Edublogs

(WordPress)

An Introductory Manual

Gail Desler – Area 3 Writing Project

[Drawing on/updating/expanding tutorials and explanations from James Farmer, Mike Temple, Ewa McGrail, Lorelle, Joan Boan, Alice Mercer, Kate Olson, The Edublogger (Sue Waters), and others]

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> *"Blogging across the curriculum offers students and teachers not only the ability to infuse writing into all disciplines, it facilitates connections in ways that plain paper cannot."*
>
> Will Richardson, *Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts, and Other Powerful Web tools for Classrooms*

Getting Started

To create your blog, go to http://edublogs.org, which will bring you to the registration page. Scroll to the *Sign Up Here* button and click!

When the next screen appears, you will be asked to choose a username. You will always log into your Edublog - including future Edublogs that you create - using this original username. Your username is just about the only thing about your Edublog that you cannot later change. Add your email address, enter the verification code, and click on the *Next* button.

Tip: Be sure you type in a correct email because if you make a mistake, the username you originally chose will no longer be available. If you're using a school email, check that your district does not block Edublogs.

You can relax about choosing a *Blog Title* because, unlike your username, you can change the title of your blog whenever you wish. Enter your title, select your blog type (*teacher, student, other*) and click on the *Signup* button.

Blogging for teachers and students, made easy   find out more

Blog Domain:	edubloggerfan2.edublogs.org/
	(Your address will be domain.edublogs.org/.Must be at least 4 characters, letters and numbers only. It cannot be changed so choose carefully!)
Blog Title:	Connecting, Creating, and Collaborating
Privacy:	I would like my blog to appear in public listings around this site. ⦿ Yes ○ No
Blog Type:	Please select a Blog Type
Language:	English

Signup »

When the next screen appears with your URL *(i.e., edubloggerfan2.edublogs.org/Is Yours),* you are almost ready to start blogging!

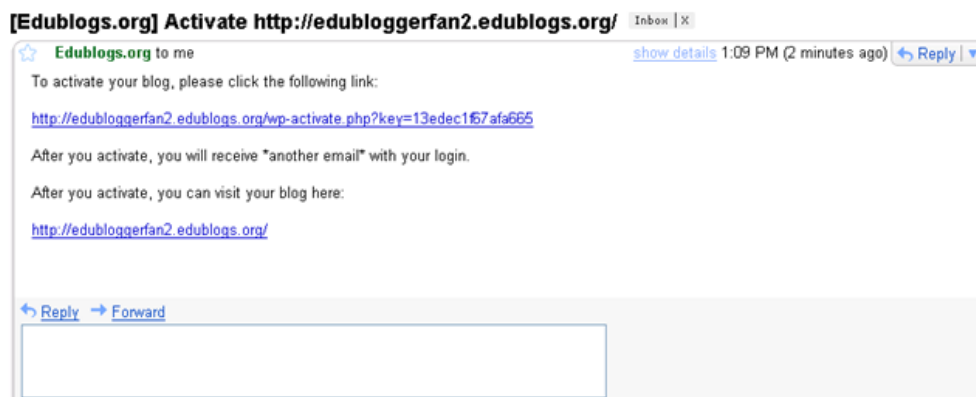**Blogging for teachers and students, made easy**

The blog edubloggerfan2.edublogs.org/ is yours

But, before you can start using your blog, **you must activate it.**

Check your inbox at **gdesler2@gmail.com** and click the link given.

If you do not activate your blog within two days, you will have to sign up again.

Check your email for a message from Edublogs with an activation link. Click on the activation link and head back to your email.

[Edublogs.org] Activate http://edubloggerfan2.edublogs.org/   Inbox | X

⭐ **Edublogs.org** to me   show details 1:09 PM (2 minutes ago) ↩ Reply | ▼

To activate your blog, please click the following link:

http://edubloggerfan2.edublogs.org/wp-activate.php?key=13edec1f67afa665

After you activate, you will receive "another email" with your login.

After you activate, you can visit your blog here:

http://edubloggerfan2.edublogs.org/

↩ Reply → Forward

A second email should be heading into your box with your password – which you will want to change (instructions on page 6). Copy your password and click on *Login* [*View your site* shows you what your visitors will see. It's not your working area (dashboard)].

Your account is now active!

Username: Password:

edubloggerfan2   84b3b61d

Your account is now activate. View your site or Login

Enter your username and password.

|	
Username: edubloggerfan2 Password: ******** ☑ Remember me Login »	Login to your blog with the exact user name and password listed in your Edublog email. Click on the *Login* button. Each time you visit your blog, you'll need to login. From your home page, locate the *Meta* section of the navigation bar. Click on *Login*. Meta » Login » Valid XHTML » XFN » WordPress *Note*: If you're already logged in, instead of *Login*, you will see **Site Admin**.

Viewing Your Blog

There are two views in an Edublog (or any blog, for that matter): the *Dashboard*, which is your working area and the *View*, which is what visitors to your blog will see. Each time you login, you will initially enter the *Dashboard*. From this page, you can see any recent activity on your site and any recent announcements for Edublogs. In the *Latest Activity* box, you'll be able to see at a glance if anyone has made new comments to any of your posts, or if there are comments that need moderation.

 Toward the top of the screen is a list of menu options: *Dashboard, Write, Manage, Blogroll, Presentation, Plugins, Users, Options*. These options are the same on every panel you work in inside the Administrative Area.
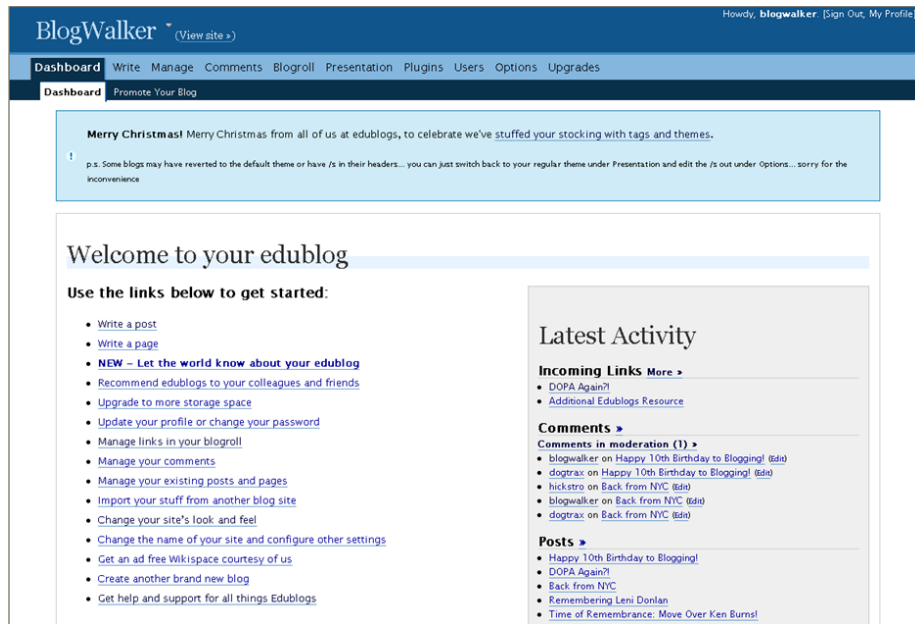
Changing Your Password

