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Assessing Effectiveness of Google Classroom:

Sankalchand Patel University Student's Perceptions

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Abstract

The technological development has greatly influenced the world of education, especially higher education. However, many educators have been unable to figure out which of the many available technological tools best suit their classroom practices. Google classroom is a free web service, providing a collaborative tool allowing users to create virtual classrooms. It has gained a remarkable popularity within a very short period of time. The main purpose of the study is to assess the university students' perception on the effectiveness of Google Classroom. A qualitative research design was employed in the present study. The sample of the study, which uses semi-structured interview method, consists of 20 higher education students of Gujarat who have been studying, taking the examinations and submitting their assignments using Google Classroom for at least two semesters during the severe COVID 19 situation in Gujarat (India). A comprehensive analysis by coding and categorizing the data through NVivo has been placed of the data acquired. Findings revealed that Google Classroom has significant impact on teaching-learning methodology. The responses of the students indicate that is user-friendly. Further studies can be undertaken by taking the perspective of the academicians into account.

Keywords: *Effectiveness, Google Classroom, Higher Education.*

1. Introduction

The current teaching and learning process is different from in the past time where classes that are held directly (face to face) or traditional method of teaching is teacher - cantered learning where lecturers use visual aids in the form of presentation slides, whiteboard and visualizer. Learning activities in the computer lab involves four major types of practical works: exercises, experiences, demonstrations and investigations. Therefore, the teachers need to be able to use the various technologies and also be able to design, compile, guide, and assess student projects. Resources and services need to be coordinated with colleagues and other professionals. This new role is challenging and requires the need for a different approach to teacher professional development. The isolation of typical teachers is formed with each other and the outside world must be eliminated given this very different form of education (Sukmawati & Nensia 2019, p.142).

In the modern era, use of technology is very much ubiquitous, in other words it is anywhere and everywhere. The most significant aspect of this trend is that the systems of education are adapting to technology at a rapid pace. This is increasingly assisting the careers of many students as well as the teacher in colleges and schools. The technology which is most often right on the fingertips, keeps everything and everyone updated



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while the rest is getting outdated. Classroom teaching can do wonders with the right implementation and usage of technology since the modern world is in need of it. The recent trend is to learn online, where almost everything is available on the screen right in front of the student. These E-Learning techniques are epitomized in Google Suite for Education which offers a plethora of opportunities for the students to explore various options in front of them to leverage E-Learning. A study has been carried out to assess the effectiveness of Google Classroom from the students' perspectives.

One of the ways that can be used to do the learning process online is to use Google Classroom. Google Classroom is to offer a platform of blended learning in schools in order to simplify creating assignments and getting the grade out to the students in a paperless way (Donald Yates, 2017). It is a popular Web 2.0 tools that offers a lot of interesting facilities and applications. It, like many other Web 2.0 tools, has potential for teaching and learning because of its unique built-in functions that offer pedagogical, social and technological affordances (Wang, Q et al: 2012). Google Classroom is a new tool introduced in Google Apps for Education in 2014. This classroom facilitates the teachers to create and organize assignments quickly, provide feedback efficiently, and communicate with their classes with ease online or blending learning style of teaching offers many advantages over the traditional classroom teaching style. The most influential advantages lie in its accessibility, students' scheduling flexibility, and adaptability for working (J. E. Gallagher, K: 2005). It takes into consideration the achievement of specific functions such as simplifying the students-teacher communication, and the ease of distributing and grading assignments. It provides the students with an opportunity to submit their work to be graded by their teachers online within the deadlines. Similarly, teachers can have a complete vision concerning the progress of each student, and they can return work along with the necessary comments so that the student can revise their assignments.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Google classroom as a blended learning tool can be used as a blended learning tool to elevate classroom productivity. The lack of research on Google classroom, particularly in the context of developing countries like India, has prompted the need to further investigate the effectiveness of the tool. Appropriate usage of technology is one of the biggest challenges for the teachers to manage in a blended learning environment; therefore, this study is focused on assessing the effectiveness of Google Classroom in higher education classes.

