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Facebook As A Vehicle For Learning English - A Case Study

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How to cite:

Nevin-Drummond, Linda (2019). Facebook As A Vehicle For Learning English - A Case Study. Research Summary for the Open University module H818 The Networked Practitioner

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MON: Facebook As A Vehicle For Learning English - A Case Study (Linda Nevin-Drummond)

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Linda Nevin-Drummond

30 January 2019

Facebook is the most popular social networking site worldwide (Statista, October 2018).

Founder Mark Zuckerberg began by setting up a social network for a university group; so, since its inception Facebook has been associated with learning. This project focuses on the use of Facebook(FB) for English language learning purposes.

Manca and Ranieri, 2016 set out two main affordances of FB for learning: Firstly, a mixture of instructional material and information and knowledge produced elsewhere, and secondly, a mixture of a learning context blended with learners' social and personal lives. Studies summarised in Pritchard, 2013, have looked at these uses of FB in formal and informal learning. Positive outcomes were reported in terms of FB's free, easy access to learning sites with the motivating factors of allowing autonomy and already being within the learners' competence. (Akbari et al , 2015) The second affordance emphasised the motivating factor of relatedness, which can be blended with learning.

The case study group was a community English group, utilising formal and informal learning. Students were surveyed and FB was identified as the most common SNS (social networking site) used.(n=12 out of a possible group of about 30). Students completed a short mainly closed answers questionnaire exploring their feelings about FB and how they currently used it. They were asked about their interest in learning English and were finally invited to join a closed FB group with the stated purpose of learning English.

The group was set up and students were encouraged to join. The tutor of the group (myself) utilised various features of the FB group. In the discussion section, students were invited to answer questions based on the week's lesson. Links were posted to education websites and quizzes and polls were set up. Students were encouraged to use the chat section but were not given any particular direction.

Eleven out of twelve of those already using FB said they were very positive or slightly less positive about using it – one was negative. All used it to keep in touch with family and friends in their own language, added photos and commented on others' posts.

It took some time for students to sign up to the group. The numbers were small (n=4) and a qualitative analysis has been made of their use of FB, and which of the two affordances have

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been most utilised. A blog /running commentary has been kept by the tutor as well as an analysis of the use that the learners have made of the features of FB – chat, discussion and responses to the educational activities posted. The findings so far indicate a more enhanced response to the second affordance, in line with other studies. Before the presentation, short interviews will be conducted to explore motivation and perceived learning both in those who used the FB group and those who did not.

This case study report will be shared via public media to enable feedback to be received from a broad audience.

References

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2. Manca, S and Raneri, M, 2016 *Is Facebook still a suitable technology-enhanced learning environment? An updated critical review of the literature from 2012 to 2015*

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Available from

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/264810/number-of-monthly-active-facebook-users-worldwide/>

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[patrick shearer](#)

11:00pm 3 February 2019 [Permalink](#)



Hi Linda,

I have been trying to use social networking tools with my students. Facebook, instagram, whatsapp and more recently Edmodo. The motivation was to try and engage students in something less formal than moodle - and something they are already familiar with. We have had limited success depending on the group and subject area. One thing is for certain - more traditional methods are disappearing fast. I enjoyed reading your work



[Linda Nevin-Drummond](#)

11:30pm 3 February 2019 [Permalink](#)

thanks very much Patrick for your comment. You seem to have tried more than me, i am not familiar with Edmodo- how has that gone for your group?

I am also not having a lot of success so will have to keep exploring further when I see the students face to face which is just weekly so it takes some time! The main thing the students like so far are photos so I have used some to try to draw them in! Maybe instagram would be better for that but my students are not keen on this - only one wants to use it.

All the best

Linda



[Linda Nevin-Drummond](#)

11:31pm 3 February 2019 [Permalink](#)

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[Phill Grimes](#)

11:18pm 13 February 2019 (Edited 11:18pm 13 February 2019) [Permalink](#)

I would like to see how this pans out as students comment to me that they don't want their SNS spaces invaded!!! I suggested snapchat and oh.... the back lash



[Linda Nevin-Drummond](#)

8:22am 14 February 2019 [Permalink](#)

Dear Phil

It is still not going very well I think. My students do not have much English and it can be difficult exploring why. they do not join in the first place. The main factor they express is 'time'

Of those who have joined, I have two who will post regularly so at least a dialogue is carrying on. This would mirror what they do in their own language. even when they can't come to the face to face lessons they carry on in Facebook. i dont correct any English at all online but can follow it up later.

I use my face to face sessions to promote the group. I post ahead of the lesson and afterwards to follow up.

Changing the social media network wouldn't help in the case, as if they dont want to join Facebook, they dont want to join anything else.

Linda

[Phill Grimes](#)



11:39am 16 February 2019 [Permalink](#)

We have found the students very particular and there definitely is not a one platform fits all.

one group likes a teacher / grp snapchat, another grp does not.

another group are happy to do it over facebook, but a similar grp are like "we don't do facebook", much as you have found.

twitter is dead, generally; except one grp love it...

As a teacher wanting to use Social media, we have to be the ones well versed in all types so as to be able to adapt to the students. Seems a full time job in itself.



[Dr Simon Ball](#)

10:57am 19 February 2019 [Permalink](#)

Hi Linda

Well done on a great presentation! Here is a summary of the comments and questions you received following your presentation (including those you may have addressed verbally). Please respond in whatever way you choose - I suspect you may wish to deal with the first few in one response!

Best wishes

Simon

- ▶ did you decide against using Twitter, or are you using it in conjunction with Facebook?
- ▶ How did you set group expectations Linda?
- ▶ Did any of your students express any concern about exposing their personal lives to their student group? They may not recognise or want to admit that this is this issue for them.
- ▶ Do you use the FB group for blended learning or just as an extra tool for outside the classroom?
- ▶ Very interesting. It's a bit like visitor resident spectrum, being residents if its used socially but feeling like a visitor for learning english



[Linda Nevin-Drummond](#)

10:59am 20 February 2019 [Permalink](#)

thanks all for your comments. Thanks Simon for your skilful hosting and all elase you have done.

re twitter- No one seemed to be currently using this and it seemed a step to far to try ! I will look into ir and found a paper by Rosell- Aguilar- Twitter as a formal and informal language

learning tool

<https://research-publishing.net/manuscript?10.14705/rpnet.2018.22.780>

group expectations- not quite sure about that - will have to think more about it . i am making it up as a go along mostly!

exposing personal lives is a big issue and will look more into this. i will take up Simons comment about uploading a picture of a bird (or similar!) to try to not give any possible threat)

I did use facebook for blended learning and am still experimenting with the best way to do this. any ideas are welcome !

I have now looked at visitor resident spectrum as it was new to me and will see how i can apply it . Thanks everyone for your helpful comments

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