



Social networking/Social learning: Connecting the two

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Overview

- [Intro to Intro](#)
- Introduction
- Some caveats & warnings
- Facebook
- Diigo
- Rateitall
- Conclusion



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Introduction



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Introduction

- Facebook alone:
 - has more than 70 million active users
 - more than 6 million active user groups on the site
 - The U.K. has the most users outside of the United States, with more than 8 million active users
 - Over 20,000 applications have been built on Facebook Platform ([Source](#)) (May 2008)
- Must be possible to harness this type of usage for education!



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Some caveats & warnings

- Traditional language labs gave students illusion of practising autonomously, while really the teacher/materials were in control
- The nature of many of the following activities in digital language labs will cause you to lose control!!
- Some of the following activities are serious, some may be deemed “Friday afternoon” ones



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Facebook



- One of the largest social-networking facilities
- Allows individuals to set up their profiles and add others as “friends”
- Allows individuals to join existing groups and form new ones
- Allows individuals to add Applications, use them, and create new ones
- View [Eric's Facebook page](#)



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Facebook Groups facebook

- Can be formed and joined by anyone
- Can find groups on pretty much [anything you can imagine](#)
- Contain forums, facility for embedding images, videos, sharing Facebook Applications and more
- Ideas for use...


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Facebook Groups facebook

- Students browse groups, explore a number and join at least one. Actively participate in it over the course of a term/year. In particular, contribute to forums ([Example](#))
- Students (or, in a pinch, you) set up a Group for your class. Students use it to communicate with each other outside class & after course


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Facebook Groups facebook

- Set tasks *around* a group or the concept of groups
 - summarise the latest discussion thread on Group X
 - choose a recent posting of 100 words or more then analyse and re-write it to suit different genre/audience
 - compare Groups X and Y (on same topic) based on criteria set by students or you


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Facebook Applications facebook

• Over 20,000 applications that do all kinds of things. Some applications and ideas for them:

- **Photos**. Students share photos amongst themselves in their FB Group. Choose one photo posted by someone else and write a description of it. (→ other students try to identify the photo from description)



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Facebook Applications facebook

• **Traveler IQ Challenge**: Students create their own Traveler Challenge individually or in groups for rest of class on basis of interest or personal events (→ class discussions)

- **Funwall**: Set a task for students to perform on Funwall, e.g. find & post a video/picture/critique of film etc. Other students must post reply or reaction of some sort



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Facebook Applications facebook

• Students browse/search [list of applications](#) and select one as a group to use throughout the term in a relevant way. Note: important to give time-limits – easy to spend a lot of time getting distracted on Facebook!



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Diigo



- “Highlight and share the web”
- Allows you to [bookmark websites](#), tag them with relevant key words, and share your bookmarks with the world
- Allows you to search other people’s tags and find sites of interest (better than Google because hand-picked)
- Allows you to find out what [people with similar interest](#) have bookmarked



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Diigo



- Allows you to apply [sticky notes and comments onto webpages](#) for yourself or others
- Means “[conversations](#)” can take place around [webpages](#)
- Ways of using Diigo with your students...



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Diigo



- Annotate a webpage with tasks using a sticky note/comment. Students visit the page and perform the task. Tasks can include
 - Highlighting of any unfamiliar words. Other students add their own definitions of the word to the page using sticky notes
 - (Multiple-choice) comprehension tasks to sentence/paragraph/whole text



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Diigo



- Ask students to research a particular topic/news item and ask them to bookmark & tag two relevant sites each
- Students visit each others' sites and (individually or in pairs/groups) write a summary of the information



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Diigo



- Devise a Webquest around a small number of sites which you have bookmarked and tagged
- Add additional information to one or more of the websites via sticky notes/comments
- Once students are familiar with Webquests, get them to create their own (in pairs/groups) for each other



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rateitall



- Website dedicated to rating anything at all. [Actors](#), [beer](#), [politicians](#), [cars](#), [MP3 players](#) – anything
- Allows visitors to rate existing content with 1 – 5 stars and add reviews/comments
- Users can create lists and custom rating scales. Users can add content to existing lists
- Ways of using it with students include...



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rateitall



- Students find a person/object of interest and write a product review/newspaper article about it based on users' feedback
- Students write a review of a film they have recently seen/object they use... and post it to the site
- Class creates a list of useful websites for their language learning and each student posts a review for each site



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rateitall



- Students read about a current personality on one or more websites (BBC News, CNN...). Then read reviews about them on rateitall. Are the opinions expressed by journalists the same as the average user? Student writes article/prepares presentation about similarities and differences



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rateitall



- Ask students to track the rating of something/someone topical – e.g. US presidential candidates. Students write up/give oral presentation every week/month on trends, and reason for the trends



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Conclusion

- There are 100s of social network sites. Nearly every one of them will have some usefulness as a language learning tool
- Ask students to present to each other (5 minutes max) any tools they use. See if one or more of them are particularly common or exploitable
- Tap into students' enthusiasm for networking and channel it for language learning



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