



A Constructive Digital Appliance for Teachers: Edmodo

Abstract :

“E-learning emphasizes on the widest view of learning: learning solutions going beyond the traditional models of training and teaching. Still in India, traditional learning cannot be wholly ignored, and therefore Blended Learning method can be assumed to get the best use of both of them. Thus participating E-learning with face to face teaching was the main objective of the study. It is focused on Edmodo, a web podium which enables sharing information, participating in the discussions, passing the tests, and monitoring the progress. It contains information about the practicality of this application, its advantages, and the principles of work. The study has worked on the hypothesis that Edmodo can be a good pedagogical devise which can stimulate curiosity, increase motivation and enrich the learning process. It explains why it is constructive for the community. It also observes possible limitations and relevant issues that can arise. The paper has concluded with the recommendations for assuming Yerkes-Dodson Law of Motivation for using Edmodo.

Keywords: Blended Learning, Edmodo, Yerkes –Dodson Law

Introduction:

The existing Indian education system is receiving Distance Education with a greater pace; though the role of teachers remains critical. One of the emerging trends in Distance Learning is the use of Computer Assisted Learning (CAL) where the learners are taught using software programmes. It is believed that the Computer Assisted Learning environment creates situations that arouse interest, allows dialogue and communication, enhances reactivity, fosters a sense of personal worth, accelerates collaboration among students working together, permits rich learning experiences for all students and strengthens communication skills. The fact is that the learners need help in making the best use of it and research has indicated that learners don't always know how to fit new information into an appropriate framework so intelligent software has to give them context as well as data. Therefore in India, self-learning is still not as consistent as traditional learning method and thus the role of a teacher cannot be totally ignored. However there is a shift in the teacher's role from a traditional teacher to a guide. Instead, she/he must possess the skills of a facilitator of learning-genuineness, prizing and empathy. 'Blended Learning' environment gives a traditional teacher an opportunity to reframe her/his roles. Blended Learning combines face to face classroom methods with computer-mediated activities to form an integrated instructional approach. It helps the learners to get the advantage of personal guidance as well as self-learning in a playful way.

Web technologies are known to become crucial component of learning the process. Teachers, children, and parents use a wide range of applications to develop a diverse learning environment and improve participation, feedback, and interactivity. One of the newest applications which are currently used in learning is Edmodo. Edmodo is a network platform which enables students and teachers to share educational applications and content, connect and collaborate with each other, and access notifications, grades, homework, and class discussions. Although Edmodo has several limitations and raises some relevant issues, it is still regarded as a useful tool in learning. It can be used as a Blended Learning Platform wherein the teacher can teach the learners through the lecture method and later use Edmodo for practice sessions and online discussions.

Edmodo is...

Edmodo is a social networking website similar to Face book, however absolutely designed with a specific educational purpose and for exclusive users. The teacher is the administrative head of the group whereas the students and parents are the members. Like Facebook Teachers can invite students into private groups, and can post assignments, quizzes and polls for the students. The students can thus, solve the tasks given by the teacher and parents can view their wards' performance.

Create and Join an EDMODO Group in Edmodo

Firstly the teacher has to sign up and form a group. Once the group is formed the teacher is provided with a separate group code for students and parents. Using their respective group codes the students and parents can sign up and login thereafter. The teacher can even lock the group from new members at any time!

EDMODO's Features

Edmodo Planner: The teacher can plan the assignments of a week or even a month in advance. The planned assignments can be received by the students after they login. It is a calendar within Edmodo which keeps the students reminding them about their assignments in coming days. Most importantly it keeps students informed about deadlines.

Edmodo Back Pack: The teacher can save the teaching material in the storehouse called as Backpack. It can be used as a virtual library from where the teacher can streamline the process of sharing content repetitively at different times. Thus it saves time as the teacher just need to share the content and not upload every time he/she needs to use it.

App Store: There are a growing number of apps for the Edmodo community. One can browse the store, follow publishers and install a large variety of Apps to Edmodo groups. The apps vary from interactive games, study guides, etc.

Teacher's Task for EDMODO Classroom

The task of the teacher is to post Notes, Quizzes, Assignments, and more to the group and initiate the learning process of this virtual classroom. The teacher can also attach files or website links and other resources, such as classroom notes or educational instructions. The teacher can provide the students with the last date of the submission and thus can lock it. The teacher can assess the assignments after they are submitted and can give the feedback. The teacher can also see the progress of the students in the 'Progress Bar'.

Usefulness of EDMODO

Edmodo offers a wide array of advantages to its users. Kumelashvili (2016) had states that it is the greatest challenge for a teacher to meet the varied needs of learners in a classroom. Edmodo seems to solve this problem by allowing tutors to post homework online, thus helping to differentiate it. Differentiation of the tasks helps students to study effectively whereas the teachers can monitor their progress through testing, quizzes, and polls. Edmodo poll is a tool which is used by the teachers to examine what skills should be developed – reading, writing, listening, or speaking. This knowledge allows planning homework assignments regarding students` needs.

Edmodo strengthens a sense of community in learners, making them feel respected and significant. Students make a connection between their interests, curriculum, and life experiences, thus understanding better the purpose of each task and the overall objective of the course. This knowledge appears to increase the effectiveness of learning process. With the help of Edmodo, the teachers create a motivating environment in which supportive adults push learners slightly beyond so that they can learn without the assistance. **Kumelashvili** (2016) has discovered that the use of this application stimulates students to reduce the time between the tasks given. Edmodo also allows to leave commentaries and share opinions and experiences about the tasks and resources.

