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College students' disposition towards individual learning paths and a personalized evaluation system on a professional English course

A Budapesti Gazdasági Egyetemen a nappali tagozatos BA képzésben résztvevő hallgatók három félévig tanulnak szakmai nyelvet. A heti kétszer 90 perces nyelvoktatás kiegészítéseként a szerző egy 18 fős turizmus-vendéglátás szakos csoportnál virtuális tanulási környezet (VTK) használatát vezette be, amelynek fő célja a gyakran már 10-12 éve tanuló hallgatók motiválása volt. A VTK a www.wikispaces.com oldalon létrehozott jelszóval védett wiki volt, amelyen lehetőséget kívántam biztosítani az egyéni tanulásra, hogy így a különböző nyelvi szinten lévő hallgatók saját ütemükben tudjanak haladni. Emellett a hallgatók önálló tanulását segítette a második félévben bevezetett, pontozáson alapuló egyéni értékelési és portfólió rendszer is. A hallgatók félév elején rövid önértékelést készítettek, nyelvtanulási célokat fogalmaztak meg, illetve megjelölték azokat a nyelvi területeket, amelyeket fejleszteni szeretnének. Ennek megfelelően kellett feladatokat választaniuk és feltölteniük. Ezek lehettek újságcikkek, rádióadások vagy előadások a www.ted.com oldalról, nyelvtani feladatok, levélírás, vagy bármilyen egyéb feladat, amelyet hasznosnak találtak. A félév során a hallgatók pontokat kaptak jól sikerült szövegértésért, prezentációért, órai munkáért, szavak feltöltéséért a www.quizlet.com oldalra, és bármilyen tevékenységért, amelyet maguk választottak, és egyeztettek a tanárral. A pontokat a képzés során több alkalommal érdemjeggyé lehetett átváltani, így bárki kaphatott jó jegyet, ha elég feladatot töltött fel. A wiki és az értékelési rendszer használatát a hallgatók minden félév végén kérdőívek segítségével értékelték. A kérdőív rákérdezett az egyéni értékelés hatására a nyelvtanulásukra, valamint arra is, hogy fogják-e a jövőben használni a wikit, és ha igen, milyen célra. A három félév során a wiki használatának tapasztalatairól az oktató tanári naplót vezetett, a projekt lezárásakor pedig két hallgatóval félig strukturált interjú készült. A kérdőívvel gyűjtött adatok alapján kvantitatív, az interjú és a tanári napló bejegyzései alapján kvalitatív elemzés készült.

Introduction

Several Hungarian researchers have highlighted the change in the skills and motivations of students today in Hungary, due to the expansion of higher education (Csillik – Daruka, 2015; Győrfyné Kukoda, 2012; Lencse, 2010; Ollé, 2009; Voglné Nagy, Lippai and Nagy, 2014). Considering that the number of students almost tripled between 1990 and 2014, while the number of teachers increased by a mere 22% (Hungarian Statistical Office, n.d.), teachers have to cope with significantly more students today. Challenges have been posed not only by the higher numbers but also by the heterogeneity of the learner groups. Although teachers in higher education might expect their students to be ambitious, motivated and self-regulated learners, today they are rare in higher education (Győrfyné Kukoda, 2012; Ollé, 2009). The majority of students today is mostly motivated by tests and exams and only prepare for them before the deadline (Ollé, 2009). Frequently, they are only interested in topics and tasks if they are compulsory and will be tested (Lencse, 2010).

Consequently, their main concern is to obtain a degree by the least amount of effort possible (Gyórfyné Kukoda, 2012; Lencse, 2010). Although it is a challenge to engage these learners, attempts can be made to raise their interest. Lencse (2010) suggests that teachers should apply innovative methods, such as cooperative learning, which might motivate students. Differentiation and personalization are suggested by Csillik and Daruka (2015), when students are provided with control to select tasks that are relevant to them, as well as to determine their learning paths. Innovative methods include the use of technology as well, which can serve to engage students to the best of their abilities (Egbert, 2007). As part of an extended research project, the aim of this study was to investigate the opportunities of differentiation and personalization with one group of students specializing in tourism and catering in their professional English classes at the Budapest Business School (BBS). As the medium of the individualized evaluation system was a virtual learning environment (VLE), the study also aims to contribute to context-based empirical classroom research on the use of technology in language teaching advocated by several researchers (e.g. Garrett, 2009; Lafford, 2009; Stockwell, 2007).

