

Tips for Using Social Media to Tell Your School's Story - 012

In this episode I share ten tips for using social media to help you spread the word about the great work happening by students, teachers and families in your school community. Whether you're just getting started with social media at the school level or a total pro, this episode has plenty for everyone. You'll hear about my favorite platforms for sharing school stories and how to make telling your school story easier than ever!

Hello there! My name is Monica Burns, I'm a former classroom teacher and through my blog, school visits, and presentations around the world, I now I spend my time sharing tips, strategies and activity ideas to make easy EdTech integration a reality in your classroom. Before we dive in, a quick note. We're talking sharing stories today, and I'm hosting a book club this spring using one of the spotlight tools I mentioned in the podcast.

So this May I'm hosting a totally new type of book club -- it features [*40 Ways to Inject Creativity in the Classroom with Adobe Spark*](#) written with Ben Forta. It's a book full of activity ideas for you to customize for your students. With K-12 lessons for all subject areas, this book was designed to help you inject creativity into the great work already happening in your classroom!

This isn't a "traditional" book with chapters or reading assignments, this book club is all about creation. You'll start Week 1 by reading the introduction and skimming through the activity ideas. Week 2 will be all about moviemaking where you'll create and share your own Spark Video. Week 3 will focus on website creation with Spark Page. And Week 4 will give you a chance to create and share a graphic with Spark Post. We'll finish up the month with a live video call to celebrate everything you've accomplished!

All of the instructions to join the book club can be found on my blog and on my podcast page, classtechtips.com/podcast. Or you can head straight to my book club page, classtechtips.com/bookclub to find the details on how to join.

The start date for the book club is May 1st, but you can join at any time during the month. If you're listening to this sometime after May, don't worry, I love hosting professional learning opportunities for teachers, so stay tuned for more. Now let's jump into the episode!

This week's podcast is titled Tips for Using Social Media to Tell Your School's Story. I'm going to share ten tips for using social media alongside some of my favorite tools for making it happen in your classroom. So as I go through you'll hear me mention some tools you'll probably want to try out. If you are folding laundry, driving to work, or walking your dog, don't worry -- I have the entire list (and the transcript for this podcast) on the episode page for the podcast. Just head over to classtechtips.com/podcast and you can find all of the resources I mention there. So let's dive in!

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From Instagram to Twitter, social media has a powerful way of connecting users from around the world. But how can you start using social media platforms to tell your school's story in local and global ways? As you think about all of the wonderful things happening at your school this year, you have stories, images and quotes to share from every corner of your building.

In this episode we'll look at ten tips for using social media to tell your school's story. I'm sure that you have more to add to this list -- so feel free to leave a comment or add your idea to a review on your favorite podcast platform. You're also welcome to share your tips on social media, make sure to tag me too @classtechtips on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook too.

When we talk today about using Social Media to tell your school's story, there are a lot of special moments to capture. From big events planned months in advance, like a school assembly, special guest visitor or field day, to everyday moments of learning in action, you have lots of great stories to share.

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TIP #1 Prioritize platforms

Instagram, Facebook, Twitter... where should you start? If you're starting from scratch or committed to using new platforms more strategically, choose one place to get started. I've been using [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for a long time and only started using [Instagram](#) last year. I always saw the value in Instagram but didn't have the time to invest in it until more recently.

Instagram is perfect for sharing pictures and photo editing apps make it easy for you to crop and filter pictures on the go. Because Instagram is so image focused, you want to make sure that you have permission to share all the pictures you take. I'm not a lawyer, but if a family doesn't give permission to post a picture of their child, placing an emoji over their face or blurring out their face is still posting a picture of child online. So when sharing pictures of this you'll want to be mindful of what permissions you have set up.

When prioritizing platforms, you'll also want to keep in mind that it is much easier to share a link to something using Facebook and Twitter. So if you plan on sharing lots of sign up forms or landing pages, this is important to note. Now when it comes to using social media to share the great work happening in your classroom or school, you don't have to post something different on each social media platform. It's totally okay, and I encourage you, to share the same content on all of the social media platforms you use. You just might condense information on Twitter since the character count is limited, or post more pictures on Instagram since this is an image-friendly platform.

Tip #2 Use Clear branding

We can often recognize a logo, colors, or font of a favorite brand from far away – whether we're driving down the road or walking down a busy street. Use your school colors and fonts consistently across all social media platforms. Adobe Spark is a tool I often share for student creators, but schools can access the branding features of Spark for free when

they set up their schools with Spark for Education -- and I'll link to more information about Spark for Education in the show notes.

Spark lets you upload logos, choose fonts and specify the colors you want to use on any of the graphics you create. This makes it really easy to have clear and consistent branding on every image your school shares. If you've visited my social media profiles before, you see that I use my logo and colors pretty consistently for all of my images. This way it's easy for someone to identify my posts as they're scrolling through.

