PLAN

ACTION RESEARCH

STEVE POLLOCK

It's All About the Audience.

PURPOSE

What is the impact of public blogging on the work of second graders in Writing Workshop?
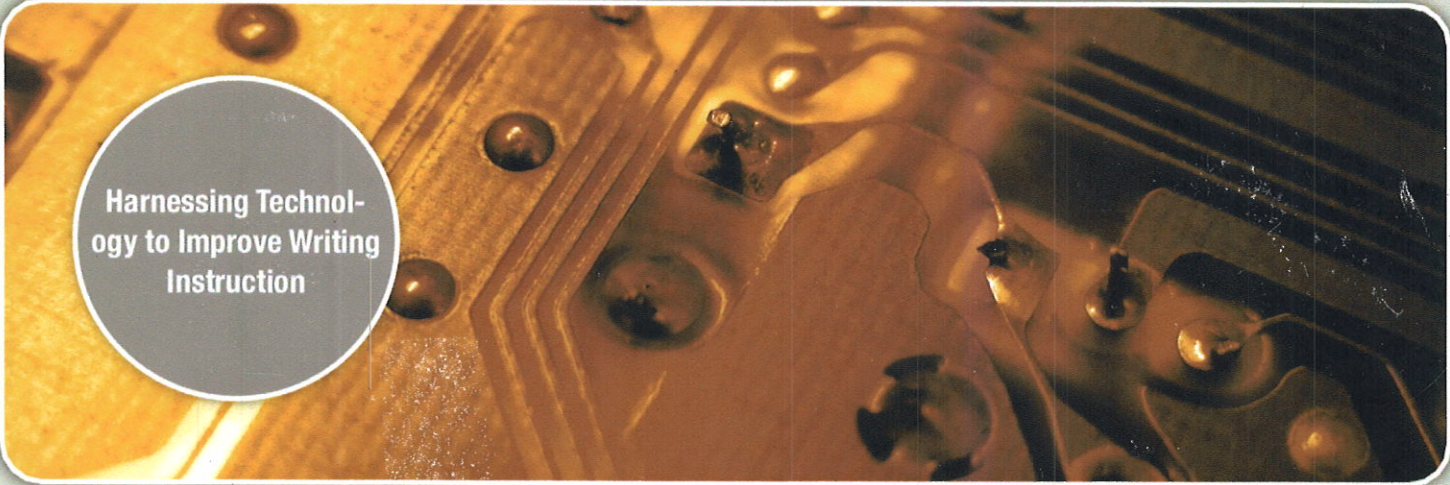
CONTENTS

QUESTION

Harnessing Technology to Improve Writing Instruction

BUILDING A SOCIALLY LITERATE VOICE
Implementing Classblogs in a Second Grade Classroom

The No Child Left Behind law includes a provision requiring that all eighth-graders be technologically literate by June 2006. Students easily embrace their high tech future, but teachers have the crucial job to guide student tech development in appropriate ways.

We need to prepare our students for their technology-rich and socially literate future by beginning to include appropriately leveled blogging instruction in second grade classrooms now.

My action research seeks to answer the following questions:

Over the course of 12 weeks of instruction and use, what is the impact of public blogging on second grade writers in the areas of voice development, enthusiasm and presentation?

Specifically, does the knowledge that their writing will be viewable by the whole world cause second grade writers to more carefully choose, edit, develop and present their writing and does it cause them to be more enthusiastic about writing?

A secondary question to be answered will be: Is blogging in the second grade classroom a sustainable classroom activity over the course of 12 weeks of writing instruction?

Giving Young Writers an Audience
The 12 weeks of my action research project will hopefully bring new enthusiasm for writing to young writers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

While there is a wealth of information about the joys of blogging and how to blog, the literature surrounding the pedagogy of blogs in the classroom is both scarce and of recent vintage. Still, I was able to find several pieces of literature which helped inform and impact my plan.

Book: We've Got Blog

The book which some consider the bible of the blogging movement was edited by journalist Rebecca Blood. *We've Got Blog: How Weblogs Are Changing Our Culture* (2002) is mostly focused on weblogs in the broader culture, not education. But one chapter lends structure to one part of my research project, the idea that blogging helps build a wider community of learners. That chapter, written by Matt Haughey in 2001, provides a framework for such a community. Haughey, the creator of Metafilter.com, states that, while building a community is very hard, there are some basic steps you can take, namely: *"1. Make sure you really want to do this; 2. Have both a compelling idea and compelling content; 3. Seed content sets the stage; 4. Create some basic guidelines and be as fair as possible; 5. Have a place to talk about the site, somewhere on the site; 6. Spread the work out as much as possible; 7 Deal with troublemakers as quickly and nicely as possible; and 8. Highlight the good, recognize the work of others"* (pp. 201-8).

The strength of this article specifically, as well as the book in general, is that it provides timely advice on building a community, laying the groundwork for cooperation and setting the rules of the road for any online endeavor. Since a subset of what we will discuss this year is internet safety (being safe while blogging, chatting or e-mailing), this gives us a good starting point for our efforts in the classroom. The weakness of this book as a source for my project is that it is not education-specific. In fact, there is very little published in book form about blogging in education. A high school technologist from North Carolina named Will Richardson has written an education-focused book, but it will not be sold until March. In the meantime, getting some structure for our efforts from *We've Got Blog* is at least a start.

Paper: Before Every Child is Left Behind

A working paper from the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Wisconsin Center for Education Research provided much of the theoretical and inspirational basis for my project. *Before Every Child is Left Behind: How Epistemic Games Can Solve the Coming Crisis in Education* by David Williamson Shaffer and James Paul Gee (2005). The authors' position in this paper is that there is a crisis in education coming as we've never seen before: *"The crisis is a crisis of learning ... The coming crisis is this: Young people in the United States today are being prepared—in school and at home—for 'commodity jobs' in a world that will, very soon, reward only people who can do 'innovative work' and punish those who can't."* (pp. 3-4). The authors define innovative work as the only work that will have value in the near future: *"Value—what the modern economy will pay for—resides primarily in knowledge: knowledge about innovative design of new products, services, and technologies, but also knowledge about new forms of social interactions and relationships"* (p. 4). It is the new and innovative technologies, suffused with new forms of social interactions and relationships, that today's second graders must be prepared for, and it's our job as their educators to prepare them.

The strength of this article lies in its vision: In 16 pages, the authors make a convincing case for innovation and a radical approach to education in the future. It's a call to arms to move the American education system away from its 19th century approach and get it to confront the reality of the 21st. The weakness of the paper, in terms of my research, is that it does not specifically address blogs (they are just a subset of innovative approaches), but it does make a convincing argument for embracing such new forms of social interactions as Web 2.0 and epistemic gaming. The gaming element is new to me and makes me want to do more education research on that topic next year.

This article had a strong influence on an element of my research project: that, instead of just being a cute toy that allows kids to get their writing published on the web, there is more at stake to blogging and Web 2.0 in the classroom ... much more. Making that case to kids and fellow educators will be tough, but it's something I'm going to be looking at along with my main research questions.

