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How English Teachers Use Instagram and Other Social Media Platforms as Professional Development and Emotional Encouragement

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How English Teachers use Instagram and other Social Media Platforms as Professional Development and Emotional Encouragement

Background Information:

- Social media platforms such as Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, Teachers Pay Teachers, Twitter, and personal blogs offer professional development through the sharing of classroom materials and advice.
- Research is only beginning to recognize the popularity of social media platforms for teachers' professional development and emotional encouragement.

Research Questions:

- Do English teachers think of social media platforms as online channels for professional development?
- How do these sites encourage and support English teachers?
- Do English teachers turn to social media sites if they are experiencing symptoms of occupational burnout?

Methodology:

- Content analysis of three popular Instagram pages created by high school English teachers
- Descriptive content and textual inquiry through interviews with English teachers and a Qualtrics survey for senior English teaching students

Social Media Sites as Professional Development

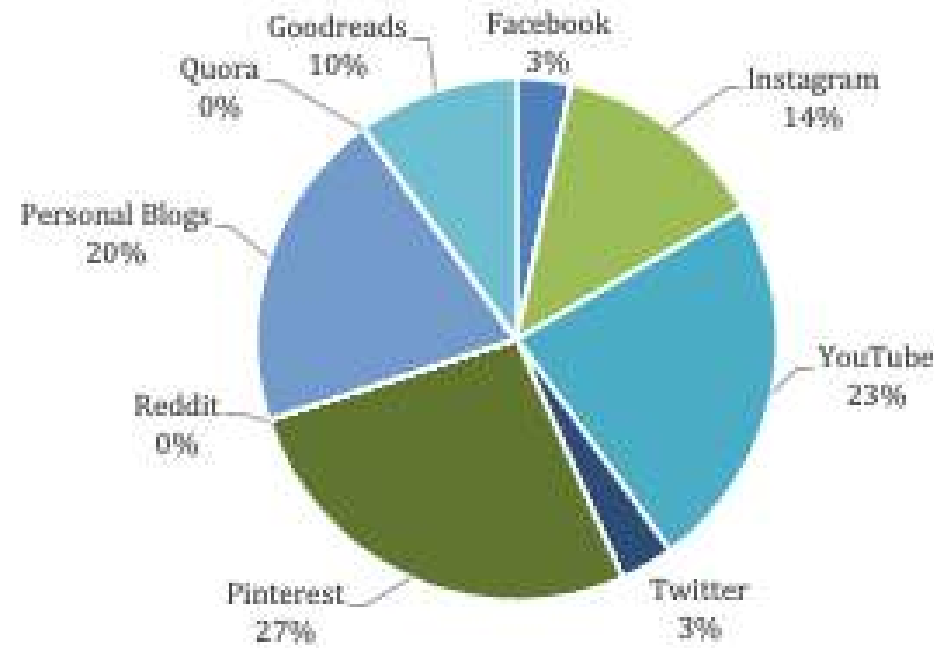


Figure 1: Most popular social media sites as professional development

Q4 - I feel that social media sites (YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, etc.) are helpful from a professional standpoint.

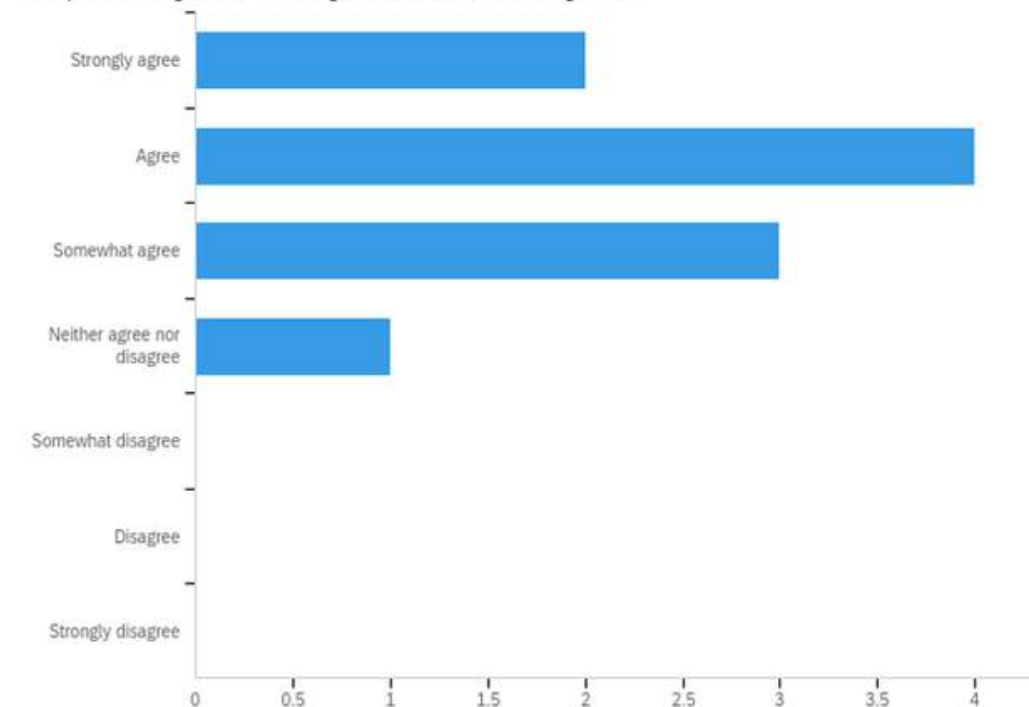


Figure 2: How Qualtrics participants feel about social media from a professional standpoint

Results of Content Analysis:

- The first 35 Instagram posts of three different teaching accounts were categorized. 78% of the posts were dedicated to different aspects of English teaching.
- The overall percentage of posts relating to encouragement and mental health was 21.9%.
 - Of the mental health category, 26% of the posts had a direct reference to occupational burnout.

Results of Interviews and Qualtrics Survey:

- Of the student participants, 70% considered social media sites as a form of professional development.
- In contrast, teachers responded somewhat negatively toward social media in general and had not thought of social media platforms as professional development.
- All teachers had experience with occupational burnout and felt that discussions over social media could be a way to brainstorm solutions for the issue.

Conclusions:

- Pre-service teachers do regard social media sites as online channels for professional development
- Experienced teachers do not share that view, but they do see how aspects of social media could be helpful in terms of advice, materials, and collaboration.