

Using the Facebook group as a learning management system: An exploratory study

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Abstract: Facebook is a popular social networking site. It, like many other new technologies, has potential for teaching and learning because of its unique built-in functions that offer pedagogical, social and technological affordances. In this study, the Facebook group was used as a learning management system (LMS) in two courses for putting up announcements, sharing resources, organizing weekly tutorials and conducting online discussions at a teacher education institute in Singapore. This study explores using the Facebook group as an LMS and the students' perceptions of using it in their courses. Results showed that students were basically satisfied with the affordances of Facebook as the fundamental functions of an LMS could be easily implemented in the Facebook group. However, using the Facebook group as an LMS has certain limitations. It did not support other format files to be uploaded directly, and the discussion was not organized in a threaded structure. Also, the students did not feel safe and comfortable as their privacy might be revealed. Constraints of using the Facebook group as an LMS, implications for practice and limitations of this study are discussed. Practitioner notes: What is already known about this topic Facebook has been popularly used by tertiary students, but many students do not want their teachers to be friends on Facebook Teacher's self-disclosure on Facebook can promote classroom atmosphere, teacher's credibility and student-teacher relationship Commercial learning management systems (LMSs) have limitations What this paper adds The Facebook group can be used an LMS as it has certain pedagogical, social and technological affordances Students are satisfied with the way of using the Facebook group as an LMS Younger students are more acceptable with the idea of using the Facebook group as an LMS Using the Facebook group as an LMS has limitations: it does not support other format files; its discussions are not listed in threads; and it is not perceived as a safe environment Implications for practice and/or policy The Facebook group can be used an LMS substitute or supplement Third-party applications are needed to extend the capability of the Facebook group as an LMS Using Facebook seems to be more appropriate for young learners than adults Teachers do not have to be students' friends on Facebook. © 2011 The Authors. British Journal of Educational Technology © 2011 Bera.

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