PERCEPTION OF PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS ON THE ROLE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING IN EDUCATION

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Abstract

Social networking is fast emerging only as a most widely used medium to interact but also as an avenue to gain knowledge and for learning. Social networking services allows individual to construct a public profile within a bounded system. Though people are using internet to connect with people since early part of 1980s but only in the last decade the social networking services have acquired a place in the life of young people. Social networking is an online interaction service that managed to connect people with shared interest. It is use of technology not only to connect people but to collaborate with each other and form virtual communities. It include services such as Facebook.com, Myspace.com, Twitter, etc. which have millions of members each. It also includes services like Flicker for photo sharing, You-Tube for video sharing. The social networking sites has transformed the process of communication and social interaction with an increasing integration of social media to these services. Young people all over the world as enthusiastic users and they are eagerly sharing information with one another on daily basis. It has been found that there are a number of significant benefits associated with the use of social networking sites. These social networking sites can be used for educational purposes to help the students to develop a more collaborative view of learning and creating a connection to, real life learning. Social networking is fast becoming a kind of virtual world where different learning communities share knowledge and provide platform for professional development. The present paper aims to find the various social networking sources used by prospective teachers during their internship period. It also aims to find the perception of prospective teachers about the use of social networking for teaching-learning. The study is conducted on 100 B.Ed. students of GGSIP University affiliated college. The results are discussed in the light of objectives of the study.

Key words: *Social Networking, Prospective Teachers, Teaching-Learning.*

Introduction

Technology has changed the present face of teaching and learning in the world. With the advancement of technology the learning has become very interesting. The use of technology has brought a major shift from passive audience to active users. The successful technology integration is based on certain basic principles and one of them is the active involvement of the students. Thus the students involved play an active role in their learning and receive frequent and personalized feedbacks. Moreover on the part of the teachers, they are able to connect classroom activities to the world outside the classroom.

National Council for Teacher Education (2010) states that there is a great demand to incorporate information and communication technology in school education. With the continuous demand of use of ICT in the school education, Ministry of Human Resource and development, GOI has launched a scheme to incorporate use of ICT amongst students.

Various technologies are being used at school level to enhance the teaching and learning process. It has been emphasized from time to time for the use of educational technology even in teacher education programmes so that the prospective teacher are no longer reluctant to use technology in their teaching. (Kleiner, Thomas, Levis & Green, 2007). Though it has been noticed that a great deal of communication between students and teachers are already through email. This signifies that teachers adopt technology if they perceive it as a facilitator of communication with students. Though a number of technology is present today and are usually integrated very well to improve the teaching and learning process. But the social networking sites are one of the most sought after technology used widely today.

Social networking sites includes Face book, Twitter, Cluster Flunk among other. It is the use of technology to connect people, collaborate with each other and form virtual communities (Young Adult Library Services Association, 2011).

According to Wellman (1997) social networking sites are a set of people or rather other social entities such as organization connected by a set of socially meaningful relationship. However according to Boyd and Ellison (2007) SNS are web based services that allow individuals to (i) construct a public or semi public profile within a bounded system (ii) articulate a list of other users

with whom they share a connection and (iii) views and traverse their list of connections and those made by other within the system.

Social networking sites are based on users rather than the content. The users are united online based on their interest, activities and common views and goals. These common views and goals may be based on religions thought, political views, sexual interest and so on. Users are the core of the social networking sites and without them there will be empty forums and empty chat rooms.

Social networking websites provides rich information about the person and his network, which can be utilized for various business purposes. Some of the main characteristics of social networking sites are:

- Acting as a resource for advertisers to promote their brands through word-of-mouth to targeted customers.
- Providing a base for a new teacher student relationship with more interactive sessions online.
- Promoting the use of embedded advertisement in online videos and
- Providing a platforms for new artists to show their profile. (Ahmad, 2011)

SNS are a typical example of media convergence and mash up solutions that try to connect all media and services in to one single solution. Social Networking includes Pod casting, Folksonomies, rating Tools, Vlogging, Geotages, Aggregation, Instant Messaging, Social Voting, Wikis etc. It also includes Discussions – Bulletin boards where users starts some topics and there is a discussion on it followed by content sharing. If one want's to trace the history of SNS than it will date back to late nineteens. It was basically a beginning in 1998 where a users profile was created along with their friend's list. (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Though a large number of social networking sites are there but the two most widely used SNS are Facebook and Myspace. Facebook is one of the most popular social networking site for college students and their peer groups. Facebook was created in early 2004. Although SNS are basically designed for social use still their use can be seen in other areas of life including education.

