

Title of Session: Weblogs - Blog-Assisted Language Learning

Moderator: Bee Dieu

Guest Speaker: Jason Ward

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BeeD: so perhaps we could start

JasonMW fidgets nervously

AzzamP: I'm a Canadian living in Abu Dhabi, teaching English to adults

BeeD: As there are not many in the room...perhaps we could start by introducing ourselves

SusanMar joined the room.

BeeD: Hello Susan

BeeD: We are about to start

SusanMar: Hi, Bee!

JasonMW: I'm Brit living in Sharjah, teaching writing to first year uni students

BeeD: and we are introducing ourselves

AaronPC: I'm Aaron, an American living and working in Kyoto.

AaronPC: I teach EFL

SusanMar waves at Jason and Salolta

BeeD: I am an EFL secondary school teacher in the Franco-Brazilian school in Sao Paulo, Brazil

AaronPC stands to introduce Jason

SaroltaG: I teach ESP at a college of tourism in Slovenia.

AaronPC: Shall we begin?

MerlaH: the gifted and talented program I teach is enrichment, so it keeps me busy as

with all of you and your jobs

AzzamP sits back, all ears

BeeD: could you please introduce yourself?

SusanMar: I'm an Iranian, teaching at Azzahra Uni

AaronPC: Our guest speaker today is Jason Ward...

JasonMW: hello

AaronPC: who is an English instructor and CALL coordinator at the American University of Sharjah (AUS)...

AaronPC: in The United Arab Emirates (near Dubai).

AaronPC: He has taught English for the past fourteen years and...

AaronPC: has spent the past six and a half years teaching at Universities in the Middle East.

AaronPC: He has Masters Degrees in Critical Theory and TESOL...

AaronPC: and hopes to pursue a PhD in Education specializing in new media.

BeeD: think wow

AaronPC: His interests are CALL, CBI and alternative assessment...

MerlaH: I'm working on an EdD in curriculum and instruction

AaronPC: and he is currently using weblogs, computer-assisted feedback and

AaronPC: I had the pleasure of meeting Jason when he presented 'Alternative Assessment and the Rise of the Weblog'...

AaronPC: at the Kyoto JALT Conference last October.

BeeD claps wildly

JasonMW blushes

AaronPC: And he will be presenting Computer Assisted Feedback at TESOL Arabia 2005...

AaronPC: and A Tale of Two Bloggers, with his wife Amanda, at TESOL 2005 in San Antonio.

BeeD: fantastique!

AaronPC: Please, let's give Jason a warm welcome!!!

AzzamP clap, clap

AaronPC claps loudly

SaroltaG clap, clap

JasonMW: Thanks Aaron

AaronPC sits down

MerlaH: howdy

JasonMW: thanks everyone

BeeD is all ears...and eyes

JasonMW: This is my first on-line conference so please bear with me. I'm not accustomed to presenting in fluffy slippers and a bathrobe ;-)

AaronPC leans forward

BeeD: lol

AaronPC giggles

JaneAP: blushes

JasonMW: I've put an outline of what I want to talk about here:
http://www.geocities.com/com_au/studentblogs.html

MerlaH: This is also my first experience.

JasonMW: I'll try to stick to this so that if you have to go and let the cat in, you'll know where we are when you get back...

AaronPC nods

BeeD: If you do not manage to click directly on the link, use CTRL key

SusanMar smiles at Jason

JasonMW smiles back

JasonMW: First on the outline is Alternative Assessment... I like Gaies' notion of Alternative assessment -

JasonMW: "Any form of measurement of what students know and are able to do other than traditional tests" (Gaies, 2002)

JasonMW: I believe that alternative assessment:

JasonMW: is

JasonMW: a communicative approach to language learning

JasonMW: Encourages student-centered activities...

JasonMW: such as:

SusanMar . o O (Good; I'm also very interested in alternative assessment)

JasonMW: playing an active part in learning process

JasonMW: sharing responsibility for selection of material

JasonMW: engaging with the assessment of their own work and that of their peers

JasonMW: Alternative assessment includes response logs, process writing, peer review and the student portfolio. This is where the weblog comes in because it has basically taken the place of the portfolio in my language class.

