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Social Media, Technology, and the Higher Education Classroom

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For as long as classrooms and education spaces have existed, there has been a complicated (if not contentious) relationship between schools, educators, and new technology. Consider that, within our own lifetimes, we have heard about electronic media's looming threat to students' ability to think critically and effectively participate in larger society. According to this framework, the new media effectively exist to undermine the work we seek out to accomplish as educators.

In recent times, a similar framework has been employed to make sense of the digital age's own threatening agents. Specifically, social media and personal electronics have received much of the spotlight as signifiers for technological threats to educators' and students' capacity for doing their respective jobs. Spend a moment in any school and you will see students, faculty, and administrators glancing down at their phones to help pass the time or find answers to their internalized inquiries. Digital technology and social media are everywhere – our classrooms and curriculum are no exception.

On the one hand, teachers have taken an approach to reduce or altogether eliminate technology from their classrooms and curriculum, citing students' attachment to their phones and social media as a contributing factor (see: Schneider, 2023). Others embrace the challenge of using new technology and social media as an aid to their pedagogy (see: Roose, 2023). To be clear, there is much debate around best practices for teacher use or implementation of technology and social media in their classrooms.

The relationship between new technology and contemporary education becomes even more complicated for media and communication educators. In most instances, our students take classes within this field because they are interested in learning about and working with new technology. Furthermore, learning and mastering this technology is often required for those seeking employment in media industries. This makes technological restrictions (or technology bans) difficult, if not impossible. With the proliferation of positions like social media manager, multimedia journalist, digital content producer, social media chair and chief technologist on the rise, restricting our students' use of new technology in our courses seems like pedagogical malpractice.

Therefore, it seems, that we're at a moment to reflect on the current state of technology and social media in classroom spaces, assignments, and the role it plays in our pedagogy. During the 2023 New York State Communication Association (NYSCA) conference, this roundtable grappled with where and how technology exists in our curriculum. This paper serves as a reflection on some of the topics discussed during the "Social Media, Technology, and the Higher Education Classroom" roundtable session. This paper also addresses issues related to participation in the communication classroom and how technology can attempt to bridge that gap, the ways that areas of study, like journalism, necessitate

including new technology as a part of the curriculum, and how professors teaching media may feel a dilemma of self, space, and future with the current state of technology in the higher education classroom.

Technology, Participation, and Meeting Students in the Middle.

As educators, we are tasked with the responsibility of cultivating interest and inspiring a thirst for knowledge within our students. Before entering a classroom, an educator may take time to reflect on their teaching philosophy and look to this philosophy as a pedagogical guidepost of sorts when thinking about best practices in the classroom. Personally, I have felt that it is through active participation, discussion, and class discourse that students are best able to grapple with and (ideally) understand some of the concepts and/or issues presented in my classes. As participation is at the center of this teaching philosophy, I have thought about how technology serves as a bridge or obstacle to class participation and, by extension, knowledge sharing (from teacher to student, student to student, and student to teacher). This section looks at the ways that our classrooms have historically impacted student participation, the promise of participation, and how technology can affect this practice. The section concludes with a proposal that we attempt to meet our students in the middle (as opposed to meeting them where they are) for the sake of knowledge sharing in our learning spaces.

The Higher Education Classroom as Space and Medium

To begin, I want to position the classroom as both a space and a medium. Traditionally, the classroom itself is a physical space comprised of walls, desks, a blackboard, and a lectern, among other recognizable low-tech artifacts. These physical spaces are sacred shrines where the learning process takes place. Hastie (2015) speaks to the special nature of our classrooms by describing them as spaces "where we continuously practice our own changing ideas, which are themselves in turn transformed by the students in the room with us." Neil Postman, too, speaks to the special nature of our classrooms by keying on the lasting lessons obtained by students in these spaces. As Postman (1985) reflects, the classroom is the space where people come to terms with the important lesson of "*how*" to learn (p. 144). In this way, we can clearly see why classrooms are somewhat sanctified: they are liminal spaces where educators and students gather as a community to embark on a rite of passage we know as the education process. To use Turner's (1969) conceptualization of the "post-liminal self" (the person we become after a rite of passage), we can see the classroom as a space with the potential to impact our students in significant and lasting ways.

