

Undergraduate Students' Perceptions of Edmodo as a Supplementary Learning Tool in an EFL classroom

Supaporn Manowong

Faculty of Liberal Arts, Maejo University, Chiang Mai, Thailand

Corresponding Author: supaporn1@gmail.com

Abstract

Social networking technology has become an integral part of students' life since they use social networking sites to connect to friends and family. This study involved the enhancement of students' learning experiences in an EFL classroom facilitated through a social networking site for educational purposes called Edmodo. The study aimed to explore students' perceptions of the use of Edmodo as a supplementary tool in an EFL classroom. At the end of the course, 94 undergraduates participating in the study completed a 5-Likert- scale survey questionnaire containing 30 items and 4 open-ended questions online. Findings revealed that Edmodo was perceived as a useful and beneficial learning tool to supplement traditional face-to-face classroom settings since it provides various features supporting the students' learning process. In addition, it was considered an effective learning tool as it increased students' motivation, flexibility, and participation in online learning activities. Further research about the use of Edmodo on students with different levels of education, cultural backgrounds and learning styles is suggested. The findings could be used as bases in developing and designing blended learning classroom.

Keywords: Edmodo; Social networking technology; Supplementary learning tools

Introduction

Technology, the Internet in particular, is playing a more and more important role in modern English teaching and learning. Information and Communications Technology or ICT has changed the way teachers teach and learn to teach. The use of ICT tools has offered an authentic learning environment making classes more motivating, pleasant and appealing to students and promotes learner interaction by engaging them in a wide variety of communicative tasks (Elliot, 2009). As a result, teaching and learning approaches have changed to suit the digital age by adopting technology or incorporating e-learning into classrooms (Cowie and Sakui, 2013).

According to Cowie and Sakui (2013), social media such as Facebook or Twitter, which are Web 2.0 tools available on the internet, allow teachers and students to communicate in a variety of interactive, collaborative, and autonomous ways. In addition, Wallace (2014) explains that there has been a trend of social networking platforms which have created online social environments where students and teachers can engage in online communication as well as have tools for promoting remote learning. Wallace adds that when integrated into effective classroom models, social networking platforms can help to increase levels of attendance and participation in learning activities. This is because most social networking sites allow users to create and share digital resources and that means teachers can easily collect and share multimedia resources to support students' learning and provide group discussion to scaffold students' learning.

A free and secure social networking site for teachers and students to connect and collaborate is Edmodo. This website has user interface and platforms similar to that of Facebook, the most popular social networking site (Hourdequin, 2014). Privacy and safety has made Edmodo a social networking site for educational purposes (Çankaya et al., 2013). Teachers use Edmodo as an instructional device and a tool for both collaboration and communication. It encourages students to get actively engaged in learning and effectively practice the principles of responsible learning (Cruz and

Cruz, 2013).

According to Looi and Yusop (2011), integrating Edmodo in teaching and learning provides some pedagogical benefits. Firstly, Edmodo allows students to post comments, send notes, links, files, alerts, assignments, events, and direct messages to the instructor. This can be a beneficial tool for enhancing learning. Secondly, online discussion on Edmodo encourages incidental learning to take place. Teachers are able to encourage the learners by awarding them with reward badges when they perform well in their quizzes and assignments. This will motivate them to engage in the learning activities. Lastly, Edmodo provides students with a sense of community and engagement in their learning.

A number of recent studies (Looi and Yusop, 2011; Kongchan, 2012; Sanders, 2012; Cruz and Cruz, 2013) have proven many benefits of employing Edmodo as a technology tool for classroom teaching and learning. Edmodo was found to be a supportive tool encouraging effective learning as it had a positive impact on student engagement and responsible learning. In addition, students had better experience, better engagement and appreciated social learning experience. More research results found by Wallace (2014), Batsila et al. (2014) and Thongmak (2013) all indicated that Edmodo could be a teaching tool that helps to motivate learners as it was perceived useful and fun by the students and at the same time it makes teachers' work easier as well as the lesson more effective and organized.

Driven by Edmodo's aforementioned extensive use and educational benefits, this research involves the enhancement of students' learning experiences in an EFL language classroom facilitated through the social networking platform, Edmodo. This research project aims to investigate students' perceptions about the use of Edmodo as a supplementary tool for English language learning. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the students' perceptions about the use of Edmodo as a supplementary learning tool for English language learning?
2. Is Edmodo an effective supplementary learning tool based on the perceptions of the students and student learning experiences in the

classroom facilitated through Edmodo?

There has been little research on social networking services in Thai EFL settings and thus, the results of this study could give language teachers or educators insight on learners' attitudes toward a technology-embedded instruction and valuable information to develop new practices and methodologies involving social networking tools for learning to create e-learning environments that make a difference for learning in the classrooms of today.

