

**Office of Digital Composition Blogging Workshop**  
**Jason W. Ellis**

**1. Blogging in the Writing Classroom**

1.1. Theory and Pedagogy

- 1.1.1. DeVoss, Dànielle Nicole, Ellen Cushman, and Jeffrey T. Grabill. "Infrastructure and Composing: The When of New-Media Writing." *College Composition and Communication*. 57.1 (Sept. 2005): 14-44.

Abstract: New-media writing exerts pressure in ways that writing instruction typically has not. In this article, we map the infrastructural dynamics that support-or disrupt-newmedia writing instruction, drawing from a multimedia writing course taught at our institution. An infrastructural framework provides a robust tool for writing teachers to navigate and negotiate the institutional complexities that shape new-media writing and offers composers a path through which to navigate the systems within and across which they work. Further, an infrastructural framework focused on the when of newmedia composing creates space for reflection and change within institutional structures and networks.

- 1.1.2. Ellison, Nicole B., and Wu Yuehua. "Blogging in the Classroom: A Preliminary Exploration of Student Attitudes and Impact on Comprehension." *Journal of Educational Multimedia & Hypermedia* 17.1 (2008): 99-122. Education Research Complete. EBSCO. Web. 6 Oct. 2011.

Abstract: This exploratory study explores student perceptions of blogging in the classroom regarding (a) which specific characteristics of educational blogging (writing an entry, reading other students' blogs, or reading other students' comments on one's blog) are most helpful for understanding course content and (b) other aspects of the instructional blogging experience, such as the process of providing and receiving peer feedback. College students (n=52) completed a series of writing assignments, submitted either as traditional, hard copy papers or as blog entries (submitted online and reviewed by peers), and then completed a survey instrument probing their experiences and perceptions. Quantitative data analysis revealed that reading other students' blogs was believed to be most helpful for understanding course concepts. Analysis of the open-ended responses revealed a need for more guidance regarding the process of reviewing and critiquing the work of peers and appreciation for the way in which blogging exposed students to more diverse viewpoints from their peers. Pragmatic guidelines for instructors wishing to incorporate blogging into their classroom activities are discussed.

- 1.1.3. Fernheimer, Janice Wendi and Thomas J. Nelson. "Bridging the Composition Divide: Blog Pedagogy and the Potential for Agonistic Classrooms." *Currents in Electronic Literacy* (Fall 2005). Web  
<<http://currents.cwrl.utexas.edu/fall05/fernheimernelson.html>>.

Abstract: Fernheimer and Nelson work toward a practical blog pedagogy that centers around a discourse-focusing, classroom-based blog.

- 1.1.4. Hicks, Troy and Peter Kittle. "Transforming the Group Paper with Collaborative Online Writing." *Pedagogy* 9.3 (Fall 2009): 525-538.

Abstract: Creating a group paper has always made unusual demands on students as they figure out their role in the process of collaborative authorship. Inviting writers to work with newer technologies, such as online word processors and wikis, can provide opportunities to make the process and outcomes of collaboration more transparent. In this article, collaborative writing approaches that use a number of Web-based tools are discussed, including cooperative synchronous writing with Google Docs, inquiry-based writing with wikis, multigenre writing in response to literature, and collaboratively constructed study guides.

- 1.1.5. Rice, Jeff R. "Cyborgography: A Pedagogy of the Home Page." *Pedagogy* 5.1 (Winter 2005): 61-75.

Abstract: My students make home pages. This simple activity, which takes place in networked computer classrooms, prompts a number of questions for me regarding pedagogy and writing. What is it about the home page that makes it a form of writing? Where does the home page belong in writing instruction? What is the relationship between writing home pages and general writing assignments that often ask students to explore personal narratives or construct arguments? How does the home page assignment reflect other practices relevant in the composition classroom? Is there a pedagogy for teaching home page construction?

