



Explore Ways of Using Social Media Platforms in Teaching English Language: Literature Review

Norah Hussain Banafi
University of Limerick (Ireland)

Abstract

Social media offers varied platforms such as blogs and wikis for teachers to use in teaching English. Each platform provides many benefits in language educational process. When English teachers decide to use social media in class, they need to know which social media platforms can support and improve their students' outcomes and which tool that they can use with students to have them experience English language. This paper will examine the main social media applications that suite teaching English and explain how English teachers can use them in the language field. The data of this paper is based on reviewing journals and books that are related to social media and help English teachers to find out what social media can use for teaching English effectively. It's reviewing new ways of teaching and learning English language as a foreign language which certainly assess improving students' language skills through social media. Really, social media is an urgent need for providing teachers with the latest methods in teaching English.

1.0. Introduction

The technology changes the environment of learning as it provides choices of flexible features. For instance, the internet supplies students, educators, and administrators with many opportunities to do their school duties and work when they need at any time and place (Greenhow, 2011)[2]. The social media platforms have become common tools that used on academic institutions by everyone to share academic works, research findings, book reviews, and communicate with their peers and teachers. Tapscott and Williams (2007:52)[8] states that “*the new generation of learners are not content to be passive consumers and increasing their desire for choice, convenience, customization, and control by designing, producing, and distributing products themselves*”. Ulbrich (2011, p. 1) [9].

“Members of the Net Generation use the Web differently, they network differently, and they learn differently. When they start at university, traditional values on how to develop knowledge collide with their values. Many of the teaching techniques that have worked for decades do not work anymore because new students learn differently too. The Net Generation is used to network; its members work collaboratively, they execute several tasks simultaneously, and they use the Web to acquire knowledge”.

2.0. Literature review

2.1 Blog

The external web applications such as blog and wiki generate for student communicative environment that engage them in conversation and motivate them to design their own works and experiences and share their knowledge with other people (George & Dellasega)[3]. Recent researches stated that there is a need to continual reflective on teaching with web-based applications that examine the value of different tools and provide teachers with digital tools that can greatly appropriate for language learning. Using web-based applications in English foreign language education result in major changes in instructors' approaches, and methodologies that they use in English class. Some teachers use the technology for improving and increasing students' motivation and interaction inside EFL classes, but still there are a lot of teachers who stick with traditional teaching mode. For that reason, the implementation of social platforms has integrated within the education system and have revealed worth in the teaching practice.

Poore (2013)[5] mentions in her book called “*Using Social Media in the Classroom*” different aspects such as blog definition, setting process and learning benefits as well ideas for classroom activities. A blog is a virtual writing–sharing platform that provides users with features to past different themes, journals and writings on varied subjects. In order to create a blog for teaching English, the user can select common blog hosts:



- Blogger.com. has functional tools that make it easy for supporting users' needs. If the user has Gmail, he or she can have access to Blogger site.
- Tumblr.com. is a good tool that young students can use because it is very simple. For example, it does not have features to write comments, and does not have a tag cloud service. It is the best choice for a student who does not have any experience with a blog and it is a good example to use in order to provide them with an easy introduction to blogging.
- Wordpress.com. is a very advanced blogging tool and it is a good tool for experienced students who have high self-efficacy in blogging.
- Kidblog.org is similar to a Wordpress-based service, however, it is designed for school students in order to be a safe environment that protects their privacy. So teachers can set up a class blog without using student email addresses.

When the teacher makes a decision on using a specific blog, she or he has to set up an account. Then, he or she can create a blog that includes two sections. The first part is the "Front Page" that is for public, so visitors are able to view. The second part is "Control Panel" where the blog's owner can write and post whatever he or she wants on it. In order to use the blog with students, there are many suggestions:

- Teacher can create an account on any blogging service and publish a class blog.
- All students are considered as "Authors" on the class blog.
- Teacher asks students to write posts related to class topics that show their understanding of class content.
- The teacher can post questions and ask students to write their answers.
- The teacher can ask each student to write about a specific thing and then he or she asks other students to comment on their classmates' posts.
- The teacher can use a blog as a management tool to post class announcements, homework details, and feedback on students' works.

