

Breaking down barriers?

Teachers, students and social network sites

Baruch B. Schwarz
Hananel Rosenberg
Christa S. C. Asterhan
Editors

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The social networks—and social media in general—have revolutionized the digital sphere by enabling interactive, egalitarian, and sometimes intimate communication that challenges social structures, cultural boundaries, and institutional hierarchies. Findings from all over the world indicate that most of the users who have adopted these channels of communication are young adults and teenagers, members of the Y generation ("children of the millennium") and their counterparts, members of the Z generation.

It appears that social network technology has made its mark on the educational realm as well – and not merely as a technological tool that enables new study practices to be devised. Rather, there has been a change that affects the nature of the interaction between teacher and student, namely, the change that occurs extramurally, even before the teacher enters the school premises.

The book deals with a variety of aspects concerning the communication between teachers and students on the social networks from the points of view of both sides by offering a variety of disciplines such as education, psychology, communications, and law. The chapters of the book present a broad range of issues: the motivations underlying the use of social network technology, the communication contents, and teachers' dilemmas vis-à-vis the social networks; sharing study resources among students and collaborative learning via these channels; the manner in which students view the efficacy and limitations of class WhatsApp groups; ground-breaking educational initiatives for the purpose of utilizing Facebook, Twitter, and asynchronous forums for teaching; the potential use of social networks for identifying and monitoring students in distress and supporting them during times of both peace and war; tackling ethical

and legal issues and dealing with an educational–systemic policy in the light of dilemmas arising from such relationships (for instance, privacy, discipline, and the teacher’s status).

In an era of rapid developments in communication technologies, which inevitably includes the field of education, this book offers original insights and important tools to those individuals who seek to explore and educate young people in the present technological climate.

Prof. Baruch B. Schwarz is an expert in learning sciences in the School of Education at The Hebrew University. His research focuses on collaborative learning, the various forms of discourse that assist learning and development, and the effect of communication technologies on the change in the nature of discourse both within and outside of the school.

Dr. Hananel Rosenberg is a lecturer in the School of Communications at Ariel University and Herzog College and a teacher of communications at Orot Etzion High School. His research deals with the psychological and sociological aspects of the use of the mobile phone and of the new media among youngsters in Israel.

Dr. Christa Asterhan is a researcher in the School of Education at The Hebrew University. Her research deals with the cognitive, social, and emotional aspects of learning via interpersonal interaction, as well as with the role of communication channels in these contexts.

Teachers’ attitude uses and dilemmas when interacting with students in facebook ***Hananel Rosenberg***

This Chapter presents a multi-method study that seeks to explore if, how and why secondary teachers use Facebook (FB) to interact with their students. Issues of privacy, authority, and even abuse

have fueled socio-political debates on the desirability of teacher-student FB contact, leading some authorities to curtail or even prohibit such contact. Proponents of harnessing Web 2.0 and Social media technology for learning purposes, on the other hand, have emphasized the many potential advantages for formal and informal learning. However, there is little empirical research on the scope, the nature and the purposes for secondary school teacher-student contact through social network sites. The present study makes a first step in this direction, by triangulating teacher survey data ($N = 187$) with in-depth teacher interviews ($N = 11$). Findings from both data sets show that teacher-student FB contact comes in different forms and serves a range of purposes, which fall into three main categories: Academic-instructional, psycho-pedagogical and social-relational. Advantages, dilemmas and limitations of FB contact with secondary school students are identified.

