



ANKARA UNIVERSITY DISTANCE EDUCATION CENTER e-Tutor Certificate Program



Social Media and Emerging Technologies

1. Social Networks

Online social networking “is a range of activities enabled by social technologies and operationalised by a group of people” (Hamid, Chang & Kurnia, 2009, p. 419). The most important feature of social networks is “creating content based on social interaction”. Images, audio files, URL addresses, video clips, presentations, activity and events shared in electronic platforms are all social content. Millions of people use social networking sites and cumulative information shared on social networks has increasing each day. Here, social networks are explained under five main groups in relation to their instructional use.

Social Networking Sites

[Facebook](#), [Google+](#) and [Linked.in](#) are the most popular social networking services. These environments are richer in terms of being able to implement various instructional activities. With these kind of tools, you can form closed groups for your students, share any kind of media and documentation, hold discussions, gather feedback about some media or document (by commenting on the posts), communicate with your students more effectively on a 24x7 basis, and administer surveys or tests. Moreover, you can add some fantastic activities to strengthen your instruction, by writing applications using platforms supported by related social media.

Facebook

[Facebook](#) is an online social network connecting people all over the world to interact with each other and share resources (Gonzales & Vodicka, 2010). Similar to other online social networks (e.g. [Friendster](#), [MySpace](#)), users create a profile, add friends and write comments to other people’s posts or share information (Peluchette & Karl, 2010). In order to have a [Facebook](#) account, one should register at <http://www.facebook.com> first. After registration, users can send invitations to friends by searching by name or e-mail address, access profile information of anyone, depending on their privacy settings, and see and review what friends share (text, photographs, videos, audio, etc.). Users can also write on their friends’ timeline (wall) if it is allowed, or send messages, photos or videos, tag their friends on these posts, and even establish open, closed or secret groups and then send a message just to that group.

[Facebook](#) can be used for sharing learning materials (video, audio, spreadsheets, documents, databases and websites, as well as other types of documents), to follow the latest news and events, people or groups and for participating in discussion groups to enhance collaborative learning, research, query, discussion, critical thinking and problem solving skills.

[Facebook’s](#) ‘groups’ function gives instructors the opportunity to enhance communication, and to create a warm and friendly atmosphere for learners. In these groups, you can share all sorts of materials with your students, including text, audio, video, links and visual animations. Groups are good for holding discussions in a problem-based learning environment. You can start a discussion (Figure 13.1) with your students by commenting on posts, thereby helping to promote students’ evaluating skills. You can also have 24x7 contact with your students via groups. You can create special applications for your class, such as online exams and puzzles, based on the specific needs of students.



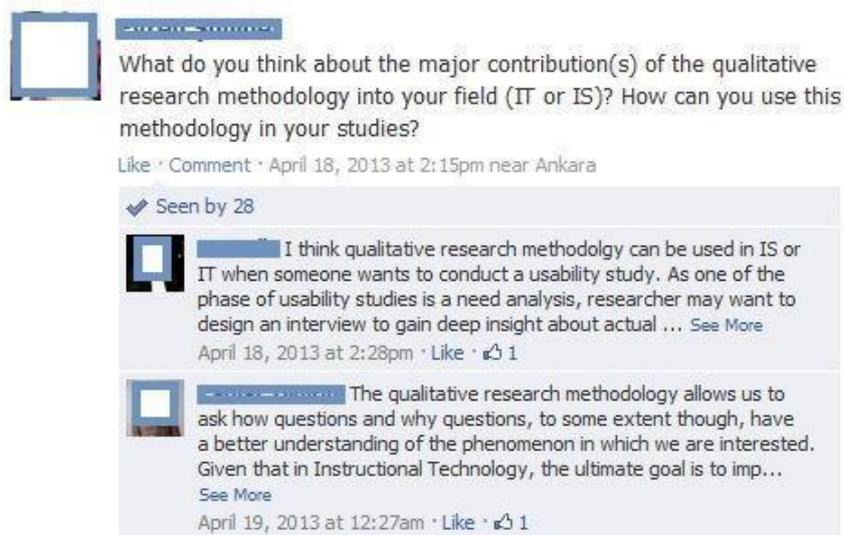


Figure 13.1. Discussion on a Facebook Course Page

You can administer any test or survey for your students using this platform. By doing this, you can get feedback from your students about any issue or topic. For instance, you can ask a question to test whether or not they understand a concept or phenomena. This method may work better particularly in concept teaching, and you can also make decisions together with your students about the course flow.

