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Table of Contents

Editorial

Dawne, Sue, Matt, David, Sarah and Hala Page 001

Research Papers

**Using social media safely and appropriately in higher education:
A reflection on the last 10 years.**

Alison Purvis and Sue Beckingham Page 004

**PDT1076 –An Exploration of Foundation Degree Student
Experiences of Navigating Digital Communities to Inform
Their Undergraduate Studies.**

Adam Chapman Page 011

**"Hello, you and I haven't met in person before, but..." Social
media for community building and self-development.**

Kiu Sum Page 014

Supporting First Generation Students with Discord.

Mike Bass Page 018

**Globalization, Technologies, and Digital Culture in Graduate
Contexts: Intercultural Possibilities and Challenges.**

Maria Cristina Lima Paniago and Gustavo Moura Page 021

**Materialism and the De-Influencing Trend: Classroom
Applications.**

Amiee Shelton and Dominic DeBlasi Page 034

**What's Up with WhatsApp: Reflections on the Evolving Use
of a Messaging Service by Students in Higher Education.**

Sharon Mallon Page 044

**Informational Quality of Retinol Content on Social Media –A
Cross-Sectional Analysis**

Trina Nguyen, Jordan Simpson, and William Ting

Page 050

**From Open-Book Exams to Group Podcasts: A Paradigm Shift
in Assessing Pre-Registration Nursing Associate Students'
Knowledge of Long-Term Condition Care**

Nicole Jeannine Blythe, Jonatan Berhane and Adam J. Fowler

Page 054

**Social Media in History Learning: Findings from a Project
Involving Active Engagement**

Ramazan Acun

Page 063

The Journal of Social Media for Learning 2025

Editorial

Dawne Irving-Bell, Sue Beckingham, Matt McLain and David Wooff
Guest Editors: Sarah Honeychurch and Professor Hala Mansour

Welcome to our latest edition of The Journal of Social Media for Learning, which showcases the Journal of Social Media for Learning Conference and Global Paper Collection 2024-2025.

The Social Media in Higher Education Conference is its 10th year and cultivating mutually beneficial learning relationships using social media for learning, this edition of our journal celebrates recent conference contributions, and a collection of submissions from authors across the globe.

Our first paper is from Purvis and Beckingham and fittingly explores the Using social media safely and appropriately in higher education: A reflection on the last 10 years. This reflective paper charts a decade of work at Sheffield Hallam University to promote the safe, professional and purposeful use of social media in higher education. Responding to rising concerns about student online behaviour, the authors describe the development of institution-wide guidance, openly licensed resources, and a vibrant cross-sector community shaped through the SocMedHE conference. They highlight how evolving digital platforms, shifting ethical expectations, and the emergence of AI-generated content continue to reshape the landscape in which students and staff engage.

Encouraging early career researchers, and the publication of work completed during academic study, our next paper by Chapman, presents an Exploration of Foundation Degree Student Experiences of Navigating Digital Communities to Inform Their Undergraduate Studies at the University of Northampton. Centred on a single academic module, it highlights how guided engagement with tools such as Twitter and Wakelet, and the use of immersive digital platforms support students in developing professional networks and a clearer sense of digital identity. Drawing on connectivist principles, the module positions online networking as a catalyst for reflective practice and pedagogical growth. The paper highlights that many students benefit from increased confidence and opportunities for continued professional development, whilst also noting challenges, particularly for those with limited technological experience. It concludes by emphasising the need for sensitive facilitation to ensure digital participation remains supportive rather than overwhelming.

Next up is a fascinating piece of work by Sum who explores Social media for community building and self-development within Higher Education. Drawing on a personal narrative, the author examines how engaging in online forums (particularly the #LTHEchat Twitter /X community) helped broaden disciplinary horizons, foster meaningful connections, and cultivate a stronger professional identity. These digital interactions became transformative, offering access to new ideas, collaborative opportunities, and real-world insights into academic practice. The paper highlights social media's capacity to enhance learning, encourage multidisciplinary thinking, and reduce barriers between early career researchers and established colleagues. It concludes by emphasising the value of social media as a dynamic, empowering tool for professional growth and encourages educators to consider its role in also supporting students' development.

Our next submission, an academic poster, illustrates our encouragement of dissemination of academic work and findings in various formats. Through this poster, Bass reports on a design-led intervention using 'Discord' to support First Generation Students, who often experience lower continuation and degree outcomes. The study reviews existing support mechanisms, identifies barriers to progression, and implements Discord as a community platform selected by students for its social and educational affordances. Early results from Bass' work indicate increased engagement with students using the space for academic and informal exchange, alongside the fostering of peer relationships with minimal staff input.

Sharing research from across the globe, in a collaboration between authors in Brazil and Canada, our next paper by Paniago and Moura examines how globalisation, technologies, and digital culture shape educational practices within graduate programmes across Brazil, Canada, and the UK. Through a series of semi-structured interviews, the authors explore how digital culture creates possibilities such as enhanced connectivity, empathy, flexibility, and innovative pedagogies, alongside challenges, including intensified workloads, digital inequities, and power imbalances. Participants highlight the need for critical, context specific approaches to innovation which acknowledge cultural experiences and resist one-size fits all assumptions. The study argues for intercultural dialogue, ecological pedagogies, and intentional, community-driven innovation to ensure digital practices remain equitable, reflective, and transformative within higher education.

Next up Shelton and DeBlasi from Roger Williams University, Rhode Island, USA explore the rise of the 'de-influencing' trend on TikTok and its significance for understanding Generation Z's shifting attitudes towards consumerism, authenticity, and sustainability. It explores how micro-influencers are reshaping purchasing behaviours by discouraging excessive consumption and promoting ethical alternatives. The authors highlight Gen Z's preference for transparency, social responsibility, and critical engagement with influencer culture. The paper also proposes classroom applications, demonstrating how analysing de-influencing can foster critical thinking, media literacy, and awareness of broader social issues within communication and marketing education.

In our next piece, Mallon analyses What's Up with WhatsApp: Reflections on the Evolving Use of a Messaging Service by Students in Higher Education, reflecting on students' increasing use of WhatsApp to build learning communities in higher education. Drawing on interview data and teaching experience, it highlights both the strong sense of connection students gain and the significant risks created by engagement in unmoderated spaces. While WhatsApp groups can provide motivation, peer support, and a sense of belonging, they also expose users to privacy breaches, misinformation, academic misconduct, and negative interactions. The author argues that the widespread, informal adoption of WhatsApp requires urgent scholarly attention and clearer institutional guidance to ensure safe, equitable, and pedagogically beneficial practice.

Our next paper presented by Nguyen and Simpson presents a cross-sectional analysis of the informational quality of retinol related posts on Instagram. Using the DISCERN instrument, a tool used to assess the quality of written information on treatment choices for a health problem, to evaluate c100 Instagram posts which were tagged #retinol, the authors found overwhelmingly poor-quality content, with an average score of 1.27/5 using the DISCERN scoring metric. Almost all posts were created by non-physicians, and many failed to reference evidence, explain mechanisms, or discuss risks. Educational posts scored slightly higher but still indicated significant shortcomings. The study underscores the unreliable nature of social media as a source of dermatological information and highlights the need for greater expert involvement when navigating online skincare advice.

In a carefully crafted review Blythe, Berhane and Fowler explore a significant shift in the assessment of pre-registration Nursing Associate students, driven by the limitations of high-stakes examinations and the need for more authentic, practice-aligned methods of evaluation. Presented against a backdrop of workforce shortages and increasing digitalisation in healthcare, the authors argue for assessment approaches that better mirror authentic clinical demands while maintaining a human-centred focus. The paper presents a case study which details the replacement of an open-book exam with a group podcast assessment, highlighting its potential to foster collaboration, critical thinking, digital competence, and inclusivity. Through interdisciplinary collaboration and critical pedagogical reflection, the study demonstrates how creative assessment design can strengthen preparedness for contemporary healthcare practice.

Closing this edition is a thought-provoking piece by Acun who examines Social Media in History Learning: Findings from a Project Involving Active Engagement. This paper reports on an experimental project exploring how active engagement with social media can enhance the efficiency of history teaching and learning. A bespoke series of videos, combining documentary, drama, and educational formats, was produced and shared across YouTube and Facebook social media channels, generating 255,000+ views and substantial user interaction. Analysis of viewer responses indicated strong approval of the project's design, content quality, and emphasis on critical thinking. The paper highlights that well-designed social media resources can support meaningful learning and offers a replicable model for future research in digital history education.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the time, effort and patience of all of our reviewers and authors who have worked in collaboration to provide us with a diverse and informative edition of the journal. Special mention must be made in recognition of the ongoing support and work undertaken by Catherine Dishman at Liverpool John Moore's University, home of the journal, in assisting with the OJS system used to facilitate and publish the journal.

Kindest

Dawne, Sue, Matt, David, Sarah and Hala

The Journal of Social Media for Learning 2025

Using social media safely and appropriately in higher education: A reflection on the last 10 years

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Abstract

The ubiquitous use of mobile technology and easy access to social media apps, and more recently video conferencing software such as Zoom, provide multiple ways for individuals to interact. These technologies have been adopted by both educators and students and provide many useful ways to communicate and collaborate within and beyond the classroom. The acceleration of digital communication tools and widespread use of digital technology in our daily lives' present tensions as the collection of personal data increasingly gives rise to privacy concerns. Furthermore, inappropriate online communications have resulted in serious situations and significant repercussions for those involved. It is therefore timely to revisit the guidance on appropriate online behaviour in the use of social media, and how we use technology safely, along with being clear about the potential implications if advice is not heeded. In our session we will share the open access resources we have developed at Sheffield Hallam University with suggestions on how these could be used with students. These include "How to use social media responsibly", "Managing your digital footprint", "Using social media for learning", and "Using social media to enhance your employability". This reflection paper considers the collaborative process undertaken to produce social media guidance for an institution.

Keywords

Social media, institutional support, technology enhanced learning.

Using social media safely and appropriately in higher education: A reflection on the last 10 years

Introduction

At Sheffield Hallam University we have a long history of using social media for learning in higher education. We have developed open-source guidance, a community-owned conference, and we have published our own collaborative international research (Purvis, Rodger and Beckingham, 2020). We reflect upon the way in which we have taken this combined approach to engagement with social media for learning and share what we have learned over the last 10 years.

Development of Guidance

Social media has been available in an identifiable format since the late 1990s (Edosomwan et al., 2011). By 2013 we began to receive requests from academic staff who were concerned about student online behaviours in social media spaces. Most of these requests for help were from staff on professional courses (i.e., Nursing, Social Work, etc.) with concerns particularly relating to potentially unprofessional behaviours. In response to these requests, we began to develop guidance that was student-facing, and that staff could also access to guide their advice to students. Our highest priority was placed on student guidance for responsibility and safety, followed by broad-brush guidance in social media in learning and teaching, and case studies for teaching staff along with forums for discussing practice and feeding into guidance.

We developed tri-fold leaflets in 4 areas:

- Using social media for learning,
- Managing your digital footprint,
- How to use social media responsibly, and
- Using social media to enhance your employability.

All guides were available as PDF files for download and content was licensed under a Creative Commons AttributionNonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.



Figure 1. The original tri-fold leaflets produced in 2013.

We developed the guidance through a cross institutional group in 2013 and an updated group has been reconvened in 2023 to refresh the guidance and re-publish with a further Creative Commons licence. With colleagues in different roles, we can share approaches that are specific to the different business needs of the university, so reducing duplication, encouraging openness and with an appreciation of the diversity of how we can use the guidance.

We are now publishing the latest version of the guidance which will reflect the most recent changes in how we use the internet to communicate and share online. We have noticed many differences through our journey from 2013 and we discuss those changes below (see the section ‘What has changed?’)

Development of Community

Alongside the development of written guidance, we also noticed the upsurge in academic scholarly activity and discourse about the use of social media in learning and teaching in higher education. Enthusiasts for social media in learning and researchers in technology enhanced learning lobbied University teaching and learning leaders and in December 2015 we held a conference in social media for learning; “#SocMedHE15” had the overarching theme of using social media for learning in Higher Education and was designed to create a forum for academics, their students, developers, and strategic managers to consider the opportunities, challenges and the disruptive influence of social media for learning (SocMedHE, 2015).

We held the SocMedHE conference at Sheffield Hallam University in 2015, 2016 and 2017. In 2018 the conference moved into being led and owned by a cross institutional social media for learning steering group. Over the last 6 years it has moved from UK higher education institution (HEI) to HEI and was held online in 2020 and 2021. For 2024 we plan to return the conference to Sheffield Hallam University for its celebratory 10th year. The strength of the community surrounding the conference is supported both by interactions using social media, and meeting through in person events. Furthermore, this journal has provided an outlet to publish case studies and research articles in Special Conference Editions.

Development of Understanding

Throughout this period, we were researching various aspects of technology enhanced learning, including the use of social media for learning. In 2020 we published an in-depth study on the experiences and perspectives of social media in learning and teaching in higher education. The study explored some of the challenges that academics have in engaging with social media for learning. We discovered that there were three main perspectives: that of the individual, the pedagogical approach to the use of social media, and the foundational institutional support for using social media. The research demonstrated the critical nature of clarity of institutional position, and we put forward a set of recommendations for institutional support for social media for learning:

“We recommend that institutions should provide:

1. A clear statement about the support and expectations for the use of social media within the university community
2. Support and specific guidance for the use of professional networks which develop staff and student professional identities.
3. Principles for consideration in using social media for learning and teaching.
4. A protocol for guiding how social media accounts are best administered for groups and peer learning.

5. Guidance for dealing with online behaviours and encouraging positive and professional online interactions.
6. Sharing of examples of pedagogic uses of social media in practice.
7. Supporting appropriate risk-taking in exploration of emergent social media technologies.”

(Purvis, Rodger & Beckingham, 2020)

The positioning of our social media guidance and the visible leadership through the support of the conference, are key aspects of this institutional support.

What has changed?

Despite social media being in place in a recognisably social format since the late 1990s (Edosomwan et al., 2011), for example Six Degrees, it did not have a shared understanding until the beginning of the 21st century when the likes of Friendster, Myspace, LinkedIn, YouTube, WordPress, Facebook, and Twitter appeared in the first decade. Indeed, social media is always changing with new technologies and applications shifting the nature of what is ‘social’ and what is ‘media’. Several tools for digital communication could be defined as social media and yet would not be universally recognised as such. Dron and Anderson (2014) use the terms social media and social software interchangeably and include email in their collection of tools. They define social software as media that socially supports interaction one-to-one, one-to-many or many-to-many.

A useful definition that we endorse is that of Nau, Quan-Haase and McCay-Peet (2022: 15): “Social media are web-based and mobile services that allow individuals, communities, and organizations to collaborate, connect, interact, and build community by enabling them to create, co-create, modify, share, and engage with content (user- or bot-generated)”

Our research published in 2020 (Purvis, Rodger & Beckingham, 2020) demonstrated how the ethical considerations relating to using tools was becoming more common. Since that publication ethics and values of the people and companies behind the tools, is increasingly to the forefront of academic decision making (McCarthy et al., 2022).

Alternative and emerging spaces (i.e., Threads, Discord, Snapchat, Signal, TikTok, Mastodon, Zoom, MSTEams), new terminology (moblog, livestreaming, webcasting, vlogging, FOMO, splog, astroturfing – please see glossary below for definitions), and the rebranding of established spaces (Twitter becoming ‘X’) demonstrate the changing nature of social media and digital communication.

Global adoption of social media has risen from 1.8 billion users in 2011 to 4.9 billion in 2023. Threads reached 100 million active users within a week of launching. However, whilst adoption rates in northern and eastern Europe equate to 83% of the population, social media engagement isn’t evenly distributed around the world and women are underrepresented in many parts of Africa (Kemp, 2023). We therefore have a responsibility to support our social media savvy students who are used to using these spaces in a social context as well as our international students who may have little or no experience of social media prior to coming to university.

With misinformation and ‘fake news’, the perpetuation of false information is often difficult to distinguish from well evidenced information and it is becoming more confusing and concerning for users of social media. Artificial Intelligence and bot-generated content has become the latest ‘hot-topic’ in almost every academic learning and teaching conversation in 2023. In this context the university community are still seeking guidance and reassurance in an ever-changing digital environment.

