



UN SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

India

21 Things Every 21st Century Teacher Should Do This Year

A new school year always brings about new ideas and hopeful ambition for teachers. However, it's almost 2023. Gone are the days when we can use the excuse that "we don't do technology". Part of being a teacher in the 21st century is being creative in integrating academics and learning into student's digital lives. With access to content being ubiquitous and instant in student's out of school lives, we can either reject their world for our more

traditional one, or embrace it.

While some of the ideas that follow may seem a bit trendy, it's never hurts to model ways to interact with all this new media as a covert way of teaching digital literacy and citizenship. The great news is, you don't need every student to have a device to make these happen. Heck, in most cases all you would need is a single smart phone. All you need is an open mind and some student-led creative thinking.

And so, I present the 21 things every 21st century teacher should try in their classroom this year:

1. Post a question of the week on your class blog

One of the best ways to engage student (and family) interaction with your classroom is to have a class blog. While these are becoming more common, I like the trend of having a weekly student “guest author” write up the ideas and learning objectives discussed in class. This is also a good place to discuss appropriate commenting behavior on blogs and websites.

2. Have a class twitter account to post a tweet about the day’s learning

Just like a blog only smaller. Nominate a “guest tweeter” and have them summarize the day’s learning in 140 characters or less. Then ask parents to follow the account so they can also get a little insight into the happenings of the school day.

3. Make a parody of a hit song

The ultimate form of flattery is imitation. The ultimate form of stardom is when Weird Al makes a parody of your song. Why not take that to an creative level and have students re-write lyrics to their favorite hit or a popular tune? Sure, this might take more time than it’s worth academically, but the

collaborative sharing and engaging aspect of producing such a thing can be a positive. Who knows, maybe someone in history class will remake “Chaka Khan” into “Genghis Khan” or something like this classic:

4. Create an infographic as a review

Those clever little graphics are appearing everywhere from popular mechanics to Cosmopolitan. Why not make one as a way to help visual learners review and remember information?

5. Go paperless for a week

Depending on your grade level, this might be harder than you think. Even in a 1:1 district we still print or

have need to print things from time to time. The idea behind this challenge is see if you can figure out ways to make things more digital. Maybe instead of a newsletter you print and send home, you write a blog or send a MailChimp? Or instead of asking kids to write and peer-edit each other's papers, you ask them to share a Google doc? If your students don't have devices, then challenge yourself to try this personally for a month.

6. Have a “No Tech Day” just for nostalgia’s sake

And then have your students blog about the experience.

7. Create your own class hashtag

Tell your students and their parents about the hashtag and have them post ideas, photos, and questions to it. It's a great way to get people from not only in your class but also around the world to contribute to your class conversation. You can also use this with your blog posts (#1) or classroom tweets (#2).

Bonus points if you use something like visible tweets to display your posts in your class.

8. Create a List.ly list to encourage democracy in your class.

It could be as simple as a list of choices for a project or something

as grand as what is one thing you want to learn about this year?

Whatever the choice, use [List.ly](https://list.ly) to create a crowd-sourced voting list and let your students have some say in their learning!

9. Integrate Selfies into your curriculum

This one might take some outside the box thinking, but I'm guessing that there are students in your class that could come up with a creative way to do this. Maybe take a selfie next to a science experiment? Or a selfie with an A+ paper?

#SuperStudent

10. Curate a class Pinterest account

Pinterest is a great visible way to curate resources but why not create a class account that has a different board based on projects throughout the year. Add students as collaborators and let them post their projects to the board. You could also have a board on gathering resources and information for a topic which would be a good time to mention what is and what isn't a valid resource?

11. AppSmash Something

Besides just fun to say, you should definitely take multiple apps on whatever device you use and smash them together into a project.

12. Participate in a Twitter Chat

Twitter can be like drinking information from a fire house at times, but finding a good twitter chat on a topic and participating can be a great way to learn and grow as a teacher.

13. Make part of your classroom “Augmented”

Why not make take an app like [Aurasma](#) and hide some easter eggs around your room? You could make them about a project or just secret nuggets about you. It'll keep kids (and parents during back to school night) engaged and turn dead space in your classroom into an

interactive learning opportunity.
Need some ideas?