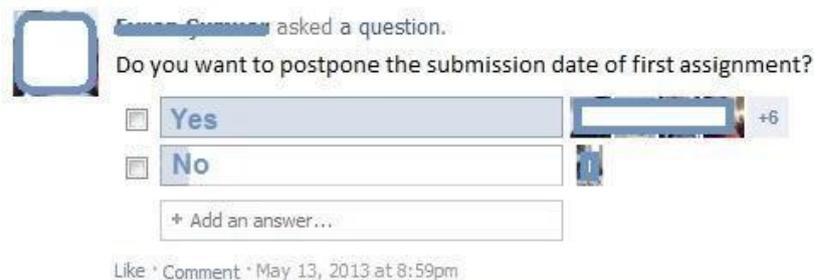


Figure 13.2. Asking Questions on a Facebook Course Page

Madge, Meek, Wellens and Hooley’s research (2009) about the effects of registering a university’s [Facebook](#) page found that Facebook is a “social connective” regarding adaption to university life for the students. Providing a socialisation prominence, [Facebook](#) offers an easy-to-use environment for teaching and learning situations by supplying all requirements such as creating separate groups for the courses, sharing all the visual materials, discussion, making announcement, sharing course materials or URL address, etc. Hence, it can be used for educational purposes effectively both in traditional or online settings.

Document Sharing Services

The most popular document sharing systems are [Dropbox](#), [SkyDrive](#) and [Google Drive](#). [Dropbox](#) allows you to share and store your files, but you cannot create a new document per se since you need another platform (such as Microsoft Office) for creating the document itself. In [Google Drive](#) and [SkyDrive](#), on the other hand, you can create documents directly using the web platform, and then share your documents with whoever you want. You can work on a document together with anyone you shared it with, and even edit documents at the same time in [Google Drive](#). You can

create a folder for your students to share resources. Store your lesson plans or documents in your classroom’s shared folder so that anyone in your class can easily find and access them. In this folder you can add different types of files for sharing with your students, such as text documents, video, audio, animation, and photo images. In this way, students can access classroom resources wherever they have an internet connection, without need for other devices like a flash drive, hard disk, or CD. You can select different sharing options too, so students can make changes to the document collaboratively, if you want that. You can share supplementary resources with your students about your course, and makes it easier to organise your instructional materials.

Multiple sharing settings allow you to publish student work and share it with your class, with your school or school district, or with the public by sharing the URL address. When you publish the file, students can make comments about it, providing a method for student-student or student-instructor interaction for your class.

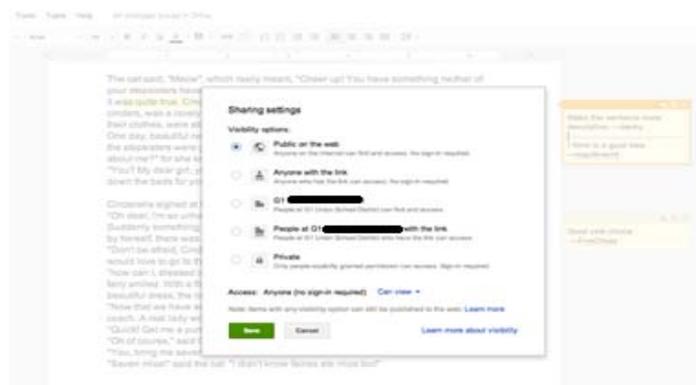


Figure 13.3. Sharing Settings in Google Drive

Principal Teacher Observation Form

Teacher's Name

Grade Level

Subject Area

- English Language Arts
- Math
- Science
- Social Studies
- Art
- P.E.

Teacher clearly communicates the lesson's objective.

1 2 3 4 5

Novice Exemplary

The lesson is standards aligned and rigorous.

1 2 3 4 5

Novice Exemplary

The lesson has an engaging opening / hook.

1 2 3 4 5

Novice Exemplary

Figure 13.4. Creating Survey



Using these services, you can work collaboratively with your students from anywhere. You can request your students to work in small groups or as a big group on a project. You can create folders for each group and see what each is doing, and provide students with ongoing and simultaneous feedback about their projects. You can also see who is making changes to the document and in this way, give personal feedback. Also, you can create surveys to understand the interests of your students (see Figure 13.4).