To change your password, click on the *Users* menu.
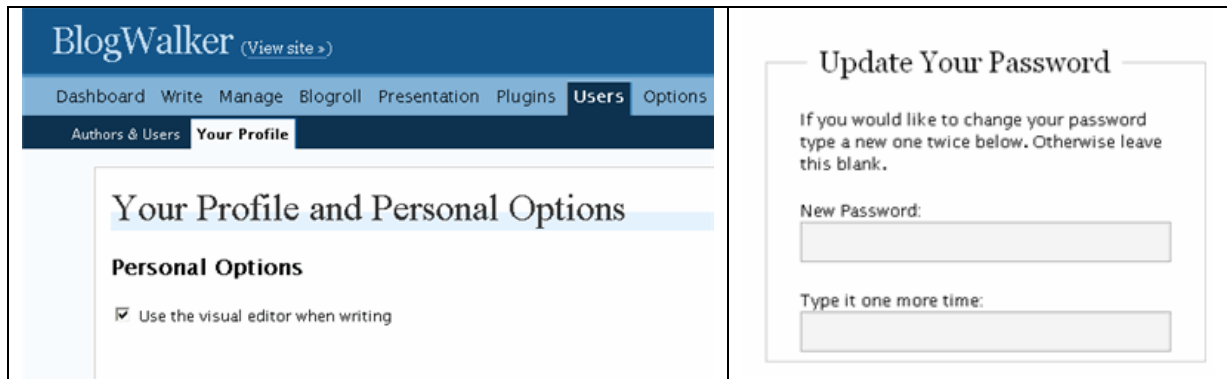
Scroll down to the *Update Your Password* box in the lower right corner of the panel and enter your new password. Don't forget to click on the *Update Profile* button (bottom right-hand corner) in order to save your new password.

Changing Other Information in the Users Panel

You cannot change your username. However, you can change your nickname. This is the name that is displayed by any posts that you create. Simply type your new nickname in the *Nickname* box and click the *Update Profile* button.
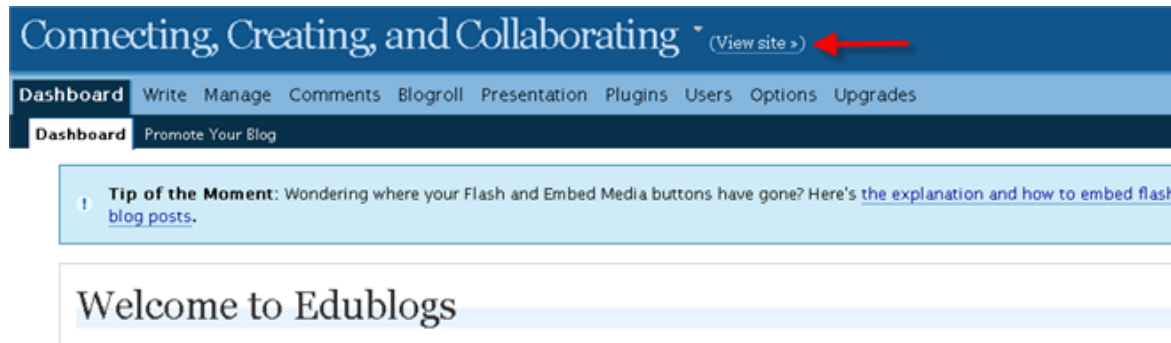
You will need to select your new display name from the drop-down menu. Press *Update Profile* once more.

Note: Your email address will not be displayed on your blog or in your profile. This information is used by Edublogs.

Click on *Update Profile* and head back to your *dashboard*.

## Designing the Layout of Your Blog

Everybody enters a newly created Edublog with the same default theme (presentation/layout/design). To view the default theme, scroll to the top of your blog and click on *View site*.


You will be able to change and customize your theme whenever you wish. The default theme has two sidebars (one on the right; one on the left). Posts are in the middle. In this particular theme (and in most of the themes), the image in the header can be customized.

Let's head back to your dashboard and take a look at the setup options – and widgets – that come with the default theme. Click on *Site Admin* to return to your dashboard.
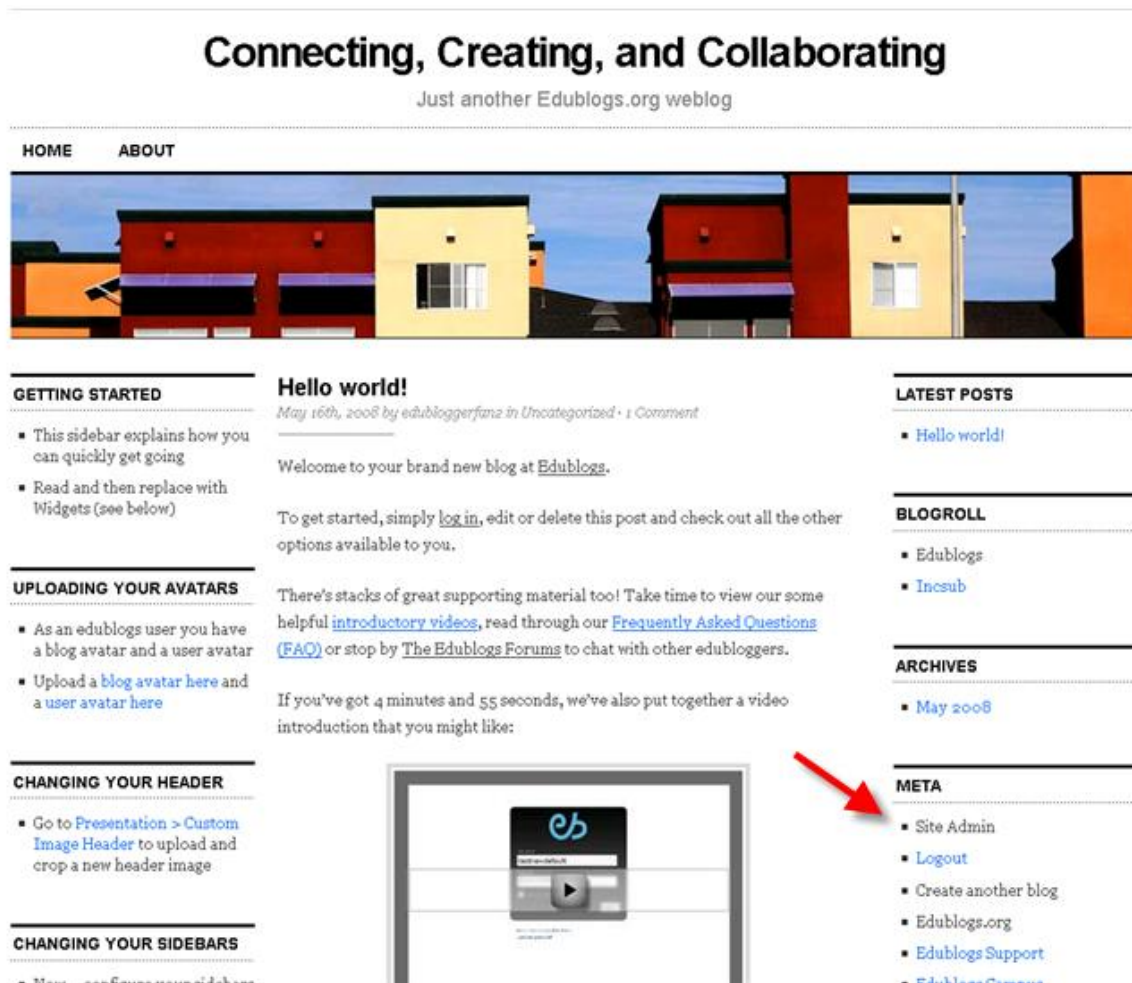
From your *dashboard*, click on the *Presentation* tab.
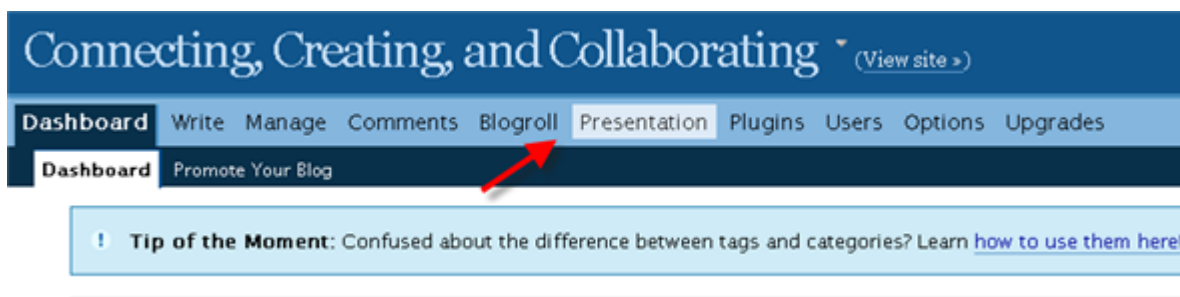