What has not changed

Social media policy and guidance in higher education continues to be variable. In 2012 McNeill's study of 14 universities policies identified that ten were under the responsibility of either HR or marketing (McNeill, 2012). The focus of nine of the policies were on reputation management of the university. Pomerantz et al (2015) conducted a study in the US and found out of 4635 institutions listed in the Carnegie Classification Data File less than one quarter had an accessible social media policy, although some institutions integrated social media policy into other policy documents such as a student code of conduct. These early studies highlighted a need to look beyond corporate communication and reputation, and to consider the implications when used by students in relation to learning and teaching, as well as peer communication in a social context.

A more recent study by Lees in 2018 analysed UK university social media policies for readability and reiterated the lack of attention paid to the use of social media in learning and teaching. A content analysis identified that the documents focussed on how to use social at work but provided almost no guidance on how to use social for work within a university (Lees, 2018:480).

It therefore seems timely to revisit both social media policy and guidance for our students and academics. In this networked world we need to help them become confident and professional users of technology that help them communicate and collaborate, build professional identities and networks, and the ability to take forward these skills to the workplace when they graduate.

Next steps

The guidance we originally produced in 2013 has been updated several times and is being republished in 2023 as we write this paper. We have moved away from the tri-fold leaflet format and have focused on attractive and accessible webpages with animations, images, and downloadable PDFs under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-commercial (CC BY-NC 2.0) license (Sheffield Hallam University, 2023).



Figure 2. The updated guidance documents produced in 2023.

We will continue to update, develop, and challenge our thinking with our approach to social media guidance and our support for its use in learning and teaching.

Glossary

Term	Description
Astroturfing	Deceptive campaigning which falsely presents materials or propaganda as if they were genuine from real customers/clients/participants.
FOMO	Fear of missing out
Lifestreaming	Documenting and sharing daily experiences online
Moblog	Mobile blogging
Splog	A fake blog which promotes spam content
Vlogging	Shortened form of video blogging, blogging in video format
Webcasting	Live video stream of an event such as a conference

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

The Journal of Social Media for Learning 2025

PDT1076 – An Exploration of Foundation Degree Student Experiences of Navigating Digital Communities to Inform Their Undergraduate Studies

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Context

PDT1076 is a module undertaken by students enrolled in the Foundation Degree in Learning and Teaching (FDLT) at the University of Northampton (UK). These students are typically employed or volunteer in support roles with children and young people in various capacities, including Teaching Assistants, Sports Coaches, and Unqualified Teachers (UQTs). The module allows students to engage with a variety of digital technologies, such as BookCreator, Canva, ThingLink, and AR/VR tools, which can provide transformative learning experiences for the children they teach and also inform their pedagogical thinking when teaching children within their individual contexts. The #pdt1076 community was established in the Autumn of 2020, at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, as a way of introducing students to another means of professional networking.

PDT1076 – An Exploration of Foundation Degree Student Experiences of Navigating Digital Communities to Inform Their Undergraduate Studies

#pdt1076 has been used as a means for student practitioners to engage with different communities of practice. Students are provided with scaffolding to support those with different technological affiliations; this involved providing a guide of different communities that support different sectors within the education sector. The purpose of digital networking is emphasized using Siemens' (2005) idea of 'Connectivism', which provides a foundation for #pdt1076. The notion of Connectivism complements how technology can be used as a force for good, rather than being approached using a deficit model. Connectivism supports the idea of social media creating networks and establishing a forum for discussion and sharing practices in all fields, including education.

As a result, students were provided with the time and space to navigate and create a profile on Twitter in line with the university's social networking policy. A Wakelet has been created to capture the learning from the 2022-23 academic year, which can be found here. What can be seen from the Wakelet is a mindful and progressive approach from student practitioners who are motivated to develop their practice through connecting and establishing a secure sense of what it means to have a 'digital identity'.

Boyd (2014) details how educators can benefit from frequent interactions on Networked Publics, with interviews with teachers and practitioners in the USA providing evidence of how their practice has benefitted from engaging in Communities of Practice. Boyd (2014) coined the term 'Networked Publics' as a way of demonstrating the power of social media in creating hubs of communities based on interests, values, and offline dynamics. Students have observed their online communities grow in a meaningful way, with the 2022-23 academic year being the best year for engagement with #pdt1076.

From the perspective of the facilitator of learning, due consideration is needed for how students engage with the subject matter. Consequently, students have been observed sharing their practice within their communities, thereby contributing to their day jobs and creating transformative opportunities for children in their contexts. Increased engagement has led to some interesting opportunities for their own CPD, including potential dissertation participants. However, there are some further considerations to be had. Facilitation can often lead to engagements taking place outside of the classroom, especially where student absence has meant students have had to catch up in their own time. Due consideration is needed for those who deem themselves to be 'technological novices'. Frequently, students have become upset when they feel they are 'out of their depth' at this stage of their degree. This is common, particularly for first-generation Higher Education students (Day et al., 2005), as students often reflect on their experiences of starting undergraduate study as overwhelming. The subject matter pertaining to sessions like #pdt1076 can sometimes exacerbate feelings of imposter syndrome.

Concluding Thoughts:

With the increased use of online networks by educational professionals, it is hard to ignore the benefits of networking, particularly for students who are returning to their studies after a prolonged absence, whereby being introduced to online networking can provide a platform for deeper learning opportunities. However, it is important to be aware of the nuances that could be introduced when introducing students to the concepts mentioned. Students can often feel overwhelmed and may need reassurance when introduced to online networking as a concept. Platforms such as TweetBeam and Wakelet can provide a better sense of immersion within the learning environment. The stance taken when introducing #pdt1076 was progressive but aware of the issues some students may face when engaging with online technologies.

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The Journal of Social Media for Learning 2025

"Hello, you and I haven't met in person before, but..." Social media for community building and self-development.

Kiu Sum
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Abstract

Social media has become a significant tool for professional development and community building. This paper reflects on the transformative impact of social media on the author's career within Higher Education (HE). Navigating the challenges and opportunities in HE has been shaped by engaging with various social media forums. The author shares their personal account of how social media has played a pivotal role in overcoming challenges, building a professional community, and fostering growth.

Keywords

Social media, community, professional development, higher education

"Hello, you and I haven't met in person before, but..." Social media for community building and self-development.

In today's digital age, introducing oneself to colleagues often happens through non-traditional networks like social media. Something I never considered, but the above quote has given me a fresh perspective on communication and networking. My journey in professional development and community building within Higher Education (HE) has been instrumental in shaping my career path. As an Early Career Researcher, identifying aspirations is just the beginning; overcoming challenges and navigating the pitfalls of being a newcomer is equally important. Nevertheless, through various HE social media forums, I have had the opportunity to connect with colleagues, explore new interests, and uncover exciting avenues for growth. While it has been all very exciting, the abundance of choices can often be as confusing as it can be. In this paper, I aim to share a personal account that reflects on how social media has played a pivotal role in overcoming my challenges (Sum, 2023), building my professional community and fostering my growth in higher education.

Social media has profoundly impacted my professional growth and community building. It goes beyond simply staying updated on the latest news; it has provided me with a platform to connect with like-minded professionals and develop my professional identity. One unexpected community I stumbled upon was LTHEchat (Learning and Teaching in Higher Education chat), a weekly Twitter chat open to anyone in Higher Education and enables the opportunity for colleagues to share practices with others (for more details: <https://lthechat.com/about/>). I first "joined" the conversation when someone whom I met at a student engagement conference mentioned it and, by "accident" to my naivety and curiosity, explored what the group is.

Before I "met" LTHEchat, my use of social media was superficial, mainly speculating on following my immediate disciplinary areas of interest. However, discovering LTHEchat and its vibrant community completely changed my perspective on professional development and the wider HE community. For example, participating in the weekly #LTHEchat discussions exposed me to new learning and teaching topics and allowed me to engage with field experts. I can still recall that feeling of intimidation during my initial interactions, lacking the confidence to contribute anything meaningful when I felt so unqualified to other #LTHEchat-ers. Perhaps this was my position at that time, a student still very earlier on in my educational journal, but I did not know what to do other than just passively observe the live conversations to curate content that would "sound satisfactory amongst experts in the area". It is that same feeling when you go to your first "big adult meeting or conferences", and there are the "well-known people in the field" whom you aspire to be but are just too shell-shocked knowing what to do. Except on social media, when everything is online, it is a different experience compared to in-person interactions (well... firstly, there is no eye contact and body language that you can find clues in... but the advantage of this is that you can hide behind a screen..).

However, over time, regular participation boosted my confidence and enabled me to develop my own voice within the community. (Not only that, but if you know about #LTHEchat, then you need to have very good eyes and fingers agility to keep up with the endless stream of comments, not to mention the random multimedia messages!). It has also expanded my awareness of the HE landscape, allowing me to absorb fresh ideas, theories, and practices that I could apply in my roles as an aspiring educator. Being part of the LTHEchat community helped me shape my professional identity and discover how to contribute to the HE sector and the community. Reflecting on my professional development, LTHEchat stands out as a transformative community that has broadened my career horizons, pushed the boundaries of my disciplinary interests, and fostered unconventional and creative thinking. It has undoubtedly shaped my perspective and equipped me with a multidisciplinary mindset, which is increasingly vital in today's diverse and interconnected world of work.

Participating in #LTHEchat has been a transformative and enriching experience for me, leading to unexpected connections and new projects. Initially, engaging with colleagues I would have never considered meeting (and secretly feeling like an imposter) felt strange, particularly if you are a student. It felt like "I was running late for an important meeting, crept in through the back door of the wrong room, thinking I knew what I was doing, yet the topic was so interesting than I anticipated that I stayed for it". In other words, having direct conversations and connecting with more experienced colleagues in the field felt unexpected. As a result, what makes this experience truly wonderful is the acceptance and openness of the community, embracing newcomers like myself (if you have not done so, I would encourage you to try or observe from a distance). Through #LTHEchat, I have had the opportunity to learn valuable skills that go beyond the classroom and discover unknown gaps, constantly fueling my curiosity and prompting me to ask more questions. This experience has allowed me to apply my knowledge and collaborate with colleagues on projects that have broadened my understanding of higher education. It has provided a taste of academic life and opened doors I might not have discovered otherwise. I am grateful for the chance to gain real-world work experience and expand my perspectives through my involvement in #LTHEchat.

However, social media has evolved beyond a mere global news feed or a leisurely activity of exercising those fingers of scrolling through (or perhaps training those fingers for the next #LTHEchat). But it has become a powerful tool for enhancing learning and technology in education (Dunn, 2013). Research has shown that social media can transform the educational experience, empowering learners to take ownership of their education and fostering professional development (Purvis et al., 2016, 2020). By embracing social media in my role within higher education, I can learn to leverage its potential to enrich the classroom environment. Utilising social media for educational purposes allows for sharing best practices, forming new connections, and exploring disciplinary topics in innovative ways. Thus, if we are to question ways of engagement, social media can serve as a platform to raise awareness, spark conversations, and engage students and colleagues in a non-traditional and dynamic educational landscape.

Conclusion

In conclusion, my journey of using social media for learning and teaching has been a continuous learning experience. It is striking a balance between leveraging its advantages and avoiding excessive use. The evolving nature of technology and social media brings an element of curiosity, particularly in how they can be harnessed for professional development and community-building. It is fascinating to witness the power of social media in fostering connections, facilitating conversations, and building online communities with colleagues. These virtual interactions lay a solid foundation for real-life meetings, eliminating initial awkwardness and enabling meaningful conversations right from the start. Reflecting on my own experiences, I recognise the potential of social media as a valuable tool for students' professional development. By incorporating innovative technological tools, we can offer students alternative approaches to their career growth. As we navigate this ever-changing technological landscape, it is crucial to ponder the personal significance of social media. Has it contributed to your community building and professional development? If so, let us join forces as advocates for its use in learning and teaching, ensuring that students can fully experience the benefits of their own career development.

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Disclosure statement

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Supporting First Generation Students with Discord

Mike Bass
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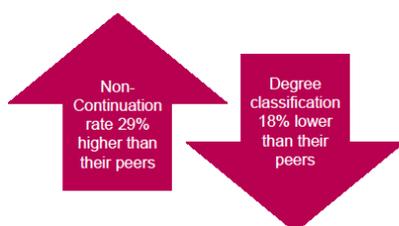
Supporting First Generation Students with Discord

Mike Bass
Sheffield Hallam University

Who Are First Generation Students (FGS)?

The first in their family to attend university and account for almost half of all new student enrolments.

What's the Issue?



Aims and Objectives

- Review of existing support mechanisms for FGS.
- Identification of factors affecting FGS progression and outcomes.
- Investigation of learning technologies to support student progression.
- Design of technology intervention.
- Qualitative analysis of FGS satisfaction and social presence.
- Quantitative analysis of FGS attendance and assessment outcomes.

The Literature

What does the literature say the issues are?



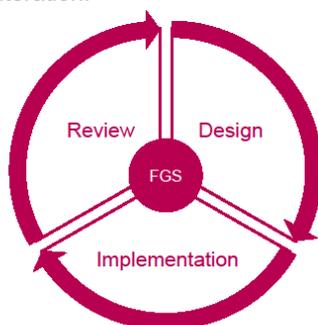
What is Discord?

A voice, video and text app used to create invite-only communities. Automated bots enable integration with VLE's such as Blackboard to build a single point of contact for social and educational content.



Methodology

A practitioner-led design research methodology. The research participants for whom the intervention is intended to support have been central to the design, implementation and subsequent evolution of each iteration.



Over the course of several focus groups the participants selected Discord as the platform whose technological affordances closest matched the issues identified in the literature. This was then used to create a community where staff and students could upload files, live stream and post questions using both a web and mobile app interface. The automated bot features of Discord aided with removing some of the mundane repetitive tasks.

Results

After a slow start filled with technical problems but a great deal of perseverance from all parties concerned, when compared to their continuing generation peers, the first iteration concluded:



The initial results have demonstrated a higher than anticipated level of student engagement with the technology platform. Regular communication between peers for both on and off-topic subjects has been evidenced with minimal academic staff involvement.

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The Journal of Social Media for Learning 2025

Globalization, Technologies, and Digital Culture in Graduate Contexts: Intercultural Possibilities and Challenges

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Abstract

This study focused on interculturally juxtaposing different higher education communities' experiences with digital culture and technologies. The dialogues created among researchers from three different countries – Brazil, Canada, and the UK – contribute to an exchange of reflections and problematizations of what innovative and ubiquitous pedagogical practices are like. For the past few years, especially due to COVID-19, researchers have identified the impact of digital culture on educational practices in different universities, highlighting there is a need to further understand the relationship between the advancements in digital culture and its outcomes for innovative educational practices. The participants in the study helped the research team to consider the possibilities and challenges of digital culture in education by sharing perspectives on: 1) the conception educational communities in universities have about innovation, educational practices and digital culture; and 2) the relationship of instructors, students, and other members of the educational community (e.g.; secretaries, deans, head of departments) toward educational practices that include innovation, and digital culture in their day-to-day practices. Our discussions broadened the notions of innovation, and digital culture in educational practices by inviting professionals from universities from different contexts to reflect on intercultural aspects that shape new dialogues to negotiate tensions among educational practices within digital culture.

Keywords

Digital culture; Innovation; Intercultural; Higher education; Globalization.

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Globalization, Technologies, and Digital Culture in Graduate Contexts: Intercultural Possibilities and Challenges

Introduction

This paper is a snapshot of a larger research study whose objectives were to understand some of the possibilities and challenges of digital culture in graduate contexts – Brazil, Canada, and the UK. Along with theories on the impact of globalization, technologies, and digital culture in education, our discussions inform the potentialities and challenges of digital culture in community building and development in higher education.

Globalization, technologies, and digital culture have indeed modified the notions within higher education programs (Hassan et al., 2022; Tight, 2021). Some examples of ongoing changes in the field relate to the fast and vast flow of information, access to information, and the interconnection among people from different communities. Undoubtedly, the conceptualization of globalization, technologies, and digital culture has inferred positive outcomes in the current higher education contexts (Anka, 2019). However, because of the many ways one can identify the impact of these aspects in educational scenarios, this study explored intercultural perspectives that can confront meanings and innovate practices (Lemoine & Richardson, 2019).

