European Journal of Open Education and E-learning Studies
ISSN: 2501-9120
ISSN-L: 2501-9120
Available on-line at: www.oapub.org/edu

doi: 10.5281/zenodo.896955 Volume 2 | Issue 1 | 2017

A SUGGESTION ON HOW *EDMODO* CAN ENCOURAGE A LIFELONG LEARNING

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Abstract:
Edmodo is basically a web application that is similar to Facebook but provides educational tools instead of a social media platform. Edmodo also reinforces classroom activities. Another benefit of Edmodo is that it allows teachers to create online classes. Teachers post assignments, lecture notes, exams, competitions, and also evaluate students and communicate with them via Edmodo. E-Learning makes it possible to learn about information and communication technologies. Applications such as Edmodo Classroom 2.0 makes it possible to learn even outside the classroom. These applications are viewed as solutions to insufficient class hours and issues that are experienced within the class. In the digital age, new generations tend to maintain different opinions and also different learning capabilities. It's important that we care about how this generation can learn and respond to diverse teaching methods for the sake of their future. Online activities that support learning outside classroom is similar to other learning practices. Life-long learning is important for building the future of our education. A process is alternative to formal education. It has no place and no time. Life-long learning aims to ensure the community are aware of all learning opportunities, it establishes a culture of learning so that people are excited by learning and they can enhance independent learning through technology. Students who use technology as a part of their life makes life-long learning necessary. E-learning

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environments and mass media are needed in lifelong learning activities to provide learning outside the school. In this study, a course work is explained with using Edmodo for life-long learning. It also explains how the learning continues in online environments and the benefits of life-long learning of Edmodo. In this way, it is thought that the researchers who study same subjects can benefit in an effective way.

Keywords: life-long learning, Edmodo, learning practices

1. Introduction

Lifelong learning, which allows people to accomplish self-realization, has become a social necessity by the development of technology. Information technology is a necessity to provide continuous education and to train individuals to have life-long learning skills. Cross (1981) said that one of the building blocks of life-long learning was the development that had happened in technology. Digital competence, namely having sufficient knowledge in information technology, has been counted among the eight qualifications required for life-long learning (Akbaş & Özdemir, 2002). The most widely used technologies for life-long learning are distance learning tools, social media and open education systems. The realization of life-long learning through distance education and open education in the countries where the young population dominates will increase the human capital and turn those countries into information societies (Berberoğlu, 2010). According to Engin (2013), with traditional approaches that education systems are trying to cope with cannot work from now on. Distance education with a different paradigm from face to face education is trying to cope with the new current problems. The effects of developing technology and distance learning applications are getting more popular and solution based to the increasing and diversified problems of education systems in terms of learning, practicing and testing.

According to the Turkish Internet Metering Survey 2017 data, the new generation of users spends most of their time on social networks, especially on Facebook, Youtube, Instagram and Twitter. Social networks are websites that allow people to communicate with each other, create a circle of friends, and allow sharing of posts. Social networks have become a part of our lives as a realm utilized in every sector.

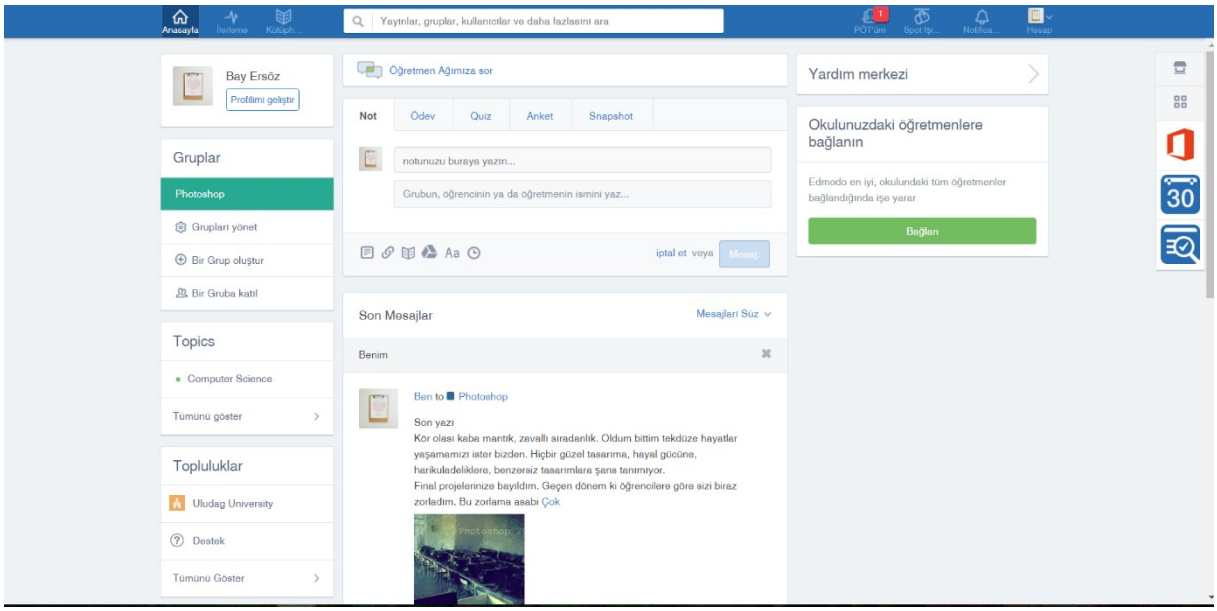
Today, the use of social networks for educational purposes has become quite popular. Various forms of social media allow for collaborative learning, communication over social networks, creation of learning groups, learning games, simulations, virtual worlds, immersive language learning, receiving guidance, messaging and collaborative projects – even when mobile – with people from all over the world. Online applications,