Since classrooms are channels through which an educational exchange occurs, classrooms also function as a medium. As media researchers, we know that different media harbor unique biases. Marshall McLuhan explored this when he used classroom instruction and student participation to explain his concepts of "media hot" and "media cool." Specifically, McLuhan wrote that a lecture hall is

a hot medium because it encourages less student participation. Conversely, McLuhan (2003) understood small seminar classrooms as a cool medium because it is a less intimidating space that welcomes increased student participation (p. 40). Although these concepts do not specifically consider other relevant considerations that factor into a student's willingness to participate (e.g. psychological disposition, history with the instructor, sharing the classroom with a friend or perceived enemy, etc.), it does serve as an example of how a medium or space can influence or prime a student's willingness to actively participate in a classroom setting.

Participation in the Higher Education Classroom

As mentioned earlier, student participation is a central facet of the learning process. In a sense, participation is a process by which students learn to learn and take a sense of ownership over their education. Scholars also point to the lasting impact that active learning and participation can have on a student. In this way, our courses and class activities have the potential to shape our students' enduring attitudes beyond the temporal constraints of an academic semester. As Dewey (1963) asserts, the indirect lessons of participating in a type of public discourse "may be and often is more important than the spelling lesson or lesson in geography or history… For those [enduring] attitudes are fundamentally what count in the future" (p. 48). In this way, we see that student participation is not merely a means of assessing student comprehension. Instead, class participation and student engagement should be seen as something with the potential to remain with our students into their future careers and lives as citizens in a democracy.

Although we see amazing potential in fostering an environment where our students are comfortable finding their voices, it is not as simple as flipping the participation switch from OFF to ON. Indeed, there are many different approaches related to best practices for encouraging student involvement in class discourse. As a starting point, some suggest teachers set a tone in the first-class meeting, whereby the instructor "highlight[s] the stimulating intellectual tasks to be accomplished, pique students' curiosity, challenge traditional views, and hint at inconsistencies to be resolved" (Forsyth & McMillan, 1991, p. 54). For these reasons, many scholars and pedagogues have taken to examine the ways that we can further accentuate student participation in our classes. As Rheingold (2010) explains, educators collaborate with their students to collectively develop literacies of participation, or the process by which students learn "how to communicate their opinions in concert with other[s]… in a productive manner" (p. 20). Participatory practices also help students "feel and exercise the agency of being cocreators of their culture and not just passive consumers" (Rheingold, 2012, p. 53). Therefore, providing the students with the opportunity to make a mark on the class' discourse may dually assist with making them feel more

connected to the course and course content, while also equipping them with a beneficial skill set in the future.

Meeting Students in the Middle.

Thus far, we have established that our classrooms have the potential to positively affect our students in lasting ways, and that active student participation is a means through which we can unlock this potential. Additionally, we have covered that a commitment to active participation can also mean cultivating a learning environment where teacher and students collaborate to establish a shared sense of ownership over the class discourse. Oftentimes, these collaborative efforts mean reflecting on the ways that modern technological tools can help facilitate active participation.

In my experience, the students in my Media Studies courses at Hofstra University have an intense interest in using classroom technology to facilitate these conversations. I empathize with this reliance as a Canva presentation featuring TikTok clips will attract more eyeballs from the gallery and, to a degree, ease some of the presenter's performance anxiety. As such, there is rarely an occasion where technology is not used to help guide a lecture or class presentation (to such an extent that we are stuck in the classroom – even on those beautiful days when we would all rather be outside). This is hardly a novel trend or concept as scholars like Rheingold (2008; 2010; 2012) and Jenkins (2009) have centered electronic and digital technology in their own musings about pedagogical practices related to student engagement and participation. That said, the students who default to using presentation technology are not consulting these scholars and yet have organically come to this same finding. In a sense, these student presenters feel more engaged when technology is present and, therefore, they attempt to replicate and promote those same feelings of engagement for their peers.

