

## Blogging about Physics:

VCE Physics Conference 2010  
Session C2  
Christopher Jones  
The University High School

### Abstract

- Web 2.0 technologies, such as blogs, give students a great way to express their opinion as well as their understanding. In this session I will show how I have used blogging about issues such as Nuclear Power to engage my students in collaborative learning. I will provide participants with instructions on how to use suitable websites such as edublogs and provide worksheets and guidelines for you to modify for your class.

### What I love about blogging!!



### What is blogging?

- A Blog (web log) is a website, where users place regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video.
- Readers are often able to leave comments in an interactive format.

### The Bloggosphere

- personal blog
- vlog
- artlog
- photolog
- moblog
- political blogs

### Blogging software

- Blogs are included in Web 2.0 technologies because the software can exist online.
- Great for schools because of
  - *Licensing*
  - *Software installation*
  - *Student access*
- Not so great being online because you have to:
  - *Share it*
  - *Upload/download to and from the internet*
  - *Internet has to be working.*
  - *Not so secure*

## Websites

- Sites that I know people use at unihigh:
- Wordpress
- Pageflakes
- Edublogs – I have an account

## edublogs

## Blogger.com (google)

## Blogging software

- Microsoft Sharepoint
  - Sharepoint services
  - Includes a number of technologies:
    - Wikis
    - Discussion boards
    - "Walls"
    - And Blogs
  - Licensed to Ed Dept schools
  - Installed on local server
  - Safe environment (good/bad later)
- Screen dump on next slide

## What to blog about. . .

## How can we use a blog in Physics

- Blogs are a great way of expressing an opinion. Traditionally this is done in a report. Simply(?) replace any report style assessment with a blog.
- Students group blog (collaborative learning) allows students to work together to create a single submission (wiki?)
- Journal of learning – prac logbook where students are able to reflect
- Posting ideas for others to provide feedback (discussion board)

## Study Design Assessment

- Assessment tasks for this unit are:
  - a selection from the following:
    - an annotated folio of practical activities
    - a data analysis
    - a multimedia or web page presentation
    - a response to a media article
    - a summary report of selected practical investigations including maintenance of a logbook
    - a written report
    - a test (short answer and extended response).

## Comparison of blog / report

### Report

- Student expresses an opinion at home in a report
- Teacher reads opinion and comments
- Teacher assigns grade
- Student can try complaining to teacher about the grade
- Tells other students about it

### Blog

- Student expresses an opinion online from home
- Class reads opinion and can add a comment online.
- Student can respond to the comments given
- A discussion can then begin.
- Teacher assigns grade and can include participation etc.

## Where to get ideas from!

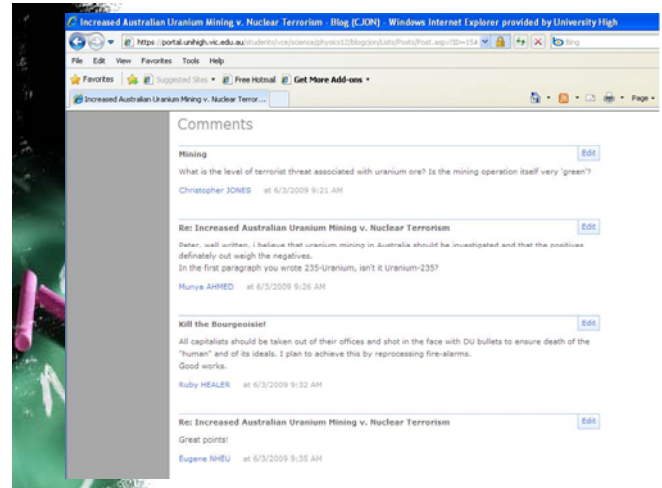
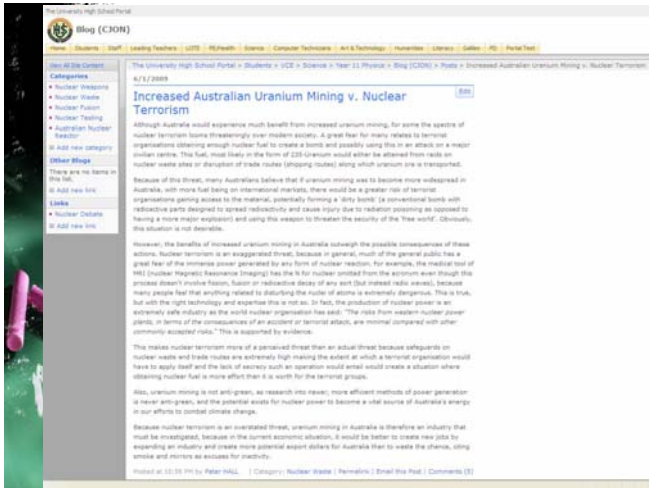
- Textbook resources
  - Heinemann Physics 11
    - Starting points for investigations
- Media articles
- News broadcasts

