

# SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS FOR TEACHERS

This guide is intended to provide teachers with some tips and resources for building an online presence. As the world becomes more connected, social media can be a great way to get your message out there. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have become the go-to for individuals to share their insights while developing a following. Communicating issues that matter to you on social media show that you're knowledgeable on relevant topics and you're invested in the current state of education. Use this guide to promote ideas that are important to you about teaching to maximize your impact as a teacher.

## FIRST THINGS FIRST: FACEBOOK, TWITTER, INSTAGRAM: WHAT ARE THEY USED FOR?

Knowing how each social media platform works can help you decide which you'd like to use to develop your online presence. Here are some broad overviews:



### FACEBOOK

Facebook tends to provide you with the widest audience. An aspiring teacher that follows you professionally will see the same post that a grandparent does. Posts with pictures usually get the most traction, while posts with only links don't do as well.



### TWITTER

People on Twitter that are involved in education tend to be the go-getters. This platform is less casual and more professional. Most educators on Twitter are there to stay in-the-know, to grow their network, or to get their own ideas out there.



### INSTAGRAM

This platform is the most casual. It is less about sharing and discussing your ideas and more about gaining street credibility. Yes, the quality of your photos matters here. The images must be engaging. Don't post a blurry selfie.



# CRAFT YOUR MESSAGE

LET'S LOOK AT THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLES OF ACTUAL CAPTION DEVELOPMENT FOR AN ARTICLE ABOUT DEFINING THE TERM EQUITY AS IT RELATES TO EDUCATION:

**Post #1** emphasizes supports for students from marginalized communities without really addressing students from privileged communities.

**Post #2** somewhat references all students, but really misses out on addressing what specific supports marginalized students might need.

**Post #3** combines the messages of #1 and #2. These subtle differences in language and terminology are extremely important for crafting a message that supports your platform.

THIS IS THE PART THAT TAKES THE MOST TIME TO DEVELOP. THERE IS A LOT OF NUANCE IN LANGUAGE, AND WRITING POSTS THAT SUPPORT YOUR IDEAS IS CRUCIAL IN GETTING YOUR MESSAGE HEARD.



State Teacher of the Year

9 minutes ago · 🌐

To me, equity means providing the right resources and support for all of our students suffering from institutional oppression. How do you define equity?

Like · Comment · Share

👍 4 people like this.

#1



State Teacher of the Year

9 minutes ago · 🌐

To me, equity means providing the right resources and support for every student to reach their potential. How do you define equity?

Like · Comment · Share

👍 4 people like this.

#2



State Teacher of the Year

9 minutes ago · 🌐

To me, equity means providing the right support for every student to reach their potential, including additional resources for students who have suffered from institutional oppression. How do you define equity?

