

# Integrated Media Literacy Project

## Global QuadBlogging (Intermediate to Secondary Grades)

### Project Description

Using online blogging websites, such as Wordpress, Tumblr, or in this case Edublogs, students can create their own blogs to share experiences and interact with others. In our projects, students blogged about their experiences of being in an Olympic games host city, and both shared with and learned from the experiences of students in other host cities around the world. After creating blogs, students can share them through a resource called Quadblogging that connects them with other global blogging students, or can use. Students can gain an understanding of not only the production of online content but also the interpretation of it as well.

### Before the Project

- **Research and Learning:** Students and teachers should review the curricular topic before beginning the project, and decide on a focus for the blog. For our project, the topics of ancient and modern Olympic history, the Torch Relay, local athletes and their training centers, and city venues were explored along with the benefits, challenges and disadvantages of being a host city. Blog posts started with student introductions, then continued to curricular topics in order of their potential challenge to students' writing and comprehension skills.
- **Technical and Media Setup:**
  - Teachers should create an account and send students links to create their own accounts and blogs. For manageability, we recommend that students work in pairs or small groups while creating their projects.
  - Should teachers choose to join Edublogs, they should contact Quadblogging ahead of time in order to join a Quad, as joining is dependent on when a new Quadcycle begins and the availability of the Quad Coordinator. Should they wish to use Wordpress or Tumblr, they can directly contact schools in relevant cities around the world and coordinate a simple timeline and deadlines for blog writing and comments.
  - Teachers should familiarize themselves with whichever media tool they choose prior to the lesson to ensure ease of use and answers to possible questions. We strongly recommend creating a short introductory blog post with text, images, hyperlinks and embedded video clips (if desired) to share with students and with other blogging classrooms.

### First Online Session

- Teachers can start their session by reviewing the project outline and blogging criteria (desired blog length, content and writing style).
- We also recommend that teachers discuss blogging guidelines with their class, and develop an agreement that every student can sign prior to starting the creation of their blog. Samples

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can be found under Step 2 at the Edublogs Teacher Challenges page:

<http://teacherchallenge.edublogs.org/2011/02/18/student-blogging-activity-2-beginner-setting-up-rules-guidelines/>

- Teachers and students should also review proper methods of referencing their online and traditional information sources, as well as techniques for confirming that information is both true and complete. If any photographs or media are to be used, make sure the students are using copyright free images, from websites such as Wikimedia Commons ([http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)), Creative Commons (<http://search.creativecommons.org/>), Flickr ([www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)) (Search through Creative Commons to ensure they are licensed under CC), Pics4Learning ([www.pics4learning.com](http://www.pics4learning.com)), Picdrome (<http://www.picdrome.com/>), Library of Congress (<http://www.loc.gov/index.html>). Students can also use copyrighted images when providing a link to their source and a reference to the author/photographer.
- Students should start their blog by creating a folder on a desktop or secure file space, labeled with their name.
- Students should create one Word or other text document for their works cited or bibliography page, and a second text document to work on writing that can be used as a backup copy. This can also be used as a spelling and grammatical aid.
- Teachers can provide an introduction to Edublogs & Quadblogging or Wordpress & Tumblr, reviewing the basic steps that students will be following over the course of their project: creating a blog post, accessing their peers' blogs, adding comments, and posting reply blogs.
- Students should finish this session by constructing their online identity: each student should create a nickname or pseudonym, and if time permits, students may also choose to create an avatar using Voki ([www.voki.com](http://www.voki.com)).

## **Second Session**

- Students should begin this session by logging into their blog account and opening the files in their personal folder for the project.
- Teachers may choose to show an example of successful student blogging. In our case, we presented Amy Bunnage's blog from the Coquitlam Centre Shopping Mall (<http://coquitlamcentre.com/blog/apr-2012/day-6-amy-bunnage-teen-blogger>). The class can discuss writing style, photo credits, and audience.
- The first session of blog writing can now begin. However, we recommend that students should most likely not post on their first lesson, to ensure that they take their time to understand how a blog post should begin (an introduction to oneself and one's host city, in our case study), and to develop their writing voice and blog structure. We also highly recommend that teachers introduce the draft feature that allows students to save and review their work before publishing to avoid errors. Ask students to read through their own, and others' work, before posting.

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- Teachers will also likely want to provide students with both a content overview (for example, introduction to self, why interested in Olympics (or not), favorite Olympic event, and general questions to students in other cities).
- Students should work on their first blog post, and start to develop their unique voice as a writer.
- Students should also add media to their blogs, including images, videos and hyperlinks, making sure to attribute to the creator and/or use copyright-free work.
- Teachers can conclude this session by ensuring that students undertake a final review, then save their work for publication either on the next day or by teachers to facilitate gathering comments from other classrooms' students.

## **Third Session**

- Students should begin this session by logging into their blog account and opening the files in their personal folder for the project.
- At this point, teachers should ensure that students from other classrooms have created blogs for which their students can provide comments.
- Prior to writing comments, teachers should review and help students to practice commenting etiquette: providing insight, helpful critique, and being respectful and appropriate.
- Students can then read other faraway students' blog posts, and can leave comments on at least 2 student blogs.
- Students may then begin their next blog post with a newly assigned topic, writing and adding media to their blogs, including images, videos and hyperlinks, making sure to attribute to the creator and use copyright free work.
- When ready, students can publish their blogs and await reply from other students.
- Teachers can continue the blog-comment-reply cycle as long as is agreed upon by all parties involved.
- To engage students in reflecting about their online learning, ask:
  - Why are blogs useful to learn and exchange ideas?
  - What did you learn about writing blogs? How is writing a blog different than writing a letter, or an essay, or a newspaper/magazine article?
  - What other ways could blogging be applied? How could you make use of the interactive comments feature for other topics of study?

Prepared by: The Cinematheque Education Department, Classroom Facilitator Dawn Moore and Coquitlam School District Teachers Alysa Patching, Crystal Redlich and Gavin Hanna.