

A Study on the Impacts of Blended Learning on College English Learning Effectiveness and Its Pedagogical Implication

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ABSTRACT

The current reform in college English teaching demands higher standards in aspects such as teaching philosophy, methods, teacher-student relationships, and learning styles, posing challenges to the traditional approaches. Blended teaching has increasingly become an essential tool for improving student engagement and teaching effectiveness. Its diverse interactive environment brings innovation and vitality to the conventional teaching model. This paper aims to explore the impacts of blended learning on the effectiveness of college English learning under a digital backdrop. Meanwhile it offers suggestions from the perspectives of teaching environment, teacher-student interaction, and curriculum design.

Keywords: *College English, Learning effectiveness, Blended learning, Internet plus.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's world, marked by rapid globalization and technological advancements, college English education also faces unique challenges and opportunities. These challenges encompass a lack of student motivation, with learners often viewing English as merely an academic or exam-oriented requirement rather than a practical real-world skill. Traditional, teacher-centered teaching methods, focusing primarily on grammar and vocabulary memorization, fail to address the practical usage of the language and communication skills, leading to diminished student engagement. Furthermore, resource limitations, particularly in developing regions, including a dearth of qualified teachers, educational materials, and technological support, impede the quality of teaching and learning opportunities. Additionally, integrating advanced educational technologies into existing teaching frameworks presents a significant challenge due to inadequate professional training, equipment, and financial resources. Lastly, the prevailing assessment methods, heavily skewed towards written exams, neglect the evaluation of oral and real-world communication skills, causing students to focus more on test scores than on actual language

proficiency. These factors collectively underscore the complexity and difficulty inherent in elevating the effectiveness of college English learning.

The development of digital technologies and the transformation of the digital industry have introduced new perspectives and methods in language teaching, particularly blended learning, which is becoming a key approach in revolutionizing university education (Garrison, 2004). Extensive existing research also supports this trend (Topping et al., 2022). Blended learning, combining traditional face-to-face instruction with modern online learning modalities, offers students a flexible and varied learning environment. In this model, students acquire new knowledge through online courses and engage in deeper discussions and practical exercises in the classroom with teachers and peers. It not only enhances learning efficiency but also fosters students' independent learning capabilities and critical thinking skills. Furthermore, the blended learning model allows teachers to adjust the content and methods of instruction to meet the specific needs of students, thus providing more personalized guidance.

Additionally, blended learning enriches the teaching resources and methodologies available to educators. Utilizing online platforms and digital

tools enables teachers to manage course content and track students' progress more timely and effectively. These tools also provide immediate feedback and support for students, helping them to identify and address learning challenges promptly. In summary, compared to traditional classroom instruction or remote online learning, the blended teaching model is a more effective approach (Means et al., 2009). Therefore, this paper attempts to explore the role of blended teaching theory in enhancing the effectiveness of college English learning from the perspective of learning effectiveness and to provide specific pedagogical recommendations.

2. LEARNING EFFECTIVENESS AND BLENDED LEARNING THEORY

2.1 *Learning Effectiveness Research Status*

The current state of research on learning effectiveness encompasses various aspects, including the integration and development of different learning theories such as behaviorism, cognitivism, constructivism, and connectivism (Ghani, 2021; Ayaz & Şekerçi, 2015), as well as the impact of technology and digital media on the learning process (Chauhan, 2017). Researchers are particularly focused on personalized learning, employing data analytics and artificial intelligence to create customized learning experiences. Studies on emotional and social factors highlight the significance of social interaction and emotional support in learning (Tan et al., 2021). Informal and non-traditional learning environments, such as communities and gaming, are also receiving increasing attention (Lai et al., 2019; Visher et al., 2012). The design of assessment and feedback mechanisms is crucial for learners' self-regulation (Vollmeyer & Rheinberg, 2005). Research from a global perspective and on cultural diversity emphasizes the importance of understanding learning outcomes in different cultural contexts (Stahl et al., 2010). Additionally, identifying and addressing learning barriers, such as cognitive and emotional issues, and learner satisfaction, are key areas of focus (Swan, 2001).

