

Using Moodle to Enhance Thai Language Learning : Instructor and Learner Perspectives

著者名(英)	Pornsri Wright, Gerald Wright
journal or publication title	神田外語大学紀要
volume	23
page range	375-398
year	2011-03
URL	http://id.nii.ac.jp/1092/00000600/

Using Moodle to Enhance Thai Language Learning: Instructor and Learner Perspectives

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Now that so many people study, work and socialize in a powerfully networked digital universe, the limitations as well as the strengths of traditional classrooms are becoming clear. Research in computer-assisted language learning (CALL) does not call into doubt the efficacy of face-to-face interaction in language acquisition; indeed, the high dropout rates in computer-based elearning (Levy, 2007) may confirm the important role played by fellow human beings in motivating the language learner. On the other hand, online learning extends learning beyond the classroom conveniently and effectively. The free, open-source online content management system (CMS) known as Moodle is one platform for online learning that gives instructors the means to provide learners with exercises, resources, and collaborative media – a space where students can receive and post assignments and work with others in pursuit of their learning goals.

At Kanda University of International Studies, Moodle has been used in the English Department for several years, but few instructors who teach languages other than English have developed online courses or resources. In this project, Moodle was used to support three Thai language courses: a first-year speaking and listening course, a second-year listening course, and a debate class for third and fourth-year students. Resources and tasks were designed to match the skills and language proficiency of the students. At the end of the semester, the students were surveyed in

order to collect their perceptions and opinions about learning through Moodle. This paper describes how the instructor used Moodle in these classes, the reactions of the students to their Moodle course, as well the perspective of the instructor in regard to Moodle's benefits and limitations. It is hoped that other instructors will see that online learning through Moodle can increase the effectiveness of their courses but that careful planning and systematic design are required.

1.0 Background

As a field of study supporting professional organizations, conferences and Ph.D theses, computer assisted language learning (CALL) emerged in the 1980s (Hubbard, 2009) though authoring languages for computer based instruction (CBI) had been developed a decade or more earlier (Gibbons and Fairweather, 1998). While CALL belongs to a long history of educational technologies that includes film strips, radio broadcasts, language labs and video discs, it has been more than a passing fad; continual improvements in computer technology, leading to CD-ROMS, local area networks (LANs) and the world wide web, have provided practitioners with both enticing new possibilities as well as complex challenges (Hubbard, 2009). And while it has been frustratingly difficult to determine whether it is technology or instructional design that enhances learning (Joy and Garcia, 2000), the field of CALL today is robust and well-integrated in the curricula of most language learning programs. As information technology is now at the center of business, industry and government – indeed, just about everything people in advanced societies do – language teachers cannot avoid some degree of engagement with CALL.

Bax (2003) identifies three major “approaches” in CALL methodology: Restricted CALL, Open CALL and Integrated CALL. Unlike an earlier analysis of CALL (i.e. Warschauer and Healey, 1998), Bax does not view these approaches as part of a

historical progression; indeed, different approaches may serve specific needs, and all three approaches may sometimes play a role within a single CALL curriculum. In **Restricted CALL**, programs teach the language system rather than skills, drills and quizzes are the most common tasks, and students interact little with other students. Restricted CALL is rarely integrated in a course syllabus, but usually serves as adjunct vocabulary practice or test preparation. **Open CALL** features a wider set of tasks and contexts. It is more flexible in terms of teacher roles and feedback even though students continue to interact primarily with the computer rather than with other humans. Advances in technology lead to more simulations, games and computer-mediated communication (CMC); however, like Restricted CALL, Open CALL continues primarily to serve as an “optional extra.” In **Integrated CALL**, technology use is “normalized;” it occurs in every classroom and on every desk. Goals feature promoting higher-order thought instead of working on skills or the language system, and instructor feedback would involve “interpreting, evaluating, commenting, (and) stimulating thought.”

