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Engaging Students in Class Activities through GC Application

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Abstract

This paper discusses about the emergence of technology within class activities, in which students would definitely engaged. As turning in smartphones become a daily bread, teachers need to manage certain activities which is engaging, challenging and pushing students' contribution, regardless to the flow of materials.

GC, Google Classroom application, assists teachers to efficiently manage the class materials, link to any sites needed to enhance the materials, and display the assignments. Not only to enhance the materials, but also it helps teachers to maintain those students get along with the learning process and covers the necessary language skills. This application is also beneficial to be applied in the flipped learning, where it supports the students to learn in the dynamic, interactive activities which raise the students' creativity in the subject matters.

The research upon 2 classes revealed that teachers easily share the assignment and countlessly interact with the students. Some materials are shared so that students can have earlier preparation about the lesson. There is some assignment that should be given in class time, which could challenge the students' creativity and manage their own time. Extended assignment would need longer time for students to complete, or even missed, so that works need more time to be accomplished. The interactions between teachers and students are continuously grow, which means that the all skills is maintained. Also through the video projects uploaded, teachers would be able to check the pronunciation and other spoken skills. Not only the engagement, but also the fact that the flipped learning is found to be efficient for the informal classes attended. Consistently used, Google Classroom would be accountable to the students' skills and creativity.

Keywords: flipped learning, skills covered, GC application

Introduction

Integrating technology within the classroom activities is becoming a new flow in the classroom activities. With students who tend to be avid users of internet and digitally competent, teachers are likely to manage themselves to get along with their students. Thus, there comes the Youtube within the discussions, links to

kahoot.com for interactive in-class games and displays of Powerpoint to explain classroom materials.

Despite the teachers' efforts, the engagement of language learning and students seem to be an array of challenges. During the implementation of the digital tools, students rely mostly on their smartphones. Implementing technology in the classroom is a matter to work efficiently to maintain the whole four skills to enhance the students' language competency. Motteram (2013) stated that technology would enable us to go through the process of writing, until the text is comprehensible. In this case, we would be able to edit the sentences, check the grammar, put into drafts, then display the text for others to comment. Not only writing, but also speaking and listening skills would be improved. Again, Motteram (2013) noted "Linking your class to other classes around the world, using tools such as video conferencing, can give a reason for a learner to ask a question and then try to understand the response." This means that video calling, skype, or other direct communication would mediate the students to get the concept of the language expressions.

The idea of utilizing technology in the classroom is to empower the teaching methods, so as it enhances the students' abilities in language learning. Walsh (2014) maintained that both students and technology inspire the teachers to use different types of devices and various methods to access. The results of these constructions are that students could show their results on the given assignment and they put on collaborative learning where they manage to work with an array of technology to deal with the learning materials. This utilization creates an active learning when students of any learning habits could go with this implementation so as to challenge their curiosity. Besides, this becomes a personal learning network when they are encouraged to combine the ease of internet access, their capabilities and the basic concept of networking. It also refers to the facts that students would have their progresses at their own paces. When the incorporation of digital learning, social elements and learning tools assist the students in all sides, this condition reaches the social networking, which means that the learning and sharing opportunities are endless. Not only to the students, but also to teachers, the impacts of this mobile learning reveals the existence of flipped learning, where the teachers send the materials earlier -anytime as the mobile learning- so that students can get the deeper information through the class discussions later on. This is an approach which "direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space, and the resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter", according to The Flipped Learning Network (2014). The teachers could work from flexible places to raise the students' own intentions and motivations, i.e. they can rearrange the spaces to accommodate the learning. When the modern learning accommodates the students' in-class learning time into exploring topics where students could take parts, they would be actively involved in the participation and evaluation. Intentionally, teachers maximize the classroom time to maintain the students' ways of learning, so that they establish the materials to teach and the ones students could explore on their own. By this kind of

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approach, teachers develop their professionalism and remain to be the essential matters in the class.

These constructions lead to the implementation of Google Classroom (GC) in which the management platform is specifically designed to help teachers easily understand and integrate classroom technology by streamlining the process of going digital. According to Lynch (2018), Google Classroom enables teachers to maintain different kind of learning habits, keep lesson plans, organize the teaching materials, including videos and slides. Unique students would gain benefit as they can work at their own paces and not tempted to distract others, while those who requires more time to process materials is not left behind to flounder. Then how to get students engaged in this flipped learning using Google Classroom, and how effective is it, when students meet teachers in the informal schools? The following research would be able to put further ideas on it.