Click on *Widgets.* This is where the fun begins! New themes, along with great widgets (doodads that appear in your sidebar, such as *links, calendar, text boxes, archives*, etc.), are added to the Presentation menu on a regular basis. To get started, click on the *Widgets* tab.

To setup your sidebars, simply drag the widgets you want from the *Available Widgets* box and drop them in the sidebar(s) in whatever order you wish. Don't worry, you can always rearrange later. Be sure to add the *Meta* widget, as this is where you will find your *Site Admin* link for logging in or logging off. For a more detailed explanation of the Edublogs widgets, refer to the Widget Glossary (page 22).

To save your new setup, click on *Save Changes*.
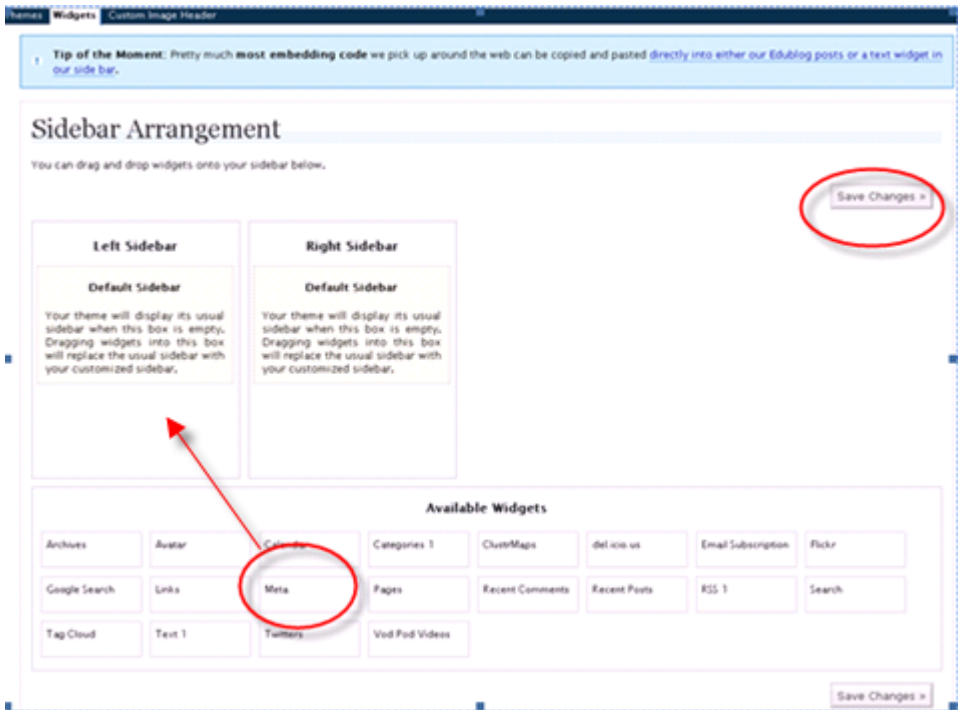
To see what your theme now looks like, click on the *View site* link at the top of your blog.

Creating a Post or Page

To write your first post, click on the *Write* menu, give your post a title, add your content, and click the *Publish* button if you are ready to "go live" with your piece. The *Save and Continue* option saves and keeps the post open. The *Save* option saves your post as a draft, which you can reopen whenever you wish.

You have a number of options available in the formatting bar, such as bold, italic, and create a bulleted list.
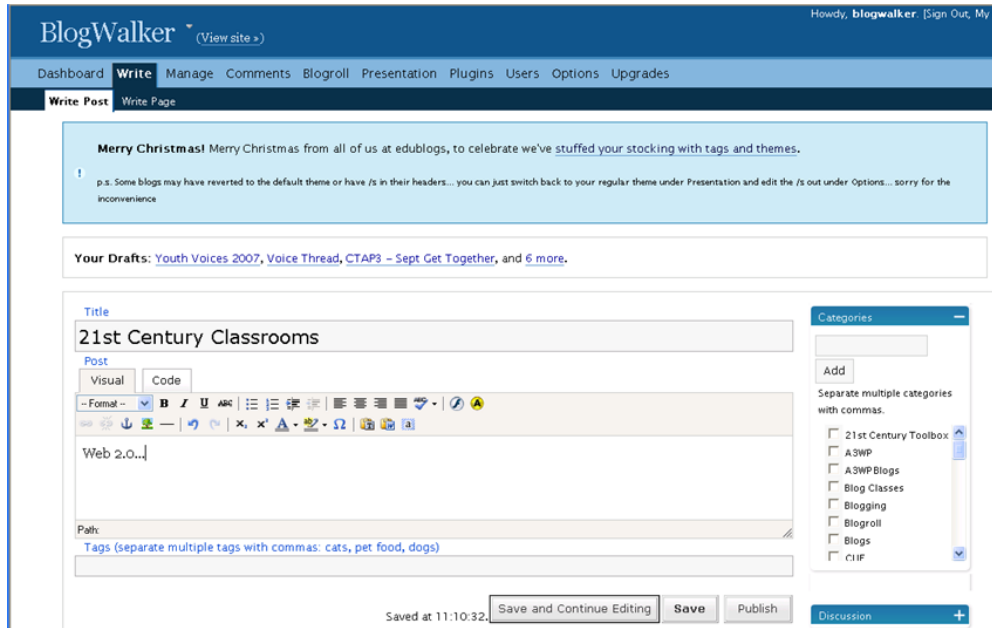
Editing a Post

