

USING POSITIVE LANGUAGE

The old saying that "Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me" was written in a different time. Cyberbullying is just as real and hurtful as face-to-face bullying. Diction, tone, voice, and the use of positive language are all very important when communicating online. Always use positive communication techniques.

Examples of "positive" communication/language:

- I like your comment about.....
- Could you elaborate more? I don't think I understand.
- What if you tried...
- Are there other options you could consider?
- Have you thought about...
- I agree but I am wondering if...

Examples of "negative" communication/language:

- Your paper is stupid...or other name calling.
- You @^&*% (no obscene language)
- You try to make yourself feel important by using big words.
- You're wrong!
- You ***** (racially marked language). Attacking a person for who they are and not addressing the ideas they expressed.

Blogging for the Classroom

Join the
BLOGOSPHERE

BY
MICHELLE FLAMOS

Blogging helps to

- Communicate with parents and students
- Create a writing community
- Create on-line writing portfolios
- Track student writing progress

WHY BLOG?

Blogs are everywhere...your local news station has one, your favorite show has one, your friends have one, and your students have one. Blogs can be a useful tool to share information, assist with the development of writing skills and allows interactivity by allowing readers to join in on the conversation by posting comments to your blog.

Web logs or BLOGS are unique. They allow digital natives (our students) to communicate and learn in an environment that has been a part of their lives since birth. Blogs are different from chat rooms because the comments are recorder and become part of the page. Additionally blogs differ from discussion boards as they are controlled by one person's vision and voice. Blogs allow for greater interaction with the author and vice versa. Teachers can utilize blogs to engage students in online writing communities while also gaining 21st century skills.

Blogging is about reading and writing.
Literacy is about reading and writing.
Blogging is about literacy!
 (author unknown)

Sample mission statement

Class X recognizes that we live in a world of digital citizens; that technology is integrated into our every day lives, that we should utilize these resources to continue and enhance learning. Hence, Class X's "digital citizens" will respect others; foster an online learning environment that is positive, safe and secure; communicate using proper etiquette; act responsibly; and adhere to all rights issues.

RULES FOR BLOGGING

1. Keep personal information to your self in classroom blogs.
2. Do not link to unapproved blogs/journals/sites.
3. Don't be offensive when responding to others posts.
4. Use proper grammar, spelling and use of words.
5. Be respectful and polite always.
6. Watch your language! If it's inappropriate in school it's inappropriate in your blog.
7. Make sure things are factual.
8. Keep it on point. Stay on task and subject.
9. Avoid using "Netspeak" like OMG, LOL, BTW, BRB, etc.
10. Be positive when posting to blogs.



OVERSEEING THE BLOGOSPHERE

Review your schools Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

An AUP should outline your schools intent for utilizing the Internet and general expectations for student use. Your schools AUP should address all of the following components:

1. Acceptable Use
2. Privileges (Use is a privilege not a right)
3. Network Etiquette
4. Responsibilities
5. Security and Vandalism

Digital citizenship mission statement

- Discuss what it means to be a digital citizen.
- Review the schools AUP.
- Talk about consequences of violating the rules.
- Create a digital citizenship mission statement for your class.

MISSION STATEMENT SHOULD CONTAIN LANGUAGE REGARDING:

1. **Respect**—Be polite and act appropriately.
2. **Inclusion**—Anyone can comment and join in the discussion
3. **Learning**—Add to conversations positively and stay on topic.
4. **Safety**—Act responsibly and do not share personal information

THE CLASSROOM BLOG

A class blog is run by the teachers and allows for sharing of information that extends beyond the classroom.

Classroom Blogs contain:

- Homework assignments
- Questions or writing prompts for students to comment on and discuss
- Lists of students' individual blogs

Comments can be posted to the blog by:

- Scrolling to the bottom of the post
- Clicking on the "comment" link
- Typing and copying/pasting in your comments
- Clicking the "save" or "publish" button
- Use the refresh button to see your posted comments

TYPICAL CLASSROOM BLOG POSTINGS

ASSIGNMENT POSTING

The most common and easiest use of blogs is the assignment post. You can utilize the blog to post assignments for the week so that parents know what the student is doing. Additionally absent students can keep up with assignments.

HOMEWORK POSTING

The teachers posts questions or writing prompts onto the blog. Students then respond by leaving a comment using the "comment" feature.

WRITING POSTS IN CLASS

Utilize a computer lab and projection device for this. Display a writing prompt and have students "comment". Project comments as the are posted.

FREE BLOG SITES

- ⇒ www.blogger.com
- ⇒ www.blogspot.com
- ⇒ www.21classes.com
- ⇒ Www.classblogmeister.com
- ⇒ www.classpress.com
- ⇒ www.wordpress.com
- ⇒ www.edmodo.com
- ⇒ www.nicenet.org
- ⇒ www.gaggle.net/signup.html

CHECKLIST BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- THINK OF A CATCHY NAME FOR YOUR BLOG
- DEFINE THE OVERALL PURPOSE OF THE BLOG
- RESEARCH EXISTING BLOGS
- CHECK WITH YOUR TECHNOLOGY FOLKS

- PICK THE BLOG SITE YOU WILL USE
- ESTABLISH EMAIL ACCOUNTS FOR USERS
- GREET YOUR AUDIENCE IN YOUR FIRST POST
- EXPLAIN THE INTENT OF THE BLOG
- DISCUSS POSTING GUIDELINES
- BEGIN UTILIZING YOUR BLOG FOR THE CLASSROOM

10 REASONS WHY STUDENTS SHOULD BLOG

1. Students are digital natives. Blogging is FUN to them.
2. Increased motivation for reading and writing.
3. Parents can access and monitor classroom activities.
4. Equips students with 21st century skills and prepares students for digital citizenship.
5. Suits all learning styles.
6. Allows for information sharing in a safe environment.
7. Increases literacy skills.
8. Fosters peer to peer mentoring.
9. Blogs accommodate multiple platforms.
10. Improves confidence levels.

