Rationale

- Classroom time is very limited.
- Contributions are stored for further analysis.
- Learners reinforce communication-interpersonal and interpretative skills.
- Learners have more time to reflect on their own answers and their peers’ answers.
- Teachers have more time to reflect on students’ answers.
- The process of learning becomes more active and learner driven. (Harasim)
- Discussions tend to be more open and less restrained. (Kiesler, Siegel and McGuire)
- Group members may participate more equally using on-line methods. (Kiesler, Siegel and McGuire)
- Discussions take place in an individualized, interpersonal, and interactive environment. (Lee)

What is a blog?

- A web page that consists of (1) a list of entries ordered in reverse chronological order and (2) other types of information related to the blog topic or its author.
- Synonym of weblog (term coined by Jorn Barger). The term blog was coined by Peter Merholz.
- Elements: title, content description, entries, links, calendar, archives. Some blogs also contain audiovisual information.
- Blogs allow immediate publishing of the author’s ideas and the readers’ comments.

What is a wiki?

- Server software that allows users to freely create and edit Web page content using any Web browser.
- Allows open editing.
- Supports hyperlinks.
- Simple structure and syntax for creating new pages and changing content.
- Most widely known example: Wikipedia.

Publishing and communication

- Blogs vs. Websites
  - Blogs allow quicker and easier updating.
  - Blogs provide easier archive search.
- Blogs have weaker formatting options.
- Blogs vs. Email
  - Blogs provide easier archiving options.
  - Blogs provide easier searching options.
- Blogs vs. IM Systems.
  - Blogs provide easier archiving options.
  - Blog users have time to reflect before publishing or commenting.
- Wikis vs. Websites
  - Wikis allow quicker and easier updating.
  - Wikis allow easier site search.
  - Wikis are subject to vandalism (easy to restore)
- Wikis vs. Email
  - In wikis, text is accessible to all users.
  - Wikis provide easier searching options.
  - Wikis have less privacy
- Wikis vs. IM Systems.
  - Wikis provide archiving options.
  - Wiki users have time to reflect before publishing or commenting.

Wikis vs. Blogs

- Blogs provide better:
  - Ways to convey information from one author to its readers.
  - Templates (allow for easier set-up).
  - Threaded discussion options.
- Wikis provide better:
  - Collaborative writing capabilities.
  - Ways to keep track of changes in website.
  - Layout flexibility.

Content, style, audience

- Authors have something to say.
- Readers want to learn.
- To create a blog or wiki:
  - Select a catchy name; establish and maintain the frequency of your blog contributions; adopt a natural style; apply your style consistently.
  - Use interactive strategies: allow readers to post comments, include your email address, create a listserv for your blog readers, invite...
other bloggers to publish in your blog, include contests, surveys and memes.

**Setting up a blog/wiki**
- **Tools**
  - Blog/wiki software (own or remote server).
  - Other tools (search engines, aggregators, etc.)
  - Multimedia integration.
- **Ideas**
- **Style**
- **Time**
- **Audience**

**Wikis and Blogs in FLI: Why?**
- Popular tools among young people.
- Easy to publish.
- Information + communication.
- Centralization of components.
- Easy integration of different kinds of information (through links or in the entries).
- Archiving and reviewing options (*some systems allow instructors to review postings sent by blog readers before including them in the thread).

**Exchange of information and communication in FLI**
- Instructor -> Students
  - Publication and distribution of information
    - Logistics
    - Contents
    - Activities
- Students -> Instructors
  - Medium to do exercises (essays, comments to previous entries, memes, etc.)
  - Ask questions
- Students <-> Students
  - Personal introductions
  - Peer review
  - Group projects
- Instructor <-> Instructor (administrative and academic issues)
  - Exchange of ideas on
    - Contents
  - Teaching strategies
  - Instructional technologies
  - Bureaucratic issues and logistics
- Students -> Community
- [Instructor <-> Parents]

**ISTE Recommended Foundations in Technology for All Teachers**
Candidates will apply computers and related technologies to support instruction in their grade level and subject areas.
- They must plan and deliver instructional units that integrate a variety of software, applications, and learning tools. Lessons developed must reflect effective grouping and assessment strategies for diverse populations.
- Explore, evaluate, and use computer/technology resources including applications, tools, educational software and associated documentation.
- Describe current instructional principles, research, and appropriate assessment practices as related to the use of computers and technology resources in the curriculum.
- Design, deliver, and assess student learning activities that integrate computers/technology for a variety of student group strategies and for diverse student populations.
- Design student learning activities that foster equitable, ethical, and legal use of technology by students.
- Practice responsible, ethical and legal use of technology, information and software resources. [From: Wildner (2000, p. 244]

**Blog/Wiki Activities Planning/Analysis Tool (see attachment)**

**Example: Study Abroad in Madrid**

**Bibliography (see attachment)**

**Glossary (see attachment)**

**Resources (see attachment)**