


Chapter 10

Designing Online Learning Environments via Mobile Technologies

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ABSTRACT

In a world of rapid technological transition, the primary objective of this study is to explore the effectiveness of an online language learning approach that integrates Web 2.0 tools aligned with a specially developed instructional design in promoting social presence and satisfaction in online learning environments. Specifically, the primary aim is to investigate the influence of integrating Padlet into English classes for preparatory school students, focusing on their social presence and levels of satisfaction by conducting a quasi-experimental study. The results suggest that by incorporating Padlet into language instruction, more collaborative and effective language learning environments that lead to increased social presence and satisfaction among learners can be created.

INTRODUCTION

With the rise of technological advancements, online educational applications have become increasingly prevalent. It can be claimed that interaction plays a pivotal role in maximizing the benefits of online learning environments. In contrast to traditional face-to-face classrooms, where teachers can communicate their messages mostly through eye contact, body language and physical contact, online environments require alternative means of interaction (Coman et.al, 2020). In order not to get affected by the advantages that face-to-face environments provide but online learning contexts are mostly lacking, such as efficient interaction and the feeling of being real, online learning environments should focus on emphasizing interaction in the best possible way. Cronje and Van (2022) revealed that students appreciated the high level of interactivity within the learning environment via a Web 2.0 application. To mitigate the negative impacts of the insufficient interaction in online learning environments, it would be beneficial to

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-8646-7.ch010

prioritize and optimize interaction to the fullest extent possible for online learning environments. This is because developing relationships in the online classroom involves honing skills that enable teachers to utilize technology effectively for surveying students and engaging in communication to identify possible learning gaps or areas that require attention (Archambault et al., 2022).

The improvements of new communication technologies, particularly the internet, enabled people to connect with each other and provide support in fulfilling their learning needs. Yeung and Yau (2022) found students expressed the necessity for increased interactions with both peers and teachers in online learning. They expressed a desire for enhanced peer interactions, hoping for additional peer support to facilitate the completion of online learning tasks. This includes activities such as reminding each other of assignment deadlines and engaging in discussions about course content. By the same token, the utilization of interactive learning scenarios through virtual reality, augmented reality software, and other simulation software has the potential to enhance learners' creativity (Barari, et al., 2022). By incorporating these technologies into teaching, learners are provided with immersive experiences that foster creativity and imaginative thinking. Learning itself is considered to be a social activity and the emergence of social learning approaches led to the use of new terms. Since the process in learning is not passive, but rather an active and interactive one, promoting a sense of community and fostering positive learning outcomes are crucial for students (Loh & Ang, 2020). The spread of various approaches regarding educational goals has contributed to the development of the concept and practice of learning communities. According to (Lenning, et al., 2023) learning community is a purposefully created community that aims to promote and maximize the individual and collective learning of its members. It involves continuous interaction, interplay, and collaboration among its members as they work towards specific shared learning objectives. As a result, learning communities have evolved into what are now known as “online learning communities” and active interaction among students is related to their satisfaction in online learning environments.

According to West and Williams (2017), there are four defining characteristics of learning communities, including online learning communities, which are access, relationships and vision. A learning community can be defined as a group of individuals with common objectives who recognize and confront common issues in a shared space and participate in collaborative activities to reach their set objectives. Hence, developing a sense of classroom community holds significant importance in promoting course satisfaction and addressing feelings of disconnectedness, particularly in online courses (Parrish, et al., 2023). Through this collaborative approach, individuals are able to acquire new information and skills. When these exercises and communication take place online, the learning community is referred to as an online learning community. Mansour (2020) posited that the forming of an online community is necessary in establishing a fruitful online learning milieu.

In this regard, integrating technology in the learning process has made it more convenient for people to engage in collaborative learning activities, which has contributed to the growing popularity of online learning communities. The importance of online communities can be attributed to their formation. With the availability of internet resources and digital classrooms, students now have the opportunity to learn various topics independently so classroom instruction is evolving towards a more participatory approach (Haleem, et al., 2022). When an online course effectively supports students in understanding course topics, keeps them engaged in meaningful learning tasks and activities, helps them clarify their thoughts, and enables them to gauge their learning progress, it can foster a sense of mastery, efficacy, and accomplishment (Turk, et al., 2022). From this perspective, the development of learning communities can be seen as intertwined with the notion of satisfaction. Creating a secure learning environment through positive social relationships can further enhance satisfaction within these communities. In this

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