2.2 *Learning Effectiveness Definition and Evaluation*

The learning effectiveness model is a theoretical framework used to assess and enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning activities.

Grounded in educational psychology, cognitive science, and educational technology research, it guides educators and learners in more effectively designing and conducting learning activities, focusing on key indicators such as the quality of learning processes and outcomes. Learning effectiveness refers to students' ability to effectively utilize various learning strategies and resources under teacher guidance, achieving optimal learning outcomes in the shortest possible time (Webster & Hackley, 1997).

As for the effectiveness of language learning, firstly, it involves the degree of knowledge and skill mastery, assessing whether learners can understand, remember, and apply the knowledge acquired. Secondly, learning effectiveness emphasizes the enhancement of critical thinking and problem-solving skills, aimed at developing students' deep-thinking abilities. Furthermore, effective learning should also boost learners' intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy, enhancing their confidence in their learning success and their positive attitude towards the learning process. The sustainability and transferability of learning are also crucial, meaning that the learned content can be remembered long-term and applied in different contexts. Participation and interactivity are equally important in the learning process, facilitating deeper understanding and increased interest in learning. Lastly, regular assessment and feedback mechanisms help learners understand their progress, adjust their learning strategies, and ensure the achievement of learning goals. Therefore, learning effectiveness focuses not only on quantifiable learning outcomes, such as exam scores, but more importantly on the quality of the learning process, including participation, development of thinking skills, stimulation of interest, and enhancement of self-confidence. The specific dimensions to evaluate the effectiveness of English learning are shown in "Table 1".

Table 1. Dimensions indicating effectiveness of English learning

Dimension	Sub-dimension	Description
Learning Outcome	Knowledge Mastery	Students' understanding and mastery of the course content
	Skill Development	Practical skills developed by students during the course
	Grade Improvement	Improvement in students' grades or scores
Learning Process	Engagement	Students' participation in class discussions, assignments, and other learning activities
	Interaction Quality	Frequency and depth of student interactions with peers and teachers
	Timeliness and Usefulness of Feedback	Whether the feedback provided by teachers is timely and helpful for learning
Learner Satisfaction	Course Satisfaction	Students' overall satisfaction with course content, structure, and delivery method
	Teaching Satisfaction	Students' satisfaction with the teaching methods of instructors
	Effectiveness of Technological Tools	Students' satisfaction with the online learning platforms and tools used
Self-Regulated Learning Skills	Time Management	Students' ability to manage time during the learning process
	Learning Strategies	Learning strategies and techniques applied by students
	Goal Setting and Achievement	Students' ability to set learning goals and achieve them
Technology Use and Access	Technology Access	Students' ability to access necessary learning technology
	Technology Proficiency	Students' proficiency in using technology relevant to learning
	Technical Issues	Technical problems encountered during the learning process and efficiency in resolving them
Social and Emotional Learning	Peer Support	The level of support students receive from peers
	Emotional Connection	The emotional connections students establish during the learning process
	Development of Social Skills	The degree to which students develop social skills during the course

2.3 Blended Learning from a Constructivist Perspective

Blended learning from a constructivist perspective is an educational approach that focuses on students constructing knowledge and learning through a variety of teaching methods. In this view, blended learning is not merely a simple combination of online and face-to-face teaching methods, but rather places greater emphasis on how these modalities can support active learning and knowledge construction in students. This includes several key aspects:

- **Active Learning:** Constructivism emphasizes a student-centered approach where students actively construct knowledge through interaction, inquiry, and reflection. Blended learning provides a platform where students can engage in autonomous online learning and have deeper discussions and interactions with peers and teachers in the classroom.
- **Diversified Learning Paths:** Blended learning allows educators to offer customized learning content and paths for different students, thus catering to varied learning needs. This aligns with the constructivist notion that learning should

be designed based on students' experiences and needs. Each student can learn at their own pace and interest, thereby constructing knowledge more effectively.

