

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

ENHANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Mohammed Ibrahim Abba

Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State, Nigeria

&

Ibrahim Ismaila Kuta PhD.

Federal University of Technology Minna, Nigeria

Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Define the term social media
2. Explain the various social media platforms for teaching and learning.
3. State the various importance of social media to classroom instruction

Introduction

The world has become a global village where everyone uses social media for various purposes. Teachers now design and deliver lessons at their convenience via various social media platforms. Integrating social media in classrooms is becoming an important part of teaching and learning process. These various platforms enable students and teachers to engage in collaborative learning, networking, generating knowledge and sharing of vital information that can be used to foster teaching and learning. Social media allows students to learn in peers through groups, live sessions and other engagements which improve their skills and knowledge. Therefore, this chapter will provide a brief discussion on various social media platforms and how they play a vital role in teaching and learning in a world of education that is rapidly being influenced by various technological advancement.

Definition of Social Media

Hakim (2019) views social media as a group of Internet-based applications built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, which allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Social media is a form of electronic communication, such as websites for social networking and microblogging, through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other contents.

Yeboah and Ewur (2014) view social media as a form of electronic communication through which users interact among people in which they create, freely share, exchange and discuss information, ideas, personal messages, and other contents about each other and their lives using a multimedia mix of personal words, pictures, videos and audio, utilizing online platforms while they are connected to the internet. Social media is therefore seen as virtual platforms for interactivity and information exchange, where issues are debated and defined and where users collaborate in content creation.

Selwyn (2012) defined social media as various platforms that allow its users to converse and interact with each other by creating, editing and sharing information in the form of texts, visual

and audio content. Boyd and Ellison (2007) defined Social media as a web-based services that permit users to create a personal profile, identify other friends on the same site, read and reply to postings made by other users on the spot, send and receive messages either privately or publicly.

Social media allows people or group of people to freely express themselves and interact socially with others. When used in the educational environment, it allows students to learn in groups and in individual capacities in order for them to exchange views. It also enables teachers to use various approaches to solidify their teaching, giving its flexibilities and importance.

Social Media Platforms for Enhancing Teaching and Learning

Over the years, there has been a proliferation of social media platforms with new ones always coming up. Although, they are not primarily designed for teaching and learning but for social interaction and networking. Researchers in the field of education have, over the years, carried out several studies on the effectiveness of Social media platforms to teaching and learning and the results have been very promising.

Therefore, below are some social media platforms that can be used to enhance teaching and teaching:

1. **Facebook:** Facebook is the largest social media platform with billions of users worldwide. It was originally designed to accommodate Harvard University College students in the United States, but later, it turned worldwide. Although, it is a social networking site where people interact and make friends. However, over the years, it has been spread to cover many areas. It enables users to post updates, create groups and pages. Recently, Facebook has created a new feature that enables users to go live on video where others could follow and interact with one another. Over the years, Facebook has been used to enhance teaching and learning in the sense that Educators now use the platform to teach students. Teachers post updates either on their personal profile or pages or groups where students comment, share and exchange ideas amongst themselves, and with their teachers which encourages collaborative learning.

Facebook creates a very powerful learning environment for teaching and learning, especially for online instruction to effectively take place. Users of this platform subscribe to pages they like and join groups that interests them. Teachers, in this case, create pages and exchange ideas with students in a collaborative manner. It can either be live or at their convenient time. It is so flexible that teachers and students can exchange information privately in the chat box or messenger (Daraei, 2015). Teachers suggest the various platforms students can check in order to learn and interact. Facebook learning encourages active participation and collaboration.

2. **Twitter:** Twitter is one the fastest growing social media micro-blogging sites where users create profiles and send tweets to their audience. Users can add links from Facebook, Google, Youtube e.t.c, to their information so that others can be able to interact and retweet information. Twitter has a special hash tag feature that makes teaching and learning to be easy. With the help of a hash tag, teachers are able to narrow down their discussions to a specific theme, and the discussions can be followed by interested readers. Twitter encourages collaboration, engagement, active participation and stimulates interests which means students can post their questions where answers will be provided and interact with one another (Ally, 2012). In order to have an idea about the active engagement during the discussion, teachers can check engagements and make analysis of the number of audience that followed the discussion.