Background

As for the implementation of virtual learning environments, (VLEs), personal learning environments (PLEs) and wikis in teaching, the results of previous research revealed considerable differences between the tools. Similarly to technology in general, the use of VLEs, which are web-based platforms for the organisation of teaching and learning, seems to be mainly confined to administration and the provision of course material and resources, which support traditional teaching practices (e.g. Limniou – Smith, 2010; Yu, Sun and Chang, 2010). PLEs, which are flexible environments integrating services and resources from multiple contexts (Buchem, Attwell and Torres, 2011) and provide students their own space to learn by connecting resources and tools they use in everyday life (Attwell, 2007) have been observed to serve more innovative purposes. One of the main advantages of using a PLE is that it can not only provide an environment and tools but also prepare for life-long learning as it encourages reflection and collaboration, provides motivating learning activities and helps develop student responsibility (Attwell, 2007; Drexler, 2010). Similarly, wikis, which allow users to freely add and edit content and to create new pages and links between different pieces of content (Leuf – Cunningham, 2001), seem to enhance collaboration, knowledge building and sharing, as well as personalized learning (e.g. Monje, 2014; Papadima-Sophocleous – Yerou, 2013). A possible explanation for this might be the difference in teachers' motivations for using the tools. While VLEs are implemented by institutions and a large number of teachers use them as an obligatory tool in teaching; PLEs and wikis are mostly selected voluntarily by teachers who seek innovation.

Besides the pedagogical purposes grounding the integration of technological tools into teaching, the present research also relies on the concept of gamification. Despite the relative novelty of the idea in education, two distinct interpretations can be identified. One strand of research defines gamification as the implementation of computer games into teaching, which can involve already existing games or games developed for education in general or specifically for one educational context (Csapó, Lőrincz and Molnár, 2012; Debreczeni, 2014; Frommann, 2014; Pásztor, 2013; Tartsayné Németh, 2012). The other direction of research, which my study is also based on, regards gamification as the

integration of game-like features into the teaching process (Csillik – Daruka, 2015; Johnson, 2012; Nádori, 2012; Prievara, 2013; Rab, 2013; Werbach, 2015). Advocates of this interpretation emphasize that instead of using computer games in the classroom, principles of computer games should be incorporated into activities in order to enhance the motivation and engagement of learners, as well as help them become more independent learners (Csillik – Daruka, 2015; Nádori, 2012; Prievara, 2013; Rab, 2013; Werbach, 2015). Elements of games that can promote learning include personalization, interaction, immediate feedback and establishing short-term and long-term aims. Personalization in this context means that the students can follow different learning paths and have the opportunity to select tasks that suit their needs and interests (Csillik – Daruka, 2015; Nádori, 2012; Prievara, 2013). The few examples of gamification in education include a social media course in higher education in the US (Johnson, 2012), and the integration of game-based principles in natural science (Nádori, 2012) and English classes (Prievara, 2013) in a secondary school in Budapest. Students in the social media course pursued a Quest designed by their professor that encouraged self-paced learning by self-selected activities that were rewarded by points and badges. Student achievement could be followed on a leaderboard and students who made significant efforts had the opportunity to enter a new level every week. The positive feedback by the students at the end of the course suggested that gamification can motivate students in a college classroom. Nádori (2012) and Prievara (2013) applied a similar system in a secondary school in Budapest and developed guidelines on its successful integration. They suggest that the school year or academic term should be divided into two or three-week periods, in which students set goals for themselves based on their needs and abilities with the help of the teacher, who can also assist them to find resources and tasks to complete. It is also essential to document their learning process, which can be done in the form of a blog or a Facebook post. Similarly to games, immediate assessment should allow mistakes and be based on points, which can be calculated into marks at the end of term (Csillik – Daruka, 2015; Nádori, 2012; Prievara, 2013; Rab, 2013). Due to the novelty of this system, Nádori and Prievara warn that its introduction in teaching should be preceded by careful planning and should happen in small steps. As a possible problem they identify the students' lack of independence, which might prevent them from appreciating the freedom of choice. Additionally, it can increase teachers' workload if they have to evaluate a variety of tasks and learning paths the students follow. In spite of the initial problems of introducing gamification, there is general agreement that it can enhance the learning process by engaging and motivating students (Csillik – Daruka, 2015; Johnson, 2012; Nádori, 2012; Prievara, 2013; Rab, 2013; Werbach, 2015).

Research question

The aim of this empirical research project was to gain in-depth experience about the use of a VLE and a personalized evaluation system to enhance self-study in language teaching at the Budapest Business School by conducting a longitudinal case study. One group of first-year tourism and catering students constituted the unit of analysis of the case for three academic terms from September 2012 until December 2013. As a VLE a password protected wiki was created, which functioned as a PLE for the groups, and was mainly used as a supplement to face-to-face classes for assignments, optional tasks and individual study.

As part of a longer research this study focuses on the use of the wiki for individual learning and the personal evaluation system, guided by the following research question:

What characterizes first-year students' use of the wiki and their dispositions towards the wiki project and the evaluation system at the Budapest Business School?

Methods

In the current research a longitudinal case study with an embedded single-case design was adopted (Yin, 2014), where the case was defined as the implementation of a VLE and a personalized evaluation system into teaching ESP to first-year college students, and the embedded unit of analysis was the group of first-year students. As data collection in case studies should involve multiple sources of information (Creswell, 1998; Yin, 2014), the design included both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The different sources of information and the multiple instruments also served as triangulation that can increase the validity of the results (Hays, 2004; Yin, 2014).

