# HOW AND WHY? EDMODO AS A BLENDED LEARNING TOOL: A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF USAGE AND RESEARCH

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**Abstract-** One of the Web 2.0 technologies is Social networking websites. Apart from what these tools have brought to daily life, they can be used for educational purposes. This paper deals with Edmodo, one of the Web 2.0 tools for education. Edmodo is evaluated as a content management system and professional learning environment. In fact, there have been two important questions which teachers seek answers: "How to use Edmodo to change their tradional classrooms into blended learning situations?" and "Why Edmodo?" The answer to these questions were analyzed in the light of research. It was concluded that Edmodo can be used in different ways like giving assignments, creating quizzes, storing course materials in the library, organizing the class schedule and integrating multimedia applications into the classroom. Studies also support that students like Edmodo and they favor it.

**Index Terms-** Edmodo, Web 2.0 tools, blended learning, Social networking sites.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Weber [1] states that the use of social networking is so popular that it has affected many fields like business, advertising and entertainment. The rise of the Internet and online communication technologies has changed the way people work, communicate, socialize and learn as a 'network society' [2]. Learning has changed especially among young learners or digital natives who are seen as "native speakers" of the digital language of computers, video games, and the Internet [3].
Web 2.0 is a term used to describe the Internet tools and applications which allow to share and collaborate online [4]. Social Networking Sites (SNSs) like Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and Myspace are the examples of Web 2.0 tools. SNSs such as MySpace and especially Facebook have rapidly earned fame among the current generation. Being aware of the popularity of SNSs among students, instructors started to apply their instruction with SNSs to primarily enhance student's learning motivation and autonomy. Moreover, researchers have been trying to find the best possible ways to use these Web based tools for learning purposes. Some studies concerning the application of SNSs with instruction showed that SNSs can better students' general learning performance, and strengthen their learning motivation and autonomy [5].

One of the SNSs prepared especially for teaching and learning is Edmodo. Edmodo is available at www.edmodo.com and it has been designed and developed by Jeff O'Hara and Nick Borg in 2008 for teachers, students, parents, schools, and districts. This website is a free, private, and secure learning network which looks similar to Facebook [6].
Edmodo is designed for educational purposes and there have been many teachers and students who use it. Therefore, it is important to learn about student views on Edmodo. This study investigates student views on the use of Edmodo.

## II. EDMODO (HOW)

Arroyo [4] notes that Web 2.0 tools can be used as an extension of a physical classroom to help students stay in touch with their teachers, while the teachers and educational institutions use them to update their knowledge and learning methodologies [4].
As a Web 2.O tool, Edmodo is similar to Facebook, but is much more private and safe. It allows teachers to create and manage accounts only for their students, the teacher can give students a group code and register in the group, and students can access and join the group; no one else can participate or spy on the group [6].
According to Bruce K. Gushiken [7], Borg and O'Hara believed that a social networking designed for the needs of students could have an important effect on how students collaborate and learn in their world, rather than the school setting. Edmodo was recognized by the American Association of School Librarians in 2011 as one of the top 25 websites category entitled "Social Networking and Communication".

Witherspoon [8] states that Edmodo can be seen as a Learning Management System (LMS) which can facilitate teachers to set up and manage their online classes easily. Edmodo provides a simple way for teachers and students in a virtual class to connect and collaborate. For example, teachers can send out quizzes and assignments, give feedback, receive completed assignments, assign grades, store and share content in the form of both files and links, maintain a class calendar, and conduct polls, as well as send notes and text (SMS) alerts to individual students or the entire class. Students can also share content, submit homework, assignments, and quizzes, receive

their teacher's feedback, notes, and alerts, as well as vote on polls [6].
Durak, Çankaya and Yünkül [9] compare Edmado and other SNS such as Facebook and Moodle.

| | Moodle | Facebook | Edmodo |
|---|---|---|---|
| News Source (free sharing capability) | - | + | + |
| Adding comments to the shares | - | + | + |
| Homework Practice | + | - | + |
| Exam Practice | + | - | + |
| Survey Application | + | + | + |
| Grading System | + | - | + |
| instant messaging between users | - | + | - |
| Messaging between users | - | + | - |
| Creating a profile | + | + | + |
| To create profile visible to users | - | + | - |
| Friendship System | - | + | - |
| Free applications accessed by users | - | + | - |
| allowed applications by teachers | + | - | + |
| a closed class system | + | - | + |
| calendar tool for planning | + | + | + |
| Teacher Account | + | - | + |
| Student Account | + | - | + |
| School administrator account | + | - | + |
| Parent Account | - | - | + |
| Labelling | - | + | - |
| Sub domains | - | - | + |

According to this comparison, Edmodo covers most of the basic features of LMS, and its operation is structurally similar to SNSs.