Summing up the three approaches, Bax (2003, p. 127) says:

... in general terms we are in an Open phase of CALL, but that each institution and classroom may also exhibit certain Restricted and even Integrated features. In terms of true integration of CALL within language teaching and learning... we are still a long way from achieving it, and it is important therefore to start to reconsider how the profession can move towards that general aim.” (127)

1.1 What is Moodle?

In the early 2000s, Bax (2003, p. 127) looked forward to the day when “CALL finally becomes invisible, serving the needs of learners and integrated into every

teachers' everyday practice," but he believed that more evolution in technology, attitudes, approach and practice amongst teachers and learners would be required for CALL to finally become "normalized." Less than ten years later, online learning through content management systems (CMS) such as Moodle has taken off and spread not only throughout university systems around the world but schools and corporations as well. Has the future that Bax predicted arrived?

Hosted on the internet, Moodle is a relatively open-ended platform that allows educators to develop courses or components of courses that their students can access online. Inside a Moodle course, students can receive tasks, reading or study materials, post responses and assignments, communicate and/or collaborate with other students or the instructor, and access course information such as grades. Materials can be posted in a variety of formats: pdf, powerpoint, audio, video, and interactive Flash. Moodle offers a wide variety of modules or templates that cover a range of computer-aided instruction or communication, including bulletin boards, chat, exercises, forums, glossary, questionnaires and quizzes. Instructors can monitor student progress, quiz scores, and even time spent in activities.

Behind Moodle is a set of principles that are "constructivist" and "constructionist." In a constructivist approach, according to Jonassen, Peck and Wilson (1999), learning is anchored in context, involves activity, accepts multiple perspectives and is based in social interaction. Moodle's support page, Moodle docs, describes "constructionism" as an approach that sees value in learners constructing things (such as ideas) for other learners. To support these principles, a Moodle classroom can be designed to include collaborative learning, through wikis, bulletin boards, synchronous and asynchronous communication. Despite the pedagogical assumptions of Moodle's developers, it is important to note that Moodle is essentially content-free. It provides instructors with an online platform and some tools, but instructors

develop their own content, with the freedom (more or less) to follow any approach they feel benefits their learners most. Indeed, some of the modules available through Moodle, such as multiple-choice quizzes, could well be seen as more “restrictive” (c.f. Bax, 2003), than communicative.

2.0 Moodle in Thai language classes: Analysis

Because Thai language learners in Japan are not likely to hear or speak Thai outside their classrooms, they are denied the rich amount of input available to English language learners (Wright, 2006). Even though Thai content is widely available on the world wide web, much of it is not suitable for beginning or intermediate learners. The author, therefore, first saw Moodle as a way to provide learners with more input in the Thai language. Additionally, Thai learners at KUIS study Thai intensively for only the first two years, after which they fulfill requirements for subject matter courses and electives or, in some cases, study in Thailand as exchange students. This, then, was a primary reason for exploring Moodle: to find out whether online learning could support a more effective and efficient process of teaching Thai.

The project sought to determine whether online learning via Moodle would prove useful to the instructor and students and to find out what attitudes students would have as a result. Because healthy attitudes and motivation are both critical components of learning as well as the products of successful learning experiences (Ushida, 2005), the reactions of the students would play an important role in shaping the project’s future. The project was therefore designed to seek answers to the following questions:

- Would students see online learning as a burden - extra work - or would they appreciate the convenience as well as the additional input and means of

study?

- Would students believe that Moodle helped them to be more successful learners?
- Would students regard online learning as an improvement over a regular class?
- Would online learning increase or decrease motivation to study?
- How would students regard different exercises and modules in Moodle?
- Would Moodle make it easier to teach the classes?
- Would online learning improve learner behaviors?

2.1 Application

An online Moodle class was at first provided in the second-year Thai listening class in 2009. With the term that started in April 2010, Moodle was implemented in three additional Thai language courses: the first-year speaking and listening classes, and a debate class for third and fourth-year students. The objectives for online learning differed for each class, and the tasks and assignments offered through Moodle were designed to match the needs and abilities of the students. During the semester, the actions of the students were closely monitored. At the end, an evaluation was administered to assess student attitudes and reactions toward learning online with Moodle.

