Utilising Facebook to Enhance Students’ Learning and Learning Experience in the Digital Era: Promises and Possibilities

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Organization of Presentation

- Objective of English Language Learning
- Classical Problems associated with EFL Classrooms
- How these problems can be addressed by making effective use of Social Media (Facebook)
- Some ideas on how to use FB for language learning
One of the primary objectives of English language teaching is enabling learners to be proficient users capable of communicating in the target language (Oxford, 1990).

However, in some Asian countries, this objective is not always easy to achieve due to limitations associated with language learning environments.
Cziko (2005) identified the following challenges associated with EFL Classrooms:

- Limited exposure and opportunities to use the target language
- Exposure to inaccurate forms or expressions
- Limited opportunities for authentic communication
- Limited language ability and cultural knowledge of the teachers
- Teaching and learning often occur in a decontextualised way.
Possible Solutions:

- Use of social media can help address most, if not all, of the challenges identified previously.
- Social interaction mediated by technology is critical to both language learning and language acquisition.
Challange #1: Limited exposure and opportunities to use the target language

- Follow news feeds such as CNN student news and add comments or watch relevant videos posted on Facebook.
- Have students join groups associated with EFL and participate in the discussion or share relevant links (such as Dave’s ESL Cafe).
- Practice the target language they learn in the classroom with native English speakers.
Challange#2: Exposure to inaccurate forms or expressions produced by both fellow students and the teacher

- Access to unlimited resources available online such as news, videos and websites with more natural language and expressions commonly used by native English speakers.
- Students may even have access to native English speakers.
Challange #3: Limited opportunities for authentic communication

- Whereas students learn such topics as interviewing people, introducing oneself, etc., the communication that takes place is, in most cases, artificial in nature.
- In comparison, communication that takes place on Facebook is more authentic and contextual for real life purposes in the process of negotiation of meaning.
Challange #4: Limited language ability and cultural knowledge of the teachers

- EFL teachers vary in their language proficiency and in their cultural knowledge of the target language.
- At times, teacher’s knowledge of the target language and the culture is so limited that students are frequently exposed to inappropriate culture or expressions.
- Using Facebook, such limitations could be minimised provided that students are interacting with native or near-native interlocutors.
Challenge 5: Teaching and learning often occur in a decontextualised way

- Interaction using FB is highly contextual and communication takes place naturally in the process of negotiating of meaning.
- The availability of various tools such as synchronous and asynchronous communication used for real life purposes makes FB highly contextual
Some Ideas

Tandem Language Learning
Some Ideas

Posting Cartoons or Photos and Have Students Comment
Some Ideas

Debates/Discussion Using FB
Some Ideas

Sharing Personal Experience or Story
Some Ideas

- Posting Relevant Links to the Group
- Posting Assignment/Project
In a nutshell

- Social media as a by-product of Web 2.0 has had significant implications not only on how people communicate in the digital era, but it has also had significant implications on how people learn.
- Classical challenges associated with EFL classrooms can potentially be addressed by integrating Facebook into such classrooms.
- Use of Facebook is compatible with current learning theories and FB offers a wide range of benefits which may not be available in a conventional classroom.
Thank You...