Flattening the Classroom with Edmodo

Some ways that we did it and how you can to!

Elissa Malespina and Melissa Bulter
Chapter 1

Introduction

Learn how we utilize Edmodo in our classrooms.
Chapter 1

Introductions

How we use Edmodo

1. Elissa Malespina
2. Melissa Butler
3. How we use Edmodo

Elissa Malespina

I am the librarian at South Orange Middle School in South Orange, NJ. I am a Technology Presenter at conferences such as ISTE, EdmodoCon 2013, and Edscape. I am also an Educational Consultant, and a Mom to a 10-year-old son. I am one of the co-moderators of #ptchat on Wednesday nights during the school year and am also a part of the live #njed chat on Tuesday nights which is available on teachercast.net. In my spare time, I am a graduate student at Seton Hall University pursuing my Supervisory Certification. I also blog for Edmodo, write for School Librarian Workshop and also blog for Teachercast. To learn more about me visit my website: http://www.elissamalespina.com and follow me on twitter at @SOMSlibrary

Melissa Butler

I am an English Language Arts teacher in the South Orange/Maplewood School District and have been teaching for the past nine years. In addition to serving as an ELA teacher, I have taught students with special needs and worked for the Lovaas Institute as a 1:1 ABA Therapist. In my present position, I am focusing on transforming the curriculum.
utilizing the Reading/Writing Workshop approach, providing Technology PD opportunities for teachers, implementing a 1:1 device program in my classroom, and co-facilitating technological change with innovative Web 2.0 tools in the classroom. I also serve as the advisor for the O’ Ambassadors club and the MLK club, which connect students with students worldwide, including a sister school in Kaliro, Uganda. This service club’s main goal is to create lasting change by working toward the UN Millennium Development Goals. I have also presented on topics such as the Implementation of Writing and Reading Workshop in the Middle School Setting, Edmodo, Livebinder, Evernote, Google Hangout and Twitter. I blog for Edmodo and with my students inside my classroom as well. Connect with me on Twitter at @Angelinashy and visit my website @ https://sites.google.com/site/mrsteacherbutler/ for more information about me.

Edmodo USES IN THE CLASSROOM...

We have been using Edmodo in our school for the last two years. We use it for such things as:

- Communicating with Students and Parents
- Absences for both Teacher and Student
- Assignments/Quizzes
- Paperless Classroom - 1:1 learning
- Badges
- Connecting students from around the world
- Backchanneling
- Classroom Planner
- Apps

**Edmodo USES IN THE LIBRARY...**

- Communicating with Students and Parents
- Contests
- Book Clubs
- Poetry Month - Post a Poem
Chapter 2

Student Voices

How our students feel about Edmodo and why they love it.
Chapter 2

Student Voices

Top 12 Reasons why South Orange Middle Students love Edmodo.com and you will too!

1. Teachers and Students Connecting
2. Homework
3. Backchanneling
4. Paperless Learning Environment
5. Backpack Feature
6. Library Feature
7. Apps
8. Assignments
9. Badges
10. Learning continues outside the classroom
11. Assessments

Interactive 2.1 Students Value Edmodo Video

SOMS Students value Edmodo! Watch the video to see how they use it in the South Orange Middle School
Melissa Butler created this resource to help flip the classroom. Students complete a Scavenger Hunt where they learn about all the features of Edmodo. It is a great tool for introducing students to Edmodo.
I begin the school year with the “Edmodo Scavenger Hunt.” The scavenger hunt allows me to virtually flip my classroom into a digital learning sensation. The Edmodo Scavenger Hunt allows me to deliver online instruction to my students in an actual active and engaging learning environment. As my students are engaged in learning the fundamentals of Edmodo, both in the classroom and at home, I am simultaneously able to test each student in Reading Workshop, so that I may assess their independent reading levels.

You can either click here or on the widget next to us to go to the scavenger hunt.

Interactive 3.1 Edmodo Scavenger Hunt

This widget will take you to the Scavenger Hunt
This idea started as a way to boost students’ self esteem and it took off!
Chapter 4

Compliments

Middle School is a time when kids feel vulnerable and are trying to find themselves. A lot of students think that no one likes them. Using Edmodo, I decided to set up a South Orange Middle School “Compliments Group” to help address this.

How the Compliments Group Works

1. Create a “group” on Edmodo and make the group “read only” so students won’t be able to comment

2. Share the group code with your students and other teachers

3. Students who want to compliment someone direct message me their compliments about other students and staff

4. Post those compliments anonymously to the Compliments group

Bringing Our School Closer Together

The group has been a huge hit with the staff and students! Students love it because they enjoy seeing nice things written about themselves and others. Staff find it heartwarming to hear nice things about themselves from their students.