2.2 First-year speaking and listening classes

The listening and speaking classes introduce beginners to the Thai language. Each class meets for one 90-minute session per week. The 14 students enrolled had no ability in Thai - aside from one student with Thai parents who could speak some Thai but could not read or write. As these two classes share the same textbook, one

Moodle site, designed to aid students with no prior knowledge of Thai, was used for both. It consisted of three parts: content and exercises that supported the weekly lessons, short videos on Thai culture, and additional support for learning language and culture. The exercises were available to students only for the week of a particular lesson, while the other content was available throughout the course.

2.2.1 Weekly lesson support

Beginning in the third week, nine lessons drawn from the class text were posted to Moodle for students to review on their own time. Since students in the first semester cannot read Thai writing, explanations and instructions were written in English and in “Thai” using roman letters. (The instructor was not able to find a consistent method of typing phonetic transcription in Moodle).

Each lesson included three types of quiz exercises: word matching, ordering words in sentences, and multiple-choice questions. The word matching and sentence exercises were authored with the Hot Potatoes module. Students were allowed unlimited attempts with a five-minute time limit for each attempt. The final score students received for each quiz was an average of all their attempts. (Moodle allows instructors a few reporting choices, such as “average score” and “highest score,” among others). A penalty of 0.5 points for each mistake was given. After submitting their answers, students received their results immediately. Students also had the option of clicking a “give up” button if they preferred to move on to the next question. It should be noted that one student in particular was not satisfied with the scoring system. Because she desired perfect scores on her quizzes, she would retake quizzes multiple times in order to raise the average grade. While “average grade” may benefit “average” students, it proved a drag on motivation for some high-achievers.

2.2.2 Modules and videos on Thai language and culture

To provide additional context and cultural information for Thai language majors in their first year, the Moodle page included modules on aspects of Thai culture. A variety of formats were used, such as interactive Flash, video and Powerpoint. Seventeen videos provided examples of Thai speakers engaging in simple routines, such as greetings, introducing oneself, ordering food and drinks and talking about family. Slightly longer videos allowed students to see the Songkran Festival and a typical Thai market. A Powerpoint presentation supplied more background information about the country and a quiz (in Powerpoint) allowed students to confirm their knowledge.

2.2.3 Additional support

One example of additional support was a “Thai food menu,” authored in Flash, that students could explore by clicking on photos of Thai dishes and then hearing the names spoken aloud. The “Thai food quiz” tested the students’ ability to match Thai dishes in photos and sound. An introduction to Thai numbers helped students memorize the words for and orthography of Thai numerals in an entertaining manner, using a combination of sound, pictures and animation.

2.3 Second-year Thai listening class

Online learning through Moodle was provided for the 2nd-year Thai listening class. The 12 students enrolled had 250 hours of instruction prior to taking this course. The 90-minute class met once a week, and students used a textbook, *A Visit to Singburi* (Wright, 2008), in which aspects of life in a small, rural town in Thailand (school, market, Songkran festival, weddings) provide the content and context for learning Thai grammar and vocabulary. An accompanying multimedia CD-ROM

