

How teachers can use social media to improve learning this fall

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Social media platforms can play an important role for teaching students already hard-wired into the tools and for advancing teacher professional development, says a Michigan State University researcher who wrote the

[first comprehensive review](#) on the medium's potential impact on K-12 education.

Benefits include making students feel more engaged in learning, creating deeper interactions between teachers and students and expanding learning communities beyond school walls, said Christine Greenhow, lead author and associate professor in counseling, education psychology and special education, at MSU's College of Education. It's not surprising since students use social media in almost every other aspect of their lives.

"Due to lack of research in this field, educators and teachers have had very little guidance on research-informed practices," she said. "This has been a problem since [a quarter of U.S. teachers surveyed turned to social media](#) to interact with students when the pandemic began and were rapidly required to teach online. This research will help educational professionals understand how their social media use can help students and support their own rapid learning—during the pandemic and beyond."

The research also showed that through social media, teachers can enhance interactions between students, between students and teachers, and with people and resources outside the classroom. All are important for a student's sense of belonging in an educational community.

And by using social media themselves, teachers can receive professional benefits through just-in-time teaching-related resources and social or [emotional support](#) outside their own school or district, she said.

Greenhow said the research provides an understanding of the impact social [media](#) has on teaching and learning, which will help teachers prepare for a combination of in-classroom and online learning likely expected this fall.

"Faced with uncertainty about what form their fall teaching will take, these insights on the advantages of using [social media](#) will help teachers address common teaching challenges," Greenhow said. "The constant challenges of promoting students' active learning and sense of connection are issues that educators often struggle with, but especially so when they have to turn on a dime to recreate in-person classes online."

More information: A Decade of Research on K-12 Teaching and Teacher Learning with Social Media: Insights on the State of the Field. www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentId=23303

Provided by Michigan State University

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