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Implications of Social Media Use in Personal and Professional Settings

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Chapter 7

Reflections on the Impact of Social Technologies on Lecturers in a Pathway Institution

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ABSTRACT

Education has evolved over time from face-to-face teaching to computer-supported learning, and now to even more sophisticated electronic tools. In particular, social technologies are being used to supplement the classroom experience and to ensure that students are becoming increasingly engaged in ways that appeal to them. No matter how educationally beneficial, however, new technology is affected by its users. To investigate this, lecturers at the Eynesbury Institute of Business and Technology (EIBT)—a Higher Education pathway provider—were surveyed to determine their perception and application of social technolog(ies) in their personal, but predominantly 'professional' lives. Utilising a qualitative and autoethnographic approach, one author provides an insight into their own attitude toward social technologies, coupled with responses to three open-ended questions. Thereafter, the same questions were posed to EIBT academic staff to understand their willingness or reluctance to use social technologies in their practice as part of their first-year pathway course(s).

INTRODUCTION

Educators have been using technologies for decades i.e., resources that range from 'textbooks to overhead projectors, from typewriters in English language classrooms to charts of the periodic table on the walls of laboratories' (Mishra & Koehler, 2006, p. 1023). Herein, 'technology/ technologies' will refer to artefacts and tools of the Web 2.0 era and beyond. The 'information age' is characterised by the diffusion of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) and

an increased demand for educational approaches that foster 'lifelong learning' (Fischer & Konomi, 2007). Slaoti, Motteram and Onat-Stelma (2013, p. 78) referred to this phenomenon as the 'technologification' of [adult] learning. As far back as Laurillard (1993), there was a desire to make greater use of the affordances of new technologies, which has since expanded exponentially as the physical terrain of study itself has become increasingly digital (Beard & Dale, 2010). Emerging social technologies offer new opportunities, otherwise referred to as 'participatory media' and/ or 'relationship technologies' (Greenhow, Robelia, & Hughes, 2009). In the present landscape of Higher Education (HE) and technological change, important transformations are underway in terms of how students study.

BACKGROUND

Eynesbury Institute of Business and Technology

The Eynesbury Institute of Business and Technology (EIBT) is one of a growing number of private providers linking up with partner universities to establish programs that aim to improve the academic performance and language skills of international students and simultaneously create opportunities to promote Australian HE in a global market. EIBT students are almost exclusively international and the main objective is to secure their tertiary destination prior to them meeting entry requirements. EIBT aims to matriculate international students to 'target' institutions (Martin, 2014, p. 5) by offering diplomas that comprise the exact same courses that constitute the first-year of a bachelor degree in Business, Information Technology or Engineering at the *University of Adelaide* or the *University of South Australia*.

Though EIBT is accessible to local students, recruitment is predominantly directed towards full fee-paying international students who:

1. Have completed Year 11 high school in Australia and would prefer to continue their studies in a different academic context;
2. Have completed Year 12 high school in Australia, but did not obtain an ATAR [Australian Tertiary Admission Rank] sufficient for direct entry into university;
3. Have graduated from high school abroad, but whose English language proficiency did not meet the minimum requirement for direct entry into university; or
4. Are above 20 years of age with a relevant employment history.

EIBT diploma programs benefit from the discipline-specific expertise and academic rigour the universities apply to their own curriculum (Velliaris & Willis, 2014). Cross-institutional lecturers—PhD candidates, experienced academics and/ or business professionals—deliver approximately 40 courses across three back-to-back trimesters. The pathway university moderates diploma delivery and grants advanced standing for courses if students achieve the minimum entry-level score upon graduation.

Impact of Social Technologies

In a seminal article, Putnam (1995) documented a broad decline in civic engagement and social participation in the United States (US) over a 35 year period, and also argued that social disengagement was affecting individual lives and the social fabric of the US at two levels. First, at the *individual* level, disengagement was contributing to a poorer quality of life and diminished physical and psychological health. That is, when people

have more social contact, they tend to be both physically and mentally happier and healthier. Second, at the *societal* level, disengagement was seen to be associated with a more corrupt and less efficient government, as well as increased crime. Putnam (1995) claimed that when citizens are involved in civic life, schools operate more efficiently, politicians are more responsive, and streets are safer.

In terms of HE, there has been a shift in the view(s) of the purpose of education. There is growing emphasis on the need to enable and support not only the acquisition of knowledge, but also to develop the skills and resources necessary for students to engage with technologies (Owen, Grant, Sayers, & Facer, 2006). Essentially, technologies of the past were:

1. Specific;
2. Stable; and
3. Transparent,

    whilst new technologies are:

1. Protean;
2. Unstable; and
3. Opaque (Koehler & Mishra, 2009, p. 60).

Relatedly, Hooper and Rieber (1995, p. 161) outlined the critical difference between 'educational technology' and mere 'technology in education' with the argument that 'guidance for designing effective technology-based classrooms should be grounded in the literature on effective pedagogy in general'. The aim of improving HE quality, invites such questions as—*To what extent can social technologies improve the overall standard of teaching and learning?*

Since the introduction of computing into society, both scholars and technologists have pondered its impact (e.g., Bell, 1973; Jacobson & Roucek, 1959; Leavitt & Whisler, 1958) and the degree to which technology itself has contributed to a shift

in the nature of education (McGrath, Karabas, & Willis, 2011; Motteram, 2013). Scholars who advocate for the positive and beneficial impact of using social technologies are many (Snow, 2012; Spires, Wiebe, Young, Hollebrands, & Lee, 2012; Trilling & Fadel, 2009). The timeline of this can be traced to Warschauer's (2003, 2007) vast portfolio of works, as well as studies conducted by Salmon (2005), and Motteram and Sharma (2009).

On the other hand, there exists a certain scepticism and apprehension by other HE educators concerning its use (e.g., Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). Some scholars warn against uncritical adoption of tools such as social networking sites, including Alvesson and Sandberg (2013, p. 20) who discussed the contextual factor of 'fashion and fads in society' and warned against embracing something because it is a 'hot' topic today, yet is in danger of going 'cold' tomorrow. In addition, Selwyn (2011, p. 108) suggested that technology involves 'the deskilling of lecturers and their students, engendering a tool mentality where technology is used to yield mechanical tasks and situations of social disconnect'.