- 1.1.6. Tryon, Charles. "Writing and Citizenship: Using Blogs to Teach First-Year Composition." *Pedagogy* 6.1 (Winter 2006): 128-132.

Abstract: Anecdotes of using blogs in a first year composition class.

- 1.1.7. Yancey, Kathleen Blake. "Postmodernism, Palimpsest, and Portfolios: Theoretical Issues in the Representation of Student Work." *College Composition and Communication* 55.4 (June 2004): 738-761.

Abstract: What we ask students to do is who we ask them to be. With this as a defining proposition, I make three claims: (1) print portfolios offer fundamentally different intellectual and affective opportunities than electronic portfolios do; (2) looking at some student portfolios in both media begins to tell us something about what intellectual work is possible within a portfolio; and (3) assuming that each portfolio is itself a composition, we need to consider which kind of portfolio-as-composition we want to invite from students, and why.

## 1.2. Purposes

- 1.2.1. Blogging is not reinventing the wheel—it is an expansion of the things that we already try to foster in our writing classes.
- 1.2.2. Meeting and exceeding writing course requirements
- 1.2.3. Generate more student writing
- 1.2.4. Facilitating student writing with computers and digital devices
- 1.2.5. Write, Discuss, Reflect, Revise
- 1.2.6. Multimodal: text, audio, video, and images
- 1.2.7. Introduce students to discourse and encourage dynamic, public discussion
- 1.2.8. Collaboration
- 1.2.9. Blogs extend the space and time of the class beyond face-to-face meetings
- 1.2.10. Encourages students to reflect on their writing, the writing of others, and the class as a whole while considering personal voice and audience
- 1.2.11. Use the blog as an anchor for the course, encourage discussion to extend beyond the class

## 1.3. Configurations

### 1.3.1. Public vs. Private

#### 1.3.1.1. Public

1.3.1.1.1. Blogger.com, more info here:  
[http://www.google.com/educators/p\\_blogger.html](http://www.google.com/educators/p_blogger.html)

1.3.1.1.2. Wordpress.com

1.3.1.1.3. FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)  
Considerations

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html> (the law)  
[http://www.kent.edu/registrar/facstaff/ferpa\\_tutorial.cfm](http://www.kent.edu/registrar/facstaff/ferpa_tutorial.cfm) (KSU Tutorial)  
<http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/blogs/ferpaform.doc> (FERPA Consent Form)

FERPA restricts you from discussing student records or grades publicly. To use a public blog for a writing class, you should tell students about the blog from the beginning. Have your students create accounts and use a pseudonym if they choose to do so. Have each student send you a link or provide you with the necessary information to add them to the class blog. During the instructional phase of using the blog, you should dedicate time to discussion of privacy issues with public blogs. When you evaluate student work, you should send evaluations/grades to students privately and never on the blog. However, you can comment on the blog as a participant—in fact, I encourage you to do so, because it is only through your teaching them about blogging that they will learn how to effectively use blogs as a writing space.

#### 1.3.1.2. Private

##### 1.3.1.2.1. Vista CMS

### 1.4. Implementing Blogs in the Classroom

#### 1.4.1. Develop a plan

#### 1.4.2. Create dummy accounts and a practice blog to try out your plan

#### 1.4.3. Let your students know from the first day about the blog, its purpose, and how it will help them achieve course goals

#### 1.4.4. You have to teach students how to blog and comment, how to think about audience, and how to maintain civil discourse

#### 1.4.5. Use blogs to share student writing, peer review, and collaborative writing

#### 1.4.6. Use blogs to extend classroom discussions beyond face-to-face meetings

#### 1.4.7. Use blogs for collaborative group projects

#### 1.4.8. Have students create Digital Writing Portfolios that emphasize revision process and reflection

### 1.5. Ideas and Assignments for Classroom Blogging

#### 1.5.1. Personal Blogs, each student has his or her own blog for writing, reflection, and portfolios, other students in class comment and respond to each others' writing

