

1) Social media and education: reconceptualizing the boundaries of formal and informal learning, Learning, Media and Technology

Reference:

Christine Greenhow & Cathy Lewin (2016) Social media and education: reconceptualizing the boundaries of formal and informal learning, Learning, Media and Technology, 41:1, 6-30, DOI: 10.1080/17439884.2015.1064954

Summary:

The authors present two real-life case studies in this article, one in Europe and one in the United States. As they theorized social media usage, they also examined its pros and cons in terms of two major learning theories: 1) **Constructivism** and 2) **Connectivism**.

The authors stated that European studies mainly focus on integrating social media into teaching and learning rather than examining how young people use social media to pursue self-defined goals based upon their interests. On the other hand, the US study describes a community whose content community members mainly determined purpose and actions.

One of the main points of this article is that through participatory digital cultures, social media can connect formal and informal learning. Also, it has been mentioned that educators would benefit from a stronger focus on students' everyday use of and learning with Web 2.0 technologies in and outside of classrooms. A suggestion related to integrating social media into learning requires new forms of inquiry, communication, and collaboration. In the end, we know that with the growth of social media use, people can engage in participatory digital cultures, potentially benefiting from collaborative learning, the development of new skills, and greater agency.

The article also discusses some advantages and disadvantages of using technologies such as social media in the classroom. For example, social media can emphasize learners as co-producers of knowledge and enable users to create and participate in various communities through functions such as communicating, sharing, collaborating, publishing, managing, and interacting. However, only a tiny proportion of young people use social media sophisticatedly that educators might value.

In addition, social media can improve collaboration, information, and resource sharing; encourage participation and critical thinking, and increase peer support and communication about course content and assessment. In contrast, social media can negatively affect students' overall grades if they use these platforms while doing their schoolwork.

The article also looked into social media from different learning theories points of view, such as **constructivist** and **connectivist**. Conceptually, social media practices align well with social constructivist views of learning as participation in a social context and values of knowledge as decentralized, accessible, and co-constructed. Similarly, connectivist ideas also seem well aligned with social media practices. Connectivism also overlaps with other more established perspectives, such as social constructivism.

As social media influenced the learning process, it was shown how an individual's comments, such as a consensus-building comment or counterargument, influenced the discussion. This way, learning was self-initiated and self-directed as young people chose which articles to debate and which actions to perform.

In my opinion, the article bridged different existing theories in the learning process. Moreover, this article's positive and negative points allow the readers to take the first step of integrating social media into any educational institute confidently and accurately. In addition, I agree with the authors that one of the main reasons we are considering integrating social media into the learning process is their ability to facilitate the sharing of learning and knowledge with teachers and students from other schools.

2) Social Media in Higher Education

Reference:

Selwyn, N. (2012). Social Media in Higher Education. The Europa World of Learning, 1(3), 1-10.
Link: <https://cpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/sites.lib.jmu.edu/dist/f/324/files/2013/04/sample-essay-selwyn.pdf>

Summary:

Social media has revolutionized how users experience the internet over the past five years. The activities of its ordinary users now drive the internet. Social media is often defined as collaboration, conviviality, and creativity. As a result, social media applications are seen as open rather than closed, bottom-up rather than top-down.

The article has a great vision about the use of social media at the time of being written. It has been mentioned that universities are now using social networking sites as alternative spaces wherein students can adapt to the university lifestyle through interacting online with peers and faculty. Also, it gives us a description of technology-enhanced learning based on principles of collective exploration, play and innovation rather than individualized instruction.

The article has reviewed the social media impact from different perspectives, 1) New Types of Learners, 2) New Types of Learning, and 3) New Forms of Higher Education Provision.

The author believes social media has a significant impact on the learners' ability to access knowledge and information. Social media supports knowledge consumption and construction forms that are very different from the epistemological principles of formal education and individual instruction.

The article provides us with many advantages about using social media in education. However, it mentions that many people do not have access to the Internet, resulting in a digital disconnect between students and their educational institutions.

After all, social media has its own shortcomings. For instance, people that are not skilled enough in making content on such platforms, may become frustrated and despaired. Therefore, the opinions of a large population in society may never be heard and communicated to the authorities.

Personally, I agree with the article's statement about the revolutionized web by social media. Having the majority of people as content creators could exponentially increase our learning capacity. A significant point to be considered, however, is that there should be a mechanism in which the content in social media can be fact-checked and tested to avoid the spread of false information and pseudoscience.

3) Neil Selwyn & Eve Stirling (2016) Social media and education ... now the dust has settled

Reference:

Neil Selwyn & Eve Stirling (2016) Social media and education ... now the dust has settled, Learning, Media and Technology, 41:1, 1-5, DOI: 10.1080/17439884.2015.1115769

Summary:

This 2015 article, originally published in 2009, looked at the impact of social media on education and how social media is used, for the better or for, the worse, in education. Also, questions of equality and diversity, questions of the forms of learning (formal and/or informal), and the unintended and unexpected consequences of social media use the seductions and pleasures and the problems and anxieties are addressed.

One negative point mentioned in the article is not about social media but rather about internet access. As future educators, we should be aware that half the world's population continues to have no access to the internet at all.

The authors stated social media's societal significance and permanence and many different ways of studying it, ranging from 'platform studies' to 'computational social science'.

Another negative point that the article highlighted is that social media may negatively impact other types of technology-based learning materials such as MOOCs (Massive Open Online Course). For example, students can find most solutions to the problems only by exploring the backchannels in social media.

When one looks at their past, one can predict their future. When studying the history of social media in education, one can see what will happen in the future of education. This should be considered by us as future educators. For example, a combination of social media and technologies such as Virtual Realities can lay the bedrock for a more interactive and dynamic educational environment as students can dive into the problem and explore the situation freely for themselves.

4) How Social Media Can and Should Impact Higher Education

Reference:

Blankenship, M.E. (2011). How Social Media Can and Should Impact Higher Education.

Summary:

The article describes that interactive and community-focused online tools, programs like Skype, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, blogs, wikis, and educational software such as Blackboard are becoming dominant in the classroom. In this era, it is hard to imagine any professor or student making it through a week without them.

The article reports that social media is being used in classrooms in various ways. For example, to communicate with students, using online videos, podcasts, blogs, and wikis during actual class time, etc.

One benefit of social media that has been brought up in the article is that it will provide us with greater student engagement and greater student interest. It also allows students to take more control and responsibility for their own education. Moreover, using social media for some students is not only a valuable way to participate in the class but also an essential part of preparing for their future careers. The author also emphasizes that we should make sure that all students have access to technology because although most people have computers and smartphones, there are always some students who are not able to afford them.

As someone who has passed a very different path to become an educator, I believe the author perfectly explains that social media in education is not just about learning but about the future of the students and their ability to communicate with others.