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**Web-based Collaborative-network & Facebook in TVET to Enhance Teaching-
Learning: An Edusocial Perspective**

Dr. Md. Abu Raihan^{*1}, Md. RashedulHuq Shamim²

^{*1,2}Assistant Professor, Department of TVE, Islamic University of Technology (IUT), Bangladesh
maraihan.iut@gmail.com

Abstract

Tremendous changes are happening in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Classrooms are being upgraded with 21st century through technological approaches. The advancements of technology help educators know much more about students' personal learning in order to provide them with a suitable learning environment and deliver personalized instructions. Social media, video games, blogs and wikis are playing increasingly important roles in TVET classrooms across the country. Some worry that incorporating more social media and other technologies into TVET is leading to too much computer time, as well as to a generation of students deficient in the face-to-face social skills needed to survive in the workplace. Proponents say schools need to find ways to use these technologies to improve teaching and learning, or else risk losing the attention of digital natives. Technique of Web-based collaborative networking is already one of the most common ways that communication occurs virtually. While the majority of users spend time communicating with those who have already built relationships with in reality, it may also have the potential to build relationships virtually. Anyone who knows some basics of Web, will surely be a Facebook user. Most of the people around the globe find Facebook very useful to share their status updates, visits, photos, videos, life events, etc. with their friends and followers. However, the Web-based Collaborative-network & Facebook can be used to enhance teaching-learning process very effectively. The main aim of the article was to examine educational use of Web-based Collaborative-network & Facebook. Thus the objectives of the articles were to (i) expose how teachers collaborate with students using Facebook groups; (ii) find out the best ways to connect and to collaborate with teachers globally; (iii) identify how students think critically, collaborative and the way of CERCA, and (iv) explain uses, advantages and practices of Wiki's in TVET.

Keywords: Collaborative Learning, Facebook, TVET, Edusocial Perspective

Introduction

Collaborative Learning is when students complete a task or goal by working together as a true team. In collaborative learning, people don't do it just because it's a requirement. They like working as a group because they value the contributions of each group member, and they truly believe that the end result will be better than if they had worked individually. Collaborative learning is not structured by the teacher; instead, the group truly functions as a team. They share authority, accept personal responsibility, and hold each other accountable for their work. Collaborative learning is required when students choose to work together as a team to accomplish the learning task or goal [8].

Web-based Collaborative-network is the best platform to get instant information about almost anyone and anything and to socialize with people. Groups, pages, apps and games etc., are some of the additional

features offered by them to create user engagement. Many people feel that Facebook is just a social networking platform for entertainment, but if you go beyond that, you'll get to know how useful it is to improve your knowledge, interaction and socialization skills. 'Facebook for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)'; there has been a heated discussion going on this topic. Some agree with it while many others disfavor it. Just as a coin has two different sides, anything in this world has two types of outcomes; positive and negative. The way we use it is what actually matters. Let's concentrate on some positive aspects of 'Collaborative-network & Facebook in TVET'. If students are already investing time and energy in social networking, building relationships and their own communities of shared interests and fostering 21st century skills in the process, there is a unique opportunity to form educational communities of

knowledge. So, if students are already using social networking sites, should educators try to secure that captive audience in a space they feel comfortable using? [21].

“Facebook” is a revolution in the world of social networking. Facebook was started by the students of Harvard University in 2004 for only the students of the university. Later, it spread to other universities and gradually became a public domain [7]. Facebook, whose users are rapidly increasing, is the second largest social network in the world and the largest one in Turkey [27]. In Turkey, it is known that Facebook is generally used for the following reasons: finding friends, supervision, video, picture, photo, music and idea sharing, games, organizations, political reasons, e-trade, sexual reasons, and denouncement [27]. It is also reported that such social networks, as a means of communication, could be used for education [12].