Articles: Taking a Journey With Today's Digital Kids | More Effective Teaching Using e-Pedagogy | Building Techno-Pedagogical Skills in Preservice Teachers |Instructional Blogging

These four articles from Innovate Online provide education-specific looks at four aspects of Edublogging. The first, *Taking a Journey With Today's Digital Kids*, is an interview with author and K-12 technology coordinator Deneen Frazier Brown, who discusses the growing disconnect between the lives of students in schools and their lives outside of school and the frustration of educators with the technological aspects of that disconnect. The article notes that students (who she refers to as *"digital natives"*) are increasingly interacting with people and information in dramatically different ways than their teachers.

She uses an example of a teacher who struggled to provide a multimedia presentation to an assembly of educators. *"She not only had difficulty using the technology, but she lost control of it when student(s) hacked into her computer using a Bluetooth cell phone"* (p. 1). She further notes that teachers still want to design learning tasks and only provide access to those technologies with which they are comfortable, while *"students seek a change in process, not just the automation of the traditional one"* (p. 1).

The second article, *Breaking the Barriers of Time and Space: More Effective Teaching Using e-Pedagogy*, is focused on how teachers can break through the disconnect Brown describes. They author notes that e-instruction is best distributed across time and space using technology. The author conducted a study which sought to improve specific aspects of teaching and learning, namely *"program flexibility, cooperative learning, accommodation of individual differences, learner control, student motivation and teacher role"* (p. 1). It is these elements, and the author's experiences with researching and implementing e-pedagogy, which will be particularly helpful for my project, especially when it comes to re-defining the instructor's role and building community, which the author discusses specifically.

The third article, *Instructional Blogging: Promoting Interactivity, Student-Centered Learning, and Peer Input*, addresses specifically the subject of my action research, blogging in the classroom. The section of the article title *Blogging as an E-Learning Tool* discusses the impact of blogging in a higher ed setting and talks about the way blogs can build classroom community across space and time.

The fourth article discusses ways to build technical skills in pre-service teachers (such as myself). *Technology and Peda-*

gogy: Building Techno-Pedagogical Skills in Pre-Service Teachers charts how new teachers need to be given the tools to make crucial technological decisions in teaching, learning and assessment. The authors posit a hybrid approach of meta-teaching, technology exposure and critical reflection to enhance instruction and note that the technological underpinnings are essential for the future.

The strength of these four articles lie in their pedagogical underpinnings. They aren't just "cheerleading" articles for blogging and technology; they present rigorous education research to back their findings and make a strong and convincing case that educators must keep their eyes on the future. Their weakness in terms of my research project lie in their generality. They are summaries of research findings and just provide a bare framework around issues with which I am already familiar.

Their implications for my research lie in giving me a factual basis for making the

claims I am making. While there is very little research that has been done in this area, at least there is a little; I won't be in total virgin territory here.

Articles: Using Weblogs in Scholarship and Teaching | Expanding the Concept of Literacy | Do-It-Yourself Broadcasting | Content Delivery in the 'Blogosphere' | Blog On

These five articles are from different on-line journal sources. They are more concerned with the specifics of using blogs in the classroom, both from a pedagogical perspective and from a practical (how-to) perspective.

Expanding the Concept of Literacy argues for an expanded definition of literacy based on four points—that *"the multimedia language of the screen: has become the current vernacular; is capable of constructing complex meanings independent of text; enables modes of thought, ways of conducting research, and methods of publica-*

tion and teaching that are essentially different from those of text; and that those who are truly literate in the twenty-first century will be those who learn to both read and write the multimedia language of the screen" (p. 33-4).

The strength of the article lies in how it sets out a clear and convincing case for the future literacy needs of our students based on the preceding four points. Its weakness in terms of my research lie in its generality; since I am zeroed in on blogging, this is more of an ideological underpinning for my argument rather than a specific pedagogy. Its implications for my research are much like that of the University of Wisconsin paper: namely, that there is more at stake to blogging and Web 2.0 in the classroom and that a case must be made, even though it will be difficult.

Using Weblogs in Scholarship and Teaching is more blog-specific, as are the other three articles. Using Weblogs sets out a definition for what a blog is, connects to accepted definitions generated by the greater blogging community and connects blogging specifically to educational practice, including professional development, scholarship and instruction.

The strength of the article lies in its overview approach; it is a good introduction to my project for the educators in the school in which I will be doing my research. It explains the how rather than making the case for why, which is what I will be working on in my project. This strength can also be interpreted as a weakness as well; an overview provides no rigorous pedagogical underpinning for my research. It's just a summary.

The article's implications for my research revolve around that overview approach as well. When educators in my school ask about the how of the project and need the basic information, it's handy to just give them the article and let them read a longer, more complete summary than I can provide orally.

Blog On: Building Communication and Collaboration Among Staff and Students takes a similar approach. It is blog-specific and education-specific; it explains the how more than the why; and it discusses individual, classroom, staff development and collaborative blogging in general, informational terms.

As with the *Using Weblogs* article, the *Blog On* article is strong in its application as a why review for educators who need to know why I'm pursuing this project. It also provides a good subdivision of blogging within the educational community when it shows the multiple ways blogs can be used within a classroom. One weakness of the article is its length; it's a very short, three-page article about a large, new and different topic. In that amount of space, you can't hope to do the topic justice.

Implications for my research are similar to the *Blog On* article; it's a good introduction to educators or even parents who have questions about my project.

Content Delivery in the 'Blogosphere' is a similarly short and general article about blogging in education; it differs from the previous two articles in that it includes a section on the pedagogy behind blogs, noting that research has shown the importance of social interaction in teaching and learning and even quoting Vygotsky's educational theory.

