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“Using Social Media to Promote Teaching Objectives Inside and Outside the Classroom”

Talk Delivered for “Educate, Innovate, Collaborate: A Faculty Showcase”

Friday, November 4, 2011, The Carolina Club, UNC-CH

1. Social Media can inform every stage of what we do as a scholar: 1) research & teaching, 2) publications, 3) dissemination and dialogue, and 4) formulate new questions.
2. How can I use social media as a tool to help reach new and traditional audiences for my research and teaching? I take a “BCC” approach to social media. On to “TO” line of my research and teaching are my colleagues and students. On the “BCC” line I approach social media in 3 ways: a) as a Bridge; b) as a Content creator; and c) as a Critic.
 - a. Bridge example: I read through the print and online media and post on Twitter one good article a day in my area of teaching and research. Twitter is linked to my homepage.
 - b. Content creator example: I write for the print and online media about my research. I now write a once weekly blog with 4 other sociologists.
 - c. Critic: I teach my students how to learn to evaluate online and print media sources and integrate them into their research papers.
3. Using Social Media Functions for Teaching
 - a. Discussion Forums (for weekly readings and research topics)
 - b. Blogs (students write reading responses that only I see)
 - c. On-Line Office Hours (flexibility for me and students)
 - d. Uploading all Assignments (no more excuses for not having a printer or printer card)
4. Lessons Learned
 - a. Learning social media takes time, but it saves time later. Get technical support whenever you can. You don’t have to learn it all at once: start small!
 - b. Students live in social media and think learning through social media is enjoyable, hence using social media for teaching increases student engagement.
 - c. Using social media allows me to reach multiple audiences at once: colleagues, students, and the general public. Increased feedback from all these audiences makes me a better scholar and teacher.
 - d. Using social media means you can give a talk without preparing a new power point!