



Introduction

Teachers are always looking for new ways to be creative and innovative in the classroom. Unfortunately, teachers do not realize how much technology can help achieve those goals. A particular technology that if used effectively will benefit not only teachers, but the classroom environment as well: Classroom Blogs.

This professional development program is offered to teachers to help them better understand the benefits of classroom blogs. They will get hands on experience creating a blog. Additionally, they will be able to customize their blog to what features will be best served in their classroom.

Teachers will find this to be an open discussion that will lay a basic foundation of knowledge and allow for exploration of ideas directed by our professional development leaders. Hopefully, teachers will maximize their time in this program and utilize it for the assistance of their classroom and school.

Table of Contents

Background	2
<i>BENEFITS</i>	
<i>OVERCOME CHALLENGES</i>	
<i>NEEDS ASSESSMENT</i>	
Overview of PD	5
<i>GOALS AND PURPOSE</i>	
<i>EXPECTATIONS</i>	
Daily Agenda	6
<i>DAY ONE</i>	
<i>DAY TWO</i>	
<i>DAY THREE</i>	
Follow-up	
References	7
Appendix	8



Benefits of Classroom Blogging

Classrooms can benefit from blogs in numerous ways. For example, blogs allow for students to have a new form of communication that can help develop their reading, writing, and critical thinking skills. Additionally, blogs allow for a

different method of demonstration of learning that offers more interactivity than the standard pen and pencil. Not to mention, students immediately will live up as soon as they know technology and the internet is involved.

A major benefit of blogs is giving students a new perspective on the meaning of voice.

Overcoming Challenges

Lack of skill or knowledge of technology

- We will introduce teachers to an easy set-up and application process.

Working with current curriculum requirements

- We will guide teachers in discovering ways to use a blog alongside their general classroom work.

Allowing permission for students to use blog and privacy concerns

- We will provide examples of guidelines and permission slips to be given to parents.

Needs Assessment

Districts, schools, and communities need better ways to utilize blogs as an effective instructional strategy and communication tool. As an instructional strategy blogs can capitalize on students' interest, buy-in, and strengths in many different areas of their academic instruction. As a communication tool blogs can reach out to different communities of people that are directly or indirectly related to the educational environment. Unfortunately, teachers and administrators do not take advantage of the effectiveness of blogs due to specific factors. Those factors include lack of technical skills, positive attitudes towards blogs, among other factors discovered in this needs assessment. Assuming that districts have technology available for teachers to implement blogs, the desired outcome is that teachers will feel comfortable to adapting their curriculum for use in a blog, as well as an environment to demonstrate student learning to a broader audience. Blogs should be viewed as a tool to better communicate and instruct students in an educational environment.

Interactive Educational Systems Design, Inc conducted a survey focusing on the use, attitudes, outcomes, concerns, and plans of U.S. school districts concerning Web 2.0 and collaborative technologies for the years 2009 and 2010, in *National Survey Report, Digital Districts: Web 2.0 and collaborative Technologies in U.S. School*, March 2011. The particular part of the survey that addresses this needs assessment was specifically about student-generated online content (e.g., class blogs, online postings of student works, wiki-type collaborative formats). The report surveyed 388 district technology directors.



In the sidebar the statistics clearly show a need for and interest in blogs in all levels of education. Finally, the study also surveyed participants about their concerns with student use of particular technologies. The survey also wanted to identify challenges for teachers to implement student-generated technology. The survey identified that 70% of respondents found that lack of teacher knowledge about how to use the technology effectively was the most challenging for this technology to be applied. Also, 36% of participants found that a teacher's perception of the technology's lack of instructional value or appropriateness is a challenge. The challenge of time required to use student-generated technology was found among 39% of the respondents. Finally, the survey discovered that 43% thought the most significant barrier to adopting student-generated online content was a "limited support system" (Interactive Educational Systems Design, Inc, 2011).