You can edit any post from either the *View site* screen or your *Dashboard*. To edit from the *View site* screen, locate the post and click on the *Edit This* link.
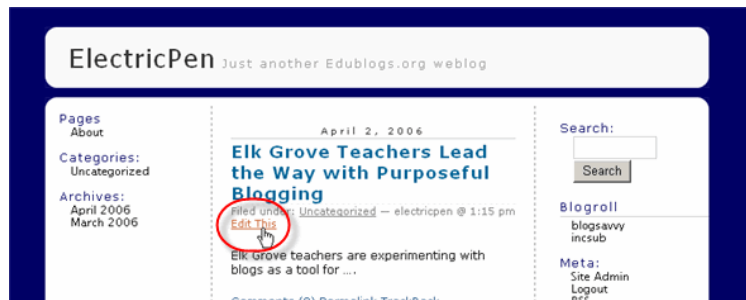
To edit a saved or published post, from your *Dashboard*, click on *Manage > Posts*. Click on the *Edit* link.

Regardless of which screen you choose for editing your posts, remember to click on the *Save* button when you have completed editing and/or revising your post.

Creating Pages

For the most part, you will be creating posts. If you wish to post a more static item that would not necessarily be open for comments, such as an *About Me* page, this is when you would write a *Page* rather than a *Post*. From your *Dashboard*, click on the *Write* menu and select the *Write Page* option.
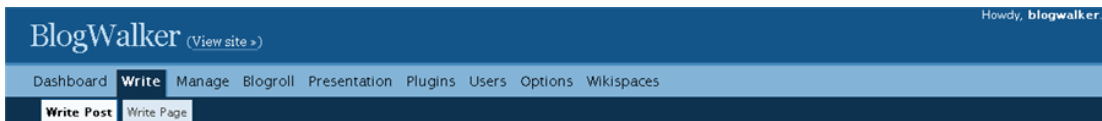

Enter your title, type (or paste) your page content, and click on the *Publish* button.
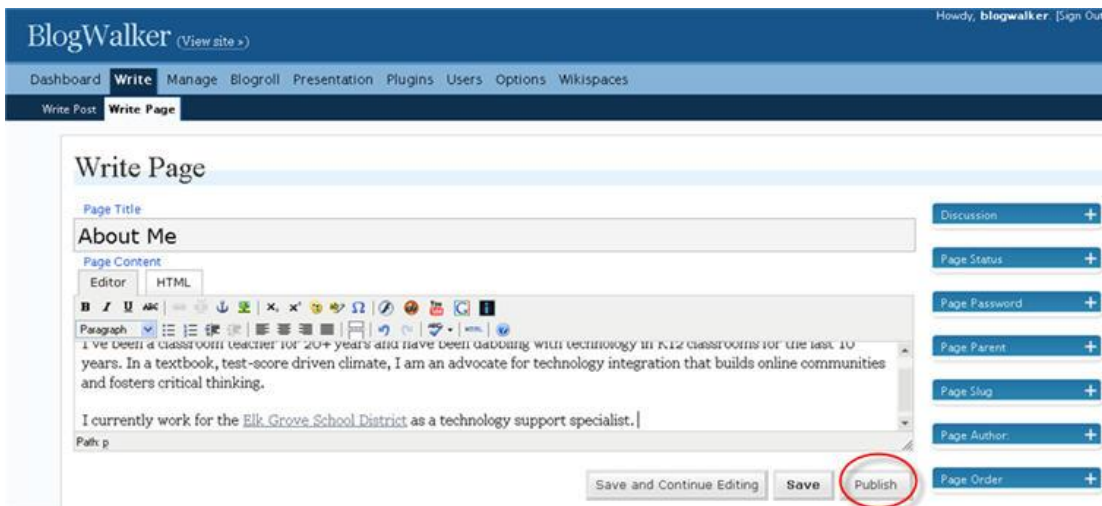
Note: In the *Post Pages Panel*, the *Page Parent* feature allows you to organize your pages into subcategories. The *Page Order* option allows you to organize the order in which your pages appear. Unfortunately, this feature does not seem to work in many of the WordPress themes.

Adding Hyperlinks to a Post (or Page)

Blogs posts often include hyperlinks, which take your readers to other blogs, websites, or even to another area within your blog. To create a link from your blog to the district website, for instance, start by selecting the word or phrase you wish to turn into a link. From the formatting bar, click on the chain link icon.
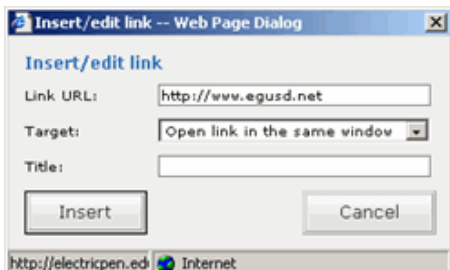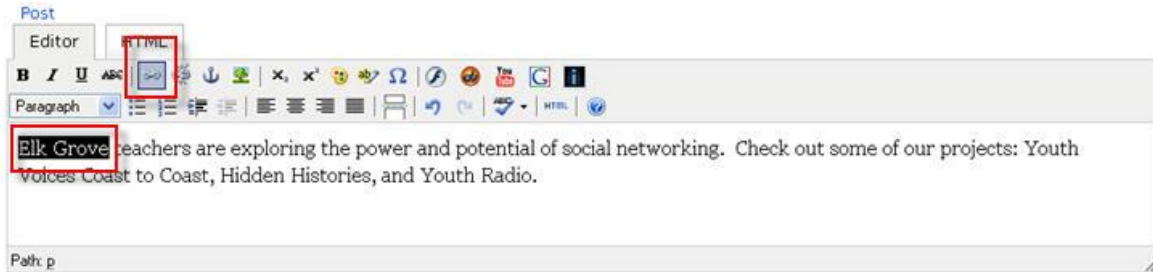
Type or – better yet – paste in the URL. Click on *Insert*. Whatever you selected in your post is now underlined. To test your link, click on *View site*.

