

## The Effect of E-learning on Foreign Language Students Using the Student's Attitude

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of the use of the attitude towards English learning at eleventh grade of the secondary school in Iran. This study was conducted on the effects of the use of MyEnglishLab, an online moodel software program, on secondary school students. One part of the students accessed to the free download software (MOODLE) in the classroom instruction. The students took a t-test and filled out a survey and completed a course evaluation and qualitative survey at the end of the research. The t-test scores were statistically evaluated. MyEnglishLab was influence the students' overall attitude toward English learning language.

**Key words:** E-Learning • English classroom • MOODLE • Student attitude

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### INTRODUCTION

The MOODLE is a web-based space for English learning where all software tools for writing and editing of information is managed through a web browser and is immediately and publicly available on the Internet [1]. There are a range of potential applications of MOODLE technology in education and training, delivery of learning materials and collaboration. As MOODLE is improving so fast, teachers have begun seeing the potential of MOODLE for teaching and learning English. However, using MOODLE in education and particularly in language learning, is still a novel subject and there have not been a lot of formal studies done on this topic. A literature review shows that the research focusing on MOODLE application in English language classes is still relatively scarce.

The focus of our project is on the possibilities of MOODLE in the virtual teaching and learning environment. MOODLE was chosen in the virtual learning environment for applying in English language learning in the classroom.

The choice was also undertaken by the outcomes of a research project called Blackboard and MOODLE [2]. Furthermore, a comparison performed revealed that MOODLE had all of the features required to promote an effective online learning [3]. Here, we will study in details how MOODLE can be used to support language learning based on these objectives to analyze the effect of

MOODLE technology on students; 1) to determine students' attitude toward MOODLE resources; 2) to explore the relationship between students' access to MOODLE and their results according to the teaching modality (e-learning and traditional education).

The rationale for this is the underlying pedagogical principle of Social Constructivism which asserts that a social group constructs knowledge for one another collaboratively. This research includes two parts. The first part is the general observation towards MOODLE in education. The second part focuses on the effectiveness of the use of the MOODLE for English language learning, according to students' attitude to the use of MOODLE.

**Theoretical Framework:** The design and development of MOODLE has been based on social constructionist theory and practice of teaching and learning [4]. A key point of constructivism is that meaning is actively constructed by learners [5]. And the second point is learning and development socially situated activities that are enhanced in the meaningful contexts [6, 7]. Another critical principle is that learning and development are self-regulated processes [8]. Constructivism emphasizes the role of self-regulation in learning and development, providing for the capability of individuals to control their thoughts, feelings, motivations and actions with considering social structures including shared knowledge, material resources and practices.

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Table 1: A summary of the main differences between traditional language learning and MOODLE learning

Traditional	E-Learning
Teacher center	Student center
Knowledge transmission	Construct knowledge
Written environment	Audiovisual environment
Traditional methodology	New technology

As suggested that in collaborative learning “learners take an active role in helping each other to accomplish a task that is a vehicle for using authentic communication” [9]. It supported that “technology-enhanced collaboration” facilitates task-based learning in an effective way. Similar to the use of a technological platform, MOODLE was applied in the English course for the secondary school students in our study. Students observed each others’ work in the course webpage through MOODLE and made some suggestions. This interactive and varied communicative approach allows the learners to work together both in a synchronous and asynchronous way: “Working together to accomplish shared goals” [10]. A summary of the conceptual framework is depicted in Table 1.

Here, the usage of e-learning platforms, virtual teaching/learning environment as MOODLE, is based on the facilitation of the communication among the participant in an educational context [11]. The selection of Moodle is of our goals, is supported, in turn, by its user friendly interface, the increasingly growing community of users and because it is the open source platform used at eleventh grade of the secondary school in Iran for online English learning.

**English Learning Language Supported by Moodle:** MOODLE can be used to integrate a course with online activities that help them to increase their foreign language proficiency and also their competence in Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Most foreign language courses in secondary schools are supported by textbooks that provide plenty of audio material like audio-cassettes, CDs and even CD-ROMs, but students seem quite reluctant to the use of these tools. The idea here is to take the advantage of MOODLE e-learning environment to enrich the learning process, through a more complete exploration of the teaching resources, contents and others as the aids to the textbook chosen. Moodle also enhances student autonomy.

**Students Can:**

- Access web-based media
- Access files downloaded by teachers (including textbook materials, quizzes and other supplementary learning tools).
- Communicate/interact with teachers and other students on the Web.
- Download materials for portable learning devices such as iPods and MP3 players.

