Students blogging true stories of their science research experiences

Lisa Gardiner
Spark – UCAR Science Education
• (Photographs included in the presentation were from the “Snail drawings” series by artist Daniel Ranalli)
In this talk...

• About the SOARS student blogging project
• Examples of student blog posts
• Benefits of getting science students blogging
SOARS student bloggers

• College interns at NCAR doing science research in the summer
• Blogging about their experiences at NCAR
• Describe and reflect on their journeys as scientists while they were building their creative writing skills.
What we did

• It was a choice. (Blogging was extracurricular.)
• We looked at examples of science blogging that use a first person point of view.
• We brainstormed and discussed blog post ideas as a group.
• I mentored students individually as they:
  – Considered how to organize a narrative
  – Grew more comfortable writing in their own voice
  – Decided what to put in and cut out of a story
• Draft ... discuss ... draft ... edit ... edit... edit ... post!
The blogging reinforced that all students have their own path.
SOARS student blog posts

Logan Dawson

https://spark.ucar.edu/spark-blogs

Reflections on the deadly tornadoes in central Oklahoma

June 19, 2013 – 9:42am — Lisa Gardiner
By Logan Dawson, SOARS Protégé

Severe thunderstorms needed to happen during the MPEX Field campaign for it to be a success. I never had this thought until after several deadly tornadoes tore across central Oklahoma in May while we were studying the storms.

On Friday, May 17, conditions for severe thunderstorms looked favorable, meaning they were likely, so the ground teams from Purdue, Colorado State, and the National Severe Storms Laboratory met in southwest Kansas and prepared to launch weather balloons across the Great Plains over the next several days. Ryan Sobash (lead nowcaster and PhD candidate from the University of Oklahoma) and I prepared for several late afternoons and evenings of nowcasting.

We didn’t collect much data on Saturday, May 18 - our first day launching balloons. A few weak thunderstorms formed in the area near Dodge City, Kansas, but none of them fully strengthened into a large storm.
Airborne Science - A Look at Research Aircraft

July 20, 2012 – 8:08am -- Lisa Gardner
By Annareli Morales, SOARS Protégé

It’s not every day that you get to tour expensive and advanced research aircraft that fly high and low through hurricanes, winter cyclones, and thunderstorms all around the globe.

Last week some fellow SOARS protégés and I traveled to the Rocky Mountain Metropolitan Airport in Broomfield, CO. We weren’t there to catch a flight for Vegas, but to get a tour of NCAR’s Research Aviation Facility. Before we even left, the main question floating around was “Are the planes there?”

Most of us study or are interested in atmospheric science, so we had all heard stories of these fantastic planes that aid scientists like us in our understanding of extreme weather. It is difficult to understand the atmosphere because most of the processes are invisible to the naked eye or too far for us to sample from the surface. These research aircraft allow scientists to sample the air and get a better understanding of the physical and chemical processes occurring above our heads. These legendary aircraft are the C-130 and the Gulfstream-V (HIAPER).

We hit the jackpot! The C-130 was there being taken care of in between projects and the GV had just arrived from a summer long project over the Great Plains studying thunderstorms and atmospheric chemistry. We were going to see both planes in one afternoon.

Annareli, excited to be next to cloud instruments attached to the wings of the GV aircraft. (Photo courtesy of SOARS protégé Andre Perkins.)

https://spark.ucar.edu/spark-blogs
Benefits

Student writers:
• have the opportunity to have a voice in science
• can process and make sense of events and experiences in science while on their path
• grow writing abilities

Readers:
• Have the opportunity to see that young people can be scientists
• Stories with a first person point of view put a human face on science
Think outside the box.
Blog in science education.
ScienceOnline Teen is a conference for scientists, students, and teachers to experience how the Web is transforming the way we do, seek, explore, and communicate science.

http://scienceonline.com/scienceonlineteen-2/
THE PRETTIEST WILL SurvIVE

This post was originally published on November 23, 2007. It has been slightly modified from its original format.

“I'm the aye-aye. According to scientists, my species has survived 60 million years on planet earth. I even play an important role in my ecosystem. But, right now I'm facing extinction from losing my habitat to humans. Some humans think I symbolize death and they kill me on sight, even though there is no scientific basis for this. Many think I'm too ugly to save. What do you think?”

Photo source: J.l.plusAL

While trying to find a good present for my two nieces I happened upon a website that sells endangered species adoption kits. I remembered several students mentioning you could adopt-a-manatee on a previous post and this website included manatees. It also included favorites such as penguins and polar bears. I immediately recognized it as a fun way to give my nieces a meaningful present.

As I moved through the list of available species, I noticed they were organized in the order of most to least popular. Tigers and pandas were at the top while anteaters and warthogs were at the bottom. The aye-aye was not even on the list.
http://youtu.be/bmVJRvjTecM