

Blog, Journal, and Threaded Discussion Learning Activity Ideas

- ❖ Students conduct reflections or journaling on course readings, course discussions, etc. This can be visible to the instructor only or the entire class (fish bowl journaling). You can experiment with different types of feedback (peer, instructor only, feedback online only, feedback face-to-face, private requests to read and discuss select journal entries with the class).
- ❖ Discuss course readings online in preparation for or as follow up to face-to-face activities and/or discussions. In order to initiate dialogue about the readings, consider having each student or group member contribute three insights, one resource beyond the assigned reading, and one application or example for personal experience. -from Conrad and Donaldson, *Engaging the Online Learner*, 2004)
- ❖ Each student writes from the perspective of a theorist, literary character, historical character, politician, person of a particular religious background, patient experiencing symptoms, Biblical character, heretic, etc. Other students try to figure out the identity or respond to the issues posed by the character.
- ❖ ...same as above, but students all know the roles played by their peers. If a student is playing the role of Abraham Lincoln, others ask questions of Abe and the student must research and respond to these questions. The group can debrief these interactions in a face to face discussion.
- ❖ Create an instructor blog as a place where you provides resources that will help students with tests, assignments, etc. You can use this to post Power Points and other documents for the class.
- ❖ Have students engage in a variety of social experiments (observations, conversations, etc.) throughout the semester, posting their experiences and findings throughout the semester. Have peers review and comment upon these experiences in view of the course readings, discussions, or outside sources.
- ❖ Have students keep an imaginary travel log or journal simulating and exploring experiences related to the course, but not readily available. Each student in a theology class creates a travel log of journeys through a different Biblical city.
- ❖ Have students keep a “travel log” of their thoughts and experiences throughout the course. Students can include reflective journaling, pictures, attached documents, reviews of related sources, and links to relevant materials. Create a rubric that clearly explains your expectations (or lack thereof).
- ❖ Consider turning your travels (or the travels of a student or peer) into teachable moments. Teaching from the Road – professor of marketing at West Texas A&M

U taught an online marketing class while on a 5000 mile 5 week trip – blogging on his travel experiences

- ❖ Have a guest contributor to the class via a blog – e.g. a group of alumni willing to contribute to a blog, sharing “real life” scenarios for class discussion.
- ❖ Create an anonymous “Dear Abby” column, encouraging students to submit questions. Discuss online and/or in class. When appropriate, have students play the role of Abby.
- ❖ Pose a problem or situation that requires creativity to resolve. Consider a problem or situation that can be addressed in multiple ways. Have students propose solutions to the problem and comment upon one another’s solutions. Consider requiring students to reference information from the text, research and cite journal articles or other sources, etc.
- ❖ Divide students into groups, assigning each group a “blog area.” Each group is responsible for serving as the “resident experts” on a given topic, posting editorials and information about relevant links, images, etc.
- ❖ Have students post research proposals for projects and papers to peers, and receive feedback from a group of peer editors. Consider providing editors with a rubric, assign a dedicated timeframe, etc.
- ❖ Pose a case study (or have students develop case studies) and have the entire class or individual groups discuss and negotiate a common course of action.
- ❖ Invite guest pastors, scholars, practitioners, etc. to serve as virtual guest speakers over a 1-2 week period in the form of a threaded discussion.
- ❖ Develop a blog where the class develops a collective resource on a given topic. Each student is responsible for contributing one or several unique contributions, and classmates can review the usefulness of the different contributions.