Using Facebook for School Work Purposes: High School Students Perspectives (Poster)

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Abstract

We report on a preliminary study exploring the ways Israeli High school students use FB for school purposes. In depth interviews were conducted with 6 students from different schools. It was found that FB is extensively used by students for (1) distribution of learning resources; and (2) managing school related activities. Few incidences of in depth learning were reported, which resemble conceptual models of learning affordances in Web 2.0 environments. Finally, several ethical issues were raised with regard to using FB for school purposes.

Growing popularity of SNS such as Facebook (Geocartography Knowledge group, 2011; Cohen & Eini, 2010) causes concern among parents and policy makers (Hamilton, 2009; Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010) and great excitement among educational researchers, who see many affordances in using WEB 2.0 tools for studying. (Greenhow, Hughes & Robelia, 2009; Greenhow, 2011). A few pioneering studies have addressed this issue (Asterhan, Rosenberg, Shcwartz & Solomon, 2013; Hershkovitz & Forkush Baruch, 2013), but did not focus on academic purposes. We conducted in depth interviews with six students from different high-schools in Israel, exploring the following questions: Do students harness FB for learning purposes? If so, how and to what extent does this resemble theoretical models of Web 2.0 learning? What are the affordances and limitations of using FB for school related purposes? How do students characterize their teachers' presence in FB?

The following themes emerged from a qualitative analysis of the data: FB is used as a group management tool both students and teachers use FB as a communication platform to convey massages and organize an overwhelming variety of activities. FB is used as an infrastructure for sharing learning materials Students reported as common practice the attaining and sharing of learning materials (such as lesson notes etc.). FB as a place of learning although relatively rare, some instances of learning within the FB environment were reported, both in standard curriculum major studies and in extra-curricular topics and nonstandard curriculum major studies. Ethical considerations: students reported cases of blurring boundaries between teachers and students.Usages of FB to organize and execute campaigns against unpopular teachers. Exclusion of students who cannot afford the expensive smart phones needed to take part in the online conversations.

FB is used spontaneously by some high school students and teachers in a variety of ways that help students achieve better grades.Future research should include direct observations of students' FB practices.

Keywords: Facebook, learning, interactions, high school students, school work.

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