Adding Anchor Links
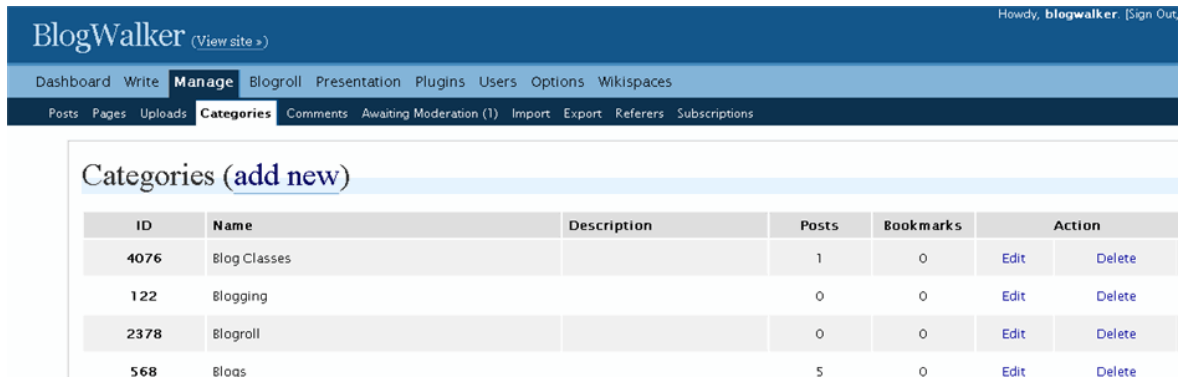
Anchors allow you link to a specific location on the same post or page. To insert an anchor link, position your cursor to the place you want the link to point to, and click on the anchor icon. When the *Insert/edit anchor* box appears, enter a logic name for the anchor. Click on the *Insert* button. A small anchor icon should now appear in your post/page.
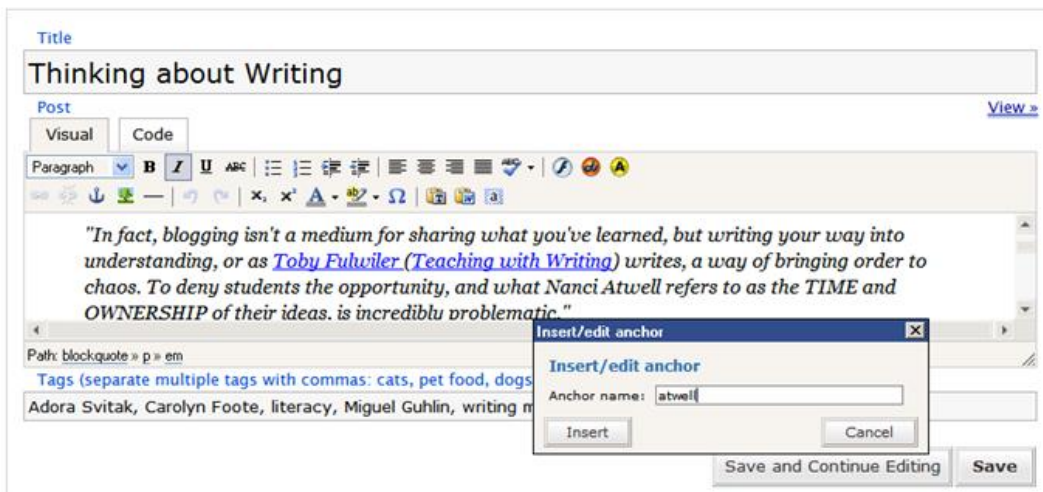
To link text somewhere else in your post back to the anchor link, scroll the text and select it. Click on the chain icon. When the *Insert/edit link* box appears, type the pound sign # and whatever you named your anchor (i.e., *#atwell*). Click on the *Insert* button.

Creating Categories

Categories make it possible, at the click of the mouse, to reorganize your chronological postings according to themes or subjects. To set up categories for your blog, click *Manage > Categories*. Scroll to the *Add New Category* box, enter your new category, and click on the *Add Categories* button (bottom right-hand corner).
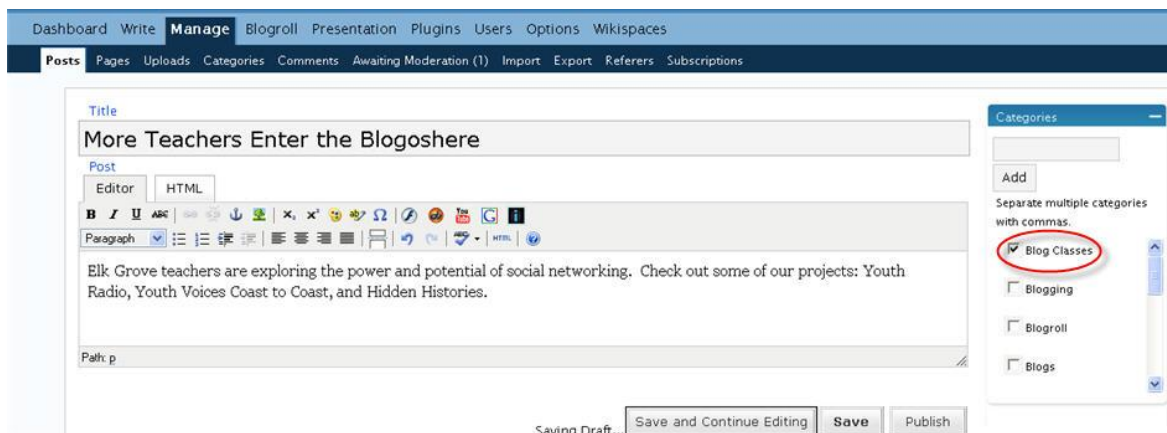

Assigning Categories

The default category for any post is *Uncategorized.* To assign a different category, click on the category you wish to assign to the post. You can assign a post to multiple categories.
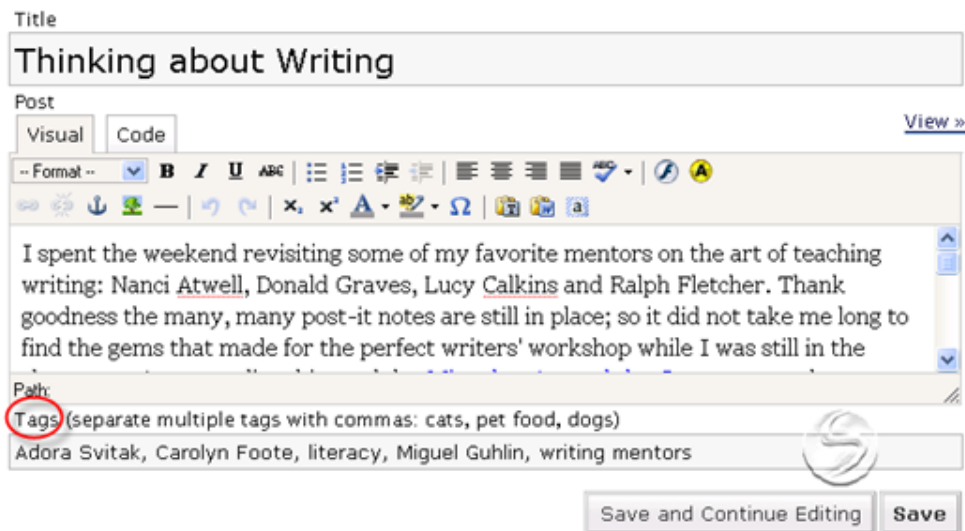
Adding Tags to a Post

Let's start by looking at the difference between a *category* and a *tag:*

> "Categories are your blog's table of contents. Don't remove them, thinking tags are a better option. They aren't. Your posts must be categorized. Remove them and they will be categorized as "uncategorized", something you do not want, trust me.
>
> Tags are like your blog's index. They are keywords that represent the micro-categorization of your blog's content. To work effectively, they need to be words that people search for, called *search terms*.