As the popularity of Collaborative-network, Facebook and other social networking sites continues to grow, educators are seeing their potential for use in TVET, realizing that social networking sites may have the ability to promote both active learning and collaboration [16]. In fact, Selwyn [24] claims that social networking may “benefit learners by allowing them to enter new networks of collaborative learning, based around interests and affinities not catered for in their immediate educational environment.” Thus, social networking sites may provide a forum for extending the traditional classroom and enabling users to join groups that match individual educational interests.

While many educators in TVET are excited about the potential of using social networking for different purposes, others remain suspicious of its place in education claiming that social networking sites may disengage students from learning traditional skills and literacies [6]. Others fear privacy issues may negatively impact or even destroy the traditional roles of the teacher and learner [26]. Educators are also concerned that the use of sites like Facebook may negatively affect academic performance. A recent study showed that students who spent more time on Facebook spent less time studying and had lower GPAs [13]. However, a study by the National School Boards Association in 2007 also presents a positive correlation between Facebook use and grades, but describes the emergence of the particular type of student that engages in social networking claiming he or she has “an extraordinary set of traditional and 21st century skills, including communication, creativity, collaboration and leadership skills and technology proficiency.”

Opponents claim that possibilities to socialize and collaborate already exist through course management systems. While there are limitations and benefits to both, it was observed much higher use on Facebook than on WebCT in their comparison study. In fact, the number of posts on Facebook was 400% greater than on WebCT. And although they haven’t become widespread yet, applications like Schools on Facebook are already investing in the potential of Facebook to provide a presence for their university by combining the best of social networking, course management, and university web sites [23].

Before educational and social environments can fully merge, it is imperative to understand if the marriage is possible and desired by users. Selwyn [25] explored this possibility by analyzing the Facebook “wall” activity of 909 undergraduate students at a UK university in order to understand purposes for student use of Facebook, the relationships of their interactions to educational concerns, evidence for engagement, and new uses for Facebook. Five themes emerged from his analysis of over 2000 posts about education including: (1) recounting and reflecting on the university experience; (2) exchange of practical information; (3) exchange of academic information; (4) displays of supplication and/or disengagement; and (5) ‘banter’ (i.e. exchanges of humor and nonsense). The study suggests that users are already using social networks to discuss their education, making the environment ripe for a link.

Analysis of survey [22] results revealed that most students believed that they learned more because of using the group page and thought it was helpful in achieving their goals for their project and for the group. In addition, most students would like to use social networking for educational purposes and were interested in using social networking in school. Students reported that they liked seeing how other students responded to their posts on the Facebook page. However, they believed their relationship with their mentors and with other students were not positively impacted by the use of the page. Students initially expressed difficulty in accessing the page, but believed the benefits of using the Facebook page were worth the extra time and effort.

How teachers collaborate with students using Facebook groups?

The teachers can collaborate with students using Facebook groups in different ways [22]. In **figure: 1** shows the follows: (i) *Instant information*: If you want

information on anything, just ask the crowd on Facebook for it. If it is a trending topic, you'll get instant information from search results in addition to what people are talking about. (ii) *Increase involvements*: The motto behind creating Facebook is to provide a platform for classmates, colleagues, family members and friends to know more about and interact with each other. So, teachers can also use Facebook to collaborate with students and their parents with ease. (iii) *Events*: The events feature of Facebook can be used by administrators to keep students & teachers up to date by creating events which work like reminders. (iv) *Explore Questions*: Facebook allows anyone to post questions such as MCQs. Teachers can conduct online quizzes, polls, etc. (v) *Stay in touch with old students*: Teachers can guide their students even after finish their schooling and students are also able to stay in touch with seniors and get help with their studies.

