

9440: Learning with the Internet Collaborative Project

URL:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1jwI598zZfUiOFnMBWRRPI0_fKLqAUSOQLDewJ8j5X4k/edit?pli=1

Team Members: David Diehl, Allison England, Tia Shumaker, Matthew Tombs

Purpose of our collaborative work – Our team chose to investigate the concept of blogging in the classroom setting. Our focus was on the following areas: online resources for blogging, blogging with an emphasis on literacy, ideas and lesson plans for incorporating blogs in various classroom settings, characteristics of effective and ineffective blogs, and following blogs using RSS feeds. One team member created a blog to demonstrate the ease in which to create a blog. We chose to use Google Docs to compile our findings.

Team roles - My role in this project was to identify potential uses of blogs in all types of classroom and to provide some specific lesson plans where blogs were a key component of the lesson. All team members reviewed the final product and made editorial changes/comments.

Description of the collaborative process.

How did you communicate with other team members? What technologies and strategies did you use to support successful teamwork?

Our initial team discussion was conducted via our team's Blackboard discussion board. Through these posts our team agreed to investigate educational blogging and decided to use Google Docs to compile our information. Once we had agreed upon the project plan, most communication occurred via email and our file on Google Docs. One team member created the draft contract which was placed on Google Docs for all to review, determine our individual roles, and then agree to the contract. As individuals completed their specific tasks, they added them to the Google Docs page for others to review.

What are your perceptions of the tool your team chose for collaborative work (e.g., wiki, Google site, etc.)? What is its potential as a tool to support learning?

While we chose to investigate blogging, and I believe we compiled some valuable information, in hindsight our choice to use Google Docs for reporting may not have been the most effective. One member of our group did create a sample blog, but we might have gained valuable insight had we used an actual blog to report our findings about blogging. Regardless, our work via Google Docs was effective in bringing the information together in one easy to read/follow location whereas it might not have flowed as well had we used a blog in this way. I can see potential for using Google Docs for group projects requiring compilation of information, whereas a blog might be better suited for ongoing work that takes on more of a conversational tone.

As an individual team member, how easy was the environment you chose to use? How effective was it in meeting your team goals?

I must confess that I caused some confusion during the group process. After we initially agreed to investigate blogging, I took a long planned mini-vacation. When I returned after 5 days it looked like no activity had occurred on the project. After some back and forth discussion posts, I finally realized that communication had been taking place via email that I wasn't receiving, also due to problems on my end. I thought my Mizzou email was being forwarded to my school email which I was checking regularly but for some reason the group emails weren't being forwarded. After that "oops", I finally got on track and found our approach worked well. Google Docs is extremely easy to use and was very effective in providing a place to work at will on the project. The sample blog one member created looked to be easy

to create, though since it wasn't used to report on our research I would say it wasn't effective for this project. As an educator I have used Word Press and found it to be relatively easy to use.

Specific idea for using the collaborative space with students

My piece of the project was to investigate ideas for educational uses and lesson plans for blogging. One idea that I thought particularly interesting and am thinking about using in my own classroom would be using a blog rather than a discussion board that I currently use for student commenting on articles, current events, etc. in the field of digital media. I think the blog setup would be easier for students to follow from comment to comment, rather than the discussion board where they have to click into each student's response to read. I think it might lead to more thought-provoking (or at least thoughtful) commenting as students see their comments openly on the page as opposed to hidden in a message line. Maybe they would take this more seriously??!!

I enjoyed working on this group project and a special thanks to Tia Shumaker who was patient with my confusion, who took on the leadership role and who cleaned up the final project for submitting!