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Effectiveness of Using Blackboard in EFL Saudi Secondary Schools

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Abstract

Blackboard remains one of the most effective approaches that the educational sector in different countries has had to assimilate. Countries such as Saudi Arabia have notably incorporated the use of different types of blackboards in their learning institutions with the primal focus of ensuring that the aspect of education is enriched. Furthermore, according to researchers such as Bradford et al. (2007), the idea of integrating the use of various blackboard within the learning institutions have significantly helped in ensuring that language learning, especially in EFL Saudi Secondary Schools, is enhanced. This study explores the effectiveness of Blackboard tools, particularly Blackboard Collaborate, in enhancing reading and overall learning in EFL Saudi secondary schools. Data were sourced primarily from peer-reviewed journals that examined Blackboard's role in improving various aspects of education, including studies by Heirdsfield et al. (2011), Al-Otaibi (2017), Katsifli (2010), Riley (2013), Cernusca (2008), and Muttappallymyalil et al. (2016). These works were selected based on the credibility of their evidence and relevance to the research theme. Findings indicate that Blackboard platforms not only enrich instruction and facilitate learner–teacher interaction but also provide cost-effective, flexible, and socially engaging learning environments. The integration of Blackboard Collaborate into EFL classrooms in Saudi Arabia is therefore recommended, as it has the potential to expand access to education, foster student engagement, and support lifelong learning while contributing to the overall development of the country's educational landscape.

Keywords: Saudi EFL students, Blackboard, e-learning, LMS, learning environment, motivation, Saudi Arabia

فعالية استخدام البلاك بورد في المدارس الثانوية السعودية للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

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ملخص

يُعدّ البلاك بورد أحد أكثر الأدوات التكنولوجية فعالية التي تبنتها القطاعات التعليمية عالميًا. وفي المملكة العربية السعودية، كان لدمجه في المدارس الثانوية أثر بارز في إثراء عملية التعليم والتعلم. ووفقًا لـ Bradford وآخرين (٢٠٠٧)، فقد أسهم اعتماد منصات البلاك بورد بشكل أساسي في دعم تعلم اللغات، ولا سيما في سياقات تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL). تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف فاعلية أدوات البلاك بورد - وبشكل خاص Blackboard Collaborate في تعزيز مهارات القراءة والتعلم بوجه عام في المدارس الثانوية السعودية. وقد استندت الدراسة إلى مجموعة من الأبحاث المحكمة، منها أبحاث Heirdsfield وآخرين (٢٠١١)، وAl-Otaibi (2017)، وKatsifli (2010)، وRiley (2013)، وCernusca (2008)، وMuttappallymyalil وآخرين (٢٠١٦)، والتي تم اختيارها بناءً على مصداقيتها وارتباطها بموضوع البحث. وتشير النتائج إلى أن البلاك بورد يثري العملية التعليمية، ويعزز التفاعل بين المعلم والمتعلم، ويوفر بيئات تعلم مرنة وفعالة من حيث التكلفة وأكثر تفاعلية اجتماعيًا. وبناءً على ذلك، توصي الدراسة بدمج Blackboard Collaborate في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية بالمدارس الثانوية السعودية، لما له من دور في تعزيز تفاعل الطلاب، وتوسيع فرص الوصول إلى التعليم، ودعم التعلم مدى الحياة، بما يسهم في تطوير المشهد التعليمي الوطني.

الكلمات المفتاحية: طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية في السعودية، البلاك بورد، التعلم الإلكتروني، نظام إدارة التعلم (LMS)، بيئة التعلم، الدافعية، المملكة العربية السعودية.

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Introduction

With the recent technological advancement, different aspects of our social lives especially education have significantly been promoted to a whole new perspective. One of the advancements in technology that has empowered the growth of educational facilities in different parts of the globe notably involves the use of blackboard in different educational facilities. According to Dr.DemetraKatsifli (2010), the introduction of the blackboard in different learning organizations have notably been associated with a variety of benefits which have not only helped in promoting learning from the students' perspective but also from the lecturers perspective. While assessing some of the well-known forms of blackboards used within the learning institutions, one would no doubt identify Blackboard Collaborate as one of the well-known and globally used form of blackboard that has for the past few years helped in enriching the concept of learning to a whole new dimension. In countries such as Saudi Arabia, the use of such technologies is currently on the rise mainly due to the aspect of technological advancement within such countries, especially in online-related services. In the context of technology and its related disciplines, it is important to review teaching strategies to encourage learners to participate in collaborative activities, such as paired or group speaking exercises and writing tasks (Qizi, 2021). At the university level, the capabilities of technology-based instruction are well-developed, making the use of Blackboard and Computer and Internet-Based Virtual Classes (CIBVC) especially beneficial for enhancing speaking skills (Al Ajlan, 2021).

