

**Facebook Posts as Complementary Teaching Material for a French
University Course in Taiwan**

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Abstract

A growing number of instructors use information and communications technology (ICT) inside and outside the classroom to teach all kinds of programs, including language courses. In this study, the instructor used a traditional way of teaching (lecturing, text-book, conversation, no technology in the classroom, no social network) during the first semester of academic year 2013-2014 (September-January) in a French course for beginners in a Taiwan public university. During the second semester (February-June 2014), the teacher added the use of multimedia and Facebook to teach the same students. They joined a Facebook learning group, which they could access anytime during the second semester; they could post, view posts, like, and comment in French and sometimes English. They could not use their mother-tongue, Chinese. This study analyzes data from the first and second semester to measure students' learning progress and how the Facebook group might influence their motivation and change their behavior. Students were expected not only to improve their reading and writing skills, but to increase their knowledge of French culture.

Keywords: Facebook; French I; learning performance; educational tool; Taiwan.

Introduction

Mark Zuckerberg famously launched Facebook, the world's most popular online social networking service, with his college roommates and fellow students, at Harvard University in 2004. As of March 2013, Facebook claimed having 1.1 billion monthly active users (Facebook, 2013). In April 2016, the number of active users grew to 1,590 billion (Statista, 2016). According to Facebook, the number of monthly active users was 1.71 billion as of June 30, 2016 (Facebook, 2016). Internet World Stats (2016, a and b) estimates there were almost 98 million French speaking Internet users in 2015, including 52 million having a Facebook account. As to the Internet users in Taiwan, in June 2016 it was estimated there were 19.6 million (including 18 million Facebook users) out of a population of 23.4 million.

This paper focuses on an optional course of French for beginners open to all students at a public university in Taichung, Taiwan. This study compares data for 32 students who took the class during two consecutive semesters, from September 2013 to June 2014. The data is based on information collected on Facebook during the second semester and on the university official questionnaires completed by students at the end of the two semesters.

The instructor used a traditional way of teaching (lecturing, textbook, conversation, no technology in the classroom, no social network) during the first semester of academic year 2013-2014 (September-January). During the second semester (February-June 2014), the teacher added the use of multimedia and Facebook with the same students. They joined a Facebook "secret group", that is a group in which only students from the class can join, post, view posts, like, and comment. The objective was to compare the online behavior, motivation, learning satisfaction, approbation of teaching, and learning progress at the end of the first and of the second semester. Students were expected not only to improve their reading and writing skills, but to increase their knowledge of French culture.

Literature Review

The launch of Facebook in 2004 means that specific literature only spans 12 years. However, because of the immense success of the online platform, a large amount of academic studies have been published discussing various topics, such as the impact of Facebook on health (Yeh, Ko, Wu, & Cheng, 2008; Steinfield, Ellison, & Lampe, 2008; Lin, Ko, & Wu, 2011), or the social network relationships in computer-supported collaborative learning (Ryymän, Palonen, & Hakkarainen, 2008).

The Net Generation, "the cohort of young people born between 1982 and 1991 who have grown up in an environment in which they are constantly exposed to computer-based technology" (Sandars & Morrison, 2007, p. 85) relies heavily on Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) for social and professional interactions. Many studies, such as Oblinger & Oblinger (2005), Barnes, Marateo, & Ferris, (2007) showed that this Net Generation expects technology to be part of their education. But according to Aydin (2012), "there has been a serious lack of research on Facebook's use as an educational resource" (p. 1093). Yu, Tian, Vogel, & Kwok (2010) had also noticed that little attention in the research literature on social networking's pedagogical impact on university students.

Hwang, Kessler, & Francesco, (2004) demonstrated that college students' social networking with their peers and instructors may help them increase their information and knowledge, and as a result improve their performance. Wang & Wu (2008) showed that in a Taiwan research

university, undergraduates interaction with their peers to get feedback helped them improve their learning performance. Studies such as Madge, Meek, Wellens, & Hooley (2009), Bosch (2009), Mazman & Usluel (2010), and Prescott, Wilson, & Becket, (2013) have shown that Facebook might be used for communication between student and instructor or with peers about course content, collaboration between students, and other kind of informal learning.

Various studies have demonstrated the use of Facebook as an English Language Training (ELT) supportive tool, such as Baran (2010), Anderson (2009), and Greenhow (2011). Social media and notably Facebook provide students with extracurricular content resources (Bahner, Adkins, Pate, Donle, Nagel, & Kman, 2012; Pilgrim & Bledsoe, 2011). Shams (2014) analyzed the effectiveness and impact of Facebook in English language classrooms in Bangladesh. According to her study, students with poorer English skills were more motivated when using Facebook during the class. Direct contact between the instructor and the students increased the positive influence of social media. Manca and Ranieri (2013) showed that students did not wish social media to be a unique teaching tool for learning.