Categories are automatically marked as tags in WordPress. Theoretically, your blog doesn't need tags. But many like the notion of breaking down the words that describe their content beyond categories, and tags offer that ability." *

To add tags, type in your keywords, separating multiple tags with commas.

*Explanation copied with permission from Lorelle VanFossen on WordPress-
http://lorelle.wordpress.com/2007/09/21/tags-arrive-on-wordpresscom-blogs/

Adding Links to Your Blogroll

To add a link, start by clicking on the *Links* in your *Dashboard* sidebar(s). Choose the *Add Link* option. Type or copy and paste the *URL* and add the *Link Name* (this is what your readers will see when they view your sidebar(s) rather than the actual http://www.egusd.net/ web address). Click on the *Add Link* button.

Note: If your *Blogroll* does not appear in the sidebar, you will need to return to Presentation and drag and drop the *links* widget into your sidebar.

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The default category for sidebar links is *Blogroll*. A description is not required, but if you add one, it will appear when visitors hover over the link.

If you are planning on adding many links, you'll probably want to create categories for your links. Click on the *Link Categories* menu to add your categories. Once you have added *Link Categories*, you can assign all your links to the appropriate link categories.

If you don't feel the *Blogroll* has enough space for all your links, you could also create Pages for your links, such as a Math Page with links, or a Teacher's Resources Page.

Changing the Presentation (Theme)

Tired of your theme? No problem. From your *Dashboard* screen, click on the *Presentation* tab and head back in to select a new one.

Click on any of the themes to update your blog. To see what your new theme looks like on your site, click on the *View site* link (top of your blog, next to your blog name). Most themes are customizable, making it possible for you to change color themes, upload an original graphic in the header, etc. All themes have a selection of widgets that you can drag and drop onto your sidebar(s).

Note: For a comprehensive introduction to Edublogs widgets, visit Sue Waters' (The Edublogger) online explanation "limits to Customizing Widgets" at http://theedublogger.edublogs.org.

To add widgets to your sidebar, click on the *Presentation* link and select the *Widgets* tab. Scroll down to view the available widgets. You can drag and drop the widgets up to the sidebar(s).	
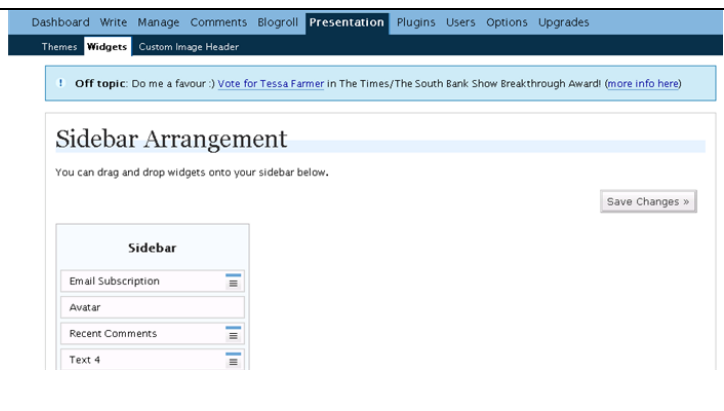
Below the Available Widgets box are options to choose how many *Text* (these are really handy in a sidebar!), *RSS Feed*, *Widgetbox Widgets* and *Video Widgets* you would like.

When you have finished selecting and customizing a theme, click on the Save Changes button. To view your new theme, click on the *(View site)* link.
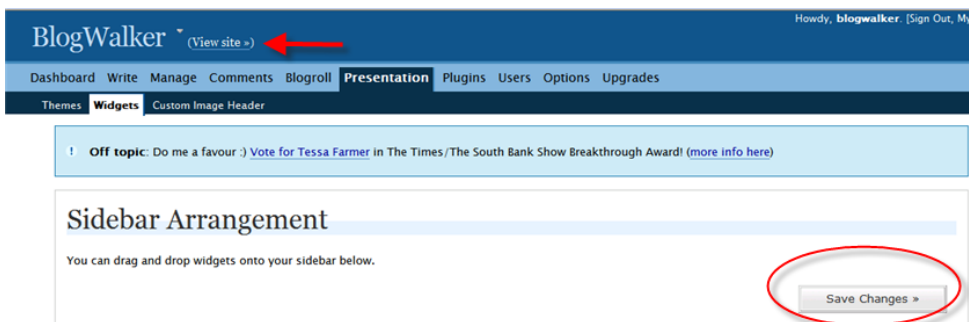
Uploading Images, Documents, or Podcasts to Your Blog

The first step to adding an image file (jpg, gif), a document file (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, PDFs), or a podcast is to browse to and upload the file to your blog. From the *Write Post* or *Write Page* panel, scroll down below the post area until you see the area for uploading. Click the *Browse* button and navigate to wherever you have saved the file(s) you wish to upload. You may put a title or leave this line blank. *Note:* If you leave it blank, Edublogs will use the file name for the title.
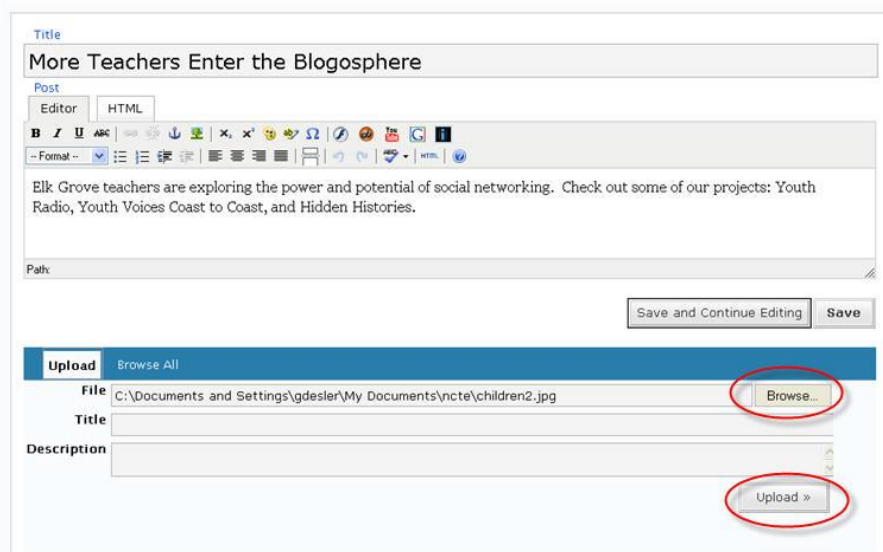
When you click on the **Upload** button, the image or document appears in the bin.

After your image or document has been uploaded to the bin, click on the *Send to Editor* link – or just drag and drop the image into your post.

