

Title of Session: WebTools - Blogging

Moderator: Pam Berger

Guest Speaker: Sandra Shattuck

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Room: After School Online

ElizabetJS: Pam, we are here to discuss blogging

PamB: great! let's get started.

PamB: First let's briefly introduce ourselves.

SandraS: I'm Sandy -- teach English at Alabama A&M University and use blogging in an advanced comp. class

JasonB: I'm Jason, I teach 4th grade in Indiana

PamB: I'm an educational technology consultant and was a school librarian in New York

MagdalenaR: Hi I am Maggie and this is my first time here. I am a preservice teacher at UofH

JamesWr: I teach technology

CarolM: I'm Carol. I'm manage content and curriculum for Libraries for the Future, a non-profit. I've been working with Pam. This is my first official visit to Tapped In

ElizabetJS: I am a preservice teacher in Houston, TX just like Maggie

LoriJH: Hi! I am Lori and teach 4th grade in Indy. I teach with Jason.

ElizabetJS: Sandy, what is blogging?

SandraS: Well, I think Pam is leading this session on blogging...

PamB: Welcome to Web tools. This evening we'll be discussing blogging...

DorothyGst13: I'm Dorothy, I teach elementary art

PamB: Sandra, go for it!

LoriJH: What is blogging??

SandraS: ok, so blog stands for web log

SandraS: very simply, it's an online journal

JasonB: cool

LoriJH: Yes. Let's talk about web tools.

SandraS: one can sign up for free services like Blogger

LoriJH: What suggestions.

PamB: I asked Sandra to join us to share her experiences blogging with her college students.

CarolM: Sandra, what tool(s) are you using?

SandraS: Does anyone else here use blogs personally or in the classroom?

JasonB: This is the first time I've heard of blogging.

CarolM: I'm just starting to...

SandraS: I use Typepad for my own blogs...Typepad is the new interface developed by Movable Type

AnnePD: Yes, I have a personal one and I use them with students.

SandraS: Anne, what level students do you use blogs with?

ElizabetJS: This is the first time that hear about an online journal

CarolM: Sandra, what do you use with your students?

PamB: We'll have time tonight to explore some blogs

SandraS: I use blogger because it's free and their new interface works well

SandraS: there's livejournal

SandraS: easyjournal

AnnePD: I use them with fifth graders and with preservice teachers who will be doing their student teaching in January.

MagdalenaR: where do you sign up for these services

DorothyGst13: I've not done any of these things I'm a neophyte(sp?)

SandraS: www.blogger.com

JasonB: Anne, could you explain how you use this with fifth graders?

PamB: Sandra or Anne -- can we look at your blogs?

SandraS: sure

LoriJH: Is this self created or are their actual companies that maintain such sites?

SandraS: companies

ElizabetJS: Would fifth grade be the lowest grade to try them with?

SandraS: basically it's a templated web page

SandraS: you write something, post it to the page

SandraS: and it gets uploaded and maintained at the company's servers

PamB: Generally, blogs are web sites that consist of many entries on a single web page posted daily or at least weekly and usually include a title and date. The typical blog format is to list entries in reverse chronological order with the most recent entry on the top of the page making it easy for people to scan quickly through the entries.

SandraS: great explanation!

CarolM: Sandra, has your school expressed any interest in hosting university-related blogs using software like Manilla?

SandraS: nope

AnnePD: I would be glad for you to look at my blog. My personal one is EduBlog Insights at <http://anvil.gsu.edu/EduBlogInsights>. One I did with fifth graders last year was called NewsQuest. Students wrote about current events and collaborated with a high school journalism class. I use Manila.

SandraS: we have a severely challenged IT infrastructure

SandraS: yes, EdublogNetwork uses Manila

MagdalenaR: What type of entries is it just for writing?

SandraS: Anne, your link gave me a 404...

PamB: Sandra, will you post your blog url so we can take a look and then come back and ask questions?