Beyond presentations, course assignments have also been impacted by our society's ever-changing technological landscape. As communication and media educators, it is incumbent upon us to consider how to account for these changes in our assignments and across other evaluative metrics. This, too, can be a collaborative process by which we consult our students about ways to update our assignments to reflect current social, cultural, and professional trends. For example, in a Media Literacy class session during the Fall 2022 semester, my students and I logged onto ChatGPT for the first time and were amazed at how quickly the A.I. chatbot could outline, organize, and construct an academic essay. This exhibition provided a platform for the class to think about how this emerging technology fits creatively and critically into the larger media ecosystem. We also considered this new technology's potential impact on education and learning communities by reflecting on how A.I. could pave new pathways to learning and push the current limits of our coursework. By the end of the class, I had a list of

ideas for how to use emerging A.I. technology in future media literacy class discussions. As a direct result of those conversations, I introduced a ChatGPT Analysis assignment in my Media Literacy class (very simply put: the students ask the chatbot to write a paper about something the student already knows well. After the A.I. produces this work, the student analyzes the paper's strengths and weaknesses). Through this assignment, students examine A.I.'s capabilities with a critical lens and come to understand the new technology's limits and shortcomings. During a time where some of our colleagues in communication and media studies are banning A.I. from their curriculum, the positive feedback this assignment has received is a reminder that there is still much to learn and space for consideration with this new technology.

As a final thought, these examples are a reminder that when we are told to "meet the students where they are" the students are already moving toward us. Burniske (2008) reminds us that a teacher "sets the tone and models the desired behavior" for many classroom behaviors and activities (p. 45). As such, embracing technology as a means of facilitating active participation and engagement can set the tone for a productive semester of participatory discourse in our classes. By doing this, we, as educators, have the potential to produce meaningful conversation where everyone in our classrooms benefits from the exchange of ideas.

Preparing Future Journalists by Embracing Classroom Technology

Technology has woven its way into many classrooms across the country and around the world. We see technology's presence in the classroom with laptops, tablets, monitors, and PowerPoint presentations to more sophisticated programs like editing software, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence. Technology has become rooted in the classroom in a similar way to how it has become ingrained in the fabric of our daily lives. Educators have taken different approaches to dealing with technology, from complete bans to embracing technology and making it an integral part of each lesson.

Although it may be tempting to ban technology to reduce distractions during class sessions, this is not a realistic option in a journalism classroom. The ability to outright ban technology is both difficult and potentially detrimental to students and their future careers in the industry. Many in the field note how essential technology has become for the daily work a journalist does. This includes newsgathering, distribution, and engagement with the audience. As Culver (2012) explains, "digital and social media are critical to the future of journalism. Banning technology in the classroom sends the message that they are something less than that."

Technology has become a critical tool for journalists in many ways and forms. Briggs (2019) notes that journalists are "all digital workers now. Previous generations of journalists… had the luxury of expecting some supergeeks in their

organizations to take care of the digital duties for them. For better or worse, those days are gone" (p.7). For this reason, Culver (2012) adds that students need to learn in the classroom what it is like to focus on their work in the face of the temptations of technology since they will face those same temptations as professionals in the industry. In this way, we see that avoiding technology in the journalism classroom may have negative consequences on students' future professional endeavors.

The connection between technology and journalism is not a new concept. It can be argued that since the invention of the printing press, technology has always been a part of journalism. Journalists could not spread their stories to vast audiences without it. However, not all journalists were trained in the skills of physically printing their own papers. The connection between journalism and technology became even deeper with the invention of printed photographs, radio and television. In the last two decades, journalism has undergone a seismic shift with the emergence and explosion of digital and social media. This has made technology an essential part of a journalist's daily existence.