BeeD nods

JasonMW: So what is the weblog?..

JasonMW: Ok, I know I'm preaching to the choir here, so I'll skip this bit...

JasonMW: ...unless you want to go and put the kettle on... ;-)

SusanMar: lol

JasonMW: Anyway the most important aspects for this context are the following:

MerlaH: I use alternative assessment in nearly everything I do.

JasonMW: The weblog is...

JasonMW nods to Merla

BeeD listens attentively

JasonMW: -Linked to other blogs and websites

JasonMW: -Reads like a public journal

JasonMW: -Written in an informal 'journalistic' style

JasonMW: -Motivated by need for self-expression

JasonMW: “[C]ommunicates an identity, a personality and a point of view” (Kennedy, 2003, p.2).

JasonMW: my biblio is here: http://www.geocities.com/com_au/studentblogs.html

JasonMW: It is not...

JasonMW: -a website - quick and simple to update and changes frequently

JasonMW: -email - it exists in its own autonomous space online, rather than squatting in an inbox

JasonMW: -an online forum - it looks like a website and is organized around content, rather than generated by the flow of participants in a discussion

JasonMW: -a diary because it is written for a wider audience

JasonMW: although we can debate this stuff later

JasonMW: I want to talk about Blogging and assessment

MerlaH: Great

JasonMW: It could be argued that once students are coerced into blogging by assessment then it's not really blogging anymore, since blogging is intrinsically motivating

SusanMar . o O (this sounds interesting)

JasonMW: However, since blogging motivates, this means that it's perfect for testing our students' communicative language abilities in an authentic context.

JasonMW: When I put together the weblog portfolio assignment for my student

bloggers, I looked at what was already online to try and make the experience as authentic as possible. I've put a copy here if you want to have a gander:

JasonMW: http://www.geocities.com/com_au/studentblogs/blogassignment.doc

AaronPC nods

JasonMW: it needs work but it seemed to have done the trick

SusanMar: couldn't find the page

JasonMW: The first version of this assignment featured sections called 'rant', 'rave', 'news' and 'reviews'.

JasonMW: oops

BeeD: click CTRL key...as it is a doc page it takes some time to open

SusanMar: I did, Bee

JasonMW: I'll fix the link afterwards

SusanMar: For some reason, Yahoo appears, and it says the page you requested could not be found

BeeD: ok

SusanMar: Okay, thanks

JasonMW: yes, I noticed

JasonMW: geocities

JasonMW rolls eyes

JasonMW: I've since scrapped the news section after unfavourable feedback from the students and replaced it with a heading called 'laugh' in which they have to blog about a funny or embarrassing experience. I've also added a reflective component to my latest version of this assignment when I realized that their weblog portfolios were missing this vital ingredient.

SusanMar smiles

MerlaH: Can't get it either

AzzamP . o O (this is fun, Cheshire grin)

JaneAP: I can't open it either

AaronPC smiles big

JasonMW: if you go back to the url after this discussion it'll be there

JasonMW: I'll fix it

BeeD: Thank you Jason

MerlaH: thanks

SusanMar: Thanks

JasonMW: BLOGGING WRITING

BeeD: Yes...fun is vital

JasonMW: Blogging and writing

JasonMW: So, how does blogging help writers? Here's a few ways. Blogging...

JasonMW: how about that for a smooth transition

MerlaH: cool

JasonMW grins sheepishly

SusanMar . o O (What?)

JasonMW: Blogging and writing

BeeD: is fun

SusanMar: Oh, sorry!

JasonMW: So, how does blogging help writers?

JasonMW: this is what I asked when I considered using it in my writing classes

JasonMW: Here's a few ways.

JasonMW: Blogging...

JasonMW: -Gifts the writer with an online voice

JasonMW: -Offers genuine peer review: “Blogs can bring a collective intelligence to bear on a question” (Welch, 2003, p.7).