As teachers, we all have days when we think that we want to give up because we are not reaching anyone. Seeing nice posts about us make us realize why we do our job.

It has brought our school closer together. All thanks to Edmodo!!

Examples:
Virtual Debate

Using Edmodo, Google Hangout, Livebinders and more we were able to have schools debate each other virtually. Now we want you to participate also!
Please visit the debate website for additional information and instructions on how you can be a part of the debate process and have your own debate: http://virtualdebate.weebly.com/

Instruction on how we did it:
Melissa Butler, was looking for a way to teach argument writing to her students while infusing technology. When Melissa and Elissa Malespina (the librarian/media specialist) started working on this unit they were looking for a way to make the debate process a little more exciting and authentic to their students. Melissa came up with the idea of debating another school and tweeted her friend Dana Sirotiak, a former 7th-grade Social Studies Teacher at the Frank R. Conwell Middle School #4 in Jersey City, NJ. She said she was willing to do it and then we decided to open the event up to Pennsylvania. Melissa and Elissa had recently connected with Thomas Murray, the director of technology for the Quakertown School District at the NJASA conference and asked him if he had a teacher in mind for the debate. He connected us with Shawn Storm who teaches 6th grade ELA. The teachers then decided it would not be fair to have one PA school vs 2 NJ schools, so Melissa tweeted Joe Mazza the principal at Knapp Elementary School in Lansdale, PA. Both Melissa and Elissa had recently spoke to his teachers via Google Hangout during an Inservice day on the benefits of being a connected educator. Joe asked Gabby Morrison a 6th-grade ELA teacher if she would also participate. Now the 4 schools were set to debate. The first Google Hangout session took place for the flipping of the coin to see which state would be arguing each side of the homework debate. New Jersey won the toss and assumed the side of Pro (Homework) and Pennsylvania took the side of Con (Homework). Let the research begin.

Here is the recording of this here: http://youtu.be/l8sDshpR6m4

They also set up a shared Google Doc between the four schools where they could plan the event https://docs.google.com/document/d/1w0fyB_J2zZL-SRtgLpADnxu6hG6i7QbJZ-wUqqC7ruw/edit
After the coin toss and SOMS assuming (Pro) Homework, the SOMS teachers set up an Edmodo group, so the two NJ schools could communicate and collaborate together. This was the main way that the students and teachers communicated. The teachers also set up a Google doc that the students could post the research they were finding, and also a place where, we as teachers, could communicate some ideas we had with the students. [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ADctcwrJlItNvm_gasOLuMVzwpQ_LjfDQsK0oQ90fKc/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ADctcwrJlItNvm_gasOLuMVzwpQ_LjfDQsK0oQ90fKc/edit?usp=sharing)

After the students compiled some of the research onto the Google doc, Elissa thought it would be easier for the students if they had a Livebinder [http://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=818758](http://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=818758) filled with websites and articles the students found. As you can see Elissa made the tabs into groups, so that all the (pro) homework articles were in one tab etc. It helped to organize the websites and made it easier for the students when they were looking for information. We password protected it so that PA could not obtain our research :-).

The teachers also put a link to the binder on the Edmodo group so that the students could access on this platform too.

The next goal was to try to find experts to talk to our students about homework. After doing research one night on the topic, Melissa saw that her Twitter friend Jerry Blumengarten (@cybraryman1) had an entire page on his website devoted to homework. She tweeted him to see if he could Google Hangout with the students the next morning. He agreed. Here is the link to the video of the hangout: [http://youtu.be/i8ka4rnulaU](http://youtu.be/i8ka4rnulaU)

The students learned a lot from Jerry and the teachers posted the video on our Edmodo group, so that the Jersey City students could view it as well.

We also reached out to Dr. Harris Cooper who has done extensive research on homework. He could not join us via Google Hangout because he was traveling but he did email us back with an article that we added to the Livebinder.

The students spent the next few days working on researching their parts of the debate. All the teachers divided the students up into groups. Some worked on the introduction statement, some researched the affirmative side of homework and others worked on the counterclaim/rebuttals. See the attached pictures for the debate format.

Melissa and Elissa realized that judges were needed for this. Elissa tweeted her PLN and asked them if they would come on the Hangout and act as judges. She received more than the six virtual judges needed! Melissa had previously sent them all a email with a debate rubric that we asked them to fill out while watching the debate.

The debate judges:
Shannon Miller - A librarian, author, speaker and consultant from Iowa

Will Richardson -- Author, speaker and consultant from NJ

Jeff Bradbury - Music teacher, speaker and the man behind the Teachercast website and podcasts from NJ

Sandra Paul - Technology Director, speaker from NJ

Kyle Calderwood - Adjunct Professor and IT director from Stockton College, NJ

Jay Eitner - Superintendent of Schools

Bill Krakower - Technology Teacher, speaker from NJ (he watched the video of the debate)

There was also a need for a moderator, so Elissa asked the Village President (aka Mayor) of South Orange, Alex Torpey to moderate the debate.