Teenage sharing of learning materials through social networks sites

Edith Bouton and Christa Asterhan

Information and knowledge sharing has become a common activity in social media, and specifically on social networks. In this chapter, we focus on a particular form of knowledge sharing, namely the sharing of school-related knowledge and information between teenage students in social networks. Field observations and findings from an exploratory interview study suggested that students use SNS platform for a variety of educational sharing purposes, such as administrative messages, whiteboard snapshots, class notes, homework solutions and online tutoring for friends. A larger study was initiated to further explore the scope of this phenomenon, its characteristics, and the motives for this type of sharing. An online

questionnaire was distributed among a nationwide, representative sample of Hebrew-speaking Israeli high school students, aged 15-17. The results showed that school-related knowledge sharing is a widespread and common practice among Israeli high school students, mainly through WhatsApp. Teenage students primarily use SNSs for mundane types of information sharing, such as administrative messages and snapshots, but also for online peer help-giving and -seeking. The findings also indicate that existing fears concerning SNSs as hotbeds of peer-assisted cheating (i.e. sharing homework solution) and reliance on others' content summaries (instead of actively processing and studying the materials themselves) are only partly founded. The most common motives for sharing were to help one's friends, to improve one's self-image, and to receive help from others in the future. Understanding teenagers' self-organized, spontaneous uses of SNS for school-related purposes, their motives, and the norms of interactions in these SNS study groups is crucial for educational practitioners and other stakeholders.

WhatsApp, Teacher?

Secondary School Teachers and Students on WhatsApp

Hananel Rosenberg and Christa Asterhan

The instant messaging application WhatsApp enables quick, interactive multimedia communication in closed groups, as well as one-on-one interactions between selected group members. It has become one of the most popular applications, and is regularly used by both teachers and students for personal and group communication. In the present study, we explore student perspectives on the phenomenon of WhatsApp "classroom groups", in which both teachers and students from a particular classroom interact with one another in closed groups. Our methodology combines interviews and

focus groups with students aged 13-18 ($N = 88$). The findings reveal that WhatsApp has become a central channel of communication among Israeli school communities, and is used for organizational purposes (sending and receiving updates and managing learning), as well as a means for teachers to enforce discipline. Students view favorably many of WhatsApp's characteristics: Easy access, its communal nature, privacy boundaries (low exposure to personal profile information), the written, mediated communication format, and the simplicity and ease of switching from group to one-on-one communication formats. Students also recognized limitations, specifically the potential of communication overload, and challenged existing teacher beliefs concerning their ability to monitor and affect student interactions in social media. Finally, we report on the central role of parallel "sans-teacher" WhatsApp classroom groups, as "back stage" discourse arenas that accompany the "front stage" activities in class and in the "official" classroom WhatsApp group.

Novel uses of social networks by 'champion teachers'

Galit Caduri and Baruch B. Schwarz

This chapter presents the stories and work of four 'champion teachers' who used social networks in classrooms. The analyses of the stories and of the practices of the teachers, as well as scrutiny over the FaceBook pages they operated, revealed salient pedagogical principles that led to the integration of FaceBook in classrooms: the fostering of collaborative work and at the same time of autonomy, and attempts to constitute a community of learners. In Literature, Sciences, Geography and History, the teachers designed activities embedded in Social Networks, and by such encouraged collaboration in a shared space. The use of FaceBook also helped in fostering autonomy among learners by engaging them to regulate their

worktime, identify goals, choose topics of interest, find appropriate sources, and use technologies. Champion-teachers capitalized on social networks to lead their students to function as beginning scientists, play writers, historians or good citizens in a community of learners.

Characteristics of the use of Twitter as a tool for boosting learning processes

Galit Duchan and Anat Cohen

This research discusses the use of Twitter as a teaching-supporting tool in face to face (F2F) learning. During the research, short text messaging, including media files, was tested and determined to assist not only the personal-business, but also to create a leap in pedagogical-management learning. The uniqueness and importance of this research is in the age group on which it focuses, an age group that has not yet been examined (ninth grade); furthermore, data was analyzed by decoding tweets, grouping tweets into various pedagogical and social uses, and exploring the technical difficulties that arise as a result of using Twitter. In addition, several communication characteristics that have not yet been analyzed regarding Twitter as an educational tool are included in the research. The results clearly show that both the students and the teacher used the new learning space mainly for pedagogical uses, as answers to homework questions and as comments to intriguing issues brought up throughout the lessons. The use of Twitter to support learning organization skills indeed assisted in avoiding time consuming difficulties in F2F learning. Analysis of all tweets during the research period has revealed valuable content. In spite of the fact that tweets were limited to 140 letters, from this study it was found that Twitter is an effective learning tool.