Lea and Jones (2011, p. 391) pointed out that 'in a fast-moving technological world, applications being heralded by learning technologists in HE are constantly being overtaken by new ones'. A culture of 'instability' is inevitable around environments of rapid change and comes about as a consequence of the pace at which new technologies are improved and disseminated. Accordingly, the knowledge required to use digital technologies is never static. Koehler and Mishra (2009, p. 61) reviewed the differences in standardised and specified technologies of the past, such as microscopes and chalkboards, and those of the increasingly digital in the present time.

Predominantly, a reluctance to integrate technology applies to the newer generation of social networking sites, namely Chirp, Conversations, Flayvr, Medium, Pheed and Thumb. Educators may be unfamiliar with many of them and some-

what reluctant to cross social boundaries, thus merging parts of their personal and professional worlds (Schwartz, 2009).

At the heart of effective teaching with technology—together with the interactions/relationships between/among them—are three core components:

1.   Content;
2.   Pedagogy; and
3.   Technology.

These interactions occur differently across contexts and account for wide variations seen in the extent and quality of educational technology integration. Koehler and Mishra (2009, p. 60) introduced a framework for teacher knowledge and for technology integration called Technologi-cal Pedagogical Content Knowledge (originally TPCK, but now TPACK or Technology-Pedagogy-and-Content-Knowledge, refer to Figure 1). They stressed that it 'built on Lee Shulman's construct of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) to include technology knowledge'. Through the interaction of these bodies of knowledge—practically and theoretically—there is creation of the flexibility 'needed to successfully integrate technology use into teaching' and a description of how under-standing of educational technologies and PCK interact to produce 'effective teaching' (Koehler & Mishra, 2009, p. 62).

Teaching and learning occurs in a sociocultural system where various tools and forms of interaction create collective activity that may be supported by technological affordances, an argument supported by Chapelle (2010) and Motteram (2013).

Figure 1. TPACK framework and its knowledge components (Koehler & Mishra, 2009, p. 63).
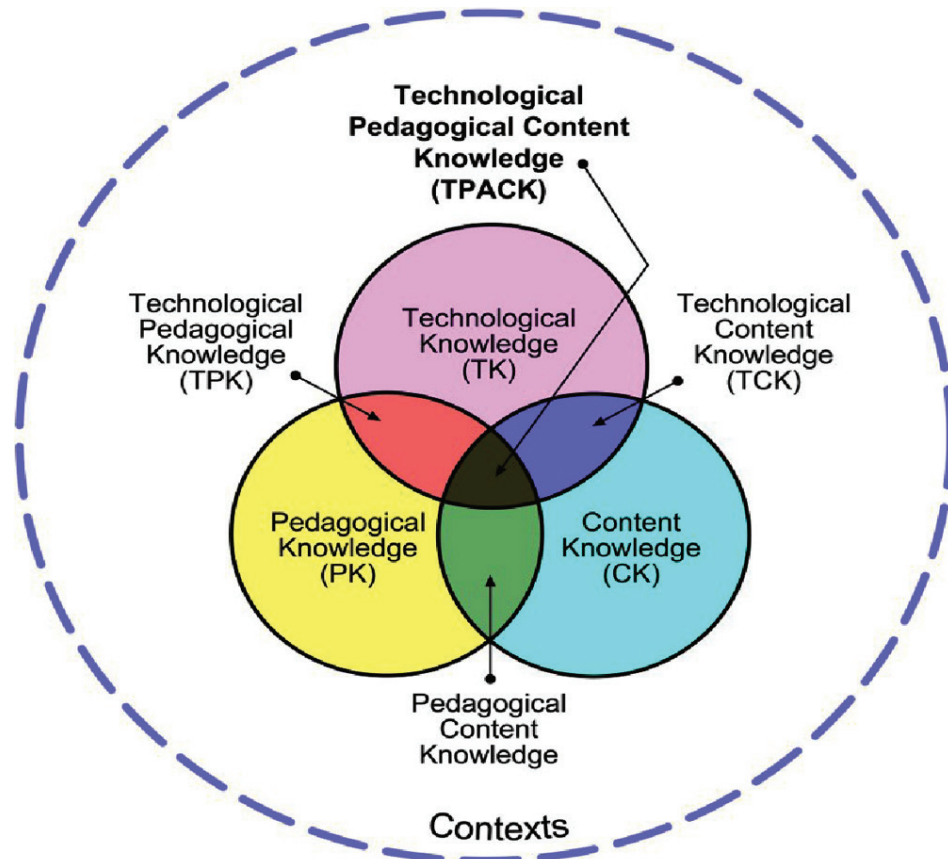
Besides being a resource manager, increasingly lecturers need to become a 'partner in learning' rather than a facilitator. That is, HE lecturers need to view students as contributors of knowledge and thus allow them to participate in the creation of content (Beldarrain, 2006, p. 149). It would seem advantageous, therefore, to better understand how students today use and make sense of social technologies. Such an understanding may provide essential information for educators who employ social networks to communicate with them and/or those who are contemplating integrating such tool(s) in the future (Blattner & Lomicka, 2012).

Although questions need to be considered at an institutional level, there are many questions that need to be addressed at a 'personal' level regarding academics' own practice and commitment to utilising social technologies in the delivery of their course(s). The central focus of this chapter was to explore if, how and/or why academics use social technologies, which may reveal the mediating relationship among content, pedagogy, and technology as well as issues related to their professional identit(ies) (Coldron & Smith, 1999, p. 711).

Though the many challenges facing HE in the digital age strongly suggest that the university will change or that it must change, there appears to be no suggested prototype for the 'university of the future'. In closing, 'the risks of doing nothing are higher than the risk of doing something. Universities typically take too long to adopt new technologies. Institutional inertia can be a significant barrier to adoption' (J. Armstrong & Franklin, 2008).

RESEARCH PROCESS

Autoethnographic Methodology

A qualitative and autoethnographic methodology has increasingly become a preference for teacher-researchers aiming to examine the multiplicity of social, cultural and educational factors that may have contributed to their professional identity (Ellis & Bochner, 2000b). Throughout this chapter, the term 'autoethnography' will refer to the research genre that associates the personal with the social, cultural and educational. Writing begins with a descriptive narrative of events and associated activities that unfolded, and then develops into a reflective analysis of those occurrences.

Ellis and Bochner (2000a) characterised autoethnography as 'autobiographies that self-consciously explore the interplay of the introspective, personally engaged self with cultural descriptions mediated through language, history, and ethnographic explanation'. They offered an insightful triadic model to illustrate the complexity of autoethnographic nomenclature. They explained how autoethnographers can vary in their emphasis across the dimensions of:

1. The self [*auto*];
2. The culture [*ethno*]; and
3. The research process [*graphy*] and may therefore, align anywhere along the continuum of these three axes.

