

IS LEARNING EFFECTIVE WITH SOCIAL NETWORKS? LET'S INVESTIGATE!

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ABSTRACT

There is extensive literature which shares the effectiveness of collaborative learning. Instructional strategies, which have been used to guide collaboration efforts include derivatives of inquiry-based learning such as project based, problem based, experiential, service and challenge based learning. Initially, the World Wide Web allowed greater ease of connecting to educators, hence the potential for collaboration increased. The significant advantage, which was provided with the Web 2.0 era, was to accelerate the opportunities for educational innovations through social networks in which educators and learners are able to engage in a two way interaction both individually and in groups, collaboratively. The authors of this study believe that many of these innovations align directly with the premise of connectivism. In this study, Educational Social Networking Sites (SNSs) such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Classroom 2.0, Facebook, Google Plus, Plurk Educator's PLN, Sophia, Learn Central, ISTE Community, WhoTeaches Edutopia, Technology Integration in Education, The 21st Century Teacher, Better Lesson Diipo, Intel Education Teachers Engage Community, Everloop, Edudemic, K12 Advantage, Collaborative Translation and Second Life virtual worlds will be investigated in terms of educational connectedness and efficacy. Specific examples will be examined which highlight the power of social networking for effective teaching and learning within the scope of Distance Education and Open Educational Resources (OER).

Key Words: Educational Social Networking Sites (SNSs), Connectivism, Collaboration, Distance Education, OER.