Edmodo does not only facilitate the differentiation of the tasks but also allows to attach a variability of file types, including (Word, Excel, Power Point,) .doc, .mp3, .ppt, .pptx, .gif, .pdf, .exl, .exls, jpeg, and others. The users can share web site links and embed flash objects such as Google forms, games, YouTube videos, etc. Games can help to learn new vocabulary items or grammar rules. **Giang and Minh** (2014) had state that it is possible to make tests and games in Microsoft Office Word or similar software, including Cross-Word. The materials are then uploaded to the home page. As soon as the task is uploaded, the students receive notifications and are required to complete it within the given amount of time. If they manage to do the assignment, they will be automatically marked. However, if the students fail, they will get a warning.

Student activity in Edmodo can be monitored. It means that teachers can examine how much time is spent on the learning process, how many times a student visits the platform, what they are interested in, and what commentaries or question they post. Tutors can monitor the level of learners' productivity and determine what types of activity are the most engaging and efficient. Edmodo presupposes "quiet discussion," meaning that the students can communication only in written form. The avoidance of verbal discussion is a good way to give a voice to all the learners, including the quietest and shy participants. Students feel less nervous and express their thoughts in a clear, comprehensible form.

This application is free to use. The teachers have to register and create a domain for their school. The site is beneficial as the administrators are empowered to send links, alerts, notes, and polls to the school, class, teachers, and parents. The events and reminders can be added to the calendar that can be viewed by both students and educators. Edmodo is an application which has been designed for Windows, IOS, and Android and can be easily downloaded from Apple or Google store. It increases the mobility of the learning process as students and teachers get an opportunity to participate in activities, regardless of the location.

Finally, Edmodo aims at involving the community in the learning process. For this reason, it ensures that parents can become a part of educational process. It is possible for them to create parent accounts and get access to assignments and grades of their children. They are also allowed to communicate directly with the teachers. The tutors also get an opportunity to inform the parents about the forthcoming events, missed assignments, and students` progress. The online platform has archives which allow reviewing the materials later if it is necessary. If an assignment is made successfully, the teacher can also delete it.

Limitations and Relevant Issues

Although Edmodo offers multiple advantages to its users, there are still some limitations that can prevent the learners from the successful performance. The greatest obstacle that prevents teachers and students from full reliance on Edmodo is associated with the quality of electronic devices. Edmodo has been designed for mobile devices and PCs. Its core objective is to provide remote control to the discussion section, materials, and assignments. If a student is unable to download this application to their mobile device, the effectiveness of Edmodo is being significantly decreased. The insufficient memory of smartphone makes it impossible to download Edmodo and join educational process. Limited access to learning materials makes it difficult to pass the test successfully. The second limitation is associated with a battery charge of the device. Low battery voltage may prevent a student from passing the quiz or doing the assignment on time. Finally, the use of Edmodo requires the users to have the Internet connection. Otherwise, they cannot access the information, participate in the discussion or any relevant assignment. It limits the working process, making it less convenient than face-to-face interaction. The limitations raise several issues, concerning the effectiveness of M-learning. To ensure adequate systematic learning, the schools, where Edmodo is used, are expected to provide every learner with the updated tablets or smartphones. Moreover, it is necessary to create the areas with uninterrupted Internet connection so to enable students to join the classes quickly. It will guarantee equality in learning, access to information, and participation in quizzes or discussions.

In closing, it is necessary to say that m-learning has recently become one of the most progressive ways to learn English. It can be used both as a primary and as a supportive tool for teachers. It enables them to share useful learning materials with the students, monitors their interest in the subject and progress in acquiring four skills which are reading, writing, listening, and speaking. A teacher gets an opportunity to upload files of different formats and encourage students to join discussions. Regardless of its limitations, Edmodo increases the effectiveness of learning process.

Objectives of the Study: To focus on the use of Blended Learning Method to teach Pedagogy of School Subject.

Hypothesis: Edmodo is a beneficial ICT classroom collaborative tool for learning school subjects.

Scope and Limitations of the Study:

The present research study was tested only for B.Ed. Trainee Students of Amity B.E. College, Bharuch. Pedagogy of Standard 9th syllabus was covered for the research.

Research Procedure

Both survey and experimental. The research which was in the form of an experiment has used Edmodo website as an ICT tool. Experimental design is meant to determine effects of Edmodo on student's language efficiency and their comprehension ability in English Language. A questionnaire was used to gather the data on their opinion about using Edmodo.

Lesson Plan

- The students were initially taught topics from the syllabus such as Prose, Poetry, Grammar, and Vocabulary through Lecture Method.
- The assignments were prepared on the basis of these topics and were posted to the students to solve.
- The assignments were according to the Board Paper pattern which also helped them in understating the question pattern.
- Students solved the exercises online.
- Feedback was given on the assignments.

Discussion and Conclusion

Innovations in the ICT field are a rapidly taking place and it is difficult to adopt online teaching tools where the basic ICT infrastructure is not easily accessible. In spite of that role of computers in language teaching cannot be neglected. It has definitely taken uplift from performing mere drill and exercises to becoming an authentic communication tool. Thus we should stop asking how computers are beneficial for language teaching and ask instead how you can teach Language through computers.

For the activity 84 students registered while 42 of them actually solved the exercises. 41 of them said that it motivated them to practice grammar, which otherwise is considered as a boring and fearful task. 32 students responded that initially they were apprehensive to use the public portal but gradually they gained confidence. 30 of them consented that it helped them to revise their syllabus in a playful manner. 29 of them commented they engaged themselves in Edmodo exercises in their free time thus utilised it in a positive way. However for 5 of them accessing internet was a difficult task which hampered their regularity. It is interesting to know that Edmodo exercises kept 41 of them enthusiastic and inspired with the new teaching-learning technique.

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