Moodle Group Mode and Student Communication
Interaction, Participation, and Instructor Workload in Forums

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1. INTRODUCTION

The paper investigates the impact the use of group mode in Moodle discussion forums can have on student participation and interaction and instructor workload.

a. Background

This is the third work in a series which examines what effects the introduction and expanded use of Moodle may have on one particular course that the author, DRB, conducts.

Moodle activities were first integrated into the course during the 2009 academic year as a first-time foray into the world of blended learning. The following year, DRB introduced Moodle forums into the Fall 2010 offering of the course as an attempt to encourage out-of-class participation and interaction among the students and between the students and the instructor. The course, called *Eibei Jijou*, "Current Affairs in the English-speaking World", is offered in the Fall semester to sophomores in the Faculty of Education at Ehime University.

In the course, the students are to compare and contrast various aspects of Japanese- and English-speaking cultures. It is not a language class, but traditionally (and predating DRB as the instructor) it has been taught by a native speaker of English, and materials and some of the discussion have been in English.

This paper concentrates on differences between the 2010 and 2011 offerings of the class which may have resulted from the introduction of group modes in Moodle forums into the latter. Other than in the use of the forums, many factors remained the same—including, serendipitously, the number of students—but there were some other changes that might factor in and, therefore, should be noted here.

A major change was the textbook. The 2010 class, Eibei10, used Nishida and Gudykunst's (1982) *American Communication Patterns*, a very serviceable text for this kind of course, but which was unfortunately quite dated, a fact noted by students in their comments on the course. A more recent text, Paul Stapleton's *Exploring Hidden Culture* (2001), was therefore chosen for the Eibei11 class.

In both classes, a similar portion of the course, about 10 weeks of the 15-week semester, dealt with the textbook. In Eibei10, 18 (nine couplets) were covered during 10 class meetings. And in both instances, forums were used to promote asynchronous discussion of the reading material.

In the 2010 course, forums had been introduced to provide an environment in which the students (and the instructor) could discuss the content of the text prior to an in-class quiz. Each week, the students took a quiz on two chapters in the text, and prior to that, they were to discuss the contents in two separate Moodle forums—one per chapter—as a means of preparing for the quiz.

For Eibei11, however, there was only one forum a week, in which the students discussed one chapter in the book (or a movie), this time in preparation for a group oral presentation on that chapter. Each chapter in the new text was approximately equivalent to two chapters in the older one.

Another change from the previous course was the introduction of group presentations on the subject material. The number of quizzes was reduced, and

the main purpose of the forum discussions tended to be preparation for the presentations. While the quizzes were, of course, intended for the class as a whole, the presentations were, naturally, group-oriented.

In keeping with the change to a group-oriented goal for the forums, DRB decided to give the group mode option a try in the more recent class. The 30 students were separated into five six-person groups, and each week a different group leader, chosen by the group, was to initiate the topic and try to keep the conversation going. (The previous year, the instructor had acted as the sole moderator.) Also, midway through the semester, the students were reassigned into new groups to allow for possible issues in group dynamics.

b. Pedagogy, Forums, and Group Mode

First of all, it should be fairly obvious that the collaborative nature of group work lends itself to the overall "social constructionist pedagogy" (MoodleDocs1, MoodleDocs2) upon which Moodle is based. Forums allow for flexible participation and a "home" for the group (Munro [2]), and students can easily bounce ideas off one another (UW-Madison).

Using the group mode with a student acting as a facilitator/moderator, the instructor can still help encourage input from quiet students and keep the discussion on course, but ideally they will be able to gradually relinquish control of the discussions. (Edmond 2009) The students will learn to take more responsibility onto themselves.

Rahim (2009) points out that the students must feel there is a reason to participate. In this case, in addition to helping the student prepare for the quiz, there is also the need to prepare for the presentation. The former is for the individual, while the latter is for the group, too. Double motivation occurs.

While some (OIT) stress a division between two types of forums—sharing content and student interaction, or creating content—the forum discussed here fulfills both goals, with the sharing of content being done, however, by students rather than the teacher.

