

Ensure Students Are Learning: Faculty Descriptions of Innovative Teaching Practices

Student Blogs on Padlet

Innovative Teaching Practice Description:

Student blogs are online sites where students post information about themselves and publish their class writing assignments. The blogs serve as a writing portfolio as students are assigned to write posts about the subject matter covered in class. Blogs are set up on the first day of class using a web-based service, Padlet. The first post assignment is “Who Am I,” whereby students share information about who they are. This provides an early opportunity for all students to learn about one another. Subsequent posts include warm-ups and in-class prompts, eight informal reflections, and four formal reflections. The writing warm-ups and in-class prompts are short in-class writing assignments. The informal reflections are approximately one- and-a-half pages and are usually assigned as homework. Formal five to seven page reflection papers and short visual assignments are assigned as homework. The visual assignments ask students to use pictures and other graphics to supplement their posts.

Before students can publish a warm-up or in-class prompt post, they must go through a peer review process. Publishing groups of two to three students review each other’s work and suggest edits; each student incorporates the peer review feedback before posting to the blog. The informal and formal reflections are reviewed and edited by the professor before being published. The blog makes up 30%

of the course grade; a midterm and final are also given. In grading the blogs, the instructor looks for completeness, sufficient and relevant supporting evidence, and how the student’s voice is used.

How to Ensure Participation in This Innovative Teaching Practice:

Students interact with the blog during class, keeping them connected to the course material.

Notes from the Instructor About This Innovative Teaching Practice:

“Because this activity is new for most students, it is important to set the tone early and provide students with ample time to become familiar with the software. The first day of class is dedicated to setting up the blogs, and students are given a few class meetings to practice using the blog before any major posts are due.”