

Katie:

It seems like everyone is Tweeting on Twitter these days. You can find out what Lance Armstrong is up to, all about Lady Gaga, what weather systems are heading your way or what people who share your same interests are chatting about.

But there is also a growing group of educators who are Tweeting about teaching in today's world. I started tweeting about a year ago and quickly realized that developing my own PLN or personal learning network was unlike any other type of professional development I had ever done. Imagine a teacher's lounge where you get to hand pick the teachers – because they inspire you, challenge you, make you think, and are always available to push your thinking or to provide a needed resource. Imagine networking with teachers, superintendents, educational researchers and authors in Canada, Australia, the United States, England -- educators from all over the world who can give you a broader view of what is happening worldwide in education. Connecting with like-minded educators takes away the isolation we can experience in a classroom and provides much inspiration for our profession. Educators on Twitter share articles, blog links, research and engage in ongoing conversations that help us learn, grow and be better teachers.

Twitter is quite different from Facebook. It's OK that you don't personally know the people you follow. You want to follow a lot of people, because the more people you follow, the more Tweets you can read, the more information you get and the more people who will then follow you. Start by following one person who piques your interest and then see who they follow. You'll be tapping into a group with similar interests, passions and questions. Follow them too. You'll grow your following list exponentially. Learning is a social process, and Twitter supports these ongoing conversations.

Kassia:

When Katie first started Tweeting and was encouraging me to start, I thought, "I don't have time for this." It looked like a more complicated process than I wanted to take on. After signing up though I realized that it's really quite simple. You can tweet as often or as little as you want and still get a lot out of it. Some people check twitter on their phones quite often where as other people just check in occasionally on their computers. I go through phases -- sometimes I check in a couple of times a day, and then I'm really busy and I'll go a week without checking. It's there when I come back to it. I can pick it right back up. When I logon to twitter in the evenings it's a space where I get inspiration, practical ideas, connections to research and a community of people who push my thinking.

Katie:

There are a variety of people to follow on Twitter. In addition to many brilliant classroom teachers, we follow children's authors like Judy Blume , Mo Willems, Kate Messner, Laurie Halse Anderson and Beverly Cleary. It's fun to hear about the new projects they are working on as well as their struggles as writers. I love sharing with my students that Judy Blume tweeted about her book *Tiger Eyes* being made into a

movie or that Mo Willems “Pigeon” tweeted something funny that he did. It makes authors come alive.

Kassia:

We also follow a lot of professional book authors. Stenhouse, Heinemann and Scholastic all Tweet and many of their authors do too. Franki Sibberson, Karen Syzmusiak, Ann Marie, Corgill, Sarah Kajder, Barry Lane, Pat Johnson, Patrick Allen, The Sisters, Debbie Diller, Cathy Mere, and Fountas and Pinnell are some – to name a few.

Katie:

A few weeks ago Fountas and Pinnell tweeted about their dog, Meli, a star in the Leveled Literacy Intervention books, having surgery. My students were very interested to know what’s going on with Meli – one of their favorite characters.

We also follow educational policy advocates such as Alfie Kohn, Susan Ohanian, and Diane Ravitch to keep us current on broader educational issues beyond our own classrooms. They often tweet links to articles and blogs that are important for teachers to be aware of.

Kassia:

My favorite part of Twitter is participating in the different chats. To me, it’s a way of bookmarking certain threads and themes of conversations. You can either follow chats live – they usually meet once a week for an hour. Or you can look them up later through the specific chat hashtag. The pound sign followed by the chat name, such as Kinderchat, Mathchat, Edchat, etc...which you will see in people’s tweets, will take you to a list of tweets all about that topic. For example, in Kinderchat, it’s interesting to read people’s chats internationally – to find out what’s going on around the world in early childhood. It’s also a great way to follow blogs from people you meet here.

Tweeting allows you to participate virtually in events and conferences going on around the world that you might not be able to attend. When Katie was at the Reading Recovery conference, I could read and participate in the sessions with Matt Glover and Lucy Calkins through her tweets. I also tweeted from the NCTM conference. A lot of people from Kinderchat and Mathchat followed along.

Katie:

Thanks for listening to us share about Twitter. We really feel that it’s a resource no teacher can be without. Perhaps you can use some time this summer to explore Twitter and all it has to offer.

We hope to see you in the Twitterverse!

Katie: @bluskysz

Kassia: @kassiaowedekind

@StenhousePub

@ScholasticTeach
@NewAtHeinemann
@CatchingReaders
@FrankiSibberson
@KellyToGo
@acorgill
@KarenSzymusiak
@BarryLane
@ColoReader (Patrick Allen)
@GailAndJoan
@ruth_ayres
@WriteguyJeff (Anderson)
@skajder
@debbiediller
@spillarke (Lee Ann Spillane)
@justwonderinY (Cathy Mere)
@FountasPinnell
@alfiekohn
@susanoa
@DianeRavitch
#kinderchat
#mathchat
#edchat