

MOODLE FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS: A COURSE DESIGN FOR INDONESIAN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN TANGERANG

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ABSTRACT

The internet advance technology allows an answer to the learning needs. Young people are familiar with electronic devices as their part of daily activities. The writer proposes how the limited time and space of learning condition can be facilitated by accessing the anytime-anywhere interactive class even when presenting on a small smartphone. In a traditional classroom, the teacher is the primary source of information, and students are required to be in the same place at the same time engaging in the same activity. Making use of technology using smartphones as learning device has created an alternative to traditional classroom interface into a limitless time and space. It also changes the role of the teacher from being the primary source of information to facilitator and supervisor, and it allows the teacher to pay equal attention to every student. In addition to that, technology gives the students a new opportunity to access instructional materials at different times from different locations. Therefore, it is necessary to as the essential question: What can the applications of the designed material, as the designated teaching medium for Budi Luhur Junior High school students who were preparing for their involvement in International Youth Study Forum Program.

Key words: Moodle, online learning, technology, learning English

ABSTRAK

Teknologi maju memungkinkan jawaban untuk kebutuhan pembelajaran. Para remaja atau orang muda terbiasa dengan perangkat elektronik sebagai bagian dari kegiatan sehari-hari mereka. Penulis mengusulkan bagaimana keterbatasan waktu dan ruang belajar dapat difasilitasi dengan mengakses kelas interaktif kapan saja dan di mana saja bahkan ketika mempresentasikan pada smartphone kecil. Dalam kelas tradisional, guru adalah sumber utama informasi, dan siswa diharuskan berada di tempat yang sama pada saat yang sama terlibat dalam kegiatan yang sama. Namun, memanfaatkan teknologi menggunakan ponsel pintar sebagai perangkat pembelajaran telah menciptakan alternatif untuk antarmuka kelas tradisional menjadi ruang dan waktu tanpa batas. Ini juga mengubah peran guru dari menjadi sumber utama informasi menjadi fasilitator dan penyelia, dan memungkinkan guru untuk memberikan perhatian yang sama kepada setiap siswa. Selain itu, teknologi memberi siswa kesempatan baru untuk mengakses bahan ajar pada waktu yang berbeda dari lokasi yang berbeda. Oleh karena itu, perlu sebagai pertanyaan penting: Aplikasi dari bahan ajar yang dirancang, sebagai media pengajaran yang ditunjuk untuk siswa sekolah menengah pertama di Sekolah Budi Luhur yang

sedang mempersiapkan keterlibatan mereka dalam Program International Youth Study Forum dalam program Moodle.

Kata kunci: Moodle, belajar daring, teknologi, bahasa Inggris

INTRODUCTION

The need for English learning is highly demanded in order to equip students to identify, absorb information and getting involved in the global environment which will also build the nation in return (Kebudayaan, 2014:3). As a result, many national plus schools engage their students in summer camp activities, international youth forums, and similar activities to improve the students' confidence when speaking English. These forums promote interactions with students from various countries whereby English becomes the necessary means of communication. In the process, students are exposed to a variety of intercultural experiences.

One that can be presented here is IYSF (International Youth Study Forum). IYSF is a forum for students from different regions in Indonesia and from abroad to interact, exchange ideas, and learn together in a fun atmosphere. Mentors accompany students and learn from selected speakers who open their horizons for self-development. They are introduced to the everyday challenges of today and the future. Concerning the international scale of the event, this activity requires English language speaker. Regarding the students' readiness (considering students capability in English speaking), they need to be prepared for language proficiency. From this, the students will improve their English skill to communicate mainly with the students from other countries. The preparation said above is an additional English training out of the formal school hour with a specific target on conversation skills.

This training is held with some difficulties. A limited study time (only several months before the event) as students' curriculum schedule and loads are considered. Also, the importance of interaction between teacher and students needs to be maintained. Based on this space-time and presence issues the writer needs a method which can accommodate the said needs to implement the learning which still holds a teacher-students interface.

The internet advance technology allows an answer to the needs above. They are familiar with electronic devices, e.g. smartphone, tablet, iPad and computers as their part of daily activities. At this moment the writer proposes how the limited time and space of learning condition can be facilitated by accessing the anytime-anywhere interactive class even when presenting on a small smartphone. In a traditional classroom, the teacher is the primary source of information, and students are required to be in the same place at the same time engaging in the same activity. Making use of technology using smartphones as learning device has created an alternative to traditional classroom interface into a limitless time and space. It also changes the role of the teacher from being the primary source of information to facilitator and supervisor, and it allows the teacher to pay equal attention to every student. In addition to that, technology gives the students a new opportunity to access instructional materials at different times from different locations.