Bishop (2006) concluded that “online communities are increasingly becoming an accepted part of the lives of Internet users, serving to fulfill their desires to interact with and help others.” Some studies have been published in this direction, notably on the impact of opening learning groups on Facebook. However, there is very little research in Taiwan on the impact of Facebook learning groups on students’ motivation and performance. Çoklar (2012) and Montoneri (2015) showed that Facebook had an impact on students’ motivation. Montoneri (2015) created a Facebook group for a class of European Literature (option, 3 hours/week, junior students) in order to share teaching material related to the class on a weekly basis. The course was attended by English majors in a private university in Taichung, Taiwan. The study notably analyzed students’ motivation, progress in learning and improvement of the instructor’s evaluation by students. It appeared that students regularly and constantly participated to the group until the end of the second semester. Teacher evaluation was higher and the average students’ final score progressed at the end of the second semester. See table 1 for a non-exhaustive presentation of studies on Facebook as an educational tool.

Table 1: Non-exhaustive presentation of studies on Facebook as an educational tool

Study	Location, data	Outcomes according to the authors
Yu et al. (2010)	Information Systems Department, College of Business, City University of Hong Kong. 4 rounds of group discussions involving 14 undergraduates (Hong Kong, Mainland China, and US) + anonymous online survey among university business major undergraduates in information systems (187 valid individual responses).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University students show zeal for online social networking • Facebook directly influences university students’ learning outcomes • Helps the students attain social acceptance from others and adapt to university culture • Peer interaction online is a crucial source of learning
Aydin, S. (2012)	Review of the literature concerning Facebook as an educational environment. The study compares Facebook usage in Turkey to its use on a global scale.	Six categories analyzed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook users • Reasons people use Facebook • Harmful effects of Facebook • Facebook as an educational environment • Facebook’s effects on culture, language, and education

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship between Facebook and subject variables.
Kayri & Çakır (2010)	Department of Computer and Instructional Technology, Yuzuncu Yil University, Turkey. The attitudes of the group towards Facebook were measured after interactively conducting “Computer Networks and Communication” lesson on Facebook during one term.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The students reported that Facebook could beneficially be used in education Significant correlation between FB adoption and the amount of time spent on it Students who spent much time on FB perceived it as an educational tool Most of the students actively participated in virtual environment during the study.
English & Duncan-Howell (2008)	Department of Business Administration, Queensland University of Technology, Australia. Creation of a group page to examine their experiences and behaviours during their teaching practicum placements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facebook could be used as a supplemental tool in education. The majority of posts were associated with affective communication such as group reinforcement, encouragement, and support The sense of community was strong in this group.
Di Capua (2012)	Review of more than one hundred studies on Facebook. Focuses on FB use, six categories identified: initiating and maintaining relationships, learning about others, recognition, personality and willingness to communicate, social influence, and experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Methodologies employed in most of the studies consist of surveys Researchers preferred a quantitative approach and based their studies on self-report Scales such as that of Likert restrict the participants’ choice and make the results more likely to follow the researchers’ predictions Most surveys were conducted online hence limiting the monitoring effect on the participants.

Methodology

The Data Source

The study case is a public university founded in 1919 as an academy in Taipei; the academy later moved to Taichung in 1943 and became a national university in 1971. The data comes from the university’s online student rating system, which provides student feedback to professors at the end of the first semester (September 2013-January 2014) and of the second semester (February-June 2014). Participants were studying French I as a 3 hour/week option at the Language Center and were majors from varied departments, including Chinese, Marketing, History, Business. The characteristics of the data source and research object are as follows:

1. French I was an optional, three-credit course open to all the students of the university. This was a course for beginners. Students had never studied French before, but they all understood English.
2. The instructor used English to teach during the class because students did not know French yet. The textbook (Picture 1) was published by the instructor in 2009. It was written in French and Chinese.