Although the Eibei course is not a language class, there is a lot of English used, and the asynchronous nature of forums allows students to take their time in composing posts to edit them later, if necessary. (Cole & Foster) Students can be quite sensitive to embarrassment, and forums allow participants who are less sure of their language abilities to take more time in formulating their posts and to double- and triple-check them, if necessary, to avoid making a mistake.

Rahim (2009) also talks about the "guide on the side" verses a "sage on the stage" role for the instructor. The former encourages more interaction among the students, while the latter is "more cumbersome and less productive". Dividing the class into groups lends itself much more to allowing students to be moderators than does a whole-class forum. We will concentrate on student interaction here.

Concerning the use of groups rather than a non-group forum, the Centre of Learning Technology of the London School of Economics (CLT2) suggests that using groups allows students to work more closely together and encourages more participation from each member than you would get from a whole-class exercise. It also allows the instructor to compare the different conclusions made by the different groups.

2. INSTRUCTOR'S OBSERVATIONS AND IMPRESSIONS

a. General and Individual Participation

Tables 1 & 2 and Charts 1 & 2 give a basic idea of how the participation compared between the two courses, but one must bear in mind that these data say nothing of the length or quality of the posts; they

only show the number of posts. However, they do indicate how often the students and instructor were participating in the forums.

Table 1: Eibe10 Posting Data

Topic	All	DRB	Student	DRB%
1	68	17	51	25.0
2	64	8	56	12.5
3	45	7	38	15.6
4	63	12	51	19.0
5	38	0	38	0.0
6	82	22	60	26.8
7	54	7	47	13.0
8	48	5	43	10.4
9	59	4	55	6.8
Total	521	82	439	15.7
Average		9.1	48.8	

Table 2: Eibe11 Posting Data

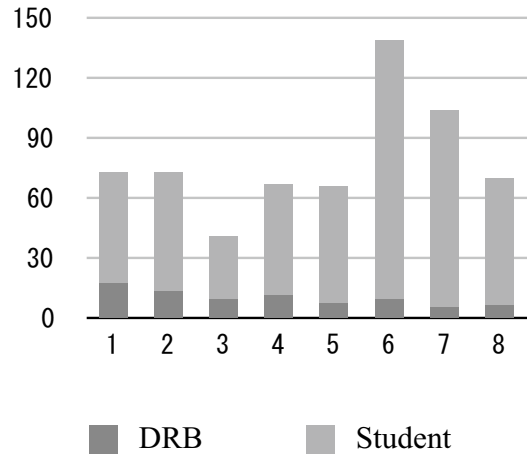| Topic	All	DRB	Student	DRB%
1	73	18	55	24.7
2	73	14	59	19.2
3	41	10	31	24.4
4	67	12	55	17.9
5	66	8	58	12.1
6	139	10	129	7.2
7	104	6	98	5.8
8	70	7	63	10.0
Total	633	85	548	13.4
Average		10.6	68.5	

Chart1: Eibei10 Posts per Forum

Chart2: Eibei11 Posts per Forum

On the whole, there were more posts made during the eight-week period in Eibei11 than were made during the nine-week equivalent in Eibei10. You can not see it in the data here, but in both courses, there were students at both ends of the spectrum, those who made a significant number of posts and those who made almost none. However, while the average number of posts per students was under 15 for earlier course, it was over 18 in the class in which the group mode had been introduced. Also, although the instructor's total number of posts was comparable, at 82 and 85, respectively, the group-mode course had two students whose total post numbers came close, in the 60's, compared to the highest numbers being in the 20's for the Eibei10 class.