JasonMW: -Embodies the process approach: “The most effective way to assess improvement in spontaneous language production is ongoing evaluation” (Myers, 2002, p.168)

JasonMW: -Provides an authentic audience: “For language learners in particular, computer networks and electronic mail provide students with opportunities for authentic communication with native speakers of the target language”

JasonMW: (Chun, 1998, p. 57).

AaronPC nods in agreement

JasonMW: so I guess I should try to show you some of my students' blogs

JaneAP: (Are we supposed to have a blog or website on our screens now? If so, I need the url

MerlaH: I think it let's the writer express in a way that is not intimidating

JasonMW: they ain't pretty

SusanMar smiles

JasonMW nods enthusiastically at Merla

AzzamP :)

JasonMW: http://www.geocities.com/com_au/sampleblogs

JasonMW: i hope this works

AaronPC: disinhibition

JasonMW: but if it doesn't try later

SaroltaG: It works.

JasonMW: I think with blogging, the sense of ownership is important.

MerlaH: Yeah! I got the blogs!

JasonMW: My students blogs belonged to them and they could choose any topic, colour

(yuk! -in some cases), design, picture, animation, song, etc. They could do anything to help them communicate the content of their blog and who they were online.

JasonMW: this is a selection of my students' blogs from last semester

JasonMW: do you want me to stop for a couple of minutes so you can check them out or shall I carry on and we could do this after?

BeeD: have they corresponded with people from other countries or was this a closed project inside the class?

JasonMW smiles at Bee

SusanMar: I wouldn't mind checking out a couple if there's time

JasonMW: sure

SusanMar: thanks

JasonMW: the assignment was public

JasonMW: so sometimes they had correspondence from overseas etc.

DavidWe joined the room.

MerlaH: I just look at SZ 52. If I were in that part of the world, I'd be visiting the restaurant!

JasonMW: lol

JaneAP: I get a "Bad Gateway" message for all of the blogs

SusanMar: Oops, got a "bad gateway message

JasonMW: can you get 20six.co.uk there?

JasonMW: well if it doesn't work now, try later

AzzamP: I was able to read a7med's blog

MerlaH: I'm also getting the "bad gateway" message

BeeD: The proxy server received an invalid response from an upstream server.

DavidWe: I got there...

SusanMar: Yes about the transcript , I mean

AaronPC: I have seen your students' weblogs before though.

DavidWe: <http://20six.co.uk/>

BeeD: so if you send me the links afterwards, I will post them in the group

JasonMW: thanks Bee

AaronPC: Now I'm seeing it

JasonMW: I'll carry on

JasonMW: Here are my students' opinions and comments

JasonMW: The students generally really like this assignment. If you click here you'll see a graph which shows the favourable attitude towards blogging in two different COM 101 classes: http://www.geocities.com/com_aus/chart

JasonMW: assuming it works :-|

DavidWe smiles

JasonMW: I think it's safe to argue that the students preferred the weblog to a regular journal and that they thought it could help improve their English. I was also amazed at how many shared their weblog with others which I think demonstrates a level of pride in their work –or lack of shame

SusanMar: Hurray, it worked!

JasonMW: Here is a selection of student comments if you're curious:
http://www.geocities.com/com_aus/comments

BeeD: mine are very enthusiastic about it as well

AaronPC: many told others about their blogs too....interesting

JasonMW: you guys using Internet Explorer or Firefox?

JasonMW: yes

SusanMar: IE

JasonMW: I've mentioned this to a few

BeeD: iE

AaronPC: Safari

SaroltaG: Mozilla

AzzamP: I've read three of the blogs from your former students and was surprised with the length and depth of their thinking - great job Jason!

JasonMW: and someone argued that just because they told others about their blogs this doesn't mean anything

DavidWe . o O (Firefox for me, on both Macs and PCs)

JasonMW: this is a valid counter argument I guess

AaronPC: Have any of your students continued blogging beyond the end of the term?

MerlaH: I'm in a public school situation, does anyone see a problem with what might go out as a blog? Maybe I've missed something, but what are to rules/good taste. etc.?

JasonMW: but I personally wouldn't want to share my work with someone if I was embarrassed by it..

