

Dear Edmodo Design Team:

The purpose of this letter is to share with you a few weaknesses and strengths of Edmodo that I experienced as a user. I created a teacher account with Edmodo to explore the site and its features. Three areas of the site that need improvement are to create a sample classroom, to enhance the collaborative tools, and to increase student control options. Three areas in which your site excels are in the detailed help section, the intuitive design of the platform, and the variety of interactive tools.

As this was my first time using Edmodo, I was uncertain about the most effective way to set up my classroom. I searched across the Edmodo site hoping to find sample classrooms that I could browse but was disappointed to discover that a code is required to view another teacher's class. Since I did not have any codes, I was unable to view other active classes. I think an improvement to the site would be to offer a sample classroom that new teachers would automatically join in order to see a "live" classroom. Educators require training on how to use new tools effectively in order to successfully integrate them into classrooms (Gan, Menkhoff, & Smith, 2015).

Two additional areas that need improvement are to enhance the collaborative tools and to increase student control options. I noticed when reviewing educators' reflections about Edmodo that they point out that it lacks student-to-student messaging, a chat feature, and a blog option (Gómez, Magreñán, & Orcos, 2015; Sedgwick, 2013). I think adding these features would be a simple way to enhance student-to-student collaboration as well as offer additional options for reflective practices (Gan et al., 2015). Currently, Edmodo only permits teachers to create polls and to edit/annotate assignments (Sedgwick, 2013). This limits the amount of responsibility that students can gain to control their own learning (Balasubramanian, Jaykumar, & Fukey, 2014;

Gan et al., 2015). An easy way to increase student control would be for Edmodo to allow students to create their own polls and to edit/annotate their assignments.

The greatest strength of Edmodo lies in its many interactive features (Balasubramanian, et al., 2014; Gan et al., 2015; Gómez et al., 2015; Sedgwick, 2013). Edmodo enables “. . . sharing ideas beyond the classroom . . . allows readily available access at random times. . .” (Balasubramanian et al., 2014, p. 421). Edmodo offers opportunities to embed third-party apps, assign badges to students, generate polls and quizzes, download a mobile app, and create groups and small groups for classes. These features combined permit teachers and students to interact with Edmodo in multiple ways as well as present opportunities for students to form group identities that will foster a sense of belonging in the classroom (Rogers & Lea, 2005).

Two other excellent features of Edmodo are the intuitive design (Balasubramanian et al., 2014; Gómez et al., 2015) and the detailed support options that Edmodo offers. As a new user, I found it very easy to learn how to navigate the site. Within moments of creating my account, I was able to post quizzes, assignments and discussion topics. In addition, I was happy to see the robust help section, which included topics about site features and how-to training, as well as freely available resources that educators can access, such as Edmodo Spotlight (Edmodo, 2015).

Edmodo is a powerful tool that is easy to use, provides detailed help, and contains many interactive features. Although the site could be improved in the areas of enhanced collaboration, increased student control, and a sample classroom, it is clear why it is so popular among educators. I now understand why it has been likened to an academic version of Facebook (Balasubramanian et al., 2014).

Sincerely,

Melissa Johnson

References

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