

## FACEBOOK AS A SOCIAL LEARNING NETWORK IN LANGUAGES

*Ruben Jans, Limburg Catholic University College, ruben.jans@khlum.be*

**Key words:** Facebook, web 2.0, technology enhanced learning,

### **Abstract:**

This paper focused on a School of Education project called "Social networks as diversity tool". School of Education is an expertise network with 22 teacher-training departments. Students are able to develop relationships with their peers even though they have never met each other (Grant, 2008; Bedard, 2009). Social software will be used to inform boys and immigrants about the profession of a teacher, and to offer them a language course to increase the intake of first-year students and the graduation of this target group.

A study taken in Belgium shows that the digital divide is the biggest in our target groups. Important for this project is the find out how to bridge the digital divide. The digital divide is a term used to describe the disparities of access to high quality educational technology and Internet access.

During this research 4 research questions need to be considered:

- Can a social network such as Facebook be used to increase boys and immigrants in teacher training?
- How can social network be used to increase boys and immigrants in teacher training?
- How can the social network become a sustainable tool for reaching to goals of this project?
- Is there a measurable difference between the amount of students before and after the project?

The approach in this research project does not focus solely on the teacher, though teachers are central participants in the process. This research herein focuses on:

1. **Change:** improving practices and behaviours by changing them
2. **Reflection:** people thinking, reflecting, and/or theorizing about their own practices, behaviour and situations
3. **Participation:** people changing their own practices and behaviours, not those of others
4. **Inclusion:** starting with the agendas and perspectives of the least powerful, widening the circle to include all those affected by the problem
5. **Sharing:** people sharing their perspectives with others
6. **Understanding:** achieving clarity of understanding of the different perspectives and experiences of all involved
7. **Repetition:** repeating cycles of research activity leading toward the solution to a problem
8. **Practise:** testing emerging understandings by using them as the bases for changing practices or constructing new practices.
9. **Community:** working toward the development/construction of a learning community

Each of these types of information had the potential to increase the power and scope of the research process. Each of these types will be discussed, linked to the research questions and the project.

**Presenter:**

Ruben Jans,  
Limburg Catholic University College  
Hemelrijk 25  
3500 Hasselt  
Belgium  
[Ruben.jans@khlm.be](mailto:Ruben.jans@khlm.be) - 0032 (0)11 24 38 05