Related Literature and Research

Edmodo as an Educational Social Networking Site Platform

Social networking is a technology that involves grouping individuals or organizations together in an online environment to interact with each other. Many social networking tools such as Facebook and Twitter are built with microblogging technology which allows an individual to post entries of commentary, descriptions of events, graphics or videos and blog visitors can leave comments or messages on the blogs (Looi and Yusop, 2011). Nevertheless, the main purpose of social networking sites (SNSs) is not for education and they do not provide structures or useful tools which can support online educational environments. Therefore, Educational Social Networking Sites (ESNSs) like Edmodo, Ning, and Elgg have been created. These sites minimize privacy and safety concerns which are weak points of SNSs use (Hourdequin, 2014).

Edmodo is one of social networking sites for educational purposes combining the benefits of social networking with a secure and controlled environment that teachers can allow students to freely operate in. It offers a private platform to exercise the full potential of the social network for educational purposes. Inspired by Facebook, developers of Edmodo designed the Edmodo interface similar to Facebook, so it is regarded as Facebook for education (Scott, 2012). Also, it is estimated that students who are already Facebook users can use Edmodo without difficulties (Çankaya et al., 2013).

According to Hourdequin (2014), Edmodo (www.edmodo.com)

is a free online learning management system that offers a secure virtual space for students and teachers to share and discuss texts, images, audio files, and videos. It is accessible via a web browser and/or free smartphone app (iOS and Android). Edmodo communities are created by teachers for specific groups of students. When a teacher creates an Edmodo group, he or she receives a group code to give to students. For students to register with the site in order to participate, they are required to have a group access code given by the teacher, however, if students register with their email address, they will receive notifications of class activity on the Edmodo site. Moreover, parents are able to have a code of their own, which allows them to check and/or work together with students (Batsila et al., 2014).

Hourdequin (2014) explains that when students sign into Edmodo, they are presented with a “wall” of recent posts. This is the primary place where class activity on Edmodo takes place. Posts on the class wall, called “Notes”, may contain text or attached files for download, or web links to audio files, videos, or other online resources. All members of an Edmodo group have the ability to post notes or give some responses or feedback to other members’ notes. Teachers can post notes to individual group members, the entire group, or to smaller discussion groups. Besides, teachers can post quizzes, polls, assignments, and alerts to the whole group, or to individual students. They can also set time for these posts to appear at specific time in the future. In addition, files with grammar sheets or reading materials can be added in the library for students to access at any time (Pop, 2013), or files in Google Drive folders can be shared with the group and accessible through the Edmodo platform (Hourdequin, 2014).

According to the aforementioned useful features of Edmodo, it can be an ideal tool to be explored and adopted in EFL classrooms to facilitate teaching and learning.

Pedagogical Benefits of Edmodo

Integrating social networking, such as Edmodo in teaching and learning, provides some pedagogical benefits. It is a tool for enhancing

learning because it allows students to post comments as well as send notes, links, files, alerts, assignments, events, and direct messages to the teacher. Looi and Yusop (2011) argued that for weaker or introverted students, they can use the platform to interact with the teacher asking questions and the teacher can clarify their doubts in the subjects learnt. This helps to reduce the discomfort of having to ask in front of a physical audience. Additionally, they added that Edmodo provides a motivating learning atmosphere by enabling teachers to reward students who perform well in their quizzes and assignments with badges. More importantly, unlike the other social networking sites like Twitter and Facebook, Edmodo provides students with a sense of community and engagements in their learning with a security advantage.

According to Scott (2012), Edmodo can be a beneficial technology tool for teachers and students as Edmodo accounts are created free of charge, and it can be accessed anytime and anywhere from any computer or device with an internet connection. It also offers free application for Apple and Android devices. Moreover, through Edmodo, individuals can collaborate on activities or share content. This facilitates classroom management by offering useful tools for posting homework, assigning quizzes, organizing groups, managing turn-in and grade assessment, updating the calendar, rewarding students with badges, creating a library of uploads, and monitoring discussions. Designed for educational purposes, Edmodo offers several benefits for teachers, namely that assignment submissions can be viewed in different formats such as ungraded, graded, not turned in or late, and each student's productions can be viewed individually (Pop, 2013).

Furthermore, Edmodo can help teachers stay organized and assist teachers who wish to go paperless. It is an easy way for classes to connect and collaborate. With Edmodo, students can access all their online classes in one platform, and this helps to promote learning in any location and at any time via computer, tablets, or smartphones (Hammonds et al., 2013). Lastly, in terms of a new teaching approach called blended learning, Garrison and Kanuka (2004) posit that it allows flexibility, interpersonal

and teamwork skill development, collaborative learning environments as well as increasing students' learning motivation and participation. With these several benefits, Edmodo can be an advantageous tool for a blended learning classroom because it is an easy-to-use online learning management system that supports students and teachers to interact outside of class (Hourdequin, 2014).