was designed to enhance the content of the textbook with video, annotated texts, interactive vocabulary exercises and true/false comprehension quizzes. (For more detail on the design of the CD-ROM, please see Wright (2007)). Modules were posted to Moodle for students to use as self-study in conjunction with their listening class. The Moodle page for this class included content taken from both the textbook and the CD-ROM. Multiple choice comprehension questions, word-order exercises (authored in Hot Potatoes) and multiple choice translation exercises were based on the paper and pencil questions in the textbook. Video, text and audio files were taken from the CD-ROM. Hence, whereas the Moodle class page did not offer content that differed significantly from either the textbook or the CD-ROM, it provided students and instructor with such advantages as greater accessibility, immediate feedback, and instructor monitoring. In addition, because students were expected to engage with the Moodle course content (and CD-ROM) as preparation before class, they came to class having already “learned” the content, which allowed the instructor to use class time to explore topics in greater depth. Whereas exercises authored in Moodle for first-year students were written using the Roman alphabet, everything for second-year students was written in Thai. The students, therefore, spent much more time reading in Thai than they would have in a class that utilized the textbook only. Every week students were asked to finish two homework assignments, an exercise with the CD-ROM and one on Moodle. These two assignments had to be submitted before the day of the class. CD-ROM homework was to be saved as a screen capture or mobile phone photo and sent by email.

2.4 Debate class for third and fourth-year students

Ten students used Moodle in a class that met once a week to debate a topic chosen earlier by the students themselves. In this class, Moodle was more integrated with

the class activities than in the second or first year courses. Moodle's collaborative functions were emphasized, and online tasks required more higher-order thought, situating the course more firmly in the category of Bax's (2003) Integrated CALL. Each week, students would join the team in support of or against a particular motion, depending on their interests. Students were given one week to prepare for a debate that was presided over and judged by the instructor. During the week of preparation, students were expected to write paragraphs in support of their position and post them on Moodle. To do this properly, they had to read the posts by other team members so as not to post duplicate positions. In addition, they were required to write against the position of one of the members of the opposite team. In this way, students received far more practice in reading and writing Thai than in any previous iteration of the debate class. Their ability to type in Thai also improved, giving them a not impractical skill for the future job market.

In this course, the debate topics were chosen by the students in advance. This started the flow of ideas and motivated students to speak up in class. By the end of the term, students had debated 11 topics. Thai was the language of communication throughout – in class and on Moodle. Students could link to other websites that supported their ideas and could use pictures or graphs to illustrate their ideas. The instructor would monitor student posts and respond to spelling and grammar mistakes but refrained from commenting on student ideas since they were to be judged in the actual debate in class. By receiving feedback on errors prior to the debate, students could be confident they were speaking correctly in the debates and could focus on being persuasive.

3.0 Evaluation

At the end of the course, a Likert-style survey asked students to react to

statements related to the Moodle course. Attitudes in regard to three aspects of the Moodle platform were assessed, namely: 1) the convenience offered by Moodle; 2) the experience of learning Thai through Moodle; and 3) elements specific to Moodle such as multiple choice exercises or online collaborative tasks. Each item included 5 possible responses, ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree with “No Opinion” at the center. The surveys developed for the first and second-year classes shared many of the same items whereas that for the third-year class focused on a substantially different set of variables. Students were also encouraged to write comments. (Please see the appendices for the results of all student evaluations).

3.1.1 First and second-year student attitudes on the convenience of Moodle

All students agreed or agreed strongly that they were satisfied with the Moodle program. Regarding convenience, 80% or more agreed or agreed strongly that Moodle’s accessibility was an advantage, that Moodle was good for self study, that Moodle allowed more time to study, and that electronic submission of homework was better than paper. 80% of second-year students agreed or agreed strongly that Moodle allowed better or more preparation before class. (The first-year class used Moodle after class lessons, so it is not surprising that only 60% agreed that it helped them to prepare for class). Some comments made by students in relation to the convenience of Moodle include:

- Moodle is very useful. I could use it many times; home, school, anywhere.
- Moodle was easy to do. I could do it whenever I wanted. I could review the class so I remembered what I learned.
- Moodle is good but I don’t have my computer so I can’t use it every time.
- I could do anywhere and anytime. I could read more. Using CD-ROM before Moodle was the best way to learn more effectively. It was very easy

way to do homework and self-study. I love it.

- The best point is that it was so convenient that I could send homework through Moodle.

