

## **Using Edmodo in Blended Learning: Its Benefits and Drawbacks**

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**Abstract** - *The incorporation of technology in the delivery of instruction is a phenomenon that cannot be ignored today. Blended learning as an approach is the trend in many educational institutions and is evidently practiced in the Philippines (Rabacal, 2018). This approach is an integration of classroom or face-to-face learning with online instruction. According to Ngo (2018), the combination of the strengths of both traditional classroom and computer assisted instruction can improve students' learning. Studies related to the use of Edmodo in blended learning and e-learning show positive results (Tavukcu, 2018, Yin et al, 2018). This study explored on the benefits and drawbacks of Edmodo as a learning platform from the perspectives of students. There were 49 participants in this study. They were freshmen Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering students of Iloilo Science and Technology University. With the teacher-researcher, they were enrolled in Purposive Communication, a general education course offered during the school year 2018-2019. The study employed qualitative research design and used qualitative content analysis. The data were culled from the students' reflections which were turned in as individual assignment in the class site via Edmodo. These data were then initially and openly coded and the emerging notions, concepts, and categories were identified, analyzed, and interpreted. The results of the study revealed both the benefits and drawbacks of using Edmodo. The benefits and advantages can be categorized into different characteristics which include accessibility and convenience, communication and connectedness, functionality, usefulness, social interaction, and practicality. Despite the multifold benefits of using Edmodo, several drawbacks were found from the results of the study.*

**Keywords** – Blended learning, Edmodo, EFL,

### **INTRODUCTION**

The incorporation of technology in the delivery of instruction is a phenomenon that cannot be ignored today. Blended learning as an approach is the trend in many educational institutions and is evidently practiced in the Philippines (Rabacal, 2018). This approach is an integration of classroom or face-to-face learning with online instruction. According to Ngo (2018), the combination of the strengths of both traditional classroom and computer assisted instruction can improve students' learning. With the use of Internet in a virtual classroom, the teacher and students can actively engage in learning activities with the facilities for group communication, joint projects, sharing of solutions to home works by emails, and chat rooms, (Sufeng & Runjuan, 2013).

Social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and Edmodo are commonly used in blended learning. Tavukcu (2018) believed that social network sites like Facebook and Wiziq virtual classroom have reshaped the learner's communication, interaction, cooperation, and learning process. Moreover, the varied features of social networks develop communication skills, enhance peer support, and enable collaborative learning. One learning platform whose functions are closely identified with Facebook is Edmodo. This is considered as the world's largest learning network designed not only for students and teachers but also for administrators and parents (<https://go.edmodo.com>). This creates a space for online discussion and gives a voice to introvert students who usually would feel



apprehended to speak their minds and express themselves in traditional classroom.

The popularity and widespread use of Edmodo all over the world cannot be underestimated. It has an overwhelming number of users since its inception in 2008. In 2016 Edmodo reported over 63 million users to have been actively working for educational purposes (Mokhtar, 2018). In 2017 it claimed to have 78 million users worldwide (<https://en.wikipedia.org>). This platform was also employed for the training of teachers in relation to the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization SEAMEO Free Online EDMODO Training for Teachers in March 2017 with the aim of equipping teachers with advanced ICT skills and to utilize online platform for collaborative learning ([www.seameo.org](http://www.seameo.org)). According to SEAMEO website Edmodo was chosen for the project because of some obvious reasons. The platform is free and is characterized by interesting features similar to Facebook and takes learning beyond the traditional classroom. It also provides users to connect, collaborate, share content and access homework, grades and school notices in a free, and safe place without the limitations of time, space and place.

With the trend of blended learning in EFL, the researcher is motivated to integrate the use of Edmodo as an extension of face-to-face instruction in the traditional classroom. Hence, this study was conducted.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study explored on the students' reflections of Edmodo as a social learning platform. Specifically, the study investigated on the benefits and drawbacks of using Edmodo in blended learning from the perspectives of the students.