Globalization, technologies, and digital culture have been synonyms of improvement and advancement, and consequently, this view has masked social issues such as racial discrimination and identity marginalization, as well as reinforced a neoliberal ideology that validates capital over knowledge construction (Canagarajah, 2012; Ferraz, 2018; Godwin-Jones, 2017; Kumaravadivelu, 2012; Moura, 2015). By considering these factors from an economic point of view, for example, globalization, technologies, and digital culture are represented rather poorly in universities today (Whittemore, 2018). For example, the idea that globalization, technologies, and digital culture contribute to quicker increases in profit is a strategic move that institutions have used to attract clientele (e.g., students). Wisely, the global university market makes investments in ads and social media and propagates its multi-millionaire numbers, and unfortunately, a great portion of society sees those numbers as the most appropriate form of knowing if those institutions are doing well or not within a globalized world.

Technology itself, from a neoliberal perspective (Moore et al., 2021), represents devices and artifacts with the latest trends in commands and software. From the smallest devices such as iPods to bigger ones like automobiles, technology has significantly been related to advancement and autonomy. The access to those pieces of information and the spread of idealized educational standards have been possible due to digital culture (Mihelj et al., 2019). The latter works as a means to consolidate hegemonic cultures through globalization which are often represented by the market as the wealthiest places to study, shape a successful career, and better the chances of making money.

The rich outcomes of being in a globalized and high-tech educational institution have shaped local learners' understandings of hegemonic cultures, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic (Abu Talib et al., 2021; Moore et al., 2021). Consequently, if universities are able to sell themselves as both wealthy and technologically equipped, those places would absolutely solidify their economy and politics. The messages being conveyed in higher education today state that with more capital, one has more chances to be globalized (Liu, 2020). Additionally, with more capital, one becomes better technologically served, after all, iPhones are the latest trends for mobile devices with their software speed and highly protected hardware systems, and laptops become essential in doing and developing one's job. Consumerism, therefore, is key to identifying some outcomes of globalization, technologies, and digital culture within the current society.

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When considering globalization and technology, society undoubtedly benefits from them too. Information is everywhere and there is access to it at any time. The sense of interconnectedness has played an extremely important role in people as they know facts from different parts of the world (Anka, 2019; Liu, 2020). Knowing what goes on around the globe shapes people's identities as new values and beliefs are shared amongst people. By the simple duty of learning about different cultures on a web search, people have gotten enough to reconsider their concepts and change or reinforce their ideas and positionalities. In theory, the more access you have to information, the more you can negotiate and provide some ground for your thinking.

Indeed, globalization does portray a diverse range of realities. Looking at it from Ferraz's (2018) perspective, globalization can actually serve society from a top-down scale, as much as from a bottom-up scale. Both are more common in cultural studies (Canagarajah, 2002; 2012; Kumaravadivelu, 2008; 2012), thus globalization and technology are dealt within two extremes: one that looks at the elite who profits from capital gain through investments in big corporations, and the other which reflects communities from the grassroots, or communities that have been marginalized but that have shown new ideas and challenged some mainstream patterns of behaviour.

Overall, this paper is an attempt to broaden the debates on the significance of globalization, technologies, and digital culture in higher education programs. This was a qualitative research study that focused on the perspectives of Brazilian, Canadian, and English participants (e.g., educators, administrators, and staff), who were considered both protagonists and subjects during the investigation process. We conducted 23 semi-structured interviews with professors, administrators, students, and employees from three universities located in those three countries. We relied on post-Critical research methodologies (Meyer & Paraíso, 2012) in order to expand our ways of seeing, deconstructing and reconstructing different investigation processes, seeking to invent and reinvent the construction movements of different knowledge.

The different perspectives, explored here, are useful to locally and globally reflect on educational practices that propose more diverse, authentic, and critical learning. In order to defend critical learning, Kumaravadivelu's (2003; 2012) notion of a sustainable challenge is an addition to the existing paradigms of knowledge. That means making use of hybrid approaches for teaching in which educators ought to rethink their practices and critically encompass diversity in teaching. Moreover, in addressing and being aware of hegemonies, higher education contexts have the space to challenge standardized kinds of knowledge (Block & Cameron, 2002).

There is no global norm other than realizing and accepting people who come from different places with different experiences. Rather than fitting everyone in the same box, globalization, technologies, and digital culture must operate in a matter of considering the dissimilarities of society and contributing to new and diverse knowledge construction. Believing in the art of research, we risk questioning the data produced in order to understand the phenomenon in focus. Some results show the importance of interculturality, ecological pedagogy, and innovation as possibilities and challenges in the context of digital culture in graduate studies across the globe.

Digital culture: Interculturality, ecological pedagogy and innovation

Faced with an increasingly digitized society, we face the challenge of rethinking our educational practices and going beyond those we have been used to for a long time. With ongoing changes in notions of time and space (Santaella, 2003; 2021), educators are invited to rethink how they can hybridize cultural exchanges, constructions and productions of different types of knowledge. In addition to a technical perspective of focusing on the technology itself, as Martín-Barbero (2003, p. 281) stated, there is a belief that "[...] the study of tech usability forces us, then, to shift the space from interest of the media to the place where its meaning is produced [...]". Therefore, educational practices at universities ought to understand the digital culture from the needs, desires, and appropriations that such a community has of it.

Regarding digital culture, Santaella (2003) foregrounds this study as she considers digital culture to be a derivation of the evolution of other cultures, or passages from one culture to others according to the process of evolution of humanity. Looking at how meaning-making processes have orally and written developed, they have enabled individuals to experience cultural exchanges through the masses, the media and the several digital forms (Santaella, 2003; 2021). There are cumulative and substitutive processes of old tech supports for new ones, including other and different technological means, producing media hybridity. According to the theories that inform this study, digital culture has to be conceptualized beyond its technological determinism, one that emerges from its uses and social appropriations of everyday life (Almeida e Silva, 2014).

Due to the different possibilities that digital culture provides, such as sharing, remixes and hybridizations, other ways of building and socializing knowledge emerge, which defines digital culture as of the "future" (Silva & Alonso, 2018). In addition, as Lemos (2013) points out, digital culture is the product of a synergy between the technological and the social, which urges educators to understand whether it is necessary to adopt a multidisciplinary approach along with its dimensions of use, consumption, and appropriation. In the context of this study, digital cultures emerge in settings of use of socio-digital networks, in different times and spaces, with other and different configurations.

Undeniably, we are living in the era of the "Internet of things" (Lemos & Lévy, 2010), where everything communicates and is part of a broader network. Devices and objects are interconnected, enabling the creation of information and communication networks, informing our daily experiences and, moreover, our academic interrelationships. There is potential for collective and collaborative (Mihelj et al., 2019; Santaella, 2023; Tight, 2021) learning supported by cyberspace, with plural and participatory social and communication dynamics.

From this perspective, between gaps and fissures (Whittemore, 2018), interculturality allows us to think and promote more dialogic and egalitarian relationships between groups with different cultural spaces (Candau, 2005). As researchers, we do not want to say that power relations are inexistent in digital culture's different scenarios, but by recognizing and assuming those dynamics exist, we will be able to seek strategies to face them.

The digital possibilities enable transformations such as breaking a hegemonic discourse and creating ecological pedagogies (Miranda & Pischetola, 2021), which cross different knowledge, experiences, concepts, and environments, promoting more reflective practices. According to Miranda and Pischetola (2021), in addition, ecological pedagogy teaches us that our educational practices can be redefined, reformulated, and redesigned in a more collaborative way.

Under these redesigns, innovation (Mill & Pimentel, 2020) can emerge, as long as it is accompanied by curricular changes and the introduction of new teaching and learning processes, ideas, people, and materials. According to Leite (2012), technological innovation must accompany pedagogical innovation and the latter must respond to the social commitment to the human development of teachers and students.

By considering the impact of globalization on the development of educational technology tools and the role of the digital culture in higher education contexts, below we present some methodological choices adopted in this study.

Methods

This is a qualitative research study that followed a post-Critical approach. By post-Critical (Meyer & Paraíso, 2012; 2014), such perspective is translated into understanding and developing research methodologies believing that:

[...] we build our ways of researching moving in various ways: back and forth, from one side to the other, from the sides to the center, making contours, curves, moving away and approaching. We distance ourselves from what is rigid, essences, convictions, universals, the task of prescribing and all concepts and thoughts that do not help us build images of powerful thoughts to interrogate and describe-analyze our object. We approach those thoughts that move us and put our questions in check. We move to prevent the 'paralysis' of the information we produce and that we need to describe-analyze. We move, in short, to multiply meanings, forms, and struggles. (Meyer & Paraíso, 2014, p. 18-19)

We used semi-structured interviews, combining closed and open questions on the topic of digital culture articulated with educational practices. We had 23 participants, who were members of three different universities: one from the Midwest of Brazil; another from east-central England; and a third one from central Canada. Among the participants who got involved in the study, they can be put into different categories: department heads/managers, professors/instructors, grad students, and employees of varied programs (e.g., Education, Peace and Conflict, Tech Education, Biology, etc). We sought to listen to the participants share their narratives and aimed at delving into the meanings they created. We maintained the anonymity of the participants and went through the ethics committee for the development of this research.

The interviews took place online, via Google Meet, and were recorded and transcribed for later analysis. Under the umbrella of the role of digital culture in the participants' contexts, the themes that emerged include innovation, ubiquity, educational practices, technologies, and interculturality. We read, organized, and discussed the data as a team in order to understand the specifics of each program. The data that is explored in this paper, in particular, focuses on the possibilities and challenges we identified when working with the digital culture in different contexts.

We assumed a methodological perspective that meets what Meyer and Paraíso (2012, p. 272-273) list as paths and procedures:

“to doubt the instituted by giving up homogeneous and fixed meanings and concepts; to assume theoretical approaches that encourage the denaturalization and problematization of the things we learn by giving up the concern to locate cause and effect relationships, origins, and processes of evolution; to take the examination of power as a central element of the texts under analysis by relating conditions of emergence of the subject positions and/or objects studied; to strange what is accepted as normal by denaturalizing it”.

Unpacking Participants' Experiences

We sought to understand what the participants expressed about digital culture in the context of the *Stricto Sensu* Graduate Programs and the results pointed to two overarching themes: the possibilities and challenges one can face given their situated practices. We stress that we aimed at working with the “[...] intersubjective, [and that] human understanding requires openness to the other, empathy, and sympathy” (Morin, 2015, p. 73). Moreover, “human understanding requires comprehension, but above all, it requires seeing the other and that the other lives” (Morin, 2015, p. 80).

Identifying the Possibilities

Connection and empathy were points presented by a Canadian Manager when thinking about the possibilities that digital technologies foster in and outside of the classrooms:

[...] I am very interested in the power of the possibilities within technology for fostering connection and empathy. [...] I am very concerned with finding ways to use developments in technology both in and out of the classroom. Not just to connect students, to bodies of knowledge, but to connect the university to the wider community.

The connection mentioned by the participant goes beyond the teacher-student relationship. Additionally, fostering connection and empathy (Friesem, 2016; Walker & Venker Weidenbenner, 2019) among students in a classroom and the other stakeholders reshapes individuals' knowledge and the participants' sense of belonging to different communities. In this sense, valuing empathy and other experiences, which come and go from beyond the four walls of the classroom, is an example of integrating digital tools to innovate the outcomes that will be reflected outside of these educational institutions.

In this sense, analyzing the impact of COVID-19 in higher education and the movement toward appropriating different technologies and online software into pedagogies, there is potential to re-signify educational practices and experiences: “[...] now with the pandemic, everything has changed, it doesn't seem like those classes [...] it changed, I had to readapt” (Brazilian Professor). According to Santos (2018), to be an educator means to act in complexity, which makes individuals open to other learning possibilities, question patterns that might have been imposed on them, and investigate how their acts as educators foment critical social transformation. Santos (2018) further suggests that educators need to learn how to ask themselves how and why they teach, so their pedagogical choices match some of the social gaps we find today.

Indeed, the appropriation of digital technologies and transition to a more immersed practice in digital culture offers insights into changes in pedagogical approaches (Blundell et al., 2020; Weis et al. 2002). However, is such a practice embracing all its opportunities or just maintaining a pedagogy supported by non-situated, binary, uncritical, hierarchical, and linear conceptions? The possibilities that digital culture can provide when we take advantage of the critical uses of digital technologies emerge when subsidized by formative processes, those that provide opportunities for the constructions of different knowledge aligned with contextual needs (Blundell et al., 2020; Lemos & Lévy, 2010; Weis et al. 2002).

For the Brazilian Coordinator:

People need to get closer to this and, above all, they need to learn to use it, and they need help to be able to learn to use it. Because not everyone is self-taught in all fields of knowledge. And especially when fields of knowledge provide things that have a certain degree of sophistication, which is another type of sophistication compared to the sophistication that person is used to and in which he moves comfortably as a researcher and as a teacher. So, I think that training programs are needed there. More serious and less occasional training programs to be able to make this transition in mentality.

Transformations can occur loaded with supposed innovations. However, we understand as Cardoso (1993) argued, that innovation needs to be intentional and to break into a current situation. Once that type of innovation is performed, educators will be able to contribute to the modification of something instituted in the educational reality, sometimes imposed by the management itself. Therefore, the digital culture in all its flexible features (e.g., time, space, accessibility), allows us to revisit, extend, and (re)create our practices. According to the English Manager, for example:

[...] my number one is flexibility. I think it gives us a chance [...] it helps us to meet the needs of students, [...] engagement, [...] the speed. [...] But there are all sorts of reasons why students might benefit from a chance to revisit material, revisit an engagement sometimes. And you can share it with apps and people which is brilliant, and I know pros and cons of that in terms of participation, but I think the fact that you can [...] in a session is wonderful. I really like the fact that you can extend and augment something, create something together in a session, you can record it, layer it, add to it. (Adm1-UK)

Perhaps the possibility of revisiting pedagogies contributes to sustainable education that helps us also encounter the possibility of reconnection (Burbules et al., 2020). According to Morin (2015), the reconnection of human beings with nature and the cosmos can provide a deeper dialogue between scientific and humanist cultures. By situating ourselves in the universe, we can understand how local and global forces connect to each other (Burbules et al., 2020; Morin, 2015).

Therefore, the need to analyze the conditions and requirements of the contexts and communities in which such innovative practices are taking place is essential for unveiling challenges that could emerge. This analysis, which is often restricted to the psycho-pedagogical and technical dimensions (Ferreti, 2011), should dismantle socio-political and educational one-size-fits-all realities. Consequently, innovation in this regard urges us to reflect on the reason why we employ such concepts in our practices (Friesem, 2016; Leite, 2012).

Learning from the Challenges

From this study, we understand that digital culture is permeated by power dynamics and social structures (Friesem, 2016; Walker & Venker Weidenbenner, 2019). In higher education environments, especially in the Graduate Programs observed in this study, people share opinions, experiences, practices, and knowledge, and reproduce social behaviours whether in-person or virtually. It is important to recognize that digital culture is not neutral and that digital technologies are not impartial (Duncombe, 2019). Although they may envision a democratic environment, it is important to consider who such alleged democratization benefits (Bernholz, 2021). Inequalities emerge with a view that everyone is equal, with the same possibilities of access and expression of their voices:

"[...] I do not consider that this digital world is a world that will fit everyone and that everyone will fit [...] some processes of social inequalities assert themselves as this digital culture comes to be an almost unavoidable condition for us to live our contemporary life" (Brazilian Manager).

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Surely, the digital culture enables cultural flows characterized by the access to different forms of reading and constantly developing of communication skills and the establishment of interpersonal and intercultural relationships (Canclini, 2018). However, such digital flows, marked by the fluidity, instability, and dynamism of relationships, pose challenges from less authoritarian and hierarchical educational practices: "I am always connected; this is very good for an administrator. For the university, it is good, for the management process, it is good. But for the individual, sometimes I don't think it is good. Why don't I ever disconnect, it causes a significant pressure increase" (Brazilian Manager).

Another challenge found in these participants' experiences was the intensification of the teaching load. With the possibility of being present on several platforms at once, the educator can end up having to manage a large volume of information and interactions with students and colleagues at the same time. In addition, the need to maintain a constant presence on social networks can lead to an overload of work, as the educator becomes available to students outside of conventional working hours (Recuero, 2014). According to the Canadian Manager:

I don't know anybody who's really enjoying this process and finding it better than being physically present in the classroom. I don't know anybody who's finding it an improvement. I think some people are appreciating the blended learning opportunities and the ability, you know, there are different ways to structure knowledge, acquisition, so that it's not just one thing, but a lot of us, you know, especially after a day of zoom meetings, you know, I can have six hours of zoom meetings and then a three-hour class [...] I feel my work is crowding out every other part of my life. And I'm not enjoying that feeling very much. This is the kind of job. And I know, you know, that can take up all of your life if you let it. And I think it's always a challenge to strike a balance between work and life, especially if you're doing something you genuinely care about. So, you think about it all the time, you know, I think there's important weights that I need to segment my life in order to be productive. And I think the ubiquity of this technology and its intersection with my recreational technologies, [...] it's just something that's unwelcoming.