3.1.2 First and second-year attitudes on learning Thai through Moodle

Regarding attitudes toward learning Thai through Moodle, 80% or more students agreed or agreed strongly that the Moodle exercises were useful, that the number of exercises for each lesson was appropriate, that they could understand more in class due to Moodle, and that Moodle helped them to be more responsible for learning. The second-year students also agreed or agreed strongly that their reading skills improved as a result of using Moodle and that Moodle helped them to comprehend the stories in the textbook. The following are some comments made by first and second-year students in relation to learning on Moodle:

- I could review lesson easily so it was useful for me to study Thai.
- Good way to understand grammar. Because of video, I could exercise my listening
- I could learn many things that I couldn't learn from paper text. So it was very good but sometime I felt that it was a bit too much. However it was very good for us to understand and keep us motivated.
- Moodle was useful for me to learn Thai. I could listen to the real pronunciation from Thailand.
- Exercises were useful to understand the stories. I could study not only reading but also grammar.
- Moodle program helped my study. I thought I did homework more than before. I could see and know real things through Moodle. If we had only text book, I could not see what things really look like.

- I enjoyed studying. Moodle was so fun. I was so glad to see video of each topic. I like CD-ROM. It was good for me. I enjoyed playing game.

3.1.3 First and second-year attitudes on specific Moodle elements

Regarding student attitudes toward elements that are specific to Moodle, 80% of the students agreed or agreed strongly that finding out quiz results immediately was helpful, that it was useful to be able to redo tests as many times as they liked, that word dragging exercises helped them to learn grammar, that the five-minute time limit for quizzes was appropriate, and that being monitored by the teacher encouraged them to study harder. First-year students overwhelmingly approved of the videos as well as the text that accompanied the videos. 80% or more of the second-year students agreed or agreed strongly that using Moodle together with the textbook and CD-ROM was helpful, that the Moodle exercises helped to confirm their comprehension. Some comments in this area include the following:

- Word dragging helped my learning very much. I could understand correct grammar. I liked to do Moodle after class.
- Exercise in Moodle was very good. Young people are glad to do it because they like convenient or handy things. However it was not necessary for us to be given hint because some students depended on hint.
- Thai food menu and Food quizzes were exciting.

3.1.4 First-year attitudes toward multimedia resources

The first-year students were also given an additional survey that asked them to assess the multimedia resources such as Powerpoint presentations, Flash exercises and videos. Every resource was assessed positively, i.e. 90% or 100% of the students agreed or agreed strongly that the particular resource was helpful to their learning.

3.2.1 Debate class attitudes on the convenience of Moodle

Like the first and second-year students, the debate students overwhelmingly felt satisfied using Moodle. Regarding convenience, over 90% agreed or agreed strongly that Moodle allowed them to participate even when absent from class, that Moodle allowed them to understand other students' ideas at their own pace, and that Moodle encouraged more preparation before class. Only 60% agreed or agreed strongly that Moodle was convenient due to its accessibility from home or other places; 40% expressed no opinion regarding this statement. (The latter finding would seem to be contradicted by the frequency with which students posted homework at 1:00 AM on the morning of the class)!

3.2.2 Debate class attitudes on learning Thai through Moodle

Regarding attitudes related to learning Thai through Moodle, over 80% agreed or agreed strongly that both reading and typing in Thai had improved, that Moodle helped them to be more responsible for learning, and that Moodle offered clear benefits for the debate class. 100% of students agreed strongly that they learned through the teacher's corrections of their mistakes, and over 80% also agreed or agreed strongly that they could learn via the teacher's corrections of other students' writing. Many students wrote comments that pertained to how Moodle helped them to improve their Thai language skills:

- At first I was lazy to type in Thai, now I got used to it. If I didn't have time, it would take long time to post my opinion because I had to type. But overall there were more good point. I could look at my friends' idea, I could check my friends and myself mistakes.
- Moodle made me try harder. I had to think a lot about each topic. It was quite busy but fun. I had to think, write, read and against the other team. It

was really useful for several learning skills.

