



Role of Social Networking in the Education

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Abstract

Social networking is one of the fastest growing methods of communication with more than 300 million users on Facebook® alone (Zuckerberg, 2009). The communication and interaction between individuals on social networks can in some instances be used as an instructional aide in education. Little is known about the use of social networking by Education colleges' faculty to facilitate the instructional process. Technology can be used for cost-free, reliable, quality online content useful to academics in international studies, teaching and research at the college level. E.g. Social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Bebo, Club Penguin, Faceparty, Yahoo 360, Flickr, Piczo1. Draves (2007) provides eleven ways you can use the web to enhance your face-to-face class: Post homework assignments, quiz or test answers, the course outline, bibliography, and syllabus online, student work, such as a paper, on the web. Have students submit essays and papers as e-mail attachments. Provide links to useful and relevant websites. Post relevant articles online. Produce recorded audio of some of your lectures and post it. Hold online discussions in between your face-to-face meetings. Establish student study groups online to assist them in studying for your final exam. Post quizzes or preparatory tests online to help students study for a final test.

Key words: Social Networking, Facebook, Twitter, Educational use

Introduction:

Social networking is one of the fastest growing methods of communication with more than 300 million users on Facebook® alone (Zuckerberg, 2009). Some individuals use multiple social media websites and social networks to communicate and connect with others. The communication and interaction between individuals on social networks can in some instances be used as an instructional aide in education.

Little is known about the use of social networking by Education colleges' faculty to facilitate the instructional process. Specifically, Tilak College does not have information regarding the use of social networking websites such as Facebook® and Twitter® by faculty to facilitate the instructional process.

Education Colleges could benefit from this paper in helping to determine policies regarding the implementation and use of such social networking websites as an instructional aide for all student-teachers and in-service education.

The purpose of this paper is to create awareness about the use of social networking sites such as Facebook® and Twitter® as instructional aides in Education college environment.

Social networking: -The term "Social Networking" refers to the formation of a community on the Internet, facilitating users to interact for a common purpose or sharing mutual views towards various aspects.

Wayne A. Selcher discusses and evaluates cost-free, reliable, quality online content useful to academics in international studies, teaching and research at the college level, including how and where to locate such materials through guides, directories, gateway sites, repositories, and various types of search engines; considerations about Internet use in college classes; and undergraduate assignments that use sources of information from the Internet. There is also consideration of characteristics and trends of college student use of the Internet for research purposes, the "invisible" or deep web, electronic information literacy for academics, and maintaining current awareness on the fast-changing web. There are following Social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Bebo, Club Penguin, Faceparty, Yahoo 360, Flickr, Piczo

According to Armstrong and Franklin's report (2008), regarding the use of social networking in higher education,

Social networking sites such as Facebook®, MySpace®, and Bebo® allow the creation of online communities of people with common interests (which could include a course). These include a wide variety of tools (often allowing third party plug-ins) which may include blogs and media sharing. An interesting recent development is Ning® which allows users to set up their own social network sites, hosted by Ning®, It is expected to be used in learning and teaching as an alternative to the institutional learning environment.

Five Best Practices to Harness Social Media in Learning (Clay, 2010)

1. Incorporate specific assignments using social media in the learning design.
2. Ensure learners are oriented to the virtual environment.
3. Help learners build a virtual presence to encourage peer-to-peer learning.
4. Build asynchronous (on-demand) social media with instructor-lead synchronous (scheduled) events.
5. Develop learner accountability. Track, monitor, and award participation.

Technology in education is not a new idea. But now a days it can be used to inculcate the core values of quality, integrity, innovation, diversity, inclusiveness, service, collaboration, and learning, each of which is of equal weight and importance. Also educationists are developing innovative educational models based on new technology about learning, such as those incorporating online learning, collaborative initiatives, and distributed learning environments. e.g. Facebook®

According to Bonk (2009),

During the past few years, Facebook® has become highly popular among college professors and other academic professionals.

Selwyn (2009) talking about the question from academia regarding the value of Facebook® and MySpace said, Though the number of educators are using social networking to (re)engage learners with their studies, others fear that such applications compromise and disrupt young people's engagement with traditional education provision.

Bowers-Campbell's (2008) in their article speaks of

1. Potential benefits of Facebook® use by instructors and highlights problems of low self-efficacy and inadequate self-regulated learning for college students.

