

SOCIAL MEDIA AS ONE OF THE PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING ENGLISH FOR STUDENTS

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English language continues to take the first place among the languages that are used as means of international communication. Most of the English teachers complain that apart from poor vocabulary and grammar difficulties we can find lack of interest among the learners, on the other hand, most learners complain that inefficient teaching tools and methods have made them so.

This article illustrates how social media can influence and improve teaching and learning English significantly. Originated in the world of the Social Media or the so-called Social Networking has already been integrated into an informal education system for decades; i.e. teleconference and distance learning before it has evolved into a more sophisticated system, e-learning. However, these applications were not developed for learning purposes and there is a controversy of using new Social Media such as Facebook or Twitter. The discussion is varied by many studies of such international scientists as D. Anderson, T. Bosch, J. Dalton and other. In Ukrainian scientific world this question is still in its infancy. Despite this fact, the amount of social networks' users in Ukraine is constantly growing. The statistics shows that from the beginning of 2013 the Ukrainian audience of Facebook has increased for 36% and at present there are more than 3 million people who have the account on Facebook. Furthermore, almost 80% of students use such social media resources as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Wikis and YouTube. Such data give us the opportunity to claim that the problem of social networking influencing the learning of English has the same importance in Ukraine as in other countries of the world.

Social media are digital applications varied by their purposes of use: communicating, discussing, private chatting, selling products, etc. We can distinguish two types of social media: *synchronous and asynchronous communication tools*.

Ashley defined the synchronous tool as a tool which “enables real-time communication and collaboration in a "same time-different place" mode”, while the asynchronous “enable communication and collaboration over a period of time through a "different time-different place" mode”. The synchronous tools, e.g. audio-video conferencing, chat and instant messaging, Twitter, Skype, etc., have some advantages in that they offer spontaneous reaction, updated data and immediate feedback, while the asynchronous tools, e.g. e-mail, web board, web blogs, streaming video-audio, etc., have less immediate interaction, and the delayed response will cause information to be out-of-date. However, it’s not always plausible to respond quickly because in some cases, message receivers need some time to digest the information. The selection of synchronous and asynchronous depends on the purposes of correspondence between senders and receivers, hereby; the teachers and the students whether they want to communicate in real time or share information for later use.

Students are experiencing the world through more than just books and assignments; they are learning and adapting to the world using a relatively new form of communication. They quickly bond themselves to those tools such as YouTube, iTunes, Facebook, blogging and twittering, to mention a few. Most people use them for recreational purposes such as “gaming, communication, and shaping online spaces for expression of personal identity”. Yet, social media tools are wonderful communication tools. If we use those tools wisely and integrate them in teaching process, we can leverage student technology skills for learning purposes.

The goal of the modern English language teacher must be to engage the student into the process of study using the means that are familiar to him. In that way it will be possible to create a comfortable environment for the student and improve the teacher-student relationships.

Teachers should change their role into “facilitator” rather than the “giver-of-knowledge” and promote more group work and relaxing learning environments. Students, meanwhile, have to engage in online task-based learning or discussions. A teacher can create a group in face book and make it public to make all his interested

learners to become a part of it. Competitions can be conducted which could improve the writing skills of the learners. Inviting guests / learners, uploading examples, videos pertaining to the topic, using wall to encourage them, discussion boards that allows even the slow learner in a class to come out of his queries without any sort of fear. This can help students to overcome their shyness in asking questions outside the classroom, and not to unrestrained by boundaries between lecturers and themselves.

With the increasing of the role of network in modern life, IT-specialists started to develop different programs that can be used as great resources for teachers and students.

According to Facebook Web site statistics, there are more than 400 million active users from over 180 The growing use of Wiki is mostly for learning resources and collaborative projects. It is the second highly-used tool among students in the study. Another wiki use in education is the collaborative wiki application. Students can work together in teams collaboratively on projects. YouTube has dedicated a special channel for education called TeacherTube for teachers to upload instructional materials and share with other educators. It provides great resources for both teachers and students. Furthermore, about a year ago, YouTube released another education related site, YouTube EDU, that aggregated thousands of free lectures.

Tweeter teachers created by Tara Benwell vividly expresses the benefits of using tweets for Teaching English, “Twitter is a great networking site for TEFL. You can use twitter to: meet other teachers, post links to your blog, share links to TEFL articles, share links to online lessons, write and read teacher tips, stay connected to your favorite sites, learn other languages, get inspiration for your classes, keep in touch with your friends and teachers even when you are away from your institution”.

To sum up, it could be said that the English language teachers should consider the constant using of social networks among students even during the lesson not as a problem but as one of the possible ways to teach them English, removing the language boundaries, the uncertainty and even the lack of interest.