



**OBTC 2015 at University of La Verne
June 17th – 20th, 2015**

Submission Template

SUBMISSION GUIDANCE

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- * All files must be saved in PDF format **
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- *Only one document should be submitted**

Submission Template for the 2015 OBTC Teaching Conference for Management Educators

1) Title of Proposal:

Building a Digital Community of Learning: The positive effects of social media use in higher education

2) Abstract:

Please include a brief session description (not to exceed 100 words). If your proposal is accepted, this description will be printed in the conference program.

Social media is an integral part of student's lives during college. By connecting with other students via social media, individuals are able to broaden their network and build a community of friendships. While extensively used and examined outside of the classroom, we investigate how social media can be used to build a community of learning. In particular, we asked both students and professors the extent to which social media was used in their course and how it influenced outcomes such as satisfaction, classroom culture, commitment, and performance. In this session we will discuss how social media can be used effectively in the classroom to enhance the student learning experience.

In an effort to help you, the reviewer, better understand our research and the design of our session, here is a more detailed session introduction.

Social media, or "internet communication platforms where more than one user can publish/post information with a community of users" (Carroll, Romano-Bergstrom, & Fischer, 2013), is of interest to researchers and practitioners alike. It is being used more and more in the corporate setting as a means to recruit, train, and even manage performance (e.g. – Cao et al., 2012; Ravenscroft et al., 2013). According to the *Society of Industrial and Organizational Psychology's Tip Topics*, four of the ten top trends in I-O psychology research were related to some aspect of social media (Harris & Hollman, 2013). The Tip Topics purports that I-O psychology researchers are interested in: the role of social media in globalization and the virtual workplace, internet-based recruitment and selection, the use of social media as a human resource tool, and the use of social media platforms for other organizational purposes.

In addition to the increasing interest surrounding research on social media usage,

corporate use of social media is increasing as well. One study revealed an increase in the adoption rate of social media tools by Fortune 500 organizations including new platforms such as, Google+, Foursquare and Instagram (Barnes, Lescault, & Wright, 2013). Another study indicates that companies can use social media to gain business value (Culnan, McHugh, & Zubilage, 2010). Although evidence of the value of social media is increasing in the corporate world, less is known about the effectiveness of social media in the academic setting. A recent University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth study found that university presidents are using social media more than CEOs. The study revealed that colleges and universities are using social media for recruiting and researching prospective students (Barnes & Lescault, 2013). A study conducted by the Babson Survey Research group (2011) indicated that over 90% of faculty are using social media in courses they are teaching or for their professional careers (Moran, Seaman, Tinti-Kane, 2011). This study suggests that faculty believe social media can be valuable for teaching, yet no evidence is provided on student outcomes related to their reactions of teaching effectiveness, learning, behavioral changes, and results.

Thus, the purpose of the current session is to examine the relationship between social media use by instructors in the classroom and teaching effectiveness. We will discuss results of a survey of both students and faculty about the use of social media inside and outside of the classroom. We will also lead a conversation about the effects of social media on learning outcomes, perceptions of teaching effectiveness, and success in the class. We believe this session will address a current gap in the literature and will provide educators a better understanding of whether and how social media can be used effectively in teaching.

Keywords:

Use three or four keywords to describe your session.

Social Media, Learning Outcomes, Teaching Effectiveness, Community of Learning

3) Format

- Activity or exercise
- Discussion roundtable (60 minute only)
- General discussion session

4) Time Requested:

- 30 Minutes
- 60 Minutes (*Roundtables must select 60 minutes*)
- 90 Minutes

5) Planning Details:

Does your session have any special requirements for space or materials?

We only need access to a projector and the appropriate cords to connect our laptop to the projection system. While there will be very little “presentation”, we will use the screen to provide examples of social media use in the classroom.

We do not have any other special requirements. We have incorporated intervals of small group discussion and large group discussion throughout our session, but this can be accomplished in a variety of settings.

6) Learning Objectives or Goals for the Session:

What are 2-4 specific learning outcomes that participants will get from your session?

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Recognize the potential of social media in building a community of learners.
- 2) Understand the effectiveness of various social media platforms in teaching.
- 3) Develop a toolbox of social media uses that have been determined to be most connected to student success.

Goals:

- 1) Provide an overview of how social media can be used in teaching to facilitate a community of social learning.
- 2) Demonstrate how social media platforms relate to learning outcomes.

7) Management or Teaching Topics:

Describe what management and/or teaching topics are relevant to your session, and why. Please include theoretical, disciplinary, or theoretical foundations that will help reviewers understand how your ideas fit within the broader field of management.

