

LESSON PLAN 50: TWIDUCATE

Objective: Create your own private, secure social network

Age range: 7-14



What is Twiducate?

Twiducate.com is a social networking site that provides a private micro-blogging service specifically for schools and teachers.

What is micro-blogging?

Think Twitter. Micro-blogging is the action of sending and receiving short text messages via a website – it's a bit like SMS on cellphones.



Why use it?

With the widespread use of Twitter and the like, people in education are increasingly finding ways to incorporate these sorts of social media tools not only into their daily life but also into the classroom (we've looked several times at ways to do this).

However, as Twiducate points out in its sales pitch: *"We understand that many social networking sites exist but the control of content is limited for teachers. Also, many of these social networking sites are continuously being blocked by school firewalls and administrators. We attempt to fill a need for a more educationally focused, safe venue for teachers, schools, and home learners in a social networking environment."*

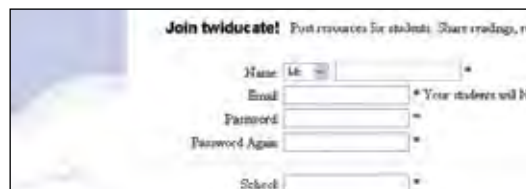
What's unique about Twiducate is the ability for teachers to create a private, closed system to network with their class. You're able to moderate all posts and remove any unwanted ones. After signing up, teachers add students to their virtual 'classrooms'. A password is generated for students to login, thus never entering personal details, such as email.

"Our service proudly differs in that only teachers and students may view classroom posts, thus creating a private network for you and your students and a safer online learning environment."

And then what?

After all the accounts are created, you can begin posting messages and comments. The service also allows teachers to 'pin' posts to keep them at the top of the timeline.

Method



1. Setup an account (you'll need an email address).
2. Choose a default classroom name/code.
3. Add students to your network. A random password will be generated for each student. They login using your classroom code and their random password – which you also have the option to change, thus never entering personal details such as their name, age or email.
4. Start posting messages to your network.
5. There are some additional features you can use:
 - Share links in the 'bookmarks' section.
 - Change your avatar and bio in the avatar section.
6. Twiducate also has the ability for teachers to open and operate multiple classes on the one account.

STAYING CYBERSAFE

Be sure to discuss rules of etiquette for posting and commenting in order to teach students effective use of these types of services. This should include actions for broken rules.

Using twiducate with your class

This site looks like it could be a useful tool for general communication between teacher and student, and improving learning experiences. As the service operates online, students are able to access it outside of school – you might also want to invite parents into this network and let them see what is going on.

It can be used to post messages and assignments, collaborate on work, collect links and resources, study groups, brainstorming sessions, open response questions, provide feedback, and even publish work, away from the classroom in a private and secure way.

WATCH THE BASICS

A screencast from a teacher in Ireland that demonstrates the core elements of Twiducate is available on our website.