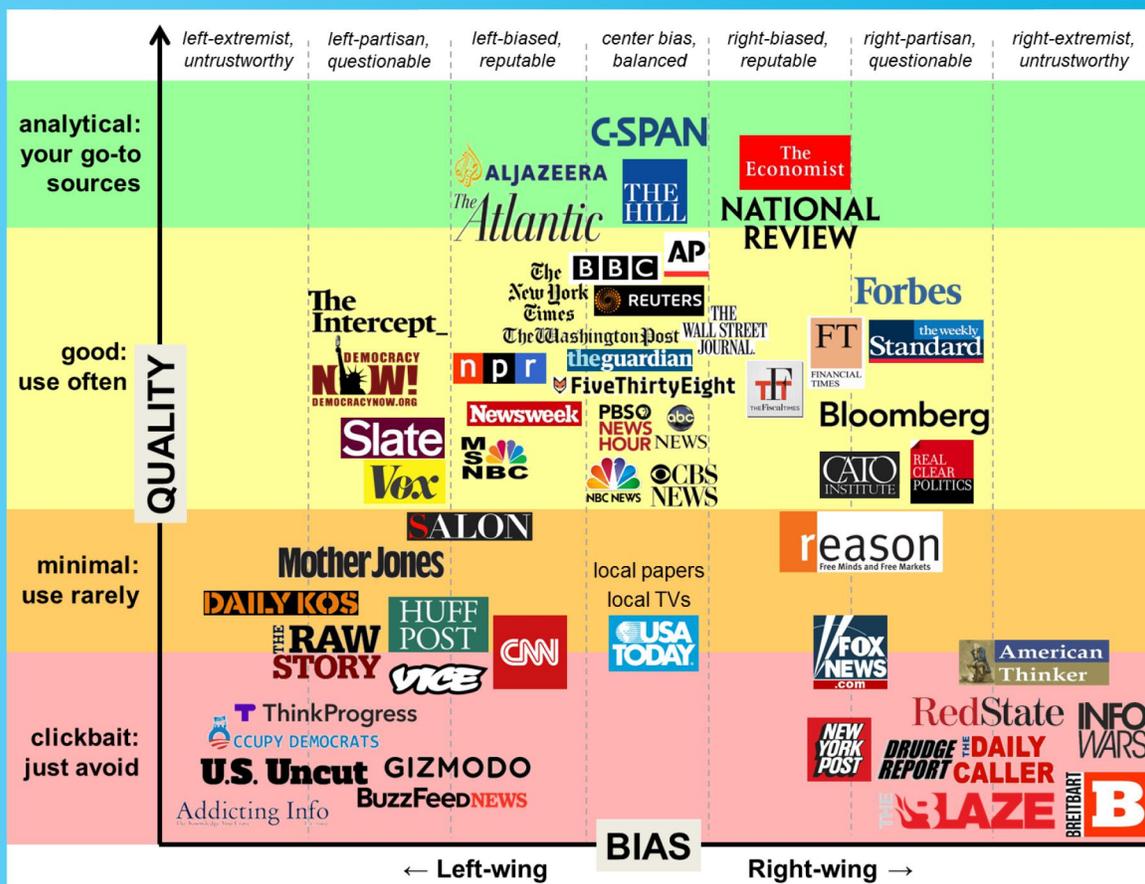
Like · Comment · Share

👍 4 people like this.

#3

# FINDING YOUR SOURCES FOR ARTICLES AND OP-EDS

When searching for articles that support your platform, make sure that you are using reputable news sources. The following chart is a good summary of news websites and how they lean politically. Using sources that lean one way or another can support your platform, but you should stay out of the untrustworthy and questionable categories. Many outlets have an education section of their website.



Source: <http://imgur.com/12zRsheh.jpg>

## EXAMPLE WEBSITES

- WWW.NPR.ORG/SECTIONS/EDUCATION
- WWW.THEATLANTIC.COM/EDUCATION
- WWW.NYTIMES.COM/SECTION/EDUCATION
- WWW.WSJ.COM/NEWS/TYPES/EDUCATION



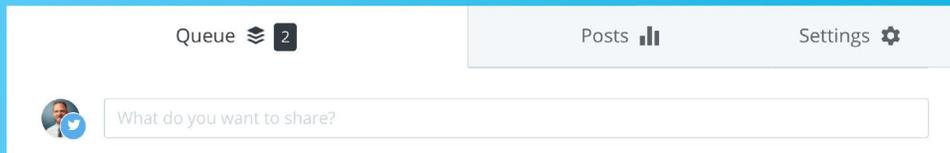
# MAKE A SCHEDULE

FINDING CONTENT AND CRAFTING MESSAGES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA TAKES A LOT OF TIME AND ENERGY. WITH SUCH BUSY SCHEDULES, IT'S OFTEN HARD TO FIND TIME EVERY DAY TO DO THIS. ONCE YOU CREATE A BUFFER.COM ACCOUNT, YOU CAN CONNECT IT TO YOUR FACEBOOK, TWITTER, AND INSTAGRAM PLATFORMS AND FROM THERE YOU CAN SCHEDULE POSTINGS.