Introduction

Social media refers to “internet communication platforms where more than one user can publish/post information with a community of users” (Carroll, Romano-Bergstrom, & Fischer, 2013). Key features of social media are that it is participatory in nature, has decentralized authority, and offers a two-way conversation (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Although students have been actively engaged in using social media to connect with friends and build informal social relationships with others for over a decade, the use of social media in teaching and learning is also growing in popularity and use (Moran et al., 2011).

Community of Learning

The transformation of social media as a community of friendships and informal relationships to a community of learning and teaching effectiveness has only just begun to be examined in higher education (Hurt, Moss, Bradley et al., 2012). Building a community of learning is based on the premises of connectedness and commonality of learning goals (Rovai, 2002). Connectedness refers to creating and feeling bonding relationships whereas commonality of learning goals refers to the shared active construction and understanding of knowledge expectations and acquisition. Research has demonstrated that students in classrooms with a community of learning have greater motivation and tend to learn more (Summers & Svinicki, 2007).

Social media can facilitate a community of learning because it changes the nature of online education. When online courses began to be offered, they focused on broadcasting information to students in a one-way communication (Agarwal & Mital, 2009). In this broadcast approach, the role of the instructor was to create the right message ahead of time, decide on the best channel to deliver the method, keep control of the topic, and speak in an official voice offering lectures on the topic at hand and demonstrating expertise. Social media offers an exchange, or two-way communication approach to learning. It can be used as a supplement to traditional face-to-face classes or incorporated into an online learning environment. The social media approach includes facilitating a conversation on the topic, utilizing a variety of channels to communicate, engaging the audience to participate in the discussion, and speaking in an informal voice that can resonate with students.

Old: Broadcast (One-Way Communication)	New: Exchange (Two-Way Communication)
Create the right message.	Facilitate a conversation of the topic. (Listen first, talk second)
Deliver through the best channel.	Utilize a variety of channels.
Control the message and media.	Engage the audience and participate in the discussion
Speak in an “official” voice	Speak in an ‘informal’ voice

Theoretical Basis for the Social Media Framework

The effectiveness of social media as a tool for management education is based on social presence and media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986; Short, Williams, & Christie, 1976). Social presence theory indicates that media differ in the intimacy and immediacy they offer in an exchange. Media richness theory builds upon this notion by suggesting that some media are better at resolving ambiguity and offering a greater intensity in the exchange. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) use these theories as a starting point to build a classification matrix for social media that highlights the level of social

presence/media richness each medium provides as well as the extent to which self-disclosure is high versus low.

We extend the nature of these classifications by suggesting that when used in the academic setting, social media typically tends to fall under one of these five categories:

- Social bookmarking: Repository of information (e.g. – Pinterest)
- Social collaboration: Developing and sharing content (e.g. - Wikis, Google Docs)
- Social connection: Informal interaction (e.g. – Facebook, Instagram)
- Social competition: Contests and incentives (e.g. - Virtual worlds, Games)
- Social sharing: Distribution and discussion of information (e.g. - Twitter, Blogs)

Literature Review. The literature on social media in higher education has focused on two factors: 1) frequency of use by instructors and 2) student reactions. We discuss major findings in each of these areas.

A majority of the initial research on social media in higher education has focused on frequency of use by instructors. One study estimated more than four out of every five professors use social media in one of its varied forms (Parry, 2010). Approximately one-third of faculty use social media to communicate with peers and students and faculty in the humanities and social science report using social media to a greater extent than faculty in business, math, and science.

In a study that compared student perceptions of Facebook to the online learning management system (Blackboard), the authors found that students preferred, were more familiar with, found it easier to use, became more acquainted with classmates, felt like valued participants, and reported that they learned more course material via Facebook (Hurt, Moss, Bradley, et al., 2012). Another study utilizing Facebook to build a community of learning indicated that students agreed that Facebook led to greater participation, personal and professional growth, and was convenient (Barczyk & Duncan, 2013). Students also believed Facebook facilitated a community of knowledge sharing, collaboration, and interactive activities. In particular, older students (over the age of 25) thought Facebook facilitated learning and connectedness. Although all students in this study felt more connected with fellow students and were able to contact the instructor more frequently, they were somewhat ambivalent about whether it should be used in more classes or that it improved the quality of the course. In fact, contrary to the prior study (Hurt et al., 2012), the students in Barczyk and Duncan's (2013) study did not find Facebook to be more effective than the learning management system and did not prefer using it over Blackboard or another learning system.

Although frequency of use and student reactions are important to understand in

using social media in the higher education context, there is a lack of systematic research on the effectiveness of social media as a teaching tool and whether students experience positive learning outcomes as a result of social media (Cao & Hong, 2011; Grover & Stewart, 2010). As we suggest above, building a community of learning is based on the premises of connectedness and commonality of learning (Rovai, 2002). We believe social media should be used in management education because it can enhance teaching effectiveness in building a sense of connectedness to others and can build learning by leading to greater knowledge acquisition and academic performance.