JamesWr: what purpose can they serve for students- can access be controlled

SandraS: <http://eng304classblog.blogspot.com>

PamB: click on Sandra's link and then come back in a few minutes

AnnePD: The GSU server may be down. The site I used last year for students was <http://anvil.gsu.edu/NewsQuest>

CarolM: James raises an interesting access question, especially for children

LoriJH: Interesting concept. I am wondering do your school firewalls allow easy access or was their special permission involved?

SandraS: college-level means I don't have to deal with permissions and firewalls

DorothyGst13: I clicked on the link I got no response

SandraS: so I'd be interested to hear about k-12 access

AnnePD: I did not use the blogs as online journals but as a place of the web for students to write, collaborate with others, and have a voice.

ElizabetJS: Could this journal be compared to something like e-classrooms where students share by replying to each other

MagdalenaR: Yeah it looks very similar to e-classrooms

MagdalenaR: e-classrooms is just separated into different folders

JamesWr: I guess they offer a sounding board that chat rooms do not

LoriJH: This sounds like a great concept. I am thinking especially with the gifted students that I work with.

AnnePD: To me, the neat thing about a weblog is that you can make it be what you want it to be. The possibilities are limitless. The preservice teachers I mentioned are using weblogs to discuss books using Literature Circles. I am also working with fifth graders this year - a combination of ESL and native English speaking students. The goal is to improve writing and thinking.

CarolM: Anne, are your students' blogs accessible to the web public?

LoriJH: That sounds like a great way to make writing and communication useful.

MagdalenaR: So does everyone just log on and write

AnnePD: My student blogs are accessible to the web public. I work at Georgia State University and the server may be down at the moment - it happens! The student blogs are linked off of the NewsQuest site.

LoriJH: The only problem Jason and I see is getting permission. Anything "chatty" our firewalls block.

MagdalenaR: Anne with your preservice teachers is it like a reading club on line?

ElizabetJS: Weblogs would be very helpful for ESL students because they are able to express their ideas freely.

CarolM: Thanks, Anne. Actually, I was asking more for privacy issues than technology ones.

JasonB: So, let me see if I have this correct. By blogging, I can post a question (if I am doing literature circles) and the students can discuss their views?

JamesWr: Your tech dept can allow access ports or sites

CarolM: Anne, could you talk a little more about the collaboration with high school journalism students?

AnnePD: Are you familiar with Literature Circles? Students take on different reading roles like Discussion Director, Word Wizard, Travel Tracker, etc. and discuss books that way. That blog is located at <http://anvil.gsu.edu/LiteratureCircles>.

LoriJH: I like the idea of reading circles or "Oprah" discussions.

JasonB: Thank you!

PamB: I posted a website to share some info and sample blogs with you. The url is <http://www.infosearcher.com/blogs.htm> Check out the high school journalism class blog and elementary blogs

ElizabetJS: Thanks that's a great resource!

MarianneH: Anne, that URL didn't come up.

LoriJH: This was most useful!

SandraS: great list, Pam

AnnePD: Yes, students post on their web sites and then the high school journalism class would comment on what the students wrote. They also created lessons for them on good news writing. They encouraged the younger ones and were impressed by what they were doing.

CarolM: FYI, on Pam's list, she mentions Kern County. They also host Manilla sites for non-profits, like the Bay Area Writers Project.

LoriJH: I like this concept. Thanks for such a great idea.

SandraS: also, on the list...Movable Type is not easy to use...Typepad is the user-friendly version

PamB: Thanks Sandra. I'll change that.

AnnePD: EdBlogger Praxis is a great site that lists lots of educator weblogs. It's at

AnnePD: <http://educational.blogs.com/edbloggerpraxis/>

CarolM: Thanks, Anne. Great opportunity for high school j. students...

JasonMc: I have actually been using Movable Type for a while now. It took a bit to get it set up. While not as immediately user-friendly as Manila, I really like it.

JamesWr: if you cannot gain access maybe you could build a lan discussion group for students

CarolM: Is anyone here hosting their OWN blog? i.e. buying the bloggin software and their own server?

