**Some Things to Consider Before You Use Social Media in the Classroom**

Think about your learning goals

Cool techniques are great, but we first need to ask if they further our learning goals. If your goal is to create a place where students can comment on readings and/or class discussions, ask yourself if Moodle sufficient, or does something like Facebook provide significant additional benefits. Popular forms of social media may be preferable because students are used to using them to form communities. They also can be used to access content, examine social phenomena, and engage in critical thinking. To repeat, don’t add social media just because it seems cool and you want to be using the latest technology. Figure out what you want your students to learn or experience first, and then add social media if it has the potential to achieve that goal.

Survey your students

Ask them what they use, how they use it, and which (if any) platforms they would be interested in using in the class. Facebook, Twitter, Ning and CourseSites.com all offer community sites that would allow communication among those enrolled.

Pick a platform

Most early adopters encourage us to choose the one platform that best fits what we are trying to do. Using multiple forms of social media means more work for us, may irritate students if they have to learn a form they don’t intend to use, and can distract from our purpose if we include approaches that don’t fit our needs.

Insure Clear Boundaries between Private and Public

Don’t obscure the purpose by mixing public and private spheres; keep your communication with students in the official space you have created.

If you use Facebook, experts suggest creating a teacher profile separate from your personal profile, and then asking students to create a limited profile with controlled settings.

Ask for Feedback

Periodically ask your students about the experience. Is it working for them? What suggestions to they have for improvement?