## **MATERIALS AND METHOD**

There were 49 participants in this study. They were freshmen Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering students of Iloilo Science and Technology University. With the teacher-researcher, they were enrolled in Purposive Communication, a general education course offered during the school year 2018-2019. In the beginning, the lessons were handled in a face-to-face setting in a physical classroom. In the middle of the term, Edmodo as a social learning platform was introduced to students for familiarization of its features and functions. They were taught the basics regarding Edmodo sign up procedure and were instructed to use the group password to join the class site at <http://www.edmodo.com> as an extension of the classroom. They were reminded to browse Edmodo website for more clarifications regarding use and more features of the learning platform. Students were made to submit writing assignments both individually and in a group, answer grammar quizzes, post concerns, write notes, or interact with other users or even with their teacher. After seven weeks beginning August 27, 2018 to October 12, 2018, students were asked to write their reflections on using Edmodo.

## **Design and Procedure**

The study employed qualitative research design and used qualitative content analysis. As a research method, content analysis involves analyzing written, verbal or visual communication messages (Cole, 1988, quoted in Elo & Kyngas, 2008). The data in this study were culled from the students' reflections which were turned in as individual assignment in the class site via Edmodo. These data were then initially and openly coded and the emerging notions, concepts, and categories were identified, analyzed, and interpreted. Thematic analysis was also used to gain understanding of Edmodo experience from the perspectives of the participants.

Table 1 presents the excerpt of the transcriptions of students' reflections on Edmodo.

Table 1. Transcriptions of Students' Reflections on Edmodo

<b>Line</b>	<b>Page</b>	<b>Meaning unit</b>	<b>Condensed meaning unit</b>
03	1	It made us more innovative and socially oriented.	Made us more innovative/socially oriented
04	1	At first, I didn't have an idea about it, but with the help of my teacher, classmates and guides of Edmodo, I've improved my knowledge and skills.	At first, no idea about Edmodo but with the help of teachers/classmates, it improved knowledge and skills
6-7	1	I became more disciplined in passing my output on time.	Developed self-discipline/punctuality
14	1	Edmodo is easy to access and relaxing	Easy to access and relaxing
16-17	1	It gives you time to correct your sentence and to think what you are saying.	Gives time to correct sentences and to think what you are saying
19-21	1	This helps us to explore different grounds and new discoveries.	Helps explore different grounds/new discoveries
21-22	1	It helps students think more freely to construct words.	Helps them think/write more freely
25-26	1	It helps students to become "Computer Literate"	Develops computer literacy.
29-30	1	It enables students to connect and work with their classmates/ teachers anywhere and anytime.	Enables students to connect and work with teachers anywhere and anytime.
31-34	1	There are flaws and difficulties in using Edmodo. The one example is that not all of us have a stable internet access. Answering a quiz especially a timed quiz really made our scores low because of the slow/not stable internet. It consumed our time waiting for the next question to appear.	There are flaws and difficulties in using Edmodo. Slow/unstable internet access made their. scores low in the timed-quiz. Slow/unstable internet access consumed their time.
37-41	1	I really had no idea about it and how to use it. In making an account is so easy for me, but when it comes on passing using text response or Word online, I really don't know what to do about it, because I only used my cellphone.	Making an account is easy. Don't know about using text response or Word online when it comes on passing (assignment) because of using cellphone .
44-47	2	It's better to learn in teacher rather online ...student was unable to go online if he has no time to go Internet shop and doesn't have the budget for the load.	Better to learn with teacher in class Going to Internet shop takes time and requires budget.
50-51	2	It's better for teachers to use site because of their absences. A site that can be used in discussing and turning in assignments.	Better to use the site when teachers cannot meet their classes.
55	2	At first, I am against it in using assignments for discussing and doing other school works because most of us students don't have Internet.	Can be used for discussion and turning in assignments; Used for discussion and doing school works.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study revealed two important main themes and some facts about Edmodo. Both the benefits and drawbacks in using the social learning platform were discovered from the results of the study.

### Benefits of Using Edmodo

The benefits and advantages of using Edmodo in blended learning can be categorized into different characteristics which include its accessibility and convenience, communication

and connectedness, functionality, usefulness, social interaction, and practicality. The study further revealed that the learning platform was worth the money and enjoyable. This brought the learners to the new world of learning and new world of technology.

Tables 2 and 3 present the benefits and advantages of using Edmodo from the perspective of the students.