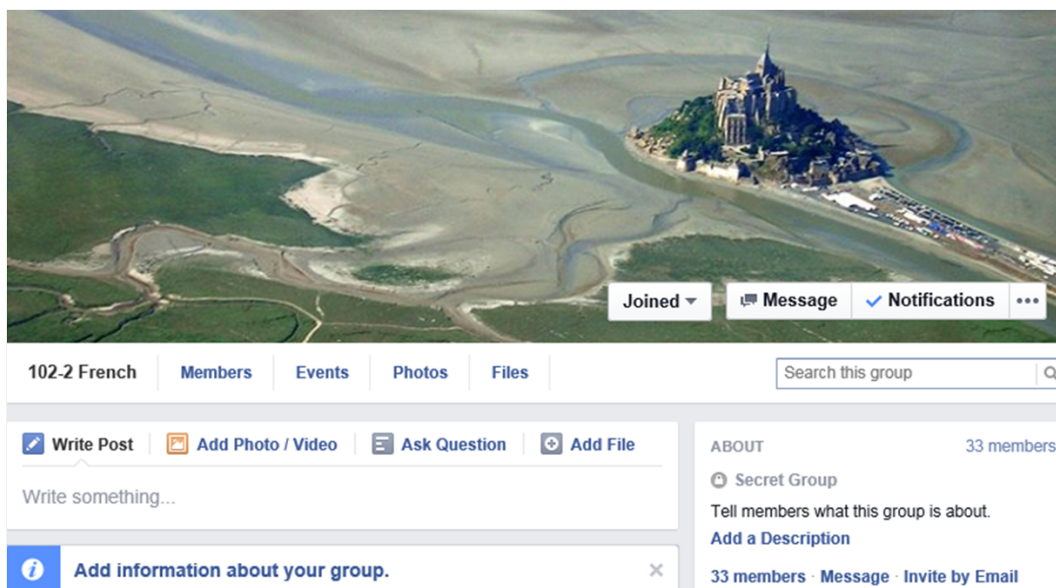


Picture 1: French textbook for beginners I published in 2009 and used during the class in 2013/2014

3. This study compares data for students who took the class during both the first and the second semesters. Students who failed, dropped or had to leave at the end of the first semester (at this time, exchange students from Mainland China could only study for one semester in Taiwan) or who joined later during the second semester were excluded from this research.
4. Thirty-two students learned French I during the two consecutive semesters, that is, from September 2013 to June 2014.
5. The data was based on questionnaires divided in 2 parts: Part 1 concerned students' learning behavior (2 questions) and part 2 concerned the degree of approbation concerning the teaching. The questionnaires were filled out by the students at the end of each semester. Each question was rated from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree).
6. All the students were required by the university to fill out the questionnaires online if they wanted their grades to be validated. The study progressed with the assumption that all students participated.
7. All of the 32 students in this study had a Facebook account at the beginning of the second semester. They joined the Facebook secret group created by the instructor.
8. None of the 32 students was English majors; none of them belonged to a department of foreign languages. They all came from various departments. Among the 32 students, for example, 7 studied in the Chinese Department, 6 in the Department of History, 3 in the Department of Plant Pathology and Microbiology, and 2 in the Department of Forestry.

Empirical Study

The Facebook secret group for French I was founded and opened on February 27, 2014. All the students registered in the class joined quickly thereafter and the first post was uploaded by the teacher on February 25, 2014 (Post 1); the last post was uploaded June 19, 2014 (Post 24).



Picture 2: French I secret group, 33 members, from class 102-2 French (2-6/ 2014)

There were 33 members in the group; including the students and the instructor. The group was “secret” in the sense that only the students who joined the class could participate, that is join, read the instructor’s posts, post, like, comment and share posts with the other members of the group. Picture 2 shows the cover picture for the Facebook secret group: Mont Saint Michel, Normandie, France.



Picture 3. Post 13 uploaded by the instructor

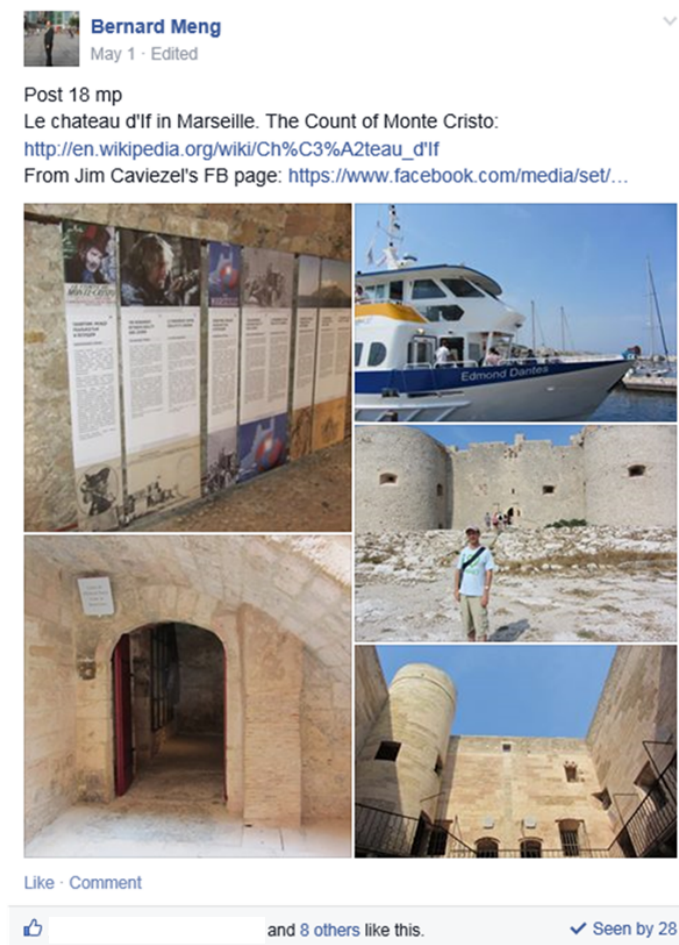
I used my French given name and Chinese family name in Chinese pinyin (Bernard Meng). Student names were hidden for the sake of privacy and anonymity. Post 13 included two tables

and one hyperlink (Picture 3). This post was uploaded on March 22, 2014; it was viewed by 29 students and 8 students liked it. The purpose of this post was to help students learn verb conjugation. The table on the left shows how to build French tenses. For example, most verbs at present tense finish by –e at the first person, *je mange*, –es at the second singular person, *tu manges*. The table on the right presents the conjugation in the present tense of the two most useful verbs in French: to have, *avoir* and to be, *être*. The hyperlink is a website created by the French newspaper *Le Figaro* which provided conjugation of all French verbs.



