



Blended Learning for Skill Development in EFL Teacher Preparation

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Background: Blended learning, which integrates online and face-to-face instruction, is increasingly essential in teacher education, especially for English as a Foreign Language (EFL). **Gap:** Research is limited on its specific effectiveness in building EFL pedagogical skills. **Aim:** This study examines whether blended learning better supports teaching success for EFL prospective teachers than traditional methods. **Results:** Blended and face-to-face methods equally boost educational success, but the blended approach better prepares future teaching skills. **Novelty:** This study reveals blended learning's unique value in EFL teacher preparation. **Implications:** Institutions should adopt blended learning to enhance adaptive teaching skills for modern classrooms.

Keywords: blended learning, EFL teacher training, pedagogical skills, educational success, hybrid teaching

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INTRODUCTION

In By using technology in education, higher education institutions have a responsibility to provide technological infrastructure to provide better learning and preparation for teachers and students (Felix, 2003). Fisher, Higgins, and Loveless assert that technology is a catalyst for teaching and supports individuals to have creative learning experiences (Stanley, 2013). Recent studies have often shown that technology aids language teaching and learning because it creates an authentic environment (Gilakjani, 2014) teaches language skills, and develops a community of engagement with others (Blake, 2013). Technology has also proven to be influential in providing teachers with information and skills to meet the needs of students (Morales & Windeatt, 2015). It is also a guide for autonomous language learning (Benson & Voller, 2014) and a platform for motivating teachers and learners (Gilakjani, 2014). There is no single description of blended learning (Jonas & Burns, 2010). However, it is often described as learning that "combines one-to-one instruction with computer-based instruction" (Graham, 2006) and a careful mix of one-to-one instruction and online learning (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). It includes both classroom and online instruction as it integrates a wide range of teaching and learning methods (e.g. seminars, conversations, supervised practice) to enhance learning (face-to-face vs. computer) and learning modes (e.g. synchronous vs. asynchronous). This is considered the most widely used learning management system (LMS) in different fields as it is user-friendly, open source and easy to use. The MDS is a modular object based Dynamic Learning Framework. Technology has transformed industry drastically and schooling is revolutionizing today. The variety of potential strategies that can enhance inputs, procedures and results for teachers and learning is broadened by technical advances. Information technology and networking offer the alternative of introducing innovative practices in learning and schooling. New innovations also contributed to further convergence of conventional face-to-face learning practice with computer-mediated instructional components. E-learning is the primary consequence of integrating technology with schooling. Today, e-learning has massively grown and expanded to the detriment of conventional face-to-face analysis over the last 2 decades. E-learning is the most increasingly increasing online model for the provision of schooling and training while allowing effective use of machines and the Internet. E-learning has modified people's way of learning and educating pedagogically. Furthermore, in order to satisfy the e-learning requirements, instructional architecture and assessment processes have been continuously modifiable.

Taking into account the typical advantages of face-to-face teaching and other learning advantages, the way was paved for "blended learning". In this way, the structure

of blended learning combines the advantages of face-to-face teaching and e-learning. In fact, blended learning provides the direct participation and versatility of online courses in a supportive classroom. (Hopper, 2003) claimed that blended courses are more competitive than those offered completely online due to the positive interaction between the online environment and face-to-face teaching. In addition, (Dziuban dkk., 2006) emphasized the positive impact on academic performance, reduced dropout rates, and learner satisfaction. (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008) stated that blended learning can promote deep learning. (Stacey & Gerbic, 2008) believe that the benefits of blended learning are mainly focused on the benefits of blended schooling. Martyn's hybrid model includes initial face-to-face meetings, weekly web feedback, and synchronous interactions and asynchronous dialogues (Martyn, 2003).

The research aims to explore the effectiveness of mixed learning in enhancing pedagogic awareness and teaching efficiency among prospective English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. Specifically, it seeks to answer the question of how a hybrid learning approach can further develop the pedagogical skills of these future educators. By investigating this, the study intends to provide insights into the potential advantages of integrating both online and face-to-face learning environments for teacher training, aiming to create a more versatile and efficient teaching framework.

