Over a two year period of using a Moodle based self-access resource, uptake was measured against student numbers in schools. Peaks in student uptake corresponded with teacher training initiatives. This paper outlines these initiatives and the way student motivation for using self-access ICT resources has a direct relationship with teacher training. It also details the types of training and incentives offered to both teachers and students to improve uptake of self-access resources and maintain the motivation to continue doing so.
Online Self-Access Centres (OSAC)

- Many institutions are offering additional resources to learners in the form of eLearning content hosted on virtual learning environments, offering enhanced opportunities for collaboration and access to a rich variety of multimedia materials.

- However, these resources are often underused and neglected by both students and teaching.

- Teachers and students need a great deal of support and training.

- Ideally, teachers should be in a position to support learners and encourage them to make the most out of these materials.
Autonomy & Motivation

• Some of the initial scepticism around autonomy arose over the perception of it being used to justify having less contact time between student and teacher, (McDevitt 1997)
  http://pdfserv.informaworld.com/186813_713582246_781151121.pdf
• Dörnyei (2001) lists autonomy as one of the most important contributors to general motivation
• Little & Dam (1998) state that students draw on their intrinsic motivation in order to work autonomously, and that it is precisely because of this motivation that they are effective learners.
• Thus OSAC uptake was conceptualised as an indicator of motivation.
Teacher motivation and student motivation

• The relationship between students and faculty is an interactive one which can be either positively and negatively synergistic. – Deci et al 1997: 68
Background to the OSAC

- The program of self-access with teacher-guidance was implemented as part of a global initiative by Kaplan International Colleges to provide better support and autonomy to students who were studying in private sector language schools located in target language (English) speaking countries.
- Using Moodle 1.9, reporting functionality for site-wide groups was not supported during the course of this study, meaning that all the data collected came from the entire student body of the 20 participating schools. As a result, uptake can only be viewed holistically.
Data was collected from private English Language schools in the UK, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand.

Over 20,000 students were registered as users on the site.

Teacher training sessions were held with teachers responsible for administering the OSAC and more general sessions were also conducted with all of the teaching staff.
Research Questions

• To what extent are students using the OSAC?
• To what extent can we equate OSAC uptake as an indicator of motivation?
• To what extent is teacher training linked to student OSAC uptake?

Much of the data collected was incidental.
Data Collection

- Using Moodle’s inbuilt reporting functions
- Student numbers taken from student management system (SQL database)
- Results plotted into spreadsheet and function to calculate uptake % run

\[
\text{Uptake \%} = \frac{UL}{N} \times 100
\]

UL = Unique Logins. N = number of participants
Results

Results over the two year period (May 2008 – May 2010) are shown in table 1.
Statistical Significance

• The longitudinal nature of the data, combined with the huge sample (over 20,000 students) and the nature of rolling enrolment makes statistical tests extremely difficult.

• This highlights the need for more rigorous and focused studies.
Comparing 2 twelve week periods

Multiple Training

Uptake % of student body

- Pre-training uptake
- Post-training uptake

Week 1  Week 2  Week 3  Week 4  Week 5  Week 6  Week 7  Week 8  Week 9  Week 10  Week 11  Week 12
Discussion

• Limitations
  – Length of course
  – Focus on single institutions
  – Qualitative data for students and teachers
  – Control group

• Future studies could easily replicate the study to test the hypothesis that teacher training leads to increased OSAC uptake and autonomy.
• Different training initiatives could be tested against one another to determine the most successful method.
Thank you

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References