On the whole, therefore, there were more posts made in Eibei11, which had the group mode. There could be, of course, other factors involved, but at least the introduction of the group mode did not appear to bring about a drop in student participation with regard to frequency of posts. The total average number of posts per week for the Eibei10 class hovered around 60, while, for the Eibei11 class, the average was greater in general, with a heavier weighting towards the end of the course. We will look at another form of participation, student interaction,
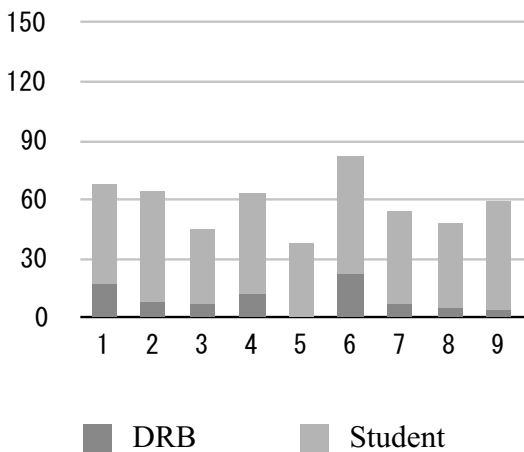
below.

b. Workload

DRB had approached the change to group mode with caution and a bit of trepidation because monitoring and moderating the forums in the Eibei10 course had taken considerable time and effort, and he was concerned that trying to keep track of five separate groups rather than the class as whole would increase the workload even more.

The only hard number that one can look at this point is the total number of posts made by the instructor. From the charts and tables in the previous section, we see that the average numbers of posts per week for DRB were 9.1 and 10.6, respectively, which is not a major difference. Again, the figures represent the number of posts only and say nothing about the length of the posts.

Subjectively, however, the instructor personally felt no perceptible increase in time spent on the forums; in fact, having the student leaders acting as facilitators/moderates seemed to reduce the instructor's workload. Unfortunately, this is only an impression and, as such, can not be measured.

As far as keeping track of things is concerned, Cole and Foster (2007) liken group mode forums to a party at a house, where you have separate discussions taking place in kitchen, living room, dining room etc. To extend the metaphor, the non-group forum used in Eibei10 was more like having 30 people sitting in a big circle of chairs trying to talk to certain people and to the group as a whole. With both types, the asynchronous nature of the forums allows one to review at one's leisure what was said, but the general impression was that it was even easier to do when confined to a smaller group.

Concerning student workload, the students as a whole made, on average, 48.8 posts per week for the 2010 class and 68.5 for the 2011 class, so, if we can assume that the average length of post is similar

for both classes, the students did more work when in groups. This translates as an increase in student participation, which is normally desirable in a class.

Some of the students commented (e.g. Appendix 3: Comments #8, #9, & #19) about the demands on their time, but they, as many students seem to do, were missing the point that even in an "unblended" learning environment curriculum, students are supposed to spend at least twice the time outside of class as during class for the typical Japanese university course. Also, there were students (Comment #16) who appreciated the fact that the asynchronicity allowed them to post at their leisure.

c. Interaction

We can look at some data from Bogdan (2011) to get an idea of the interaction between students in the Eibei10 course. Moodle provides a way to display the posts in a threaded form, with the indents giving a graphical representation of who was replying to whom. Appendix 1 offers simplified samples of four of the Eibei10 forums, two from the beginning and two from towards the end of the course. They are fairly representative of all the forums, as can been seen in the appendices of Bogdan (2011). The S##'s ("S" followed by a two-digit number) is a randomly generated tag for a particular student, while "DRB", of course, signifies a post by the instructor.

The series of posts below (93-97, 156-163 and 191-194) are either from the forums in the appendix, or from different forums. They provide examples of the desired pattern of interaction, one in which the students are replying to each other and occasionally the instructor, rather than a student just giving one pro forma response to the instructor's original question(s).

93.	**DRB** 01/7-07:20
94.	S28 01/7-19:44
95.	**DRB** 01/7-20:15
96.	S02 01/9-22:35
97.	S14 01/10-17:39

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156.  DRB 11/15-17:33
157.       S23 11/16-21:21
158.           S18 11/16-22:28
159.               S23 11/16-23:03
160.       S12 11/16-22:59
161.       S28 11/17-00:20
162.       S15 11/17-00:51
163.       S11 11/17-02:40

191.  S25 11/22-16:14
192.       S05 11/23-11:00
193.           S12 11/23-23:52
194.               S15 11/24-12:28
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Table 3 shows the numbers of posts at each indent level for all the forums. Note that a great majority of the "interaction" occurs only at the top three indent levels.

