

## Setting up Blogs with Literacies Groups

You do not need experience of blogging to take part!

- Aims:** To develop literacies practitioners' confidence to use blogging in their groups
- Outcomes:** Students will have access to more group work learning via **blogging**
- Content:** Exploring the advantages of group blogging for literacies learning, including safety issues and practising setting up a group blog.

A 2 or 2.5 hour session modelling a social practices approach.

### Pre-course activity

Look at 2 blogs - what do you notice about these ? What type of thing can you see on them (e.g. text, pix, videos, sound, links, etc.)

### Session Plan

- 1 Share your own feelings about blogging and what learners will get out of it in 2s/3s - 10 minutes.
- 2 Ask the whole group to share what they noticed in the pre-course activity and reflect on this (content/style/purpose) in 30 minutes. (purpose, audience, impact, scope, likes, dislikes, why - include an example of the CARS learner blog in examples of blogs)

*Note for Tutor:* Think about why might learners want to set up their own blog - purpose, audience, content and how it's added to the group's learning.

What would need to be discussed with learners before setting up a blog?

- 3 Paired discussion: What kind of blog do we want? (10-15 mins)

Split the group into pairs (to make blogs in pairs) - It is important for everyone to get a chance to be physically involved in setting up the blog as it is the most difficult and least often repeated part of the process.

The pairs should consider the following:

- What will your blog be about? Examples: something for your literacies tutoring?
- Decide on a name that will reflect the blog's purpose.
- Decide on some images that will reflect the blog's purpose.

Time: 30 minutes

- 4 Set up an agreed blog with learning preferences in mind: show first then do?
- 5 **Keep in the same pairs:** demonstrate how to set up a blog using Blogger whilst talking participants through and then leave the pairs to play around with it for a bit- this would give each person in the pair an opportunity to actually have a hands on go of the stages of setting up a blog. Will create handouts that participants can follow as a reminder as well.

We will look at the following during this activity:

(a) Logging in using gmail username and password (remind group that learners will need gmail accounts to use the blog and will need to click on a link from their gmail accounts to become blog authors).

(b) Setting up profiles; show how to do the bare minimum but quickly go over what can be added to a profile; raise safety issues.

Click on 'new blog'. Enter a name for your blog and an address. Click on 'view blog' to see default templates.

(d) Show how to find the drop down menu for controlling the blog. Most of the items on the menu are irrelevant at the moment as they only come into play once there is more content on the blog. We will concentrate on 'templates', 'layout' and 'settings'.

(e) Click on 'settings'. Show that this is where to edit the name and address, control who can read the blog (people must be authors to comment on posts- posts main bit of writing and comments about posts) and where you can invite new authors to contribute to a blog; assure participants that we will come back to 'permissions' in order to invite the other person from the pair (who is not logged in).

- (f) Show how to experiment with templates and backgrounds. Click on 'advanced'.
- (g) Show how to experiment with layouts and show the variety of 'gadgets' you can insert. Show how to put in a description with the title.
- (h) Show how to view the blog to see how it looks.
- (i) Get the pairs to name their blog, choose a template and background for their blog and write a description of the blog.
- (j) Go back into 'settings' and invite your partner (who isn't yet logged on) to your blog- and if time permits others in the group (possibly not very realistic). Partner to click on link in email to access the blog in order to do the next activity.
- (k) Show how to delete authors if time permits.

## 6 Doing a post on the blog and posting an evaluation (30 mins)

- (a) Show participants how to do a post, how to **save, preview, publish** and spellcheck. If time allows get participants to insert a picture or a link as well.
- (b) Show participants how to **edit and delete** posts. Remind participants that only those with administrative rights can delete other people's posts. Otherwise you can only delete your own posts.

Get participants to leave each other a comment.

- (d) Get group to brainstorm how they might use blogs with their learners:
  - ❖ Any security issues?
  - ❖ How could it be used in group work?
  - ❖ What sort of things might particular learners you work with like to contribute? How could participating in a blog play to their strengths?
  - ❖ What would need to be discussed with a group of learners before setting up a blog (may ask this pre- setting up blogs)?

- ❖ How could it be useful to learners? What can they get out of it?
- ❖ How might you use what you've learned today?
- ❖ How could you get your blog read by others outwith your group?  
(Would you want it read by others outside the group?)