Similarly, the ties between technology and journalism education have been strong since the early days of formalized journalism education, and technology has long played an important role in journalism classrooms. In 1908, the University of Missouri founded the first journalism school and offered the world's first journalism degree. In 1920, the University of Missouri was also the first to incorporate cameras into its journalism courses. It introduced radio into its journalism courses in 1930 and software into journalism courses in 1960 (Dunn, 2018, p. 31).

With the rise of television news, once referred to as electronic journalism, the ties between journalism and technology were further solidified. As technology advanced over the years to make field cameras smaller and easier to use, many news organizations have gone from sending out teams of videographers and reporters to cover news stories to having one-man band reporters. As such, covering a story for television requires that reporters possess more than the technical knowledge of how to work a camera and editing program. Visual storytelling is more than just adding pictures and sound to a written script. Telling a visually interesting story requires a journalist to think about the video that will explain the story and immerse the viewer in it. The video and reporter script must work in concert to give the full story to the audience.

Teaching broadcast journalism without teaching the technology that is used to tell stories will leave students unable to learn their craft. Although most modern cameras do much of the technical work for us by capturing high-quality images with automatic functions like focus, exposure, and white balance. With this said, Shook (1999) argues that "photojournalists who aspire to excellence soon discover that mastery without understanding is unlikely" (p.106). To this

end, we see that automation serves as a helpful starting point for a journalist's technological education and skillset.

The term "one-man band" has now evolved into the role of multimedia reporter, since journalists are also typically required to contribute work to a station's website and social media pages, further tying journalists to technology. During the COVID-19 pandemic, technology became an essential tool for television journalists. Some television anchors and reporters worked remotely, going live via cellphones from their homes and newscast guests could easily be featured in program segments via Zoom. The use of technology also expanded to other fields of journalism, where journalists learned new ways of telling stories and reaching audiences using daily newsletters and social media platforms.

As we are now fully immersed in the digital age, technology has become a necessary component of a journalism education. It is not only important to teach students about technology but how to use it well. This can result in a future generation of journalists who use technology for the betterment of their craft instead of being overrun by the problems of technology. Briggs (2019) warns that taking new technology for granted can lead to educators "miss[ing] some important opportunities to leverage it to gather information better, to communicate better, and to create better journalism" (p.7).

When it comes to uses of technology in journalism, the sky is the limit. Today's journalists can use social media alone for newsgathering, distribution, and engagement. Reporters can find sources to interview through their social media accounts, ask their audience members what they want to know about a specific topic or story, and even pose open ended questions or polls to gather information. Journalists can increase viewership or readership by teasing their stories on their social media pages and directing their audiences to the full reports either in print, online or on the air. This is an important tool for growing a news organization's audience as well as the audience's loyalty to a news organization. Audience engagement on social platforms can mean crowdsourcing information for a story and affording journalists a space where they can address their audience's comments and questions. In this instance, a journalist can gather feedback on a story that can be useful in future coverage or answer questions about details that were not included in a report.

In a 2022 Pew Research survey, 94% of journalists who responded reported using social media in their work to some degree (Gottfried, 2022). Educators who ban technology from their classrooms miss the opportunity to teach their students best practices for using social media. This includes the legal and ethical issues surrounding social media. Ethics is a crucial part of a journalism education, and there are many ethical questions surrounding the use of technology, from verifying information posted on social media to the usage of images, videos, and other posts on social media platforms.

