Details

What is Microblogging? A Spin on Blogging With Students - 211
In this episode, we'll answer the question, "What is microblogging?" and look at a lesson idea (with a customizable template) that takes a spin on blogging with students. You'll hear about this popular way to share information and how to connect students' microblogging creations with an authentic audience!

Link to live show notes: https://classtechtips.com/2023/04/18/blogging-with-students-211/
**Blogging With Students*

Introduction

Hi there, I'm Monica Burns, and welcome to a new Easy EdTech Podcast episode! As a former NYC public school teacher and current EdTech consultant, I started this podcast in 2019 to share my favorite tech integration tips and stories from my experiences.

Each episode offers practical ideas for you to try, share, or save for later. Be sure to check out classtechtips.com/podcast for today's show notes and resources. If you're listening on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, or another platform, you'll find the show notes link in the description as well.

Promotion/Reminder

This episode is sponsored by my new free ebook on ChatGPT! It's called "60+ Must-Try ChatGPT Prompts for Teachers" and it's full of ideas that will save you oodles of time. To grab the free ebook, go to ClassTechTips.com/ChatGPTbook. That's my website, ClassTechTips.com and add a slash ChatGPTbook. You can also find the link in the description of this episode or by tapping on the free stuff button on my website, classtechtips.com.

Today's Intro

This week's episode is titled: *What is Microblogging? A Spin on Blogging With Students*
This episode is inspired by a blog post you might have seen pop up earlier this year titled, "A Microblogging Lesson Idea and Template You Can Customize" and just like the title of the blog post, I have a ready-to-use template for you to try out the activity we'll talk about in today's episode. So make sure to click on the link in the description that take you to the shownotes today, since there is a template right there and waiting for you.

What is Microblogging? We see it everywhere, and your students might consume this content, too. Merriam-Webster defines microblogging (noun) as "blogging done with severe

space or size constraints typically by posting frequent brief messages about personal activities." When it comes to creating for an audience, a series of short-form posts is super popular.

From tweets on Twitter to a series of Instagram posts, microblogging can take many forms. If you're wondering if this episode is about encouraging students to post pictures and captions on a public social media page… not exactly. Instead, we'll look at a microblogging lesson idea (and a template you can customize) that takes a spin on this popular way of posting updates for an online audience.

Episode Transcript

The microblogging lesson that we'll look at today is pretty open-ended and ready for you to customize. You can decide on the format and the prompts you share with students. I'll share a few ideas and a template for you to use "as is" or make your own. With this lesson, you can simulate a traditional social media audience by examining this popular format for sharing ideas.

This is a project idea I love to share – and if you've been on a webinar with me you might have seen me share this idea, and I've included in workshops with Arizona and New York educators this school year too.

But let's take a step back and think about the why, why you might try this kind of project.

In my book EdTech Essentials, I dedicate an entire chapter to the idea of an authentic audience. Here's a quick excerpt:

"Connecting student work to an audience is perhaps more important than ever, as online sharing prevails in our digital world. Students are familiar with having content shared online, and some may even be aspiring content creators. In today's online world, students are well-positioned to identify content creators and observe how they connect with their audience. Students expect their own creations to be viewed and celebrated, and having an authentic audience is critical. " p. 79

I've included a link in the shownotes for today's episode to download the free study guide for EdTech Essentials.

Of course, you might decide to publish student creations on a school social media page if that is part of your regular practice. Or you might have another audience to share student work, like a partner class studying a similar topic.

Set an intention

Before we look at tools and an example, you'll want to set an intention for this project. For example, you might have the goal of giving students a space to capture their observations for a composting project. Or you might use this as a way to have students respond to reading responses. The focus of this activity is totally up to you. You might find that it provides a new way for students to share their learning related to an objective you've taught differently in the past.

To help set up students for success, you can create an example that connects to the task you share with them. In the template I've created for you that you'll find the link to in the shownotes for this episode, you'll see I included an example for you, too. This example connects to an activity where students might reflect on what they've learned after beginning a composting endeavor.