Picture 4: Post 16 uploaded by the instructor

Picture 4 includes hyperlinks to translation websites, French to English and French to Chinese. One link gives students access to verb conjugation and an online dictionary. This post was uploaded on April 17, 2014; it was viewed by 28 students and 8 students liked it. This type of post helped students find useful online learning material they could view anytime, during the class (phones are allowed during the classroom for educational purpose) as well as outside the class. The instructor noticed that students checked the group as soon as there was a new post; however, they were more likely to check in the morning, before the class.



Picture 5: Post 18 uploaded by the instructor

Post 18 (Picture 5) was quite successful as it was viewed by 28 students and liked by 11. To motivate students and to interest them to French language and culture, I introduced the story of *The Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas (1844). Students watched the movie during the class and I gave them detailed information about the writer, the story as well as the infamous Château d'If, situated about one mile offshore in the Bay of Marseille in southeastern France. Students' interest increased as I posted my own pictures of the château taken in July 2013. "If" (the French word for the Yew tree) used to be an ideal escape-proof prison, very much like the island of Alcatraz in California. It became one of the most feared and notorious jails in France. It is now opened to the public. One of the boats which carry tourists to the island was named after the hero of the novel, "Edmond Dantès".



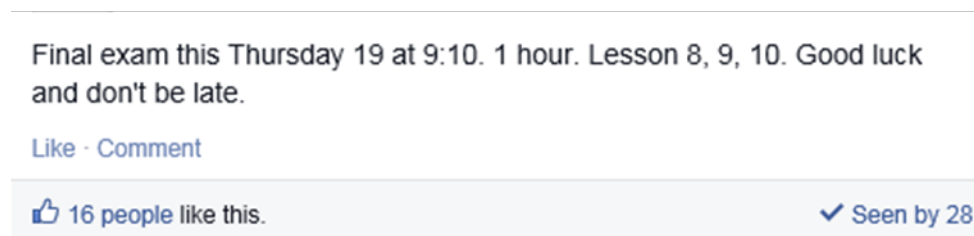
Picture 6. Post 20 uploaded by the instructor

Picture 6 introduces French culture, in particular Versailles Palace and related stories, such as *The Man in the Iron Mask* with Leonardo DiCaprio (1998) and *Marie Antoinette* with Kirsten Dunst (2006). This post was uploaded on May 15, 2014; it was viewed by 28 students and 7 students liked it. The French for beginners course is 3 hours long. During the third hour, I generally introduces French culture, including French tourist areas, cinema, literature, and music. By the end of the second semester, students were able to read in the French, extracts from various novels and tales, including *The Little Prince* and *Beauty and the Beast*.



Picture 7: Post 22 uploaded by the instructor

Picture 7 introduces French culture as well; French cuisine is quite famous around the world. This time, I just wanted to introduce some international dishes French people enjoy eating, such as couscous (North Africa), pizza (Italy), French fries and mussels (Belgium), paella (Spain), and some French sea food (Provence). This post was uploaded on May 19, 2014; it was viewed by 28 students and 11 students liked it. During the class, I also introduced traditional French dishes and told students the Chinese translation for most famous French and Chinese/Taiwanese dishes, such as le bœuf bourguignon 紅酒燉牛肉 (beef Burgundy), les nouilles au bœuf 牛肉麵 (beef noodle), l'omelette aux huîtres 蚵仔煎 (oyster omelet), and drinks like le thé aux perles 珍珠奶茶 (bubble tea).



Picture 8: Post 23 uploaded by the instructor.

Picture 8 is a short message to students regarding the coming final exam. This post was uploaded on May 19, 2014, in the morning, before the exam; it was viewed by 28 students and

16 students liked it. This is the highest number of likes during the whole second semester. Who knew students like exams more than pizzas? I suppose the likes mean that students enjoyed the class and were ready for the final exam. I note that the number of students who viewed the posts was high and quite stable.



Picture 9: Post 24 uploaded by the instructor

Picture 9 is the last post of the second semester, uploaded on June 19; it was viewed by 27 students and 16 students liked it. This post is a message to students notifying them that the course is over, and wishing them a nice summer vacation. Nobody left the group after the end of the semester, but I eventually closed it as well as the Facebook account. I added a picture of a famous motivational quote encouraging students to work hard and never to give up.

