Practicing Blended Learning at Engineering Institutions using Google Classroom to Teach English

Dr. Suganthan C.[1], Prof. Ramesh P. S.[2]
[1]Vellore Institute of Technology, India, suganthan.c@vit.ac.in
[2]Vellore Institute of Technology, India, ramesh.ps@vit.ac.in

ABSTRACT

Learning Management System (LMS) is the new normal among top institutions in India. Faculties at technical universities in India have started using LMS for various purposes to implement blended learning. LMS like Schoology, Moodle and Google classroom used for many academic activities by academicians across India. Some universities in India have built their own LMS for exclusive online courses. LMS can be used effectively to instruct, share materials, share information, conduct assessments and evaluate digitally by faculties in their classrooms. This paper is an attempt to explore the possibilities of using Google classroom to practice blended learning in English courses.

Key words: Learning Management System, Blended Learning, English Teaching, Google Classroom

1. INTRODUCTION

The current situation due to global pandemic (COVID 19) has forced almost every educational institution in the world to go online mode for their various academic activities. Institutions are looking for various Learning Management System (LMS) like Moodle, Schoology, Google Classroom and several other platforms to handle classes to their students.

This investigation is about the utilization of Google classroom as a viable LMS to deal with ESL/EFL classes at the college level. Google classroom is a gift from Google to incorporate blended learning into English language courses. English teachers at most of the institutions are expected to be familiar with ICT tools in teaching. Language laboratories at most of the higher education institutions allow English teachers to use technology to handle LSRW modules [6].

Successful teaching only happens when the instructor develops a rapport with students. Current students are millennials who were exposed to technology right from their kindergarten. They give their attention more towards gadgets than blackboards or any conventional teaching methodology. It is inevitable for the language teachers to accept this change and adapt themselves towards incorporating technology into their teaching methods and modules.

Importance of Technology Integrated Language Learning and Teaching is taken into serious considerations by the educational institutions now. IT giants like Microsoft and Google started to develop their meeting tools as LMS with video conferencing facilities. This paper intends to explore the facilities provided by Google classroom to incorporate blended learning in English courses.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Learning Management Systems are the programs that help a teacher to be connected with the students virtually. Basal A (2015) says that LMS acts as a bridge to gap the inadequate class hours in teaching. He says that for most of the students the learning happens outside the classrooms [1]. Lonn, S. & Teasley, S.D. (2009) says that an LMS is a software package and an online platform that facilitates online learning and teaching. This web-based system allows instructors and students to be connected online, share materials, make class announcements, assign class works and assignments and get back the same, and platform for communication within the class group [2].

Soni et al., in the article say that the Google Classroom can be used as a face to face communication tool by the educators and the learners [3]. Henukh et al mention that learners and the teacher can share files such as MS Word, PDF, MS Powerpoint, Audio and Video files [4].

Ernawati, M suggests teachers make test questions, pretests, and tests, transfer material and hold reflections can utilize that classwork. In the individual's menu, the teacher can welcome understudies by utilizing the entrance code that is accessible in the individual's bar, while to welcome different instructors as associates just by welcoming instructors through their separate messages. As online learning, google classroom has been demonstrated to help the accomplishment of educating and learning since it very well may be incorporated with any model or technique [5].

3. G CLASSROOM FOR CLASSROOM COMMUNICATIONS

The first step required for a flipped classroom or blended learning is the forum to communicate with the students. Communication in a conventional classroom is easy and face to face but there are many limitations. A teacher can communicate with students only during their class timings and possibilities are very limited for a teacher to meet and communicate with their students out of their class timings. Thanks to LMS like google classroom, which facilitates the communication between a faculty and students hassle-free.

