

Your virtual toolbox

Strategies for teaching with social



While social media may sometimes feel like Enemy #1 in the classroom, there are many advantages to using it in your course. When you meet students where they already are, it increases the relevance of the lesson you're delivering and fosters engagement. Social media is also flexible, allowing users to interact at a level that feels most comfortable to them. And finally, social media gives you the option (depending on the age of your students) of expanding classroom discussions to a larger community that includes subject matter experts.

	Twitter	Facebook	Instagram	YouTube	TikTok	Snapchat	Periscope	WhatsApp
Live streaming		•	•				•	
Lessons, instructions, feedback & questions (Recorded video)	•	•	•	•	•	•		•
Instructions, feedback & questions (Text)	•	•	•		•	•		•
Micro-content	•	•	•	•	•			
Open educational resource sharing	•	•						
Group work		•						•
Topic-based communications	•	•						
Community building for institutions	•	•	•			•		



Live streaming

[Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Periscope](#)

While synchronous video chat software is great for small or large group discussions, there are times when you'll want to deliver a lesson with the full focus on you. (If you have a class with both in-person and virtual students in attendance, live streaming is a great way to reach both groups simultaneously.) Tools such as Facebook Live, Instagram Live, and Periscope allow you to deliver lessons and explain difficult concepts in real time. All have interactive capabilities, so students can ask questions via chat thread and post reactions.

Instagram and Periscope versions are ephemeral, meaning you can continue to share them after broadcast, but they'll disappear in 24 hours. There are additional workarounds you'll find to save the videos longer, though you may lose the chat thread. With Facebook, you can post a recording of the video to your timeline for students to rewatch until you decide to delete it.



Lessons, instructions, feedback & questions (Recorded video)

[Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [YouTube](#) | [TikTok](#) | [Snapchat](#) | [WhatsApp](#)

Pre-recording your videos has the advantage of letting you do multiple takes or make edits, and it allows you to keep the videos available to your students long-term (with the exception of Snapchat). The platform you choose depends on the length and type of content you're sharing.

Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat each have run-time limitations and are best for quick lessons (think: under a minute) or for brief instructions, feedback, or Q&As. The other platforms support both short- and long-form content.

If you want your video to be available to a larger community, Twitter is a great choice, along with public Facebook, Instagram, or YouTube™ accounts. All have options for privacy settings if that's your preference.

Consider your chosen platform when you compose a video. Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and WhatsApp are designed to be viewed on mobile devices, so portrait orientation is best. You can go either way on the other platforms, but landscape is most traditional.



Instructions, feedback, questions & reminders (Text)

[Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [TikTok](#) | [Snapchat](#) | [WhatsApp](#)

Just about every platform has a direct message feature. If you and your class have established a practice of using a particular tool, you can communicate directly through text chat there — at a group level or one-to-one.

On Twitter, you can also send notes or instructions to your students by including an established class hashtag with your post. A private Facebook Group will let you post on the Group wall, which has the advantage of keeping it in context with other content you've shared.

For reminders, make sure you're using a platform's direct messaging feature or require your students to set up alerts for new posts (in a Facebook Group or for a Twitter hashtag). Creating a standard post that your students have to discover on their own introduces the risk that they may not see it at all.



Micro-content

[Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [YouTube](#) | [TikTok](#)

In the context of learning, micro-content consists of bite-sized chunks of information — in a variety of media formats — that can both stand alone and fit within a larger lesson. With videos, each chunk is typically under 5 minutes and covers a single, discrete topic. Micro-content is the cornerstone of mobile learning, and if you're conducting any part of your class via social media, you should assume all or most of your students are accessing via mobile devices.

The application of micro-content on YouTube is pretty straightforward — you can create short, focused videos and share them directly on your YouTube channel or include links or embedded videos on another platform, such as Twitter or Facebook.

Instagram and TikTok are also great for video sharing, and their inherent run-time limitations will help make sure your micro-content stays micro!



Open educational resource sharing

[Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#)

The internet is a near-endless source of quality educational content if you know where to look. Sharing links via social media can turn that simple URL into an interactive and collaborative experience for your class.

Twitter and Facebook both allow you to share content with your students and have threaded discussions directly in response to it. Facebook shares and discussions will stay private if you conduct them within an invite-only class Group. You can share via Twitter and monitor your students' tweets by having them use a designated class hashtag. These tweets will be either public or visible to all students' followers, depending on their settings, but with proper oversight this can be a perfect opportunity to engage experts within the larger community and practice appropriate digital citizenship.



Group work

[Facebook](#) | [WhatsApp](#)

When students can't be in the same place or need to work asynchronously, Facebook and WhatsApp are great. With Facebook, it's easy to set up small, private Groups where students can have discussions, share resources, and post their work. WhatsApp is also a simple way to keep a group chat going and share media.



Topic-based communities

[Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#)

While direct interaction with the experts isn't guaranteed, social media lets students occupy the same spaces and closely follow ongoing discussions on specific topics.

Twitter's biggest benefit for education is the ability to follow the thoughts and activities of subject-matter experts and to keep up with particular topics via relevant hashtags. Facebook communities are established through Groups, which may be open to the public or require you to request access.



Community building for institutions

[Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Snapchat](#)

Many educational institutions have active social accounts to keep their communities informed and connected. For schools with students who attend virtually, this social media-based connection may be as valuable as assemblies, rallies, and other events are to brick-and-mortar schools.

Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat are all common platforms for institution-level accounts that students are likely to seek out and follow. Explore other schools' social media accounts to see different examples of how they share content to foster community. Depending on the age of the students, these may need to be private accounts, and rules around parental-consent should always be closely examined.

Implementation tips



- Create a test account to get acquainted with a platform
- Have an idea of what you want to accomplish with your social posts and develop clear objectives beforehand
- Depending on the age and experience of your students, consider a preliminary lesson on netiquette and digital citizenship
- Be confident — let your expertise in the subject matter take front stage and don't get overwhelmed by the bells and whistles
- Be flexible and adaptable, and constantly be on the ball to turn emerging platforms into opportunities for new communication channels

For more tips and strategies from educators, explore the ebook **Dare to teach with social media>>**



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