PHÂN HỘI NGHIÊN CỨU VÀ GIẢNG DẠY TIẾNG ANH VIỆT NAM

VIETTESOL INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION 2023
ELT FOR 21ST CENTURY EXCELLENCE

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APPLYING BLENDED LEARNING IN ENGLISH LESSONS TO DEVELOP HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH AND GENERAL COMPETENCE IN VIETNAM

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Abstract: *As digital transformation continues to take hold in Vietnamese education, there is a growing need for optimal teaching methods to improve education quality and meet the demands of this pioneering task. Blended Learning is a modern digital learning model becoming an inevitable trend worldwide. This research seeks to examine how Blended Learning can be utilized to teach English and its impact on improving students' English communication skills and general competences, while also delving into students' reactions to learning English through Blended Learning. A mixed-methods approach was employed, with a survey, experimental research, and observation used to collect data from 360 high school students in two schools in Binh Dinh province, divided into control and experimental groups. The results showed significant improvements in the experimental group's pre-and post-test scores and their enhanced communicative and general competencies, including autonomy and self-learning, communication and collaboration, problem-solving, creativity, and informatics competence. Most participants in the experimental group had positive attitudes toward learning English through Blended Learning models. Based on the findings, practical suggestions for applying Blended Learning in Vietnamese high schools are proposed to meet the requirements of innovative teaching methods and the 2018 general education curriculum. Besides, this study provides insights for educators in Vietnam and other countries who seek to enhance their students' competencies through Blended Learning in the digital era.*

Keywords: *Blended learning models, modern digital learning models, communicative competences in English, general competences*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, terms like open learning, collaborative learning, virtual classrooms, and competence development have become prevalent in 21st-century teaching discussions. These concepts raise important questions: how to facilitate competence growth in learners, identifying appropriate teaching methods, optimizing combinations of methods, and seeking greater effectiveness. These questions prompt educators to reassess teaching practices, particularly in the era of technology (4.0). They need to discover methods to utilize technology effectively while still keeping their objectives and goals in focus.

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The strong development of the Internet along with the popular application of smart electronic devices helps people easily connect and interact with each other from anywhere in the world. In education, this has led to opportunities for the development and expansion of online learning. However, online learning does not deny the leading role of traditional forms of teaching. Blended learning is a solution that combines traditional learning with online learning. This model helps learners practice self-study awareness, be proactive in choosing learning space and study time, and partly limit the disadvantages of the traditional teaching and learning model (teacher and learners must meet in person at a fixed time and at a predetermined location). Currently, applying the blended learning model in teaching is a reasonable choice. In addition to promoting the advantages of young people when participating in learning, the model also helps teachers be more flexible and diverse in their teaching methods to attract learners.

Blended learning has captured the attention of second language researchers and second language educators in the world over the past decade, especially with a focus on teaching English as a Foreign Language. In particular, numerous prior research works have explored how learners acquire English as a second language. Examples include investigations conducted by Erdem & Kibar (2014), Liu (2013), Miyazoe & Anderson (2010), Shahrokni & Talaeizadeh (2013), Siew-Eng & Muuk (2015), Tuncay & Uzunboylu (2012), and Yang, Chuang, & Tseng (2013). Additionally, there has been a surge of research attention focused on the responsibilities of educators within the framework of blended learning (Ellis, Steed, & Applebee, 2006; Karavas, 2014; Larsen, 2014).

The use of blended learning environments in Vietnam is the result of the government's recognition of e-learning as a significant factor in fostering educational advancement. Several policies have been released since 2000 in an effort to encourage the growth of e-learning in the nation (Anh, 2012). Besides, on 3rd June 2020, the Prime Minister approved "The National Digital Transformation Program to 2025, orientation to 2030" to make Vietnam become a digital, stable and prosperous country, a pioneer in testing new technologies and models. "Digital Education" is one of eight industries that need to prioritize digital transformation first. However, there are other factors that can ensure the success of e-learning in general and blended learning environments in particular, particularly in the EFL field, in addition to government backing. Its acceptance and adoption by students are more crucial. According to Porter *et al.* (2014), one of the crucial stages in the implementation of blended learning is drawing in potential adopters, which includes students. In Vietnam, only a limited number of studies on e-learning acceptance and blended learning environments (Vu *et al.*, 2011; Huynh and Le, 2014; Nguyen *et al.*, 2014) have been conducted. Therefore, there is a need for further research on blended learning, especially at high schools, conducted in the Vietnamese context.

