

THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING

*Cultivating Student Learning
in the Evolving Digital Landscape*

Contents

- 3 **From the Editor**
By Tracy Wacker, Director, Thompson Center for Learning & Teaching
- 4 **Deep Reading and Critical Thinking in the Age of the Internet:
Report from an FYE**
By Peggy Kahn, Professor, Political Science
- 10 **Mindful Social Media Practice in the Classroom:
My Personal Experiences**
By Joe Reinsel, Assistant Professor, Communication & Visual Arts
- 12 **Why I Use Social Media in My Courses**
By Shelby Newport, Assistant Professor, Theatre & Dance
- 13 **Learning to Teach with Twitter**
By Annie McMahon Whitlock, Assistant Professor, Education
- 18 **E-mail as a Means of Communication in University Settings**
*By Alex Maddox, Graduate Student Research Assistant
Greg Laurence and Jie Li, Assistant Professors, School of Management*
- 22 **Leveraging the Features of Blackboard for Face-to-Face Courses**
By Fred Svoboda, Professor, English

The Scholarship of Teaching

Volume 7, Issue 1 / Fall 2015

Co-editors: Tracy Wacker, Director
David Linden, Graduate Student Research Assistant
Thompson Center for Learning & Teaching

The Scholarship of Teaching is published by the Thompson Center for Learning & Teaching, University of Michigan-Flint, 303 E. Kearsley Street, 134 Thompson Library, Flint, MI 48502; ph 810-237-6508.

The Scholarship of Teaching invites submissions from faculty, staff, and administration. A Call for Manuscripts is available on the inside back cover. Submission guidelines are also available online at www.umflint.edu/tclt.

The Scholarship of Teaching is not responsible for views expressed in articles, essays, reviews or other contributions that appear in its pages. It provides opportunities for the publication of material that may represent divergent ideas, judgements, and opinions.

Design and Layout: Sandra Alberto, Coordinator, Thompson Center for Learning & Teaching

Printing: UM-Flint Printing Services

Editor's note:

Greg Laurence and Shelby Newport were promoted to Associate Professor effective September 1, 2015. Their submissions were accepted during their appointment as Assistant Professor.

From the Editor

“In general, human societies are not innovative. They are hierarchical and ritualistic. Suggestions for change are greeted with suspicion: they imply an unpleasant future variation in ritual and hierarchy: an exchange of one set of rituals for another, or perhaps for a less structured society with fewer rituals. And yet there are times when societies must change.”

-- Carl Sagan

Dragons of Eden: Speculations on the Evolution of Human Intelligence

I love Carl Sagan. I find solace in his writings, always forcing me to rethink my opinions and beliefs – it is exhausting and invigorating! There is so much about the quote above that I think is true (such as “suggestions for change are greeted with suspicion”), but I want, need, to believe that we are and always will be innovative. It is the reason that I accepted the directorship of TCLT and is the fuel that lights my pedagogical fire.

Advances in digital technology are a good example of human ingenuity and innovation. But I find myself among the minions who are suspicious of technology. Part of my problem is that I don’t understand how all of the gadgets, software, apps, etc. work. That bothers me. I want to know more than just which buttons I click and how I can make a table in Word etc.; I want to understand the schematics, the mechanics, the internal organs of the beast. Alas, I haven’t come to terms with this and probably never will. So maybe what I have is a love/hate relationship with technology. Obviously I need it, both in and outside of the classroom. I realize its potential in all of my academic endeavors - and I am so very interested in creative and innovative uses of technology that help our students learn. These technological tools are here to stay, our students are quite adept at using them (or some of them) and we are at that time “when societies must change”. Thus, the topic of learning in the digital age was chosen for this edition of *Scholarship of Teaching*.

How can we make technology more useful in our classrooms? This is the theme for many of the contributions in this edition. The trailblazing social media trio of Newport, Reinsel, and Whitlock address how they use social media in their classes to great effect – Pinterest, Facebook, and Twitter will never look the same to me. Shelby Newport’s graphic submission is also a breath of fresh air – how many ways can you tell your story? Fantastic! I have been enlightened by these progressive junior faculty.

There are so many vehicles available for communication with our students including LMS like Blackboard, Facebook, and the ever-present email. In these pages you will read about how Fred Svoboda has maximized his usage of Blackboard in his English courses; this compares very well to how Joe Reinsel uses

Facebook for similar outcomes. Alex Maddox, an SOM student, has contributed his findings on the use of email communication with students. This submission is intriguing because the student is the author of the main body of the paper and the professors chime in via the footnotes.

A common concern regarding technology is: Does technology interfere with certain aspects of learning? This is the question that Peggy Kahn raises in her article on deep reading and critical thinking in an FYE. We should all be wary of what technology can and cannot provide our students. We should not use technology for the sake of technology but for the sake of learning. There is a raging war in the literature on the effects of technology on learning and I hope that consensus occurs soon.

How do you use technology in the classroom? Are you willing to try something new, cross over, take the plunge? We need to figure out how to use technology to promote learning, even deep learning, in our students and we need to keep an open mind about the benefits that technology can bring to our teaching and learning endeavors. We should not let our skepticism or suspicions keep us from trying new things and with that, another Sagan quote to convey where I am on all of this: “Keeping an open mind is a virtue—but, as the space engineer James Oberge once said, not so open that your brains fall out.”¹

Best,



Tracy Wacker, Director
Thompson Center for Learning & Teaching

¹Sagan, Carl. *The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark*.



Deep Reading and Critical Thinking in the Age of the Internet: Report from an FYE

Words of Introduction

How is the Internet affecting our brains? In this age of sound bytes and decreasing attention spans, are students up for the challenge of deep learning and critical thinking that is the hallmark of a college education? Professor Kahn discusses this issue in relation to her FYE course and suggests strategies for the development and transformation of student early in their college careers.

By Peggy Kahn, Professor
Political Science

Have social and mental habits connected to new electronic media added challenges to teaching beginning students to read deeply and think critically? The Internet and digital devices host a rich assortment of information in many different forms, make new types of relationships and cooperation possible, and may strengthen visual-spatial skills and other abilities, but how does their incorporation into students' everyday lives bear upon our instructional effectiveness and their learning? Specific intellectual technologies not only help us access new information and content, but may also alter how we read, think, process information, and express ourselves. Earlier in the electronic age, Marshall McLuhan (1967) noted "the medium is the message." In the 1980's Neil Postman (1985) wrote that the spoonsful of visual entertainment of the television age had invaded and dislocated our practices of journalism, education and religion, conditioning audiences to entertainment rather than serious discussion and reflection. However, it is not purely the technology but the social uses and detailed applications of technology that matter. Some people may check Facebook compulsively and message incessantly, while others may use social media intentionally and sparingly. Some faculty may minimally design and barely guide online courses, permitting or encouraging only surface or rote learning, while carefully designed, massive, open, online learning courses might motivate serious reading in the modern and postmodern humanities and attract students with deep interest in learning for its own sake (Roth 2014b). Some users may discipline themselves to read long articles on the screen, while others may habitually skim and surf even when they have set out to read. How in particular have our students' habits related to networked computer devices affected deep reading, critical thinking, and focused attention as they enter the university?

Undergraduate education aims to develop students' deep reading and critical thinking skills – as ends in themselves and as tools for learning curricular content. These two concerns, deep reading and critical thinking, in some ways capture the

two major historical, intertwined threads combined in liberal university learning in the U.S.—the cultural-rhetorical tradition, a reverential appreciation of cultural achievements, and the inquiry-discovery tradition, more skeptical, problem-oriented, and directed toward new knowledge (Roth 2010b). Contemporary university-level reading and critical thinking involve highly active integrative intellectual and affective work. Reading relies on neurological processes and structures, not genetically given; they require repeated intellectual effort to build so that they function more automatically over time (Wolf 2008; Wolf 2010). Journalist Nicholas Carr observes that reading the printed book involves "deep concentration . . . combined with the highly active and efficient deciphering of text and interpretation of meaning . . . In the quiet spaces opened up by the prolonged, undistracted reading of a book, people [make] their own associations, [draw] their own inferences and analogies, [foster] their own ideas. They [think] deeply as they read deeply. Readers [disengage] their attention from the outward flow of passing stimuli in order to engage it more deeply with an inward flow of words, ideas and emotions" (2010, p. 65). The critical thinking about which we often talk in connection with liberal education is also a deep thinking process—a process involving sustained intellectual attention. Critical thinking, as Richard Paul and Linda Elder, directors of the Foundation for Critical Thinking, summarize it, applies universal intellectual standards to one's own thinking and that of others: clarity, accuracy, precision, logic, appropriate breadth and depth, fairness. Among essential intellectual traits they suggest intellectual humility, intellectual courage, intellectual empathy, intellectual autonomy, intellectual integrity, intellectual perseverance, confidence in reason, and fair-mindedness. They caution against critical thinking pitfalls, including ego- and socio-centric thinking ("It's true because I believe it," "because we believe it," "because I want to believe it," "because I have always believed it," "because it is in my economic and status interest to believe it," "because my group values it," "because it is current social reality in my society," "because the

media says it.”)

Alongside the commercial and cultural celebration of the new technologies, there is both a research literature and anxious public discussion about the problematic impacts of the uses of new technology, especially on younger, “digital native” generations. Researchers and commentators note that young people send huge numbers of text messages, use Facebook, watch YouTube, and play video games in ways that squeeze out reading, reflection, study, boredom, solitude, and extended face-to-face social interactions. Young people fragment their attention and multi-task (Kaiser Family Foundation 2010; Lewin 2010; Richtel 2010; Turkle 2011). Our students are shaped by many specific institutions and structures, influenced by, but not reducible to, the dynamics of the new technology. Schools face evaluation and ranking based on student performance on timed high-stakes tests, and they lack resources to meet the social and educational needs of students. We live in a high-velocity market-driven society, amidst growing socio-economic inequality, race- and class-segregated communities, and polarized politics. Political theorist Benjamin Barber (2007) argues that the culture contains an ethos closely tied to consumer capitalism in a globalized economy—a world in which an apparently individualized self thinks about “choosing” goods and receiving quick gratification but fails to recognize its social embeddedness and fails to develop skills of public participation and public judgment. Sociologist Richard Sennett (2006, 2013) has argued that the culture of the new capitalism is marked by unstable institutions, transient and superficial relationships, and a de-emphasis on doing something well for its own sake. And our students are pressed by their immediate and urgent non-learning responsibilities and obligations-- meeting their own basic needs, providing family care, and maintaining employment.

