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## THE EVOLVING CLASSROOM: EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL AND CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA INTEGRATION IN TEACHING PRACTICE

*The ubiquity of social media platforms in our daily lives has led to a growing exploration of their potential within educational settings. This research article delves into the multifaceted role of social media in teaching practice, examining both its potential benefits and inherent challenges. On the positive side, social media offers a plethora of opportunities to enhance student engagement. Interactive features, such as polls, quizzes, and discussions, can create a dynamic learning environment that fosters active participation. Collaborative learning is also bolstered by social media platforms, allowing students to work on projects together, share resources, and provide peer feedback in a digital space. Additionally, social media provides access to a vast repository of educational resources. Teachers can leverage educational videos, documentaries, and content shared by experts to enrich the traditional curriculum and cater to diverse learning styles. However, the integration of social media in teaching requires a nuanced approach. Concerns regarding student distraction, cyberbullying, and the spread of misinformation necessitate careful consideration. Developing strategies for responsible social media use and establishing clear digital citizenship guidelines are crucial steps towards creating a safe and productive online learning environment. Furthermore, educators must be equipped with the necessary skills to navigate the ever-evolving social media landscape and identify platforms that best suit their pedagogical goals. Ultimately, this research article argues for a balanced and strategic use of social media tools in teaching practice. By harnessing its potential to enhance engagement, collaboration, and access to resources, while mitigating potential drawbacks, educators can leverage social media to create a more dynamic and effective learning experience for students. This research contributes to the ongoing conversation about integrating technology in education, highlighting the importance of ongoing professional development and a thoughtful adoption of new tools within the classroom.*

**Key words:** social media, education, teaching practice, student engagement, collaboration, educational resources, digital literacy, cyberbullying, misinformation, blended learning.

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## ЕВОЛЮЦІОНУЮЧИЙ КЛАС: ВИВЧЕННЯ ПОТЕНЦІАЛУ ТА ВИКЛИКІВ ІНТЕГРАЦІЇ СОЦІАЛЬНИХ МЕРЕЖ У ПРАКТИКУ ВИКЛАДАННЯ

*Повсюдна присутність соціальних медіа-платформ у нашому повсякденному житті привела до зростаючого вивчення їхнього потенціалу в освітньому середовищі. Ця наукова стаття заглиблюється у багатогранну роль соціальних медіа у викладацькій практиці, досліджуючи як їхні потенційні переваги, так і пов'язані з ними виклики. З позитивного боку, соціальні медіа пропонують безліч можливостей для посилення залучення учнів. Інтерактивні функції, такі як опитування, вікторини та дискусії, можуть створити динамічне навчальне середовище, що сприяє активній участі. Платформи соціальних мереж також сприяють спільному навчанню, дозволяючи учням працювати над проектами разом, обмінюватися ресурсами та отримувати зворотній зв'язок від однолітків у цифровому просторі. Крім того, соціальні мережі надають доступ до величезного сховища освітніх ресурсів. Вчителі можуть використовувати навчальні відео, документальні фільми та контент, яким діляться експерти, щоб збагатити традиційну навчальну програму та задовольнити різноманітні стилі навчання. Однак інтеграція соціальних мереж у навчальний процес вимагає виваженого підходу. Занепокоєння щодо відволікання учнів, кібербулінгу та поширення дезінформації потребують ретельного розгляду. Розробка стратегій відповідального використання соціальних мереж і встановлення чітких правил цифрового громадянства є важливими кроками на шляху до створення безпечного і продуктивного*

*середовища онлайн-навчання. Крім того, освітяни повинні володіти необхідними навичками, щоб орієнтуватися в постійно мінливому ландшафті соціальних мереж і визначати платформи, які найкраще відповідають їхнім педагогічним цілям. Зрештою, ця наукова стаття закликає до збалансованого і стратегічного використання інструментів соціальних мереж у педагогічній практиці. Використовуючи їхній потенціал для покращення взаємодії, співпраці та доступу до ресурсів, а також пом'якшуючи потенційні недоліки, освітяни можуть використовувати соціальні медіа для створення більш динамічного та ефективного навчального процесу для учнів. Це дослідження робить свій внесок у постійну дискусію про інтеграцію технологій в освіту, підкреслюючи важливість постійного професійного розвитку та вдумливого впровадження нових інструментів у навчальний процес.*

**Ключові слова:** соціальні медіа, освіта, практика викладання, залучення учнів, співпраця, освітні ресурси, цифрова грамотність, кібербулінг, дезінформація, змішане навчання.