On strength of this article is in a sidebar which charts the Four Benefits of Student Blogging, which the authors claim include: "*The use of blogs helps students become*
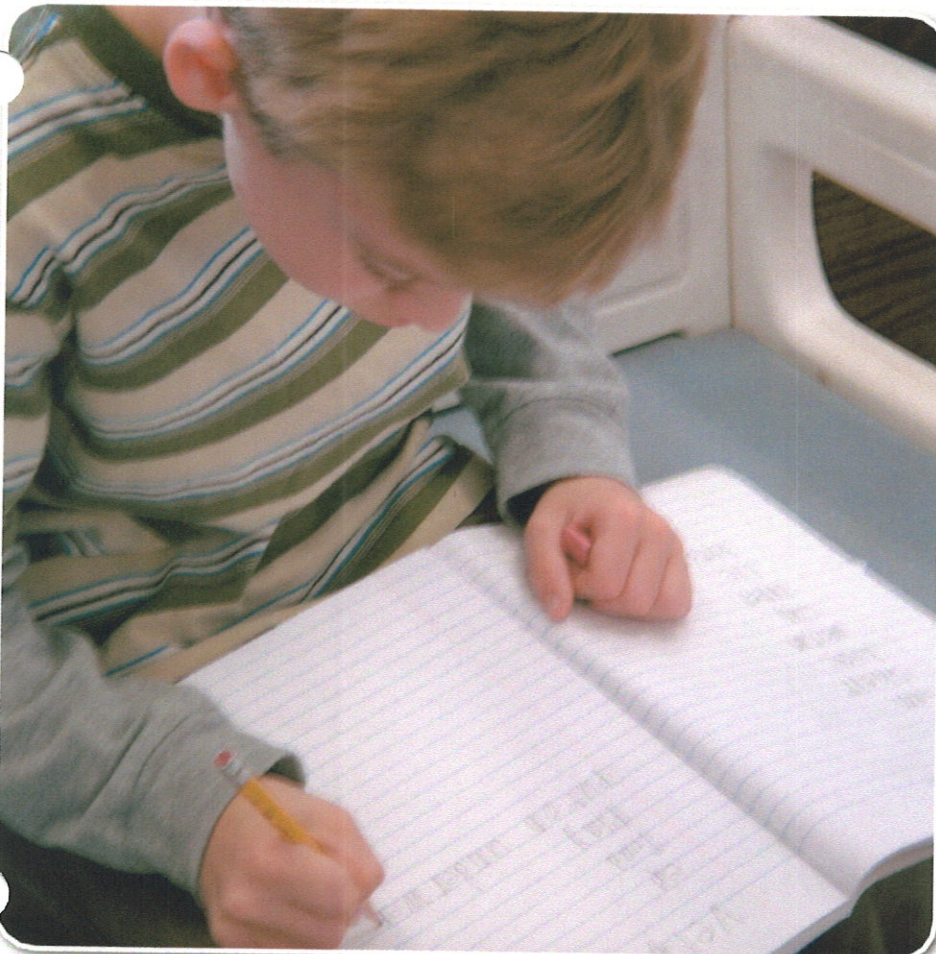
subject-matter experts; the use of blogs increases student interest and ownership in learning; the use of blogs gives students legitimate chances to participate; and the use of blogs provides opportunities for diverse perspectives, both within and outside of the classroom" (p. 16). This sidebar is a nice, tight summary of the pedagogical underpinnings of the edublogging movement. The article is also very strong linking its statements back to pedagogy, citing many different sources and studies to support its thesis. A weakness of the article is its brevity; it's only four pages long.

One of the implications for my research is that it helps give me additional pedagogical ammunition for making my argument. It's more about the foundational work that has already been done in this area as opposed to looking to the future and where we need to be. This will help me strengthen the argument in my research.

The last article is a lengthy (22-page) paper presented to the American Education Research Association 2003 annual meeting. *Do-It-Yourself Broadcasting: Writing*

Weblogs in a Knowledge Society does much the same as the *Content Delivery in the 'Blogosphere'* article in that it sets out the foundational underpinnings for edublogging, but it goes into greater detail about the history of blogging and its educational applications. In addition, the article goes into great detail about the how of blogging, listing such things as blogging services and listing some specific blogs.

The strength of this article lies in its extensiveness. It is a complete and comprehensive review of blogging in general and edublogging specifically and of their uses and pedagogy. There is an exhausting level of detail here, as well as a wealth of bibliographic sources which need further exploration. A weakness probably lies in how it treats edublogging; its level of detail there is not as exhaustive as about the general uses of blogging.

Implications for my research lie in its bibliography, which will be a rich source for further study to inform my research project as it goes on.

Powerful Testimony

"For one question, I set up a chart and asked kids for the advantages and disadvantages of representing information in these four forms: blog, wiki, video, and in a written document. For both blogs and wikis, many kids wrote that they knew if they posted something on a blog or a wiki, someone was reading what they wrote, an audience existed. ... A few kids also listed the fact of being able to go back over their work at a later date to review what they wrote and also the fact that if something is online, it will never get lost in a messy binder or locker, they will always know where it is.

"Along these same lines was the fact that many kids listed the fact that no one else gets a chance to read a written document except for me as a disadvantage of using this form. A written document goes nowhere except into a binder and eventually a garbage can. It is not connected to anyone or to any of their other work. A written document has no context, no history, no connection to their other work or the network they exist in, it stands alone.

"Another piece of evidence that they are getting it. They understand audience, they are beginning to understand networked learning and the importance of the connections they have." —Clarence Fisher, writing in his blog, remoteaccess.typepad.com
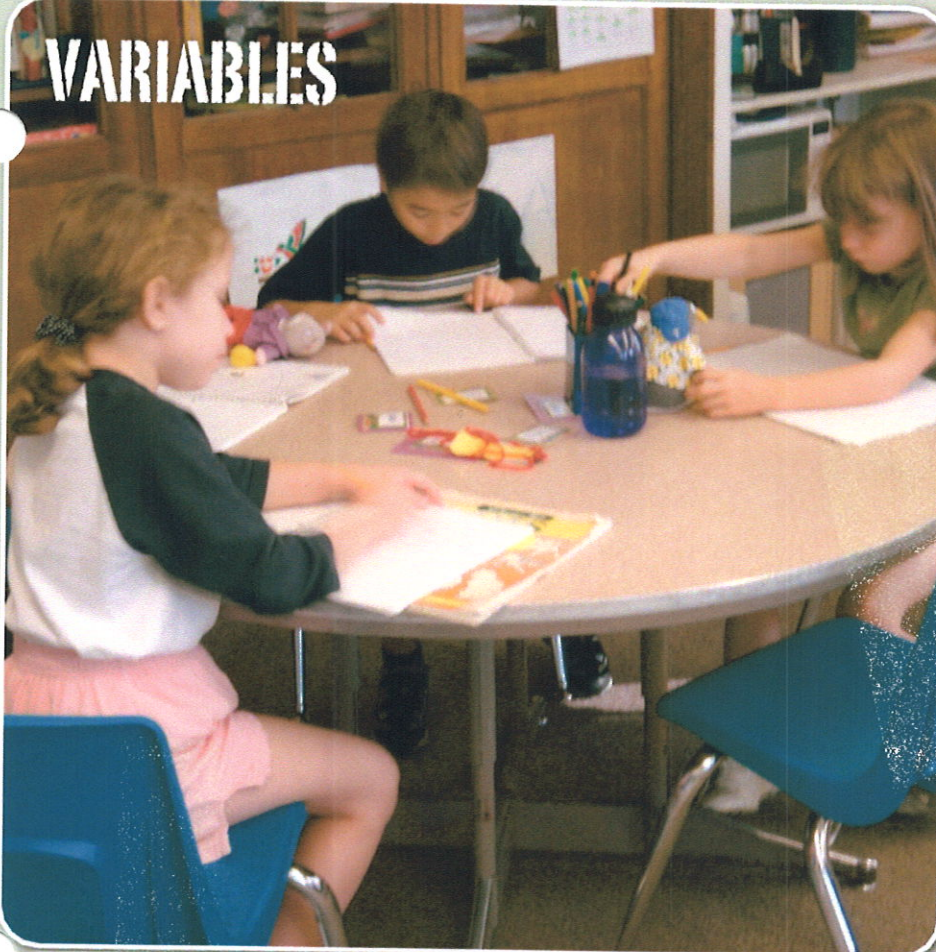
VARIABLES

Variables to be Observed or Measured

This project relies on two of Ruth Culham's "6+1 Traits of Writing": voice and presentation. I know there is a commitment to the writing workshop and the 6+1 traits of writing in our school. Teachers and students work hard on all elements of the program.
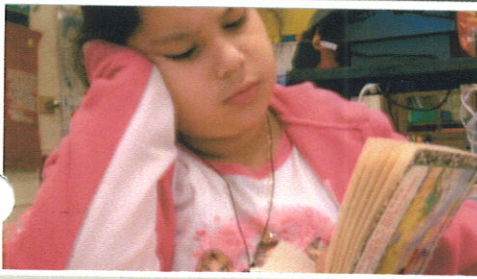
Blogging and podcasting offer students the ability to develop their writing voice through presentation. Traditional presentation of writing is very limited; mainly students can print out a book and take it home to mom and dad. Blogging or podcasting lets students easily reach a wide audience. They fill in a missing gap in the writing program. And by paying attention to an audience, students pay more attention to the other writing traits, specifically voice and presentation.