The First Year Experience (FYE) is a good place to observe students’ strengths and challenges as they enter higher learning. Observation in a single course can only be suggestive, but troubling traces of new technology-related habits seemed to appear in the Winter 2014 FYE, Food and Hunger. This FYE section tries to develop students’ engagement with important themes related to domestic food chains and food insecurity and to strengthen skills in reading, critical thinking, and writing. The course revolves around discussion of reading assignments, audio-visual materials, and community-based speakers. We try to engage with a few substantial texts, among them Michael Pollan’s *Omnivore’s Dilemma*¹ and the 1968 CBS documentary,

Hunger in America.² In Winter 2014, we also set aside two weeks to discuss Amy Waldman’s novel, *The Submission*, the Common Read text.

Being present

Perhaps more than students in previous Food and Hunger sections, students in Winter 2014 came into the classroom intent on their electronic hand-held devices, only reluctantly turning them off when asked at the start of class. Traditionally students have used the ten minutes before class to organize their thoughts and materials, review notes, and converse informally with the instructor and fellow students, to make themselves present to the learning experience about to unfold. My upper-level and older students still use the time in that way. Michael Roth (2014a), President of Wesleyan University, recounts his experience trying to bring students into the classroom community of his film and philosophy course: “I have to insist that students put their devices away while watching movies that don’t immediately engage their sense with explosions, sex or gag lines . . . At first they see this as some old guy’s failure to grasp their skill at multi-tasking, but eventually most relearn how to give themselves to an emotional and intellectual experience. . . that does not pander to their most superficial habits of attention. . . Together we then share an experience that becomes the subject of reflection, interpretation and analysis.”

Even with their devices off, FYE students had difficulty listening to the instructor and valuing and reflecting on each other’s comments, emerging from class with an enriched and more complex understanding. On the one hand, the face-to-face class period is an occasion for instructor clarification of concepts and information, monologic but still somewhat interactive. Note taking is a practice indicative of student attention-giving to this sort of instructor presentation and arguably reinforcing through the kinesthetic activity and (linear) visualization it has traditionally involved. Abstention from note taking seems to have come in the last few years. The classroom is also the site for more dialogic practices. However, students

² *Hunger in America* is a famous hour-long broadcast by CBS in 1968, narrated in a deep and somber voice by newscaster Charles Kuralt. Generated in the context of efforts in the mid- and late-1960s by concerned health workers, the civil rights movement, and others to address serious hunger in the U.S., the film documents hunger, physical sensations of weakness and discomfort and conditions of malnutrition, sometimes deadly, and not simply what today we describe as “food insecurity,” the social condition of a household that is not consistently sure it has resources to access enough food for its members’ healthy and active living. The documentary contains an overview of the problem, but also focuses on Mexican-Americans in a poor quarter of San Antonio, Texas; white tenant farmers in Loudon County, Virginia; Black tenant farmers in Hale County, Alabama; and Navajo Indians on reservations in the southwest. The documentary is dramatic and shocking. It is based on field work done by civil society actors and movements, includes many voices (poor children and adults, their priests, nurses and physicians, social workers, county commissioners) and has an underlying complex analysis. This film is a long-form narrative, rich with voice and experience, with visual images and spoken words, as well as a structured exploration of a social problem.

¹ Michael Pollan’s *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*, a key book in food studies, written by an exceptional journalist, narrates several human food chains. The book’s first section explains the conventional industrial food chain by focusing on corn, its botany (including corn sex), its intensive cultivation after the development of the Haber-Bosch process and development of large-scale mono-cultural farms, its use as animal feed, its transformation by food chemists, and its high consumption (“We are corn chips with legs.”). It also explains and reflects upon three other food chains, in a carefully crafted and reflective text.

seem to understand “discussion” to mean a partly tuned-out, serial expression of strongly held individual “opinions,” not the cooperative conversation described by sociologist Richard Sennett, in which the idea is to broaden understanding of plural subjectivities and interests. Student comments seem to resemble the hit-and-run Internet comments on news pages, and elsewhere, where the discussion is semi-anonymous and does not occur in a face-to-face community. Richard Sennett has called this mode “declarative-aggressive speech:” “This is what I think and I can think no other.” Sherry Turkle (2011) suggests that students may be accustomed to being “alone together” and in “relational retreat,” failing to commit fully to the social relationships in the physical space they occupy, partly conditioned by Internet connectivity. Professor of Social Studies of Science and Technology at MIT, Turkle has spent decades using her insights as a psychologist and anthropologist studying computer culture, finding that the volume and velocity of technological logics and styles of Internet communication have attenuated authentic and intimate relationships.

One of the most striking examples of the general problem of insensitivity and inattention combined with shot-gun utterance occurred at one point late in the semester, when several students in turn, in almost jeering tones of voice, denounced food stamps (the federal means-tested Supplementary Nutrition Assistance Program) as the same as charitable emergency food (food pantries and soup kitchens) because in both cases it was “just charity”: “we” were giving things away free to people who hadn’t earned and really didn’t deserve them. This wasn’t the first of the comments from a group of apparently relatively economically secure students delivered in a tone that did not show respect to students in the classroom who were struggling with meeting their basic needs but had demonstrated remarkable commitment to learning. A very hardworking and bright student from a struggling family that relied on food stamps, and whose biography by now might have been transparent had students been paying attention to verbal and non-verbal cues, sat in the front row. She rose to the occasion with a strong analysis delivered in a calm voice. Without the judgmental and disdainful tone, a question about how these forms of nutrition support were different would have been very positive, and in fact we moved the discussion in that direction, though I wonder what had been noticed and what had been heard. (To my great sadness, the student in the front row disappeared from class shortly before the final, and I haven’t been able to contact her since.)

The problem of not being fully present in one’s own learning experience occurs not only in the physical classroom and its social community, but also in independent work outside the classroom. While it often appeared to me that students were simply not doing their work, it may also have been that they were not doing it in a focused, slow and systematic way, not becoming absorbed in their learning activities, in part because of multi-tasking, interruptive behaviors, or limited deep attention-giving.

Neuroscientific studies seem to suggest that quiet concentration and slow learning are essential. Incoming information must be thoroughly and deeply processed and associated meaningfully and systematically with already acquired knowledge. There are advantages when mind and brain concentrate on one thing, a habit that seems increasingly disrupted in our technologically fragmented, speeded up, “multi-tasking” (more properly described as “task switching” according to psychologists) environment (Wu 2013; Carr 2010). In the independent learning environment of the university, in which many of us emphasize to students that for every hour in class they should be working independently for two hours, are students making a long, quiet space for learning outside the classroom, and can they focus?

Long and deep reading in the social media age

Wolf (2008, 2010) worries that the Internet skimming phenomenon especially when practiced at younger ages may be restructuring the relatively plastic individual reading brain, which needs to work consistently and repeatedly over many years to activate multiple regions and create coordinated reading circuits, moving from basic code-cracking to advanced autonomous reading. Skimming may interrupt higher-stage reading development, when how we attend to a text has the potential to become more discriminating, more sensitive, and more associative. Others (Choudhury and McKinney, 2013) caution against neuro-alarmism, noting limited scientific evidence for any impact on neurological functioning, and cognitive neuroscientist Daniel Willingham (quoted in Strauss 2014) notes that what is plausible is not that “we’re . . . less capable of reading complex prose, but less willing to put in the work. . . We can still read deeply and think carefully. The bad news is that we don’t want to.” Social and psychological habits of extended, singular concentration probably have been attenuated by the ease and speed of digital device-using. Slower mental processes of empathizing as the brain begins to understand and feel the psychological and moral dimensions of a situation unfolding in a long text may also be challenged.

Many students had difficulty feeling the words and situations of *The Submission*, the Common Read novel we read in class. Lack of experience and exposure in the Internet and media era of their high school years may have contributed. Most claimed that they had never read a novel in high school, though aghast local high school teachers presented me with the standardized fiction reading lists for some area high schools. But it seemed also that their current and ongoing over-exposure to certain forms of journalism and opinion, much of it Internet-mediated, and contributed. Early in the book *Mo*, the main character, the Muslim-American, competition-winning architect, tired of defending himself, tells an irritating self-protecting politician that he had entered the architectural competition to build the memorial to the victims of a 9/11-like attack “because I could.” Yet earlier in the novel *Mo* walked the devastated area, deeply moved and already imagining how to make a memorial

more permanent than the makeshift memorial, “[the] quilt of the missing . . . pasted on fences and construction plywood . . . the centers of hundreds upon hundreds of webs of family, friends, work [which] had been torn out.” But students couldn’t put these together, immediately finding Mo guilty of morally thin opportunism. Some students never got over denouncing Asma, the wife of the dead Bangladeshi janitor, as an illegal immigrant who shouldn’t have received “taxpayer” compensation money, even though she was written also as a loving partner, deeply caring mother, and, in the end, public heroine and victim herself. For these students, the media-primed negative identity of an undocumented freeloading immigrant seemed to crowd out the depiction of Asma as a complex, suffering, and strong person. They seemed to be unpracticed in letting other human beings, in all their complexity, enter their feelings and thinking, or perhaps Asma somehow simply came to rest in their emotions of rejection, distaste, or anger.

Critical thinking

Screen-based knowledge, in the absence of deeper probing and critical thinking, in a world of partial attention and multi-tasking, may lead to only a semblance of understanding. Ubiquity of information may lead to the mistaken assumption that we know, or can quickly retrieve, what we need to know. We might assume that what an Internet source says is true, that we don’t need to ask who has written it, who is reading it with what consequences, or how to interpret it.