JasonMW: er...

JasonMW: yeah sure

JasonMW lies

SusanMar: Right

AaronPC: Mine haven't....yet

SusanMar smiles

JasonMW: a few have continued blogging

AzzamP: You could teach the netiquette of blogging, Merla

JasonMW: most have not

JasonMW: although they said they would

JasonMW: I haven't updated my own blog for six months

JasonMW looks bashful

DavidWe: Well, Jason, that's an interesting point, but often that sense of "people will see what I do" encourages students to put more work in, because they WANT to be proud of their work

SusanMar . o O (Interesting)

JasonMW: indeed

DavidWe smiles

JasonMW: one student complained that he didn't like others to see his work

AzzamP: Perhaps the reason the students did not continue is because they were under the impression that their community had disbanded after the course

DavidWe: If students feel they are been encouraged to "show their best stuff", often, they will

BeeD: yes...in my classes many send me their post before publishing it so that I correct it...sthg that would never happen before

JasonMW: yep

AaronPC: good point Azzam

JasonMW: yes Bee, we try so hard to get them to revise and rewrite...

JasonMW: and normally they can't see the point

JasonMW: "but I handed this in! Why you give it back!

JasonMW: one student said

JasonMW: "Take experience from our friends' writing" and "Being able to fix it as much as I could and getting feedback from people" These comments indicate how the weblog facilitates peer review. There are others that suggest that this assignment is less painful than traditional writing exercises and ideal for teaching process writing.

JasonMW: The ongoing writing process and peer review also turned up as negative comments.

JasonMW: as I mentioned

JasonMW: Another negative comment explained the perils of writing onto online documents, “Once at midnight, I was on my weblog account typing my news, and as soon as I was done I clicked on save and boom it was all erased because I was ‘inactive’ for too long!”

SusanMar: For those who don't require a lot of privacy?

JasonMW: yes

JasonMW: we have to train the students on netiquette

SusanMar: Less painful, I meant

BeeD: this is why I ask them to compose on notepad first

JoelB joined the room.

JasonMW: otherwise they give their mobile numbers etc.. :-0

BeeD: Welcome Joel...good to see you

DavidWe waves to Joel

JoelB: hello

JasonMW: good idea to use notepad

JasonMW: word always messes up formatting

BeeD: yes

AaronPC waves to Joel

DavidWe . o O (don't use Word, then)

DavidWe grins

JasonMW: Anyway, I'll leave the student feedback for now and we can talk more about it later if you're interested. Right now I've got a sales pitch coming up for those of you that haven't yet tried using blogs in your classes.

MerlaH: hello

SusanMar: Right, Jason, like now; I can't see your apostrophes or colons!

JasonMW: although you probably all have

AzzamP listening attentively

JasonMW: oops

MerlaH: What's next?

DavidWe: You can DO diacriticals in Tapped In é

JasonMW: I wrote in Notepad and pasted to word

DavidWe nods

SusanMar: Right

JasonMW: If you want to try, here's what I would recommend from my brief experience (not that I'm an expert!.. I'm making this up as I go along...;-)

DavidWe listens

SusanMar listens carefully

JasonMW: -Find a free and easy weblog provider

JasonMW: -Existing journal and response log activities can be converted to weblogs

MerlaH: Thanks for the truth - we are listening!

JasonMW: -Blogging can take place outside of class, from any location with a web connection. Blogs can even be sent by SMS

JasonMW: -Allow students to express themselves by choosing own topics

JasonMW: For the weblog Assignment...

JasonMW: -Utilize peer review by linking student weblogs, and require students to respond to each other

JasonMW: -Discuss privacy and netiquette with class when they begin posting. Warn students that anyone

JasonMW: on the web can read their weblogs

JasonMW: -Enable process writing. Ask students to rewrite work before it is submitted for assessment

JasonMW: -Assess blogs by asking students to submit a portfolio containing printouts from weblog, and the comments they have made on others.

SusanMar: What do you mean by "link student weblogs", Jason?

