



The Implications of Required Twitter Engagement in #HigherEd

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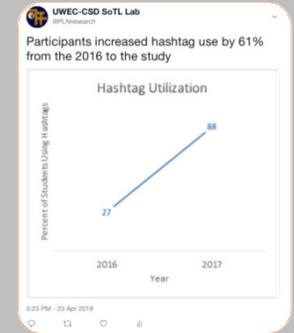
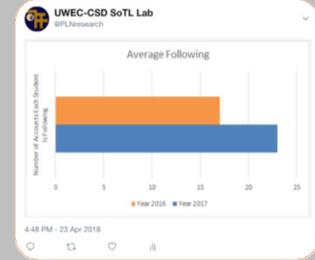
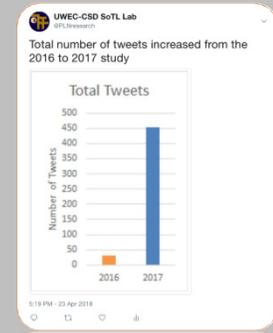
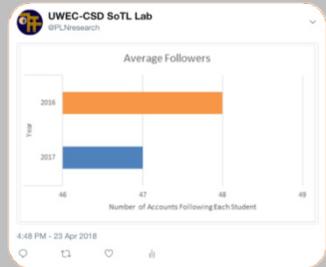
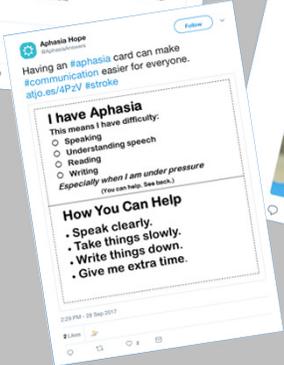
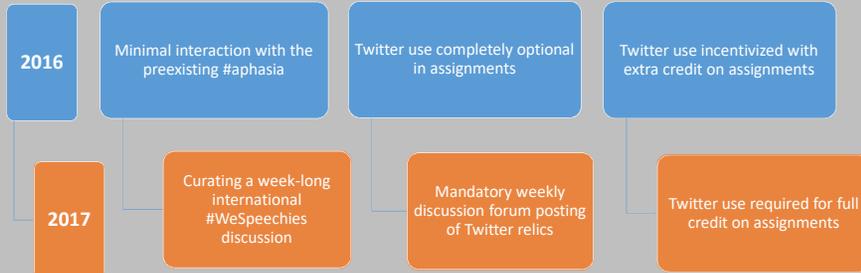
Background

Twitter emerged as a microblogging platform in 2006; despite more than a decade of free accessibility, there is a paucity of research regarding Twitter use in the field of Communication Sciences and Disorders and online coursework.

Twitter employs a hashtag system, denoted by an octothorpe (#), to categorize and link topics on their site. For instance, the “aphasia” hashtag connects users to relevant tweets composed by clinicians, researchers, and individuals with aphasia. Additionally, there are multiple world-renowned aphasiologists who maintain active Twitter profiles.

This investigation sought to analyze Twitter implementation in higher education; specifically, the attitudes and behaviors of 21 online CSD graduate students were examined, coded, and compared to pilot study data to determine best practices – if any – for Twitter as an adjunct to existing pedagogical tools.

Year-To-Year Comparison



Barriers

Requirements

• “The required “relics” I posted were not as thoughtful as I wish they were.”

Steep Learning Curve

• “Even though I have used Twitter for several years, it is one of the more confusing social media platforms.”

Faulty Twitter Design

• “I’m not the biggest fan of the layout of Twitter nor am I the biggest fan of the way it operates.”

Facilitators

Pedagogical Benefits

• “Using Twitter over the course of the semester was an unexpected way to gain knowledge about aphasia, the people affected by it and the growing research.”

Professional Networking

• “I was intrigued though to learn that there was a whole other side to Twitter, a professional and clinically applicable side, that I wasn’t aware of before.”

Awareness of Groups in the Field

• “I am glad I found them [specific Twitter account], as I will reference back to them in my career when looking for ways to earn ASHA CEU’s.”

Future Directions for the Fall 2018 Cohort

- Require Twitter utilization biweekly for entire semester
- Continue involvement with rotating curator discussions (e.g. @wespeechies)
- Provide additional structured platforms, similar to curated discussions



Implications

- Positive adjunct to online course
- Excessive requirements may lead to reduced student engagement
- Coded barriers will inform future usage