Table 3: Eibei10 Layers of Interaction

	Student	Instructor
Level 1	321	11
Level 2	67	51
Level 3	34	10
Level 4	7	9
Level 5	6	1
Level 6	2	0
Level 7	1	0
Level 8	1	0
Totals	439	82

Having a table for Eibei11 similar to Table 3 would make comparison much easer, but tallying up all the indents by hand was not possible at this time. We can, however, look at Appendix 2, which parallels Appendix 1 by providing posting listings for four sample forums from the Eibei11 course from similar time periods. They are, again, representative of the posting patterns for course. Notice the difference in indent patterns when compared to those of the Eibei10 course. There was, of course, some direct participation on the part of the instructor, but the pattern of indentation illustrates clearly students interacting and communicating among themselves.

DRB tended to refrain from direct participation unless there were questions directed to him or he needed to get the conversation back on topic. There was much more of the former than the latter.

While other factors, such as the new text and the introduction of in-class presentations may also have contributed, all in all, interaction among the students occurred on a greater level in the course with the group mode.

3. STUDENT REACTION

a. Course Evaluation Ratings and Comments

During the last week of the class, the students were asked to complete an evaluation of the course in the form of a Moodle questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of 10 5-point Likert-scale questions rating different aspects of the course and the amount of effort they put into the course, one question about what grade they expected from the class, followed by four open-ended items asking for comments. The fourth Likert question and the final open-ended question concerned the forums specifically.

The students found the class enjoyable (4.4 out of 5.0) and useful (4.3), which would indicate that they liked the class as a whole, but they rated the forums at 3.7, which was somewhat lower than the average of all the ratings for the class (4.0). (As a side note, they rated their own effort at only 3.6.)

The comments in Appendix 3 might give some better clues as to what the students thought about the forum. The comments that were given in English were left as is, while those that were only in Japanese were roughly translated into English. The translations are italicized.

As mentioned earlier, some of the students had issues with the amount of time required to participate, while two of the students (Comments #9 & #11) had difficulties with communicating in an asynchronous manner. The comment in #21 was most

negative of all, which was interesting because that student gave Forums a high rating of 4 out of 5.

There were some quite positive comments about the forums, and it seemed that many students liked their tie-in with the in-class presentations, which had itself received a relatively high rating of 4.1.

The students also made some constructive, although sometimes contradictory, suggestions on how to improve on the use of the forum. For example, one of the students suggested also having the presentations in English, while two others preferred allowing Japanese in the forums themselves. One of the students points out that there were quite a few students who were not English majors, and it would be easier for them to discuss and understand the content if they could do so in Japanese.

This is a tricky issue. As mentioned earlier, the asynchronicity of the forums is more forgiving for those communicating in a second language, while the in-class presentations and Q&A sessions would put certain students on the spot. The students were told they could use English for the presentations, but they mostly ended up doing them in Japanese as time went on .

One very good suggestion involved spreading out the material covered in the forums to two class meetings, with the first giving the students time to meet face-to-face before they began posting to the forum. Other students asked for DRB to institute some way to encourage all the students to participate. As noted above, some students left everything to others.

4. DIFFICULTIES AND FEATURE REQUESTS

As mentioned in Bogdan (2011), having Moodle provide a method for class-specific handles (names) for the students would really be appreciated. DRB has asked this of the Moodle administrators at the university and is still awaiting a response.

In addition, more export capability is needed. For example, the threaded display form for forum participation gives a decent graphical representation of the interaction going on, but DRB had to manually insert the indentation for Appendices 1 and 2, which was not only time-consuming, but also error-prone. Simply taking a screenshot would not work either, because then the students' names would then be visible.

