

English Teachers in France and Facebook: Use and Professional Growth

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Abstract

Does Facebook have an effect on English teachers in France? For this, a group of 85 secondary school English teachers in France aged 21 to 50+ were recruited from Facebook's English teacher groups and answered an online questionnaire on their usages and practices. We observed no differences as regards to age and frequency of use, no effect between the number of associations to English teachers' groups and professional growth, no significant relationship between the amount of participation and support used and professional growth in time, finally, sharing lessons online was a significant predictor of how some English teachers help others grow professionally. Regrettably, this study was limited to only a few groups. Thus, investigating the use of SNS in a broader context could open the possibility for the development of future research on this field.

Keywords: Facebook, English teachers, France, practices

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Introduction

Some of the most popular sites on the internet are social networking sites. They are defined as sites that establish and maintain connections with others. The most common reason Facebook users say they use these sites is to connect with friends (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Hew, 2011), to send personal and public messages, to play games and to share photos (Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009; Boyd & Ellison, 2007). However, even though users most frequently interact with those they already know (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007), Facebook may be an effective way to connect with people they have not met before (Roblyer et al., 2010). For Ractham & Firpo (2011) for example, communities of practice "help foster a culture of learning in which users share their prior experience and learn from the experience of others" (2011, p. 2). For Kabilan, Ahmad & Jafre (2010), learning can definitely take place in informal settings as long as there are meaningful interactions that lead to knowledge construction. The advantages of using social sites for educational purposes are far ranging. Many teachers are familiar with using social media

like Facebook for private communication (Cunha Jr., van Oers, & Kontopodis, 2016) and for participating in groups for educational purposes (Charlton, Magoulas, & Laurillard, 2012; Hewitt & Forte, 2006) in order to discuss themes relating to classroom practices and have access to different sources of information and opportunities for communication (Dron & Anderson, 2007; Abdulahi et al., 2014; Ahn, 2011). According to Kajornboon (2013), Facebook is a powerful tool to be used for learning English and promoting learning attributes. Facebook therefore has the potential to be a “place where the diverse parts of the same community . . . come together and hold a conversation with a shared sense of participation and responsibility” (Dales et al. as cited in Schwartz, 2009). Regardless of its popularity and its providing interactive and collaborative aspects, the value of Facebook as a learning environment has not been fully explored (Manca & Ranierit, 2013). Thus, it is essential to investigate how Facebook can be involved with education as Facebook may help teachers find a place to share and communicate.

An array of studies on the use of Facebook (Ajjan & Hartshorne, 2008; Godwin-Jones, 2008; Blattner & Fiori, 2009; Mazman & Usluel, 2010; Cain & Policastri, 2011; Manca & Ranieri, 2013) indicates a number of potential benefits to using Facebook as an educational tool: communication, collaboration and resource/material sharing. For other studies, teachers and learners with different amounts of experience and knowledge should always interact with each other, exchange information, ideas and knowledge, and help assess or edit each other comments while learning together (Knowles, 1980, Troike, 2006, Yang, 2004). Thus, Facebook can make teaching and learning more effective especially when focused on the diversity of experience or knowledge of the teachers and the learners. Kabilan, Ahmad & Jafre (2010) emphasize that Facebook also allows for incidental learning, learning that occurs as an unplanned result of engaging in other activities. Towner & Muñoz (2011) note that learning is actively constructed by comparing material individuals already know, by collaboration and sharing of ideas. Thus, the more opportunity for dialogue and sharing of ideas, the more learning can take place. This exploration of informal teacher professional development within the context of Facebook is guided by the literature related to teacher knowledge development (Shulman, 1987; Verloop, Van Driel, & Meijer, 2001) and effective teacher professional development (Borko, 2004; Darling-Hammond, & Mclaughlin, 1995; Nord, 2004; Smylie, Allensworth, Greenberg, Harris, & Luppescu, 2001; Warren-Little, 2006; Wei, Darling-

Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009). These studies altogether suggest that social network sites such as Facebook do have potential to be utilized for instructional purposes but that the results may vary depending on how they are used and even for what course they are used. It therefore seems to make sense to look at how Facebook teachers' groups might be used by English teachers in France to better their practices in the classroom.