2.2. Wikibooks

Wikibooks is a writing media project that aims to create a virtual place for collaborative writing. It is an open-content textbook that everyone can use to practice editing. "*Wikibooks are textbooks which are written by using wiki technology to develop and to distribute a textbook that marks a fundamental shift in the concept of a textbook, a shift which we are only now beginning to explore. A wikibook combines the attributes of the textbook, of the e-book, and of the wiki. This hybrid construct will become a success if it leverages the advantages afforded by e-books and by wikis, and improves on some of the limitations of textbooks*" (Ravid, Kalman, & Rafaeli, 2008:1915)[6]. Zheng, Niiya & Warschauer (2015)[10] used the Wikibooks platform in four stages. On the first stage, the researchers followed many steps to activate all features of Wikibooks in teaching English. First, they designed an international wiki that connects four universities together (three in the United States and one in China). Also, students were divided into four groups according to their location and every group was in charge of writing in English and answering activities related to a certain chapter in a Web 2.0 course. Then, a chapter theme was given to each group, and the teachers provide students with articles to read and discuss in the classroom. After discussion, students became ready to write their first draft on a certain wiki page that called "a drafting space"; the students' first writings went through the editing process that finished in 21 days. Students were allowed to write on wiki at any time, so they can complete their work. The teachers were responsible to check students' English writing in order to make sure that student writing is free from grammar mistakes and it makes sense. Afterward, the teacher posted the final papers on the wiki page and the last week was for discussion about students' attitudes toward their experience on Wikibooks. The second stage was more organized in order to allow for all students to participate in a wiki. The teacher made a group of 30 students and explained to them how to use all the features of the discussion board and posting resources. Also, the teacher gave each student a certain task. On the third stage, the teacher worked as a guide to facilitate an effective learning experience through the wiki. He divided students into groups and chose a topic and a leader for each team. Then, the teacher showed the students how making, editing, and required processes for their own page and gave them a time for practicing in order to help them to feel confident and skilled at editing. In the course time, the students met in the computer lab, and the teacher observed them and provided them with assistance in case they face any problem. The teacher used email as a communication tool and the discussion was in the form of presentations. The fourth stage was similar to



pervious stages, however, the students were from China, United State, Australia, Taiwan and Singapore and the teacher concentrated on “inter-group communication” via wiki and “Google Talk”.

2.2. Wiki Ideas for student

Poore (2013) [5] suggests on her book many ways that can be used to in classroom:

- Teachers can use a wiki as a guide document for students. He or she can past on the wiki the course syllabus, assignments and study guide.
- Teacher can ask students to work as group and build one wiki around certain topic.
- Teachers can ask students to use wiki discussion forum in order to enhance students’ discussion skills.
- Teachers can ask students to write article about new issue on Wikipedia.
- Teachers can have students design information source about certain topic that could be in form of FAQ or Glossaries.
- Teacher can improve students’ creativity by having them create chain stories. He or she can put students in pairs and ask each pairs to take turns on writing imaginary stories.

2.3.0 Educational Benefits of Blog and Wiki

Blogs	Wikis
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Critique and reflection 2. Individual Control and ownership 3. Easy sharing of opinion and discoveries 4. Allow for creativity and flow 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaboration, negotiation, teamwork 2. Track developments in knowledge construction and comprehension 3. Easy sharing information and data
<p>Writing skills, integration of diverse perspectives, communication</p>	

Figure adapted fomPoore (2013) Chapter 5

3.0. Conclusion

As Social media applications have grown fast all over the world, the possible methods to transmit education and planning teaching materials have increased. Social media platforms provide teachers and students with different advantages such as improved instructional materials and endless resources that involve students with various types of multimedia. It can also help teachers to engage students on classroom activities (Smith, 2006)[7] that can be designed in the form of small groups to allow students work together. Integrate social media applications with teaching offer a variety of ways to teach curriculum and provides students a healthy learning environment, thus students can learn effectively in their own space and time with a sense of control over their learning. In addition, teaching through technology provides many levels of instruction in one room with a single teacher through YouTube videos, blogs and wiki. Nowadays, students can have access to instructional materials at home such as available videos on the internet and all learning materials are stored and distributed electronically on it. Therefore Web-Based applications are considered as friend environment for EFL students to search related issues from websites, and there are not the management issues associated and if they miss their regular classes, they are able to go to a web site and find instructional materials they missed during their absence. (Mathew, Dohery-Poirier, 2000)[4]

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