Effects of Blackboard on the preparatory students at Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University, Saudi Arabia

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Abstract: The study is aimed at analyzing the effects of blackboard on preparatory students. A blackboard is a learning tool that allows students to use the course whenever they want. Blackboard allows students to access information of the study, the books needed on the course for IAU 101 or 102 books, deadlines for assignments, the assignment framework, quizzes, discussion subjects, voice presentations, and all the marks they have obtained during their session. Furthermore, students can attend live lectures, review material and discussions via a virtual environment from anywhere provided they have a stable internet connection. This research aims to determine the obstacles that English learners face while using the blackboard and the degree of effect that blackboard might have in IAU. The sample consisted of 325 students from Health, Engineering, and Science at IAU, and only 224 students completed the survey. The study found that using blackboard positively affected learners as it inspired them to learn better, motivated them to work harder than using traditional teaching methods.

Keywords: Blackboard, 101 and 102 English Courses, motivation, application, PYP program and writing portfolio, skills gap.

Background of the study

Blackboard is a platform that educators and instructors can use to help students learn more effectively. Administrators use a blackboard to communicate information such as exam schedules, space updates, and scheduling revisions. Teachers use blackboard for announcements, quizzes, homework, debate, and presentations and some live links to instructional websites to assist students. The instructor will also use a blackboard to monitor students to see if they are using the forum and provide input on their success. Blackboard has many valuable features, such as student previews, community integration, and marking points. Students will see what scores and marks they have and what they need. Although blackboard has been used in EFL for over a decade, there is no research on its usefulness from learners' perspectives and student encouragement to use the method(Bradford et al., 2007; Khine, 2003; Luckin et al., 2006; Sife et al., 2007; Singh & Reed, 2004; Yucel, 2006).

Following are some of the obstacles that male students in Science, Engineering, and Health face in using blackboard as a blended learning system in the PYP program. The amount of information on the blackboard may be overwhelming for learners coming into the preparatory program of the University from School life. Teachers have to explain how blackboard works, how to use this tool for the betterment of learners. Students have to be motivated to use a blackboard, and in the English program, 20 % of their overall mark is correctly using blackboard. In IAU quizzes, assignments, discussion forums, presentations, and Oxford learning, blackboard makes up this 20 % of marks. Here motivation is the key; Dörnyei (1998) stated that "Researchers seem to agree that motivation is responsible for determining human behavior by energizing it and giving it direction, but the great variety of accounts put forward in the literature of how this happens may surprise even the seasoned researcher." At IAU, this 20 % can be the difference between passing and failing the course in the English Language Program(Al-Zubeiry, 2012; Alkhalaf et al., 2012; Asiri et al., 2012; Choudhury, 2015; Mapuva, 2009).

Introduction

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia currently has 28 government or public universities, 27 private universities and schools, and several other training institutions, many of which deliver an intensive English preparatory year for their students (http://www.mohe.gov.sa). Blackboard or some in-house e-learning tool is used as a learning tool in most of these institutions, with most instruction

on this platform in English. These programs were designed as the government felt it necessary to have this policy implemented in Saudi Arabia. "Saudi Arabia's decision-makers, partners, and other responsible bodies view the English language as a critical tool for the country's success in terms of both foreign affairs and strong educational growth since the 1960s," one source states. Saudi Arabia's official language is English, which is learned in the majority of preparatory schools (Al Zumor et al., 2013; Alaidarous & Madini, 2016; Alhazbi, 2016; Alshahrani, 2016).

Hypothesis

1. Does the use of blackboard have a positive or negative effect on Science, Health and Engineering students?

2. Has blackboard increased the English ability of Science, Health and Engineering students in the PYP program at Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University?

3. Has 20 % of the final grade on the PYP program increased the use of Blackboard at Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University?

Research Questions

1. What are the difficulties facing English students using Blackboard at Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University, Deanship of Preparatory Year and Supporting Studies?

2. What are the perceptions of English Students at Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University, PYP, in terms of the effectiveness of the blackboard?

3. What are the effects, especially of Science, Health and Engineering Students Using Blackboard as a tool for enhancing their English learning?

