



The Digital Shift: Integrating Social Media as a Pedagogical Tool in Teacher Education

¹Rekha K & ²Dr. S. Thangarajathi

Research Scholar¹, Professor², Department of Educational Technology, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore



Manuscript ID:
BIJ-SPL1-MAR26-EDU-028

Subject: Education

Received : 03.02.2026
Accepted : 08.02.2026
Published : 14.03.2026

DOI: 10.64938/bij.v10si1.26.Mar028

Copy Right:



This work is licensed under
a Creative Commons Attribution-
ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Abstract

This paper explores the transformative role of social media in modernizing teacher education. As the digital landscape evolves, social media platforms have transitioned from mere communication tools to sophisticated ecosystems for professional development and pedagogical innovation. This analysis specifically examines the strategic use of WhatsApp, YouTube, and LinkedIn, in shaping pre-service teachers' professional identities and instructional strategies. The paper addresses the integration of these tools into teacher training to develop "digital wisdom" and prepare educators for future classrooms.

Keywords: teacher education, social media, WhatsApp, YouTube, Professional Learning Networks (PLN), digital pedagogy

Introduction

The landscape of teacher education is undergoing a profound transformation. Traditional face-to-face workshops and static Learning Management Systems (LMS) are increasingly supplemented by dynamic social media interactions. In teacher education, these platforms facilitate a "Community of Praxis" (Reich et al., 2011). For student-teachers, social media provides a bridge between theoretical coursework and the practical realities of the classroom. For student-teachers, particularly those navigating the complexities of modern classrooms in regions like Coimbatore, social media serves as a vital cognitive bridge. It connects the abstract, theoretical frameworks provided by university coursework with the lived, practical realities of the classroom environment. This digital mediation allows for a shift

from a "transmission" model of learning to a "collaborative-participatory" model, where knowledge is co-constructed in real-time.

In this emerging "smart" educational ecosystem, platforms such as WhatsApp, YouTube, and LinkedIn are no longer peripheral distractions; they are sophisticated instructional operating systems. Each platform offers unique "affordances" from the instantaneous collaborative troubleshooting found on WhatsApp to the visual pedagogical archiving on YouTube. However, this shift toward a more transparent and connected professional life introduces new complexities. As pre-service teachers navigate these spaces, they must engage in a constant negotiation of their professional identities while managing significant ethical risks.



This paper delves into the specific pedagogical applications of these four major platforms, analyzing how they reshape teacher competency. Furthermore, it addresses the critical ethical implications of their use, including the "surveillance" of educators, data privacy, and the digital divide, ultimately arguing for the integration of "digital wisdom" as a core pillar of modern teacher training.

Literature Review

Lalduhsaki & Chaurasia (2025): In their study on prospective teachers, the authors highlight that pre-service educators are now deeply "social-media aware," maintaining an average of five distinct social media accounts for educational purposes. Their research indicates that while YouTube remains the primary repository for "master-teacher" demonstrations (PCK), there is a significant surge in using Instagram for visual instructional design. However, the study warns of a "weak negative relationship" between high-frequency social media usage and academic emotional intelligence, suggesting that over-reliance on digital interaction can sometimes impair face-to-face pedagogical sensitivity.

Advance HE (2024) [Mok, 2024]: This comprehensive review explores the shift toward "Real-World Application" via social media. Mok argues that 83% of modern student-teachers now utilize platforms like LinkedIn and WhatsApp specifically to bridge the gap between abstract university theory and classroom practice. The study introduces the concept of "Just-in-Time" feedback loops, where WhatsApp acts as a digital "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD), allowing novice teachers to receive instant mentoring from experts during their internships, thereby reducing professional isolation.

EdWeek Research Center (2024) [Prothero, 2024] This analysis provides a critical counterpoint to the "digital-first" movement by highlighting a significant perception gap. While 75% of pre-service teachers find social media comfortable for networking and professional development, over 65% of their faculty

and mentor teachers view these platforms as a "mental health minefield." The review underscores that for social media to be effectively integrated, teacher education programs must address the "authenticity concern"—the difficulty students face in discerning evidence-based teaching strategies from viral but non-validated educational trends.

Strategic Platform Analysis

WhatsApp

The Engine of Instant Collaborative Learning
WhatsApp has become the "informal staffroom" for teacher education.