The context of the case – language learning at the college

At the BBS students are offered classes in one language for three terms, two 90-minute lessons per week. Those who opt for English, which is the most popular language at the college, learn general business English in the first two terms and only start the professional language of their own specializations (catering-tourism or commerce-marketing) in the third term. Considering that an intermediate level (B2) professional language exam is a requirement for obtaining a degree, students are encouraged to take a language exam at the end of their language studies. Consequently, professional topics and terminology, as well as exam preparation should be taught in one term, which might pose difficulties for weaker students. The materials which are used for teaching professional English aim to provide background knowledge in specific topics for students. The course book *Business Benchmark Upper-Intermediate* (Brook-Hart, 2006) is used in all specializations, while materials have been developed by the teachers of the college for the third term (*An Essential Guide to the Special Examination in Tourism and Catering* [Benke – Szilfai, 2005]) for catering-tourism. As it is compulsory to start learning a foreign language in grade 4 in Hungary (Government decree 243/2003); many students attending the college have been studying English for at least nine years, some of them, who start earlier, for 12 years. Even if they learned another language at primary or secondary school, they have spent at least 4 years studying English. As a result, they can communicate reasonably well but their level of English proficiency ranges most typically from B1 to B2. Nevertheless, they perceive their knowledge as sufficient for communication and have no inspiration to learn the same topics and structures repeatedly. Finally, after such a long period of studying, students' knowledge of English is fairly mixed, even if they are approximately at the same level, with strengths and weaknesses in different areas.

The description of the case – the group wiki

A group wiki supported by web 2.0 tools was introduced for the group of students at the beginning of their English studies. Although the main purpose of using the wiki was to engage the students more intensively, the use of the wiki was expected to enhance language development as well. A further intention was to help students prepare for extended

language learning beyond the obligatory three terms of language studies at the college. The wiki was first used in class in a computer room, where students were trained how to use it. After that students used it at home for assignments, supplementary tasks and individual study. To encourage life-long learning and self-study, links to useful websites were collected that could be used for studying English at any time in the future. These websites included online dictionaries, pages for practising grammar, learning vocabulary (www.quizlet.com) and other resources. Individual learning paths were encouraged by the introduction of a personalized evaluation system based on Nádori (2012) and Prievara's model (2013), in which points were given for any task the students had completed. Students were encouraged to select tasks freely for themselves first from given sources then from any source, which allowed them to tailor the tasks to their individual needs and learning styles. Each student had a page on the wiki which functioned as a portfolio where they uploaded all the tasks they had carried out. Although this system was employed as a supplement to in-class work, where compulsory material was covered, points earned on the wiki could compensate for lower performance in class.

Although there are several wiki websites available today which can be used with any web browser, it is difficult to find one which is suitable for classroom use. Some of them are commercial (e.g. Socialtext) or only partially free (e.g. PBworks), some are free but feature advertisements (e.g. Wikia and Wiki. Wiki), while others provide no private wiki (e.g. Orain). Wikispaces, the wiki website I chose after careful comparison, is free to use by anyone for educational purposes, has no advertisements and also provides password-protected wikis. Today it also has a classroom version, which was not available in 2012, when the research started. In order to use the wiki created for the group (*Businessenglishfun 1C*), the students had to register on the website with a username and password. Once a wiki is created, it can be edited by all registered members, and can only be deleted by its creator.

The encouragement of self-study on the wiki

The three most important tools and websites which served to encourage self-study were the webpage Quizlet (<http://Quizlet.com>), and two wiki pages: "Dictionaries" and "Grammar". The website and mobile application Quizlet provides learning tools for any subject but it is especially suitable for studying vocabulary. Anyone can create a study set after free registration and can use the study sets created by others even without signing in. Students can learn and practise the words by flashcards, tests and three online games. Since January 2013 it has been possible to create classes within Quizlet where all the sets of one group can be stored, thus students can access them easily via one web link. In my group one volunteer entered the new words on Quizlet with English definitions after each topic. After checking and correcting the definitions I shared the set with the group on the wiki where they could practise the words. To overcome Quizlet's weakness that the words can only be practised without a context, we also spent some time in class with contextual practice.

