



"Our
STUDENTS,
Our
FUTURE"

TEACHING AND LEARNING THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

Tech Tips November Newsletter

BLOGGING AND TWITTER IN THE CLASSROOM

"It's Not About the Tools. It's About the Skills." Silvia Tolisano



Blogging



Twitter

Check out Silvia Tolisano's [blog post](#) in which she explains to parents that blogging and other 21 Century Skills ARE about the basics *and* so many more skills and literacies. Silvia hosts the very popular blog 'Langwitches'.

Blogging Class Newsletters and Student Work



Check out these great educator's blogs:

[FreeTech4Teachers](#)

[Langwitches Blog](#)

[The Nerdy Teacher](#)

[21 Century Classroom](#)

[Eduademic](#)

[iGeneration](#)

[Larry Ferlazzo](#)

[Mind Shift](#)

[Teach Thought](#)

Check out [Feedly.com](#) It is one example of a 'Reader'. It helps you to set up a magazine type display of the blogs you like to follow. Their app is useable on all platforms and computer types (tablets, laptops, desktops, phones).

Blogging is a great way to communicate with your parents. Posting to a blog is as easy as sending an email. You can add pictures, videos, webpage links, audio files and documents to any blog post. Consider using a blog as a way to publish your class newsletters. They can also be very useful to create electronic 'notebooks' for students, or ePortfolios of their best work.

There are many great platforms (companies that host blogs) out there for educators. Some popular blog sites to use include: [Edublogs](#), [Kidblog](#), [Blogger](#) and [Weebly](#). Many are free. Most have upgrades that you can select for a nominal fee.

If you are going to have your students use a blog as a writing platform it is best to select a blogging site that allows you to set up a class. Edublogs, Kidblog and Weebly do this. This allows you to *share* ownership of each student's blog. Students tend to be highly motivated when they realize their writing is being shared with a real world audience. Some platforms limit the audience to your own class group. Others allow student blogs to be shared with other classes around the world.

A great way to get started is to spend some time reading and exploring other blogs written by teachers and students. Edublogs has an [index](#) of all of their educational blogs that are public. They invite students and teachers to enter their blogs in the annual [Edublogs Awards Contest](#). These blogs are great examples to check out.

When you are ready to begin work on your own blog there are great resources to help you plan your approach. Check out Silvia Tolisano's [Blogging Guide](#). She also has developed a great [Scope and Sequence](#) for Blogging with K-8 students. This list of the [Top 25 High School Teacher Blogs of 2012](#) has a good variety of approaches. As does this Pinterest Board "[Canadian Teacher Blogs](#)".

Another great way to learn more about blogging is to read blogs of your colleagues. Janet Wilson (from Henderson P.S.) has just started her experiment with blogging. Check out [Pebbles and Pine Cones](#). She uses her blog to reflect on her practice and share her thinking with her parents. Another example is [Lee Casement's blog](#). He is a primary teacher at Perth Road P.S. and uses his blog as a 'Class Diary'. Check out Wendy Parliament's ['The Classroom Tourist'](#) for lots of new ideas.

If you need help figuring out the menus and screens on your blogging site use Google to look up 'how to set up a *your platform* blog'. There are also great videos on YouTube for most blogging sites. Don't forget to check the home page of your blogging platform for tips.

Check out these hashtag lists:

[Cybraryman's List of Educational Hashtags](#)

[TeachThought's 'Complete Guide to Twitter Hashtags for Education'](#)

[Edublogs' Best Twitter Hashtag for Education 2012](#)

Here are a few Limestone regular 'tweeters' :

- [@NikiPutnam](#)
- [@GRECGryphons12](#)
Primary Teacher
- [@FrancaisSV LDSB](#)
French Department at Southview PS
- [@Lisi JE](#)
French Teacher
- [@FrontPS LDSB](#)
Frontenac PS
- [@LOLPS LDSB1](#)
Primary Teacher
- [@sawdongrec](#)
Junior Teacher
- [@WendyParliament](#)
Computer Tutor

Twitter in the Classroom



Another great platform for connected learning is [Twitter](#). Twitter is described as a 'microblogging' platform. Messages are limited to 140 characters. If you are a registered user of Twitter you can post 'tweets'. If you are not a registered user then you can only read them. Twitter

is used to share links, ideas, conversations, updates, photos... Many of us discovered the power of Twitter this past year by following Chris Hadfield's amazing tweets from the Space Station. Teachers have used Twitter as a way to get messages directly to their parents, to post homework assignments and links. You can follow ideas on Twitter by using hashtags (#). If you wanted to see what was being shared about this year's Quebec Winter Carnival then you would search for that in the Twitter page search window. If you wanted to contribute to the discussion you would tweet with #quebecwintercarnival in your message.

Check out these resources to help you become familiar with Twitter.

[Getting Started with Twitter](#) (Twitter Help Page)

[Twitter in the K-8 Classroom](#) (Silvia Tolisano)

[Five Ways to Use Twitter Without Being a Twitter User](#) (Chris Hardie)

[Best Practices in a Twitter-enhanced High School Classroom](#) (posted by Shelly Blake-Plock on 'Teach Paperless')

[50 Ways to Use Twitter in the Classroom](#) (Samantha Miller)

[20 Ways High Schools Are Using Twitter in the Classroom](#) (Teach Thought)

[Cybrary Man's Educational Websites](#)—Twitter (Cybraryman.com)