

Technology for Teachers

Twitter...Twitter...Twitter...Twitter

Carol Marcolini, Hampton City VA Public Schools

Laurie Smith, Hampton City VA Public Schools, Retired

What is twitter? Twitter is a social networking and microblogging tool that allows users to send messages, aka “Tweets,” that are no more than 140 characters (all letters, numbers and spaces) in length. Tweets can include pictures, videos, links to websites, callouts to other twitter users (@), and discussion topics by hashtags (#). It can be used on a desktop/laptop computer as well as on a mobile device using the free twitter app (iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch, Android device, any smartphone)....

Why have a twitter account? Educators have started to chat on twitter using #edchat. They connect with other educators, mentors and communities interested in education. An archive of #edchats can be found at <http://edchat.pbworks.com/w/page/219908/FrontPage>

A comprehensive list of ed Hashtags can be found at <http://www.teachthought.com/twitter-hashtags-for-teacher/>



There are different ways to use twitter in the classroom. After you sign up for twitter, have students and families follow you by searching for your @username. Students will “follow” you so that they can read all of your tweets but you won’t follow them. With a classroom account (under a teacher’s login and password), anyone in the class can tweet out questions, request resources, or share the learning that is taking place in that class. The appropriate hashtags should accompany each message. These messages might look like this:

We are looking to shake up professional development in our district. What are some unique models you use. #profdev

Our class is looking to collaborate with another class to write and produce a PSA on #bullying and #cybersafety.

In addition to using twitter as a way to connect globally, we’ve also seen examples of classrooms using twitter as a way to share learning opportunities with others outside of the classroom. For example, supplementary photo and video tools provide the ability to share learning from anywhere someone can access an Internet connection. This could be in a classroom, it could be on a field trip, or – it could even be from a baseball game.

There are many uses for twitter in the classroom or your personal life. Some examples are:

Personal Learning Network	crisis communication
picture of classroom activities/ fieldtrips	communicating with experts
tweet to parents	polls and data gathering
homework assignments	follow mentors and stories
touching base with the community	

Other examples are :

foreign language newsfeed
 network and career experts
 present daily puzzles and challenges
 follow bloggers
 tweet link a newsletter
 foster a pen pal exchange

showcase student work
 follow national and student leaders
 live tweet a book or movie
 role play
 follow the issues
 create a career list

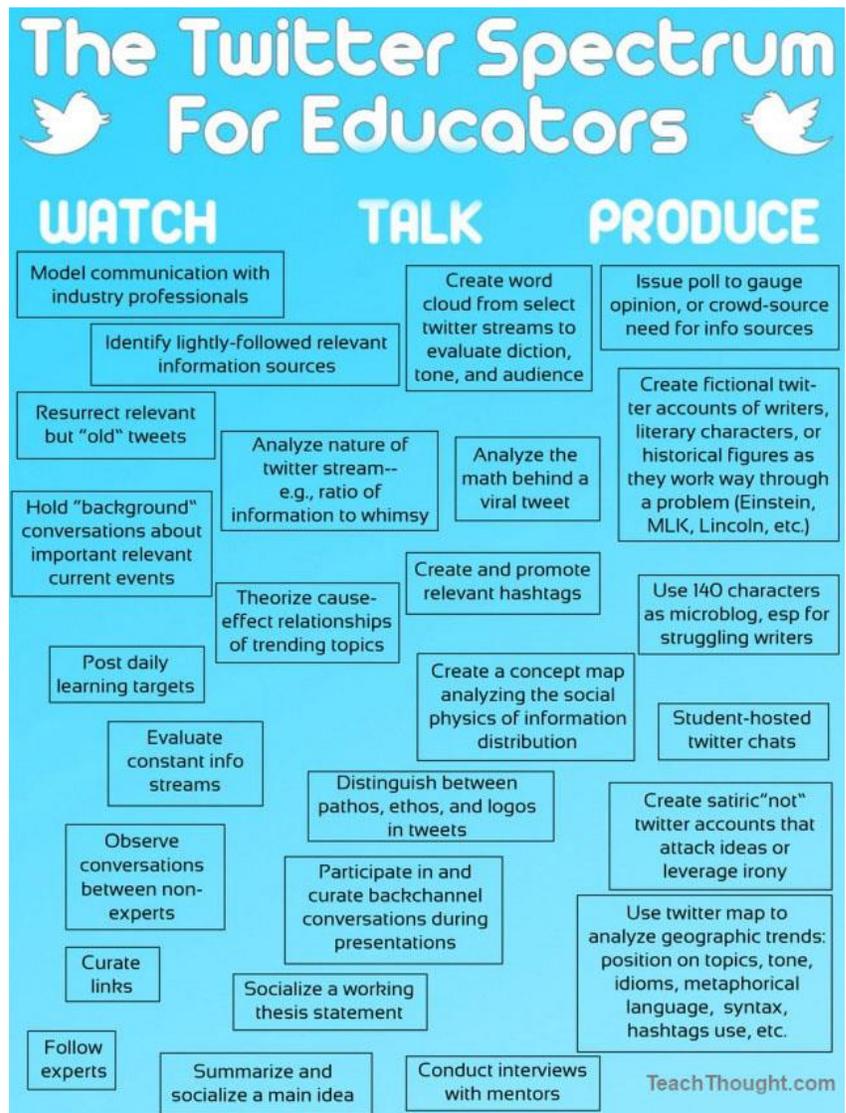
For more ideas go to <http://www.teachthought.com/social-media/60-ways-to-use-twitter-in-the-classroom-by-category/>

