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# **Transforming the Classroom: Engaging Students by Using Social Media as a Pedagogical Tool for Teaching Advocacy**

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# OBJECTIVES

Review the background of social justice advocacy and the current trends regarding e-advocacy

Examine a framework to help students use their technological skills to empower marginalized populations

Explore the practical usage of technological innovations as tools for engagement in e-advocacy

# INTRODUCTION

Widened Civic  
Space

Student use of  
Social Media

Technology in  
Classroom

Student  
Engagement

# WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

Advocacy is defined as any action that speaks in favor of, recommends, argues for a cause, supports or defends, or pleads on behalf of others

Bowen, 2014

E- Advocacy entails the usage of Internet communication tools to advocate, plan, and rally support for community causes, campaigns, and coalition actions

Schneider et al., 2013

# TYPES OF ADVOCACY

Organizing: Build power at the base

Educate Legislators: Provide information on issues

Educating the Public about the Legislative Process: Introduce communities and constituencies to the legislators who represent them

Research: Produce relevant resources that reflect the real story of a community

Organizing a rally: Mobilize for a cause

Public education: Educate the community on an issue

# ADVOCACY & NETWORKING SITES



## **POLL QUESTION**

**What Social Media Tools Have You Used to Engage in Advocacy?**

# DIGITAL ADVOCACY

Can effect change within political, economic, social, and environmental systems

Increases the power of people to make institutions more responsive to human needs

Influences public policy and decisions regarding the allocation of resources

Increase speed of communication, and can be cost-effective

# EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING THEORY

Calls for students to draw from various experiences within and beyond the classroom

Allows students to apply knowledge learned in the classroom to real-life situations

Multi-dimensional model of adult development

Comprises six premises that are shared by scholars

# EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING THEORY

Learning is best conceived as a process, not in terms of outcomes

All learning is re-learning

Learning requires the resolution of conflicts between dialectically opposed modes of adaptation to the world

Learning is a holistic process of adaptation to the world

Learning results from synergetic transactions between the person and the environment

Learning is the process of creating knowledge

# CHALLENGES

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Understanding the importance of professional boundaries

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Using digital tools like social media in the classroom

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Navigating misinformation and disinformation campaigns

# OPPORTUNITIES - ADVOCACY ASSIGNMENTS

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- Connecting With Peers and Professionals Using Twitter
  - Infographics to Promote Advocacy on Instagram
  - Engaging in YouTube E-advocacy
  - Social Media and Technology Use Policy Assignment

## CASE EXAMPLE

A student is completing her placement at a nonprofit agency that works on behalf of Refugee populations. The agency recently heard that the Governor of the State has ordered the Legislature to cut funding to agencies working with immigrants populations. This will greatly impact how the agency is able to service their clients.

In response, the agency director has decided to bring attention to this proposal by the Governor and has asked the social workers and social work interns to identify ways the agency can empower the clients to bring attention to the measures as well.

In what ways can you assist these clients to develop an advocacy platform using social media?

# CONCLUSION

Social networking tools have widened the “civic space,” creating opportunities to reach more people with a greater impact on our most vexing social problems

These platforms have changed the way individuals advocate, organize, and mobilize support for community causes

Integrating social media in the classroom engages students as active learners

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