JasonMW: get the students to reference their peers

JasonMW: make connections

BeeD: they can link using RSS

JasonMW: communities

SusanMar: Oh, I see, thanks

JasonMW: yes, Aaron has been doing stuff with RSS

LeanneMM joined the room.

BeeD: make an opml file for the group

MerlaH: That's a great idea - the reference thing

SusanMar: Hi, Leanne!

BeeD: link them from the main blog

JasonMW: -Include a feedback component in the portfolio to ensure that students reflect on how blogging may have contributed to their language skills.

LeanneMM: Hi, sorry to be late

BeeD waves hi to Leanne

AaronPC smiles to Leanne

LeanneMM: I can't really stay...on my way to work

JasonMW: There are many Teacher-friendly features of the weblog:

SusanMar waves hi to Leanne

JasonMW: -it includes ready-made weblog templates (so you won't wind up teaching web design)

MerlaH: Morning Leanne - if it's morning for you

JasonMW: -it allows user to embellish writing with photographs, multimedia files etc.

LeanneMM hugs all her BaW friends

JasonMW: Hi Leanne

JasonMW: -it encourages students to write by enabling posting through email or SMS

JasonMW: -it facilitates Peer Review. Readers respond to the author by email or write directly onto the author's weblog

LeanneMM: brb

JasonMW: -RSS automatically notifies the teacher when new student work is posted online (as Bee pointed out)

JasonMW: -it rewards dedication with fame. Updated lists of the most recently updated blogs are featured on the homepage of weblog providers (providing 15 minutes of fame for the most hard working students).

JasonMW: Anyway, I think I'll stop my delirious ramblings here, so that we can open this up...

AaronPC: Do any of your students post via mobile phones?

JasonMW: I've thoroughly enjoyed using blogs in my classes over the past four semesters and although I'm hooked on Moodle these days, the weblog will always have a place in my course syllabus...

JasonMW: yes

JasonMW: they love the mobile

MerlaH: Jason, how do they work on/write directly to another person's web site?

JasonMW: comments

JasonMW: with 20six.co.uk

BeeD: or if they are invited as members in Blogger

JasonMW: there is a comments feature

AaronPC: Does using the mobile affect the quality of their writing?

JasonMW: Blogger is more reliable, but has less features than 20six

JasonMW: unless you pay

BeeD: <http://beeonline2.blogspot.com/>

JasonMW: btw cuz u asked...

SusanMar: How is Blogger more reliable, Jason?

JasonMW: a little, yes

JasonMW: 20six has bugs

AaronPC nods

JasonMW: stuff getting stuck in the cache

SusanMar: I see

JasonMW: logging in and finding someone else's name instead

AzzamP . o O (thanks for the tip Jason)

JaneAP: I'm sorry--I have to leave early. Thanks for the info!

JasonMW: Any questions, suggestions, elaborations? Are any of these experiences familiar to you?

JaneAP left the room (signed off).

MerlaH: yes, very helpful

AaronPC: yes...excellent to reflect on.

MerlaH: Is there a place to find the proper netiquette?

JasonMW: my angle is that the weblog is basically The Portfolio Digitally Remastered!

JasonMW: I love soundbytes

JasonMW cheesy smile

AaronPC smiles

AzzamP: Do students review the content and language (grammar, spelling, vocab) of their peers?

JasonMW: so what have you guys been doing with blogs

JasonMW: yes

JasonMW: they're supposed to comment on this

AaronPC: These blogs are part of a writing class?

JasonMW: interestingly these are the comments that always get deleted...

JasonMW: yes

LeanneMM: Bye all!

JasonMW: bye Leanne

AaronPC: How much time do you spend in class on blog-related activities?

JasonMW: the students write standard 5 paragraph essays

JasonMW: and sit timed exams

MerlaH: I have only begun to use them this year with 7th and 8th graders. I want them to do Independent Research and post for each others learning,

JasonMW: the blog is their chance to do something different

JasonMW: and more authentic

SusanMar: I'd like to get a class of mine started on blogging, but I'm afraid I'll run out of ideas

BeeD: we should get our stds together

AaronPC: yes

SusanMar: And that they'll lose interest

AaronPC: Susan...I bet you don't need so many ideas....

