

Education via facebook benefits and challenges education essay



As many teachers might attest, students diligently clicking away at their laptops during class are not always taking notes or interacting with class material. If their minds are wondering, chances are they are browsing the Internet. Though the internet provides many options for diversion, statistics show that one of the most likely places students are spending a portion of their class time is on Facebook. As likely as Facebook is to be a distraction in the classroom it also has the potential to be a teaching tool when used strategically and creatively. Social Media is an emerging technology with growing popularity. Most students and educators are familiar with Facebook. Some argue that Facebook isn't a reliable mean to transform knowledge between educators and students and is viewed as rather distracting than beneficiary. In this paper, I will review findings by some researchers to understand the relationship between Facebook and education, and whether it could be a reliable mean to be used in Education by educators and students as nowadays, people are divided into two major groups in terms of familiarly with technology: digital immigrants and digital natives (Siegle 2011). " Digital natives" are those who have always relied on technology as a way of life where " Digital Immigrants" are people who live in two worlds, one of which technology is overlooked. In the second world, it dominated our lives and became a recognized necessity (Siegle 2011); e. g. while digital immigrants prefer to use emails; digital natives prefer to use text messaging. Conventional media such as radio, television, and newspapers are associated with many challenges related to high costs and access limitations. Social media, on the other hand, is highly accessible anytime and anywhere the internet can reach (Tiryakioglu and Erzurum 2011). Conventional media

cannot be changed after production, whereas social media can be immediately changed and/or updated via comments, likes, and dislikes. According to researchers, social networks can help developing communication skills and encourage participation and social commitment (Tiryakioglu and Erzurum 2011)

Facebook can be defined as an online platform where users can create profiles, generate and share content and information, and interact with other known and unknown contacts (Boyd and Ellison 2007). Following its launch in 2006, Facebook has grown rapidly in terms of the number of users and the amount of time its users spend browsing compared to other websites. Facebook is now considered to be the dominant network of all the international social networks and has led people to abandon other websites like MySpace, which some have gone so far as to refer to as the “ghetto” of social networks (Siegle 2011).

In this paper, I will present and discuss what other scholars have concluded from their research on the use and effects of social networks (i. e. Facebook) in education. The studies used in this paper were conducted on teachers, university professors, college students, and high school students to understand and assess the usage of social networks in the light of education and its effect on student’s academic achievements as well as fulfilling the desire of promoting knowledge and maintaining effective and efficient student interaction with educators. This paper will eventually answer the following question: does Facebook usage by students and educators improve the interaction between both parties to promote knowledge? The objective of

this essay is to present the benefits and challenges that face students and educators in practicing their role in education in the light of using Facebook.

Communication through Facebook is different from traditional face-to-face communication. First, friendships through Facebook are explicit, where traditional friendships usually tend to be implicit. Secondly, conversations through Facebook are persistent. They are permanently stored and easily retrieved at any point in time. Finally, Facebook conversations are shared with all friends who can access someone's profile (Siegle 2011).

While Facebook enhances the process of communication, it is important to perceive it as a possible threat to its users' privacy, which may in turn cost them educational and career opportunities (Siegle 2011). Fortunately, this threat can be avoided by a simple application of personal judgement before sharing private matters a person does not desire to be "shareable" with anyone at any point in time.

Before I discuss the usage of Facebook by college students, let's take an overview on the first time Facebook is used by young users (teenagers, for example). Unlike the past, teens don't need to physically leave the house to socialize. Facebook is used as a primary communication activity through which they post, comment, and share information with each other. To preserve this tool, young users ought to be advised from the beginning as to how to use social networks responsibly and be aware of all the issues that might arise from such activity including exposed privacy. Facebook can provide a window into anyone's life. Given that fact, it is the responsibility of the parents to monitor and provide guidelines to their children once they

start using Facebook. The use of Facebook by students entails education-related interactions, while some use it to obtain information on a missed class, others may use Facebook to engage in humorous comments about their own and their teachers' actions.

Today's classroom lexicon contains words with different meanings, including post, message, tag, poke, and inbox (Fewkes and McCabe 2012). No one can deny the fact that Facebook broke down the barriers between students and educators because the informal learning that occurs in the context of sharing media offers important opportunities for increased student involvement in formal learning settings (Fewkes and McCabe 2012). Psychologists have argued that a learning community would perform its best if the characteristics of connectedness and trust have been established amongst the learners (Fewkes and McCabe 2012). For this reason, education remains one of the areas most heavily impacted by technology.

