

Chapter 22

Social Media Use in Teaching and Learning

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 outbreak opened a new scenario where social media use for school educational activities became imperative to teach online and to implement a current and innovative educational model. This chapter provides the most relevant information on types of social media, social media effect of COVID-19 on education, educational social networking, student privacy issues and education technology, safety measures for the use of social media in schools, role of social media and its importance in teaching and learning, application of social media platforms to education, numerous opportunities that social media offer to both students and educators, and challenges of social media in education.

INTRODUCTION

During the month of March 2020, a “state of alarm” was declared to control an unprecedented global health crisis caused by the outburst of COVID-19. In accordance with the statistics provided by UNESCO (2020), more than 1500 million students all over the world, and their corresponding teachers, were confined inside their homes due to COVID-19 during the academic year 2019–2020, causing an unprecedented situation. From that moment on, all face-to-face activities were restricted. Teaching was shifted to the virtual environment. In recent times, we cannot ignore social media in our lives as a result of the pandemic. None has ever faced a pandemic like COVID-19 that requires social distancing, wearing of masks, and staying home when possible. As the global health emergency continues to unfold, schools are scuttling to digitize their teachings and satisfy their students’ needs. The current period of social distancing and isolation is creating challenges for schools to find ways to support students to stay active. The dynamic environment provided by social media has promoted an avenue for schools to help

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students stay connected to their academic pursuit. By engaging with and understanding how to harness the educative potential of social media while at the same time ensuring that students remain safe and healthy online. It will not be wrong to say that social media and education goes hand in hand in the modern world (Willbold, 2019).

However, during the pandemic process, as people stayed constantly inside the house, the use of social media reached a very high level. Before the pandemic social media were mostly used as a support to traditional education, however, the situation changed with the closure of schools during the pandemic and the transition of educational institutions to e-learning, and the use of virtual classroom environments. While this situation maximizes the number of people who use technology actively, it has revealed that the element of active learning in education has required the faculty members and students who were not previously intertwined with technology to use technology actively (Near East University Social Development Center, 2020). As the pandemic forced schools to shift to online learning, teachers became creative.

Many teachers find social networking a great way to expand their own learning and discover new resources. According to Keierleber (2020) some utilized Facebook's live video feature to connect with students. Others shared lessons on TikTok, the video-sharing platform popular among young people. For educators, social media can be beneficial in numerous ways such as you can keep up to date with the latest information, ideas and "best practices" in the sector. Social media sites offer teachers a convenient way to connect with students remotely, but bearing in mind student privacy laws. For example, many social media companies explicitly prohibit children younger than 13 years old from signing up for their platforms because they collect user data for targeted advertising. He further stated that, in order to ensure student safety online, educators should stick to digital education services that have strict privacy protections and use social media only to share general district information. Keierleber (2020) further stated that before the pandemic, the use of social media in schools was not high as individuals usually use social media in order to spend time in their spare time outside of work and communication, as they spent time in social media not to exceed their needs. When we consider the use of technology before the pandemic, the use of technology was enough to make use of free time, except for smart phones and business laptop use."

Social media such as blogs, online forums, wikis and social networking sites have become an integral part of the personal, school and working lives of young adults. Broadly, social media encompasses: social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn; media-sharing sites, such as YouTube and Flickr; creation and publishing tools, such as wikis and blogs; aggregation and republishing through RSS feeds; and remixing of content and republishing tools (Greenhow 2011; Harris 2012; Buzzetto-More 2015; Gonzalez-Ramirez et al. 2015). Worldwide, growth in the use of social media in education and training is part of a movement towards more active forms of student learning, learning that is collaborative, experiential and problem-based and which can involve situated learning. Linked to the emergence of these more active forms of student learning are the debates associated with the need to rethink the nature of pedagogy, learning and assessment in this more digital age (Beetham & Sharpe 2013). Social media have become very useful tools in education in this Covid-19 era. It plays an important role in every student's life. It is often easier and more convenient to access information, provide information and communicate via social media. Tutors and students can be connected to each other and can make good use of these platforms for the benefit of their learning and teaching (Jain, 2019). In areas such as –

Instant online discussions - Social media has created a medium for people to interact. Staff and students, prospective staff and students, alumni, stakeholders and the wider community can all communicate with like-minded individuals and have their questions answered, make friends and network.

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