Teaching with social media

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**EDT 613 Teaching with social media**

**Keywords:** social media, social software, educational technology, social networks, online learning, informal learning

**Description:** Social media pervades our social life; with implications for education, business and beyond. Examine the sociological and psychological impacts, benefits and risks of social media. We examine social networking sites, (micro) blogs, video, and wikis; focusing on their use in classrooms to build community, develop literacy, and foster critical thinking.

Social media has become an extremely successful and popular technology that has made its way into life of the individual as well as education, business and medicine. Since this technology has become an important part of society and because it can facilitate social interactions where people can connect and share thoughts, opinions, special interests and personal information, it has great potential for teaching and learning. Educators must have knowledge of this technology and understand it’s sociological and psychological impacts, social benefits, privacy and security risks and potential applications for education.

## Goals

The student will be able to:

* Assess the impact of social media on the individual and society.
* Identify ways in which social media creates new challenges and opportunities.
* Discuss social media privacy, safety and self-presentation.
* Explain how social media is effected and guided by psycho-social dimensions.
* Engage in the use of social media technologies such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, wikis and video.
* Analyze and evaluate social media technologies to determine their appropriateness, relevance and use for education.
* Apply reflective analysis.
* Construct individual and collaborative social media projects.

## Course Readings & Bibliography

*There are no required texts for this course*.

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*Wallis, C. (2010). The impacts of media multitasking on children’s learnng and development: Report from a research seminar, New York, NY: The Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Workshop.*

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## Class Sessions

### Introduction to social media

Introduction to the basic tenants of social media. What is social media? How do people engage with it? What does social media look like? What are the positive and negative aspects of this technology.

### Social media and society

Discussion (based on readings) on how social media has become a strong force in current society. Students will look at how social media has been used in the business, political and medical sectors.

#### Readings due:

* Pew Internet (2007 & 2010)

### Social media and teens

Students will discuss (based on readings) how and why social media has gained a significant foothold in teen life and how teens use and embrace the various media-rich features of social media to interact on issues. What does this mean for the K-12 students we teach or will teach?

#### Readings due:

* Wakefield

### Psycho-sociological aspects of social media

Review of the literature on the sociological and psychological aspects of what makes social media so popular.

#### Readings due:

* Wallis; Pelling

### Social media privacy, safety and self-presentation

Special topics on current privacy issues pertaining to the use of social media. Issues of safety, personal profiling/self-presentation and identity protection will be discussed.

### Blogs for education

Students will look at the use of blogs in education as a tool for building writing, reading and higher order cognitive skills. Students will be introduced to blogs and popular web blogging applications. Students will work hands-on to develop a special interest blog. Student blogs will be evaluated for their use, relevance and importance for education.

#### Readings due:

* Knobel

### Twitter for education

Introduction to Twitter. Students will work hands-on to develop a Twitter account and will follow every class member, the professor as well as 1-2 other Twitter feeds relevant to education or a societal issue. Twitter will be evaluated for its use, relevance and importance for education.

### Facebook for education

Introduction to Facebook. Students will work hands-on to develop a Facebook identity and class group which they will use throughout the semester. Facebook Apps for Education will be reviewed and used. The Facebook project will be evaluated for its use, relevance and importance for education.

*Reading due: Institute of Psychology*

### Social aspects of virtual simulations and games

Introduction to social interactions present in virtual simulations and games.

### The video revolution and the power of video

Introduction to video creation and sharing through a few of the popular video sharing sites; YouTube, TeacherTube, Vimeo, Metacafe and Hulu. Students will evaluate the pros, cons, uses, missuses and value of these social video environments for education. Students will look at the power of video to engage, motivate, assist with differentiation and “speak a thousand words.”

### Wikis for education

Introduction to wikis and popular wiki applications; Wikipedia, Mediawiki, Wikispaces. Students will evaluate wikis for use in education. Students will work hands-on to construct a class wiki. Student wikis will be evaluated for their use, relevance and importance for education.

#### Readings due:

* Wikipedia Education Project; Wikiversity (online)

### Social media and co-creation of meaning.

Readings on the work of Roy Pea from Stanford University. Class discussion will follow.

#### Readings due:

* Pea (selections)

### Critical perspectives on social media - case studies

Students will present/discuss assigned/self-selected case studies on social media in education, business, politics and education.

### Summaries and evaluations of social media in education

Review, analysis and synthesis of what has been learned about social media, it’s impact on society and on the individual and whether this particular technology has a place in education.

### Final project presentations

Final project presentations.

## Assignments & Grading

### Class Participation (10%)

Students will be assessed on quality and depth of class discussions, as carried out through synchronous and asynchronous online activities. Class participation will be based on weekly session topics and collaborative work with class members.

### Social Media Activities (20%)

As part of this course, students will immerse themselves in social media to develop fluency in the tools and evaluate their potential for education. Students will be assessed on their level of activity, level of technical skill acquisition and creativity. Students will create accounts for Facebook, Twitter, Blogger and WikiMedia (Wikipedia, Wiktionary, Wikitravel, etc.) and will engage in these technologies to complete mini-class assignments and collaborate with class members.

### Reflection Discussions/Papers (35%)

Students will be given reading assignments, which they will be expected to read and discuss in class. Their quality and depth of discussion will be assessed. In addition, students will be asked to respond to a special topic or issues related to weekly topics by way of a reflection paper. Some sample reading/reflection topics include:

* **(Session 2)** How has social media become a strong force in current society? How has social media been used in education as well as in the business, political and medical sectors?
* **(Session 3-4)** What psycho-sociological traits do humans possesses that makes social media so popular?\*\*\*\*How has social media gained a significant foothold in teen life and how do teens use and embrace the various media-rich features of social media to interact on issues? What does this mean for the K-12 students we teach or will teach?
* **(Session 5)** Is social media a threat to privacy? Why are so many people willing to part with their “private” data? Beyond the safety issues of identity theft, harassment, and personal security, what are the negative consequences of mass over sharing through social media?
* **(Session 10)** Discuss how and why video is a powerful learning tool.
* **(Session 15)** Does social media have a place in education? Review, analyze and synthesize what you have learned about social media, its impact on society and on the individual and whether this particular technology has a place in education.

### Final Culminating Project (35%)

Each student will design and develop a fully integrated social media lesson. The project will be designed in a way that addresses the parameters for using social media in K-12 education - social aspects, safety, privacy, student differentiation and pedagogy will be stressed. Students will also set-up an actual social media environment, using one of the technologies discussed in class, to support their lesson.