**Teachers Can:**

- Obtain information about students through profiles posted to the site.
- Download lesson plans, handouts and other course materials.
- Track and assess students’ progress.
- Assign blogs, forums and other interactive activities for homework.
- Disseminate information about the course not mentioned during class.
- Post reminders about exams and term papers.

MOODLE showed a great potential for supporting conventional classroom instruction [12]. It includes forums which are best for fluency practice, but as they leave a written record, they work very well for identifying individual students’ error patterns as well. For learners who have a low-level of confidence or accuracy in the target language, the use of the forum is a good choice to help them to plan a conversation without scaffold. For learners at higher levels greater forums for fluency practice can be exploited.

For example, Wiki is basically a webpage with an edit button but MOODLE allows set up individual wikis private to each learner and the teacher. These can be used to create collaborative documents between teacher and learner. The students can see texts, their developments, retrieved and this process can then be used to reflect on learners’ writing process. However, public wikis can be applied to get students to collaborate on a project, or for peer correction but learners are often keen to share contents that they have created by their own.

Thus, using MOODLE is about how it handles multimedia files. It is really simple to insert video files from YouTube, or add audio files. The real strength of this method is when the learners film themselves and upload their own videos to MOODLE. If one uploads a FLV or MP3 file into MOODLE and links to it on a page it will

display in an embedded player. Then, it can easily create a feedback exercise such as asking students to reflect on their language use, grammar and vocabulary choices, pronunciation, etc. Doing this regularly throughout a course allows students to build up a portfolio by letting them to literally see (and hear) the improvement in their language skills.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of the use of MOODLE on the attitude towards English learning language at eleventh grade secondary school of Iran in the city of Tehran. The variables were assessed using descriptive statistics.

**Subjects:** The population was consisted of secondary school students in Tehran, Iran. The sample was made up of students enrolled in the eleventh grade during the spring of 2010 involving a section of 50 classes and a total of twenty-four female students participated in this study.

**Treatment:** The treatment was free download software (MOODLE). Initially, the researchers delivered a common lecture to the treatment group. The lecture was performed simultaneously to prevent the effect of any extraneous variables such as time, resource and infrastructure. The lecture was 50 minutes in length. A server was set up in school office and Moodle was installed on it. This made it possible to begin developing online lessons for students.

The class was given access to MOODLE, free download software. EnglishLab was free download software (MOODLE) that used in conjunction with English textbook. Each student had access to computer with a course ID given by their respecting teachers. They have also been accessed to many valuable tools such as forum, wiki, blog and chat teacher.

The teacher chose some units of the textbook that was based on Learning Objects. Some of the goals of the lessons are:

- To teach students to navigate the Web in English learning.
- To encourage student participation in chat, workshop.
- discussion forums, wikis.
- To introduce online learning resources such as www.starfall.com.
- To utilize the Web to enhance student autonomy.

- To introduce study techniques for effectively using the Web.
- To help students find the information they want in English learning when such information is not available in Iran.

Some of the audio material (tracks) on CDs was saved as audio files in a directory used as a resource. Some sites such as starfall (www.starfall.com) was provided this sort of video material that can be linked or downloaded from the platform. Additional audio material, such as listening exercises, solutions and answers sent via e-mail to the teachers for correction or recorded by the students and put in an area of the platform where other students could access for listening and discussion in a chat room. A particular section of MOODLE makes the opportunity to create quizzes of different kinds. Evaluation was done through the t-test. At the end of the test a mark or score gave to each student and added to the general evaluation in the subject.

To illustrate the procedure we created a module choosing some of the contents of the textbook used in Iranian secondary schools mostly in the first year. After learner's login and the choice of course, questions was set in the main frame. The exercises were interactive and scored was independently. A particular part was also set in the platform in the forum where the students wrote their doubts and the teacher gave them explanation. They encouraged suggest the solution to the questions asked by the others. The use of chat and Wiki for communication and answer questions seemed worked very well and showed good results for written skills.

**Instrument:** The instrument used in this study was survey. The students' attitude regarding MOODLE was determined. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS in order to prepare descriptive measures which involved means and standard deviations using the non-parametric test of mean differences, One-Sample Test as shown in Table 2.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Students' Attitude Towards Their Learning with Moodle:** The students' attitude towards MOODLE was examined in this study. The acquired values are presented in Table 2. A questionnaire with Likert-scale was used to t-test and to better understand the students' attitude towards MOODLE application in learning English.

