

## THE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES FOR ONLINE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN EFL CONTEXTS

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### ABSTRACT

*Artikel ini membahas pemanfaatan Social Networking Sites (SNS) sebagai media Online Professional Learning dalam konteks English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan narrative thematic literature review dengan menelaah 18 studi sebelumnya yang berkaitan dengan penggunaan media sosial dalam pembelajaran bahasa dan pengembangan profesional calon guru. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa SNS berperan sebagai ruang pembelajaran profesional informal yang memungkinkan pre-service teachers memperoleh ide pedagogis, mengakses materi pembelajaran, serta berinteraksi dalam komunitas digital. Selain berbagai peluang yang ditawarkan, seperti fleksibilitas belajar dan kolaborasi daring, penggunaan SNS juga menghadirkan tantangan berupa kualitas konten yang beragam, distraksi belajar, serta minimnya arahan pembelajaran yang terstruktur. Secara keseluruhan, temuan ini menegaskan bahwa SNS memiliki potensi besar dalam mendukung Online Professional Learning di konteks EFL apabila dimanfaatkan secara reflektif dan terarah, serta memberikan implikasi bagi perlunya penguatan literasi digital dalam pendidikan calon guru.*

**Kata kunci:** *Social Networking Sites, Online Professional Learning, EFL, pembelajaran informal, pre-service teachers*

### ABSTRACT

This article discusses the use of Social Networking Sites (SNS) as a medium for Online Professional Learning in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This study uses a narrative thematic literature review approach by examining 18 previous studies related to the use of social media in language learning and professional development for prospective teachers. The results of the study indicate that SNS serves as an informal professional learning space that allows pre-service teachers to obtain pedagogical ideas, access learning materials, and interact in digital communities. In addition to the various opportunities offered, such as flexibility in learning and online collaboration, the use of SNS also presents challenges in the form of varying content quality, learning distractions, and a lack of structured learning guidance. Overall, these findings confirm that SNS has great potential in supporting Online Professional Learning in the EFL context when used reflectively and purposefully, and imply the need to strengthen digital literacy in teacher education.

**Keywords:** Social Networking Sites, Online Professional Learning, EFL, informal learning, pre-service teachers

## INTRODUCTION

Teachers' professional learning has increasingly shifted toward digital environments as technology becomes embedded in everyday life. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp, which were initially designed for communication purposes, have gradually expanded their functions within educational contexts. Previous studies indicate that these platforms support informal professional learning by enabling educators to access pedagogical resources, exchange ideas, and engage in collaborative communities beyond formal institutional settings (Ferrari et al., 2024; Mai et al., 2020). Through these interactions, teachers are able to participate in professional discussions with fewer structural constraints, highlighting the importance of collaboration in contemporary professional development.

Previous studies have noted that pre-service teachers in EFL programs often experience limited exposure to authentic language use and classroom practices during their formal training. This limitation is frequently linked to the inability of traditional teacher education programs to respond rapidly to evolving pedagogical approaches and real-world instructional demands. As a result, many pre-service teachers turn to social networking sites as supplementary learning spaces to access teaching resources, exchange practical insights, and connect with wider professional communities (Solmaz, 2019; Samosir et al., 2025). While these platforms offer promising support for professional learning, existing research suggests that their effectiveness may vary depending on how they are utilized.

Existing literature has largely examined the role of social networking sites in supporting language learning and classroom engagement. In contrast, their potential contribution to online professional learning in teacher education remains underexplored. Most studies emphasize linguistic outcomes or general user attitudes toward social media, offering limited discussion on how these platforms shape teachers' professional identity and long-term development. This gap indicates a need for further investigation into the professional learning dimensions of social networking site use among pre-service teachers.

This review synthesizes existing studies on the opportunities and challenges of using social networking sites for online professional learning in English teacher education. By examining recent research, it identifies emerging patterns while also highlighting underexplored areas, particularly regarding the influence of social networking sites on professional identity development. These findings suggest the need for more in-depth and systematic investigations into how such platforms function as professional learning spaces for pre-service teachers.

## METHOD

This study employed a narrative thematic literature review to synthesize previous research on Social Networking Sites (SNS) and Online Professional Learning in EFL contexts. Relevant studies were collected from academic databases such as Google Scholar, ERIC, and ScienceDirect using keywords including "Social Networking Sites," "online professional learning," "social media in EFL," and "pre-service teachers."

The selection criteria included peer-reviewed journal articles and conference papers published within the last ten years that addressed SNS use in language education or teacher professional development. Articles that were not directly related to EFL contexts or professional learning were excluded. After the selection process, the chosen studies were carefully read and coded to identify recurring concepts and patterns. These codes were then grouped into broader themes that formed the basis of the narrative analysis. The main themes that emerged from the analysis are Social Networking Sites as informal professional learning environments

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Social Networking Sites as Informal Professional Learning Environments

Previous research highlights that social networking sites function as meaningful informal spaces that support online professional learning in English, particularly for pre-service teachers in EFL contexts. Beyond their role as social communication tools, these platforms provide opportunities for accessing teaching materials, observing instructional practices, and engaging in professional interactions outside formal

institutional settings. Studies by Ellison et al. (2007) and Greenhow and Robelia (2009) suggest that user participation, collaboration, and knowledge sharing within SNS environments contribute to networked learning experiences. Regular engagement in these digital spaces enables pre-service teachers to gradually develop professionally through continuous interaction and exposure to diverse teaching perspectives.