On the wiki page "Dictionaries" students collected links to online dictionaries including monolingual, bilingual and business English dictionaries, as well as dictionaries of synonyms and collocations in the first class in the computer room. In groups a checklist for dictionaries was developed, whose final version was also added to the wiki. Students had to evaluate the dictionaries at home on the basis of the checklist and choose their favourite one. One of the students described the dictionary she likes using as follows:

<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/> I like this page the most because it is more than one dictionary. It's not just a monolingual one, but we can find here a Business English, an American English and an idioms and phrasal verbs dictionary as well. When we search a word, it doesn't give only the meaning of the word, but it also shows us a lot of examples and we can listen to the pronunciation (how the word is pronounced in the UK and in the USA), too. (Stefi, a student)

At the college, as the three English courses focus on professional English, grammar instruction is not part of the curriculum. Additionally, the students' proficiency is usually fairly mixed including students with high grammatical competences. However, there are also students in almost every group who need some grammar instruction and practice, which can only be provided in a limited amount during the lessons. Thus, I decided to provide an opportunity for online practice for the students and created a page called "Grammar" on the wiki. Students had to search the internet for a website where they could practise grammar and insert the link on the wiki. As a next step, they had to try some of the exercises, evaluate the website and write a comment on the wiki. Finally, everyone had to choose a favourite page that they were encouraged to use regularly for practice:

<http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/grammar-games>: If you visit this page you can find grammar exercises/tests in a lot of topic, from the beginner level to advanced. You have to fill in the gaps, correct mistakes, match sentences etc. so it's varied, not only multiple choice. If you're stuck with one of the topics, there is a grammar support block, where you can read about that grammar (Edit, a student).

The personalized evaluation system

In the first term of the study students had the opportunity to get marks for extra tasks they carried out. One option was to put the words and definitions from the units of the course book on Quizlet. Students could also prepare a task sheet with 5 tasks for a talk they watched on www.ted.com. This web page, which contains over one thousand 5-to-20-minute talks on various topics, was introduced to them in the computer room. After exploring the page and watching one talk they had to complete a task sheet about it. They could upload the tasks on the wiki page "Ted talks" at any time during the second half of the term. To provide more opportunities for individual learning and self-study I introduced a personalized evaluation system in the second term. It was based on Nádori (2012) and Prievara's model (2013), who designed it for secondary school students in Budapest. At the beginning of the term students had to assess their skills and decide which skills they would like to improve as well as lay down their immediate and long-term aims. They were encouraged to select tasks freely for themselves, first from given sources, then from any source, which allowed them to tailor the tasks to their individual needs and learning styles. The tasks I suggested included tasks for practising grammar on any webpage, summarizing a TED talk or any article or video in English and putting the words on Quizlet. They were also encouraged to select tasks to improve their weaknesses. Each student had a page on the wiki which functioned as a portfolio where they uploaded all the tasks they had carried out. First I looked at the task and highlighted the mistakes, which students had to correct in order to get points for it. Assessment was based on the points students earned for any task they had completed depending on the length and difficulty, which were aggregated into one mark at the end of the term. Marks for the four vocabulary tests, one grammar test and

a presentation were also included in the calculation. Students received one to three points for each task, as well as for each test (1 point for mark 3, 2 points for mark 4 and 3 points for mark 5). At the end of the term they had to have 8-10 points for a mark 2, 11-13 points for a mark 3, 14-16 points for a mark 4 and 17-20 points for a mark 5. Thus, students could get a 5 with no extra work if they received a 5 for all tests and the presentation but also if they failed all tests and did a lot of extra work. Students also had to take a mid-term written and an end-term oral test and the final mark was based on the marks for the two tests and the mark calculated from the points. In the third term the system was applied with the difference that points were converted into marks twice during the term. Although this system was employed as a supplement to in-class work, where compulsory material was covered, points earned on the wiki could compensate for lower performance in class.

Participants

One group of first-year students constituted the unit of analysis ($n=18$) of the research. Although purposive sampling is recommended in qualitative research (Dörnyei, 2007), it is impossible to achieve in classroom settings, where the groups are not selected by the teacher. As a result of random assignment of groups to teachers, the language proficiency of the students participating in the study was higher than the average of all students studying English. With 18 students the group represented the average size of a group in the first term. As for their proficiency level, all the students who started the course had passed a B2 level language exam and three students even had a C1 exam. Details about the participants can be seen in Table 1. In order to gain informed consent from the students (Dörnyei, 2007), the research project was introduced to them in the first week of their course together with the option of choosing another group for those not willing to take part in the study. However, no one opted for changing the group.

One of the problems that arose in the group was student attrition, which is a common difficulty of research carried out in school settings (Dörnyei, 2007). The number of students decreased from 18 in September 2012 to 16 in the second and 11 in the third term. This relatively high rate of attrition can be attributed to several factors beyond the language classroom, such as failing difficult exams (e.g. math and statistics), financial problems or the impossibility of managing studies and work at the same time. However, attrition from the language group does not necessarily mean attrition from the college; in the credit system students can enrol onto language courses at any time during their studies. Moreover, this rate of attrition is normal in language classes, although it is higher than the average attrition (22% between the first and the third term in 2012-2013). Thus, the final number of participants was reduced to 13 students due to the attrition in the two terms, including the two newcomers who joined the group in the second and the third term.