It can be concluded that Edmodo is a potential innovative tool that provides many educational benefits. Many useful features provided on the Edmodo platform can be employed to encourage online learning environments as well as enhance classroom experiences and resource sharing by just a click away.

Related Studies

Several recent studies have proven many benefits of employing Edmodo as an alternative tool for learning. The study conducted by Kongchan (2012) on the teacher's and students' perception towards using Edmodo in a language classroom found that Edmodo is a user-friendly social learning platform which is so simple that even a non-digital native teacher can make use of the site to set up and run online classes without a need for support from a computer technician. In addition, a study on Edmodo adoption as a classroom collaboration tool by Thongmak (2013) showed that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and instructor characteristics are key factors which caused acceptance of Edmodo by Thai students. He also suggested that instructors emphasize the benefits of using Edmodo to students, educate students on how to use some unfamiliar features, encourage online collaboration environments, and treat students with care in order to make Edmodo's adoption successful. Enriquez's (2014) research focuses on the students' perceptions of the use of Edmodo as a supplementary tool for learning a social science course. Based on the results obtained from questionnaires and the focus group discussions and interviews dealing with students' experiences using Edmodo, it is a good supplementary tool for learning because it allows students to improve their learning through active participation in online discussions and tasks.

However, some disadvantages of Edmodo were mentioned, for example, it is time consuming, it is difficult to follow the procedure, copying other work is possible, and not all students have access to the internet.

Sanders (2012) studied the impact of incorporating the academic networking site Edmodo on student engagement and responsible learning by using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The results of the study showed that incorporating Edmodo had a positive impact on student engagement and responsible learning. She concluded that Edmodo is part of information and communication technologies and for teachers aiming to have a more student-centered pedagogy, incorporating Edmodo in classrooms is recommended. Studying the features of Edmodo and the potential use of it in improving reading comprehension among young adult EFL learners, Looi and Yusop (2011) found that Edmodo is beneficial to the teaching and learning of reading. The students' reading performance was improved accordingly and the result confirmed that Edmodo provided more opportunities for students to practice together and get engaged with the reading tasks provided.

Edmodo can also be a social learning platform in the flipped classroom which is a new pedagogical method which allows students to watch instructional online videos or other online media independently and complete set tasks during classroom time while teachers tutor them as needed (Wallace, 2014). The study done by Wallace found the use of Edmodo was perceived useful within the flipped classroom as it allowed teachers to post messages, share folders, set assignments, quizzes and polls.

Research conducted by Çankaya et al. (2013) using a qualitative method to investigate why undergraduate students use the Internet, SNSs and Edmodo found that almost all of the students had technological devices and spent too much time on the Internet. Moreover, they were using SNSs for communicating, sharing, and playing games. Also, they expressed positive attitudes about Edmodo's features such as the assignment application, quiz application, poll application, and announcement and sharing features in Edmodo. Applying Edmodo was found useful, fun and attractive making teachers' work easier as well as making the lesson

effective and organized.

A case study by Pop (2013) using the Edmodo assignment feature as an ePortfolio of EFL student productions and progress showed high levels of students' satisfaction of working with Edmodo. By using Edmodo, students can share ideas with friends, keep pace with class progress and especially they can select tools offered to amend their productions and therefore can enhance their learning and grades. Additionally, students had positive remarks on learning English with Edmodo which offers benefits such as variety and novelty of tasks, interactivity of the site, and creativity of internet-based teaching approach, user-friendly platform, and above all, the possibility to record oral productions or revise written ones until satisfied.

Based on the findings of the previous studies, general pedagogical benefits can be seen in integrating social networking in teaching and learning and thus it could be suggested that Edmodo with social networking capabilities be employed to provide various benefits to educational settings.

Method

Participants

Participants of the study were 94 undergraduate students in a Thai university enrolling in English for science and technology II in the first semester of the academic year 2014. The students' identities were kept confidential. They were students majoring in computer sciences, statistics, food science and technology, landscape technology and architecture and design.

Research Instruments

This study used both quantitative and qualitative methods to identify undergraduate students' perceptions on Edmodo. To obtain quantitative data, a closed-ended survey questionnaire with 30 statements was made by adapting from the existing survey developed by Enriquez (2014), Cruz and Cruz (2013), Kongchan (2012) and Sanders (2012) with some modifications by the researcher in order to address the research

question 1. It was a 5-point Likert scale survey questionnaire consisting of the following topics: (1) students' perceptions toward Edmodo in terms of its advantages, disadvantages and usefulness; (2) views on utilizing Edmodo to engage students; and (3) views on students' experiences in using Edmodo in the course. The 5-point Likert scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). To obtain qualitative data, four open-ended questions were prepared to obtain responses describing more in-depth views of the respondents regarding their Edmodo experience and satisfaction. The data from the open-ended questionnaires were grouped to see salient points of students' experience, problems and suggestions to address research question 2.