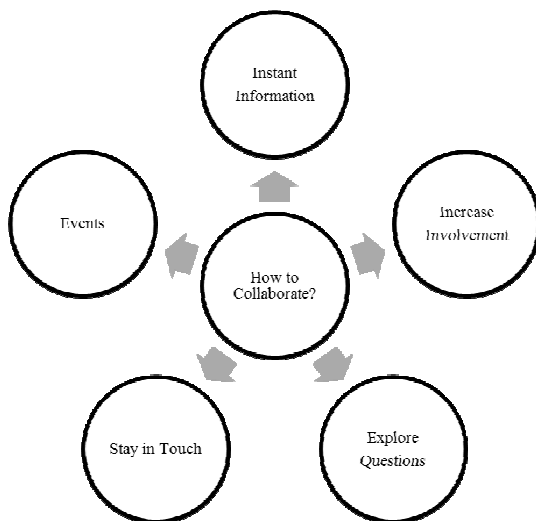


Figure:1 Using Facebook groups

Including the above benefits, there are many more Edusocial aspects of Facebook what are shows in **figure-2**. One of the significant aspects of using Facebook in Education/TVET is the ability to (i) *Create Groups*: Facebook allows anyone to create free groups for their class, school, college, organization, favorite subject, etc. There are a large number of groups on Facebook which relate to a particular place, class, cause, school, area of interest and more. People need not be friends to collaborate in groups; (ii) *Ask for Feedbacks*: If you want to introduce a new assignment or a new activity to your classroom, it's better to have your students' opinions on it. Getting feedbacks from your students will be very easy if you've all of them present in your class's Facebook group; (iii) *To encourage online*

participation: Get shy or inactive students out of their shells to participate in discussions. There's an option to mention any particular group member on Facebook; (iv) *Take Polls*: Give students priority to participate in classroom activities. Facebook allows to create polls or quizzes through groups: ask group members a question, add some options and see the votes on them, (v) *Publish Time Table*: You can pin any of your posts to keep it visible on the top of group posts. You can publish time tables, home works, syllabus to cover in a fixed time format, events or questions and pin them for students to find whenever they need; (vi) *Provide best resources by adding multimedia*: Facebook allows group members to post articles, links, images & videos for document creation and collaboration. Ask your students to current content, you can also provide them with your best resources on any topic or lesson; (vii) *Publish students' achievements*: If a student gets a top rank, admire and encourage him by posting his result publicly. The rest of the public can also congratulate him through comments. Similarly, mention the group of students who have topped a quiz or who have completed a classroom project successfully; (viii) *Conduct Discussions*: Post a topic and ask students to have a discussion on it. It's better if you initiate it by mentioning some active members and appreciate students' opinions by liking their comments; (ix) *Exam practice*: Post-exam practice activities and help your students prepare better for upcoming exams; (x) *Review your students' posts*: Give students instant feedbacks either formally or informally on their work and progress.

Facebook allows group administrators (admins) to approve a group member's post before making it visible to all members. These are how teachers can collaborate with their students effectively through Facebook groups. Besides the above mentioned points, there would surely be more ways to use a Facebook group for education [22].

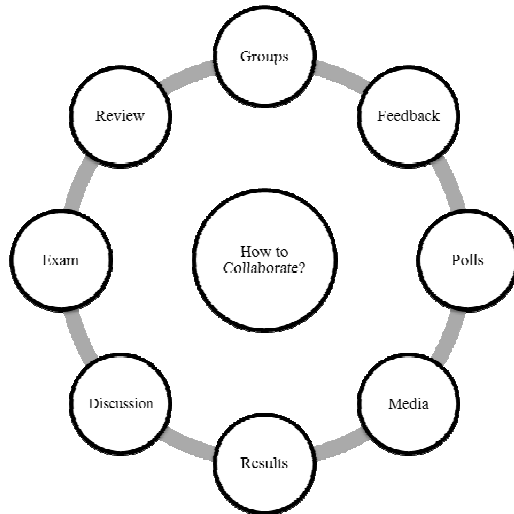


Figure:2 Edusocial aspects of Facebook

Best ways to connect and to collaborate with teachers globally

Twitter: There is no doubt that Twitter is the most powerful social networking tool for collaboration. It's the top most site educators are using to connect with one another. Teachers use Twitter to follow leading educationalists and professors to learn from their researches and ideas, communicate with other educators to bring best educational practices and also develop professionally by learning numerous teaching techniques [8].

