

# Utilising Facebook to Enhance Students' Learning and Learning Experience in the Digital Era: Promises and Possibilities



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# Organization of Presentation

- ▶ Objective of English Language Learning
  - ▶ Classical Problems associated with EFL Classrooms
  - ▶ How these problems can be addressed by making effective use of Social Media (Facebook)
  - ▶ Some ideas on how to use FB for language learning
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# Objective of Language Teaching

- ▶ One of the primary objectives of English language teaching is enabling learners to be proficient users capable of communicating in the target language (Oxford, 1990).
  - ▶ However, in some Asian countries, this objective is not always easy to achieve due to limitations associated with language learning environments.
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# Classical Challenges Associated with EFL Classrooms in South–East Asia

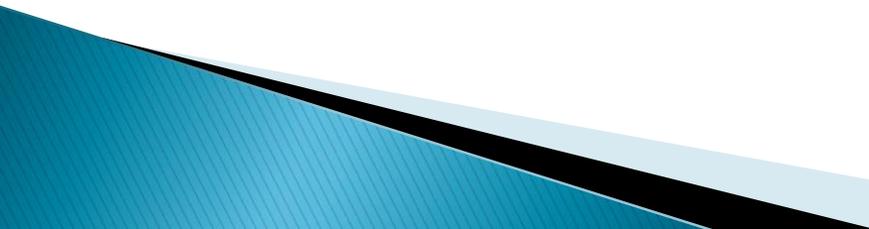
Cziko (2005) identified the following challenges associated with EFL Classrooms:

- ▶ Limited exposure and opportunities to use the target language
- ▶ Exposure to inaccurate forms or expressions
- ▶ Limited opportunities for authentic communication
- ▶ Limited language ability and cultural knowledge of the teachers
- ▶ Teaching and learning often occur in a decontextualised way.

# Possible Solutions:

- ▶ Use of social media can help address most, if not all, of the challenges identified previously.
  - ▶ Social interaction mediated by technology is critical to both language learning and language acquisition.
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# Challenge #1: Limited exposure and opportunities to use the target language

- ▶ Follow news feeds such as CNN student news and add comments or watch relevant videos posted on Facebook.
  - ▶ Have students join groups associated with EFL and participate in the discussion or share relevant links (such as Dave's ESL Cafe).
  - ▶ Practice the target language they learn in the classroom with native English speakers.
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## Challenge#2: Exposure to inaccurate forms or expressions produced by both fellow students and the teacher

- ▶ Access to unlimited resources available online such as news, videos and websites with more natural language and expressions commonly used by native English speakers.
  - ▶ Students may even have access to native English speakers.
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## Challenge #3: Limited opportunities for authentic communication

- ▶ Whereas students learn such topics as interviewing people, introducing oneself, etc., the communication that takes place is, in most cases, artificial in nature.
  - ▶ In comparison, communication that takes place on Facebook is more authentic and contextual for real life purposes in the process of negotiation of meaning.
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# Challenge #4: Limited language ability and cultural knowledge of the teachers