This is like a free hand to the faculty to reach students outside the class hours. Google Classroom provides a separate forum to communicate with the people added to the classes created. Figure 1 shown below is a class communication made by the researcher to his class students. The communication was made using the stream option in Google classroom. The communication reached the students and they have raised some queries below the communication using the comments section.
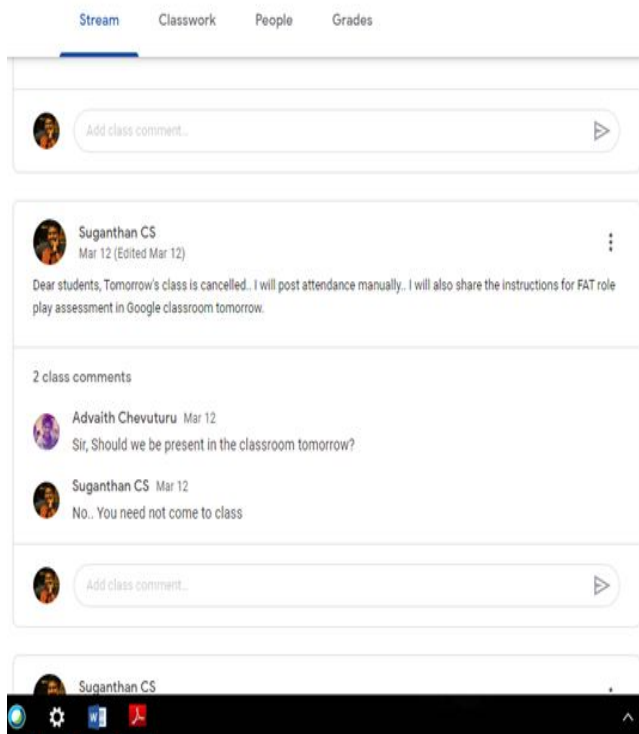

Figure 1: Classroom instructions communicated through STREAM option

Figure 2: Classroom communication with attachment facility

Communication with learners is a very important aspect of making a classroom successful. This is very essential when you assign some work to the learners. It is necessary to remind them frequently to get a better output. Google classroom also provides an attachment facility in the stream option where you can communicate and attach some notifications along with the communications. Sometimes we may have to add the circulars given by the institutions to give instructions to the student. Figure 2 is a common instruction given to students about additional learning.
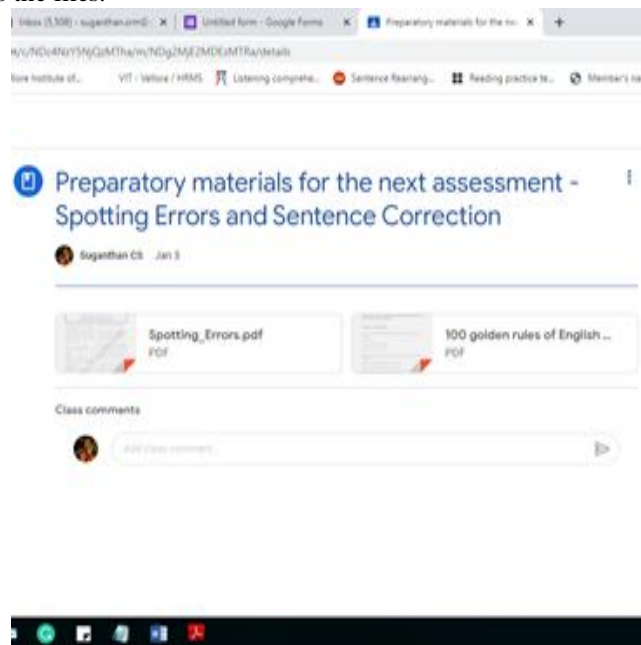
4. G CLASSROOM FOR MATERIAL SHARING

Google classroom is a reliable LMS to an English teacher in a way that all the required materials for the hands-on session can be shared to the students instantly. A language faculty may need to share some worksheets to the students to conduct classes. In conventional classes, the faculty has to make photocopies of the worksheets and distribute to the students to conduct a planned activity. However, with the help of Google classroom, a faculty can share any number of worksheets to the students instantly and the students can access the worksheets through their smartphones instantly after shared by the faculty [7].