Teachers and administrators are constantly looking for both a valuable instructional strategy and a way to demonstrate to members of their educational community the learning capabilities of their students. Blogs give opportunity to fulfill that need because it helps students become more aware and involved in their learning, as well a place for demonstration of their learning to peers, administrators, parents, and even larger audiences. Mac Bride and Luehmann (2008) express that classroom blogs can provide opportunities for teachers to capitalize on

Statistics

- ABOUT 25% OF THE USE STUDENT-GENERATED ONLINE CONTENT, COMPARED TO 32% IN 2009
- THOUGH 53% OF RESPONDING TECHNOLOGY DIRECTORS INDICATED THAT VERY FEW OR NO TEACHERS USE STUDENT-GENERATED ONLINE CONTENT
- ON THE OTHER HAND, 32% OF THE DISTRICTS HAVE A PLAN FOR ADOPTING/ PROMOTING THE USE OF COLLABORATIVE FORMAT BLOGS, COMPARED TO 22% IN 2009
- ANOTHER 20% WERE GOING TO CONSIDER PLANS OR POLICIES TO USE THIS TECHNOLOGY
- NEVERTHELESS, DISTRICT TECHNOLOGY DIRECTORS SHOWED A SPLIT OF 44% POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS USING STUDENT-GENERATED ONLINE CONTENT AND 48% FEELING AMBIVALENT OR MIXED ATTITUDES

established interest in online communication and focus that interest towards their academic study. Students have the ability and *want* to communicate online. Teachers should utilize professional development centered on blogging as an opportunity to capitalize upon their students' *want* to participate in their classroom in a way that sparks their interest. Blogs combine a school's need to provide a way to demonstrate students' learning and a valuable instructional strategy for a classroom.

Collaborative Learning



The teachers and technology directors surveyed in Interactive Educational Systems Design, Inc review found useful information on the use, attitudes, concerns, and plans of student-generated online content (blogs). Participants showed that fewer teachers are using blogs as an effective tool in their classrooms compared to the previous year. This reduction shows that there is a need to find out why teachers do not feel comfortable using blogs in their classroom. This may somewhat reflect the mixed attitudes towards using blogs in the classroom. Findings were split almost down the middle of a positive reception of blogs compared to an ambivalent or mixed attitude towards blogs. This split shows that there is a need to create an awareness of how well blogs can be used in a classroom so that attitudes will change. In addition to addressing a person's attitude about blogs it is also important to be aware of their concerns. For

purposes of planning this professional development, it was interesting to find out that their main concern for teachers and technology directors was students' safety online. Furthermore, this survey showed that 63.4% of respondents are posting content online in their professional development communities and 48.6% use online communication and collaboration tools (blogs) as well. Obviously, teachers are willing to use blogs to demonstrate their own learning, but could use further direction in how to use blogs effectively in their classrooms for their students. For the fact that the survey identified that 70% of respondents found that lack of teacher knowledge about how to use the technology effectively was a challenge, proves that professional development on blogging is vital to assisting schools and their staff on how valuable blogging can be.

According to the survey conducted both students and teachers are familiar and connected personally to blogs, but a gap needs to be closed so that blogs can be used successfully by both students and teachers. In order to do so resources need to be available so that they can be used in an appropriate manner. The resources that are needed are access to the internet, and software that applies to blogging (i.e., Wordpress, Edublogs, etc.). There are many different software applications that are appropriate for basic application of blogs. Also, it would be helpful if teachers brought any curriculum that they would like to use when implementing blogs. Given these resources, participants in this professional development will find useful information that can better enhance the educational environment for both teachers and students.

Goals and Purpose

The short term goal for this professional development is to identify and understand what the benefits of blogging are and how you can best utilize those benefits in your own classroom setting. The long term goal for your professional development is to develop and maintain a blog that can be used to improve the communication between you and parents, you and fellow teachers, and you and your students.

Through this professional development you should be able to gain insight into what your strengths can be in creating a blog and how you can best serve the community of your own classroom. There will be many opportunities to discuss with your colleagues in order to formulate ideas and gain some perspective on what could and should be included in your own blog.