It is seen that social networking sites can help educators share information and resources, create professional learning communities and improve school wide communications with students and staff. Though in most of the cases the opinions are formed that social networking is hardly used for

educational purpose, and it is widely seen as a social exploring, fun seeking activity in which communities formed on the basis of shared interest and fun and florick. But a number of researches are being carried out which have established that social networking sites and tools could improve students motivation and engagement, help students develop a more collaborative view of learning and create a connection to real life learning. (Bumgardner & Krestes, 2011).

British Council (2009) reported that students tend to learn more effectively in social setting and it further opined that there should be safe social networking and collaboration with virtual world. Jones (2010) stated that social networking website are tolls to be used by teachers and students to enrich education.

It was reported by Karlin (2007) that more than 60% of the students who use social networking talk about education online and more than 50% talk about specific school work. The uses of social networking site for teaching and learning purpose is well established by various researches carried out by researches. Bican, Ozdemli and Uzunboylu (2012) stated that social networking websites could promote communication between teachers and students, provide an easy access to subject materials and information by creating groups on social networking websites.

Methodology

Objectives

The main objectives of the study are:

    (i) To find out the patterns of social networking sites used by prospective teachers for teaching and learning process.

    (ii) To find the perception of prospective teachers about the use of social networking for teaching and learning.

Sample

A total sample of 96 students of Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University of Delhi studying in B.Ed. course comprised of the sample.

Tools and Procedure

A questionnaire was administered to the subjects. The questionnaire consisted of open ended questions where the respondents were free to give responses as per their experiences. The frequencies of the responses were determined which were converted into percentages.

Analysis, Interpretation and Discusions

In the light of objectives, the date was analyzed, interpreted which has been described in the following sections.

Objective 1: To find out the pattern of social networking sites used by prospective teachers for teaching and learning process.

Table 1

.No.	Source	Content	Percentage
1.	Face book	Face book has access to groups which join the discussion for schools and teachings.	100
2.	Twitter	Twitter for teachers us used as a collaborative effort to teach teachers about Twitter.	80
3.	Linked In	Stay connected with peers in a professional environment.	75
4.	Flickr EDU	Use of this to know how photographs can enhance on educational experience.	60
5.	Social Media Classroom SMC	This offers teachers a way to build a site filled with blogs, wikis, videos etc. This is an open source web service.	55
6.	Edublogs	Free blog hosting solution for teachers that runs on the word press MU plat form so teachers have access to all current word press features.	50
7.	Moodle	Virtual learning environment is free to use, includes a myriad of ways to build community in class room.	50
8.	Edu 2.0	Teach and learn online. Teach private or public classes accessible from any web browser, share lesson plans and in more than	40