The researcher, as an English faculty has conducted many sessions in teaching grammar and language concepts by sharing worksheets to the students through Google classroom. Also, this tool facilitates the teacher to share media files to the students and they can access the files using their smartphones. A language faculty must take the help of media files like audio and video to conduct listening and speaking sessions. The role of audiovisual(AV) media in a language class is incredible in the teaching-learning process of LSRW skills. Practising with AV facilities in a conventional classroom is a big challenge for a language teacher. Thanks to google classroom, which delivers the AV files directly to the smartphones of the students. All they need is a smartphone and an earphone to access the files.
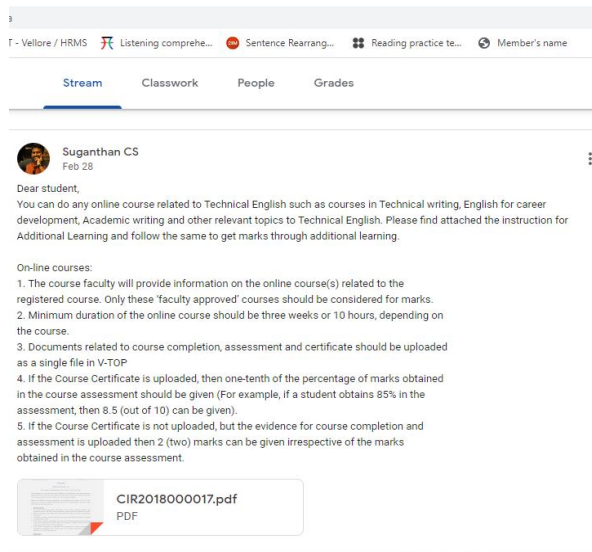
Figure 3: Material sharing through Google classroom

5. G CLASSROOM FOR ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

One of the biggest challenges in Indian English classrooms is the student strength, especially, in the technical education institutions. This is the biggest challenge for English teachers across the world. Providing continuous assessments in a classroom of 65 students would be tedious for an instructor. Google classroom makes the work easier for a language teacher providing multiple options to assess and grade student activities. Google classrooms allow the faculty to create quizzes with the help of google forms. A faculty can create a quiz, add MCQs to the quiz, assign rubrics and answer key to the quiz. Once the quiz gets assigned, the students can access the quiz and answer the questions in an instant. The students get the result and the review of the answers as soon as they submit the quiz. A faculty can customize the quiz as per the need, for instance, a faculty can turn off the review of answers and marks option. Later, the faculty can release scores and review option manually after everyone in the class completes the quiz.

A variety of assessments in the areas like grammar, vocabulary, reading, listening and many other English components can be assessed through objective type questions using Google classroom. There are also possibilities to provide descriptive assessments like essay writing, paragraph writing and other similar assessments using the assignment option in Google classroom. The only drawback in descriptive assessment is the faculty has to read all the answers manually from the screen and award marks to the students.

The other important challenge of a large classroom in conventional mode is conducting classroom assessments. Making a fair assessment in a populated classroom is nearly impossible. However, a fair assessment in a populated classroom is possible with the assistance of technology. A faculty can make use of the options like shuffle question order and shuffle answer choice order. Therefore, the students get questions in random order and the choices are shuffled. This avoids students discussing the answers in a large classroom.
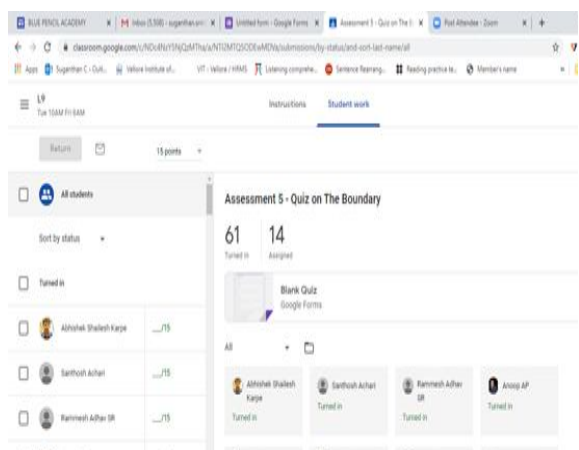

Figure 4: Descriptive type assessment through Google classroom
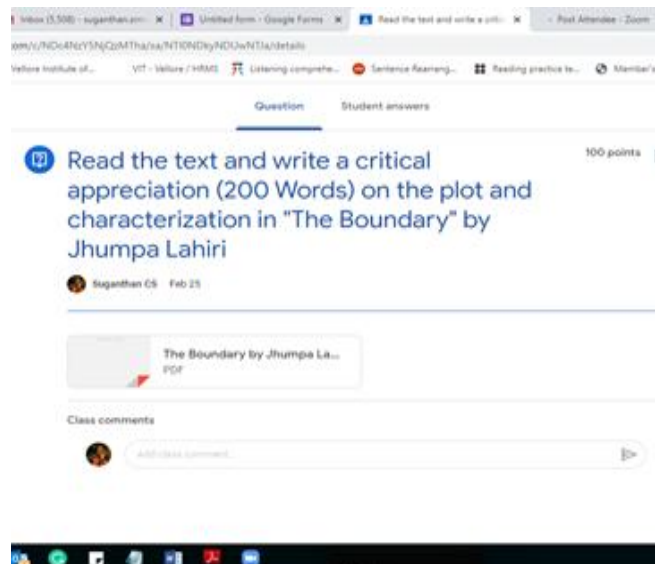

Figure 5: Quiz with MCQs on "The Boundary" – A short story

Figure 4 and Figure 5 shows the assessments shared to the students.

