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Facebook as an Instructional Technology Tool

Can the wildly popular social network be used constructively in the classroom? This student's story says it can.

Yesterday, student Kristen Nicole Cardon submitted a comment in response to my post [5 Reasons Why Educators Need To Embrace Internet Technologies](#) ^[1] in which she explained how she used [Facebook](#) ^[2] in a course she took. I really appreciated her well stated discussion of how Facebook was used in the course and how the approach succeeded (*slightly edited in the following excerpt*).

"In my British Literary History course last winter semester, my professor created a class facebook group which we all joined. We'd finish our reading for class and then get online and write a paragraph about what we'd read, focusing our comments on the specific course aims that my professor had created for the class. We would then go to class where my professor would note the ways in which we'd covered the material well and he'd teach anything we missed as well as anything else he wanted us to know.

This way of conducting class was effective because:

1. We were socially motivated to complete the reading and contribute to the online discussion.
2. We didn't spend class time going over that which we already understood.
3. We were able to benefit from insights from peers who generally don't participate in class discussion.
4. We all learned to focus the vast amount of reading required for such a course to the specific course aims of our professor.
5. Through contributions from our classmates, we understood how each distinct text related to the others and to the class focus, and so on.

We shouldn't discount facebook when it has proven to be a worthwhile classroom tool. I should also note that a class facebook group doesn't require the professor or students to "friend" each other to participate."

So Facebook was basically used to facilitate a discussion group, which can certainly be done with an LMS like Blackboard or Moodle or with various other tools, but the nice thing about Facebook is that many students are already familiar and comfortable with it – it's a "known entity" to them. Another positive thing, which addressed a concern of mine in this environment, was that there was a 'wall' between this academic use and the personal uses students have for the tool – by being in the group you didn't have to friend anyone or expose your personal information.

There are so many ways in which today's Internet based tools can play a creative, constructive role in the educational process ... even those tools that we shy away from because they seem more like 'pop culture' throw-aways than academic tools. Thanks, Kristen, for sharing your story.

Kristen blogs at technologyinexile.blogspot.com ^[3], stop by and visit to learn more about her experiences with Facebook in an educational setting, and more.

Related Posts (if the above topic is of interest, you might want to check these out):

[5 Reasons Why Educators Need To Embrace Internet Technologies](#) ^[4]

[10 Internet Technologies that Educators Should Be Informed About](#) ^[5]

[100 Ways to Teach With Twitter](#) ^[6]

<http://www.emergingedtech.com/2010/08/facebook-as-an-instructional-technology-tool/>

URLs in this post:

[1] 5 Reasons Why Educators Need To Embrace Internet Technologies:

<http://www.emergingedtech.com/2009/05/5-reasons-why-educators-need-to-embrace-internet-technologies/#comments>

[2] Facebook: **<http://www.facebook.com>**

[3] *technologyinexile.blogspot.com*: **<http://technologyinexile.blogspot.com>**

[4] 5 Reasons Why Educators Need To Embrace Internet Technologies:

<http://www.emergingedtech.com/2009/05/5-reasons-why-educators-need-to-embrace-internet-technologies/>

[5] 10 Internet Technologies that Educators Should Be Informed About:

<http://www.emergingedtech.com/2009/04/10-internet-technologies-that-educators-should-be-informed-about/>

[6] 100 Ways to Teach With Twitter: **<http://www.emergingedtech.com/2010/02/100-ways-to-teach-with-twitter/>**

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