Collaboration and Interactivity in EFL Learning via Blackboard Collaborate:
A Pilot Study

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Significance of the study

➢ To report on a Blended Learning model adopted to teach communication skills; listening and speaking to EFL learners in KAU.

➢ This is the first study on the topic of Blended Learning in KAU following the implementation of Blackboard Learn as the university LMS.

What is Blended Learning?

A learning model which combines traditional face-to-face (ftf) instruction and computer assisted learning (CAL) (Nemeir, 2005) or computer-mediated instruction (Graham, 2004).

Lynch and Dembo (2004): blended learning represents an eclectic blend of technologies and modalities which enable both synchronous and asynchronous teacher-learner and learner-learner interactions.

Why Blend?

- Improving teaching and learning strategies
- The convenience of blended
- Cost-saving
- Access to knowledge; social interaction
- Learner's capability to control and choose
- Ease of revision
- Learners expect technology to be integrated into their classes

Why Blend?

- Support and encourage independent and collaborative learning
- Provide a place to practice the target language beyond the classroom
- Provide a less stressful practice environment
- Provide flexibility of studying to meet learners' needs
- Help learners develop the necessary learning skills for 21st Century

Blackboard as a LMS

- The most popular course management systems for classroom and online educational assistance.

- It has become the dominant e-learning software.

- It provides easy access to all course materials anytime anywhere.

Blending Learning in KAU

- ICT for teaching and learning in higher education institutions
- Deanship of E-Learning and Distance Education in KAU
- Virtual learning environment
- Blackboard Learn 2013

The study

Subjects:

17 female students enrolled in "Listening and Speaking 1"
Never taken an online course before, so they were trained on using the system

The Blended course

- Five units
- Each includes one listening and
  one speaking activity
- A drill application
- On-line listening quiz and speaking task

Data collection and analysis

- End-of-course survey to collect students' input on their satisfaction
- A quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data

Results and discussion

1. **<u>Computer and Internet literacy and accessibility</u>**

- Computer skills of the students varied between excellent and very good.
- Students didn't have much difficulties concerning the LMS.

2. **Language skills**

Language skills	Responses
Listening skills	Strongly agree 52.9%
Reading skills	Agree 67.7%
Writing skills Pronunciation Grammar Vocabulary	Agree 47.05%
Speaking skills	Undecided

3. <u>Overall rating of the Blackboard learning experience</u>

Students feel comfortable using Blackboard.	p = 3.05
Using Blackboard helps develop knowledge of computer and internet.	p = 3.01
Using Blackboard helps students work according to their pace.	p = 2.47
Using Blackboard improves communication between students and teachers.	p = 2.23
Blackboard gives access to authentic second language materials outside the classroom.	p = 2.20

4. **Blackboard features, tools and content rating and frequency**

Responses	%
Tests in Blackboard were easy to answer.	58.8%
Content of the course was found easily.	52.9%
Students know how to use the tools.	41.2%
Students got good grades on online activities.	41.2%
No technical problem during the Blackboard test.	35.3%

Blackboard tools

Tests   100%

Forum   94.1 %

Assignments   41.2%

Voice tool   35.3%

Limitations of using Blackboard

Slow Internet connectivity in KAU

Suggestions

- Increasing the number of online courses
- More language laboratories and fast Internet connection
- More credits should be given to students work distinguishably via Blackboard
- Provide workshop training to students

Conclusion

- ✓ This pilot study investigates insights about Blended Learning model in teaching EFL communication skills; listening and speaking, in the Department of European Languages in KAU.

- ✓ It examines students' satisfaction of using the university's LMS.

- ✓ It provides limitation and some suggestions.

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Thank You