Facebook Pedagogy- An Effective Tool for Teaching Learning

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Abstract:

Social Media remains critical and important in the age of MOOCs, Blended Learning and various other LMS interventions. Social networking sites (SNS) such as Facebook remain prolific on college campuses and touches on various aspects of collegiate life, including the classroom. Facebook can be used creatively with some check and balances as an effective tool for teaching-learning pedagogy. Face book, Google groups and similar platforms can be used very effectively to set up discussion groups and get students to engage. From experience, it is observed that some students whilst very passive in face to face and in class discussions can be very active in on line forums. This is particularly more noticeable when working with groups which are made up of students from different nationalities and cultural backgrounds.

This conceptual paper tries to find out its efficacy and connect with the student community as an effective pedagogical tool.

Key Words: Facebook, Social Media, Google, Edex, Courseera

Facebook is one of the most effective platforms for student discussion and collaboration within Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and other online course formats. Facebook is a virtual meeting place that encourages authentic interaction, sharing and collaboration. I've found that closed Facebook groups, created for a specific course, generate more discussion, exchanges and sharing among a greater number of students than any forum within a MOOC platform.

Facebook groups can be created by the instructor or institution administrators as a closed group where students request to join. Though in MOOCs, students often take the initiative and create a group for course participants, opening up the group well before the course begins. Frequently participants will create smaller groups for those interested in specific course-related topic areas; they find one another via the interaction and dialogue.

A recent study, *The Role of Social Media in MOOCs* presented at the annual ACM Conference on Learning at Scale, validates Facebook's effectiveness for student engagement. Researchers conducted a study using three MOOCs on Coursera's platform comparing students use of Facebook groups to discussion forums within the Coursera site (Zheng et al. 2016). They found that students were more engaged in Facebook groups than within the MOOC discussion forums (*see figure 1 below*), and engaged for longer periods on the Facebook site, even after the course ended. Students also admitted they preferred interacting on social media due to its immediacy—the quicker response times to questions and posts, as well as the less chaotic environment. Quite compelling is the fact that students stated Facebook gave them a "sense of community" (pg. 423).
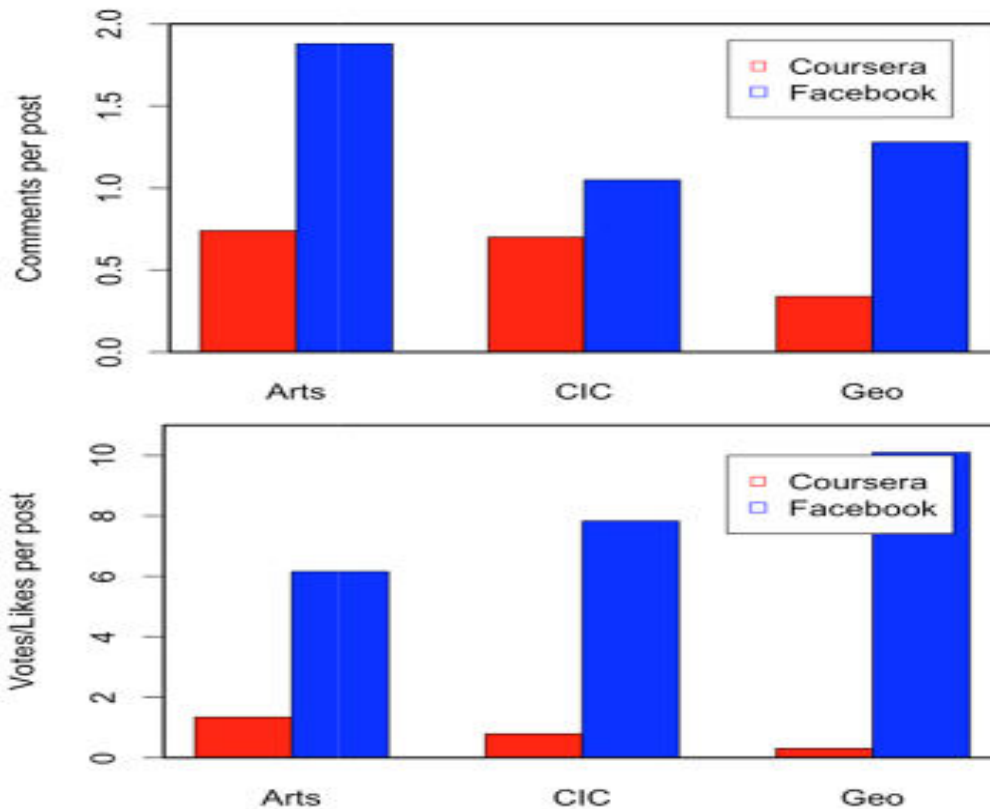
Figure 1. Summary of commenting (top) and Voting/Liking (bottom) activities.

"The Role of Social Media In MOOCs: How to Use Social Media to Enhance Retention". Proceeding of the Third (2016) ACM Conference on Learning @ Scale, pages 419-428.

Harvard Business School Transformation for the Facebook Age was possibly one of the earliest initiatives in this space, during 2012, reinventing the MBA and giving birth to a new generation of entrepreneurs, innovation, and start-ups.

Learning by doing is a central tenet of the new FIELD (Field Immersion Experiences for Leadership Development) curriculum which supplements its venerated case method core with a required leadership and teamwork (FIELD 1), global immersion (FIELD 2) and entrepreneurship "module" (FIELD 3) for all 900 students.

HBS is far from alone among business schools in revamping its curriculum to focus on entrepreneurship and "action-learning." But the sheer pace and scale of FIELD's deployment—including requiring all 900 students be immersed globally at 150 established companies (FIELD 2) and then, a few months later, build from scratch 150 businesses and sell their products—is unprecedented and unparalleled,

Why is this so? Some of the reasons might be-

First, It is observed that some students preferred the on line discussion groups to in class discussions and contributed very actively. The other positive side is that all the discussions

are recorded and more importantly the moderator can clearly identify the level and frequency of participation from the members

However to avoid 'possible abuse' the rules of engagement and behaviour and the role of the moderator must be clearly specified when setting up a group.

Second, because Facebook is the most used social networking site globally, for a variety of reasons—its low barrier to participation, and ease of use (Pew Research, 2014). Given the numbers of people who use Facebook across nations, more students are familiar with Facebook than any other tool or feature within the MOOC platform, so it's no wonder they are more likely and willing to engage with their peers. Below are some telling comments from students of the study that indicate why Facebook preferred over the MOOC platform.

Third , Facebook creates a sense of community. Learners are able to establish a sense of presence, they have a sense of being there and being together. Students can *see* who they are interacting with—a real person. Facebook is transparent, unlike MOOC platforms where students can sign up and create any user name not linked to their identify and post in forums anonymously. Interaction within MOOC platforms feels like one is communicating in a vacuum. This transparency fosters a sense of presence and trust, aligning with the Community of Inquiry (CoI) model. The CoI model is a theoretical framework that outlines a process for creating deep and meaningful online learning experiences. It's based on three interdependent dimensions of presence–social, cognitive and teaching presence (Garrison Anderson & Archer, 2000).

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The study's findings have tremendous implications for online educators and institutions. If students in online learning environments are more likely to engage with class peers on social platforms, like Facebook, it's well worth our time to examine further how we can thoughtfully integrate social media to engage students and deepen their learning experience.

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