

Students' Perception on Using Google Classroom to Improve English Writing Skills

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ABSTRACT

Google Classroom is a widely used feature by educators to help them submit and organize student assignments. The objective of this study is to ascertain students' perspectives on the utilisation of Google Classroom in English classes. The method used a qualitative research design involving STKIP Yasika Majalengka students who had used Google Classroom in English courses in the first semester with a sample of 120 students. Data was collected via surveys and interviews. The acquired data was examined through the process of theme analysis. The findings revealed that college students consider Google Classroom a helpful tool that helps them turn in assignments easily and manage tasks better. Therefore, it can be concluded that Google Classroom is helpful for lecturers and students in improving their writing skills in English courses. The incorporation of technology into education is anticipated to foster the development of a dynamic learning environment. Technology has the potential to enhance the educational process by offering a wide range of tools and resources that assist students and instructors in achieving their learning objectives with greater efficiency. This study contributes valuable insights into students' perspectives regarding using Google Classroom facilities to enhance learning without disrupting the learning process.

Keywords: Google Classroom, Writing Skills, Technology in ELT, Technology in Education, Digital Education



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1. INTRODUCTION

English is an essential language for students to learn these days. English is essential as it serves as a global language facilitating communication among students and their English teachers. In today's world, people from all walks of life use English to communicate and interact with others. According to Putri et al. (2022), humans are inherently gregarious, incapable of solitary existence, and need to communicate with one another through language. Language plays a vital role in human life (Cummins, 2021; Humeau et al., 2023). If people do not speak the same language, they may find it challenging to communicate with one another. Language is used to express thoughts (Jackson et al., 2022), ideas (Rahmat et al., 2023), and feelings (Richards, 2022). Writing is defined as the transmission of messages or communication using written language as a medium (Bulqiyah et al., 2021).

Writing is one of the skills in English (Teng & Yue, 2023; Zulaiha & Triana, 2023). Writing is the act of transmitting information using the written word as a medium. Written communication involves four key components: the writer as the sender of the message, the writing content, the medium, and the reader as the recipient. Learning to write is an essential skill for students who are studying a foreign language (Alfadil, 2020; Sun & Wang, 2020), alongside listening, speaking, and reading (Conklin et al., 2020; Rukthong & Brunfaut, 2020; Vafae & Suzuki, 2020). Writing is also necessary in various situations.

Writing is an important way of recording speech and should be seen as a secondary mode of communication. It is a vital means of communication and a necessary skill for professions like journalism and novel writing. Moreover, writing can improve people's thinking processes. Despite students' low interest in writing, it is one of the defining characteristics of an educated student. Technology advancements have significantly impacted society and various aspects of our lives, including business operations. It is important to highlight that the preceding three industrial revolutions had a pivotal impact on the advancement of contemporary technology and economic efficiency (Oke & Fernandes, 2020).

The digital era has brought everything into the digital world. Digital technology has revolutionised how we establish connections and engage with one another (Hidayat et al., 2022; Van Veldhoven & Vanthienen, 2022). In this era, technology can also be used to enhance creativity and generate ideas, imagination, and reasoning power by creating digital content (Bereczki & Kárpáti, 2021; Selfa-Sastre et al., 2022; Tursinawati & Widodo, 2019). However, in the digital era, acquiring knowledge can be challenging as it requires covering many different topics (Bonfield et al., 2020; Polizzi, 2020).

The use of technology in education is becoming increasingly popular. According to Hwang & Tu (2021), incorporating technology in the classroom can help students accomplish their learning goals. Additionally, technology has a positive impact on student engagement (Bedenlier et al., 2020; Bond et al., 2020; Xu et al., 2020). When used alongside traditional classroom settings, technology can improve the learning environment for students, making classes more enjoyable (Bouilheres et al., 2020; Heilporn et al., 2021; Taghizadeh & Hajhosseini, 2021). At the university level, technology has significantly impacted the teaching and learning process (Akram et al., 2021; Almazova et al., 2020). Teachers and students alike use computers and cell phones to assist them in their activities, even when they have limited access to the internet. Many teachers use technology to simplify the collection of assignments from students. Students are usually asked to submit their assignments via email, saving time for collecting and checking assignments. However, there are some disadvantages to this technique. Firstly, students cannot discuss their assignments with their teachers. They can only send their tasks without receiving any further feedback. Secondly, students are unaware of their grades, resulting in less transparency. Thirdly, students may send their work to the wrong email address, leading to assignments not being received by the teacher.

To address the weaknesses of traditional methods of collecting student assignments, educators can leverage technological advancements to their advantage. There are now many mobile-based applications available that can help collect student assignments more efficiently. One such application is Google Classroom, which was developed specifically for educational settings (Gupta & Pathania, 2021; Rosyada & Sundari, 2021). This app eliminates the need for paper-based assignments and streamlines the process of creating, delivering, and grading assignments. Google Classroom is easily downloadable onto smartphones or computers and can be used by both educators and students (Huang et al., 2021; Warman, 2021). To get started, educators simply need to create a class and share the class code with their students so that they can join the class. Once joined, students can easily submit, revise, and review their assignments with ease.