- **Integration and Utilization of Technology:** In blended learning, technology serves not only as a tool for information transmission but also as a platform supporting and facilitating constructivist learning. Students can use technological resources for information exploration, integration, and creation, which also promotes collaboration and communication among students, a key part of constructivist learning.
- **Reflection and Assessment:** Constructivism stresses the importance of reflection in the learning process. Blended learning offers various tools and opportunities for students to reflect on their learning journey and receive feedback from teachers and peers.
- **Social Interaction:** Social interaction plays a central role in knowledge construction. The blended learning environment supports learning in different social settings, including online communities and face-to-face classroom interactions.

In summary, from a constructivist perspective, blended learning is not just a mix of teaching methods but a comprehensive educational strategy that centres learners and promotes active and personalized learning.

2.4 Blended Learning from a Connectivist Perspective

Blended learning from a connectivist perspective focuses on the role of networks and technology in the learning process, emphasizing that knowledge is distributed across a wide network, including the human brain, social networks, and technological tools. In this sense, blended learning is not just a combination of online and offline teaching, but a learning method that uses technology and social interaction to facilitate the sharing, connecting, and creation of knowledge:

- **Networked Knowledge:** Connectivism posits that knowledge is not an attribute of the individual but is distributed across a network. Blended learning leverages this by using online platforms and face-to-face communication to help students connect to this broader knowledge network.
- **Social Nature of Learning:** Social interaction is at the core of connectivist

learning. The blended learning environment encourages students to interact with others through social media, forums, and collaborative tools, thereby building and expanding their learning networks.

- **Integration of Technology:** Technology is not only a tool for transmitting information but also a bridge connecting different sources of knowledge and learning communities. In blended learning, technology is used to support students in establishing and maintaining these connections.
- **Self-Directed Learning:** Connectivism emphasizes learner autonomy. In blended learning, students are encouraged to explore their interests and questions, using network resources to guide their learning.
- **Dynamic and Adaptive Learning Paths:** Given the continual evolution of knowledge and technology, blended learning from a connectivist perspective emphasizes the need to constantly adjust and update learning paths to accommodate these changes.

In a nutshell, blended learning is an educational approach that emphasizes the distributed nature of knowledge, the social nature of learning, and the integrated use of technology, encouraging students to explore and construct knowledge by expanding their learning networks.

3. IMPACTS OF BLENDED LEARNING METHOD ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COLLEGE ENGLISH LEARNING

Blended teaching methods can be effective in elevating the effectiveness of university-level English learning. This efficacy can be attributed to advancements in language knowledge, language skills, emotional support, and practical application.

3.1 Language Knowledge and Skills

Blended learning, combining the strengths of both online and interpersonal instructional methods, has emerged as a comprehensive approach in language education. Online resources offer a wealth of language learning materials, including videos, audio files, and interactive exercises, facilitating the expansion of vocabulary and grammar knowledge. In contrast, offline classroom sessions serve to reinforce these foundational elements through

direct guidance from instructors and interactive peer engagement, deepening students' understanding of language rules.

This hybrid teaching method allows students to tailor their learning experience based on individual needs and pace, enabling autonomous selection of study materials and difficulty levels. The personalized learning paths foster a more effective mastery of English, allowing students to delve into specific language aspects aligned with their abilities and interests. Online learning systems often feature instant feedback mechanisms, providing students with prompt corrections and explanations following exercises or tests. This timely error correction aids in a better understanding of language rules, facilitating rapid improvement. Moreover, online learning platforms offer diverse multicultural content, including information on English usage habits and cultural backgrounds from various countries. This integration enhances students' comprehension of English culture, a crucial aspect in achieving profound language knowledge. Cross-cultural understanding plays a pivotal role in language learning beyond surface-level proficiency.

