



The use of social media
for democratic participation (SOCMED)

Negotiation and Reflection in Teacher Training

by

Author: Andrea Fischer - Hungary

Editor: Audrey Cheynut

Last edition: April, 2015

The opinions expressed in this work are the responsibility
of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy
of the Council of Europe.

This training unit has been developed in the trainer training course :
« The use of social media for democratic participation (SOCMED) »
organised by the [Pestalozzi Programme](#)
of the [Council of Europe](#)

Negotiation and Reflection in Teacher Training

Brief description

This training unit aims at developing participation of the learners in their learning process, by letting them take an active part in the choice of the studied topics, according to their interests and needs. The use of social medias facilitates the promotion of participation and responsibility.

Keywords: social media, democratic participation, cooperative learning, pre-service training.

Expected outcomes

- ✓ Participants will have experienced voicing their needs and expectations in course design. (A_EPIST_1)
- ✓ Participants will have tried out using social media to find out about each other's needs, express their views, support and justify arguments, relate to and comment/reflect on each other's suggestions, ideas. (A_DIV_1)
- ✓ They will have learnt how to negotiate course content democratically, and tailor-make a course. (A_COOP_2, A_COOP_3, S_COOP_1, S_COOP_2)
- ✓ Participants will have discussed the possibilities of using social media for skills development with their own students, including the pros and cons, based on their experience.

Activities

	Duration	Methods used
Activity 1 – Pre-course tasks	-	Online survey
Activity 2 – What can I share ?	110 minutes	Open space discussion Online individual or group work
Evaluation	25 minutes	Online questionnaire Whole group discussion

Background and context

I teach an optional methodology course for pre-service trainees. Since it is an elective course, I had a chance to tailor-make the course content. Thus, I asked them to set up a Facebook group to carry out needs analysis first. Then gave them a tentative course content, asked them to negotiate it and decide/agree on what best meets their needs, comment on each other's suggestions in a democratic way. They had a chance to argue, agree/disagree/ comment on each other's suggestions and justify their choices. Now that we have the course running, I use the group platform to develop reflectivity: ask for self-evaluation, biweekly progress reports and regular feedback. We then give feedback on feedback, and also use this forum to share 'products' (various assignments). It is meant to be a kind of 'looped-input' about how social media can be used for developing democratic skills, i.e. negotiating shared goals, reaching consensus later with their own pupils.

Activity 1: Pre-course tasks

Duration : -

Expected outcome

- ✓ To inform participants about the course
- ✓ To invite them to take part in the process of negotiating course content
- ✓ To encourage them to express preferences, become aware of different needs in a group

Methods/ techniques used

- ✓ Online survey on a group forum

Resources

/

Practical arrangements

- ✓ The trainer will set up a group forum on a social network (Moodle, Facebook...) and post an outline of the training session on it.
- ✓ The trainees are to be contacted in advance so that they can get connected for the activity.

Procedure

Step 1

- ✓ The trainer invites the participants to answer individually the following questions :
 - Why did you register for this training?
 - What are your expectations in terms of outcome?
 - What is the topic that mainly interests you?
- ✓ The trainer can encourage the participants to develop their answers and start a real online discussion before meeting.

Step 2

- ✓ The trainer asks the participants to open group forums to answer the following question: what can you share with others during the session? He/she invites each participant to post a brief description of what he/she can share, and encourages everyone to have a look at the others' groups and start discussions.
- ✓ The trainer asks the participants to prepare a 15-minute activity or discussion according to their proposal. He tells the participants that if they have some similar proposals, they can work in pairs or small teams (3 people maximum).

Step 3

- ✓ The trainer gathers all the information.
- ✓ He/she prepares his/her training according to the participants expressed interests.
- ✓ He plans a 60-minute open space activity to let the participants present their activities in small groups during the training session.

Step 4 - Debriefing

- ✓ The debriefing for this activity can occur at the beginning of the face-to-face training session. The trainer can ask the participants :
 - Did your expectations evolve during the online discussion?
 - What other participant's proposal do you remember? Which ones particularly interest you?
 - How do you feel now that the face-to-face training is starting? (Concerning the feeling of the group, of oneself in the group, etc.). Do you have any fears or worries?

Tips for trainers

- ✓ Try to plan this activity so as to keep enough time for you to organise your training session according to the participants' interests.

Activity 2: What can I share?

Duration: 110 minutes

Expected outcome

- ✓ To carry out needs analysis, reveal their background knowledge/skills/expectations
- ✓ To get trainees think about their mental suitcase
- ✓ To reveal previous experience to draw upon during the course, voice and share strengths and worries

Methods/ techniques used

- ✓ Open space discussions

Resources

- ✓ Paper
- ✓ Pens and markers
- ✓ Computers or laptops
- ✓ Internet connection

Practical arrangements

- ✓ The participants should have the possibility to split into different small groups.

Procedure

Step 1 (10 min) – What can I share?

- ✓ Each trainee writes down on a piece of paper what he/she can share (according to what had been said during the online forum).
- ✓ The trainer splits the whole group into four and explains that during the first 15 minutes, a quarter of the participants will present their chosen topic in small groups and have a discussion. For the next 15 minutes, another quarter of participants will present their topics, and so on until everyone has had a chance to do his/her presentation.
- ✓ The trainer explains that the auditors will be collecting information about the presentation they attend in order to post reports on the online forums.

Step 2 (60 min) – Open space discussions

- ✓ The participants split into small groups.
- ✓ They go on for four rounds of exchanges according to the previous instructions.

Step 3 (30 min) – Sharing reports

- ✓ The participants are given time to post short reports about the presentations they attended, so that everybody can have an access to all that has been said.
- ✓ They can either work individually or in small groups. The trainer will invite them to pay attention to all the previous posts, so that they can try to complete them in a cooperative way.
- ✓ In the end, time can be given so that everyone gets a chance to read reports from other groups.

Step 4 - Debriefing (10 min)

- ✓ What did you learn that you find particularly interesting? Surprising? Useful?
- ✓ Is there a particular topic that you would like to develop more in depth?

Tips for trainers

- ✓ You can encourage the participants to get organised for cooperative work, so that everyone gets a chance to equally participate. Invite them to be creative: they could be taking pictures, write their report in a personal way...

Evaluation

Duration: 25 minutes

Expected outcome

- ✓ Looking back and looking ahead

Methods/ techniques used

- ✓ Online questionnaire
- ✓ Whole group discussion

Procedure

Step 1 (15 min) – Online questionnaire

- ✓ Open a new discussion group on the chosen social network.
- ✓ Ask the participants to individually fill in the following online questionnaire:
 - 1 idea that you've shared with someone.
 - 2 new things you've learned in this course.
 - 3 things you will definitely try out.
- ✓ Give some time for the participants to read the each other's answers.

Step 2 (10 min) – Whole group discussion

- ✓ What are the pros and cons of using a social media platform?
- ✓ How is it suitable for (democratic) skills development?
- ✓ What are participants taking away with them from this experience?
- ✓ Do you have any reactions concerning the previous online questionnaire?