6. STATISTICAL APPROACH

The researcher is a language faculty, who surveyed the effectiveness of Google classroom in his classroom. Eighty-five students from two different batches participated in this survey and their views are statistically elaborated in this section. The first question to the students was about the user-friendliness of Google classroom to conduct class activities. A large majority of 96.5% of students agreed that the Google classroom is user friendly. The figure below shows the statistical data. In the following question, the students were asked whether the tool is an easy source to access the class materials and 88.2% agreed and the rest of 11.8% said maybe and they are not sure.

The third question is about the communication to the students from the faculty and 90.6% of students agreed that they get information from the faculty instantly through Google classroom. Only 1.2% disagreed and the rest of 8.2% answered maybe as the choice. The fourth question checked whether the students were able to communicate with faculty easily through Google classroom and 57.6% of students agreed that. 30.6% said that they are not sure about this and 11.8% disagreed that it is not easy to communicate with faculty through Google classroom.

The next question was about the ease of access in-class materials through Google classroom and 49.4% said mostly agreed. 48% of the students strongly agreed that Google classroom is an efficient means to access shared media files. 67.1% of students strongly agreed that the online quizzes conducted through Google classroom are easy to access and answer. On a scale of 1 to 10 on the overall satisfaction, 31.8% has given 10 points, 42.4% has given 9 points, 20% has

given 8 points and only a very minor percentage has given 6 and 7 points.

7. CONCLUSION

This statistical analysis indicates that a majority of the class agreed that Google classroom is an effective tool to incorporate blended learning. This tool, in many ways, proved helpful to a language faculty such as communicating with the students, material sharing, delivering assessments in multiple forms and even getting survey feedbacks from students made simple. To conclude, this paper attempted to describe the uses and facilities of Google classroom in English classes and the researcher has provided the content with real-time usage examples and statistical proof from the survey conducted in two batches of English classes.

REFERENCES

1. Başal, Ahmet.(2015). Perceptions of Pre-service English Teachers towards the Integration of an LMS into English Language Teacher Education. Journal of Technology and Teacher Education. 23. 485-507.
2. Lonn, S. &Teasley, S.D. (2009). Saving time or innovating practise: Investigating perceptions and uses of Learning Management Systems. Computers & Education.53 (3), pp. 686-694. Elsevier Ltd. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2009.04.008
3. Soni, S., Hafid, A., Hayami, R., Fatma, Y., Wenando, F. A., Al Amien, J., ...& Hasanuddin, H. (2018). OptimalisasiPenggunaan Google Classroom, E-Learning & Blended Learning Sebagai Media PembelajaranBagi Guru Dan Siswa Di SMK Negeri 1 Bangkinang. JurnalPengabdianUntukMuNege RI, 2(1): 17-20.
   https://doi.org/10.37859/jpumri.v2i1.361
4. Henukh, A., Simbolon, M., &Budiman, N. A. (2019).DeskripsiSistemPembelajaranFisikaMelaluiP endekatanKontekstual. Musamus Journal of Science Education, 2(1): 22-30.
5. Ernawati, M. (2018).Media Pembelajaran Google Classroom.Kompas. Jakarta, December 18th.
6. Suganthan C. (2019). Differences in the Board of Education and its Impact in the Writings of Engineering Graduates. International Journal of Advanced Trends in Computer Science and Engineering 8(5):2677-2679
   https://doi.org/10.30534/ijatcse/2019/1238512019
7. Al-Omari, Omaia& Omari, N.. (2019). Enhanced document classification using noun verb (Nv) terms extraction approach. International Journal of Advanced Trends in Computer Science and Engineering. 8. 85-92.
   10.30534/ijatcse/2019/15812019.