

PLATO Conference 2019:

**Jennifer Cattaneo
Santa Fe Christian School
cattaneo@sfcs.net**

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Jennifer Cattaneo teaches French and Western Philosophy at Santa Fe Christian School in Solana Beach, California where she is the World Language Department chair. With a background in world languages, history and literature, she has focused her academic and professional career around nurturing critical thought. She has taught seminars on blogging, critical thinking skills, philosophy and intercultural communication to high school students and adults and has led many student trips to Europe in the past decade.

PLATO

June 2019

Workshop Proposal

Title: Blogging to Boost Creativity in Philosophical Inquiry

Workshop Background: 250 words

After teaching Western Philosophy for almost 15 years, I decided to try an innovative approach by incorporating the use of blogs into our classroom. I had already taught blogging as the teacher of a “Writing to Publish” course and was impressed by the impact of the interplay of image, sound, and writing. I would like to present some of the ways in which a pre-college philosophy class can be repositioned as a vital component to developing the minds of our students through the skills of writing, presenting and incorporating elements of graphic design. As teachers of philosophy, we are uniquely equipped to teach students the art of asking good questions as well as exploration of ethical and logical conundrums. Blogs are an amazingly versatile platform to transform traditional projects into a visually stimulating means of showcasing student work.

Philosophical blogs are a perfect training ground for our modern competitive work environment which demands creativity and critical thinking. Employers put a premium on employees who have a strong ethical framework, who can think in innovative and collaborative ways, and who are accustomed to supporting their ideas with logic and perspective. Although I have used many different means of assessing my students through the years, from traditional essays and tests to creative videos, debates, and Harkness-style discussions, the level of student engagement and satisfaction with their blogs has been a remarkable addition to our philosophy class. Blogging encourages student involvement, collaboration, research skills, and creates a remarkable digital portfolio of philosophical inquiry.

Anticipated Learning Outcomes: 100 words

The goal of this workshop is to encourage the use of blogging in philosophy classrooms.

Participants will leave after having set up their own blog framework and with examples of many types of blog posts. Participants will explore the features of three different blogging platforms, comparing the ease of set up, of inserting text, video and other design features. They will discover ways to transform traditional essays and projects into blog posts, incorporating images and video. Finally, they will discuss ways to share student work with through expositions, inviting others into the philosophical discussions either virtually or through school events.

Strategies for Engagement: 80 words

This session will lead participants through the set up and exploration of various features of three different blogging platforms. Through a powerpoint presentations, participants will have the opportunity to see a variety of student blogs developed over a two year period, incorporating a wide variety of posts. Participants will be able to brainstorm, collaborate, give and receive feedback as they develop their own blogs. Finally, they will model their own blog exposition as they present their work to fellow participants.

Workshop Description: 205 words

This presentation will share practical ideas from a three-year blogging project piloted in high school Philosophy and French classes. Participants will see a wide variety of styles, in which the blogs transform traditional assignments into creative and eye-catching posts. The interplay of the written word, video and image is a remarkably versatile means of engaging students and developing critical thought. The blogs allow students to build a showcase of their work as they

wrestle through topics during their philosophy course. Blogging encourages student engagement, collaboration, research skills, and creates a remarkable digital portfolio.

In addition to seeing student work, participants will explore three different blogging platforms and initiate their own blogs. This workshop will lead participants through the setup and exploration of various features of the different blogging platforms. Participants will be able to brainstorm, collaborate, give and receive feedback as they develop their own blogs. Finally, they will model their own blog exposition as they present their work to fellow participants.

Blogs are an amazingly versatile platform to transform traditional projects into a visually stimulating means of showcasing student work. Bring a device and prepare to create a sample blog as well as brainstorm ways in which to incorporate a wide variety of posts.