What are the features of the platform?
Some of features and benefits of the tool include:
• creating a document library
• share documents, files, links
• invitation only - no need for email address
• no personal details shared
• commenting and messaging
• quizzes and questionnaires
• online tests
According to Harmer [10] there have been several features of well-developed and promoted learning. These are:
• clear identification of goals,
• specific objectives,
• identified resources.
Then for social networks to be successful the following features must be present:
• purpose,
• focus,
• collaboration

Edmodo changes traditional classroom and transforms it into blended learning. In traditional classes, students generally do their course work such as a writing task only on paper, but when the teacher uses Edmodo, the students can do their individual work and group work online and the teacher can check the work, and give feedback to her students online. Moreover, whatever each member of the group post to the small group, the teacher and other members of the group can see it. In addition, the students and the teacher can work together online at the same time on the same document. While some members of the group are writing, some of the others may work on other parts of the same task.

## III. AN OVERVIEW OF STUDENT VIEWS ON THE USAGE OF EDMODO

There have been several research investigating student perceptions of the use of Edmodo. Kongchan [11] found that students enjoyed Edmodo because of quizzes, homework load, getting feedback from teachers and class and being able to send notes to their favorite friends. In another study, Thongmak [12] concluded that students think Edmodo is useful and easy to use.
Balasubramaniana, Jaykumar and Fukey [5] found the following about the student preference on use of Edmodo for resource sharing:
It is easy to identify the study materials in the platform.
Students like the sharing folder option because it enables them to access their lecturer's resources (e.g. lecture notes, videos, etc.).
They find the unlimited Backpack (Digital Library) option is very useful for saving data (e.g. Files, folders, etc.).

Preview of the files option from the platform is useful to check before downloading.
They like the "filter by posts" search option.
They found the Student preference on use of Edmodo towards activity: They concluded that
Students like to use the platform for forums/ group discussions with their lecturers.
Students like to use the platform for forums/ group discussions with their peers (student–to-student).
This platform is useful for making enquiries on information (e.g. video file, slides, etc.) posted by the lecturers.
This platform is useful for making enquiries on information (e.g. video file, slides, etc.) posted by peers on project work.
Students like to take online quizzes using this platform because it gives them the correct answer immediately after completion.
Moreover, Balasubramaniana, Jaykumar and Fukey [5] noted the student preference on use of Edmodo towards support. They found that:
Students find the online help desk is user friendly.

Communication (e.g. alerts, postings notification, etc.) between the students and lecturers is fast.
Communication (e.g. alerts, postings notification, etc.) among peers (student-to-student) is fast.
Students like to make online appointments with their lecturers through this platform, because it is fast.
Students like the support community team feature in the platform.
Kongchan [11] concluded student views as in the following:
As for technical aspect students think they log in and log out quickly, register easily, easy steps of doing quizzes, load any page quickly, submit/post easily, attach a file easily, post messages/files quickly, and download quickly. In terms of features of Edmodo they like submitting work and getting feedback, like reviewing lessons posted by the teacher, are pleased with posting their work to class, pleased with studying their classmates' s work, are happy with consulting the teacher personally, like having an online class via Edmodo, and they like using Edmodo.

## WHY EDMODO?

Edmodo is a platform similar to popular SNSs in which educators can safely share information, create surveys, follow up tasks and give notes [13]. Students who are reluctant to participate in physical classrooms, fell more comfortable sharing their thoughts via Edmodo which looks like a SNS Facebook [14].
Minimal training is enough to understand how to work with Edmodo because teachers and students are familiar with a similar tool, Facebook. This allows effective use of time for education [15].
Edmodo is both a Content Management System and a professional learning environment. Thus, we do not need to use different Web 2.0 tools for each of these functions.

## CONCLUSION

As one of the Web 2.0 tools, Edmodo is designed for educational purposes. Edmodo is useful for educational purposes that provides students with a safe environment under the supervision of teachers. Teachers in Edmodo can create groups for classes, give assignments, create quizzes, store course materials in the library, organize the class schedule and integrate multimedia applications into the classroom. In addition, teachers from different parts of the world may meet in 12 different subject areas under the communities in Edmodo and share ideas and exchange information. More importantly, students think that it is easy to use, provides safe environment, and improves student-teacher, student-student interaction. They think that using Edmodo is enjoyable. As a result, the applications with the students and research show that Edmodo is a useful tool because it is similar to SNSs which students are familiar with and students favor it. Therefore, it can be preferred by the teachers who would like to transform their traditional classroom into blended learning situations.

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