Internship Support

- **Smit (2025)** identifies that pre-service teachers use peer groups to troubleshoot classroom management and pedagogical challenges in real-time during school placements.
- The platform creates a digital **Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)** where immediate feedback from peers and mentors reduces the professional isolation typical of internships.
- This "just-in-time" support system allows for high agency and interactional space, fostering autonomous problem-solving before the next lesson begins.

Resource Dissemination

- The app facilitates **multimodal micro-learning** through the rapid sharing of voice notes, high-resolution photos of classroom layouts, and instructional videos.
- Trainees can co-create and aggregate learning resources, such as successful lesson plans or creative teaching aids, making academic knowledge visible and actionable.
- Its low-bandwidth requirements ensure that multimedia resources remain accessible even in regions with limited internet infrastructure, such as parts of the Coimbatore District.

Administrative Efficiency

- Educational institutions utilize **WhatsApp Business API and AI-driven chatbots** to



automate routine queries regarding enrollment, exam schedules, and curriculum deadlines.

- These automated systems provide 24/7 support, significantly reducing "operational friction" for faculty and allowing them to focus on deeper pedagogical engagement.
- By streamlining administrative communication, institutions report a **30% increase in student engagement** and higher satisfaction rates due to the immediacy of the responses.

YouTube

The Global Repository of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) YouTube serves as a massive, open-access library for instructional strategies.

Demonstration Peer-Review

- According to **PubMed Central (2024)**, student teachers utilize private channels to upload "micro-teaching" sessions, creating a secure environment for targeted assessment.
- This digital archive enables professors and peers to provide timestamped feedback, allowing for a granular critique of specific instructional behaviors and classroom movements.
- The process fosters a collaborative culture of improvement, where recorded evidence replaces subjective memory during post-lesson evaluation meetings.

Instructional Diversity

- The platform provides unprecedented access to a global variety of teaching styles, allowing educators to observe diverse pedagogical techniques across different cultures and subjects.
- Pre-service teachers can study how native speakers or master educators manage classroom dynamics, helping them adapt international best practices to their specific local contexts.
- This exposure broadens the "pedagogical imagination" of trainees, encouraging them to move beyond traditional rote methods toward more interactive, globalized instructional strategies.

Self-Paced Reflection

- The "pause," "rewind," and "slow-motion" features allow pre-service teachers to meticulously analyze subtle classroom events, such as a student's non-verbal cue or a specific questioning technique.
- Unlike live observations, video allows for repeated viewing, which helps trainees identify patterns in their own teaching performance that might escape immediate attention.
- This asynchronous reflection empowers students to take ownership of their professional growth, transforming the video player into a powerful tool for deep, critical self-evaluation.

LinkedIn

Professional Identity and Career Longevity LinkedIn is critical for the transition from "student" to "professional educator."

Digital Footprint Management

- Teacher education programs utilize LinkedIn to help students manage their "Social SEO," ensuring that their professional achievements appear first in search engine results for potential employers.
- By teaching students to curate their profiles with fact-based resumes and educational credentials, the platform helps them differentiate themselves in a competitive job market (Teal, 2025).
- This proactive management of one's digital presence reduces the "surveillance anxiety" often felt by new teachers, replacing fear with strategic self-promotion.

Global Networking

- Pre-service teachers can connect with global educational NGOs, thought leaders, and professional groups, moving their professional development beyond local institutional boundaries.
- Access to global networks allows for the exchange of "best practices" and provides a



broader perspective on international educational standards and policy trends (OECD, 2025).

- These connections often lead to collaborative projects or mentorship opportunities that are not available within the immediate geographic vicinity of the trainee.

Teacher Professional Identity (TPI)

- The platform facilitates a "negotiation" of the teacher's role, allowing trainees to align their personal values with the professional standards shared by the global teaching community.
- Regular engagement with professional content helps pre-service teachers develop a sense of belonging and commitment to the profession, which is a strong predictor of career retention (Li & Khairani, 2025).
- By sharing original insights and articles, trainees begin to see themselves as "knowledge creators," a critical shift for developing long-term professional agency and longevity.

Methodology

This paper uses a Systematic Literature Review to study research from 2020 to 2026 found in major academic databases like ERIC and ResearchGate. It specifically looks at how social media helps student-teachers connect what they learn in college (theory) with what they actually do in a real classroom (practice), a concept called a "Community of Praxis." By using a Socio-Technical Perspective, the study explains that social media isn't just a simple tool; it is a digital space where technology and human behavior interact to change how new teachers build their professional identity and teaching skills.

