



Pin It! Using Pinterest in the Agricultural Mechanics Laboratory

Introduction

Pinterest, an online bulletin board, is surpassing Twitter and even Facebook in social media website popularity (Falls, 2012). A hit among hobbyists and do-it-yourselfers, Pinterest is an online storage space for crafts, recipes, and ideas. Individuals, after creating a profile and becoming an official “pinner,” can re-pin previously posted ideas to their personal page under customized boards for future reference. According to the Pinterest website, *“Browsing pinboards is a fun way to discover new things and get inspiration from people who share your interests.”* In addition, pinners can also upload their own ideas/projects to share with other Pinterest users.

Pinterest has been a popular education tool among elementary teachers, and often used to locate creative lesson ideas, and also share original ideas with others in the profession. However, Pinterest need not be limited to elementary teachers and can be used by agricultural educators in the secondary classroom, specifically the agricultural mechanics laboratory. This innovative idea aligns well with the American Association for Agricultural Education 2011- 2015 Research Priority Areas Technologies, Practices and Products as well as Efficient and Effective Programs (Doerfert, 2011).

How it Works

Agricultural educators can use Pinterest in the agricultural mechanics laboratory to search for new, unique, affordable agricultural mechanics projects that they can integrate into their curricula. The teachers are also able to share a large collection of projects with their students. The teachers can also use Pinterest as a virtual filing cabinet to store agricultural mechanics projects for future reference. The teachers are also able to upload current agricultural mechanics projects to share other teachers/professionals. The instructors also can connect with individuals within the same discipline and with similar interests. Table 1 outlines the process needed to create a Pinterest account and begin collecting projects.

Table 1. Steps to Pinning in the Agricultural Mechanics Laboratory

Step	Activity	Description
Step 1	Create log-in name and edit personal profile.	A pinner’s personal profile will be displayed when fellow pinners search for them specifically or others within their discipline.
Step 2	Follow pinners with similar interests and career objectives	Following agricultural instructors and mechanics professionals allows one to browse pins and boards most like their own and in line with their own interests.
Step 3	Create boards based on interests, subjects taught	Creating boards, or general topic areas such as “Metal Ideas”, “Woodworking Projects” or “Electricity”, allows the Pinterest user the

		opportunity to organize pins for easier access later.
Step 4	Search for project ideas	Using the search bar, Pinner can look for projects specific to their needs, such as metals, woods, welding, autos, etc.
Step 5	Re-pin project ideas for future use	Re-pinning projects to the customized boards created in step 3 allows pinner to organize and store ideas for future reference and easy access.
Step 6	Upload personal projects for other Pinner's reference	Projects completed in your own shop can be uploaded onto Pinterest and shared with other agricultural mechanics instructors.

Results to Date

The researchers have used the website to pin projects that fall into several content areas within agricultural mechanics. Thus far they have created the following categories within agricultural mechanics: welding, electricity, woods, and plasma cutting. The researchers have also created categories for projects that can be constructed out of pallets, horseshoes and other miscellaneous materials. In addition to those categories, the researchers have also created a category for projects that can be constructed for free which was intended to assist teachers who are on a limited budget. This category is also an excellent resource for teachers who have students from low socio-economic backgrounds who want a project of their own. This category will also allow students to explore their creativity with projects constructed out of refurbished materials thus the students are enhancing their higher order thinking skills with the adoption of these projects. The researchers also created folders for projects that fall into other content areas such as horticulture and agricultural science. Researcher #1 has pinned 419 projects and has 41 active followers. Researcher #2 has over 25 projects pinned and has 9 followers to date. The researchers were unable to locate any functions on the website that tracked the number of people who visited our project sites but did not pin the project or followed us.

Future Plans/ Advice to Others

Safety and privacy of users should always be considered when using the internet. The teachers will have to work with administrators if firewalls prevent them from gaining access to the Pinterest website. Teachers should allot at least one hour of time during the initial visit and set up of their Pinterest page. To navigate quickly through the website, the researchers suggest using the key word search option to focus on the areas of interest desired. The researchers also highly suggest making several folders within agricultural mechanics to maintain an organized wall that is easy to navigate through. A study should be conducted to assess student learning objectives that could emerge from that projects being utilized.

Costs/Resources Needed

Costs associated with this educational technique are minimal. Pinterest is available at no cost to users but requires an active email address. Teachers will need internet access to access Pinterest as well as to collect projects. Additional costs may incur if smart phone technology is utilized, as individuals would be subject to additional charges from their service providers.

References

Doerfert, D.L. (ed.). 2011. National research agenda: American Association for Agricultural Education's research priority areas for 2011-2015. Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University, Department of Agricultural Education and Communications.

Falls, J. 2012. How Pinterest is becoming the next big thing in social media for business. <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/222740>. Entrepreneur.

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