Table 2. The condensed reflections of students with codes and categories/themes

Condensed meaning unit	Code	Category	Theme Main Category
Free and easy to access.	Free and easy to access.	Accessibility	Benefits and Advantages of Edmodo
Making an account is easy.	Easy to use	Convenience	
Assignments can be submitted easily	Easy submission of assignments	Accessibility	
Makes school works easier.	Easier school work	Convenience	
Makes submission of assignment easy	Easy submission of assignments	Accessibility	
Very simple and easy to use software	Very simple and easy to use	Convenience	
An easy way of passing assignments	Easy submission of assignments	Accessibility	
Sending/compiling outputs is easy and fast with Edmodo. Helps make output legible.	Easy and fast sending and compiling of outputs.	Convenience	
Easy to learn and use; not very hard to get started with	Easy to learn and use; not very hard to get started with	Accessibility	
Done a great impact in academic life because it is convenient to use	Convenient to use	Convenience	
Very convenient to use; Can be easily accessed by using phone	Convenient to use Easily accessed by phone	Accessibility Convenience	
Teacher can give assignments, talks about a topic, shares thoughts/ideas even outside the classroom	Giving assignments, discussing a topic, sharing thoughts/ideas even outside the classroom	Communication/ Connectedness	

**(Continued)**

Table 2. The condensed reflections of students with codes and categories/themes (Continuation)

<b>Condensed meaning unit</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Theme Main Category</b>
Enables students to connect and work with teachers anywhere and anytime.	Connect with teachers and classmates	Communication/ Connectedness	Benefits and Advantages of Edmodo
Ability to connect with the educator and sharing experiences is great.	Ability to connect with the educator	Communication/ Connectedness	
Better to use the site when teachers cannot meet their classes.	Better site for teacher's absence in class	Communication/ Connectedness	
To stay connected with each other	To stay connected	Communication/ Connectedness	
Makes school communications easier.	Makes school communications easier	Connectedness	
Ability to connect with the educator and sharing experiences is great.	Ability to connect with the educator	Connectedness	
Used for communication and quizzes.	For communication and quizzes	Functionality	
Assured that teacher monitors student's progress	Monitors students' progress	Functionality	
Edmodo is like a classroom that you can comment and give answer.	Compared to a classroom; students give comment/answer	Functionality	
Great for communication; as a "social network" is more appealing to students.	For communication as social network	Functionality	
Enables student to conveniently create and submit assignments/projects online	To conveniently create and submit assignments online	Functionality	
Very helpful for submission of assignments and posting of announcements	Helped in submission of assignments and posting of announcements	Functionality	
Allows teacher to give exams/tests online with or without time limits.	To give exams/tests online	Functionality	
Very helpful because of its notification feature for deadline of assignments.	Helps them submit school work on time	Functionality	
Gives time to correct sentences and to think what you are saying	Opportunity for editing	Usefulness	
Helps explore different grounds/discoveries	Exploration and new discoveries	Usefulness	
Helps them think/write more freely	Develops free thinking/writing	Usefulness	
Develops computer literacy.	Computer literacy development	Usefulness	
Makes them responsible because of submission deadline and timed-quiz	Makes students responsible	Usefulness	
Updates students on what to do in class	Updates students on their task	Usefulness	
Develops independent thinking and writing	Develops independent thinking and writing	Usefulness	

**(Continued)**

Table 3. The condensed reflections of students with codes and categories/themes (Continuation)