The challenges exist and need to be highlighted so that a distorted image of the implications of digital culture in the practices of educational communities is not established (Almeida & Silva, 2014; Hassan et al., 2022). There is an inequality of access to technology, which can lead to digital and educational exclusion (Moore et al., 2021), and digital technologies can overwhelm educational practices when used excessively. Therefore, it is important that we are aware of their benefits and risks so that we can carefully consider which tools to use in establishing educational practices that are more inclusive, beneficial, and inspirational to other forms of knowledge (Miranda & Pischetola, 2021).

Furthering Debates

We can open space for further debates from what was presented and discussed in this work. We know that innovation accompanies digital culture, but that it needs to be situated, occurring in specific contexts and developed not from a top-down stream. Moreover, innovation should be developed in a collaborative way, in this case, involving all educational community members in decision-making, and considering creative troubleshooting skills according to local needs.

As seen in this paper, the notions of globalization's impacts in higher education fall into two main distinctions. First, globalization has either reinforced or challenged the notion of knowledge. Second, globalization has undoubtedly emphasized technological use as the main feature of a more globalized and modern classroom (Godwin-Jones, 2017; Kumaravadivelu, 2008; 2012; Schmidt, 1990; Thorne, Smith & Smith, 2015). Indeed, globalization reinforces the notion of knowledge if educators passively ignore how digital culture reconfigures the flow of information, the reshaping of new identities, and the global awareness of their students. Once these are not considered in educational settings, educators start from a point that everyone has or should have the same knowledge, which implicates marginalization of non-mainstreamed ways of knowing. (Thorne, Smith & Smith, 2015; Warschauer, 2002)

The current status of education should be celebrating diversity and multiplicity, challenging hegemonies, and seeking other alternatives for interpretation and expression (Thorne, Smith & Smith, 2015; Warschauer, 2002). Unfortunately, as much as digital culture provides freedom, individuality, and originality, it also emphasizes coloniality and it is not an entirely benign outcome of globalization (Block & Cameron, 2002). Being aware of that means demystifying what we understand by digital culture learning today.

In addition, we must remember the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on our lives, including education, opened up the existing inequalities in relation to access to technologies, and the necessary conditions to teach and learn with quality and sustainability (Burbules et al., 2020). We question how much we know about technologies in the sense that they can provide us with better spaces and times for discussions, learning, exchanges, and the production of different knowledge and cultures.

Questioning what technologies have done in our lives is fundamental, but also is what we have done with them to improve our coexistence. These are some concerns that haunt us. A relevant question within this matter should also reflect the preparedness of educators when dealing with globalization and technology in classrooms. A perspective on how new educators are being exposed to such tools in their education (Faez & Valeo, 2012; Larsen-Freeman, 2018; RLG, 2014) shows that higher education programs have taken globalization and technology for granted. Both have become so naturalized in our society that programs believe individuals know how to approach and use globalization and technology in their favour in their education.

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Materialism and the De-Influencing Trend: Classroom Applications

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Abstract

A new trend on social media, coined “de-influencing,” is reshaping the way Generation Z (Gen Z) views mass consumerism. Gen Z’s Shifting position on consumerism, moral values, and relationships with rising influencers is the dominant explanation for the trend's popularity. Like the Hollywood celebrities of the past, micro-influencers are becoming recognizable icons whose endorsement and influence are valued by this generation. Using a meta-analysis of current publications, the article considers the magnitude of Gen Z’s shifting interests and the economic impact this may have on consumer goods. The article extends its findings to the academic world by providing concrete suggestions for teaching the subject in the classroom.

Keywords

TikTok, Social Media, Micro-Influencers, Consumerism, Marketing

A case study using Instagram to create an online learning environment

In the past few years, TikTok has emerged as a powerful platform for social and cultural trends. One such trend, known as the "de-influencing trend," has been reshaping the way Generation Z (Gen Z) views mass consumerism, influencer culture, and the values they hold dear. This article delves into the rise of micro-influencers on TikTok, explores the changing values of Gen Z, and discusses how educators can incorporate this movement into communication disciplines such as marketing and public relations to foster critical thinking among students.

In the age of social media and digital connectivity, the role of influencers in shaping consumer behavior has never been more significant. However, as Gen Z emerges as a dominant force in the market, their values and preferences are reshaping the influencer landscape. The changing values of Gen Z and the emergence of the de-influencer movement are interconnected phenomena that reflect evolving attitudes and priorities in the digital age. Gen Z, born between the late 1990s and early 2010s, has grown up in a world dominated by social media and digital technology. As they have come of age, their values and expectations have diverged from those of previous generations. One notable reflection of this shift is the rise of the de-influencer movement. This term stems from influencers being increasingly candid about not endorsing certain viral products. Their rationale is to avoid encouraging excessive consumption. To this end, many influencers are now advocating for alternative products that are more budget-friendly than popularly shared products. Their messages convey a clear and direct message: These products are excessively hyped and unnecessary. Additionally, they engage in discussions regarding sustainability and the economic toll of waste within specific sectors, such as the beauty and fashion industries. To begin our conversation on the trend, we must understand the overall shift to influencers and why it attracts Gen Z.

Rise of Micro-Influencers

Influencer marketing has evolved since its inception, initially taking the form of celebrity endorsements. Before social media, a select group of famous individuals with vast followings monopolized advertising campaigns, yet the sheer size of their audiences sometimes translated into substantial sales. Today, the landscape of influencer marketing has diversified, encompassing influencers with audiences of varying scales. It is not solely the mega-influencers reaping substantial profits; micro-influencers, with smaller yet deeply engaged followings, are also securing a piece of the pie. Micro-influencers, with smaller but highly engaged audiences, have emerged as trusted voices in social media. Unlike mega-influencers with millions of followers, audiences of micro-influencers perceive them as credible and relatable. Their credibility stems from their authentic and relatable content, which often centers around niche interests or firsthand experiences.

The impact of Influencers comes as social media has become crucial for marketing products and services – especially to younger consumers. A 2019 study showed that 87% of people surveyed followed a brand, visited its website, or purchased online after they saw a product advertised on social media, making visual platforms such as Instagram and TikTok lucrative for promotions (Meta, 2019). However, one issue with influencer marketing is oversaturation; exponential user growth has led to a surge in influencers, overwhelming audiences with choices. Therefore, today's social media users are much savvier in influencer marketing due to an overabundance of product promotions and brand partnerships from creators. Therefore, the overabundance of product promotion and partnerships has made social media users keenly aware of influencer marketing.

As a result, Gen Z loses interest in products if the partnered advertisement seems inauthentic. HubSpot (2022) conducted a study that found that 33% of Gen Z have purchased based on an influencer's recommendation in the past three months to establish trust in that brand. The diverse differences of influencers are applicable as a form of horizontal product differentiation, aka its distinctive factor making it stand out among the competition (Cong & Li, 2023). Throughout 2022, global companies and brands allocated a generous portion of their marketing budgets, paying over \$16.4 billion to various influencers (Sanora, 2023). The 2022 numbers are up from \$13.8 billion in 2021 and \$1.7 billion in 2016 (Enberg 2022). In 2021, Gen Z, quickly gained the most purchasing power of any generation, holding over \$360 billion in disposable income in 2021 and over 25 % of the global income by 2030 (Winck 2020), more than double the pre-COVID-19 estimates (Pollard 2021). The digital landscape suggests that the Gen Z and Millennial cohorts are the most significant consumers responsible for online purchases (Nielsen 2017). This number is estimated to increase to \$33 trillion by 2030 as the generation ages and more join the workforce (Winck 2020).

Gen Z places a high premium on authenticity and relatability when assessing celebrity credibility. Individuals who share their real-life experiences, struggles, and passions are most enticing to Gen Z. These qualities often make digital celebrities more relatable and trustworthy in their eyes. The 2019 The Influencer Report survey highlights that 69% of Gen Z respondents believe authenticity is the most essential quality for influencers. This emphasis on authenticity underscores the changing dynamics of celebrity credibility. Furthermore, trust in influencers is growing, as the number of Gen Z and millennials who said they trust social media influencers increased from 51% in 2019 to 61% in 2023 (Morning Consult Pro, 2023).

One of the critical reasons micro-influencers hold greater credibility and trust among Gen Z is their authenticity. These influencers often create content that displays their real lives, struggles, and passions, making them more relatable. In contrast with more prominent celebrity influencers, these influencers are not promoting these products or services purely for financial gain. Gen Z appreciates influencers who prioritize genuine connections with their audience and are willing to share their firsthand experiences, even if they are imperfect. Furthermore, micro-influencers often focus on niche interests or industries, positioning themselves as experts. Gen Z, a generation known for valuing individuality and niche hobbies, is likelier to trust influencers who share their passions. When micro-influencers engage within these niches authentically, Gen Z perceives their recommendations as valuable and trustworthy. This trend challenges mass consumerism by encouraging more selective and thoughtful purchasing decisions, leading to more informed consumer choices.

Microcelebrities heavily influence Gen Z's media consumption patterns. They watch their YouTube videos, follow their Instagram stories, and participate in challenges or trends started by these influencers. As a result, microcelebrities significantly impact the content Gen Z consumes and creates. Micro-influencers often build close-knit communities with their followers, fostering a sense of belonging and shared values. Gen Z, driven by a desire for genuine connections and a sense of purpose, is drawn to these communities. As a result, they are more likely to trust product recommendations from influencers within their chosen communities. Additionally, microcelebrities often collaborate with brands and companies. Gen Z is receptive to these partnerships if they see them as authentic and aligned with the influencer's values. However, they can quickly detect insincerity and are more likely to disengage if they feel an influencer is solely motivated by financial gain. Gen Z also relies heavily on peer recommendations and word-of-mouth marketing. Microcelebrities can act as trusted friends or peers, offering product recommendations, lifestyle advice, and entertainment that aligns with Gen Z's interests and values.

#De-Influencing Movement

Gen Z is characterized by values that differ from previous generations. They prioritize community, authenticity, and conscious consumerism over materialism. The de-influencing trend on TikTok has further accentuated these values. De-influencing videos began surfacing in early 2023, as a sincere attempt to join the dots between trend cycles, unethical labor practices, and excess waste. As of this writing, de-influencers are growing in popularity. On TikTok, the total views for the #deinfluencing hashtag from January to March 2023 were 300 million (Digital Day, March 10, 2023). Using Talkwalker.com, a free media monitoring webpage and app, we found that in the last seven days of this writing- between September 27th and October 3, 2023- over 517.3 million have been reached with the #deinfluencing tag. Talkwalker analytics show that the total number of people who have viewed the tag since Jan 2023 is 897.9 million.

This movement occurs when consumers are displaying growing skepticism toward influencer-generated content. Marketers are observing a shift away from the prevailing culture of mass consumerism and the pursuit of perfection. Instead, there is a burgeoning interest in adopting a more mindful lifestyle that values community and authenticity and aligning with businesses that embody meaningful values. Therefore, de-influencing is exactly what it sounds like-- the opposite of a social media star promoting a product.

Gen Z, known for their skepticism toward traditional advertising and marketing tactics, gravitates toward micro-influencers who appear more genuine and less commercialized (Casaló, Flavián, & Ibáñez-Sánchez 2019). While prominent influencers endorse fast-fashion giants like Shein or Old Navy, clothing production contributes to 8% to 10% of the world's carbon emissions and 20% of global water pollution (Andreadakis & Owusu-Wiredu, 2023). Furthermore, shipping activities contribute around 3% of global greenhouse gas emissions (Reuters, July 7, 2023). These statistics lend credibility to the idea that the influencer culture fosters an unhealthy pattern of excessive consumption as individuals strive to stay current with the latest trends. De-influencers, in contrast, champion sustainability by curbing their consumption at the consumer level. Those involved in this movement are active participants in online activism and believe in using social media as a tool for advocacy and change.

De-influencing actively counters the desire for material possessions, including clothing, cosmetics, and gadgets, perpetuated by internet influencers and prevailing trends. It represents a rejection of the materialistic culture and the societal pressure to crave and accumulate more possessions constantly. If influencer marketing uses personal endorsements to sell products, de-influencing urges consumers to think critically about their purchases and evaluate their necessity. More importantly, consumers gain information and learn about important topics related to social justice, environmentalism, and other issues through watching de-influencing content (Ekvall & Mellberg, 2023).

Other key aspects of the de-influence movement include:

1. **Critique of Materialism:** This movement challenges consumerism and encourages a more minimalistic and sustainable approach to living. De-influencers may reject materialism and emphasize experiences and relationships over possessions.
2. **Empowerment:** De-influencers often build communities around shared values and interests. They use their platforms to empower their followers, encouraging them to embrace their individuality and make more conscious choices.
3. **Social Commentary:** De-influencers engage in social commentary and critique influencer culture itself. They highlight the negative aspects of the traditional influencer lifestyle and its impact on mental health and self-esteem.

As you browse the #deinfluencing hashtag today, you will notice two prominent content streams. One stream shows that the trend has evolved from discouraging excessive consumption to promoting one product over another, emphasizing the need to encourage people to make more conscious and thoughtful purchasing choices. The second stream of content has individuals reflecting on how social media has distorted our perception of everyday consumption habits. This serves as a refreshing reminder in a digital landscape often dominated by excessive consumption, as evidenced by phenomena like clothing hauls from fast fashion brands such as Shein, which has garnered an astonishing 8.1 billion views on the platform to date under the #SheinHaul hashtag (British Vogue, March 3, 2023).

Changing Values of Gen Z

Gen Z has redefined the values associated with mass consumerism, challenging long-held beliefs about conspicuous consumption and materialism. Several fundamental shifts in Gen Z's values contribute to this change, but four are essential: Sustainability and Ethical Consumption, Quality over Quantity, Social Activism, and Personal Branding.

Generation Z is more concerned about the environmental and social impact of their purchases. Gen Z places a high emphasis on sustainability and ethical consumption. They are more concerned about the environmental and social impact of their purchases. As a result, micro-influencers who advocate for sustainable and ethical products gain credibility among Gen Z, promoting conscious consumerism over mindless mass consumption.

When it comes to their possessions, Gen Z values quality over quantity. They prefer investing in durable, functional products that align with their values. Micro-influencers focusing on product quality and longevity resonate with Gen Z, encouraging them to make thoughtful purchases rather than chasing fleeting trends.

Gen Z consumers are more likely to engage with celebrities who use their platforms to advocate for critical issues and raise awareness, as they are known for their commitment to social and environmental causes. Digital celebrities actively contributing to positive change often gain credibility among Gen Z, as this generation is highly socially conscious and is committed to causes such as climate change, racial and gender equality, and social justice. Their expectation is for influencers to use their platforms to promote positive change. Underscoring this are the results from a 2021 study of the role of social media influencers in promoting pro-environmental behavior among Gen Z. The study found that exposure to sustainability content on social media affects sustainable habits and consumption behavior. These three factors influence social media's propensity to promote sustainability-related issues (Confetto, Convucci, Addeo, & Normando, 2021).

Gen Z prioritizes products that align with their values and image, rejecting the one-size-fits-all approach of mass consumerism. As such, Gen Z is keen on personal branding and self-expression through consumer choices. Micro-influencers who align with their values and help them curate their brands gain credibility in this context. Micro-influencers' credibility among Gen Z reflects the changing values regarding mass consumerism. This generation values authenticity, niche expertise, and community building, all challenging the traditional notion of mass consumption.

In this evolving landscape, micro-influencers are trusted guides, helping Gen Z make more thoughtful and meaningful purchasing decisions. The #deinfluencing tag is a prime example of Gen Z leveraging the platform to discuss conscious consumer choices, from sustainable fashion to ethical beauty brands. Users actively engage in discussions, forming a sense of shared purpose and accountability. Gen Z prefers businesses that align with their values. Brands with a solid commitment to sustainability, diversity, and social responsibility are celebrated on TikTok.