The teachers also decided it would be great to backchannel the event so they started a hashtag #hwdebate on Twitter.

The students were so into the project that almost all of them stayed till 4:00 PM on both Thursday and Friday when school dismisses at 2:45! Melissa and Elissa also worked with a number of the students via Google docs over the weekend helping them to publish their speeches. Melissa also made up charts with all of the speeches on them, so that the students did not have to memorize what they wrote. We have a number of classified students in the class and these modifications were needed. See the attached pictures for examples of the charts. The students were also waiting for us at 7:30 AM, the day of the debate, ready for last-minute preparations.

At 10:45 AM on Monday, Elissa invited all 10 people into the Hangout and at 11:00 we started the recording of the debate.

Mrs. Butler also had a number of her students tweeting the debate live to the #hwdebate via the class twitter account that we set up for the students @msbutlerclass.

There was an issue with Dana’s class dropping off the hangout because she had to use her own personal hotspot due to Google Hangout being blocked in her district, but her connection persevered in the end. Even though Dana’s students missed part of the debate they did not miss a beat and came out strong with their arguments.

After the debate ended, we opened up an Edmodo group to all of the students from all four of the schools to join and meet each other. They also put a link to the debate video on it so that the students could re-watch the debate.

That Monday night, I received all of the judges’ rubrics and tallied the votes and NJ won 8-3. The judges thought that all of the teams did really well and were very prepared.
Elissa announced the winners on Tuesday morning during morning announcements and the students were very excited.

Both Melissa and Elissa felt that this was one of the best teaching days we ever experienced as educators. It was amazing to watch four classes of students so engaged in the project. This could not have been done without having access to technology like Google Hangouts, Edmodo, Google Drive, Livebinders and Evernote.
Virtual Poetry Summit

Students and Poets come together to share their love of poetry! We are looking for teachers to join in and be part of it!
Please visit the poetry website for additional information and instructions on how you can be a part of the poetry summit process and have your own poetry summit:

http://poetrysummit.weebly.com/

How we organized the First Poetry Summit:

Since we were from all different areas we used a number of tools to help us connect and organize:

- Google Docs: This is where we did most of our collaborations. All parties had access to the document and would put in information and questions etc. You can view our document here: http://bit.ly/13qvC4h

- Edmodo: We made a Edmodo group so that all of the students from the different schools could connect and backchannel. Some schools also had separate Edmodo groups for just the students who had a role in the summit. Edmodo is a great safe way, to communicate and share information with students. Using Edmodo also made it really easy to connect with all the students from all of the schools participating.

- Google Hangout: We used it not only for the event but those of us organizing the event also "hung out" a few times prior to the event. We did this as a way to meet, connect and answer any questions. Since not everyone could join in, having the ability to record the hangout was key because those who missed it had the ability to watch it at a later time.

- Padlet: Since we could not share all of the great poems that our students were writing in the live event, we made a Padlet where the students could publish their work for the world to see. It was a great way to get all of the students involved in the event. It was also a good way to showcase their writing. Here is our padlet: http://padlet.com/wall/poetrysummit

Interactive 6.1 Poetry Summit

Video of the first annual poetry summit
• Smore: We needed a way to publicize the event and get the important information out to everyone. Smore does a great job doing just that! Here is the Smore: https://www.smore.com/9qf0

We also made up a twitter hashtag so that others could follow along #poetrysummit
Teachers Lounge

A comfy sounding board staff room on Edmodo - NO ADMIN ALLOWED!!
We are piloting a new group on Edmodo this Fall, a “Teacher Lounge”. This will be a (comfy sounding staff room) for our school, where teachers can share ideas, files and links that would seem like spamming if we sent it via email to “all teachers” on staff. The biggest complaints in our school each day are, “Not another email to peruse,” and “when will I ever have time to collaborate with my colleagues?” The teacher lounge solves these problems simultaneously. Much like the Playground idea for students, the teacher lounge will create a casual environment where ideas can freely flow, be discussed and easily browsed.

Six essential elements...

1. **Information board** - A quick place to find out guest speakers coming to visit, when birthdays are, and any school announcements.

2. **Inspiration!** - Shout-outs, kudos and other recognitions of our teachers. Go team; go!

3. **Sound Proof Board** - A casual environment where online discussions can take place.

4. **Best Teaching practices** - Share ideas, files, links and lessons with colleagues.

5. **Anywhere, anytime learning** - Teachers can contribute on their own time.

6. **Administration Free!!**