The benefits of using tweets are many. For students tweeting increases participation and summarizes skills. For parents, it keeps them informed and engaged and improves two-way communication. The staff and the district administrators, it can create a classroom connection, networking opportunities, as well as a sharing of resources.

Some food for thought about using twitter in the classroom from other sources:

The website [te@chthought](http://www.teachthought.com/) created a “twitter spectrum”. The following spectrum takes a new approach for using twitter in the classroom. While other posts offer a list of ideas, the following spectrum is roughly structured to increase in complexity from left to right:

Watch is passive.
Talk adds interaction.
Produce implies an even greater interaction between an audience, a purpose, and a media design – in this case, using twitter to actually produce something original.



BLOOM'S TAXONOMY & TWITTER

[TeachBytes](#) has followed that up with an excellent graphic of their own that uses a pure [Bloom's Taxonomy](#) approach. The specific ideas range from "remix trending tweets with video and music" to creating concept maps showing the relationship between tweets.

CREATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invent a Twitter application - Create a fake but accurate Twitter profile for a historical or literary figure - Remix trending tweets with video and music to create a PSA
EVALUATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Combine multiple tweets on a single topic into a story - Criticize a Twitter user's argument - Predict trending words and phrases based on current Twitter trends and world news - Convince someone on a topic based purely on tweets for evidence
ANALYZE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compare & contrast Twitter to other forms of social media - Analyze tone in different tweets - Examine bias in different tweets - Diagram a web showing connections between popular/trending tweets
APPLY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Give an example of a tweet for an assigned political leader - Illustrate popular/trending tweets - Paraphrase a book, poem, or text using 140 characters
UNDERSTAND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summarize tweets on a relevant topic - Translate tweets in other languages - Estimate the number of tweets a user will post based on previous tweets per day - Rewrite tweets in your own words
REMEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Follow relevant Twitter users (historians, scientists, etc.) - Define major elements of Twitter (tweet, hashtag, etc.) - Observe geographical trends in tweets with TrendsMap - Match political tweets with political parties

© TeachBytes 2013

To help you get started on creating a twitter account go to <http://www.twitter.com>
 Enter your name, email and a password.
 Choose a username, also called a handle. It will look like @SmithPhotography

Go to settings and adjust the privacy if desired.
 Download the twitter app to your mobile device and get started.
 Each tweet will have a stamp. People will follow you from a hashtag or a search.

To help, we downloaded from the twitter site their pdf on [Getting Started](#) for more information and steps to follow.

In addition, we downloaded a series of posters to help you use twitter effectively in your classes. These posters are from [Educational Technology and Mobile Learning](#), where you will find much more about twitter and other apps, as well as a ton of other resources.

Teachers should have the skill set to build their own personal learning networks (PLN) to be global. They should be able to leverage their PLN to bring the challenge of authentic conversation to their students. Teachers should be able to use social media to connect their students to real-world problems.

In closing educators should be powerful role models and provide examples of how to use the most powerful social media tools to expand the boundaries of learning. Otherwise, our students may only end up following #Bieberhair.



Additional Resources

Teachers Guide to Twitter <http://www.edudemic.com/guides/guide-to-twitter/>

Shrock's guide to Twitter <http://www.schrockguide.net/twitter-for-teachers.html>

Educational Technology and Mobile Learning <http://www.educatorstechnology.com/>

Twitter help page <https://support.twitter.com/articles/215585>

Twitter the basics <https://support.twitter.com/groups/50-welcome-to-twitter>