

INCREASING STUDENT'S SELF-LEARNING ABILITY IN PRACTICING ENGLISH WITH THE SUPPORT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

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Abstract. *A self-learning is an indispensable form of learning that helps students get success in their studies. This article is aimed at students' self-learning ability in practicing English with the support of information technology, specifically the social learning network Edmodo. The survey was conducted with 256 non-English major students at the Thai Nguyen University of Education, Viet Nam. The research results show that self-learning ability is one of the main factors of the communicative method used in teaching foreign languages. The use of Edmodo has helped to improve students' self-learning ability, motivate them to actively learn and practise English in a responsible and effective way.*

Keywords: *self-learning ability, Edmodo, practice English*

1. Introduction

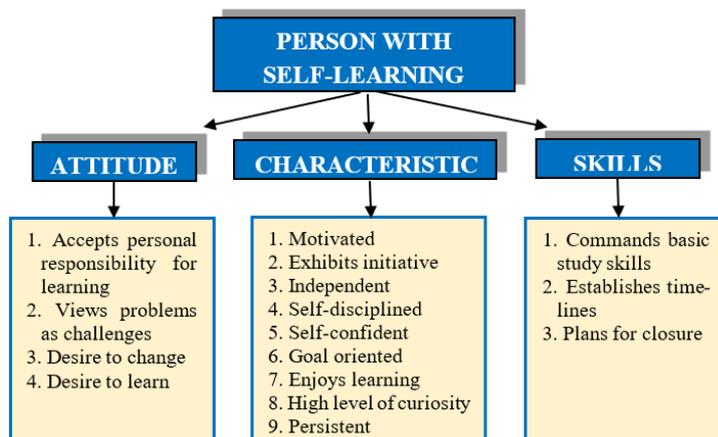
It is not enough for students to acquire learning knowledge based on only the lessons in classrooms. Teachers must teach their students how to study so that they can have learning methods suitable for society's requirements and they can self-study throughout their life. Therefore, increasing the students' self-learning ability is a core issue under the goal of modern education. We must innovate teaching methods in the direction of promoting students' positive awareness.

The paper examines the effectiveness of the use of information technology (specifically the social learning network Edmodo) in increasing the self-learning ability of non English major students in practicing English. A survey of the effectiveness of the Edmodo use in improving students' self-learning capacity in practicing English outside the classrooms was conducted with the participation of 256 students at Thai Nguyen university of Education.

John Dewey (1859 - 1952) believed that students thrive in an environment where they are allowed to experience and interact with the curriculum, and all students should have

the opportunity to participate in their own learning [1]. He offered teaching methods, such as "Positive methods", "Collaboration methods", "Individualized methods", "Experiential learning", "Problem-Based Learning"...; T. Makiguchi (1871-1944) thought that teaching knowledge has never been the purpose of education. The purpose of education is to instruct the learning process and put learning responsibilities in each student's hands. Education is considered as the process in which teachers guide students to perceive activities to "develop themselves" [2].

When the revolutionary education began in Viet Nam in 1945, President Ho Chi Minh launched an emulation movement on self-learning spirit and it was he who uphold the self-learning example. In "Modifying the way of working", he wrote "... self-study must be the core" [3]. Taylor (1995) has argued that people with self-learning ability are those who are always proactive, independent and persistent [4]. He also determines the following expressions of people with self-learning ability:



2. Increasing students' self-learning ability in practicing English with information technology support (social learning network Edmodo) at Thai Nguyen University of Education

Nowadays the training programs of a foreign language for non-major students have focused on practice. English courses always have the corresponding number of practice hours: Module 1 and Module 2 with 45 periods (including theory + exercises + discussion), have 90 self-learning periods per each module; Module 3 with 60 periods (including theory + exercises + discussion) has 120 self-learning periods [5].

We use the learning network Edmodo to increase students' self-learning ability in training English skills outside the classroom. Edmodo is easy to use and can access on a computer or even on a mobile phone, so Edmodo has become a useful tool for students to practice their English skills outside the classroom. This creates extremely favorable conditions for students to actively take part in classes outside the classroom.