At a time when deepfakes are becoming increasingly realistic and artificial intelligence can create fabricated images and video, visual verification is a valuable skill for a journalist to learn. According to Walker (2019), visual investigations "stand as a model for journalists in this post-truth era, when the public is quick to trust feeling over fact, and social media platforms contain vast amounts of false information." Therefore, teaching future journalists how to use visual verification tools helps them to take a critical look at digital sources to uncover if they are trustworthy. A clear example of the importance of these tools was evidenced in the case of the photo of Princess Kate Middleton with her children released by Kensington Palace in March 2024. Hours after posting the image, the Associated Press, along with Getty, Reuters, Britain's national news agency and other media outlets removed the photograph from their platforms after determining it had been manipulated by the source (Putterman, 2024). The fallout of the edited image led to an apology from Princess Kate for editing the photograph and fueled speculation about the princess' health weeks after a surgery that sidelined her from public engagements. The incident also led the global news director of Agence France-Presse (AFP), one of the world's largest news agencies, to say Kensington Palace is no longer a "trusted source" (Roeloffs, 2024). Less than two weeks after the photograph was published and then "killed" from numerous media organizations' sites, Princess Kate publicly announced she had been diagnosed with cancer and was undergoing chemotherapy. Journalists trained to look at digital sources with a critical eye are the ones who uncovered the inconsistencies in the photograph. However, not all newsrooms have staff trained to spot such issues.

As technology continues to change and advance, these ethical issues become increasingly important. Currently, the journalism industry itself is struggling to figure out if and how it should use artificial intelligence. While some newsrooms have not yet entered into the AI space, others are embracing the technology. Veiga (2023) states this is a time that requires newsrooms to develop new, clear standards for the use of A.I. in reporting: "Newsrooms need to act quickly but deliberatively to create these standards and to make them easily accessible to their audiences. These moves are important for maintaining trust with news consumers and ensuring accountability of the press." The world is at a crossroads with the changes A.I. could bring looming on the horizon. Veiga (2023) points to the serious ethical questions raised about A.I. technology. One of the key issues is cases of what is called "hallucinating," when A.I. makes up facts or citations that do not exist. "News consumers should be assured that safeguards are in place to make sure the content they're reading, watching and listening to is verified, credible and as fair as possible" (Veiga, 2023). By ignoring this technology in the classroom, we can neither teach students about the problems

and pitfalls involved, nor help them work through the ethical issues surrounding A.I.

This is true of many types of technology used by journalists. By failing to include them as part of a journalism education, we fail to prepare students for their careers in the industry. Due to its inseparable connection to journalism in the digital age, educators should embrace and integrate technology into their classrooms. These tools have become a foundation of journalism in the 21st century. As Culver (2012) puts it, "technology in the classroom is not about 'banning' or 'allowing.' It is about engaging. This could not be more important for budding journalists to learn." By incorporating these tools into the classroom, we will ensure future journalists to be technologically literate.

A Professor's Dilemma

Who doesn't want to welcome technologies and techniques that enable innovative and engaging educators? Who doesn't want to keep up with the times? Who doesn't want to reach their students where they live? Who *does* want to admit they are overwhelmed? Beleaguered? Swamped? And Clueless?

The observations offered come from personal experience rather than from an expert in educational technologies. Many have studied Educational Technology with extensive research focusing on analyzing, designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating the technologies associated with effective teaching and learning. Today, those authorities are in great demand as each of us attempts to cope with incorporating emerging technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence, Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, and yes—social media into the classroom.

These comments are offered from a closet technophile who clings to the dream that teaching will be more effective if the latest and greatest technology can be seamlessly brought into the classroom. The magical transformation dreamed of has been humbling and transforming not so much in terms of teaching strategies, but as the relationship between faculty and student. The professor, the authority, the experienced educator is no longer the omnipotent expert when at the mercy of unfamiliar, uncooperative technologies. A professor pleading for a volunteer to help connect to their own campus account to bring up a PowerPoint loses credibility. Competence also means there is a halo effect of incompetence. Yet many, including the author, continue to devote valuable time and energy to integrating technologies and ever newer applications of those technologies, such as social media. Sometimes this task feels very solitary since there are limits to how many times one can take the same training course or call the same helpdesk number. Experimenting with innovations is encouraged, but meaningful support is another matter.