Analysis of Various Types of Teacher’s Posts and of the Timing of Posts

In a previous study on Facebook as an educational tool (Montoneri, 2014), I defined six types of posts, such as quotation of texts, PowerPoint, pictures or photos, movie information and music adapted from books, and external links. I demonstrated that students showed little interest toward PowerPoint presentations posted in the group in a class of European Literature. In the present study, I focus on four types of posts: *photo*, that is the sharing of pictures taken by the instructor and photos found on Internet; *film*, referring to everything related to French cinema; *song*, means the sharing of French songs found on Youtube and information about French singers; *link*, referring to additional information about French grammar, syntax, vocabulary, and pronunciation. During the class and in the Facebook group the students learned about the influence of French Literature and the numerous adaptations on screen of French novels, notably in Hollywood (*Les Misérables*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *The Count of Monte*

Cristo, The Little Prince, and so many others). Table 2 and Figure 1 show that almost all the students in the group viewed all the teacher's posts. They were obviously more attracted by the posts with pictures, *photo* in French (5.2), and information concerning French cinema, *film* in French (5.0); surprisingly, students were less interested by posts on French music or *song* (*chanson* in French) (2.3). The posts called *link* (*lien* in French) were quite appreciated (4.5), because they gave complementary information about French vocabulary and various points of grammar studied during the class.

Table 2: Average number of views and likes for various types of posts

Type of posts	Number of views	Number of likes
photo	28.6	5.2
film	29.0	5.0
song <i>chanson</i>	28.7	2.3
link <i>lien</i>	28.5	4.5

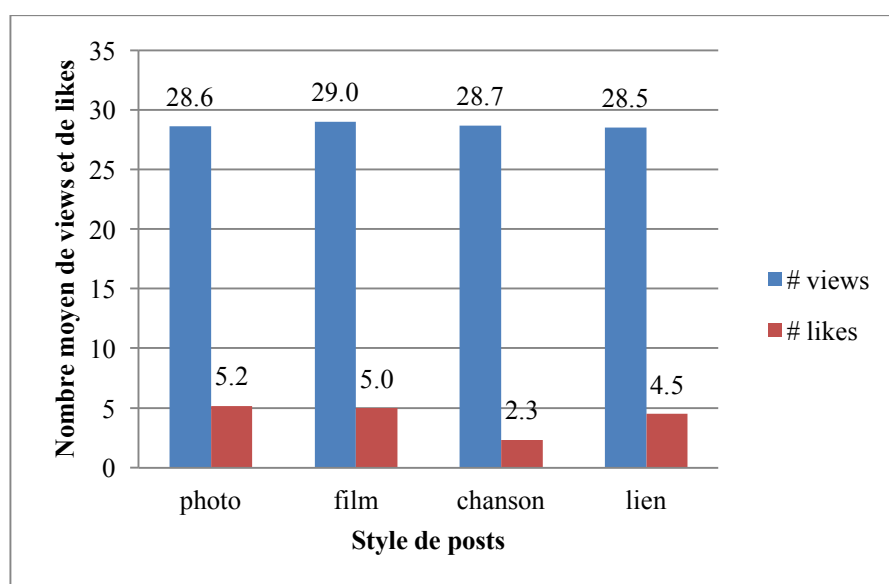


Figure 1: Comparison of various types of posts

Posts' Timing: At What Time of the Day Posts Might be More Successful?

It might be interesting and useful for teachers to have some insight into students' online behavior, which may of course vary from country to country. According to Pring (2012), almost 50% of 18-34 year olds check Facebook when they wake up – 28% before even getting out of bed. It seems that students in Taiwan are online day and night. However, in my experience, it seemed that posts uploaded in the morning before the class might have more chance to be viewed by a larger number of students. The time of the week that would have the lowest success rate or impact would be on Sunday morning, very early.

Student behavior was interesting here and a little difficult to analyze as each student had his or her own problems and deadlines. This course was an option for beginners in French. It was impressive enough that students would spend so much time for a 3-hour class when they were so busy with their major. Moreover, none of the students in the group belonged to the

department of foreign languages. Seven were Chinese majors; the other students did not belong to a department of languages. We can see in Table 3 and Figure 2 that some students were highly motivated; they took on the habit of viewing and liking posts as soon as they got uploaded. Other students tended to go online some time later and to view many posts at once. As people who regularly use social media might suspect, posts are viewed the most just after they are uploaded, that is in the next 24 hours. This study demonstrates the overwhelming importance of timing. People react very quickly and almost immediately when information is posted online. However, students who did not have the opportunity or the time to view a post so quickly (exams in other courses, assignments, school activities, part-time job...) still came back to check previous posts. As a result, one month later, a few students were still viewing older posts. With the exception of post 1 on week 2, all the other posts from week 3 to week 14 were mostly viewed within a day after posting (in red, Figure 2).

