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How is Facebook being used for educational use in two Mpumalanga schools : a case study.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Facebook has witnessed enormous transformation since its onset. It developed rapidly and started being used widely in and outside the school environment. According to Wang et al. (2011), “Facebook is a popular social networking site, like many other new technologies, has potential for teaching and learning because of its unique built-in function that offer pedagogical, social and technological affordances. Several studies asserting the field of social networking sites (SNS) in education have acknowledged that the use of SNSs within the educational context of the secondary school level is an under explored area.

Triangulation of (qualitative and quantitative) methodologies was applied to investigate how Facebook is being used for teaching and learning in two secondary schools in Mpumalanga Province, South Africa. The two schools have created their Facebook groups for learning, and both schools encourage their learners to visit various Facebook groups for learning purposes.

Teachers use Facebook groups for: administration, classroom announcements, to respond to learner questions, and when they want to motivate learners to collaborate on issues of mutual concern. Often in the classroom, teachers share through the significant affordances of Facebook and participation in this group by the learners is voluntary. Questionnaire, interviews and Facebook page data were categorized into themes to interpret the results.

The findings reveal that learners in Grade 11 and 12 used Facebook for socializing, knowledge exchange and collaboration. Through Facebook, teachers are able to get to know learners challenges while the more reserved learners find comfort in this mode of learning.