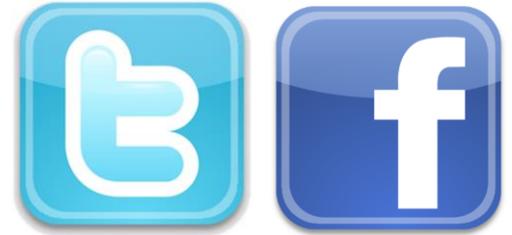


Blended Learning Essentials: Getting Started

Crib Sheet: Social Media



What is Social Media?

Social media can be thought of as any web based tools that enable people 'to create, share or exchange information, ideas, and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks'. This crib sheet focuses on 'Facebook' and 'Twitter' two of the most widely used social media tools. Both 'Facebook' and 'Twitter' are very popular, free social media sites. It is very easy to create groups on Facebook as well as pages promoting an event or shared interest. The 140 character limit on Tweets is a great function to help summarize key information. It is also a great way to discover breaking news before conventional news channels. Twitter also uses hashtags # to group information which is a great way to crowd source and share relevant information.

Where can I find out how to use Social Media?

Social media changes quickly so using the help pages on the service's own website is often the best way to get the most accurate and up to date information. Find out how to use Twitter or Facebook by accessing their help pages: <https://support.twitter.com/> or <https://www.facebook.com/help/>. But there are also lots of video tutorials on YouTube, like [this beginner tutorial about Twitter for teachers](#) and this one about [educational pages in Facebook](#). Check the date to find the most up to date information. If you have a [Lynda.com](#) account there are detailed training videos there as well.

How can Social Media be used in learning and teaching?

Social media is very easy to use and popular and many students will already be familiar with how to use Facebook and Twitter. Don't be afraid to learn from your learners about the latest features and issues. At its most basic Facebook or Twitter can be used as a 'broadcast' account, that is, one-way communication from the institution or teacher to learners as a simple information portal. You can also create groups in Facebook which can be private and do not require members to be friends with each other. Members of the groups can exchange files, links, information, polls and videos very quickly. This can provide an alternative Virtual Learning Environment which will be much easier for learners to use.

Teachers or trainers can set up subject or class Twitter accounts that learners can follow and find out useful information via Tweets, hyperlinks and images. Whichever social media you use it is important to keep it up to date and relevant so learners will keep checking the information. Within the Vocational Education and Training sector, possible uses of social media that could be adapted to your own educational context are:

- Creating a [Twitter Timeline](#) or Facebook Group to support the teaching of any curriculum subject
- Running Facebook debates on topical issues and hot issues in the media, for example in Public Health and Social Care.
- Creating a [Twitter Chat](#) around a hashtag, as a Twitter virtual 'meeting' for peer tutoring, discussion and support, for example <https://twitter.com/ukedchat>

- For professional development for teachers and trainers, for example, using your Twitter account to post, share ideas, videos and resources;
- Developing a creative writing task for students (e.g. ESOL) using the 140 character restriction on Twitter.

Using Social media in the Vocational Education and Training Sector

Level 3 Performing Arts

The teacher or trainer has set an assignment to explore the use of social media for publicizing events:

- In groups of 4, learners choose a high profile singer, actor or dancer and follow them on Twitter over a week/2 weeks.
- The groups use [Storify](#) to collect and share the tweets with each other.
- The groups create a mind map (on paper or using a tool like [Mindmeister](#)) of the different kinds of tweets and suggest ways of developing the celebrity's twitter activity.
- The groups present their findings and suggestions to the whole group for tutor and peer feedback.

Level 1 Sport and Recreation

The teacher or trainer creates a slow [Twitter Chat](#) over the course of a fortnight by requiring learners to post tweets using the hashtag #healthylifestyle and embedding the Twitter feed into Moodle:

- Learners tweet ideas for nutrition and exercise to encourage more people to take up a healthy lifestyle.
- Learners tweet links to articles or websites that feature healthy lifestyle tips.
- Learners create a poster on achieving a healthy lifestyle with some of best examples.

Level 3 Business and Marketing

The teacher or trainer has created a project assignment for groups to create a Facebook page to launch a small business:

- The teacher or trainer uses a flipped classroom approach and posts a [video about creating a business Facebook page](#) on Moodle for learners to watch before coming to class.
- In class, learners work in groups of 4 to set up a Facebook page to advertise their business idea, including a logo, cover photo, a mission statement and at least 3 status updates.
- Learners present their page to the whole group and receive tutor and peer feedback.

Level 3 Fashion Design

The teacher or trainer has created a project assignment to create design ideas around the theme of “myths and fairy stories”:

- Learners take photographs of street trends they can relate to the theme over the course of a week and post onto [Instagram](#), and share on Twitter using the hashtag #justasreal.
- Learners search Twitter for #justasreal to collect the whole group's images, and use these as a starting point to create their design ideas by incorporating or reacting against the group's collected images.