WEB 2.0: A COLLABORATIVE LEARNING APPROACH USING EDMODO IN GROUP DISCUSSION

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Abstract: *Teaching and learning has become more interactive with the emergence of Web 2.0. Group projects via virtual communication can be done collaboratively and are able to engage students' participation. These flexibility of time and venue provide convenience to students. This paper aims to explore students' perceptions towards their communication by using Edmodo in group discussion. It also investigates the students' attitude towards using Edmodo in completing their group project in the future. The study reveals that students gain benefits in using Edmodo to complete their project and it is one of the best platforms to assist group discussion.*

Keyword: *Edmodo, Web 2.0, group discussion, writing, collaborative learning*

1. Introduction

The use of online learning platform has become the current trend in education. Students nowadays spend most of their time interacting online and this has made online learning the best platform in encouraging them in learning. With the emergence of Web 2.0, learning can be done interactively and collaboratively. More learning websites have been created and this has encouraged students to explore on the use of different platforms which may benefit them in their learning. With the existence of Edmodo which is more user friendly for education, the use of the platform should be maximized as there is a great potential for the interactivity among students and teachers and some features available are much suitable for education. Edmodo educators can create groups for students and even the parents can also monitor the children's work. Not only that, folders can be created, and files can be uploaded and shared with other users in the same group. Teachers can also upload assignments and set time and dates for submissions. Apart from that, evaluation can be done online, and students are able to view their marks and feedback given by their teachers. Of all the features available in Edmodo, one of the most interesting features which helps students in working collaboratively with their group members is the setting up small groups.

In this paper, the use of group discussion which is featured in Edmodo is studied. This paper attempts to investigate answer the questions given:

1. What are the students' perceptions towards their experience in communicating by using Edmodo in group discussion?
2. What are the students' attitude towards using Edmodo in completing their group project in the future?

2. Literature Review
2.1 Edmodo to support collaborative learning

Edmodo is one of the platforms that can promote interactive learning experience to teachers and students. What makes the platform special is that it has similar features to Facebook interface. However, according to Jarc (2010), Edmodo offers more safety and privacy because only those students who are registered can access and join the group. This interface and features encourage the users to collaborate, communicate and to be more productive (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012). In a study, Mills and Chandra (2011) found that Edmodo has a very good impact to classroom community as a result of the strengthening of the teacher-student relationship. Consequently, the widespread application of Edmodo is also found to have a very significant role in improving students' attainment. Larusson and Alterman (2009) revealed that social media technologies have a positive impact to the learning process thus leads to a better performance by the students. In addition, Boyd and Ellison (2008) argue that these platforms offer leverages in forms of social interaction and relationships maintenance rather than just publishing or commenting on works. Kongchan (2013) found that the use of Edmodo and Google Docs in classroom resulted in enjoyment in learning English to the students.

To date, several studies have found that Social Networking Sites (SNS) such as Edmodo has a significant role in encouraging active collaborative learning. Edmodo is perceived to be a user-friendly social learning network (Kongchan, 2012). Arroyo (2011) stated that the use SNS is convenient for teacher and students to get an update as it can extend the class time. Edmodo could support both distance teaching and fulfil physical classroom learning (Thongmak, 2013). This is due to the fact that collaborative learning method requires the students to engage in small-group activities based on task given. According to Scager, Boonstra, Peeters, Vulperhost and Wiegant (2016), the quality of the interaction among students within the group is a determinant factor for the method to be successfully executed. Slavin (1995) proposed that team members will be motivated to learn and assist each other when group learning goals are established. The author also mentioned that the goals assisted to link the team members together throughout the learning process. Nevas (2010) reported that as communication increased between students, more challenging tasks were progressively performed. Therefore, the social networking could benefit students who are shy and do not participate in class to virtually communicate with their teachers and classmates (Miller, 2011). This is further supported by Sanders (2013) who stated that particular features in Edmodo could be used to encourage students' engagement towards the task given and also to promote responsible learning.

The evidence presented in this section suggests that the Edmodo's features and interface that allow the students to communicate better with their peers and teachers are very useful to support collaborative learning.

3.Methodology
3.1 Participants

About 51 students were involved in this study. However only 44 students responded to the interview questions asked. The purposive sampling method was used in this study as only the two classes were chosen to go through group discussion using Edmodo. They were second semester Diploma students from two different faculties at the age of 18 years old and have undergone one English course before they enrolled to this course. Participants were facilitated for eight weeks in using Edmodo so that they were familiar with it before the small group was set up. The small group consisted of three to four members per group.

3.2 Research instrument
The research instrument used for this study is a set of semi structured interview questions which consists of two questions. Interviews were conducted via Whatsapp (WA) personally and all students were required to answer the questions. The time of interview was agreed by parties – the researcher, the instructor and the participants. Each session took about 30 minutes.

