Abstract

Today e-learning is blooming as a vital part of digital age education which facilitates a virtual environment for enhanced interaction & engagement between teachers and fellow learners and to engage them with resources for effective learning. Despite having significant potential, the Google classroom is still vastly underutilized especially in developing countries e.g. Bangladesh. This study is an endeavor to identify the factors responsible for poor engagement of students in Google classroom and to explore other critical barriers behind the underutilization of this virtual learning platform. From the empirical findings, this study attempts to explain and testify the effectiveness of strategies adopted in different classes for more engagement and proactive participation from the students. The primary data was acquired through a baseline survey which was carried out using a pre-defined structured questionnaire with a sample size of 350 randomly selected undergraduate students from different levels. Several case studies were also carried out along with participatory and non-participatory observations of student activities as methodology of this research. The research questions were: a) Do the peer influence improves student engagement in critical thinking? b) Do the passive role of teacher increase the
active participation of students? c) Do the students prefer Facebook groups as a platform for
group study instead of Google classroom? The findings of this study, empirically unearths peer
influence as a significant determinant of the effectiveness of Google classroom. Furthermore,
the majority of learners are found more comfortable while teachers play passive facilitators’ role
instead of active intervention whereas the availability of Facebook groups as a popular alternate
platform for interaction may limit the utilization of Google classroom. Finally the data analysis
reveals that the strategic changes in selected dependent variables facilitate more proactive
engagement by the learners which in turn enhance the effectiveness through optimum utilization
of the opportunities of Google classroom as a virtual platform for more effective learning.

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Index Terms

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Virtual classroom, Facebook group, Learning Engagement, peer influence, critical thinking, ownership