JasonMW: I want to put together a Blogging 101 course

AaronPC: they have lots of their own I'd imagine

JasonMW: using blogging to teach writing

JasonMW: and research

BeeD: I have just joined the mug project with my 10th graders

SusanMar: Probably not, Aaron, but since it's my first experience, i want to play it safe

BeeD: opened a Blogger and Flickr account with them last week

JasonMW: mug project?

SaroltaG: It sounds exciting.

JasonMW: tell us about it

AaronPC: like mugshot?

BeeD: and asked them to photograph their mugs in all positions and situations for this week...lol

BeeD: coffee mugs

AaronPC: oh coffee mugs

MerlaH: If it's their choice I don't see them losing interest so quickly,

SusanMar: Do all of them have mugs, Bee?

BeeD: those who do not have them had to choose a cup or a bowl they use

SusanMar: Well, Merla, it would actually be my choice, wouldn't it?

SusanMar: Right

BeeD: and then they have to describe it thoroughly

BeeD: tell me when and how they use it

SusanMar: How old are they, Bee?

JasonMW: so how does photographing crockery improve English

BeeD: 15

JasonMW grins

JasonMW: oh right

SusanMar grins too

BeeD: all memories associated

JasonMW: great angle

SusanMar: Yes

BeeD: why they bought it..or if they received it

BeeD: on what occasion

BeeD: why they like/dislike it

JasonMW: I have a thing about a corkscrew

MerlaH: why it was important

SusanMar: I guess your mug is probably very important to you, right Bee/

AzzamP . o O (ownership of blogs - mugs)

JasonMW: people get very possessive about their mugs

AaronPC: Don't touch my mug!

SusanMar: blugs? (blog +mug)

JasonMW: the amount of rows at work over people drinking out of other people's mugs

GerryGst2 joined the room.

AaronPC: that's a good one Susan!

DavidWe: Oh, my goodness, Jason!

SusanMar smiles at Aaron

BeeD waves hi to Gerry

JasonMW: Hi Gerry

DavidWe has MANY mugs

BeeD: each one with a story, I bet

JasonMW: this is the room for Mug fetishists

AaronPC waves to Jerry

JasonMW grins

GerryGst2: Hi all

DavidWe has a new mug with the "@" symbol on it

SusanMar . o O (different mugs for different bagels)

DavidWe waves to Gerry

DavidWe: Welcome to Tapped In, Gerry

BeeD . o O (cool)

MerlaH: Hi Gerry

AaronPC: Jason...I'm wondering if you have made any changes to your approach....

DavidWe nods to Bee

JasonMW: I have a Starbucks Kyoto mug that I bought in Japan

GerryGst2: Thanks David

AaronPC: since writing the BALL paper...like...will you....

GerryGst2: In a Vancouver hotel

SusanMar . o O (Oh dear, looks like I'll have to buy a mug)

AaronPC: do anything differently in the future?

DavidWe: Oh, cool, Jason. I'm jealous of that one

JasonMW: yes

DavidWe: I can give you several of mine, Susan

JasonMW: I want to give the students more control

JasonMW: I've started by getting rid of the part of the assignment that they hated

SusanMar: thanks, David! I'll give you some bagels in return!

DavidWe doesn't want to sidetrack the conversation but he can tell a Starbucks Mug story at an appropriate time, LATER

JasonMW: I'd like to make it completely free and self assessed

DavidWe: I've got the good bagels, Susan, remember?

AzzamP: What did they hate, Jason?

DavidWe . o O (brb)

MerlaH: Which part did they dislike?

JasonMW: or rather they have to suggest and justify their grade

JasonMW: the News section

SusanMar: yes, David!

JasonMW: I asked them to find an item in a newspaper...

MerlaH: And why the news section?

JasonMW: summarize and add opinion

BeeD: I did some peer and self review using media as well...so am interested in what you have done

JasonMW: because I wanted to use stuff that I saw on blogs

AzzamP: I see

JasonMW: and I saw a lot of people writing about the daily news

JasonMW: I've also seen people writing about stuff they're embarrassed about

SusanMar: Doesn't that sometimes create disagreements?