Ultimately, once you have completed this professional development you should feel confident enough to use your newly developed tools in order to create a blog that will help improve

Overview of Professional Development



Gain insight into what your strengths can be in creating a blog.

Expectations

The expectations for the participants of this professional development is that they come each day ready to learn and with an open mind. Using technology, especially technology that people may be unfamiliar with can be overwhelming. However, through this training participants can overcome those fears or discomforts in order to use technology to their benefit in the future.

Participants are expected to actively participate in discussions in order to gain the best possible experience. Participants are expected to bring their computers and be ready to participate in hands on learning. Finally participants are expected to respond truthfully and fully to all survey questions so that facilitators can gain an accurate perspective of where everyone stands.

Daily Agenda: Day 1

- 8:30-8:45** Sign in, refreshments, and find a seat
- 8:45-9:15** Ice breaker and Introductions
- 9:15-10:00** Discussion led by facilitators on “Why Do I Want to Use a Blog?”
- 10:00-10:45** Group discussion at tables on why blogs can be useful and complete the provided pre-survey
- 10:45-11:15** Begin hands on set up of your own blog
- 11:15-12:00** Break into Jigsaw groups and discuss ideas of what to include in your blog
- 12:00-12:30** Closing: Time for questions, concerns, and what to work on for tomorrow

Daily Agenda: Day 2

- 8:30-8:45** Sign in, refreshments, and find a seat
- 8:45-9:15** Round table activity; “What are the benefits and challenges of blogging?”
- 9:15-10:15** Instruction and Practice: Add components to your blog with facilitators available to assist
- 10:15-10:45** Instruction on how to interact with other blogs; tutorial in posting and editing posts
- 10:45-11:15** Practice: Post to at least two other PD participants blog
- 11:15-12:00** Closing: Time for questions, concerns, and what to work on for tomorrow

Daily Agenda: Day 3

- 8:30-8:45** Sign in, refreshments, and find a seat
- 8:45-9:15** Discussion: Putting the finishing touches on your blog
- 9:15-10:00** Work time: finish your blog as much as possible so it is ready to be used, facilitators available to help
- 10:00-10:15** Post survey: Views and concerns with blogging
- 10:15-10:45** Roundtable: Discuss with table mates what is included in your blog as well as theirs
- 10:45-11:15** Support: Discuss the support that will be available post PD as well as administer contact information
- 11:15-12:00** Conclusion: Summary of benefits of the blog and a follow up; how to check back in with PD to give updates of your progress

Following the professional development program send out a follow-up assessment for further use in enhancement of the program for future



PLEASE FOLLOW UP WITH OUR PD GROUP TO LET US KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE DONE SINCE YOU JOINED US.

NAME:

PHONE #:

BLOG URL:

EMAIL:

	<i>Very/Somewhat/None</i>	<i>Highlight</i>	<i>Further Explanation</i>
Were you satisfied with the learning experience?			
Did you apply your learning to your classroom?			
Do you feel comfortable sharing your learning with other educators?			
Have you designed lessons to use with your classroom blog?			
Have you seen improvement in your school or classroom academics?			
Would you attend a future PD to expand your knowledge or better use blogs in the classroom?			

References

Interactive educational systems design, Inc., national survey report. (March 2011). Digital districts: Web 2.0 and collaborative technologies in U.S. schools. Retrieved from <http://digitaldistrictsurvey.com/pages/digital-districts>

MacBride, R. , & Luehmann, A. (2008). Capitalizing on emerging technologies: A case study of classroom blogging. *School Science & Mathematics, 108*(5), 173-183.

Appendix A

Introduction 9:15-9:40

- I. What do we already know about blogs? This could be led as an open discussion, inviting the participants to share out what they already know about blogs

- II. Discuss the common features of a blog (posts, comments, bio information, links to other pages, etc.)