As a result, the de-influencing trend has driven a surge in awareness and support for ethical companies. As Gen Z continues to influence the market, businesses and marketers must adapt their strategies to align with these changing values, promoting conscious consumerism and ethical choices over mindless mass consumption.

Other characteristics of Gen Z that correlate with the de-influencing movement should be noted as characteristics that may play a role for brands in future influencing attempts. Of specific concern is the idea that this generation prefers experiences over possessions. Gen Z prioritizes experiences, such as travel, adventures, and events, over material possessions. They are more inclined to spend money on experiences that enrich their lives rather than accumulating things (Hubspot, 2022). Furthermore, with vast amounts of information through the internet, Gen Z is more informed about consumer choices' environmental and social impacts. They make conscious decisions to support ethical and socially responsible brands. Along this line, Gen Z is receptive to anti-consumerism movements that challenge the culture of overconsumption. They engage in campaigns like "Buy Nothing Day" and support initiatives promoting conscious consumer choices (Ergun & Erdigmus, 2017).

Compared to previous generations, Gen Z is less loyal to traditional brands. They are likelier to switch brands or opt for smaller, independent businesses that align with their values and offer unique, personalized products (Hootsuite, 2019). In part due to the digital sharing, they have grown up with, Gen Z has embraced the sharing economy and collaborative consumption. They are more willing to share or rent items like clothing, transportation, and housing, reducing the need to own and consume excessively. To this generation, the value of their dollars and their personal beliefs is their top priority when purchasing goods and services.

Incorporating the De-Influencing Trend in the Classroom

Understanding and analyzing the de-influencing trend on TikTok is an essential topic, especially in fields such as communication, media studies, sociology, or marketing. Assignments that delve into this trend can help students critically examine social media's and influencer culture's impact. When structured thoughtfully and infused with specific values and perspectives, college courses can be powerful catalysts for positive societal change. College-level learning has the potential to make the world a better place by fostering advocacy, promoting sustainability, and reducing consumerism.

One of the fundamental pillars of a functioning democracy (reword) is an informed and engaged citizenry. College classes can play a pivotal role in nurturing this essential aspect of democracy by teaching students about various social and political issues, encouraging critical thinking, and promoting active participation in advocacy. By introducing the de-influencing trend, students can better understand the challenges facing their communities and the world through a medium they already use. By encouraging students to question assumptions, analyze evidence, and engage in respectful dialogue, these classes help shape future advocates who can effectively address complex problems.

For example, the global community faces profound environmental challenges, including climate change, deforestation, and resource depletion. College-level learning can be crucial in promoting sustainability by educating students on the importance of responsible stewardship of the planet. Furthermore, consumerism, driven by excessive consumption and materialism, has profound environmental and social consequences. University-level learning can equip students to become agents of positive change in society through a holistic educational approach that combines knowledge, critical thinking, ethical values, and practical skills.

Here are some assignments and activities that can help students understand the de-influencing trend on TikTok:

Literature Review:	Have students conduct a literature review to explore academic articles, news reports, and scholarly research related to the de-influencing trend on TikTok. They should summarize key findings, identify patterns, and assess the reasons behind this trend.
Deconstruct Influencer Culture:	Analyze the evolution of influencer culture, from its origins to the rise of micro-influencers on TikTok. Encourage students to critically examine the implications of this shift for traditional PR practices.
Content Analysis:	Ask students to select TikTok videos that reflect the de-influencing trend. They should analyze these videos for common themes, messages, and strategies to criticize or challenge influencer culture. This assignment can help them understand the content driving the trend.
Interview Influencers:	Encourage students to contact TikTok influencers, both those participating in the de-influencing trend and those critical of it, for interviews. This primary research can provide valuable insights into the motivations and experiences of influencers in this context.
Case Studies:	Assign students to research and present case studies of specific TikTok influencers who have experienced a decline in popularity or faced backlash. They should analyze the factors contributing to this decline and explore the role of authenticity, relatability, and social issues in the context of TikTok.
Social Media Analytics:	Have students use social media analytics tools to track and analyze engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments, followers) of influencers participating in the de-influencing trend. They can identify trends in engagement and assess the effectiveness of such campaigns.
Ethical Implications:	Ask students to author essays or engage in class discussions about the ethical implications of the de-influencing trend on TikTok. They should consider issues like cancel culture, online harassment, and the responsibility of platforms in moderating content.
Creative Content:	Encourage students to create their own TikTok videos or social media content that reflect their opinions on the de-influencing trend. This hands-on activity allows them to experiment with the platform and gain firsthand experience.
Debate:	Organize a class debate where students take on distinct roles, such as influencers defending their work or critics advocating for the de-influencing trend. This activity promotes critical thinking and helps students understand multiple perspectives.
Guest Speakers:	Invite guest speakers who are experts in social media, influencer marketing, or online trends to provide insights and real-world experiences related to de-influencing.
Final Research Project:	Students work on a semester-long research project investigating various aspects of the de-influencing trend on TikTok. They should incorporate their findings, analysis, and recommendations into a comprehensive research paper or presentation.

By incorporating these assignments and activities into a college class, students can better understand the de-influencing trend on TikTok, its societal implications, and the broader context of influencer culture in the digital age.

Conclusion

Conversations on TikTok and Instagram, like on any other public platform, can be meaningful, but lasting change will come from a significant economic overhaul needed to tackle overconsumption. The de-influencing trend on TikTok reflects the changing values of Gen Z, emphasizing community, authenticity, and conscious consumerism. As micro-influencers gain prominence and reshape the influencer landscape, educators in public relations can leverage this movement to engage students in critical thinking exercises. By analyzing real-world examples and discussing the impact of these trends, educators can empower the next generation of PR professionals to navigate the evolving media landscape with authenticity and purpose.

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What's Up with WhatsApp: Reflections on the Evolving Use of a Messaging Service by Students in Higher Education

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Abstract

Students are increasingly using social media with instant messaging, to build educational communities. Personal experience from my own teaching practice suggested the majority of the student cohort were engaged in these groups. When interviewing students about their sense of community in online spaces, the strength of feeling expressed about the risks and benefits of joining WhatsApp groups outweighed all other social media apps. This article uses interview data, in combination with teaching experience, to briefly reflect upon WhatsApp use in education. It concludes with a proposed pathway for further scholarship on this important emerging area of university life.

What's Up with WhatsApp: Reflections on the Evolving Use of a Messaging Service by Students in Higher Education

Introduction

There is an increasing awareness in the sector that students' sense of connection to their institution, their educational community and peers, has a significant impact on both their retention and educational success (Mallon and Dresden, 2023). Alongside this, there is longstanding concern that the turn towards online and blended programs in higher education has increased students feelings of isolation and disconnectedness (Bolliger and Inan, 2012). Yeboah and Nyagorme (2022) have proposed that instant messaging services, such as WhatsApp, are being used by students and tutors to create a strong sense of connection. Here, I provide my reflections on the turn to WhatsApp as a community creator among HE students, using anecdotal evidence from my own practice, and empirical data from a study on students' experiences of community in online settings. Early reports indicate that the absence of university oversight means WhatsApp engagement comes with risks, which some students are learning to self-manage. However, I conclude by arguing that continued use with inadequate scholarship makes both students and staff vulnerable.

Use of WhatsApp in education

At the time of writing, with reportedly 2.7 billion users worldwide, WhatsApp is the most popular messaging application worldwide (BankMyCell, 2023). It offers a wide range of functions such as instant accessibility and group chat functions (which allows many users to be added to a single group). These have likely increased their popularity among university students; one Ghanaian study found that among higher education students studying in distance settings, over 98% owned mobile phones that support WhatsApp and that over 99% of these students used the app (Yeboah and Nyagorme, 2020). In another survey of 127 students, Gazit and Aharony (2018) found that the level of participation of students who were in WhatsApp groups to be 'medium-high', also showing that once they have engaged in the group most students become active members posting regularly.

Given the high level of engagement in WhatsApp groups in HE, it is surprising that until recently there has been remarkably little attention paid in the literature to students' experiences of these groups. LeRoux and Parry's (2021) survey of instant messaging usage among over 1700 students in a single institution, found that these groups provided an environment that enhances online participation. They also compared different types of groups: finding that student-to-student groups had higher participation and more positive outcomes in terms of the students' perception of improving academic performance and reduction of academic pressure. Bharat's (2022) exploration of usage of WhatsApp among students in India identified that 70 of the 80 students reported visiting their WhatsApp accounts more than six times a day. But they also found that 26 out of 80 preferred night-time use for their WhatsApp connection. This preference connects with my own trials of social media use of Facebook with students, where students were typically most active and engaged in the site outside of the typical working hours of academia (Mallon and Dresden, 2023), and illustrates the challenges for tutors who are interested in using this medium to engage with their students.

Reflections on use of WhatsApp by Open University Students and Staff

In my own practice using Facebook to connect with students, I also noted that the use of student led WhatsApp groups seemed to rise with each cohort, where Facebook use appeared to have plateaued. Observing the attempts of students to advertise their WhatsApp groups in official university moderated spaces such as module forums, also gave me insights into the determination students had to join them and keep them active. For example, the perceived value of WhatsApp use to students was hinted at by the organisational structure that was applied to the transfer of group details from one cohort to another, so that information was saved between year groups.

In addition, students' eagerness to join these groups meant they often showed little regard for their personal security. For example, each year I had to proactively delete posts to prevent students from sharing their personal mobile numbers in module wide forums, as they attempted to gain the link to the latest module WhatsApp group. In the case of The Open University, these forums typically have hundreds of participants. This means their phone numbers were being shared widely with large groups of people they had never met, but also meant they were able to gain access to a WhatsApp group with large numbers of students. The universities lack of oversight over these spaces meant I felt an obligation to continue to support the use of tutor moderated spaces on the Virtual Learning Environment, and was concerned that allowing WhatsApp links in the forum to remain visible provided tacit approval of these spaces, and could in some ways make staff responsible for experiences that happened within them. From students, I became aware of the use of WhatsApp by some of the tutors on other modules at our institution, who were using their personal mobiles to create WhatsApp groups to connect with their students. This work was unofficial, in the sense that our institution had not approved WhatsApp for use by tutors because of the risks of communication outside of university regulated spaces. Such lack of regard for the risks is concerning, especially as the general lack of university guidance on engaging with WhatsApp and the lack of qualitative academic scholarship into the experiences of those staff and students operating within them, make informed choices about involvement or the best strategies for protection challenging.

Reflections on WhatsApp Use from students

My broad areas of scholarship interest have been concerned with how connections are created for students studying at a distance. As part of this work¹, I interviewed fourteen students about their sense of community in online spaces, during these interviews, despite not featuring as an explicit part of the initial interview schedule, the issue of WhatsApp was repeatedly raised. I noted that their reported use of WhatsApp was extensive; many reported automatically joining these groups, with some even saying they “definitely (join),... every WhatsApp group”. Notably, many students reported that it gave them a sense of connection they felt was lacking from other aspects of their educational experience, describing how the groups meant they felt “in touch with students” and that it was highly motivational, particularly around assessment time, with students supporting and encouraging each other.

However, there was also a darker side to WhatsApp use, with some students reporting that groups were being infiltrated by imposters selling ‘Essays’, and that in bigger groups clashes were frequent and bordered on bullying. There was also lots of “talking about things they shouldn't be”, with occasional sharing of copyrighted learning material, or essay plans, which meant despite gaining connections some students “tend to steer clear of them now”.

¹ (This work was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee for The Open University and by SRPP (Student Research Participant Panel)).

There was also a commonly reported issue of “oversharing”, and students described the groups as “intrusive” and “pinging all the time”, with “massive long, constant conversations about stuff that's completely irrelevant”. While some left the groups because they recognised that they “don't need this negativity” others self-managed by only going on there “when there's something specific that I'm looking for”. However, it was also apparent some students felt they couldn't leave the WhatsApp groups because they would miss out on too much valuable information that was not available in official university spaces.

Directions for future work into WhatsApp.

The literature and reflections shared here describes how students, within distance and traditional HEIs, are making use of WhatsApp to create communities. As with other social media apps in HE, such as Facebook, the opportunities provided by instant messaging on WhatsApp can come with considerable benefits such that as Vázquez-Cano and Díez-Arcón (2021) pointed out students can come to prefer them to official spaces. These online settings allow students to informally engage with other students from both their module and qualification; students can also be welcomed and supported by their peers, receive advice on administrative aspects of studying, form friendships and useful study connections. However, engaging outside of university moderated spaces, also comes with significant risks (Chugh and Ruhi, 2018; Mallon and Dresden, 2023) and may be excluding those who experience digital poverty (Mallon et al, 2023). These risks include, but are not limited to, issues related to cheating, breaches of privacy, exposure to hateful or harmful content, as well as cyber bullying. Social media use is continually changing, it is a dynamic social, legal and political space, and the potential for significant incidents that threaten both the student learning experience, as well as their emotional wellbeing and safety, cannot be underestimated. Using personal mobiles to create communities with students, also comes with risks for staff as recently documented by Information Commissioner Officer's reprimand of NHS staff in the UK (ICO, 2023).

Given the levels of WhatsApp use in HE, and the range of experiences students have in these spaces, we urgently need to produce evidence on the benefits, challenges and expectations of staff and students who use it. This may include creating knowledge to develop interventions that educate students on the beneficial and harmful effects of WhatsApp², and those which facilitate the development of robust, preventative reporting measures for behaviour which risks academic misconduct. However, in an era where the use of WhatsApp is so ubiquitous by HE staff and students, universities should also consider whether specific protocols and guidance are needed for using communication apps like WhatsApp.

Conclusion

This article provides one practitioner's reflections on student use of WhatsApp to create communities in higher education. As an academic with a strong background in student mental health, I watch this evolving area of practice with trepidation. Student choice is important, but it is vital that students and staff understand the risks and benefits, before they abandon official university spaces. Scholarship is essential to examine what these are and to provide protective protocols and guidance. In conclusion, my experiences of engaging with students who are using WhatsApp as part of their studies, and speaking with colleagues in the area, leads me to suggest there are five areas of potential scholarship in relation to student use of WhatsApp as part of the higher education.

² To better educate students and share best practice The Open University have now created an OpenLearn Course [Using Social Media in Higher Education](#). This contains a section that deals directly with some of the benefits and challenges of WhatsApp Use in HE.

(Insert Box 1) In the absence of sustained scholarship into this area, we are all vulnerable.

Box 1: Proposed pathway for WhatsApp Scholarship, Projects which explore:

- Student to student engagement;
- How to maximize the pedagogical benefits of WhatsApp- What works well?;
- Risk identification and Minimization through clear guidance and policy structures;
- Student to tutor models of engagement;
- How university spaces can better replicate the experiences of social media instant messaging platforms such as WhatsApp.

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Informational Quality of Retinol Content on Social Media – A Cross-Sectional Analysis

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Abstract

While social media is a popular tool to disseminate dermatologic information, the informational quality of the available retinol content has not been assessed. We conducted a cross-sectional study by querying for Instagram posts about retinol on January 24th, 2023, and analyzed ninety-seven posts using the DISCERN metric, a validated instrument for judging the quality of written consumer health information. The majority of assessed posts had a DISCERN score under 2 (out of 5), with an average score of 1.27/5 (SD of 0.56). This study highlights the lack of high-quality information on the topic of retinol on Instagram and the importance of consumer caution when seeking information online.

Keywords

Retinol, Social Media, Information Quality, Acne, Photoaging

Informational Quality of Retinol Content on Social Media – A Cross-Sectional Analysis

Instagram, a social media platform, has emerged as a dominant source for the consumption of dermatologic information, with retinol as a popular search topic [1]. Retinol, a nonaromatic Vitamin A derivative, is converted through a series of enzymatic reactions to its biologically active form, retinoic acid [2]. Retinoic acid activates nuclear retinoic acid response elements, implicated in cellular growth, differentiation, and apoptosis [3]. Because of its properties influencing collagen synthesis, fibroblast activity, and inhibition of matrix metalloproteinases, retinol products have long been used by both dermatologists and the public to target many dermatologic concerns, including acne vulgaris and photoaging, such as facial wrinkles, facial skin roughness, or hyperpigmentation [2].

