Edmodo – A Social Networking Site for the Classroom
Kathleen Lintan, Teacher, Parkview Adventist Academy, Lacombe, AB

Living in today's technological world, it seems like everything needs to be done in the "now." Social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter have become a hit over the past few years. These sites allow users to share information about what's going on in their lives at that particular moment all with the click of an "Update Status" button. Because of these sites' popularity, it would be beneficial if teachers could utilize these types of sites in the classroom.

One particular site that I and the rest of the teachers have recently started using at Parkview Adventist Academy is Edmodo (www.edmodo.com). Its user interface is quite similar to Facebook. It allows teachers to communicate with students by posting "updates" that are visible to the whole class. Updates go on the class "wall" and can include general announcements, assignments, link posts, videos, etc. It even includes a calendar where teachers can let students know of upcoming events.

I enjoy using this user-friendly website to communicate with my students. Here is why:

1. **No more excuses.** How many times have we heard students say something like– "but I was sick that day, so I don't know what you covered and I didn't know what the assignment was." By using edmodo, I've eliminated the opportunity for them to say such things. As soon as I give out the assignment to the class, I immediately post what the assignment was onto the class "wall." There is also a function that allows me to upload handouts or worksheets to the wall so a student who was missing for that day can have access to all the same information the students in class had. Students may even submit their papers and assignments directly to the site.

2. **Provides extra communication with parents.** Edmodo also has a "Parent" feature where parents can login with their own username and password and see what's going on in their child's classroom. It provides parents with a way to get a better glimpse of goes on in the classroom each day. It also helps them keep their students accountable for doing their homework because they can also see what was assigned in class and make sure their child is doing the work they are supposed to.

3. **More Student Interaction.** Edmodo doesn't limit the posting of comments or information to just the teacher. Students are also able to interact and comment on the "wall." This is a good thing because it provides students with the opportunity to ask questions outside of the class when they can't ask the teacher in person. The teacher can answer questions if they happen to log in after school, but so can the students if they

know the answer. This allows for open discussions where students can discuss among themselves. There is even a poll function that can be utilized.

4. **Instant Alerts**. The last feature I find very useful is the fact that both students and teachers can receive instant alerts to their emails, cell phones, or even Twitter accounts whenever there is an update to the wall or a direct message. For example, I have my account set up so that if students send a comment or question directly to me on the site, I receive a text message. Students can set up their account in such a way that all alerts/assignments go to their cell phones or twitter accounts. This also eliminates the chances of hearing excuses for not knowing the assignment or what went on in class while they were away.

There are many other exciting features that edmodo has to offer. Students like it because it's like Facebook, and I like it because it helps me better communicate with my students. Utilizing Edmodo can prove to be very effective if you use it daily and maximize your use by accessing the added features. It is definitely worth checking out. For more information, go to http://help.edmodo.com/frequently-asked-questions/