At the beginning, there was Facebook:

First steps in the use of Social Networks through biblical education

Shirly Nathan-Yulezri and Galit Caduri

Social Networks have been used for educational use immediately after they were created. However, these first steps were not accompanied by systematic research. The Israeli society is a leading country for the consumption of technologies for information and communication uses. The educational realm has not been an exception and several educational projects were instigated since 2008. The project "The Bible within Facebook" is such a project. Through interviews with pre-service teachers, scrutiny over their notebooks, and interactions with their students, we point at some insights on the first steps of the use of Social Networks in education that are still relevant now.

A dialogue about a case study of integrating a class environment and an online environment in mathematics education

Nelly Keller and Boris Koichu

The paper presents a two-year-long process of creating a combined learning environment in a high-school class. The environment consisted of mathematics teaching in a classroom and collaborative problem solving in an online asynchronous forum. The exposition is constructed according to the rules of one of the methods of narrative research, which is known as virtual duoethnography. Namely, presentation and analysis of the data are shaped as a conversation among imaginary characters representing the teacher, the students and the researchers. The exposition substantiates two conclusions. First, the process of incorporating on-line collaborative problem solving in mathematics teaching can be seen as a process of diffusion of an innovation, in the following meaning: the stages of

the process matched the stages described by the Everett Rodgers' theory of diffusion of innovation. Second, there existed a bilateral effect between the online environment and a classroom environment, which eventually led to integration of the two environments into a new, unique and effective learning space.

Detection, Prevention, and Treatment of Adolescents' Distress on Social Media: A Literature Review

Yaakov Ophir, Christa S. C. Asterhan and Baruch B. Schwarz

For better or for worse, online social networks have become adolescents' new town square. Teenagers and young adults use SNS technology for various social activities, but most notably for self-presentation, emotional self-disclosure and frustration "venting, maintaining and creating social relations and affiliations, and even sharing learning materials. In popular media outlets, the negative effects and danger of SNS usage on teenagers' social life are often highlighted (e.g., online bullying, sexting, privacy invasions, and procrastination). In the present chapter, we offer a complementary, novel approach for research on the relation between SNS use and psychological well-being: Since teenagers' online SNS activities are logged and preserved, access to this information allows us to unobtrusively watch, monitor and learn about different facets of adolescents' social and personal lives. We present first findings of a research program, that specifically focuses on detection of adolescents' psycho-social distress, based on their SNS activities. We triangulate data obtained from expert judgments, interviews and self-report questionnaires, as well as computerized language processing methods. Finally, we offer a brief review on online counselling psychology and the various venues open to adolescents who seek emotional support via social networks.

**Building Adolescent Resilience: Teacher-Student Social
Network Communication in times of political violence**
Hananel Rosenberg, Yaakov Ophir and Christa Asterhan

In this multi-method study, we examined the extent and nature of teacher-student communication on Social Network Sites (SNS) during the 2014 Israel-Gaza war, from students and teachers point of view. Corresponding with the literature on adolescent SNS usage, participants in the current sample were found to be frequent users of SNS. During the war, a time of major stress, this extensive usage even increased further. The first step of the study indicated a large scope of teacher-student communication in times of war. Based on student reports, we found that more than half of the adolescent participants communicate with their teachers via SNSs during the war (mainly through WhatsApp); and that the main purpose of this communication was to lend and receive emotional support. Moreover, the majority of participating adolescents expressed their appreciation of this communication and believed it to be helpful. From the students' point of view, the study revealed five distinct themes of emotional support on SNS during the war: caring, reassuring, emotional sharing, belonging, and distracting. From the teachers' point of view, it was evident that teachers: (a) recognize their central psychosocial role in times of war and appreciate the opportunities that arise from SNS communication to deliver emotional support to their students, (b) dedicate their efforts to monitor distress through SNS, and (c) maintain norms of civilized and sensitive discourse. Teachers also engage among themselves in moral discussions regarding the advantages and risks of SNS communication with students. The implications of these findings may include the creation of specialized training program for teachers, which will support their efforts in times of crisis.