SandraS: Movable Type is very versatile

AnnePD: The link I just listed is EdBlogger Praxis and it is run by Al Delgado. It lists lots of educator weblogs - great resource.

SandraS: but you've got to have access to a server, know some Unix

SandraS: nope

AnnePD: We bought Frontier and are hosting sites for GSU students and faculty.

CarolM: Anne, is it paying for itself?

SandraS: Anne, how is that working?

PamB: Anne, are many students taking advantage of the free blogs?

JasonMc: I managed to get an old Win 2000 network server, popped Movable Type onto it and run our school's web site on it.

SandraS: cool, Jason

PamB: JasonMc -can you share the url with us?

JamesWr: cool edu blog site, thanks

AnnePD: Different professors are taking advantage of introducing it to students. We are not offering them just for anything but under the umbrella of useful educational purposes. As students show interest in classes, they can set up a weblog. We are in a pilot project type mode.

JasonMc: The learning curve was kind of steep at first, but it's nice having the server sitting in my classroom. The url is

<http://lakewood.kpdsb.on.ca>

CarolM: So both Moveable Type and Manilla can actually become more "traditional" website-like places, just with easy content management, right?

JasonMc: I have another site that I have put together for my staff to use. It's at

<http://pdzone.org>

SandraS: the Edublog website is hosted on Typepad....

PamB: Nice job! Jason

JasonMc: Thanks!

SandraS: nice work with Movable Type, Jason

SandraS: Carol, that's an interesting comment...where do blogs and websites blur?

SandraS: some blogs, especially with video/images, come much closer to a website

SandraS: not so much a traditional blog

JasonB: Thanks for the information on Blogging!

ElizabetJS: Thanks for the helpful sites on blogging.

PamB: your welcome.

PamB: Be sure to look at Weblogg-ed site...

PamB: it has lots of other educational blogs. It gives a good idea of what is going on in K-12

MagdalenaR: just out of curiosity what grade level do you think is the youngest you can use this blogging with?

PamB: Sandra, do have any students who do not want to blog?

SandraS: some...

SandraS: I would think the youngest age would be anywhere close to beginning literacy?

SandraS: maybe even first grade?

CarolM: How about typing as a bloggin issue? I would think that would be a more natural barrier

SandraS: absolutely...typing is definitely a challenge!

AnnePD: Weblogs are dynamic. A regular website is static. Also weblogs enable you to instantly publish. It is a way to connect with others and make connections to learning. It is a way to give students ownership of a personal space. And it is an upclose and personal way to include parents in the process.

JamesWr: is there any legal problems k-12 with giving access to blogs. . . are they monitored

PamB: Amsterdam international school uses blogs in their elementary school...in all the classes but I'm not sure how young.

CarolM: Sandra, did you have students using this as a entre to typing?

SandraS: not so far, Carol, but that would be a good idea

MagdalenaR: okay, it sounds like a good activity to enhance reading and writing. I just was not sure if they could handle all the typing.

SandraS: traditional blogs tend to be short entries

AnnePD: James, I got parent permission from each child's parent. I explained what they were doing and everything they wrote would come to me on an email as I was a managing editor on their sites.

JamesWr: good

SandraS: if students had consistent access, they could write more regularly but perhaps not at great length...that might take care of some typing problems

CarolM: Anne, would you be willing to share a copy of the language you used on the permission slip?

MagdalenaR: Great thinking Anne

DorothyGst6: at what age are most children keyboard literate?

PamB: Anne- so the kids don't write directly to the blog?

AnnePD: At the elementary school where I used to teach, we began keyboarding in grade 3.

JasonMc: Has anyone used blogging in interactive projects? I know wikis are a popular way to do this, but I'm trying to work within technology that I already have.

MagdalenaR: Well I have worked with first graders and they know how to type, slowly.
SandraS so wants to set up a wiki...

AnnePD: Pam - I started with a class blog, then students created their own blogs.

CarolM: My understanding of wikis is they were kind of the blog parent...

SandraS: my student blogs are interactive in that each student needs to find two readers outside of class

SandraS: the readers can then post to the blog, if the blog author gives the reader permission

PamB: that's a great idea

CarolM: Can students continue to access their blogs after school?