Similarly, Chang (2008) emphasised how autoethnography should be:

1. Autobiographical in its content orientation;
2. Cultural in its interpretive orientation; and
3. Ethnographical in its methodological orientation. Accordingly, self-reflective writings devoid of one of these three ingredients may fail to be a true *auto-ethno-graphy*.

Rooney (2005) referred to an autoethnographic method as 'insider' research, whereby the concept of validity may be problematic due to the teacher's own involvement with the subject of study. This methodology allows teacher-researchers to access primary data from its genesis, as the prime source of data stems from themself. As a methodology that is primarily interested in excavating the formation

of identity, Austin and Hickety (2007) claimed that autoethnography holds significant potential for the development of critically reflexive and genuinely emancipatory professional practice for educators. Indeed, autoethnographers are privileged with an intimate and holistic perspective on their 'familiar' data; a familiarity that provides advantages to them in relation to collection, analysis and interpretation (Velliaris & Willis, 2014). For example, teachers 'situate their selves in their own teaching and in their students' learning; and students situate their learning in their selves and their teacher's teaching' (P. Armstrong, 2008).

As Polkinghorne (1988, p. 161) noted, autoethnography through narrative inquiry and 'life' go together, and in the sharing of a personal narrative, one shares their journey. The attraction of an autoethnographic approach is its capacity to render life experiences in relevant and meaningful ways (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 10); unravelling them and the causal links among events uncovered. Hence, this type of insider research can facilitate: authenticity; closer relationships; ease of access; informed knowledge; and richer data (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Rooney, 2005). In other words, it has considerable benefits in terms of generating a fuller description of the study and its setting (Creswell, 2008).

This methodology is often described as 'reader-friendly' because a narrative style of writing tends to be more engaging than conventional scholarly writing (Chang, 2008). According to Nash (2004, p. 28), 'scholarly personal narratives liberate researchers from abstract, impersonal writings and touch readers' lives'. Gergen and Gergen (2002, p. 14) contended that 'in using oneself as an [auto] ethnographic exemplar, the researcher is freed from the traditional conventions of writing'. Autoethnography thus enables one's unique voice—inclusive of colloquialisms, reverberations and emotional expressiveness—to be valued. This process may generate new insights and enhance sensitivity towards the knowledge gained (Velliaris & Willis, 2014).

Qualitative Survey Method

To better understand the complex and rapidly changing nature of social technologies in the first-year 'pathway' experience, the researchers were interested in EIBT academics' use of social technologies. For the purpose of this study, a brief questionnaire was disseminated via EIBT's online portal to academic lecturers with ten (n=10) individuals contributing. Data collection consisted of one source in the form of an 'open-ended' survey (Creswell, 2008; Kaufman, Guerra, & Platt, 2006; Neuman, 2004). The intention was to elicit personal responses to three research questions that would help to display multiple layers of autoethnographic consciousness and that were arranged in a somewhat chronological order in terms of past, present and future contexts.

- **Past:** What, if any, social technologies have you used/attempted to use in business, IT or engineering courses? And, what positive and/or negative experiences have you faced?
- **Present:** Do you use social media in your personal life? What, how and why?
- **Future:** How would you respond to the statement, 'ICTs will continue to affect teaching and learning profoundly, no matter what the response of traditional higher education institutions'?

Academic staff remained anonymous and were assigned a Respondent Number (RN1-RN10) for identification purposes. No narrative style or way of articulating the content of responses was established. This was motivated by a desire for the writing to be a trial process; a 'pilot' study or 'small scale version or trial run, undertaken in preparation for the major study' (Polit, Beck, & Hungler, 2001, p. 467). Further, the age and gender of respondents was unidentifiable since the emphasis was on qualitative features and issues of relevance to the research purpose (Patton, 1990, p. 169).

While it is acknowledged that there are countless social technologies that may support educational activities in HE, this study did not focus on any particular 'type'. This was an 'exploratory' study (Neuman, 2004, p. 15) that involved becoming familiar with a new setting and its particular features, gathering a range of data from a small community, and creating a preliminary picture of contributors' professional viewpoints to be able to generate ideas for future research-informed action. The three overarching objectives were:

1. To acknowledge the value of one's experiences and understand how educators are themselves a rich source of description and insight;
2. To employ the reading and writing of self-narratives as a window through which self and others can be examined and understood; and
3. To share and value the narratives for EIBT teaching and learning improvement.

In order to set the scene, the narratives commence with one author's own personal stories. For Ellis and Bochner (2000, p. 738), the primary aim of autoethnography is to 'come to understand [one]self in deeper ways and with understanding yourself comes understanding others'.

REPORTED NARRATIVES

Autoethnography

As teaching and learning intrinsically define who I am, I felt compelled to embark on this autoethnographic journey to investigate my teacher-learner self. My personal narrative has been drawn together as a compilation of anecdotal, scholarly, and autobiographical writing. Organised chronologically, I attempt to link my personal motivation to pursue this study as it was

the 'process of opening inward that allow[ed] me to reach outward toward understanding' (Berger, 2001, p. 515).

Crossing time, I (re)visit and (re)construct seminal events in my life using knowledge—gleaned in intervening years—to see how my past experiences may have informed, guided and influenced me today. What follows is my story; insight and interpretation of experiences that may have contributed to my professional identity as an academic in the Australian HE sector. In purposefully completing this narrative, I 'attempt to take you as the reader into the intimacies of my world. I hope to do this in such a way that you are stimulated to reflect upon your own life in relation to mine' (Sparkes, 1996, p. 467).

I matriculated from high school in 1988. I had little choice of subjects and definitely no computing or computer-related studies. I am not entirely sure what year that subject was introduced into South Australian high schools, indeed I did not have the luxury of 'rapid editing, instantaneous cut-and-paste... and unlimited perfectibility... infinitely re-editable and instantly distributable [assignments]' (Land & Bayne, 2008, p. 676). My handwriting regularly changed and hand cramps were inevitable after a long school day.

Following matriculation in the late 1980s, I applied to be an international exchange student. I spent one year abroad in Tokyo, and similarly, my Japanese host families and high school did not have Internet facilities. My mother and I always maintained a close relationship and writing letters became our primary source of communication as phone calls incurred astronomical charges. During those days, the walk to the mailbox was filled with anticipation. I would leave the house to amble to the post box, savouring the cherry blossoms blowing in the breeze and pondering: 'What stamp did my mother choose? What type of stationery? What travels did this letter take from my mother's hands to mine?'

