

Blogging –The New Model for Building Collaboration in the Classroom

For students around the nation, blogs have become far more than the latest technology buzzword. For many, blogging can be a key method of communication on a social level. While many students already blog in their free time, incorporating blogging technology into the classroom can have many benefits through the use of a medium that already interests students and makes learning more interactive and engaging.

With the knowledge and interest that students have in blogging, it can be an effective tool to use in the classroom to engage students outside of the classroom setting. For example, blogs can be a great avenue for continuing class discussions or posing questions for students to consider before coming to class. This gives quieter students the opportunity to participate without feeling the pressure of speaking in front of a group. Students will also find this medium helpful as they will have more time to formulate their thoughts and to reflect on other students' comments and questions.

Another use for blogs in the classroom is for peer review – a method that many teachers use for essays and projects. A blog can be a convenient and interesting way for students to review others' work. Students can post an essay, for example, and their peers will be able to read it and post comments. It also makes the peer review process easier for teachers to grade, as they can see who commented and the content of their remarks.

When used with younger students, class blogs can be an effective tool to introduce students to the increasingly important world of Web 2.0. Teaching students the educational and practical value it has can be accomplished by using it in a fun manner such as pen pals via the web and many other activities.

Blogs can also be used to keep parents involved in their child's education by keeping them abreast of class happenings and activities. A special thread for parents could be created or they could be given some rights on the class blog.

Perhaps most importantly, class blogs are a great way to build a sense of unity and community within the classroom. Within this online forum, student's profiles and class goals can be shared. This allows students an opportunity to learn about and from each other. With this unity creates an open class culture that fosters learning and promotes an environment in which students feel comfortable sharing their ideas.

The process of incorporating blogs into the classroom can sometimes be an intimidating prospect to teachers. To help educators develop ways to incorporate blogging into their classrooms, Atomic Learning has created a Blogging Workshop available at www.atomiclearning.com/workshops. The workshop covers topics ranging from setting up a blog and managing blog comments to keeping your blog confidential.