Choose your tool

I often use the phrase "embrace your place" when discussing ways to simplify technology integration. When I use the term place, I mean the space to organize and post content for students. For example, in a kindergarten classroom, your place might be Seesaw. In a middle or high school classroom, your place might be Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, or another learning management system (LMS).

But this phrase can also connect to tools already in your tool belt or places (online spaces) you and your students are already comfortable navigating. So for this project, I'll share how you can use Google Slides, but you can use a variety of tools to accomplish the same goals.

Getting started

For this microblogging activity, I opened up a new Google Slides and went straight to the Page Setup option under the File menu. This gives me the option to change the sizing to look more

like what you'd see on an Instagram page. I choose the dimensions 5 x 10 inches, but you can choose whatever you like.

Then I added a text box to the bottom half of the slide and a gray box to the top half of the slide. After you share this slide deck with your students, they can make it their own. Students can add a picture to the top half and replace the gray box. They can type in their caption or short response below. Students can change the text size and font, too.

Student work example

After making your template, you might want to add an example as the first slide. In the example I've included in this post, I made a slide with a composting picture and a reflection about composting. At this point, you'll want to think about your expectations and tasks for this type of project. Then, you can make an example that connects to what students will create.

Sharing a template

If you are going to share this with a large group of students so they can work on one slide as their classmates work on the others, you'll want to have a system to make sure each student knows which slide is theirs. Alternatively, you might want to make a copy of your template for each student to have their own. Then they can make one or several slides for their microblogging creation.

Where can students find pictures to use? For this project, you might want students to use a picture they've snapped themselves or one they have found. Google Slides lets students upload a photo from their device or Google Drive. Alternatively, students might search for an image that grants permission to use it on a website like Unsplash. I added a link to my blog with tips for creating collections of photos for students in the show notes, too!

Ready to get started? Find the link in today's shownotes for the template you can use as-is or customize for your students. Remember, this isn't just a "Google Slides" project. You can try this out with another slide-based presentation tool or use the concept of microblogging with any open-ended creation tool.

So let's make this EdTech easy with some key points from the episode…

Set an intention for your microblogging project.

Decide on an authentic audience for student projects.

Share examples with students so they can envision their creations.

Customize a template to connect to your learning goals.

Remember, you can find the shownotes and the full list of resources from this episode on classtechtips.com/podcast and finding today's episode #210!

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Outro

Thanks for joining us for another Tuesday edition of the Easy EdTech Podcast. Remember to hit "Follow" on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or your favorite app to have next week's episode ready for you on Tuesday morning.

Feel free to share takeaways from this episode with friends or colleagues in a quick email or text, or even on social media. Don't hesitate to tag me @ClassTechTips if you have any questions.

Episode Resources

- EdTech Books by Monica Burns
- EdTech Essentials: A Sneak Peek Inside My New Book (Podcast Episode)
- Download the free study guide for *EdTech Essentials*
- Seesaw (Student-driven Digital Portfolios & Parent Communication)
- Google Classroom
- Unsplash (Free High-Quality Photos)
- Google Slides (Free Online Presentation Tool)
- A Microblogging Lesson Idea and Template You Can Customize (Blog Post)

- Creating Real Audiences for Student Projects with Jennifer Hall (Podcast Episode)
- Favorite Google Slides Tips (Podcast Episode)
- Showcase Student Learning With Seesaw Updates (Blog Post)
- Microsoft Teams (Collaboration tool)
- Must-Try Updates from Microsoft Teams Assignments (Blog Post)
- How to Find Photos for Student Projects (Blog Post)
- How to Make Collections of Photos for Students to Use (Podcast Episode)
- Everything New in Microsoft Teams Assignments (Podcast Episode)
- How to Choose an Audience for Student Projects (Blog Post)
- 5 Tips to Keep EdTech Simple This School Year (Blog Post)
- 3 Types of Audience for Student Work [EdTech Essentials Spotlight] (Podcast Episode)
- 4 Ways to Create an Authentic Audience for Students (Blog Post)
- 6 Tips for Connecting Students with an Audience for their Work (Blog Post)