

## Social Media in Classroom Teaching. How Teachers Can Exploit the Added Pedagogical Value of Social Media for Language Teaching Purposes

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### Abstract

The use of social media for learning in schools is becoming more and more widespread and reflected in the European context. But existing studies and learning material repositories predominantly consider social media as a new technology. They are regarded as a technology enabling users to easily get in contact with other people. This paper puts social media in another context - they are regarded as a "social" innovation rather than a technological one. We see the innovative core of social media in the generation of content by users. This "user generated content" paradigm has started and will continue to change the way people communicate, work and learn.

The paper narrates the experience gained in the ongoing EU funded Comenius project "L2T – Learn to Teach by social web" which is exploiting the educational potential given by social media in the educational field. In doing so, we concretize the discourse around social media for the classroom by investigating the potential of social media in new teaching methods or in learning outcomes.

The project involves teachers and students from six European countries. It is the aim of the project to develop a curriculum that teachers who never used social media in classroom teaching before can now prepare themselves for using social media in their classroom teaching. The curriculum is working with examples and best practice in order to illustrate hands-on social media use. Language teaching is a very important example, as social media require - and produce - a very specific use of language. This is reflected in the curriculum.

This curriculum is developed by teachers (half of them language teachers) from six countries in a user generated content process, facilitated by the University of Dortmund, Germany. The first results highlight how social media foster student driven learning and empower teachers to use social media supported project learning in classroom teaching. The proposal constitutes a repository of practical experience and a place of confrontation between teachers from different educational and technological backgrounds. Language learning is facilitated in a shared project of students from all participating schools.

The approach of the project is to help and motivate teachers in their educational activities by stimulating their interest in new pedagogic approaches, especially "learning by teaching". The L2T project is developing and strengthening communication between teachers and students and putting into practice the ideas behind the constructivist approach of teaching with social media (action learning, active learning, learner-to-learner interaction, learning by teaching, exploring learning).

The teachers themselves see the project as a source of "inspiration", a tool "made by teachers for teachers", a space capable of strengthening "the international community of practice of teachers", and a platform where they can experiment, get involved and share ideas.