Blogging about Physics

## CASE STUDY

## UHS Case Study

- Unit 1 AOS 3 Energy from the nucleus (!)
- Nuclear issues debate
- Students are required to
  - read all of the text first
  - Read the research topics from text
  - Decide what they are most interested in studying further and research it.
  - Write their response/blog
  - Read other student's blog posts
  - Comment on three other blogs
  - Respond to at least one comment or question.



## Downside

- Takes longer to complete the Assessment task.
- You may need to teach some/all of the students how to use the software
- Need access to school computers (if giving class time)
- Student need to access UHS intraweb from home or otherwise stay at school.
- Students cannot post blog late or their work is not there for other students to read and comment.
- Some students do not take the task seriously.
- Opens the class to 'online bullying' types of behaviour.

## Upside

- Students are writing their response to an audience of their peers.
- They get to read more than one response and can often see an opinion different to their own.
- They can reflect on their own work and formulate responses
- They get to have the final say (maybe)
- More motivated
  - *the quality of work was very good*
  - *Students more eager to have discussion*
- Less copying from Wikipedia

## Upside (continued . . .)

- No paper – but some students will still print the ones they want out
- Students get to see the quality of other students work.
  - *Great for lower achieving students*
  - *Great for ESL*
    - Draft work and edit response
    - Can read other examples before starting
- Assessment can be performed by peers (more later)

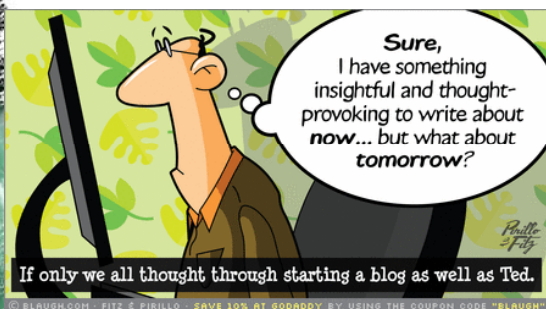
Blogging about Physics

## LEARNING HOW

## Go and Blog

- Try out your own blog.
- If you are going online, set up a hotmail account or something like it that you can get rid of if too much spam starts arriving
- I use
  - [cjunihigh@hotmail.com](mailto:cjunihigh@hotmail.com)
  - [cjunihigh@gmail.com](mailto:cjunihigh@gmail.com)
  - [Christopherjones@live.com.au](mailto:Christopherjones@live.com.au)
- Each provider will often have their own account.

## Write a second blog (?)



## Rules - cybersafety

- How many schools have a code of conduct?
- ICT or Computer use policy

### Concerns

- Online Avatars:
  - *Are you talking to who you think are?*
- Who can see what you are saying?
- "Would you let your mother read it?"

## cyberbullying



## Have access to technical support

- Other teachers that use blogging
- Need to ensure that your students are safe or that you took precautions to only allow access to the blog by registered users etc.

Blogging about Physics

## ASSESSING A BLOG

### Assessment Criteria

- You can assess the blog the same way you assess a written report.
- BUT you can also add
  - Participation
  - Cyber-behaviour
  - On time submission
  - Quality of comments/questions
  - Student's response to your comment/question
  - Can take into consideration other students comments on the blog (opinion)

### Will you blog this year?