Teachers, Students and Social Networking Sites: Can they be intertwined?

Alona Forkosh Baruch and Arnon HersHKovitz

The incorporation of social networking sites (SNS) in school activities and beyond has been an issue of concern for several role-players in current years, including educators, policymakers, students and parents. Along the many advantages entailed in using SNS in education, there lay several challenges, as well as dangers. In spite of the vast amount of research in the last decade in this area, mostly pedagogical aspects were examined, while social and interpersonal aspects regarding usage of SNS by teachers and students were rarely studied. In addition, studies mostly examine higher education populations. The chapter herewith is based on empirical studies conducted in recent years, focusing on teacher-student relationships and communication using SNS, for formal and informal uses. These studies were constructed using qualitative and quantitative research paradigms, and included teacher as well as student populations in secondary education. Within the research frameworks, we examined teacher-student relationship as well as communication on Facebook. The data was collected using interviews and online surveys enabling comparison between data extracted from both populations. We present in this chapter social and emotional aspects of the communication from the teachers' and the students' perspectives. In addition to attitudes and modes of conduct of these relationships between teachers and their students, we will discuss in our chapter major ethical issues presented by the two research populations. We will end the chapter by presenting implications and recommendations arising from the results of our studies.

An Online Class about the Right to Privacy: The Social Network and the School

Michael Birnhack

The online relationship between teachers and students takes place within a multilayered legal environment. This article explores one aspect of the legal relationship: the right to privacy that applies in the teacher-student communications. When this relationship occurs outside the physical setting of the school and moves to the virtual space, new doubts and challenges arise, as to the regulation of the data flows between the parties to the communication. The Israeli Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty, the Privacy Protection Act, and educational laws set some principles as to the discussed relationship, but these principles require concretization. Memoranda issued by the Ministry of Education initially prohibited direct teacher-student communications via social networks, but later this prohibition was softened: teachers and students who wish to communicate directly online were channeled to a platform designated for such communications. The article examines the right to privacy on the background of its normative rationales, in both the school and on the social media contexts, and focuses on the interaction of these two contexts. Accordingly, the argument made here is that the Ministry of Education correctly identified the mutual collapse of the two previously separate contexts into each other, and now it wishes to separate them. The discussion yields a few guidelines as to the right and wrong in the online school context.

Educational policy and the challenge of the social networks

Ben Zion Slakmon

The objective of this chapter is to analyze the Israeli educational policy towards social networks. The official policy of the Ministry

of Education is presented, together with considerations of policy-makers. To this aim, we analyzed official documents, as well as internet sites of the Science and Technology Administration. We also interviewed Dr. Ofer Rimon, the Director of the Science and Technology Administration and head of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and Ms. Dalia Fenig, Head of the Pedagogical Development Wing and acting chair of the Pedagogical Secretariat.

We argue that the social networks are found in an accelerated, largely unsupervised process of training and adaptation to the educational system. From a pedagogical viewpoint, educational policy regarding the social networks is formulated in unclear terms. In this way the various forces involved in shaping the policy, are able to promote activities important to them in the field, without having to undergo a full regulatory process, and without a comprehensive discussion on the ramifications involved. Simultaneously, this lack of clarity creates 'local freedoms' for interpretations and school level initiatives, and facilitates pluralism in technological-pedagogical deployment. The chapter reviews pedagogical deployment approaches of the social networks, based on learning from successes and from professional apprenticeship in professional-social teacher networks. In light of the sweeping use of the social networks by students outside of school, the social networks are viewed as a supplement that can enlarge the scope of school learning and, to a lesser degree, change it.