I became increasingly gratified that she had taken the time to put pen to paper—to sit down perhaps as I often did with a cup of [green] tea—to write a letter especially for me. It took up to 10 days for mail to be sent and received between Australia and Japan and hence, I learnt firsthand that patience was a virtue. What was frustrating in the beginning, became a cathartic process; finding private spaces to foster contemplation and deliberation. My mother and I kept all our letters and today, they remain in a treasured folder.

During my exchange student days, I recall occasions spent at landmarks such as *Hachiko Square* in *Shibuya* or *Almond* on the corner of *Roppongi Crossing* and making forays to a payphone to check for messages with my host families. Indeed, mobile phones have revolutionised the experience of arranging meetings in urban space. After many travels to and from Japan, one significant difference in the use of mobile phones for social interactions in Adelaide (Australia) versus Tokyo (Japan) is apparent. In Adelaide, it seems almost impossible to arrange a meeting point and somehow become lost. The terrain is flat, the landmarks are big and bold, and with a population density of only three persons (or less) per square kilometre—'Who needs a mobile phone to coordinate a simple meeting? How has such an uncomplicated event become complicated?'

In enormous contrast, there are at least 12 million persons in Tokyo or approximately 350 persons per square kilometre, so it is not surprising that one rather 'desperately' requires a mobile phone. Tokyoites today, initially agree on a general time and place and exchange 10+ messages that progressively narrow in on and eventually enable persons to converge in a 'coordinated dance through the urban jungle' (Ito, 2003, p. 2). While I used a mobile phone in Tokyo for many years, I only recently succumbed to getting one in Australia.

I became a school teacher in my early 20s and email quickly evolved from a novel way of communicating to a full-blown business tool that without careful management could become a real-time sponge. Undoubtedly, email is a powerful communications tool, but one that also has the potential for deep impact on relationships and 'mood' in the workplace. For most emailers, sloppy, shady or chit-chat email habits carry few consequences, but for others, sending inappropriate content and mishandling/misuse can be disastrous. Communicating at such a fast pace via email or other social application gives individuals the potential to engage in 'incivility'; communicative behaviour exhibited in computer-mediated interactions that violate workplace norms of mutual respect (Lim & Teo, 2009, p. 419). In agreement with Lindley, Harper and Sellen (2009, p. 1701), oftentimes emailing 'discourages the possibility of ruminating before sending a reply and it limits self-reflection'.

Younger workers represent the generation to have grown-up with the Internet and various social technologies. They are comfortable sending emails pertaining to many and varied events, including: birth notices; invitations to weddings; marriage/divorce announcements; thank you notes; condolences; and job inquiries/applications. HE student recruitment, marketing, alumni relations, and even 'admissions' have begun to send out decisions via email (Fallows, 2002). As an educator, my attitude presents a contrast to that of younger generations for whom communication is frequently constant (i.e., peripheral, pervading, transient and short-lived). Unlike electronic communication, a handwritten letter engages the totality of my heart and senses. Subscribing to Davis (2009), 'in a small but significant fashion, the act of writing to another person gives us the opportunity to engage in the healing and repairing of our fractured world, as two individuals are able to reach out, connect, acknowledge, and celebrate one another'.

In 2000, I completed my Master's thesis on Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) for Japanese language teaching and learning in Australia. Japanese consists of three scripts:

Hiragana, Katakana and Kanji. The first two are called 'syllabaries' because each symbol is a syllabic unit, while *Kanji* [Chinese] characters are ideographic symbols. While Romaji [Romanised Japanese] is not entirely foreign to native speakers of Japanese, this script is used on limited occasions, such as writing their name on a passport. It is not an integral part of their native orthography and is not often mixed with the other scripts and importantly, Romaji does not always transcribe the spoken language in a grapheme-phoneme match. Japanese has traditionally suffered from a shortage of orthographically well-designed CALL programs (Okuyama, 2007, p. 357). Hence, while my French and Italian teaching colleagues were able to implement online 'social' letter writing/chat activities with foreign students abroad, while I failed to see the advantage of promoting unauthentic Japanese.

While I acknowledge that social technologies play an important role in present and future teaching and learning processes, efforts should be made to monitor the effects/affects on the writing skills of HE students (Omar & Miah, 2013). Chronologically, Tapscott (1999) put forward the notion of the 'net generation', while social commentators coined the term 'millennials' as a generational label (Howe & Strauss, 2000). In 2001, Prensky suggested that HE (undergraduate) students could be characterised as 'digital natives' (i.e., young, fast, technologically avid, into graphics, texting and gaming, experiment with trial and error) due to their exposure to digital technologies while growing up. Subsequently, a proliferation of less widely used epithets have surfaced, each attempting to capture the essence of the same phenomenon (e.g., Generation C, Google Generation, and the Nintendo Generation). Conversely, their mature lecturers can be characterised as 'digital immigrants' (i.e., older, less familiar and somewhat uncomfortable with technology, preferring to carefully read hardcopies offline).

As a HE lecturer, I can identify with being a digital immigrant as well as a 'reluctant adopter'; realise technology is a part of today's world and try to engage with it, but it feels alien and unintuitive… While they possess a basic cell phone, they do not text if they can help it… check their emails intermittently and perhaps have surrendered to online banking' (Zur & Zur, 2011). Moreover, I am a 'minimalist'. That is, I try to engage with technology minimally and only when necessary… Google for information if they have to and purchase online only if they cannot do so in a local store. While they may have a Facebook account, they may check it once a day or every couple of days. They will ask for directions to a friend's house instead of checking Google maps. If absolutely necessary, they will use Skype, but they are not eager to do so' (Zur & Zur, 2011).

As a minimalist-reluctant-adopter-&-digital-immigrant, 'netspeak' language register (or blargo, cyberslang, cyberterms, digichat, digitalk, e-lingo, geekspeak, leetspeak, net lingo, textspeak, and my personal favourite 'textese') is not my preference. Transformations (mostly mutations) of the English language in the hands of technology has been rapid and affected large number of users (Kinsella, 2010). Features such as: an absence of apostrophes e.g., don't = dont, can't = cant; random capitalisation to express deeper emotion e.g., I AM ANGRY or GRRRR; exaggerated punctuation e.g., what = whaaaat?!, please = pleassse; countless shorthand/acronyms/initialisms for brevity e.g., Absent From Keyboard = AFK, Be Right Back = BRB, Got To Go Parent Over Shoulder = GTGPOS, Laughing Out Loud = LOL, Oh My God = OMG; special symbols to intensify feelings e.g., I **love** you; and linguistic shortcuts enabled by emoticons e.g.,:-D:o may be acceptable among friends, however, I must decode emails from students who commonly use this style.