To achieve a reliable content validity of the survey instrument, which originally was in English and interpreted into Thai for Thai learners, the translated document was reviewed and edited by the researcher after a pilot instrument had been tried out. The students participating in this study completed the revised survey to report their experience of using Edmodo. Moreover, the survey instrument was tested to assess the internal reliability. The internal reliability of the survey questionnaire was checked using Cronbach's coefficient for 30 statement items. The alpha values for all constructs were 0.9. Therefore, the overall reliability of all constructs was deemed acceptable.

Data Collection

To answer the research questions, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. The questionnaire created in Google Docs was sent via email to all students (N= 94) at the end of the course and the students were asked to complete it before the final exam. A total of 94 survey questionnaires were collected and therefore the response rate was 100 percent.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed by descriptive statistics to determine the mean (M) and the standards deviation (SD) for each item of

the close-ended survey questionnaire. A rating guide is as follows: 4.21-5 = strongly agree, 3.41-4.2 = agree, 2.61-3.4 = neither agree nor disagree, 1.81-2.6 = disagree, and 1-1.8 = strongly disagree., Qualitative data from the open-ended questions were analyzed by means of content analysis in order to gain insights into students' views on Edmodo implementation which were used to support the quantitative data.

Results

The results of the study were obtained from 94 participants, 56 students (59.57%) are female and 38 students (38%) are male. Regarding information from the first section of the survey questionnaire about Edmodo usage, none of the respondents used Edmodo longer than 1 year and throughout the course the most frequently used features of Edmodo were: turn-in assignments (100%), quiz (86.17%), poll (68.09), attachment (59.57%), comments (56.38%), and note/alert (39.36%) respectively. In addition, only 3.19% of the students never posted or gave comments.

Students' Perceptions of Edmodo

In order to address research question 1: What are the students' perceptions and views about the use of Edmodo as a supplementary learning tool for English language learning?, Table 1 shows results of students' perceptions toward Edmodo.

Table 1: Perceptions of Edmodo use, Views on Using Edmodo to Engage Students and Students' Experiences Using Edmodo in the Course

Items	Statements	Mean (<i>M</i>)	SD	Interpretation
a. Perceptions about using Edmodo				
1	Edmodo allows me to easily interact/participate with my classmates and teacher about assignments, group tasks and other course activities.	4.03	0.77	Agree
2	Edmodo is convenient in submitting assignments, taking online quizzes and doing other activities.	3.94	0.84	
3	Edmodo allows me to easily access reference materials (e.g. internet articles, online videos, power point files, etc) provided by the teacher.	4.03	0.87	
4	Online activities and discussions in Edmodo motivate me to learn more about the course.	3.89	0.78	
5	Online activities such as quizzes, assignments, discussions in Edmodo are time – consuming.	3.36	1.05	Neither agree nor disagree
6	Students with no access on the internet could be left behind on activities and discussions in Edmodo.	3.29	1.14	
7	Being able to share and access other student's files/answers, this leads to copying of others' work.	3.31	1.11	
8	Edmodo procedure is difficult to follow.	3.03	1.17	

Table 1: (Continued)

Items	Statements	Mean (<i>M</i>)	SD	Interpretation
9	Edmodo is useful for me.	4.26	0.73	Agree
10	Using Edmodo could enhance my learning.	4.09	0.79	
11	Assignments, quizzes, and other online tasks given by the teacher in Edmodo help me improve my learning and comprehension skills.	4.12	0.69	
12	Reference materials posted by teachers are useful in understanding the contents/topics of the course better.	4.16	0.72	
Overall mean of part a.		3.79	0.89	Agree
b. Views on using Edmodo to engage students				
13	I prefer to ask questions using Edmodo rather than face-to-face.	3.33	1.24	Neither agree nor disagree
14	I enjoy the “poll”.	3.88	0.85	Agree
15	I enjoy the practice quizzes uploaded on Edmodo.	3.94	0.90	
16	I enjoy giving feedback.	3.40	1.07	Neither agree nor disagree
17	I enjoy the links and clips uploaded on Edmodo.	3.93	0.89	Agree
18	I am more engaged in this subject.	3.97	0.80	
19	My interaction with other students increased.	3.59	0.92	
20	I feel that the quality of my interaction with other students in this subject was better.	3.59	0.87	
21	I feel that the amount of interaction with my teacher in this subject increased.	3.94	0.76	Agree

Table 1 : Continued

Items	Statements	Mean (<i>M</i>)	SD	Interpretation
22	I have trouble using the technologies in this subject.	3.07	1.12	Neither agree nor disagree
23	I feel more anxious in this subject.	2.90	1.21	
Overall mean of part b.		3.64	0.95	Agree
c. Views on students' experiences using Edmodo				
24	I am satisfied with Edmodo.	3.96	0.82	Agree
25	Given the opportunity I would like to take another subject in the future that has both online and face-to-face components.	3.94	0.85	
26	This subject experience has improved my opportunity to access and use the class content.	3.98	0.78	
27	I feel connected with the teacher and other students in this subject.	3.86	0.82	
28	I feel isolated in this subject.	2.71	1.25	Neither agree nor disagree
29	I am overwhelmed with information and resources in this subject.	2.99	1.00	
30	This subject required more time and effort.	3.56	1.00	Agree
Overall mean of part c.		3.57	0.93	Agree
Overall mean of all 30 items		3.67	0.93	Agree