Table 2: Students Views of English learning Language with MOODLE

Statement	Test Value = 0					95% confidence Interval of the Difference		
	M	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	MD	Lower	Upper
1. Use of Moodle is useful for collaborative learning	4.400	.507	33.606	14	.000	4.400	4.119	4.680
2. Use of Moodle is useful for increasing individual learning	4.333	.617	27.191	14	.000	4.333	3.991	4.675
3. Collaborative learning is a suitable method for engagement	4.266	.703	23.482	14	.000	4.266	3.876	4.656
4. Feedback is applied to correct any mistakes in learning English writing	4.466	.743	23.276	14	.000	4.466	4.055	4.878
5. I'd like collaborative learning in English learning language, it's work group	4.333	.4787	34.395	14	.000	4.333	4.063	4.603
6. Collaborative learning with use of Moodle enhance learning English writing	4.266	.457	36.101	14	.000	4.266	4.013	4.520
7. Collaborations with use Moodle upgrademy knowledge and skills in English learning language	4.600	.632	28.169	14	.000	4.600	4.249	4.950
8. Group work with Moodle is a suitable method	4.400	.507	33.606	14	.000	4.400	4.119	4.680
9. I enjoy collaborative learning as I can work with other students	4.466	.639	27.033	14	.000	4.466	4.123	4.821
10. Teacher help is adequate to improve English learning language	4.533	.516	34.000	14	.000	4.533	4.247	4.819
11. Use of Moodle in English learning	4.600	.507	35.133	14	.000	4.600	4.319	4.880
12. Technology tools that I used in English class were friendly	4.600	.507	35.133	14	.000	4.600	4.319	4.880
13. Cooperation to increase skills and knowledge	4.466	.516	33.500	14	.000	4.466	4.180	4.752
14. leaning English language by Moodle	4.666	.617	29.283	14	.000	4.666	4.324	5.008
15. Overall, learning English language by using Moodle interesting	4.600	.507	35.133	14	.000	4.600	4.319	4.880

Note. There were five choice ranging from strongly agree (=5), No idea (=3) to strongly disagree (=1) in each statement. \* z, p> 0.05 (not significant), p<0.05 (almost significant), p<0.01 (significant), p<0.001 (very significant).

Two experts from the English Department of the Research and Educational Planning Organization, Ministry of Education in Iran were selected and after training performed the prototype questionnaire. A Likert-scale instrument with statements, each with five choices ranging from strongly agrees to no opinion/do not know, was used to assess students' attitude about MOODLE usage. The question was closed-ended. The result of the study is presented in Table 2.

In this study, statements 14 were highly agree in Moodle use. Many students agreed, at the end of their Moodle, that "learning English language by Moodle helped me to learning English language" (Statement 7 and 13, Table 1). Moreover, many students had the view that, "The use of a Moodle in a learning English language helps me in my study" (Statement 2).

### CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to examine the students' attitude towards MOODLE during learning English. The result coincided with the pilot study [13]. Our study showed that the students' views were positive. MOODLE

had succeeded in engaging students well enough in collaborative learning. Our study also showed that the use of MOODLE had many advantages. Students were actively involved in investigations and were almost successful in using Internet for data gathering. Although, their skills was found to be poor. The classroom activity engagement helped students in the learning process, skill development and the use of devices to aid skill development. The use of a MOODLE in the classroom was interesting for all students. Students also were interactive and cooperative with each other and with the teacher.

This study showed that the teacher's role is crucial to support students and shows that students need to be supported in their skills, especially at the start of the study and using tools. There were, however, many problems in the practice/classroom phase, according to the results. The use of a MOODLE was not easy for all students, although the researchers observed that all the students used the Internet. Therefore, there is a need to develop the learning environment with MOODLE, teacher's pedagogy and skills and also student skills.

**Implications for Teachers:** From our research, it can be concluded that the collaborative learning with the use of MOODLE may foster the learning English through discussion and evaluation of others' ideas. However, this method of instruction was found to be effective in gaining factual knowledge. Therefore, if the purpose of a teacher is to enhance learning English and students skills, then collaborative learning with MOODLE can be more beneficial. For an effective collaborative learning, the teacher needs to observe teaching as a process of developing and enhancing students' ability to learning English. The teacher's role is not just to transmit information, but to serve as a facilitator for learning. This involves creating and managing a meaningful learning experience and develops students' thinking through learning in real world.

Future research needs to investigate the effect of different variables in the collaborative learning process with MOODLE composed of different group compositions such as heterogeneous versus homogeneous groups, group selection and size, structure of collaborative learning, amount of teacher intervention in the group learning process, differences in preference for collaborative learning associated with gender and ethnicity and differences in preference and possibly effectiveness due to different learning styles, all merit investigation. Also, a psycho- analysis of the group discussions will reveal useful information.

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