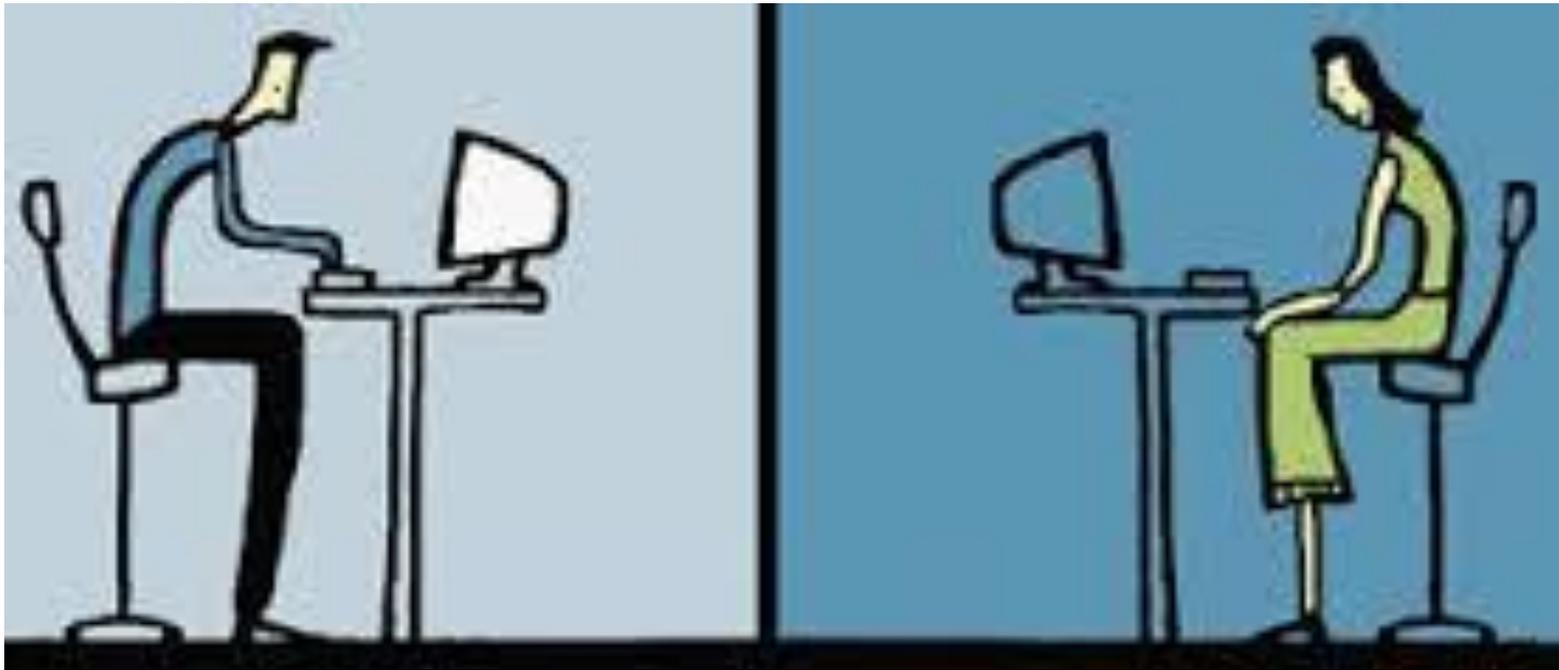
- ▶ EFL teachers vary in their language proficiency and in their cultural knowledge of the target language
- ▶ At times, teacher's knowledge of the target language and the culture is so limited that students are frequently exposed to inappropriate culture or expressions
- ▶ Using Facebook, such limitations could be minimised provided that students are interacting with native or near-native interlocutors.

## Challenge 5: Teaching and learning often occur in a decontextualised way

- ▶ Interaction using FB is highly contextual and communication takes place naturally in the process of negotiating of meaning.
- ▶ The availability of various tools such as synchronous and asynchronous communication used for real life purposes makes FB highly contextual

# Some Ideas

## Tandem Language Learning



# Some Ideas

## Posting Cartoons or Photos and Have Students Comment

The screenshot shows a web browser displaying the Facebook profile of 'Asaihl Singapore'. The browser's address bar shows the URL <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100008515213393>. The Facebook interface includes a search bar, navigation tabs for 'Home', 'FBP', and 'Asaihl', and a main content area. On the left, there are sections for 'ABOUT' (listing work at Nanyang Technological University and study at National University of Singapore), 'FRIENDS - 1' (featuring a profile picture of Alberth Dalope), and 'SPORTS'. The main post is from 'Asaihl Singapore' and is titled 'Fill in the blanks with appropriate phrases/expressions'. The post features a cartoon of a boy waking up in bed, with a red alarm clock on the wall and a speech bubble containing two lines of dots for text completion. The post has 'Like - Comment - Share' options below it. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows various application icons and the system clock indicating 12:29 on 05/12/2014.

# Some Ideas

Debates/Discussion Using FB



# Some Ideas

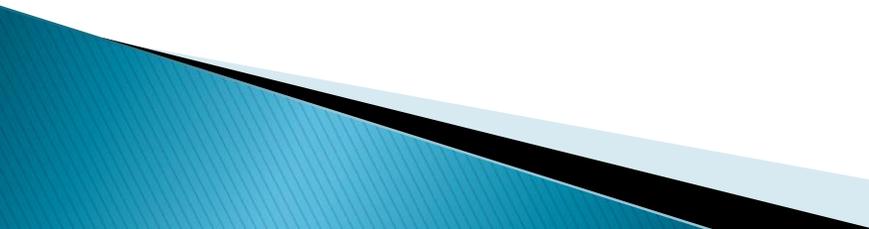
Sharing Personal Experience or Story



# Some Ideas

- ▶ Posting Relevant Links to the Group
  - ▶ Posting Assignment/Project
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# In a nutshell

- ▶ Social media as a by-product of Web 2.0 has had significant implications not only on how people communicate in the digital era, but it has also had significant implications on how people learn.
  - ▶ Classical challenges associated with EFL classrooms can potentially be addressed by integrating Facebook into such classrooms.
  - ▶ Use of Facebook is compatible with current learning theories and FB offers a wide range of benefits which may not be available in a conventional classroom.
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**Thank You...**

