

Faculty Spotlight



Collaborative Blogging

Amy Rutstein-Riley, Faculty
Sociology of the Family, Spring 2009

Introduction

In response to students who did not have time to meet in person, Amy decided to move her undergraduate group project online to provide more flexibility. She developed the class blog, The Changing Nature of the American Family, as a way for students to participate in collaborative research, develop leadership skills and engage in a dialogue with their peers. Throughout the semester, students worked in teams to compose blog entries around various topics, utilizing text, images, and video from the web. By creating a week long discussion maintained by the students themselves, students were required to take more authority over the group work and facilitate an ongoing dialogue with classmates with minimal encouragement from Amy.

Timeline

At the beginning of the Spring 2009 semester, Amy sat with an Instructional Designer for a one-hour consultation on setting up a blog and structuring the assignment.

Equipment

- Blogger (free)

Process

Students were divided into assigned teams and chose a theme related to the topic of the Changing American Family. Students then worked together to collect resources and write a concise blog entry around their theme. Each team was responsible for maintaining the blog for a specific week, by writing blog entries, posing questions to guide discussion, and posting a summary. Classmates were asked to post comments and questions in response to the blog posts.

Outcome

By the end of the semester, students had built a collection of posts on various topics of interest, including gender & family, aging & healthcare, adoption, war, media influences, and other current topics in family sociology. Students posted links to articles, short video clips, images, graphs and charts to enhance their well-researched blog entries. Students reported that they found it to be an interesting and engaging exercise. You can view the blog at <http://sociologyofthefamily.blogspot.com>

Monday, May 4, 2009
[Domestic Violence Discussion](#)
Posted by Sociology of the Family at [10:47 AM](#) [1 comments](#)

Monday, April 27, 2009
[Woke Up This Morning, Got Myself a Gun: Examining Ethnicity, Class, and Gender as Related to Family on The Sopranos.- Bonnie Bryant's Honors Project](#)
Posted by Sociology of the Family at [8:45 AM](#) [5 comments](#)

Monday, April 13, 2009
[Single Parenting](#)
Posted by Sociology of the Family at [9:53 AM](#) [15 comments](#)
Labels: [Single fatherhood](#), [Single Parenting](#), [welfare](#)

Sunday, April 5, 2009
[Healthcare for Elders in France](#)
Posted by Sociology of the Family at [7:55 PM](#) [1 comments](#)

[Caring for the Elderly](#)
Posted by Sociology of the Family at [3:02 PM](#) [10 comments](#)

Monday, May 4, 2009
[Domestic Violence Discussion](#)

I went to the discussion on domestic violence in the women's center. I was really impressed by how much the woman knew about the different kinds of violence that can happen. For example, I had never really heard of financial abuse until very recently, she was able to describe it in the discussion in a way that made it very clear. Also, I never before would have considered some of those types of abuse, abuse at all. This helped me to realize that abuse is not just about physically hurting someone, it is about forcing someone into something, or a way of life that they do not want to have. One thing I originally found strange was when she said someone forcing you to hold their hand could be considered abuse. At first I thought "no way" then upon discussing this further I can see that if you don't want to be holding their hand then, yes, it is considered abuse. As much as I thought I had heard on this subject before I realized that I really did not know as much about it as I certainly do now! I found the discussion very helpful.

Posted by Sociology of the Family at [10:47 AM](#) [1 comments](#)

Monday, April 27, 2009
[Woke Up This Morning, Got Myself a Gun: Examining Ethnicity, Class, and Gender as Related to Family on The Sopranos.- Bonnie Bryant's Honors Project](#)

Blogs of interest to check out!

[Our Bodies Our Blog](#)
[Rep. Barney Frank Refutes Protester's Accusation: Democrats May Pursue Reform Bill on Their Own](#)
1 hour ago

Blog Archive

▼ 2009 (26)

▼ May (1)
[Domestic Violence Discussion](#)

► April (6)

► March (12)

► February (6)

► January (1)

Next Steps...

In the coming semester Amy will continue to use this blog as a tool for student research and collaboration. She will develop the blog as a

part of the classroom that is primarily student led. While she will monitor it and facilitate questions, the blog is created with their voices, their work and their thoughts. Since some students required more technology instruction, she will spend more time at the beginning of the semester showing them how it works.

You Can Blog Too!

- A self-paced Blogging Tutorial is available in the eLearning & Faculty Resource Community in myLesley. Contact elis@lesley.edu if you are not yet a member!
- Contact elis@lesley.edu for a special one-on-one training session.

eLearning
and
Instructional
Support