educational social networks and similar applications provide education outside the classroom environment. Edmodo, Classroom 2.0 and Thinkbinder are the most known social networks used for educational purposes.

2. Edmodo

Edmodo is an educational social network with a structure similar to Facebook. It was founded by Borgi Hara and Hutter in 2008 and reached approximately 80 million users as of August 2017. With the help of Edmodo, students, teachers and parents join together in the same learning environment, creating a great learning community. Each user has his or her account, and to be a teacher one must have his or her account certified.

Figure 1: Edmodo homepage



Through Edmodo, teachers can create virtual classes and invite whoever they want to participate in these classes. According to Mathupayas's (2013) study, the most common applications on Edmodo are assignments, notes, comments, and file shares, in order. By creating a virtual classroom environment, Edmodo easily enables applications that are difficult to accomplish in the classroom. The basic practices and benefits provided by Edmodo are as follows:

Sharing: Teachers and students can share whatever they want on the main page of the course offered through Edmodo. Comments can be made under these posts shared. Moreover, interest areas can be followed, and all users on the globe can be reached through the posts shared. The posts provide interaction.

Assignments: Homework can be assigned to students in groups created by the teacher. In an assignment post, a delivery date can be determined, students' delivery dates of the assignment can be seen, and materials related to the assignment can be added. Assignments also can be assessed easily via Edmodo and at the same time students can see the corrections made and the grades they get. Additionally, successful students can be rewarded with virtual badges. Badges provide gamification in education and increase the course motivation.

Library: Files, pictures and materials are kept in the library. Thus, materials used in lessons are stored orderly. Users can use, download and send these materials to each other whenever they want.

Examinations and assessments: Examinations, quizzes and questionnaires can be easily administered via Edmodo, with the help of online forms. Assessments of these exams are also made online, and grades are assigned to students in the assignment grading section. Assigned grades, badges, and missed assignments are easily seen on the progress screen. Moreover, with the help of the export button, all the grades assigned to students can be downloaded by the teacher in the csv format.

The purpose of this research is to examine student views in terms of the usefulness of applications in Edmodo for life-long learning. The question "*Can Edmodo applications be used for life-long learning?"* was determined to be the problem statement, and accordingly, the research question was as follows: *"What are the opinions of students about fulfilling life-long learning through Edmodo?"*

3. Method

In this study, Grounded Theory, one of the qualitative research methods, was used. Grounded Theory was developed in 1967 by Glaser and Strauss. In Grounded Theory, the researcher collects information through observations and materials as well as interviews. He creates categories by blending the data that he collects and clustering expressions that have similar meanings. Then, main categories are formed from these created categories.

Action research was adopted in the implementation of the method. Action research is a research approach that involves identifying problems related to the implementation process or collecting and analyzing data to understand and solve a problem that is already occurring. In this study, the practitioners were also the researchers and collected the data related to the problem that they determined while carrying on the application.

The participants of the study consisted of 22 randomly selected students who studied in the Department of Computer Education, Faculty of Education, Uludag

University. An interview form was used as the data collection tool. The interview form was developed by the researchers. During the preparation of the interview questions, opinions of 2 subject matter experts were consulted, and the form was finalized by making necessary arrangements in the structured interview form. 22 students who were selected from the participants by simple randomization were directed open-ended questions.