2. Facebook®, may be helpful in improving low self-efficacy and self-regulated learning by increasing connection with the instructor, increasing social contact with classmates, and providing an opportunity to guide students in their responsible use of Facebook® technology.
3. The instructional techniques that may be utilized with Facebook®, such as the instructor creating a profile and facilitating student contact via chat rooms.

Pempek, Yermolayeva and Clavert (2009) in their peer reviewed journal article for *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* refer to their study saying,

1. In their study, 92 undergraduates completed a diary-like measure each day for a week, reporting daily time use and responding to an activities checklist to assess their use of the Facebook®. At the end of the week, they also completed a follow-up survey.
2. Results indicated that students use Facebook® approximately 30 min throughout the day as part of their daily routine. Students communicated on Facebook® using a one-to-many style, in which they were the creators, disseminating content to their friends. Even so, they spent more time observing content on Facebook® than actually posting content.

According to Bonk (2009) accounting firms Deloitte using Facebook®

1. As a means to get new hires to create social networks within the company.
2. Facebook® and Youtube® serve as employee retention and recruitment tools. At the same time, they are powerful vehicles for learning.

Twitter®

1. Twitter® is a microblogging service that allows users to post and read 140-character status message (Ovadia, 2009),
2. Schaffhauser (2009) advises that public school in districts Florida and Alaska are now using Twitter® to communicate with parents sending out announcements via Twitter® and the Alaska School District is focusing its Tweets on school closures.

Dunlap and Lowenthal (2009) have their own ideas on the use of Twitter® and stated,

1. It is truly effective, online learning must facilitate the social process of learning. This involves providing space and opportunities for students and faculty to engage in social activities.

2. Although learning management systems offer several tools that support social learning and student engagement, the scope, structure, and functionality of those tools can inhibit and restrain just-in-time social connections and interactions.

According to Knowles et al. (2005),

1. Technology presents new opportunities for providing adults with rich learning experiences in the **andragogical tradition**.
2. Knowles et al. (2005) point out three new opportunities.
 - a. It directly caters to adults' desire to be self-directed in their learning.
 - b. Well-developed computer-based instruction enables adults to tailor the learning experience to fit their prior experiences.
 - c. If properly designed, technology-based instruction easily allows learners to tailor the learning to their real-world problems.
3. Knowles et al. (2005) does admit there are special challenges that accompany these opportunities,
 - a. **The easy access to information on the Internet does not ensure learning.**
 - b. **Including learner impatience and learners' needs for developed self-directed learning skills.**
 - c. **In the classroom setting the instructor can change the presentation to meet the needs of the students; however, the online setting requires the learners be ready for self-directed learning.**
 - d. **The intended learners do not have the metacognitive skills, motivation, or confidence to engage in the required level of self-directed learning.**

Draves (2007) provides eleven ways you can use the web to enhance your face-to-face class:

1. **Post homework assignments on the web.**
2. **Post quiz or test answers on the web.**
3. **Post the course outline, bibliography, and syllabus online.**
4. **Have students submit essays and papers as e-mail attachments.**
5. **Post student work, such as a paper, on the web.**
6. **Provide links to useful and relevant websites.**
7. **Post relevant articles online.**
8. **Produce recorded audio of some of your lectures and post it.**

9. Hold online discussions in between your face-to-face meetings.

10. Establish student study groups online to assist them in studying for your final exam.

11. Post quizzes or preparatory tests online to help students study for a final test.

Draves (2007) states, all online classrooms have three common elements: **(1) Content, (2) Interaction, (3) Assessment.**

Draves elaborates on the three elements saying the content of online courses is delivered in at least three ways: **1) written and graphic; 2) audio; and 3) video, animation, and moving pictures.**

Draves (2007) points out that, it is clear that we all do not learn one way, at one speed, or at one proficiency. There are many approaches to teaching; one is the SAVI approach to teaching and training activities. SAVI was developed by Dave Meier Director of the Accelerated Learning Center. **SAVI is an acronym (Meier, 2000) for four learning styles addressed here:**

Somatic (learning by physical activity that uses the body in some way)

Auditory (learning by talking and social interaction)

Visual (learning by watching and listening)

Intellectual (learning by reflecting, thinking, and analyzing)

Bonk and Zhang (2008) suggest, Learners might use online technology tools and aids for the following reasons: **(1) blogging about the week's readings, (2) outlining and reevaluating key points for a paper or speech, (3) annotating comments on the paper of a team member or critical friend, (4) pausing or re-evaluating content in a video streamed presentation, (5) summarizing the results of a role play activity, (6) self-testing knowledge of a chapter or a topic, (7) comparing and contrasting different viewpoints in a debate, or (8) providing peer comments on a paper.**