To resize an image, click once on the image to select it and drag one of the corner handles.

Formatting Images

To re-position an image, click on the tree icon and select an alignment option. To add some padding around your image, add a few pixels to the *Vertical space* and/or *Horizontal space* boxes.

Note: To add multiple images and/or files to the same post, click on *Upload* and browse to the next image

Changing Your Blog's Tagline

If you have selected a theme that includes a tagline, you've probably noticed that the default tagline is *"Another Excellent Edublogs Blog."* To edit the tagline, go to your *Dashboard* and click on the *Options* tab. Check to see that you are in the *General* screen. Scroll down to the *Tagline* window and add your own tagline. Click on the *Update Options* button.

Note: Not all themes include a tagline.

Monitoring Your Blog

Concerned about the possibility of someone from the general public posting inappropriate comments to your blog? No need to worry because you have complete control of what is actually published to your blog. For maximum control, make sure the first two options under *Before a comment appears* box are checked.

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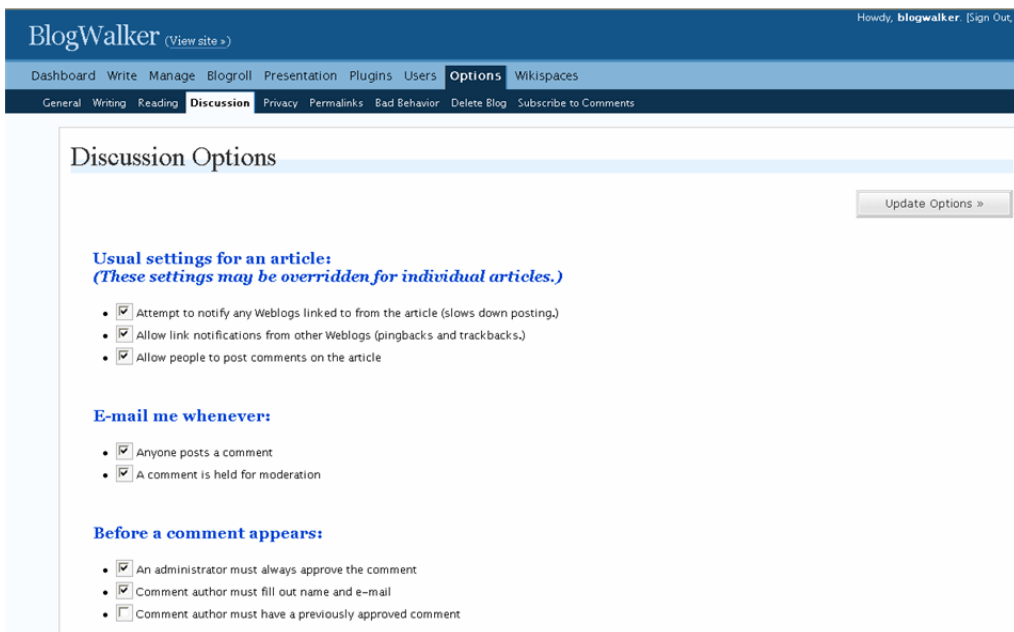
By selecting the *E-mail me whenever anyone posts a comment* option, you will receive an email message that looks something like this:
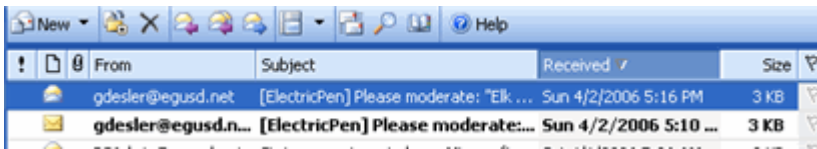
Moderating Comments

To moderate comments, go to *Manage > Awaiting Moderation* (Note the (1), which indicates one comment is awaiting your approval or deletion.
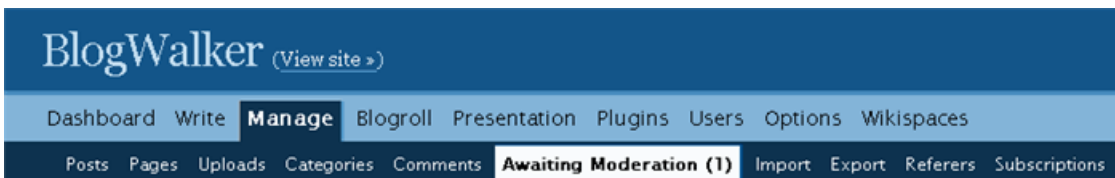
Approving Comments

To approve a comment, click on the *Approve* radio button and click on the *Moderate Comments* button. If you click on the *View site* link, you will see that the approved comment now appears under the *Comments* link of that particular post.
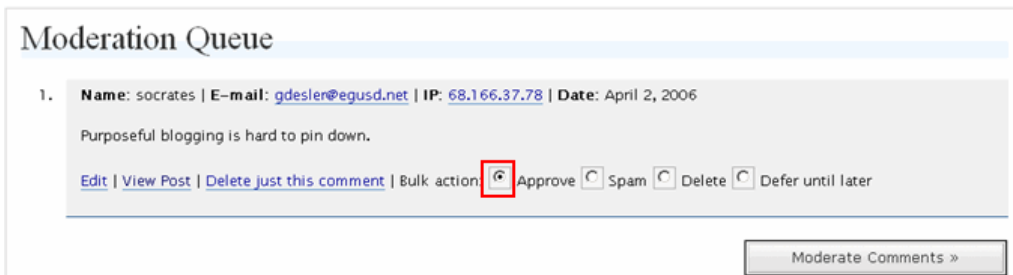
Editing Comments

When your code view opens, select *italic* and/or **bold** so that your comment will be noticeably different from your student's comment, and add your comment. When you've finished, select *italic* and/or **bold** to close your comment, and click on the *Edit Comment* button.

Adding Edublog Community Users

If you wish to limit posting comments on your blog to Edublog members only or to provide greater posting privileges to certain individuals, you will need to add their email to your *Users* list. From your *Dashboard*, click on the *Users* menu > *Authors & Users*. Scroll down to the *User Email* box and type the email address. Before clicking on the *Add User* button, think about the permission level you wish to give an individual user.