For the material in Appendix 2, DRB had to copy and paste the listings, manually insert the indents, and then codge together a Perl script to remove unnecessary material and clean up the remaining data. Having an ability to export all the postings for a forum, including the content of the posts, would make all sorts of analysis possible, including establishing a mean length of post for individual students.

5. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

DRB had originally introduced the forums into the Eibei10 course to encourage participation and facilitate interaction among the students. Participation and interaction were seen, but much of it was in the form of single responses to questions posed by the instructor, often with little communication among the students themselves. For the following year, DRB made a number of changes in the Eibei class, including the introduction of the group mode in the forum.

In this paper, we compared the frequency of participation and the interactivity of the participation for the two classes. These could have been influenced by some other factors besides the group mode—including the changing of the text, the introduction of presentations, and the topics discussed—but the frequency of posting did increase somewhat, and the students did appear to communicate with each other to a greater degree.

The instructor workload did not appear to increase to any great degree, and, subjectively, following the

more highly interactive group discussions was much more enjoyable.

In order to better judge the value of using the group mode, at least two other indicators need to be examined: the length and the quality of the posts. Measuring the length would require some changes in (or ways of getting around) the export function of Moodle, and there is no telling when that might happen, but fortunately, Moodle does provide one way to measure the quality of the post. Moodle has a setting which allows students to rate each other's posts. This can be instituted in the next iteration of the course.

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Appendix 1: Eibei10 Forum Posting Samples

10-27 Greetings

1. S01-10/20-16:42
2. **DRB** 10/22-18:00
3. S02 10/22-14:59
4. **DRB** 10/22-17:57
5. S03 10/24-11:08
6. S04 10/25-11:15
7. S05 10/25-13:21
8. S06 10/26-20:23
9. S07 10/25-13:42
10. **DRB** 10/25-14:47
11. **DRB** 10/25-14:48
12. S08 10/25-13:47
13. S09 10/25-14:05
14. **DRB** 10/25-14:46
15. S02 10/25-16:14
16. **DRB** 10/25-18:38
17. S10 10/25-23:49
18. S10 10/26-16:06
19. **DRB** 10/26-21:15
20. S10 10/26-23:12
21. S11 10/26-20:38
22. S12 10/26-21:15
23. S14 10/26-22:13
24. S15 10/26-22:38
25. S16 10/26-23:21
26. S17 10/26-23:38
27. S18 10/26-23:58
28. S19 10/27-00:41
29. S20 10/27-01:19
30. S21 10/27-08:04
31. S22 10/27-11:03
32. S23 10/27-11:41
33. S24 10/27-11:45
34. S25 10/27-14:43

10-27 Gift-giving

35. S01- 10/20-17:06
36. **DRB** 10/20-18:01
37. S08 10/22-08:44
38. **DRB** 10/22-13:12
39. **DRB** 10/22-13:14
40. S02 10/22-14:41
41. **DRB** 10/22-15:36
42. **DRB** 10/22-15:34
43. S03 10/24-10:56
44. S05 10/25-13:53
45. **DRB** 10/25-14:43
46. S07 10/25-14:19
47. **DRB** 10/25-14:44
48. S09 10/25-14:23
49. **DRB** 10/25-14:41
50. **DRB** 10/25-18:55
51. S10 10/26-09:22
52. S10 10/26-15:39
53. S11 10/26-20:22
54. S06 10/26-20:34
55. S12 10/26-21:55
56. S14 10/26-22:46
57. S15 10/26-22:57
58. S17 10/26-23:54
59. S16 10/27-00:05
60. S18 10/27-01:04
61. S19 10/27-01:01
62. S20 10/27-01:30
63. S21 10/27-08:03
64. S22 10/27-11:18
65. S23 10/27-11:52
66. S24 10/27-13:42
67. **DRB** 10/28-10:02
68. S25 10/27-14:38

Appendix 1: Eibei10 Forum Posting Samples (Continued)