1.2 Aim of the Study



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The purpose of the present study is to explore the university students' perceptions of the effectiveness of Google Classroom as a tool for teaching and learning in higher education classes.

1.3 Research Question

What are the higher education students' perceptions on the effectiveness of Google Classroom as a tool for teaching and learning?

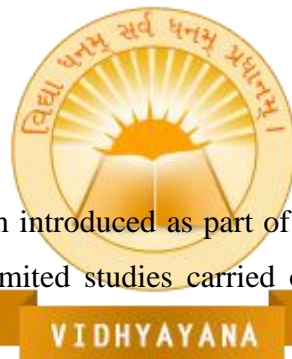
1.4 Importance of the Study

Technology is inseparable part of the youngsters. The massive use of technology has generated interested in many researchers and academicians to explore the ways teachers can use that technology prowess to enhance the learning of students. The popularity of Google Classroom is increasing day by day; however, there are limited studies which have explored the effectiveness of the tool. The results of the study can provide evidence to the administrators, teachers, and educationists of the effectiveness of Google Classroom.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Google Classroom

This software Google Classroom has been introduced as part of Google Apps for Education (GAFE) since August 12, 2014. Therefore, there are limited studies carried out related to the effectiveness of Google Classroom.



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Sukmawati, S., & Nensia, N. (2019) carried out a study on *'The Role of Google Classroom in ELT'*. The researcher found that students who used Google classroom felt excited using online learning. This application can be accessed easily. In addition, students can focus on their discipline because lecturer gives time to submit the assignment. Students can see the instruction of classwork about what the topic and deadline of assignment are. If the students are late to submit, notification will give information in lecturer's account. Next, students easily submit assignment anywhere via handphone. The forms were word, audio. Their knowledge becomes more increase about online learning. Students are faster to obtain information. Google classroom become useful media to learn English. By Google classroom, students and lecturer can make interaction. There was also a private comment. Here, students communicate with a lecturer anything relating to the topic. There was also space to interact between student and other students.

Madhavi K., Mohan V., & Nalla D. (2019) carried out a study on *'Improving Attainment of Graduate*



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Attributes using Google Classroom'. The results show that the Graduate Attributes attainment levels have improved in the course that used Google Classroom when compared to other courses using traditional methods for classroom management.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Method

A phenomenological methodology is required for the research problem. A total of 20 semi-structured interviews were conducted for this qualitative exploratory study. Purposive sampling technique was used. Participants for the present study were selected from the students of commerce faculty that were studying and taking examinations using Google Classroom as a tool for learning for at least two semesters. The intention of using purposive sampling technique was to gain an insight into the matter under investigation (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2006 as cited in Kaukab & Nayab, p. 56).

3.2 Participants

All the participants (10 males and 10 females) were the university students. Participants were affiliated with Sankalchand Patel University of Visnagar, North Gujarat, India. Only those students were selected who has been studying and taking the examinations on Google Classroom for at least two semesters. In order to protect the confidentiality of the participants, codes were assigned to participants at the time of transcription of interviews.

3.3 Instrumentation

The semi-structured interviews were conducted on the basis of a set of questions that were devised from the literature review and past studies. The questions covered various aspects of Google Classroom including familiarity, awareness, impact, effectiveness, and reflection on using Google Classroom.

3.4 Data Collection

Prior to the interviews of the participants, a consent form was given to them in which the purpose of the study and approval of Ethics Committee was attached. They were also informed that they could choose not



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to answer any of the formulated questions. After taking their consent, interviews were scheduled as per their convenience. All the interviews were conducted on the Google Classroom platform considering the severe situation of COVID 19 pandemic in the Gujarat. The duration of an interview, on an average, was 30 minutes. The interviews were conducted, primarily, in English language.

All the interviews were recorded. At the end of the interview, the researcher thanked the participant and informed him/her that a follow-up interview might be scheduled to triangulate dentsdata or for any clarification.

Digital recordings were transcribed into Nvivo (Version 10). Transcription of the interviews was carried after each interview. After transcribing, the data was analyzed and reviewed through the software to spot the emerging themes. The use of the software helped in quickly discovering the commonalities in the interviews. Data started to saturate when nine interviews were analyzed.

