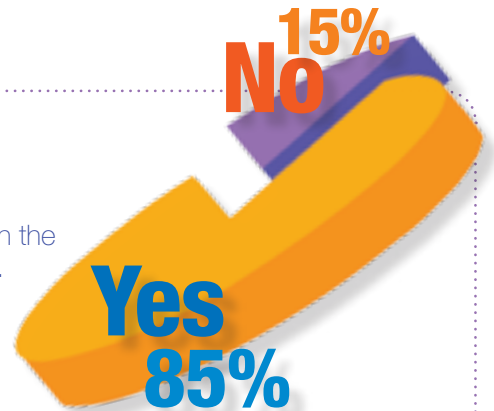


READERS respond

POLL RESULTS

Do Social Networking Applications Have a Place in the Classroom?

The majority of respondents believe that social networking can be used in the classroom. Poll comments include caveats concerning ethics and safety.



POLL COMMENTS

If We Don't, Who Will?

If anyone thinks students need schools to introduce them to social networking, they are not in touch with today's youth. Let's face facts—our students are going to use social networking sites whether in school or out. If educators do not embrace these technologies, who will teach our children how to use social networking in a safe manner, for constructive purposes, and to foster learning?

*Dan Ireland
Ottawa Area ISD
Holland, Michigan*

Don't Need It in School

Students do enough on their own; we don't need to waste valuable teaching minutes letting them pass e-notes. Ethics would be good, but you can do that a hundred better ways.

*Paul J. Barker
Clairbourn School
San Gabriel, California*

Safe Networks, Not Excuses

Yes! The greatest opportunity we can afford our kids is to allow them to publish for an audience and receive peer review. Is this not a real-world practice? As communities, we demand secure schools for our students; we need to create safe social networks as well, not excuses.

*Bill Lewis
New Braunfels ISD
New Braunfels, Texas*

Networking Can't Be Nullified

Michael Baker (Point/Counterpoint, Dec/Jan 2006–07, pp. 8–9) is right! Supervision is paramount! We cannot deny this aspect of modern technology simply for fear of "predators." We would be abrogating our responsibility as educators to educate the "whole person." It's not just academics that we teach—it's life in all its aspects—the good,

the bad, and the ugly (Apologies to Clint Eastwood, Lee van Cleef, et al.).

*Michael Thomason
St. Bernadette Elementary
Silver Spring, Maryland*

Absolutely

Socially mediated learning experiences can be some of the most engaging and tend to extend beyond the boundaries of the classroom. We need to create relevance and passion for what is addressed in the curriculum so learners use those social tools to hone their skills and integrate them into their lives.

*Michael Jay
Educational Systemics
Bellingham, Washington*

When Applied Appropriately

Yes. As with any well-planned unit of instruction, social networking applications can have their place in the classroom. The appropriate application of such tools requires well-thought-out instruction that meets current curricular goals, teacher and student self-monitoring of the task, and appropriate evaluation of student achievement. Forward-thinking teachers can foster the skills of our future leaders.

*Denise Lutz
Grandview Heights City Schools
Columbus, Ohio*

It's a Must in Class

Social networking must have a place in the classroom. It is one of the best "current" student technology uses to address the issues of online privacy and online choice when delivering guidance curriculum. The communication tools are so powerful that they will be used professionally in their post-secondary careers. Online platforms, and even site-based communication systems,

should be taking advantage of the successful asynchronous communication that these networking sites have achieved. Students use these sites for communication in their day-to-day life, and that in itself promotes the viability of them as a classroom tool.

*Jim LaPlante
Havergal College
Toronto, Ontario, Canada*

Powerful Tools When Used Correctly

Social networking sites in the classroom are acceptable if taught using perspective and judgment. Teachers need to guide students to use tools which assist them in gathering and publishing information. Sites such as Del.icio.us, flickr.com, notemesh.com and pageflakes.com are powerful tools if used correctly. Twenty-first century students will need these types of tools to remain competitive in the future workplace.

*Bruce Lemieux
Cushing Academy
Ashburnham, Massachusetts*

Teachers Can Play a Relevant Role

In my opinion social networking applications must have a place in the classroom. Why? It is not a secret that we don't have the possibility to monitor or check every action students do with the Internet, and it is a reality that social networking applications are extremely used by them. Students are really interested in experimenting how to meet new people through cyberspace and explore this kind of experience. I think teachers could play a relevant role providing guidance in a topic that they are interested in. Isn't the school a place where learners have the chance to experiment and explore their own interests?

*Melania Brenes Monge
Fundación Omar Dengo
San José, Costa Rica*