The Use of Social Media from a Student Perspective for Active Learning and Retention

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<th><strong>Jonatha</strong></th>
<th><strong>Nicol</strong></th>
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<td>Native Texan/El Pasoan</td>
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<td>BBA, UTEP</td>
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<td>Associates, EPCC</td>
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Audience Poll
Does this matter?

Nontraditional learners increasingly make-up a larger percentage of the total undergraduate student body.

[We] need to find ways to meet these non-traditional student concerns.

[We need] to customize and frame e-courses in such a way that non-traditional learners will like them.
Online Classes vs. Online Programs

Online *classes* may be part of any student’s (traditional or not) coursework, but as discrete experiences, likely integrated with classroom exposure.

Online *programs* are a comprehensive experience, with minimal or no exposure.
Student engagement, support, and persistence

Let us agree that:

- Students need to be engaged and supported to successfully persist to degree attainment
- There are numerous support strategies for increasing student persistence
Element of Retention

“When online learners have a stronger sense of community, they feel less isolated and have a greater satisfaction with their academic programs...this also results in fewer dropouts”

-Fisher and Baird, 2005
Silverman, Aliabadi, & Stiles (2009) propose “gathering cohorts of [CPTR and traditional] students together…as part of the Welcome Week activities…”

They also note that “CPTR students often hold the prevalent assumption that none of the co-curricular experiences the institution offers are more important than their other obligations.”
What’s wrong with this picture?

- Most nontraditional students do not have time for “Welcome Week”
- Welcome Week is sometimes not useful or even relevant for online and distance students
- Other obligations may take precedence (e.g. children, work)
- Most engagement and support strategies based on traditional student models rather than nontraditional or distance/online students
“Commuter, part-time, transfer, and returning students are expected to function in an environment where policies are created and maintained for the traditional population... ‘The traditional “linear-matriculation” image of the college student still influences policy formulation and educational practice at all levels, despite the reality that the majority of 18-to-24-year-olds, not to mention older students, do not experience a college education in a linear fashion.’”

--Silverman, Aliabadi, & Stiles (2009)
What is Lost Online?

• “Engagement strategies are meant to build relationships and support structures, which most non-traditional students will either already have, or search for in other places.”

—Aaron Miltenberger,

• Adams State College, Coordinator of Student Activities (2011)
Assumptions

- Online and distance programs are almost exclusively populated by nontraditional students.
- Nontraditional students have competing priorities and complicated schedules.
- We can use the technology that delivers distance learning to increase student engagement (and therefore persistence).
The Conversation
The Art of Listening, Learning, and Sharing

LiveCasting - Video and Audio
Blog Platforms
Wiki
Blogs/Conversations
Music
Blog Communities
Events
Micromedia
Documents
Lifestreams
Video Aggregation
Specific to Twitter
Video
SMS/Voice
Social Networks
Online/Distance Learner Needs

“the key to a successful online user experience is to help students find ways to construct relationships with their peers, while simultaneously meeting their neomillennial-based learning styles”--Fisher & Baird, 2005, Neomillennial user

“…distance learners need to feel that they are not isolated, either from their instructors or other learners”--Lapadula, M., 2003
Institutions can design online programs to create stronger relationships and networks.

Support academic functions.

Support social functions.

These may be separate or combined.
Online Support Solutions

- May be formal or informal
- Can be student-led or student-initiated
- Contain social or academic functions (or both)
- Demonstrate the elements of online learning communities:
  - Participation
  - Shared identity
  - Social network
- (Wang, Sierra, & Folger, 2003)
Facebook Pages

Program page – created by program staff
Needs to be regularly maintained and updated
Post things if you say you will
Somewhat static, but often a good source of information
Creating a formal connection between program and students
Adams State College
University · Alamosa, Colorado

Adams State College
Congratulations to some outstanding faculty ... Dr. Jared Beeton, Earth Sciences; Dr. Robert Benson, Earth Sciences; Dr. Mari Centeno, Political Science; Dr. Stuart Hilwig, History; and Dr. Beth Robison, Music.

Presidential Teacher Award finalists announced
www.adams.edu
Now in its fifth year, the Adams State College Presidential Teacher Award acknowledges professors dedication to their students and recognizes outstanding undergraduate teaching, advising, and mentoring.

Unlike · Comment · Share · 4 hours ago ·
You and 23 others like this.

1 share

Chantine Beene Awesome program - congrats to all the finalists!
4 hours ago · Like · 1

Billie Mathews Cold, but beautiful!

Jason Gomez T

Bejeweled Blitz
Lisa Bradshaw Slover and 9 other friends play Bejeweled Blitz.

Fly Denver to NYC
southwest.com
Facebook Groups

Students can belong to a Facebook group without being Facebook friends

Caveat: if you are a student who has not participated in your group project, and any of your group members are Facebook friends...don’t post about how you just up and went to Vegas. It will not increase solidarity.

Creating a semi-formal connection between program and students
Facebook Groups

Historic Hand Embroidery
Closed Group — HistoricHandEmbroidery@groups.facebook.com
320 Members 125 Photos 13 Docs

Kellee Hultgren
It's done! This is the best of three heraldic applique. Posting it here a little back did, in fact, guilt me into finishing it a bit sooner. "gasp"

Impatient Bed Makers
Secret Group
2 Members 1 Photo 1 Docs

Write Post  Add Photo / Video  Ask Question
Write something...

Higher Education Admin & Leadership (HEAL) at Adams State
Open Group
21 Members Photos Docs

Write Post  Add Photo / Video  Ask Question
Write something...

Melissa L. Freeman
New Mexico Higher Education Assessment & Research (NMHEAR) conference this week in Albuquerque, NM. HEAL students Nicola Donaven and Jonathan Macias are presenting a paper. Dr. Freeman will have a table for recruitment to the Fall 2012 Cohort. Stop by and see us!

Like · Comment · Follow Post · 13 hours ago near Alamosa, CO
👍 Marsha Shock Lewis likes this.

Write a comment...

Updated Posts
Nicola Donaven
My sewing room about two months ago. Conditions are about the same.

Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · December 30, 2011 at 10:25am

Sponsored
Celebrating the creative slab, self-preserving impatience, and a general lack of self discipline, because life is about abundance and friends, not about getting it right.

Who else should be in this group?

Add Friends to Group

Sponsored
Rocky Mountain Rollergirls vs...
Don't miss the fast paced, hard hitting roller derby at the Fillmore Auditorium on Saturday, March 3. RMRG vs. Pikes Peak Derby Dames!
WikiSpaces (Wikis)

- Can be a great place for students to share general information
- Creating a formal or an informal connection between program and students
- Creating a space where things can flourish and students can create their own connections
Wiki Examples
Challenges: Technical

- Not everyone is on Facebook or knows how to use a given technology
- Technical issues can interfere with synchronous use of social media
- Some people will always need and/or want FTF connection as well—online support is only ONE strategy
- Maintenance and updating
Keep Five Things in Mind

- Develop a strategy
- Like a good assessment be ongoing not episodic
- Allow student honest
- Integrate students in planning and implementation
- To succeed, you must be prepared to fail

• Thank you


