

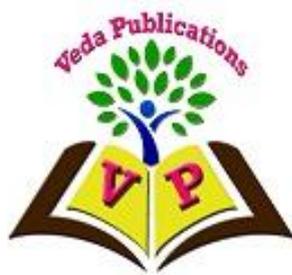


INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT



Internet has affected the preferred learning styles of young people wanting to learn English around the world. Teachers, to remain relevant and effective, need to use 'learning technologies' to help students reach the world outside the classroom. Teachers now adhere to innovative practices in teaching- learning process and have changed their roles into 'facilitators'. The role of teacher demands to promote more group tasks and stress- free learning environments. Social media is emerging in various forms to bring people together as communities. It is not denied that there is also a controversy on using new Social Media such as Face book, whats up or Web Chat. But in the present global scenario, when millions live and breathe on social media, teachers are learning how to incorporate the medium into the classroom successfully. The social media tools help the language teachers to stay connected with their peers around the world and stay updated about their fields. Moreover, these online buttons give the language teachers the chance to help others in their fields, find solutions to their problems and improve their teaching language careers. This paper focuses on the influence of social media in teaching and learning English language.

Keywords: *Social Networks, Language, Teaching Process.*



INTRODUCTION

English is the official language of the world. It is an international language, spoken in many countries both as a native and as a second or foreign language. Hence, it is of paramount importance that this language has to be taught in such a way that it will help us not just to speak and write and listen but to communicate. The traditional methods which largely depend on lecturing and rote learning reduce English language learning to mechanical memorization and miserably fail in developing language competency among the students. These stereotyped methods and teaching material makes the learning a monotonous activity and creates distaste among the students by reducing them to mere passive receptors of language and not active participants in the learning process. Therefore the necessity to deviate from the grand methods and materials and to use innovative material and techniques of teaching has been strongly felt. Innovative methods help in bringing a change and most of the times for the better. With the use of novel teaching techniques, creating novel activities and tasks and participating in the same and use of authentic material, teachers can involve learners directly in the learning process by providing them direct experience by assuring their participation directly in the learning process. It helps the students learn faster and in an efficient, interesting and an interactive manner and it is the teacher's responsibility to leave the traditional methods and make way for new and better methods for the students benefit.

By using authentic teaching material available around and the material that is connected to the experiential and background knowledge of the students, an English class room can be made interactive, interesting, enthusiastic and learner friendly.

RELEVANCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Daily observations and recent scholarly traditions suggest that a certain amount of learning takes place beyond the confines of the individual mind. Learning a different language involves social aspects which influences the way in which individuals learn language. Language learners are able to

enhance their language skills due to the different avenues in which new social media have created. Social media provides the learner with the possibility of participating in actual, real-time, relevant conversations taking place online, and practicing the target language with or without the help of an experienced teacher by his or her side.

In 2007, the British Council conducted market research into how the Internet has affected the preferred learning styles of young people wanting to learn English around the world. The results of this research suggest that if teachers are to remain relevant and effective, then they need to use 'learning technologies' to help students reach the world outside the classroom. 69% of learners around the world said that they learned most effectively when socializing informally. The research also showed that students who felt they were getting enough opportunities in their lives to socialize informally were also successful in their learning. The results stated that the student found time both to study and socialize as much as they want. It is important to understand that successful students combine studying and socializing, and that combining the two things helps them to be successful at both.

The average young person in the world today owns technology. It feels like everyone has a mobile phone today. In China, more people have mobile phones than land-line phones. In some African countries, people own more than one phone each on average and the conditions in India is not different at present. These findings suggest that sometimes young people get more new information from the technology they use outside of school than they do from their teacher in the classroom. Sometimes, young people learn more from using the Internet at home or in a café than they do at school.

IMPLICATIONS

When young people are on the Internet, they feel 'connected' to people and the world knowledge. The implications, therefore, are that teachers might:

- Try to use 'learning technologies' in the classroom whenever they can, to make the learning experience relevant to their students



- Show students how to find and access information and opportunities through technology
- Focus on developing students' networking skills (both online and face-to-face) so that the students become 'connected' to people who can give them information, help them learn and keep the learning experience relevant to the student's life
- Take on the role of 'trainer' rather than 'teacher'.