**Introduction.** Nowadays our life is hard to imagine without the Internet, without information. Almost every person on Earth now has the opportunity to access the resources of the global network. The development of web technologies and their impact on modern society has led to changes in traditional spheres of communication, changing the ways and forms of communication on the Internet. The Internet has become a platform for barrier-free transmission and exchange of information, knowledge and communication of people from different cities and countries.

Modern society actively uses Internet resources: information exchange, communication between people, ways of building relationships, job search, work itself, recreation. Internet and computer networks are in demand all over the world. In addition, all activities, from the financial sphere and mass media to politics and social movements, are organised around the Internet. The growth rate of the World Wide Web is high and continues to increase both by increasing the number of users of the global Internet and by increasing the amount of information on the Internet itself.

**Problem statement.** Social networking has now become part of everyday life for millions of people around the world. The Internet has made it possible for people to communicate at any time and on a global scale, and social networks are a concrete tool that allows to build relationships between people, to activate the social component of online interaction.

Recently, it has become popular to use «social networks». There is no person who has not heard of them. Social networks are an interactive multi-user website, the content of which is filled by the participants of the network themselves. The site is an automated social environment that allows a group of users with a common interest to communicate. This includes thematic and industry forums, which have been actively developed recently, etc.

**The object of the research** is social media impacts and teaching methods and approaches. It explores how educators can leverage social media's capabilities to improve the delivery of education.

The subject of the research is the integration of social media in teaching practice. The research focuses on how social media platforms are being used within classrooms and the impact, both positive and negative, this has on teachers and students. It's not directly studying social media itself, but rather how social media is being implemented as a tool for educators.

**The aim of the research article** can be understood as two-fold: to explore the potential benefits of integrating social media platforms into teaching practice. This includes examining how social media can enhance student engagement, collaboration, and access to educational resources; to identify and address the challenges associated with using social media in the classroom. These challenges might include student distraction, cyberbullying, and the spread of misinformation.

Based on the analysis of the potential abstract, here are some possible **objectives** for the research article: to investigate the impact of social media on student engagement in the classroom. This could involve analyzing how different social media features (e.g., polls, discussions) influence student participation and motivation; to evaluate the effectiveness of social media in promoting collaboration among students. This might explore how social media platforms facilitate group projects, peer feedback, and knowledge sharing; to identify and analyze the range of educational resources available on social media. The research could assess the quality and suitability of these resources for different subjects and learning styles; to examine the potential challenges associated with using social media in teaching. This could involve investigating student distraction, cyberbullying risks, and the spread of misinformation within online learning environments; to develop recommendations for educators on the responsible and effective use of social media in teaching. This might include strategies for classroom management, digital citizenship education, and selecting appropriate platforms for learning objectives; to explore the potential of social media to personalize learning experiences. The research could investigate how educators can leverage social media to cater to individual needs and learning styles; to analyze the

evolving landscape of social media and its implications for future teaching practices. This might involve exploring emerging technologies like social learning platforms and virtual reality, and how they could be integrated into the classroom.

By addressing these objectives, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the opportunities and challenges associated with using social media in teaching. It seeks to inform educators on how to leverage social media's strengths to create a more engaging and effective learning environment for students.

The analysis of research and publications. Social media's impact on teaching has been a topic of growing interest, with research highlighting both its potential benefits and inherent challenges. Here's a breakdown of key findings:

Studies consistently show social media's ability to boost student engagement. Interactive features like polls, quizzes, and discussions create a more dynamic learning environment compared to traditional lectures. Research by Akyol et al. (2014) supports this, demonstrating how social media fosters active participation in higher education (Akyol, Garrison, Archer, 2014). Social media also facilitates collaboration, as evidenced in Sun & Yu's (2012) study, which highlights how platforms enable group projects, peer feedback, and knowledge sharing in language learning (Sun, Yu, 2012).