- It took me a long time to type Thai before I took this course. Now I can type faster. I could learn good expressions from my senior. I could have not understood what my senior spoke in class if I didn't see their ideas in advance on Moodle. Moodle also allowed me to look up meaning of words in the dictionary. It helped me very much.
- I could learn how to speak correctly from Moodle.

3.2.3 Debate class attitudes on specific Moodle elements

In contrast to the other classes, the debate class students had to collaborate with other students or at least read their posts. In relation to the collaborative functions of Moodle, over 80% of students agreed or agreed strongly that they liked being able to post photos for others to see and to being able to link to other websites. 80% or more agreed or agreed strongly that Moodle enabled them to understand other students' ideas at their own pace and that it was good to be able to read the opinions of both their teammates and opponents. 80% or more agreed or agreed strongly that the deadlines helped them to keep up with assignments and that they studied harder because the teacher could monitor them. Students were less positive about the posting of debate scripts and audio files in the week after the debate. 60% agreed or agreed strongly that it was useful to have the debate scripts. (30% had no opinion and 10% disagreed strongly). 80% expressed having no opinion in relation to the audio files. (20% agreed strongly that the audio was helpful). Clearly students tend to ignore tasks when they do not detect direct relevance to course goals (i.e. if the information is just "nice-to-know" rather than "need-to-know").

4.0 Moodle from the teacher's perspective

One purpose of this project was to provide other instructors with insights and recommendations based on the experience of designing online language learning through Moodle. From the start it was clear that Moodle offered two particular advantages to both learners and teachers: accessibility and convenience. However, a benefit that emerged over time derived from the information instructors get about how their learners use the system. The ability to monitor students' use of Moodle gave the instructor not only a new tool for improving learner behaviors (e.g. handing assignments in on time) but insight into the language learning behaviors of students.

4.1 On accessibility and convenience

As a relatively new educational technology, Moodle offers advantages but also a few frustrations. It connects students with their course content, fellow students and teacher. Students could access their courses at school, from home – even on the train with the right mobile device. It also allowed learners to work at their own pace. Students too shy to speak up in class could review content or ask questions online. Moreover, a wide variety of text, audio and video resources provided students with more valuable input in the language than had been possible before. On the other hand, relying too much on the system's accessibility can be risky. Computers break down and students do occasionally travel to places where computer access is limited. Posting too many materials on line is problematic if students cannot access them. In addition, users may require plug-ins to access media, and instructors must understand which plug-ins students will need before uploading files in such formats as pdf, Flash, or Quicktime. Finally, students became frustrated when video files downloaded slowly or Flash programs behaved erratically. A lot of time and trial and error was required to determine how to create and post optimal files. Many teachers

could find themselves defeated by technology if they are not careful.

4.2 Advantages for the instructor

The instructor also found important advantages to using Moodle. By putting required materials online, the teacher could keep students on track to achieve the course goals. With more material posted online for study outside of class, more time could be spent in class on other activities. In this way Moodle did contribute to students learning the material faster than students in previous years. Course management was also easier with online storage of papers, tests and materials; much less paper was produced over the course of the semester, helping the instructor to be better organized. Finally, the instructor noted the amount of time saved by Moodle's ability to quickly and accurately score quizzes and calculate grades.

4.3 Understanding learner behaviors through Moodle

Beyond the convenience, Moodle also provides great tools for understanding and managing student behaviors. The teacher can learn not only who completes the assignments, but who starts early, spends more time on task, and retakes quizzes to improve their scores versus those who wait until the last minute or skip the videos. In contrast, this level of detail is rarely clear when students hand in homework on paper. No longer can a student say she forgot her homework at home when in fact she neglected to do it! By monitoring student performance and grades on exercises, the instructor can better understand which students need extra attention. Finally, it was significant to note how many students said they worked harder because of the monitoring by the teacher. Such motivation may be extrinsic, but if it provides the incentive to make time for study, more intrinsic motivation and autonomous learning behaviors may follow.