FYE students sometimes resorted to Smart Phone checking of Internet sites for facts when we were actually trying to discuss more abstract and complicated questions. Early in the course, a student went to her favorite news site to retrieve a figure for total spending on the SNAP program, when we were trying to examine the different constituencies and interests represented in the traditional Farm Bill and had already noted the approximate expenditure on Food Stamps, the largest proportion of appropriations. Later in the course, after initially saying that there was no summer child nutrition activity in Flint because there probably was no need, another student used her iPhone to check, and reeled off the numerous local feeding sites she found. I was trying to get students to collectively consider the need for summer nutrition in view of what we had discussed previously and to together reflect on the student’s initial statement that there probably wasn’t any need in Flint. Seeking Internet answers to narrow factual questions thus missed the point of and disrupted a guided collective reasoning process. In-group mini-presentations, students presented sometimes visually elegant PowerPoint collections of information from Internet sites, without evaluating sources or thinking critically about the facts they had retrieved.

The overarching narrative of the 1968 documentary, *Hunger in America*, is that through the 1960s in the United States many different factors conspired to keep families hungry and that

public policy had not focused on the problem of access to basic nutrition. While it doesn’t feature explosions, sex or gags, this important documentary exposes shocking levels of destitution; listless, hungry and shamed children; infants and children dying or very ill with Kwashiorkor or marasmus; and crude and stark expressions of racism by some white southern local officials. The documentary had the potential to trigger not only empathy and compassion but also critical thinking about the social and historical structure of the situation. Careful watching of the film might have opened up some complex questions and answers. Between the film viewing and the discussion, students might have investigated some of these issues through the Internet, but habitual busy and rudimentary Internet interactions may not encourage complicated thinking about what questions need to be asked and how to navigate to begin to answer them.

One student in particular pronounced in a tone of high moral righteousness that the main point in the film was that “they [particularly a large African-American family in rural Alabama] had too many children” and that the women were “irresponsible” and should have made better “choices,” and there were many nods of assent. Students didn’t stop to think that the oral contraceptives, or even over-the-counter contraceptives, that they seem to take for granted were not available to destitute black tenant farmers in rural Alabama in the 1960s or that in poor societies with less educated women lacking access to contraception there are high birth and high death rates. In Alabama, the families were hungry because the fathers (they were married families) couldn’t find enough work, though they travelled far to find paid manual labor. In addition, the landlords told the tenants they couldn’t plant corn, with the consequence that tenants couldn’t raise small animals to feed themselves. The film emphasized that the food stamp program at the time in Hale County, Alabama required purchase of large quantities of food stamps and that white county commissioners designed the program to make access by black tenant farmers difficult. By the end of the discussion, some students told me that they had heard something new and worthwhile, but others seemed to resent the fact that their “opinions” (generally clear instances of ego- and socio-centric thinking) were not seen as sufficient responses.

Reading on the screen?

In the FYE, weekly Blackboard announcements reminded students of their responsibilities and our planned classroom activities the coming week. At several points in the course, this was the exchange: “How many of you read the announcement?” Three hands go up. “What did it say?” “I don’t know but I saw it.” At the beginning of the semester I posted a summary of the Elder and Paul “Critical Thinking and Intellectual Standards.” I repeatedly asked students to consult this. When I turned back their first essays with comments and offered an opportunity to re-write, I referred them again to this material. At the end of the semester when we revisited the practice of internalizing intellec-

tual standards and using them for the final essay and final exam, I asked how many of them had seen and used the Blackboard summary. No hand went up. While students generally didn't read the print book carefully, there was apparently equally little use of the shorter pieces of reading and viewing posted as links or documents on Blackboard.

The lack of screen announcement reading and screen-hosted content reading might, on the one hand, suggest a disinclination to follow instructions, stay organized, and do coursework, but it also might suggest a problem with reading on the screen. First, having been used for so many social and entertainment purposes, the screen may not be seen as a repository of important coursework-related content, of deep and demanding material (Vigdor, Ladd and Martinez 2014; Turkle 2011). Networked devices are universal technologies, that is, they are able to host and sometimes combine many types of information and media, while simultaneously transforming them onto screens. Secondly, recent findings confirm that paper has advantages over screens as a reading medium particularly for long pieces of unembellished text, due to the more obvious topography of written text, the taxing and tiring qualities of screen displays, the diversions of scrolling and navigating, and readers' less intensive cognitive engagement with screens in general (Jabr 2013). Arguably these machines not only allow distraction, but also promote it (Wu 2013).

What to do?

These reflections are non-systematic and exploratory and not a universal judgment about all aspects of new networked computers and digital media. They highlight problems. It is difficult to disentangle habits associated with networked computer technology from other developmental learning challenges, but new challenges in the classrooms of the liberal arts and sciences seem to present themselves in this digital media and cultural environment. Yet, while our response may require awareness of the habits of students especially as they enter the university and some change in emphasis or teaching strategies, we need to continue to focus on core liberal arts skills and sensibilities.

Self-control and bi-literacy. We probably need to argue that students should develop a wide and inclusive repertoire of how they pay attention in what settings and for what purposes. Researchers suggest it is possible to develop a bi-literate brain, one that has strong circuitry both for fast processing of bits of information and for deep, more linear, extended reading. The addictive and distracting tendencies of continuous connection and fast news can be countered with self-control and retraining the brain to focus. Part of learning how to think is learning to control what we think about and how we think about it. As teachers we may need to be more explicit about the process of deep thinking and how it needs to be intentionally cultivated in a distracting environment. We can make the issues of focused reading and thinking part of first-year orientation and FYEs.

Deep reading. In many courses, we can continue to assign and work through longer, more complex, level-appropriate texts. Deeper and longer texts have the potential to create sustained encounters with important questions and to present and model more complex, richer reasoning and reflection. The novel gives the reader access to other complex subjectivities and worlds of experience. A recent social psychological experiment (as well as previous work) has shown that reading literary fiction improves "theory of mind," that is a person's ability to interpret what is in other people's minds (affective and cognitive dimensions), making the subjectivities of others more present and richer and moving readers beyond thin and automatic social scripts or schemas that we employ to get through everyday life (Kidd and Castano 2013). (This is different from claiming that reading literature leads to morality or moral action).

Face-to-face presence, attentiveness and interaction. The class meeting is a purposefully constructed learning moment in a largely instructor-designed teaching strategy and an associative and interactive opportunity. On the one hand, the face-to-face class period is an occasion for instructor clarification of concepts and information, to which students need to lend their focused attention. In addition, we are often asking students to articulate meanings they attach to literary texts or social processes, though in a language register different from what they might use in other settings, and to listen to each other. How communication happens differently in the classroom than in other settings has always been a teaching challenge, and it seems likely that we need to differentiate classroom communication practices from those on digital devices. We may also need to make explicit when it is appropriate to resort to digital fact checking, and when it is more important to listen and be involved in an ongoing conversation. We may need to emphasize the skills and importance of face-to-face interaction and sensitivity to one's own and others' language, gestures and feelings in classroom discussion. If relational skills and cooperation are developed through practical activity, the classroom is an important site at which to build such skills. If ethnography, literary fiction and other arts are ways to learn about diverse and complex subjectivities, we need to reserve a prominent place for such material in our general education curriculum.

Digital materials and online teaching. Economic and environmental considerations, as well as new media habits, press students and faculty away from printed books, articles and handouts. Yet, if students do not read at all or do not read well on the screen, should we require students to purchase books, in which they can underline and make marginal notations, and should we increase paper learning and teaching resources generally? Do student expectations and behaviors in online courses particularly correspond to the fast skimming practices on social media, and to what extent should we reinforce these? Or, can we accomplish our deep reading and critical thinking goals while making our teaching more digital and interactive?

These questions may have a bearing on how we use Blackboard and how much online teaching we do in various majors, which courses and at what level we consider appropriate for online instruction, and how we structure online courses.

Conclusion

How do we help more students move beyond Internet habits problematic for deep reading and critical thinking and resist the cultural valorization and commercial promotion of speed and connectivity, the equation of capacity to connect with knowledge and understanding? Beginning students are only starting to understand the objective of a university face-to-face learning community; respect instructor voice, expertise and experience; and take seriously the more complex skill-related objectives, skills inseparable from the content, of courses. Upper-level students show much less evidence of problematic habits and often focus and engage more fully, either due to cohort effects (due to age and experience, they are differently embedded in digital media) or to their intellectual development and self-control as they move through their curriculum. The immersive experiences traditionally associated with liberal learning are key to supporting students' development as active, thoughtful, analytic, perspective-taking readers and users of all written and visual texts. If liberal education includes a curious looking outwards and a transformation of the self, rather than simply seeing the external world as some sort of reflection of the self or a fixed external set of disjointed facts, we need to work for deep and sustained, reflective and associative attention in many curricular locations, including students' earliest courses.

References cited

- Carr, Nicholas (2010) The shallows: What the Internet is doing to our brains. NY: Norton.
- Choudry, Suparna and Kelly A. McKinney (2013) Digital media, the developing brain and the interpretive plasticity of neuro plasticity. Transcultural Psychiatry. 50 (2), 192-215.
- Jabr, Ferris (2013, Nov.) Why the brain prefers paper. Scientific American, 48-53.
- Kaiser Family Foundation (2010, January) Generation M2: Media in the lives of 8- to 18-year-olds <http://kff.org/other/report/generation-m2-media-in-the-lives-of-8-to-18-year-olds/>
- Kidd, David Comer, and Emanuele Castano (2013) "Reading Literary Fiction Improves Theory of Mind" Science, 342 (6156), 377-380.
- Lewin, Tamara (2010, Jan. 20) If your kids are awake, they are probably online. New York Times.
- McLuhan, Marshall (1967) The Medium is the Message. New York: Random House.
- Postman, Neil. (1985). Amusing ourselves to death: Public discourse in the age of show business. New York: Penguin.
- Richtel, Matt (2010, Nov. 21) Growing up digital, wired for distraction. New York Times.
- Rosenfeld, Michael S. (2014, April 6). Serious reading takes a hit from online scanning and skimming, researchers say. Washington Post.
- Roth, Michael (2014a, May 10). Young minds in critical condition.