3.3 Research procedures
A schedule in Table 1 was designed by the instructor to ensure that the students followed tasks given accordingly. The online group discussion via Edmodo which the students had to do was for the written final assessment. It was the only platform where students met and discussed their progress on the final project. No specific time per discussion. However, everyone had to meet up together like a traditional meeting for example 10 to 20 minutes per week to discuss on the final assessment written work. The group leader had to conduct the virtual meetings. Towards the end of the discussion and consensus made, the group leader had to print out the post and the thread of the discussion and submit the copy to the instructor as evidence. After undergoing the process, these students were interviewed in order to get their views on the use of Edmodo for group discussions.

Table 1: The schedule for Group discussion via Edmodo

WEEK	TASK
8	Upload the observation report of the event using template given by your instructor on Edmodo wall in you small group. Discuss in your groups via Edmodo whether the words/points provided are appropriate.
9	Delegate task in groups and assign paragraphs to group members. Using the words/points in the template, write an essay of describing an event. You may write your assigned paragraph in Edmodo and ask group members to check. Share your assigned task with the group members via Edmodo. Post the paragraphs on the wall in order (introduction, body 1, body 2, body 3, conclusion)
10	Edit your group members' part of the essay via edmodo. Check your grammar and organization. Discuss with your group members.
11	Post again the essay in Microsoft word and upload it in your small group in Edmodo. Then ask all to proofread and give comments to make the essay better. Upload pictures in Edmodo and select the ones you are going to use for the essay.
12	Upload the final draft of the essay on Edmodo.

3.4 Data Analysis

The feedback given by the students were then analyzed using content analysis method. The coding categories were based on the themes which emerged from the raw data collected. All transcripts were reviewed more than once in order to ensure the meaning of the raw data were not distorted.

4. Result and Discussion

When asked to respond to the question on students' perceptions towards their experience in communicating by using Edmodo in group discussion, there were two main themes revealed which are on communication and also the use of English.

In communication, students felt that the use of Edmodo as a platform for small group discussion helped them as they believed that the discussions held were more convenient and also comfortable. Four students when interviewed had stressed on the use of group discussion in Edmodo is convenient in communicating. Students felt that communicating in a smaller group via Edmodo has made communication became much frequent due to its platform and easy access. S19 stated that through communication via Edmodo in smaller group, S19 communicated more frequent to others. Moreover, S26, S27 and S36, felt that communicating via small group in Edmodo became much easier.

Communication via Edmodo becomes easier

S19   *"Yes. Because we can communicate frequently with our friends using english language"*

S26   *"Find it was more easier to communicate in a small private group"*

S27   *"easy to communicate and discuss"*

S36   *"... by using edmodo for small group help us for communicate and easy for discuss about our assignment that have given."*

The students also felt that their discussion done were at ease when discussion was made in a smaller group via Edmodo. The students were more comfortable in communicating. S17, S37, S38 and S41 shared the same belief that using Edmodo group discussion feature has made them became more comfortable in communicating.

Comfortable in communicating

S17   *"Yes, because we can only interact with friend that we comfortable to using english in discussion."*

S37   *"By using edmodo, it will help me to use english with my friends because i feel comfortable"*

S38   *"It will help me to use english with my friends because i feel comfortable to speak english with them.ble to speak english with them."*

S41   *"Yes because through small group, the student will be more comfortable to discuss about the task given and help"*

The second theme which emerged is the use of English in the group discussion. Students' believed that due to their experience in communicating via Edmodo in small groups, English was used regardless mistakes made as they are aware that their instructor was also in the group.The students perceived that the platform of small group discussion has helped them. About 5 students felt that using Edmodo group discussion has helped them in improving their English.

Group Discussion via Edmodo helps the students in English

S41   *"Yes because I can practice and improve my English skill"*

S9   *"In my opininon this small group discussion using Edmodo are really helping on improving student language as we have to talk and practice to share information in just English language"*

S16   *"Alhamdulillah it helps me a lot. With that, i can improve our english language"*

S20   *"Yes because beside from discussing our assignment we could improve our English."*

S33   *"Because i can define my weakness in english language and can improve my english skill"*

S3   *"Yes because it will help us to improve our English pronouncation, grammar and skill."*

S4   *"yes, because they can improve my"*

Two of the students also mentioned that using group discussion feature in Edmodo has helped them in making them more confident in using English. Both S30 and S34 similarly emphasized the benefit of using small group discussion in Edmodo in building self-confidence.

