



## Anonymous Comments

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The logistics for making comments on my blog are easy. Enter your name, email address, and leave your comment. You don't need to use (and, more importantly, remember) a password. I am notified by email of each comment. I automatically approve and post each comment, with one exception—I won't post anonymous comments.

I discussed this issue in my response to an earlier anonymous comment on the blog—at the time I didn't even know that anonymous comments were possible. In a nutshell, the culture of the School generally is one where people respect one another and communicate openly without fear of personal criticism or punishment. I don't want to do anything with this blog that might move us away from that cultural ideal. Your colleagues will evaluate your ideas and possibly disagree with them. That is the way things should work. My experience in other contexts is that anonymity encourages some people to engage in poor behavior (cheap shots and general snarkiness) because they don't have to take responsibility for their comments. The effect over time can be corrosive in an organization. Anonymity also can produce rushed and less thoughtful comments—people are more likely to refine their thoughts if they will be identified with them. It also can be harder to evaluate some anonymous comments because you don't know anything about the person's experience. Do they really have the background to know what they are talking about, or does lack of experience in a particular area partly explain their point of view? The suggestion box will continue to be available as a way to make anonymous comments, though I hope people will consider signing their names so that we might have a dialogue about the issues being raised. I give much greater credence to opinions when people are willing to stand behind them, even when I disagree with them.

I completely recognize that there are times when people want and need to share confidential information with me. That will continue to be possible, as it has been in the past. Come see me, email me, or call me. I'm just saying that if you comment on my blog, and I hope that you do, it will



be public.