SNSs are important in addressing the lack of exposure to real-world language use and pedagogical practice in the context of English as a foreign language. Due to limited possibilities for real-world language contact, EFL learners and pre-service teachers frequently rely primarily on formal training, according to Harmer (2015) and Richards and Schmidt (2010). Through platforms like Instagram Reels, TikTok, and WhatsApp Channels, SNS helps close this gap by offering constant access to real English input and teaching-related content. Teachers and pre-service educators regularly utilize social media to watch instructional practices, share teaching ideas, and engage in professional communities, which supports their continued professional development, according to studies by Carpenter (2016) and Trust et al. (2016).

Social networking sites also support self-directed and reflective professional learning by allowing pre-service teachers to engage with content that aligns with their individual needs and interests. Participation in reflective activities within digital learning environments encourages pre-service teachers to reconsider teaching experiences and gradually shape their professional identities (Maulidia Rachmawati Nur N. L., 2026). Consistent with findings from Trust (2016) and Kohler et al. (2020), online professional learning through SNS is often flexible, autonomous, and socially driven. Through activities such as engaging in online discussions, viewing short instructional content, and following educational accounts, pre-service teachers are able to reflect on pedagogical practices and develop greater professional awareness. Similarly, Kimmons and Veletsianos (2018) note that interaction within online professional networks promotes reflective thinking by enabling educators to compare experiences across varied educational contexts.

SNS not only provides accessibility and flexibility, but they also foster community-based professional development and collaborative

learning. According to Godwin-Jones (2018), social media platforms offer multimodal content that boosts student engagement and encourages innovative teaching methods in language instruction. In a similar vein, Abidin and Razali (2019) contend that professional learning based on social networking sites fosters a feeling of community among professionals, which inspires teachers to keep improving their craft. Pre-service teachers are exposed to a variety of teaching viewpoints that might not be included in their formal education through casual conversation and shared digital practices.

However, despite SNS's acknowledged potential as online resources for professional learning, a number of studies point to issues with learning focus, content quality, and the lack of formal support. Previous studies have demonstrated that emotional experiences during teaching practicum play a significant role in shaping pre-service teachers' professional learning and instructional awareness, emphasizing the affective dimension of teacher development (Maulidia Rachmawati Nur S. J., 2025). According to Manca (2020), pre-service instructors may find it difficult to assess learning materials critically because informal digital learning environments frequently provide inconsistent or unvalidated content. Furthermore, pre-service teachers actively consume educational content on social networking sites, but they are less likely to produce reflective content, which may hinder deeper professional learning outcomes, according to Calderón Garrido and Gil Fernández (2022). These results imply that while SNS offer worthwhile educational possibilities, users' reflective participation and digital literacy play a major role in how effective they are.

When considered collectively, the literature shows that social networking sites serve as valuable online resources for professional learning in English by providing chances for reflective and collaborative learning, flexible access to instructional knowledge, and realistic exposure. However, pre-service teachers' detailed views regarding how SNS influences their professional learning experiences in EFL contexts have received little attention in previous research, which has mostly concentrated on broad perceptions or learning results. Therefore, more study is required to examine pre-service teachers'

reflective perspectives on the usage of SNS as online professional learning resources for English, especially in everyday and informal digital contexts.

## CONCLUSION

This thematic literature review demonstrates that social networking sites play a meaningful role in supporting English online professional learning for pre-service teachers in EFL contexts. Findings from previous studies suggest that SNS enable access to pedagogical resources, opportunities to observe peer practices, and engagement in reflective and collaborative learning through digital communities. By offering flexible and self-directed modes of interaction, these platforms extend professional learning opportunities beyond the boundaries of formal teacher education programs. Despite these benefits, existing literature also identifies several challenges related to the use of SNS for professional learning, particularly issues concerning content reliability and the absence of systematic guidance for users. Such limitations indicate that the impact of SNS on professional development is closely associated with pre-service teachers' levels of digital literacy and their ability to engage reflectively with online content. Based on these findings, further research is needed to explore pre-service teachers' perspectives on the use of social networking sites for English online professional learning in greater depth. Qualitative approaches, such as reflective journals or in-depth interviews, may provide richer insights into how pre-service teachers interpret, evaluate, and integrate SNS-based learning into their professional development. In addition, teacher education programs may consider incorporating structured digital literacy training to better support pre-service teachers in using social networking sites as effective professional learning tools.

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