Self confidence in English

S30 *"by using edmodo for small group help me to use english with my friends because it's improve our self-confident to communicate in english."*

S34 *"By using edmodo for small group help i to using english with my friends because it's will improve our self-confident to communicate in english"*

Other than building self confidence in using English, four students have responded that the use of small group feature in Edmodo has encouraged students to use English regardless the limited proficiency that they have. One student (S32) expressed that using group discussion feature in Edmodo has made the student not feel down when communicating in English with the group members.

Motivate students' to use English

S39 *"Yes because creating small group will helps the student to be more courage to practice English whether it's right or wrong in grammars and others."*

S14 *"Yes. Because it is encourage me to talk even my english not quite good"*

S22 *"yes,because it encourages students to use more english"*

S28 *"Yes, because it can make more interesting and exited to speake english.it also can make me more brave to use english."*

S32 *"Because i will not feel down when speaking english with my friends"*

The findings presented earlier have proven that students perceived that the use of small group discussion via Edmodo has helped them in communicating. More safety and privacy are observed when Edmodo is used because only students in the group can access to the discussion (Jarc, 2010). By using the feature of group discussion in Edmodo, communication is seen very productive as its feature and privacy allow the users in collaborating and communicating (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012).

Other than communicating, students responded more on the benefits of Edmodo group discussion in using English language. Learning process has resulted positive impact as Larusson and Alterman (2009) agreed that the use of Edmodo has lead to students' better performance. The excitement in using Edmodo has also created enjoyment as it was supported by Kongchan (2013) that Edmodo has created enjoyment of the students in learning English. Motivation in learning English is also observed in the study and supported by Slavin (1995) that Edmodo has made team members becoming more motivated to learn and assist each other.

This study also seeks feedback from the students involved on their attitude towards using Edmodo in completing their group project in the future. The question posted via whatsapp asked students on their opinion whether should using Edmodo as a platform for group discussion be continued in the future. Two themes emerged based on the data collected. 39 out of 44 students have shown positive attitude towards the use of Edmodo for group discussion. Out of the 39 students, 12 students mentioned that the size of group discussion in Edmodo helps them to complete in the discussion. The smaller number of group members should be used in order to maximize everyone's interaction and contribution**.**

Small group discussion via Edmodo

S15   *"Yes,_it_build_bond_among_students"*

S16   *"Yes, its focus in small group and easy to improve english language"*

S17   *"Yes, it help when you had improvise your english in the small group discussion"*

S19   *"Yes . Of course because. In small group , we can write as much as we can."*

S22   *"Yes,because it enables students to be able to express themselves more clearly than in bigger groups"*

S27   *"..., easy to discussion in small group"*

S38   *"We can focus more in the smaller number."*

S39   *"Yes. Because some student shy to talk in big group discussion.so with use small group discussion, student can show their true self."*

S40   *"Yes because through small group, the student will be more comfortable to discuss about the task given and help them in practice english effectively"*

S41   *"Them in practice yes because through small group, the student will be more comfortable to discuss about the task given and help english effectively."*

S3   *"Yes. It should be used because the small discussion can improve their English"*

S39   *"Yes because through small group, the student will be more comfortable to discuss about the task given and help them in practice English effectively."*

In addition, the presence of teacher to monitor students' discussion actually helps the process and students carried out the discussion successfully and as scheduled. Being aware that a teacher is in the group and could read the discussions allow control of the groups and more focused on tasks given. This also helps in disciplining students.

The presence of teacher in the group

S6   *"Yes. The teacher can see who is an English expert in the class and vice versa. Next, I'm also sure that student in the class were using their mother tongue"*

S2   *"Yes. The teacher can see who is an English expert in the class and vice versa"*

Other than teacher's presence in group discussion via Edmodo, findings from three students interviewed have shown that virtual group discussion created in Edmodo has benefited the students. S7,S9 and S11 agreed that having this platform as a group discussion, work became faster, shy students could talk directly and this technology (Edmodo) is useful. However, S11 added that Virtual meeting should also be considered not to be conducted as sometimes group member was not aware to the group discussion carried out in Edmodo.

Benefits of Virtual meeting or discussion via Edmodo

S7   *"Yes, we do not have to meet face to face and things will work faster"*

S9   *"It think it should be used in the English class in the future because this Edmodo really help student in improving their English language.Some of the student are really shy to share or talk in English directly, so by using this application, for me it really useful and should be used in the future."*

S11   *"Yes and no.Yes because we are now in technology era, so it is very useful nowadays. No because sometimes group member is not alert with group in edmodo"*

The findings received have shown that by using group discussion via Edmodo, students have the flexibility in meeting up virtually. Students can be themselves and will not be embarrass in using English as medium of communication. It is also seen as very useful for students too.