(e) Do a post about (d) and also about how you've found the training - have the aims been met? Something to keep, something to get rid of? How might you like to follow up? Was the session the right length?

## **Resources:**

1. [Session Plan Summary: Handout for Participants](#) (page 5)
2. [Pre-session Activity](#) (page 6)
3. [Setting up a blog](#) (page 7)
4. [Writing a post, saving, previewing and publishing](#) (page 10)
5. [Adding Authors and Readers, and Accepting an Invitation to a Blog](#) (page 11)

## **Session Plan Summary: Blogging Training**

### **Handout for Participants**

**Aims:** To develop literacies practitioners' confidence to use blogging in their groups

#### **1. Paired and whole group discussion about blogs:**

- style, content
- audience, purpose
- likes, dislikes
- what we know about blogs

Why might learners want to set up their own blog - purpose, audience, content?

What would need to be discussed with learners before setting up a blog - may ask this later?

#### **2. Setting Up A Blog About Interests as a literacies tutor**

- naming your blog and giving your blog an address
- choosing a look for your blog
- writing a description for your blog heading
- adding authors and readers,
- joining a blog as an author

#### **3. Writing, Publishing and Editing Posts**

Write a post about the following questions:

- How might you use what you've learned today with your learners?  
What might particular learners you work with like to contribute to a blog? What things would they most like about having a blog?
- What would need to be discussed with a group of learners before setting up a blog ?
- How could the blog be used to promote group work?

#### **4. Posting an Evaluation**

## Blogging with a literacies group

### Pre-session Activity

This activity should take 10-15 minutes; you're just trying to get a flavour of what blogs are, their purpose and what they contain (e.g., text, pictures, links, video, etc.) so that you can feed this back to the rest of the group.

Look at 2 blogs and make a note of:

1. What you notice about them generally
2. Similarities / differences
3. Intended audience and purpose
4. What kind of things were on them (e.g., pictures, text, sound, videos, links, etc.)

Here are some suggested blogs or choose others:

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

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/blog>

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

<http://blog.gardening-tools-direct.co.uk/>

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

<http://scotland.theoffside.com/>

<http://cluedupcars.blogspot.com/>  
(A learners' group made this blog.)

## Setting up a Blog (With Blogger)

1. To create a new blog, name it and give it an address, log into Blogger with a gmail account.

The 'sign up for blogger box' will appear. Type in a display name and check the acceptance of terms and conditions box.

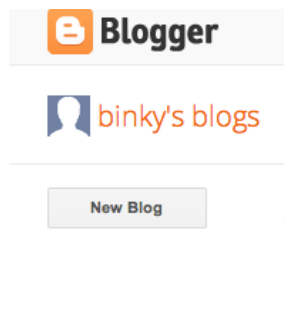
**1 Sign up for Blogger**

Once you complete this process, you'll be able to log in to Blogger using your Google account email and password.

Email address	therangeoftheawfulhand@gmail.com	<a href="#">Use a different account</a>
Your name	the range of the awful hand	
Display name	<input type="text"/>	The name used to sign your blog posts.
	Required field cannot be left blank	
Email notifications	<input type="checkbox"/> Send me feature announcements, advice, and other information to help me get the most out of my blog.	
Acceptance of Terms	<input type="checkbox"/> I accept the <a href="#">Terms of Service</a>	Indicate that you have read and understand Blogger's Terms of Service
	You must accept the terms of service	

**CONTINUE**

Click on 'continue'.



Click on 'new blog' which is on the left hand side of the screen underneath the Blogger logo (big orange B) and '*your name blogs*'.

The 'Blogs List- Create a new blog' box will appear. Type in a title for your blog.