What Does It Mean to Me?

But I will also look for two additional gains in student writing: enthusiasm and development of fluency.

One student I will be looking at often says, "Do we have to do this? I hate writing." Others approach it in a lukewarm fashion. I will be looking for evidence that my intervention boosts students' enthusiasm for writing workshop.

Ultimately, I will be looking for evidence that expanding students' voice and presentation skills and building up their enthusiasm leads to the development of writing fluency, as defined below. In other words, is blogging a good tool that causes students to attend to their writing and to be excited and interested in that writing?

DEFINITIONS	VOICE	ENTHUSIASM	PRESENTATION	DEVELOPMENT
	Golden Thread Voice is the golden thread that runs through a writing piece; it is how the reader knows who is speaking.	**Excited Interest** Says Webster's: "Great excitement for or interest in a subject or cause."	**Welcome Mat** Final copy, the result of the revision process serves as either a welcome mat or barricade to readers.	**Towards Fluency** Students make academic progress towards fluency, or "graceful, varied, rhythmic and almost musical writing."
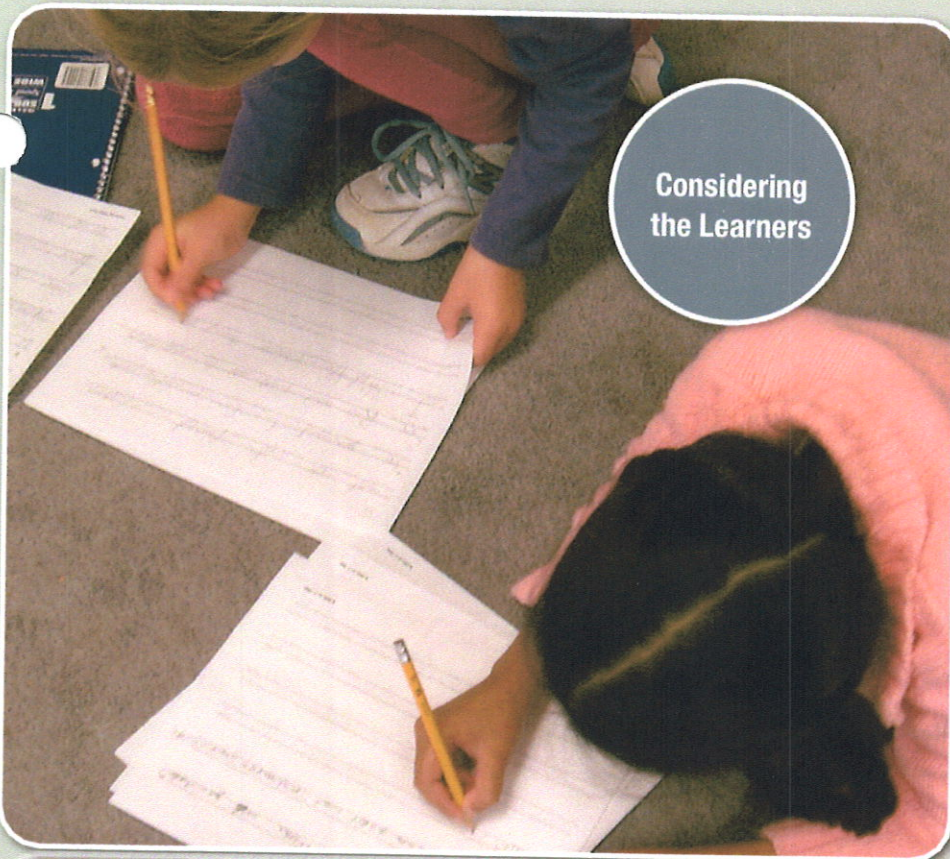
INTERVENTION

Description of Intervention

This plan calls for blogging the writing output of our second graders over an extended period of 12 weeks, from February through the end of April, and possibly as long as the end of May.

Minilessons which actually cover the mechanics of blogging will taught for just a few minutes once a week during a Writing Workshop minilesson, probably on Monday mornings. I anticipate they will not last more than three minutes. Total blogging instruction time therefore will be about 36 minutes total spread over those 12 weeks.

Regular Writing Workshop minilessons will continue throughout the rest of the time, all of which will support the blogging effort.

This intervention is not intended to displace regular Writing Workshop minilessons or time. It is intended to overlay and extend students' writing learning.

The basic procedure for blogging will flow like this:

1. Students Choose a Piece of Writing

Each participating student will choose a piece of his/her recent writing that he/she feels would be a good candidate for publication. Students will be told to look for pieces which they feel others would want to read, especially pieces which show their developing literate voice.

2. Students Work With Instructors to Revise

The revision process will involve typical writing workshop activities such as filling in holes, narrowing the focus of the piece to 'small seeds,' adding 'excellent expressions' in order to infuse their voice into the piece and the usual revision work on spelling, grammar and punctuation. Students will be their own proofreaders.

3. Students Submit the Piece for Publication

Once the student is happy with the revised piece, he/she will submit it to the teacher or administrator for publication. The teacher or administrator will determine if the piece is appropriate for publication and in a finalized state.

4. Instructor(s) Approve(s) for Publication

The adult can either approve the piece, suggest that an alternate piece be used, or send it back to the student for further revisions which they will discuss during a writing workshop conference.

5. Administrator Posts the Final Copy

The administrator will take the students' final copy and post it using the blogging software. Students who are capable of entering their text into the software in a reasonable time, or those who wish to do so at home can enter their own pieces and submit them to the administrator for publishing. Parents will be encouraged to read their child's copy before submission for posting.

6. Students Are Encouraged to Comment

Students will be encouraged to give 'wishes' and 'stars' — constructive criticism and helpful praise — to each other by leaving comments on others' entries. This can be done in several ways: By submitting a written comment to the administrator; by being allowed to enter a comment during classroom time; or by leaving a comment from home. Every comment will be moderated by the administrator before it goes 'live.'