Note: 4.21-5 = strongly agree, 3.41-4.2 = agree, 2.61-3.4 = neither agree nor disagree, 1.81-2.6 = disagree, and 1-1.8 = strongly disagree

Table 1 shows that overall, the students agreed that Edmodo is a favorable supplementary learning tool ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 0.93$). The students showed positive perceptions toward using Edmodo in the course ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 0.89$) and they viewed that Edmodo engaged them in learning ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 0.95$). Moreover, the students responded favorably to the Edmodo experience they had throughout the course ($M = 3.57$, SD

= 0.93).

Regarding the students' perceptions on the advantages and usefulness of Edmodo in item numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, and 12, the responses were interpreted as 'strongly agreed and agreed'. The positive responses among the students supported the notion that Edmodo is a useful and good educational tool to be incorporated into the classroom potentially allowing learning enhancement, collaboration and interaction. The responses from item numbers 5, 6, 7, 8 related to disadvantages of Edmodo were all interpreted as neither agree nor disagree ($M = 3.36$, $M = 3.29$, $M = 3.31$, and $M = 3.03$ respectively) with a wide difference of opinion ($SD = 1.05$, $SD = 1.14$, $SD = 1.11$, $SD = 1.17$ respectively). It can be seen that the data shows a moderate level of agreement among learners in terms of their opinions toward disadvantages of using Edmodo. This suggests Edmodo could be time-consuming and difficult to use for some students, and plagiarism or copying of other works and/or poor internet connection could also become a major learning obstacle for some students.

In addition, results from Table 1 in item number 9 shows that the students strongly agreed ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 0.73$) that Edmodo was a useful tool for them. The statement in the item number 12 concerning the usefulness of reference materials such as attached files, or YouTube posted by teachers were considered useful ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 0.72$). It indicates that these reference materials and multimedia helped support better understanding of the content or topics being taught. In addition, online activities such as assignments, quizzes, and other online tasks given by the teacher in Edmodo helped the students to improve their learning and comprehension about the course ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.68$), as well. These results showed the respondents had a positive attitude. They perceived that Edmodo was a useful supplementary tool.

On the statements regarding students' engagement in the classroom facilitated by Edmodo, the respondents agreed that they had better engagement in the course ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 0.95$). The results in Table 1 revealed that the students were more engaged in the course ($M = 3.97$) and they agreed that the amount of interaction with the

teacher in this subject increased ($M = 3.94$). Additionally, they responded favorably to some online activities via Edmodo by agreeing that they enjoyed participating in many activities, for example, doing practice quizzes on Edmodo ($M = 3.94$), studying the links and clips posted and shared on Edmodo ($M = 3.93$), and doing a poll ($M = 3.88$). However, the data did not indicate either more or less negative views of learners to ICT skills as a problem or anxiety to be triggered in the course because of using Edmodo ($M = 3.07$, $M = 2.90$ respectively).

Based on the results about students' experience in the blended learning classroom embedding the social networking technology, Edmodo, the data revealed that students had positive experiences using Edmodo ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.93$). The respondents agreed that the use of this social networking site improved the ways they accessed the course content and made use of the provided materials ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.78$) and therefore they were satisfied with Edmodo ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.82$). Additionally, the students agreed to see a place for this tool in the future ($M = 3.94$, $SD = 0.85$). When asked to reflect upon the statements 'I feel isolated in this subject.', and 'I am overwhelmed with information and resources in this subject,' the data reveals the mean of 2.71 and 2.99 respectively, indicating that the respondents have a moderate degree towards the statements. However, the standard deviation values ($SD = 1.25$, $SD = 1.00$ respectively) show that there is a great variation in learners' views on these two negative statements. This suggests that some learners agreed that they felt isolated from the teacher and peers and were overwhelmed with resources in this course. In contrast to the other learners, these issues might not have caused a negative impact. Lastly, the students agreed that more effort and time were required in a course integrated with Edmodo ($M=3.56$, $SD = 1.00$).

In conducting this study, to obtain responses that describe the views of the respondents more closely, the data from the open-ended questions were collected and grouped to see salient points regarding their experience and satisfaction toward Edmodo as well as to know problems and suggestions as stated. The results from the qualitative data showing

Edmodo was regarded as a favorable and effective supplementary learning tool in an EFL classroom and they were supported by several positive statements made by the participants. The students expressed their thoughts about advantages and usefulness of Edmodo use in the classroom and shared some common responses concerning convenience, accessibility, and interaction enhancement of the use of Edmodo. Some examples of the positive statements are as follows:

- Edmodo allows me to easily access class content online from anywhere and at anytime.
- Edmodo is easy and convenient to use in submitting assignments and taking online quizzes.
- Using Edmodo is as easy as using Facebook.
- Edmodo can facilitate the out of class learning and it makes staying in contact with teacher and friends conveniently and easily.