<b>Condensed meaning unit</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Theme Main Category</b>
Can effectively manage time on when should a student work. Beneficial because it enables one to be updated/digital literate.	Helps them in time management and makes them update and digital literate.	Usefulness	Benefits and Advantages of Edmodo
Helped student become information-literate	Helped to become information literate	Usefulness	
Helps enhance grammar when constructing sentences	Enhance grammar and construction of sentences	Usefulness	
Made us more innovative/socially oriented	Makes them innovative/socially oriented	Usefulness	
At first, no idea about Edmodo but with the help of teachers/classmates, it improved knowledge and skills	Improved knowledge and skills	Usefulness	
Developed self-discipline/punctuality.	Developed self-discipline and punctuality	Usefulness	
Easy to access and relaxing	For discussion and school works	Social Interaction	
Used for discussion and doing school works	Dynamic interaction between teacher and students	Social Interaction	
Allows dynamic interaction between teacher and students/Stimulates participation in group discussions.	Interacts with teacher easily	Social Interaction	
For the teacher-and-students interaction	No need of hard copies and no struggles in finding teacher for late submission	Social Interaction	
Interacts with teacher easily	for late submission	Practicality	
Students don't need to pass assignment in hard copies and struggle in finding their teacher for late submission	Saved time and easy to access.	Practicality	
Saved time and easy to access.	New world of learning - no books, no chalks, no ball pens, just mouse, keyboard and computer	New world of learning	
Brought them to the new world of learning - no books, no chalks, no ball pens, just mouse, keyboard and computer	New world of technology where everything is at the tip of one's finger and the power of your hand.	New world of technology	
Brings them to the world of technology where everything is at the tip of your finger and the power of your hand.	Safe from negative influences	Safe	
Safe from negative influences	Encouraged individual work	Autonomous/Independent learning	
Quizzes and activities are sent individually so that students cannot copy from others.	Wonderful and user-friendly	Wonderful/user-friendly	
Wonderful, user-friendly learning platform	Enjoyable	Enjoyable	
Enjoyable online class	Worth the money for Internet	Worth the money	
Money is worth spending for internet			



**Drawbacks of Using Edmodo**

Despite the multifold benefits of using Edmodo, several drawbacks were found from the results of the study. For first time users, Edmodo is difficult to navigate and thus requires constant hands-on practice with computer. This does not only require Internet connection to get the access but also requires stable or high bandwidth of Internet connection so as to avoid intermittent access to the learning platform. The poor signal or absence of Internet providers in some rural areas were also identified as a barrier in the use of Edmodo.

Edmodo requires specific mobile device compatible with Edmodo application.

Another drawback that was revealed in the study is the possibility of cheating to take place when students go online and do their school tasks. In the absence of the teacher in a virtual classroom, there was no assurance that students work on their own.

Tables 4 and 5 presents the drawbacks of using Edmodo.

Table 4. The condensed reflections of students with codes and categories/themes

<b>Condensed meaning unit</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Theme Main Category</b>
Using Edmodo for the first time was difficult Quite difficult for first-time user and when there is no internet connection	Difficult to use for the first time Difficult to use for the first time user	Difficult for first time users	Drawbacks of Edmodo
Without Internet, students can't get access of Edmodo and they can't pass their assignments or projects as soon as possible	Requires Internet for access Without Internet, assignments cannot be submitted	Requires Internet for access	
Without Internet connection, submission of task is not possible especially in the provinces/rural areas	Without Internet, no submission of assignments/school works	Requires Internet for access	
Going to internet shop takes time and requires budget.	Requires time and budget	Requires budget and time	
Spending money for Internet café Costly; requires load and internet connection	Requires money for Internet Costly; requires Internet load or Internet connection	Requires money Costly	
Hard/Difficult to use for first timer	Slow Internet connection makes Edmodo is difficult to use	Slow Internet	
There are flaws/difficulties in using Edmodo. Slow/unstable internet access made their scores low in the timed-quiz	Slow/Unstable Internet makes scores low in the timed-quiz	Unstable Internet	
Slow/unstable internet access consumed their time	Slow/unstable Internet consumed time	Slow Internet <b>(Continued)</b>	

Table 5. The condensed reflections of students with codes and categories/themes (Continuation)