NEGOTIATIONS
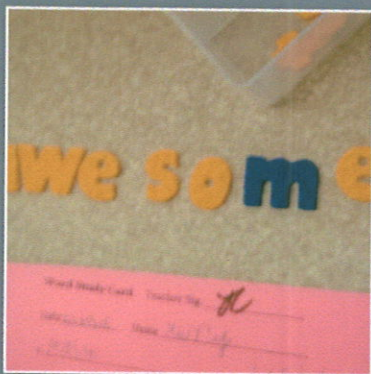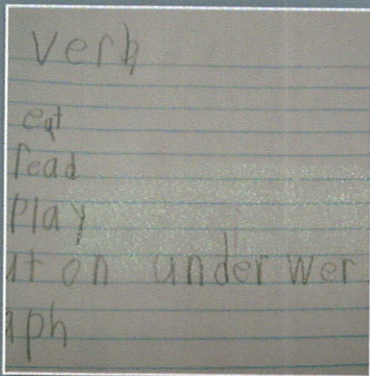
Making the Case: The Future

"Fast Company has posted a list of the top jobs of 2006 and for the coming years.

"Count the jobs on this list that do not involve at least one of these three factors:

· technology
· information analysis
· data handling and investigation

"I counted 2.

"Are we getting what we need to be emphasizing in our classrooms?"

—Clarence Fisher

Negotiations to be Undertaken

Negotiations which have already occurred include sharing my blogging plans with my cooperating teacher back in October and making the case to her based on the same rationale/basis as is outlined in my literature review. I also presented my plans to parents of all students during Curriculum Night back in September. They were all very enthusiastic about my plans.

Prior to actually going live with any entries, I will send a letter requesting a formal approval from each students' parent/guardian. This letter is included on the next page.

No other negotiations are anticipated. Since the class blog is hosted on my personal web server, no school district resources are needed. The school principal has been informed; since the school already has a website and some student work is published there, and as long as we have parental permission, the principal has no objections to the project. It is possible she will change her mind and suggest that we seek central office approval, which we are happy to do, but this is not anticipated.

Ongoing negotiations will include listening to parents very carefully if concerns/questions arise during the course of the project. These will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

I will need to strike a careful balance; the teacher has concerns that Writing Workshop time might be affected. I will need to take care that the actual blogging, as well as data collection, occurs during free choice time or after school.

Covering All the Bases

TIMELINE

12 Weeks of Minilessons / Potential Modifications

Parental notification will go out on Feb. 6 and the project will be introduced to students around Feb. 7.

Project teaching will take place on Mondays; the rest of the week will focus on regularly scheduled minilessons and writing time. Posting will take place on Fridays.

While it would be great if every single student posts something every single week, this may not happen. Every student will have the opportunity to post every week, but only if his/her piece is ready to go and the teacher approves.

Blogging lessons are not confined to these specific minilessons; informal teaching will go on every day, both whole group and one-on-one.

Minilessons

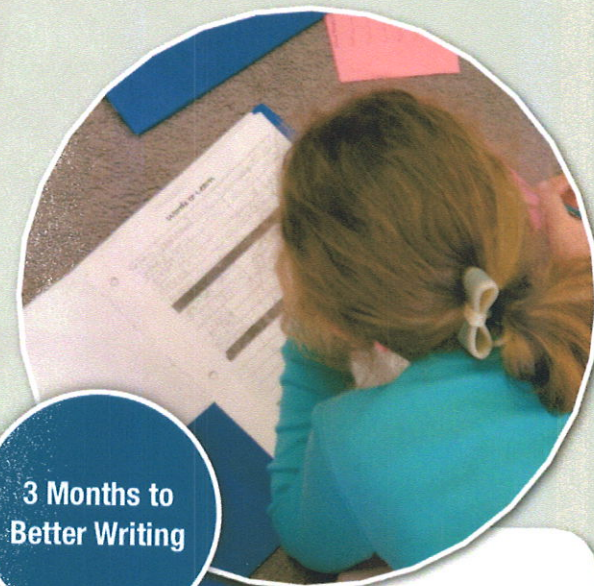Minilessons to be taught each Monday are the following:

1. Introduction of concept to students via minilesson during Writing Workshop. What's a blog and why do it?
2. Posting our work: Minilesson on the entire blogging process.
3. Style minilesson. What is my style? Has it developed over the last few months? How do I know what my style is?
4. Minilesson on word choice: How can we put our personal stamp on our writing through our vocabulary?

5. Minilesson on ways to develop a 'blogging voice' through a unique personal style.
6. Minilesson: What is a good blog post? How do you recognize one of your own or someone else's?
7. Reaching out: Minilesson on linking to other blogs and creating a larger audience/community.
8. Internet Security: Minilesson on how to be safe both with blogs and commenting and in other online communities.
9. The commenting system minlesson: How to use the blog to leave wishes and stars for others.
10. Good comments minilesson: Thinking deeply about someone else's writing and articulating your thoughts.
11. Keeping the passion going: A minilesson to recharge the project with new story ideas or by reading new blogs.
12. Grand celebration of the blogging project by reading aloud some of the best blogging of the semester. Cookies, punch.
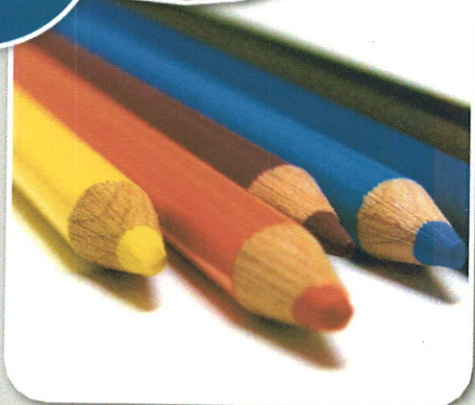
Potential Modifications

There are several potential modifications: The one I most anticipate is that students will view several of the craft lessons such as personal style and using kind language to comment on the blog as being 'old stuff from last fall,' since we have talked about these before. The challenge will be to make it interesting and refreshing, presenting deeper thoughts.

Two other possible modifications:

1. We have a bilingual student who has a parent who does not speak or write English. In what ways can we involve that parent, both in eliciting her approval and in getting her to participate? I will attempt to get the letter translated into Spanish and make sure that she knows that commenting on her daughter's blog entries in Spanish is safe and acceptable. I will need someone to read her comments to make sure they are appropriate.

2. For students who are at the lower end of the reading scale, reading a blog may pose a challenge. This is where the enthusiasm lessons come in; also, by February/March, these students should be at or near the same level as their peers. I don't anticipate this will be a problem, since tremendous growth in their writing has already happened. However, making sure that blogging is a safe and nurturing experience and reassuring the student(s) that quantity is not important will help.

3 Months to Better Writing

Minilessons

Writing Workshop minilessons are taught every Monday morning February through May, 12 in all.

Each minilesson lasts no longer than 10 minutes.

At the end of Writing Workshop during author share time, sharing is connected back to the minilesson by the teacher.

What Will Success Look Like?

Admittedly, the project might be too much for second graders. It might be like a bright, shiny toy which they play with excitedly for a few weeks and then abandon. The process might prove to complicated to maintain. We might simply get blog fatigue and run out of steam.

Given the particular intelligence and enthusiasm of this particular class, we seriously doubt this will be the case. But it will take further careful planning, communicating and review as the process goes forward in order for us to look back in June and feel successful.

