The Role of Faculty in the Use of Twitter in Large Lecture Courses

Submitted for: Best Practices

At the University of Saskatchewan, we are currently engaged in a multi-year research study to examine the use of Twitter as a back channel in large lecture courses (more than 100 students) to determine its impact on increasing students' sense of engagement with each other, the content, the instructor and the university community in general. In this first year, three courses in the disciplines of nursing, geography and psychology, with class sizes ranging from approximately 135 students to 350 students participated. In each course, the role and experience of the instructor on Twitter varied, which has provided us the opportunity to examine the success, challenges and suggestions for improvement in terms of how to implement Twitter in postsecondary classes.

For this presentation we will discuss the differences between these initial three classes and what "best practices" appear to be emerging. This information will be based upon our observations of the Twitter activity connected to each course, feedback from the instructors and Twitter facilitators (when the instructor does not fill this role) and the initial results from the student surveys.