Student Attitudes Toward Using Social Media for Class Assignments

Kathryn Woods
Austin Peay State University, woodsk@apsu.edu

Melissa Gomez
Austin Peay State University, gomezm@apsu.edu

Michelle Arnold
Middle Tennessee State University, Michelle.Arnold@mtsu.edu

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STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

Dr. Kathryn Woods, Austin Peay State University
Dr. Melissa Gomez, Austin Peay State University
Dr. Michelle Arnold, Middle Tennessee State University
DISCUSSION: PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT GROUPS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Socialnomics Video
EFFECTIVENESS OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

- Increasing student engagement
  

- Increased student to student interaction
  
  (Dixson, 2010; Fox & Varadarajan, 2011; Kassens-Noor, 2012; Kurtz, 2014; McCarthy, 2010; Prestridge, 2014; Veletsianos, Kimmons, & French, 2013)

- Increased student to instructor interaction
  
  (Kurtz, 2014; Özmen and Atıcı, 2014)

- Increased student to content interaction
  
  (Kurtz, 2014; Minocha, 2009; Prestridge, 2014)

- Increasing sense of collaborative learning in an online group
  
THE STUDY

- Conducted over three semesters: Fall 2015 – Fall 2016
- Surveyed 239 students enrolled in 14 courses at 2 universities
  - Pre-test administered at beginning of each course
  - Social media assignments incorporated into each course
  - Post-test administered at end of each course
  - Collected 155 pre-tests, 105 post-tests; 85 usable paired responses
  - Response rate = 35%
Current trends in:

- Educational technology #edtech
- Online learning #onlinelearning
- Increasing student engagement #studentengagement

Share an interesting finding

- Who tweeted about your topic?
- Who was the originator of the information?
The Survey: Pre-Test

- Undergraduate or Graduate
- Traditional or Non-traditional
- Online or Face-to-face
- Gender
- Frequency of social media access
- Previous experience with using social media in class assignments
- Do you believe that social media outlets (such as Twitter) can/will be an effective learning tool to enhance learning in higher education?
THE SURVEY: POST-TEST

- Do you believe that social media usage enhanced learning in this course?
- Do you believe that social media outlets (such as Twitter) can/will be an effective learning tool to enhance learning in higher education in general?
## Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th># of Students</th>
<th>%</th>
<th></th>
<th># of Students</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online</strong></td>
<td>60</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Non-traditional (24+)</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>73</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Face-to-face</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Traditional (18 – 24)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Undergraduate</strong></td>
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<td>82</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Graduate</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>72</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Do you believe that social media outlets (such as Twitter) can/will be an effective learning tool to enhance learning in higher education?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N = 85</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-test: Yes</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Post-test: Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>85.9</td>
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<td></td>
<td>n</td>
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<td>%</td>
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<td>--------------------------</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Never/occasionally use</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>social media</td>
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<tr>
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<td>53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traditional students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-traditional students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Used SM in class previously</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>88.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have not used SM in class previously</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>59.3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>Pre-test: Yes</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male students</td>
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<td>16</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female students</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>68.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
QUALITATIVE DATA: PRE-TEST IMPRESSIONS

Pre-test and post-test question:
Do you believe that social media outlets (such as Twitter) can/will be an effective learning tool to enhance learning in higher education? - Briefly explain why or why not.
Pre-Test Impressions, Continued

Positive
- Social media could be useful with current events
- Could be helpful if utilized correctly
- It depends
- For some students but not all students
- Everyone already uses social media so it makes sense to incorporate it in the classroom

Negative
- Social media is distracting and mainly gossip
- Not everyone uses social media and they do just fine
- Social media is primarily for personal use
**PRE-TEST IMPRESSIONS, CONTINUED**

**Positive**

“Yes, I believe social media can be an effective tool if properly utilized. Usages can range from notifications to information management.”

“Social media is becoming such a big part of our lives. We actually use it for learning already. Why not try and use it for learning?”

**Negative**

“Honestly, I think it will just make people procrastinate more. Like when you fool around on YouTube and next thing you know you realize you’ve been sitting in the same spot for three hours watching random cat videos. Social media is way too distracting to learn from.”

“I know nothing about Twitter and really am not interested.”
Post-test question: Do you believe that social media usage enhanced learning in this course?

Most participants acknowledged that the assignment enhanced the course. Common explanations/examples:

- Improved communication and engagement (particularly for online courses)
- Made assignments more interesting
- Viewed as a new research tool
- Provided more insight
“I have learned to use social media not only for entertainment, but for research on corporations and businesses.”

“It allowed for better research and pushed me to want to know more about what I was learning besides just reading my textbook.”

“I had never used Twitter and had to learn a little about how to get what I needed. Hope I never have to use it again. I like other medias better.”
GENERAL FACULTY OBSERVATIONS

- More active discussions
- Provided an opportunity to apply concepts to real-world and real-time situations
- Easy to apply in the social sciences
- Can use as tool to help students understand and improve their online presence
- Good way to try something new at no cost to you or your university
Consider your learning objectives
- Aggregating information
- Tracking trends
- Sharing images
- Facilitating discussion
- Networking
- Gathering news
- Studying
- Marketing
- Offering new ways of completing assignments
Know your audience
Consider your comfort level
Potential negative consequences
  Distraction for students
  Exposure to negative or inappropriate material
Practicality
Establishing ground rules
Choose your platform deliberately
QUESTIONS?

FEEDBACK?
THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING!

- Kathryn Woods, Austin Peay State University
  woodsk@apsu.edu
- Melissa Gomez, Austin Peay State University
  gomezm@apsu.edu
- Michelle Arnold, Middle Tennessee State University
  michelle.arnold@mtsu.edu
REFERENCES

REFERENCES, CONTINUED