4.4 CD-ROM CALL and Moodle CALL

The second-year course yielded some insight into the differences between CALL authored on a CD-ROM and that offered online on the Moodle platform. On the CD-ROM, students could experience the content of the program as a unified whole with a consistent design scheme in which each multimedia exercise builds in difficulty from one to the next. Coherent design may aid cognitive processing (Clark and Mayer, 2003). On the CD-ROM, too, the audio, video and Flash media worked flawlessly, whereas on Moodle these media occasionally encountered server glitches and slow download speeds. Moodle, however, was more easily accessible by students as internet connections are now more numerous than CD-ROM drives. It was easier to complete homework through Moodle, requiring a mere click of the submit button versus sending screen shots of their completed quizzes to the teacher via email. Most importantly, the online platform excels by giving the instructor much greater direct contact with the students. Being able to monitor student performance in exercises and on quizzes allowed the instructor to solve problems before they grew out of control. And while certainly a form of extrinsic motivation (Stipek, 1998), monitoring by the instructor may turn out to be one of the major reasons so many students completed the work expected of them.

4.5 On collaboration in Moodle

A great advantage to using Moodle with students in their third and fourth year of study was that it allowed those who missed class to attend job-hunting seminars and interviews to keep up with the class, matching a finding by Johnson (2005). On the other hand, the rich collaboration among students and between students and the instructor required a lot of the instructor's time. 24/7 accessibility frequently meant receiving student posts late in the night before the class. It is therefore necessary to

set ground rules. Another disappointment reflects the difficulty in realizing the full potential of online learning. In the week following a debate, the instructor would gather all the posts for and against the debate topic and type them up into one file. The instructor would also record herself reading the text, so students would be able to review the debate in text and audio. Unfortunately, only a small number of students actually made use of these files following a debate. They may simply have wished to “move on,” or more likely they had plenty to do (such as job-hunting by fourth-year students). It may also be the case that, without the extrinsic motivation of a requirement assigned by the teacher - or without a pressing “need-to-know” the information - students felt they could ignore the material, despite the benefit to their long-term goal of learning Thai.

5.0 Conclusion

Prensky (2001) coined the term “digital natives” to describe the current generation of university students, suggesting that their “native understanding” of the digital world would lead to greater motivation and better outcomes through elearning than in traditional forms of learning. However, because learning requires deliberate and conscious effort, motivation cannot be taken for granted in any classroom or environment. Indeed, Ushida (2005) found that students possessing drive, self-regulation and positive attitudes succeeded in online language courses over those without those characteristics. Furthermore, Keller and Suzuki (2004) have shown that students are more likely to persist in learning when instructional materials are systematically designed to be motivating. While the current project did not investigate motivation per se, several results do suggest that online learning may have had a positive effect on student outcomes, as follows:

- The only student in the first-year class to fail the final exam was the one

who persistently did not utilize the resources posted on Moodle and spent the least amount of time doing the tasks.

- For the first time all students in the second-year listening class passed the class by successfully passing every quiz.
- For the first time in a class with fourth-year students, no student dropped out due to falling too far behind.

Did better accessibility result in students spending more time learning? Did additional multimedia resources provide a critical amount of input in the language? Did the immediate feedback in online tasks lead students to have more drive to excel? Did monitoring by the teacher, deadlines or other forms of external pressure lead to increased persistence and better homework completion rates? At this point we do not know the answers to these questions, but they ought to point the way to further research.

