AFFECTING HIGHER STUDENTS LEARNING ACTIVITY BY USING WHATSAPP

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ABSTRACT

This Study aimed at investigating effects of students' usage of Whats Up İnstant Messaging for learning and improve students' achievement (exam performance). WhatsApp is a smartphone application that operates on nearly all current types of devices and operating systems used by all of higher students and improve their achievement, performance and the amount of information learned and the motivation of preparation with the big or smaller groups. Being in a relatively synchronous group work and having various and instant knowledge make the students motivated and eager to learn and be in the media which suitable and easy to learn. Preparing for the exam by traditional way and instant messaging may differ the achievement scores of their exam. This research provides literature review and experiment and analysis of the data and the findings that lead the new experiments and the implementations. A number of influences can be seen from the findings of this study on the practise of technology into the course programs. Using WhatsApp (technology), pedagogy and course content program, this study offers external activity around student-centered learning for the exam preparation in order to raise their achievement with a small digital tool in their hand. The sample of the study was composed by 92 higher students (teacher candidates) attending Biruni University, Faculty of Education, in the ''Introduction to Educational Sciences Course'',in İstanbul, Turkey. Data is collected from 92 students but 32 of the students didnt want to do anything using WahtsApp for the Course. They were supposed into Control Group. Other 60 students admitted to be in the study, and they called as the Experiment Groups. The research was continued from April to May 2015, time which is between the Fall Exam and Final Exam. Students who participated in the study are listed according to their Fall Exam points. The same points from the list put into the groups in order to provide equality. The control group and experiment groups has the same number of students (30-30). While 30 students were studying their lesson in traditional ways as usual; other 60s were studying their lesson by using WhatsApp; messaging text, asking questions and getting answers, sharing materials like pictures, graphs, tables and of course discussing on the course content via the medium.

Keywords: WhatsApp, using WhatsApp in education, new technology in higher education, technology use in higher education, WhatsApp in teacher education.

INTRODUCTION

Digital media such as social media and newer instant messaging applications are rapidly changing the communications landscape, their emergence has impacted significant how students learn and the way instructors teach (Griesemer, 2014). Digital communication between groups of students and between students and teachers has become popular during the last decade through various channels: Email, SMS, Facebook groups, Twitter, and recently WhatsApp, etc. Each one of these tools has different characteristics that influence its suitability for learning purposes (Calvo, Arbiol & Iglesias, 2014). WhatsApp is a Smartphone application that operates on nearly all current types of devices and operating systems. The

application has been on the market since 2010; the declared purpose of the developers was to replace the existing SMS platform for a system that is free of charge in an ad-free environment.

As a means of sending and receiving messages to and from individuals or groups, WhatsApp includes a variety of functions, such as text messages, attached images, audio files, video files, and links to web addresses(Elsje Scott: Publisher@InformingScience.org to request redistribution permission).

Technically, WhatsApp can be viewed as a social network that allows people to access a great deal of information rapidly. The simple operation scheme makes the program accessible to a variety of people of different ages and backgrounds. WhatsApp enables communication with anyone who possesses a Smartphone, has an active internet connection, and has installed the application. The overall cost of the application is very low, up to one dollar per year.

One the of the application's unique features is the option to create a group and to communicate within its boundaries. The creator of the group becomes its manager, a position that includes the privilege of adding and removing participants without the need for approval from the group members. Aside from this, all of the participants in the group enjoy equal rights. The application enables the participants to receive an alert for each message sent or, alternatively, to mute the incoming alerts for the duration of 8 hours, a day, or a whole week. Connectivism is the theory that acknowledges that learning is no longer an individual activity, but rather a process that allows for students to flourish in the digital era (Siemens, 2005).

Educational mobile tools have emerged and show great potential to help students construct and share information and knowledge for learning through computers or mobile devices (Pence, 2007). Educational systems around the world are under increasing pressure to use the new information and communication technologies (ICTs) to teach students the knowledge and skills they need in the 21st century. The influence of these media on learning and teaching environments is growing more each year. Message Applications can reinforce class material and positively influence discussions, collaborative work, and authoring. Educators are experimenting with these technologies hoping to stimulate critical thinking skills, collaboration, and knowledge construction.

The 1998 UNESCO World Education Report, Teachers and Teaching in a Changing World, describes the radical implications ICTs have for conventional Teaching and learning. It predicts the transformation of the teaching-learning process and the way teachers and learners gain access to knowledge and information. With the emerging new technologies, the teaching profession is evolving from an emphasis on teacher-centred, lecture-based instruction to student-centred, interactive learning environments. Designing and implementing successful ICT-enabled teacher education programmes is the key to fundamental, wide-ranging educational reforms.

Education nowadays try to develop new critical skills for the students not only to learn content. Technology offers teachers the ability to transform the quality of instruction—to achieve a more student-centered learning environment, have more differentiated instruction, and develop problem- or project-based learning, and demand higher order thinking skills. Technology integration is affecting higher classroom. Teaching in all settings should encompass student-centred approaches to learning. Technology should not be used only as a

tool for demonstration, as an electronic overhead projector or blackboard; rather the use of technology by students should be an integral part of instruction. In student-centred approaches to learning, students become the source for problems investigated. Students and teacher candidates must have opportunities to identify problems, collect and analyze the data, draw conclusions, and convey results using electronic tools to accomplish these tasks.