Blended learning, through online interactive platforms and offline conversational practices, promotes the development of students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Online environments allow for repetitive practice in listening and reading, while interactive exercises contribute to enhancing writing skills. Face-to-face teaching environments provide opportunities for oral practice, thereby improving practical communication abilities.

3.2 Emotional Support

The efficacy of blended teaching in elevating emotional engagement in English language learning can be obtained by providing personalized learning resources and activities tailored to individual student needs and interests. For instance, students can choose materials based on their interests, such as favorite English songs or movie clips, fostering a personalized learning experience that stimulates interest and strengthens emotional connections to English language learning.

The interactive tools offered by online learning platforms, including forums, chat rooms, and interactive exercises, facilitate communication and interaction among students and between students and teachers. This interaction not only aids in problem-solving but also enhances students' sense

of social participation, contributing to a heightened sense of emotional satisfaction within the learning community. Teachers can provide timely feedback and encouragement through both online and offline channels. Online systems automatically track students' progress and performance, offering instant feedback, while face-to-face communication allows for more personalized encouragement and guidance. This positive feedback and motivation mechanism contributes to boosting students' confidence and learning motivation. Through online platforms, students gain exposure to a plethora of English cultural content, including history, customs, and traditions of English-speaking countries. This cultural immersion not only enriches learning content but also helps students develop a sense of identity with English culture, enhancing intrinsic motivation for learning English.

The flexibility of blended teaching, particularly in the online learning environment, allows students to learn at their own pace, alleviating the pressures associated with traditional classroom learning. Students can study in comfortable environments, adjusting learning times and progress, thereby reducing anxiety and stress and enhancing the pleasure of learning.

3.3 Practical Application

Blended teaching utilizes simulation tools and resources available on online platforms, such as simulated dialogues and virtual reality environments, to create immersive English language scenarios closely resembling real-life situations. These simulation activities assist students in applying classroom-acquired knowledge to practical language use, thereby enhancing their proficiency in actual English language application.

The incorporation of project-based learning contexts, involving activities like research investigations, report writing, and presentations, challenges students to not only gather and process information in English but also articulate their viewpoints and outcomes in the language. This approach effectively elevates students' practical English language application skills. Online learning platforms often connect learners and educators globally, offering students opportunities to engage in cross-cultural communication with individuals from diverse backgrounds. Through these interactions, students practice and apply English in authentic cross-cultural communication settings, thereby improving their cross-cultural communication abilities.

Blended teaching encourages active thinking and problem-solving during the learning process. For instance, students may engage in online discussion forums or collaborate in group projects to find solutions to real-world problems. This learning approach fosters critical thinking and problem-solving skills, crucial abilities for effective communication in English. Through the combination of self-paced online learning and in-person instruction, blended teaching cultivates students' autonomy in learning. Students are required to manage their own learning plans and progress, with self-management skills being a key element in the effective application of English language learning. In the realm of blended teaching, students utilize various online learning tools and platforms, including online course management systems and multimedia creation tools. This not only enhances their technological proficiency but also aids them in more effectively using English to search information.

4. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The pedagogical implications of blended learning are significant, and this part is tempting to elaborate in aspects of instructional environment, teacher-student interaction, and curriculum design.

4.1 Instructional Environment

The blended teaching model, with various instructional modalities, imposes discernible requisites on the hardware and software infrastructure within the educational sphere. Primarily, in the realm of hardware, this pedagogical approach mandates a steadfast, high-bandwidth internet connection to facilitate seamless access to online educational resources. Both students and educators necessitate individually configured personal computing devices or mobile platforms, enabling adept interaction with and utilization of the designated learning platforms. Furthermore, technologically sophisticated classrooms should be endowed with interactive whiteboards, state-of-the-art projection apparatus, and superior audio-visual equipment to optimize classroom engagement and content dissemination.

