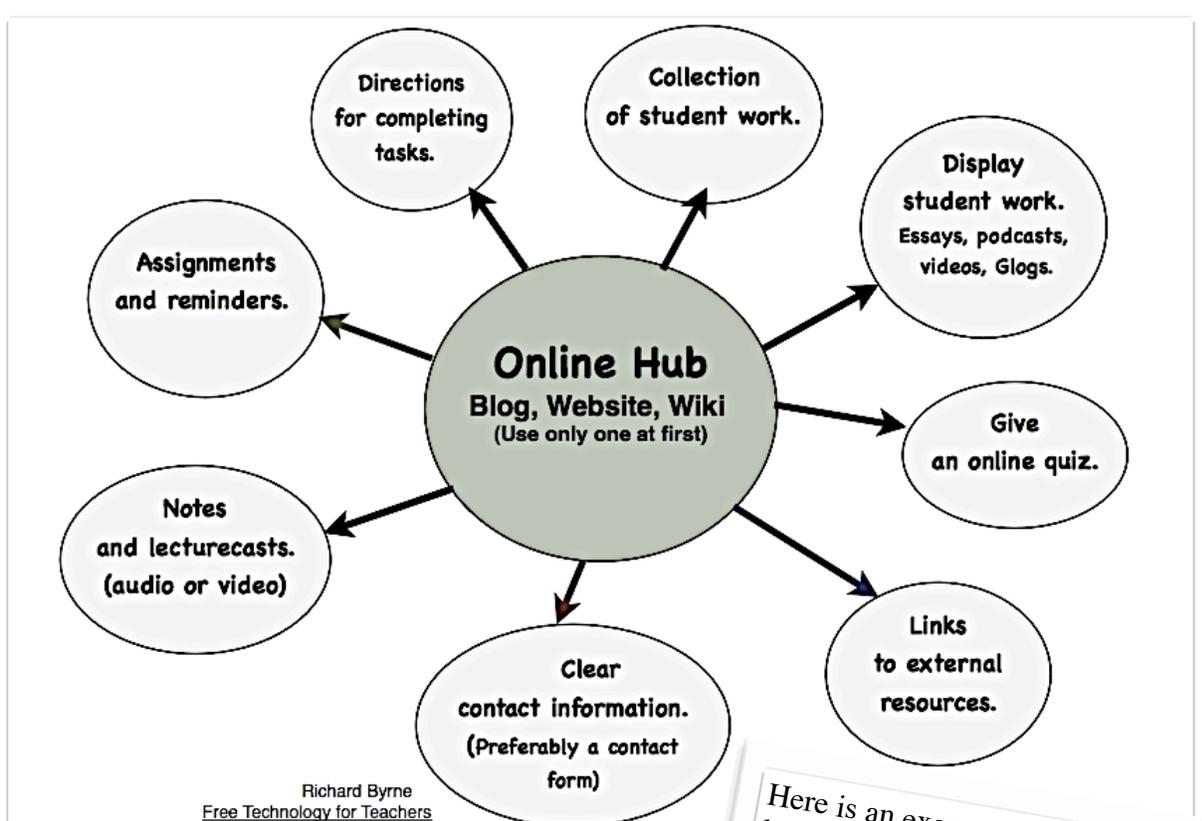


How to do blended learning—using a blog:

Blogs are websites that are organized by blog posts - these are individual news stories, like articles in the paper. Bloggers simply fill out a form to post a new story. With the click of a button, the blog post appears at the top of the web page, just above yesterday's news. Over time, the blog becomes a collection of these posts, all archived for easy reference. Each blog post can become a discussion through comments left by readers. Blogs make the news a two way street.

If you are not familiar with how blogs work, watch this Common Craft video to get started: www.commoncraft.com/blogs

Here are some of the ways instructors use blogs as an online hub:



Here is an example of how a literacy instructor uses a class blog: mathkarin.wordpress.com

Fortunately for educators, blogs are easy to use.

They require minimum technical knowledge and are easy to create and maintain. They are flexible in design and can be changed relatively easily. Learners find them convenient and accessible via home or library computers. Blogs can be open to the public or they can be closed to invited participants only.

Some ways to use blogs are:

Classroom Management

Class blogs can be a hub for a community of learners. Blogs can be used to post handouts, notices, and assignments, or be a place for learners to ask questions.

Collaboration

Blogs provide a space where instructors and learners can work to develop writing skills and present creative work to an audience of peers. Learners can participate in cooperative learning activities that require them to report research findings, ideas, or suggestions.

Discussions

With a blog, every person has an equal opportunity to share their thoughts and opinions. Learners have time to be reflective. Instructors can bring together a group of knowledgeable individuals for a given unit of study for learners to network with.

Learner Portfolios

Blogs present, organize, and protect learner work as digital portfolios. As older entries are archived, developing skills and progress may be analyzed. Sometimes when learners realize their efforts will be published, they produce better writing. Instructors and peers can discuss a developing work with a learner individually and expert or peer mentoring advice can be kept for future reference.

Setting up a Blog

WordPress (wordpress.org) and Blogger (www.blogger.com) are the two most popular blogging platforms.

Blogger is probably the easiest to use. Blogger blogs are hosted by Blogger so you do not need to find a host or download any software.

WordPress has more features and plug-ins but is a little more complicated. Wordpress requires users to host their blog at a web hosting site and download software.



Getting Started with Wordpress:
http://codex.wordpress.org/Main_Page



Blogger video tutorial:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BnploFsS_tY
Blogger tour: https://www.blogger.com/tour_start.g