METHODS

In this research, several objectives were targeted to support the advancement of EFL pedagogy within a blended learning framework. This study aimed to construct a mixed TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) model that combines traditional and digital elements, enabling future educators to adapt to diverse teaching environments. Additionally, an educational test (PKT) and a standardized rating scale were designed to evaluate the performance and pedagogical development of prospective EFL teachers. Furthermore, the study explored the impacts of blended education on EFL pedagogy, focusing on the influence of these methods on the teaching effectiveness and performance of potential educators. In alignment with institutional needs, the research also sought to provide the university with insights into mixed learning approaches, offering strategic information for the development of an e-learning unit.

The significance of this study stems from several key factors. First, as highlighted by the American Training and Growth Organization, blended learning is one of the leading trends in the knowledge-based industry, emphasizing the importance of adapting to this approach in EFL education (Dziuban dkk., 2004). Moreover, it is crucial for EFL prospective teachers to be equipped with innovative teaching and learning methods, such as mixed education, to meet the evolving demands of the educational field. By updating TEFL courses with blended

methodologies, this research contributes to the training of competent EFL teachers, ensuring they are well-prepared for contemporary classrooms. The study's findings are expected to inform the development of new frameworks for blended learning courses at the tertiary level, specifically tailored to EFL education. Enhancing the teaching skills of potential educators is essential, as teachers often adopt teaching strategies that align with their own learning experiences, underscoring the need for comprehensive training in modern educational practices.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Definition of Blended Learning

Some scholars describe blended learning as a mix of school courses or distribution channels (Reay, 2001), (Thomson, 2002). Others describe blended learning as a mix of education (Rossett, 2002), (Driscoll, 2002). Many scholars define integrated education as a combination of face-to-face teaching and online learning (Sands, 2002). "Blended learning systems combine face-to-face instruction with computer-based instruction," said (Graham, 2006). More recently, (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008) described blended learning as "a thoughtful blend of face-to-face and online learning experiences." The above concepts do not seem to define the essence of blended learning, which is described as a collection of processes, methods, structures, and experiences.. In comparison, although it was necessary to define certain meanings, others did not. Current research suggest that blended learning environments and online learning activities both fit well together to promote face-to-face connections with teachers and students.

B. Blended Learning Rationale

Blended learning is used to improve critical thinking skills and meet the needs of students (Owston, 2006). It enables students to achieve higher levels of achievement than traditional courses and reduces retirement rates (Dziuban dkk., 2006). Students who use blended learning are more engaged in the online environment and course content (Ziegler dkk., 2006) Blended learning allows students to gain advantages because some instruction is conducted face-to-face, while other instruction is more accessible due to physical distance. This role is suitable for older learners who want to balance work and family commitments and learners who want to maintain social connections (Owston, 2006). Blended learning is both economical and effective.

Osguthorpe and Graham identified six reasons for developing or using blended learning methods: instructional richness, information access, social engagement, personal agency, cost-effectiveness, and ease of assessment. (Graham, 2006) believes that "BL combines the best of both worlds" is the most common explanation for blended learning. (Orey, 2002) reported that people

prefer blended learning to enhance pedagogy, improve accessibility and accessibility, and improve cost-effectiveness. In terms of improving courses, blended learning will provide better immersion in educational activities. This approach reduces the dependence of lecturers on higher education. (Waddoups & Howell, 2002) pointed out that students who want to absorb a lot of content alone can also learn completely online. BL can create a combination of face-to-face teaching and comprehensive networking. (Smelser, 2002) pointed out that the BL approach creates active learning, peer learning, and skills. (Graham, 2006) studied a variety of learning models. For example, IBM has a blended learning model that includes: self-paced online learning, face-to-face labs and active learning, and face-to-face community learning dedicated to applied learning and real-world environments. Brigham Young University's online modules provide students with tools and technical skills and allow them to use face-to-face time to focus on applications, case studies, and decision-making (Cottrell & Robison, 2003).

Mixed learning offers both accessibility and versatility in terms of expanded entry. Ability to education is an important element in the creation of hybrid environmental learning (Bonk dkk., 2002). Flexibility and ease of learners are often 8 of increasing significance as mature students pursue additional learning with external responsibilities including family and jobs. Many learners also don't want to lose their social connections and human contact in a face-to-face course to the ease provided by an online world. Combined learning maintains a form of harmony between versatile and immersive learning possibilities.