Table 1. Participants

		<i>1st term</i>	<i>2nd term</i>	<i>3rd term</i>
<i>Gender</i>	Male	3	2	2
	Female	15	15	11
<i>English studies</i>	3-5 years	7	7	4
	6-10 years	7	6	5
	Over 10 years	4	4	4

Instruments

The longitudinal case study involved multiple instruments to gain in-depth experience about the integration of a wiki into teaching ESP to a group of first-year students at our college. As the main aim of the study was to assess the suitability of the wiki and the personalized evaluation system for classroom use including students' dispositions towards it and the problems that arise, the main instruments were three course evaluation questionnaires and the teacher's diary that I wrote during the three terms. The 18 questions in the course evaluation questionnaire were in English, except for the *Comments* for each topic, which students could write in English or Hungarian to provide a fair chance to students with lower language proficiency. The questionnaires at the end of the second and the third term were slightly different in several aspects. They included seven questions about the participants' perceived language development; additionally, the end-project questionnaire also had some questions about the students' language exams and their plans for exam preparation. Thus, they consisted of more questions (25 in the second and 33 in the third term). During the whole project the events that occurred in the classroom and on the group wikis were recorded in the teacher's diary, as suggested by several researchers (e.g. Elliott, 1991; McDonough, 1994). According to McDonough, the main merit of keeping a diary is its ability to document the everyday working experience including individual student's behaviour, the teacher's feelings, students' attitudes and the atmosphere of the class. The purpose of the journal was to record all my observations, as well as students' reactions and comments about the different tasks and tools of the project. It also served as a source of personal reflection about the events and challenges that emerged during the course. I typed my notes that were made during the classes dealing with the wiki after the class in a Word document along with further comments. I also added notes at other times during the course when the wiki was dealt with in the lessons. To supplement information gained from the end-project questionnaires, a semi-structured interview guide was developed. The original plan was to conduct interviews with ten participants in December and January 2013 about their experience of the project, however, only two students volunteered for an interview. The main reason for this could be the inconvenience of the timing, since December and January are usually very busy with exams at the college. Most of the students took the B2 professional language exam in January, which required considerable preparation. When I approached the students for an interview, they gave me a further explanation for their unwillingness beside time pressure. They felt that they had expressed their views about the project through the open-ended questions and comments in the questionnaire, which often yielded lengthy monologues. These answers were analysed qualitatively, similarly to data gathered from the two interviews I conducted.

Data collection

As one of the objectives of the questionnaires evaluating the course was to provide feedback and help design the next term, students were asked to fill them in at the end of each term. The link to a Google form was put on the group wiki for the students, who completed the survey online in the computer room. Participants, who were absent at the time of administration, were asked to fill in the questionnaires in the following lesson on paper or at home online. The two interviews at the end of the project were carried out in the staff room of the Language department, in an office, which was out of use at the time. They were recorded with the help of a mobile telephone after obtaining consent from the participants and lasted between 40-45 minutes.

Data analysis

Data yielded by the three end-of-term evaluation questionnaires were analysed quantitatively. Mean scores, standard deviations and percentages for individual questions were calculated using Microsoft Excel 2010. Students' comments to the questions, as well as the interview data were subjected to qualitative content analysis using the constant comparative method (Maykut – Morehouse, 1994) with the help of a co-researcher. Comments from the Teacher's diary were used to support or supplement findings.

Results and discussion

In this section the results of the research will be presented and discussed guided by the research question. Within the sections the results will be presented in a chronological order, as suggested by Yin (2014), covering the three terms of the study, including problems that arose in each phase and implications for the following phase. First, students' use of the wiki will be described as well as their dispositions towards the wiki project and the evaluation system, followed by the portraits of three students to supplement information about the wiki project.

The first term of the study

As for students' dispositions towards the wiki, most of the 14 students, who filled in the course evaluation questionnaire, had overall positive feelings towards the wiki. The results of the questionnaire show that 78.6% of the students found the wiki useful and 45.5% thought it was interesting. Students also expressed their positive dispositions towards the wiki in their comments in the questionnaire. Besides its usefulness, they liked it because it provides a platform for playful and interesting learning (Inez, Zsófi) and sharing information (Enikő, Emőke, Nóra), as well as because of its logical structure and transparency (Tibor, Stefí) and the possibility of using it in the future (Emőke, Lili). They also found it useful to be able to support each other's work and develop their computer skills at the same time (Detti). The few negative comments concerned technical problems and the lack of time. András and Odett complained that they had problems with signing in the wiki, while Bianka and Csaba remarked that they had not used the wiki very often because they had not had the time for it.