Blogs List > **Create a new blog**

Title	<input type="text"/>
Address	<input type="text"/> .blogspot.com

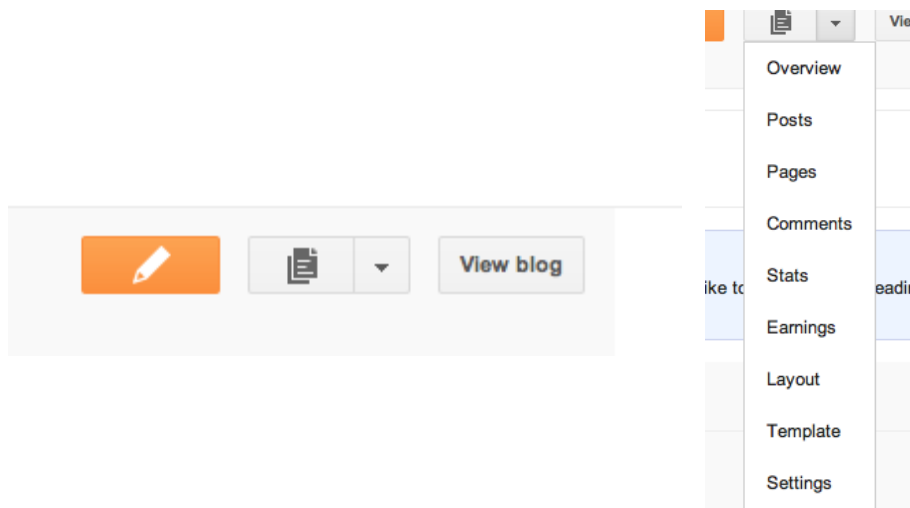
You can add custom domain later.

Type in an address for your blog.

Click on 'Create blog!' and that's you started! A banner will appear with your blog name and a message saying 'your blog has been created.'

Create blog!

2. To set the look of the blog click on the drop down arrow to the right of the orange pencil icon and the notepad / paper icon. Click on the drop down arrow and click on 'templates'.



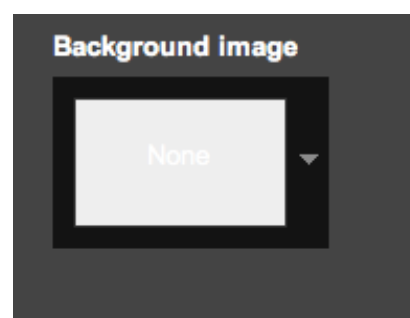
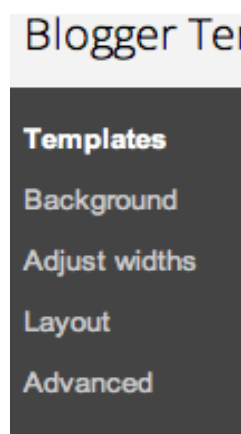
To choose a template for you blog click on a template of your choice then click on 'apply to blog'.

Apply to Blog

To choose a background picture for your blog click on 'customise'.

Customise

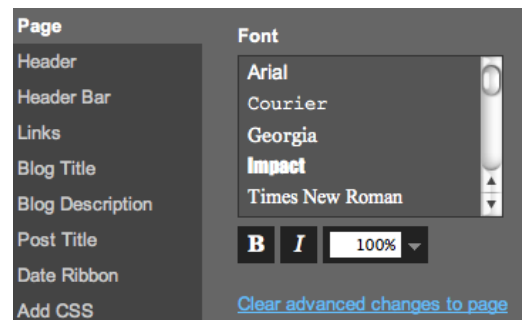
Click on 'background' in the menu to the left. Click on the box underneath 'background image'. Choose from the themes listed to the left and click on the image you want. Click on 'done', then click on 'apply to blog'.





To change the font, click on 'advanced' in the menu to the left of the screen.

Click on the text you want to change in the menu titled 'Page' (e.g. page text, blog title, post title, etc.).



Click on the font you want and change the size and colour if necessary. Click on 'apply to blog' when you're happy.

3. To return to the dashboard click on the big (or sometimes small) orange B in the top left hand corner.

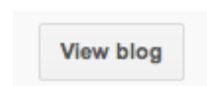


If there is no such B (which there may not be when playing with the background) click on 'return to blogger' which is usually at the top of the screen.

[« Back to Blogger](#) [Revert to previous temp](#)

Sometimes you may also have to click on your blog name which will be in the top left hand corner of the screen.