Colloquially, "retinol" often encompasses nonprescription vitamin A derivatives found in over-the-counter skincare products, such as retinaldehyde, retinyl esters, retinyl palmitate, and others [1]. The market for retinol products continues to expand, with consumers presented with many different formulation and combination options [3]. Unfortunately, lack of education may leave consumers ill-equipped to navigate safe retinol usage and manage potential side effects, such as skin irritation and photosensitivity [4].

An Instagram search under the hashtag #retinol yields 828,000 posts as of January 2023. Despite this abundance, the quality of informational content has not been systematically evaluated. Our study aims to analyze retinol content on Instagram and assess the quality of information available to consumers.

We searched Instagram using the hashtag, #retinol on January 24th, 2023, and analyzed the top 97 posts recommended by Instagram's search algorithm. Inclusion criteria comprised picture posts in English about retinol, excluding duplicates, non-English posts, non-image posts, and unrelated posts. Descriptive statistics, including likes, post type (product recommendation, educational, advertisement, or humorous content), and authorship (physician or non-physician), were tabulated. The informational quality content was determined by two independent reviewers, using the DISCERN metric, a validated instrument for judging the quality of written consumer health information, using a 1-5 scale [5]. Weighted Cohen's kappa was calculated to assess interrater reliability.

The top 97 posts tagged #retinol had a combined total of 213,362 likes. The average content quality was 1.27/5 (SD of 0.56, with a substantial level of interrater reliability - weighted Cohen's kappa of 0.788), indicating serious or extensive shortcomings in informational content based on the DISCERN categorization. Notably, 95 posts were authored by non-physicians, while 2 were by dermatologists (one post with an average score of 1, the other - a score of 4).

Educational posts, focusing on aspects such as how to use retinol or benefits, comprised 43.3% of the content, with an average DISCERN score of 1.58. Product recommendations, forming 38.1% of the dataset, had an average score of 1.02. Advertisements constituted 11.3% of posts, with an average score of 1.09. Humorous posts, making up 7.2% of the content, had an average score of 1 (Table 1 Overleaf).

Table 1. “Statistics of Analyzed Retinol Content on Instagram Based on Post Type”

TABLE 1: Statistics of Analyzed Retinol Content on Instagram Based on Post Type				
Category of post	Number of posts	Mean number of likes	Mean DISCERN score	Number of posts by physicians
Educational	42 (43.3%)	4606	1.58	2 (4.8%)
Product recommendations	37 (38.1%)	961	1.02	0
Advertisements	11 (11.3%)	552	1.09	0
Humorous	7 (7.2%)	409	1.00	0

The low DISCERN ratings indicate that Instagram may not be a reliable source of information about retinol, despite its use popularity. Contributing factors to low ratings include lack of source citation, insufficient risk discussion, and failure to explain treatment mechanisms. Furthermore, scarcity of physician-authored posts highlights a potential deficiency and encourages dermatologists to have an active role sharing informative content on social media.

While limitations are present, including the dynamic nature of recommended posts on Instagram and the exclusion of non-image content, this study emphasizes caution required when relying on social media for information. Overall, user discretion should be exercised when using Instagram as an educational source about retinol.

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From Open-Book Exams to Group Podcasts: A Paradigm Shift in Assessing Pre-Registration Nursing Associate Students' Knowledge of Long-Term Condition Care

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Abstract

The role of Nursing Associates in the English healthcare system has become increasingly significant amid a nursing shortage, necessitating a re-evaluation of traditional higher education assessment methods. This case study critiques high-stakes examinations and advocates for authentic assessment strategies that better reflect real-world scenarios. We explore group podcasting, which fosters collaboration, critical thinking, and digital competencies while maintaining a human-centred focus. By integrating digital skills with interpersonal care, this case study highlights the importance of inclusive, effective educational frameworks that prepare pre-registration Nursing Associates for the complexities of modern healthcare delivery.

From Open-Book Exams to Group Podcasts: A Paradigm Shift in Assessing Pre-Registration Nursing Associate Students' Knowledge of Long-Term Condition Care

Introduction

The role of Nursing Associates in the UK healthcare system has gained significant prominence in recent years, with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) registering over 758,000 healthcare professionals in 2022, including 7,000 NAs in England (NMC, 2022). Amidst a backdrop of nearly 50,000 registered nurse vacancies in the English health and social care sector (RCN, 2022a), Nursing Associates have emerged as vital contributors to addressing workforce shortages. These professionals typically complete a two-year Foundation Degree programme that combines academic learning with practical experience, equipping them with essential knowledge, skills, and attributes to support registered nurses in delivering safe and effective patient care.

As the landscape of nursing associate education evolves, there is a growing need to critically evaluate traditional pedagogical approaches, particularly in relation to assessment methods. High-stakes examinations and conventional written assignments have long been the cornerstone of educational assessment, yet their effectiveness in measuring the competencies required for contemporary nursing practice is increasingly being challenged. This case study explores the necessity of rethinking assessment strategies in nursing associate education, advocating for authentic assessments that closely reflect real-world clinical scenarios.

In addition to addressing the pedagogical challenges, this discussion encompasses the imperative for pre-registration Nursing Associate students to develop strong digital skills in an increasingly digitalised healthcare environment. While the integration of technology enhances patient care, it also raises concerns about potential over-reliance on digital tools, which may hinder essential interpersonal skills. By embracing innovative assessment methods such as group podcasting, this approach aims to cultivate collaboration, critical thinking, and effective communication skills among pre-registration nursing associate students, ultimately preparing them for the complexities of modern healthcare delivery.

Through a critical examination of pedagogical and ethical considerations, this paper seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse surrounding pre-registration Nursing Associate education, highlighting the importance of authenticity in assessment, the integration of digital skills, and the need for an inclusive learning environment that prioritises the diverse needs of all students.

Rethinking Assessment in Pre-Registration Nursing Associate Education: The Case for Authentic Assessment Over High-Stakes Exams

The effectiveness of high-stakes or unseen exams (including open book examinations) in higher education is a debated topic, with many educators challenging their value in areas such as real-world relevance, validity, memory retention, student motivation, academic misconduct, and fairness.

Empirical evidence supporting the pedagogical benefits of these exams is limited, with much of the support based on opinion, anecdote, and practicality rather than solid research. In contrast, significant evidence points to their drawbacks, suggesting that high-stakes exams are not strongly backed by empirical findings (French et al., 2024).

A key aspect of pre-registration nursing associate education is the implementation of authentic assessment, which emphasises evaluating students' ability to apply their knowledge and skills in practical, real-world settings. Assessments including simulated clinical situations, practical exams such as Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE's), and reflective exercises are designed to replicate the actual challenges Nursing Associates will encounter in their roles. These methods not only assess their competence but also cultivate problem-solving abilities and critical thinking, which are vital for delivering effective patient care (Ashford-Rowe et al., 2014).

By grounding assessments in real-life practice, educators aim to ensure that pre-registration Nursing Associate students are better prepared for the demands of the healthcare environment, ultimately improving the quality of care (Gulikers et al., 2004). Authentic assessment also helps bridge the theory practice gap, ensuring that students are not just learning but are able to demonstrate their competence in meaningful, relevant ways (Biggs & Tang, 2011). A structured education and assessment process arguably enables registered Nursing Associates to play a key role in the workforce without replacing registered nurses, but rather complementing their work to improve patient outcomes.

While open-book examinations may be viewed by some educators as more authentic than traditional unseen exam hall examinations, their effectiveness for pre-registration Nursing Associate students is debatable. Critics contend that such assessments fail to replicate the pressures of real-world clinical environments, where quick decisions are essential, and reference materials are unavailable (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 2018). This raises questions about whether open-book formats adequately prepare students for patient care, especially in managing long-term conditions, where critical thinking and rapid decision-making are vital (Bennett, 2019; Moon, 2004).

Navigating Digital Skills in Nursing Associate Education: Balancing Technology with Human-Centered Care

In an increasingly digitalised healthcare environment, we believe it is essential for pre-registration Nursing Associate students to cultivate strong digital skills to provide effective care for patients with long-term conditions. While proficiency in tools such as electronic health records is crucial for tracking patient progress and managing treatment plans, concerns arise regarding the potential for over-reliance on technology, which can lead to diminished interpersonal skills and a detachment from the patient experience (Health Education England, 2018). Although telehealth platforms facilitate remote consultations and improve access to care, they may not fully replicate the nuances of in-person interactions, potentially compromising the quality of the therapeutic relationship (Koonin et al., 2020). Furthermore, while mobile health applications can enhance patient education on medication adherence and lifestyle modifications, the variability in patient engagement and digital literacy may limit their effectiveness (Mhealth Evidence, 2021).

Our team has explored alternative methods, such as group podcasts, particularly given the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in education, which can lead to students relying on AI for assessments instead of engaging with the material (Dede et al., 2016).

This discussion has encouraged us to seek assessments that better reflect real-world challenges, including the complexities of caring for patients with long-term conditions, and that develop the critical skills necessary for effective Nursing Associate practice (Miller, 2023).

Group podcast assessments provide numerous advantages in educational settings, particularly in enhancing collaboration, communication, and critical thinking skills among students. This format encourages our students to express their ideas clearly and engagingly while fostering teamwork and cooperation. By working together to research topics, script discussions, and produce a final product, our students deepen their understanding of the subject matter. Podcasting also promotes active learning, which enhances retention and comprehension (Hew & Cheung, 2019).

In this context, incorporating podcasting into assessments can provide a valuable opportunity to develop the digital competencies of pre-registration Nursing Associate students while also fostering critical thinking and communication skills. By creating and sharing podcasts, students learn to convey complex information in an accessible manner, bridging the gap between digital tools and meaningful patient engagement (Hew & Cheung, 2019). Furthermore, group podcasts create a more interactive learning experience, mirroring the collaborative nature of healthcare practice and preparing students for real-world scenarios. Overall, this assessment method not only enhances students' academic skills but also equips them with essential competencies for their future careers in healthcare (Adams et al, 2021; Perrin, 2019).

However, it is important to critically assess whether such methods genuinely enhance learning or if they merely serve as a trendy pedagogical approach. Ultimately, while developing digital skills is essential, Nursing Associates must remain vigilant in maintaining a human-centered approach to care, ensuring that technology enhances rather than detracts from the quality of patient interactions and outcomes.

The paradigm shift - Transforming Nursing Associate Education: Embracing Creativity and Inclusivity in Assessment Methods

Our landscape of pre-registration Nursing Associate education is experiencing a critical paradigm shift as we strive to move beyond traditional pedagogical frameworks and adopt creative teaching approaches that prioritise inclusivity. This transformation began with rigorous team debates about the effectiveness of conventional examinations and written assignments, leading us to question whether these methods genuinely assess the competencies essential for Nursing Associates in today's diverse healthcare settings. In our pursuit of more equitable assessment strategies, we conducted extensive research into alternatives that not only foster creativity but also amplify the voices of all students, ensuring that no perspective is overlooked.

Among the methods we considered, group podcasting emerged as a particularly promising tool. While it enhances collaboration and communication skills, we had to critically evaluate whether it genuinely addresses the gaps left by traditional assessments or if it simply serves as a novel alternative without substantive pedagogical merit. To deepen our understanding, we partnered with expert colleagues from the Arts and Media School who possess expertise in podcasting and group assessments, bringing invaluable insights into the design and implementation of this approach.

This collaboration enabled us to broaden our understanding and led us to critically question how authentic our assessments really are. We also had to critically consider our own beliefs and practices and embrace non-traditional teaching and assessment methods. We are currently in the process of rewriting our assessments, removing the unseen open book exam and replacing it with a group podcast. This transition required us to put together a business case for the school to purchase podcasting equipment and create a detailed project plan. Initially, we were somewhat naïve and conservative regarding our timeframe, hoping to roll out the new assessment within six months. However, due to various pedagogical, ethical, and financial considerations, it will ultimately take nearly two years from the initial conception of the idea to the implementation of the new assessment.

Pedagogical Considerations:

1. **Authenticity in Assessment:** Emphasising authentic assessments, such as practical exams and simulated clinical scenarios, ensures that students can apply their knowledge in real-world settings. This approach helps bridge the gap between theoretical learning and practical application, enhancing their preparedness for actual patient care (Ashford-Rowe et al., 2014; Gulikers et al., 2004).
2. **Critique of High-Stakes Examinations:** The limited empirical support for high-stakes or unseen exams raises questions about their effectiveness in measuring essential competencies for pre-registration Nursing Associate students. Educators are encouraged to explore alternative assessment methods that foster critical thinking and quick decision-making, which are vital in clinical practice (French et al., 2024; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 2018).
3. **Integration of Digital Skills:** In a digitalised healthcare environment, students must develop robust digital skills to provide effective care. Training in digital tools is crucial, but it must be balanced with the cultivation of interpersonal skills to avoid detachment from the patient experience (Health Education England, 2018; Koonin et al., 2020).
4. **Collaborative Learning through Podcasting:** Utilising group podcasts as an assessment method promotes collaboration, communication, and critical thinking skills. This format encourages students to engage with the material actively, facilitating deeper understanding while preparing them for the collaborative nature of healthcare practice (Hew & Cheung, 2019; Adams et al., 2021).
5. **Balancing Technology and Human-Centered Care:** While integrating technology and digital assessments is essential, maintaining a human-centered approach in nursing practice is crucial. Educators must critically evaluate whether technological tools genuinely enhance learning and patient engagement, ensuring that technology complements rather than detracts from the quality of care (Mhealth Evidence, 2021; Perrin, 2019).

Ethical Considerations:

1. **Equity in Assessment:** Ensuring that all students have equal access to learning opportunities and assessment methods is critical. Educators must consider the diverse backgrounds and circumstances of pre-registration Nursing Associate students to provide equitable assessments that do not disadvantage any student group (RCN, 2022b).

2. **Accommodating Neurodiverse Learners:** It is essential to create assessment environments that are inclusive of neurodiverse learners. This may involve offering alternative assessment formats or accommodations, such as extended time or the option to demonstrate knowledge through non-traditional methods, to support diverse learning needs and ensure all students can showcase their competencies effectively (McKenzie et al., 2020).
3. **Informed Consent and Data Privacy:** In a digitalised healthcare setting, pre-registration nursing associate students must be educated on the ethical implications of using digital tools, including issues of informed consent and data privacy. Students should be trained to understand the importance of safeguarding patient information when using electronic health records and other digital platforms (Health Education England, 2018).
4. **Balancing Technology Use:** The integration of technology in education raises ethical concerns about over-reliance on digital tools, which may detract from interpersonal skills essential for patient care. Educators must critically evaluate the ethical implications of technology use in assessments, ensuring that it enhances, rather than diminishes, the quality of care and the human connection with patients (Koonin et al., 2020).
5. **Supporting Vulnerable Populations:** Nursing Associates often care for vulnerable populations with complex needs, including those with long-term conditions. Ethical considerations must include training pre-registration nursing associate students to understand the unique challenges faced by these populations and to advocate for their patients' rights and well-being, promoting social justice and equity in healthcare (Mhealth Evidence, 2021).

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the evolving landscape of pre-registration Nursing Associate education necessitates a critical re-evaluation of traditional assessment methods to better prepare future professionals for the complexities of modern healthcare. With a growing shortage of registered nurses, the role of Nursing Associates has become increasingly vital, making it essential that their education reflects real-world demands. Our focus on authentic assessment strategies, such as group podcasts, aims to foster creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking among students while ensuring inclusivity in learning environments.

As we navigate the integration of digital skills into pre-registration Nursing Associate education, it is paramount that we maintain a balance between technological proficiency and the essential interpersonal skills that underpin effective patient care. By fostering an environment that prioritises human-centred approaches, we can enhance the learning experience while equipping students with the competencies required for the challenges they will face in their careers.

Furthermore, the interdisciplinary collaboration with colleagues from the Arts and Media School has been instrumental in broadening our understanding of innovative assessment methods and refining our pedagogical practices. The shift towards non-traditional assessment strategies, including the removal of high-stakes exams in favour of authentic, practical evaluations, reflects our commitment to enhancing the educational experience and ensuring that pre-registration Nursing Associates are well-prepared to deliver high-quality care in an increasingly digitalised healthcare environment.

Ultimately, our goal is to create a more equitable, inclusive, and effective educational framework that not only addresses current workforce needs but also empowers qualified and registered Nursing Associates to contribute positively to patient care and outcomes. By embracing creativity and innovation in assessment, we can cultivate a generation of nursing professionals who are not only skilled in their practice but also adept at navigating the challenges of a rapidly changing healthcare landscape.