Unlike Facebook, students can be able to follow audience that interests them. In this case, teachers start discussions from their handles while students follow, reply and retweet as they so wish. In any event that they are unable to follow up the discussion online, they can star them to read and understand later. One unique feature of twitter is the small character tweets which eliminate long write ups that can bore students during active engagement. It is designed to be straightforward and precise.

3. **YouTube:** YouTube is a social networking site that enables users to upload short or long videos where interested users make reference to the niche that interests them. Over the years, users have significantly increased on YouTube and educators have started tilting to online instructions on the platform to teach their students and to reach a wide audience. YouTube gives students and teachers the opportunity to upload videos that clearly illustrate contents and facts in a simple manner. Those that aren't online can follow the instruction at their own pace and convenience (Chenail, 2011).

YouTube videos are so unique because they provide an audio-visual avenue where students can hear and see clearly what instructors are passing across. At their own pace, students can follow online discussions of other schools not necessarily theirs, from experienced and professional tutors with the aim fostering understanding. During YouTube instructions, students can interact and engage their tutors in the comment sections. Additionally, educators use YouTube platforms to create their own specific channels to facilitate online teaching and learning. The various YouTube channels enable facilitators to give online lectures and tutorials where students can comment, like and rate the sessions to be either good or bad. Students can also download the lectures they watch on the various channels for their use later on.

Jones and Cuthrell (2011) noted that YouTube is very interesting in the educational setting because tutors can be able to use online videos as a model to make references while they teach in the classroom in order to drive home their points. Students can be able to favourite their desired videos to be used at a later time. Teachers, on the other hand, can be able to see the number of views their videos get.

4. **Telegram:** Telegram is one of the web-based applications serving a large online community, which was launched in 2013 by two Russian brothers, Pavel and Nikolai Durov, an entrepreneur and a computer programmer, based in Berlin Through telegram, teachers can share more documents of various types than WhatsApp (Shima & Saeed, 2018). With telegram, teachers can send messages, photos, videos, and files of any format as well as create groups of up to 200,000 people. The platform enables the creation of channels where students can subscribe to a particular area of interest for effective teaching and learning. Telegram does not require phone numbers as you can easily add someone via their usernames. Telegram has additional traits of transferring and receiving documents and files without needing to store it into the device being used and also not taking our device storage. Heba (2015) further explained that telegram provides high security as it is using encryption technique in setting the privacy and security. In addition to that, it also does not include any advertisement that could cause interference in having effective communication. Students can also make audio calls and video calls which make collaboration very easy and interesting.

Novel Practices In Education

Telegram as a mobile application allows users to communicate using mobile gadget and computer. It is a social media platform that allows users to interact with one another to exchange ideas and network. Telegram is one of the emerging platforms that offer both synchronous and asynchronous services to students where everyone can learn online and interact with the teachers and students.

Telegram sends documents of all formats and up to 1.5 gigabyte can be sent. Additionally, it offers both a synchronous and asynchronous services meaning that teachers can, when opportuned, communicate with their students based on an agreed time and drop contents intermittently where everyone will come across them at their own convenient time. The platform enables users to edit messages and review previous history of the group chat. Important group discussion can be pinned on the wall to enable students to concentrate. This is very useful as topics will be pinned to enable students to collaboratively engage in the discussion. Teachers can create channels where students can subscribe to in order to follow discussions online.

5. **Blog:** Blog is a web platform created by authors, of which it can be edited and updated regularly in order to encourage engagement and pass information. Blog as a learning platform is very useful for classroom instruction. Blogs enable users to create profiles and post relevant contents where users follow the contents in order to comment, discuss, like and share the information posted. By so doing, it enables interaction and active engagement. Blog can be for various disciplines and fields depending on the areas of interest. Teachers can create blogs and regularly update them with information while students follow the contents and comment, share and discuss where necessary.
6. **Whatsapp:** Whatsapp is a free instant messaging application that allows the exchange of information in different formats for easy and effective communication. Whatsapp as a free messenger application which works on various platforms like iphone and android systems, is largely used to send multimedia contents like photos, videos, audio, and other instant messages in the form of text. Whatsapp can therefore be used for teaching and learning through the creation of online groups aimed at fostering communication with students, creating dialogue and encouraging students to exchange ideas and information among themselves (Sonia and Rawekar, 2017). WhatsApp platform allows users to deliver messages to the people individually or by creating group for a wider interaction. This application makes use of the online internet connection of smartphones to permit the people to send and receive messages, images, videos and voice messages to the others. It can be used either synchronously or asynchronously.