This study discusses how working English teachers in France use Facebook as their own learning platform and as a way to better their own teaching. While there are quite a few studies that prove the educational potential of Facebook, research gaps still exist. Some studies for example have been conducted on college and university students (Alagoz, 2013; Ledbetter & Finn, 2013; Oldmeadow, Quinn, & Kowert, 2012; Wan, Wang, & Haggerty, 2008), others focused on pre-service teachers (Chen, Liao, Chen, & Lee, 2011; Tseng & Kuo, 2014; Yeh, 2010) but the educational potential for teachers in secondary education remains unclear. There are also scales which have been created and used to determine the usage of social sites like the Facebook intensity scale formulated by Ellison et al. (2007) for the scale on Facebook addiction by Andreassen, Torsheim, Brunborg & Pallesen (2012). However, no such scale has been constructed specifically for our context. In addition, social networks remain to be explored as scholars currently have a restricted grasp of who is using these sites and why (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). This study will fill the gap of studies focusing on the use of Facebook by English teachers in France who are already working. Within the context of this study, we believe that the participation of English teachers in Facebook groups can be an alternative approach to improve the quality of their classes. The research aims to investigate the effect of Facebook to enhance the effectiveness of English language teachers.

Purpose and Research questions

The present study aims at observing how working secondary school English teachers in France use Facebook groups to move beyond the traditional teaching model. The following research questions are addressed in the study:

- I. Do younger teachers use more social media than older teachers?

2. Does the number of teachers' associations to teachers' groups on social media like Facebook help secondary school English teachers in France grow professionally online but also in real life with time?
3. Does the amount of online participation and support used by a secondary school English teacher in France have a link with how (s) he grows professionally in real life with time?
4. Does the number of groups a secondary school English teacher in France belong to and how often (s)he participates to the groups and/or gives/uses supports have a link with how other teachers grow professionally?

Method

Participant

To pilot the instrument, a group of secondary school English teachers in France were recruited from Facebook's English teacher groups. All were French teachers teaching English as a second language and all teachers, prior to starting to answer our questionnaire, received and validated an informed consent form regarding their participation to the study. Our population was made up of 85 randomly selected secondary school English teachers from all over France (N = 85). Together, there were 5 men (5.89%) and 80 women (94.11%), 30 were teaching middle school (35.29%) and 55 high school (64.70%). The teachers (M = 2.56 out of 4; SD = .981) were divided in 4 groups depending on their age: 15 teachers were aged 21 to 30 (17.64%), 22 were aged 31 to 40 (25.88%), 33 were aged 41 to 50 (38.82%) and finally, 15 were 51 or more (17.64%). Participants were motivated to complete the questionnaire with humble request.

Data collection

Facebook indicates that there are a lot of public groups with the terms "Professeursd'anglais/Enseignantd'anglais/English teacher" in its title. Some have thousands of members, others barely a hundred but all are English teachers interested in connecting with other educators to share ideas and resources. The Facebook groups at the center of this investigation are (1) Worksheets PDF – English Teaching Resources, (2) ESL games and activities, (3) mutualisons,

profs d'anglais, (4) Professeursd'anglais: Partage de sequences et d'idées, and (5) Ressources for ESL/EFL Teachers. In addition to being typical examples of the many teacher groups on Facebook, these groups were selected for study because they had a lot of French teachers teaching English in middle and high schools.

To answer the questions of our retrospective study, a questionnaire was created in October 2019 and a purposive sample of French English teachers in France using professional groups on Facebook were selected to participate in this study. Based on our theoretical framework, the questionnaire was developed by the researcher and used to understand the English teachers' perspectives on how they used Facebook's professional English teachers' groups and how they impacted on their own and other teachers' professional growth. It consisted of twenty close-ended questions: (1) What is your sex? (2) What is your age group? (3) Which social network platform do you use? (4) Which level are you teaching? (5) Which method do you use the most in class? (6) Do you belong to English teachers' group on different platforms? (7) Do you belong to English teachers' group on Facebook? (8) How often do you consult your personal Facebook account? (9) How often do you consult your professional Facebook account? (10) How often do you write up new posts on Facebook in your English teachers' group(s)? (11) How often do you answer other teachers' posts on Facebook in your English teachers' group(s)? (12) How often do you share lessons on Facebook in your English teachers' group(s)? (13) How often do you download other teachers' support on Facebook in your English teachers' group(s)? (14) How often do you use other teachers' support in the classroom? (15) Did you find yourself new friends or a good community in your English teachers' group(s)? (16) Do you think it is important to share on Facebook what is happening in school? (17) Do you think it is important to share in school what is happening on Facebook? (18) Have you become a better English teacher in real life over time? (19) Have you become a better English teacher thanks to Facebook's group(s)? (20) Have you helped another English teacher become a better teacher? The survey instrument consisted of checklist items examining participants' experiences and attitudes toward using Facebook as an informal learning tool. The questionnaire is made up of 20 questions divided in 2 parts: the participants presents him(her)self, his(her) teaching methods and presence on social media in the six first questions by answering close-end questions and then, over the following 14 questions, (s)he expresses his(her) habits on