About the Data

Data Collection

My data collection will center on interviews (both informal and structured formal) and on archival documents, which will be the blog entries and comments on those entries themselves. I plan to interview all 22 students at least twice at the beginning and end of the project; I plan to focus on 5-6 representative students to interview several times, at least twice a month, during the semester. These representative students have a range of abilities: from an ADHD-diagnosed, lower-reading-level minority child to a highly accomplished writer who reads well above grade level. One I will particularly focus on will be a child who doesn't enjoy writing since part of my research focuses on the impact of public blogging on enthusiasm, she will be of particular interest. In terms of the blog entries/comments, since these are time/date-stamped as they are produced, I will have a complete record of the project over time, which will, among other things, allow me to compare writers' development over the course of the project.

Data Analysis

By looking at students' blog entries and comments and by conducting interviews with them, I am looking for evidence that students:

Making Sense of It All

- Enjoy writing workshop more than before (from interviews and comments)
- Like having their work read by a wider audience (from interviews)
- Have fewer mistakes in grammar, spelling and punctuation in their writing (from reviewing their submissions)
- Write longer and more frequently (from reviewing their submissions)
- Want to read and comment on what others have written (from comments they write on the blog)
- Choose to write during free choice time (from passive observation)
- Are turning in higher-quality writing (from reviewing their submissions). Higher-quality writing involves showing voice development and progress towards writing fluency, as defined in the *Variables* section above.

I can quantify the data by charting the number of words written during writing workshop, the number of comments they leave on the blog, the number of times they submit writing for posting.

I can qualify the data by asking specific questions tailored to elicit responses about the level of their enjoyment of writing over time; by reviewing comments they leave on the blog; by observing writing during free choice time.

REFLECTION

Rationale

I have had an evolving web presence since 1999, when my first website, airbeagle.com, went online. I at first used it for such things as dog pictures and resume postings. Over the next three years it evolved, both in the underlying technology and in the amount of content. By August of 2001, I was operating several blogs on three domains and had an extensive gallery of photos and plenty of links to other websites, as well as deeplinks to other articles of interest. Today, I have 12 domain names and 15 blogs with numerous purposes linking to hundreds of articles and websites around the world. My blogs get comments and links from countries from the Netherlands to China. I understand the power of making blogging a part of your writing life.

While I know that blogging can be a integral and fun part of literacy instruction for children, I want to learn and understand just HOW to make it an integral and fun part of literacy instruction. And this is why I chose this subject to be the focus of my action research project.

I need to implement it in a careful way in the classroom that does not disrupt and displace already planned out and critical writing instruction but does add value. I need to find out how children will react to the additional capability and, if there is enthusiasm, whether it can be maintained for an extended period of time.

Why do I care? I care because it's personally meaningful to me, because, based on reading I've done on the subject over the last two years, especially in the articles noted above in my literature review, I can see that educators need to be forward thinking now more than ever and because kids who can build a strong literate voice will have bright future. As an educator, giving kids a bright future is my job.

One of the articles in my literature review, *Before Every Child is Left Behind: How Epistemic Games Can Solve the Coming Crisis in Education*, had a particularly strong influence on my project planning. As I noted in the literature review, I consider this article to be a visionary statement that helped me understand that, instead of just being a cute toy that allows kids to get their writing published on the web, there is more at stake to blogging and Web 2.0 in the classroom ... much more. Making that case to kids and fellow educators will be tough (I've already experienced some hesitation and pushback) but it's something I'm determined to explore, because I believe in its importance.

The Intervention

This project attempts to link students' real lives with their needs in writing workshop by giving them a creative outlet and connecting them to the larger world which they are just beginning to discover. The project provides structure and guidance in safely and carefully communicating in social settings. Particular attention will be paid during informal buzzing and assessment times to six of our students who are struggling with two things: being behind their peers in reading level and finding enthusiasm for writing.

There are some limitations. Some students may find the technology daunting, particularly since they have no typing skills at this point, but the project addresses this by initially removing them from having to interface with the computer and only introducing the physical act of blogging later to those students who feel they can do so confidently.

I anticipate the students who are behind their peers in reading level will find new enthusiasm for catching up so that they can be full participants in the online conversations which take place. The project is designed to test my belief that

social activities, conducted within safe and nurturing environments such as our classroom, can boost a student's comfort level with learning that he or she finds challenging. I also hope that students who simply are not enthusiastic about writing now find a new enthusiasm for it by realizing how their writing is simply a conversation with their reader. We have taught this concept to them very explicitly several times, but until their reader can react to their writing and a conversation can occur, our less-enthusiastic writers may not be understanding the idea. I'm hoping for an 'ah-ha!' moment for these students.

Data

As mentioned above, my data collection will center on interviews (both informal and structured formal) and on archival documents, which will be the blog entries and comments on those entries themselves. I plan to interview all 22 students at least twice at the beginning and end of the project; I plan to focus on 5-6 representative students to interview several times, at least twice a month, during the semester. These representative students have a range of abilities: from an ADHD-diagnosed, lower-reading-level minority child to a highly accomplished writer who reads well above grade level. One I will particularly focus on will be a child who doesn't enjoy writing since part of my research focuses on the impact of public blogging on enthusiasm, she will be of particular interest. In terms of the blog entries/comments, since these are time/date-stamped as they are produced, I will have a complete record of the project over time, which will, among other things, allow me to compare writers' development over the course of the project.

Ethical Considerations

Parental permission will be sought before a student participates. A letter (see above) will be sent home to parents for their approval. Students will also have the option to orally tell me they do not wish to participate. One student already has done so.

During data collection and analysis, students will be anonymous, identified by their student number, as assigned by the cooperating teacher at the beginning of the school year.

The project will be hosted by ClassBlogs.Net, a new, free, K-12 blog and podcast hosting service; ClassBlogs.net is hosted by TextDrive, on servers in San Diego, CA. (See http://textdrive.com/). There will be no need to use district resources for this trial project. I will supervise and maintain it myself. I have seven years of web-based communications expertise and 20 years of education communications and community building experience. The blog will be powered by the free, open-source blogging software Wordpress and by a MySQL database. This software is accessible via username and password from home or school so students who wish to extend their learning and writing can do so at their own pace and on their own time. Submissions will be read by the teacher or administrator before going 'live.'

Students' submissions to the blogs will be identified in the manner which their parent/guardian chooses: they will either be anonymous, by initials, by a pen name or by their first name. No student's full name or other identifying information will be published on either the blog or in this research study or the final report.

All of these considerations are in line with Ann Arbor's district guidelines and standards for student use of the internet.

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Our ClassBlog

Choose One

◯ NO, I do NOT wish my child —————————————————

to participate in the classroom blogging project. (Feel free to tell us why, if you wish.)_____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date:_____

If you marked 'Yes,' then Choose One

✓◯ YES, I give my permission for my child ██████ _____

to participate in the classroom blogging project.

My choice for how my child's work should be identified online is (choose one):

◯ Completely anonymous (i.e., 'Anonymous,' 'Anon.' 'Student' or just blank)

◯ Only by his/her initials (i.e., 'S.P. or L.C.')

✓◯ By a fake or pen name (i.e., 'Mark Twain'): ██████████████

◯ By first name only (i.e., 'Steve' or 'Lisa')

By signing this permission slip, I agree that the Ann Arbor Public Schools Elementary Computer Use and Publicity Agreements apply to this project and that I understand I can withdraw my permission at any time.