		10 languages.	
9.	Teacher Tube	A site meant to share instructional videos.	35
10.	Wiki Educator	Use wikis to plan educational projects and develops content for that project.	30
11.	4 Teachers	Used to learn how to teach with technology, helps learn about new tools, get support and stay on top.	25
12.	Classroom 2.0	Learning about web 2.0 and collaborative technologies in education.	15
13.	We The Teachers	Find teachers in the neighborhood or from around the world to share lesson plan and other classroom resources.	10
14.	Teacher Lingo	Educational Community that connects teachers from every educational level.	5
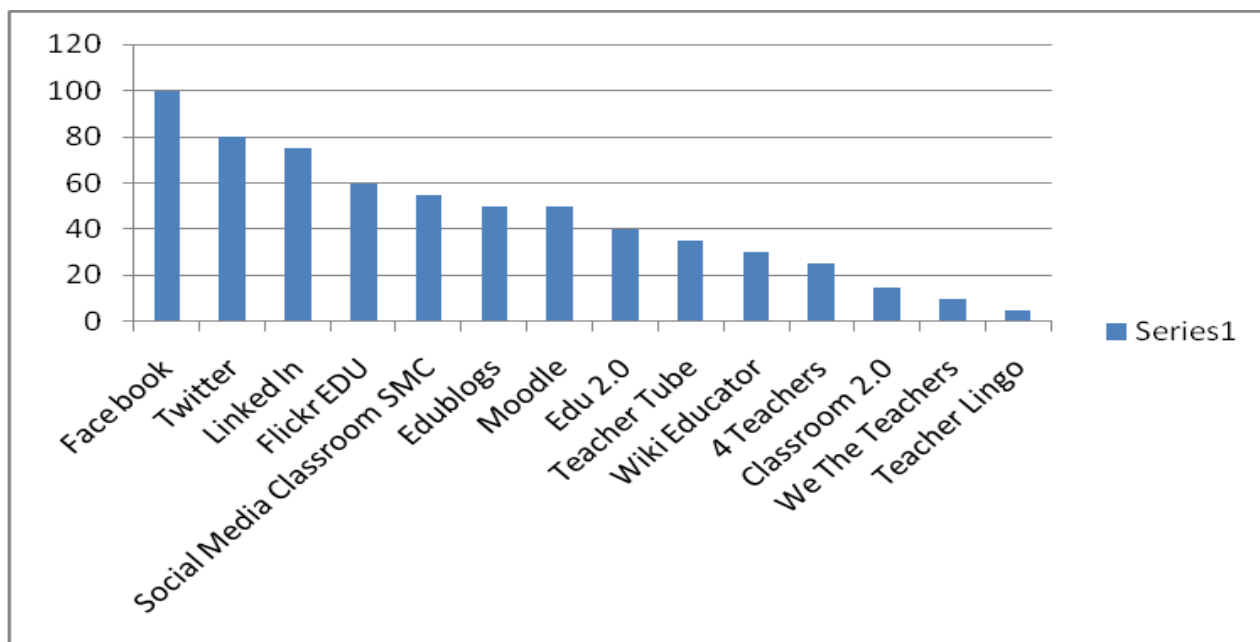
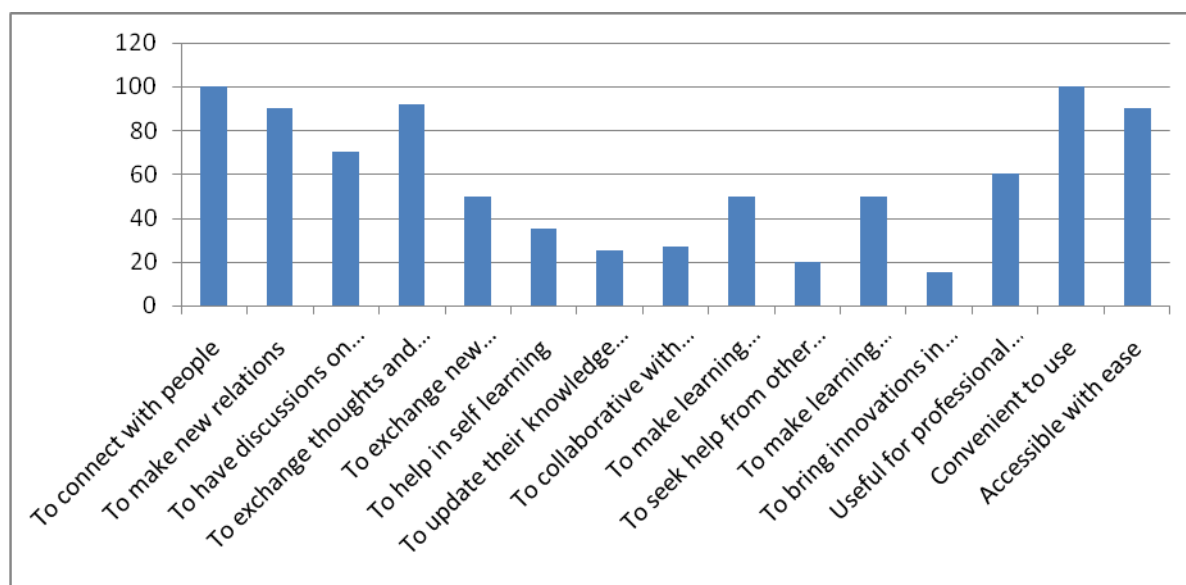**Graphical Representation of Table 1**