1-12 Wedding Ceremonies

69. S02 01/7-00:07
70. **DRB** 01/7-07:18
71. S28 01/7-19:36
72. **DRB** 01/7-20:14
73. S03 01/10-23:06
74. S14 01/10-18:08
75. S07 01/11-10:58
76. S08 01/11-11:31
77. S27 01/11-15:44
78. S04 01/11-21:39
79. S12 01/11-22:43
80. S09 01/11-23:24
81. S17 01/11-23:40
82. S11 01/11-23:52
83. S06 01/12-01:27
84. S20 01/12-01:27
85. S23 01/12-01:50
86. S10 01/12-01:51
87. S25 01/12-03:03
88. S16 01/12-09:48
89. S18 01/12-13:50
90. S24 01/12-13:52
91. S19 01/20-20:18

1-12 Guests

92. S02 01/7-12:39
93. **DRB** 01/7-07:20
94. S28 01/7-19:44
95. **DRB** 01/7-20:15
96. S02 01/9-22:35
97. S14 01/10-17:39
98. S03 01/10-22:34
99. **DRB** 01/11-06:18
100. S07 01/11-10:49
101. S08 01/11-11:27
102. S27 01/11-15:35
103. S12 01/11-21:10
104. S09 01/11-23:01
105. S17 01/11-23:33
106. S11 01/12-00:06
107. S25 01/12-00:20
108. S15 01/12-01:46
109. S18 01/12-09:47
110. S20 01/12-12:33
111. S06 01/12-01:23
112. S10 01/12-01:32
113. S23 01/12-02:25
114. S16 01/12-12:34
115. S24 01/12-14:03
116. S19 01/20-21:56

Appendix 2: Eibei11 Forum Posting Samples

Topic1

117. S26:10/20 06:44P
118. S5:10/20 08:33P
119.   S26:10/21 08:36P
120.   S29:10/21 05:25P
121.   S5:10/23 04:22P
122.   **DRB**:10/21 02:08P
123.   S1:10/24 03:22P
124.   S10:10/24 08:59P
125.   S26:10/25 05:41P
126. S26:10/25 10:05P
127. **DRB**:10/25 03:44P
128.   S30:10/26 12:18P
129.   S1:10/26 12:19P

130. S14:10/21 03:23P
131. S15:10/22 11:59P
132.   S14:10/23 02:19P
133.   **DRB**:10/23 04:16P
134. S17:10/24 11:24P
135. S24:10/24 02:11P
136. S15:10/24 02:15P
137.   S4:10/24 03:26P
138. S17:10/24 09:39P
139.   **DRB**:10/25 03:52P
140.   S4:10/26 01:34P
141.   S23:10/25 08:56P
142. **DRB**:10/25 09:20P

143. S2:10/19 03:50P
144. **DRB**:10/19 03:53P
145.   S2:10/19 03:55P
146.   **DRB**:10/19 03:56P
147.   S2:10/19 03:57P
148.   S2:10/23 10:10P
149. S3:10/22 01:06P
150. S27:10/22 06:34P
151.   **DRB**:10/22 08:04P
152.   S27:10/22 09:28P
153.   **DRB**:10/26 04:40P
154. S2:10/23 09:54P
155.   S21:10/24 09:41P
156.   S3:10/24 11:23P
157.   S22:10/25 12:26P
158.   **DRB**:10/25 09:23P
159.   S6:10/25 11:27P
160.   S6:10/25 11:48P

161.   S22:10/25 12:33P
162. S6:10/25 11:37P
163. S22:10/25 12:37P
164. **DRB**:10/25 09:24P
165.   S6:10/25 11:31P
166.   **DRB**:10/25 03:50P

167. S19:10/24 11:07P
168. S18:10/25 12:51P
169.   **DRB**:10/25 03:47P
170.   **DRB**:10/25 09:37P
171.   S18:10/26 02:57P
172.   S20:10/26 09:36P
173. **DRB**:10/25 03:48P
174. S18:10/26 03:03P