Literature Review

According to sources such as Muttappallymyalil's (2016) peer-reviewed journal, blackboard has for the past few years been categorized as one of the most effective and more essential approaches that have significantly helped in the transformation of the learning environment to a whole new perspective. The attestation could be elucidated further considering that the application of such forms of learning has made reading more manageable and effective to all learners. Besides, the approach has notably been associated with services that have similarly helped in ensuring that the learning environment is more accessible despite one's geographical locality. Therefore, with this attestation, the use of blackboard services such as Edmond could be described to be more beneficial towards enhancing the learning environment through maximizing effectiveness in reading. The following part includes an in-depth review of various studies explaining the benefits of learning approaches such as Blackboard Collaborate and how they enhance the effectiveness in language learning.

According to Bradford et al. (2007), blackboard approaches such as Blackboard Collaborate are considered beneficial bearing the fact that they help in enhancing communication between the lecturer and learner. The attestation could be elucidated further bearing the fact that through the introduction of such learning methodologies, students are now able to communicate more frequently with their teachers through various platforms supported by Blackboard Collaborate. Furthermore, students are now able to communicate with their teachers regardless of their geographical position provided they have access to the internet. The idea has significantly helped in enriching the effectiveness of reading bearing

the fact that through enhanced communication amid the teachers and the students, both learners and their teachers are able to associate accordingly and at the same time share different ideas that could help upgrade their learning. Heirdsfield et al. (2011) elucidate further on this attestation where he denotes the fact that through introducing the various forms of blackboard learning practices in educational facilities, staffs and learners can communicate more frequently even when from miles away. Besides, the idea of enhanced communication could also be elucidated bearing the fact that some students have low self-esteem which may sometimes impact the concept of socialization between them and their teachers. However, through the application of approaches such as Blackboard Collaborate in learning institutions, students are now believed to have higher self-esteem which in most cases allows them to communicate with their teachers more frequently.

The use of the Blackboard Learning Management System (LMS) in education provides multiple benefits. It allows learners to access course materials with ease, offers straightforward navigation and instructions, and enhances the convenience of using digital devices such as computers and mobile phones, making it a more practical alternative to traditional exam papers (Ta'amneh, 2020). Moreover, Blackboard contributes to the development of crucial skills like time management and organization, which help students complete their coursework and related tasks more efficiently (Kashghari & Asseel, 2014). In addition, Blackboard-based teaching aligns with constructivist and student-centered approaches, thereby encouraging equal involvement and active engagement from all learners (Motlhaka, 2020).

According to Dhawan (2020), the World Economic Forum (WEF) stressed the importance of preparing individuals for challenging circumstances, since the COVID-19 pandemic forced many to re-evaluate their outlook on education. To address difficult circumstances, educational institutions provided detailed guidance for teachers and learners, which supported the shift and enabled broader engagement with online learning via Learning Management System (LMS) platforms (Yen, 2020).

Blackboard Collaborate is on the other hand considered beneficial bearing the fact that it helps in accommodating multiple reading and learning styles. Like other online learning practices, the use of Blackboard Collaborate is deemed to be beneficial bearing the fact that it helps in promoting varied learning style within the learning institution. The attestation could be explained further considering that this tool provides various service including instant messaging, interactive whiteboard which is typically used in displaying educational content, and other related shared services which in most cases helps in ensuring that various educational programs are undertaken as expected. Muttappallymyalil et al. (2016) article elaborate further on this attestation where he notes that different learning institutes have for the past one year integrated this tool with the primal focus of introducing or somewhat accommodating other learning practices that would help in advancing the nation's curricula. Besides, according to Al-Otaibi (2017), intergrading the tool has notably favoured the advancement of learning institutions in countries such as Saudi Arabia. Surprisingly, the approach could also be identified as one of the practices involved in advancing a country's economic perspective bearing the fact that through enriching the educational aspect of a state, the economy is in most cases promoted.

