



Blogging Right Along

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Integral to becoming a successful science student is the ability to communicate and effectively convey the results and understanding of classroom events to a variety of audiences. Students in our classes must regularly demonstrate their learning through participation in classroom activities, experimentation, demonstrations, and lecture. But how do we ensure that each student develops a firm grasp of the material? How are we sure that students are capable of communicating their understanding in ways other than through summative assessments? Blogging allows students to communicate their understanding of concepts, share information about current events, and interact with others.

One way is to use blogging through a daily or weekly log or journal of classroom events. Using an online blog editor or application such as iWeb, each student or group of students is assigned a period of time for which they are responsible for logging all events and lessons occurring as a part of the daily lessons. Students describe key concepts that were a part of the context of the lesson, but may not have been included in the formal notes. They take pictures of demonstration setups and apparatus, explaining how the experiment modeled a critical point of the lesson. A critical piece to their delivery of related information is their reference to the location of class notes (e.g., Web site, PowerPoint, etc.), homework assignments, and location of worksheets or handouts.

The daily log allows for several measurable objectives. It:

1. Allows the teacher to identify that, from the perspective of the assigned blog-group, the objectives of the lesson were met at a cursory glance of the blog content.
2. Provides access to important course content with relative immediacy to students who were physically absent or absentminded.
3. Serves as an excellent time line of the classroom events for the purpose of content review for chapter or unit exams as well as for the cumulative review of all course content in preparation for final exams.

The photos of key classroom events serve as a reminder to visual learners. We set up our blogs to e-mail us when changes are made. This allows grading and monitoring of the blog to occur easily.

Students can use the blog to post solutions to problems. Ben's AP students are solving a problem of the week and posting it online. Other students comment on its accuracy. As students prepare for the test, they will have a wealth of problem solutions with which to refer.

Assessment is critical to ensure the success of the daily log. So long as students are clear about the expectations and criteria for completing a successful journal, we found that generally they completed thorough and accurate information. The students served as monitors of quality control, as for many, their dependence during times of absence or review was critical. This year, an anonymous "grammar police" has posted corrections to entries.

By Jared Mader and Ben Smith

Science

This blog should continue a day by day list of what we are doing in class. It is managed by students for students. Please help each other out by being complete. Each entry should contain: Lesson Information, Notes, Announcements, and Homework. Here is the blog list.

[Web User Login]

December Period 1 Blog

Posted by Benjamin Smith on Sunday, Dec 2nd, 2007.

(New Message)

3 Comments

[Post Comment]

December Period 8 Blog

Posted by Benjamin Smith on Sunday, Dec 2nd, 2007.

(New Message)

6 Comments

[Post Comment]

Daily blog usage in physics class

Posted at 1:20 PM EST November 29, 2007 | [Comments \(7\)](#) | [Delete Blog Entry](#) | [Edit Blog Entry](#) | [Report Abuse](#)**Jon's Problem**

Post your comments here.

AP Problem #2

d) $F = m_1 a$
 $f = \mu m_1 g \sin \theta$
 $F = m_1 g \sin \theta$
 $m_1 a = m_1 g \sin \theta - \mu m_1 g \sin \theta$
 $a = g \sin \theta - \mu g \sin \theta$

b) $F_f = \mu m_1 g \sin \theta$
 $\mu = \frac{F}{m_1 g \sin \theta}$

c) $F = F_f$
 $F = M g$
 $F = m_1 g \sin \theta + m_2 g \sin \theta - f - 2f$
 $F = m_1 g \sin \theta + m_2 g \sin \theta - \mu m_1 g \sin \theta - 2\mu m_1 g \sin \theta$
 $M g = m_1 g \sin \theta + m_2 g \sin \theta - \mu m_1 g \sin \theta - 2\mu m_1 g \sin \theta$
 $M = m_1 \sin \theta + m_2 \sin \theta - \mu m_1 \sin \theta - 2\mu m_1 \sin \theta$

Integration of images with blogging

Another use of blogs that we have employed in the science classroom is through our own professional logs. Through a brief weekly or bi-weekly journal detailing the events of the week, we can look back on a month or series of months and evaluate the time elapse for major projects as well as how to improve efficiency within our system of workflow. Many times, putting into words the work that we have completed allows us to focus our attention on the professional objec-

tives that we must accomplish in the near future. The advantage of the blog is its public nature allowing others to comment and share ideas.

—Jared Mader has been a chemistry teacher for the past nine years and is now the director of technology at Red Lion Area Senior High School in Red Lion, Pennsylvania. Mader and Smith have been recognized as Keystone Technology Innovators in Pennsylvania and have presented at NSTA and NECC.

—Ben Smith has been a physics teacher at Red Lion Area High School for 19 years. He and Mader are the science curriculum specialists for L&L.

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