- New York Times. http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/05/10/young-minds-in-critical-condition/?_php=true&_type=blogs&r=0&assetType=opinion
- Roth, Michael (2014b) Beyond the University: Why Liberal Education Matters. Yale University Press.
- Strauss, Valerie (2014, April 21). Actually, online skimming probably hasn't affected serious reading after all. Washington Post. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2014/04/21/actually-online-skimming-probably-hasnt-affect-ed-serious-reading-after-all/>
- Sennett, Richard (2006). The culture of the new capitalism. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Sennett, Richard (2012). Together: The rituals, pleasures and politics of cooperation. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Turkle, Sherry (2011). Alone together: Why we expect more from technology and less from each other NY: Basic Books.
- Vigdor, Jacob L, Helen F. Ladd, and Erika Martinez (2014). Scaling the digital divide: Home computer technology and student achievement. Economic Inquiry, 52 (3), 1103-1119.
- Wolf, Maryanne (2008). Proust and the squid: The story and science of the reading brain. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Wolf, Maryanne (2010). Our "deep reading" brain: Its digital evolution poses questions. Nieman Reports, Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard. <http://www.nieman.harvard.edu/reports/article/102396/Our-Deep-Reading-Brain-Its-Digital-Evolution--Poses-Questions.aspx>
- Wu, Tim 2013 (Sept. 9) How today's computers weaken our brain. The New Yorker.

TCLT ADVISORY BOARD

2014-2015

Lois Alexander, Professor
Music (CAS)

2015 Teaching Excellence Award Recipient

Jennifer Blackwood, Assistant Professor
Physical Therapy (SHPS)

Brandon Blinkenberg, Instructional Designer
Office of Extended Learning

Bill Irwin, Associate Professor
Theatre & Dance (CAS)
2013 Teaching Excellence Award Recipient

Greg Laurence, Associate Professor
School of Management

Laura McLeman, Assistant Professor
Mathematics (CAS)

Stephanie Roach, Associate Professor
English (CAS)

Mindful Social Media Practice in the Classroom: My Personal Experiences

Words of Introduction

How do you get successful group collaboration online? One way that Professor Reinsel uses Facebook as a medium is for student collaborative gaming projects. He also uses it as discussion board and states that Facebook lets him see student responses more quickly and conveniently than an LMS like Blackboard. The uses of Facebook in teaching are intriguing and our students are definitely Facebook-savvy – a definite bonus.

By Joe Reinsel, Assistant Professor of Media Arts
Communication & Visual Arts

“As laptop-carrying, smart-phone-using members of the digitally connected infosphere, we need to start by learning a new discipline: the literacy of attention. As citizens and cocreators of the cultures that shape us, we need participatory media skills.”

- Howard Rheingold
“Net Smart: How to Thrive Online.” (2012)

Since I started teaching at University of Michigan-Flint, I have created a number of techniques for engaging students inside and out of the classroom. One technique that I am increasing my usage of every semester is connecting with my students through social media. As with most changes that occur in classes, the results can be mixed -- I feel that this will continually shift from semester to semester. These shifts do not dissuade the importance of my ideologies that influence my course design and development. My main reason for using social media has been to connect the students' learning to their daily lives. By using multiple platforms as a way to connect them digitally, I found that creating two threads of communication - one within the Blackboard context for the course, and one in social media - allowed for more open discussion as the course progressed.

My teaching is influenced by the approaches of Howard Rheingold who is a writer on virtual communities and learning systems. I took a course with him in the summer of 2014 that opened my eyes to ways in which students and the instructor can work together and create better learning environments. His groundbreaking work has taught me new methods for creating learning environments that are more exploratory in nature.

In Rheingold's book "NetSmart: How to Thrive Online," he discusses the importance of being a mindful and literate user of the Internet - using it for its strengths and as an amplifier of our thoughts. This concept suggests that the Internet and social media, when used mindfully, can foster stronger conversations and increase learning because a larger network of learning resources is available through the Internet. The important part

to consider when using this in the classroom is to understand how it will be used and how the students can benefit from using these tools.

As I added social media as an option, I found that I could not force its use and needed to be responsive in a way that continued to make the learning experience open and clear. I have done this by discussing whether or not we need social media in the course, why we may need it in the course or if there are other elements that should be considered (personal issues, software preferences, etc.)

In the fall of 2013, I taught the course ART 346, *Game and Virtual Art*. This course introduces concepts of Interactive Art and Design to students through game design. Throughout the course students create a number of games and concept designs for games and through this practice they begin to understand ideas such as building narrative structures, understanding the user is in a design project, and constructing virtual worlds. These practices also align well with other areas of design practice because the focus is on users. I also connect these concepts to other areas of practice within interaction design and graphic design.

In the course, I used the Facebook group as a way for the students to collaborate on a group project. The project was to create a working prototype of a board game. The students worked together from the original idea to the final prototype that we played at the end of the course. The learning outcomes for this project were for the student to understand the many faceted areas of designing a game by 1) creating the visual elements, 2) structuring of rules, and 3) creating the game playing experience. Before we began, each student had already created a number of smaller games and mockups where they learned the basic elements and the final project was used to assess this learning and making a workable prototype that the students could then play together.

I used Facebook as a method for students to talk and discuss current topics. With the comment system and ability to "like" something, Facebook offers more points of observation of

where the students are regarding viewing materials that are posted in the Facebook group. In Learning Management System (LMS), there are ways that you can retrieve data about how a student is working in the course but using Facebook in this way allows me to see similar data much quicker. In my practice, Facebook is a way to augment the course and get quicker feedback from students (see Figures 1.0 and 1.1).

There are possibilities where social media platforms could work well as a method to offer learning in the online world, but at this point I see it more as a way to complement current practice in online instruction rather than as a replacement. Understandably, the Blackboard LMS uses a strict approach to homogenize the design of all courses, thus the way in which an instructor uses its features is somewhat limited. As technology continues to evolve, hopefully Blackboard will too in order to allow more flexibility regarding the online classroom environment. For now, I feel that Facebook provides an option that connects the instructor more directly and immediately to the students.

Figure 1.0
Example of Facebook communication where students had quick questions about assignment. As you can see in this example I made an error in the assignment heading and this confused the students. By having this quick exchange it allowed me to have a quick understanding of situation so I could address the problem.

Figure 1.0



Figure 1.1- This is an example of some of the online exchanges that students took part in during a collaborative game design project. By having these conversations increased the speed of the project's development.



Figure 1.1

Words of Introduction

Professor Newport shares the many ways that she uses social media in her classroom in a graphic synopsis that is an eye-catcher. She makes valuable suggestions to the novice for incorporating social media into courses



Why I Use Social Media in My Courses

#itisnotashardasitseems

Shelby Newport

Assistant Professor, Theatre & Dance

Follow me @shelbynewport

Building Community through Facebook Groups

- o Informally promotes conversation and independence within the student group
- o Allows me to distribute documents and announcements in a format that students are constantly checking.
- o Students support and "like" research posts and questions posed by other classmates



Guiding and Shaping How Artists See Inspiration on Instagram

- o Instagram allows students to follow me and other students in the course who are sharing photos of their own inspiration, showing others what they "are seeing".
- o Using class hashtags (a word or phrase preceded by a hash or pound sign (#) and used to identify messages on a specific topic) allows the group to connect their images together throughout the semester.
- o This semester #spottingmodernism for THE 241 encourages students to look around the world and connect what they see to their coursework by sharing photos of modern influences in architecture, fashion and design.

Provides Formative Assessment Instantly During the Creative Process

- o Pinterest boards allow students to collect images for classroom design projects. I can comment and "like" images at any time during the day to remind the students I'm available throughout their process for feedback.
- o Pinterest's newsfeed allows me to see what the students are "pinning" and I can comment on their posts giving them instant feedback or just simply "like" the image, providing encouragement through social media.



My Social Media Advice:

Start small, try integrating one element at a time and ask your students for help setting it up. These three examples lend themselves well to data collection; how might they work for you?



Learning to Teach with Twitter

Words of Introduction

Professor Whitlock uses Twitter as a tool in ED400, a course for elementary education students. Twitter allowed for students to “microblog” in real time about multiple facets of the course, allowing for reflection and engagement. As a field observation course, it also made the connection between field experience and F2F classroom experience relevant.

By Annie McMahon Whitlock, Assistant Professor
Education

“New teachers have two jobs—they need to teach and they need to learn to teach” (Feiman-Nemser, 2012, p.119). Although this idea refers to new practicing teachers, it also applies to pre-service teachers because they are processing their roles as students in education courses and as observer-participants in classroom-based field experiences. Feiman-Nemser (2012) argued that pre-service teachers need to 1) examine their beliefs critically in relation to a vision of good teaching, 2) develop subject-matter knowledge for teaching, 3) develop an understanding of learners, learning and issues of diversity, 4) develop a beginning repertoire, and 5) develop the tools and dispositions to study teaching (p. 143).

Pre-service teachers typically develop these tasks in education methods courses, but as Feiman-Nemser (2012) advocated, learning the intellectual and practical tasks of teaching and developing a teaching identity must be connected to actual teaching contexts. Since pre-service teachers don’t yet have their own classroom, their context for learning includes field placements such as student teaching or a pre-student teaching field assignment in a methods course. Task 5 in particular may require students to develop tools to examine the course content and the classroom. An important question is what tools can pre-service teachers use to study teaching, not only in their field placements but also in their methods courses?

One possible tool for teachers to study teaching is the social media site Twitter, because of its capacity for succinct reflections and interaction with others that can occur in real time through the use of a mobile device. Twitter is a social network where users communicate via short messages of no more than 140 characters, called “tweets.” These messages can include original content created by the “tweeter,” or passing along information from other sources (“re-tweets”) to the people in one’s social network. Twitter users can amass “followers,” a group of people that subscribe to one’s Twitter updates or “feed.” Twitter is different from other social media sites like Facebook due to its public nature. With Facebook, users have to “friend” (request) to be allowed access to someone’s activity on the site. If a Twitter account is public, one does not have to be accepted to follow a particular feed (LaLonde, 2011), allowing opportunities for

interaction between users who did not have a previous relationship. For example, President Obama has 44 million Twitter followers who can read status updates as frequently as they wish.