4. Findings

The questions were aimed at gaining insight into students' perception of the effectiveness of Google Classroom. The study included 20 higher education students (10 Males and 10 Females) from faculty of commerce: Five Undergraduate Male Students, Five Undergraduate Female Students, Five Post-graduate Male Students, and Five Post-graduate Female Students. They self-reported that they have been learning through Google Classroom for at least two semesters (12 months).

Table 4.1 represents the summary of respondents' profiles.

Identifier	Gender	Degree	Position	Semester	Experience of Learning through Google Classroom
T1	Male	M.Com.	Student	Semester III	2 Semesters
T2	Male	M.Com.	Student	Semester III	2 Semesters
T3	Male	M.Com.	Student	Semester III	2 Semesters
T4	Male	M.Com.	Student	Semester III	2 Semesters
T5	Male	M.Com.	Student	Semester III	2 Semesters
T6	Female	M.Com.	Student	Semester III	2 Semesters
T7	Female	M.Com.	Student	Semester III	2 Semesters
T8	Female	M.Com.	Student	Semester III	2 Semesters



T9	Female	M.Com.	Student	Semester III	2 Semesters
T10	Female	M.Com.	Student	Semester III	2 Semesters
T11	Male	B.Com.	Student	Semester V	2 Semesters
T12	Male	B.Com.	Student	Semester III	2 Semesters
T13	Male	B.Com.	Student	Semester III	2 Semesters
T14	Male	B.Com.	Student	Semester V	2 Semesters
T15	Male	B.Com.	Student	Semester III	2 Semesters
T16	Female	B.Com.	Student	Semester V	2 Semesters
T17	Female	B.Com.	Student	Semester V	2 Semesters
T18	Female	B.Com.	Student	Semester III	2 Semesters
T19	Female	B.Com.	Student	Semester III	2 Semesters
T20	Female	B.Com.	Student	Semester V	2 Semesters

5. Results and Discussion



5.1 Overall Effectiveness of the Tool:

When the students were asked about the overall effectiveness of Google Classroom as a tool for teaching-learning, most of the students were highly agreed as they considered it as a significant part of their overall learning.

My learning has become effective than earlier. (T4, T9, T11, T12, T17, T19, T20).

I really experienced improvement in increasing my level of engagement although it has helped me a lot in other areas. (T1, T7, T8, T10, T11, T12, T13, T17, T18, T19)

I would consider 80% success and 20% failure overall. (T1, T2, T8, T10, T11, T12, T15, T 18)

I find Google classroom as an effective tool overall. (All)

It has affected on my learning. Communication with my colleagues and teachers has improved through it. (T3, T4, T8, T9, T10, T14, T19, T20)

It's an interactive tool. Remarkable impact on learning-teaching strategy. (T5, T18)



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Most of them had positive remarks on its overall performance. (T7, T 15, T16, T18, T19, T20)

5.2 Facilitation of Assignments:

The key benefit that emerged from the interviews was related to assignments of the class. Students used Google classroom for different purposes and tasks assigned by their teachers, such as uploading assignments, unit tests, and submission of dissertation (M.Com.) progress work.

I use it for sharing assignments with my teachers and colleagues.(All)

Eliminates the hard copies of the assignments which is beneficial for the teachers as well as the students.(T2, T8, T11, T15, T 16, T18, T20)

Now my teachers can easily mark the assignments online at the end of the semester without students complaining that you have misplaced my assignment. (T6, T9, T14, T19)

My teachers received notification when I have completed an assignment.(All)

Easy tracking of assignments. (All)



5.3 Facilitation in the overall Teacher-Student Interaction:

Some of the students pointed out that they were able to interact with their teachers even outside the classroom which facilitated the overall teacher-student interaction.

I neither required WhatsApp group nor Facebook group to communicate with the teachers as I found announcement feature regularly to exchange messages with.(T16, T18, T19)

I don't have to send separate emails to my teachers. I can send messages and assignments easily. (All)

It facilitates interaction and discussion among teachers and colleagues. (T5, T8, T9, T11, T16)

5.4 Improvement in Classroom Organization:

Another key benefit that emerged from the interview was how students were able to better utilize their class and course through Google Classroom organized by their teachers.

