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3 Pitfalls of Teaching with Twitter

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The previous post identified three possibilities for using Twitter in class. It is only fair that I also explore three pitfalls for using Twitter to lecture less while teaching more

1. Twitter does not allow for nuance. The main concern I hear about Twitter—from both professors and students—is that the 140-character limit of a tweet does not allow for nuanced thought. That is, of course, absolutely true. However, Twitter *does* help develop concision and clarity of thought. By combining Twitter assignments with more traditional writing assignments, such as research papers, students develop both concision and the capacity for nuance.

2. **Twitter creates distractions in the classroom**. It is true that allowing students to access the internet during class can be a source of distraction. However, in my experience students can also get distracted *without* access to the internet if the pedagogical experience is not well designed. When I use Twitter in the classroom, I have students work out ground rules for in-class internet use, and I hold them to those rules. I think we serve students well by helping them develop a sense of professionalism with the internet rather than simply eliminating the internet altogether.

3. Twitter is too much extra work for the professor. Like any new pedagogical practice, teaching with Twitter can be a lot of work, particularly in the beginning. However, now that I

have developed my pedagogical practice and found the assignment structures that work for me, Twitter doesn't take any longer than more traditional teaching methods. I certainly don't think everyone should teach with Twitter—and I myself only use it in select courses—but if you are going to invest some time in expanding your pedagogical repertoire, Twitter might be worth considering. There are some great resources out there for getting started.

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