<b>Condensed meaning unit</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Theme Main Category</b>
Some do not have time to open account because there is no internet connection	Internet connection limits students' use of Edmodo	Slow Internet	Drawbacks of Edmodo
Prefers passing assignment in hard copies because of slow internet	Slow Internet affects the use of Edmodo	Slow Internet	
Slow Internet in the Philippines.	Slow Internet in the Philippines.	Slow Internet	Internet connection problem
Poor Internet connection serves as barriers to Edmodo.	Poor Internet connection is a barrier in the use of Edmodo	Internet connection problem	
Edmodo requires full access to a mobile device with Internet access	Requires specific mobile device with Internet access	Requires specific mobile device	
Don't know about using text response or Word online when it comes on passing (assignment) because of using cellphone .	The type of gadget (cellphone) limits the use of some Edmodo features	Specific mobile device	Requires hands-on practice
Hard for first time user but practice would provide knowledge/experience in handling different online websites	Hands-on practice makes using Edmodo less difficult	Requires hands-on practice	
Constant use of the site makes experience good/better.	Constant use of the site makes the experience good/better	Requires constant use of the site	Ethical concern or Cheating
No assurance that student works with honesty	Cheating is possible with Edmodo	Ethical concern or Cheating	
Help from anyone is possible to do the task	Help from anyone is possible when doing assigned work		

Studies related to the use of Edmodo in blended learning and e-learning show positive results (Tavukcu, 2018, Yin et al, 2018). Hakim and Kodriyah, 2015 investigated and found Edmodo as an effective solution that can be implemented in a blended learning setting especially in English as a Foreign Language EFL classroom. Similarly, the study conducted by Al-Kathiri (2014) with Saudi Secondary Schools among EFL learners showed highly positive results on students' perceptions concerning Edmodo despite some challenges to its integration in EFL learning. These results support similar findings of this study which indicated that some disadvantages in using Edmodo were noted.

When used in one EFL class, specifically Advance Writing Course, the results showed that Edmodo has successfully facilitated students' participation in online discussions and task (Gay & Sofyan, 2017). The study further revealed that the learning platform enhanced the learners' interest and motivation in improving their writing skills. In a Palestinian school, Qalaja (2015) investigated the effectiveness of using Edmodo as a teaching and learning virtual class to the product writing approach on enhancing the elementary pupils' writing skills and their attitudes towards writing. The findings showed remarkable improvement in English



writing performance with the use of Edmodo. The results also indicated that with the implementation of Edmodo the participants' attitudes towards English writing positively changed. Another research conducted by Ashawi and Alhomoud (2016) explored on students' motivation for learning EFL through Edmodo and the students' beliefs about the impact that Edmodo has on their communication with teachers. Interestingly, the results showed statistically significant motivation towards language learning through the use of Edmodo and indicated that the teacher-students interaction via Edmodo was highly significant.

With researches other than EFL discipline, Edmodo proved to be useful and effective social learning platform. Using a mixed-methods research paradigm, Enriquez (2014) determined the effectiveness of the use of Edmodo as a supplementary tool for learning social science courses. The findings affirmed that majority of participants considered Edmodo as an effective supplementary tool for their learning. Yin et al (2018) in a quasi-experimental study noted that Edmodo contributes significant effects towards students' performance, interest and collaborative problem solving skills.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Edmodo has undoubtedly takes learning beyond the traditional classroom. With its features, this social learning platform proves to be a useful tool for blended learning especially in an EFL class. As revealed in the study, this enables students to conveniently connect and interact with their teacher and fellow learners even outside the classroom and beyond the class schedule. This also facilitates easy online submission of school tasks and assignments, not to mention that this provides opportunities to

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develop critical thinking and computer skills. On the other hand, the most common drawbacks that emerged in this study included budget for Internet and Internet problem specifically the unstable or intermittent connection that may result to disappointment and discouragement for Edmodo users in the Philippines.

Despite the efforts of the national government to provide free public Internet connection in some locations in several cities in the Philippines, Internet connection or Internet signal was identified among the drawbacks of using Edmodo. This problem is extremely difficult to solve in a national scale, but this may be addressed within the academic community by strengthening the computer and Internet facilities of higher educational institutions where students and teachers can avail free access to Internet and the social learning application. Students should also be informed about the budget concerns and Internet cost required for use of the learning application when outside the school's computer laboratory.

The conclusions derived in this study were drawn from the findings which primarily relied on the data culled from the students' reflections. The study only investigated on the advantages and disadvantages of using Edmodo in a particular blended learning setting. Hence, the results may not be generalized in other contexts. To explore more on students' learning experiences, challenges, and difficulties in using the same social learning application, further study with the use of other research methodologies is advanced for recommendation. Further researches that will address Internet issues and the challenges of using blended learning approach in the Philippines are also recommended.

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