Media Sharing Services

Media sharing services provide functionality to upload and share any media types such as video, image, animation, simulation, etc. Enhancing instruction with media provides motivation, increases retention, and even prevents boredom, hence using media sharing services in educational settings is important and useful.

You can use [YouTube](#) or [Vimeo](#) for uploading and sharing video and audio for your students. Users can register to these platforms, and arrange the individual privacy settings of each material. Students can make comments and give feedback on these materials as well.

Visualisation is important, and offers many benefits for learners. It makes learning more attractive, permanent, and students more active and attentive. You can also use some social platforms for visualisation; for instance students can prepare online multimedia posters via [Glogster](#) including text, images, videos, graphics, and sounds etc. They can also collect and pin all images, audio and videos they like to their inboard via [Pinterest](#). To support your course with some visual elements such as images, graphs or charts, you can also use [Picasa](#) or [Flickr](#). [Picasa](#) is like a picture gallery where users can organise, edit and share their photographs. [Flickr](#) is a platform to host and share images and videos.

The easiest way to share visual e-content such as digital photos and videos is to use a software designed for sharing visuals. One of the most popular software for this purpose is [Flickr](#). It is used for storing your photographs as well as managing them under folders and sharing them with billions of users (Figure 13.5). You can upload your photos to [Flickr](#) from different devices or by connecting your [Flickr](#) account to other social media platforms such as [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Blogger](#), among others. Users can create common licensing for photographs in Flickr or keep “all rights reserved”. Licensing in [Flickr](#) includes Creative Commons as well as content control licensing. Flickr users can only access and use these photographs in compliance with terms of use.

Photographs uploaded to Flickr can be edited online, shared and gathered as a slideshow. You can create short films with the help of appropriate software making easier to prepare visual content such as [Animoto](#), [BigHugeLabs](#) and [PhotoPeach](#). Moreover, it can be used for having discussions on visuals, visualisation of poetry or events in schools and creating e-portfolios. Furthermore, it also allows adding friends and creating groups like other social networking software.

You should register to [Flickr](#) to use the application. [Flickr](#) provides you a considerable amount of free space to store your photos. It allows you to create tags, change explanations, establish groups, and edit your photographs online (Gülbahar, Kalelioğlu & Madran, 2010). Flickr can be used effectively and creatively in learning situations via groups (Gonzales & Vodicka, 2010).



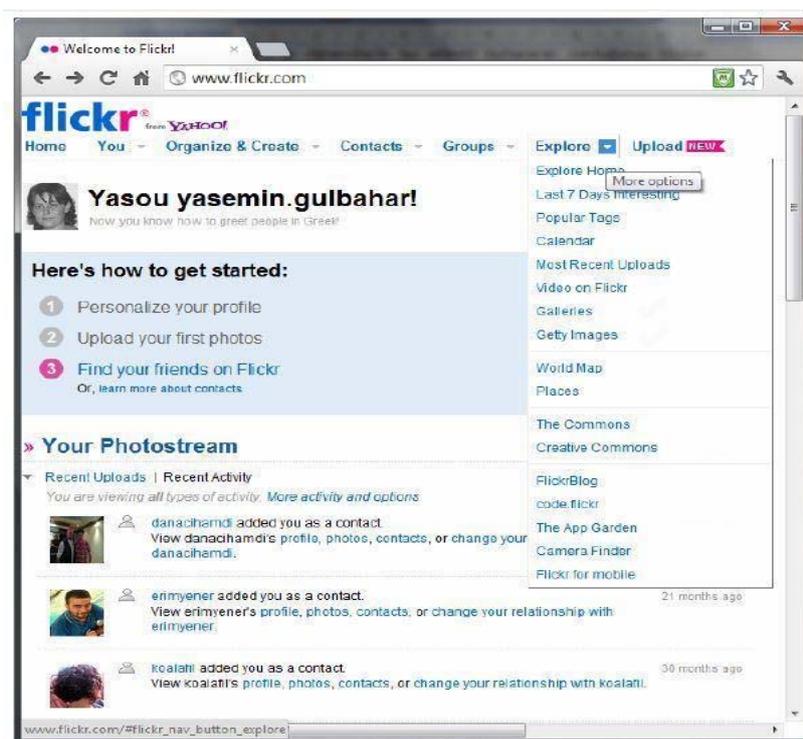


Figure 13.5. Flickr Interface

In educational terms, the information box on photos allows you to see tags and explanations about the photos or hold discussions about them in [Flickr](#). Connecting users all over the world and allowing to share visuals about any culture or region may be the most important feature about [Flickr](#). Instructors may also elaborate on different viewpoints and perspectives via tagging and using this feature in [Google Maps](#) and [Google Earth](#). It is also possible via [Flickr](#) to compose virtual museum tours, to teach language (Gülbahar & Kalelioğlu, 2010), to teach how to use digital photograph machine, to compose or to conduct activities as digital storytelling and brainstorming.

