

The YNF Social Media Learning Framework

Online learning

Current online learning systems essentially do no more than deliver workbooks, sometimes videos, over the web.

The student usually works alone through a series of lessons, completes assessment online and sometimes with written assignments. Feedback is intermittent and usually takes the form of written comment rather than discussion.

Online learning systems often use multimedia but interactivity is limited. Many of them (Blackboard in particular) are dominated by *learning management* functions and can seem to the student more about checking they are meeting the course requirements rather than learning the material.

These systems are relatively inexpensive. They primarily offer asynchronous learning.

1. Social learning

The concept of social learning was introduced by Bandura in the 1970s. He suggested that behaviour is influenced by environmental factors and stimuli as well as psychological factors.

This was a shift away from the pure behavioural approach. Behavioural learning assumes that people's environment (surroundings) shape their behaviour. Cognitive learning presumes that psychological factors are important for influencing how one behaves. Social learning suggests that a combination of environmental (social) and psychological factors influence behaviour.

Social learning theory proposes three requirements for people to learn and model behaviour:

1. **Attention:retention.** This involves remembering what one observed, the cognitive process of selectively concentrating on one aspect of the environment while ignoring other things. Attention has also been referred to as the allocation of processing resources. Examples include using a mobile while driving a car.
2. **Reproduction.** An ability to reproduce the behaviour, and
3. **Motivation.** The good reason to want to adopt the behaviour.

School and university based learning environments are good examples of social learning. Here, the learner is offered a variety of ways to access the learning, such as:

- lectures and tutorials
- practical classes
- group work and other peer-based learning
- an increasing but typically still limited use of social media (mainly blogs)
- online learning management systems (Blackboard), and
- a range of assessment strategies, with teacher feedback

Universities and school learning environments are expensive, with access restricted in terms of eligibility, fees, time and availability of places. They offer synchronous and asynchronous learning (e.g. face-to-face classes, and textbook)

The YNF social media learning environment

The Young Networks Foundation approach to social media learning leverages the power of social media to deliver many of the features of social learning in a far more accessible way. It involves:

- the use of a nominated Teacher, who works with a study group of 10 to 15 learners, who collaborate online for peer-group learning
- group agreements or learning contracts between learners
- learning content, feedback and assessment delivered through a range of social media channels
- “meta-learning” – that is, learning *about* social media by *using* social media
- regular use of immediate incentives, including badges, competitions
- practical experience through “social good” project assignments
- a focus on specified learning outcomes as well as a social media “product” - e.g. developing a social site or mobile app as a focus for the learning.

Social media learning is affordable and involves a mix of synchronous and asynchronous learning.

The learning environment

As the student signs up they are presented with the following outline of the learning environment they will be working in for the Course.

2. The learning objectives

Here we specify the outcomes in terms of the learning they will acquire through the Course.

For example, for eMe: Create an Online ePortfolio:

At the end of this Workshop you will be able to:

- *understand what a range of audiences (including teachers, prospective employers and online friends) would like to know about your personal “story”;*
- *create a storyboard that shows you how to present your personal story best;*
- *develop a resume of your achievements at school, work and elsewhere;*
- *create a short video that features you, presenting your career goals;*
- *create a repository of other documents, audio and video files, interviews with referees and other material that you can use to promote yourself to particular audiences;*

- *bring this together in an online portfolio – an ePortfolio – that you can promote to each of these audiences using social media.*

3. The social media product

The specific social media product (if any) they will be working together on during the course and which will be published at the end of it;

For example, for eMe:

Over the next few weeks you will learn to develop a compelling ePortfolio, which you can use in your job search, to showcase your achievements at school or to capture your digital design work.

4. The Class

Classes are limited to no more than 15 learners who work together direct (for example, in Workshops) or online, or a blend of both. A specific Teacher is allocated to each Class.

Learners get to know their fellow students' interests and background on their Profiles and are also presented with the qualifications, industry experience and particular areas of interest of the Teacher in the same way.

As a first step they agree on a learning contract about how they will interact, confidentiality, the timing of key learning events, etc.

5. The Lessons

In each Course the Class works through a series of **Lessons**, which for Workshops are typically covered in a day session and for longer courses are week-long.

Of course, the Lessons for each Course will depend on the specific material to be covered. However, there is a common theme to learning in a social media learning environment – you are working together on a topic so that you understand it well enough to share your knowledge with others, through the social media product you develop.

In line with this common theme, the typical way the **Lessons** progress is:

1. Develop your story - what would you like to tell your audience about the topic you are working on
2. Choose the tools you will use to develop and publish your story
3. Research and learn about your topic
4. Produce the content
5. Edit and prepare it, and
6. Publish

6. The Lesson Structure

Each Lesson is delivered in two phases – the **peer learning** phase and the teacher-led **consolidation and assessment** phase. For the longer courses, a Lesson is typically delivered over a week.