#### 1.5.2. Group Blogs, groups of students each operate a collaborative blog with contributions from each member and members of the other groups engage in

discussion with that group

- 1.5.3. Class Blog, the instructor creates a blog and adds students as contributors to the blog, students and/or groups respond to prompts and engage in discussion with each other.
- 1.5.4. Content Creation in the Public Realm, Our students need to be aware of the increasingly public nature of writing, which requires a keen awareness of audience. This is, of course, part of what we have always done in our writing classes. However, public blogging raises the stakes, and teaching our students about the raised stakes reinforces their engagement of writing in a public space and their mindfulness of audience.
- 1.5.5. Encouraging Discussion, This exercise helps students become effective communicators on the blog, and it also helps with peer review by having students not worry so much about hurting one another's feelings. Create a writing prompt in which there are two possible positions, e.g., the Liliputian dispute over breaking hard boiled eggs: Big-Endians vs. Little-Endians. Assign half of your class one position, and assign the other side to the remainder. Have opposing views sitting next to one another. Have each student write a comment with at least one reason supporting his or her assigned view. Then, they have to comment again after finding the view of the person sitting next to them. In this second comment, the student has to restate the view of the target of their comment and give one reason why that position is wrong. Practicing this will encourage students to actually read others' posts, reflect on that position, and write in response to that position. The goal is to encourage students to engage rather than post-for-posting's-sake or arguing past one another.
- 1.5.6. Peer Review, Instead of having students circulate hard copies of their writing assignments for peer review, have them post their drafts to their blog. Then, have students in their peer review group comment on their draft in paragraph form. You can have students follow a rubric or address certain things in their peer review comments. Blogging is about writing, so any kind of review work will encourage students to reflect on and comment on the writing of others in elaborate terms.
- 1.5.7. Collaborative Assignments, Blogs are great writing spaces for collaborative work. As part of paired or group assignments, blogs can foster collaborative writing and editorial skills. Group blogs can offer students a new opportunity for demonstrating responsibility and self-management that can be assessed by the instructor. For example, students in a group can contribute to a single blog post and provide bylines for everyone who contributes. For collaborative assignments, each group member can write an assessment report for that assignment that details their work and their perception of the work of others. With these documents in hand, an instructor can hold editorial meetings with the group to discuss workload distribution and responsibilities of the group members. This is a form of modeling that

## 2. Blogging in the Profession

### 2.1. Theory

- 2.1.1. Farrell, Henry. "The Blogosphere as a Carnival of Ideas." *Chronicle of Higher Education* 52.7 (2005): B14-B15. Education Research Complete. EBSCO. Web. 6 Oct. 2011.

Abstract: The article states that in July 2004 an anonymous blogger revealed his identity when he allowed his photograph to be taken at the Democratic National Convention. "Atrios," the writer of a prominent left-wing blog, Eschaton, turned out to be Duncan Black, an assistant professor of economics at Bryn Mawr College. Many young academics who are thinking about blogging share Black's dilemma. While blogging has real intellectual payoffs, it is not conventional academic writing and shouldn't be an academic's main focus if he or she wants to get tenure. But to dismiss blogging as a bad idea altogether is to make an enormous mistake. Academic bloggers differ in their goals.

- 2.1.2. Giroux, Henry A. "Academic Freedom under Fire: The Case for Critical Pedagogy." *College Literature* 33.4 (Fall 2006): 1-42.