Therefore, it is necessary to as the essential question: What can the applications of the designed material be

installed on a smartphone, as the designated teaching medium for the students who were preparing for their involvement in the IYSF Program? Beforehand, there are components needed to be identified in order to answer the question: needs analysis and material selection and production (Dudely-Evans and St. John, 1998). These are not sufficient enough to capture the whole picture of an ideal program, yet due to limited time and space, this article's most concerns are on the two components above. The writer tries to provide an overview of how mobile smartphones can support the teaching and learning of English for eight graders of Budi Luhur Junior High School, Tangerang who participated in IYSF (IY'ers).

Vygotsky's Activity Theory is a foundation of constructivism, and it asserts the role that action plays in learning. Vygotsky (1978) presented the fundamental argument that speakers are active agents in controlling their environment; consequently, tasks cannot be predetermined, but emerge from the interaction of speakers, settings, motives, and histories (Lantolf & Appel, 1994). It is essential to look at the differences in language learning using the ideas and perspective of activity theory. First, teachers evaluate students' current comprehension of specific ideas, areas, and concepts before deciding what need to be taught. Secondly, teachers apply contextual examples in order to facilitate proper understanding of concepts. Vygotsky also emphasized the need for continual assessment and assistance students as they improve and grow to the higher level.

Activity Theory, when applied to designing application for learning English, requires a thorough definition and analysis of an activity in order to highlight potential areas of improvement

(Lantolf & Appel, 1994). Also, part of the theory is to provide a robust framework for creating and delivering innovations that will boost the performance of foreign language learners. By using Activity Theory, teachers can provide students with an opportunity to use upon their abilities and demonstrate their potentials. Teachers should develop independence as well as implementing cooperative learning and reciprocal teaching strategies to provide a successful teaching environment. However, there are specific challenges a teacher faces in establishing learners' social identities within the learning environment and the nature of what is defined as the learners' cognitive activity in a historical context. Teachers need to explore the relationship between tools and signs, or practical activity and talk because such ideas support the capacity of the learners to change both their circumstances and themselves specifically to meet their educational needs and expectations.

Moodle, an acronym for the Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment, is a major popular open source software packages used by many schools, colleges, and university, worldwide. It allows the user to design and create and moderate online courses (Williams, 2005). Martin Dougiamas developed it as part of his Ph.D. in Education thesis (Dougiamas, 2007). Being an open source software, Moodle is free to download, use, modify, and distribute and sell (under GNU, General Public License), all with no license fee.

This study has chosen the Moodle software an area of research and analysis because Moodle is better than other e-learning systems for the following important reasons (Brandl, 2005; Dougiamas, 2007; Massy, 2004; Nozawa, 2011; Sclater, 2008): 1)

Moodle is an OSS that users are free to download, use, modify and distribute under the terms of GNU, 2) Moodle runs without modification on Unix, Linux, Windows, and any other system that supports PHP, and 3) It allows teachers to provide and share documents, graded assignments, quizzes, etc. with their students in an easy way to create online courses. Also, it supports 75 languages and is being used in 175 countries.

METHOD

Thirty students from a national plus Junior High School namely Budi Luhur in Tangerang, they were in their eighth year. The needs analysis was conducted to prepare the English syllabus for those students who will join to an International Forum, namely Intercultural Youth Study Forum (IYSF), they called as IY'ers.

The instrument used was a questionnaire. It was deployed to reveal the subject's perception on several issues, including the activities and media which are useful to enhance their English language skill. The questionnaire consisted of four different parts. The first part is the learners' profile. It aimed at gathering the learners' personal information. The second part is the present situation analysis; aimed to investigate the learners' level of language development at the beginning of the course. The third part is the target situation analysis; it focuses on the learners' need after a language course ended. The final part is the learning situation analysis; it was to find out the best environment for the learners to learn English.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Present Situation Analysis

The IY'ers' English skills range from poor to fluent. Listening competence varies from poor to very

good. 17% of them are poor in listening, 10% are weak, 46% are good, and 27% are very good. Since only 27% of the respondents answered poor and weak, the rest answered good and very good it can be assumed that most of them are confident with their listening competence. For the reading skills, most of the IY'ers are confident that they can read English texts, although 30 % of them are still poor and weak in reading.

