Student Attitudes Toward Using Social Media for Class Assignments

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Recommended Citation

Woods, Kathryn; Gomez, Melissa; and Arnold, Michelle, "Student Attitudes Toward Using Social Media for Class Assignments" (2017). SoTL Commons Conference. 93.
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STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

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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%
ASSIGNMENT EXAMPLE

www.twitter.com

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># of Students</th>
<th>%</th>
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<td>71</td>
<td>Non-traditional (24+)</td>
<td>62</td>
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<tr>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Traditional (18 – 24)</td>
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<td>82</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>61</td>
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</table>

N = 85
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>
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<th>Pre-test: Yes</th>
<th>Post-test: Yes</th>
<th>% Increase</th>
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<td>17.7</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
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<td>%</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never/occasionally use social media</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33.3</td>
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<td>Regularly/daily use social media</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Non-traditional students</td>
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<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Used SM in class previously</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>88.5</td>
</tr>
<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>
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<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
“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?”

“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.”
QUALITATIVE DATA: POST-TEST IMPRESSIONS

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
**Post-Test Impressions, Continued**

**Positive**

“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.”

**Negative**

“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
DISCUSSION: BEST PRACTICES

- Consider your learning objectives
  - Aggregating information
  - Tracking trends
  - Sharing images
  - Facilitating discussion
  - Networking
  - Gathering news
  - Studying
  - Marketing
  - Offering new ways of completing assignments
DISCUSSION: BEST PRACTICES, CONTINUED

- 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!

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REFERENCES