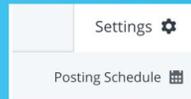
CONSIDER BLOCKING OFF A TIME EACH WEEK TO ORGANIZE ALL OF YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS FOR THE WEEK AND THEN CREATING A POSTING SCHEDULE. YOU CAN POST MANUALLY OR USE ONE OF THE MANY WEBSITES THAT CAN SCHEDULE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT FOR YOU. BUFFER.COM IS A FREE SITE THAT IS EASY TO USE.

## SETTING UP YOUR BUFFER.COM ACCOUNT

#1. The "Queue" tab at the top is where you will craft your social media posts.



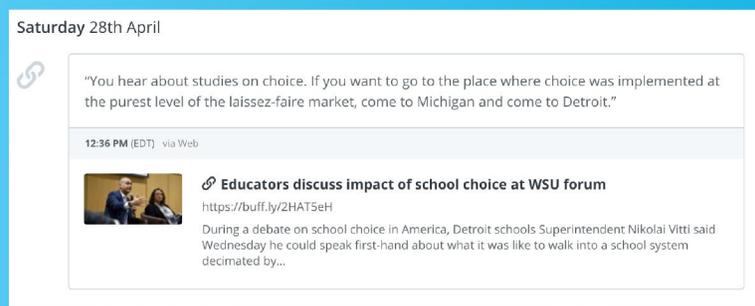
#2. Choose "Posting Schedule" in the "Settings" dropdown and you can set up your schedule.



#3. Choose a schedule that makes sense with how much time you'd like to put into developing your social media voice. Weekday afternoons tend to get more traffic than morning or evening posts.

Sunday Turn on	Monday Turn off	Tuesday Turn on	Wednesday Turn off	Thursday Turn on	Friday Turn off	Saturday Turn off
	12 : 28 PM		12 : 28 PM		12 : 28 PM	12 : 28 PM

#4. Buffer will automatically post the most recent content from your queue at your scheduled times.



Note: You can use Buffer for Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. But Facebook recently changed privacy settings so that users can only post to a Facebook page with Buffer, not a personal profile.

**That's it! This doesn't mean that you can't post to your Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram if there is something you'd like to share, this just guarantees that you will have a consistent online presence and engagement with your followers.**

# SO HOW DO I BECOME A SOCIAL MEDIA GURU?

WHEN I STARTED MY YEAR AS TEACHER OF THE YEAR, I THOUGHT I WOULD BE ADDING 50 NEW FOLLOWERS EVERY TIME I DID A BIG KEYNOTE SPEECH. THIS DID NOT HAPPEN.

What I have found is that increasing your audience is a process of slow growth over a long period of time. You will meet a lot of new people in all of your adventures as a teacher. Every time you meet someone new, find them on social media and reach out.

Additionally, think about who you want to see your ideas. Here are some suggestions: your state school board members, policy makers, teachers and administrators in your district, or education leaders in your state. Find these people on Facebook and friend request them. Find them on Twitter and follow them. These are the people that are influential in education, and you want to be on their radar, even if it is quietly.

On Twitter, always consider who you can tag in your post. For example, if you just finished a presentation about increasing diversity in the teacher workforce, you might add @RisingEducators because you know that this issue is important to them. They will now see your post, and maybe they will retweet it. You'll then have more eyes on your content (not just your followers), which will lead to more followers.

Also, retweets are far more valuable than likes, because they will get your content in front of new eyes. So, when you are writing the copy for your Twitter posts, try to write them in such a way that others might be able to "endorse" your idea. Retweets allow followers to endorse and advocate for your idea, which is much stronger than simply "liking" your idea and also positions you as an authority on the subject.

**"One of the best ways to learn the culture and rules of each type of social media platform is to watch other people who are good at it."**

Hashtags are another way to get more exposure for your social media posts. Hashtags are added at the end of a post and are a way for people to search for a specific topic. For example, if you were making a tweet about education policy in Michigan, adding #miched to the end of your post will allow other people to see you when they search for or click on #miched. Hashtags are used widely on Twitter and Instagram, but not as much on Facebook.

One of the best ways to learn the culture and rules of each type of social media platform is to watch other people who are good at it. Find and follow your colleagues and other teacher leaders. Pay attention to how many friends/followers they have and weigh their posts in your mind accordingly.