In addition to that, 43% of the IY'ers are poor in speaking, and 43% are poor in writing English, 27% are weak, 17% are good, 10% is very good, and 3 % are fluent in speaking and writing. From the figures, it can be concluded that most of the IY'ers need more practice in speaking and writing. Meanwhile, only 36 % of the IY'ers are confident in their pronunciation while 64% of them still think that they need to be helped a lot in pronouncing English words. The pronunciation taught in the online training program will focus on how to articulate certain words that are usually mispronounced by most Indonesian. Phonology or stressing on a certain syllable is also to be considered in the syllabus.

Almost half of the IY'ers recognized their English grammar knowledge is still weak and poor. Mastering grammar in order to be able to use the language orally is vital. Thus, grammar should be taught inclusively in the lesson activities of the online English training program. There are 6% of the IY'ers are not confident with their vocabulary. Only 30% of the IY'ers think that their vocabulary is enough to engage in English communication. Vocabulary is one of important components of language that helps learners listen, speak, read or write more effectively. Therefore, the use of more words is expected in the lessons in order

to help the IY'ers to gain more vocabulary.

Target Situation Analysis

Gathered data from the questionnaires show that social, practical, and future reason are the basic why the students need additional English learning. Their motivation to know the others and make friends with them are the most noteworthy while the possibility of future study and knowing the language-way of thinking relation are secondary. Considering the finding that social reasons are the most significant reason why the students need the additional English learning, we will have this ground in order to build the appropriate syllabus that accommodates these needs. The skills and the simulation environments, even also the form of exercises and tasks can be pointed towards these needs.

Learning Situation Analysis

The question involves the notion of cross-cultural communication related to the importance of cross-cultural knowledge in the English course. Most of the respondents (18 respondents or 60%) state that it is “essential” to teach cross-cultural

communication, 10 (33%) mention that it is “important,” and only 2 (6.7%) state that it is “necessary.” Since so many respondents see cross-cultural knowledge as an important subject, the writer decided to put it as one of the components in the syllabus.

Applying the Lesson Plan in the Moodle Platform

Due to limited space, the discussion in this paper will cover Session 1 on basic introduction in English. The session covers several components: Objectives of the task, Comprehensible Input, Practice, Assessment and Evaluation, Application and Extension.

Below is the application of the lesson plan in the Moodle platform as it is seen on the computer screen:.

Session 1: Greetings and Introduce Personal Information

1. Objectives

- a. Students will be able to give, ask and respond to interpersonal expressions such as greeting and self-introduction orally.
- b. Students will be able to give expression of self-introduction in written form.



Figure 1.
Objectives of Session 1 (source: <http://iysf-indonesia.com/>)

2. Comprehensible Input

a. Download the following videos of Greeting and Introducing Yourself in English

1) Title of the video: How to introduce myself
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oWP9Riq-ZBg> (R. English, 2013).

2) Title of the video: Learn English - Introduce Yourself in English - Innovative English

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZOgdnKJ5Sc> (Learn English with EnglishClass101.com, 2014)

b. Discuss the posted videos based on the questions:

- 1) What do you think about the videos?
- 2) What do you already know about greetings and introducing personal information?

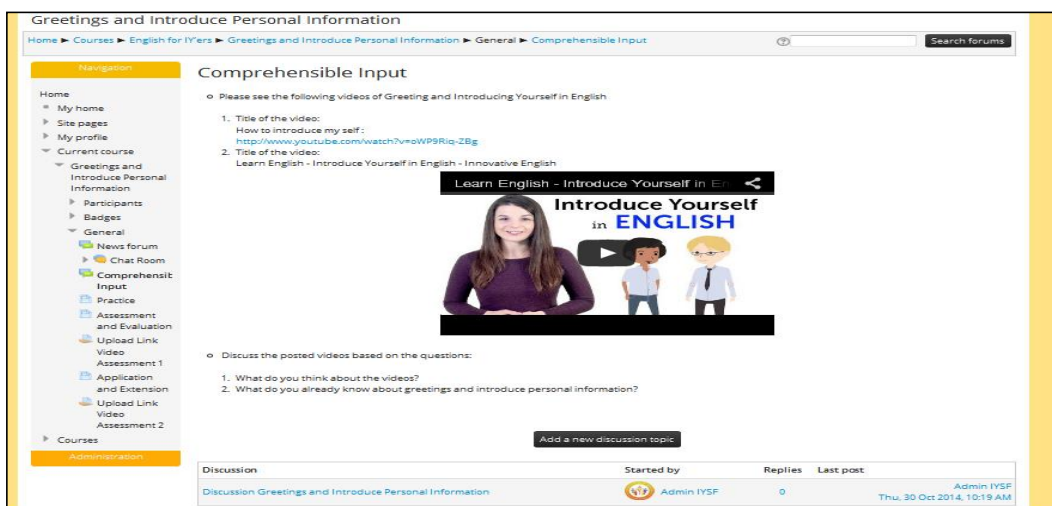


Figure 2.