To fill the research gap mentioned above, the current study is aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What blended learning models are suitable for teaching and learning English at high schools?

2. What is the contribution of blended learning to English teaching and learning?

3. How do the students perceive the application of blended learning in the EFL classroom?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definitions of Blended Learning

Although blended learning is a concept that is frequently used in education, no single definition has been agreed upon (Graham, 2012). Others define it as a combination of online and face-to-face learning and teaching depending on the proportion of course content delivered online (Picciano, 2013), whereas some definitions refer to a combination of different delivery media, instructional methods, or face-to-face and online instruction (Bonk & Graham, 2012; Graham, 2013). This study, however, tends to rely on Garrison and Vaugan's (2008) definition of blended learning, which states that it is the organic integration of thoughtfully chosen and complementary face-to-face and online approaches. This is because the concept places more emphasis on the pedagogical aspect of the combination and heavily relies on the context in which it is put into practice. (Tue, 2015).

Types of Blended Learning

Blended learning can be categorized in a variety of ways. In terms of implementation levels, blended learning can be categorized as Activity, Course, Program, and Institutional levels; in terms of learning objectives, it can be classified as Skill-Driven, Attitude-Driven, and Competency-Driven models; and in terms of the learning scope of blended learning, it can be classified as Enabling Blends, Enhancing Blends, and Transforming Blends (Graham, 2012; Valiathan, 2002). Enhancing blends and Transforming blends are the two types of blended learning that are most important to this study because they demonstrate gradual change to current pedagogy, such as providing supplemental online materials for face-to-face courses or shifting from a model where EFL learners are passive information receivers to a model where learners actively construct English knowledge and skills through rich interactions with others in both face-to-face and online settings.

Models of Blended Learning

Judy Thomson, Heather Staker, and Michael B. Horn (2012) outlined several primary models of Blended Learning as categorized below. Each with its own characteristics and advantages. Based on the characteristics of each class, teachers can choose the appropriate model

- The Face - to - Face Driver Model: In this model, the traditional classroom still plays the leading role. In addition, teachers use online learning materials, resources, and software for teaching and formative assessment to increase teaching effectiveness, personalization and differentiation in teaching.

- Rotation Model: In this model, students rotate between different learning modalities, typically between online and in-person instruction. It can be further divided into several sub-models:

+ Station Rotation: Students move between different learning stations, such as a computer station for online activities and a teacher-led station for face-to-face instruction.

+ Lab Rotation: Students spend a portion of their time in a computer lab or online learning environment and the rest in a traditional classroom.

+ Flipped Classroom: Students learn content online at home through videos or other digital resources and then engage in activities, discussions, or projects during in-person class time.

- Flex Model: In the Flex model, students have a more individualized and flexible learning experience. They can choose when and where they access online materials and receive in-person support as needed. This model is often used in higher education and allows students to progress at their own pace.

- A La Carte Model: This model is primarily used in K-12 settings and involves students taking one or more online courses to complement their traditional classroom education. Students have the flexibility to select specific online courses based on their interests or needs.

- Enriched Virtual Model: In this model, most of the learning occurs online, but students attend in-person sessions for specific activities, assessments, or collaborative projects. It's more common in high school and higher education settings.

- The Online Driver Model: learners complete the course based on an online management platform, interaction between learners and instructors through online software. This model helps learners be flexible in their study time to suit those facing geographical distance barriers.

Among six models listed above, I identify 3 models suitable for both high schools in general and Binh Duong high schools in particular. These models include the Face-to-Face Driver Model, Lab Rotation, and Flipped Classroom. In the results section, I'll provide detailed descriptions of how to implement these models, accompanied by specific examples for clarity.

Fundamental Theories for Implementing Blended Learning in EFL Education

According to Lamy and Halmpel (2007), the theories of cognitive constructivism and socio-cultural constructivism serve as the theoretical groundwork for the creation of transformational EFL blended learning. However, this study gives greater consideration to the latter rather than the former. In contrast, socio-cultural constructivism emphasizes the role that social processes and interactions play in an individual's intellectual development while highlighting the fact that these social processes and interactions are culturally situated (Tue, 2015). This is because cognitive constructivism is most interested in the mechanism of intellectual development and knowledge acquisition that occurs internally.

Mediation and social learning are concepts that are part of socio-cultural constructivism. According to social-cultural viewpoints, some students' EFL learning is mediated by others, including teachers and peer students, cultural artifacts like language, cultural history, social context, electronic forms of information access, and so forth, as well as by the self through private speech or private imitation (Lantolf, 2000). Additionally, since learning is a social activity that involves individual-collective processes of identification and identity construction, the concept of social learning offers theoretical support for the use of ICT in EFL education and emphasizes the significance of a supportive discourse for EFL learning (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007).

