Using Social Media in Language Teaching and Learning: Some Pedagogical and Technological Considerations

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Presentation Overview

1. Definition of social media
2. Pedagogical arguments in favour of using social media in education
3. The importance of instructional design
4. Five ways to use Social Media in Language Teaching
5. Facebook
6. Blogging
7. Demo of how to create a multimedia blog
‘Social Media’: What is it?

- Also referred to as ‘social networking’, ‘social software’, ‘Web 2.0’
- Older terms: ‘ICTs’, ‘computer conferencing’, ‘CMC’, ‘online discussion groups’
- Examples: Facebook, Twitter, wikis, blogs, YouTube and much more
- Online, free, open, requires user account

- Widely-used: Facebook has 1.39 billion monthly active users and 890 million daily active users on average as of December 31, 2014 ([http://newsroom.fb.com/company-info/](http://newsroom.fb.com/company-info/))

- 2 main affordances of social media: **information exchange** (‘media’) and **communication** (‘social’).

- The challenge to educators: not to use social media merely because ‘it is there’ and it is pervasive; how to harness the dual features of social media for educational purposes
Why use Social Media in (Language) Teaching and Learning? The Pedagogical Arguments

- Familiarity: our students are already using them for purposes that include the social and the educational
- Use in class/after class – social media bring learning outside the classroom
- Authentic, autonomous and independent learning
- Motivational and fun
- Meaningful interaction peer-peer, student-instructor (communication)
- Vast resource of authentic written, audio, video materials with which both receptive and productive skills may be practised. (information)
- Swain’s output hypothesis: “the act of producing language (speaking or writing) constitutes, under certain circumstances, part of the process of second language learning” (2007).
The importance of instructional design

Five factors to consider when designing Web-based learning (Miller and Miller 2000)

1. theoretical orientation
2. course content
3. learning goals
4. learner characteristics
5. technological capabilities
Online Community of Inquiry

‘Community of Inquiry’ Model as a model of good practice for the online classroom and online learning (Garrison and Vaughan 2008): higher-order learning occurs through the interaction of three core elements: social presence, teaching presence and cognitive presence.
Five ways to use Social Media in Language Teaching (The Guardian 10 April 2012)

1. Create a Facebook page that your class can 'like'. Start posting updates to your timeline, but not in English. Ask your pupils to translate the text using Facebook's in-line Bing translation tool and ask them to gauge its accuracy.

2. Create a Twitter account. Start tweeting in a foreign language, keeping in mind that you have a 140 character limit, and see if your pupils can strike up a conversation with you. Impose a non-English only reply and retweet rule.

3. Create a YouTube account. Ask each of your pupils to record a video blog, or 'vlog', of their hobbies, thoughts or opinions on topical news stories, but speaking only in a foreign language. Those who want to have their video uploaded should send it to you first.

4. Create a Pinterest account. Take some pictures of prompt cards, post-it notes or even objects with their description in another language and 'pin' them on your boards. You could even look for photos of the country, or infographics about languages in general, to help your pupils understand more about why they should learn it.

5. Create a blog or Tumblr. Dedicate it entirely to publishing content in the language you teach. Show your pupils why you love the language and inspire them to do the same. Ask them to write something, however small, and post it for the whole world to admire.

Source: http://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/teacher-blog/2012/apr/10/language-teaching-social-media
Facebook: Example of good practice (Leier 2011)

- Intermediate students of German at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand.

- The students taking part in a film competition. Students in groups of 3-4 members. Each group makes a short film (max 5 minutes).

- A closed FB group for each group created, accessible only by invitation and used exclusively by members. Draft copies uploaded and discussed online in German. The final copies of each group’s film then uploaded.

- The students and a selected audience comment on the individual entries.

- German used exclusively as the language in the group.

- A good example of using FB for sharing files AND discussion/collaboration for language learning.
Leier: Screenshot
Facebook: Students using FB independently of instructor
Facebook: Example of Instructor Interference

Hi guys,

It has been brought to my attention that there may have been a little bit of verbal tutor bashing over the last couple of days. How ever lighthearted it is please be aware that there are tutors and students in the group who may take offence.

However frustrated you are about your tutor (especially around TMA time) please be mindful they are people usually with other full time jobs, families and lives just like us and are under the same pressures as we are splitting work/family. I'm sure you wouldn't like to sign onto the group and find someone bad mouthing you?

Please, please don't think I'm pointing fingers I'm not, I just want everyone to feel happy and get a good experience from this group.

Thank you
xx
Admin

Agreed!
December 11, 2014 at 2:18pm · Like

I agree that tutor bashing is very poor show (you can sense a but coming can't you) but this is in effect our Common Room. At an ordinary unit the JC and SCR are mutually exclusive. The OU don't get the idea of forums and censorship of Facebook is equally poor form in my humble view. I prefer Facebook because it is less pompous and freeer than the OU forum. So to counter tutors must be aware of and take into consideration the levels of anxiety about tma marking timescales caused by working in isolation. Its a two way street and we all need to be nice. I think you are all wonderful 😊

December 11, 2014 at 5:37pm · Like · 2
Disadvantages of Facebook as a Learning Tool

- Privacy issues
- Distractive multitasking while using FB
- Lack of access in schools
- Sentiment amongst students (and parents?) that FB is a place to socialise, separate from academic work (Hew 2011) - separation between ‘pleasure’ (socialising) and ‘pain’ (learning)
- Students may consider Facebook to be more of a “social study space” that is off limits to teachers – difficulties in attempts to formalize the use of Facebook in the classroom (Gray et al., 2010).
- Terminology of FB – why does the teacher want to be my ‘friend’?
Blogging

- A blog can be set up using a free hosting site on the Internet, such as Blogger or Wordpress, or within a secure space such as Moodle or Edmodo.
- Type of website with a series of entries on a single page.
- Reverse chronological order – newest appears on top.
- Multimedia incorporating sound, video and image (information).
- Comment feature (communication).
- Can be used by students to create a portfolio of their work or by instructors to disseminate information.


