Edmodo Tutorial
Proposal

Rationale

Current science teaching and learning practices emphasize collaborative, student-centered, authentic, inquiry-based environments in order to build on prior knowledge, explore misconceptions, and support higher-order learning (Wendt & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2014, p. 1104). Vygotsky's theory of Social Constructivism began in the 1960's and still remains one of the most effective ways in learning under the guidance of a teacher. A more recent theory, the Connectivism Theory, combines Vygotsky's social learning with social media technologies (Al-Kathiri, 2014). Web-based learning has drastically increased the learning opportunities for students and communication opportunities between students and teachers (Balasubramanian, 2014, p.418), and supports the collaborative learning and active engagement necessary for a successful learning environment (Wendt & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2014, p. 1104).

Edmodo is a social networking site (SNS) designed specifically for teaching and learning (Balasubramanian, 2014) in that it provides learners "with a frame to assist them in structuring and coordinating acts of knowledge construction" (Turkmen, 2012, in Al-Kathiri, 2014). Studies have shown that SNS can "better student's general learning performance, and strengthen their learning motivation and autonomy" (Balasubramanian, 2014, p.417). Edmodo follows the RASE model for teaching using an online learning platform: activities need to be available to supplement the resources, while support and evaluation need to be present to help and inform students of their progress (Balasubramanian, 2014).

Overview of Edmodo

Edmodo is a free online community with over 47 million users designed to provide students and educators with a social learning platform. It provides students with a closed and private community to interact with their classmates in synchronous or asynchronous discussions, collaborative projects, online polls, as well as interact with other classrooms from around the world (Dobler, 2012). Edmodo provides teachers with a platform to "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, conduct polls, as well as send notes and text (SMS) alerts to individual students or to the entire class" (Al-Kathiri, 2014). It also allows parents to stay connected with their child's learning by offering them an account to view assignments and calendar items.

Edmodo.com, and many sites online already have the necessary documents available to teachers, and administrators to launch Edmodo. The documents that are available range from information regarding privacy policies, acceptable use (student code of conduct), general help and support, and parent permission forms. These support documents can be adapted to meet the needs of your school or division to assist with your Edmodo start-up.

Another valuable addition when using Edmodo is the ability to embed and interact with outside resources. One valuable resource that works with Edmodo is Google Drive. Google Drive allows a collaborative Google Document to be placed onto a page inside Edmodo. Once embedded, an object can easily be viewed and interacted with by students. The ability to add different types of resources within Edmodo provides teachers with an easy to use feature that can add variety, interactivity, and expandability to Edmodo.

From the official support and blog pages of Edmodo, to classroom teachers blogs, and instructional videos found online, there is an every expanding and vast collection of resources available online.

Identify the Need

Al-Kathiri (2014) highly recommends on-going professional development, as well as experience being online learners in order to effectively reflect on their teaching practices using technology (p.199). Twenty-first century learners identify with methods of learning that include technology, and in order for teachers to implement technology learning in their classroom it is important to become learners themselves. Edmodo is an ideal platform to facilitate learning with its various applications and affordances. Edmodo "creates a useful and enjoyable medium of communication, which keeps people engaging continuously" (Balasubramanian, 2014, p.417) and is recognized by the American Association of School Librarians (2011) as one of the top 25 websites that "foster the qualities of innovation, creativity, active participation, and collaboration in the category entitled *'Social Networking and Communication'* (Al-Kathiri, 2014).

Feasibility of the Tutorial

This Edmodo tutorial will be designed for educators as a 'self-help' guide to address the rationale, affordances, challenges, and implementation of an Edmodo platform into their classroom. A Weebly site will house the background information, as well as videos and step-by-step guides that will walk teachers through setting up an Edmodo account, adding students to their class(es), and creating assignments, polls, and quizzes. The tutorial will also provide teachers with insight into what the student and parent Edmodo pages look like, so that they can be better informed of all aspects of the site. Teachers will be encouraged to peruse the Weebly site to familiarize themselves with Edmodo, as well as set-up their own Edmodo teacher account by following the easy step-by-step guide.

We hope to explore the answers to some of our preliminary questions as we begin designing the Edmodo tutorial:

- Will two hours be enough time to walk teachers through this tutorial?
- Does Edmodo offer incentives to use their technology?
- What are some of the mobile app limitations?
- For the tutorial, would it be better to have video walk-throughs or step-by-step guides? Both?
- Include different user experiences (i.e. Teacher, student, parent)

- Do we want to recommend that teachers create an Edmodo account and have a 'follow along' type section on the website for basic account set up?
- What are some testimonials from teachers and students currently using Edmodo in their classrooms?

Additional Resources

Beyond this tutorial there are many resources available online to support teachers in their Edmodo endeavours. The following is a list of web resources that educators will find useful:

1. The Edmodo Help Center: This website features a wide variety of support materials about each aspect of Edmodo. The list of topics is very thorough and should meet the needs of educators who are trying to create and effectively use their Edmodo learning environments. The 'how to' style videos are particularly useful.
2. From within Edmodo, under the 'Communities' tab, you can also click on an internal support link. Via this link you can access an ongoing discussion thread through which users can post any support related questions. Their questions may be answered by other users, by an Edmodo Ambassador (an educator who has been given this role by Edmodo) or by the Edmodo support team. From this support area educators can also access webinars and blogs enabling them to become involved in Edmodo learning communities.
3. Educators may want to actively participate in Edmodo learning communities through social media and networking sites. Edmodo has learning communities on both Facebook and Twitter.
4. There are a variety of helpful documents available for download directly from the Edmodo support website as well, such as the general Teacher's Guide to Edmodo and the Grade-level Guides.

Communities of Practice

There are many ways to incorporate Edmodo into the classroom. On the Edmodo website there is access to the following:
1) Assessments:
   Edmodo allows users to build quizzes as well as use a poll feature in order to use assessment as learning within the classroom.
2) Role Playing:
   Students can use Edmodo to understand key historical events by re-enacting them through the role play feature. Acting out/verbally interpreting knowledge of the subject can provide the opportunity for teachers to formatively assess student comprehension.
3) Peer Reviews & Critiques:
   Teachers can use Edmodo to create small groups and have individual boards to post their reviews and feedback for the group. This also provides the opportunity for teachers to use assessment as learning through Edmodo, as it provides the option to watch conversations, reviews and more to unfold.

4) Writing Projects:

 Edmodo allows for students to share their own work with the entire class. This can be especially beneficial in the classroom if a student is away for a prolonged period of time, or is not able to come to school for a particular reason.

5) Build Digital Citizenship Skills:

 Online behaviour and etiquette can be fostered in the classroom while using Edmodo. This can help build and/or project classroom etiquette rules as well.

6) Cultural Exchange Projects:

 Edmodo allows for users to create Edmodo groups with other classrooms around the globe.

7) At home access and help:

 Edmodo allows for teacher to communicate appropriately and professionally with their students beyond the classroom. This also provides the opportunity for students who were absent from school to see what work was completed. Edmodo also allows for a "Parent" profile to be used, enabling parents to view their child's progress.

8) Science Probes:

 Edmodo has Science probes which can be used in a classroom to create discussion and bring more engagement to students in Science.

9) Mobile Learning:

 Edmodo is accessible by a mobile App which allows for increased accessibility within the classroom and can make learning interactive and available almost anywhere.

10) Project Based Learning:

 Project Based Learning can be facilitated using the small group feature.

11) Differentiated Instruction:

 Edmodo allows for individualised lessons, events, probes, sharing features and more, which facilitates the use of differentiated instruction within a classroom.

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