As for individual pages and tools, students found Quizlet the most useful with 92.9% who agreed on its usefulness and all students used it for learning and practising words. The page "Dictionaries" proved to be popular among students as well, with 85.7% of the students finding it useful and using the online dictionaries for their studies. One participant (Detti) gave a technical problem ("I forgot my password") as the reason for not using them, while one student (Nóra) commented "I haven't needed it yet". While 23% of the students only used a bilingual dictionary, 58% used a monolingual general or business English dictionary and the remaining 19% could not remember which dictionary they used. This is in contrast with their previous habits, when the majority of the people had claimed to use solely bilingual online dictionaries (www.sztaki.hu or Google translate) in the computer room before I introduced the page "Dictionaries" to them (Teacher's diary, 01.10.2012). Finally, the page "Grammar" was the least popular among the students: 50% of them perceived it to be useful but only 28.6% used it for practice. This is surprising in the light of data from the teacher's diary (01.10.2012), in which 85% of the students claimed

that they would like to improve their grammar skills during the course. However, only 25% of the students (Dorina, Enikő, Inez, Zsófi) who did not use the page gave their preference for practising on paper as the reason, while others simply did not need any practice (Edit, Livi), were too lazy (Detti, Odett) or did not have time to practise (Lili).

Although students enjoyed using the wiki and completed the obligatory tasks regularly, they did not use it frequently for extra practice. The fact that even the most popular page “Dictionaries” was mostly used in October, and only 28.6% of the students practised grammar online, while the majority claimed they needed and wanted practice shows that it is not enough to provide opportunities for students to do additional work. Altogether six students did some extra tasks for the class, four of them put the words on Quizlet (Dorina, Jutka, Lili and Stefi) and three students prepared tasks for TED talks (Inez, Lili and Tibor). I also offered extra marks for completing the TED tasks on the wiki but no one did that. When I asked students why, the most common reason was the lack of time and laziness. However, several students claimed that they did not know about this possibility or had technical difficulties signing in or editing the wiki. To sum up, in the first term of the main study the majority of the students enjoyed working with the wiki and were enthusiastic about classes in the computer room after the initial problems of registration. All the participants who were present agreed that the lessons were useful and interesting. The students who did not use the wiki much were the ones who did not attend the classes regularly and one of them (Csaba) even quit the course in November. Several students complained about technical problems, which needed more attention the following term. The fact that some students did not know or forgot about the opportunities provided by wiki indicated that follow-up work in class needed even more emphasis.

The second and the third term of the study

Although most students perceived the wiki as useful at the end of the first term and claimed to have used it at home, their reluctance to do extra work seemed to present serious problems. To enhance personal study at home, I decided to introduce a personalized evaluation system in the second term, which was described earlier. The main aim of the system was to encourage students to improve their weaknesses by selecting tasks that they found useful and also interesting. As the second and the third term of the study were both based on the application of the evaluation system, they will be discussed together in this section and the results will be compared to those of Term 1. When the evaluation system based on individually selected tasks was introduced, students found it very difficult to understand it and adapt to it. The freedom of choice made them incapable of making decisions. They approached me after the classes personally and by email asking about specific tasks if they were suitable for them to practise (Teacher’s diary, 15.02.2013). This reluctance to appreciate the option of self-selected activities is in line with the results of earlier research on gamification (Nádori, 2012; Prievara, 2013). Thus, several sources for tasks were presented to them and it was suggested that they should choose exercises which could improve their weaknesses.

Similarly to Term 1 (T1), students filled in a questionnaire in the computer room in the last week of the courses, where 14 out of 17 students were present in Term 2 (T2) and 12 out of 13 in Term 3 (T3). Although no statistical comparison was conducted because of the small sample sizes, the results of the questionnaires show (Table 2) that the majority of students found the wiki useful in all terms (T1=78.6%, T2=100%, T3=91.7%), while an increasing number of students perceived it as interesting in the second and the third term

(T1=35.7%, T2=42.9%, T3=66.7%). The number of students who thought using the wiki was easy was very low at 7.1% in the first and second term and rose to 25% in the third term. Regarding the evaluation system, the majority of students considered it useful (T2=64.3%, T3=66.7%), wanted to continue using it in the third term (T2=71.4%) and recommended it to other groups (T3=83.3). While most students thought it was fair (T2=78.6%, T3=83.3%), only one student considered it unfair and one regarded the system as complicated in Term 2. In Term 3 nobody described the evaluation process as unfair or complicated. The three students who voted against using the system gave different reasons for their dislike. While Nóra did not like the evaluation table because it made it more difficult to get a good mark at the end of the term, Odett perceived it to be too complicated. She complained that she had been absent from the class when the system was introduced and took her a long time to understand it. Zsófi felt that the system did not reflect the amount of work invested because all points would be aggregated into one mark at the end of the term. However, their opinion partly changed by the end of Term 3. Although Nóra did not fill in the questionnaire, her negative view was probably the same. She clearly stated her dislike frequently during the classes and claimed that she did not have the time and energy to do any extra work. In contrast, Odett answered “I don’t know” to the question whether she would recommend the system to other groups, while Zsófi changed her opinion and said “yes”.