Blending levels The literature on blending levels shows that there are four degrees of blending: operation level, level of course, level of programming or institutional level. The essence of 9 blends in all four levels depends on the student or the creator or teacher (Graham, 2006)

Blending in the task phase occurs when both face-to-face instruction and the Internet are part of the learning activity. Learners should take courses and complete them digitally, or vice versa. Other courses can also be completed online. Technology can also be used to bring experts to the school remotely, providing both face-to-face and online environments. Technological means should only be used to increase the credibility of learning practices.

Blending is one of the most popular types of blending in the course phase. It entails combining certain face-to-face and online activities in a given course. According to (Graham, 2006), some blending methods involve students in multiple but supportive face-to-face and online actions that converge over time, while others distinguish between chronologically ordered but non-overlapping blocks of time.

Blending courses are widespread and often used at the university level. Blending may require one of two models: learners choose a combination of courses from

face-to-face and online instruction, or the course stipulates a combination of courses in each model.

Institutional fit refers to the commitment of an enterprise to combine classroom training with online training. Many universities are developing structural fit models.

C. Kinds of Blends

Educators have the choice of utilizing hybrid models to help students draw upon what they already learned or in other words extend their learning environments in a way that encourages learning (Graham, 2006). Secondly, improvement of mixtures makes minor pedagogical improvements, but may not alter how teaching and learning occur dramatically. This ensures that new multimedia tools and additional materials will be applied to the conventional person-to-person learning environment. Finally, revolutionary mixtures facilitate radical pedagogical change. The styles of transition appear to allow learners to create awareness effectively through complex interactions.

D. Success Factors of Blended Learning

A variety of performance indicators have been reported by blended learning. (Sharpe dkk., 2006) listed such success factors, including the daily review and publication of administrative activities. The mixture of simulated and natural worlds can take care of each environment's strengths and disadvantages. Mixed models of learning can address resident official requirements. (Mason & Rennie, 2006) indicated that combined models of education would address the needs of students and the preparation of teachers. (Littlejohn & Pegler, 2007) proposed that mixed learning recognize the workloads of students. In order to correct students' assumption that less personal class is a question of less work, (Vaughan, 2007) called for greater efforts. Students must assume more accountability for their studying, taking into consideration their time management abilities. (Tabor, 2007) emphasized that blending learning calls for organizational preparation, appropriate technological tools, inspired teachers, strong contact facilities and avenues of input. In addition, student development and preparation for mixed learning should be taken into consideration of their individual learning demands. The notion that schooling combined requires continued professional growth for teachers was advocated by (Vaughan, 2007). (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008) eventually suggested the implementation of mixed learning as a science and transformational redesign method.

1. Former Research

(King, 2002) discussed the complexities and viewpoints given by a lecturer and students in a hybrid model classroom. The authors observed that hybrid conversations in the online classroom had the 12 ability to promote critique, complex interactive discourse and

considerable peer-to-peer interactions. Students had fewer travel time and electronics did not typically detract from studying. More innovative and immersive courses were also enabled in the hybrid model. The hybrid model's biggest drawback is that it has machine worms, power shortages and other issues with technology.

(Christensen, 2003) also developed an introductory learning tutorial. The method involved evaluation of course priorities, audiences and learning targets. Two separate course pilots have been carried out, and data on performance and similarities are included for the same face-to-face course. Results revealed that mixed learning results exceeded the findings of the same course. The results showed

(Cottrell & Robison, 2003) discussed the idea of utilizing mixed methods for minimizing teaching time, concentrating student time again and utilizing mixed learning to allow more students to enroll in a defined instructional program. Students indicated that they favor the mixed approach to studying and lesson time.

The connection between the student's learning results and two styles of teaching was explored in (Dowling dkk., 2003). The findings revealed that the flexible hybrid distribution model increased learning performances and was more favorably related to the final marks of the students.