Analysis reveals a vast repository of educational resources available on social media. Educational videos, documentaries, and expert content can enrich the curriculum and cater to diverse learning styles. Additionally, some research explores the potential for personalization.

Research consistently identifies concerns about student distraction in online environments and the potential misuse of social media platforms during class time. Angeli et al. (2013) address this concern in their study, highlighting the need for strategies to manage student attention (Angeli, Valanides, Reynolds, Treger, 2013).

Studies by researchers like Lee (2014) address the risks of cyberbullying in online learning communities and the importance of establishing digital citizenship guidelines to create a safe learning environment (Lee, 2014). Research by Warschauer et al. (2004) highlights potential inequalities in access to technology and the need for strategies to bridge the digital divide and ensure all students can participate effectively (Warschauer, Quiroz, Lister, Fox, 2004).

**The presentation of the main material.** The use of social networks in the educational process allows to provide joint work in interactive mode, student and

teacher, graduate student and supervisor; collection and accumulation of data on the work being done, writing a diploma; archival storage of all this information on the server of the social network, with the possibility of obtaining it from any place where there is access to the Internet.

In practice, a student, teacher or anyone else, creates an account in the social network, in which other teachers and students create accounts. Since there may be thousands of students and teachers, thematic groups are created, which are divided by interests and topics.

A social network is a community of people who are connected by common interests, common cause or have other reasons to communicate with each other.

On the Internet, a social network is a software service, a platform for people to interact in a group or groups. From the point of view of the Internet, it is a virtual network, a means of providing services for establishing links between its users, as well as different users and information resources corresponding to their interests on the sites of the global network.

The formation of social networks and online communities is considered to be the greatest achievement of the World Wide Web. The most general and widespread definition of social networks can be found in the Universal Internet Encyclopedia: «Social networks are a platform, online service or website designed to build, reflect and organise social relationships visualised by social graphs. The term was first coined by Manchester School sociologist James Barnes in 1954, long before the advent of the Internet and modern web sites. The current interpretation means a certain circle of acquaintances of a person, where the centre of the social network is the person himself, and the relations are the connections between the person and his circle of acquaintances. When considering social networks in more detail, their typical characteristic should be noted: one-way and two-way networks, networks of friends, colleagues, peers, etc.

The characteristic features of a social network are:

- full range of opportunities for information exchange (photo + video + blogging service + microblogging service + communities + PM/chat + possibility to mark location, etc.);
- creation of profiles, in which it is required to specify real full name and maximum amount of information about oneself;
- the vast majority of a user's friends in a social network are not virtual friends of interest, but real friends, relatives, colleagues.

The social network site has the following features:

- active communication;

– creation of a public or semi-public profile of the user (for example, the profile can contain date of birth, school, university, hobbies, etc.);

– the user can create and maintain a list of other users with whom he/she has certain relationships (e.g. friendship, kinship, business and work relationships, etc.);

– viewing and traversing connections between users within the system (e.g., a user can see friends of his/her friends) classmates and classmates (Lee, 2014).

The possibilities of social networks as a means of communication are realised in specific practices of their use. They are based on the functions and goals of communication, the conditions for which are the interaction tools provided by the web service, as well as the structure of the social network supported by them as a communicative model that ensures the dissemination of information, the maintenance of group norms, and the effective use of existing contacts as a resource that constitutes social capital.

Social networking sites help young people in self-realisation, self-presentation. In social networks there are no conventions that cannot be avoided in real communication, many people find it difficult to communicate in real life and it is much easier to express their thoughts in writing. There are thousands of different social networks on the Internet, which are used by about 80% of all Internet users.

Each of the social networks has its own features that allow users to perform some actions that are unique to that social network. There are various social sites where young people are registered: Google+, Facebook, LinkedIn, Myspace, Livejournal, Twitter, Instagram. The rapid development of information and communication technologies and the emergence of new opportunities for their use in education actualises the search for adequate approaches to the organisation of the educational process at the university, which contributes to the development of general academic and subject competence, communicative skills and abilities, as well as provides students with the necessary information.