This study examined how pre-service teachers used Twitter in a literacy methods course. Twitter was intended to serve as a reflective tool for pre-service teachers to examine their learning in the coursework as well as in their classroom field placements by engaging in an online discussion with classmates and practicing teachers outside of their university. The use of Twitter was designed to help students “develop the tools and dispositions to study teaching” (Feiman-Nemser, 2012, p. 143) and also to create a classroom community where students could explore teaching ideas and develop their “personal orientation” without judgment. Following Feiman-Nemser’s (2012) advice to provide opportunities for interaction around analysis of teaching, Twitter gave students the opportunity to interact with and learn from others, and this study contributes insight into how they used the social media to learn to be teachers.

Literature Review

Twitter was created in 2006 and now has nearly 500 million registered users, with more than 250 million regular users who tweet more than once a month (Bennett, 2012). Thirty-three percent of online Americans aged 18-29 use Twitter, and the amount of users in this age group is rapidly growing. Seventeen percent of “Millennials” (the generation of adults aged 15-34) plan to start using Twitter in the coming months (Bennett, 2013). Perhaps due to the growing popularity of Twitter among college-aged adults, there is some recent research about Twitter use in higher education in general, and some research emerging about Twitter use in undergraduate education courses (Dunlap & Lowenthal, 2010; Junco, Heiberger, & Loken, 2010; Junco, Elavsky, & Heiberger, 2012; Rinaldo, Tapp, & Laverie, 2011). Twitter has great promise in its use as a professional learning network (PLN) in teacher education courses among practicing teachers.

Research on Twitter use in teacher education is just emerging. Social media platforms can become obsolete quickly, so trying to incorporate certain platforms like Twitter into courses must be done when these platforms are popular among students

in order to maximize community and engagement (Abe & Jordan, 2013). Twitter was introduced in marketing and communication courses because social media was perceived to have a real-world application for those entering a marketing career (Lowe & Laffey, 2011; Rinaldo et al, 2011). We argue that Twitter use for pre-service teachers has potential to be a valuable tool in a methods course for pre-service teachers to reflect on and study teaching both in coursework and in the context of classroom practice (Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Holmes et al., 2013).

This study analyzed the students' tweets to closely examine how the students learned to be teachers by analyzing the interactions they chose to make and resources they chose to use with Twitter in ED400. This study set out to discover: How did students use Twitter as a tool in learning to be teachers?

ED400: An Education Course

As the course instructor, I introduced students to Twitter as a part of a requirement in a literacy methods course. ED400 is a required course for elementary education students, and a classroom-based field placement component is a large part of the course. Students complete nearly 80 hours in one field placement classroom, which for many is their first time spending a significant amount of classroom time in a role other than student and the first time observing and participating in literacy instruction. As to be expected, many of the students see a variety of literacy instructional practices in their placements—from scripted reading programs to individualized instruction in a Montessori setting.

The students were required to blog to respond to readings in more depth. These blogs were another outlet for students to be creators—reflecting on their experiences in the field, connecting them to course readings, and interacting with the classmates. Because it would take a large amount of time for each student to read everyone's weekly blog post, the students blogged in small groups, where three other students had access to their posts. I introduced Twitter as an additional, briefer, form of blogging ("microblogging"). This allowed students to blog in real time in a way that was accessible to the entire class. Students were required to tweet at least once a week as part of their grade for blogging, but the students did not receive a better grade if they tweeted more than required; quality was emphasized more than quantity. What the students tweeted about was left up to them, but I gave suggestions about what to tweet (course readings, class discussions, field placement) and who to follow (other educators, educational blogs, news feeds).

The 20 students in the study generated a total of 1,243 tweets in a semester. The median number of tweets per student was 49. Although one student tweeted only 16 times, and

another student tweeted 252 times over the same amount of time (averaging about 15 tweets a week), 19 of the 20 students tweeted more than the required amount per week, and 11 of these 20 tweeted nearly three times more than required. I analyzed the students' tweets (as well as interview responses from a group of five participants) to determine patterns in how they used Twitter to enhance their learning in the course and in field placements.

Results

Students used Twitter as a tool serving a variety of purposes to make sense of their ED400 coursework and related field experiences. However, there were distinct benefits and costs to implementing Twitter in an education course, both for the students and the instructor.

Benefits: Creating Content to Enhance Learning

A majority of tweets the students generated (65%) were original reflections and thoughts, not questions or comments to others. Students created new content for others' consumption and response, and this content was related to their experiences in ED400. At times, others responded to these reflections and they became conversations. The students tweeted during face-to-face class meetings to process their learning (called "backchannel"), they discussed their classroom experiences on Twitter, and they reflected on their learning in their teacher preparation program at large.

Using the backchannel. Students created content by sharing their reflections during face-to-face class meetings, using Twitter as a backchannel for side conversation versus speaking out verbally. For example, during a lesson where the students were experiencing literacy centers, the students completed short tasks at each center in small groups as they examined children's literature of varying genres. Many of the picture books featured were examples of literature with unique text features, multi-modal texts, stories told from alternate perspectives, and stories that introduced social issues. The students talked within the small group, but they also used Twitter to share their thoughts with the large group. For example:

@Grace: Everyone should read Chester at center 3! Loving the chance to read new children's books.

Grace offered an opinion and reaction to the book *Chester* (Watt, 2007). This center activity's goal was to expand the students' ideas of what text could look like (*Chester* is written as dialogue between the author and the main character Chester, a cat). Capturing their responses to what for some of them was a new experience was important information for me as the instructor. Grace's entire small group tweeted similar responses

The students tweeted during face-to-face class meetings to process their learning (called "backchannel"), they discussed their classroom experiences on Twitter, and they reflected on their learning in their teacher preparation program at large.

to *Chester*, which gave me the opportunity to let Grace's group talk about their reactions to the book with the whole group—why they thought the book would resonate with students, how they would read it aloud, and other reading and writing lessons that could use *Chester*. Allison later used *Chester* for her literature discussion assignment and had her students write from Chester's point of view, an idea posed during this whole group discussion.

During this same center activity, three students across different small groups tweeted about *Black and White*, by David Macauley (1990). *Black and White* features four different stories shown through illustrations on each page divided into quadrants. In the end, the stories appear not to be “different” at all, but different perspectives on the same event. The organization of the illustrations challenges the reader to interpret the story many different ways, and is a very different type of book than students are used to seeing and reading aloud with children. Renee, Lisa, and Alyssa expressed their discomfort with the book on the backchannel:

@Renee: “Black and White” by David Macauley is seriously messing with my mind. Cool book with multiple perspectives. #ed400

@Lisa: “Black and White” just confused me. #ed400

@Alyssa: I don't know how I would read Black or White to my students. #ed400

These comments may or may not have been made within their small groups, but they used Twitter to make them available to the whole class by using our class hashtag: #ed400. A hashtag organizes all tweets with that particular hashtag, making it easier for instructors and classmates to follow the conversation. Their willingness to discuss their confusion about the text on Twitter sparked a whole-group discussion about the book, which may not have occurred had they been unwilling to share with the whole class, or not have had the platform to do so. Even though these examples are from one class period, backchanneling was quite common, as students often engaged in it during mini-lectures and guest speakers, sharing quotes or statistics they found interesting through these presentations.

Connecting the field and our class. The students also tweeted about their field placement. This part of ED400 happens away from the course instructor and often away from the other members of the course. It appears that the pre-service teachers used Twitter to reflect on their time “away” from the face-to-face meetings, and to connect the course learning with what they were seeing and doing in the classroom:

@Brittany: Started spelling tests and it is very interesting to see that they can spell more difficult words before their sight words

@Grace: It's amazing to see how far their writing has progressed since I started last semester.

With limited face-to-face time each week, there was little opportunity in class for students to bring up their reflections on their classroom experiences and to make explicit connections

to the course. The students used Twitter to reflect publicly and share with everyone without prompting.

At times, these reflections on classroom experiences started discussions between students, such as these exchanges:

@Melissa: teaching my discussion lesson 2morrow: any advice from all who did theirs before break?

@Chris: @Melissa You will do great! Classroom management is always the hardest part I think. Maybe do a classroom rules review before u start?

@Lori: As part of our gift we may give the students postcards with postage so they can write to us this summer. Hope to hear from them!

@Lisa: @Lori that's such a great idea! I might have to steal that one!

These public exchanges did not happen in face-to-face meetings and were made outside of class time. By using Twitter to connect with each other, students were meeting course goals such as using teaching strategies, collaborating with colleagues, and sharing resources with classmates. However, the brief nature of Twitter makes it difficult to understand whether Lisa will incorporate the instructional strategy suggested by Lori into her teaching repertoire in the future. The students may only have made surface-level connections with course and the classroom and gathered examples of tools they could use, but Twitter did seem to encourage this initial first step in developing their teaching practice.

I was also able to connect with the students outside of regular face-to-face meetings:

@Lisa: Got to see my 4th graders do readers theater today! It was amazing how engaged they were with it!

@Whitlock400: @Lisa It's another way for them to use talk to interpret what they're reading. More on this Thurs! Hint hint!

In this example, Lisa tweeted about an observation she made in her classroom that was particularly meaningful to her. Her experience coincided with an upcoming topic in the next face-to-face class regarding the literature discussion assignment. I was planning to introduce the concept of using talk to interpret literature by showing how Readers' Theater is one example of how students can express their interpretations in a classroom. I previewed this information to Lisa (and the rest of the class members that read this exchange) to make an explicit connection between what Lisa was seeing in the field and what she was going to be learning in the course. In this case, Twitter was a tool to help the students make those connections.