The peer learning phase

The learner commences the course by opening up the first Lesson on the site or the app (see below). They are presented with a range of documents, videos, links, etc that form the key learning resources of the Lesson.

They then work through these, in their own time and in line with any learning pattern set out by the Teacher.

For example, the Teacher might initially present three learning resources and then, after a certain period, tweet the Class to indicate that an additional resource has now been uploaded.

They are also presented, on the site or the app, with icons that link to the social tools that the Teacher has determined most appropriate for that Lesson.

For example, if the Lesson involves the collaborative development of a shared document, a link to a supplied Google Doc would be provided.

There would also be communication links (e.g. Twitter, Facebook), possibly social bookmarks (Diigo), etc.

During this phase, much of the learning emerges from the learners' interaction with their peers along with their own reflection, research, and other active learning activities.

While the Teacher's active role in group interactions in the first phase is typically limited, they certainly follow the conversations and use this time to assess the extent to which the Learners are absorbing the material; how well they collectively resolve any key issues, etc. when they do intervene in the peer learning, it is by a social channel such as Twitter, which means that their message is shared across the group and can then be discussed by all of them.

This phase lasts for the first part of Lesson.

For example, in a week-long Lesson, it would last from, say, Monday 8am till Wednesday 5pm.

The consolidation and assessment phase

The Teacher feeds their observations back to the group at the start of the second phase.

For example, they may post a blog entry, upload a YouTube video, provide worked examples through Google Docs, etc. They make sure any issues and questions that could not be resolved by the group are dealt with at this time.

This is followed by a Class webinar.

This is set at an agreed time. The learning is most powerful where the Learners and the Teacher interact synchronously and so the timing of the Webinar is agreed among the Class at the commencement of the Course. However the Webinar is recorded and can be accessed later by learners who were unable to participate live

The Teacher may open up a whiteboard, a shared document, an illustration on Sumo Paint, etc. The Class then interact with the Teacher online over, say, a one hour period.

The assessment

Assessment tools are in line with the Course objectives and may be set in line with standards such as the AQTF. Learners can continue to interact with each other and the Teacher through the Assessment period, although specific limitations may be placed on the completion of the final assessment.

FOR DISCUSSION

For example, a student may present a time-stamped video presentation that shows them working through a process (operating a Brushcutter).

Summary

In summary, the stages of each Lesson are:

1. Peer research and discussion – learners work through the Teacher's notes, discuss them with other class members, do your their research and complete the exercises
2. Lecture - the Teacher offers an online presentation of the main themes and clears up any issues that came up in the online discussions
3. The webinar – the online meeting of the Class where they can review their work and clarify any remaining issues with the Teacher.
4. Assessment – when the learners and the Teacher are satisfied that they understand the key point of the Lesson, they complete the Assessment and then move on to the next Lesson. If they are having trouble, they can link directly with the Teacher to clarify the issues and then repeat the Assessment.

The Social Media Learning Tools

Learners interact online using a range of familiar social tools, along with specific tools developed by the YNF..

We introduce these tools progressively as the class works through the course. They learn how to use them for communication, for research, for collaboration, for analysis and much more. The session leader uses the tools to manage and mentor the online learning community; class members use them to set up a rich peer-learning experience.

We configure these tools so that they fit closely with the course aims, and they provide the learners with a repository for the learning resources and record of the learning process.

The Learning Tools that apply to all Courses are:

The Course Site

When they enrol the Learners are given access to the Course site. This is a typical (but limited) social site, where they may access the learning resources, create and review profiles, share ideas, etc.

The Course App

The YNF is currently developing a Course app, which provides all the features of the Course site through an app for mobile access.

Other social tools

Each course is delivered within an ecosystem of social media tools that facilitate the learning in various ways. these include:

- Communication Tools
 - Twitter
 - Facebook
 - Email (for course administration only)

FOR DISCUSSION

- Collaboration tools
 - Diigo
 - Google Docs
- Presentation tools:
 - Slideshare
 - Prezi
 - Grou.ps

The way to learn

We tell the Learners:

You will get the most out of this workshop if you:

- **READ** the Lessons
- **TALK** regularly with your class online, using the social media tools we suggest for each Lesson (and more, if you like)
- **ASSESS** your own progress and collect the evidence that shows how well you have been able to complete the tasks (this might include written work, test results, digital creations, videos of your work - or anything that shows what you have learned)
- **CHECK** your work with your Teacher.
- **COMPLETE THE FINAL ASSESSMENT TASKS** - and have them checked by your Teacher.