Rona Besijeta's (2013) article notes that blackboard tools are considered beneficial particularly in providing information that advances a student's knowledge and skills. While reviewing the application of tools such as Blackboard Collaborative web, one would note that the tool offers a wide range of platforms whereby students could use to help in advancing their knowledge on concepts that are typically taught in class. One of these platforms notably regards to online library whereby a student is allowed to conduct further research on different sources including books and journals that are useful and related to the lessons taught in class. Therefore, through the availability of such platforms students are able to gain an in-depth understanding of the concepts being taught in class which offers them more in-depth knowledge while still taking these course. With this attestation, its right to attest to the fact that incorporating online learning tools such as Blackboard Collaborative is not only beneficial towards enhancing communication amid the learners and the teachers but also an effective way while aiming to advance student's knowledge and skills. A different way in which this tool helps in improving the student's knowledge and abilities notably regards to the fact that the platform that allows students to communicate through discussion forums which enable them to share ideas regarding the course.

With this attestation, one can undoubtedly acknowledge the tool to be more beneficial considering that through communicating and sharing, students gain a deeper understanding of the concepts being taught in class. Muttappallymyalil et al. (2016) article elaborate further on this attestation where it explains that blackboard has for the past few years been categorized as one of the learning methodologies or approaches that have helped in advancing the skills and knowledge of medical students.

In most medical-related courses, students find it hard to understand some of the topics or concepts perceived to be generally complicated. However, through the introduction of the blackboard in medical-related courses, reports have concluded with the fact that the knowledge of these students has notably been promoted to a whole new perspective. The attestation could be elucidated further bearing the fact that students are now able to communicate with their teachers more frequently while at the same time discussing with their fellow students to help gather more information regarding the concepts being taught in class. On a different perspective, the approach has similarly been considered beneficial and productive towards enriching the knowledge and skills of medical students considering that online research has now been made easier.

A different benefit linked to Blackboard Collaborate web as explained by Suad Alaofi in his 2016 article centres on the fact that it has made distance learning more effective and less costly. The introduction of Blackboard Collaborate has allowed more students to participate in online classes considering that traditional reading practices involving face to face are evaded including handing in of assignment which can now be done online. Therefore, these approaches have significantly reduced the cost of learning since it has helped in cutting off the cost of travelling daily to attend classes. The method could, therefore, be described as one of the most important strategies that have helped in allowing flexibility to all learners. Also, teachers or educators have similarly benefitted from this tool since they also do not have to travel to learning facilities daily (Riley, 2013). The living standards of both the students and the teachers could similarly be described to have been upgraded considering that some

students are now allowed to indulge in learning while at the same time attend their jobs. The idea of introducing blackboards services within learning institutions have on the other hand allowed a significant percentage of individuals including the old aged to indulge in learning activities to advance their knowledge of learning-related practices. Therefore, with the attestation, one can undoubtedly conclude with the fact that blackboard tools such as the Blackboard Collaborate are not only beneficial towards promoting the enriching the concept of education within the learning instructions but also a helpful approach that has in different ways helped in improving the country's economy.

Blackboard Collaborative have similarly been identified as one of the most critical aspects that have for the past few decades empowered more students from different parts of the globe to participate in learning. Furthermore, as stated earlier, e-learning has allowed students from different parts of the world especially the underdeveloped countries to participate in quality education in developed countries such as the United States (blackboardcollaborate.com. 2018). Hakim (2020) argues that Blackboard tools can reshape how students learn and how teachers deliver instruction. To encourage collaborative learning, the platform should be adapted to learners' particular needs and motivate them to engage in creating and using online resources that enrich conventional teaching (Huang, 2020). Still, like other technologies, Blackboard does not ensure educational success on its own; its effectiveness depends on careful planning, proper use, and supportive strategies. The idea of indulging in learning practices through online tools have significantly

helped in promoting both the social, political, and even the cultural lives of these students bearing the fact that these platforms offer an effective way of learning and socializing. Therefore, with this attestation, one can no doubt attest to the fact that learning tools such as Blackboard Collaborate regard to one of the best and most effective ways of learning that should be adopted and utilized in all learning institutions. Furthermore, the only difference between traditional methods of learning and such modern methodologies centres on the fact that these forms of learning do not indulge in face-face learning. Besides, while assessing the advantages and disadvantages associated with the incorporation of this form of learning, one would no doubt attest to the fact that the benefits emanating from the integration of the approach outweigh the disadvantages.