(O'Toole & Absalom, 2003) explored the probability of providing a beneficial impact on the student performance of course results by the availability of instructional materials on the Internet. The authors observed that all students with 13 lectures and online materials better performed than students who either attended lectures or used the web.

A student's influence in environmental biology course was investigated by (Riffell & Sibley, 2003) in the hybrid format. Included in the dual training format is face-to-face training and online homework. The findings suggest that students have more contact with students and professors in the hybrid course than in their conventional format. Furthermore, online homework helped to control time and to study.

(Utts dkk., 2003) studied the variation between a mixed format and a traditional format. Hybrid students performed better with the regular format, but they also had rather poor self-appraisal of the course and its complexity. A analysis showed that hybrid students took more classes than their non-hybrid peers.

(Ausburn, 2004) performed a survey in which adult learners defined aspects of course design that were most appreciated in mixed environments. These statuses were then contrasted to other gender-based subgroups, pre-curricular technologies, abilities and experiences and desired learning techniques. The findings suggest that adults enjoy courses that provide choice, customization, self-direction, diversity and an educational environment. The sex, favorite learning methods and prior knowledge of participants were also linked to technology and self-

management.

(Priluck, 2004) analyzed the effects on student reactions of two technologically related marketing teaching approaches. An online form of 14 schooling compared a conventional face-to-face method of teaching. The findings revealed that students were happier with their experience in the conventional course. The course allowed these students to improve their expertise in logical thought, team working and social interaction.

(Pereira, 2007), students of first year Biology graduate curricula at Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona, have investigated the impacts of hybrid learning methods on university achievement and satisfaction. There were two sets of participants. The first group (n = 69) was trained by mixed schooling, while the second group (n = 65) was taught through tradition. Mixed learning was obviously more successful in the production of student academic achievement in human anatomy than conventional schooling. In comparison, the absolute satisfied with the guidance obtained did not vary. There is ample scientific and procedural data to confirm the success of mixed learning. In addition, it is evident that composite learning tends to refer to a broad variety of courses and disciplines. Another rehabilitation is that higher education is common to mixed learning. More specifically, there has been no prior study to examine the efficacy of blended learning in improving the pedagogical skills and success of potential EFL students. These findings assist the conduct of this report.

2. Pedagogical Knowledge

Pedagogical awareness relates to the knowledge of the instructor on essential subjects such as philosophies of instruction, approaches to the teaching, program designs, assessment methods and administrative concerns. Pedagogical information operationally relates to the comprehension of prospective EFL teachers in four particular fields, including learning input, learning methods, genuine content and alternate examination.

3. Pedagogical Performance

Pedagogical success applies in and beyond the school to teacher's instruction and training, such as teaching and learning, manipulation of teaching tools, exam planning and correction and IT usage. Pedagogical success applies in organizational terminology to EFL's prospective classroom teachers in four areas: learner input, instructor methods, authentic content and alternate appraisal.

4. Blended Learning

The study explains blended learning as a flexible approach in which students may learn by various forms of interactivity that combine feedback, learner techniques, material and evaluations.

CONCLUSIONS

The present research shows that integrated learning is more beneficial than self-directed learning in developing the pedagogical skills of prospective EFL instructors. Mixed learning and face-to-face learning have about the same effects on improving the pedagogical success of potential EFL students. Ready-to-use material and emails on the Internet are powerful and usable for clearly blends in lessons.

RECOMMENDATION

Any pedagogical outcomes and instructional guidelines are indicated in the outcome of this survey.

1. Higher education organizations do not waste any time negotiating whether to combine or not from a futuristic perspective; energies should concentrate on integrating them.
2. Mixed learning as a key solution to teaching most course assignments must be taken by English divisions.
3. Developing the educational success of prospective teachers by mixed learning needs more study.
4. An integral aspect of EFL teaching must be the execution of curriculum at the same time as generating it.
5. Efficient hybrid learning implementation takes more care and attention, since mixed learning does not ensure successful or effective preparation and learning.
6. Further training sessions on mixed education and devily should be conducted for faculty members in favor of professional growth.
7. Members of the staff can exchange perspectives and perceptions around mixed learning by focus group techniques.
8. What factors and strategies should be used to improve the connections between the simulated and physical elements of mixed courses?

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