Twitter- a great way to connect and follow as many personalities as one may want to. Apart from the youth Twitter interests all age groups. Teachers can be an interesting tool to deal with. Apart from why Twitter interests them there are various reasons for using it. Teachers can follow leading educationalists and professors to gather information about teaching techniques. It will enable them to stay updated about on goings of the world and developments in their field and elsewhere. Self-learning and education can be done for improving the quality of teaching. Secondly it is a great help for planning and propagating Collaborating with other teachers, parents, students. If one finds similar interests with other academic, Twitter can be used to work together on research ideas, classroom solutions, and other topics. Twitter can be used to review lessons and remind students what is going to be covered in class that day or the next. Teachers say tweeting a few quick review questions and some good Web sites add depth to their lessons. In turn, students can tweet their own questions and observations [8].

Twitter helps to collaborate with other classrooms in the same school, district, or another country. Why work alone when you can connect with other college classrooms? That's just what many college classes are doing these days. Educators and academics can come together to share and collaborate on lesson plans quite easily using Twitter. One can create their own classroom hash tag. One way to keep classroom tweets organized is by having a shared hash tag that all students use.

Lastly teachers can help their students benefit a lot by using Twitter: Twitter is a great way to keep your students thinking after class. A quick provocative question about a TVET lesson, for example, that will keep their brains active. Twitter helps students crystallize thoughts, focus attention, and make connections that weren't possible a few years ago. Teachers can help their students to connect to a wider audience by linking students of other countries. Employing Twitter to facilitate discussion and collaboration between students in their classrooms and their counterparts in different countries can be beneficial in several ways. Teachers can share their experiences and TVET research finding with students more friendly way of teaching and learning. Holding a reading discussion over Twitter gives everyone a chance to chime in, even shy students who might not otherwise speak up. Without sharing phone numbers teachers can Tweet links to additional reading material, announcements and reminders. Twitter allows for personalization of learning according to the student's ability and interest. Teachers can quickly provide students with multimedia source links (YouTube, Pinterest) through tweets. Teachers can help students in exploring their knowledge [8].

Hashtags: Currently there are approximately 4000 Tweets shared per second. It's a tough task to figure out information related to our particular need. Introduction of hashtags has helped in sorting out the information on Twitter. The purpose of a hashtag is that when you tweet and want your message to be part of a larger conversation beyond your followers, you need to add a relevant hashtag. A particular hashtag collects all the tweets that are tagged with it and displays them whenever we click on it. Teachers use numerous hashtags for numerous purposes [8].

Skype, Google+ Hangouts & WizIQ: Twitter chats are effective but sometimes educators need to have face-to-face conversations for personalized learning and effective interaction for solving the different problems of TVET. For such interactions, educators opt to use Skype,

Google+ hangouts or WizIQ platforms. A lot of the tools in Skype Premium/Business and Google+ Hangouts with extras are expanded upon in WizIQ. And the best thing about WizIQ is that it focuses 100 % on education [8].

Google+ Communities and LinkedIn Groups: LinkedIn Groups are to interact with other professionals. On LinkedIn, Educators can find numerous useful groups relevant to their fields, stream, areas of interest, subjects in which they are efficient and those topics they are working on. Joining in groups helps educators connect with people even if they're not their network. Teachers can interact with those people, exchange knowledge, ask questions and connect with others in the same field. You can participate in discussion forums or post your own articles, researches or projects that can help build your professional learning network. EduBloggers , Education Community Mangers Network, Technology in Education and many more groups offer a great platform to interact with other educators [8].

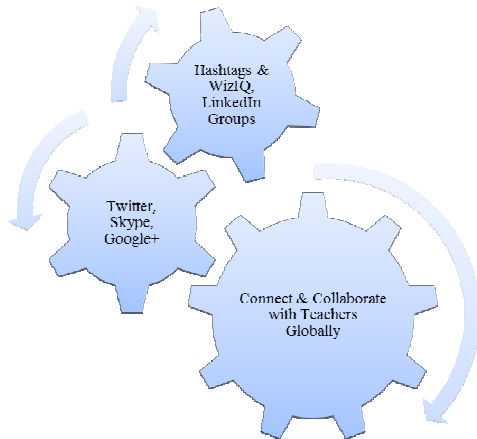


Figure: 3 Ways to connect and collaborate during teaching-learning

How students think critically, collaborative and the way of CERCA?

