

Learning English through an LMS, face-to-face lectures and the resulting blend

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Abstract

As the 21st century wears on and we find ourselves fully immersed in the digital age, new and amazing activities come about which are forever keeping us lecturers engaged in trying state-of-the-art technology to improve the learning-teaching activity. We have been using Moodle in our lectures for over 8 years now and although there have been some ups and down along the line, on the whole, the experience shows an upward trend of satisfaction that correspond to the same trend which affects the efficiency and improvements in technology and communications worldwide.

Implementing "blended learning" to teach English Language using Moodle, has been the core of our research in the last few years and we have solved it by leaving the more cumbersome and creative tasks (writing and speaking) activities for the "face-to-face" lectures and the more "mechanical" activities have been inserted in an LMS (in our case Moodle) with outstanding results. Slower and more backward students take their time and catch up quickly thanks to the LMS and the activities we give them. Thus, in a relatively short time, they level up with the brighter students and manage to acquire a deeper understanding of the subject and, in many cases, excel thanks, first, to their work and dedication and, secondly, to the opportunity we give them to work at their own pace in our LMS, and lastly to the motivation they receive from using a system which inculcates the students with a sense of "group" responsibility. Since there is a lot of cooperativeness in the classroom, whatever students do or do not do affects the rest of the members in their group.

Our main concern henceforth has been to adjust each and every subject we teach using an LMS, to the new realization: the work students do in the LMS and the face-to-face lectures. The success or failure depends entirely on the blend we make of these two elements and the activities and resources we provide both in the lecture room and in the LMS.

This article reveals the secrets of this "language blend", which for us was an exceptional starting point to course building strategies for language learners.