Methods and Results

In order to examine the relationship between social media use, teaching effectiveness, and learning outcomes, we conducted a study in two business schools in the Midwest. We surveyed both students and professors of classes ranging from little to no social media use in instruction to high social media use. We collected teaching evaluations and student grades from these courses and compared the effectiveness of social media use on teaching and learning. We also asked about perceptions of a community of learning, including course engagement, commitment, and connection to others. Our initial findings suggest that social media use does relate to teaching and learning outcomes, but only through perceptions of communications and connectedness to others. We will use these findings as a starting point to discuss when and how social media can be useful in teaching.

Conclusions

Although social media use can be effective in instruction, it does have its limitations from an instructor point of view (Racham, Kaewkitipong, & Firpo, 2012). The biggest constraint is that it can be very time consuming. Social media use requires instructors to communicate frequently with students to maintain a high level of interest and activity in the overall learning environment. Another limitation is that its effectiveness can depend on instructor characteristics such as the skills, personality, and commitment that they are willing to dedicate to social media. Despite these limitations, students seem to find social media valuable in creating a community of learning. The use of social media in student's personal lives will only continue to grow. We as professors can find ways to integrate and utilize these platforms in our teaching to facilitate knowledge sharing and effectiveness in the future.

8) Session Description and Plan:

What will you actually do in this session? What activities will you facilitate, how long will they take, and how will participants be involved? Reviewers will be evaluating how well

the time request matches the activities you'd like to do, and the extent you can reasonably accomplish the session's goals. Reviewers will also be looking for how you are engaging the participants in the session. Include a timeline for your session.

We strive to make this an exploratory session with a balance of interactive discussion, theory exploration, and recommendation sharing and development. Our activity plan and timeline is listed below.

- Introduction. (2 minutes)
- Small group discussion focused on the following questions: How do you currently use social media while teaching? How is the pedagogy of social media different than traditional instructional methods? (5 minutes)
- Interactive discussion and presentation of the social media framework, a theoretical classification of how social media can be used in management education (5 minutes)
- Small group discussion focused on the following questions: How might social media enhance teaching effectiveness? What kind of learning outcomes do you believe might be influenced by using social media? (5 minutes)
- Interactive discussion of recommendations (from us and from participants) regarding teaching and learning outcomes associated with using social media to build a community of learning including suggestions of best practices when incorporating social media into classes (10 minutes)
- Closing remarks and takeaways. (3 minutes)

9) For Activities and Exercises:

Attach any materials needed to run the activity and debriefing questions. Evidence for effectiveness may also be included.

See previous section for discussion questions. We have developed a separate worksheet that follows along with the session for participants to utilize in notetaking throughout discussion (see last page of this submission).

10) Implications for Teaching or for Teachers:

What is the contribution of your session?

Our discussion is relevant to any management topic and any level of instructor who teaches the traditional college student (i.e. the young adult aged approximately 18 to 22 years). This session contributes to management education by offering a model of how social media transforms the nature of online teaching and influences learning outcomes and teaching effectiveness. Participants in this session will walk away with a new perspective on the learning process and new ideas for utilizing social media in building a community of learning. Attendees will build a toolbox of new strategies for engaging the traditional college student through social media.

11) Application to Conference theme:

How does your session fit with the overall OBTC theme of Learning in Community? This session directly relates to the theme of “Learning in Community” in that it highlights how social media can be used to create a digital community for a class. In particular, the effectiveness of social media as a teaching tool seems to be contingent on its ability to connect learners to one another and the instructor and facilitate knowledge sharing. The purpose of social media in teaching is for professors to build a learning community using platforms that are familiar and interesting to students.

12) Unique Contribution to OBTC:

Have you presented the work in this proposal before? If so, how will it be different? Is this proposal under current review somewhere else? If so, please explain. How will your proposal be different for the OBTC conference?

This proposal has not been submitted anywhere else.

13) References and/or Additional Materials:

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Building a Community of Learning: Social Media and Teaching Effectiveness

GENERAL DISCUSSION SESSION
2015 ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR TEACHING CONFERENCE

AUTHOR
AUTHOR AFFILIATION
CONTACT INFORMATION

AUTHOR
AUTHOR AFFILIATION
CONTACT INFORMATION

Small Group Discussion

How do you currently use social media while teaching? How is the pedagogy of social media different than traditional instructional methods?

Social Media Framework

Definition

Examples

Social Bookmarking

Social Collaboration

Social Connection

Social Competition

Social Sharing

Small Group Discussion

How might social media enhance teaching effectiveness? What kind of learning outcomes do you believe might be influenced by using social media? What recommendations do you have for incorporating social media into teaching?