Social networking sites as instructional aides

The acceptance of computers and the introduction of the Internet gave the consumer global reach from his or her desktop. Individuals can use the Internet to chat, share photos, stream live video, and more. The advances in mobile phone technology in the last five years allow space for a viewing screen and an Internet connection on the mobile phone. The user of an

Internet enabled mobile phone can surf or browse the Internet from his or her mobile phone. No longer is a person limited to surfing or browsing the Internet from his or her desktop computer. The mobile Internet connection has placed the ability to have global connectivity in the palm of the users' hand almost anytime and almost anywhere. Students can and have sat in class and surfed the Internet on their hand-held device. Sometimes the surfing is relevant and on the topic being discussed; other times the opposite is true. Students surfing the Internet in class may be not doing well, so because the instructor failed to keep the interest of the student or did not keep the student interacting and involved.

Rhoades, Irani, Telg & Meyers (2008) The frequent usage of social networking sites like Facebook® and MySpace® offer a unique new teaching opportunity to instructors. Because many students are familiar with these programs and the technology involved, instructors can utilize the communication tools in these programs to engage students in a manner comfortable and enjoyable to them. Instructors can utilize these resources to prompt out-of-class discussions and post announcements for students. These technologies offer students a real world example to draw from during discussions on information credibility and online resources. Emerging sites like wikis and social networking sites like Second Life are being explored by educators and may also offer new avenues to take the classroom outside of the classroom.

Kapuler (2010) offers his list of the top ten social networks for education:

1. Twitter®
2. Classroom 2.0
3. Facebook®
4. Plurk
5. Educators PLN
6. Learn Central
7. ISTE Community
8. Edutopia
9. Collaborative Translation
10. IT4ALL.

Batson (2010). A proponent of online education using social networking, talks about the benefit of this new approach to learning saying. Most importantly, their learning experiences often involve conversation, a process, and this conversation can include teachers and others with knowledge in their field. The skills students gain in the process are those they need to join a wider community and succeed in today's economy. Colleges and universities need to do more to incorporate social software into their courses and methodologies. There is transformations among the faculty and administrators of entire programs to social/conversational/active learning paradigm today. This extension of the learning conversation online (with blogs, wikis, email, texting, chat, conferencing systems, portfolios, and so on) helps students develop online literacy skills. Though it is dependent on

technology, it represents a return to the roots of human learning. Learning has always involved conversation. In fact, knowledge results from, or increasing is, consensus building through conversation.

Schroeder and Greenbowe (2009) point out, the fact remains that students spend a significant amount of time interacting on social networking sites and Facebook® offers a dynamic and unthreatening environment for students to communicate not only with the instructor or a small study group but also with all other students in the course.

Ellison's (2007) presentation on *Using Facebook® In the Classroom, Potential Benefits* cited the following positive aspects:

Already integrated into students' daily practices

Higher level of engagement

Potential to make identity information more salient during class discussions

Adds *social* peer-to-peer component

Digital literacy skills.

Ganster and Schumacher (2009) describe the use of Facebook® fan pages by the State University of New York at Buffalo to virtually reach out to patrons and market library services. The librarians can update and inform students, faculty, and 50 staff of new events, workshops, library services, and resources. (Ganster & Schumacher, 2009).

Nielsen's (2011) article *Ten Ways Facebook® Strengthens the Student-Teacher Connection* offers the following suggestions.

1. The students also explained how Facebook® has helped strengthen their connections with teachers and their principal. They also shared they do not expect their teachers to be friends with them on Facebook®, but appreciate it when they do. Below are the ways that their teachers, principal, and others have found Facebook® to be an effective tool in strengthening the educator-student bond, reaching out to a student in need.

2. Getting a peek into the lives of students.

3. The family connection.
4. Instant learning and homework support.
5. Snow day update.
6. Facebook® lets teachers create a no-excuses environment.
7. Snow days and sick days do not hold you back.
8. Using Facebook® teaches you how to deal with the world and the way it works.
9. Facebook® as a learning portal.
10. Mobilize in an instant.

Ellison's (2007) presentation on *Using Facebook® In the Classroom, Potential Benefits* cited the following, Concerns of Integrating Facebook® into Formal Learning:

Thus one can use facebook or other social networking sites in the education.

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