In accordance with these two theories, Wilson's (2008) five pedagogical principles are used in this study since they specify what teachers must do to foster successful learning in blended learning settings. These guidelines include: (1) fostering learner engagement; (2) giving prompt feedback; (3) allowing learners to take charge of their own learning; (4) offering chances for communication and dialogue; and (5) inspiring students in a variety of methods.

Previous Studies

There have been many studies of blended learning conducted in the EFL context. In order to better understand how students feel about blended learning, Erdem and Kibar (2014) conducted a study that included Facebook in the blended learning environment. The outcomes demonstrated the students' favorable attitudes toward the adoption of blended learning, which in turn revealed that Facebook can be a useful tool for communication and engagement and that the blended learning environment might be a suitable setting for sharing assignments and projects. Similar to this, Liu (2013) carried out a study on blended learning in an EFL context to describe and explore the effectiveness and impact of an academic English writing course in a blended learning environment with regard to course design, material development and presentation, assignment submission and grading, student involvement, teacher reflection, and student evaluation. Similar to the study of Erdem and Kibar (2014), the results showed that blended learning has boosted student and student-teacher interaction. Another advantage of blended learning is that it lowers students' levels of communication anxiety, encourages them to be more self-reliant and independent, and improves their English writing skills. In another context, an exploratory study on the use of forums, blogs, and wikis in blended learning for upper intermediate level Japanese language learners was undertaken by Miyazoe and Anderson (2010). It was discovered that the students enjoyed this course and that it also improved the quality of their writing. Additionally, the results demonstrated that students' capacities to distinguish between various writing idioms have improved.

In addition, a few studies have looked into how teachers fit into the blended learning environment. Ellis, Steed, and Applebee (2006) conducted one study on the opinions and roles of teachers in blended learning courses. In order to understand what teachers believe students learnt, how they believe they teach, and what they do to prepare students for the blended learning design, participants were interviewed, and data were qualitatively categorized in accordance with teachers' views. The desired learning outcome of the blended learning course was shown to be more easily attained by students when using technology media. In his dissertation Larsen (2012) examined the opinions of both students and teachers on a blended learning English writing course in his dissertation. The primary objectives of this study are to investigate how teachers can be best prepared and taught to create a better blended learning environment for English language learners and to find out how students see this blended learning course in terms of its productivity. The findings indicated that collaborative planning, technological support, and pedagogical guidance provided throughout the term were all effective and that teachers did not really require much training in blended learning. This study indicated that students started to become more independent and took on more responsibility for their own learning, which is consistent with Liu (2013)'s findings. Additionally, students said they enjoyed the blended learning course and preferred it to face-to-face instruction. In light of the findings, he proposed that instructors' prior training and experience in a mixed learning setting might be a predictor of students' happiness with both the course and their teachers . Hamzah *et al.* (2022) aimed to create a blended learning model for Islamic studies using the Web-Centric Course approach. They developed a Problem-Based Learning model supported by textbooks, manuals, and e-learning resources. Validation and practicality analyses confirmed the model's effectiveness for both lecturers and students.Similarly, Namyssova *et al.* (2019) studied a blended learning course for teachers and educational leaders at

Nazarbayev University in Kazakhstan. They surveyed and interviewed all participants to assess teaching practices and challenges. The paper offers recommendations to enhance blended learning in higher education, particularly for schools starting to adopt this approach.

In general, past research suggests that blended learning is essential and beneficial in teaching English as a Foreign Language. Given this observation, the present study aims to investigate the utilization of blended learning for English instruction and its influence on enhancing students' English communication competences and general competences. Additionally, it seeks to explore high school students' reactions to learning English through blended learning at two highschools in Binh Dinh province, Vietnam.

METHODOLOGY

Context and Participants of the Study

A selection of 360 seniors from Binh Duong and Nguyen Thai Hoc high schools in Binh Dinh province were selected at random for this research and separated into control and experimental groups. We believed that, being in their final year of high school, these students possessed enough prior knowledge to engage in independent study without significant challenges. We anticipated their interest in the concept of blended learning.

Data Collection Instruments

In our study, we combined both quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze the results of our survey. The instruments used in this study consisted of the questionnaire, pre and post-tests (quantitative method) and observation (qualitative method).