Especially those educators who prepare to teach Common Core State Standards, a new set of challenging standards for career and college readiness is adopted by many states, technology is must needed help for students to learn without stress. Because when we have more data and new standards, it leads to a very busy schedule where students can't get time to spend with family or to gain practical knowledge by working things out. With ThinkCERCA, educators help students overcome this situation easily. Let's learn about how it works. ThinkCERCA allows educators to design and deliver

Common Core State Standards aligned literacy lessons for grades 6-12. The techniques will be helpful for the learner of TVET. Using the highest quality content across disciplines enables students to get what they need in the CERCA (claims, evidence, reasoning, counter-arguments, audience) system. ThinkCERCA allows educators to match the best content with the best lesson design to deliver lessons directly to students. In a traditional classroom, teachers used to deliver one wide lesson for all students even if they were unable to learn at the same pace. But with ThinkCERCA, teachers can flip their classroom to provide students with personalized flipping lessons using many ThinkCERCA resources. It also enables educators to reach any student, anytime to deliver instructions online with an Internet connection. With all these features ThinkCERCA enables teachers to help students learn to read closely, think critically, and ultimately develop powerful arguments across disciplines [8].

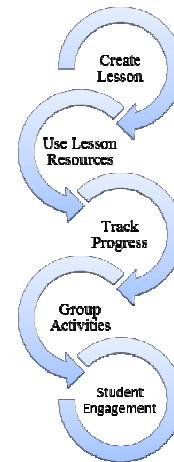


Figure: 4 ThinkCERCA's functionality

Personalized instruction deals with big data which needs to be processed frequently, but if teachers are employed to do all these tasks, they'll no longer have time to work with each student who needs help. ThinkCERCA provides educators with ready-made lessons and lesson design tools to reduce their efforts and save their time to work with students. It also provides educators with resources for success, for example; implementation plans, and guidance on how to make sure your kids love using ThinkCERCA. Let's learn about ThinkCERCA's functionality. (i)Create Lessons: With ThinkCERCA, lesson creation is very easy. Educators can turn any text into an engaging lesson, delivered directly to students. It enables two lesson designs: Consistent lesson design allows for easy interdisciplinary planning with colleagues. Flexible lesson design means

students can debate on any type of text or multimedia, (ii) *Use Lesson Resources*: ThinkCERCA provides educators with a wide range of lesson resources for grades 4-12 with 9 different levels of instruction. (iii) *Track Progress*: With ThinkCERCA's data dashboard, educators can access student data in real-time, assign growth focus for student learning and continued monitoring and also track data from year-to-year with student's college and career ready portfolios. (iv) *Encourage Group Activities*: Using ThinkCERCA, educators can assign leveled texts to groups or individuals based on readiness level. It has nine different leveled texts to meet individual student needs. You can also use data dashboard to strategize student learning groups. (v) *Increase student engagement*: To meet the learning standards of 21st century, educators should make students ready to apply argumentation skills to analyze, evaluate and create solutions to complex problems. ThinkCERCA with its simple framework walks students through the process of reading critically, collaborating with peers, and responding in a way that increases engagement and deepens learning. (vi) *Collaborate*: ThinkCERCA's collaborative platform enables teacher teams to connect with big ideas across disciplines because it has recognized the power of communication and exchange of information among educators. In addition, there are numerous Common Core State Standard tools and resources to help students, educators, principals and administrators in enhancing learning (EdTechReview 2013).

