

Facebook

Well-known to students as the primary social media tool of their generation, Facebook can be a powerful presence in the college classroom, since so many students already have accounts (but be prepared to offer flexible alternatives to students who refuse – or can't – create their own Facebook accounts).

Direct “Friending”

The most common use of Facebook is to “friend” someone else, meaning their updates will show up in your “feed” and vice versa. Most students do not seek a direct Friend relationship with faculty. Despite privacy protecting measures like “[lists](#)”, the direct friend relationship is sometimes seen by students as undesirable or even [creepy](#).

Facebook Page (formerly “Fan Page”)

Any user can create a ‘public page’ that functions just like your regular Facebook account, but is branded and labeled as something other than you. For instance, you could make a page named after your college class (ENC1101H) and your students could be instructed to “like” this page. Thereafter, the posts/updates from this page will show up in their news feed. Advantage: preserves privacy. Disadvantage: students may miss an update/post in their “feed”, and there is no way to “message” (FB direct IM) the followers.

Facebook Group

A group functions like a public page, and can be “open” (joining is public and automatic) or “closed” (users must request to join and the owner must approve each request). Older groups include the functionality of discussion boards and the ability to “message” students so they will see a red notification when they log in to Facebook.

Advantages over Webcourses

1. Students use FB several times per day, much more frequently than Webcourses
2. URLs become links automatically
3. FB profile icons often provide a “face with the name”
4. Red notification numbers inform students when a peer comments on their post

Pedagogical Uses

1. Replace Webcourses discussion boards (though it's harder to grade automatically)
2. Students finding and sharing URLs, and providing reflection or commentary
3. Students networking with faculty, even after graduation (suggestion: use “lists” to maintain privacy on both sides of the direct friend relationship)
4. 4. Share just-in-time instructional resources with students, such as news, videos, and other links