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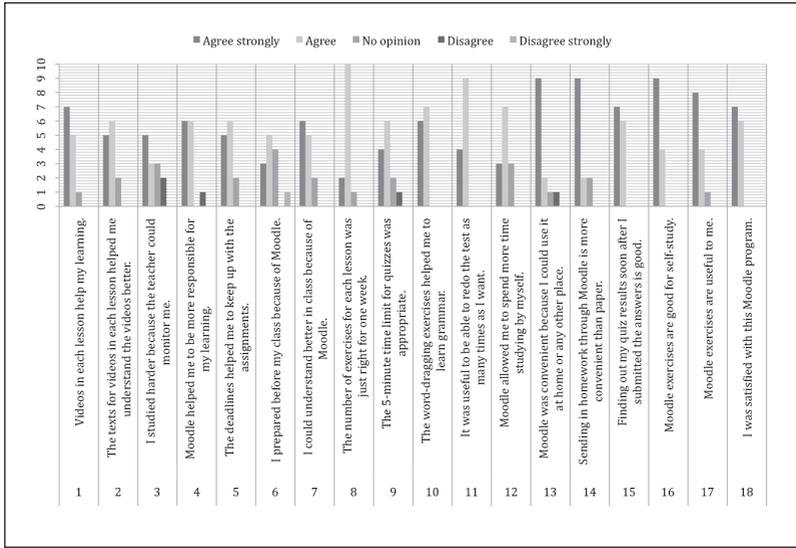
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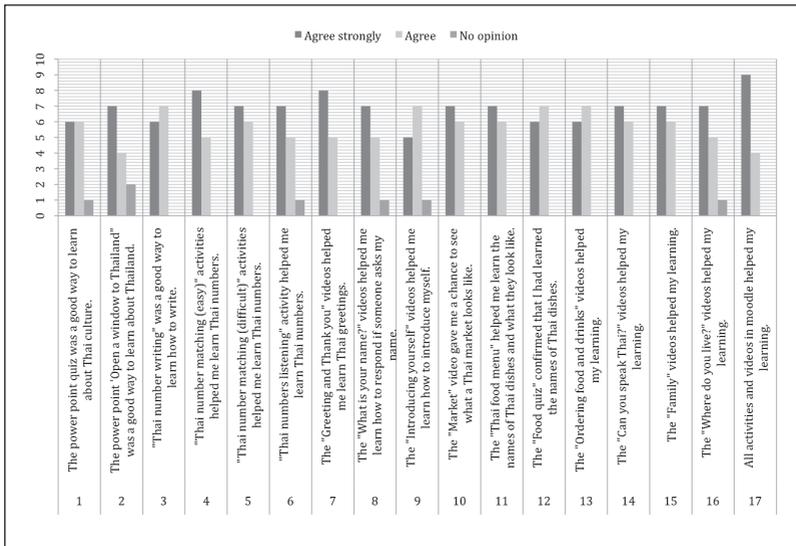
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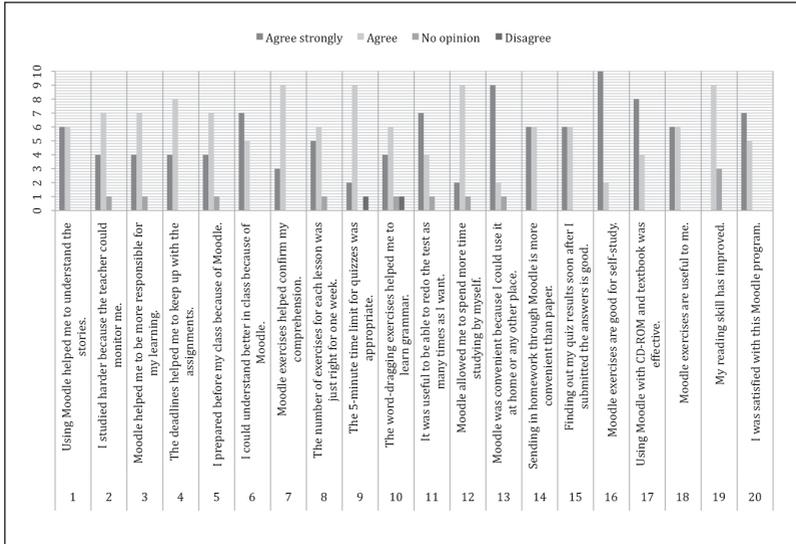
Appendix I



Appendix II



Appendix III



Appendix IV