Wiki's in TVET

Wiki is a "collaborative workspace in which information can be gathered, shared, evaluated, organized or used to produce something new." Wiki is a piece of server software that allows users to freely create and edit Web page content using any Web browser. It supports hyperlinks and has a simple text syntax for creating new pages and crosslinks between internal pages on the fly. It's a fully editable website whose content can be edited by anyone who has access to it. Wiki is a great tool to use in education because of its numerous features. Let's learn about it. Advantages of Wiki in Education: (i) *Free*: Most of the Wiki hosting platforms are for free, (ii) *No Need to Learn Coding*: Creating and editing Wikis are very easy and user friendly. They do not require HTML or other programming languages; (iii) *Anyone from Anywhere*: Anyone can access as well as manage Wikis from anywhere with an Internet connection; (iv) *Collaboration*: Students and educators from all around the world can collaborate and work on the same document; (v) *Instantaneous*: As Wikis can be modified by anyone, students always get instantaneous

information through them; (vi) *Encourages Non-Technical Users*: Non-technical users can also create and publish content with ease. There are people who have a great expertise in a particular area of interest but they can't showcase their skills due to lack of technical knowledge. Wiki encourages all such users and widens their Web usage; (vii) *Connects Multiple Resources*: Wiki is a combination of Web pages linked together. Educators can provide students with as many resources as they can. It helps them learn in a detailed way [8].

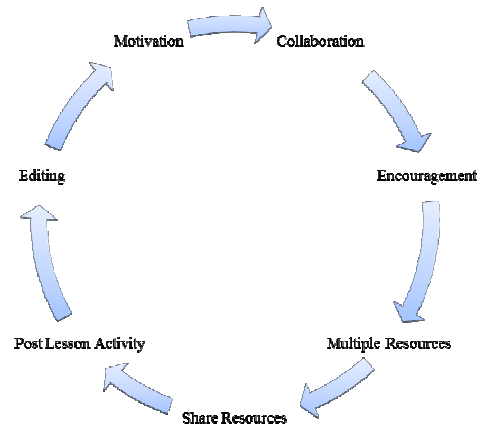


Figure 5: Some applications of Wikis in the field of TVET

In addition to the above mentioned advantages, Wiki can be used in many applications in the educational field. Let's learn how educators and students can use Wiki. (i) *Create a Wiki for your Classroom*: As we know many educators create blogs for their ideal classroom to encourage online presence of students and their parents, Wiki is a much more effective way to engage students. Select great Wiki hosts create a Wiki and explain to your students its usage. (ii) *Share Resources*: Educators can use Wiki as an online resource platform where they can share numerous links relevant to the current lesson topic. Students can also suggest their researches here. Educators can provide students with docs, media, and PDF files on their classroom Wiki. Students and educators can share their presentations using Wikis. (iii) *Post Lesson Activity*: Ask students to write summaries on Wiki for every lesson they've learnt. Allow students to share feedback on every lesson. By reviewing them, educators can assess students' performance and design individualized instructions. (iv) *Wiki for Editing*: Wikis can be used for peer editing, for example, students can edit each other's work for spellings, grammar, or anything else educators want them to learn. This helps them learn better by helping each other; (v) *Collaboration*: Wiki is a great

collaborative platform for many of the students and educators involved in a learning process. Ask students to post their works and allow others to give feedbacks on them. Students can collaborate with other students to exchange and explore information. Educators can also use Wikis for professional development, to connect with other educators from other places to discuss, share and learn from each other. (vi) *Motivation*: Teachers use Wikis to motivate their students to get involved in a learning process. Wikis enable students to collaborate with others on class assignments and activities. As learning through Wikis is a new way, students will surely be excited about it, (vi) *Turn students into experts*: The ideas and opinions that are written by students are accessed by many people, gradually students improve their writing, learning, communication and research skills. Wikis allow students to teach others about what they know about a topic[8].

