

Step 10: Connect with other classes

by Sue April 23, 2014 Waters

Welcome to the tenth step in our free professional learning series on class and student blogging!

The aim of this step is to explain the value of connecting with other classes and the types of projects educators use to develop global connections through blogging.

Why connect with other classes?

Connecting with other classes can have a huge impact on your class blog because:

- 1. Your students benefit from having an authentic and global audience
- 2. You gain from being supported by other educators increasing your skills and developing new ideas that benefit your students

Watch Slivia Rosenthal Tolisano, Andrea Hernandez and their students explain why connecting with other classes is important in the The Possibilities of student blogging.

An authentic and global audience is important because:

- When students are writing or publishing for an audience other the teacher, it impacts how they view what they doing and the intrinsic motivation they have.
- Students love seeing their work on the Internet and adore getting comments from people. It motivates
 them to write as it gives them an audience that is real. The blog opens up a whole new world of people
 who can offer encouragement and feedback.
- Blogging provides an authentic educational experience, where what they write is not only seen and commented on by their teacher, but by their peers and the "public." For most students, it's a bit of extra motivation knowing their peers will see their work.
- There is an authentic audience a global audience one that is willing to connect, share, challenge, discuss and communicate with classes. This audience can provide further information, opinions, suggest resources, seek answers to questions and so on which pushes blogging further.
- Provides real world problems and solutions to share.

Summarized from The State of Educational blogging in 2012.

Read Kathleen Morris's Do and Don't for forming friendships with other blogging classes.

How to get started?

There's a wide range of options for connecting your class blogs (or student blogs) with other classes including:

Student Blogging Challenge

The Student Blogging Challenge runs twice yearly starting in March and September. It is made up of a series of 10 weekly tasks all designed to improve blogging and commenting skills while connecting students with a global audience and being supported by a team of blogging mentors.

The Challenge is open to both class blogs and to individual student bloggers from all over the world and of all ages. Participants can complete as many of the tasks as they like and in any order.

March, 2014 Challenge has over 110 Class blogs and 1300 student blogs participating from approximately 18 different countries.



QuadBlogging

QuadBlogging involves connecting your class to a Quad group of four schools/classes.

Each Quad team has a coordinator who is responsible for making sure each of the quad members know what is going on and when. The Quad team rotates so that each week a different class blog is the focus of the task with the other three blogs visiting and commenting on that class blog during that week.

You can learn more and register here for QuadBlogging or learn more by watching this video.



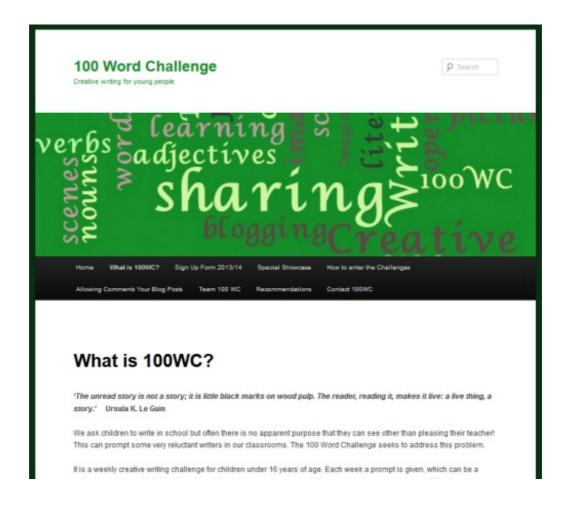


100 Word Challenge

The 100 Word Challenge is a weekly creative writing challenge for children under 16 years of age.

Each week a prompt is given, which can be a picture or a series of individual words and the children can use up to 100 words to write a creative piece. This is posted on a class blog and then linked to the 100 Word Challenge blog. The link is usually open from midnight on Wednesdays until midnight the following Tuesdays.

You can read more about the 100 Word Challenge here and sign up here.



Comments4kids

Comments4kids is a hashtag used by educators to tweet student posts that deserves to be commented on such as a post that is awesome or student that needs encouragement.

Read more about Comment4 kids here.

Refer to The Twitteraholic's Ultimate Guide to tweets, hashtags, and all things Twitter to learn how you can use Twitter to connect with other classes.

What now?

How did you go?

Also feel free to leave any questions you are having (or tips/advice) as well.

Or go to Step 11: Set up student blogs.

