Blogger *in the Classroom*

Get the tool: http://www.blogger.com

What is it?

Blogger is a tool that makes it easy to instantly publish weblogs or "blogs." Blogs are webpages consisting of frequently updated posts. The newest post appears at the top of the page, followed by recent posts in reverse chronological order. Older posts appear in archives, usually organized by month. Blogger makes it easy to create rich multi-media posts that include text, links, pictures, and videos. Visitors can comment on posts - or subscribe to the blog using a feed reader.

Why use it?

Students can use Blogger to:

- Keep a reflective learning journal throughout the school year.
- Post messages, photos, and videos from a family vacation.
- Share schoolwork with their peers, parents, and others.

Teachers can use Blogger to:

- Use the Mail2Blogger feature for a simple way to have students email their writing assignments to the class blog to be posted on the web.
- Use the Template Designer feature to customize their blog's look, even edit the HTML.
- Keep parents up-to-date on class happenings.
- Reflect on their own teaching practices and share their ideas with other educators.
- Add "labels" as keywords or tags to organize and categorize your posts. Labels such as announcements, homework or social studies can help students find the posts most relevant to them.

Instructional Ideas

Elementary. Post a series of images and links to great reading activities that kids can do from home. See http://goo.gl/ohuVL for an example.
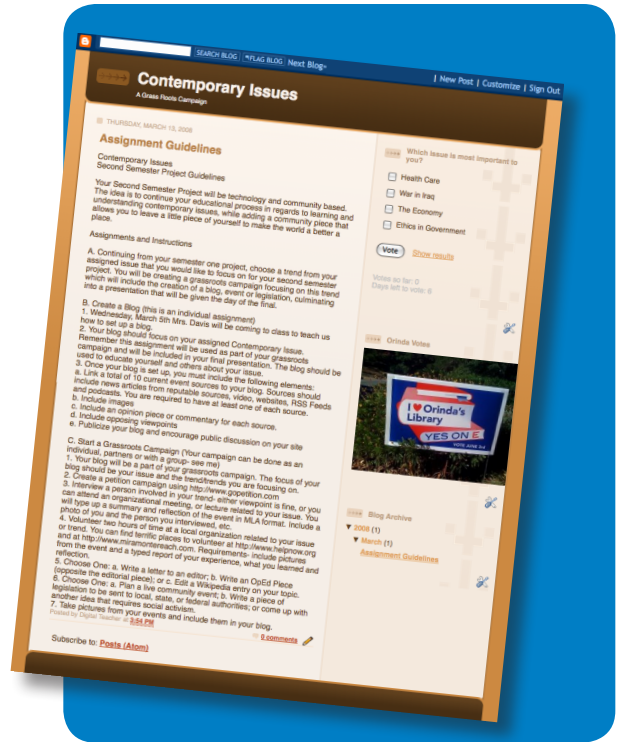
Middle School. Students can post reviews of their favorite books and invite comments from other classes, their parents, or the general public.

High School. For history class, students conduct original interviews with local senior citizens, placing text, images, and video clips on their blog as a digital archive of local history.

Expert Tip

Type "/view" at the end of a Blogger URL (http://coolcatteacher. blogspot.com/view) to get a completely new and different visual experience. Use the drop down menu at the top of the page to choose between Flipcard, Mosaic, Sidebar, Snapshot, and Timeslide. http://goo.gl/Z3HZB

Blogger in Action

Project: Community Issues Blogging
Grade/Subject: Grade 9-12 Social Science
School: Miramonte High School, Orinda, CA

In a Contemporary Issues class, students use Blogger to share a little piece of themselves while they make the world a better a place. Students create a grassroots campaign through a blog, focusing on an issue of choice. They educate their readers about the issue via research and writing and solicit comments from different perspectives. They also volunteer time at a local organization related to their issue, taking pictures and posting commentary on their blog.

Additional Resources

More Examples

Project S.C.A.T. - Mrs. Abernethy's Cyber Chickens, a 5th grade class in Greenville, PA, take on hazardous waste contamination in their community.
http://cyberchickens26.blogspot.com/

AP Calculus Blog - Sophisticated math lessons are blogged and discussed.
http://apcalc07.blogspot.com/

Weblogg-Ed - Will Richardson's blog about the read/write web in the classroom.
http://weblogg-ed.com

Two Cents Worth - David Warlick's blog about literacy in the 21st century.
http://davidwarlick.com/2cents/

CoolCatTeacher - Vicki Davis's blog about teaching with technology.
http://coolcatteacher.blogspot.com

SupportBlogging.com - A site set up to provide an oppportunity for students, teachers, administrators, parents, and others to understand the benefits of educational blogging.
http://supportblogging.com

Complementary Tools
- Feedburner
- Google Blog Search
- Google Docs: Embed Documents, Spreadsheets, Forms, or Presentations.
- Google Reader
- Google Video or YouTube
- Picasa

In order to comply with federal law and the Google Terms of Service, students need to be over 13 years of age to use any product which requires a Google Account.

Students may participate in product use if the account is owned by a parent or teacher and that parent or teacher is present when the product is being used.

http://www.google.com/educators