The findings in this study have shown the engagement of the students were observed in Edmodo small group discussion and it has encouraged the students to complete tasks in groups. (Sanders, 2013) As the small groups were formed, more challenges were seen in completing tasks. The teacher was also part of the group and challenges were seen for the students to ensure tasks were carried out effectively. Communication increased in the group discussion as more challenging tasks were progressively performed. (Nevas ,2010) Nevertheless, the challenges they faced in completing tasks have turned to become comfort based on findings of this study and communication were observed more productive.

The findings have shown that Edmodo has made the relationship of the teacher-student becomes more appealing as discussions were carried out effectively as the students were aware of the presence of the teacher in the group. Thus, this will strengthen the relationship of both parties and has given good impact to classroom community (Mills and Chandra,2011). Edmodo like other social networking sites could also bring benefits to students who are not brave enough to talk to other students or teacher face to face. (Miller, 2011).

Collaborative learning is clearly presence in the group discussion in this study. Edmodo group discussion feature has a user-friendly social learning network (Kongchan, 2012). The quality of the interaction within the group members via Edmodo group discussion is seen successfully done (Scager, Boonstra, Peeters, Vulperhost and Wiegant, 2016) The finding in this study also mentioned about the flexibility of Edmodo group discussion. (Thongmak, 2013) supported it by stating that Edmodo could support both distance teaching and fulfil physical classroom learning.

5. Conclusion

This study has explored students' perception in using Edmodo for group discussion. The results discovered that the use of Edmodo for small group discussions has helped students in communication and contributed to the use of English. Communication became much easier and students were comfortable in communicating. Not only that, group discussions via Edmodo has helped them in English, built their confidence and also motivated them to use English. Other than that, the results also shown that small group discussions have helped students in completing task

and maximized the interaction and contributions in discussion. Other than that, the presence of the teacher in the small group has helped all students to work together in completing the tasks.Finally it also has allowed the flexibility of students in completing tasks regardless where their group members are.

However, this study also has its limitation. The study only underwent a small number of students in an institution in an English course. The task given was on writing and group discussions were conducted to replace the actual face to face meetings. Future research can be done by looking at bigger number of students and make comparison between virtual and face to face meeting. Communication and interaction of students in English and contributions can also be studied to look at the differences of two platforms. Not only that, future research can be done to see other possible skills such as reading, speaking and listening that can be used for this particular platform. Writing skills also can be done as in a thorough process to see how the progress of writing is processed and looking at stages including brainstorming, pre -writing, writing and editing.

Other platforms can also be studied as they also offer similar purposes for learning. The platforms chosen is certainly subject to teacher and students' choice but what makes it becomes more meaningful is how the learning takes place and maximize the platform as much as it offers.
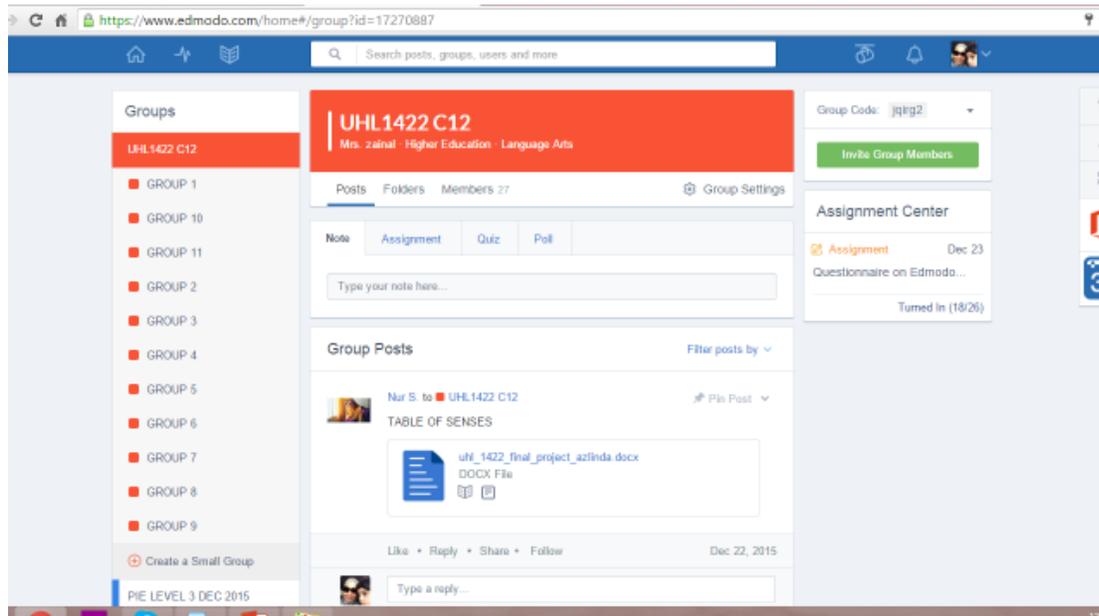
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APPENDIX

Sample of group created via Edmodo