Facebook English teacher professional groups. The generated questions intended to capture social networking usage by using the Likert (1932) scale. The items were aligned so they could all be answered using a 3-point Likert scale with Never=1, Sometimes=2 and Always=3. After getting written informed consents from all subjects, the questionnaire was distributed in November 2019 on several Facebook groups for French English teachers in France. The data collection procedure was carried online and it lasted for one week. The responses recorded in SPSS were used to assess the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha for teachers' participations and support was at .835 and the correlations showed that the responses given by the teachers could be accepted as reliable regarding their consistency.

Data analysis and sample

In the present study, a quantitative approach was adopted. The data analysis procedure included the study of descriptive statistics and correlations for each category observed.

As a first step, we looked at the first few questions of the questionnaires that were presenting the 85 participants of the online survey. Here is what the group looked like:

- 17.65% are aged 21-30, 25.88% are aged 31-40, 38.82% are aged 41-50 and 17.65% are aged 51 or more;
- 35.29% teach in middle schools and 64.70% teach in high schools;
- The 21-30 age group has 5.9 social network accounts, the 31-40 age group has 5.4, the 41-50 age group 5 and the 51+ age group 5.1;
- The youngest and the oldest groups are more flexible as regards to the creation of their lessons (respectively 86.5% and 90%) whereas the two other groups tend to use more both fixed methods and personal flexibility (respectively 81.5% and 83%);
- 86% to 90% of the teachers have found new friends or a new community they enjoy and can relate to;
- Younger teachers tend to share more information (from school to Facebook and vice versa) (respectively 40% and 47%) than older teachers (respectively 27% and 40%).

Those descriptive responses are presented in Table I to enable one to see the various groups of values included in the study. The descriptive analysis revealed the mean scores achieved in each group.

Table I

Presentation of participants according to the age groups

	aged	Numbers of teachers working in		Average number of SN accounts on different platforms		Most common method of teaching (1=method / 2=flexible)		Found friends or community (1=yes / 2=no)	Share information: school to Facebook - Facebook to school (1=yes / 2=no)
French English teachers in France	21-30	5	in middle schools	5.9	3	1.73 / 2	1.6	1.73 / 2	1.2 - 1.06 / 2
		10	in high schools		2.9		1.8		
	31-40	9	in middle schools	5.4	3.2	1.63 / 2	1.55	1.77 / 2	1.27 - 1.22 / 2
		13	in high schools		2.2		1.69		
	41-50	11	in middle schools	5	2.1	1.66 / 2	1.45	1.72 / 3	1.33 - 1.06 / 2
		22	in high schools		2.9		1.77		
	51+	5	in middle schools	5.1	2.8	1.8 / 2	1.8	1.8 / 2	1.46 - 1.2 / 2
		10	in high schools		2.3		1.8		

As a second step, the descriptive responses obtained from the Likert scale survey questions were analyzed in order to answer the research questions. They were evaluated by getting the mean scores of each group for each question and were correlated.

Results

The findings of the study are discussed in the order of the research questions.

Younger teachers vs. Older teachers?

To answer the question: “Do younger teachers use more social media than older teachers?” (RQ1), participants were asked to give their age brackets and the number of all social network site accounts they had.

Out of the 2 groups making up the youngest teachers (aged 21 to 40) ($n = 37$; $M = 1.59/2$), they appeared to have an average of 2.76 social network accounts per person ($SD = 1.164$). The most used sites are Facebook (100%), WhatsApp (78.37%) and Instagram (56.75%) whereas the less used sites are Twitter (24.32%) and other less known sites (16.21%). They claim to check their personal Facebook account just over 6 days a week ($M = 1.81/2$; $SD = .397$), to belong to more than 3 teachers' groups ($M = 3.03$; $SD = .986$) and to check their professional Facebook account just over 5 days a week ($M = 1.57/2$; $SD = .502$).

