My use of blogging was a long time in developing. I was always reluctant to simply use technology for the sake of technology. But as blogging became more popular and the technology became more available I decided that blogging would be a way of using technology to educate students in a way that was previously impossible.

First, the rise of blogging in general seems to necessitate a blogging literacy among students. A number of our grads have gone on to work in media and they have returned to school to emphasize the multi-media explosion of the last few years. For example, one student works for Fox and he is producer, but he also does on-air reporting and throughout the last presidential campaign he maintained a blogsite for Fox that would be updated throughout the day. Many other traditional news sources such as newspapers are turning to blogging as well. My first goal is to introduce students to this up and coming trend.

Second, I have been very aware of the change from a producer to a consumer society. We have become a nation of consumers. By creating a blog, it makes students producers again. The student-managed blogs are productive in that students are producing their own writing and thoughts. Blogging is unique in that it allows for a forum for students to produce something that reaches millions of people. The seriousness and meaningfulness of blogging changes the dynamics of what would be a traditional assignment. Rather than a journal that is turned in to a teacher and then discarded, the blog is something that can be accessed by the general public. One example from my own life recently is that I was googling an article that we read last year in class because I couldn’t find my copy of it. The first few yields of the google search were my previous students’ blogs about the article. Now I not only had the article I was looking for, but I also had the context with which we discussed it in class. Students are now helping to produce the content of the class, and content for anyone with the Internet to see.

Along the lines of being productive, the third point about blogging that I have found to be transformational is that it requires students to take the class content and apply it to their own lives. In doing so, and in sharing this application, the students become teachers for themselves. In other words, I am not the only one giving examples of our lesson to the students, but now the students are giving each other a lesson as well. I do not want students to be simple consumers of my sociology, but I want them to produce their own sociology that I can learn from as well. With the blog I am finding more and more that students have insights and stories to share that add to our understanding of the content, and these stories would not be available without the blogging.

One of the reasons that the student insights are available because of blogging is the limited amount of classroom time. The blog is an unlimited classroom where
students can read as much as they want and are free to share as much as they want. On the blog, I never have to say to students, “Okay, we have to move on.” This virtual classroom allows motivated and interested students to be as involved as they would like to be, without dominating the class. Incidentally, this has been really useful in terms of absences. My classes have a notoriously high absence rate. When students return and ask “what did I miss?” I say, “Check the blog.”

Lastly, I have always been wary of what we were measuring with our objective tests. The blog is a type of online portfolio that allows real assessment of a student’s grasp of the subject matter and the student’s ability to apply that subject matter to his/her real life.
Beginning the Blog

Please read these steps carefully and complete step 1 before we meet in the link tomorrow. You will be creating your own blog page to use as an ongoing e-journal throughout the duration of this course. You will be expected to use the next couple of days to develop your blog using creative yet appropriate images, design, fonts, colors, etc. to make it your own. You need to follow the steps as well as the restrictions that are listed below.

NOTE: Do not use last names on the blog and do not use specific identifiers such as your address or the name of our school. Instead, you can consider using your first and middle names or other nicknames and for the school, simply say a suburban high school or something like that.

STEP 1: Please go to https://www.blogger.com/start and follow the steps to create your blog. Begin by clicking on “Create a blog.” If it asks to text you a verification code, you can do that without fear of google spamming you. Don’t feel pressured for a good title – this is changeable, but the url address is permanent. As you fill out the info, PLEASE BE SURE THAT YOU WRITE DOWN THE FOLLOWING INFO:

USERNAME: ____________________________

PASSWORD: ____________________________

BLOG ADDRESS/URL: http://www.________________________.blogspot.com/

AND YOUR PASSWORD TO GIVE TO MR. SALITuro

Click here and enter that info into this google doc.
https://docs.google.com/a/d125.org/forms/d/1vMnIlrZvR2Wb64B_p-SIubBW7JnPYyP2Tohr8oYfUrQ/viewform

STEP 2: Click on settings and then click on comments and scroll down to the bottom where it says Comment Notification Email. Enter in the email address you check most frequently.

STEP 3: Once you have created a blog and are logged into your blogpage (which should be at the blog address in Step 1)

• Click Design(At the top) or "layout"(on the side)
• Then--&gt; (on the side bar) click "add gadget" --&gt; scroll down and click add link list
• In the “new site url” box, write: http://sociologysal.blogspot.com
• In the “new site name” box, write: Sal’s Page or Ways of Thinking

Click “add a link” to add any other links that will make your blogsite more useable (add any websites you might check frequently like your yahoo/aol/hotmail, or your facebook or whatever).

STEP 4: Feel free to add pictures/change fonts/layouts/templates to make this blog personal and conducive to you! There’s lots of gadgets – feel free to explore them.

STEP 5: Use for the Course:
NCSS 2013, St. Louis, MO.
Sociology Symposium
Session 1; Chris Salituro, Blogging in Sociology

• You are to make at least 1 post (on your own page) and 2 comments (on a classmate’s page each week) but feel free to post more.