JasonMW: so that's in the new version of this assignment

SusanMar: Writing about news, I mean

MerlaH: the opinion part could be "dangerous" for some

JasonMW: yes

JasonMW: I posted something about the Iraq war

SusanMar: Oh! Brave of you!

SusanMar smiles

JasonMW: and one of my Kuwaiti students wrote to my blog disagreeing with my opinion

JasonMW: it was wonderful

SusanMar . o O (interesting)

SusanMar . o O (I'd like a shot at that one!)

JasonMW: critical thinking is not always easy to encourage

SusanMar: right!

AzzamP: don't students self-censor on controversial topics?

JasonMW: www.20six.co.uk/jblogger

JasonMW: sometimes

SusanMar: Good point, Azzam

JoelB: One of the most interesting assignments I have is to reflect on their experiences plagiarizing. I learned a lot about why students do this.

SusanMar: But I guess it increases interest and motivation

SusanMar: Very interesting

JasonMW: and sometimes I've had to censor them by threatening them with an F and removal from class blog list

SusanMar: lol

AzzamP: cool Jason

MerlaH: I'm sure the disagreement did not affect the grade, but did it hurt the relationship between student and teacher?

JasonMW: only two students out of 5 semesters though

SusanMar: How can you censor them, though? Before anyone reads the comment?

AzzamP: Can students post on the class blog or only you?

JasonMW: no they know what is not permitted

JasonMW: no sexism, racism, homophobia etc.

JasonMW: at least not if they want to submit it for assessment

JasonMW: I can't but I won't grade anything that breaks the rules

SusanR joined the room.

JasonMW: the blogs are their own...

JasonMW: but for the duration of the course

SusanMar: of course

JasonMW: they have to do what is required in the assignment

JasonMW: only 2 students have made me worry

MerlaH: plagiarism is a big concern. My favorite quote from a 7th grader - "He just said it better than I did, so I use his stuff"

JasonMW: both with anti Semitism

JasonMW: yes

JasonMW: research is RE search

SaroltaG: Jason, what were your criteria for assessment?

AzzamP laughs

MerlaH: Do you use a rubric?

AaronPC: good question!

BeeD: I have tried to use rubrics with mine...but it did not work

JasonMW: it's on the assignment:

http://www.geocities.com/com_au/studentblogs/blogassignment.doc

JasonMW: it's difficult to assess

AzzamP: What aspect of the rubric did they not like, bee?

BeeD: http://members.tripod.com/the_english_dept/crit2.html

JasonMW: but basically they need to support their ideas

BeeD: they just did not follow them

MerlaH: thank you, Jason. Bee, why did it not work for you?

AaronPC: I use self and tutor assessment

BeeD: so I gave up on them in the end

AaronPC: I like the idea of using a rubric though

JasonMW: my students are required to provide feedback to each other as part of assignment

SusanMar: Do you use self-assessment?

JasonMW: but so far it's been a bit lame

JasonMW: stuff like "great blog dude"

SusanMar: lol

MerlaH: Do you have specific details for the feedback?

AaronPC laughs nodding head

SusanMar: I have a question: Which one works better: one collective blog, or each learner owning a separate blog?

BeeD: I always have both Susan

JasonMW: Effort & Comprehension – Does the entry meet the word limit and answer the question?

SusanMar: How do you divide the activities among them, Bee?

AzzamP: use both, Susan

JasonMW: Support – Are all opinions well explained and supported with examples and illustrations?

JasonMW: Language – Any errors in grammar, spelling, or mechanics?

JasonMW: stuff like this

AaronPC: I think it depends on the type of communication dynamics you want to encourage.

SusanMar: How, Azzam?

AzzamP: students use their own blogs to draft work

AzzamP: and use the collective blog for their submission

AaronPC: Interesting

MerlaH: But where is the best facility to display a draft?

JasonMW: mobblogs are a great idea

SusanMar: I'm not sure that would always work out though?

