

OLTD 506  
Reflection on Evidence 1

**Program Learning Outcome:**

- Become familiar with common terms, definitions and elements related to online environments
- Scaffold digital citizenship from K-12 to professional level of educators

**Evidence: Social Media Basics and Boundaries - Case Studies**

The five case studies that make up this evidence of learning piece were completed as group work assignments with my fellow cohort members Nicole Hamilton and Thai Nguyen. As we worked through the course materials in the first three weeks of OLTD 506 to develop our background knowledge and understanding of social media use within the B.C. education context, we came together to consider each of the scenarios presented in these case studies and determine what advice we may be able to offer ourselves or colleagues in similar situations based upon our learning to date.

In developing responses to each of the issues outlined in these case studies I gained a deeper knowledge of social media terms overall, including the distinction and crossover between social media and social networking, as well as the contexts and constraints relevant to social media use in education in B.C. By analyzing each of these realistic case scenarios and determining what actions the educators involved could take I have improved my own ability to make informed, rational decisions regarding social media use both personally and professionally with my students, considering issues such as digital footprint, digital professionalism, privacy implications, the digital divide, indigenous contexts, and safety. My awareness of the legal obligations and potential risks when using social media has been heightened, but so too has my knowledge of strategies that can be used to mitigate these risks, allowing me to be more effective in conducting a risks/ benefits analysis of social media tools and select those that I believe hold the greatest potential for supporting and enhancing student learning overall.

Much of the advice that my team members and I suggested for each of these case studies supports the development of digital citizenship for both the students and the educators involved. By working through these scenarios I have learned where the gaps were in my own knowledge regarding social media usage and now believe that I would also be better equipped to support other educators in filling in these same gaps through informal professional conversations or more formalized professional development

opportunities. I have become more familiar with the BC Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act, relevant legal precedents, and policy manuals within my own school district outlining guidelines for social media usage, consent requirements and the duty to report, as well as resources such as Common Sense media lessons and tips that can be used to support digital citizenship instruction for students across all grade levels. All of this will help to strengthen my ability to effectively teach online as I will be able to better determine the right balance between protecting students and equipping them with the knowledge and skills that they will need to navigate our increasingly online world.

Social media is a part of our students lives and they will continue to use these tools whether we support them with this or not. As educators I believe it is important that we do support students in learning how to use these tools safely and effectively, and leverage the tools available given their significant potential for enhancing learning through the wide scale sharing of knowledge and information (Baruah, 2012). “When educators and educational institutions take the time to create a social media plan outlining strategies and policies for use, the potential for social media to support and enhance learning is significant (Hopkins, 2016)” (Mullis, 2020, p. 1). In order to effectively create such a plan and support our students in developing digital literacy and digital citizenship skills, educators need to be knowledgeable digital citizens ourselves. We need to be familiar with common terms, definitions and elements related to social media use, understand the potential benefits of employing these tools for instructional purposes and the constraints that we are working within, whether these be legal, ethical or otherwise, and know how we can best scaffold these skills for students based upon age appropriateness and readiness.

## References:

- Baruah, T. D. (2012). Effectiveness of social media as a tool of communication and its potential for technology enabled connections: A micro-level study. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 2(5).
- Mullis, M. (2020). *Module 1 Demonstration of Learning*. Vancouver Island University: unpublished assignment.