For this class, each post should (This is how you will be graded):

  o Should demonstrate that you understand the sociology terms, ideas and content in class.
  o Should apply the sociology to your own life and help others understand the sociology. Use examples from your own life, or examples you find in your posts. Be unique. Avoid cliché’s. Make your blog authentic. Bring in new ideas from your experiences, what you read, your daily life, etc.
  o Write properly, use proper prose and grammar, and post on time – by classtime the last day of each week.
  o Comment on a different classmate’s page each week.

STEP 6: First post:

• Who am I? Write a blog entry that defines who you are. Explain to the class what makes up the person you are. What are the biggest influences in your life? What are your goals/purposes in life?

Precautions:

• Please remember that this blog should be treated as seriously as you would treat a test or an essay or a project for class.

• You should also refrain from using your full last name anywhere on the blog.

• You will be responsible for monitoring what people have posted on your blog.

This is not your facebook account, you need to be aware that this site is public, therefore DO NOT use your Full Name on the page, DO NOT use information that a “ creeper” could use to identify you. DO keep your posts, pictures, and songs appropriate.

More Blogging Information

Music:

There used to be a way to add music to your page, but that has changed. But you may be able to figure out a way to add music. Search the web for music players, or mixpods, or blog music player.
Teacher Notes on Blogging in Sociology

Monitoring and sharing
After you setup your own teacher blog and the students have their own student blogs, have students fill out the info slip and turn it in to you. Then, I use google reader. Using Google Reader, input student blog URLs and it will tell you if it is valid. If so, I add it to my reader list and create a file for each period. After you have a file in your reader for each of your periods, you can tell Google Reader to share your list with your blog. The students’ blogs will all appear on your blog page now. I use this to tell students that they can see what their peers are blogging about. I require each student to comment on two different students’ blogs each week. Besides automatically sharing the blogs, the Google Reader allows you to easily monitor students’ posts. Just check your Google Reader and it will tell you who posted and when.

Requirements
I require students to post once per week. This is what I tell students regarding blogging:

I will help you create your own unique blog using <<blogger.com>>. There will be one post required from you each week. Your post must be up by classtime on the last school day of each week. The blog is an exercise for you to connect what you are learning in class to your life. It is supposed to be a forum that allows you to interact with your classmates outside of class and allows you to be both a teacher and a student to your fellow classmates. Each blog will be worth ten points. My blog address is <http://sociologysal.blogspot.com>

I have found success when I commented on students’ posts early in the semester and let them know I am monitoring and interested.

Student Attitude
I have found more success by emphasizing that students should feel ownership in their blogs. I tell them to personalize the page, add pictures and music. I tell them that their writing is real – in the sense that everyone can read what they write. They are not simply turning it in to me. So they should have fun and take ownership in the blog.

Security
I also emphasize internet safety. I think this is a valuable skill to be teaching our young people. I tell them about not sharing specific information such as addresses, last names or even identifiable pictures. Students are generally surprised when I show them <<zabasearch.com>> and the information available there. I also use this as a teaching note to help students think long term about what they are publishing on the web (including facebook). They should be mindful that this information could show up later when they apply to college or apply for a job or run for president.
Scaled Standards
(Assessing student achievement in blog posts)

Standards in bold with scaling below each standard:

**Sociology** (Artisan – students can craft authentic posts that richly explain the class content in a unique way): Students will be able to explain the concept of sociological imagination through different supporting content. Students will demonstrate that individuals are shaped by their social life. (Excellent includes application to student’s life and demonstration of sociological mindfulness.

4 Student is able to fully explain the sociological content and apply it to a unique example.
3 Student fully explains the sociological content using relevant terminology from the class.
2 Student somewhat explains the content from class but does not do it in detail and/or uses little or no sociology concepts or terms
1 Student completed the assignment but did not explain any sociology at all.

**Literacy** (Scholar – Students can read and understand a wide variety of sources and make meaning from them): Student demonstrates an understanding of the sources used in class (books, movies, websites, etc…)

4 Student refers properly to multiple sources from class and/or explains the connection of an outside source found by the student.
3 Student refers properly to a source from class and explains its connection to sociology.
2 Student refers to a source from class but it lacks depth, clarity or correctness.
1 Student completed the assignment but was not correct in interpreting the sources from class.

**Academic Expectations** (Citizen- student recognizes the importance of being a part of the community of class; being present, listening, sharing, teaching respecting, trusting other student): inc. participation

4 Student contributes to the class through commenting, listening and reading.
Student uses proper grammar, spelling, punctuation and clear and academic writing.
Student meets deadlines and is on time. Student’s work is neat and professional.
3 Student is able to meet almost all of the expectations above.
2 Student meets some of the expectations.
1 Student turns in the assignment or shows up, but does not meet any of the expectations above.

Evidence collection is the blog.

Grad Calculation:
A: At least a “4” in one of the three academic standards and no “2’s”.
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B: A score of “2” in any one Standard (with grades of “3” or “4” in the remaining Standards)
C: A score of “2” in more than one Standard (no score of “1”)
D: At least one score of “1”; at least one score of 2 or above
F: A score of “1” in each of the three academic standards