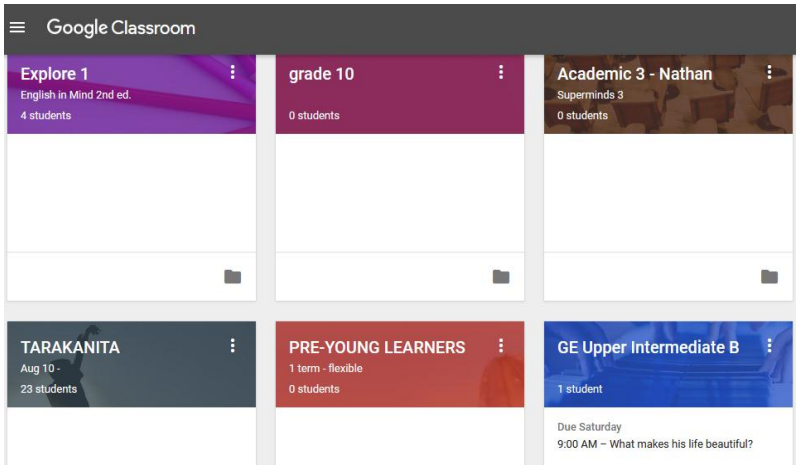

Fig. 1 the display of Google Classroom

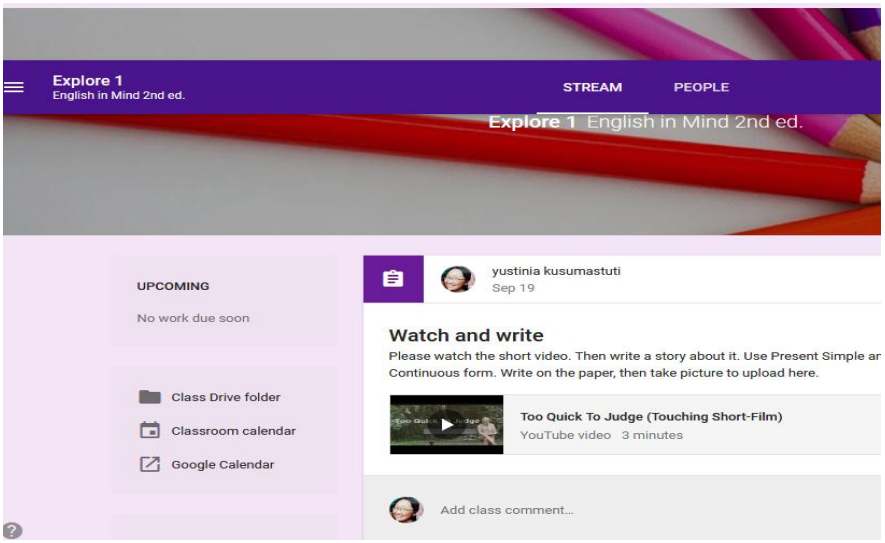

Fig. 2 STREAM page - ASSIGNMENT

Method

The research is applied to classes of Junior High School and Adult, in different needs of English, who are taking English classes in English Institute Magelang. The 4 Junior High School students are the avid users of English in Minds published by Cambridge, who are doing their first term in the language course. While the other level, with 23 students, is taking conversation classes, namely the English Club for Tarakanita Senior High in Magelang. The students joined Google Classroom (known as GC) through the class code shared by the teachers. Once they joined the GC, they would be able to do any assignments or simply answer quiz shared by teachers through stream. They need to answer individually to get their scores and attach the answers or reports on the GC wall. For those students who couldn't join the class, GC would still reach them through the notification, especially on the streaming assignment.

The features used by teachers in streaming materials are shown on the page of the class folder, containing Announcement, Assignment, Questions and Reuse post. In line with the research, teachers used only Assignment and Questions. As it set streaming, students can see each others' works, as well as the scores. Teachers can upload video or material then assign the students to work individually, before the scoring. It would be remarked by Turned in and Assigned, as seen on fig.3.