It helps in uploading course materials with the whole class.(T7)



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It saves paper.(T3, T4, T8, T9, T10, T11, T14, T16, T17, T19, T20)

Now I don't have to send separate emails to teachers. I can send messages and assignments easily. (T5, 10, T12, 19)

It's a good tool for record keeping. Our teachers used to collect a number of sheets and papers from the students. (All)

Tracking progress of student's tasks and portfolios. (T14, T16, T17)

I use it mostly to upload assignments.(All)

It makes data sharing extremely easy. (T1, T4, T5, T6, T7, T11, T12, T14, T17, T19, T20)

I can take instant quizzes through Google classroom. (T8, T15)

5.5 Issues Faced by Students:

Students indeed faced very few issues. It is quite evident from their statements that students have faced difficulties in adoption of Google Classroom.

They find Google Classroom easy to use. (All)

It seem user-friendly to the students.(All)

It's widespread, so initially, students didn't find it challenging to use. (T3)

Students interact with the teacher by sending personal messages. (T14, T15, T18, T20)

I could frequently comment on the posts. (All)

Students think that uploading material online is not problematic at all. (All)

Students have come to teachers and said that it's easy to upload or edit material online. (All)

5.6 Issues Faced by Teachers:

Excessive use of such technologies can be beneficiary. (All)

It's difficult to monitor if students are using their mobile phones in the classroom for study purposes or checking their social media notifications (e.g. Instragram, Facebook or Whatsapp). (T2, T12, T18, T19,



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T20)

There were a few teachers who admitted that they were not able to effectively use the technology for improving classroom practices.

Maybe I wasn't able to make the platform interactive. (All)

It helps in uploading course materials to the whole class; however, sometimes when I forget to upload a file then students face difficulties. (All)

On the other hand, there were some teachers who considered Google Classroom difficult to adopt.

I don't like the fact that it is linked to my personal Gmail account. (All)

5.7 Improvement Areas:

The participants of the current study were asked to identify areas which can improve the effectiveness of Google Classroom. Students came up with some interesting features that can be included in Google Classroom.

I think video editing is a feature that is missing from Google classroom. (T15, T19, T20)

There must be an individual folder for each student. (T7)

There should be a space where students can work directly on documents; instead of downloading, editing, and then uploading documents. (T19, T20)

6. Conclusion

The analysis of the interviews revealed that Google Classroom has made a significant impact on overall classroom learning. It has been used effectively for uploading answers of question papers, uploading assignments, classroom management, audio-visuals, and communication with the students. Google Classroom has a lot to offer apart from just these basic features. One of the most important observation from the interviews was that all of the participants acknowledged or brought up the fact that it is a free tool and has no cost implications which is a major consideration while implementation of technology in the majority of the education sector in Gujarat, in particular India.

These are early years for Google Classroom and familiarity with this platform will grow over time for



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students as well as teachers. A significant finding of the study was that the interface of Google Classroom is not viewed as user-friendly by the students.

7. Contributions of the Study

The study proposes several recommendations for administrators and teachers. Google Classroom is a free tool that can be used by any University that does not have enough resources to form its own LMS (Learning Management System). It actually reduces the paperwork for the teachers and assists in classroom management. It also helps in enhancing the student-teacher interaction and communication.

Students and Teachers need to do spend some time initially to understand the various features of Google Classroom. Of course, you may face initial difficulties in getting used to its functionality. Teachers should also conduct a session to train students regarding the importance and use of Google Classroom in which they could explain the various features and benefits for the students.

8. Limitation and Future Research

This study was conducted in the higher education sector in North Gujarat (India) so findings cannot be generalized. A similar study can be conducted in primary or secondary schools to compare if the findings are consistent with the present study. Future studies can also incorporate quantitative techniques and obtain a mix methodology approach to further strengthen the validity of the findings. The study was based on analysis of interviews from students, it will be interesting to take into account the perceptions of teachers and compare those with students' perceptions. A comparative study can also be conducted by comparing the effectiveness of Google Classroom with other educational platforms.

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