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## Teacher and student experiences in learning: Google Education Apps.

Clare Thomas  
Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology  
[clare.thomas@toiohomai.ac.nz](mailto:clare.thomas@toiohomai.ac.nz)

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### Abstract:

As new digital technologies increasingly become standard in tertiary education context, tertiary institutes are tailoring courses to a much more diverse population ranging over wide geographical areas (Heggart & Yoo, 2018; Owayid & Uden, 2014). The use of online technologies, together with compatible digital devices, enables users to access course content and resources from any location at any time (Ding, Xiong, & Liu, 2015). To account for changes in educational provision, changes to teaching and learning will occur too as institutes increasingly offer online or blended programmes. At Foundation Level 3 face-to-face lectures and tutorials were the main modes of delivery. However, with the adoption of Google Classroom, different opportunities for teaching and learning presented themselves, especially since all teaching and learning resources are accessible online.

The study arises as the organisations use of Google Classroom (GC) as its learning management system (LMS) and the wider Google Suite for Educations (G-Suite) Applications (Apps) had recently been introduced to a range of Foundation Level courses across the regions. The transition from traditional classroom delivery with printed materials to a blended environment, combining face-to-face with online materials, created an ideal opportunity to investigate participants' learning experiences. In addition, the Foundation Level 3 course offered a student cohort with diverse G-Suite experience, learning needs, digital literacy skills, experience and confidence. This provided the opportunity to investigate benefits and challenges for teachers and students when introduced to a new teaching and learning environment.

The key aim of the research was to; *Examine how Foundation Level 3 students' and teachers' experience learning with the newly introduced Google Classroom.* The methodology adopted an interpretivist paradigm and incorporated the use of a mixed method design of student surveys and focus group interviews together with individual staff interviews. The findings indicated that the integration of G-Suite Apps to a blended learning environment led to an increase in communication and collaboration for all participants. Students identified increased autonomy when accessing and retrieving digital materials which led to a more self-directed learning approach. Teachers felt their practice had changed as course assessments were designed to maximise the functionality of the different G-Suite Apps. Managing and tracking students online was also an easy and efficient use of time. The research indicated the importance of digital literacy skills for all participants which were closely linked to academic performance. The study helped to reflect on current practices to gain a deeper understanding, so we, as educators, are able to better shape pedagogical practice and enhance students' learning experiences. A brief overview of the benefits, challenges and recommendations gained from the study will be presented.

### References

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