175. S7:10/21 09:22P
176. **DRB**:10/21 02:06P
177.   S7:10/23 11:31P
178.   S25:10/24 11:23P
179. S8:10/24 07:43P
180. S25:10/24 11:10P
181.   S7:10/25 01:09P
182. S8:10/24 07:50P
183. S16:10/24 11:15P
184.   S13:10/25 02:59P
185. S16:10/24 11:07P
186. S7:10/25 12:53P
187.   S13:10/25 03:15P
188. **DRB**:10/25 03:40P
189.   S9:10/25 10:58P

190. S7:10/21 09:22P
191. **DRB**:10/21 02:06P
192.   S7:10/23 11:31P
193.   S25:10/24 11:23P
194. S8:10/24 07:43P
195. S25:10/24 11:10P
196.   S7:10/25 01:09P
197. S8:10/24 07:50P
198. S16:10/24 11:15P
199.   S13:10/25 02:59P
200. S16:10/24 11:07P
201. S7:10/25 12:53P
202.   S13:10/25 03:15P
203.   **DRB**:10/25 03:40P
204.   S9:10/25 10:58P

Appendix 2: Eibei11 Forum Posting Samples (Continued)

Topic7

206. S26:1/28 05:10P
207. S17:1/28 09:52P
208.   S26:1/29 07:23P
209. S11:1/28 10:21P
210.   S26:1/29 01:33P
211.   S17:1/31 02:44P
212.   S26:2/1 08:41P
213.   S16:1/31 09:10P
214.   S21:1/31 11:27P
215. S11:1/28 11:02P
216. **DRB**:1/29 06:02P
217. S26:1/29 07:37P
218.   S21:1/31 11:39P
219.   S26:2/1 08:44P
220. S16:1/31 09:20P
221. S26:1/29 07:44P
222. S17:1/29 11:35P
223.   S1:1/30 01:02P
224.   S26:1/30 02:46P
225.   S1:1/30 03:42P
226.   S16:1/31 09:28P
227.   S21:1/31 11:52P
228.   S1:2/1 12:48P
229.   S1:2/1 12:51P
230.   S17:2/1 10:09P

231. S14:1/26 09:29P
232. S22:1/28 09:26P
233. S9:1/28 11:58P
234. S9:1/29 12:32P
235. S9:1/30 02:02P
236. S8:2/1 01:23P
237. S8:2/1 01:34P
238.   S14:2/1 08:47P
239. S8:2/1 01:37P
240. S8:2/1 01:42P
241.   S14:2/1 08:52P
242. S14:1/26 09:51P
243. **DRB**:1/29 05:55P
244.   S14:1/28 08:34P
245.   S14:1/28 08:37P
246.   S22:1/28 09:16P
247.   **DRB**:1/29 05:54P
248.   S5:1/29 12:10P
249.   S14:1/29 04:48P
250.   S9:1/30 01:46P
251.   S19:2/1 12:07P
252.   S9:2/1 01:37P
253.   S22:1/29 11:27P
254.   S9:1/30 01:25P
255.   S14:1/31 12:38P
256.   S8:2/1 01:55P
257.   S14:2/1 08:45P
258.   **DRB**:1/29 05:51P

259. S22:1/28 09:34P
260. S14:1/29 04:54P
261.   S19:1/29 10:15P
262.   S19:1/29 10:21P
263.   S14:1/31 12:35P
264.   S22:1/29 11:39P
265. S9:2/1 01:33P
266. S8:2/1 02:05P
267. S14:2/1 08:38P
268. S14:2/1 08:39P
269.   S22:2/1 01:13P
270. S14:2/8 10:19P
271. S14:2/8 10:24P

272. S6:1/28 09:51P
273. S3:1/28 07:20P
274.   S6:1/28 11:13P
275.   **DRB**:1/29 06:05P
276.   S3:1/29 01:09P
277.   S29:1/31 09:02P
278.   S25:1/31 10:57P
279.   S3:2/1 12:04P
280.   S25:1/31 11:53P
281.   S29:1/31 07:36P
282. S6:1/28 02:34P