The rest of the research data consisted of the interactions on Edmodo created by the students in the sample and the observation notes taken by the teacher. The data were collected through the answers given to the interview questions by the students participating in the research and then were analyzed. The interpretations that were obtained from the examined posts were coded in the context of the questions posed within the scope of the research. The resulting codes were grouped under categories. Then, frequency and percentage values of the categories were found.

4. Application Process

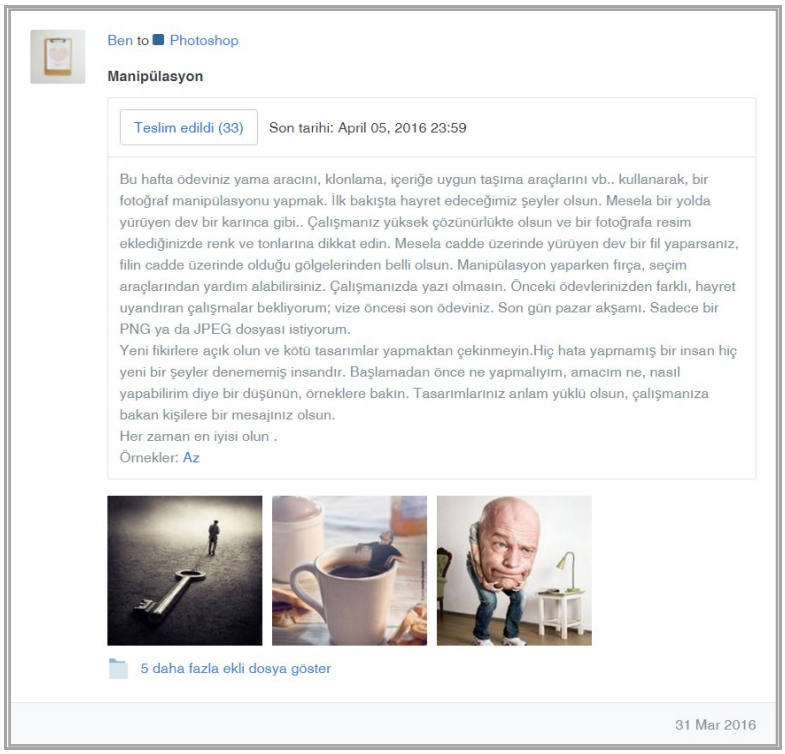
Students were given Photoshop education for 4 weeks. The lessons on campus were carried out together with Edmodo. The actions performed before, during and after the lessons are explained with pictures below.

The teacher shared subject-related materials with the students through Edmodo before coming to class (Figure 2). These materials included the pictures to be used in class, what topics were to be described, what students needed to read before coming to class and objectives. Related materials could be easily downloaded and used during class.

Figure 2: Related materials

After the lecture, the students prepared their designs using the technique they learned and shared them through Edmodo. The teacher followed these shared items from his computer and informed the student of the errors in the design. At the end of the lesson, the teacher shared the subject of the weekly homework, delivery date and other things to do. When students left the classroom, they did their homework until the subsequent week and uploaded it on Edmodo.

Figure 3: Assignments



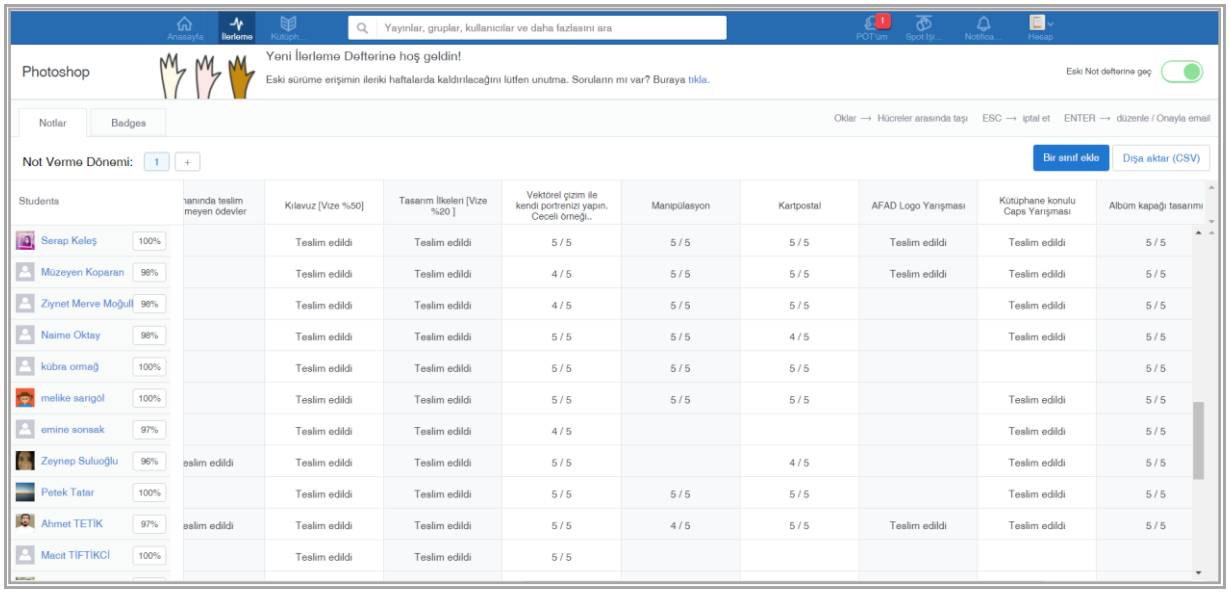
The teacher assessed all the assignments on the system, rewarded successful students with virtual badges, and shared the profile of the best weekly student on the main page.