Literature Review

Many experiments have been done on the use of blackboard, but only few have looked at how mighty blackboard is at inspiring learners and what learners think about its utility. The writers in brackets have discussed EFL and the use of blackboard as a learning method extensively. These scholars saw blackboard as a helpful method for educating students and backed it up with numbers, but they did not look at what students felt about the application and what they wanted to research for themselves. (Dörnyei, 1998; Mapuva, 2009; Smith, 2001; Yucel, 2006)

This paper aims to look at the usefulness of blackboard from the viewpoint of both teachers and students, as opposed to the previous papers, which just looked at the blackboard as a learning aid. In contrast to other literature reviews that looked at motivational elements of using blackboard, this paper looked at using Blackboard applications required in the preparatory year by learners.

Another study by Alkhalaf et al. (2012) investigated how blackboard can be used in Saudi Arabian universities' English language preparatory courses. This paper recognized blackboard's value and highlighted how it offered important material online that students could access at any time if they had an internet connection. In this paper, Alkhalaf et al. (2012) on the other hand, declined to address how learners felt about using blackboard and whether they wanted coaching or preparation to get the most out of it. These articles failed to consider that students may have transferred directly from high school to university and may not be familiar with using technology.

This paper differs from those of its kind in that it considers not only the motivating elements of a blackboard but also what learners find helpful in using blackboard and why they required instruction in this use. The analysis also shows that a limited proportion of marks associated with this application has a 99 percent impact on how much students use blackboard.

Methodology

The questionnaire asks learners to respond to questions with one of five options: strongly accept, agree, normal, disagree, or strongly disagree. We choose students in the preparatory year for both Engineering, Health, and Science colleges who are all male, aged 18 and up, and transferred directly from high school to the university preparatory year, with 99.9% of them being Saudi Arabian students. Students had the option of checking a box or selecting the correct answer. We discovered that out of 325 participants, 225 finished the questionnaire, while 101 began but did not finish it.

The questionnaire asked learners 15 questions about various ways of using blackboard as a learning method and which functionality they considered helpful. In addition, Students in the PYP program were asked what kind of preparation they would need to use this tool. The queries were written entirely in English. One of the most important aspects of this research was that the participants were expected to understand and comprehend English. The Arabic language was not used at any point during the survey. The majority of respondents choose from five options: 1.

strongly approve, 2. agree, 3. neutral, four disagree, and five strongly disagree about the blackboard and its features. We also asked students which of the following features of blackboard they find most useful: announcements, course guide, course material, materials, writing assignments, debate, oxford Q skills, quizzes, and presentations. This is a compilation of Blackboard programs. Throughout the school year, IAU University invites students to use it as a method of self-learning.

Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was given to a random sample of male students in the Engineering, Health, and Science Colleges of Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University's preparatory program. The responses were translated to a percentage. The learners were sent the following series of questions using an application named Questionpro, an easy-to-use questionnaire web development platform. The connection was distributed at Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University in the preparatory year to as many classes as possible, ranging from beginners to intermediate learners. It was divided between Engineering, Health, and Science students. Teachers of Engineering, Health, and Science students were asked to submit the connection to their students to inspire their students to complete the questionnaire. Since these were teachers that the students respected, they were more than willing to assist with the survey. No names or ages of students were included, and all responses were kept secret, with teachers being asked to explain this to their students. All the responses were either choose a letter or tick a box. The survey results were gathered and tabulated in a table, such as pie charts or bar charts.

Data Analysis Procedure

All the data were plotted in a pie chart or a bar graph. Statistics were measured to indicate the proportion of learners who Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Neutral, Disagreed, Strongly Disagreed, and features in blackboard that learners considered most helpful, and the standard deviation of these figures and the mistake created by using these statistics.

Results/Finding.

This study aims to see if blackboard is effective in encouraging students to use it. We have chosen a few questions to demonstrate our research results, and we have included graphs with ratios, standard deviations, and errors from student responses. The first question was posed in the following manner: Blackboard, in my opinion, offers a lively and stimulating learning atmosphere. Regarding the first question, 40.62 percent approved, with 29.02 percent strongly agreeing, with a standard deviation of 0.0904 percent and a margin of error of 0.063 percent.