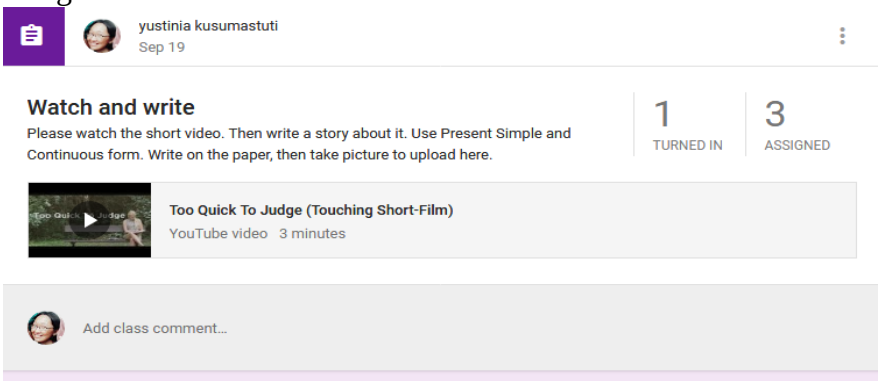

Fig. 3 The assignment and the turned in - assigned

When the students turn in their assignment, the page appears like in *figure 4*, where other classmates and teachers could see the status.

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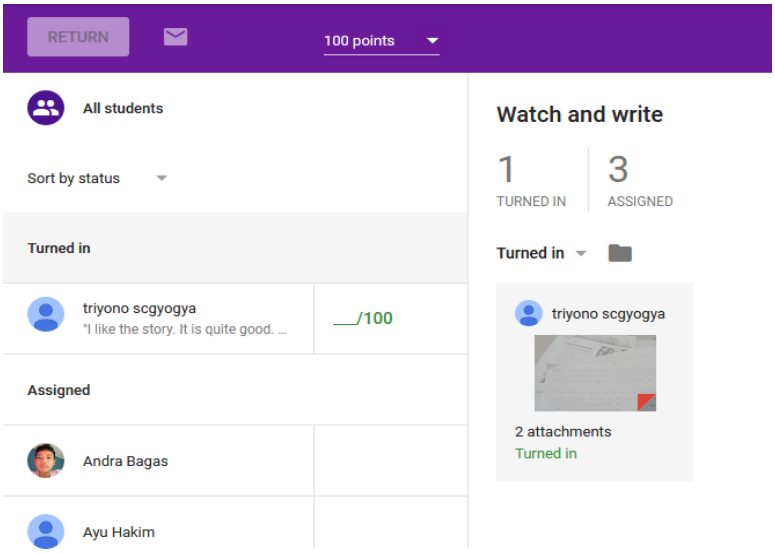

Fig. 4 turned in assignment and its status

Soon as teachers get the work, they can go over it and give personal comments, like *figure 5*. The student would be able to reply under the comment. This would be useful for the student him/herself to make corrections, and to communicate directly to teachers. Teachers would be benefit from this step, as they can do individual corrections and assistance.

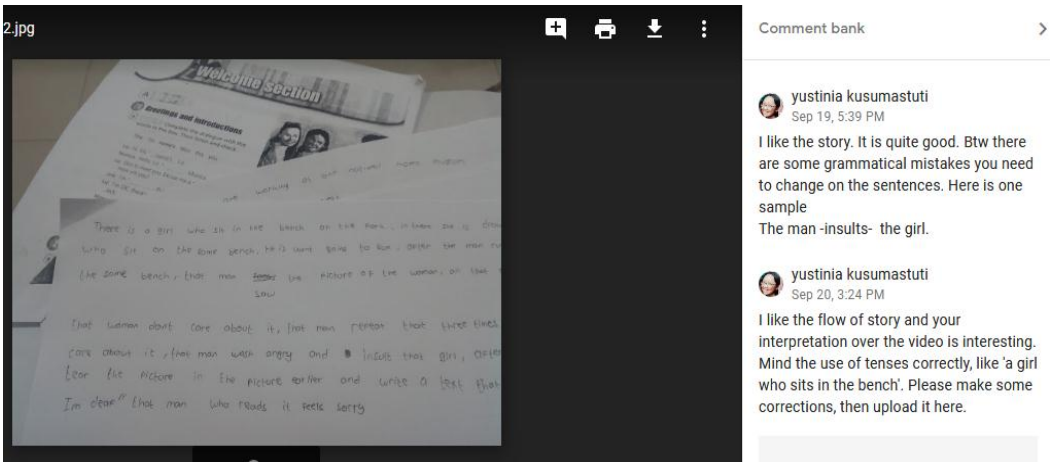

Fig. 5 the uploaded work of a student

When the work scored, it directly changes the student's status into *graded*, like in *fig. 6*.

