

BLOGGING ABOUT BOOKS: WRITING, READING, AND THINKING IN A TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate how blogging as a reader response tool influences students' writing, response to literature, and thinking. From October 2006 through January 2007, thirty students in a ninth grade, English I Honors class, used the blog to post responses to literature. The data suggests that students can sustain appropriate and beneficial online conversations with minimal prompts from the teacher. Using open coding and categories from Hillocks (1980) and Odell (1999) student writing on the blog was analyzed for writing, specifically fluency and voice, levels of comprehension, and thinking. The data suggests that students' fluency, voice, and confidence increased. Students valued collaboration and felt that the blog created community. Students generated their own responses to the literature and made text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections. Students moved toward higher levels of comprehension. In addition, students demonstrated a variety of verbal and visual thinking strategies. Overall, the data suggest that students can sustain appropriate and beneficial online conversations with minimal prompts from the teacher.

A number of pedagogical recommendations are included. Recommendations include using the categories for analysis used in this paper to assess students' writing on the blog, as well as to assess their own writing.