I think Blackboard offers a lively and interesting way of learning.

Mean : 2.094 | Confidence Interval @ 95% : [1.971 - 2.217] | Standard Deviation : 0.940 | Standard Error : 0.063
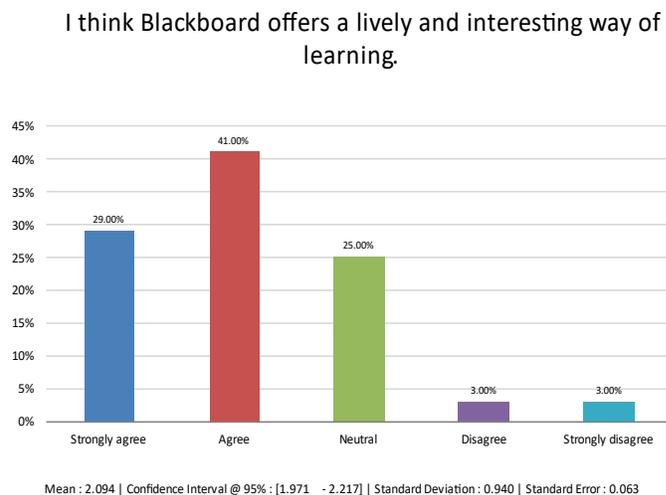
Figure. 1

The next interesting question is that using blackboard helps me learn various aspects of my courses at my pace from this question, 39 % agreed with this statement with 18 % strongly agreeing with this with a standard deviation of 1.035% of standard deviation and 0.069% error.

I think Blackboard offers much needed variety in the learning of my courses.

Mean : 2.424 | Confidence Interval @ 95% : [2.289   - 2.560] | Standard Deviation : 1.035 | Standard Error : 0.069
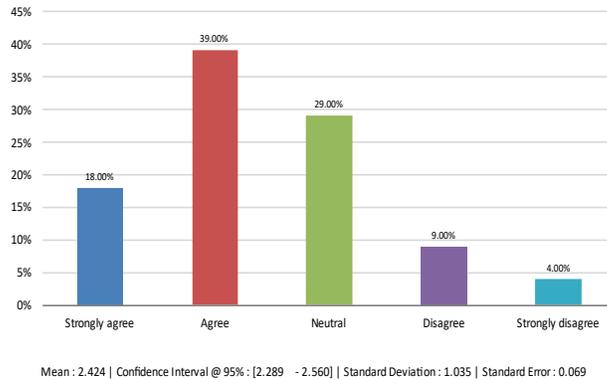
Figure. 2

The next interesting question was how often learners visit blackboard; the results showed that a surprising figure of 62% visit Blackboard every day, with 18 % visiting it three times a week. With a standard deviation of 1.099% and a standard error of 0.073%. Therefore, the motivation to use blackboard was good.

I visit the Blackboard(Tick the correct choice):

Mean : 1.719 | Confidence Interval @ 95% : [1.575   - 1.863] | Standard Deviation : 1.099 | Standard Error : 0.073
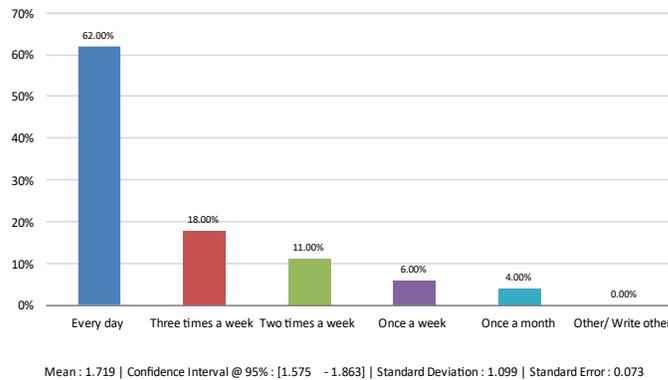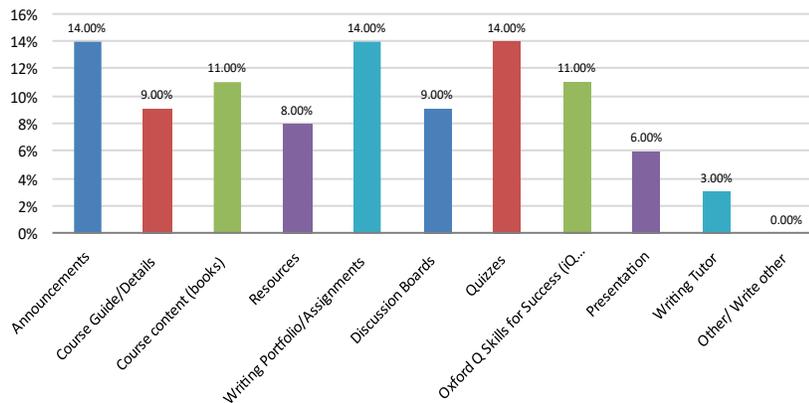
Figure. 3