Meanwhile, the software should necessitate the implementation of an adept Learning Management System (LMS) such as Xuexitong or Moodle. An LMS assumes a significant role in the orchestration of course content, assignments, and assessments. Essential to effective communication and

collaboration, requisite tools include video conferencing software and collaborative online platforms. The toolkit must also incorporate content creation utilities, assessment and feedback mechanisms, and supplementary learning applications, all serving as indispensable elements for the development and management of digitalized instructional content. The intricate integration of these hardware and software constituents, necessitating not only fiscal investments but also systemic technological augmentation, underscores the imperative of ensuring that all stakeholders possess the requisite proficiency to navigate and exploit these tools. This proficiency is foundational to the holistic harnessing of the potential inherent in blended teaching, engendering a pedagogical paradigm characterized by heightened flexibility and interactive engagement within the contemporary educational field.

4.2 Teacher-Student Interaction

Effective pedagogy necessitates the proficient utilization of digital tools to facilitate dynamic communication and interaction between educators and learners. Teachers are tasked with employing collaborative platforms such as Zoom and DingDing to conduct video conferences, while also integrating interactive online forums and question-and-answer sessions to stimulate student engagement and cultivate a vested interest in the learning process. Concurrently, pedagogues must adeptly navigate personalized instructional strategies customized to accommodate the diverse learning proclivities and requirements of individual students.

Students, in turn, are expected to actively acclimate to the varied interactive modalities inherent in blended learning. Proactive participation in online discourse and astute utilization of digital resources for self-directed learning are paramount skills. The nature of blended teaching necessitates the cultivation of an equitable and open communication paradigm between educators and learners, with the former assuming roles not only as disseminators of knowledge but also as guides and collaborators in the educational journey. Moreover, educators' attentiveness to learners' affective states and motivational dynamics becomes pivotal.

In the online sphere, teachers should expeditiously respond to student queries and apprehensions, alleviating potential sentiments of isolation or anxiety associated with remote learning. Offline, astute observation of students' non-verbal

cues during in-person classes, such as facial expressions and body language, serves as a mechanism for gauging emotional states and levels of engagement. Regular assessments of emotional well-being and motivation can furnish valuable insights, enabling pedagogical adjustments to optimize instructional methods and content.

To kindle intrinsic motivation, educators should craft captivating course content and interactive activities aimed at enhancing student participation and sustained interest. Importantly, educators must acknowledge the inherent heterogeneity among students, deploying adaptive and diverse pedagogical strategies to cater to divergent learning styles and needs. Consequently, the success of this pedagogical model hinges not solely on technological support but, fundamentally, on a transformative recalibration of roles and skill augmentation for both educators and learners in the interactive educational aspect.

4.3 Curriculum Design

Blended learning also has pedagogical implications for curriculum design, influencing how educators structure and deliver content to optimize the advantages of both online and offline teaching and learning.

- Online learning activities: Students access course materials through LMS, encompassing recorded lecture videos, reading materials, and practice exercises, all of which are accessible at any time. In this digital space, teachers orchestrate online discussions and collaborations, where students engage in forums and group discussions, enhancing their communicative skills through writing and feedback exercises. This dynamic participation fosters peer interaction, bolstering a sense of learning community. Additionally, teachers assign personalized learning tasks, such as critically analyzing TED talks on relevant topics, culminating in oral or written presentations.
- Offline learning activities: Weekly in-person classes focus on elevating oral proficiency and practical application, incorporating activities such as role-playing, group discussions, and simulated interviews. In this context, teachers offer tailored guidance and feedback, aiding students in grasping challenging concepts and refining language learning strategies. Students showcase their project assignments, such as group research

reports or individual oral presentations, during class, thereby increasing opportunities for practical application and public speaking. Furthermore, the course necessitates the integration of effective feedback and assessment mechanisms, including automated grading systems and real-time progress tracking, facilitating students in gaining timely insights into their learning trajectories.

5. CONCLUSION

This paper emphasizes the multifaceted impact of blended teaching in enhancing English language learning effectiveness, showcasing its strengths in boosting language knowledge and skills through providing realistic application scenarios, promoting cross-cultural communication, fostering critical thinking, developing self-management skills, and improving technological application abilities.

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