Challenges: Using Twitter as Teachers Do

Part of “learning to be” a teacher (Gee, 2007) is to be able to seek and offer resources to other practicing teachers, and Twitter offers a possibility to do this on a much larger scale. Twitter allows teachers the potential to connect to literally thousands of other teachers from across the world to help them improve their practice and reflect on their work. In this semester, the students were far less successful with connecting to other teach-

ers on this larger scale, choosing instead to use Twitter as more of a closed social network like Facebook. The students did seek and share resources, attract followers, and had some reach on the social network, but only within our class. As discussed by Risser (2013), given their role as pre-service teachers, and not yet practicing teachers, the students may have been hesitant or not ready to help other practicing teachers.

Perhaps the ED400 students still thought about their Twitter use as students, as opposed to teachers, using Twitter. They valued the use of Twitter to discuss our course, readings, assignments, and assigned field placement time and what they were learning from those experiences as students. The students seemed less aware that their use of Twitter also modeled how practicing teachers would use Twitter. For example, they regularly reached out to colleagues about lesson ideas and thoughts about their placement students' development. They also gave advice, resources, and recommendations to one another about classroom instruction. These are all ways that practicing teachers have appropriated Twitter as a form of free, accessible, professional development (Collier, 2012). However, the students' lack of access to and attraction from outside sources showed that they might not have been aware of how practicing teachers can and do use Twitter.

Future iterations of ED400 could focus more on connecting the pre-service teachers to the large network of practicing teachers who are making Twitter part of their teaching repertoire. I could show the students how to connect with teachers during synchronous Twitter chats and hashtags such as #titletalk, #rwworkshop, and grade-level specific groups like #5thchat. Connecting with practicing teachers could also enrich their learning (Carpenter, 2014) and help them develop their teaching repertoire (Feiman-Nemser's task 4).

It is logical that the students began using their Twitter just among our ED400 class at first. Twitter use may need to be scaffolded for pre-service teachers; before the students can access and attract resources on a larger scale, they may need to practice within their class group first. With guidance and modeling, the students can begin to reach out to other practicing teachers to access resources. Future research on Twitter could focus on how and if students create different content, once their Twitter audience is larger.

Discussion and Conclusion

The use of Twitter in ED400 is consistent with the literature on its use in undergraduate courses. The students were engaged in using Twitter, choosing to embrace the social medium and even exploring other social media options (Facebook, School-

ogy, and Tumblr) for classroom use. However, it is important to examine not only if the students used Twitter, but how they used it (Junco et al., 2012) to aid in learning to be teachers.

The students strengthened an already-established classroom community by reaching out to each other for resources, help, and advice. As an instructor, I was able to tailor the face-to-face class time to their needs by reading the regular backchannel communication during class. Students were making connections between the classroom and the course on their own, engaging with course readings and class discussions and thinking about these during their time in the classroom. Connections to the field placement classroom are an important part of Feiman-Nemser's (2012) first task for pre-service teachers in learning to teach: examining their beliefs critically in relation to good teaching. Because seeing good teaching in an elementary classroom context happens in the field, the students' reflections may not have been made explicit to the instructor or other students without the use of Twitter as a platform to share these reflections. Twitter is one way for instructors to access students' thoughts on their field work as it is happening, without having to conduct a formal observation.

These findings suggest that the students in ED400 used Twitter to access resources and reflect on their experience, sometimes in real time during class, and show the multiple roles that Twitter and other social media can play in helping pre-service teachers learn to be teachers. However, a closer focus on how to connect the pre-service teachers to outside sources is necessary. Just because students become adept at using social media doesn't mean they will know how to use it for other purposes like professional networking, especially if this is their first experience doing so (Abe & Jordan, 2013).

In sum, using Twitter in a methods course has some clear benefits: it affords the instructor opportunities to enrich the pre-service learning experience by giving students a platform to make connections between the course and the classroom and to learn and collaborate with each other. These findings suggest that the students in this literacy methods course used Twitter frequently as a tool to help them learn to teach and that Twitter can be a valuable part of a teacher preparation experience.

References

- Abe, P., & Jordan, N. A. (2013). Integrating social media into the classroom curriculum. *Wiley Online Library*. Online publication: DOI 10.1002/abc.21107.
- Bennett, S. (2012). Twitter on track for 500 million total users by March, 250 million active users by end of 2012. *All Twitter: The Unofficial Twitter Resource* [Web log post]. Retrieved from

The students strengthened an already-established classroom community by reaching out to each other for resources, help, and advice. As an instructor, I was able to tailor the face-to-face class time to their needs by reading the regular backchannel communication during class.

Continued on page 22

Leveraging the Features of Blackboard for Face-to-Face Courses

Words of Introduction

Professor Svoboda shares features of Blackboard that have facilitated his interactions with students in his English courses and the benefits of using these features in both face-to-face and online courses.

By Fred Svoboda, Professor
English

Many faculty members could productively make use of the Blackboard course platform for greater efficiency in their face-to-face courses, and in the process discover whether they might eventually be interested in teaching online. I'd like to provide some suggestions and examples. While I currently teach several courses online, I did not just jump into this; only one of my online courses was originally developed as such. Rather, I began to use the Blackboard platform (and even its predecessor, eCollege) in face-to-face courses as a way of lessening my workload (and also making things easier for my students). I continue to use it in face-to-face courses, and some of the steps I followed are pretty easy to use.

First, a statement about UM-Flint students: almost all are familiar with Blackboard and comfortable using it. I regularly query my face-to-face students on this point, and they uniformly report this to be the case. Familiarity with Blackboard could not necessarily be assumed a decade ago, but now it's an accepted part of the student experience - save perhaps for first semester students, so faculty members don't have to worry about student acceptance of some of the common uses of the course platform. (Transfer students and even many K-12 students already may be familiar with Blackboard.)

Every UM-Flint course comes with a Blackboard "course shell" set up automatically by OEL, the Office of Extended Learning, so getting started is as easy as logging in six weeks before the semester begins. Probably the easiest thing to do is to post course syllabi as attachments on Blackboard. These can simply be your existing syllabi as MS Word documents or PDF files. The big advantage is that they are always available to students: you no longer have to field requests for additional copies to replace lost syllabi throughout the semester. Put these under a newly labelled tab called "Course Syllabus" or something

The Office of Extended Learning provides assistance and support for Blackboard seven days a week by phone (810-237-6691) and in person Monday through Friday during the business day.

similar; unfortunately some students will not be able to figure out that Blackboard's existing "Course Information" or "Course Documents" tabs are the places to look for syllabus information.

In my face-to-face courses I do pass out a photocopied syllabus, by the way, just because it's nice for students to have something to look at and follow along with on the first day of class. (It makes things seem more "official" somehow.) However, I also remind students that they'll be able to access the syllabus at any time via Blackboard, and should look there if they lose their copies.

Having made that statement, I add that future handouts (outlines, assignments, and the like) will be available exclusively on Blackboard, and that students should look for them there. This saves me a lot of photocopying time and energy, and helps delay the inevitable decline into senility and death of our copy machines. It saves money, also, of course, and is more convenient for students.

When discussing the syllabus and future handouts in face-to-face classes I simply use the computer/projector setup in any UM-Flint classroom to access Blackboard and show the material on screen. This has the nice added effect of keeping student attention focused on the front of the room instead of down on their desks or tables. Some students will neatly print out and save hard copies of all these materials in binders; most will just access them on line as needed.

Quizzes are another easy use of Blackboard in face-to-face courses. These can be written in Blackboard and saved in the course shell—or in the "Content Collection" to be available for reuse in future courses. I recommend multiple choice format, which can be set up to be graded automatically and to provide feedback that you have written ahead of time on correct and incorrect responses. It is possible to use and individually evaluate short answer quizzes, but simpler forms like multiple choice or true/false don't require you to read and evaluate each individual student's quiz and usually are just as useful as learning devices. There are many possible formats in Blackboard—including Likert Scale, which also can be used to anonymously survey students about how they feel they are doing in the course during

Continued on page 22

E-mail as a Means of Communication in University Settings

Words of Introduction

In this article, Alex Maddox shares his experiences with email from the student perspective and discusses the benefits and drawbacks of email communication between instructors and students. A unique aspect of this article is that Drs. Laurence and Li make all of their comments through the footnotes of the article. It is an interesting tactic for communication of ideas and perspectives.

By Alex Maddox, Graduate Student Research Assistant
Greg Laurence, Assistant Professor
Jie Li, Assistant Professor
School of Management

Introduction¹

When I first started as an undergraduate student at the University of Michigan-Flint in Fall 2005, I remembered seeing posters in certain areas of campus informing students of the need to regularly read their university e-mail. They said, “Do you check your student e-mail? It’s now required!”² So, I stepped up the pace, and made it a habit to log on to my webmail account at least three to four times a week. Since my freshman year of college, electronic mail has become a means for me to constantly keep in touch with my classmates and professors. For me, it is a pretty powerful tool because it allows me to discuss things with other people when I do not have the opportunity to meet them in person. I often do not have the patience to go into my professor’s office to voice my concerns and/or get help with a project or homework assignment. Electronic mail provides me with an alternative to asking questions directly, and is much more convenient for me.³

In addition, I feel that e-mail has become one of my most effective learning instruments. Communicating with my profes-

sors via electronic messaging has enabled me to improve my writing skills, and it has taught me to write in a more professional manner. Moreover, I do not feel as though I do well talking directly with others. I am the type of person who likes to be detailed when explaining things. When I talk face-to-face, I feel as though I am being rushed. I like to slow down and take my time. Putting my thoughts on paper or in an e-mail gives me more freedom to think about what I want to say and how I want to say it. I want to be sure that I am thorough when speaking to somebody. To me, it is important that my receiver gets as much information as necessary.⁴

Electronic mail has become one of my major topics of interest. Since my first year of college, I have wondered how our ever-changing dependence on technology has impacted our methods of communication on campus. For that reason, I applied for a graduate research assistantship pertaining to perceived fairness of course policies, as it was going to entail researching more information about the university e-mail experience. In this literature, I offer some insight as to how students and instructors view electronic messaging and make use of it on a daily basis.