The question of the features on the blackboard I often visit was varied, with 14 % looking at announcements,14% looked at quizzes and writing portfolio,11% on books, and 9% on discussions element of the blackboard, which was expected since Quizzes and Assignments carry marks towards learners final University grade. GPA score determining which course they will go to when they join their main subject in the faculty of either Engineering or Science Colleges.

The features on the Blackboard I frequently visit (Select your choices from the list)

Mean : 5.027 | Confidence Interval @ 95% : [4.883 - 5.171] | Standard Deviation : 2.690 | Standard Error : 0.073

QuestionPro

Figure. 4

Only 15% of the learners said the blackboard was not useful, and 10% strongly agreed with this statement. However, the vast majority argued it was useful, suggesting that learners found blackboard useful to their learning habits and not a hindrance.

I think learning through Blackboard is not useful.

Mean : 3.429 | Confidence Interval @ 95% : [3.265 - 3.592] | Standard Deviation : 1.247 | Standard Error : 0.083
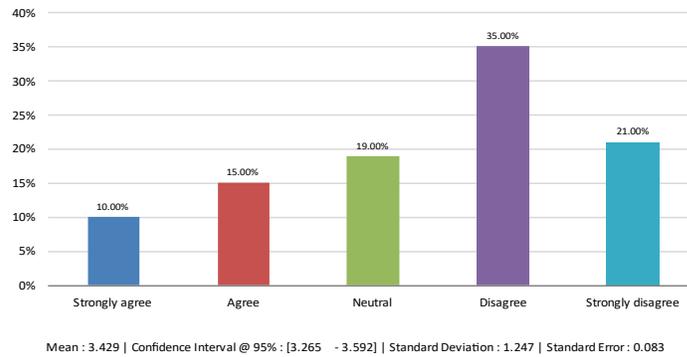
QuestionPro

Figure. 5

Unfortunately, it was found that over 40% of learners faced technical issues when it came to using blackboard with a standard deviation of 1.178% and an error of .0.079 %. The researchers did not go too deep into the technical problems because of the limited time and resources.

I face technical problems while using Blackboard.

Mean : 2.696 | Confidence Interval @ 95% : [2.542 - 2.851] | Standard Deviation : 1.178 | Standard Error : 0.079
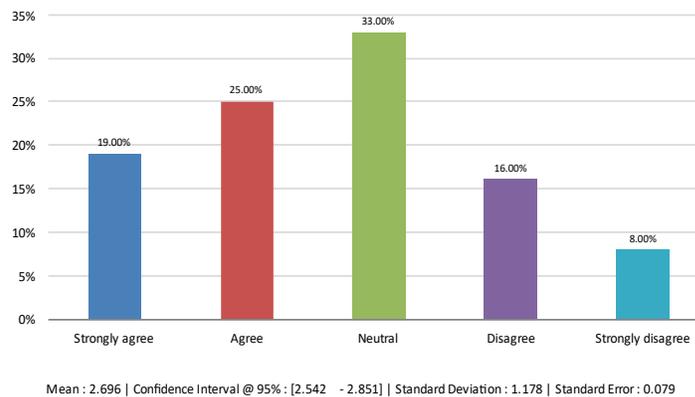
QuestionPro