Table 3: Average number of views and likes for various types of posts

Time *	Week											
	2	3	4	5	7	9	10	11	12	13	14	
1 day	2.0	11.0	15.0	11.0	10.0	21.0	19.0	16.0	13.0	12.0	12.0	
2-3 days	8.0	2.7	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	
4 days-1 week	8.0	7.3	4.0	4.0	8.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	
1-2 weeks	6.1	1.0	0.0	1.5	7.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	5.0	
3-4 weeks	0.7	1.0	4.0	9.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	
1 month~	4.1	6.0	6.0	3.5	2.0	7.0	8.0	7.0	6.0	5.0	0.0	
Proportion for the first week (%)	29.0	29.0	29.0	29.0	29.0	28.0	28.0	28.0	28.0	28.0	28.0	
Proportion the two first weeks (%)	62%	72%	66%	52%	66%	75%	71%	64%	64%	61%	61%	
Proportion for the first month (%)	83%	76%	66%	57%	90%	75%	71%	68%	64%	64%	79%	

* “1 day” means that students saw a post within the next 24 hours after the upload of the post. “1 month~” means after a month and more.

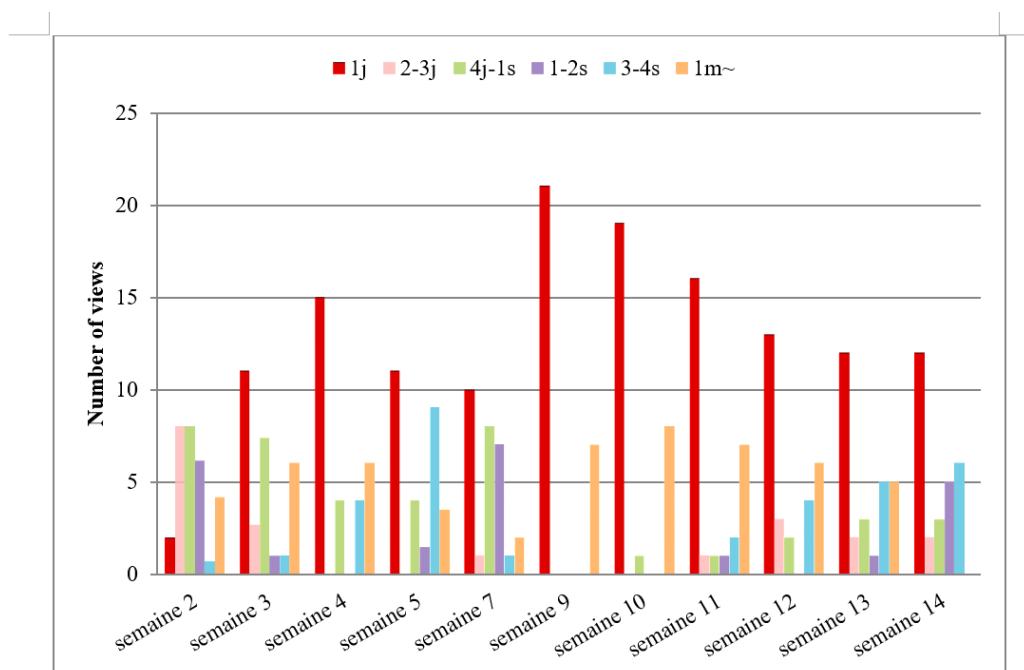


Figure 2: Views of weekly posts and timing

* *semaine*, week; *j* for *jour*, day; *1s* for *une semaine*, one week; *1m* for *un mois*, one month.

Analysis of Teacher's Evaluation

The questionnaires were originally written in Chinese and translated into English by the instructor/researcher. Table 4 shows student evaluation of the instructor for two consecutive semesters. The questionnaires are divided in two parts: Part 1 concerns student learning behavior (two questions) and part 2 is the degree of approbation concerning the teaching.

S1 represents the amount of time students believed they were absent or late during the two semesters, from never absent to absent more than 19 hours during each semester. Between the first and second semester there was a -6.43% progress (from 1.71 to 1.6). This means that students were less absent or late during the second semester. To decrease absenteeism is not easy. Some students are often late early in the morning. The class was 3 hours long, from 9 am to 12. Using Facebook seemed to have motivated some students to be on time and to attend the class more often. The instructor also noticed that when some students were late or absent, they took on the habit of sending a message on Facebook before the class (asking for a sick leave for example).

The amount of work represented by the score of S2 decreased from 2.5 to 2.2 (-12.0%). The course during the second semester became more demanding (workload, difficulty of the lessons) and more severe (notably concerning the scoring); as a result, students' average scores were relatively lower. They were able to progress and maintain a certain level, despite the fact that they had the impression they needed less time and effort to progress in French. Learning the basics in French (ABC, pronunciation, numbers, gender of nouns, verb conjugation, accents and liaisons) required a fair amount of hard work at the beginning. Once they learned and assimilated the rules, students needed less effort to speak and write in French. By the end of the second semester, they were able to read extracts from French Literature. This is the first time the instructor could get beginners to read literature in French during the class.

Moreover, despite the fact that students' scores decreased during the second semester, the instructor's evaluation increased (average score T1 to T12: 4.08 to 4.34 from the first to the second semester; 6.37% increase), which shows that scores and approbation of the teaching are not related, in part because students felt their grades were "justified and fair" (T10: first semester 4.18; second semester 4.33; 3.59% increase).