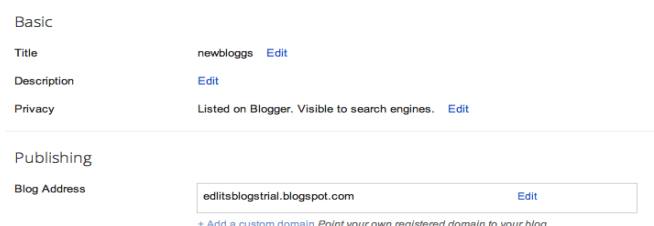
4. To see how your blog's coming along click on 'view blog'. Where this appears on the screen varies but it will always be somewhere.



5. To change your blog name and put a description on your blog heading click on 'settings'.

To change the name click on 'edit' next to the blog title. Make the change and click on 'save changes'

To write a description for your blog heading, click on 'edit', write your description in the box, then click on 'save changes'.



## Writing a post, saving, previewing and publishing

To write a post click on the orange pencil icon on the dashboard. Write your title where it says 'post title'. Click inside the bigger box to write your post.



To insert a picture click on the picture icon. Click on 'browse' to find your image, then click on 'upload image'.



To save your post click on 'save'.

To find out what your post will look like click on 'preview'.

To make your post be seen to your blog readers click on 'publish'.

## Editing and Deleting Posts



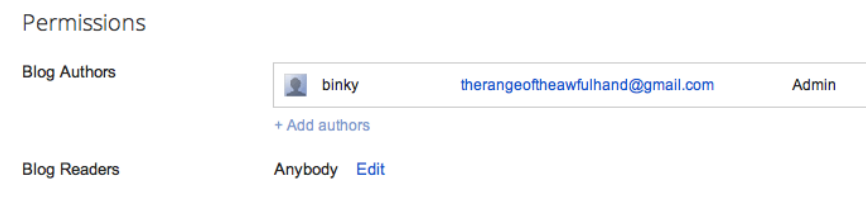
To edit and delete posts go to the post list by clicking on the notepad / paper icon to the immediate right of the orange pencil on the dashboard. (See above)

To edit a post click on 'edit' and the post will appear to be edited. Once edited either click 'save' or 'publish' depending on whether you want your readers to see it yet.

To delete a post click on 'delete'.

## Adding Authors and Readers, and Accepting an Invitation to a Blog

To add authors click on **'settings'**. Under **'Permissions'** is **'Blog Authors'**



Permissions

Blog Authors

binky therangeoftheawfulhand@gmail.com Admin

+ Add authors

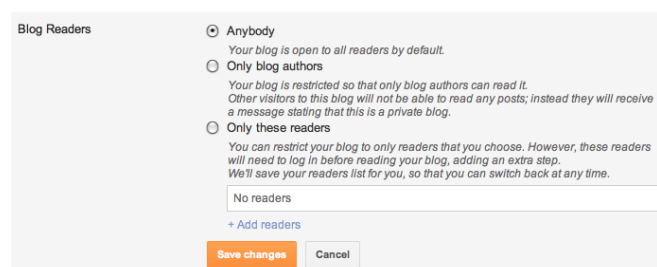
Blog Readers

Anybody Edit

Click on **'add authors'**. Type in the email address of the person you want to invite and click **OK**.

To control who can see the blog, click on **'Settings'** and then **'blog Readers'** click on **'edit'**. Click on the box depending on who you want to be able to read your blog.

You can add readers in the same way as you add authors by clicking on **'add readers'** and then typing in the email address of the person you want to invite, and clicking on **OK**.



Blog Readers

☒ Anybody  
Your blog is open to all readers by default.

☐ Only blog authors  
Your blog is restricted so that only blog authors can read it. Other visitors to this blog will not be able to read any posts; instead they will receive a message stating that this is a private blog.

☐ Only these readers  
You can restrict your blog to only readers that you choose. However, these readers will need to log in before reading your blog, adding an extra step. We'll save your readers list for you, so that you can switch back at any time.

No readers

+ Add readers

Save changes Cancel

You can also edit your blog name and address from the same page!

To accept an invite to become a blog author, sign into your gmail. If you've been invited to join the blog you will have an email titled **'You have been invited to contribute to .....blogs'**.

Click on the link **'to contribute to this blog, visit...'**. When the blogger window opens, click on the blue **'here'** where it says 'To join this blog as an author, accept the invitation by signing in with your Google Account here'. This will take you to your dashboard.