Conclusion & Discussion

Means of communication change together with improving technology. Today, the number of social networks, where communication is established, is rapidly increasing. As a part of daily life, mostly teenagers and adults use social networks such as Facebook, Myspace, Youtube, Weblogs, Xanga, Friendster, Orkut, Bebo and Wiki to take advantage of opening their world to friends and introduce themselves to others. At the same time, such users share their photos and videos, become members of groups and they are also provided with many msn and e-mail possibilities. Educational use of Facebook was thought to be an eligible subject for the study because of the following reasons: the number of social network users in intense communication was high; every user knew the setting and Facebook offered e-mail, forums and chats as a learning management system did. On the other hand, it was critical to reveal the reasons for daily intended use of the applications and rapid spreading since it could define possible factors to influence educational use.

Boyd [5] defines social networks as software products developed to make mutual interaction between individuals and groups easier, provide various options for social feedback and support the establishment of social relationships [5]. The features of social networks are summarized as follows [1], [2], [3], [4], [10], [17], [19], [20], [24]: (i) Most social networks provide users with information sharing facilities such as e-mail, chats, instant messages, videos, blogging, file sharing and photo sharing; (ii) Social networks have a database for users so that they can easily find friends, form groups

and share things with those with similar interests; (iii) Social networks provide users with opportunities for establishing on-line profiles and setup their own social networks; (iv) Most social networks are free of charge; (v) Most social networks are reviewed and recreated according to user feedback. Similarly, open source versions enable users to develop their own applications to be integrated with sites; (vi) Social networks enable users to reset their own access and privacy; therefore users decide what to share and to what extent they share; (vii) Social networks focus on individual based personal online groups rather than first generation online groups based on content, subjects or personal interests; (viii) Social networks allow constantly accumulating data update; (ix) Social networks allow data analysis; (x) Social networks create a cooperative environment; (xi) Social networks support active model participation role through social features and chat facilities; (xii) Social networks provide interaction; (xiii) Social networks provide users with a critical thinking environment, (xiv) Social networks support active learning; (xv) Social networks provide school-student interaction and student-student interaction; (xvi) Social networks increase student satisfaction with lessons; (xvii) Social networks improve student writing skills; (xviii) Social networks support informal learning; (xix) Social networks allow optional profiles open to everyone; (xx); Social networks allow contact lists; (xxi) Social networks allow users to follow connections between contact lists and other users in the system.

It is obvious that social network applications are closely related to many pedagogical points of constructivist approach, because of the above mentioned features [10]. They also provide people with individualized, personal settings. It is thought that the number of studies on social network applications in TVET is low, and further studies and research on educational use of such tools are suggested, since the previous ones focused rather on identification, network structure, privacy and technology [15]. In a study by [9], a project by the students of Queensland University of Technology, Department of Business Administration was introduced. On account of the fact that the students constantly used Facebook, a group page to enable those students to assess experience and proceeding during the course was created. With the study, it was concluded that Facebook could be used as a supplemental tool in TVET as a result of the students' digital proceeding and participation by the students. In a study, Genç[11] presented reflections on educational use of the following applications introduced by Web 2.0 technology: Weblogs, podcast and video casts, wikis, social networks, bookmarks, tagging and photo sharing. The

study included details obtained during three undergraduate and one post-graduate courses offered by Firat University, Department of Computer Education and Instructional Technologies for a sample application of educational use of Facebook, a popular social network of the modern world, but the final reports were not presented [11].

The fact that learning management systems like Facebook present e-mail, forums and chat facilities together with personal profiles enables instructors to use the systems without introducing an additional teaching management system. Also, according to changing network management system, Facebook must be improved. The emergence of next generation networks & services has ushered in a new era of technological advancement. At this time, the focus is to have some technology-independent, network-agnostic and completely autonomic management framework for networks and its related services [14].

In traditional classrooms, teacher talking time might be longer than student talking time [18]. This case is not experienced on Facebook. On the contrary, it is student centered. As lesson materials are saved on Facebook lesson page, students can access to information and answers to the previous questions by classmates do not prevent them from re-asking questions. In this respect, Facebook brings many educational advantages. Consequently, in case of considering some pedagogical issues, Facebook Web 2.0 tool can be used for educational purpose. Facebook media not only makes lesson enjoyable but also provides lots of electronic material. Building social network with Facebook provides collaboration in group.

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