Comprehensible Input of Session 1

(source: <http://iysf-indonesia.com/mod/forum/view.php?id=3>)

3. Practice

a. Watch the following videos of learning and practice to introduce yourself in English

1) Title of the video: Introducing Yourself - How to Introduce Yourself in English
<http://www.youtube.com/wat>

[ch?v=h-VKSSd9hko](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h-VKSSd9hko) (T. English, 2013).

- 2) Follow the instructions in the video to introducing yourself.
- 3) Repeat this activity until you master the sentences and the patterns.
- 4) Play the game to assess your understanding of introducing yourself in English.

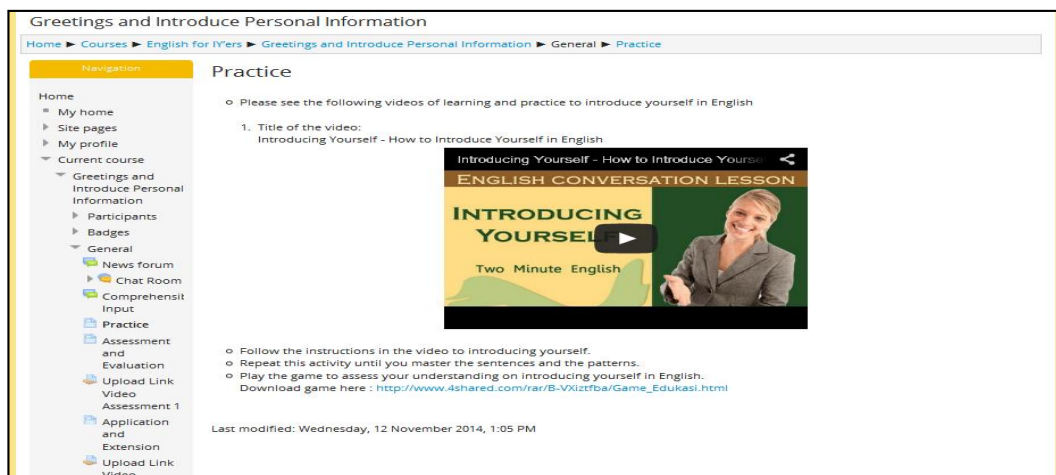


Figure 3
The practice of Session 1,
 (source: <http://iysf-indonesia.com/mod/page/view.php?id=4>)

4. **Assessment and Evaluation**
 - a. Download the list of questions on Introduce Yourself.
 - b. Compose your personal introduction based on the questions given in the podcast and send it as your assignment in the link given.
 - c. Note the deadline of the submission given. You will not be able to upload your work after the deadline for submission.
 - d. I will examine the composition that you have sent. If the composition is appropriate, I will post it on the message board under “Introduce Yourself.”