In the survey, most of the students (229 students, accounting for 89.5%) said that the social learning network Edmodo was easy to use in self-learning, especially, in English practice. It gave students a new learning style, helped them avoid being bored with the traditional learning way. That means it is correct and reasonable to use Edmodo in teaching and learning English. 27 students (accounting for 10.5%, mainly students with beneficiary policy, international students) thought it was not convenient to use Edmodo network in self-learning. They said that it was because

they did not have a computer or a smartphone to access the Edmodo site, or there was no internet at home; they had to be highly self-conscious and work harder ...

In the survey, when answering the question "Which language skill do you practise most effectively on Edmodo?", 25.5% of students chose writing skill, 15.4% of students chose listening skill, 33.7% of students chose reading skill, 25.7% of students chose speaking skill. Based on the results of the survey, we have re-allocated the practice time of each language skill so that it can be appropriate to the students' self-learning ability.

Evaluating the effectiveness of using Edmodo in English practice, we received the following results from 256 surveyed students: 47 students (accounting for 18.4%) said that using Edmodo was very effective; 195 students (accounting for 76.1%) said that it was effective, only 14 students (accounting for 5.5%) said it was not effective. When 14 students who chose "not effective" were interviewed, they honestly answered that it was because of their work (extra work, personal work ...) or their concern, they did not pay more attention to the English practice on Edmodo.

Many students do not feel interested in the empty theoretical lectures without practice or the talks that are not practiced much, and they are bored with learning without progress. Practising regularly and correctly is very important to students to be confident about communicating with others in English. The application of the social learning network Edmodo has helped them to practice English more. Therefore, when we asked the question "Using Edmodo lets you to develop your self-

learning ability", 86% of students did agree and totally agreed. (accounting for 12% disagree, 2% totally disagree; accounting for 55% agree, 31% totally agree).

When students use Edmodo as a tool to practise English outside the classroom, they become more active to receive information from teachers or from textbooks. Edmodo helps students to develop their ability to become independent and proactive learners. These skills are essential for students to succeed in their education and future life.

3. Recommendation

To maximize the effectiveness of using Edmodo in students' self-learning, the following issues need to be considered:

+ Students must be willing to participate in all studying forms. They should have inner motivations to be ready to learn. With the support of teachers, they must know how to set learning goals to determine their interests and learning needs. Each student must form a positive learning habit for himself and the self-learning must be carried out continuously and permanently all the life. Students must improve their level of using information technology software so that they can use it best in self-learning and practicing language skills.

+ Teachers guide students to self-study, to choose carefully the right knowledge to acquire and necessary skills to equip. They help students avoid superficial learning

methods. They encourage students use Edmodo network as a learning tool to explore and get basic knowledge and new things. Teachers should prepare learning resources outside the classroom. To control students' self-learning, teachers need to set timelines for self-learning of each part. In order to enhance students' self-learning ability, teachers should create opportunities for students to work in groups, encourage them to cooperate, exchange knowledge and develop their own ideas.

+ The university should be well equipped with technology devices, computers, Internet systems, self-learning rooms, learning space, ... which help students make their self-learning better.

4. Conclusion

The application of information technology (social learning network Edmodo) has been effectively applied at Thai Nguyen University of Education. The results from the study have shown that Edmodo creates a connection between theoretical and practical lessons. It helps students develop the ability to organize their learning time and their self-learning ability. They have a change in attitude about using technology in self-learning. Based on the results of this study, it can be suggested that the use of Edmodo in teaching and learning foreign languages in general and English in particular should be widely introduced to teachers and students.

References

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**ПОВЫШЕНИЕ СПОСОБНОСТИ СТУДЕНТОВ К САМООБУЧЕНИЮ В
ПРАКТИКЕ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА С ПОМОЩЬЮ ИНФОРМАЦИОННЫХ
ТЕХНОЛОГИЙ**

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***Аннотация.** Самообучение – это незаменимая форма обучения, которая помогает студентам добиться успеха в учебе. Эта статья направлена на то, чтобы студенты научились самостоятельно практиковать английский с помощью информационных технологий, в частности социальной обучающей сети Эдмодо. Опрос проводился с 256 студентами, не владеющими английским языком, в Тхай Нгуенском педагогическом университете, Вьетнам. Результаты исследования показывают, что способность к самообучению является одним из основных факторов коммуникативного метода, используемого при обучении иностранным языкам. Использование Эдмодо помогает улучшить способность студентов к самообучению, мотивирует их активно и эффективно изучать английский язык и практиковать его.*

***Ключевые слова:** способность к самообучению, Эдмодо, практика английского языка.*