The questionnaire was constructed according to the criteria outlined in the 2018 general education program document by the Ministry of Education for evaluating student competences. The questionnaire contained 32 five-point Likert scale items (on a scale of 1-5, ranging from Not at all Agree = 1 to Strongly Agree = 5). It was divided into two parts. The first part, which had 21 statements centering on the second research question, aimed to explore students' achievement in general competences including autonomy and self-learning, communication and collaboration, problem-solving and creativity and informatics competence. The second part included 11 statements concerning the students' perceptions of teachers' teaching methods, the way of organizing classroom activities and formative assessment during teaching and learning process after using blended learning.

Pre and post-tests were utilized to investigate students' achievement in communicative competence in English at the beginning and the end of the study.

To get more in-depth information, a qualitative instrument observation was conducted. During direct classroom observation, we compared given criteria in the check-list.

Data Collection Procedures

Data for the questionnaire were collected from students at two high schools. The researcher administered the questionnaires immediately after classes, providing instructions in both English

and Vietnamese to ensure accuracy. Students could request explanations for any unclear statements or words. The questionnaires were anonymous, and students took approximately 30 minutes to complete them. All 360 questionnaires were collected and returned to the author for analysis.

Pre and post-tests were conducted before and after the experimental teaching process that took place within one semester of the 2021 -2022 school year. During the experimental teaching process, the researcher applied the three teaching models mentioned above and combined observations of teaching and learning activities based on the given criteria..

Data Analysis

The questionnaires were collected and the data was inputted into Microsoft Excel to calculate the mean for each item. The output from the computer was then summarized and demonstrated through tables. Additionally, during the classroom observation process, data is carefully recorded, compared with the given criteria framework. After the data collection process has completed, we proceed to reinterpret it.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Results from Experimental Teaching

After a period of experimental research, I found that there were three blended learning models that were suitable for the conditions and reality at high schools

The Face-to-Face Driver Model

In this model, the traditional classroom still plays the leading role, so teachers can integrate online learning into some parts of the lessons. It means that some of the lesson activities will be done online at home instead of in traditional class. Here are some of the different activities of the lesson that I have integrated online learning.

Example 1: Warm-up activity

I used Brainstorming teaching technique, asked students to participate in the online discussion on the Padlet, present their opinions on the question:

"Have you ever volunteered? Why? If yes, what did you do? If not, what is your plan to help people in your community?"

Then, in face-to-face classes, I would show students' online discussion and lead into the lesson.

Figure 1. Students' online discussion on the Padlet

Example 2: Application and Extension activity

Similarly, when teaching Unit 5: CULTURAL IDENTITY - Getting started – English 12, in the application and extension stage I had students work in groups to study one of the cultural identities of Vietnam. The groups presented on the Padlet and then I evaluated their products.
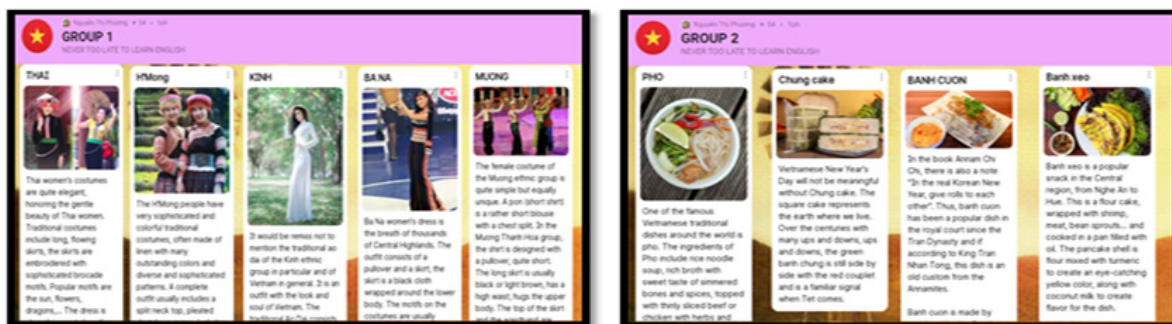