On the other hand, out of the 2 groups making up the oldest teachers (aged 41 to 51+) ($N = 48$; $M = 3.31$ sur 4), they appeared to have an average of 2.58 social network accounts per person ($SD = .986$). The most used sites are Facebook (100%), WhatsApp (77.08%) and Instagram (52.08%) whereas the less used sites are Twitter (18.75%) and other less known sites (12.5%). They claim to check their personal Facebook account just over 6 days a week ($M = 1.83/2$; $SD = .377$), to belong to less than 3 teachers' groups ($M = 2.92$; $SD = 1.007$) and to check their professional Facebook account close to 6 days a week ($M = 1.71/2$; $SD = .459$).

The results from independent samples T-test show that younger teachers do not differ from older teachers on the overall number of social network accounts they have (younger teachers, $M = 2.76$, $SD = 1.164$ and older teachers, $M = 2.58$, $SD = .986$), $t(83) = .743$, $p = .460$. The average number of social network accounts they have is generally high. The same results show that younger teachers do not differ from older teachers on the number of professional Facebook accounts they have (younger teachers, $M = 1.03$, $SD = .164$ and older teachers, $M = 1.00$, $SD = .000$), $t(83) = 1.141$, $p = .257$. Moreover, the results from independent samples T-test show that younger teachers do not differ from older teachers on the average number of personal social network accounts they have (younger teachers, $M = 1.81$, $SD = .397$ and older teachers, $M = 1.83$, $SD = .377$), $t(83) = -.267$, $p = .790$. Finally, the results from independent samples T-test show that younger teachers do not differ from older teachers on the average check their professional Facebook account (younger teachers, $M = 1.57$, $SD = .502$ and older teachers, $M = 1.71$, $SD = .459$), $t(83) = .021$, $p = .182$. Thus, contrary to what we believed, there are no differences between the younger and the older English teachers in France as regards to the frequency of use of their Facebook accounts.

Number of teachers' memberships on social media in relation to professional growth?

To answer the question: "Does the number of teachers' memberships to teachers' groups on social media like Facebook help secondary school English teachers in France grow professionally online but also in real life with time?" (RQ2), participants were asked the number of professional English teachers' groups they belong to on Facebook but also if they had grown professionally in real life with time or thanks to Facebook's professional teachers' groups.

According to the data collected, the 85 French English teachers belonged to just under 3 professional teachers' groups ($M = 2.96$; $SD = .993$) on Facebook. They generally thought they were becoming better teachers online thanks to Facebook professional teachers' groups ($M = 1.40/2 - 1$ being the most positive $-$; $SD = .493$) but also most importantly in real life over time ($M = 1.11/2 - 1$ being the most positive $-$; $SD = .310$).

The correlations (see *Table 2*) proved that there was no significant relationship between whether French English teachers in France think they have become better teachers in real life with time and the number of associations they have to English teachers' groups.

There was however a significant and negative correlation between the professional growth happening within Facebook professional English teachers' groups and the number of associations they have with English teachers' groups ($r = -.238$; $p = .028$). A simple linear regression was carried out to investigate the relationship between professional growth happening within Facebook professional English teachers' groups (level of growth) and the number of associations they have with those groups (number of groups). The slope coefficient for professional growth happening within Facebook professional English teachers' groups was $-.480$ so the number of associations they have decreases by 0.480 every time a teacher thinks (s)he grew professionally thanks to Facebook professional English teachers' groups. The R^2 value was $.057$ so 5.7% of the variation in the number of associations they have can be explained by professional growth happening within Facebook professional English teachers' groups.

There was also a positive and significant relationship between professional growth in real life with time and professional growth happening within Facebook professional English teachers' groups ($r = .265$; $p = .014$). Another simple linear regression was carried out to investigate the relationship between professional growth happening within Facebook professional English teachers' groups (level of growth) and professional growth happening in real life with time (level of growth). The slope coefficient for professional growth happening within Facebook professional English teachers' groups was $.167$ so professional growth happening in real life with time increases by 0.167 every time a teacher thinks (s)he grew professionally thanks to Facebook professional English teachers' groups. The R^2 value was $.070$ so 7% of the variation in professional growth happening in real life with time can be explained by the model containing only professional growth happening within Facebook professional English teachers' groups.