The data indicates positive perceptions of incorporating the social networking site Edmodo into the classroom and some frequently used key words for expressing these ideas are “easy”, “accessible” and “convenient”.

Nevertheless, there were some students who criticized Edmodo use in the classroom by stating:

- Edmodo is new for me and I am not so sure how to use it.
- I was quite confused at the very first time I used Edmodo.
- I made some mistakes because I am not familiar with Edmodo technology.

The data indicates that the respondents lacked confidence with new technologies and therefore they may need more training.

In reflecting on Edmodo’s potential to make learning more effective, the participants expressed a variety of positive views, including Edmodo is motivating and engaging and assists better understanding on lessons and completing tasks. Statements revealing students’ views on how Edmodo can enhance their learning are as follows:

- Edmodo makes the learning effective because it is an online

technology that supports the face-to-face classroom making learning easier and more motivating and interesting.

- Edmodo makes my learning more effective because files and videos posted are very helpful to understand the lessons.

- Using Edmodo, I can access the materials at any time and review them as needed.

- Edmodo supports students to complete many tasks online, for example, students can easily upload files and turn in the assignments, give feedback and communicate with peers and teacher conveniently.

It was evident that Edmodo contributed to effective learning and made it more motivating and interesting to learn at students' own pace, anytime and from anywhere outside the classroom.

Additionally, although the research results revealed that Edmodo was considered a good and user-friendly learning tool, some comments reflect that Edmodo needed some improvements in terms of making the applications more updated. More suggestions and comments were also given by the participants such as:

- I need more training in how to use Edmodo.

- The teacher should let the students informed in advance whenever quizzes are timed.

- I need more time to do a quiz.

- I had no ideas how to turn in the assignment and so teacher should show how to clearly.

The data indicates that Edmodo training in educational settings should be emphasized in order to ensure that students understand the system and employ its features without difficulty to explore useful resources available and to accomplish a task assigned by teachers. Apart from the need of training, the students required a clear and informative explanation from the teacher including the time amount allowed, a due date, and step-by-step instructions to reach a goal of each assignment, for example. It can be said that having a clear understanding of the purpose for using Edmodo and knowing how to use this user-friendly social networking site to benefit learning and teaching are necessarily important to make Edmodo

become a more effective tool to support teaching and learning as well as provide better learning experiences.

Based on the students' responses, Edmodo was considered an effective learning tool that helped improve students' learning because it increased students' motivation, flexibility, and participation in online learning activities. In addition, several aspects of Edmodo implementation in the classroom need to better prepare students for a blended classroom learning atmosphere where technology is integrated into teaching and learning.

Discussion and Conclusion

Perceptions on Using Edmodo

Based on the results, the positive perceptions of the students proved that Edmodo can be used as an effective supplementary tool in the classroom because of its features and benefits. Edmodo allows teachers and students to stay connected without difficulty and many Edmodo features allow students to participate and get actively engaged. It can be said that Edmodo makes learning convenient and accessible for all. With Edmodo, a teacher can create and share multimedia resources to support students' learning and provide learning tasks to scaffold students' learning (Wallace, 2014). Students can access to all their online classes in one platform, and this helps to promote learning in any location and at any time via computer, tablets, or smartphones (Hammonds et al., 2013). It is clearly seen that Edmodo can encourage active participation in online class activities and students can access the site to use reference materials easily and conveniently.

However, it appears that using Edmodo could be time-consuming for some students who are not good at using technology. Another drawback of using Edmodo is that it is difficult to follow the procedures. From the study, some students suggested more training and detailed instructions from the teacher. This is similar to research conducted by Kongchan (2012) discussing that the teacher tended to overestimate students' digital skills, but in fact some students did not possess this ICT

skill and so they found using technological tools like Edmodo procedure difficult to follow and that might discourage them to be involved. The research, therefore, suggested the need of Edmodo training for students. Similarly, the study of Thongmak (2013) shows that in order to successfully incorporate Edmodo into class, a teacher should train students who are not familiar with Edmodo. In addition, Lin and Fang (2010) found that some students may feel comfortable about learning that is mediated by computers; on the other hand, some may find it difficult to collaborate, interact or communicate with their peers in an environment that is unfamiliar to them. It indicates that there seems to be a link between students' learning styles and participation in a web-based learning environment and thus it is one of important points teachers should take into consideration when implementing technology into classrooms.