One random website (not worth citing), claimed that lecturers who recognise that netspeak is 'different' and not deficient, can find ways to harness this language enroute to improving students' academic writing. My response to that proposition is 'witwct'.

Question 1: What, if any, social technologies have you used/attempted to use in business, IT or engineering courses? And, what positive and/or negative experiences have you faced?

I feel uneasy answering this question and affirm that I have never used social technolog(ies) in the classroom. I concede that social networking sites are undeniably engaging for HE students, who fall within the 18-24 demographic, but I remain hesitant. The underlying debate relates to whether or not the 'popularity' of social networking systems can be the impetus for effective integration into my teaching. I am not referring to the simple tasks of uploading a course syllabi, showing YouTube clips in class (Is YouTube a social technology?) or other simple and minimally expected teacher tasks. I am referring to actual formative and summative assessment tasks that incorporate more advanced applications.

Using social media may move discussions and interactions that are private (i.e., happening in a secure classroom), into a public space. Stories abound about students posting images and comments on Facebook that have later come back to curse them when submitting a job application or employees being dismissed because of comments made in what they thought was a private space… Class-created content and online commentary can be stored and archived by anyone with access, which creates the potential for them to resurface at a later stage. 'Will this public learning space inhibit risk-taking and instead foster a reluctance to share ideas with a broader audience for fear that these things will come back to haunt ME later?'

In a study conducted by Ajjan and Hartshorne (2008, p. 73) based on HE faculty decisions to implement Web 2.0 social technologies, they defined 'attitude' as the degree to which individuals favour a certain behaviour. They explicated three attitudinal types, namely, perceived:

1. Usefulness;
2. Ease of use; and
3. Compatibility.

First, 'usefulness' was identified as the degree to which an individual believed that technology would improve their job performance; the higher the perceived usefulness the more likely an individual would adopt that new technology. Second, 'ease of use' represented the degree to which an innovation was easy to understand and operate; technologies perceived to be less complex have higher possibility of acceptance and use by potential users. And third, 'compatibility' was described as the degree to which technology fit with the existing values and experiences. With this in mind, my main hurdle appears to be Attitudinal Type (1).

New technologies must be introduced in a curricular properly and not randomly (e.g., evidence to suggest that they will enhance rather than detract from the teaching and learning). First, however, I have a duty to uncover the mass of social technologies to make a selection suitable for my educational purposes because, the more things I could teach, the greater the need to make my students responsible and effective/efficient partners in the learning process. By understanding which social technologies are more apt for supporting specific activities in teaching and learning, I will be in a better position to make an informed decision i.e., to deploy or otherwise and invest in such resources.

Question 2: Do you use social media in your personal life? What, how and why?

As I perused the Internet, I found a list of the top ten social networking sites in the world, namely:

1. Facebook;
2. Twitter;
3. Ozone;
4. Google+;
5. Sina Weibo;
6. Habbo;
7. Renren;
8. Linkedin;
9. Vkontakte; and
10. Bebo (Bhabwat, Omre, & Chand, 2013).

From this list, I have used one and heard of only three of these sites. Others not on this particular listing include: Ask.fm; Care2; Classmates; Cyworld, del.icio.us; digg; flickr; Friendster; Hi5; Instagram; Last.fm; LiveJournal; MeetMe; Meetup; MyLife; MySpace; Ning; Orkut; Pinterest; Stumpleupon; Tagged; Travellerspoint; Tumblr; VK; and Xanga, from which I am familiar with a mere two.

In 2007, I decided to join Facebook as I was a frequent traveller and it appeared to be the most convenient method of documenting my adventures with few words and lots of photos. I regularly composed lengthy emails CC'ed to family and friends, but I found Facebook an enjoyable medium for visually sharing my global ventures. Today, I still have my account, but my list of 'friends' is entirely comprised of family and 'strong' friendships. I have chosen to maintain the highest level of privacy, as I do not want colleagues and students to see too much of my personal life. My concerns over becoming too dependent on this media relates to: cyber bullying; identity theft; misuse of information for less than savoury purposes; privacy issues; stalking; taking things out of context; virtual integrity; and issues relating to intellectual property and copyright. While I acknowledge that this may be interpreted as having something to 'hide', on the contrary, I use Facebook for my closest relations.

In 2011, in a small lecture theatre, one student announced that they could not find me on Facebook. I casually laughed and responded that I thought it was inappropriate to have students linked to my account, when I wanted to answer, 'You cannot find me for a reason'. Many students interpreted my response as meaning 'no current students', because at the conclusion of the course, they asked me again. As previously stated, Facebook users are predominantly 18-24 years, a life stage sometimes called 'emerging adulthood' (Bumgarner, 2007), which is a transitory period between adolescence and adulthood when they are probably experiencing freedom by living on their own for the first time and not yet having a family and/or a stable career. If Facebook had been introduced in my 20s, I may have had hundreds of friends, potentially including my former students.

As a final point, I tend to use Facebook when I am entirely alone; a time when I can coordinate a meeting with a friend, post photos of the kids or a 'selfie' for laughs.

Question 3: How would you respond to the statement, 'IT will continue to change teaching and learning profoundly, no matter what the response of traditional higher education institutions'?

I mused over Levine's (2000, p. 2) distinction between 'brick universities' (i.e., traditional HE institutions) and 'click universities' (i.e., virtual HE institutions) or the 'brick and click universities' that offer a combination of the two. With reference to the 'click' type scenario, once faculty and courses go online, administrators gain greater direct control over faculty performance and course content, and thus the potential for administrative scrutiny, supervision, regimentation, discipline and even censorship may increase dramatically. At the same time, the use of technology entails

an inevitable extension of working time and an intensification of work as faculty struggle at all hours of the day *and* night to stay on top of that technology and respond (via chatrooms, virtual office hours, and email) to 'everyone' with whom they have now become instantly and continuously accessible.

While many students appreciate the ease and freedom of online services, they may also appreciate a face-to-face physical space where they can interact with others and obtain expert advice. An interesting metaphor for future [HE] educators is that of the teacher as 'concierge' (Bonk, 2010, p. 64); the notion of a teacher shifting from a deliverer of content to that of an educational concierge who finds and/or suggests resources as learners need them. Additionally and in agreement with Levine (2000, p. 4), I imagine that to a certain extent—in the future—an individual's education will occur in a cornucopia of settings and geographic locales via a plethora of educational providers.

