# Integrating Edmodo into a High School Service Club: To Promote Interactive Online Communication

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**Abstract:** Positive experiences reported by teachers and students utilizing Edmodo, a social networking tool, suggests that similar results may be possible in organizing a high school service club. A web-based instructional module was created to show club advisers how to use basic Edmodo features to organize students and groups, foster and increase communication between students, and increase student participation in activities. The instructional module, which included a series of instructional online videos, and a set of fifteen pre-test and post-test questions, was tested by graduate students enrolled in the University of Hawaii at Manoa Educational Technology program. The effectiveness of the module, areas for improvement, and suggestions for future implementation are discussed.

## Introduction

The Leo Club is a high school service club that provides youths with volunteer opportunities. Leadership, Experience, and Opportunity are the cornerstones of the Leo Club, and its members engage in activities where they learn the rewards of serving others in their community. The membership at a Leo Club in Honolulu, Oahu has grown over the years to 179 members, making it very difficult to have efficient face-to-face meetings, and properly disseminate important information about volunteer events. For the last four years, members have complained about being unable to sign up for volunteer activities, or being unable to contact the officers in a timely manner. Each year, approximately 10-15 members quit the Leo Club in frustration. It is hoped that Edmodo can help organize the club, and improve communication between members, officers, and advisers. The purpose of this instructional design module is to teach future advisers of a high school service club how to use and integrate Edmodo, a social networking tool, into the organizational structure of the club, in order to promote interactive online communication.

## Background

Edmodo was created by Nic Borg and Jeff O'Hara, who realized the need to evolve the school environment to meet the connectedness of the 21st century world. The success of earlier social networking platforms like MySpace and Facebook, showed that students were connected in many ways outside the classroom, but entered a void when they

attended school. Borg and O'Hara believed that a social network geared towards the needs of students could have a profound impact on how students collaborate and learn in their world, rather than the school setting their teachers grew up in (Edmodo, 2012).

Now boasting over 18 million users, Edmodo has garnered rave reviews from teachers and students alike. Teachers use Edmodo to post announcements and assignments for their students. Students use Edmodo to communicate with their teachers to ask questions about lessons and homework, and collaborate with fellow students on activities and project ideas. The Edmodo environment is free of advertisements, games, and other distractions that might interfere with student learning. Teachers have noted that Edmodo even strengthened the relationships between students, and led to a stronger classroom community(Mills, 2011). Edmodo's success with students in the classroom warranted a closer look at the potential success in other school-related environments.

## Methodology

### *Instructional Strategies*

Considering the moderate level of technology skills and knowledge possessed by the target audience, instruction was designed to be straightforward. The testers of the instructional module possess higher levels of these skills, and should have an easier time moving through the instructions and sections of the website. The website was designed so the user could navigate from one section to the next, in a short amount of time. The module was divided into four sections to address the main components of an Edmodo site: creating a user account and group page, creating a small group page, creating a calendar, and embedding Google forms. Each section contained a description of the instruction, and instruction was delivered through YouTube video clips.

### *Technologies*

All instruction and data collection took place through a six-page Weebly website. Weebly, a webpage creation site, was selected for its ease of access and use, so that time could be spent focused on instructional development rather than website creation.

YouTube videos were used to deliver the narrated instructional content, and Google forms were used to create a list of fifteen multiple-choice pre- and post-test items, which were later embedded into the Weebly website.

### *Population*

A call for participation was sent out via e-mail to thirty-three current ETEC and OTEC graduate students, with the link to the website. No support in using the technologies was necessary. Ten students, six females and four males, participated in the module testing, for a 30% participation rate. All ten participants possess a 4-year college degree. Four participants also possess a Master's degree. Eight participants responded that they had heard of Edmodo, but currently do not have accounts.

*Data Collection*

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected using pre- and post-surveys to determine the effectiveness of the instructional module. The surveys were created in Google forms, and embedded into the website. Questions in the surveys were based on a five-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." To ensure the anonymity of the participants, a random name generator was used to create a unique ID for each participant to be used throughout the surveys in the module. Open-ended responses allowed for additional comments regarding the instruction.

**Results**

The following figures present the survey and assessment data collected from participants of the *Integrating Edmodo* module. Data was collected anonymously using the survey tools in the Google Forms features.

All ten of the participants felt that the module was easy to understand and that it was at the right length and difficulty level. One participant was neutral in her response about the difficulty level being at the right level. See Figure 1 below.

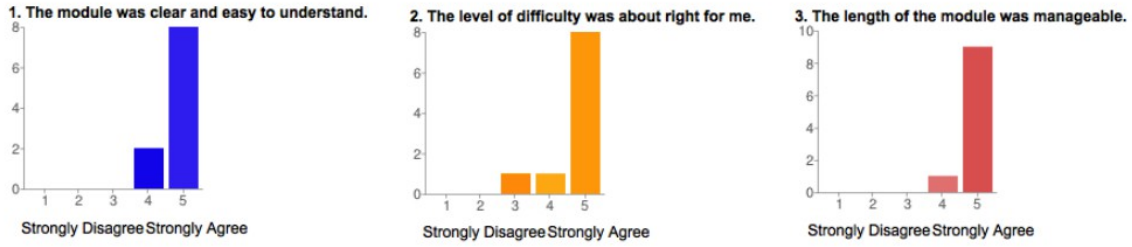


*Figure 1*. Responses pertaining to clarity, difficulty, and length of module.