From the above table no. 1, it can be seen that the prospective teachers uses various social networking sites for teaching and learning process. It can be seen that most used SNS for teaching and learning in Face book which shows highest percentage i.e. 100% followed by Twitter at 80%. Linked In has 75% and is third in the pattern meaning thereby that teachers form the groups on the face book for discussion on teaching and learning process. The teachers are also involved in the collaborative efforts through twitter and they also stay connected with press in a professional environment. Next comes Flicker EDU meaning thereby that 60% of teachers uses this site of photographs to enhance educational experience. 55% teachers uses Social Media Classrooms. This means that these teachers use blogs, wikis and videos as open source web service. 50% of the teachers uses Edu blogs and Moodle sites. Meaning thereby that these percent of teachers use free blog to access to all current word press features and they also use virtual learning environment to build community in class room. 35% teachers use Teacher Tube to share instructional videos. 30% of the teachers use the site wiki educator. Meaning thereby that they use wikis to plan educational projects and develop content for that project. 25% of the teacher use site 4 Teachers. Here these teachers learn how to teach with technology, they also learn about new tools available for teaching and learning. 15% of the teachers use classroom 2.0 sites, where teachers learn about web 2.0 and collaborative technologies in education. 10% teachers use the site, "We the teacher". Here they share the lesson plans and other resources with each other. 5% of the teachers uses the site Teacherlingo. Here the educational community connect teachers from every educational level.

Objective 2: To find the perception of prospective teachers about the use of social networking for Teaching and Learning.

Table 2

S.No.	Purpose	Percentage
1.	To connect with people	100
2.	To make new relations	90
3.	To have discussions on various issues	70
4.	To exchange thoughts and ideas	92
5.	To exchange new informations	50
6.	To help in self learning	35

7.	To update their knowledge in subjects	25
8.	To collaborative with teachers of same subject	27
9.	To make learning environment flexible	50
10.	To seek help from other teachers of same subject to develop content material	20
11.	To make learning environment flexible	50
12.	To bring innovations in teaching	15
13.	Useful for professional development	60
14.	Convenient to use	100
15.	Accessible with ease	90

Graphical Representation of Table 2

As it is depicted in Table 2, all the students use the social networking sites to connect with friends and other people. 90% use the SNS to make new contacts and relations. 92% use these to exchange new thoughts and ideas. 70% of the prospective teachers use these to have discussions on various issues. About 50 % of the prospective teachers use these SNS to exchange new information and 35% use these SNS for self learning 25% uses these to update their knowledge in the relevant

subjects. 27% use these to collaborate with other teaches of the same subjects. 20% seek help from other experts subject teachers to develop content material and another 15% use this to bring innovation in teaching-learning. 50 % said that use of SNS makes learning environment flexible while 100% feel that it is convenient to use and 90% feel it is accessible with ease and 90% opined that SNS are useful for professional development. Few responses on the various SNS used by prospective teachers were:

- Face book and Twitter can help educators and teachers to share information. The same view areas put forward by Young Adult Library Service Association.
- SNS like Face book are fast emerging sites in which learners make forum which help in instant sharing of information and also help in developing virtual learning communities.
- SNS improve the students motivation by engaging them in relevant discussions. This view is supported by Bumgardner & Knesties, 2011 who suggested that SNS besides motivating students help to develop a collaborative view of learning.
- SNS create a connection to real life learning as the learners seek examples from the hand on experience. This view was again supported by Bumgardner & Knestie, 2011.
- SNS are used by teachers and students to enrich their knowledge. This view was supported by a study of Jones (2010).
- SNS help in developing online groups and forums which help in provide easy access to subject and content material. This view is supported a study done by Bicon, Ozdamli and Uzunboyle (2012).
- SNS stimulate students to update knowledge and various groups formed include chemistry group, B.Ed. College groups, Professional Development Groups etc.
- The various SNS are used by prospective teachers to connect with fellow teachers, to dicuss about education online, to talk about specific school / subject work. It also came into notice that teachers are using the blogging features to engage into the discussion on various topics. (O'Hanlon, 2007). Further it was seen that prospective teachers are learning this SNS as the tool in science projects, lesson reviews and thus helping in improving students achievement Klien (2008).
- Almost 100% prospective teachers find the SNS accessible with ease.

Conclusion

On the basis of the results of the study and their analysis it may be concluded that the use of social networking sites by the prospective teachers are considered a significant medium for imparting the knowledge and for learning. The prospective teachers consider it useful medium for enhancing skills, knowledge for sharing new information. They also find it a medium to connect with different virtual communities across the globe. There is a collaborative sharing of knowledge which brings of learning groups in a close network and the knowledge thus constructed is shared evenly at all levels.

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