T2 rates how clearly and coherently the teacher speaks. This rating increased at the end of the second semester. Additional explanation and online feedback helped students better understand the instructor's lecture during the class. Perhaps, because students made progress in both French and English during the academic year, they could more clearly understand the teacher. It is noteworthy that the class was teaching French using English to Chinese students who are not majoring in English. It takes tremendous effort to learn a foreign language, French, through the medium of another foreign language, English.

T5 rates the informative content of the educational material. This rating was very important in relation to the use of Facebook. As we saw earlier in this paper, the instructor added a large number of posts about French culture, which were quite successful. The 8.37% increase concerning this question is an important encouragement for teachers using social network during and outside the classroom. Students seemed to appreciate the additional amount of information and course content. According to the detailed data, more students appreciated the teacher's open attitude toward communicating with them online during the second semester.

T7 rates the availability of the instructor to help students and to guide them to solve problems. This rating was interesting. Facebook concretely helped students in their perception that the teacher was helping them, during the class as well as outside the classroom. They could send messages and ask questions any time. They had therefore more opportunities to practice French and more feedback from the teacher. Many students wrote short texts in French, asking the instructor to correct them (even during the weekend, which was also more demanding for the teacher, increasing his workload).

T8 rates the punctuality of the instructor. This rating showed some subjectivity in the way students answered. Since the instructor was never late or absent during the entire academic year, it seems that the score should be higher.

Table 4: Teacher evaluation at the end of the first and second semester

Part 1: Students' learning behavior

Questions	Period	Semester 1	Semester 2 with Facebook	Progress (%)
S1. This semester, after the dropping out period, for this course, circumstances of absence (including being late, leaving the class early, authorizations of absence and absenteeism) are : 1. never absent, 2. absent 1-6 hours, 3. absent 7-12 hours, 4. 13-18 hours, 5. absent more than 19 hours.		1.71	1.6	-6.43%
S2. This semester, I worked for this course an average per week after school of about: 1. Less than an hour, 2. between 1-2 hours, 3. between 2-3 hours, 4. between 3-4 hours, 5. More than 4 hours.		2.5	2.2	-12.0%

Part 2: Degree of approbation concerning the teaching (1 strongly disagree, 5 strongly agree)

Questions	Period	Semester 1	Semester 2 with Facebook	Progress (%)
T1. The instructor at the beginning of the semester can explain clearly the content of the syllabus for this course		4.03	4.47	10.92%
T2. The teacher speaks clearly and is coherent		3.94	4.27	8.38%
T3. The instructor's teaching methods have helped me to learn		4	4.2	5.00%
T4. Weekly progress for this course is appropriate		3.97	4.13	4.03%
T5. The content of the educational material is informative		4.06	4.4	8.37%
T6. The instructor is highly enthusiastic in the teaching process		4.29	4.53	5.59%
T7. The instructor is available to help students and to guide them to solve problems		4.09	4.53	10.76%
T8. The instructor is rarely absent or late with no reason		4.24	4.4	3.77%
T9. The scoring method can reasonably reflect students' learning results		4.06	4.2	3.45%
T10. Until now, students' grades are justified and fair.		4.18	4.33	3.59%
T11. Until now, the instructor can immediately provide the results of the evaluation for each student.		4.06	4.33	6.65%
T12. Overall, the results concerning the teaching of this course are good		4.06	4.27	5.17%
Average score T1 to T12		4.08	4.34	6.37%

Figure 3 and Figure 4 below highlight the progress made between the first and second semester. Concerning part 2 of the questionnaires, it indicates improvement for all of the questions from T1 to T12; T1 and T7 show the highest progress (10.92% and 10.76% respectively). The progress of question 3 and 6 implies that the posts provided on Facebook gave extra information, which helped students to better understand the curriculum content.