Faculty should model the use of new technology and digital media to demonstrate their usefulness and appropriateness for collaboration, acquisition of resources, analysis and synthesis, presentation, and publication. Especially this has the much importance in teacher education because the student would be teachers and manage the instruction in the near future. Incorporating-engaging- WhatsApp into the teacher education courses can allow a diverse group of interested individuals to engage in creating and developing content and to gather online to share knowledge, information, materials and opinions (Minshew & Anderson, 2015). Teacher education institutions may either assume a leadership role in the transformation of education or be left behind in the swirl of rapid technological change. For education to reap the full benefits of ICTs in learning, it is essential that pre- and in-service teachers are able to effectively use these new tools for learning.

WhatsApp, as a relatively new tool in education, has similar positive characteristics as previous technological tools that are implemented, but it seems that WhatsApp has some up to date features that encourage teacher and students to use it in order to enhance understanding (Bouhnik and Deshen, 2014:22). This research is conducted among high school students (teacher candidates), while most of the studies mentioned above were conducted among the other students profile (college, university different aged).

METHODOLOGY

In this research, there is a simple question for understanding the effect of WhatsApp activities of the students'achievement, and the way that they were affected both educational and academic sides. Since there was an engaging medium(smartphone) in their hands. Students can learn easily with this tool and prepare themselves for the exam by the soul of being in a group.

To make the students motivated its asked the students if they want to prepare themselves for the exam via WhatsApp communications with their friends. Most of them were eager, some of them were want to, and some of them didnt want to study with WhatsApp. The sample of the study was composed by 92 teacher candidates attending "Introduction to Educational Sciences Course'' at the first class of Faculty of Education, RPD Department, Biruni University, İstanbul. Data was collected from these students. They were asked if they enter a group that they will study in, by using Whats App. Some (32) of the students didn't want to enter in a group, called Control Group(GC) ,other 60 were accepted. They were told about they would construct groups and study for the Final Exam via WhatsApp messages. Group Creators organised three groups. One group called E1 has 30 students, and other group; E2 has 30(10 +10+10) students who would supposed in the same group for their 't' test. The study continued from the beginning of April to the beginning of May up to final exam in 2015.

GC hasn't done any different activity they had before but E1 and E2 groups studied in their groups via Whats App; sending messages, sharing materials, pictures, graphs and asking

questions and having discussions. E2 group has three parts inside in order to see the effect of the difference of the group size.

Fall Exam Points were listed and E1 Group was constructed with the students who got similar points with the students in GC, in order to provide equality.E2 has the rest 30 students; in fact they studied in three smaller groups.

After five weeks they had the Final Exam and points. Three groups listed and compared with their Fall Exam Points and Final Exam Points. In the study; Pretest and Posttest Control Group Model was used. Groups were compared inside between their own pretests and posttests; T Test was used for these comparisons. Groups also compared between each other; F Test was used for this comparison of their pretests and posttests Data were analysed with SPSS, T Test (paired sample) and F Test techniques. TTest was used for those comparisons.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

At the end of the study, it was founded that WhatsApp use has a positive effect on the final achievement, and smaller groups is more benefitting while studying. Sample of Participants; 92 high school students (teacher candidates) had been in the study. The students listed in three groups according to their Fall Exam points. They studied by their special way up to Final Exam. After getting their final exam points, comparisons were made inside the groups and between the groups. After looking for the relation between the groups for equality, those results below were handed:

I-Pretest comparisons between the groups: At the first stage, the groups were analyzed all together and their points were compared. $F=20,207$ and $p<0,0001$.It means that there was meaningful difference between the groups.

GC and GE1 seems equal according to $p<0,0001$.There wasn't meaningful difference between the groups, but there was meaningful difference between GC and GE2 according to the pretest points. This was need explanation of the limitations of the study.

II-Comparisons between the pretests and posttests inside the groups:
a-Pretest Comparisons; GCpretest and posttest difference; $t=2,048$ and $p=0,0448$,means that GC was more successful in the Final Exam than Fall Exam. Its just a near meaningful value, and may be considered not a meaningful value.
GE1;$t=20,207$ and $p>0,0001$;there wasn't meaningful difference between these groups according to the Fall Exam Points.

For GE1; pretest and posttest comparisons; $t=13,164$ and $p<0,0001$.It means that GE1 had meaningful difference between two tests. GE1 was more successful in the Final Exam. WhatsApp contribute the success of the group.

For GE2;pretest and posttest comparison has $t=16,774$ and $p<0,0001$values.It means that GE2was more successful in the Final Exam, too. At this point starting values of GC and GE2 needs and explanation for the starting equality. Its a limitation of the study but it can be explained by high different values between the groups at the end.

b-Posttest Comparisons; this time three groups were analyzed alltogether again according to their posttests. $F=186,45$, and $p=0,0001$ values had got on. This means that there were meaningful difference between the groups, because $p<0,0001$.

CONCLUSION

WhatsApp use for learning in higher education, especially in teacher education (because they will be the future educators to have the learning and communication skills) needs to be understood of better learning with technology. WhatsApp use is a handy behaviour or skill that they could use for benefical results of themselves with a simple organising and motivation they got it easily. Every small goal on learning enhances their capacity and the students would use technology or other tools as a part of their achievement of the goals. Still there are many to show teacher candidates to use for learning and life skill goals in the very hand and they can practise how to achieve and manipulate by the help of technology. As a simple conclusion of the study is; WhatsApp use for improvement of achievement of the course goals had a significant support of the teacher candidates.

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