It is clear that societal needs will continue to dictate great changes in the knowledge it expects from universities. As traditional degrees lose importance, there may be the need to establish a central database to record an individual's educational achievements (i.e., however and wherever they were gained) and to store supporting documentation. Such an educational 'passport' will file a student's lifetime educational history. It is difficult to imagine the roles society will ask the university to play in the century ahead; one can only be certain they will be different from the roles HE educators and students play today.

Participant Responses

Herein, data stemming from survey responses are shared. Excerpts provide an insight into respondents' lives, but should be conceived as a subjective process realised in a specific historical context. Readers should, therefore, make their own judgments about the extent to which commonalities/dissimilarities could potentially inform their own practices.

In response to the first research question: 'What, if any, social technologies have you used/attempted to use in business, IT or engineering courses? And, what positive and/or negative experiences have you faced?' an almost equal number of respondents have/have not attempted to use social technologies in their courses. First, those who have attempted to use some form of social technology have implemented 'limited' techniques as noted below:

- "I have used Facebook and Twitter (not as much)."
- "I have not used any social media applications within any of my classes, only discussion boards, chat and web/video conferencing within the Learning Management Systems (LMS) of the organisations that I have worked for."
- "Fairly limited in some institutions; mainly interactive discussion boards and live chats. However, some Facebook interactions in one or two university courses."
- "Only discussion forums. These appear to be more relevant to students' desire to use when external (fully online) students are involved. Students who physically attend classes appear to still want to undertake face-to-face discussion especially when their language skills are poor and work involves complex calculations."

On the other hand, respondents who have yet to incorporate social technolog(ies) have either chosen not to or were opposed to this type of resource.

- "None. These students are people I teach, not my personal friends. I should not need to consistently entertain them."
- "None. It is a waste of time. A soon-to-be published paper in a recognised academic journal will attest to this."
- "None. I have not personally used any social technologies to support my teaching. The primary reason for this is the perceived additional workload associated with incorporating them into my teaching and learning environment. At present, I do not have the time."
- "No, workload creep is something many professionals in HE deal with. Many academics play multiple roles and struggle to stay afloat. Adding social media into the mix can become time intensive. There needs to be a strategic reason and plan in place to use social media, otherwise why bother?"

As an extension to the first survey question, respondents were asked to elucidate both 'positive' and 'negative' experience(s) of utilising a social technolog(ies) in their teaching courses. Again, there was a clear divide among those who were 'open' to exploring this type of media and those who strongly opposed continued use or exploration of social media stemming from negative personal experiences. First, in terms of the 'positive', several respondents commented that:

- "Within the Learning Management Systems (LMS), the chat, discussion boards and web conferencing have been beneficial from a review of material perspective and in fact created some offline student interaction where they formed study groups of their own following these sessions."
- "Facebook in an Open Universities Australia (OUA) site and in a university course. This connects students (well some students who like it); often generational

and not all students. It met the needs of those who like this type of interaction and community building. A part enables social connection for them and gives me as coordinator the chance to read their discussions in terms of what is needed and what they understand, however, it is not a substitute for academic discussion boards."
- "I set up a class Facebook account once so that students could communicate with each other in class and externally, as not all wanted to be friends with each other but still found the ability to chat useful. A moderated forum discussion would be just as useful but at the time Moodle did not allow for an effective one and to some of the students Facebook was a novelty and they were keen to find out what it was all about."
- "I wouldn't say there were any negative experiences. The main issues are: (1) being confident in the application yourself; (2) being clear on the purpose for including the use of the application from a teaching and learning perspective; and (3) finding out if students are willing to use their social media accounts for educational purposes or whether they want separate educational accounts. I think this is one benefit of having these tools within the Learning Management System (LMS) as a single sign-on function."

In stark contrast, the following comments highlight several respondents' rather staunch opposition to social technologies in the HE classroom having experienced a 'negative' event in their career.

- "Too many problems to discuss individually!"
- "None. All negative i.e., 60 students found guilty of sharing information on Facebook for an assessment."

- "Inappropriate comments which require me to set the standards re: behaviours. Also, students setting up Facebook sites from which I am excluded (I do not mind that...) however, on these sites there may be sharing of work which crosses the line of 'own work' even if in the end it does not show up as plagiarism."

Three respondents offered more pedagogically-based reasons for avoiding social media.

- "I think the biggest is ability to communicate appropriately. Many who use the forums make the mistake of assuming the reader understands shorthand. I do not. Is that an indication of my abilities or a lack of desire to communicate in what I believe is a 'lazy' way? My thinking in this regard has been formed by my commercial working experience where clarity in communication can spell the difference between a good and bad decision."
- "Often students end up going on Facebook etc. and lose track as to why they are in front of the computer during class. I found a few students addicted to the various popular games on Facebook and trying to play in class (e.g., Farmville and Candy Crush). It has slowed down somewhat over the past couple of years. Facebook is no longer the social media of choice for many of them. They use Snapchat and other 'closed' apps. In addition, while EIBT can limit the availability of websites that can be viewed on their network, students may find links that have somehow passed through the system. There may be times when students are not accessing the Internet through a monitored network."
- "A perfect example of the loss of control relates to blogs and their 'comments' feature. In HE, having a blog to begin with can be controversial and opening up the comments feature to allow two-way dialog can be frightening. While this feature can easily be turned off that begs the question—Why even use the blog format to begin with?"

In response to the second question: 'Do you use social media in your personal life? What, how and why?' the spread of responses was across a broad range of the spectrum. At one end were a couple of respondents who commented that they did use some form of social technology in their personal life, but did not identify what type, although the how and/or why was stated.

- "Yes. To keep in touch with my friends across the world."
- "Yes, it is easy to use and connect to friends and overseas family. It allows for a greater interconnectedness and effectively reduces the tyranny of distance. It also allows for direct contact with companies. Often you do not feel like a voice in the desert if there are others who can read your comments."

One respondent indicated that they personally used social media for academic purposes; creating a type of synergy among scholars across the globe.

- "I belong to special interest groups in the areas of research I am interested in, which keeps me connected with around-the-world research, conferences, and people. I am able to connect with other researchers throughout South-East Asia, Europe, Africa and parts of India. It is a great builder of both social and human capital."