The professor's dilemma is that, historically, what the professor had to offer was paramount. The student's role was to absorb and critically evaluate what the professor offered. The dilemma is that gradual change has shifted the

paradigm from professor to technology. That is to say, the relationship had been based on teaching in real time where the professor was the primary source of information and knowledge. With technology used to enhance a classroom experience, today the source of information and knowledge, the very control of the classroom, has shifted from the professor to technology. Because of this shift in the educational paradigm, the significance and nature of the classroom experience has shifted. Where once the professor was the powerful and unique source of information, augmented by a textbook, today, the authoritative site of the classroom has ceded to retrievable data available anywhere. A Google and A.I. mentality has assumed prominence.

Some universities have devoted resources to deal with these issues. For instance, M.I.T. has set up a multimillion-dollar fund to pay for faculty to experiment with teaching innovations. But alas, few of us are working at institutions with those resources allocated for these challenges. Educational technology programs abound foregrounding practice and research into best practices in the application of media technology. One aspect explores media as the subject of study, and it is this dimension of the study of educational technologies that is of greatest interest to those of us in media studies. In this sense, social media is positioned AS the subject of the course of study, rather than a "tool" within the course of study.

The dilemma is also that students enter the classroom (however that may be defined) far more technologically advanced and social media proficient. Much research is being done regarding the implications of screen time (Rideout, Peebles, Mann & Robb, 2022; Livingstone, 2021; Sargent, 2017). Likewise, research supports the addictive nature of social media (Haynes, 2018; Leung & Chen, 2018; Kuss & Griffiths, 2017). In *The Chaos Machine*, *New York Times* reporter Max Fisher suggests the effect social media has been associated with the influence on neural circuitry which dopamine has on other self-destructive addictive behaviors such as drinking or gambling. A chemical produced by the brain, dopamine acts as a reward for certain behaviors and motivates repetition (Fisher, 2022). The addictive nature of social media is no accident, but strategically designed by social media platforms. In *Digital Madness*, Nicholas Kardaras, a psychologist, describes how platforms, including Facebook and Instagram, planned and maintained their platforms to continue to be addictive (Kardaras, 2022). "One study that Kardaras cites found that university students who used social media for more than three hours each school day suffered from poor sleep and poor academic performance. They also had much higher rates of depression, substance abuse, stress, and suicide. Why? One likely culprit is too much false social comparison: In online posts, photos, and videos, the grass always seems greener elsewhere" (Haynes, 2018).

These studies do not address the myriad ways in which students are propelled toward social media through their classes. This is particularly true of students studying communication. Increasingly, classes are about social media. Students studying subjects ranging from public relations and marketing, to advertising, psychology, and political science spend more and more time engaged with social media for specific class related work. How many classes now rely on social media for direct communication with students about assignments and course updates? How many courses, having nothing to do with social media use as an educational technology, are being studied to determine its physical and psychological impact? Yet, less work has been done exploring social media's impact on the educational experience of college students.

I offer a few personal observations. I teach media law and ethics. I have a separate course in social media law and ethics. In each, the developing cases are the subject of study. For example, each semester one of the first assignments is to Review the Terms of Service for their favorite social media platform and consider whether they do not understand or are surprised by some of the content. In this regard, the awareness that there are differences between types of electronic contracts is a useful starting point. We deal with the contractual obligations students may be unaware they are entering. For example, there are *Shrink-wrap contracts*, typically licensing agreements for software. Sometimes these are known as *clickwrap contracts* because the user typically has to click a button or check a box to indicate that they accept the contract. These *clickwrap contracts* are "less negotiable" than shrink-wrap contracts, i.e., they must be accepted for the user to proceed to the next web page or gain access to a site. Then there are *browse-wrap agreements* which are contracts that users agree to simply by continuing to use the service or continuing to browse the web page, which is where the term originates. Additionally, the terms of browse-wrap agreements can be viewed usually through a hyperlink. These contracts are but one facet of how social media intersects with law. The final project for this class has students open a new social media account and track their experiences over a specified number of weeks. From the choices made in crafting their media profiles to the ethical and legal questions associated with privacy, copying, freedom of expression, family communication, student's rights, and employee rights. Each example, each assignment requires the student become increasingly engaged with and critical of social media.