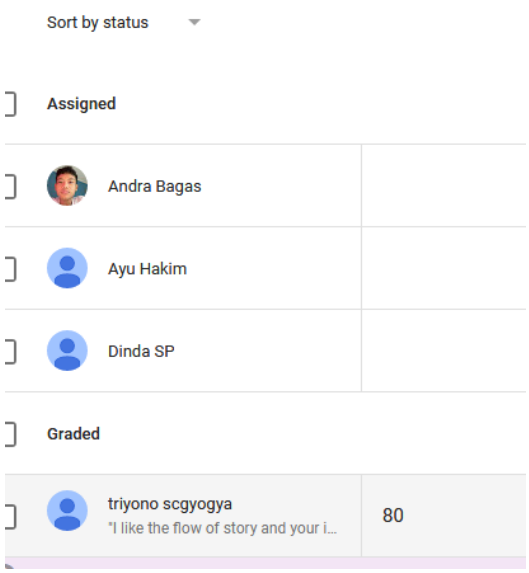

Fig. 6 the graded status

Not only Assignment, the other set used by teachers is the Question, where teachers can set a question to be answered directly by students. With the similar process as Assignment, teachers would be able to get the uploaded answers, either written or by other attachments, followed by the grading.

The experiment of GC on the JHS level of English in Mind 1 users was from August 29 up to September 12, 2018, through the use of assignment and questions sections. On the first graded assignment, students need to upload video under the topic about Unusual Hobbies then explained about the activities. On the second trial, the students had to attach songs, contained lyrics showing the use of Present Simple tense as a part of their short presentation, in the streaming line. On the third experiment, the teacher designed an assignment to be accomplished on the same day, i.e. to give opinions based on the video shared by a classmate. The fourth assignment was about taking 5 pictures in pairs then attached those pictures on the GC streaming. Each pairs then took turns in describing each picture from the streaming using Present Continuous tense. Considered as half-independent task, the students managed to describe and to give corrections upon the other pair's works.

The second class which continuously applied GC was the English Club for Tarakanita Senior High School in Magelang, from August 24 - September 14, 2018. The first assignment was to create video blog (vlog) which due on August 31, which meant that they had 1 week to create it individually. Then the second experiment was an impromptu question following a listening session, in which students got to answer the question shared on the GC stream. While on the third investigation, the quiz was shared to be completed the day after, by 2 p.m.

The treatment of GC on was slightly different in this High School level, where students need to get more time in oral discussions. Therefore sometimes videos and listening would precede the discussions or sharing opinions, to be used as baits. Over all discussions, the students would achieve high appreciation when they delivered the presentation in appropriate pronunciation and word bank.

Several quiz shared, with written answers, to check their grammar and written elements. Because the answers are shared personally, the teachers could give direct comments to them, so that their language expressions are maintained.

There are some class activities as guided by teachers, where students needed to upload videos, photos, or simply their writing on the individual comments to be scored. Following the GC uploaded materials, there were also discussions based on class-materials. Dealing with the GC availability, the students who missed the class would still be able to reach the materials and discuss it with the teachers/friends in the provided comment columns.

Findings and discussion

From those experiments, it revealed the students' engagement to the class materials and the skills covered by the use of GC. In JHS level, the turned projects were fully set once they were involved in it, as seen on fig. 7.