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Social Media in History Learning: Findings from a Project Involving Active Engagement

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Abstract

This paper presents findings from an experimental study that investigated the potential of active social media engagement to enhance efficiency in history teaching and learning. A two-stage work program was implemented to achieve this goal. In the first stage, a series of videos were created by combining three traditional forms: historical documentary, drama, and educational video. These videos were filmed at various locations, including Göbeklitepe, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Subsequently, the videos were published on YouTube and their links shared on Facebook. In the second stage, the impact of the videos was assessed based on viewer interactions, such as views, likes, emotions, shares, re-shares, and comments, on both platforms. The Göbeklitepe video series, which comprised of 11 videos released over 11 weeks, garnered more than 255,000 views on YouTube. Analysis of user interaction data revealed that 82.19% of users who went beyond mere viewing found the work to be successful. The overall conclusion drawn from this study is that social media can be a valuable tool for enhancing efficiency in history teaching and learning, provided that careful attention is given to conceptual design and content quality. This study is expected to pave the way for further research utilizing the same model to further improve these results.

Keywords

History Teaching and Learning, Social Media; Media in Education; Teaching and Learning Strategies; Gobeklitepe (Şanlıurfa, Turkey)

Social Media in History Learning: Findings from a Project Involving Active Engagement

Introduction: Purpose and Scope

History teaching and learning is a subject of intense debate right from the beginning regarding what to teach and how to teach. Technology has always been a part of the discussion; the film, the computer and the internet. Now the social media has entered the scene with its as yet not fully understood potential. This study seeks to explore this potential by implementing a two-stage work program.

In the first stage, a series of videos incorporating elements from historical documentary, drama, and educational video were created and published on YouTube and shared on Facebook. These videos were based on a custom-written script and were shot at various locations. In the second stage, the impact of the videos on viewers was measured using data generated by user interactions.

Content Creation Process

One of the unique and pioneering aspects of this study is the design of the videos, which combines features from three styles: historical documentary, drama, and educational video. The first one, the historical documentary feature, as the name suggests, ensures that the information presented in the videos is based on the latest scholarly research and findings, including visits to historical sites. As is the case in this study, visiting the places where historical events took place is one of the ways for obtaining objective facts. The drama feature involves the interaction of real-life characters around a subject, with multiple viewpoints represented in the dialogue, even if they are contradictory just as in real life. The documentary feature of the project ensured that the winner in the end would be the character speaking with objective data and facts. Lastly, the educational aspect of the project involves specifying the expected learning outcome for each dialogue group in the script, allowing for possible measurement. The first step of scriptwriting involved creating a comprehensive bibliography by collecting all research, documentary and other visual material about Göbeklitepe. Afterward, individual studies were carried out by the project team members within the framework of the division of labor determined by the project manager. The result of these studies was then evaluated and combined at regular meetings held twice a week. This process led to the creation of the script for the video films, titled "Dialogues", which brings together scholarly information about Göbeklitepe and the Neolithic period in a dialogue form. This work is also unique in terms of both content and form in the field.

The video shoots took place primarily at various locations on the [blank] University [blank] and at Göbeklitepe in Şanlıurfa, Southeast Turkey, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

At this point, it would be useful to briefly touch upon why Göbeklitepe was chosen as the historical site for video shootings. Göbeklitepe has a history that goes back 12,000 years and is considered one of the most important megalithic artefacts (stone structures) from the Neolithic period. In fact, it is the oldest known large-scale structure in the world in terms of size and function. It is located on the northernmost part of the Fertile Crescent. As the name suggests this is a fertile region where the human species transitioned from a hunter-gatherer life to a sedentary one.

The modern social structure, which manifests itself with features such as division of labor, specialization, social hierarchy and surplus product, began to form here for the first time in human history. Therefore, the project team decided that it would be appropriate for a historical video shooting project to start from “zero point of civilization,” or “zero point in time,” or “zero point in history”[A1.1] (Atakuman 2020, 252) as it is variously called, that is Göbeklitepe. As a lucky turn of events, four months into the project in this direction, this site was decided to be included in the World Heritage List on July 1, 2018, and the following year was declared as "Year of Göbeklitepe" in Turkey. These developments can be seen as the evidence that it [A2.1] was the right choice to start with (the broader vision, interrupted by the pandemic, was that the effort would continue up to the present in chronological order involving other prominent historical sites and places in Anatolia).

The megalithic structures at Göbeklitepe are discussed in the context of time and space, as they should be in any historical research. In this context, as mentioned above, the most recent scholarly research results were used. For example, findings from a recent study using ancient DNA data were included in the script. That is the builders of Stonehenge (in England), another famous Early Neolithic megalithic structure might have come from Anatolia (Brace, Diekmann, Booth et. al. 2019).

The scholarly research examined during the script-writing process showed that the construction of Neolithic megalithic structures in Europe was possible through social organization and collaboration. The structures at Göbeklitepe date at least 5-6 thousand years earlier than the megalithic structures in Europe. Despite this huge time gap, the size, complexity, and sophistication of the structures at Göbeklitepe have led us to hypothesize that Göbeklitepe might have been the scene for the earliest known social formations. Thus, the videos concerning the construction are structured around the concepts of social hierarchy, division of labour, specialization, and collaboration. Indeed, the soundness of this approach has been confirmed by more recent research (Clare 2019; Cassidy, Maoldúin, Kador et al. 2020). However, until then, most of the research and documentaries on Göbeklitepe were based on a very controversial temple theory, that is the site was created to serve primarily as a temple, stemming from Schmidt[A3.1] (2007), the director of the original excavation project of the site.

In addition to relying on the latest research, the methods of studying and thinking, especially critical thinking about the past were emphasized in the text of the dialogues. Indeed, the first part of the text is devoted to this topic (this part of the script was configured to become the base of a separate video, as in each of the other parts).

The characters playing in the drama were chosen from the students who voluntarily participated in the project, with two purposes in mind. Firstly, this would help them develop their communication and presentation skills and serve as role models for their peers. Secondly doing so would increase the likelihood that the videos would be watched by other undergraduate and graduate history students. Before going to the actual sites of video shootings, the script in question was given to two separate producers experienced in documentary filming, as stipulated in the project plan, and their opinions were elicited on its feasibility. Both producers stated that the subject and the way it was designed (a blending of historical documentary, drama and educational video styles) were original and would have a significant impact if successfully implemented.

Video shootings based on the script were done by one of the mentioned producers, within the scope of the service procurement as described in the project document, at various venues in Şanlıurfa, Göbeklitepe archaeological excavation site and [blank] University [blank] Campus during the fall of 2019.

In order to enhance the video footage obtained, other supportive audio-visual materials such as pictures, music and fragments from other videos were added to them. The final videos were organized according to the sections in the script and published as short videos ranging in length between 6-13 minutes. At the beginning of each video, as in the TV series, a summary of the previous episodes was included to allow for independent viewing. In addition, English subtitles have been added to each video in order to reach international audiences.

Content Distribution Process

As a result, a total of 11 videos (plus two very short videos for promotional purposes) were produced, A channel called [blank] or [blank] was created on YouTube for publication of the videos. On this channel, a video was published once every week, the first of which was on the 18th of April, 2020. In parallel, the links to these videos were shared on the Facebook page of the same name. For each video, the same short description text was used on both platforms.

Within three months, a significant amount of data was generated as a result of viewer interactions on these two major social media platforms. In the second stage of this study, these data were analyzed. The whole process can be summarized as shown in Figure 1:

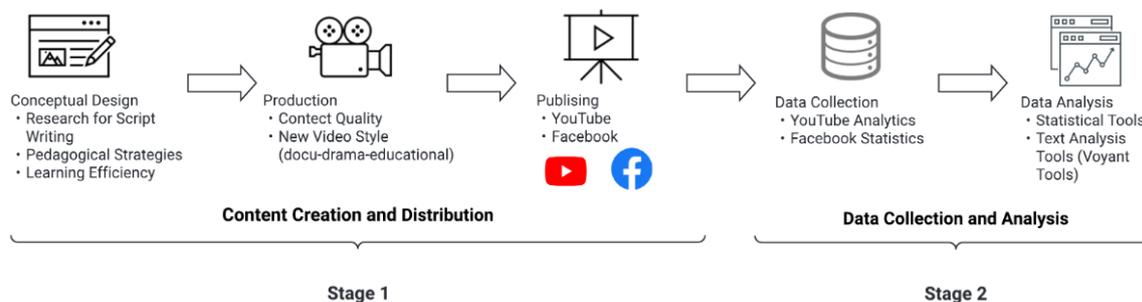


Figure 1. A two-stage work program implementation

Previous Studies

Early experiments with motion pictures in history education go back to the early twenties (Consitt,1931). Research in this area has risen significantly during the last two decades in line with the increased and easy availability of such sources through web platforms.

Considering the purpose of this paper, this section will focus on the findings of the reviews of such research rather than doing a selective review here: Peters (2020), Paxton & Marcus (2018), Kay (2012), Heilesen (2010), and McGarr (2009).

New technologies have broadened and proliferated the ways learners interact with the past. Especially, the social media platforms that facilitate video publications have grown rapidly in the last ten years. History-based channels now have a substantial following on the internet. YouTube and other web platforms provide viewers with a wide variety of historical products, both traditional and “alternative” narratives and analyses of the past. The problem here is that simply judging by the number of views, one can say that this is more so for pseudo-science products, which include substantial amounts of pseudo-history content. This fact should be a real concern for the academic community, especially history education researchers. [A4.1]

Kay (2012), Heilesen (2010) and McGarr (2009) review the exploration of these fast-evolving new technologies and modes of presentation by educational researchers. In these reviews the focus is on the following themes: the rapid growth of video publications on the web, especially after the launch of YouTube platform, types of broadcasts, difficulties in publishing videos, benefits, and methodological problems.

The benefits include a positive affective and cognitive attitude about web video publications, control over one's own learning, improved study habits, and increased learning efficiency. Among the difficulties are the technical problems frequently encountered in web video publications used as course material, some students preferring classical lectures instead of videos, and the decrease in attendance. The methodological problems that they identify are to do with limited sample sizes, insufficient description of video publications selected for the study, and poor evaluation of reliability and validity of the data collection and analysis tools.[A5.1]

Peters (2020), and Paxton & Marcus (2018) cover specifically the research on history education involving film from the beginning until the present day. Peters examines the evolution of teaching with film in history education through 50 works ranging from 1922 to 2019. These consist of 21 books and articles, 28 conceptual pieces and 1 literature review. In selecting the pieces for review he uses the term film in its broadest sense which includes feature-length films made by Hollywood, educational pictures developed specifically for the history classroom, short films, and documentaries. He argues that the current state of research on film in history education is complex; empirical research is scarce particularly that which includes student voice. Research on their effective classroom application and cognitive impact has been sporadic when in a world awash with audio-visual representations of the past. Professional development for teachers is largely missing, perhaps due to the lack of direction for the field (“what exactly is film trying to achieve?”). Also missing is the presence of multiple historical perspectives. He concludes that further research could determine the effectiveness of educational films in history education, particularly the short educational films available on YouTube (Peters 2020).

The review by Paxton and Marcus (2018) reflects the topics educational researchers are primarily concerned with such as historical consciousness, teacher practices, social identities, trustworthiness, and empathy. They find that there seems to be an emphasis on U.S. or Hollywood films in modern educational research. But films from many nations can also be employed to provide additional perspectives, ideas, and styles. They recommend that researchers should consider how teachers can use international films—including subtitled movies—to teach history. The sophistication of film media today, the volume of viewing by young people both inside and outside school, and the broad agreement among history education researchers that schools should offer multiple perspectives on history. All these factors create the need to better understand the relationship between film media and the teaching and learning of history. “To give short shrift to this important facet of modern life, or to ignore it altogether, would be a terrible abdication for the field of history education”. They conclude with an emphasis on historical film literacy combining media and historical literacy (Paxton & Marcus, 2018, 595).

At this point it must be kept in mind that the main purpose of producing historical movies and TV series is entertainment, not learning. Therefore, they can only be used for learning purposes after checking that the information presented is compatible with historical reality (Acar-Kaplan, 2018, 276). Another problem with movies and TV shows is that they provide a one-way flow of information; the viewers are passive.

The above-mentioned reviewers suggested that future work should focus on improving the quality and design of video publications, pedagogical strategies, learning efficiency, and viewing patterns. The project this paper reports about has specifically addressed these issues in the context of social media, on which there is as yet no independent study concerning history teaching and learning.

Materials and Methods

This study considered the emergent highlights of the reviews summarized above: The design of the videos focused on quality, pedagogical strategies, and learning efficiency. That is, as also explained in the introduction, particular attention was paid to making the videos informative as well as interesting.

Two of the largest social media platforms, YouTube and Facebook, were used to deliver the resulting videos to the widest possible audience, including history students. The Göbeklitepe video series, consisting of eleven videos, reached more than 255,000 views on YouTube in 11 weeks.

The second stage of this study consists of analyzing the data in the form of the number of views, likes and other emotional expressions, re-sharing and comments generated by the users watching the videos on both platforms.

Depending on the type of data thus collected, statistical and qualitative methods were used in the analysis. In this, statistical tools provided by social media platforms themselves as well as a web-based external text analysis tool called Voyant Tools (<https://voyant-tools.org/>) were found to be useful. Links to all the data and tools used in the analysis are given in the bibliography for further examination by the reader.

Before moving on to the findings from the analysis, it would be useful to briefly look at the concept of “Social Media”, the common name for the platforms where the data is generated, to make sense of the findings: There are many different definitions of what social media is (and is not). At their roots, they can be defined as web-based platforms that make it easy for users to share their creations online and then interact with them.

The platforms conform to this definition can be grouped by functionality as Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) did:

- Blog and microblogging sites (e.g. Twitter, Tumblr)
- Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, MySpace)
- Content communities (e.g. YouTube, Daily Motion, Pinterest, Instagram, Flickr, Vine)
- Collaboration Projects (e.g. Wikipedia, kaynakca.info)
- Virtual game worlds (e.g. World of Warcraft)
- Virtual social worlds (e.g. Second Life, Farmville)

As can be seen from this list, social media is used for communication, sharing, participation, and entertainment. Another area of use of social media is research. It is a relatively new field, but it is started to gain traction lately. So much so that guideline publications have emerged to assist research in this area (see Social Media Group, 2016; Sloan & Quan-Haase, 2017; Kozinets, 2019).

The term “social media research” covers any type of research that uses data generated from social media sources. These can be classified into two groups: (1) research that uses social media as a research tool (such as the application of surveys through social media platforms), and (2) research on the effectiveness and content of social media itself.

It can be said that this study constitutes a third group in that it contains features from both groups: designing videos and publishing them on social media in order to generate data, and using the data thus obtained to measure the impact of the study itself.

Findings

As stated in the introduction, the main goal of this study is to explore the potential of social media in improving learning efficiency in history teaching through active engagement. This goal was encoded as learning outcomes in the script on which the videos were based. Here, in a sense, the videos were used as data collection tools. Before moving on to the findings, it would be useful to define the concept of learning efficiency, albeit at a simple level.

Efficiency is a powerful concept that has been deeply engraved in the history of the last few centuries. In its simplest form, it is the rapid conversion of inputs into outputs. Inputs are manpower, money and other resources. Outputs are products and solutions to socioeconomic problems. Learning efficiency, on the other hand, is a combination of participation in an educational activity and the resulting achievements vis-a-vis the predetermined goals (Kuh & Hu, 2001, 2).

