

# A CASE STUDY ON BLENDED LEARNING IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO TESL STUDENTS OF A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY IN IPOH

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**Abstract:** This study investigates how a private institution in Ipoh, Malaysia, is using blended learning to teach English to students studying the language as a second language (TESL). Due to its potential to improve student engagement and learning results, blended learning which combines traditional face-to-face classroom approaches with online learning activities has gained popularity in higher education. Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which serves as the theoretical foundation for this qualitative study, and a conceptual framework that emphasizes student production serve as the two main theoretical pillars. The theoretical foundation for this study is self-determination theory, which highlights the roles relatedness, competence, and autonomy play in promoting intrinsic motivation. The study looks at how blended learning settings might provide these psychological needs and encourage TESL students to learn actively and independently. Data were gathered from a sample of students through focus groups and in-depth interviews to understand more about their opinions and experiences with the blended learning strategy. The conceptual framework is focused on how blended learning affects students' academic achievement and skill development, specifically how productive they are as learners. This paradigm takes into account a number of variables, including the efficiency of both online and offline teaching techniques, the accessibility of learning resources, and schedule flexibility. The results show that blended learning, which offers a more customized and flexible learning environment, can greatly increase students' productivity. Pupils expressed better language proficiency, increased involvement, and a more thorough comprehension of the course material. Overall, this study shows how blended learning can benefit TESL instruction in a private university setting. It emphasizes how crucial it is to create learning settings that foster students' competence, relatedness, and autonomy in order to optimize their academic performance. The knowledge gathered from this study can help shape instructional tactics in the future and add to the larger conversation on blended learning's effectiveness in higher education.

*Keywords:* Blended learning, TESL, Digital tools, Productivity and Proficiency

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## INTRODUCTION

Due to the demands of neo-millennial students and the pervasive use of technology, educators have been forced to focus on the digitization of pedagogies, particularly over the last 20 years Majeed & Dar (2020). Since the epidemic has worsened the situation, online learning is now necessary rather than optional. Much of today's educational discussion centers on the application, possibilities, challenges, efficacy, and outcomes of various forms of blended learning. The purpose of this research was to assess the effectiveness of blended learning in teaching English to TESL students at a private school in Ipoh, Malaysia.

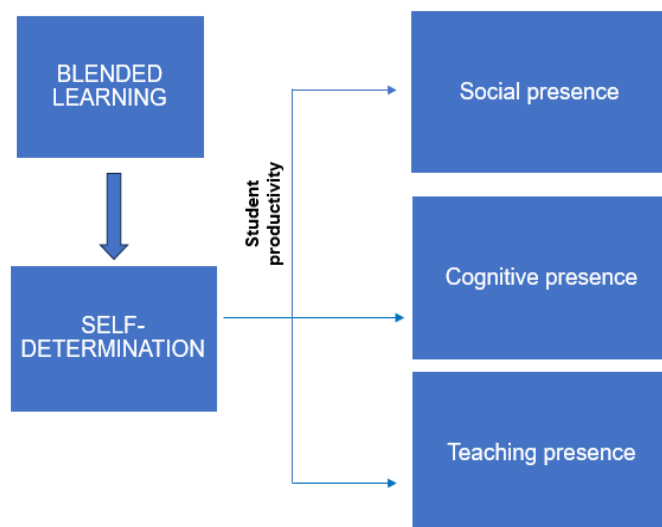
Blended learning, often termed hybrid learning or mixed-mode education, is a teaching style that combines one or more alternative learning philosophies with conventional classroom instruction (Vasyura et al., 2020). Online lesson plans, lectures, textbooks, tasks, quizzes, tests, resources, multimedia, and social networking sites like

Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok can be used with the right software, materials, and desktop computers. Lazar et al. (2020) first used the term "digital learning tool" to refer to digital resources used in blended learning, such as the latest technology. Digital learning aids include apps, interactive whiteboards, scientific and instructional software, digital textbooks, and mobile devices like smartphones and tablets. Streaming video support, aerial video projection panels, adaptable resources, virtual assemblies, and documentation such as lecture notes and dictionary entries are examples of conventional digital technologies (Lazar, 2020).

From an educational perspective, blended learning includes the author, teacher, student, technique, and technology as key components (Kashefi et al., 2017). The author develops the curriculum and sets the goals for each component. With blended learning, more stakeholders are included in the educational process, prioritizing the formation of strong relationships between students and teachers.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Blended learning is the practice of combining traditional in-person instruction with online learning in one setting. This is a growing trend in the age of rapidly advancing technology (Albiladi & Alshareef, 2019). A variety of significant fields, including instructional design, educational technology, and online teaching and learning, have come together to form the potentially useful notion of blended learning. Moreover, an educator supervises students in a technologically advanced classroom that blends in-person and virtual instruction to produce blended learning (Han, 2023). In the post-pandemic period, academic institutions routinely employ and approve of BL courses. However, BL's dependability is still up for debate. The lack of an exact BL scale was one of the primary problems (Han, 2023). The study examined the relationship between BL's effectiveness and SLO and developed a test to evaluate BL for undergraduate students. One of the most crucial parts of the research process was the theoretical framework, yet numerous individuals frequently misunderstand it when developing their dissertation research study. Regarding the selection of a subject, development of research questions, conceptualization of the literature review, design methodology, and analysis plan for the dissertation study, the significance of theory-driven thought and behavior is highlighted. The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) forms the theoretical foundation of this work. SDT comprehensively explains the dynamics of human wants, motivation, and well-being within social and cultural contexts (Ryan et al., 2020). According to this theory, every person has three basic needs: the need for autonomy (a sense of control over one's actions and goals), the need for relatedness (the need to connect with and care for others or activities), and the need for competence (a sense of effectiveness in completing tasks). When these needs are better fulfilled, individuals are more motivated and engaged in activities, shifting their motivational orientation from amotivation to intrinsic motivation (Ryan et al., 2020).