14. Create a recipe on IFTTT.com to make your life easier

With all of these tools and social media platforms, it might be a good idea to create some ways to automate tasks in your classroom. IFTTT.com has some great pre-made “recipes” to combine some of your accounts into simple workflow solutions.

15. Create a Class Instagram Account

Have a daily student photographer who’s job is to post an example of something your class/students did

that day. If you don't want to mess with "do not publish" lists, you could ask that it be of an object or artifact, not a person. This would also be a good time to talk about when and how to ask permission to take someone's photo. Mix in your class hashtag(#7), throw in an IFTTT (#14)recipe, and all the sudden you can also auto-post selfies (#9) to your class Pinterest board (#10)

16. Perform in a LipDub Video

This can be either a solo project or for even greater effect, tie in your parody song (#3) and have your students act out their learning throughout the video. Don't forget

to hashtag it. Bonus points if said video goes viral like this one:

17. Make a class book

The ease with which you can publish books now is amazing. Using a tool like Book Creator or iBooks Author, you can publish to the iBooks store or Amazon.

18. Participate in a Mystery Hangout

This sounds a lot scarier than it is but essentially think of playing the game 20 questions with another classroom somewhere in the world. It's a great way to increase cultural and global awareness and you could even invite the other class to add

to your Pinterest board (#10), vote on your List.ly (#8), comment on your blog (#1) or maybe co-collaborate on an eBook (#17).

19. Produce a class Audio podcast

Have students create a podcast highlighting classroom activities, projects or students. That way mom and dad can listen to the weekly recap while going on their evening walk or driving to work.

20. GHO on Air with an expert

With so many resources and experts available, it only makes sense to bring in someone from “the real world”. This not only creates interest in the topic, it adds an air of

authenticity. Using Google Hangouts On Air means you can record this session on the fly and post it to your class site or embed it on your blog to generate discussion at home.

21. Become an activist for a worthy cause.

If the AI can teach us anything, it's that sometimes a little creativity is all you need to awareness to a cause. Whether it's helping a country in need or finding a cure for a disease, our new connected society can be a powerful thing when galvanized for good.

Participating in a global project gives students perspective on their

own lives while helping others with their own life challenges.

BONUS – Let your students drive the learning

While you could do all of these challenges by yourself, the real power comes in letting students own a piece of it. They have the curiosity and the digital acumen, it's the teacher's job to give them instructional focus and empowerment. We live in wonderfully connected times. Despite all of technology's perceived misgivings and the fears that we are losing ourselves as a society, why not use some of this power for good?

Just know that as a teacher in the 21st century you ultimately hold the key to unleash this creative beast. So try something on the list this year that may force you a bit out of your comfort zone because there is no better way to learn than trying.

Just be sure you blog about it when you are finished as learning in isolation helps no one.

Oh....and be sure to hashtag it.

21 THINGS EVERY 21ST CENTURY TEACHER SHOULD DO THIS YEAR



POST A QUESTION OF THE WEEK
ON YOUR CLASS BLOG



TWEET ABOUT TODAY'S LEARNING ON YOUR
CLASS TWITTER ACCOUNT



MAKE A PARODY OF A HIT SONG



CREATE AN INFOGRAPHIC AS A REVIEW



GO PAPERLESS FOR A WEEK



HAVE A "NO TECH DAY"
JUST FOR NOSTALGIA'S SAKE



CREATE YOUR OWN CLASS HASHTAG



USE LIST.LY TO ENCOURAGE DEMOCRACY
IN YOUR CLASSROOM



INTEGRATE SELFIES
INTO YOUR CURRICULUM



CURATE A CLASS PINTEREST ACCOUNT



APPSMASH SOMETHING



PARTICIPATE IN A TWITTER CHAT



BRING AUGMENTED REALITY
INTO YOUR CLASSROOM



CREATE AN IFTTT RECIPE
TO MAKE YOUR LIFE EASIER



CREATE A CLASS INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT



PERFORM IN A LIPDUB VIDEO



MAKE A CLASS BOOK



PRODUCE A CLASS AUDIO PODCAST



GOOGLE HANGOUT WITH AN EXPERT



LET YOUR STUDENTS
DRIVE THE LEARNING



BECOME AN ACTIVIST
FOR A WORTHY CAUSE

BASED ON A BLOG POST BY CARL HOOKER
AT HOOKEDONINNOVATION.COM

