

# **WECHAT AND THE FACILITATION OF COLLABORATIVE LEARNING, TEACHER- SUPPORT AND STUDENT-REFLECTION: THE NZCEL EAP SCENARIO**

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# OUTLINE

- Literature review
- Ethical considerations
- Case study and methods
- Key aspects analysed
- Findings
- Conclusions



# AVAILABLE LITERATURE

- Luzon (2018) – Constructing academic identities online – research group blogs
- Jiang & Wei (2018) -University of Queensland- (TBLT) framework to gauge learners' perceptions on incorporating a *Wechat* task allowing students learning Chinese to link up with Chinese students across the campus.

# • AVAILABL LITERATURE

- Liu (2014) - use of *Wechat* in ESP (in a paper titled ‘English for policing’) training courses –  
purpose of improving students’ interests, motivation and efficiency of vocational field training.
- Wang (2019) - the use of *Wechat* to improve the pronunciation of English for Chinese students at a business school in China.

# LITERATURE UNDERPINNINGS: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM (SC)

- Emphasis on active learning as opposed to passive
- Learning perceived as a socially constructed phenomena
- In this pilot study *Wechat* was used for:
  - student-driven, enquiry-based & promoting collaboration

# MAIN AIM



- Evaluating *Wechat* as a tool for collaborative, supportive and reflective learning
- Roles of students & teachers (academic identities)
- Purpose for posts

## Why *Wechat*?

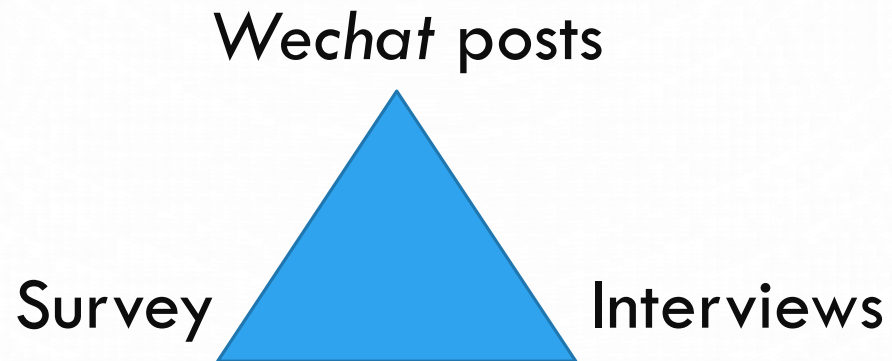
- Mobile phone apps - LMS doesn't allow for the speed of information dissemination
- Students have their mobile phones - at their fingertips!

# ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Course teacher - a researcher on the project
- No access to any data until course grades were submitted
- Re-iterated that the focus was the use of the *Wechat app*.
  - informal dissemination of information

# CASE STUDY & METHODS

- NZCEL Level 4 Academic course
- Final EAP course prior to entering mainstream subjects
- Data gathering tools





# KEY ASPECTS ANALYSED



- Most posts categories: academic or non-academic
- Questions:
- Direct Qs to teacher vs. Open Qs to class group
- Solicited vs. Unsolicited information
- Students and teachers
- Visual aids in posts

# FINDINGS: *Wechat* POSTS



- One class: 19 students and two teachers
- 873 posts
- Over 18 week semester (essentially 16 weeks)
- 130 unsolicited from the teachers

# FINDINGS: Wechat POSTS



Aspects	Academic	Non-academic
1. Qs direct to the teacher	61	0
2. Qs open to class group	24	3
3. St. providing unsolicited information	99	10
4. Providing solicited information	15	0



# FINDINGS: Wechat POSTS



Visual aids	Academic	Non-academic
PowerPoint slides	46	0
Screenshots	34	7
Whiteboard	15	0
Photos (people)	0	35

# FINDINGS: Wechat POSTS



Aspects	Number of posts
Health information, encouraging comments, attendance	62 (Humour) 6
Thank you and emojis	242
Happy birthdays and congratulations	54

# FINDINGS: *Wechat* POSTS

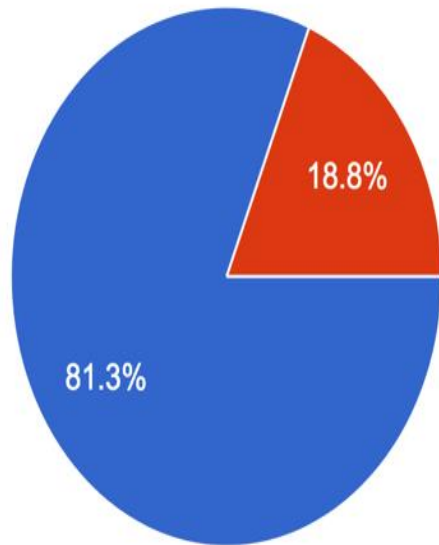
## ACADEMIC IDENTITIES:

- Mainly eight students tended to provide unsolicited information
- Less proactive students – majority of the emojis and thank you messages
- Three students strongly mentoring and providing personal guidance

# FINDINGS: SURVEY

2. Did you enjoy using WeChat?

16 responses



● yes  
● no

*If you felt comfortable using WeChat, can you say why you think you felt comfortable using the app.?*

- To organize the group easily
- we have lot of friends
- I can talk to my classmates and teachers anytime
- Do not need to wait the response with using traditional E-mail
- Because it is easy to assess video chat, share moments, talking

# ISSUES: THOUGHTS

- Get students to vote on which app they want to use.
- Let them know that it tends to be used for social aspects as well.
- It was really useful that we insisted on an English only policy in the group - inclusive



# CONCLUSION



- definitely continue to use an app. - but revisit the cl app.
- students seem to enjoy having this additional communication source.

# REFERENCE LIST

Jiang. W. & Li. W. (2018) *Linking up learners of Chinese with native speakers through Wechat in an Australian tertiary CFL curriculum*. *Asian-pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*. 3:14. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-018-0056-0>

Luzon, M-J (2018) *Constructing identities online: Identity performance in research groups blogs written by multilingual scholars*. *journal of English for Academic Purposes* 33, 24-39.

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**THANKS!**



**ANY QUESTIONS?**