Collaboration Tools

Collaborative work and cooperation are crucial elements of instructional activities that make students active learners. By using collaborative environments, it is possible to create one product with several contributors. Several students can create a concept map collaboratively by using something like [Webspiration](#) or create a website about a certain topic using [Wiki Spaces](#), share and write computer programs using [Github](#) or [Google Code](#), and share and/or work on various types of documents using [Google Drive](#). Most of these tools record the ‘document amendment history’, so it is easy to keep track of who is participating, and what their contributions are.

[Wiki Spaces](#) is a free web hosting service where people can write and discuss on a web page either individually or collaboratively. Having a place to manage all the activity, resources, conversations, and projects in your classroom is essential for students and teachers alike to be organised and work together. Teachers can post homework, group work, and classroom goals, and keep them updated throughout the term in real time. Students and teachers can share a flexible educational space that’s accessible anytime, and from virtually anywhere in the world. The students can work collaboratively, which can in turn improve their social skills. They can add different kinds of file types like video, animation, or photo images to the same environment. They can comment on the posts and you can create discussions about a subject.



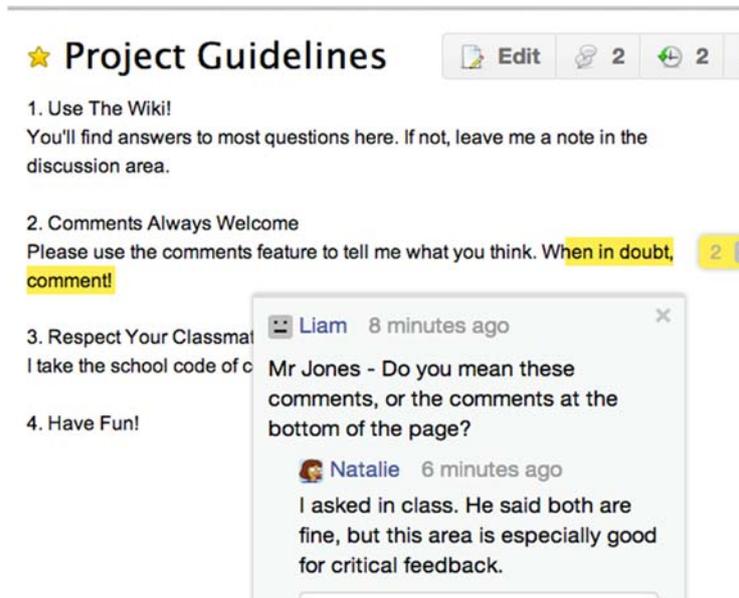


Figure 13.6. Discussion

You can watch student engagement in real time, literally as they type, without changing how you work. You can also report on contributions to pages, discussions, and comments over time and you can focus on particular students, projects, or view reports across your entire class. You can use portfolios for student assessment. Each student cultivates a unique online space to showcase their best work, and teachers assess performance as it progresses. You can see the students' participation in the discussions.

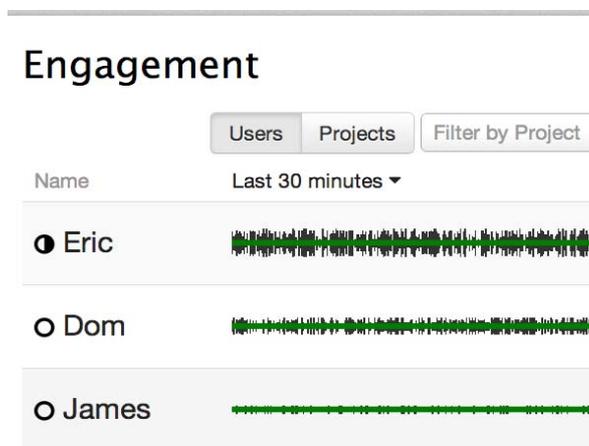


Figure 13.7. Tracking Performance

Student groups collaborate on projects that address real-world questions, and share their findings with a real-world audience. You can choose to set assignment start and end dates, or create long-running projects. At the end of the assignment, you can automatically publish projects to the entire class or to students, parents, or others in your community.