The collaborative learning that is made possible in WhatsApp groups enables students to have sense of being a member to a learning community, and this makes them to consider tasks more seriously since their contributions in a WhatsApp group are overt. WhatsApp enhances collaborative learning of students, thereby increasing their performance significantly (Sweeny, 2010; Bawa & Aisha 2016).

WhatsApp incorporates the use of multimedia contents where pictures, audio, videos, graphics, and texts can be used to support normal conventional classes. With the aforementioned being able to stimulate both auditory and visual senses, teaching and learning can be effectively enhanced. The voice note feature offers teachers to clarify things and even send audio contents in

Novel Practices In Education

...ation where they are busy to type. Discussion forums like WhatsApp provide online ...ents with opportunities to collaborate and cooperate together in order to construct ...nowledge. This simply means that teachers, as facilitators of knowledge, can pose a question or ...an assignment that requires the active collaboration of each and every student in order to increase their understanding and collaboration. This will help the students to understand concepts better, thereby enhancing their performances.

7. **Instagram:** Instagram is a social media platform with millions of users where users upload pictures and videos with various captions. Just like Facebook and twitter, Instagram has a feature that enables users to go live on a video chat. When applied into classroom settings, teachers can post information and students can comment and like. Additionally, when teachers go live, students can be able to see them on the videos, thereby stimulating both visual and auditory senses. Teachers can therefore use the live feature as well as other features like videos and pictures to engage students on a particular topic, which therefore stimulate engagement, collaboration, and interests (Dewi, Fajriyah & Salam, 2018).

Importance of Social Media in Teaching and Learning

Several studies like Jain (n.d.), Holder-Ellis (2015) etc. have highlighted the importance of social media in teaching and learning. Some of the importance are;

1. Social media learning offers a multi-sensory approach to classroom instruction because it appeals to the various senses where students can see and hear during the course of instruction. Instead of learning being more of orals and talks, social media provides an avenue for learning to be practical, interesting and visual as the case may be. It also gives students the room to learn from various approaches unlike normal classroom sessions.
2. Social media learning encourages collaborative learning in the sense that it provides an avenue for student-student or student-teacher interaction especially about issues relating to their class. In this case, students can be able to interact and exchange ideas and facts amongst themselves and with their teachers. Students that are introvert during normal classroom interactions can be able to express themselves on social media. Through collaboration, they can coordinate and assist one other to accomplish a task, assignment, project, online tutorials etc. which gives teachers ample time to concentrate on other things.
3. Social media increases the communication skills of students especially those that are timid in the classroom. Students improve their communication skills and abstract concepts become more concrete through interactions with peers and teachers especially when concepts are presented in the form of multimedia.
4. Social media boosts research opportunities for students. They can connect and interact with prospective researchers, experts and supervisors even before commencing a program. Students are able to reach out to supervisors and other researchers through direct messages, emails, and other engagements to seek more clarification regarding any information they need. Also, researchers can use social media to extract secondary data from polls, comments and other analytics which simplifies data gathering techniques.
5. Social media is flexible that it makes learning to be interesting and continuous at any given time. Teachers and students can schedule classes either synchronously or asynchronously and it can happen anywhere and anytime since students are always glued to their phones and gadgets. Teachers that are busy can be able to schedule classes at a

- suitable time with their students. It is so flexible that classroom session can be extended beyond normal period; teachers can go live where students will be able to join the conversation and comment while teaching goes on.
6. Through social media, teachers can send links to blogs and other virtual libraries which can be of tremendous help to students. Teachers can drop links to their works, textbooks, materials where students will be able to access them in different formats.
 7. Social media gives lecturers a wide range of options to teach which enhances learning.

