With recognition to Making Teachers Nerdy Blog:

[Social Networking Power with Edmodo in the Classroom](#)

After being in full time tech integration for nearly seven years, I've had the privilege to return to the classroom at such a pivotal time in education. With the use of wonderful Web 2.0 tools and the ability to easily collaborate across the globe, students have opportunities today that weren't even envisioned three years ago. One of those opportunities involves creating a professional learning community through Edmodo, a teacher moderated social network where students can share ideas, publish their work, and learn how to communicate effectively online. What better place to build on our 21st Century Skills? What can Edmodo do? Let's take a look at some of the features:

Accessing My Personal Library– A new feature that I recently discovered is the teacher personal library. Here any file I've uploaded or URL I have shared sits in an online storage area for me to quickly recycle next year. As one who works with multiple computers, this feature has certainly caught my eye. Similar to a curriculum map, I can walk through my Edmodo library and recall previous assignments and projects.

Building a Student/Teacher PLC – The best feature of Edmodo is having the ability to build an online community with my students. Quite often students have questions about current assignments or discussions after school or on weekends while they are doing homework. With Edmodo, my students can post a question directly to me or to the entire class, and within a few minutes responses are given. My students stated that this feature provided teacher support they had been missing in other classes, and that they felt part of a real group rather than an individual in a class.

Collaborating with Other Teachers – This is another new feature that I've enjoyed discovering. As I teach technology professional development workshops, I've begun to create Edmodo groups my participants as a place to collaborate, share ideas, and build our own community. It's been wonderful especially for collaborative projects as new groups linking classrooms together can easily be formed.

Connecting with Absent Students – Edmodo has also provided a paradigm shift of communication for students who are absent. Even though they are not in class, most of them do have Internet access at home and can complete assignments before returning. I simply upload any handouts and answer any

questions as though the student was in class. I've also set up discussions during class and the absent student participates in live time from home. Not having to grade late work is such a wonderful feeling, isn't it?

Embedding Just About Anything - Can I just say this out loud? I LOVE this feature. Whether I'm sharing a YouTube video, Glogster, ProProfs quiz, Google Form, Voicethread, or Slideshare, this feature is such a treasure. Now, I must tell you that yes, indeed have a class wiki where I can embed, at least three steps are involved. In Edmodo, however, it's a one stop paste of an embed code, and ba-da-bing – it's there. Plus, now students are able to have a conversation around the embedded item. It's brilliant!

Posting Handouts – Do your students leave handouts on their desks? Lose Rubrics? Leave homework in their lockers? Yes, my students do, as well, but I have found that uploading my handouts within Edmodo has eliminated much of this worry and reduced late work issues. With Edmodo's document viewer, even the students who don't have Microsoft Office at home can view the embedded document or print if needed. Talk about nice!

Providing Online Data Storage – How often do students lose their files? Jump drives crash or viruses run rampant), but with Edmodo, the students quickly upload any files they are working on for easy access in other classes or away from school. My students have commented often how nice this feature is for them, especially since many of them had lost their jump drives within the first few months of school.

Providing Teacher Big Brother Features in a Student Centered Environment – I believe Edmodo is successful for teachers because it allows us to set up a social network for our students while still being in control of the content. I love that students can send posts to me or the whole class without direct messaging their peers. Yes, I want to nurture the student dialogue, but I also want them to recognize that our professional learning area is not a Facebook environment. By having the ability to delete any posts that are inappropriate, the teacher can redirect discussions to a more focused topic.

Publishing Student Work – Quite often I have students utilize creativity web 2.0 tools such as Glogster or Voicethread, but when it comes to grading them, I have to login to those tools and search for student products. With Edmodo on my side, the students simply copy the embed codes for their products and post directly for easy grading.

Receiving Text Message Updates – The students rave over this one. Whenever I submit an assignment, question, or reminder to the students, they receive a text message on their phones. For those students who have organizational skill troubles, this has been wonderful. It was an instant reminder to login to Edmodo in order to complete an assignment or answer a question. I, too, have the text message feature setup for direct posts. If a student has a question at any time, I instantly receive a text on my phone so I can address it quickly and easily. I can tell you late work diminished tenfold when they knew I would answer questions in a timely manner.

Setting Up Classroom Discussions – One of my favorite assignments is to provide "Edmodo Homework" every few weeks. I generally post an open-ended question on current classroom units, literature, independent reading, or projects and ask the students to pop in for class discussion that evening. It's rather amazing to watch them do homework in "real-time" as I moderate the discussion or sit back and watch them communicate with each other. I get such a kick out of it, and grading is quick, as well. As they post, I update the gradebook. **TIP** – Assigning a whole class discussion can be lengthy and confusing for the students since responses are not threaded. I recommend sending conversation assignments out to groups of four to six.

Sharing Links – We've all been in a similar situation – students in the computer lab with the assignment of students visiting four or five websites. We've given handouts, written URL's on the board, or created a list of hyperlinks on a wiki. With Edmodo, time is less wasted as I can instantly post a link and have all students there in less than three seconds. No files to open or URL's to type. I can also say this feature was a dream during the research paper assignment. Each student researched a different topic and as finding resources online became difficult for a select group of students, I could easily provide support.

If you haven't explored Edmodo previously, I highly recommend it for grades 3–12, especially if you teach in a 1:1 learning environment. No more having to set up shared drives on the server, posting stacks of URL's on wikis, or waiting for student emails. Edmodo makes sharing files and communicating with students easy cheesy lemon squeezy. Give a go.