Create Project		Archive	Delete
<input type="checkbox"/>	Name ▾	Event	
<input type="checkbox"/>	French Revolution ↻	0	
	Blue, Green, Orange, Red, Yellow		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Roman Empire ↻	0	
	Blue, Green, Orange, Red, Yellow		
<input type="checkbox"/>	World War II ↻	0	

Figure 13.8. Setting Assignment

Blogs & Microblogs

Blogging and microblogging services are used for interactive content and discussion. Blogging websites can be described as electronic dairies, where users can focus on a specific topic or just write down their thoughts, experiences, and to instigate discussion. For example, you can get your students to prepare a blog page as a performance assessment, using something like [Edublog](#), [Blogger](#), [Wordpress](#) or [Tumblr](#). Some blogging services even have instant messaging functionality, such as [Twitter](#).

[Twitter](#) started in 2006 as a project by a San Francisco podcasting company. This microblogging platform had 100,000 users only one year later, and was named as “the best blogging tool” by the influential South by Southwest festival (Hamilton, 2007). [Twitter](#) allows users to write messages not more than 140 characters, which are called ‘tweets’. At first, it serves to convey the updated information, news and information (tweets) to the users quickly and shortly (Humphreys, Gill, Krishnamurthy & Newbury, 2012). Then it has become a social environment where people share their opinions, discuss any project, ask their questions and reach updated news and sources. Here, users chose with whom they want to interact and who they want to follow. According to Crawford (2009), “Unlike radio, which is a one-to-many medium, [Twitter](#) is many-to-many” (p. 528, as cited in Messner, Linke & Eford, 2011).



Figure 13.9. Twitter Interface



[Twitter](#) requires membership to use the application, and to follow people and institutions. New users have followers in due time. You can share any information with your followers sending tweets whenever you want. Tweets coming from your followers include @ symbol, and it is like a bridge between your follower and you. Tweets are tagged with # symbol and so they are classified. They make easier to reach tweets in a specified topic. There is also a Top Trend (TT) tweet list, which is arranged based on the mostly talked topics in the world or in any country, where you can share or read top tweets about what people talk mostly at that time.

According to Java, Song, Finin and Tseng (2007), people use microblogging to talk about their daily life activities, search and share any information. As a microblogging application Twitter can be used with mobile technologies during online learning situations and traditional classroom settings. Twitter can be used in teaching-learning situations for many purposes such as learning language, enhancing translation skills or collaborative activities namely announcing, sharing an abstract of an article or chapter, or URL address, creating an account for a person in the history and managing that account or creating a story (Messner, 2009), sharing book suggestions, asking questions about trend topics, following important people or experts in the field, watching trend news in television, following other news channels and discussing with other people (Gülbahar, Kalelioğlu & Madran, 2010).

2. Related Activities

Discuss

- Attractively, social media changes the structure of existed content and learning management systems (LMS). What do you think about that LMS should integrate social media platforms into its own system or they should be integrated into social media platforms? Which one is better and why?
- What are potential benefits of drawbacks of live streaming?

Explore

- Examine five software about audio and video recording and editing. Compare these software based on 10 criteria you decided.
- Examine the software used for screen casting and try them. And then, please write a report about which software you prefer the most and explain the reasons.

Suggested Applications

- Please try audio, video recording and screen casting using the software explained above.
- Please try live streaming in the classroom using different technologies and software.
- Prepare a user guide (audio, video recording or live streaming) step by step about the most favourite application and share in a social environment.

3. Conclusion

Based on the popularity of social media in recent years, $E_1^{-1} \cdot 3^0 \cdot 1 \cdot 3^1 \cdot 4 \cdot 5 \cdot 6$ decide to use social media as a supplementary to LMS or even as an LMS in e-learning, which is a similar approach used by MOOCs. Selecting the appropriate social media tools and managing this online environment is key to success. If you plan to do so, you can visit <http://socialmediaforeducation.org/> and have some ideas on how to implement instructional activities via social media.



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