_____ 3/23/06

Parent/Guardian Signature and Date

Instructions:

- If you DO NOT wish your child to participate, check the red circle next to NO in the yellow box above, write in your child's name and your signature and return the form to us. *That's all you need to do.*

- If you DO wish your child to participate, check the green circle next to YES in the green box above and write in your child's name and then choose how you wish your child's work to be identified on the blog. Your child's work can be completely anonymous, identified only by his/her initials, identified by a pen name such as Mark Twain (chose a name with your child) or by his/her first name only. Choose ONE of those four, then sign the form. *That's all you need to do.*

- When we publish our first entries online, we will send a note home with your child to let you know that the blog is up and running!

Our ClassBlog

Choose One

NO, I do NOT wish my child ⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚

to participate ⬚⬚⬚ classroom blogging project. (Feel free to tell us why, if you wish. ⬚⬚ *says he'd prefer not to, because the writing*

Parent/Guardian Signature: ⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚⬚

Date: 2/24/06

he does is "private." If his opinion changes, I'd gladly change my consent to "Yes".

If you marked 'Yes,' then Choose One

YES, I give my permission for my child _____

to participate in the classroom blogging project.

My choice for how my child's work should be identified online is (choose one):

○ **Completely anonymous** (i.e., 'Anonymous,' 'Anon.' 'Student' or just blank)

○ **Only by his/her initials** (i.e., 'S.P. or L.C.')

○ **By a fake or pen name** (i.e., 'Mark Twain'): _____

○ **By first name only** (i.e., 'Steve' or 'Lisa')

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http://campos.classblogs.net

All about Miley Cyrus

Posted 19:34 | 10-Feb-09 by C.V. |

Miley Cyrus has a step mom and 2 stepsisters and 1 stepbrother and his dad name is Billy R
Hannah Montana to. Her best friends are Emily Osment and Emily plays Lilly and Lola on Ha
a dog and she has CD's of her and she has made a movie of her in concert in 3D. She playec
Games in 2006. She was on the green team and her team won the game. His dog name is L
songs. She was before singing at Memorial Coliseum, Poland, Oregon September 17, 2006 a
CA. in September 19, 2006. I am writing about her because I think she is a great singer. I lik
makes her t.v shows. They are funny and she is a great pop star singer. She was dating Nick
to have cows,and horse. Her real mom of Miley died. She singed with the Jones Brothers. Sh
went to Disney Land. In her book she said if she gets new friends she well steal have her old
Texas and her mom to. She doesn't have a real sister. She only haves stepsisters. Her big si
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Miley Cyrus is a actor/singer.Her name of birth is:Destiny Hope Cyrus.Miley Cyrus became a
Cyrus is the oldest daughter of country music.Her dad is Billy Ray Cyrus. Mily began parform
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music of her are, who said, the seven things I like about you. Her conser are great the tickes
can go to one of Hannah Montana cornser and meet her.

How to take care of a dog

I am going to tell about to take care of a pet.If you have pets it is easy how to take care of a a dog it is easy you have to give him food and give him water. Also it is very,very,very,impor shelter,love,and care. But if it's a puppy you have to give him lots baths like two times a day walking some of them can bark at people. If your dog does that make sure that your dog ha leash a leash that is a chocker leash. If your dog does is good because my anties dog has a same thing. Next,you should brush him until he/her is buitiful/handsome. Next,but not list

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to have cows,and horse. Her real mom or Miley died. She is in magazine. She has went to Disney Land. In her book she said if she gets new friends she well steal have her old friends. She was borned in Texas and her mom to. She doesn't have a real sister. She only haves stepsisters. Her big sister. Her big stepsister sometimes plays the guitar at her t.v showes when the t.v showes stars. Her family showes in her t.v showes.Miley likes to hear rock and roll music to.

Miley Cyrus is a actor/singer.Her name of birth is:Destiny Hope Cyrus.Miley Cyrus became a t.v star at age of 13. Mily Cyrus is the oldest daughter of country music.Her dad is Billy Ray Cyrus. Mily began parforming at age 9. In 2003,staring Ewan McGregor. After a series of auditions that began when she was 11,Cyrus landed the lead role of Hannah Montana. Her dad, Billy Ray,was then chosen to play her father in the t.v. Cyrus family mowed from Nashville, Tennessee to Southern C.A. In October of 2006 the sound track to Hannah Montana featuring eight songs by Mily. Her music of her are, who said, the seven things I like about you. Her conser are great the tickes got sold fast but I whish I can go to one of Hannah Montana cornser and meet her.

How to take care of a dog

I am going to tell about to take care of a pet.If you have pets it is easy how to take care of a pet but hard to. If you have a dog it is easy you have to give him food and give them water. Also it is very,very,very,important to give them shelter,love,and care. But if it's a puppy you have to give him lots baths like two times a day. When you take big dogs walking some of them can bark at people. If your dog does that make sure that your dog has a leash but not a normal leash a leash that is a chocker leash. If your dog does is good because my anties dog has a chocker leash he does the same thing. Next,you should brush him until he/her is buitiful/handsome. Next,but not list you should make him/her

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How to take care of a dog

Posted 08:46 | 12-Nov-08 by [VChico](#) | [Comment on this Story](#)

I am going to tell about to take care of a pet.If you have pets it is easy how to take care of a pet but hard to. If you have a dog it is easy you have to give him food and give him water. Also it is very,very,very,important to give them shelter,love,and care. But if it's a puppy you have to give him lots baths like two times a day. When you take big dogs walking some of them can bark at people. If your dog does that make sure that your dog has a leash but not a normal leash a leash that is a chocker leash. If your dog does is good because my anties dog has a chocker leash he does the same thing. Next,you should brush him until he/her is buitiful/handsome. Next,but not list you should make him/her take a nap so you can also take a nap beacause you must be tiered doing all those things but playing with your dog/your puppy is the hardest thing of all. Well I gess this is all for right now see you later but remember it is hard and easy to take care of a pet. THE END!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Dancing

Posted 15:02 | 11-Nov-08 by [VRoble](#) | [Comment](#)

Vhen your dancing your usually listening to music. You just want to dance to the beat. Dancing is sometimes is a good excercise. You can usually dance to hip-hop,country,salsa and rap. But when you dance theres so many ways to dance. It feels good inside. I will name a lot of dancing moves to you. This is the bacongo it's

the scottish dance is developed by the lowlands of scottland. The circle folk dance where there are many young children dancing in a joyful way. The struts you can do is,turn around,kick high,reach up, reach down, pin quickley, step foward, and step back. When your dancing you want to feel happy inside and outside too. One of the hardest dance moves is to crump. There some dances that celebrate seasons . That repersent there cultures. Some people dance in there own traditinol way. The way you have to move your body. You dance because of the rythum you hear. Dance all about dancing.