Abstract: In spite of its broad-based, even global, recognition, higher education in the United States is currently being targeted by a diverse number of right-wing forces, which have high jacked political power and have waged a focused campaign to undermine the principles of academic freedom, sacrifice critical pedagogical practice in the name of patriotic correctness, and dismantle the university as a bastion of autonomy, independent thought, and uncorrupted inquiry. Ironically, by adopting the vocabulary of individual rights, academic freedom, balance, and tolerance, private advocacy groups and individuals such as the American Council for Trustees and Alumni and David Horowitz are waging a campaign designed not merely to counter dissent but to destroy it and in doing so to eliminate all of those remaining public spaces, spheres, and institutions that nourish and sustain a democratic civil society. The article argues that there is much more at stake in the current assault on the university than the issue of academic freedom. First and foremost is the concerted attempt by right-wing extremists and corporate interests to strip the professoriate of any authority, render critical pedagogy as merely an instrumental task, eliminate tenure as a protection for teacher authority, and remove critical reason from any vestige of civic courage, engaged citizenship, and social responsibility. The article offers both a critique and some suggestions about how such an attack can be collectively resisted, especially by those of us working in the universities. There is a central focus in the article on the importance of both developing a theoretical framework for engaging critical pedagogy and developing a defense for its use in the classroom as part of a broader project of connecting education to democratic values, identities, public spaces, and relationships.

- 2.1.3. Perlmutter, David D. "Facebooking for the Tenure Track." *Chronicle of Higher Education* 56.2 (2009): A78-A79. Education Research Complete. EBSCO. Web. 6 Oct. 2011.

Abstract: The article presents suggestions for using the Facebook media web site to advance an academic career. Suggestions include professionalizing the page, blogging about the field and providing updates on publications. It suggests blogging under an assumed name for controversial views. The internet, it notes, keeps information about individuals permanently, but suggests that negative information can be crowded out by putting positive comments about oneself on the internet. Few people, it notes, look beyond the first ten references on the Google search engine site. It suggests self-publishing only summaries and saving treatises for academic journals. It suggests that using social networking with students may help with student ratings.

## 2.2. Purposes

- 2.2.1. Develop online and professional persona
- 2.2.2. Public engagement and circulation of your work, ideas, and accomplishments
- 2.2.3. Develop your writing, thinking, arguments in an open forum

## 2.3. Concerns

- 2.3.1. Academic freedom for the not-yet-hired
- 2.3.2. Interpretation and the figurative "death of the author"

## 2.4. Configurations

- 2.4.1. Public
- 2.4.2. "Full" blogging vs. Google+ vs. Facebook vs. Twitter

## 2.5. Techniques

- 2.5.1. Define the focus of the blog
- 2.5.2. Set reasonable goals for yourself—frequency, word count
- 2.5.3. Always be mindful of audience (colleagues, friends, family, and future employers)

2.5.4. Automatic distribution of your work to other networks (pairing your blog with Facebook, Twitter, Google+)

## 2.6. Examples

2.6.1. Jason W. Ellis, English Literature PhD Candidate

2.6.1.1. <http://dynamicsubspace.net/>

2.6.2. Mareen Kincaid Speller, Native American Literature PhD Candidate

2.6.2.1. <http://paperknife.blogspot.com/>

2.6.3. Matthew Holtmeier, Film Studies PhD Candidate

2.6.3.1. <http://www.matthewholtmeier.com/>

2.6.4. Andrew Pilsch, recent Rhetoric and Composition PhD

2.6.4.1. <http://blog.pilsch.com/>

2.6.4.2. <http://andrew.pilsch.com/>

2.6.5. Derek Van Ittersum, Professor of English and Digital Literacies

2.6.5.1. <http://memoryfailure.net/>

2.6.6. Troy Hicks, Professor of English

2.6.6.1. <http://hickstro.org/>

2.6.7. Masood Ashraf Raja, Professor of English

2.6.7.1. <http://postcolonial.net/about/>

2.6.7.2. <http://www.postcoloniality.org/>

2.6.7.3. <http://www.postcoloniality.org/2011/05/20/notes-on-mla-job-search/>

2.6.8. Marilyn Seguin, Professor of English

2.6.8.1. <http://littlesebagolakesummers.blogspot.com> (course assignment on creating a blog)

2.6.8.2. <http://writinghistoricalfiction.blogspot.com> (course assignment on writing, publishing, and marketing an ebook)