Table 2

Correlations as regards to professional growth

<i>Measures</i>		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>
1	Number of associations they have to English teachers' groups	-		
2	Professional growth in real life with time	-0.065	-	
3	Professional growth happening within Facebook professional English teachers' groups	-.238*	.265*	-

We have therefore observed that the number of associations to professional English teachers' groups on Facebook has no effect on the level of professional growth online happening within Facebook professional English teachers' groups or professional growth happening in real life with time.

Amount of online participation and support used in relation to professional growth in real life in time?

To answer the question: "Does the amount of participation and support used by a secondary school English teacher in France have a link with how (s)he grows professionally in real life with time?" (RQ3), participants were asked how often they posted messages on professional English

teachers' groups on Facebook, how often they answered other English teachers' posts, how often they shared lessons online, how often they downloaded support from other teachers, how often they used what they downloaded from the Facebook groups but also if they had grown professionally in real life with time.

Out of the 85 French English teachers, they all agreed, to different levels, that they had grown professionally in real life with time ($M = 1.11$, $SD = .310$). Knowing that 1 was never and 3 often, they declared to seldom write posts ($M = 1.79$, $SD = .514$), they sometimes answered other teachers' posts ($M = 2.05$, $SD = .460$), they seldom shared their own lessons ($M = 1.72$, $SD = .548$), they sometimes downloaded other teachers' lessons ($M = 2.12$; $SD = .498$) and when so, they sometimes used it in the classroom ($M = 2.25$, $SD = .510$). The correlations proved that there was no significant relationship between the real-life professional growth of French English teachers in France and their online participation and the supports they use.

There are nevertheless some positive significant correlations between the writing of posts and the answers to posts ($r = .495$; $p = .00$) as well as the sharing of lessons ($r = .504$; $p = .00$). There are also correlations between the downloading of lessons from other teachers with the sharing of lessons ($r = .254$; $p = .00$) as well as the use of newly downloaded support in the classroom ($r = .353$; $p = .001$). Finally, there was also a positive significant correlation between how often teachers answer posts and how often they share their own lessons ($r = .431$; $p = .00$).

We therefore observed that there was no significant relationship between the amount of participation and support used by a secondary school English teacher in France and how (s)he grows professionally in real life with time.

Number of groups and how often (s)he participates to the groups in relation to other teachers' professional growth?

To answer the question: "Does the number of groups a secondary school English teacher in France belongs to and how often (s)he participates to the groups have a link with how other French English teachers in France grow professionally?"(RQ4), we used the same information as before

about the number of groups French English teachers belonged to and their amount of participation and supports used but we also asked if they thought they had helped other English teachers better their classes.

As stated here above, out of the 85 French English teachers and knowing that 1 was never and 3 often, they declared to seldom write posts ($M = 1.79$, $SD = .514$), they sometimes answered other teachers' posts ($M = 2.05$, $SD = .460$), they seldom shared their own lessons ($M = 1.72$, $SD = .548$), they sometimes downloaded other teachers' lessons ($M = 2.12$; $SD = .498$) and when so, they sometimes used it in the classroom ($M = 2.25$, $SD = .510$). Moreover, 65% of those teachers thought they had helped other teachers grow professionally thanks to their participation and support ($M = 1.35/2$; $SD = .481$).

Correlations (See Table 3) indicated negative and significant relationships between other teachers' professional growth thanks to their help and the number of associations to teachers' groups ($r = -.223$; $p = .04$), how often posts were created ($r = -.272$; $p = .012$), how often the teachers answered posts ($r = -.237$; $p = .029$) and how often they shared their lessons ($r = -.385$; $p = .00$).

Table 3

Correlations as regards to participation and support

Measures	1	2	3	4	5
1 Number of associations they have to English teachers' groups	-				
2 How often posts were created	.078	-			
3 how often the teachers answered posts	.056	.495**	-		
4 how often they shared their lessons	.266*	.504**	.431**	-	
5 Other teachers' professional growth	-.223*	-.272*	-.237*	-.385**	-

