

TFS QuickTool 9.8: Forty-five Ways You Need to Know to Use Social Networking Tools with Your Classes

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Social media tools are rapidly being adopted in many classrooms, from K-12 to college. In a 2011 survey by Faculty Focus journal, 56 percent of the teachers surveyed said they expect their use of social media to increase this school year. Nearly 85 percent of those teachers surveyed have a Facebook account, 83 percent allow students to use laptops in the classroom, and 52 percent allow smart phones.



According to KQED television, 43 percent of students in grades 9-12 say that social networking sites are their primary mode for communicating with friends online. Sixty three percent of students in grades 6-12 want online textbooks that allow them to communicate with classmates.

There are many creative and unique ways to use the various social media sites and applications. As an adjunct faculty you should become acquainted with these as quickly as possible. Below is a list the most popular tools and associated classroom ideas to help you add variety and engaging activities to your class:

1. **Answer Questions:** Be available to answer student's questions via a Facebook page or Twitter feed. If you have more time, you can even set up an ask-an-expert site where you encourage students and members of the community to e-mail questions that are answered and posted on the site.
2. **Author e-Visits:** Use Skype to set up a live author visit that would allow students to interact with them directly.
3. **Blogging Current Events:** Three apps allow students to gather and embed social media messages for use in blog posts and articles. These include: Storify and Keepstream.

4. **Book Reviews:** Students can post their own book reviews for the teacher to grade and for other students to read. You can also do a basic Internet search to see book reviews from many other sources.

5. **Bookmark Best Sites:** These sites allow you to save your favorite links online and access them from any computer. You can also post your favorite links for others to enjoy. One example is Netvouz.com

6. **Brainstorming ideas:** Encourage students to brainstorm about class topics outside class time. This provides more opportunities for sharing great thoughts and ideas.

7. **Broadcast from Your Classroom:** If your school can afford it, there are several services that help you to create your own Internet radio show. You choose the format and they provide the technical details. One example is Blogtalkradio.com

8. **Citations Assessment:** Students can learn how to properly format citations according to APA, Chicago, Harvard, MLA, or other style through CiteMe, a Facebook app.

9. **Class Attendance and Participation:** Have students tweet one thing you discussed in class as a way of taking attendance and making sure they are paying attention.

10. **Class Feedback:** Have a student tweet about your class to receive instant feedback. This is especially helpful for those teaching a large lecture class where everyone has some form of Internet access.

11. **Collaboration with Peers:** Learn from other instructors around the world by sharing ideas, tips, and techniques through Twitter or Facebook.

12. **Community Service Projects:** You could organize a community service class project where students find out about local volunteer opportunities and interact with the volunteer coordinator.

13. **Conference Feedback:** If one of the students (or the teacher) is able to attend a conference, they can post regular updates to keep the rest of the class informed.

14. **Connect with Other Classes:** Collaborate with another classes, no matter where they are in the world, to expand learning opportunities. Many of the social media tools can be used, depending on what both classes have available.

15. **Cultural Understanding:** Getting to know small bits of others over time, as happens through social media, provides a greater picture of who those people are and develops a deeper sense of understanding for more openness and sharing in the classroom.

16. **Current Events Pipeline:** The recent public updates on Twitter show the most recent posts from all users and is a great tool to use when studying current events.

17. **Dictionary on the Go:** an app based on the Random House Unabridged Dictionary, this popular tool offers a dictionary and thesaurus, phonetic and audio pronunciation, example sentences, non-standard uses, word origin and history. It works on various platforms and is available on Dictionary.com

18. **E-book Access:** There are many academic and general interest books that have been converted to a digital format and are available free from public libraries. Mobipocket and Overdrive are apps that can be used to locate e-books from various libraries.

19. **e-Field Trips:** Use Skype to bring the field trip into the classroom when it is difficult or impossible for students to go to the source.

20. **Flashcard Maker:** Ace Flashcards is an easy-to-use app for creating study flashcards for just about any subject.

21. **Follow Famous People:** Many famous people are on Twitter or Facebook. Have students follow someone related to what you are studying, such as following President Obama when studying civics or government.

21. **Geography Comes Alive:** Use a combination of Twitter and Google Earth to help teach geography-based lessons.

23. **Group your Scene:** Create a social website to bring people together. One school created a virtual faculty lounge for educators that connect them as a group to Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. For more details, go to Ning.com

24. **Guest Speakers:** Recruit guest speakers for your class from social media contacts such as colleagues or past students. You can also go to refdesk.com and find hundreds of potential speakers and experts.

25. **Homework Posting:** Teachers can post homework assignments through Facebook to provide easy access for students who need a reminder of what was assigned.

26. **International Perspectives:** This site gives you access to search engines from over 300 different countries try Search Engine Colossus.

27. **Journalism:** use Twitter to teach journalism: Have students use Twitter to report news in 140 characters or less to practice communicating important information concisely.

28. **Lectures at a Distance:** Have students attend a lecture or presentation at another campus via streaming media.

29. **Literature Fun:** Have students create a Facebook page for a character from literature that you are studying.

30. **Multitasking:** Twitter can get confusing with several conversations going on at once. Tweetree is an app to group conversations together.

31. **QuoteUR:** This is another program that helps you group different Twitter updates from different people into a single page that has a permanent URL, so you can put it on your blog or send it to others.

32. **News Analysis:** Use a group like World News Webcast on Facebook that provides video clips of world news. Organize assignments: Notedly, users who are on Facebook can organize assignments, classes, notes, and more with this app.

33. **Photographs:** Share your photos on Twitter with TwitPic or similar tool. Flickr is an online photo management and sharing application where you can share your stories with comments and notes.

34. **Podcasts of Lectures:** There are thousands of lectures from universities that have been recorded and are available for free download. One lecture resource is <http://www.openculture.com>

35. **Portfolio Showcase:** Set up a Facebook page to showcase some of your best student projects. Here are some of my examples: <http://RickSheridan.com>

36. **Practice a Foreign Language:** If students are learning a foreign language, they can practice with native speakers through groups on Facebook or by finding native speakers on Twitter or Skype.

37. **Research Rambos:** Access articles from journals, magazines, and newspapers on multiple subjects such as current events, health and medicine, business, history, and much more with EBSCOhost (For use on iPhone and iPod Touch app).

38. **Schedule events:** Organize your personal or class schedule and share events with Google's free online calendar, it's easy to keep track of life's important events all in one place.

39. **Shy student participation:** Shy students who may feel uncomfortable approaching their teacher in person can use social media as a way to communicate.

40. **Socializing on Campus:** Use CampusBuddy, a Facebook app to help you find students attending your school who have similar interests.

42. **Survey Your Class:** Use polls as an interactive teaching tool in class using the PollApp for Facebook or PollDaddy for Twitter. You can also use SurveyMonkey, a Website that creates surveys.

42. **Treasure Hunting with GPS:** most web-based cell phones have a GPS program that can be used to send students in search of educational clues. This might be appropriate for an introductory geology or environmental studies (depending on what they are identifying).

43. **Tweet Famous Conversations:** Have students tweet imagined conversations between famous literary figures such as Romeo and Juliet, Sherlock Holmes and Watson, or Dante and Beatrice.

44. **Tweet or Blog in 3D:** Several services allow you to add video to your blog or tweets. BubbleTweet.com lets you add a “talking head” video in a small, round format. Animoto.com shows you how to create and add fast action, MTV-style videos to your blog or tweets.

45. **Watch Citizen Journalism in Action:** World events unfold immediately on Twitter, so invite students to follow citizen journalism along with the mainstream news.