How I Have Used E-Mail

Approximately one week into my assistantship, I met with Drs. Li and Dr. Laurence, the two professors I was working with on this project, and they gave me my first work assignment. They provided me with a short list of possible search terms to use when looking for sources. During our talk, I assured them I was going to keep in touch with them via electronic mail, because I wanted to make it a priority to regularly inform them

¹ Footnotes, I was once told, are a useful literary device as they allow an author to have a parallel conversation with the reader. In this paper, we take what we believe is the novel approach of using footnotes to have a conversation between the authors as well as between the readers. The body of the paper is written from the student’s perspective, while the footnotes approach the topic from the perspective of faculty.

² One of the key questions we ask is: Should it still be? Is this the preferred mode of contact for students in 2015? Email as a primary mode of communication is at least a 25 year old technology at this point. Are there better alternatives that students would prefer?

³ This raises some interesting questions. Does email make it easier for students to ask delicate questions of their professors? Alternatively, does reliance on email in this regard do a disservice to students by not teaching them patience or how to have difficult conversations?

⁴ Negotiation and communication research recognize these as benefits to electronic communication. While physical cues that we can normally access during face-to-face communication are unavailable, the opportunity to take time to think through a response is recognized as a positive aspect of asynchronous communication.

of my findings, let them know where I was in my research, and ask them questions whenever necessary. I understood that it was important for me to make use of e-mail on a frequent basis when I was outside of their offices, and that I needed to keep them up to date on my situations. Whenever emailing Drs. Li and Laurence, I tried to be as detailed as possible, telling them the status of my research assignments, and providing them an overview of the sources and information I found. When developing my e-mails, I always wrote them in the form of a formal letter. I started out with "Greetings, Dr. Li and Dr. Laurence" on my first line, and concluded my message with "Best regards" followed by my name.⁵ As a professional graduate student, I felt that it was essential for me to demonstrate skill and proficiency through my writing, and I wanted to indicate to my professors that I was serious about my work.

In the past, I have also used electronic messaging to contact my professors and discuss matters such as grades and assignments. I am not a very verbal individual, and I was embarrassed to talk to a professor in person whenever I was concerned about my grade in a course. Electronic mail also came in handy for me when I needed to contact my classmates and get help whenever I got stuck on a homework question. Like many other students, I did not engage in electronic mail strictly for informational reasons. At times, I used it for social communication. I sometimes had those amusing stories that I wanted to share with my professors and classmates -interesting quotes, websites, videos, and pictures that related to topics that were being discussed in my courses, and I was inclined to share them.

E-Mail: Its Benefits & Potential Drawbacks

In many college and university settings, e-mail communication is a convenient tool that professors and students use to get in contact with each other and relay information outside of

⁵ If only every e-mail I received from a student was constructed as well as Alex wrote his. Professional communication has been a topic of interest in the School of Management for some time now and our decision to bring Alex on as a GSRA was prompted by an e-mail I received from a student which read, "Hi, can you clear this up for me? How many pages of paper are we suppose us. I got confused a bi how many pages are we suppose to turn in. For the pair assignment." We wanted to investigate whether grading of e-mails sent by students would be better received if students were reminded by faculty of the importance of polishing their communications regularly than if the e-mails were graded without explanation. We foresaw too many issues related to getting Institutional Review Board approval for such a project, however, and in the end, I have instituted a policy of grading e-mails in my undergraduate courses. Is it working? It may be too soon to tell, but the secondary question it has raised is whether e-mail is really the right tool or not for this generation of student.

E-mail has become advantageous for reticent students or students who do not actively speak up. When these types of students utilize e-mail, they appear to be less anxious than they are when they talk to their instructors in person.

the classroom.⁶ Students often send messages to their professors in order to make appointments to discuss personal matters (Duran, Kelly, & Keaten, 2005). Additionally, students may use e-mail in order to clarify something, and they may want specific instructions on assignments or projects (Waldeck, Kearney, & Plax, 2001). Professors use electronic mail primarily for scheduling appointments and making class announcements (Duran, Kelly, & Keaten, 2005). Moreover, they may take advantage of e-mail to send out instructions for assigned tasks. To a much lesser extent, instructors may send electronic messages to students containing information regarding class syllabi and lecture notes (Adams, Brunner, & Yates, 2010). Sheer and Fung (2007) suggest that electronic mail serves not as a preferred means of communication between students and professors, but instead, as a conduit for when they cannot meet face-to-face.

The use of e-mail in college and university environments also comes with a number of potential benefits

for college students. E-mail gives students the opportunity to consult with their professors without having to commute to campus, and serves as an alternative for students who do not feel comfortable talking directly to instructors. When students discuss their personal matters through electronic mail, they can build closer psychological connections with their professors (Waldeck, Kearney, & Plax, 2001). E-mail has become advantageous for reticent students or students who do not actively speak up. When these types of students utilize e-mail, they appear to be less anxious than they are when they talk to their instructors in person. These students enjoy using electronic messaging to discuss situations such as homework help or class absences (Kelly, Keaten, & Finch, 2004).

E-mail usage on and off campus has possible downsides. First, professors do not appear to see their connections with students improve as a result of electronic mail, and report that few of their students make use of it on a regular basis (Duran, Kelly, & Keaten, 2005).⁷ Plus, instructors still often see face-to-

⁶ Importantly, it would seem, it is no longer the only option available here. In the mid- to late-1990s e-mail was the most convenient way to quickly disseminate course related information. The question we might ask ourselves now is whether there aren't more efficient or more accessible tools for the functions Alex goes on to describe.

⁷ And so, we arrive at the crux of the matter. Why are students not accessing this tool regularly (or regularly enough for our liking as faculty)? We have acknowledged that e-mail is convenient, easy to use, etc., and still are left with this finding. If students are more inclined to access some other tool, whatever that tool might be, should not we as faculty consider making use of that rather than forcing the use of a less preferred communication tool? Or, is this a sign that the tools we choose are still about us rather than them? It may also be that interest level in the course content and

face communication as a beneficial means of keeping in touch with their students (Sheer & Fung, 2007). Finally, while the development of e-mail has seemed to have led to better channels of computer communication between students and professors, it has also probably negatively impacted their oral communication methods (Kelly, Keaten, & Finch, 2004).

Nonetheless, e-mail can also serve as a powerful learning and teaching instrument. As Duran, Kelly, and Keaten (2005) point out, it is important for professors to help their students understand the proper usage of electronic messaging. For example, professors should teach students that sending e-mails to make excuses for absences and assignments could have a negative impact on their future careers. Businesses and companies may see such e-mail writing styles as inappropriate, and students will have to be able to learn how to communicate in a professional manner. Many employers expect their subordinates to show skill and expertise when it comes to writing their messages.⁸

What is Interesting

Over the course of my research, I discovered plenty of additional information about electronic mail that I found to be interesting. First, Adams, Brunner, and Yates (2010) suggest that age seems to be a factor that influences how professors make use of e-mail to communicate with their students. While younger instructors tend to have a more positive perception of electronic mail, they do not send messages with attached documents as frequently as older faculty members do. As said by the authors, this could be because professors of younger ages may be more cautious about preparing their lecture notes and documents for their courses, and as a result, they do not have as much of an opportunity to send them out ahead of a class period. I was a bit intrigued by this because I would have thought that younger instructors were more likely to be adjuncts or employed part-time, thus having more free time on their hands to prepare their

how fast the faculty responds to students' emails may affect how the students use email, or other channels to communicate with faculty. One interesting question might be, "does the quality of the faculty-student relationship manifested in emails or in real life interactions have any influence on how students use email?"

⁸ Students may now be more used to Twitter and other types of short and informal communication with people who tend to be equal in status or closer relationships. However, students need to realize that email is a different channel in that it is often used in more formal hierarchical settings among people with different status and power. Using the Twitter mentality in emails with people who tend to be more serious about the business and more influential on your professional life does not seem like a good idea.

handouts and send them to students in a timely manner.⁹

Punyanunt-Carter and Hemby (2006) said that significant differences also exist regarding the way male and female college students perceive and make use of e-mail. They proposed that female students have a greater chance of using shorthand when writing their messages, and are also more likely to check their e-mail regularly. Males, on the other hand, tend to make more use of emoticons, which are symbols that are used to express feelings and emotions through writing (for example, " :) " to

show happiness or " :D " for signifying joy or excitement). This captured my attention because I would think that many male students have a negative perception towards English, writing, and literature, and would therefore use abbreviations in their e-mail messages. Plus, I use Flickr and YouTube often, and I have seen a significant number of female

users (or users who appear to be female) use emoticons in their messages. I may even take a look at people's profile comments on Twitter or Facebook (though I do not use social media for any reason), and see plenty of female members use emoticons when they comment.¹⁰

What Other People Have Said to Me About E-Mail

Throughout my assistantship, I had plenty of opportunities to meet and speak with other people regarding my research topic. During my Fall semester, I attended a campus event where instructors and research assistants were able to present their research to other students, faculty, and guests. As I was looking at other presenters' posters and sharing my experience and findings, I had the chance to speak with a professor who was happy to discuss her perception of e-mail and how she used it to communicate with her students. She told me that she often sends out electronic messages to students to make announcements on class changes, new postings on Blackboard, or homework assignments. The professor said that on many occasions, several students tell her that they were unaware of the information and did not even get the e-mail message when she had sent it out

⁹ There might be an explanation that explains such differences seemingly associated with age. That is, both older and younger instructors realize that email is not ideal for communicating complex meanings, particularly for instructional purposes. So, older instructors choose to add attachments while younger instructors choose to use email to do just what it does best, conveying simpler ideas. It might be interesting to ask how such difference is developed.

¹⁰ This finding about more frequent use of emoticons among males sounds wrong in such a masculine society as the US. However, it does not mean that males should use fewer emoticons. On the contrary, they probably should use more because of emails recognized inability to communicate emotions effectively.

ahead of time and gave them everything they needed to know. This mirrors my research findings indicating numerous college students do not routinely access e-mail.

