

## Journaling in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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It has been shown that to write something down on paper helps to clarify and add understanding to that which you have written about. Trying to get your thoughts out on paper is another term used to express the same idea. In fact I have used journaling in my classes for several years now both in math and other subjects. I have students keep monthly journals on Poetry, Music, Short Stories through out the year. I have them keep a Math journal to reflect on the problem of the week and quarterly projects through out the year as well. One of the main draw backs of this is that I have to collect, read, comment (if warranted) and return to the student in a timely manner. As teachers are ever more pressed for time how can we have students practice a proven exercise in a meaningful way that will enhance their learning experience and not take up valuable amounts of our time too? Welcome to the Blog!

This summer I was able to participate in the Blogging community of IISME veterans. I was able to learn a lot about blogging and how I might be able to use it in the classroom to enhance the journaling experience of my students.

Blogging is a term given to keeping a journal online that other people in your community or people on your friends list can read and comment on if they desire. To blog is to actually write the journal. Our task this summer was to blog about our IISME experience at each of our sites and to add our thoughts about the state of education as we see it.

My fellowship was at Intel and I had many opportunities to blog about the cubicle experience and how it contrasts to that of the classroom. I was also able to share some of the corporate culture that exists at Intel and how the employees went about maintaining this culture in the work place. Each employee carries a list of the company values with their employee ID badge and is able to cite for you the key ones that they believe help them to achieve the type of positive atmosphere at Intel. It appears to me that most of the employees that I was able to talk to mentioned being able to work toward the task at hand and communicate effectively as the main key to a successful work environment.

I also blogged about the sense of job satisfaction and happiness Intel employees showed in the work place. Most of my days at Intel were nice and the employees seemed happy and eager to get to work. When a project or task was completed successfully there seemed to be enormous satisfaction at meeting the goal on time and on budget.

I blogged about my IISME experience, and how awesome it was to get to know so many wonderful teachers and how they too have help me to grow. How I wished we as teachers could experience the enthusiasm that employees at Intel seem to carry with them to work everyday and how so many IISME teachers seem to have or show during their summer fellowships.

In another blog I pointed out how I plan to use blogging as a tool in my class next year and how I hope it will stimulate students to think and write more because it is a format of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I mentioned in another blog how nice it would be to get a whole bunch of IISME teachers and start a charter school with all the technology and corporate wisdom adapted for education based on the latest data and IISME veteran teacher experience. What would that school look like?

Several of my fellow bloggers had very wise counsel and information in their blogs. List of several handy web addresses were made available to the community. Some of my favorite bloggers were jonathan\_iisme, michelle\_iisme, and dowbiggin. I am not sure I ever figured out what dowbiggin means but all three of these individuals were insightful and humorous in their blogs... they also seemed to be enjoying it the most. I would have to say the best of the bunch is teacherlara! She provided us with many links and thought provoking ideas on the most current issues in education. She also seemed to have a way of cheering me up with her oh so positive attitude.

I was also able to post comments on another blog community, the 5E community with Alicia. The way she handled here community is that she would post instructions on what she wanted us to do and then we were to reply with our thoughts on the task. I see my math bloggers in my class doing it this way. I will provide the students with a post question of the day or week and have them give their thoughts on it in our community. I am not sure on all the ways I will have students respond. Another idea I have had is to have students comment on the problem of the week as part of their weekly blog. I could also have several different blog ideas going in a given month.

I have enjoyed my blogging this summer but I can see that like all assignments that I give students I need to make sure it is not just busy work. Many times I would not have a reflection in mind for a particular day and it would be hard for me to come up with meaningful words. I actually posted about this once and got several replies. My post was actually about time spent in front of the computer and if it was used wisely. If I have issues with this imagine 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders... I really feel it is important for me to be sure to help my students to be able to focus and get the task done with efficiency while still make it interesting, challenging, and perhaps fun for them.

I did learn a lot about blogging this summer and I plan to use this new tool quite a bit in the coming year. My wish is that students will be engaged, and I will see their understanding of the subjects go to a deeper level through online group discussion.