DorothyGst6: what's a wikis?

SandraS: at college level, yes

CarolM: wiki

AnnePD: On my EduBlogInsights (<http://anvil.gsu.edu/EduBlogInsights>) I have links to lots of other educator blogs.

PamB: thanks Anne

SandraS: a wiki is a website of information that can be accessed by anyone (can be password protected)

SandraS: collective information building

SandraS: Wikipedia

PamB: Anne, can I add your site to the blog page?

JasonMc: I have thought about the possibility of using a blog as a tool for having my French students share info with French-speaking students in other parts of the world. Does anyone have experience in something like this? Any problems you can foresee?

AnnePD: Sure!

SandraS: that would be way cool, Jason

AnnePD: Jason, I don't have experience with that but it's a great idea!

PamB: isn't the concept of a Wiki that anyone adds information to it to share and build the site?

SandraS: yup, Pam

JasonB left the room.

JasonMc: I'd like to jump in, but I want to test the waters first, you know?

SandraS: <http://www.wikipedia.org>

MagdalenaR: Jason, do you mean like pen pals but over the internet?

JasonMc: That could be part of it. I was thinking of collaborative projects; sharing information for a virtual field trip, for example.

MagdalenaR: Wow that sounds like something I want to try. I have not heard of the virtual fieldtrip idea before.

JasonMc: I'd like students to be able to ask questions and share info in a forum-like atmosphere without the hassle of setting up a forum.

PamB: You might be able to find a partner school in France at the Global Schoolhouse website.

BJ . o O (or talk to Phil Benz during one of the EuroLang discussions here in Tapped In)
BJ . o O (Phil is in France)

AnnePD: I have been exploring possibilities with weblogs for almost two years. The best part about them is that they make you think about what you truly want to accomplish with students. You need a plan. I feel that they have helped me improve my own writing, given me a great resource through all the communication with other educators (we're learning together), and it encourages active engagement and thinking by the students and teachers.

PamB: Great idea, BJ...

SandraS: I agree, anne

PamB: Phil Benz has a virtual website where students meet and talk inFrench [Ed. note: visit the interactive village of Viv@ at <http://www.ardecol.ac-grenoble.fr/viva/index.htm>]

SandraS: also helps me to talk about class process cuz I write about that on class blog

JasonMc: Thanks for the suggestions. I have used E-pals before, but I like the idea of students being able to share, with the group rather than with just one person at a time. I have found that it can be intimidating for students to write to an individual.

MagdalenaR: Anne would you say that it is possible to create a mock blogging on my website for my students

PamB: Anne, where do you talk with other educators about blogging?

CarolM: For those of you using blogs with k-12 kids, have you found parents logging in to read?

SandraS: Pam, thanks...I need to run to another chat. This has been very helpful.

PamB: Sandra, thanks very much!

JamesWr: It has been great info I guess we should others have their turn ...thanks

PamB: there is a group in Tapped In called blog (soap) box...

AnnePD: Well, there is a great little community out there. You need to sign up on eBN Educational Bloggers Network (<http://www.ebn.weblogger.com/>) and see all the good resources there.

MagdalenaR: I really appreciate the information about blogging. I had never heard of it and will look at the resources that you provided. I think this is an activity that I would like to experience. Thank you

PamB: that's a great site.

AnnePD: Once you start blogging, other educators will find you and everyone shares what they are learning and thinking. It is better than any inservice I have ever attended. Lots of thinking, sharing, and learning going on!

PamB: well it's almost time. thanks for coming and sharing.

JasonMc: Back to report cards. Thanks for the great ideas.

AnnePD: Nice talking to everyone!

MagdalenaR: Bye

PamB: Thanks for all your ideas and links.

PamB: Good night!

[Ed. note: Pam has created a WebTools group in Tapped In as a resource room for all the great links and information she has. To join the group click on the Search tab, go to Groups and enter Web Tools. When you click on the green i to identify the group, you will see a link to join the group.]