

Blogging in the Art Classroom

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This session describes my experience of integrating students' daily observations into a personalized art project through blogging. Not only was this lesson exciting for the students but it also allowed me to see a transparent, fully personal side of my students that is often hidden from view. Within the context of appropriation, or found objects, students became aware of their environment and were then given an opportunity for contemplation that included photography, poetry and design. This successful project has grown to be a catalyst for discussion at my school in finding new ways to integrate blogging into the classroom environment in many subject areas.

- Community: Blogging to share within communities. Connecting members.
- Advocacy: Influence decision makers regarding technology in the classroom.
- Learning: Learning about new technology. Strengthen virtual learning experiences.
Blogging for personal growth.
- Research and Knowledge: Sharing research and knowledge through blogging.

What I had to set up before the project started:

- Approval from administration to give daily blog access to specific students
- Give URL's of all blogs to administration so they could check on the development of student blogs
- Allow iPhone use in class if students didn't have access to a personal laptop to use
- Devise rules for composition and layout of blog

Blog Rules:

- Never use your home or school address. Use appropriate images and wording, reminding students that administrators have access.
- The title and "theme" of blog had to work together.
- Take one photo per day associated with something personal and write a Haiku poem.
- Layout to be consistent: Set up on Day 1 and then design will follow format rules from that day forward.

Pay special attention to these things:

- Consistency: Each entry had to have 1) Image, 2) Haiku, 3) Heading/Title, 4) Description, 5) Date
- Quality and interest of photos
- Spelling, punctuation and capitalization – be consistent
- Correct syllables and vocabulary for Haiku
- "Mysterious Factor" – is there anything that compels the reader to want to come back and read more on the next day?

Blogs can be used for many things:

- Blogging can be used to form a reading or writing discussion on art history.
- Blogging can be used to post short current events articles from the art world. Invite students' thoughts and critique.
- Blogging can be used to gather research on any topic by dividing work up among students.
- Blogging can be used to post photos and homework assignments online.
- Blogging can be used as a portfolio for artworks made over a year's time.
- Blogging can be used to connect your art class to the world!

What kind of blog?

- You can have your own Blog
- You can have a classroom Blog
- Each student can have their own Blog
- Your class can connect with other students around the world on their Blogs

Resources:

- <http://wordpress.com> (FREE blogging site)
- <http://blogger.com> (FREE blogging site)
- Pinterest: Blogs for Educators
- <http://kidblog.com> (Blogs for your students)
- <http://comments4kids.blogspot.com/>
- <http://www.epals.com/> (connect with classrooms around the world)