Few lecturers claimed to use some form social media in their personal life, but at a minimal level and as a matter of necessity rather than preference. Some examples of those responses included:

- "Rarely. Only to contact friends, but I prefer email."
- "Not interested, though I have been 'persuaded' to have a LinkedIn account which I seldom use. After accessing multiple course databases and discussion forums the 'thrill' of doing it in my own environment is limited."
- "Yes, in the first instance just to see what all the hype was about and then slowly finding some social usages such as networking; being able to be found by people I went to high school or university with or previous work colleagues. It is also useful for sharing photos easily and keeping in touch with family overseas. I am not a significant user, but the applications I use are Facebook (I may log in once a month and read, but rarely post anything), Skype (approximately once every 4-6 week) and while I have a Twitter account and follow various people/organisations, I have never tweeted."
- "The advent of social media has created so many forms of media that those who follow blogs, Twitter friends, Facebook friends, MySpace friends, etc., can easily find themselves overloaded now when trying to keep up with 'traditional media' such as email, print publications, and instant messaging."

At the opposite end of the spectrum was one respondent who declared:

- "No, it is a waste of time!!"

In response to the third question: 'How would you respond to the statement, 'IT will continue to change teaching and learning profoundly, no matter what the response of traditional higher education institutions'?' an array of responses were recorded. Four respondents believed—to differing degrees—that change(s) were inevitable.

- "Agreed. While IT is unlikely to overtake on-campus studies to become the sole form of teaching and learning, it is an integral part of the blended-learning environment, and therefore an essential part of the student experience. Student learning has always been directly influenced by the level of engagement and feedback, consequently social technologies can be used to assist students, especially those at risk, in addition to the face-to-face component of their studies."
- "I think IT will continue to change teaching and learning but I think traditional HE institutions may find themselves in difficulty if they ignore the changes and do not attempt to 'get on board' so to speak. Of course, a huge part of this is the culture of teaching and learning which strangely enough is not embedded in HE institutions. Generally, the teaching lecturers do not do research and vice versa, which essentially leads to teaching lecturers being stuck in their (at times) antiquated, anti-technology ways because they do not experience anything else."
- "I totally agree that the ship is sailing towards us and we can either get on and sail forward or get left behind. In the process, if we do not embrace it our education, learning communities and student engagement will not reach the new benchmarks that students expect, whether written down or not. In the longer term, I am sure research will show that institutions that have included social media and other e-learning educational tools into their teaching and learning strategies will have performed better, and also to have feedback that the experience for students is more engaging, exciting, connecting and caring. My experience in Open Universities Australia (OUA) shows that new technologies offer great ways to reach and connect with students and for

them to attain synergy by connecting with each other. Virtual communities and virtual learning is both the current and new wave of education, and needs to be embraced not just to ensure keeping abreast of competitors but is like old machine technology where the decision to use a pedal sewing machine or move to an electronic sewing machine with many options is the choice. The answer? Well there is only one choice = move forward."

- "Of course IT will change! In and of itself, IT is a service tool and will respond to changes in the general community. In due course, those changes will filter into education. The issue we usually miss when we use the letters 'IT' is that we often view it as 'electronic'. We need to view IT as 'information technology', otherwise Why are we not still using wax tablets with stone stylus to write?"

Two respondents sat somewhat on the fence.

- "Hmmmm… Good question. Students are the main clients of the university and directly or indirectly the main source of income. Their characteristics and needs steer the university in its programs and approaches. As higher numbers of non-traditional students, such as working people, require new services from the university, their influence will be a substantial component in the change process. Parallel to them, the faculty in the institution are another critical variable affecting change. Instructors bring with them their own histories with respect to change and technology in teaching and learning, which in turn influences their willingness or capacity to adopt new forms of educational delivery. Thus, student and instructor characteris-

tics are both critical baseline conditions for the choice of a dominant scenario for the institution."

- "I do not think it will change teaching and learning profoundly, as good teaching practice should be the focus and IT developments will provide a greater range of tools to achieve effective teaching and learning outcomes. As for the response from traditional HE institutions, while it may range from a rapid and innovative response through to a very slow and evolutionary change, the reality is that as student demands and expectations change so too will the institutions' uses of these tools."

The final four respondents were those who believed that teaching and learning in HE will not be affected by social technologies.

- "Not really. Overall it seems that HE institutions do not expect revolutionary change as a result from or related to the use of IT. In general, there is not really a concern about being 'forced' to change by external influences or developments. Rather, a 'business as usual' approach is taken."
- "Disagree. It will not change it profoundly. The media simply gives people an excuse to research it and to become experts in an area."
- "No. Smart phones are now commonplace, tablets are replacing or substituting computers and laptops, and social media has become second nature. The rapid and widespread adoption of these technological innovations has completely changed the way people conduct their daily lives, including how knowledge is digested and taught in our classrooms. But is it a positive change? IT will continue to change elements of teaching, but ultimately, it cannot change

the core business which remains human interaction; technology is not a magic wand, merely a tool."

- "Probably not. I recall the so-called 'e-education bubble' between 1997-2000 that 'online learning' would quickly and fundamentally rupture the conventional campus-based model of HE. However, online learning has had relative impact on-campus and on distance education. A fundamental move away from on-campus provision has not materialised. Despite the tremendous public attention given to technology, it seems that the majority of academics across the country have not 'dramatically' transformed their teaching methods or redesigned their programs/courses. To do so is time-consuming. Importantly, such activities have not yet been rewarded in promotion and tenure review the way scholarly publications have been. The disincentives of the current academic reward structure may account for the notable absence of burgeoning educational technology in HE."

FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Supportive Findings

Narrative data from this exploratory study suggests that while there are a number of advantages in using social technologies in HE, there are also pitfalls that warrant consideration. First, positive attributes and considerations for using social technologies came across in a number of the following ways.

Social technologies appear to have become a natural extension of the way that many people are already using the web rather than a completely new departure and therefore, they could be seen to bring the outside world into the classroom. Social technologies can create opportunities for collaborative work. 'Authentic' engagement

with wider communities of learning, especially for professional development, can draw on the expertise of external persons. Lecturers can invite peers—physically and/or virtually—from other universities and from outside academia to contribute to the educative process.

The narratives further suggest that for social technologies to work effectively, there may be a requirement for a new paradigm of learning; though not one so radical as that espoused by Prensky (2001). Rather, it should be based on networking, connecting, and community which are philosophies driving the use of social software, underpinned by the theories of constructivism and connectives, and that these require a rethinking of pedagogies and practices. This is supported by Spires et al., (2012, p. 5) who stated that 'in a social constructivist learning environment, effective learning happens through interactive processes of discussion, negotiation, and sharing'. The meaningful integration of social technologies can empower students as partners in the learning process. This can engender a mindset where students are increasingly viewed as contributors of knowledge and allowed to participate in its creation, as in Beldarrain (2006, p. 149) who viewed lecturers and students as 'partners' in the learning process. The narratives suggest that it is not enough to simply have knowledge of social technologies. Importantly, there is the need to be knowledgeable about how to integrate appropriate technologies with traditional pedagogic strategies and thereby, make the resulting content meaningful to the lives of students. For this to occur, a theoretical framework such as TPACK can play a major role.