A multiple linear regression was calculated to predict how some French English teachers help other English teachers in France grow professionally based on how many teachers' groups they belonged

to, how often they posted messages on professional English teachers' groups on Facebook, how often they answered other English teachers' posts and how often they shared lessons online. A significant regression equation was found ($F(4,80) = 4.304, p = .003$), with an R^2 of .177. The other English teachers' predicted level of professional growth is equal to $2.259 - .084$ (writing up of posts) $- .070$ (answer to other teachers' posts) $- .241$ (sharing of lessons) $- .067$ (number of associations to English teachers' groups), where how often they posted messages on professional English teachers' groups on Facebook, how often they answered other English teachers' posts and how often they shared lessons online is coded or measured as 1 = never, 2 = sometimes and 3 = often, and how many teachers' groups they belonged to is coded or measured as 1 = 1, 2 = 2, 3 = 3 and 4 = 4 or more. How some French English teachers help other English teachers in France grow professionally decreased .067 out of 3 for each number of associations to English teachers' groups, .084 for each writing up of posts, .070 for each answer to other teachers' posts and .241 for each sharing of lessons. Coefficients showed us that how often they shared lessons online was a significant predictor of how some French English teachers help other English teachers in France grow professionally but how many teachers' groups they belonged to, how often they posted messages on professional English teachers' groups on Facebook and how often they answered other English teachers' posts were not.

Discussions

The purpose of this small-scale study was to examine English teachers currently working in France and their professional use of Facebook as a tool for collaborative learning. The preliminary analysis of the data indicated that our population of 85 participants was covering teachers aged 21 to 51 or more. They were French English teachers currently working in French middle and/or high schools and maintaining active both personal and professional Facebook accounts. The participants were also mostly creating their lessons as they went along, adapting them to the place and the public. A minimum of 86% had found new friends and/or a community they could relate to. Finally, the younger the teacher, the more (s)he shared on Facebook and in school.

MDR Teachers and Social Media Survey (2018) stated that US teachers reported heavy use of Facebook. 83% of their respondents said they use Facebook, followed by 72% who use Pinterest, 54% who use Instagram, and 48% who use Twitter. Moreover, according to edWeb.net, MCH Strategic Data, MMS Education (2009), younger educators are more likely to be a member of a social network than older educators. 47% of older educators have nonetheless already joined a social network. Regarding our first research question (“Do younger teachers use more social media than older teachers?”), we however observed that there was no difference between the younger and the older English teachers in France as regards to the number of Facebook accounts and the frequency of use of Facebook. This could be due to the country in which the study is carried out or to the specificity of the subject.

According to English & Duncan-Howell (2008), there are benefits to teachers being able to share course related materials, to create groups, collaborate on projects, to provide peer support and to facilitate teaching. Tartari (2015) showed that social media had a positive effect on communication abilities and information research. Comparably, Deng & Yuen (2011) observed that SNS supported self-expression and self-reflection, as well as social interaction and reflective dialogue. Moreover, those results go along those exposed by Ajjan & Hartshorne (2008), Bosch (2009), Browning, Gerlich, & Westermann (2011), Maloney(2007), Mason (2006) and Mazman & Usluel (2010) who found that they help active learning, collaboration, interaction, information and resource sharing, increased communication and enhanced discussion. Regarding our second research question (“Does the number of teachers’ memberships to teachers’ groups on social media like Facebook help secondary school English teachers in France grow professionally online but also in real life with time?”), we observed that, for English teachers in France, there was no significant relationship between the number of associations to professional English teachers’ groups on Facebook and the level of professional growth online happening within Facebook professional English teachers’ groups or professional growth happening in real life with time. This means that, for this very specific group, Facebook groups do not have any impact on their professional growth.

Ahmed & Qazi (2011) found that social network sites promote interactions. O’Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson noted that staying connected by social media helps share pictures and videos, and exchange

new ideas (2011). Gafni & Deri (2012) used the term “social absorption” for when people use social networks to socialize and open new channels for discovering more academic resources. According to MDR Teachers and Social Media Survey (2018), when connecting online, 81% of teachers look to get inspired with new teaching ideas, 80% want to find resources for their classrooms, 54% want to connect with other educators and 33% want to participate in an online community. Regarding our third research question (“Does the amount of participation and support used by a secondary school English teacher in France have a link with how (s)he grows professionally in real life with time?”), results however showed that there was no significant relationship between the amount of participation and support used by a secondary school English teacher in France and how (s)he grows professionally in real life with time or on Facebook. This means that, for this very specific group, participation and support used from Facebook groups do not have any impact on their professional growth.

