

# Social Media in Education

## Assessing the Benefits of Integration

Darci Drylie

### The Average Student

The common structure of learning in today's classrooms often entails many students sitting quietly while furiously copying notes; all while trying to listening and catch every word the teachers sounds off. No real learning can take place in this type of setting. This style unintentionally promotes the necessity for students to simply write whatever they can in a limited amount of time. Then forgetting about it until it comes time to study for the test. In an age of learning where students have shorter attention spans and, in their opinion, more interesting things to do, this traditional method of teaching does not comes across as an active way of learning for them. The content being presented is meant to be absorbed, thought about, and internalized by the students. They need the chance to question what they are learning, receive the information in a way that works for them, and can spark their interests.

### Problem

Traditional teaching methods do not adequately fulfill the engagement and stimulation needs of students. Our students today are less attentive and are relying on memorization rather than inquiry and mastery of content.

### Methods

Within the discussion of social media integration of classrooms, the controversy arises when discussing the value of social media. This debate occurs strongly among educators. Educators who have integrated social media platforms into learning have experienced positive responses and feedback from students. However, educators who have yet to integrate social media into their classrooms view this mixture as being negative in education. This research will support the positive side of this discussion, and illustrate the necessity of social media integration.

Research states that when social media is integrated into classroom instruction, students have demonstrated an increase in participation and motivation. Authors Careless, Smith, Duncan, Hart, and Younger support these claims, adding that when work is shared, the creator will take more pride in their work; ultimately increasing their motivation to do well. Careless and Smith show their support for social media integration by stating that the publishing of student work gives students new insights into the world outside of the classroom. By putting their work on display to individuals around the world, perhaps through blogs, Careless and Smith explain that this interaction demonstrates to students that they can positively affect the world around them.

Swan adds that many students are familiar with the different forms of social media platforms and accustomed to posting information online. Swan posits that since students will partake in these online activities regardless of where they are, it would be fitting to make an accommodation for it within education.

Those opposed to social media usage in education view it primarily as a distraction. However, if educators knew more about the tools of social media they would see that it has immense benefits to learning. When students are properly directed, distractions will be of no concern.

### Abstract

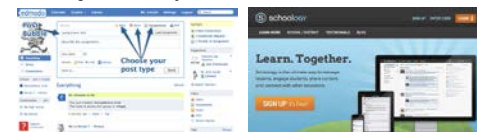
Within recent years, the Internet has evolved into one of the most commonly used innovations by members of today's society. Social media is one aspect of the Internet that has also become a prominent staple among Internet users. The research explores social media's progressing role in education and student learning. Current generations of students are demonstrating decreased engagement, participation, and interest towards the different areas of content being presented to them. Research identifies traditional teaching methods as a central cause to the negative learning aspects being portrayed by the students. This is in part due to the fact that traditional methods no longer emphasize active learning and stimulation. By being brought up in a fast paced environment, students need to be stimulated in order to truly process the content. Social media is able to maintain the attention of students and keep them stimulated. Students' daily routines hold a considerable amount of time for social media usage; therefore, further integration into the classroom could rekindle the participation, engagement, and interest once held by students. The research examines the integration that has taken place within schools currently, and assesses the advantages of use towards student learning.

### Solution

Among the classrooms integrated thus far, social media has demonstrated that it can successfully address the needs of students. To bring about further integration, teachers must become educated on the tools of social media. They need to know how to use social media in order to feel comfortable with incorporating it into their teaching methods. To allow this to happen, schools must create and offer training sessions to their educators.

### Conclusion

Educators need to grasp that social media is becoming a new form of learning for students in today's society. Social media interests students, keeps them engaged, and motivates them. From the integration that has occurred, active student participation has increased in those classes and students are no longer hesitant to ask questions or share their ideas. To have a smooth integration of social media, educators must start learning about the tools of social media and become familiar with them. They do not need to completely throw away their old methods of teaching, but rather accommodate them to better fit the average student in today's classrooms. Some social media tools are better than others, the teacher will need to address what works and does not work according to educational content and the students. But social media use is becoming the norm and it is the responsibility of educators to create the most optimized learning environment possible for their students to succeed.



Rather than directing students to their personal Facebook profiles, students can create profile accounts through educational platforms Edmodo and Schoology. These social networks have a similar design to Facebook, but the functioning of a Blackboard site. The content being posted and shared is specific to what they are doing academically in the classroom and the teacher is able to monitor their activity. This site allows the posting of assignments, discussions, tests and quizzes. Through Schoology the teacher also has the ability to check student participation and assign grades via the site. On both, students can post questions and receive help from their peers over the comments. Communication between students and their teacher is also made easier because the tools can be accessed over computers, tablets, and mobile devices.

### References

- Athgo. (2013). [Photograph of social media collage] Retrieved from <http://www.athgo.org>
- Careless, J. (2012). SOCIAL MEDIA. *Technology & Learning*, 32(7), 42-46
- College Start Up. (2013). [Photograph of Schoology site]. Retrieved from <http://www.collegestartup.org>
- Duncan, J., Hart L., & Younger, D. (2013). Tuning into YouTube in the Classroom: Improving Assessment Scores through Social Media. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED543108.pdf>
- Edmodo. (2011). [Photograph of Edmodo site] Retrieved from <http://edmodo.com>
- Gabriel, T. (2011). Speaking Up in Class, Silently, Using Social Media. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from Smith, S. W. (2000). Get connected to science! *Science and Children*, 37(7), 22-25. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.snhu.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/236908278?accountid=3783>
- Swan, C. (2013). BEING SOCIAL. *Technology & Learning*, 33(7), 30-33.
- Twitter Tools Book. (2013). [Photograph of Twitter bird] Retrieved from <http://twittertoolsbook.com>

### Application within the Classroom

English teacher Erin Olson held a discussion on the poem, "To the Lady," over a Twitter feed. While some students read the poem aloud, others took to Twitter to post their opinions and responses to the literary work.

"We tend to have the attitude that someone else will do it. But what happens when everyone thinks the same as you?"

"It only takes one individual to change, if you want something to change you have to be willing to be that voice."

"It really shows the impact one change can make."

"I agree with Katie"(Gabriel, 2011, Speaking Up in Class, Silently, Using Social Media)!

The above conversation was of one of the discussions held about the poem. Students were able to go off of each other's responses and form greater ideas. The digital sharing allowed students to feel more comfortable when sharing their thoughts. Twitter has allowed this class to have a voice.

