



Instructional Technology Newsletter

Developing 21st Century Skills One Byte at a Time

Global Collaboration: Connecting Content, Technology and the World

Have you considered connecting your classroom with another classroom around the world? Are you studying communities, temperature, time, weather or holidays? Can you think of some questions that your students could ask students in other locations to gather data on these topics?

What about literature? Would you be interested in discussing a book your class read with another class in the world? Wouldn't it be interesting to get the perspective of the American Revolution from a school in England? Are you collecting data for a project? Could you ask questions of someone in a specific location to retrieve that data? Have you used Google Earth? Would it be engaging for your students to take a virtual field trip on Google Earth and then video conference with a school in that location?

There are endless possibilities with regards to video conferencing in the classroom. It has never been so easy either. Most schools around the world use a simple service called [SKYPE](http://www.skype.com). www.skype.com. Skype is a free video conferencing software that anyone can download. Once you create a username and download the software you are ready to connect to the world.

It is essential that we provide students with a global outlook. By utilizing social

technology, we cannot only provide students with a global perspective, but we can allow them to learn from each other as well as peers around the world.

"Who seriously believes that locking 25 students in a small room with one adult for several hours each day is the best way for them to be "educated", In the 21st Century, education is about project-based learning, connections with peers around the world, service learning, independent research, design and creativity, and critical thinking."
(Nair, 2009)

There is an online project called "AROUND THE WORLD WITH 80 SCHOOLS" that started this year. The goal of the project is to attempt to connect with 80 other schools around the world. The project is very well organized. [There is a wiki](#) that provides all of the information necessary to get started. [There is a spreadsheet](#) available online that provides all of the contact information for schools that have decided to take part in this.

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Jefferson Township Public Schools



April 2010

Points of Interest

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- 🕒 Skype Connections
- 🕒 Wordle- Word Clouds
- 🕒 Collaborative Note-Taking
- 🕒 What is cool on the web?

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WORDLE - Have you made a word cloud lately?

[Wordle](#) is a toy for generating "word clouds" from text that you provide. The clouds give greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in the source text. You can tweak your clouds with different fonts, layouts, and color schemes. The images you create with [Wordle](#) are yours to use however you like. You can print them out, or save them to the [Wordle gallery](#) to share with your friends.

You can paste any text into Wordle. A word cloud is formed based on the text. The words that are used the most frequently are larger in size.

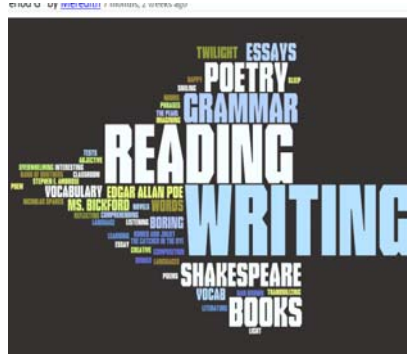
Wordle has a number of potential uses in the classroom. I have created a wiki page that provides information and uses for Wordle in

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the classroom. [It can be accessed here.](#)

Here are some uses for Wordle in the classroom:

- **As a starter** for students to try and guess where we're going with our lesson and create their own learning outcomes
- **Use it as a warm up.** If you do not like the question, "What are we doing today?", give word clues about what we are doing in class. The students can figure it out.



- **Use as a Prediction Tool** - Each student adds a word to create a comprehensive cloud of thoughts based on a book/poem title. The cloud can be referred to at the end of the reading and a new one can be created for comparison.

- **Famous Speeches:** Enter the text of a famous historical speech into Wordle. Analyze the results by looking at the most commonly used

words, or even the words that are not used.

There are other websites that are similar to Wordle. A great example is <http://www.tagxedo.com>.

Collaborative Writing and Note Taking — <http://Typewith.me>

Allow me to introduce a method of note taking for the 21st century. We will refer to this as "**collaborative note taking**". This can be defined as more than one individual taking notes on the same document at the same time.

There currently are a number of free web applications that allow for multiple people to type into a document at the same time. Each person types in a different color in order to distinguish who is who. The final product can be saved, printed, or shared electronically.

Electronic collaborative writing has a

number of beneficial uses in the classroom. For this article I will focus on note-taking. Research has proven that collective knowledge exceeds individual knowledge. This is the premise of Wikipedia. With technologies such as <http://typewith.me> students can work collaboratively on a single electronic document. This means that each day 2 or more students in your class can be assigned the job of note taking!

The result of collaborative note taking far exceeds notes compiled by individuals as it represents the collective knowledge, learning styles, and comprehension in the classroom

This collaborative document can then be saved and shared with the entire class.

This technology can also be used for curriculum writing or any other collaborative writing compiled by faculty, staff, or administration.

There are a number of other uses for this technology. I will write about them in my blog. Take a look at typewith.me and give it a try with your students. You may be surprised at the result.

Global Collaboration—Continued from page 1

What I like about this project is the simplicity of it. Although connecting with 80 schools may seem overwhelming, they are recommending no more than 5 minute conversations. The wiki has a nice outline of ideas broken up by time. I copied some of it below.

Here is a suggested timeline:

- Hello (15 sec)
- Intro of School 1 (school/geographic location) (30 sec.)
- Intro of School 2 (school/geographic location) (30 sec.)
- School 1 shares (1 min)
- School 2 shares (1 min)
- Data collection Question (30 sec.)
- Goodbye (15 sec)

Take some time and read through the [WIKI](#). There is some great informa-

tion on there. If you are interested in starting to video conference in your classroom please let me know. I will be happy to assist the entire way through. Enjoy!

[Around the World with 80 Schools wiki](#) — [aroundtheworldwith80schools - home.](#)

Epals is also a great resource for making global connections. [www.epals.com](#). There you can connect with teachers and classes of all grade levels around the world.

Collaborative exchanges can be simple, complex, single instances ,or ongoing. Students may connect as a large group or on an individual basis. Projects may consist of information exchanges or group projects with global groupings.

In the 21st century workplace global

competition, outsourcing, collaboration with global partners, and international politics are mainstreamed. To be successful in this environment our students educational experience must assist in the development of the skills and knowledge necessary. Access to information and individuals has never been so easy. This is an exciting time for education. The prospect of a global education with the use of social technologies should be an expectation of every student today.

“Who seriously believes that housing 25 students in a small room with one adult for several hours each day is the best way for them to be “educated” In the 21st Century, education is about project-based learning, connections with peers around the world, service learning, independent research, design and creativity, and critical thinking.” (Nair, 2009)

What Is Cool on the Web?

<http://www.animoto.com>

Digital Storytelling has gone web-based. Animoto is a free website that allows teachers and students to create digital stories online. These stories can contain pictures, narration, and music. The special educator section allows the teacher to setup managed accounts for each student.

<http://www.wallwisher.com>

Wallwisher is an online bulletin board maker. It can be used to post notes, have student post questions, facts, opinions etc.. It is free to use and easy to get started.

<http://www.prezi.com>

Tired of “Death by PowerPoint”? Are you looking for a presentation tool that will not put your audience to sleep. Take a look a Prezi. It is a unique way to create presentations. Visit the site and watch the demo video.

Forty Six Interesting Ways to Use Wordle in the Classroom

http://docs.google.com/present/view?id=dhn2vcv5_157dpbsq9c5

Citations

Nair, P. (2009, April 6) Don't just rebuild schools-reinvent them, Education Week. Available: www.edweek.org

<http://www.skype.com>—Free video conferencing software.

<http://www.wordle.net>—Create word clouds

<http://aroundtheworldwith80schools.wikispaces.com/> - Around the world with 80 schools wiki

<http://typewith.me>—Collaborative documents