As for the choice of extra tasks, the number of students increased by the third term who selected interesting tasks (T2=50%, T3=58.3%), useful tasks (T2=28.6%, T3=41.7%) and tasks to improve their weaknesses (T2=14.3%, T3=25%). However, the percentage of students who claimed that they had improved their weaknesses by doing the extras was much higher (T2=28.6%, T3=66.7%), possibly because they perceived development by doing interesting and useful tasks as well. Those who did some extras felt they had also learnt more by doing them (T2=35.7%, T3=33.3%) and enjoyed learning (T2=42.9%, T3=25%). The fact that fewer students claimed to have enjoyed learning in Term 3 may have been caused by the closer imminence of the language exam, which is also indicated by students’ choice of exam preparation tasks (T3=33%). While 28.6% of students did not do any extra task in Term 2, the number decreased to 8.3% in Term 3. The majority of the students who did not do any tasks gave the lack of time as a reason (András, Emőke and Ivett), while Nóra blamed it on her laziness. While András and Emőke also argued that their good marks for the tests and the presentation made it unnecessary for them to do any tasks because they got a mark 5 anyway, the others did not care about their final mark as long as they did not fail the class. In Term 3 the only student who did not do any extra task was Gina, who joined the class in that term and claimed that she had not had time and had been lazy. Those who evaluated the system positively emphasized its fairness (Inez and Lili), the high number of opportunities to receive points (Lili and Enikő) and to compensate for a poor mark (Emőke and Stefi). Dorina and Livi highlighted that they enjoyed learning more by doing the extras, while András claimed that the main advantage of the system was that it forced students to improve their skills. Enikő also praised the transparency of the system, where everyone can see how many points they have and would they need to get a good mark.

Table 2. Results of the course evaluation questionnaire in Phase 4

	<i>wiki</i>			<i>evaluation table</i>	
	Term 1 N=14	Term 2 N=14	Term 3 N=12	Term 2 N=14	Term 3 N=12
<i>useful</i>	11	14	11	9	8
<i>fair</i>	0	0	0	11	10
<i>interesting</i>	5	6	8	0	0
<i>easy</i>	0	1	3	1	0
<i>complicated</i>	0	0	0	1	0
<i>have used it</i>	14	14	12	10	10

The fact that the majority of the students thought at the end of Term 3 that they would use the wiki in the future after completing the English course (83.3% yes, 16.7% maybe) shows that the use of the wiki may have the potential to encourage the idea of life-long learning. The areas where they plan to use it include exam preparation (83.3%), writing letters (41.7%), preparing for a job interview and writing a CV (50%), practising grammar (16.7%) and using online dictionaries (16.7%).

Extended use after the course

One of the aims of the wiki project was to help students prepare for extended language learning beyond the three terms of their studies at the college. Although it was not possible to yield detailed data about their use of the tools and pages including Quizlet, TED talks and online dictionaries after the course, some evidence can be provided that indicate a potential future use. Firstly, the majority of students claimed at the end of Term 3 that they would use the wiki later, especially for exam preparation. Similarly, the page statistics of Wikispaces for January 2014 shows 261 views on 20 pages, most of which can be associated with exam preparation, including “Exam writing”, “Oral topics” and “Information about the exam”. The two participants, Stefi and Ivett, who were interviewed in January after taking the exam, confirmed this by saying they had used the wiki for preparation. Finally, more than one year later in February 2015, I received an email from a student of the wiki group, Lili, who asked me to send the link to the wiki to her. She was preparing for a C1 exam and she intended to use the links and materials collected on a wiki but forgot the web address.

Three students’ views on the wiki

Although the units of analysis of the case study were the group of students, it seems valuable to introduce three types of students in detail: an enthusiastic, a critical and a lazy student. The three students profited from using the wiki and the evaluation system to a different degree. While Stefi, a hard-working student added new websites and tools to her wide repertoire of language learning techniques, Ivett, a critical student started to use a few additional resources, Nóra, a lazy student clearly did not benefit from her English course. While Stefi and Ivett participated in an interview in January 2014, Nóra will be characterized on the basis of the results of the other instruments, including the questionnaires, the wiki statistics and the teacher’s diary.