More importantly, the findings of the study revealed that students positively agreed that Edmodo was a useful tool for them and they therefore were satisfied with it. Interestingly, in the future they would like to take another subject which incorporates both online and face-to-face components. The findings are supported by research conducted by Ractham et al. (2012) and Thongmak (2013) which affirmed that perceived usefulness has a direct impact on user satisfaction and continued intention of adopting a new technology.

Edmodo Contribution to Effective Learning

From the findings, the students perceived the advantages and usefulness of Edmodo and they participated more and engaged better with online activities resulting in effective learning. They, in addition, had a positive experience using Edmodo as they agreed that they enjoyed the features and their interaction and communication, especially with the teacher, increased. They were motivated to learn independently with the help of an extensive range of authentic materials provided by the teacher and they could access Edmodo easily as long as they were connected to the Internet. In the study conducted by Cruz and Cruz (2013), using social media tools enhanced students' learning experience since they increased the level of students' engagement to improve students' educational

outcomes. Moreover, the same study indicated that by implementing this social networking tool, a positive effect on student knowledge acquisition occurred. Using Edmodo social networking site, therefore, encourages the student to be actively engaged in learning and they are satisfied with the tool and expect this tool to be implemented in their future course. Interestingly, a statement saying, “*I’m more responsible using Edmodo,*” shows Edmodo has a positive impact on responsible learning. This is in parallel with the study by Sanders (2012) that proved that Edmodo fostered responsible learning of the students by allowing students to exercise more effort and seek additional help beyond a classroom wall at any time in order to achieve the learning tasks.

Blended Learning Classroom Using Edmodo

According to Garrison and Kanuka (2004), a blended learning provides meaningful educational experiences to students as it supports flexibility, interpersonal and teamwork skill development, motivation and collaborative learning environments. The findings for the present study shows that Edmodo, one of the technological tools, has the proven potential to support traditional classroom instructions since it has facilitated communication and collaboration among students and students/ or teachers and it has motivated and facilitated students to be actively engaged with online out-of-class learning activities. Edmodo, thus, should be regarded as an alternative technology tool offering a blended learning environment which can aid teachers to enhance active and self-directed learning opportunities for students.

Recommendations

Social networking technology provides opportunities for greater interactivity and novel ways to facilitate teaching and learning. Additionally, as social networking sites are communication tools that can be applied in teaching, teachers should consider integrating technological potential into the educational system in order to cultivate student engagement in and out of classrooms. The results of this study may encourage teachers and educators to implement Edmodo technology

into their classroom and exercise the full potential of it to meet desired learning outcomes. By integrating technology into classrooms, teachers not only should know and understand the functions of different technological tools available, but they should also know when best to execute them to fulfill learning outcomes. If Edmodo is implemented, it is suggested that teachers demonstrate it in class by introducing the log in process and basic functions of the Edmodo platform, and then encourage students to participate by expressing his or her attention and cares to students, focusing on teaching and boosting online activities. Feedback and comments should be given, as well. Moreover, teachers should react to individual needs and stay prompt in dealing with enquiries meanwhile they should encourage students with good computer skills to mentor others.

Results from the present study have provided insight to some queries, but have uncovered other areas of concern that require additional research. Future research may include a study on using Edmodo with students with different levels of education and on other groups of EFL students with different cultural backgrounds. A study investigating which learning styles work best with social networking technology is also recommended. In addition, there is a need for research to discover how an educational social networking site, such as Edmodo, can best facilitate development of blended learning courses to support autonomous learners and reap benefits of technology-embedded instruction.

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by Faculty of Liberal Arts, Maejo University research grant. The author would like to thank Acharn Patcharin Suphapun, Maejo University, for granting permission to pilot the survey questionnaires with her students. More appreciation also goes to Acharn Dr. Benjaporn Thepseenu, University of Phayao and Acharn Dr. Tonda Liggett, faculty member in the Department of Education at Marylhurst University and a Fulbright specialist at Chiang Mai Rajabhat University during May 2015, who provided helpful suggestions and comments. All remaining errors are the responsibility of the author.