Social media law has become part of other classes including journalism ethics. So too are subjects such as defamation by Yelp, copyrights and YouTube, invasion of privacy, regulation of advertising in the age of data-driven ads and native advertising. Employee privacy rights, friending and professionalism and the illusion of privacy settings are discussed. The law of influencers, hate speech online, cyberbullying, and the rights of students when school districts monitor

student posts off campus are appropriate subjects for students to deal with in social media law as well. We explore such court cases as Mahanoy Area School District v. B.L., 141 S. Ct. 2038 (2021), in which the high court upheld students' free speech rights. The Supreme Court ruled that a Pennsylvania school district had violated the First Amendment by punishing a student for a vulgar social media message sent while she was not on school grounds. Keeping up to date on proposed legislation domestically and internationally alone could consume a semester.

Other media studies courses naturally lead to the need to examine emerging areas of social media law. For instance, a course in Celebrity and Media Culture deals with the changing nature of the celebrity/fan relationship; the changes in entertainment journalism with direct appeal to fans, changes to the path of becoming a celebrity, transformations in who we consider to be celebrities all require examination of social media. Social media fame is at the heart of the matter.

Nowhere is the professor's dilemma more apparent than in those courses in which student use of social media becomes part of the course itself. The sophistication of the student regarding social media often surpasses that of the professor. Many courses lend themselves to students using social media. I have students create a class specific social media account on a platform they do not regularly use. Assignments are then tailored to the unique attributes of each platform. For example, an assignment might be to practice storytelling on Instagram where graphics and photos can be presented. This can work especially well in visual-heavy classes such as photojournalism in which students are required to post essays. For a social media marketing class, the assignments include creating a faux-brand campaign. There have been success stories involving such assignments such as Chapman University professor @itsmattprince who went viral after challenging his class to earn 1 million likes on a TikTok video in exchange for canceling their final.

Ultimately, my courses range from those in which social media invades virtually every course I developed eons before the rise of social media, to those in which social media *is* the subject of study. The inevitability of addressing social media has dominated the ritual of course revision undertaken each and every semester.

Beyond curriculum-based initiatives, social media is certainly entering the professor/student relationship. Students can use chatbots for assistance outside of a professor's office hours. Using automated replies or chatbots can help students get their questions answered immediately foregoing the visit during office hours. One looming question for faculty remains whether to connect with students on social media outside of the classroom. Who do you friend? Who do you follow? What invitations does a faculty member safely accept? What of the relationship

development between student and faculty member when the faculty member rejects a student's social media request? I have had students express frustration and hurt when I reject a request from a student to follow me on social media from the first day of the semester. My policy has been to accept social media requests only after the student is no longer in one of my classes. This however could be perceived by a social media bred generation of students as being aloof, unavailable, distant, or uncaring. I have had to have open discussions with students explaining my choices and hope this does not impair my ability to build strong and lasting relationships with my students. This has been no small matter of consternation for someone proud to still be in touch with students from my earliest days in front of a classroom 40 years ago.

Where once the professor was the authority figure with knowledge beyond that of the student, that authority can easily be chipped away when the student is more adept at the technology than the once all-knowing professor. When the technology fails and the student joins the professor at the podium to smooth out the technological glitch, the power dynamic shifts. When the student is native to the social media environment the professor is just learning, the venire of expertise is stripped away. This equalizing of roles may be a good thing, but it does fundamentally shift the professor/student relationship.

When all the technology failed in my classroom and I was left with me, my knowledge, and 80 minutes to fill, I resorted to sitting on the desk and having a discussion without bells and whistles. The dizzying result was one of the best classes I've taught in a longer time than I care to admit. Me, the students and defamation as the topic—stripped down to the most elemental form of teaching in which I had to be clear without slides, video, podcast, or posts—just us and it worked. What does that say about educational technologies? Can that success be repeated or are we too far gone for that? Ultimately, is there no retreating from the influence of the social mediatized classroom?

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