**CoI framework (Figure 1.1)**

Social, cognitive, and teaching presence constitute the three main components of the CoI framework (Figure 1.1). A collaborative constructivist educational experience is achieved at the intersection of these three mutually enhancing factors. Social presence fosters an environment of trust, open communication, and group cohesion. According to Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2001), cognitive presence is defined as "the extent to which learners are able to construct and confirm meaning through sustained reflection and discourse within a community of inquiry." It is operationalized through stages such as triggering event, exploration, integration, and resolution. Teaching presence, the third and integrative element, encompasses the creation, facilitation, and management of the community of inquiry.

## METHODS

This study utilized qualitative research design. A variety of data sources were used by qualitative techniques. Qualitative research involves obtaining and evaluating non-numerical data (such as written word, audio recordings, or video recordings) to more fully understand thoughts, opinions, or experiences. It can be used to elucidate complex information regarding a circumstance or to generate novel study hypotheses (Bhandari, 2022). Qualitative data provides a knowledge of the learning process that is occasionally challenging to express using numbers. You can learn more about how pupils learn by asking them open-ended questions and giving close attention to their answers. Using qualitative data, we may look into specific concerns for our organisation and create the necessary action plans. Nonetheless, eight students from the Faculty of Social Sciences participated in this research design. The obtained data will show the benefits of blended learning to TESL students. This

qualitative research data was examined using one on one interview method. During the procedure, a lot of information will be produced. There are numerous ways to record what is said and done during an interview or focus group, in addition to the many study methods, including taking written notes or shooting it on video. Data analysis should be started before. The telephone interviews' verbatim transcriptions were saved as Excel documents. Then, it is transcribed, coded and tabulated according to the title.

## FINDINGS

In this research, 8 TESL students have been interviewed, these students have experience in blended learning which is suitable for this research. However, these participants will be set as anonymous. Hence, they have been identified as Student A, Student B, Student C, Student D, Student E, Student F, Student G and Student H. To carry out the data for this research, 8 students participated in a one-on-one interview session with the researcher. Their interview were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed.

**Finding for first research question “What is the productivity of blended learning among ESL undergraduates in a private university?”**

### **4.2.1 Blended learning was engaging among students.**

Given that blended learning provides a flexible and dynamic approach to teaching, it engages pupils. By incorporating virtual elements into conventional classroom training, it adapted to different schedules and learning preferences. Incorporating multimedia tools, cooperative activities, and interactive internet information piques students' attention and built a feeling of community. Students are empowered by personalized learning paths and instant feedback, and lessons are made engaging and relevant by technological integration and real-world applications. All the students have stated that blended learning was flexible.

**Interviewer’s question to all the participants: How will you describe blended learning?**

Student A: As for the online learning, kahoot kept me engaged during online classes

Student B: I would say, when the blended learning involves online learning. You can go online onto, for instance, Jamboard and do your tutorials there, then you're done for the day. But other activities are probably not that interesting to me

Student C: I would choose blended learning for its flexibility and diverse learning opportunities. It prepares students for a technology-driven world while maintaining the valuable aspects of traditional education.

Student D: My academic achievement was enhanced via blended learning. A deeper knowledge of the subjects was made possible by the mix of online resources and in-person instruction, which eventually produced better results

Student E: I was able to modify my education through blended learning by selecting how and when to interact with the course content. I was able to take charge of my education and adjust to different learning styles because of this flexibility.

Student F: Considering blended learning is flexible and allows for the development of a wide range of skills, I would pick it. It maintains the advantages of conventional classroom engagement while meeting the demands of a technologically advanced environment.

Student G: In my opinion, blended learning is a teaching strategy that skillfully combines online resources with conventional classroom techniques to provide a flexible and interesting learning environment.

Student H: Thanks to blended learning, I was able to customize my education to fit my interests. The option to choose when and where to interact with the materials facilitated adaptability, and the online elements supported a more self-directed learning style.

In summary, students seem to find blended learning intriguing as it provided a dynamic approach that blends traditional and online teaching approaches. Students' engagement are increased in blended learning environments because of the resources' flexibility and variety, which accommodate various learning styles

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Chapter 4 provides a thorough analysis of each outcome that was obtained from the interview transcription. Numerous insights on the interests and experiences of TESL students and instructors with regard to blended learning were uncovered by the analysis. Because of its flexibility and potential for increased involvement, blended learning is clearly preferred by respondents. Pupils valued the chance for a more dynamic and participatory classroom environment as well as the flexibility to access course materials whenever it was convenient for them. It is also evident that there is no definitive answer to the question of which instructional approach works better. The degree to which lecturers encourage their students and the degree to which students can adjust to the online components appear to be key factors in blended learning's efficacy. Blended learning was more advantageous to students who could use digital tools and internet platforms more easily. Similarly, the blended learning model's success kept the students interactive and made them obtain good grades. Blended learning has many benefits, but there are drawbacks as well. Two major ones are internet connectivity and distractions at home. Many students complained about having erratic internet connections, which made it difficult for them to regularly access digital resources and take part in online sessions. Distractions from the home environment, like family responsibilities and noise, also posed serious obstacles to studying effectively. These problems highlight the necessity of a dependable technology infrastructure and comfortable learning environments in order to optimize blended learning's advantages. The study emphasizes how important it is for educators to continue their professional development as well as how important it is to incorporate student feedback into blended learning practices.

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