
HOW DID BLACKBOARD COLLABORATE ULTRA IMPROVED THE ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF MY STUDENTS IN SPANISH COLLEGE CLASSES?

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ABSTRACT

Although the use of Blackboard Collaborate Ultra has been with teachers and faculty for several years there is still debate on its benefits for the students. This work focusses on the benefits of using Blackboard Collaborate Ultra and its relation to the student's success in Spanish college classes. A survey was administered at the beginning of the semester and another one at the end of the semester to find out the benefits of Blackboard Collaborate Ultra and its relation to language learning skills following Chávez (Chávez, 1) work. She stated that its use was beneficial to her students. The results of this research support Chávez (Chávez, 1) findings in support of the use of Black Board Collaborate Ultra and support the academic success of the students in the following ways. 89 percent or more of the participants stated that Black Board Collaborate Ultra improved their communication skills, their Spanish language learning skills, their attendance rate, their social skills, their academic skills, their motivational skills, their assessment skills. The participants also stated that Black Board Collaborate Ultra is easy to use.

Key Words: Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, language learning, Spanish, Spanish language learning, higher education, teaching, all online class, online on a schedule class.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to Chávez (Chávez, 1) Blackboard Collaborate Ultra (BBCU) has been used in several ways in teaching including online classes, hybrid classes, assessments, for hosting speakers, to record classes and to hold online on a schedule class. BBCU is a teaching tool or platform based on the internet that can be used live and allows users to attach documents, meet virtually, converse live, write in a virtual board, etc. Some of its benefits include the support, the interaction between the students, provide flexibility, improves communicational skills, assists with language learning skills, and improves motivational skills. Other researchers also reported it to be "user-friendly," and that it supports "learner cognitive engagement and constructivist perspective" (Alokluk, 133; Bodey et al., 49; Cairncoss and Mannion, 156; Politis and Politis, 196; Tonsmann, 54.)

Chávez (Chávez, 1) also found out the following information related to BBCU after she did a survey with her classes related to the benefits of BBCU. She found out that 64 percent or more of her students stated that BBCU helped them in the following ways. It helped them with their social skills, academic skills, motivational skills, communicative skills, attendance rate, Spanish language skills and that it was easy to use. Chávez (Chávez, 1) also found out that although 64 percent of students stated that BBCU helps them in other ways not stated in her survey, 55 percent

of them still put down other items they wish it did help them. However, some limitations of her study is the limited number of participants and that the survey is subjective where the students answered it themselves. Therefore, there is still debate on the benefits that Blackboard Collaborate Ultra provides to students and faculty that uses it (Chávez, 1; Bodey et al., 49).

The purpose of this investigation is to find out how the Black Board Collaborate Ultra platform helped to improve the academic success of the students in Spanish college classes in a two-year public college. The variables are the survey and the end of semester grades. This research is a continuation of Chávez (Chávez, 1) as it includes the end of the semester results of the survey.

2.METHODS AND MATERIALS

There were 18 participants who were 18 years old and older. They were not on dual credit classes during the spring 2021 semester. They attended a two-year public college in Texas. All classes were beginning classes of Spanish of semester 1 taught by the same professor. Two classes were all online or 100 percent and two online on a schedule. All classes used the same Blackboard Collaborate Ultra platform, textbook, lecture videos, homework assignments and exams. They also covered the same 4 chapters. The difference was the lecture interaction for the online on a schedule class that also included small group work and live interactions with students and the professor.

There was a permission slip survey and a survey with 10 questions about the use of BBCU that was administered twice in the semester. One was at the beginning of the semester and the second one was at the end of the semester. See Figure 1 for the survey.

Figure 1

Multiple Choice Survey on Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

1. Blackboard Collaborate Ultra helps me to improve my communication skills.
a. Yes
b. No
2. Blackboard Collaborate Ultra helps me to improve my Spanish language skills in the listening, speaking, reading and language mode.
a. Yes
b. No
3. Blackboard Collaborate Ultra helps me to improve my attendance rate.
a. Yes
b. No
4. Blackboard Collaborate Ultra helps me to improve my social skills.
a. Yes
b. No
5. Blackboard Collaborate Ultra helps me to improve my academic skills.
a. Yes
b. No
6. Blackboard Collaborate Ultra helps me to improve my motivation skills.
a. Yes
b. No
7. Blackboard Collaborate Ultra helps me to improve my assessment skills.
a. Yes
b. No
8. Blackboard Collaborate Ultra is easy to use.
a. Yes
b. No
9. Blackboard Collaborate Ultra helps me to improve another skills not mentioned above?
a. Write a comment here if needed. If not just leave it blank.
10. I wish Blackboard Collaborate Ultra helped me with the following item or items:
a. Write a comment here if needed. If not just leave it blank.