References

- Batsila, M., Tsihouridis, C., and Vavougiou, D. (2014) Entering the Web-2 Edmodo World to Support Learning: Tracing Teachers' Opinion after Using it in their Classes. *iJET* 9(1). [Online URL: <http://online-journals.org/index.php/i-jet/article/view/3018>] accessed on May 1, 2014.
- Çankaya, S., Durak, G., and Yunkul, E. (2013) Using Educational Social Networking Sites in Higher Education: Edmodo through the Lenses of Undergraduate Students. *European Journal of Educational Technology* 1(1): 3-23. [Online URL: http://www.ejetechnology.eu/images/form/dosya/dosya_224911.pdf] accessed on May 1, 2014.
- Cowie, N. and Sakui, K. (2013) It's Never Too Late: An Overview of E-learning. *ELT Journal: English Language Teachers Journal* 67(4): 459-467.
- Cruz, M. B. and Cruz, S. B. (2013) The Use of Internet-Based Social Media as a Tool in Enhancing Student's Learning Experiences in Biological Sciences. *Higher Learning Research Communications* 3(4): 68-80. [Online URL: <http://journals.sfu.ca/liu/index.php/HLRC/article/view/170>] accessed on May 1, 2014.
- Elliot, D. (2009) Internet Technologies and Language Teacher Education. *Handbook of Research on Web 2.0 and Second Language Learning*, 432-450. [Online URL: <http://www.livesofteachers.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/Internet-technologies-and-language-teacher-education-pdf-markup.pdf>] accessed on May 1, 2014.
- Enriquez, M. (2014) *Students' Perception on the Effectiveness of the Use of Edmodo as a Supplementary Tool for Learning*. Paper Presented at the DLSU Research Congress 2014: Philippines. De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines. March 6-8, 2014. [Online URL: http://www.dlsu.edu.ph/conferences/dlsu_research.../_pdf/LLI-II-010.pdf] accessed on May 1, 2014.

- Garrison, D. R. and Kanuka, H. (2004) Blending Learning: Uncovering its Transformative Potential in Higher Education. *Internet and Higher Education* 7: 95-105. [Online URL: http://cecs.anu.edu.au/files/flu_presentation/blended_learning/data/resources/Garrison_2004_The-Internet-and-Higher-Education.pdf] accessed on October 10, 2014.
- Hammonds, L., Matherson, L. H., Wilson, E. K., and Wright, V. H. (2013) Gateway Tools: Five Tools to Allow Teachers to Technology Integration. *Delta Kappa Gama Bulletin* 80(1): 36-40.
- Hourdequin, P. (2014) Edmodo: A Simple Tool for Blended Learning. *The Language Teacher* 38(1): 34-35. [Online URL: <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/tlt-wired/articles/3547-edmodo-simple-tool-blended-learning>] accessed on May 1, 2014.
- Kongchan, C. (2012) *Edmodo: A User-Friendly Social Learning Platform*. Paper Presented at the 4th TCU International e- Learning Conference 2012 on Smart Innovations in Education and Lifelong Learning, IMPACT, Muang Thong Thani, Nonthaburi, Thailand. June 14-15. [Online URL: www.ict-21.ch/14d/mod/file/download.php?file_guid=489036] accessed on May 1, 2014.
- Lin, H. and Fang, Y. (2010) EFL Learners' Perception of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) to Facilitate Communication in a Foreign Language. *International Scholarly and Scientific Research & Innovation* 4(6): 540-547. [Online URL: <http://waset.org/publications/9445/efl-learners-perceptions-of-computer-mediated-communication-cmc-to-facilitate-communication-in-a-foreign-language>] accessed on May 1, 2014.
- Looi, C. Y. and Yusop, F. D. (2011) Potential Use of Social Networking Tool to Assist Reading Comprehension: Implications for Practice and Future Research. *Jurnal Pendidikad* 31(1): 189-201. [Online URL: http://www.academia.edu/3718356/Potential_use_of_social_networking_tool_to_assist_reading_comprehension_implications_for_practice_and_future_research] accessed on May 1, 2014.

- Pop, A. (2013) *Edmodo E-portfolio in EFL- A Case study*. Paper Presented at the 8th International Conference on Virtual Learning ICVL 2013: Phase II - Period 2010-2020: e-Skills for the 21st Century, Romania. University of Bucharest, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences: Bucharest University Press. October 25-26. [Online URL: <http://c3.icvl.eu/files/content-authors-ICVL2013.pdf>] accessed on May 1, 2014.
- Ractham, P., Chen, C., and Srisawas, S. (2012) Affective and Social Factors Influencing the Continuance Intention of Using Social Technology for the Case-Based Learning. *International Journal of Management, Knowledge and Learning* 1(2): 173-188. [Online URL: http://www.issbs.si/press/ISSN/2232-5697/1_173-188.pdf] accessed on May 14, 2014.
- Sanders, K. (2012) *An Examination of the Academic Networking Site Edmodo on Student Engagement and Responsible Learning*. Doctoral dissertation. Retrieved on May 1, 2014, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI 3523217).
- Scott, M. (2012) Go Ahead ... Be Social: Using Social Media to Enhance the Twenty-First Century Classroom. *Distance Learning* 9(2): 54-59.
- Thongmak, M. (2013) Social Network System in Classroom: Antecedents of Edmodo Adoption. *Journal of e-Learning and Higher Education*. [Online URL: <http://www.ibimapublishing.com/journals/JELHE/2013/657749/657749.pdf>] accessed on May 14, 2014.
- Wallace, A. (2014) Social Learning Platforms and the Flipped Classroom. *International journal of information and education technology* 4(4): 293-296. [Online URL: http://www.academia.edu/6692555/Social_Learning_Platforms_and_the_Flipped_Classroom] accessed on May 14, 2014.