- III. Show example blogs that already exist that teachers have created

- IV. Provide reasons why a blog could be useful to participants (improve communication between teachers and parents, allow for a new forum to access information and display student work, integrate technology to improve ease and time management)

Group Discussion 9:40-10:00

- I. Instruct participants to use their provided discussion prompt sheet to talk to the people at their table about why they want to use their blog

- II. Provide five to ten minutes at the end for participants to share out

Appendix B

Blogging For The Benefit of All

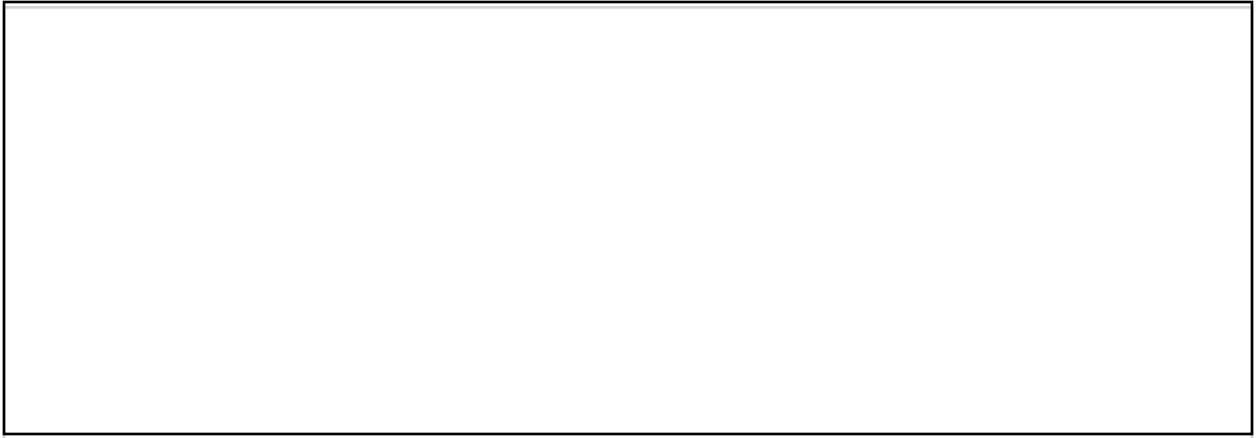
.....
Why Do I Want to Use a Blog?
.....

PLEASE USE THIS HANDOUT IN ORDER TO RECORD YOUR THOUGHTS AND NOTES ON WHY YOU PERSONALLY WANT TO USE A BLOG. YOU WILL ALSO HAVE TIME TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR FELLOW PARTICIPANTS AND RECORD YOUR THOUGHTS.

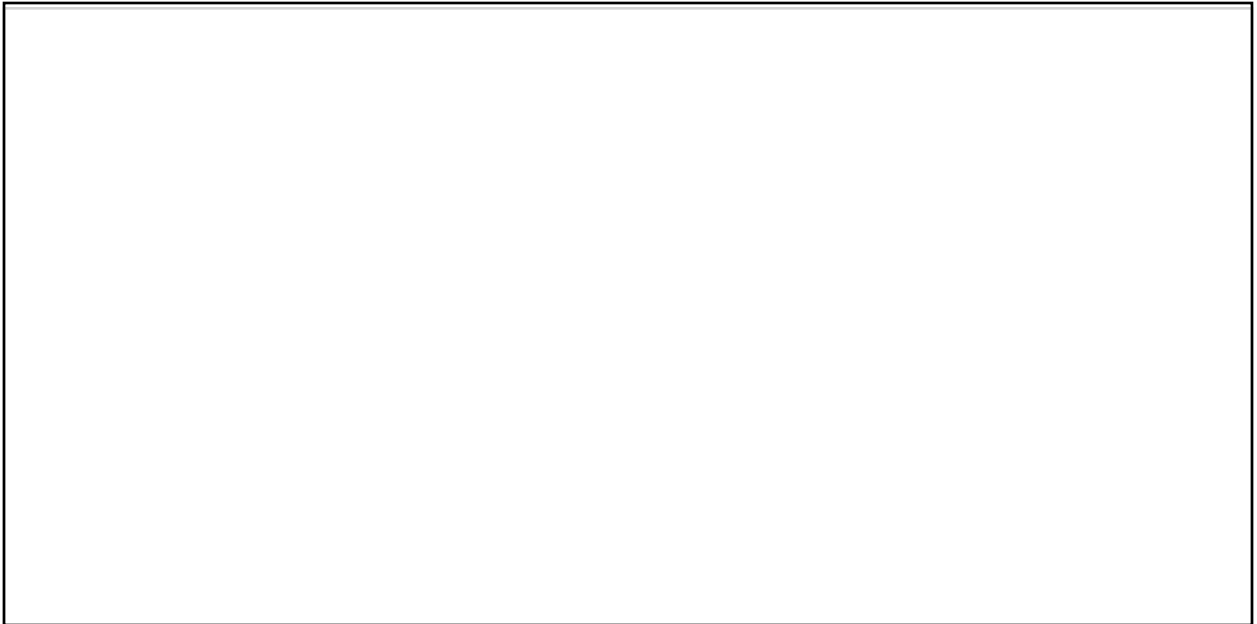
1. WHAT DO WE ALREADY KNOW ABOUT BLOGS?