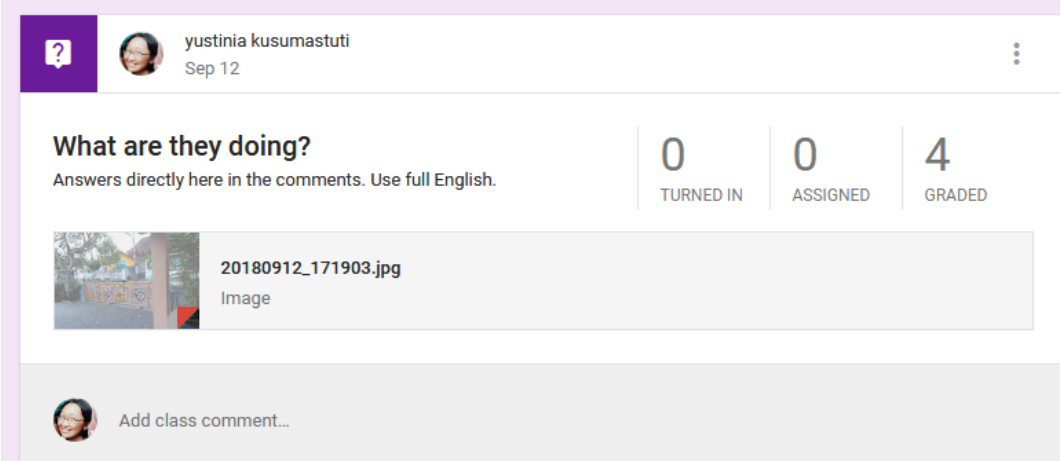

Fig. 7 sample of Question page used with the photo of activity to answer

The other graded activities were left undone, or else only 2 classmates completed the tasks. Meanwhile the ungraded tasks, i.e. the videos, were shared by teachers, so that the discussions could be held in forum. Teachers could maintain the speaking activities when the students shared their opinions, presented arguments and explained their point of views. It would also be listening discussions when they do the comprehensive listening pages upon the BBC Radio. Upon the photo uploads, the students were asked to write their interpretation using certain tenses and noted the answers on the GC comments.

Meanwhile, as seen on fig. 9, Tarakanita SHS students managed to work on the 3 graded GC streaming assignments, followed by the other discussions. On the vlogs uploaded, teachers maintained the both oral skills, covering the range of vocabulary, pronunciation, listening and language delivery, because the students needed to describe their activities.

Table 1. Result from English Club – SHS

Date	Due date	Activities	Descript-ion	Grade		
				Turned in	Assigned	Graded
Aug 29	Sept 2	Yeay! Vlog! Make a vlog about your outdoor activities.	Graded	0	19	6
Sept 7		If someone enjoys watching horror movies and plays hard rock music, but is terrified at parachuting and bungee jumping, can we call it a sensation seeker?	Graded	0	6	19
Sept 14	Sept 15, @2 pm	Join the quiz. the, share your result and give comments whether it suits you or not	Graded	0	23	2

Eventhough there are only 6 students turned the task in, the other students participated by taking turns in commenting the activities in the vlogs. Whereas the other 2 assignments were responded in written, for the teachers checking the grammar and flow of sentences.

From both sides, we can see the impact of students' full engagement when they were involved within the projects or the class activities. On JHS level, it was the time they took photos and uploaded for the class discussions. Whereas SHS showed the contribution on the impromptu writing, i.e. the second task following the discussions on the listening. Although the replies were quite short, still it maintained the written sides the teachers wanted to cover. These conditions then uncovered the 8 results of constructions, as previously stated.

The assignments managed to maintain their curiosity, so that they were encouraged to enlarge their accompaniment along with the internet access. As teachers were able to track the students who missed the tasks, they would be able to work individually with the students to follow their own paces.

Conclusion

Applying GC in the flipped learning is definitely beneficial for all sides. It efficiently saves teachers' time, assists a lot of teachers' works, so as to keep up with the students' individual works and to give personal comments anytime. This chance gives more value to students, as individually the teachers connect with them and discuss knicks knacks personally. Easily, teachers would also find out which students rarely, or even never, does the assignment. Then, teachers could meet the students and discuss with them in line with the language difficulties. Both teachers and students could also discuss the materials in the other types of language use. This appropriate use of grammar emerges as the students need to write the responses/comments following the assignment. Then this is followed by the pronunciation and other spoken skills necessarily made when they make virtual responses.

Students would be engaged in dealing with GC activities because they can manage their own time and pace, in order to complete the assignment. They can also put comments and relevant sources along with their works. This flipped learning and the use of Google Classroom are found to keep students productive in language uses when it is used in the informal schools.

This method, however, needs more than just preparation in materials. Completing the attachments, teachers need to ensure that the flow of the lesson plans would be balance to the time spent with GC. On the other hand, creativity matters. Several creative projects request students to spend some time to produce, so that the assignments need to be set with deadlines and strict reminders. Also the fact that even though the students meet difficulties in written skills, still the hardest challenge to beat is the speaking skill, as it needs more than encouragement but also self-motivation. Through the more consistent application of Google Classroom, the outcome is believed to be advantageous for both teachers and students.

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