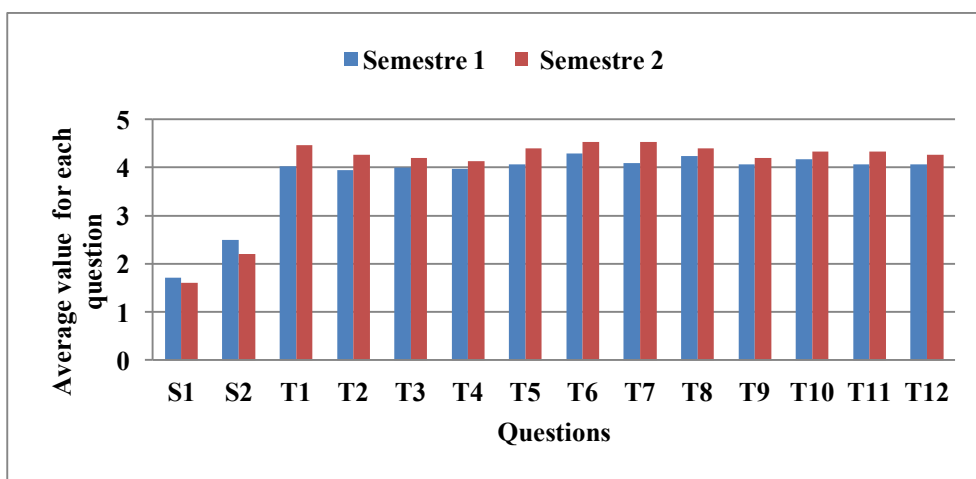


Figure 3. Comparison Semester 1/Semester 2, without and with FB

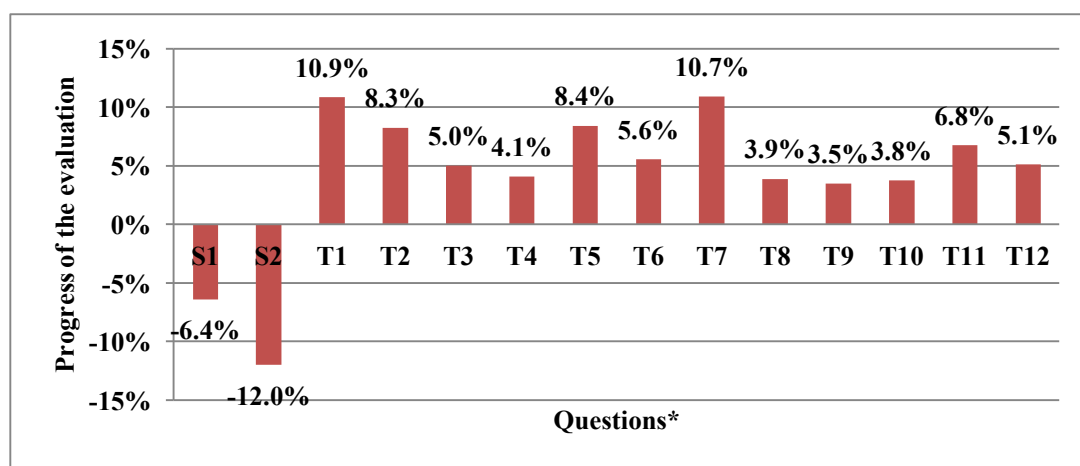


Figure 4. Progress of the evaluation for the second semester after using Facebook

* S1~S2 represent the evolution of students’ learning behavior, T1~T12 represent the evolution of the degree of approbation concerning the teaching of this course.

Conclusion

Facebook can be a useful complementary educational tool for teachers who wish to improve the presentation and organization of their courses. The teacher plays the roles of instructor, group administrator and group member; this situation gives them the opportunity to observe and analyze students’ improvement, their motivation, their behavior, and their needs. Teachers may do real-time adjustment and have a better relationship with their students who have one more way of communicating with their instructor, during and outside of the class. This way of teaching is obviously more demanding and time-consuming, but it is worth it, as students can see their level in French progress faster while using online technology and social networking. We note that they did not communicate with each other in the group and did not share information with the teacher or with their classmates. Further studies could concentrate on encouraging students to participate more actively in the group, that is, to share their knowledge, ask questions and chat with their classmates.

Suggestions for Future Use of Facebook as a Language Learning Tool

- We saw that Facebook allows instructors to create groups that are easy to open and to manage. Teachers can collect data to do research, notably concerning the impact of Facebook on their students' motivation, learning progress, behavior, tastes, communication and language skills.
- Facebook might help the instructor share his or her own teaching material and also find new teaching material online (flashcards, drawings, tables and figures) which can be viewed by students anytime, anywhere, during and outside the classroom.
- Students become more engaged in the learning process, further studies could encourage students to be more active in the group, that is, to post and to share their classmates' posts, to comment posts in the language they study, to share their experience and what they know about the country and language they study.
- Facebook may help improve the relationship and communication between the instructor and the students. Shy students can also have another way to communicate with their teacher. Taiwanese students are quite shy and rarely ask questions during the class. They might feel more comfortable asking questions online about things they did not understand during the lecture.
- Facebook can be a useful tool to schedule events and exams, to make announcements, as well as to send messages concerning unexpected absences or problems.
- Students in Taiwan are very comfortable with Facebook and before the instructor created the learning group, all of the students in the class already had a profile for years. They easily connect with their teachers and generally enjoy reading posts related to their courses.
- The instructor may also help students connect to relevant websites, such as the Bureau français de Taipei (functioning as a de facto embassy), the Alliance Française (international organization promoting French language and culture around the world), webpages teaching French online or helping students pass the DELF (diploma awarded by the French Ministry of Education to prove the French-language skills of non-French candidates); students might also have the opportunity to meet future employers in the French community.
- Teachers should find some balance and make sure that being the group administrator does not become time and energy consuming. It is therefore advised to post one or two times per week and to choose the posts "wisely", in relation with what was actually taught during the class. Sharing too many posts or unrelated posts might be counterproductive.

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