

ESL Teachers' Professional Development on Facebook

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ABSTRACT

ESL teacher from around the world can create or join Facebook pages, groups or clubs for ESL teachers for free. Those pages are online learning communities that provide opportunities for in-depth peer-to-peer interaction. They help teachers exchange knowledge, information and experiences. They create social inter-personal rapport among the participants. They foster dialog among teachers, promote asynchronous self-directed learning, peer support and greater involvement in teaching-learning and student-teacher issues. They provide opportunities for cognitive, social, and teaching presences and are essential for the successful development of online learning communities. Members of the Facebook ESL teachers' pages constitute a homogeneous group of teachers from different countries and cultures and the climate of interaction is warm and positive. Members are inclusive, supportive and receptive of each other's ideas and attend to each other's needs. Members can upload and download resources such as tests, video activities, movies for the ESL classroom, ebooks, lesson plans, software, and worksheets. They post questions and receive answers about teaching and learning English such as: how to become a teacher, teaching via skype, grammar usage rules, improving students' accent, ideas for increased comprehension, communicative activities, how to reinforce speaking, problems in teaching writing, reading, grammar, pronunciation...etc. Facebook teachers' pages also enhance teachers' awareness of non-conventional ESL teaching issues such as: Teaching business with no teaching certificate, Facebook pen-friends, teaching in rural schools in China, online tutoring, testing private students at Euro levels, using songs in TEFL, ideas for teaching presentation with 600 students, and others. The presentation will give examples of Facebook pages, groups or clubs for ESL teachers, kinds of topics, issues and problems posted about the teaching and learning of English to students of all ages, the role of Facebook teachers' pages in professional development as perceived by a sample of ESL teacher members.