2. WHAT ARE SOME COMMON FEATURES FOUND ON MOST BLOGS?

3. WHY COULD USING A BLOG BE USEFUL TO ME?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for students to write their answers to question 3.

4. USE THIS SPACE TO RECORD YOUR THOUGHTS AND IDEAS WHILE DISCUSSING WITH YOUR TABLEMATES WHY YOU WOULD LIKE TO USE A BLOG.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for students to record their thoughts and ideas while discussing with their tablemates.

Appendix C

Blogging For The Benefit of All

.....
Jigsaw Activity
.....

USE THIS HANDOUT TO FORMULATE YOUR THOUGHTS AND RECORD NOTES. WITH THE MEMBERS IN YOUR GROUP, TAKE TURNS SHARING YOUR IDEAS OF WHAT YOU THINK A BLOG SHOULD INCLUDE OR WHAT YOU WOULD WANT IT TO INCLUDE.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for students to take notes or record their thoughts during the jigsaw activity.

Appendix D

Blogging For The Benefit of All

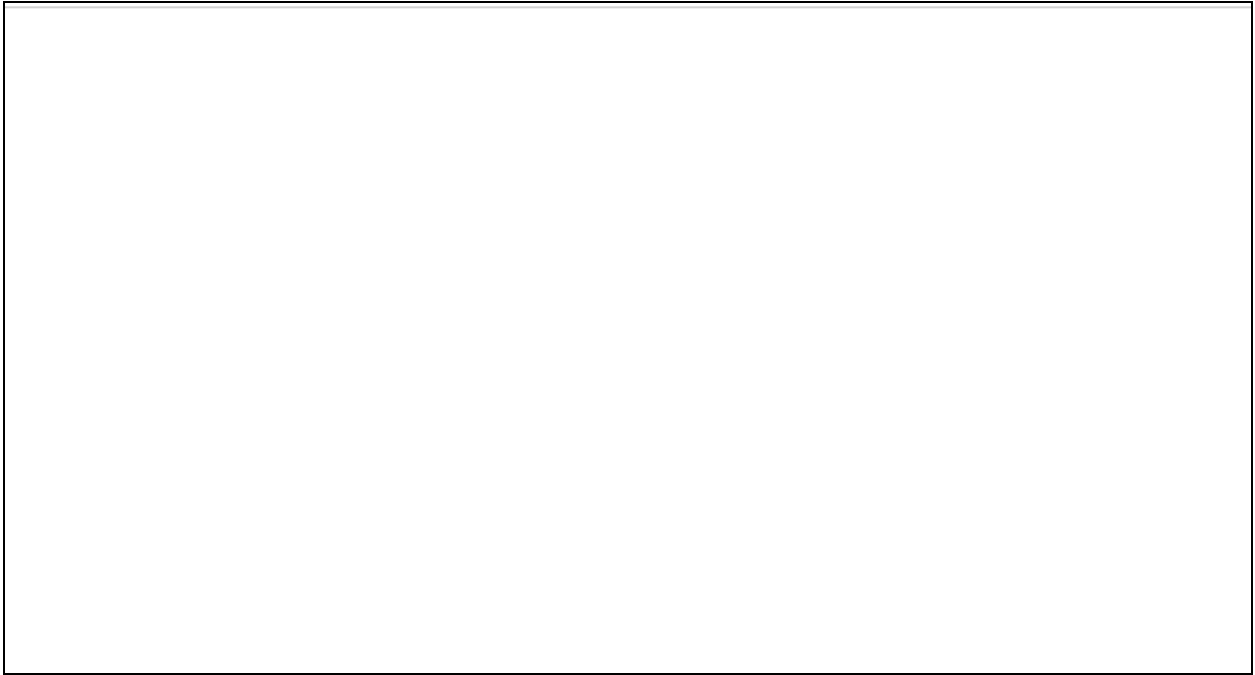
Pre-Survey

PLEASE RESPOND TO THE QUESTIONS AS HONESTLY AS POSSIBLE AND WRITE YOUR RESPONSE IN THE PROVIDED AREA.

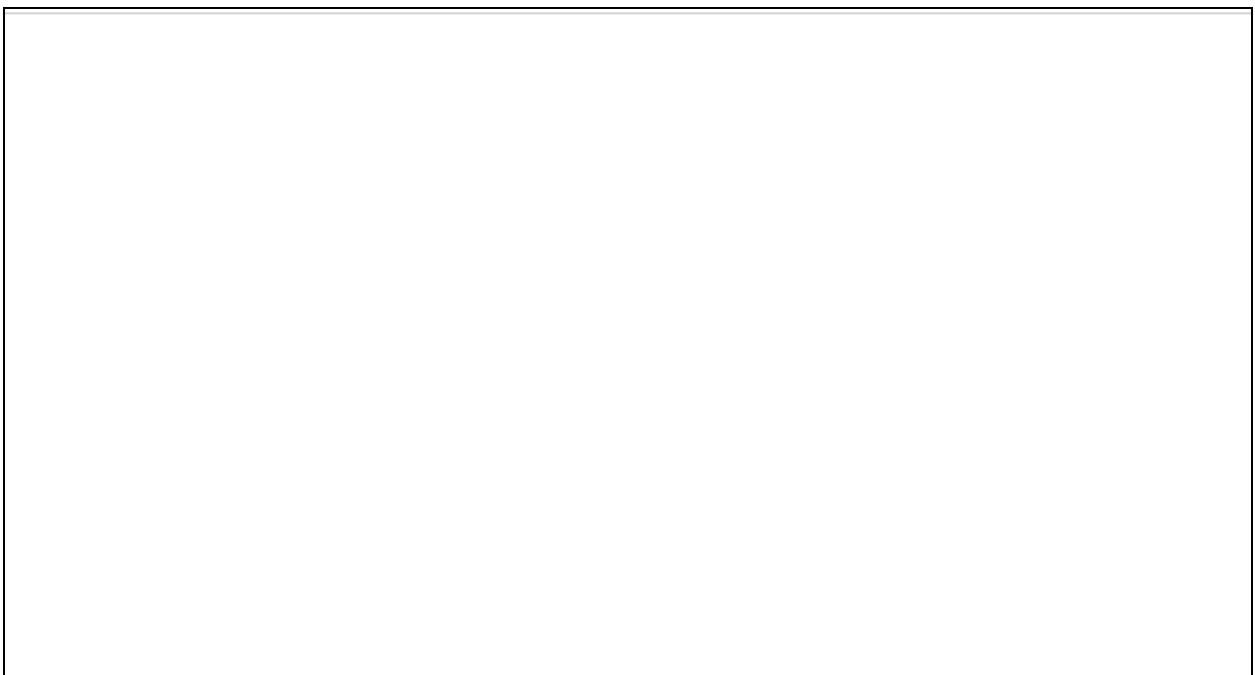
1. *HOW FAMILIAR ARE YOU WITH BLOGGING; HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF BLOGGING OR HAVE YOU EVER USED A BLOG?*

