

Pointers For Parents

A New Teaching Tool Makes Learning Fun

(NAPSA)—The place for tweens to connect these days is online, and one social networking site has found a way to help kids to connect with schoolwork.

The free social networking site, imbee.com, was developed especially for kids 8 to 14. It has fun features such as photo sharing and trading card creation, and even allows kids to have their own blogs. Parents like it because the site is designed to provide them with visibility into their child's activities, while helping the child foster real-world skills such as reading, writing, and problem solving in a secure environment.

Teachers now like it because it is helping them get kids excited about learning.

"It has really transformed my classroom," said Richard Coleman, a fourth-grade teacher at Meridian Elementary School. "As far as everyday teaching goes, the blogging comes to mind. It allows for unprecedented collaboration between students on projects."

It also helps students with writing projects.

"I am able to assign writing prompts that they can post and they are able to see others' work as well as my immediate comments," said Coleman. "This helps with editing because I can pull up their writing and give them immediate feedback, plus the whole class can see examples of good writing and my comments on what needs to be fixed."

Students seem to be more comfortable writing in the blogging format, said Coleman, and many of his students are writing more this year. "It's especially useful for



A free social networking site is motivating kids to learn more and have fun doing so.

students who have difficulty writing with pen and paper."

imbee.com features classroom and subject blogs. Teachers can pick a topic and students can use search engines to research them.

Photo album essays let students create visual essays. Podcasting lets students record their thoughts on specific subjects or current affairs. Teachers can communicate directly with students using monitored messaging.

Besides homework assignments that can be accessed 24/7, teachers can post a question of the day or poll on a particular subject or news item. Online study groups can be created based on specific subjects.

"imbee has consistently engaged my third-grade students," said Susanna Messier, a teacher in California. "Even on a Friday afternoon, they will be in pairs responding to a social studies or science question blog post. Furiously looking up answers and discussing the posts before they submit them, each and every student is engaged and excited."

For more information, visit www.imbee.com.