

Online Social Networking to Support Youth College Student Learning and Behaviour

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Nowadays, online social networking is very popular with young people. Most young people participate in online social networking such as Facebook, Youtube, MSN etc. Young people believe that online social networking is part of their life. Whether on the street, in the home or in the classroom, young people converge in their online social hubs via smartphone, laptop or tablet computer. However, many parents dislike their children using online social networking because they believe online social networking not only affects student learning performance, but may also encourage online misbehaviour.

Laffey, Espinosa, and Moore (2003) suggested that technology may be particularly useful in supporting student learning and behavior. Barlow (2008) argues that Web 2.0 tools also offer an exciting opportunity to create a classroom without walls because they enable learning to take place wherever and whenever possible. Based on the above scholars' opinions, the author believes online social networking far from being detrimental, offers better communication channels with young people.. This paper is based on the experience of using online social networking in support of Youth College (YC) students, and how it can enhance their learning and behaviour.

The Youth College is a member of The Vocational Training Council (VTC) Group and was established in 2004. YC provides professional vocational training to post secondary 3 students to acquire knowledge and skills for further studies and employment. Some YC student's characteristics are so similar to Emotional and Behavioral Disorder (EBD) students before they studied in YC. Those have a high rate of absenteeism and tardiness, failing most subjects, returning assignments late, sometimes with written or oral profanity directed toward the teacher. (Anderson, Kutash & Dunhniwski, 2001)

In the Academic Year of 2010 to 2011, the author became a Year 2 Class Tutor of The Diploma in Vocational Education (Business) in YC and used online social networking to support Youth College students' learning and behaviour. After introducing online social networking, student's behavioural problems and learning performance were improved. Teacher, student relationships were improved and the class retention rate remained high at the end of semester.

The objective of this paper is to discuss how teachers can enhance YC student learning performance and behavior through popular online social networking. The paper will be organized in the following sections: Background of the study, Understanding Emotional and behavioral disorder (EBD) students, Web Technologies in Social Networking, Teacher experience of using social networking, and Conclusions.

References :

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