

SOCIAL MEDIA IN STEM: ACADEMIC AND STUDENT PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TEACHING TOOL

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In the current age more and more STEM education is being delivered online. Success in online education requires active engagement from both student and educator. In recent years social media has become an integral avenue for social interaction, peer to peer engagement, and for sharing information. Contemporary teaching methods are being adapted to include social media, with educators experimenting in incorporating social media into teaching and learning approaches. Introducing social media into STEM courses may be a way to create interest and engagement, while equipping students with communication and collaborative skills, and building a sense of community.

This paper reports preliminary findings on an investigation into the attitudes towards the use of social media as a teaching tool at the University of New England. Students and academic staff were surveyed about their social media habits and whether there was a perceived benefit or role for using social media in teaching. Although both staff and students expressed agreement that there is a role for the use of social media in teaching, the uptake of using these tools in delivery of STEM education at UNE has been low. Therefore, the barriers and/or risks, from both student and academic points of view, that might be preventing uptake, were also explored.

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