**Lesson Plan for a Twitter Assignment**

**Developed by Sarah Elaine Eaton, Ph.D.**
**for use UNIV 205 "Becoming an Effective Learner"**

Note: This lesson plan may be adapted for various grade levels and subject areas.

| Grade level | University undergraduate | |
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| **In-class time required** | 10 minutes in one class period. | Explain the activity |
| | 10 minutes in one class period two days later. | Check in with students about their progress, answer questions, clarify instructions. |
| | 20 to 25 minutes in one class period once the assignment has been completed. | Follow-up with students to debrief their experience. |
| | Total time: 40 to 45 minutes | |
| **Out of class time required** | 10 minutes x 3 responses = a maximum of 30 minutes to complete the activity as homework. | |
| **Outcomes** | • Students learn to set up a Twitter account if they do not already have one.<br>• Students integrate social media technology into a university-level, face-to-face course.<br>• Students will understand how to use Twitter to engage in an online dialogue on a concrete and specific topic.<br>• Students demonstrate their ability to use social media for educational purposes.<br>• Students understand the value of engaging with peers using a social media platform for the purposes of learning and pre-professional networking.<br>• Students understand the importance of active and repeated engagement in an online environment (as opposed to passive observation). | |

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| **Learner objectives** | **Knowledge / Understanding**<br>• Develop online dialoging skills.<br>• Engage with classmates and instructor in an online forum in a meaningful and respectful manner.<br>• Develop an awareness of how social media is used for learning.<br>• Understand the benefits of active online dialogue with peers.<br>• Understand that "Lurking" or just listening is less effective than engaging actively.<br>• Learn how to build an online community of peers by following and interacting with others.<br><br>**Inquiry / Values**<br>• Understand the concept of sharing ideas in an online forum such as Twitter.<br>• Gain an appreciation of the Twitter community as a space for both directed and self-directed learning.<br><br>**Skills / Applications**<br>• Learn how to open a Twitter account.<br>• Learn how to use the "@" and "#" functions in Twitter to engage in conversations. Use assigned class hashtag for all Tweets.<br>• Practice "checking" in with an established online community to provide ongoing contributions to the conversation and responses to colleagues. |
| **Preparation (a.k.a. Anticipatory Set)** | Provide evidence of changing trends in learning: increased use of technology, and the incorporation of social media for learning. Present the idea that social media can go beyond social interactions and entertainment.<br>Warm-up exercise:<br>• Students discuss the value of connecting with friends to learn informally.<br>• They imagine extending their face-to-face social network to the online environment.<br>• Students are challenged to re-think the idea of their "network" to include people they can learn from and in their future, people who may be their professional colleagues.<br>• How do students see social media as useful in their future careers and to develop professionally? |

| Learning Task | • Engage in the online discussion on the topic "What is an effective learner?"<br>• Use the @ and # functions we discussed in class.<br>• Use the assigned class hashtag to follow and engage in the conversation. Also, the hashtag is used so the instructor can track student responses.<br>• Offer a minimum of 3 relevant, well thought-out responses on the topic over the course of a one-week period.<br>**Pedagogy notes:**<br>• Offer a specific and concrete topic for discussion.<br>• Make it clear to students that one-word responses or responses that do not add depth to the conversation (e.g. "LOL") do not count as a "well thought-out response". |
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| **Student reflection and follow-up discussion** | • Students reflect on their experience engaging in a directed Twitter conversation.<br>• Students provide feedback about what they found useful or engaging and what they found difficult or problematic.<br>• Students are asked to strategize about how they might use social media for their self-directed, informal learning outside of the classroom setting in the future (e.g. when they are in the workforce).<br>• Students discuss their experience engaging in an online discussion. Were they able to achieve the depth of discussion they expected? How did they find the experience of responding to classmates online? |

| Evaluation | **Knowledge / Understanding**<br>Did the student:<br>• attempt to craft well thought out response to the question "What is an effective learner?"?<br><br>**Inquiry / Values**<br>• Did the student make a sincere attempt to use the Twitter forum to engage in a learning experience?<br><br>**Technology skills**<br>Did the student:<br>• open or use a Twitter account to complete the activity?<br>• use the @ symbol to respond to a classmate?<br>• use the # symbol to follow and reply to the discussion?<br>• engage at least 3 times on Twitter, providing additional insights and make an attempt to "continue the conversation"?<br><br>Pedagogical note: The objective of this activity was based around using social media as a vehicle for learning. Students primary purpose was to engage in a dialogue about learning. Twitter was the forum in which the discussion was held. So by default, evaluation must take into consideration both the depth of the students' contribution to the discussion and their use of the technology. |
| **Teacher reflection** | This activity required more explanation than I initially expected. Many students did not have a Twitter account. I ended up spending time in class showing them how to open an account.<br>Making the connection between social media for personal or entertainment purposes and learning required significant time and reflection.<br>One student did not use the hashtag and wondered later why no one replied to her. Once she used the hashtag, she was able to engage.<br>Coaching students on what constituted "meaningful" online engagement (e.g. beyond "LOL") was critical to the success of the activity.<br>This activity required significant in-depth instructions and much more time than initially anticipated, but it was worth it, as students began to see the possibilities for how Twitter can be used for self-directed and online social learning. |