It is not denied that there is also a controversy on using new Social Media. There are some disadvantages with being able to communicate easier with multiple people on the internet, especially for teens and even sometimes youngsters, of cyber bullying and stalking. Thousands of teens use social media every day, but not all have the best intentions. Many use a computer screen to hide behind, which makes it easier to make fun of someone, because you are not face to face. This can seriously damage the individuals who are getting bullied and cause them severe stress.

So, while social media does have its advantages, if it is not used for what it was intended, many people could get hurt from it. But as the internet became more popular, websites have become a pivotal resource for school pupils across all subjects.

TECHNIQUESTO ENGAGE WITH THE STUDENTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook- Many students use Facebook, a social networking service, as part of their daily lives. This use, out of college, can foster and maintain relationships and add to greater cohesion and dynamic when back in class which, in turn, can have a positive effect on their attendance and retention on the course. Create a Facebook page that your class can 'like'. Facebook can be used by the instructor to share course resources, fire up discussions, promote collaboration, improve relationships between students, incorporate an array of learning tools (such as videos, images, boards, chatting and private messaging), and use it in conjunction with other social media platforms, Facebook has endless advantages that solidly prove its social learning value.

An instructor can make Facebook advantageous in the following manner:

1. Create closed groups. Participants will enter only by invitation and no one else will be able to see the contents, discussions, posts etc. inside the group. It's a great and safe way to interact and bond.
2. Create open groups if the target is a wider audience to a specific course, domain, application or even school. Many MOOC programs have Facebook pages. With millions of FB users around the globe, the number of people that might be interested in your courses will be surprising.
3. Create polls to receive feedback about a course or a program you are thinking of implementing, to request the opinion of your audience on a specific topic, or even to generate statistics. Possibilities and options are endless.
4. Create questionnaires to comprehend the likes, dislikes and interests of your current or future students and build the course around them.
5. Upload course contents material and resources in your account or the closed group you created. Think of the advantages. Everything will be available 24/7, if a mistake is made it can be corrected and re-upload. The user will get immediate feedback and safe receipt confirmation, your material can be remotely accessed no matter where your students are, and you will effectively minimize classroom time.
6. Tell your students to connect their smart phone to Facebook, so they can receive instant notifications about all new messages and activities related to your course. Facebook's notification system allows everyone to keep track of anything new that happens; new groups, requests, discussions, comments, tagging, material, links etc.
7. Urge your students to introduce themselves, connect and collaborate. You can also create group assignments to further promote collaboration and improve relationships between them and you. It's true that



hierarchy might be lost in the beginning, but you can always restore it, by setting the right tone, mood and style to your groups, discussions and applications.

8. Start posting updates to your timeline, but not in English. Ask your pupils to translate the text using Face book's in-line Bing translation tool and ask them to gauge its accuracy.

Twitter -Twitter is an online social networking service that enables users to send and read short 140-character messages called "tweets". Registered users can read and post tweets, but those who are unregistered can only read them. Users access Twitter through the website interface, SMS or mobile device application. 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.

1. Create an Informative List of Resources - Before you begin, create a list of things you want to provide as information to your learners. Think what will be interesting, engaging and re-tweet able. Break apart the content and post regularly, so that you keep the interest of your learners.
2. Create Learning Hashtags - Come up with a #hash tag with the help of which learners will be able to feedback and communicate on your materials.
3. Create Learning Topics - Create topics, making use of the hash tags. In Twitter you can also create regular Twitter chat events. Don't forget to encourage your learners by liking, re-tweeting and commenting on relevant tweets they share.
4. Create Learning Lists - You can create your own learninglist which basically is a curate group of Twitter users. This way you and your learners will be able to see the stream of your group's tweets.
5. Learn How to Search - Twitter has a powerful and accurate search engine that will help you get the information you need most. Get familiar with the Twitter trail.
6. Follow the Influencers - Get in touch and follow interesting people from your field of

study – eLearning Developers, Instructional Designers, Subject Matter Experts, Professors and other experts – see what they share and what gets re-tweeted. Think about the things your learners will find interesting and will want to re-tweet.

