

Social Media All Around Us

By: Monty Kirk, North Central High School

Contact: kirkm@nesc.k12.in.us

Background That Led to Your Inquiry:

I was led to this inquiry by parent inquiries. My staff and I were trying to come up with ways to get parents involved in the educational process. Our teachers needed a way to communicate the exciting things taking place in class to the parents.

We decided to start using social media more frequently. We created new usernames that had a relationship to the school. We spent time requesting students and parents to follow us. We needed a way to break down the walls of a classroom and expand the learning to homes and places students were. Therefore, the purpose of my action research was to see how well it was received.

Statement of Your Wondering:

What happens if we increase Stakeholder interaction using social media and digital resources?

Methods/Procedures:

I met with my staff and introduced Twitter and how it can be used. I met with teachers individually that were intimidated by using social media and helped them see how to use it for education and social media. We created accounts that were intertwined with the school.

Next, we shared these accounts with students and parents. We began posting pictures of events and activities taking place in class. This helped to open the walls to the classroom and allow parents to see what is happening daily with their students. We post information about athletics and school events on pages and retweet them as well. This allows several hundred people to see messages with little effort.

Lastly, I brought all the information back and began to look at how many people had viewed messages. It was interesting to see what type of message attracted the most likes. Also interesting to see that pictures were an incredible draw for attention. Students and parents love to see themselves in action in the classroom.

Stating Your Learning and Supporting it with Data:

As a result of analyzing my data I learned 2 important things.

First, I learned that people are almost completely reliant on social media. People have a need to let others see what they are doing and how they are feeling. It allows many to have a voice that otherwise wouldn't. Although people say they do not want to hear every detail of someone else's life, they also can't help themselves but to look. I found that messages I sent through social media tend to get better likes and views than emails or printed letters that I send out.

Secondly, Students are incredibly adaptable in terms of technology. They are able to pick up tech ideas and run with it quickly. As long as we put tech in their hands, they will be able to produce solid and promising ideas.

Providing Concluding Thoughts:

I have learned that I have to improve my communication skills with students, parents and staff. I have to make a commitment to posting thoughts or notes frequently. In the future, I plan to make daily notes to send out. I have to find a way to reach all of the stakeholders, not just the ones I have frequent contact with.

I have also learned that I need to push teachers to be more visible and open to parents of their students. Transparency is key in earning student and parent trust in a classroom. We do great things each day in the classroom, we need to find a way to make sure everyone sees that and not reflect on the negatives. Put positivity first and make sure students learning is the center of all we do.

References:

N/A