Google Classroom is a free web platform designed to simplify the learning process for educators and students (Kumar et al., 2020). It is considered one of the most useful applications for digital learning in this era (Hussein et al., 2021). Google Classroom can be defined as an open-source software application that can be studied, improved, and disseminated. It is like a digital classroom, where teachers and students can interact with one another (Gupta & Pathania, 2021; Perrotta et al., 2021).

There have been few studies that focus on the opinions of students regarding the use of Google Classroom, which is important as they are the primary users of the application. This study was conducted to determine how students perceive the use of Google Classroom, especially in writing subjects. Educational technology not only has the potential to transform learning but can also improve student outcomes when implemented effectively by teachers. Azhar & Iqbal (2018) has identified two key elements that are necessary to create an environment that supports technology integration. Firstly, teachers need to carefully select the right technology tools that can be put into the hands of their students. Secondly, technological tools must be developed to enhance innovation, problem-solving, teamwork, and decision-making.

Teachers can greatly enhance the learning experience for their students by incorporating various educational technologies alongside traditional classroom settings. One such technology that's particularly suitable for developing countries with limited budgets is the free Google Classroom app. This app has the capability to operate as a learning management system for educational institutions such as universities, colleges, and schools (Modise, 2022). By making use of Google Classroom, teachers can optimize class time and make it more effective for students. Google Classroom was initially launched in 2014 and is a platform that encourages collaboration between students and instructors (Arsini et al., 2021). This tool has the potential to transform passive learners into active ones. According to Gupta & Pathania (2021) and Martin (2021), teachers can leverage Google Classroom to create a collaborative and student-centered learning environment. Google Classroom's user-friendly teaching tools make it possible for students of all levels to work together, with group leaders being particularly effective motivators for sharing tasks and knowledge.

Google Classroom is a multifunctional platform that has proven to be useful for various learning categories, including adult learners. One of its key features is paperless access, which can be accessed from anywhere with an internet connection. It is an effective tool for communication between teachers and students, allowing them to exchange ideas, provide feedback, and personalize instruction. With its teaching features, teachers can easily create and manage assignments while providing timely feedback to students. Google Classroom makes it easy for teachers to manage student work and is highly beneficial to both teachers and students because of its user-friendly interface and durability.

To use Google Classroom, there are several steps you need to follow. First, download the app and sign in. If you are a teacher, you can create a class, or as a student, you can join a class. Next, teachers can add class information such as descriptions, instructions, and Google Drive folders for materials in the "about" tab. Additionally, teachers have the ability to append course outlines and lesson plans. Once the class is set up, students can join freely if they have an institutional Google account and can find the class code in the "stream" tab. In Google Classroom, teachers have the option to make announcements. They can use this feature to update students on class-related information and attach files or class materials. Additionally, teachers can create tasks and upload work for students to complete within a designated time frame. Students have the option to download materials that the teacher has uploaded in order to fulfil their homework.

Google Classroom offers a variety of features that make it easy for both teachers and students to interact. One such feature is the ability for students to create questions that they can discuss with their teacher or classmates, provided the teacher has allowed it. Another useful feature is the option to reuse important posts like announcements, assignments, and questions. This can save teachers a lot of time and effort. Google Classroom is a user-friendly, free, and mobile-friendly platform that simplifies the process of sending and tracking assignments. It also provides various communication options, including announcements, emails, and notifications, making it easy to communicate with the entire class or individuals. Kumar et al. (2020) and Nursyahrina et al. (2021) notes, Google Classroom has been designed to streamline the instructional interface and make it effortless to use.

Google Classroom is an advantageous tool for distance education, but it has a few limitations that teachers and learners should be aware of. According to Singh et al. (2020), Google Classroom has limited integration options, it is too focused on Google, lacks automatic updates, and has difficulties with learner sharing and editing. Teachers find it challenging to manage teaching materials and set assignment due dates. Additionally, some Google Classroom buttons are only familiar to experienced Google users, leaving new users feeling confused or requiring additional time to learn how to use them.

We conducted a preliminary study of several papers that have used Google Classroom in English learning. Research by Warman (2021) used Google Classroom media to examine the general English language skills of 68 students. Research by Albashtawi & Al Bataineh (2020) focused on the English reading and writing of 26 students. Research by Melani (2020) focused on the English listening of 78 students. Research by Nguyen (2021) on Google Classroom media focused on the English listening of 100 students. When compared to several of these studies, as a novelty, this study only focuses on writing skills and uses students' perceptions in using Google Classroom media. Therefore, the objective of this study is to ascertain students' perspectives on the utilisation of Google Classroom in English classes.

2. METHOD

This research study utilized an exploratory qualitative research design, where purposive sampling techniques were employed to select the participants. The study participants were chosen from students who had used Google Classroom for at least one semester during the academic year 2023-2024. One hundred twenty students from STKIP Yasika Majalengka semester one English courses were selected as participants. To investigate students' perceptions of using Google Classroom to improve their writing skills in English courses, open questionnaires, and interviews were used to collect data.