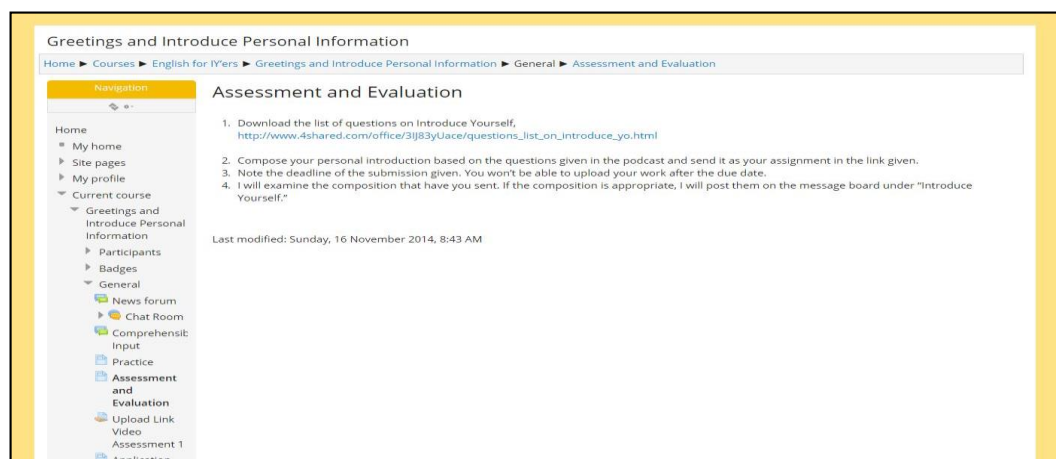


Figure 4
Assessments and Evaluation of Session 1,
 (source: <http://iysf-indonesia.com/mod/page/view.php?id=5>)

5. **Application and Extension**
 - a. Show an example of a video where a person is introducing his / her self
 - b. Download the following videos:
 - 1) Introduce my self on [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=etIpPH5CEdA\(1992823,2010\)](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=etIpPH5CEdA(1992823,2010)).

- 2) *Perkenalan Diri dalam Bahasa Inggris* on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zijLoYZfTbQ> (Widartha, 2014).
- c. Practice your personal introduction in your composition orally.
- d. Make a video of yourself while you introduce yourself based on your personal introduction in the composition.
- e. Upload the video into the link given. You will not be able to upload your work after the deadline for submission.

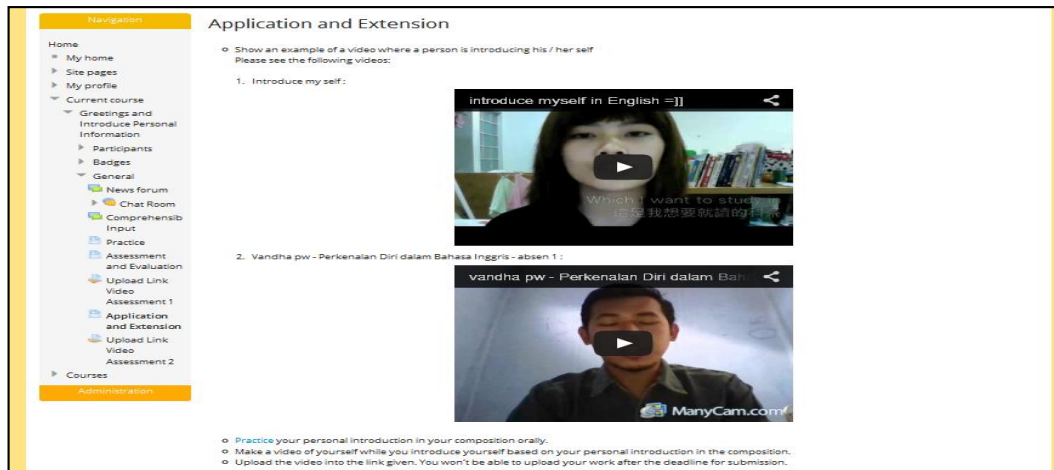


Figure 5
Applications and Extension of Session 1,
 (source: <http://iysf-indonesia.com/mod/page/view.php?id=7>)

Learning materials are provided in the learning management system, in this study the writer uses Moodle that can be accessed by IY'ers at any time and anywhere by their smart mobile phone. The IY'ers will learn English from the e-learning web constructed by the writer; the site is <http://iysf-indonesia.com/>. From the web, IY'ers can access materials, text passages, exercises, audios, videos, photos, and pictures via their desktops or laptops. Learners can also download and upload different materials from the site using their three-generation (3G) smartphones.

CONCLUSION

Although IYSF is a program for the improvement of English language skills and provides new experiences interacting with native speakers, the participants still need to have basic proficiency in English before they start.

Therefore the participants need some preparations to join in the forum such as additional English training, out of the formal school hours, with a specific target on conversational skills. The goal of the training is to improve their English skill, to help them improve their interaction with native speakers and at the same time able to follow and enjoy the program. The syllabus in this study was designed based on the real situation of the participants and the findings that have been acquired through questionnaires completed by the IY'ers.

From the questionnaire, it was found that most of IY'ers realized that they did not have much time to attend the additional English training due to their school activities. Demand therefore when answering the choice of whether they would prefer to have a real classroom or online learning, the data shows that the IY'ers tend to prefer for

the online learning environment. More than half of the class preferred online media learning while only 20 % of them preferred a traditional classroom environment.

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