Results and Discussion

The findings reveal that social media is predominantly used for educational communication, resource sharing, and professional networking, effectively acting as a "digital bridge" during internships. There is a clear mediating effect of peer influence; students are more likely to adopt innovative tools when they see their colleagues successfully using them for classroom management.

However, a significant "pedagogical gap" remains: while student-teachers are active "creators," many faculty members still view these platforms as purely informal. This disconnect results in a lack of formal assessment strategies, meaning that the valuable learning happening on WhatsApp or YouTube often goes unrecognized and unrewarded in the official curriculum.

Challenges and Ethical Safeguards (Data Privacy and Security)

While social media offers significant pedagogical benefits, its integration into teacher education must be balanced with strong ethical safeguards to protect both educators and students.

Data Privacy and Security

- Educational institutions must implement strict data protection policies to prevent the unauthorized sharing of student images or personal information on public platforms.
- Teachers need to understand platform privacy settings and legal frameworks like **FERPA** or **GDPR** to ensure that digital communication remains within professional and legal boundaries.
- Robust cybersecurity measures, such as **multi-factor authentication**, are essential to protect the sensitive pedagogical data stored within decentralized social media groups.

Work-Life Balance and Mental Health

- The "always-on" nature of apps like WhatsApp can lead to burnout, making it necessary to establish clear "digital office hours" and professional communication boundaries.
- Research indicates that constant online comparison can negatively impact the self-efficacy and mental well-being of pre-service teachers, requiring proactive institutional support.
- Encouraging "digital detox" periods and mindful technology use helps educators maintain a



healthy separation between their personal lives and their professional digital identities.

The Digital Divide and Equity

- Institutions must ensure that digital-first learning does not exclude students with limited internet access or lower-tier mobile devices, particularly in rural or marginalized regions.
- "Digital equity" involves providing alternative, non-digital resources and ensuring that all trainees have the necessary technical skills to participate fully in the curriculum.
- Bridging this divide requires policy reforms and infrastructure investments that prioritize universal connectivity as a fundamental right for all learners and educators.

Conclusion

The integration of social media into teacher education represents a fundamental shift toward a more connected and responsive pedagogical model. By strategically utilizing WhatsApp, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Instagram, institutions can foster a new generation of teachers who are not only digitally fluent but also globally connected through a Community of Praxis. However, this transformation is not without risks; it requires the intentional cultivation of "Digital Wisdom" to navigate complex issues like privacy and misinformation. Ultimately, when used ethically and strategically, social media serves as a powerful engine for professional growth, helping educators bridge the gap between theory and the practical realities of the 21st-century classroom.

References

1. Palacios-Rodríguez, A., et al. (2025). Assessing the impact of WhatsApp on academic interaction and influencing factors in distance education. *Journal of Digital Learning in Teacher Education*.
2. Martínez-Domingo, A., Aznar-Díaz, I., & García-Segura, S. (2025). Use of Instagram as

an educational tool with pre-service teachers and the impact on digital competence in communication and collaboration. *Education Sciences*, 15(2), 149. <https://doi.org/10.33407/itlt.v10i5.5775>

3. OECD. (2025). *Teacher professional identity: Using digital resources for learning and development*. OECD Publishing. <https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/teacher-professional-identity>
4. Mok, M. (2024, December 16). The impact of social media on teaching and learning: Transforming education in the digital age. *Advance HE News*. <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/news-and-views/impact-social-media-teaching-and-learning-transforming-education-digital-age>
5. Zeng, Z., et al. (2024). Pre-service teachers' digital competence: A systematic review of factors, frameworks, and global patterns. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 23(1). <https://ijlter.org/index.php/ijlter/article/view/13958>
6. Smit, I. (2024). *Mobile instant messaging in higher education: Case studies from India*. ResearchGate. [Pre-print for 2025 publication].
7. Hou, R., et al. (2023). The relationship between social media and professional learning from the perspective of pre-service teachers: A survey. *PMC - NIH*, 10(5), e10213592. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10213592/>
8. AITSL. (2021). *Using social media for professional learning - a practical guide for teachers*. Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership.
9. Reich, J., Levinson, S., & Johnston, W. (2011/Updated 2020). *Social media and the community of praxis in teacher education*. [Foundational Framework cited in current SLR 2020-2026].