

## Blogging and Beyond

Blogging can be used in any number of ways. It can be used to form a reading discussion forum or for posting short current events articles and inviting students' thoughts. You can use it to foster communication among multiple classes or to serve as a student progress log on a lab or research assignment. Some teachers use it to post photos and homework assignments online.

No matter how you decide to use your class blog, make sure you encourage the conversation but at the same time moderate the comments. (See "Setting Up a Blog" [Document #: TX001052] for more information about this.)

## Activity Ideas

These are some activities to do with your students or school community using a blog:

- Post a homework question and ask each student to post a one-paragraph response.
- Start a discussion by posing a question and requiring that the students post several times over the course of a week or curriculum unit. Invite parents or other grades or schools to comment on the students' work.
- Illustrate ideas and connections through written and visual explanations.
- Have the students post discussion questions for the next day's class. This works great if you know the students are having a hard time understanding a concept and they post questions you want them to review.
- Have the students write their notes for the day. Assign one student per day to be the scribe for the class. This is great for discussion-based classes where you want the students to focus on the discussion and not have to worry about taking notes.
- Post progress reports on team projects. The students can post their work to the blog so that others can see what they are doing and comment on one another's work.
- Have the students create their own blogs for an independent study.
- Host conversations about books. Ask the students to write feedback, and invite the author to respond, if possible.
- Participate in a student blogging or comment challenge. For a set period of time, challenge your students to post or comment on another student's blog. See a sample at <http://wyatt67.edublogs.org/student-blogging-challenge/>.

## Moving Outside the Classroom

Blogs are great if you are looking for an organized, formal connection with other classrooms in the city, country, or world. Cross-country projects can open a wider world for your students while meeting lesson objectives and standards. The students can discuss global issues and compare how each country is working toward solving the problem. The students can share informational links on how they are making a difference or just learn more about global issues. These are some suggestions for getting started:



- **Taking IT Global** (<http://www.tigweb.org/>). Taking IT Global is an online community of youth interested in global issues and creating positive change.
- **iEarn** (<http://iearn.org/>). The International Education and Resource Network (iEarn) is a nonprofit global network that enables teachers and students to collaborate on projects that enhance learning and make a difference in the world.
- **ePals** (<http://www.epals.com/>). This is a K–12 online community in which students can safely connect, collaborate, and build community across two hundred countries and territories.
- **Youthink!**(<http://www.youthink.worldbank.org/>). Youthink! gears international development issues to a youth audience and encourages young people to get involved in solutions to global problems, such as HIV-AIDS, malnutrition, and gender inequality.
- **Global SchoolNet** (<http://www.globalschoolnet.org/>). Global SchoolNet focuses on developing literacy and communication skills, fostering teamwork and collaboration, encouraging workforce preparedness, and creating multicultural understanding among students.

These social networks are great places to start looking for teachers who have planned a project and need collaborators, or to see examples of how other projects work:

- **Flat Classrooms** (<http://flatclassrooms.ning.com/>). Participants in the Flat Classrooms Project communicate, share, and interact via this educational network.
- **The Global Education Collaborative Ning** (<http://globaleducation.ning.com/>). This community for teachers and students is interested in global education. Contribute by adding media, conversation, and collaborative project ideas.
- **Online Projects For Teachers Ning** (<http://onlineproj4tchrs.ning.com/>). This social network links teachers together.
- **Teachers Connecting** (<http://www.teachersconnecting.com/>). Teachers Connecting is a place for K–12 teachers to find other teachers for cross-classroom collaboration.
- **Classroom 2.0** (<http://www.classroom20.com/>). Classroom 2.0 is a social network for those interested in Web 2.0 and collaborative technologies in education.
- **Global Education Collaborative Projects Database** ([http://spreadsheets.google.com/pub?key=pfr2\\_hjQxlJba\\_OcJYcARDQ](http://spreadsheets.google.com/pub?key=pfr2_hjQxlJba_OcJYcARDQ)). The Global Education Collaborative Projects Database lists collaborative educational projects from around the world.