Although some argue that technologies like Facebook could involve some challenges for students, that is, when implementing new technologies in classrooms, it is important that teachers focus on promoting knowledge rather than “ simply being a source of information” (Siegle 2011). Moreover, the nature of multimedia can captivate students easily; too much multimedia stimulation can interfere with the deeper cognitive processing that is critical to learning (The American Psychological Association).

Aaron M. Fewkes and Mike McCabe conducted a survey on a sample of students at Waterloo Regional District School Board after the latter had made a decision to “ embrace” the growing popularity of Facebook to verify

if their vision of using Facebook in schools aligns with the actual behaviour of the students. The results show that 48% of students do log on to Facebook at least once during class time, moreover, the research exposed a possible disconnect between school board and students due to improper implementation of this policy.

Facebook, however, can be a powerful communication tool that could serve as a professional resource for educators. (Pilgrim and Bledsoe, 2011).

Educators can respond to the use of technology in their classrooms in five ways: 1

1. Ban it: This has been deemed ineffective due to the fact that technology is becoming a part of our life that we constantly use. Typical workarounds are hiding devices behind books and texting from pockets.
2. Do business as usual: I disagree with this behaviour of educators as it is the educator's responsibility to engage the students in their classrooms
3. Limit the use of Technology: a clear guideline indicating what is to be tolerated and what would be unacceptable.
4. Enhance traditional practice: Technology is dependent on users.
5. Use the technology to restructure the educational process: encourage students to use technology for inquiry, problem solving and/or instruction.

If I was an instructor, my choice would be the fifth option, as it is the most effective and efficient according to the studies conducted by Pilgrim, Beldsoe, and Siegle, who all have concluded in their studies the importance

of learning how to incorporate Facebook into the education process. The use of technology allows students to use social media websites like Facebook to engage in formal or informal discussions with their instructor as well as their fellow students. There are many ways educators and students can connect using Facebook. For instance, the teacher can post comments for the students, students can post their final work for their peers to review and provide feedback, and also students can use the wall feature to ask questions and respond to each other. In addition, I would set up a central page where all classroom mates can join to participate at any time of their choice to exchange knowledge and understanding of the subject being studied.

Using social media should be, however, accompanied by some important precautions which educators should adhere to when using Facebook as a tool for educating students: 2

1. Teachers should consider setting up a separate Facebook account
2. Educators should obtain signed parental consent prior to interacting with young students on Facebook.
3. Teachers should refrain from installing any applications on their page that would negatively affect their professional image.
4. Educators should remind students that they need to transfer the respectful tone teachers expect in class to their online interactions with them and ensure that students are aware that a teacher's ethical responsibility will continue online.

According to some studies (Seigle 2011), educators who relied on Facebook to follow professional organizations were more knowledgeable than those who did not (Pilgrim and Bledsoe 2011). We live in an age in which we are fully dependent on instant updates and information, the rationale behind using Facebook as a tool for professional learning adopts the idea that the internet is this generation's defining technology for literacy (Pilgrim and Bledsoe 2011). Facebook is indeed an important source of information for educators who seek to continue their learning. According to a study conducted on university instructors in Turkey, all instructors who participated in the survey somehow use Facebook in their courses; even the instructor with the lowest frequency had used Facebook to make announcements about the course by creating a group. The study concludes that instructors have adopted Facebook and they are using it intensively, with a greater tendency toward its use for educational purposes.

According to my cited sources, the studies recognized Facebook as a reliable source for academicians because it is flexible and user friendly, in addition, the sources emphasized on the role of Facebook as a medium between students and instructors and argued that Facebook can neither be solely dependable for conducting courses nor can it be ignored.

After I have explored the usage of Facebook by educators as well as students and identified the benefits and challenges of such usage by each party, I can assert that Facebook is a dependable, reliable, and popular medium through which both educators and students can interact appropriately. In order for this medium of communication to work in its most effective and efficient way, students need to be trustful and self-regulated, that is, to refrain from <https://assignbuster.com/education-via-facebook-benefits-and-challenges-education-essay/>

the over- use of Facebook and eventually the addiction to it leading to damage to their potential academic achievement.

In conclusion, Educators and students use Facebook; the education process should be focused on the interaction of each party with the other and not the technology itself. Facebook opens new doors to students and allows their knowledge to grow. Facebook also allows them to learn about themselves from their peers. It is my belief that social networks like Facebook will continue to evolve and optimize the education channels in the context of human communication. Educators should consider Facebook as a mean of enhanced communication that provides traceability to what has been discussed and a source of feedback and/or evaluation on whether the discussion has fulfilled what it is mandated for or not.