7. Re-Tweet - Re-tweet and share everything you want your learners to know. Don't forget to encourage them by liking, re-tweeting and commenting on relevant tweets they share.
8. Favorite – Show your appreciation by favorite a tweet. You will encourage the poster of the original Tweet by let him/her know that you liked the tweet. Also, by doing so you can save the Tweet for later review.

You Tube -. YouTube is one of the most popular websites on the planet and a vast resource for educational content. The site is home to over 10 million videos tagged as educational, many of them submitted by your fellow teachers.Create a YouTube account.Ask each of your pupils to record a video blog, of their hobbies, thoughts or opinions on topical news stories, but speaking only in English language. Those who want to have their video uploaded should send it to you first.

1. Bring in videos to the class. - Lessons can be enhanced with the right video. Something visual and entertaining that speaks to the subject you're teaching breaks up the monotony of a lecture, brings some fun into the lesson, and keeps the students more engaged and interested in the subject. For showing videos in the classroom all it takes is some searching and browsing on the website to see what videos are already out there on the subject you're teaching, along with a little time spent watching to find videos that are a good fit. Although if you choose, you can write some questions or create activities that relate to the video to help students get more out of them.



2. Create YouTube playlists as student assignments
 - Some people learn better by watching than reading, so providing video alternatives to the reading homework assigned could really pay off for some students. Create playlists, either to supplement the other work you assign or as an alternative, and simply send the link to the students for viewing. A playlist puts it all into an easy, well-organized format for their using up.
3. Record class lessons or lectures and save them for future viewing. - YouTube can become a storehouse for saving and sharing any lectures you record. Once the video is created, YouTube makes it easy to send the link to any student that missed class, or keep track of the different videos you have in case you want to review them before giving the same lesson next year.

Blogs - Create a blog. A blog is a self-published, web-based collection of writing and photos. Blogs differ greatly in focus, sophistication of topics and popularity. The culture of blogging calls for regular updates, exchange of comments, and short posts. Blogs offer a hugely exciting platform for learners to express themselves in a new language. The fact that posts are generally short, and that new content is added frequently, make them attractive and exciting for classroom adaptation. Dedicate it to entirely publishing content in the language you teach. Ask the students to write something, however small, and post it for the whole world to admire. Blogging in classroom contexts demands lots of decisions to be made in relation to the functionality of the blog, and importantly how this impacts on security and privacy of use. In the case of a group or class blog, however, the tutor can act as the administrator, setting up the blog and deciding on what permissions to give the students access to, the privacy settings, the widgets required and so on. Perhaps the top three for anybody interested in class blogging are Wordpress (www.wordpress.com), Blogger (www.blogger.com) and Edublogs (www.edublogs.org). With the blog configured in an appropriate way the tutor can still hand over a certain amount of control to the students,

maintaining a safe and productive blogging environment.

Skype - It is a proprietary voice-over-Internet protocol service that can be used to encourage students to communicate with their teacher and with each other. The studies conducted by ESOL says that previously hesitant speakers in lower level ESOL groups were encouraged to talk in greater depth when they were using material which they had created themselves as opposed to using textbook pictures. Sony PSPs were found useful for this, because personalised visual prompts can be recorded whilst capturing still images and videos, the vocabulary level can be fixed, and it uses simple buttons and direction mechanisms which require only a little pre-teaching.

Other applications - The facilities provided by mobile devices can offer a highly-valued level of independence to the user and help to provide a bridge with society at large. Much of this is related to the user being able to search the internet for information or the use of mobile applications like Dictionary, grammar and spelling applications Encyclopedias, such as Wikipedia Text translation tools, such as Google Translate etc. Journey planners and map applications offer greater independence to the user, allowing them to find out information for themselves, often accessed whilst they are on the move.

CONCLUSION

In the current context it is important that teachers keep abreast of technological developments and are aware of the skills, both literacy and IT, that each learner possesses – these need to be harnessed and developed further to both engage learners and improve their English language skills. Thus it is suggested that the integration of social media into classroom practice entails a reconfiguration of roles: the teacher is no longer the sole source of content, and the students are able to shape their learning in ways which align closely with the needs of their daily lives. All the above encourage the user to engage with information in English, reading and writing both formally and informally. The use of these techniques can act as a bridge to facilitate communication inside and outside the classroom. These devices can, of



course, be a powerful teaching and learning device too.

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