JasonMW: 20six is good for these because of the email blogging

SusanMar: I mean, why use a personal blog then?

JasonMW: they all write to the same address

BeeD: I use the collective blog for interactions with the outside world...and the personal blogs for reflective and chronicling individual work

SusanMar . o O (mixed up conversations)

JasonMW: and post to each others blogs

JasonMW: good for chain stories

SusanMar: What do you mean by interactions with the outside world, Bee?

JasonMW: I see individual blogs as portfolios

JasonMW: collective blogs as forums

BeeD: with students and teachers from different parts of the world...like the mystery guest with Graham...the Italian stds who joined for some time

SusanMar: Right

SusanMar: Nice ideas, everyone, thanks!

JasonMW: I hear that Moodle has a blog feature on the way

BeeD: oh...have they included it?

JasonMW: it's coming is all I know

AaronPC: That should be your presentation topic for next year Jason!

MerlaH: I've just learned about Moodle, any quick advice?

JasonMW: use it!

JasonMW: it's fantastic

BeeD: I once said it would be redundant in Moodle

GerryGst2: I think that feature is now there in Moodle, but I have no direct experience

JasonMW: my students have just started using it to do blind peer review

GerryGst2: We use it in our Distance Ed School

JasonMW: they all submit their work anonymously

SusanMar: Is that "moodle.com" or "moodle.org"?

JasonMW: and receive 2 (you can change it) to evaluate

JasonMW: org

SusanMar: Oh, thanks. (Because I did a search and found both.)

JasonMW: then they get grades and comments from their peers

JasonMW: but they don't know who

SusanMar: sounds interesting

JasonMW: it's motivating

SaroltaG: That's a wonderful idea, Jason.

SusanMar: good experience

JasonMW: because they don't get their grades until they submit their evaluation

JasonMW: it's Moodle

JasonMW: it's full of great ideas

MerlaH: I've just learned about Moodle, any quick advice?

JasonMW: get your IT dept. to put it on the server!

JasonMW: it's very easy to learn

MerlaH: Thank you Jason, this has been wonderful. I must bow out and teach 8th graders!

JasonMW: thanks Merla

JasonMW: have a good one

AzzamP: thanks for your questions, Merla

MerlaH left the room.

AaronPC: Thanks so much for coming today Jason!

JasonMW: if anyone wants to share ideas or ask questions: jward@aus.ac.ae

JasonMW: thanks to you Aaron

JasonMW: for organizing all this

BeeD: This was most interesting Aaron

MerlaH joined the room.

JasonMW: and inviting me

BeeD: and Jason

AzzamP: thanks a lot

AaronPC: Our pleasure....

JasonMW: thanks Bee

AaronPC: this was an exciting interaction

SusanMar: I found it all very interesting and lots of fun. Thanks, Jason!

GerryGst2: I was just at the Northern Voice Canadian bloggers conference

GerryGst2: Lots of good stuff from it

BeeD: And I hope we can get our stds together for some project

JasonMW: thanks for the great suggestions

AaronPC: Lucky you Gerry!

BeeD: They would love it

GerryGst2: I will post some links

AaronPC: Pls do

GerryGst2: Lots of podcasts

JasonMW: anyone going to TESOL?

SusanMar: Not me, I

BeeD: Jason..please send me the links so I can post them in the YG

AaronPC: I'd like to...but cannot get away

SusanMar: ... I'm afraid

JasonMW: k

BeeD: Must rush to school now...have a class starting in 40 minutes

JasonMW: http://www.geocities.com/com_au/studentblogs/

SusanMar: Bye, Bee!

BeeD waves ciao to everyone

JasonMW: it should all be here

AaronPC: It's past my bedtime.

JasonMW: if not: jward@aus.ac.ae

AaronPC: Bye Bee!

BeeD hugs Aaron goodnight

AaronPC: Enjoy the springs

GerryGst2: Thanks - got to run too.

AaronPC: Bye Gerry

BeeD flies out of the window

AaronPC: thanks Jason

SusanMar: Thanks, Jason, for everything; it was lots of fun *and* very interesting