Nine of the participants found the examples used in the module to be helpful, and eight participants responding that they are motivated to learn more about Edmodo in the future. Remaining participants were neutral in their responses to these questions. See Figure 2 below.

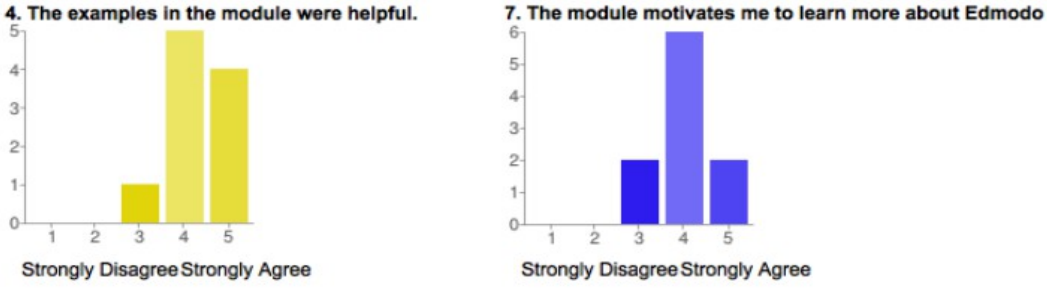


*Figure 2*. Responses pertaining to helpfulness and motivation.

All ten of the participants felt that the module helped them do better on the post test questions, but their responses to the open ended question mentions the need for additional learning aids in the module. One participant suggested having the instructional steps provided in written form to complement the videos, so as to refer to them later. Two participants also wanted to see their results after taking the pre-test earlier in the module. See Figure 3 below.

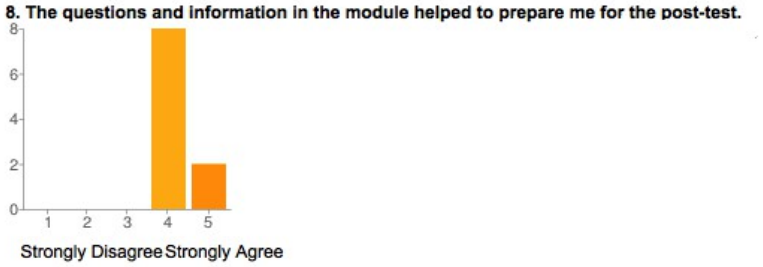


*Figure 3*. Responses to preparedness for post-test.

**Discussion**

Eight participants improved their test results. Improvement was primarily made in responding to questions pertaining to joining a group in Edmodo, and using group pages in Edmodo. Two participants showed no improvement. After reading through their comments, it seems likely due to a lack of access to the correct answers to the pretest questions. Participants were not told or shown which items were answered incorrectly, and therefore were not able to focus on those concepts as well as they could have. All ten participants answered the same four questions correctly on the pre test and post test. This is likely due to the participants' prior knowledge of Edmodo or similar Web 2.0 tools. See Figure 4 below.

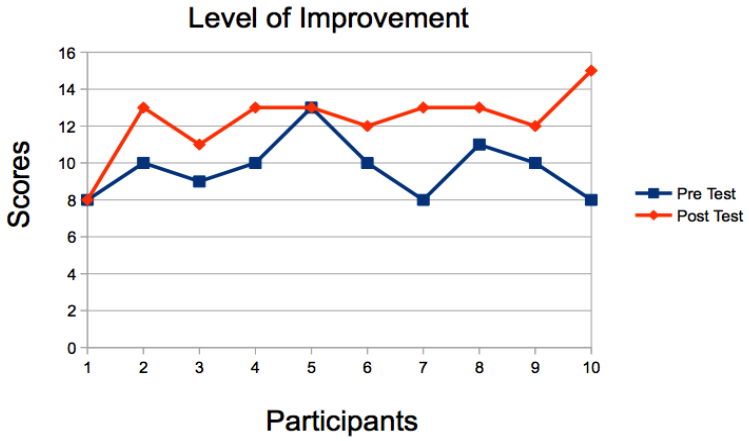


*Figure 4*. Pre- and Post-Test Scores

Though participant response in the post survey were favorable, comments received from the free response question revealed a lack of key learning aids that would have assisted in the instructional process. One participant commented that "a section check would help me know if I learned what I was I needed to to complete each section of the module." Another participant added, "I would add some written steps in addition to the videos for later reference." Another participant added, "although the training videos served their purpose, I would like videos that focus specifically on school clubs and activities."

Reflecting on these comments, it is apparent that further work is necessary to improve the instructional module. The learner must receive immediate feedback following the pretest and posttest questions, and instruction needs to be added to target the learning of the test items. Written documentation, along with screen captures of the instruction must be included, whether in pdf format or another form, so that participants can download or print the information for reference. In addition, other videos will need to be created to specifically target and address the focus on school clubs. The instructional module appears to have served its purpose as an introduction to Edmodo, and future videos can be made to specifically focus on club activities, and Edmodo's role in club organization.

**Conclusion**

Edmodo, as well as other Web 2.0 tools, are transforming the ways in which students participate in their learning. Educators believe that these tools are necessary to teach students how to be productive citizens in the 21st century, and it will be necessary to show students these tools and allow them to use such tools in their collaborative work.

The learning module, *Integrating Edmodo*, can be used as a short introduction to the Edmodo tool. However, it cannot stand alone as a complete guide to organizing a high school club. Additional modules will need to be created to address the specific needs of the club or organization to support their activities and operational routines.

The website address of the *Integrating Edmodo* instructional module is:
http://edmodotraining.weebly.com

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