Social media opens up all new avenues of communication for college students, their classmates and their professors. A typical class may only take a few hours a week, but now with social media, the classroom can be a lively, 24/7 experience. Professors are more accessible, often clarifying assignments via Twitter or sharing content on their blogs.

Students benefit from these extra communication channels. They can process information and contribute to class discussions at their own pace. They can more easily ask questions of their peers and professors.

This new layer of conversation also raises questions about appropriate boundaries, such as whether students and teachers can connect online as “friends.” The state of Missouri recently took a stand, declaring Facebook friendships between students and teachers illegal.

But that shouldn’t discourage the opportunities presented by social media in the classroom. Here are some guidelines for educators using social media effectively while maintaining professional boundaries.

1. Survey Your Students About Social Media

Ask your students how they use various social platforms and which ones (if any) they would be interested in integrating into class. Some students may be ardently opposed to using Facebook for educational purposes, for example, while others might think it’s great. Suggest possibilities, such as adding a Twitter backchannel to classroom discussions or holding extra office hours on Google+ two evenings per week. See which ideas stick and think about which ideas align with your course objectives.

Social media is a way to enhance student learning and grow discussions. For this reason, it’s important that students feel comfortable with whatever social media you decide to integrate into the course. If they don’t buy-in, the experience will not be as rewarding for them or for you.

2. Utilize Groups and Communities

Take advantage of the many options that exist for group discussion. With Facebook, you can establish a class page (or even a private class group) where students can interact with each other, post content and ask questions. With Twitter, you can create a “class hashtag” which all students can use to tag their tweets about course-related content.

Click Here to read complete article
This month’s “Spotlight” is on five outstanding faculty who were awarded mini grants to develop and present innovative training modules for faculty.

Some of them were presented on the variable Flex Days in August and the others will be presented on the variable Flex Days of January 11, 12 and 13. Don’t miss them! Thank you for your continued commitment to student success.

**SHELI AYERS**

**USING CCC CONFER FOR ONLINE INSTRUCTION, TUTORING AND STUDENT CONFERENCES**

Basic skills and other “at risk” students often receive less individualized instruction than they need. Offering students the opportunity to meet with an instructor online, either individually or as a group, will promote student success and reduce attrition.

I have used CCC Confer, a Web conferencing platform that can supplement ETUDES. It supports audio, video, document sharing and group discussions in breakout rooms. Meetings can be recorded and accessed later by simply clicking a URL.

Participants will brainstorm possible applications for their own teaching, and discuss best practices for content delivery.

**NEA HEWETTE**

**DEVELOPING & USING CASE STUDIES IN THE CLASSROOM**

Want to make your lectures more interactive and learner based? Learn to develop case studies for courses using course material (e.g. news articles) that will contextualize a concept specific to an area in a course and relevant to the discipline.

**STEVE GRAHAM**

**COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION**

Communication Apprehension has been defined as “an individual’s level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated (oral) communication with another person or persons” (McCroskey, 1977).

Approximately 70-75% of adults experience Communication Apprehension. The fear of public speaking tops many fears…ahead of dying.

Many research studies show communication is the key to success in business, relationships, and life in general.

Overcoming Communication Apprehension is a process that can be learned just like learning any skill that you have.

**PATRICK WALL**

**BRAIN BASED LEARNING**

Learn new pedagogy derived from Brain Based Learning, using the multi-media kit How the Brain Learns. This is a highly interactive model that employs games, video clips and group interaction and discussion. Examine best practices in pedagogy, return to your classroom with new tools and share them with your colleagues.

**DEBRA LOUIE**

**THE CAREER LIFE PLANNING PROCESS**

Experience the Career Life Planning Process, including career assessments, career exploration, career information interviewing and job seeking skills. Discover a variety of career resources that can be adapted to your course and specific career activities that can be used as class assignments. Learn what is available for your students to explore their interests and career choices.