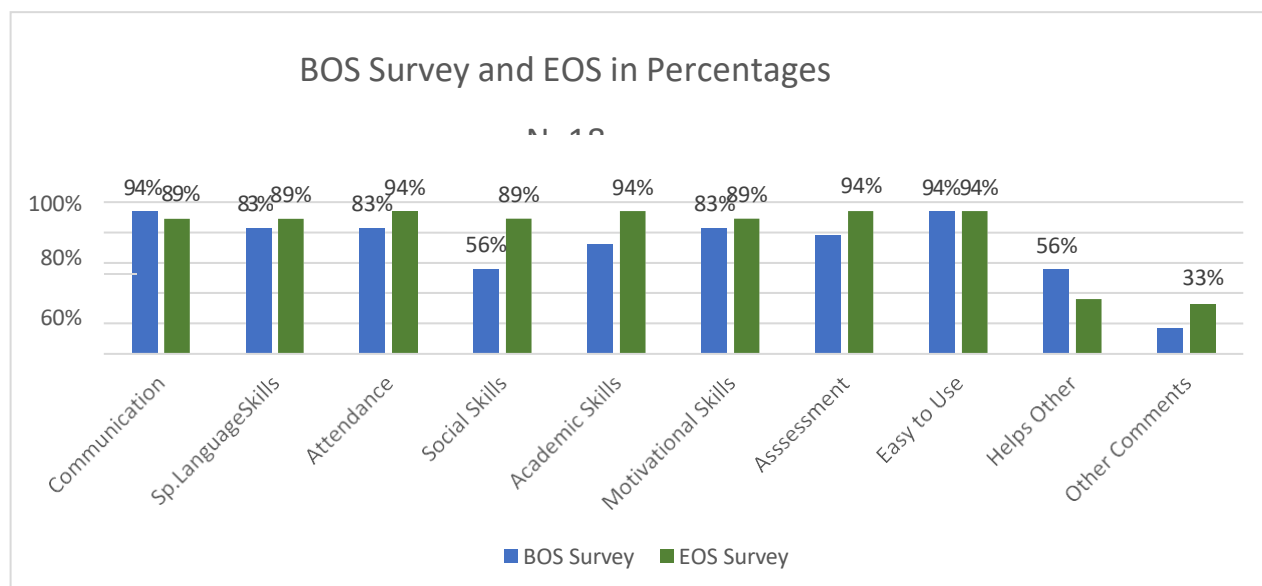
End of survey. Thank you for your time.

3.RESULTS

The overall results for the Beginning of Semester Survey (BOSS) are as follow 56 percent or more of the participants stated that BBCU helped them with their communication skills, their Spanish language learning skills, their attendance rate, their social skills, their academic skills, their motivational skills, their assessment skills, and they also stated that BBCU is easy to use. The

overall results for the End of Semester Survey (EOSS) are as follow: 89 percent of or more of the participants stated that BBCU helped them with their communication skills, their Spanish language learning skills, their attendance rate, their social skills, their academic skills, their motivational skills, their assessment skills, and they also agreed that BBCU is easy to use. These results align with Chávez (1). Unfortunately, there was no correlation found between the end of semester grade and the questions in the survey. The only thing we can conclude is that all participants had a passing grade of C or higher. See figure 2 for more detailed information about the results.

Figure 2



4. CONCLUSIONS

Although there is no correlation between the final grade and the survey, students did find that BBCU helps them in several ways as follows. BBCU helped 89 percent of the participants with their communication skills, Spanish language learning skills, attendance rate, social skills, academic skills, motivational skills, assessment skills and they also agreed that BBCU is easy to use. These results align with previous research (Chávez, 1). However, we are aware of the small number of participants and the subjective survey done. Hopefully in the future more research will expand in the use of the platform and compare it to other platforms like Zoom, Canvas etc.

Some recommendations for future research include the following: increase the number of participants and only do the end of semester survey because of the small number of participants interested in doing it at the end of the semester. After all, the end of semester experience is the one we are interested in knowing about. Also, it will be interested to see how the platform helps students in other languages classes like English, French, Chinese etc. Finally, another recommendation is to continue this research in hybrid or in person classes and see if the positive comments continue related to the BBCU platform. My guess is that it may decline as we will not

depend as much in the platform as we did in this research with the all online classes and online on a schedule classes as the professor will be there in person to provide additional materials and facilitate it better.

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