2. *WHAT ARE YOUR FEELINGS AND OPINIONS ABOUT USING A BLOG IN THE CLASSROOM? WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS OF WHEN IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO USE A BLOG?*

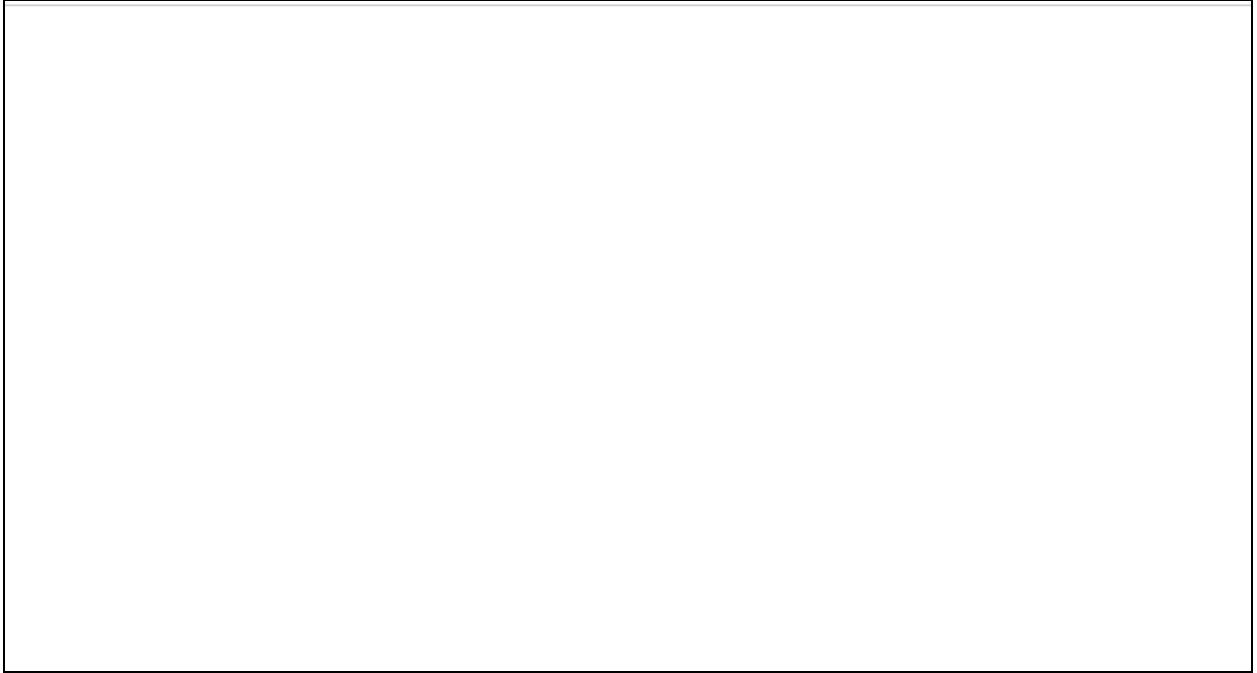
3. *WHAT ARE YOUR CONCERNS OR FEARS WITH USING A BLOG?*



4. *IF YOU WERE TO CREATE AND USE A BLOG WHAT, IDEALLY, WOULD YOU WANT IT TO INCLUDE? WHAT SUBJECT AREAS AND/OR CURRICULUM WOULD YOU WANT TO ADDRESS?*



5. *WHAT ARE YOU HOPING TO GAIN FROM THIS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT? WHAT ARE YOUR OWN PERSONAL GOALS FOR YOURSELF?*

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their response to the question above. The box is centered horizontally and occupies a significant portion of the page's vertical space.