Let's highlight the main possibilities of using social networks in the educational process of the university:

1. Expansion of work with young people by means of creation of certain groups or communities in social networks, which unites not indifferent, creative young people on aspiration to a certain field of knowledge, and also on desire to co-operate in the process of application of this knowledge in practice. Community members understand each other well, as they work on similar problems and can also get the knowledge they lack.

2. Application of educational and scientific social networks. The most popular tool (software) for learning and development is recognised as the social network Facebook, which allows university teachers to create training courses for students, a closed corporate network on the Facebook platform: employees of one university can be in constant communication with colleagues from other universities and branches. MySpace works on approximately the same principle.

3. In social networks it is possible to organise effective collective work of a distributed learning group, long-term activities, international exchanges, scientific and educational, mobile continuous education and self-education, networking of people located in different countries, on different continents of the earth.

The possibility of constant interaction of students and teachers in the network at a convenient time gives the possibility of continuous educational process, there is a possibility of more detailed organisation of individual work with each of the students. In addition, discussions, dialogues, polylogues started during the classroom sessions can be continued in the social network. This allows students to spend more time in the process of discussing educational issues, which ensures thorough mastering of the material and active position of the student in learning. Information support of the course in the social network allows students who missed a class to participate in discussions and complete assignments from home.

4. Variety of forms of communication. Wiki pages, forums, polls, voting, comments, subscriptions, sending personal messages, and more provide a wide range of opportunities for collaboration. In a social network it is easier to share interesting and useful links to other resources. A big advantage of using social networks in the educational process of the university is the accessibility of teachers in the implementation of communication. Maintaining relations between teachers and students, participants of conferences, seminars, allows to improve the quality of scientific and educational activities through the exchange of ideas and comments.

*The main advantages of social networks:* free of charge, i.e. no expensive server equipment and its maintenance is required, no need to pay for website development; in most cases, unlimited disc space for storing various content, such as audio-video files, images, etc. is provided; reliable protection from hacker attacks, reliability of data storage; convenience of mailing and information notification services; monitoring of learning activities; the opportunity to participate directly online and much more.

The use of social networks in the educational process promotes the exchange of information,

increases students' motivation in learning activities, stimulates the development of creative abilities and cognitive interest. All these factors have a positive impact on the formation of knowledge and skills.

*There are a number of problems* associated with the use of social network in the educational process: lack of network etiquette of participants; lack of convenient tools specifically designed for educational purposes (e.g., keeping an electronic sheet or journal), as in learning management systems; lack of access to social networks from university classrooms; active communication, extensive information flow and an abundance of entertainment content together with educational content, which distract from the learning process; high degree of time and labour costs to organise and support the learning process in the conditions of continuous learning in the social network for the teacher; openness of the learning space to the whole Internet community, which is unacceptable or uncomfortable for the learning process; the impossibility of evaluating the teacher's work in social learning in order to pay for his/her labour.

The above-mentioned problems can be solved by creating conditions for the professional development of teachers in the field of information and communication technologies, financial and moral encouragement of teachers who actively use new technologies, the development of effective methods of using new technologies, and the development of new technologies.

Moreover, the teacher should intuitively feel the audience and select teaching materials for it. In order to solve the present problems, effective methods of using social media in the educational space should be developed.

The value of using social media is not sufficiently appreciated today. Many people are sceptical about the possibility of using this method as a learning tool, as social networks are traditionally perceived as a medium for entertainment and spending free time. Recently, researchers have been exploring new applications of social platforms in various human endeavours. The nature of socialisation is set to increase rapidly in the near future.

**Conclusion.** The choice of social networks as a platform for organising distance and interactive learning has a number of arguments. The principles of construction of many social networks as identification, communication, presence on the site, relationships, groups, reputation, sharing, search, integration with other offerings are very well suited for the creation of a learning group, class in the online space, in a social network. Placing an educational resource on the basis of social networks automatically establishes direct effective communication between instructor and student, between student and student. Today, HEIs should use various educational management systems. With their help, HEIs will be competitive and provide students with an interactive, mobile and engaging learning and communication environment in line with global market trends. All these trends in the development of social networks create a situation where the inclusiveness of the audience and simultaneous use of the maximum number of opportunities provided by modern Internet technologies take educational activity to a completely different, much higher level. Social networks are not just an opportunity to socialise, they are an important educational tool for schools and universities.

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