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In addition to prioritizing platforms and using clear branding, TIP #3 for using social media to share your school's story, is to use this space to share student work.

You may have heard me use the phrase "[give eyes to the exit slip](#)" which is my way of saying – celebrate all sorts of student work. If you're not sure what to snap, tweet or post on social media, use these platforms to share student work from small everyday moments. Just like photos of course, you'll want to make sure to have permission granted by families before sharing student work publicly.

Sharing student work can take lots of forms, it might include a few pictures of work posted on a bulletin board or a science experiment in action. It could also include a link to a student video or ebook. This is a great way to celebrate student work and share what's going on in your school.

Tip #4 Capture quotes

Your students, teachers and community members all have important things to say. Maybe there is a quote from a student about something new they learned or a quote from a family member after a school assembly, capture these quotes and share them on social media. This is a great way to amplify voices and celebrate the great work happening at

your school. You might leave these quotes anonymous or include student names alongside them. A tool like Spark Post makes it easy to layer text over a color background or over a picture. You could also simply type out a quote or record a video of someone talking.

Tip #5 Plan ahead

The idea of "keeping up" with social media is one reason some people decide not to get started in the first place. Instead, create a schedule of a few things you want to share over the course of the week. You might also try out a scheduling tool like [Buffer](#) to make sure your account is sharing content regularly. Buffer, Hootsuite, Tailwind, or one of the many scheduling apps let you sit down and schedule content for a week or a month. This is a great way to stay consistent without feeling like you have to post every day. I'll link to these tools in the show notes so you can learn more about scheduling tools, just head to classtechtips.com/podcast

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So we're halfway through our list, TIP #1 Prioritize platforms, Tip #2 Use Clear branding, TIP #3 Share student work, Tip #4 Capture quotes, Tip #5 Plan ahead

Now Tip #6 is Prepare for "in the moment" sharing

If there is a special event on your schedule, make a plan for sharing it! You might have a point person during events who is in charge of posting. It may also be helpful to brainstorm a list of what to "look for" during an event so you can be sure to capture every special moment.

Imagine you have an event on your calendar like a student concert. You'll want to think about the moments you can capture from this event. It might include snapping a picture of a packed auditorium, or recording the opening remarks from a student, if you come in with a plan, you'll make sure you don't miss anything.

Tip #7 Use video recordings

Instead of just snapping pictures during the event try capturing video too. Filming a few short clips will give you a few options of what to share. You can review the clips after the event and share them over the course of the following week.

Tip #8 Try out a live feed

Live video is becoming increasingly popular, and it may be something you decide to use at a special event. I've used Instagram Live and [Facebook Live](#) to share stories and interviews from different events in the past. This is a great way to provide real-time content to families who might not be able to attend an event.

Preparing for a live feed might include practicing your introduction or jotting down a few things you don't want to forget to say. Some of these platforms let people interact and comment during the feed. If you pay attention to these comments, you can thank people for watching or figure out if there are any audio issues.

Tip #9 Filter images

Want to make your pictures stand out? Try using a mobile app like Snapseed. It's perfect for moments where you want to crop an image from a classroom visit or make the colors of a picture pop. I'll link to Snapseed in the show notes, but there are lots of filtering apps. Many social media platforms include a photo filter option too.

Tip #10 Share snapped stories

Instagram and Snapchat lets users take images and add them to a "story" feed. This means you can snap multiple pictures in a short amount of time to spotlight a special event. Instead of writing a dozen Facebook posts during a school fundraiser or recording a live video, you can snap a bunch of pictures for people who want a more detailed idea of what's happening.

You can post stories in real-time over the course of an event or you can sit down when the event is over and upload all of your photos at once, kind of like a slideshow.

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So let's recap, TIP #1 Prioritize platforms, Tip #2 Use Clear branding, TIP #3 Share student work, Tip #4 Capture quotes, Tip #5 Plan ahead, Tip #6 is Prepare for "in the moment" sharing, Tip #7 Use video recordings, Tip #8 Try out a live feed, Tip #9 Filter images, Tip #10 Share snapped stories

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So let's make this EdTech easy...

1. Choose one social media platform to focus on first, maybe Instagram or Twitter
2. Think about an upcoming event and what you'd like to capture
3. Snap pictures you have permission to post and decide on what message you'd like to share along with it
4. Post in real-time or schedule the posts to appear later!

As you get ready to tell your school's story? Use these tips to help share the great work happening at your school with the world! Have another suggestion to add to the list? Share in the comments of the podcast episode or tag me in your post on your favorite social media platform!

And Remember to head over to the show notes for information on my May Book Club as well as links to all of the resources from this episode!

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See you next week with more easy EdTech tips!