Ito *et al.* (2009) reported that social media may influence aspects such as friendship and sharing documents. Dzvapatsva, Mitrovic & Dietrich (2014) declared that Facebook can become “the classroom, available 24/7, and not confined to Mondays to Fridays” unlike the traditional face-to-face medium of teaching which have some space and time restrictions. Regarding our fourth research question (“Does the number of groups a secondary school English teacher in France belongs to and how often (s)he participates to the groups have a link with how other French English teachers in France grow professionally?”), the findings of the study show that the number of time English teachers in France shared lessons online was the only significant predictor of how they help other English teachers in France grow professionally and not the number of teachers’ groups they belong to, the number of times they posted messages on professional English teachers’ groups on Facebook and the number of times they answered other English teachers’ posts.

To answer our main question “Does Facebook have an effect on English teachers in France?”, we have found that Facebook, and with it the number of professional groups English teachers belong to, had no effect on English teachers in France, whatever their age, as regards to their own professional growth. The only relation those teachers had with Facebook seems to be the

professional growth one English teacher in France can bring to another through the sharing of lessons.

The finding of this study rely on volunteers from all over France, both continent and oversea departments. The results are however associated with the following shortcomings:

- One limitation of this research study is its execution in a specific academic and geographical setting. Consequently, its finding may not be generalized to other settings.
- Another limitation of this study is its focus on only Facebook. Since there are many other social networks, other studies concentrating on other social networks may find different results.
- It is also important to note that all participants who responded to the survey reported to have active Facebook account. The design of this study did not attract others who are not active Facebook users to participate in this study.

Empirical research studies aimed at measuring the use of social media networks for both personal and professional development are rare and isolated. A few studies showed how early career teachers are using social media in their professional lives for communication with peers (Greenhow & Gleason, 2014), other English studies how to use Facebook in and around the classroom or the relationship teacher-student on Facebook. According to some authors (Nentwick & König, 2014), there are too many platforms and it would be too time-consuming to study the scholarly usage of SNS. None of those studies however are done in France and/or on actual English teachers' groups on Facebook and therefore none of our results can be compared with the findings of studies conducted previously and with any resemblances and discrepancies. Further research would therefore be needed to substantiate our findings since additional and exhaustive empirical research examining in detail the effective uses of these tools, as well as attitudes and resistance towards them, would be valuable. Empirical research would be able to demonstrate whether social networking tools have a place in professional lives.

Conclusion

Facebook is one of the most used social networks in the world. Sharing things affects our decisions, thinking process, behaviors in several aspects, such as cultural (Manca & Ranieri, 2016), social (Boticki et al., 2015; Jong et al., 2014; Yu et al., 2010) and professional knowledge (Hart & Steinbrecher 2011; Sumuer et al. 2014).

As discussed in the introduction, studies on the use of Facebook by teachers tend to focus on pre-service teachers rather than teachers who are already working (Chen, Liao, Chen, & Lee, 2011; Tseng & Kuo, 2014; Yeh, 2010). In addition, our group secondary school French teachers working in France and teaching English, are typically not considered. The present study aimed at filling this gap by describing how English teachers in France used social media, and in particular Facebook's online teachers' groups, in order to help themselves and other teachers better their practice, and how their online participation had a link with professional growth. The present study wanted to illustrate the benefits that could be obtained from using Facebook English teachers' groups for professional purposes and as a mediation tool enabling French teachers to use different digital materials. We were looking to prove that English teachers in France adjusted their practices through the use of Facebook groups.

This study however demonstrated there are no differences between the younger and the older English teachers in France as regards to the frequency of use of Facebook. It proved that the number of associations to professional English teachers' groups on Facebook has no effect on the level of professional growth online happening within Facebook professional English teachers' groups or professional growth happening in real life with time. Moreover, it proved that there was no significant relationship between the amount of participation and support used by a secondary school English teacher in France and how (s)he grows professionally in real life with time. Finally, how often English teacher in France shared lessons online was a significant predictor of how some of them help other English teachers in France grow professionally. The number of teachers' groups they belonged to, how often they posted messages on professional English teachers' groups on Facebook and how often they answered other English teachers' posts however were not.

In our study, we were focused on secondary school teachers in France teaching English and using Facebook English teachers' groups, in order to focus on a specific group, as described in the introduction, and as a possibility of developing a professional growth pattern susceptible to help other kind of teachers. Although it was possible for us to observe how the use of Facebook groups as a mediational tool potentially improved communication between teachers and created a sense of community, this study was limited to only a few groups of English teachers. In that sense, investigating the use of SNS in a broader educational context opens the possibility for the development of future research on this field. It is recommended that the study be tried on large samples to confirm its validity and reliability.

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