

The Journal of Social Media for Learning 2021

Editorial

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Welcome to our second edition of The Journal of Social Media for Learning.

This is a relatively new journal where our ethos is centred around the creation of a supportive space where all colleagues, but particularly those new to publishing, can contribute to the scholarly discourse about their academic practice, and if they so wish secure opportunities to gain experience of peer-review and journal editing.

Our inaugural edition was special in many ways, not least because it celebrated the outcomes of work presented at our 2019 Conference, but also because it came at the end of what was a most unusual year.

As we moved into 2021 the unprecedented challenges continue and as such, we are grateful to all of our authors for their continued commitment in working to share their innovations with us in this way.

The disruptions caused by the Covid-19 global pandemic have left us all at one time or another with feelings of uncertainty, and there can be no time more important than right now to continue to share our practice; to support each other and help ensure our students continue to have equity of opportunity and an outstanding student experience.

As Higher Education institutions globally have pivoted to online pedagogical approaches for delivery, sharing the most innovative learning and teaching strategies could not be timelier. Hence it is with great delight that we welcome within our second edition several papers from our international neighbours and colleagues.

The first of which is provided in the form of an insightful and thought-provoking paper written by Sara Santarossa, Paige Coyne, and Sarah J. Woodruff. Presented as a case study this study offers an international perspective on the use of Instagram to create an online learning environment. Engaging first year students in a Kinesiology class, by utilizing hashtag data, we learn how distractors, such as social media, may be used to elicit agency, deep learning, reflection, and critical thinking among students in higher education in Canada.

Capturing research published between 201-2020 our next paper presents a systematic review of the literature of the use of Social Media for Academic Purpose. In this work, selected from 76 empirical studies, Njideka-Nwawih C. Ojukwu, Stephen Mutula and Sambo Atanda Saliu (who are based in South Africa and Nigeria respectively) examine 35 papers and offer perspectives on the promise social media technology holds for improving academic engagement, knowledge sharing and community building.

In our next paper Danielle Ligoeki is ‘All about the drama!’. Based at Oakland University, Rochester, USA, presenting findings from her research with pre-teens and teenagers, her paper offers invaluable international insights into the necessity of critical media literacy in public education. In a world where the lives of youth everywhere are shaped by a variety of texts and incessant media exposure, tackling the issues Danielle’s study presents a critical analysis of the ways in which youth interact with media and how the images and lifestyles that are portrayed may be affecting the way they both view themselves and others.

Penned by Vanessa Parson from the University of Sunderland, UK, and Hannah Bain, from the National Health Service (NHS) in the UK, our fourth paper entitled “In it together: Staff-Student Facebook groups promote collaborative learning and formation of a cohort identity.” Presents findings from their research, Vanessa and Hannah invite us to explore the use and potential of Facebook as an educational tool to support the formation of a cohort identity and to improve student engagement which can impact positively on both retention and student performance.

Then all too quickly we come to our final paper. Brining our second truly international edition to a close, we have a wonderful collaborative piece of research written by colleagues from the University of Ghana. In their work Joseph Bawa, Ebenezer Odame Darkwah, Abdul Hamid Kwarteng, Anthony Ayim and Michael Kojo Kolugu encourage us to consider the effects of social media on the academic lives of University of Ghana undergraduate students as well as their coping strategies in dealing with the social media pressures.

So, as this editorial draws to a close we hope that you will find this second issue invaluable for sharing practical innovative ideas that you can adopt and adapt for immediate use within your own practice.

Finally, we would like to recognise that while it has been another challenging year, we would like to acknowledge the time, effort and patience of all of our reviewers and authors. with particular thanks going to Catherine Dishman who oversees the OJS at Liverpool John Moore’s University. Once again it truly has been a team effort with everyone pulling together on this journey to bring this issue to fruition!

Kindest

Dawne, Sue, Matt and David