Stefi – an enthusiastic student

Stefi had been studying English for 5 years before her studies at the college and had already passed a C1 level exam. She chose to study English because she intended to learn the professional language of business and tourism and pass the C1 professional exam, as well as speak fluently. As her weakness she mentioned listening in all three terms, along with grammar in the second and vocabulary in the third term. She assessed her level of proficiency as B2 at the beginning, and C1 at the end of the course for each skill. The majority of her marks during the course were 5, similarly to her end-of-term marks. In the second term she was the only one who did not miss any classes and she was absent 2 times in each of the other two terms. She was enthusiastic about the wiki from the beginning, volunteered for extra tasks from early on and performed the highest number of edits (19) during the course. While she selected interesting, challenging and useful tasks in Term 2, she also aimed to improve her weaknesses in Term 3. She praised the wiki and evaluation system for being transparent, fair and providing a chance for weaker students to improve their weaknesses and receive a good mark. Although she admitted that it had taken her longer to select tasks than to complete a task handed out by the teacher, she also enjoyed the tasks she chose herself more. As a member of Aiesec, an international organization of students, she often needed to speak English via Skype and read online newspapers, such as the Daily Telegraph regularly. While she had already considered herself a self-regulated learner before the college, she claimed that she had been introduced to some new tools that she would use in the future. Firstly, she had not used any monolingual dictionary before, but started to use Cambridge dictionaries online during the course. She also created two sets on Quizlet, used it frequently for learning the words, and intended to use it in the future for her Russian studies. A further website that she began to visit as a result of the course was TED talks, although she had heard about it before. She even decided to follow them on Facebook and listened to each newly posted talk. As for the other pages, she claimed she might use them for future reference. To sum up, Stefi clearly profited from the use of the wiki and the evaluation system, which seems to influence her future language learning habits as well.

Ivett – a critical student

Ivett joined the group in Term 2 because she perceived the level of her previous group too low. She had studied English for 4 years at secondary school, five hours a week and had passed a B2 exam. While at the beginning of Term 2 she rated her listening, reading and writing skills as B2, spoken interaction and spoken production as B1, at the end of Term 3 she assessed all skills as B2. She had mixed marks during the course, mostly fours and fives with an occasional three leading to an end-of-term 5 in Term 2 and a 4 in Term 3. She missed 5 classes in Term 2 and 6 classes in Term 3, which are within the allowed 6 classes. As for the wiki and the evaluation system, she exhibited negative dispositions towards it from the beginning. At the end of Term 2 she found it complicated, admittedly because she joined the group then and did not participate in the introduction and training. She also complained that she did not have the time and energy for doing extra tasks during the term because of other obligations at the college, although she had always liked learning languages. Thus, she completed the necessary tasks shortly before the end of the term only to receive a good mark and considered it an unnecessary burden with no positive effect on her language knowledge. Besides the English lessons she claimed that she read articles and blogs in English frequently about cooking and recipes, which was her hobby. However, she never

presented a task about her favourite topic because she had not realized that it was possible. In Term 3 her disposition changed radically, because she understood the system better and selected tasks that genuinely interested her. As she expressed it in the end-of-term interview: “I really didn’t like this system last term but this term I have been positively surprised and have got to like it by the end”. Her view was not influenced by the fact that she got a 4 at the end of the term. As for the future, she intended to use the wiki for preparing for the language exam. Besides, she started to use an online dictionary and Quizlet as a result of the course.

Nóra – a lazy student

Nóra had already passed a C1 level language exam before the course and did not plan to take a professional exam at the end of her studies. She decided to study English at the college because she supposed she would be able to complete the course and receive a good mark easily. In Term 1 she assessed all her skills as very high with her listening skills the lowest and indicated a moderate desire to develop them ($M=1.42$). However, she expressed her liking towards the wiki, completed the obligatory tasks and even practised some grammar online. Accordingly, her end-of-term mark was a 4. However, in the second and the third term she started to miss an increasing number of classes and did not fulfil any compulsory tasks. She also expressed her dislike towards the wiki and the evaluation system repeatedly based on her conviction that she would get a better mark without it. At the same time she liked Quizlet and found the idea of sharing knowledge useful. Her only edit on the wiki about her aims for Term 3 expressed her wish not to fail the class because of the high number of missed classes. As the main reasons for her low performance in class she named laziness and the lack of time. Her end-of-term mark in Term 2 and 3 was 2 and she even had to take an oral exam in Term 2 because she missed 9 classes.

Conclusion

Students’ disposition towards the wiki project at BBS was overall positive. By the end of the third term, the majority of students perceived the wiki as useful, recommended it to other groups and claimed that they would use it in the future. Some evidence including the two student interviews, as well as a student email suggest that some students have visited the wiki after the course finished. Although there is no evidence that Quizlet, online dictionaries, the grammar practice pages and TED talks are still used by any of the students, the fact that some of them have visited the wiki lends hope that they might use these pages as well in the future. As for the evaluation system, the majority of the participants regarded it as useful and fair and also recommended it to other groups. The difficulties that arose during the three terms of the course resembled those described in earlier studies, such as technical problems, including signing in and editing (Ducate, Lomicka Anderson and Moreno, 2011; Lin – Yang, 2011), and the lack of time (Karasavvidis, 2010). An aspect that has not emerged in research so far is laziness, which prevented some students from working on the wiki, possibly stemming from Hungarian college students’ lack of motivation and ambition (Csillik – Daruka, 2015; Ollé, 2009). Finally, the analysis of the effects of the wiki on three types of students revealed a different degree of benefit they gained: a hard-working student broadened her wide repertoire of language learning techniques, a critical student

started to use a few additional resources, a lazy student clearly did not benefit from her English course.

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