Conclusion

In conclusion, from the discussions above, it can be seen that in a world experiencing massive change, and which has become a global village as a result of technological advancement, social media plays a vital role in enhancing teaching and learning for it gives students the room to actively engage in collaborative learning as well as interact with their teachers. Social media platforms give teachers the opportunities to use various approaches to teaching and to extend classes beyond normal settings. Based on the foregoing, the role of social media towards enhancing teaching and learning needs not to be overemphasized.

References

- Ally, M. (2012). Student attention, engagement, and participation in a twitter-friendly classroom. *Proceedings of the 23rd Australasian conference on information systems (ACIS)*, 1-9.
- Bawa, N & Aisha A.I. (2016). Using *WhatsApp* to extend learning into undergraduate students' digital lives: measuring its effects on academic performance in general studies. *ATBU Journal of Science, Technology & Education (JOSTE)*, 4 (2), 64-71.
- Boyd, D. M., & Ellison, N. B. (2007). Social network sites: Definition, history and scholarship. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*, 13, 210- 230.
- Chenail, R. J. (2008). YouTube as a Qualitative Research Asset: Reviewing User Generated Videos as Learning Resources. *The qualitative report*, 13(3), 18-24. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol13/iss3/14>
- Dewi, R. F., Fajriya, L. & Salam, H. (2018). The utilization of Instagram as digital literacy to enhance learner autonomy: A case study in English Intensive Class Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya. *Proceedings of the first international seminar of English language teaching and research (ELTAR)*, 797-803.
- Hakim, M. F. (2019). *The Use of Telegram to Facilitate Students Vocabulary Learning at SMPN 1 Surabaya*. An Unpublished Master's Thesis submitted to the English Teacher Education Department, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya.
- Heba, S. (2015, May 7). What are the Advantages and Disadvantages of Telegram? Retrieved from <https://www.online-sciences.com/technology/what-are-the-advantages-and-disadvantages-of-telegram/>
- Holder-Ellis, M. N. (2015). The role of social media technology tools in higher education instruction. Doctoral dissertation, Walden University, Minnesota, United States of America. Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi?article=2539&context=dissertations>

Novel Practices In Education

- Jain, R (n.d.). *Use of social media in teaching and learning: Emerging role of social media and its importance in teaching and learning*. Retrieved from <https://www.asmaindia.in/blog/use-of-social-media-in-teaching-and-learning-emerging-role-of-social-media-and-its-importance-in-teaching-and-learning/>
- Jones, T., & Cuthrell, K. (2011). YouTube: Educational Potentials and Pitfalls. *Computers in Education*, 75-85.
- Selwyn, N. (2012). Social Media in Higher Education. *The Europa World of Learning*
- Shima, G., & Saeed, T. (2018). Effects of Telegram Stickers on English Vocabulary Learning: Focus on Iranian EFL Learners. *Research in English Language Pedagogy*, 6(1), 139-158.
- Sonia, G. & Rawekar, A. (2017). Effectivity of E-learning through whatsapp as a teaching learning tool. *MVP Journal of Medical Sciences*, 4(1), 19-25.
- Sweeny, S.M. (2010). Writing for the instant messaging and text message generation: Using new literacies to support writing instruction. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 54, 121-130.
- Yeboah, J. & Ewur, G.D. (2014). The impact of whatsapp messenger usage on students' performance in Tertiary Institutions in Ghana. *Journal of Education and practice*, 5(6), 157-164.

About the Authors

Mohammed Ibrahim Abba obtained a B.Sc. (Ed) Environmental Education from the University of Abuja in 2015. Currently, he is a Lecturer at Federal University of Kashere in Gombe State, and a Masters student in Educational Technology, Federal University of Technology Minna, Niger State. His research interests include social media learning in a collaborative online learning environment. Mohammed is a registered member of the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN).

Dr. Ibrahim Ismaila Kuta obtained NCE in Biology/Geography in 1993 and a First Class bachelor's degree in Biology Education in 2004 from the Federal University of Technology, Minna. He obtained his Masters and PhD in Educational Technology from the same school in 2010 and 2016 respectively. He is currently a lecturer in the Department of Educational Technology, Federal University of Technology, Minna and has published many articles in both national and international journal.