Based on this definition, the question of this section is: what can we say about the level of user engagement (e.g. number of views, watch time, comments, etc.) with the videos? From that; what can we deduce about the realization level of the predetermined learning outcomes? In other words, does this kind of study really increase learning efficiency in history teaching? It would be useful first to look at the data on a platform-by-platform basis:

Table 1. User Interactions on YouTube (accessed on 08.10.2020, 14:01)

Video Title	Video Length (Minute)	Number of Views	Total View Duration (Hours)	Average Views (%)	Likes (vs. dislikes) (%)
1. Poor Travelers Prepare for a Trip to Göbeklitepe	12:27	17707	165,4	4,6	90,54
2. Poor Travelers Go to a Traditional History Class	10:46	13770	128,4	5,27	80,15
3. Poor Travelers go to the Biological Anthropology Lab.	7:12	7248	168,7	19,46	88,46
4. Poor Travelers Arrive at Göbeklitepe	12:29	51866	423	3,94	75,74
5. Poor Travelers Examine Findings at Göbeklitepe	13:33	16043	227,8	6,31	83,19
6. Poor Travelers Look for Clues to Modern Society	10:19	74688	432,2	3,37	72,1
7. Poor Travelers on Neolithic Society	13:32	14816	139,6	4,18	84,78
8. Poor Travelers on Rhythm of the Daily Life at Göbeklitepe	5:39	11779	102,6	9,26	85,71
9. Poor Travelers Tackle with the Process of Believing	11:19	22509	169,3	4,01	75,71
10. Poor Travelers Discuss Cultural Continuity	9:50	4393	124,8	17,47	97,3
11. Poor Travelers as Advocates of Historic Heritage	10:28	5099	40,4	4,59	92,5
Total	1:57:56	255.585	2.122,2	4,99	82,19

According to the data provided by the YouTube Analytics tool, the total length of the 11 Göbeklitepe videos is 1:57:56 (one hour 57 minutes and 56 seconds). As of August 10, 2020, the total watch time (in hours) and the number of views is 2,122 and 255,585, respectively. The number of views on a video basis varies greatly: the lowest is 4,393 and the highest is 74,688. On average, the proportion of those who indicated that they liked the videos to those who did not is 82%. It can be seen from Table 1, that the percentage varies between 72% and 97%. The total number of likes/dislikes is 1557 (Appendix II, Table 1). The total number of comments is only 39. Compared to the total number of views, the rate of those who interact in the form of likes, comments etc. is 0.6%. The total number of people who like videos (1273) on YouTube is close to the number of subscribers to the channel (1345). In addition, it was observed that the majority of the views came from Turkey 61.3%, followed by India 34.8%, and others 3.9%. These data show that the effort to outreach international audience has paid off significantly.

As for the situation on Facebook, the data consisting of user interactions with the videos shared on Facebook are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Number of user interactions on Facebook

Video Title	Click	Comments	Sharing	Emoji
1. Poor Travelers Prepare for a Trip to Göbeklitepe	7051	42	2	134
2. Poor Travelers Go to a Traditional History Class	4824	100	50	3223
3. Poor Travelers go to the Biological Anthropology Lab.	9266	128	64	366
4. Poor Travelers Arrive at Göbeklitepe	13720	89	46	390
5. Poor Travelers Examine Findings at Göbeklitepe	11494	216	109	810
6. Poor Travelers Look for Clues to Modern Society	13390	38	19	483
7. Poor Travelers on Neolithic Society	7246	36	18	379
8. Poor Travelers on Rhythm of the Daily Life at Göbeklitepe	6824	401	201	5447
9. Poor Travelers Tackle with the Process of Believing	3462	139	70	3095
10. Poor Travelers Discuss Cultural Continuity	10982	213	106	661
11. Poor Travelers as Advocates of Historical Heritage	2490	42	21	226
Total	90747	1444	527	15214

At the beginning of this section, it was stated that the learning outcomes expected from the videos were defined in the script on which the videos are based. The question at this point is: do the user comments indicate that these learning outcomes have been realized? The answer to this question is not a definite "yes"; only an inference can be made in this direction: for example, a user wrote this comment about the first video shared on Facebook titled "Poor Travelers Prepare for Göbeklitepe Trip":

"It is a very good project, sir. We were informed about how future historians would correct what today's historians wrote... The historian's use of tools and methods while writing history... The historian's claim to truth can only be an approximation. We will eagerly await your investigations in Göbeklitepe."

Here, the user not only expresses what he learned from the video, but also indicates the curiosity that it aroused in him by saying "we will eagerly await your investigations". Another user expressed his curiosity even more strongly:

"After every episode I watch, my curiosity increases even more, it makes me feel like a practical lesson, well done to you!"[A7.1]

Another user quoted a sentence from the video titled "Poor Travelers in the Human Bone Laboratory" and shared the link to the video with his group of friends.

"It was said that Homo sapiens completed its evolutionary process and has been in existence for 30,000 years. But recent scientific research has shown that they have been around for 300,000 years."

Facilitating (accelerating) learning, creating a new style in documentary and highlighting scientific thinking (criticism, questioning) are the basic principles that guide the design of the videos. However, these principles are not clearly expressed in any of the videos. Despite this, the viewers, at least some of them, seem to have taken notice:

- "You have prepared a very easy tutorial system, thank you."
- "It was a good inquiry-based lesson"
- "A video that covers good topics and highlights scientific thinking"
- "Excellent work. A new style in documentary. I will watch it again and again."
- "You have created a very appropriate field of information production and interpretation, congratulations."
- "It was a very good episode. Your emphasis on critical thinking is great, thanks, I'm looking forward to the next parts :)"

To summarize, although the numerical data obtained from YouTube and Facebook differ in quantity, they are ultimately supportive of each other: The social media engagement implemented in this study can be said to be approved by the viewers by a large margin in terms of style and content. This, in turn, can be considered as a confirmation of the assumption that this style of engagement with social media would contribute to efficiency in history teaching and learning. Qualitative analysis of the user comments also supports this assessment

Discussion

Social media is a relatively new phenomenon compared to, say, the printing press. The establishment of the major social media platforms operating today coincides with the beginning of the 2000s; LinkedIn 2003, Facebook 2004, YouTube 2005 and Twitter 2006. By adding new features, they are constantly and rapidly evolving both structurally and content-wise. As a result of user activity on these platforms huge data deposits are being created that researchers can peruse in their research.

The academic world appears to be becoming increasingly aware of these deposits: a Google Scholar search for "social media research" yields around 17000 results. For the year 2020 alone, this number is 2200. Compared to previous years, it is seen that there has been a significant increase in the number of studies. However, social media research uses data that is produced by users "naturally". In other words, they use existing data. As to the use of these deposits by history education researchers, only one study can be found: Turan (2020).

In this study, however, firstly, participation in social media was realized through custom designed videos that incorporated pedagogical elements. Then, the data arising from the viewer interactions around the videos were analyzed. This is a new approach that has both disadvantages and advantages.

First of all, quality video design and production require knowledge and experience. Otherwise, the time needed for production increases. This further adds to the already high cost of such work as an opportunity cost. All of this is bound to act as a deterrent for both funders and researchers. Moreover, despite rapid development, social media research is a new field, as also mentioned above; compared to social research based on surveys, standards have not yet been established. This is likely to cause problems in evaluating project applications as experienced by this author himself.

Another problem area is in the interpretation of the data. Social media users comprise a non-homogeneous group in terms of age, gender, education level, income level, religion, ethnicity, worldview, and geography. The data arising from the reactions of such a group to the posts and their interactions with each other are not structured for research. This complicates the analysis. To solve this problem, it has been recommended to use multiple methods and compare the findings obtained from different platforms (Tufekci 2014). This is exactly what has been done in this study.

As for the advantages... First of all, it is possible to access data on a much larger user base via social media that cannot be achieved with other methods. This potentially expands the scope and dimensions of the analysis, which is undoubtedly a factor that strengthens the validity of the result of the analysis. In the words of Tüfekçi (2014), "the emergence of 'big data' in social media has had a similar effect on the study of human behavior, similar to the introduction of the microscope and telescope into the fields of biology and astronomy".

Indeed, the Göbeklitepe video series produced within the scope of this study reached a total of 255,585 views in a relatively short period of 11 weeks on YouTube. The exact meaning of this figure can perhaps be better understood through a comparison with older methods of using film in history classroom: If the Göbeklitepe video series had been shown to all students in all classes in the 49 years since the foundation of [blank] University [blank] (1972), only 2,078 students would have been reached.

It was mentioned above that the inhomogeneous, open-ended nature of social media data creates methodological difficulties. However, this situation can also be seen as an advantage in terms of revealing new problems and research areas that may not be possible with other methods. For example, the percentage of liking expressed for the fourth episode titled "Poor Travelers Reaching Göbeklitepe", 75.74, was far below the channel average (82.19%). This is the episode that one YouTube user described "It was a very good episode. It was very good that you got into the subject of critical thinking". Why then is this low level of likes?

This is the video in which the subject of science, prejudice and critical thinking is discussed with historical roots and with expert opinions in the context of archaeological finds in Göbeklitepe. It appears as if the video has hit a prejudice wall. But why? Is it because [A8.1][A8.2]of the videos created about Göbeklitepe by others on YouTube that contain pseudo-science descriptions such as "ancient aliens", "the world's first temple", and "the door to the realm of the dead"? These videos containing pseudo-history elements appear to have reached millions of viewers on YouTube alone. Could those videos be the source of the opinion expressed by a Facebook user to the video post, "Poor Travelers Examine the Göbeklitepe Finds"?

"That hill is the temple where Abraham broke all the idols and was taken out to be thrown into the fire with a catapult as punishment, nothing else..."

It seems that the social media space left largely blank by the academic community is filled with YouTuber videos and similar content that have little or no connection with science facts and historical realities, but can be watched for pleasure. A few simple scans support this observation. So, how does this situation affect the science-society relationship in general and the history-society relationship in particular?

Unfortunately, as yet we do not know the answers to these questions, which may be of vital importance.[A9.1] A good starting point to answer them would be conducting a comprehensive analysis of the impact of pseudo-science and pseudo-history content on the viewers on major social media platforms, just as it is done in the second stage of this project.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Social media studies can be classified into two groups: research that uses social media as a tool for collecting data (such as the application of surveys through social media platforms), and research on the effectiveness and content of social media itself. This study constitutes a third group as it combines features from both groups: Designing videos and publishing them on social media in order to generate data, and using the data thus obtained to measure the impact of the study itself. This is a first.

The research question addressed in this study is whether social media can enhance efficiency in history teaching and learning. Through quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data generated from viewer interactions with the videos on two major social media platforms, the answer has been shown to be yes, provided that care is given to conceptual design and content quality. The design and implementation processes therefore explained in sufficient detail so that it creates a model for further research. This is also significant for developing practical applications of history teaching and learning involving social media.

At this point, it should be noted that not only videos reached a high number of users compared to, say, classroom environment, but also are still active on YouTube [blank] channel. At the time of writing this paper, the channel has 1345 subscribers, reached more than 255000 views and 2500 hours watch time. Facebook page with the same name has 1535 followers. According to the current figures, the videos are viewed around 50 per day. This means that the cost per learner will decrease further over time.[A10.1]

This study raised the questions of impact of wide availability of pseudo-science and pseudo-history content on social media platforms on science-society relationship in general and history-society relationship in particular. These questions may be addressed following the research model described in this paper. Because of the experimental and pioneering nature of the study It took at least 50% longer than planned. That in turn increased the cost (the increased cost was covered by the project manager's own private budget). This may be a deterrent for future similar studies.

It may be therefore suggested that the studies involving both participation and research using social media, just as is done in this study, can be encouraged through special project calls, until a number of good practices emerge not just in history but also in other fields of social sciences as well.

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Appendixes

I: [Blank] ([Blank]) Göbeklitepe Video Series Contributors

PROJECT MANAGER

[Blank]

PROJECT CONSULTANTS

[Blank]

ANIMATION / COMMENT

[Blank]

SERIES EDITOR

[Blank]

VIDEO EDITOR

[Blank]

TECHNICAL CONSTRUCTION

Film Icabi Production Ltd.

Gobeklitepe Video List on YouTube Channel: [Blank] ([Blank]):

[Blank]

II: Data Tables

Table 1. Number of Likes/Dislikes on YouTube

Video	Like 	Dislike 	Like (vs. dislike)
1. Poor Travelers Prepare for a Trip to Göbeklitepe	134	14	90%
2. Poor Travelers Go to a Traditional History Class	103	19	84%
3. Poor Travelers go to the Biological Anthropology Lab.	112	15	88%
4. Poor Travelers Arrive at Göbeklitepe	227	72	75%
5. Poor Travelers Examine Findings at Göbeklitepe	98	19	83%
6. Poor Travelers Look for Clues to Modern Society	224	84	72%
7. Poor Travelers on Neolithic Society	79	12	86%
8. Poor Travelers on Rhythm of the Daily Life at Göbeklitepe	84	12	87%
9. Poor Travelers Tackle with the Process of Believing	106	32	76%
10. Poor Travelers Discuss Cultural Continuity	71	2	97%
11. Poor Travelers as Advocates of Historical Heritage	35	3	92%
Total	1273	284	81%

Table 2. YouTube Comments (as of 23.07.2020)

Video	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Irrelevant	Total
1. Poor Travelers Prepare for a Trip to Göbeklitepe	10			2	12
2. Poor Travelers Go to a Traditional History Class	3	2		2	7
3. Poor Travelers go to the Biological Anthropology Lab.	7		6		13
4. Poor Travelers Arrive at Göbeklitepe	10	1	2		13
5. Poor Travelers Examine Findings at Göbeklitepe	1	3	1	3	8
6. Poor Travelers Look for Clues to Modern Society				2	2
7. Poor Travelers on Neolithic Society	2	4	4	1	11
8. Poor Travelers on Rhythm of the Daily Life at Göbeklitepe	3		2	1	6
9. Poor Travelers Tackle with the Process of Believing	1		1		2
10. Poor Travelers Discuss Cultural Continuity	3				3
11. Poor Travelers as Advocates of Historical Heritage	1		1		2
Total	39	11	17	11	79

Table 3. Facebook Likes % Emojis

Video	Like 	Love 	Astonishing 	Hug 	Diğer 
1. Poor Travelers Prepare for a Trip to Göbeklitepe	127	5	0	2	0
2. Poor Travelers Go to a Traditional History Class	3,137	77	4	4	1
3. Poor Travelers go to the Biological Anthropology Lab.	339	24	3	0	0
4. Poor Travelers Arrive at Göbeklitepe	369	18	1	1	1
5. Poor Travelers Examine Findings at Göbeklitepe	758	47	5	0	0
6. Poor Travelers Look for Clues to Modern Society	462	19	0	1	1(
7. Poor Travelers on Neolithic Society	365	12	0	1	1
8. Poor Travelers on Rhythm of the Daily Life at Göbeklitepe	5,239	169	27	9	3
9. Poor Travelers Tackle with the Process of Believing	3,026	59	2	5	3
10. Poor Travelers Discuss Cultural Continuity	617	32	9	1	2
11. Poor Travelers as Advocates of Historical Heritage	212	13	0	0	1
Total	14.651	475	51	25	13

Table 4. Details of Sharing and Resharing on Facebook (As of 23.07.2020)

Video	Sharing	sharing with open identity	anonymous sharing	Resharing
1. Poor Travelers Prepare for a Trip to Göbeklitepe	2	1	1	0
2. Poor Travelers Go to a Traditional History Class	50	21	29	0
3. Poor Travelers go to the Biological Anthropology Lab.	64	20	44	0
4. Poor Travelers Arrive at Göbeklitepe	43	12	31	3
5. Poor Travelers Examine Findings at Göbeklitepe	107	17	90	2
5. Poor Travelers Look for Clues to Modern Society	19	7	12	0
7. Poor Travelers on Neolithic Society	18	1	17	0
3. Poor Travelers on Rhythm of the Daily Life at Göbeklitepe	200	53	147	1
9. Poor Travelers Tackle with the Process of Believing	69	16	53	1
10. Poor Travelers Discuss Cultural Continuity	106	30	76	1
11. Poor Travelers as Advocates of Historical Heritage	21	2	19	0
Total	699	180	519	8

Table 5. Details of Comments on Facebook

Video	Favorable Comments	unfavorable Comments	Neutral Comments	Irrelevant Comments
1. Poor Travelers Prepare for a Trip to Göbeklitepe	1	0	0	4
2. Poor Travelers Go to a Traditional History Class	2	0	0	13
3. Poor Travelers go to the Biological Anthropology Lab.	22	1	1	83
4. Poor Travelers Arrive at Göbeklitepe	1	0	1	25
5. Poor Travelers Examine Findings at Göbeklitepe	19	0	1	55
6. Poor Travelers Look for Clues to Modern Society	7	0	1	8
7. Poor Travelers on Neolithic Society	1	1	0	34
8. Poor Travelers on Rhythm of the Daily Life at Göbeklitepe	18	3	0	56
9. Poor Travelers Tackle with the Process of Believing	3	0	0	18
10. Poor Travelers Discuss Cultural Continuity	8	1		100
11. Poor Travelers as Advocates of Historical Heritage	1	0	1	6
Total	83	6	5	402

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.