Appendix E

Blogging For The Benefit of All

.....
Post-Survey
.....

PLEASE RESPOND TO THE QUESTIONS AS HONESTLY AS POSSIBLE AND WRITE YOUR RESPONSE IN THE PROVIDED AREA.

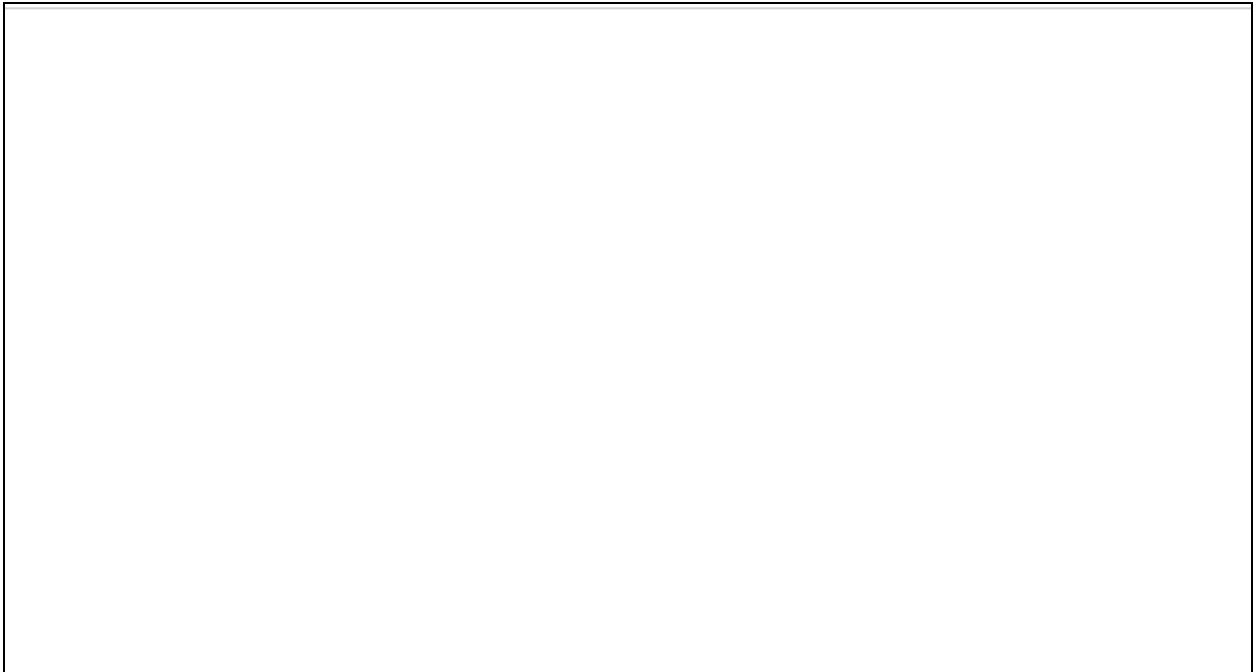
1. *AFTER COMPLETING THIS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT HOW COMFORTABLE DO YOU FEEL WITH BLOGGING? WILL YOU USE A BLOG IN THE FUTURE?*

2. *AFTER COMPLETING THIS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WHAT ARE YOUR FEELINGS AND OPINIONS ABOUT USING A BLOG IN THE CLASSROOM? WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS OF WHEN IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO USE A BLOG?*

3. *WHAT ARE YOUR CONCERNS OR FEARS WITH USING A BLOG?*



4. *WHAT DO YOU ENVISION YOURSELF DOING WITH YOUR BLOG NOW THAT YOU HAVE THE TOOLS TO UTILIZE IT?
WHAT WOULD YOUR PERFECT BLOG DO FOR YOU?*



5. *WHAT DID YOU GAIN FROM THIS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT? DID YOU MEET YOUR PERSONAL GOALS? IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE WE COULD HAVE DONE TO FURTHER SUPPORT YOU REACHING YOUR GOALS? OR OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE?*