When you add users, you can also determine what their permissions (capabilities) are by assigning one of five roles from the *Role* drop-down box. The default selection is *Subscriber*. A *Subscriber* can see the *Dashboard* and edit his/her own profile. That is all. A *Contributor* can draft posts but cannot publish them. An *Author* can publish posts. An *Editor* can edit other people's posts and can manage categories, links, comments, and pages. An *Administrator* can do everything. Each role is simply a set of capabilities. The *Editor* and *Administrator* roles have the capability to edit posts that do not belong to them. They can edit anyone's posts, including each other's.
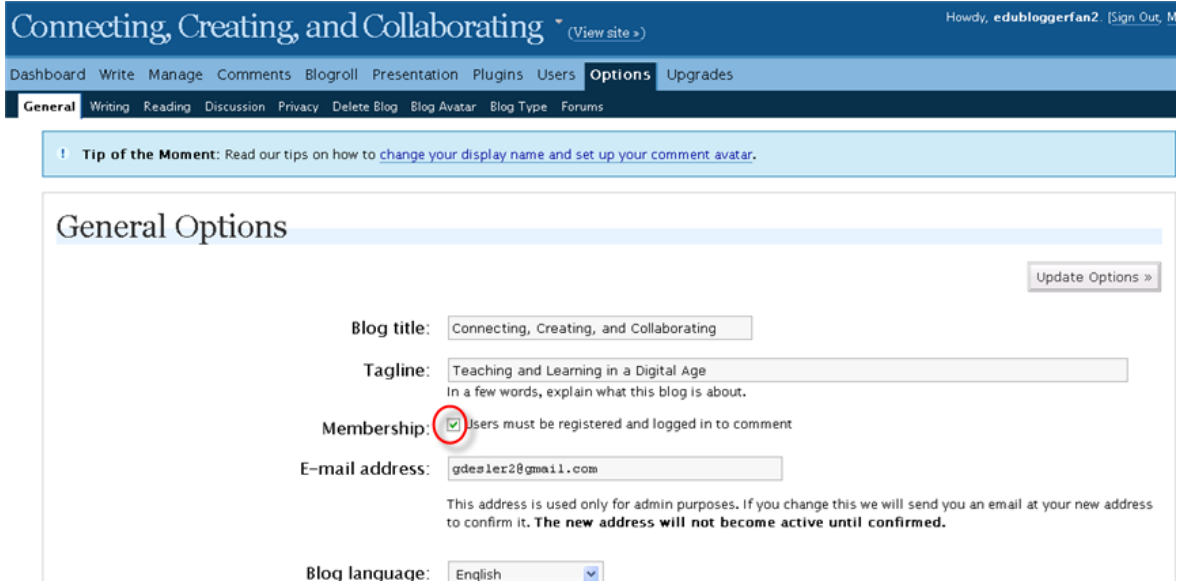
Limiting Comments to Edublog Community Members

If you wish to limit posting only to members you have added to your Edublog community, go to your *Options* menu > *General*. Click in the *Membership* checkbox to require that users are registered (members of your community) and logged on in order to comment. By selecting the *Membership* option, anyone who clicks on the comment link for any post, will be redirected to a WordPress login box. Don't forget to click on the *Update Options* button.

Looking for More Edublogs Resources?

- Start by subscribing to Sue Waters' "The Edublogger" - http://theedublogger.edublogs.org/ - "which is jammed with helpful tips, ideas and more." \
- Check out the video tutorials posted at Edublogs.org - http://edublogs.org/videos/
- Visit the Edublogs Forum - http://edublogs.org/forums/
- Edublogger Mike Temple also offers excellent tutorials for the advanced user at his Edublogs Tutorials site - http://miketemple123.edublogs.org/.

Edublogs Glossary of Widgets*

Archives – Having an archives widget in your sidebar is like having a file cabinet with folders organized by month and year. By clicking on a May 2006 archive link, for example, a window will instantly open displaying all your posts from that month and year – a much faster way to access previous posts than by scrolling back through months and years!

Avatar – A graphic or photo that in some way represents the blogger. Edublogs provides you with the option of uploading two types of avatars: 1) blog avatar – appears on the front page of your blog, and 2) user avatar – appears when you comment in your blog, or on another Edublogs blog, or in the forum. Your blog and user avatars can be the same image or different images.

Calendar – The calendar widget is another great organizing tool, similar to the archives link. When placed in the sidebar, the calendar widget displays the current month, with a link to previous months. Dates on the calendar that appear in bold type indicate dates that you have posted and they are hyperlinked to the actual posts.

Categories – Another great tool for organizing, the categories widget is like the drawer of a file cabinet. You can create as many categories as you wish. Each time you assign a category – or multiple categories – to a post, they will appear in your sidebar as hyperlinks to all posts you have assigned to those categories. Categories are much like a table of contents for your blog.

ClustrMaps – Your students will love this widget – and will probably improve their knowledge of world geography as they check for red dots appearing on the world map as readers from around the world visit their blog project.

Del.icio.us – Del.icio.us (http://del.icio.us/) is a social booking marking tool that allows you to access your online books marks from any computer – and to share them with others.

Email Subscriptions – This widget makes it very easy for readers to subscribe to your blog. By typing their email address in the box and then clicking on the *Subscribe button*, they will receive an email each time you add a new post.

Flickr – Although blocked by many school districts, the flickr (http://flickr.com) widget allows you to display the lastest photos you've added to your flickr account.

Google Search – Just one more option you can offer your readers: access to the world's most popular search engine.

Links – This links widget will be the section in your sidebar(s) for links to other blogs and websites. You can organize your links by categories (i.e., Math, English, Blogroll)

Meta – This widget provides you with a login to your dashboard. Without the meta widget, you would have to go to Edublogs.org each time you wanted to get into your dashboard.

Pages – Pages are where bloggers keep more static information (e.g., about me, blog etiquette, grading policies, etc.). Depending on the blog theme you select, pages will either appear in the sidebar or in tabs across the top of your blog. Pages always appear in a separate area from your posts.

Recent Comments – Another very motivating widget for students. When you place this widget in your sidebar, readers will see snippets of your most recently approved comments.

Recent Posts – Similar to the recent comments widget, the recent posts widget will show snippets of your most recent posts.

RSS – This widget will show up in your sidebar – or maybe in your header, depending on your theme, as a small orange icon. By clicking on the RSS icon, your readers who use news aggregators (i.e., Bloglines, Google Reader, Pageflakes) can "subscribe" to your posts and/or comments, which means, rather than receive notification via email, they open their news aggregator to see what's new in your blog.

Search – Another handy way for readers (or you) to locate information within your blog.

Tag Cloud – This widget will check you posts for "tags," which differ from "categories" in that they are more like items listed in an index. Generally, tags are words that are actually included in a post. If I post about a rubric for evaluating podcasts, for instance, I might tag the post with "rubric" and "podcasts" (and also assign it to a broader *category* such as "Assessment"). If you're tagging your posts and include a tag cloud widget in your sidebar, readers will be able to see at a glance what topics you are posting about and how frequently you write about those topics, as the more frequent the tag, the larger it appears in the tag cloud.

Text – Text boxes allow you to add more than just text to your sidebar. Besides adding, for instance, a favorite quote in a text box, you can also paste in some pretty fancy JavaScript, iframes and object codes, such as the code for adding a "voki" (speaking avatar) to your sidebar.

Twitter – The Twitter (http://twitter.com) widget allows your readers to view your latest "Tweets" (up to 140 character, a "micro blog") from your Twitter community.

VodPod Videos – Many districts block this widget, which allows you to share the latest videos you've uploaded to your account (http://vodpod.com).

*****Widgets** – "In simple terms widgets are mini web applications that you can put onto your website." To learn more about widgets, visit "The Edublogger" tutorials at http://theedublogger.edublogs.org/2008/01/19/getting-more-out-of-widgets/#more-19.