Methodology

With the aim of gaining credible information regarding the effectiveness of a blackboard such as Blackboard Collaborate in enhancing reading in EFL Saudi Secondary Schools, different methods were applied in gathering data. One of the ways in which information was sourced involved the use of peer-reviewed journals focused on elaborating more the use of blackboard in enhancing various aspects of learning. Some of the peer-reviewed journals used in articulating the research include Heirdsfield et al. (2011) journal article which centres on explaining how blackboard has helped in enhancing the aspect of education to a whole new perspective and Al-Otaibi (2017) which describes how blackboard has notably helped in enriching or somewhat promoting the effectiveness of learning instructions

situated in Saudi Arabia. Other articles used in articulating the research notably include DemetraKatsifli's (2010) article, Alanna Riley's (2013) research article, Dan Cernusca's (2008) article which is categorically focused on explaining how to effectively use Blackboard, and Muttappallymyalil et al. (2016) article which is notably focused on elaborating more on the evolution of technology in teaching specifically through Blackboard services.

While assessing credible articles to be applied in this research, several aspects were notably considered. A major factor that was considered while reviewing the articles relates with the information or the data used in articulating the research. In regard to the factor of information, analysis was first conducted to identify articles with detailed information regarding the research's primal thematic context. A different factor that had to be consider while sourcing for credible sources centres on the aspect or somewhat the evidence used to back up the major argument. Notably, all the above-identified articles had backup evidence aimed at explaining in detail the argument featured. Therefore, with this attestation, its true to attest to the fact that all the above-identified articles were entirely based on credibility.

Discussion

After a comprehensive review of the above articulated-literature review, one would no doubt attest to the fact that blackboard tools such as Blackboard Collaborative are more beneficial towards promoting the learning environment to a whole new dimension. Therefore, with this

attestation, it would be essential for such approaches to be integrated into EFL Saudi Secondary Schools to help enrich or somewhat help in enhancing learning in such institutions. Furthermore, while assessing the primary benefits associated with the integration of such approaches, one would no doubt attest to the fact that they are cost effective and at the same time essential in promoting learning (blackboardcollaborate.com. 2018). This attestation could be explained further considering that they favour or somewhat support socialization amid learners and teachers and at the same time allow students to conduct extensive research through various online libraries and related services. Therefore, considering such benefits, it would be necessary for the government of Saudi Arabia through the educational sector to consider introducing blackboard services and tools such as Blackboard Collaborative which has for the past few years been acknowledged as one of the essential tools that have helped in improving learning institutions to a whole new perspective.

Furthermore, through the introduction of such tools in Saudi Arabia's learning environment, institutions such as the EFL Saudi Secondary Schools will now exhibit the capability to accommodate more students which will at a significant rate help in enriching the country's educational perspective. Also, as stated earlier, Blackboard tools such as the Blackboard Collaborate are considered to be more beneficial while integrated into learning institutions considering that they offer convenience and flexibility (blackboardcollaborate.com. 2018). Therefore, more adults would now indulge in learning practices to help advance their knowledge and skills to help promote the country's

literacy level. Besides, the idea of introducing Blackboard Collaborate would significantly help students improve their career. The attestation could be elucidated further considering that learners would now be allowed to complete entire degrees while in-between jobs, while taking time to raise the family, and at the same time taking their degree.

Conclusion

Regarding the above-articulated information, one can undoubtedly attest to the fact that online services such as Blackboard and other related e-learning practices are more beneficial towards promoting the effectiveness of reading in learning institutions. While assessing some of the services offered through Blackboard Collaborative, one would identify Customized navigational Buttons, A Course Banner, Uploaded Content, Announcements, Safe Assignments, Journals, Blogs, Wikis, Grade Center, Discussion Forums and among other features as more essential towards enhancing reading in learning institutions. Therefore, with this attestation, it would be more beneficial towards for the Saudi Arabian government to consider using Blackboard tools such as Blackboard Collaborative tools to enhance reading in EFL Saudi Secondary Schools.

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