you have created your own blog I want you to generate a page or section that tells your readers about yourself. I want you to create a post or subheading telling your readers what the purpose of your blog (even though this will be used for class responses throughout the year, think of the other ways in which you will be using this blog: to timeline events of your life, share your personal writing, share life experiences, explore interests, etc.). Finally, I want you to write a post explaining why you chose this blog site over other, what others you looked at, the challenges you think may arise in the future using this blog, and what you hope to learn from using blogging as a mode of communication.

1. Create a blog from three researched blog sites
2. Customize blog to represent you
   1. Change settings
   2. Change backgrounds
   3. Add picture of yourself
   4. Add links to other pages
3. Tell readers about yourself so that they have a context of who the writer is (Do not give out personal information like your address and city and state of which you live. This information should be vague)
   1. Who are you (My name is Ian McCreary, a high school student in a class focusing on digital literacies and environmental concerns.)
   2. What do you like to do (I like outdoor activities like hiking and fishing.)
   3. What are your interests (I like watching sports in my free time and reading. My favorite author is Mark Twain and my favorite band is Beats Antique.
4. What is the purpose of this blog?
5. First Post
   1. What blogs sites did you consider when selecting a blog?
   2. Why did you choose this blog?
   3. What challenges do you foresee in the future using this blog? (maybe it is difficult to post videos or pictures)
   4. What do you hope to learn about using this as a form of communication

Once you have created your blog and made your first post, please email me the link to your blog and post a link of your blog to the class google doc so that the rest of the class can access your blog. Follow up by finding your accountability partners blog and responding to their first post.

**Assessment**

This is the general rubric for your blog posts. Please note that certain blogs will be graded different based on the complexity of the blog post assigned. You should expect to have a minimum of one written blog post a week.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **4- Excellent** | **3- Good** | **2- Fair** | **1- Poor** |
| **I answer the topic question(s) in my blog entries.** | I answer all of the question(s) with a clear and focused response. I flush out all of my ideas and give supporting details. | I answer the question(s) with a focused response. I do not flush out all of my ideas and lack supporting details. | I answer the question(s). I express some of my ideas and give no supported with details. | I do not answer the question(s). I do not attempt to flush my ideas or offer supporting details. |
| **I can write in complete sentences and use capital letters appropriately.** | The writer makes no errors in capitalization or punctuation, so the writing is very easy to read. | The writer makes 1 or 2 errors in capitalization or punctuation, but the writing is still easy to read. | The writer makes some errors in capitalization and punctuation that catch the reader's attention and interrupt the flow of the writing. | The writer makes several errors in capitalization and punctuation that catch the reader's attention and make the writing hard to read. |
| **I can share information electronically by leaving feedback and comments on my classmates' blogs.** | The student regularly (more than once per week) leaves specific, quality feedback for classmates. | The student regularly (once per week) leaves comments specific/high quality feedback for classmates. | Student leaves comments and feedback for other students sometimes, but less than once per week. Some feedback is too general | Student rarely leaves comments and feedback for others students OR feedback is vague ("I like your story"). |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Adapted from rubistar.com | |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |

### Colorado Academic Standards Addressed

Reading for all purposes

1. Literary criticism of complex texts requires the use of analysis, interpretive, and evaluative strategies
   1. Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact. (CCSS: RL.11-12.5)
2. Interpreting and evaluating complex informational texts require the understanding of rhetoric, critical reading, and analysis skills
3. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem. (CCSS: RI.11-12.7)

Writing and Composition

1. Style, detail, expressive language, and genre create a well-crafted statement directed at an intended audience and purpose
   1. Use a range of elaboration techniques (such as questioning, comparing, connecting, interpreting, analyzing, or describing) to establish and express point of view and theme
   2. Create a clear and coherent, logically consistent structure appropriate to the chosen literary genre (biographical account, short story, personal narrative, narrative poem or song, parody of particular narrative style, play script)
2. Ideas, evidence, structure, and style create persuasive, academic, and technical texts for particular audiences and specific purposes
   1. Articulate a position through a sophisticated claim or thesis statement and advance it using evidence, examples, and counterarguments
   2. Select appropriate and relevant information (excluding extraneous details) to set context
3. Standard English conventions effectively communicate to targeted audiences and purposes
   1. Deliberately manipulate the conventions of standard English for stylistic effect appropriate to the needs of a particular audience and purpose
   2. Seek and use an appropriate style guide to govern conventions for a particular audience and purpose
   3. Seek and use an appropriate style guide to govern conventions for a particular audience and purpose

Research and Reasoning

1. Independent research designs articulate and defend information, conclusions, and solutions that address specific contexts and purposes
   1. Define and narrow a topic for self-designed research for a variety of purposes and audiences
2. Critique and defend sources and information based on credibility, relevance and appropriateness relative to context and purpose
3. Logical arguments distinguish facts from opinions; and evidence defines reasoned judgment
   1. Determine and use the appropriate style guide to govern format and documentation of quotations, paraphrases, and other information from a range of research sources. Synthesize information to support a logical argument
   2. Distinguish between evidence and inferences

Oral Expression and Listening

1. Effective collaborative groups accomplish goals
2. Critique and offer suggestions for improving presentations given by own group and other groups