Another memorable opportunity I had was when I met Dr. José Bowen (then professor of music at Southern Methodist University; currently President of Goucher College), who gave a series of presentations on the use of technology in college settings. Dr. Bowen conducted a hands-on approach with his guests, which had to do with the incorporation of media and computers in the college learning process. He showed us some of the sites instructors can use to connect with students outside of class, as well as some helpful internet sources that students can use to get their information. I also obtained a copy of his book, *Teaching Naked: How Moving Technology Out of Your College Classroom Will Improve Student Learning*. In his book, Bowen (2012) details how professors can approach e-mail messaging. Though he admits that e-mail has become somewhat obsolete these days, he demonstrates it can still be a useful teaching technique. For instance, Bowen discusses that professors should show their students that they have passion in their field and make connections with outside events whenever possible. An additional method he suggests is using electronic mail to introduce readings. This way, students who do not have a passion for reading will be able to get some information out of the e-mail message and use the material as a learning tool.

Conclusion

Overall, e-mail can be a beneficial and useful way of getting in touch with classmates and staff to discuss concerns and exchange information, depending on how people perceive it and make use of it. The unfortunate reality is that computers and technology continue to change every single day, and with these changes come a shift in people's attitudes towards electronic communication. Though many of us currently rely on social media and mobile devices to relay messages with other individuals, we can still use e-mail as an essential tool for keeping in contact with others, especially in postsecondary environments. Despite its potential disadvantages, e-mail comes with several potential benefits as well. College professors, for instance, can

see it as a way to prepare their students for the outside working world and teach them what it takes to communicate in a professional manner. Nevertheless, it is going to take more than just sending electronic messages to students in order to encourage them to engage in e-mail communication. Professors have to be able to find ways to motivate their students. This can come in the form of assignments where they can require students to send messages in a specific format. This way, students can be persuaded to become more active in e-mail messaging so they can have the skills necessary to be active and professional speakers in their careers. In all, the potential for e-mail as a learning device is there, and as instructors, we have to take e-mail usage a step farther to demonstrate its importance to our students.

References

- Adams, J. W., Brunner, B. R., & Yates, B. L. (2010). Social-structural factors and e-mail communication with college students: A national study of journalism and mass communication faculty. *International Journal of Instructional Media*, 37(3), 251-262.
- Bowen, J. A. (2012). *Teaching naked: How moving technology out of your college classroom will improve student learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Duran, R. L., Kelly, L., & Keaten, J. A. (2005). College faculty use and perceptions of electronic mail to communicate with students. *Communication Quarterly*, 53(2), 159-176.
- Kelly, L., Keaten, J. A., & Finch, C. (2004). Reticent and non-reticent college students' preferred communication channels for interacting with faculty. *Communication Research Reports*, 21(2), 197-209.
- Punyanunt-Carter, N. M., & Hemby, C. O. (2006). College students' gender differences regarding e-mail. *College Student Journal*, 40(3), 651-653.
- Sheer, V. C., & Fung, T. K. (2007). Can email communication enhance professor-student relationship and student evaluation of professor?: Some empirical evidence. *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, 37(3), 289-306.
- Waldeck, J. H., Kearney, P., & Plax, T. G. (2001). Teacher e-mail message strategies and students' willingness to communicate online. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 29(1), 54-70.

Editor's Note:

This piece was written while Alex served as Graduate Student Research Assistant in the School of Management. He graduated in December 2014 with a Master's Degree in Mathematics.

Leveraging the Features of Blackboard

Continued from page 18

the semester, etc.

Quizzes can be set up for limited periods of time—both limited periods of availability and time limits to completion. These can be hard limits that cut the student off when exceeded, or soft limits that record how much extra time a student took.

Quiz scores automatically post in the Grade Book, another easy feature of Blackboard that already exists when the course shell is created by OEL. Setting up a quiz name and number of points gets it automatically added to the Grade Book, which also can hold all your other grades, whether for items available on Blackboard or otherwise. The Grade Book can perform record-keeping tasks such as weighting grades, and calculating averages; it even can be set up to move final course grades over into SIS (Student Information System) at the end of the semester. Another advantage is that it allows students to access their own grades (only their own, not others' grades) and a running grade for the course. This helps avoid multiple queries of "How am I doing?" throughout the semester and helps to remind students of assignments. It's also possible to attach brief private comments (currently up to 1000 characters) to individual students to any quiz or other grade.

My favorite feature of Blackboard? Using it for students to submit papers. I do this via attachments in the Discussion

Board feature. Doing so will allow students to read and comment in writing on each other's work. (This feature helps make papers more "real" communication in students' eyes, not just exercises in pleasing the professor.) As with quizzes in the grade book, it is possible for an instructor to assign grades and make comments privately to students. Receiving papers via Blackboard also means no losing track of papers, or having a student claim that she gave you a paper but you must have lost it, or that it really was turned in on time rather than late. The paper is either in Blackboard or not, and date and time of submission are right there also. It is also possible to receive papers privately if one prefers this, and to have them checked for possible plagiarism via the SafeAssign program built into Blackboard's assignment feature.

This certainly does not plumb all the ways in which Blackboard can be used to deliver course content in a face-to-face class, but these few steps add convenience for students and instructors alike; they also are a way for instructors to try out Blackboard and perhaps move courses on line in the future.

Note: Thanks to Carson Waites, Instructional Designer, Office of Extended Learning for providing detailed information on the current version of Blackboard.

Learning to Teach with Twitter

Continued from page 17

http://www.mediabistro.com/alltwitter/twitter-active-total-users_b17655.

Bennett, S. (2013). 29% of under 35s use Twitter (and 17% plan to start). *All Twitter: The Unofficial Twitter Resources* [Web log post]. Retrieved from http://www.mediabistro.com/alltwitter/social-millennials_b49852.

Carpenter, J. P. (2014). Twitter's capacity to support collaborative learning. *International Journal of Social Media and Interactive Learning Environments*, 2(2), 103-118.

Collier, L. (March 2012). Capitalizing on social media to find professional community. *Council Chronicle: National Council for Teachers of English*.

Dunlap, J. C., & Lowenthal, P. R. (2010). Tweeting the night away: Using Twitter to enhance social presence. *Journal of Information Systems Education*, 20(2), 129-135.

Feiman-Nemser, S. (2012). *Teachers as learners*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Gee, J. P. (2007). *Good video games + good learning: Collected essays on video games*. New York: Peter Lang.

Holmes, K., Preston, G., Shaw, K., & Buchanan, R. (2013). "Follow" me: Networked professional learning for teachers. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 38(12), 55-65.

Junco, R., Heiberger, G., & Loken, E. (2010). The effect of Twitter on college student engagement and grades. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 27, 119-132.

Junco, R., Elavsky, C. M., & Heiberger, G. (2012). Putting Twitter to the test: Assessing outcomes for student collaboration, engagement, and success. *British Journal of Educational Technology*. Online publication. doi:10.1111/j.1467-85.2012.01284.x

LaLonde, C. (2011). *The Twitter experience: The role of Twitter in the formation and maintenance of personal learning networks*. (Master's thesis). Available from Library and Archives \ Canada.

Lowe, B., & Laffey, D. (2011). Is Twitter for the birds? Using Twitter to enhance student learning in a marketing course. *Journal of Marketing Education*, 33(2), 183-192.

Macaulay, D. (1990). *Black and white*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Rinaldo, S. B., Tapp, S., & Laverie, D. A. (2011). Learning by tweeting: Using Twitter as a pedagogical tool. *Journal of Marketing Education*, 33(2), 193-203.

Risser, H. S. (2013). Virtual induction: A novice teacher's use of Twitter to form an informal mentoring network. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 35, 25-33.

Watt, M. (2007). *Chester*. Toronto, Canada: Kids Can Press.

SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING

*A publication of the Thompson Center for Learning & Teaching
University of Michigan-Flint*

Call for Manuscripts

The *Scholarship of Teaching* is a publication of professional reflection about all matters relating to teaching and learning. Original essays, commentaries and articles reporting informal research on your teaching may explore what you find compelling, perplexing and inspiring about your work in and outside the classroom. Previously published original articles may be reprinted with permission.

Theme for the Fall 2016 Issue:

ENGAGING STUDENTS IN THE WORK OF LEARNING

Recently, the TCLT has encouraged UM-Flint faculty to explore the ideas and concepts presented in the text *Learner-Centered Teaching: Putting the Research on Learning into Practice* (Doyle, 2011). There is significant evidence available to show that learner-centered teaching (LCT) is the best way to optimize learning opportunities for students. LCT is not a new or radical pedagogy, but rather takes the best features from the teacher-centered approach and applies them in ways that are in better harmony with how our brains learn.

In our next issue, the TCLT would like to feature your reflections, success stories, arguments, and confessionals that address this topic. Questions or ideas to consider include:

- In what ways have you moved from lecturer or deliverer of content to a facilitator of learning? What's been the biggest challenge? What's been successful?
- The one who does the work, does the learning. What techniques and strategies have you used to encourage students to be more responsible for their learning?
- Do you incorporate opportunities for student reflection in/on the learning process? What's been the response? Has offering opportunities for reflection helped them develop as self-regulated learners? How have these activities impacted the way you teach?
- How do you motivate students to learn? Which extrinsic or intrinsic motivators do you try to maximize and why?
- Do you teach to all of the senses? Have you found ways to help students use more of their senses to improve their learning?
- More discussion and less lecturing – how have you incorporated more discussion into instruction? Have students taken more ownership of learning through discussion?
- Leave me alone – how have you facilitated student collaboration, especially when students have been reticent to work in groups? What models of inclusivity have worked?

We aim to provide compelling reading and intellectual liveliness around this topic. Preference will be given to evidence-based or research-substantiated articles. For more information regarding learner-centered teaching or a copy of Doyle's text, please contact the TCLT.

Submission Guidelines: Please submit your manuscript electronically to Tracy Wacker, TCLT Director, at twacker@umflint.edu or in hard copy to Tracy's attention at the Thompson Center for Learning and Teaching, 134 FWTL. Final manuscripts must be sent electronically. Articles using references may follow either APA or MLA format. Manuscripts will not be blindly reviewed.

Deadline for Submission: March 30, 2016

Publication August 2016