Figure 4: Best of week

Students shared their decent designs willingly on the home page. The teachers gave feedback for the assignments turned in in the first week of the course, and the students were asked to complete the missing items. In the weeks that followed, the teachers left complementary comments only under outstanding works shared by the students who improved themselves.

The lessons continued like that throughout the whole semester. At the end of the semester, the final project was shared over Edmodo again. The students uploaded the projects they prepared to the system between the relevant dates. The teachers assessed the projects. The students' end-of-the-semester grades, weekly assignments, midterm and final projects, and all of the badges they received were easily calculated by the assessment application provided by Edmodo.

Figure 5: Assessment via Edmodo



5. Findings

In the coding of the data, the answers given by the students relating to their views on Edmodo were used. Responses close to each other were combined under the same codes and then categorized. Their opinions about learning with Edmodo were gathered under the categories of Sharing, Interaction, Assignment, Reward and Assessment.

Table 1: Opinions of students

Categories	Code	Examination
Sharing	Before lesson	Sharing materials to help us prepare for the next lesson
	Students' post	Likes to shares, comments written by friends
Interaction	Student-student	Students' correspondence between themselves

	Teacher- student	Interactions between teachers and students, comments.
	Other	People working in the same area communicate via Edmodo
Assignment	Assignment	How the assignments will be and the contents
	posts	Expressions that define when to deliver the assignments
	Submit assignment	
Reward	Badges	Opinions of students about badges they have won
	Teacher's comments	Teacher's comments on student sharing
Assessment	Feedback	Teacher feedback during the course and during the preparation and sharing of assignments
	Exam	Making exams, assignments and other projects on Edmodo

The posts that the teacher shared about the subsequent lesson allowed the students to come prepared for the lesson. Sharing a lesson's objectives before coming to class intensified the belief that the lesson would be productive. A student answered the question "Were the materials helpful that the teacher shared about what he would teach before coming to class?" as follows:

> "*Of course, at least you have a chance to make a preliminary preparation about the subject. By doing research, you benefit your friends and teachers as well as yourself during the lesson. It is very successful in this respect."*

The teacher showed to the students that he was knowledgeable and had a full grasp of the subject by the posts he shared. This allowed the teacher to become a model to be followed in the eyes of the students.

Students had positive opinions about the assignment application. It gave the teacher a great deal of convenience to assign, collect and assess assignments. The response of a student to the question "*Have you got an assignment through Edmodo, how did you submit it, and how was the assessment?"* was

> "*Yes, I got assignment. I submitted it as if I was sending a file through the social networks. In this respect, it provided convenience. The assessment results were reported via Edmodo*."

This shows the ease with which students receive and deliver assignments. For the teacher to share the successful posts and well-prepared assignments on the homepage, to give badges and to make encouraging comments to the posts increased the student motivation. To the question, "*Did you share anything through Edmodo? How*

were the attitudes of your teacher and friends to those posts? How did they feel to you?" a student gave the following answer:

> "*Yes, I did. When my teacher and my friends liked and commented on some of my posts, my enthusiasm for the lesson was growing, and their liking of my work positively affected me towards the lesson."*

The fact that teachers rewarded outstanding and successful assignments with their comments increased the students' interests towards the lesson.

