

Using Blogs to Improve Special Education Courses  
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Common Uses of Blogs (Richardson, 2006)

1. Course management tool

*Special education faculty publish course syllabus, homework assignments, rubrics, and handouts. Candidates post their assignments online and seek feedback from instructors and peers.*

2. Promote Active Learning

*Candidates become active learners when they are asked to gather and synthesize information found in blogs. Additionally, faculty ask candidates to relate this new knowledge to their special education courses and related field experiences. Finally, candidates write and publish their personal reactions to material covered in class, field experiences, and information learned from reading other blogs. This is true reflection, not journaling (i.e., "This is what I did today.").*

3. Collaborative space

*Candidates collaborate online to complete a project or create a product.*

4. E-Portfolio

*Candidates collect work they might consider for their final portfolio. They select the artifacts that demonstrate their best work and reflect on their choices. Candidates publish the portfolio on their blog for others to see and provide feedback. These portfolios could span the entire college career.*

5. Research

*Candidates read current blogs to learn about special education, individuals with exceptionalities, and the families of individuals with exceptionalities.*

Special Education Blogs

Current Events and Resources

1. Bilingual Special Education

<http://www.bilingualspecialed.com/>

Dr. Claudia Rinaldi writes about issues related to teaching English Language Learners (ELL) who may have academic difficulties. In addition to her commentary, Dr. Rinaldi includes article and book reviews, and websites of interest associated with ELL and special education.

## 2. Free Resources from the Net for Special Education

<http://paulhami.edublogs.org/2007/06/10/dotsub-online-resource/>

Paul Hamilton highlights free downloadable programs and online resources of good quality that may be of value to educators and their students, especially those involved in special education.

## 3. LD Blog

<http://ldblog.com/>

Drs John Lloyd and Margaret Weiss offer news and commentary on Learning Disabilities and associated difficulties. Additionally, the authors include content about the assessment and treatment of individuals with Learning Disabilities.

## 4. EBD Blog

<http://ebdblog.com/>

Drs John Lloyd and James Kauffman include content about individuals with Emotional and Behavioral disorders. Additionally, they include information about related areas of disability such as autism, ADD, and ADHD.

## 5. Teach Effectively!

<http://teacheffectively.com/>

Drs John Lloyd and Margaret Weiss offer current news and opinions about effective teaching, particularly students with Learning Disabilities or Emotional and Behavioral Disorders. However, entries also focus on other disabilities such as Autism, ADHD, and at risk learners.

## 6. ADHD and LD Resource Blog

<http://www.adhdguide.blogspot.com/>

Shane from South Carolina is the author of this blog that provides resources for those who want to learn about ADHD and Learning Disabilities. Examples of content included are information about various ADHD medications and how parents can advocate for their children who have special needs.

## B. Special Educator

### 1. The Life that Chose Me

<http://specialed.wordpress.com/>

Dick writes about his life as a high school special education teacher of students with severe and profound disabilities. Additionally, he is the parent of two boys with autism.

### 2. LIQUIDWAFFLEGIRL

<http://liquidwafflegirl.blogspot.com/>

Liquid Waffle Girl writes about her life as a special education teacher of students with behavioral disorders in NY.

### 3. Your Mama's Mad Tedious: Dairy of a Bronx Teacher

<http://madtedious.blogspot.com/>

Miss Dennis writes about her experiences as a special education teacher of students with autism in NY.

#### 4. MENTOR MATTERS/Collegial Support in Desperate Times

<http://mentormatters.blogspot.com/>

Mrs. Ris, a veteran teacher, reflects on the challenges and joys of teaching 30 students with emotional disabilities in a self-contained special education program.

#### Individuals with Disabilities and Their Families

##### 1. A Deaf Mom Shares Her World

<http://www.putzworld.blogspot.com/>

Karen writes about her life as a deaf mom to three deaf and hard of hearing children.

##### 2. Soapy Water

<http://soapywater.blogspot.com/>

Molly G writes about her experiences mothering a child with multiple disabilities.

##### 3. BrokenClay.org/journal

<http://brokenclay.org/journal/index.php>

Katja writes about her life as a computer programmer living in Colorado with Multiple Sclerosis.

##### 4. Do It Myself Blog

<http://doitmyselfblog.com/>

Glenda shares her experiences as a person living with cerebral palsy. She is an author, blogger, and podcaster who works to motivate and inspire others to think about how they perceive their own situation and world around them.

### *Locating Appropriate Blogs*

#### Blog Rolls

View the blog rolls of blogs you currently read. A blog roll is a collection of links to other blogs and is often found on the front page sidebar of most blogs.

#### Blog Directories (type in special education, special educators, disabilities, etc)

1. Blog Flux <http://dir.blogflux.com/>

2. Google Blog Search <http://blogsearch.google.com>

3. Yahoo! News Directory [http://dir.yahoo.com/news\\_and\\_media/blogs/](http://dir.yahoo.com/news_and_media/blogs/)

4. Blog Search.com <http://www.blog-search.com/>

### *Organizing Blogs*

## Social Bookmarking Services

Social bookmarking services allow users to store lists of Internet resources that they find useful. These lists are accessible to the public or a specific network. Additionally, other people with similar interests can view the links randomly, or by category or tags. Some services provide additional features such as allowing the user to import and export, add notes, reviews, email links, automatic notification, and web annotation. Two common social bookmarking services are

1. del.icio.us <http://del.icio.us/>
2. Furl.net <http://www.furl.net/>

## *Creating Blogs*

1. Go to free blogging website (we used Blogger.com)
2. Create an account
3. Name your blog
4. Select a domain name
5. Choose a template
6. Type a post
7. Publish post
8. View blog

## *Free Blogging Tools*

1. Blogger.com <http://blogger.com>
2. Bloglines.com <http://www.bloglines.com/>
3. Word Press <http://wordpress.com/>
4. B2evolution <http://b2evolution.net/>
5. Blog Flux <http://www.blogflux.com/register.php>
6. Edublogs <http://edublogs.org/>