Though from the narratives themselves there are no specific instances of TPACK, the findings have provided a sense of where lecturers are in terms of their developmental continuum and how TPACK could be integrated into their teaching philosophy and resultant practice. Further to this, there has been the creation of new possibilities for encouraging learners to contribute, rather than pas-

sively consume content. The affordances of new technologies are being assimilated and integrated into existing virtual learning environments and are widely available elsewhere because there is already significant take-up of at least some technologies. This claim is supported in both the narratives and in the literature by Spires et al., (2012) who argued that 'educational systems have to stay abreast of the changes in online research, communication, and social media in order for students to be prepared for 21st Century work and citizenship'.

Despite email sometimes being a 'real time sponge' it can also serve as a useful tool for communication, record-keeping, and instant addressing of problems. From actions that teachers have claimed to be a part of their practice, social technologies can have major benefits in terms of course management, particularly in terms of storage, dissemination and submission. Such evolution and integration of new spaces can support life-long learning by providing places where teachers and learners can access their resources even after leaving university. Historically, once teachers and students depart a university they may effectively lose access to their peers, HE resources and many of the works that they created during that time.

Critical Findings

Despite the positive features and opportunities associated with social technologies, it is equally important to capture the voices and arguments of those who are critical of the adoption of new technological tools. On their own, they do not provide any real evidence of a shift in traditional forms of education, and indeed may make some lecturers feel inhibited by their presence in the classroom.

Among some academics, there appears to be an expectation that they should be using these technologies in their teaching, even if they do not feel entirely comfortable/confident with them. This goes against the values of a conceptual framework such as TPACK where the emphasis is on the natural integration of technologies, rather than forced delivery. Pressure may invoke anxiety amongst lecturers to not disadvantage students by expecting them to engage in innovative practices that may not benefit their learning. This is supported by Koehler and Mishra (2009) who described how social and contextual factors can complicate relations between teaching and technology. Social and institutional contexts are often unsupportive of lecturers' efforts to integrate the use of technology into their work. Lecturers often have inadequate/inappropriate experience with using digital technologies for instructional purposes. Further to this, acquiring a new knowledge-base and skill-set can be challenging, particularly if it is a time-intensive activity that must fit into an already demanding schedule (Koehler & Mishra, 2009).

Continuing the theme of teaching norms, there is a fear that traditional frameworks for the development of academic knowledge do not sit comfortably with the speed of information sharing and production that exists via the Internet. The rapid expansion of information accessible through the web coupled with tools that can be used to repurpose and create new knowledge online, are forming an entirely 'different' and potentially undesirable HE environment. Hence, there is apprehension that the traditional knowledge-base of teaching itself is changing as a result of the perceived need for the integration of technology or technological 'fads' that have little lasting impact and/or are unproven in terms of their effectiveness.

Further, there is a sense of technology not only changing the physical shape and appearance of the classroom, but also the nature of people's identities in the world outside the classroom. The sociocultural shift in the way people share and access information has introduced new challenges for educators regarding the intersecting of personal and professional boundaries. In addition, social technologies may challenge current notions

of authority, as lecturers find that their expertise is questioned. Students may explore alternative sources of information and (re)construct knowledge in other ways.

CONCLUSION

Part of the impetus for this research was the recognition that although there are demonstrable benefits of integrating social tools in HE, and specifically within EIBT, there are some challenges that prevent their enthusiastic integration. For social technologies to expand and flourish in HE, it was necessary to investigate academics' conceptions and gain deeper insight into why they may or may not incorporate social technologies into their course(s).

The use of an autoethnographic approach could be criticised for capturing only instances of espoused actions and not actual practice. It was, however, suited to this study, which was deemed to be exploratory from the outset. Indeed, all methodologies have strengths and weaknesses; autoethnography is an intriguing and promising qualitative method that offers a way of giving voice to personal experience for the purpose of extending sociological understanding. A professional life story expresses a particular sense of self and a perspective on membership of a group, which in this case was EIBT. These reflections perhaps do not show the process followed in producing these texts, but reveal decisions and tensions of the 'self' in understanding how one may apply social technologies to shape their own personal and professional selves.

As presented, there is a wide range of perspectives about technology and its impact on HE, from one extreme in which it is viewed as an exogenous variable driving all progress, to another where the risks and menaces for academics abound. The findings here may be used as a guide for other academics and/or educational designers to improve pedagogical practices in HE settings. This also raises interesting questions related to how social media might be incorporated into theoretical frameworks such as TPACK. Perhaps to achieve this, lecturers need to feel more confident about their existing pedagogical and content knowledge, and its relationship with technological knowledge, which should be seen as interlocking rather than separate. Nevertheless, sizeable challenges remain for researchers, lecturers and learners in a HE environment progressively more informed by the digital.

This chapter sought to enrich the current literature on the use of social technologies for HE teaching and learning that is still emerging. It is hoped that this work will contribute to practice by providing empirical and authentic evidence of the challenges faced by EIBT lecturers. HE educators should be attuned to the ever-changing and often diverse characteristics of students and let this be an important and/or guiding factor in informing how technological tools can help augment and enrich the educational environment.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Autoethnography: Autobiographies that self-consciously explore the interplay of the introspective and personally engage 'self' with cultural descriptions mediated through language and history. This methodology can vary depending on the relative importance placed on its three components: the self [*auto*]; the culture [*ethno*]; and the research process [*graphy*].

EIBT: The Eynesbury Institute of Business and Technology offers full fee-paying pre-university pathways for predominantly international students entering one of two South Australian HE institutions: *The University of Adelaide* or *University of South Australia*.

ICT: Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is often used as an extended synonym for Information Technology (IT), but is a more specific term that stresses the role of unified communication i.e., any product that will store, retrieve, manipulate, transmit or receive information electronically in a digital form.

Pathway Provider: Educational institutions that offer students alternative forms of entry into university programs. Applicants may include: early school leavers; those that have not achieved the academic and/or English requirements to obtain direct entry; or students looking to return to study after a period of absence.

Web 2.0: The term given to describe a second generation of the World Wide Web that is focused on the ability for people to collaborate and share information online.