

4 Tips for Using Social Media in the Online Classroom [1]

September 1, 2021 by [Amy Arnold | Office of Digital Education](#) [2]

Social media usage spans nearly every age group, every socioeconomic group, every workplace, and every higher education system. Social media has many engaging and interactive factors that can be translated into the online environment to increase student engagement. Engagement is often a piece of online education that can be difficult to achieve and maintain throughout the semester in general, even in face-to-face courses. Social presence in an online course should give students an opportunity to make connections. Social media can help bridge that perceived distance in online courses for students. So why not consider incorporating social media content and tools into the online classroom? Let's take a

oom more **S O C I A L**.



[3]

Photo by Austin Distel on Unsplash

Tip 1: Use the Canvas “Like” feature

Canvas already has a ‘like’ feature built-in to discussions and announcements. ‘Liking’ in Canvas is similar to the ‘like’ feature in Facebook or Instagram. Faculty often use the ‘like’ feature as an upvoting tool in discussions or a way for students to provide easy feedback to their peers. As an instructor, all you have to do is enable the feature. You can learn how to do that in this [Canvas Guide](#) [4].

Tip 2: Find your platform of choice and stick with it

There are so many different social media platforms available, including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat (among others). It is best to select the one that you are most comfortable using and that is most accessible to students. Accessible social media should be a platform that is user-friendly. Maybe you teach a photography course, Instagram might be the best choice for sharing photos as opposed to Twitter. Using too many social media platforms can be confusing and exhausting for both you and your students.

Tip 3: Do not force participation

Social media should be an option to either be active or passive for your students. Unless you are teaching a course on the “Theories of Social Media in the Classroom” you might consider the use of social media as an optional engagement tool in your courses. Social media participation could be a more low-stakes means of participation in your course. Just remember to make your content exciting and engaging so that they will want to go check out your latest post or photo.

Tip 4: Make it F-U-N!

One of the biggest draws of social media can often be that it can provide a fun and lighthearted atmosphere to share content. If you share fun and relatable content, your students are more likely to engage and share it. Using social media is just another way to really connect with your students on a more personal level. Not all content has to be fun, but mixing in a relatable meme every once in a while could help students feel more connected with you as an instructor.

Social media is here to stay. Finding ways to incorporate social media into the classroom has the possibility to increase student engagement, satisfaction, and connectedness.

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