283. S7:1/26 09:12P
284. **DRB**:1/29 06:18P
285.   S7:1/29 05:21P
286.   S30:1/31 12:45P
287.   S2:1/31 11:02P
288.   S2:1/31 01:20P
289.   S7:2/1 01:12P
290.   S30:2/5 04:19P

291. S27:1/28 10:50P
292. S18:1/30 01:15P
293. S18:1/30 01:33P
294. S4:1/30 07:13P
295.   S18:1/30 08:29P
296.   S10:1/30 10:06P
297.   S27:1/30 10:52P
298.   S4:2/1 12:00P
299.   S27:2/1 12:16P
300. S13:1/30 11:17P
301. S27:1/31 12:52P
302.   S18:2/1 09:38P
303. S10:1/31 09:30P
304. S4:2/1 12:05P
305. S28:2/1 01:15P
306. S18:2/1 09:46P
307. S4:2/1 12:25P
308. S28:2/1 01:23P
309. S18:2/1 09:49P

Appendix 3: Eibei11 Student Comments

1. I think discussion forums depend persons. Of course, it's important to have a high motivation, but if other persons who lack the will to do it in same group, I also losted the will. It's difficult whether it's good or not. But it might be easy to evaluate by the participation of the forum and it's fair. About presentations were very good for me because we can deepen the understanding between our country and NA from various point of view. And it's important to experience of speaking in front of many groups.

2. Please add them to other classes, too.

3. *Should also allow posting in Japanese*

4. *In the group discussions, because there was a big gap between students who prepared and those who didn't, there were students who didn't take part. Rather than limiting the discussions to Moodle, it would be better to allow two class meetings for each topic, giving students time in the first class to meet in a group to talk and divvy up the load so that each student can present. Then give some more time in the second class to prepare for giving the presentation. This would even up the participation load.*

5. *Although the group forums were conducted in English, the presentations took place in Japanese. I think it would be better if the presentations were also in English.*

6. I was able to hear the opinions of many people.

7. It was very nice to know others' opinion and thinking. Thanks to this, my knowledge and vocabrary are growed up. Maybe it was a little troublesome when we are busy, but it was not bad.

8. *The Moodle discussions were difficult because I had a hard time finding the time. The presentations were helpful in getting a better understanding of the content.*

9. *There were a lot of times when the discussion was difficult because I had little time and didn't do much posting or because of the fact that the members would post at different times.*

10. *I was woken up in the middle of the night a number of times because someone would post to the forum and that post would be sent out by e-mail an hour later. Something needs to be done about this.*

11. it is difficult to discuss because members don't match time.

12. I think the group discussion forums and presentations is good way to share each idea with my friend. I can learn a lot from them.

13. This is good, we can see our own menber's comments. It is enough to do that.

14. That is a good idea. It was interesting.

15. I think presentations were very good.

16. We can use our free time. This is very effective.

17. *I think it was good being able to talk on Moodle, give presentations, and discuss topics with others. However, some of the topics, especially sports, were hard to talk about.*

18. *I think there would have been more participation had the Moodle forums been in Japanese. One feels it was not necessary to do them in English, because not all of the students are planning on being English teachers, and it would be easier to discuss and understand differences between North America and Japan in one's own native language. Of, if this were intended as an English class, the presentations should also all be in English.*
Some topics, such as Family and Appearances, were easy to understand and discuss, while others, like sports, were difficult for those who had no experience or interest in them. I'm not saying that there's no need to learn about things you aren't interested in, but such topics might not

be the best for encouraging active participation.

19. I think group discussion on the Moodle is a little
    difficult. Because we should start up every day.
    But the group discussion is important for
    exchanging our idea.

20. I don't like that.....

21. I think group discussion is good addition. But
    someone in the group didn't take part in
    discussion. So setting the least poting amount
    may be a solution. 私は，グループディスカッション
    は良い取り組みであったと思います。しかし，グルー
    プの中にはディスカッションに参加しない人もいたの
    で，「最低発表回数」を設定することで改善されるか
    もしれないかもしれないと思います。