Figure. 6

Furthermore, it was demonstrated from the results that over 40 % of learners would like training on the blackboard and how to use all its features with a standard deviation of 1.182% with a standard error of only 0.079%. What type of training is a subject for a further paper?
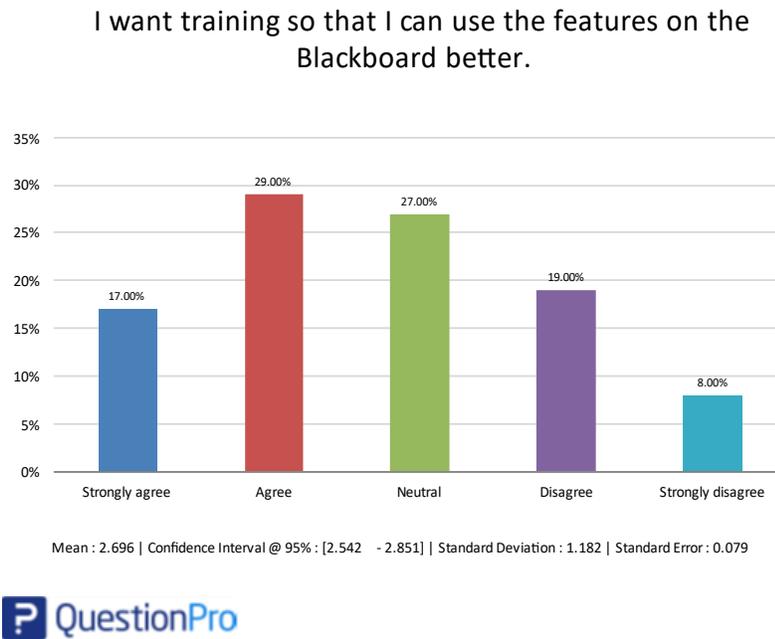
I want training so that I can use the features on the Blackboard better.

Mean : 2.696 | Confidence Interval @ 95% : [2.542   - 2.851] | Standard Deviation : 1.182 | Standard Error : 0.079

QuestionPro

Figure. 7

Conclusion:

The objectives of the study were:

1. Does the use of blackboard have a positive or negative effect on Science, Health and Engineering students?

2. Has blackboard increased the English ability of Science, Health and Engineering students in the PYP program at Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University?

3. Has 20 % of the final grade on the PYP program increased the use of Blackboard at Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University?

With the help of data analysis, this paper showed that Science, Health, and Engineering students at IAU liked using the Blackboard program. In other words, they were encouraged to use it at least

three times a week, particularly for quizzes and writing portfolios that were linked to their grades, which they thought improved their English skill. Learners have tended to use online books and expected teachers to make announcements daily. Furthermore, the analysis revealed technical difficulties in using blackboard, either with the internet or navigating the program. The paper also demonstrated that the majority of the learners needed proper training to use blackboard. Learners must be trained because they are motivated to use blackboard and do not see this as an extra burden to their studies.

Learners were inspired to use blackboard in the literature review so far reviewed, which was a common conclusion reached in our paper because they saw it as a valuable method. As a result, all future research will be used to improve on this Blackboard feature.

However, this article is unique in that none of the research reviewed looked at how blackboard was a method that troubled learners, when they were not qualified to use it and therefore did not grasp how to use it properly, having transferred directly from the school system to the university system, in the Primary Years Program (PYP). These experiments have ignored the technological difficulties that might arise by using blackboard. These IAU students wanted to study all facets of blackboard and handle the system even though the internet was down since they had a skills deficit going straight from school to the PYP program. What was noteworthy about the paper was that learners were not intimidated by the use of English on Blackboard; they could comprehend the questions and react appropriately.

Recommendation and Further Research:

Future research would be needed to determine what technical issues learners encountered when using blackboard and what kind of preparation they need. As a result, we will dig further into questions q 12,13,14,15 asked learners about technical and training uses of blackboard and ask more detailed follow-up questions. Another flaw in this paper is that the authors should have included female students in this study, but this was not done due to a shortage of funding. Female learners will be included in future studies to see whether they use blackboard more or less than their male peers and what facets of the program they find most helpful. The third flaw in this paper is that learners should contribute their suggestions for improving or customizing blackboard so that it is more user-friendly for their use.

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