The Titanic

Posted 08:31 | 05-Nov-08 by Blue Jay 1998 | Comment

The Titanic was built by White Star Liner. People say they were very luxurious. Most of there ships were expensive. Some of the richest people were on the ship. The ship was built by a man named Thomas Andrews. British wanted to travel to America. Titanic was traveling to New York City.
Titanic had three classes. First class was 5,000 dollars. First class was usually for the richest people on the ship. Second class was a little less elegant than first class. Third class was where the families usualy slept. They were the cheapest rooms on the ship.
On the ship, they had a lot of food, like: 36,000 oranges, 1, 750 quarts of ice cream, 16,000 lemons, 7,000 heads of lettuce, 2, 200 pounds of coffe. Also1, 500 gallons of milk, 40,000 eggs , and 5, 900 tons of coal. The Titanic featured a swimming pool, gymmasium, grand staircase, post office, and 2 cafes.
Some of the passengers' names were John Jacob Aster. He was the richest person in the world. Also Karl Behr and Helen Newson. The youngest person on the ship was 2 weeks old.
The ship had an operator.The operator was receiving messages about ice bergs in the area!The operator turned the machine off.Later that night the staff in the crows nest were ringing the bell, they called and were screaming iceberg!Half of the ship was gone.The staff were getting the lifeboats ready.Women and children ʳst!There were 700 people in all the lifeboats.THE SHIP SPLIT IN HALF!The ship sunk.People in the water ʳound pieces they could get on. Finally rescue came by a ship named Carpathia.The captin of the ship was Captin Rostron.Allthe people on the lifeboats, were rescued,and6 people in the water were saved. Finally the Titanic was found.It was found by a man named Dr.Robert Ballard.He found it in August 1985.The Titanic was destroyed.Some say it was just accedental or a secret plan.

super sayian flapjack [a true story]

Posted 07:33 | 29-Oct-08 by Obadee | Comment on this Story

One hot summer on 2007 on a friday I was playing in my room eating junk food and watching my favorite show on cartoon network Naruto.It was 9:00 my brother and mom were sleep as hours passed and passed Iwas very sleepy and bored but I didn't want to go to sleep.So I went In the kitchen and looked at the time it was 2:oo in the morning.But I didn't care I stayed up as late as I wanted,I looked in the cabinet and saw mountain dew I grabbed it of course and drunk the whole bottle I was feeling really hiper now.I was also not sleepy anymore,I went back in my room and andI had to do something so I turned on my favorite dance movie step up 2 the streets after a while I got bored of the movie so I turned it off, 1 hour passed and it was 3:oo am

The World's Largest Thing in Space: The Sun

Posted 21:07 | 18-Oct-08 by P.T. Pricy | Comment on this Story

The Sun is the earth's shining star.The sun is actually a glowing thing of hot gas. But the sun looks unique ʝecause it's so close to us. The sun is 93 millon miles from earth. All living things on earth need heat from the sun, even us! Did you know, the sun contains more than 99/100 mass of the solar system.
A solar eclipse happens when the moon is between the sun and the earth. This makes a glowing ring. Did you

that if you look at it, it could make you blind! Over 1.3 million earths can fit inside the sun.
The closest star to our sun is 4.3 light years away! Sunspots are dark spots of the sun's photospere. Sunspots are cooler than other areas of the photospere. The average temperture of a sunspot is 3,870 degrees celsius.
The structure of the sun is: Solar flares, radiation layer, sunspots, convection layer, photospere, chromosphere, the corona, and the core.
The sun's weight equals about 333,000 earths. The oldest star in the Milky Way is called HEo107-5420. This giant star is about 36,000 light years from earth. Scientists think that it is about 13.7 billion years old. Astronomers think that the universe is the same age.
Did you know, our sun and all of the planets around it are part of the Milky Way galaxy? Well, as you all don't know, the sun is about 5 billion years old.
Have you ever heard of the red giant? It's the oldest living star in the galaxy. It's about 250 million miles wide! In our solar system, that is the distance from the Sun to Mars.
There could be unusual stars in the sky, but here there are new stars. But, astronomers today think that those new stars are not called that; they're called "Supernovas." Supernovas are stars that are about to explode. They are actually called a "White Dwarf Star." Also, Supernovas are rare. They happen about once every 300 years.
Did you even know that the sun travels alone? This is not common. Most stars have one or more star companions, or buddies. Some stars are double stars. Double stars are two stars close to each other. Sometimes, these stars orbit each other.
Sometimes, stars form groups of three or more. A large group of stars are called a star cluster. M.13 is a star cluster in the constellation called "Hercules." Hercules is 20,000 light years away from earth and 12 billion years old.
Also, I bet you didn't know that the sun sometimes has streams of hot gas coming out of it!
The last thing that's been discovered was the planets that orbit the sun, white dwarf stars, and Pluto galaxies! You want to know who did discover them? Those are Nicolaus Copernicus, William Fleming, and Clyde Tombaugh! It was nice sharing my story with you about the sun!That's cool to me!THE END!!!

The Soccer Game

Posted 20:46 | 18-Oct-08 by McLovin' | Comment on this Story

I played soccer at Parkside on Sunday at 12:30. We scored more goals then the other teams. A kid got kick in the face by a ball and fainted for 3 seconds. It was very funny.
We had no more people. The kids did the right thing and scored. We won 5-4. My coach which was my dad was happy that we won the finals. They entered the other league too so we can win them. We won again but we won then 20-0. We won a trophy.
We got a guy named Tony, he is 11 years old. He is a good kicker. With him, we are unstoppable. We can win anyone even though they are big; we are good.
My coach which was my dad is the best person ever. He is the bomb.
Four weeks later we were professionals. We were on YouTube.com and on Sports Channel. We won 10-0. All of the other teams are bigger than us, but they will lose. Everyone was impressed that me, Luis, Omar, and Tony scored all the goals. We were champions.
Another person had a better team, but we won 1-0. I scored the goal by doing a chilenita. We were the best; we got 1,000,000,000 dollars. Tony was 12, he can kick harder. I am 10 and everyone else in my team were 11 and 10. We are better than anyone.
We got there there at 10:30. We played in the casino through 12:30. It was super fun. We stayed there for a month. It was a long trip. My little brother sang, "We are the Champions."
They bought me new shoes for soccer; they were Mexican colors. It was so cool and they bought me a new ball to play soocer. I can kick harder with them. I would barely tap it and it would hit hard.

Welcome!

Posted 18:48 | 11-Oct-08 by [Steve Pollock](#) | [Comment](#)

Welcome to the Classblog of Mr. Pollock's class. We are a class of 29 California fifth graders learning how to post our writing on the web. We hope you enjoy reading our work.
Please leave us comments and let us know what you think of all of our hard work!
Thank you for dropping by!

About

Welcome to Mr. Pollock's Classblog. We are fifth graders in California. We hope you enjoy are writing! Leave us some comments!

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- [Administrative](#)
- [All About Me](#)
- [Animals](#)
- [Astronomy](#)
- [Austin, Texas](#)
- [Bicycles](#)
- [Biographies](#)
- [California](#)
- [Cartoons](#)
- [Cats](#)
- [Cities](#)
- [Dancing](#)
- [Football](#)
- [Gold](#)
- [Hannah Montana](#)
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- [Hurricanes](#)
- [Mars](#)
- [Martin Luther King Jr.](#)
- [Miley Cyrus](#)
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- [My Life](#)
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- [Pokemon](#)
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