A questionnaire was distributed to students to investigate their perceptions of Google Classroom, including their familiarity with the platform, as well as its advantages and disadvantages. The questions were created based on literature reviews and past studies. To ensure the accuracy of the information gathered, semi-structured interviews were conducted to verify the responses obtained through the questionnaire. To ensure the confidentiality of the participants, codes were assigned to them during the transcription of the interviews. The interviews were recorded on video, and the data collected was transcribed and analyzed thematically. Field notes were also used to supplement the data analysis. Finally, the data was interpreted to identify the research results.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the questionnaires and interviews conducted, it was observed that students have a favorable perception of the use of Google Classroom in their English courses. The data collected focused on the students' familiarity and knowledge of Google Classroom, including its pros and cons. The information obtained from the questionnaires and interviews indicate that the students are well-acquainted with Google

Classroom and have a good understanding of its features. This is most likely due to their previous use of Google Classroom during the first semester of their course.

The interview aimed to explore students' familiarity and knowledge of Google Classroom. Google Classroom is a free app that can be used as an online class platform. It has several features, such as submitting assignments, studying, and more. Based on the results of the interview answers to 120 students, the researchers identified the respondents' answers into six groups of students based on the similarity of the students' answers. We labeled the six groups S1 to S6. The following is an analysis of the answers from group S1 to group S6.

Group S3 stated that they have been using Google Classroom for about a semester and have found several features such as discussion forums, finding learning materials, submitting assignments, and more. Group S1 mentioned that they use Google Classroom for some courses like writing. They use it to submit assignments, download learning materials, and ask lecturers and friends for instructions or materials. Group S5 shared that Google Classroom is a great app for teachers and students to communicate without the need for face-to-face interactions. They mostly use the app to submit assignments, download learning materials, and read instructions. Group S2 also found Google Classroom helpful for teachers and students to communicate anytime. They mainly use it to submit assignments, download learning materials and read instructions.

Based on the data analysis, it was found that students utilize Google Classroom for various purposes. The primary use of the platform is to submit their assignments. Apart from this, they also use the streaming feature to communicate with their lecturers and peers. Lecturers frequently post course materials on the platform, making it easy for students to access them. One of the significant advantages of using Google Classroom is that it facilitates more feedback from both the faculty and peers. This finding is consistent with the argument made by Jumadi et al. (2021) that Google Classroom fosters an active learning environment. Students have found Google Classroom to be an incredibly helpful tool for their learning experience. This platform offers numerous advantages that make it easier for them to access course materials, submit and receive assignments, and turn in work without any hassle. In addition, students have mentioned that the quality of learning activities provided by Google Classroom is excellent, helping them to submit work on time and receive useful feedback from their lecturers. Furthermore, Google Classroom's grading system helps in monitoring student performance and understanding of the topics being discussed. It also ensures consistency in subject objectives, grading, and content. Finally, students feel comfortable conversing through this application because lecturers help participants discuss, making them feel at ease while interacting with other participants.

Here is some data taken from interviews about students' perceptions that show the advantages of using Google Classroom. Group S6 stated "We enjoy using Google Classroom because it is user-friendly and simple to navigate." Group S3 stated, "Google Classroom sends notifications about assignment deadlines and provides an easy way to check feedback." Group S4 stated "We can use Google Classroom to discuss the material or anything else. It has been very helpful." Group S2 stated "We believe that the features are an all-inclusive package that allows me to submit assignments, engage in discussions, view learning materials, and receive clear instructions."

Based on the interviews conducted, it was discovered that all the students were content with the use of Google Classroom in their writing subjects. They stated that Google Classroom served as a learning initiative and a motivation booster. These findings are in line with the research conducted by Ali & Maksum (2020) and Nugroho & Atmojo (2022) who also discovered several benefits of using Google Classroom. Throughout the semester, the students did not face many challenges while using Google Classroom for their writing assignments. The only issue they encountered was related to internet connectivity. Participants mentioned that they only experienced difficulties when they were unable to access the internet, which, in turn, prevented them from accessing Google Classroom. According to Syafi'i (2020) and Salam (2020), Google Classroom can be accessed from anywhere and at any time if there is an internet connection.

According to student feedback, Google Classroom has more benefits than drawbacks. It helped students complete their English assignments by providing clear instructions and access to additional resources. However, using Google Classroom can vary depending on student and teacher experience and learning objectives so that it can be integrated into education effectively.

4. CONCLUSION

The study found that Google Classroom has proven beneficial for students. Students reported that it helps them manage their writing assignments effectively. The platform's features are user-friendly and easy to navigate. Additionally, internet access allows students to access Google Classroom anytime and from any location. Therefore, Google Classroom can be a valuable tool for teachers to enhance their students' English writing skills. It can also help in managing assignments in a paperless manner, making it simple to provide feedback. This study contributes valuable insights into students' perspectives regarding using Google Classroom facilities to enhance learning without disrupting the learning process. In general, numerous students perceive Google Classroom as a valuable instrument for facilitating online education,

particularly when educators utilize it proficiently. Nevertheless, the outcome can vary significantly based on how individuals utilize and adjust to the technology.

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