6. Discussion, Conclusion, and Implications

The data from the interview and observation forms were combined under 5 main categories as a result of the analyses based on the Grounded Theory framework. The claim that it would be possible to accomplish life-long learning using Edmodo was presented by comparing the interview data and the relevant literature to the life-long learning dynamics. The main themes created in this context were "*Self-Realization, Flexibility, Motivation and Learning by Having Fun, Teachers as a Role Model, and Information and Communication Technologies*". These themes, which were determined by the Grounded Theory method, were the building blocks that enabled the life-long learning with Edmodo.

6.1 Self-realization

Students agreed that Edmodo facilitated education, encouraged learning, and supported independent learning. Students could improve themselves from any location with access to the Internet by receiving any education they wanted.

The student-teacher and student-student communication increased greatly with the help of the nature of the interaction provided by Edmodo. A student who had never spoken in class since the beginning of the year shared 17 posts on Edmodo and even sent a greeting card to his friends.

Life-long learning helps the individual complete his personal development and fulfill his self-realization by ensuring that he is able to advance in the field in which he is interested. Thus, the quality of life of the individual will increase.

6.2 Flexibility

Life-long learning can be adapted to changing needs. New technologies move with the technologies that will make learning easier. Students can learn without any time constraints also outside the classroom through e-learning environments and

technology-based education, and can continue learning lifetime. They do not have to worry when they miss a lesson because with the help of Edmodo, they can listen again and review their notes. Throughout the examination period, by looking at all the posts shared on the homepage, they can understand what is taught in the course, how the course is carried out and by which assignments the course is reinforced. Lecture notes are always at their disposal.

6.3 Motivation and Learning by Having Fun

Learning environments need to have instruments that increase the life-long learners' motivations. With the help of Edmodo, motivation can be achieved in a number of ways. The virtual badges given to the successful actions of students have a great effect on the participation of the students in the classes. In the light of the answers given by the students, it is seen that the assignments given to the students were done more effectively as the students got badges, that the badges were encouraging, and that the students' interest in the courses increased. The answer a student gave to the question "*Did you share anything through Edmodo, and how did it feel to you?"* was

> "*Yeah. Attitudes were very good. Criticisms are very important for me to improve myself. Likes, humorous comments, memes, civilized negative views all added up many things to me and will continue to add up. Of course, it is pleasing for your posts to be appreciated. Moreover, comments are very important in terms of seeing the reflection of your ideas on the other side."*

Another student expressed his feelings about the badge he received as follows:

> "*I got a badge as the champion of the week :) Thanks to this badge, I was listening to the lessons willingly every week and I was making more efforts to do the assignments in accordance with the topic of that week."*

For students, Edmodo is a gamification tool. It encourages students to learn by having fun and increases their motivation to lessons.

6.4 Teachers as a role model

In the life-long learning approach, the teacher should be a role model, should guide and assist the students.

The teacher must deal with every student in the class in the same way and find solutions to their problems. In a classroom setting, it is not possible for a teacher to deal with everyone in a crowded classroom. Many students lose interest in the course and

school due to the fact that the decent works they prepare are not seen and evaluated by the teachers (Karakelle & Canpolat, 2010).

The students complained that the teacher did not equally attend to everyone in the classroom. It was found in their comments that Edmodo amplified this interaction. With the help of Edmodo, the teacher can share what he will teach in the lesson before he comes to class and the preparations to be made by the students before coming to class. Additionally, the fact that the teachers provided instant feedback to the comments shared by the students and easily assessed all the assignments on the same screen made them role models in the eyes of the students.

6.5 Information and communication technologies

The individual needs the use of technology in life-long learning. Information and communication technologies form the basis among the most important factors affecting life-long learning (Gönüç, Odabaşı & Kuzu, 2012). Learning with Edmodo is one of the best examples to be given about how learners can benefit from technology. In extracurricular settings, the individual meets the need for learning to the greatest extent through the Internet.

The students found Edmodo very useful because they were able access to the resources of the classroom and were able to communicate with the teacher personally any time they wanted outside the classroom with the help of Edmodo.

The students participating in the study spent an average of 6-7 hours per day on the Internet. The use of technology in education requires also the teacher to get in the virtual world. This allows the teacher to see the expectations and needs of the new generation and to understand how they learn better. It can be said that the use of Edmodo in life-long learning has many positive effects. Edmodo is an effective educational social network that enhances motivation in life-long learning, enhances the teacher-student interaction, and helps people fulfill self-realization. Effective use of technology and the popularization of e-applications and e-learning environments directly influence the increase in life-long learning.

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