Figure 2. Students' online products on the Padlet

Example 3: Homework activity

Instead of assigning boring and available exercises in textbooks, I gave students homework on Nearpod to widen their knowledge related to the topic of the lesson. The lesson was designed with interactive questions among informative slides, and ended with a quiz game to consolidate knowledge. Therefore, students could both watch and interact with questions to grasp the content very easily.
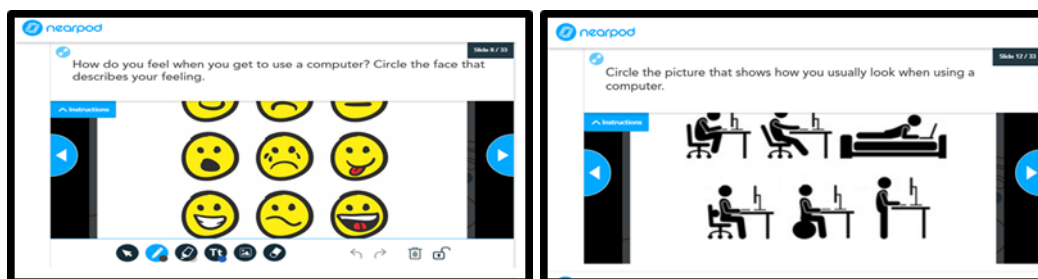

Figure 3. Online exercises on Nearpod

Example 4: Formative assessment activity

For example, I assessed students' understanding using online tools Nearpod. When students completed the test, Nearpod automatically reported back the results.
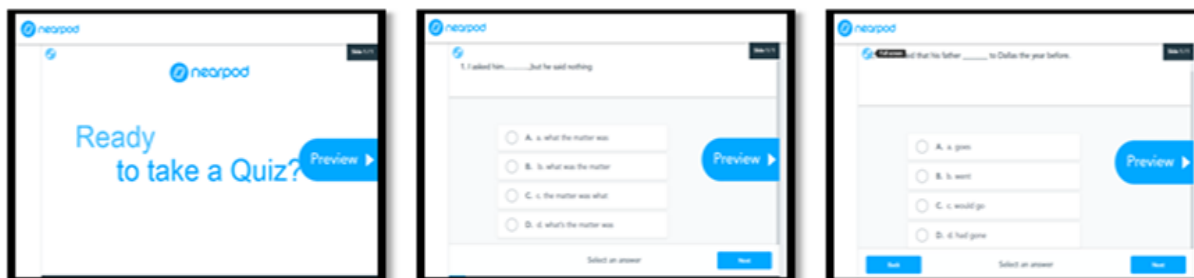

Figure 4. Online exercises on Nearpod

Lab Rotation

In this model, after studying face to face in traditional classrooms, students will go to the computer room for online learning. The form of online learning that I applied in the computer room was to use some websites, integrate them into the lesson to develop students' language skills and linguistic knowledge.

Example 1: Practice reading skill

Integrating the website Breaking News English www.breakingnewsenglish.com

In lesson Unit 7: Artificial Intelligence – Writing – English 12, I instructed students to visit the above website, choose a relevant topic, select an appropriate reading level, read the passage, and encourage weaker students to pause and read additional text if needed. I also offered to explain any unfamiliar words in advance if they encountered them in the passage.

Figure 5. The interface and exercises of the website Breaking News English.com

After reading, students were tested with some activities on the website
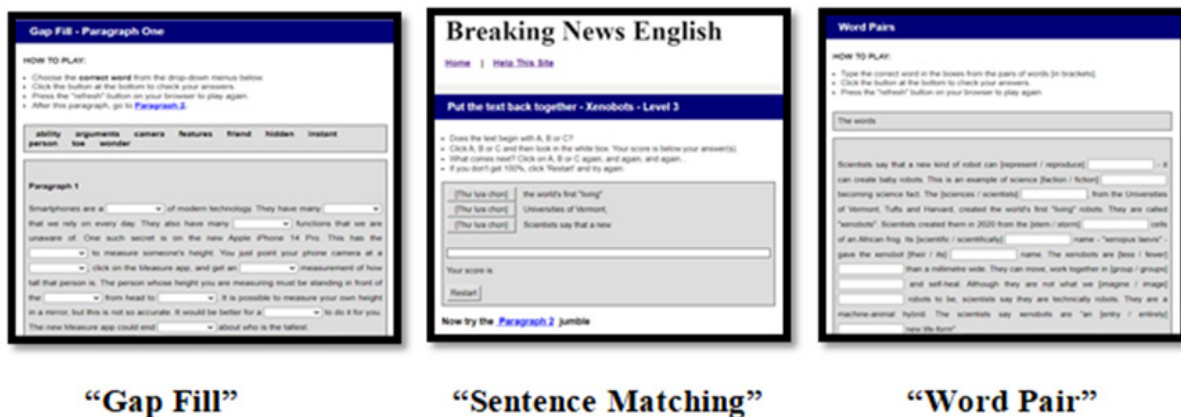
Figure 6. The exercises of the website Breaking News English.com

Example 2: Practice writing skill

Integrating the website Grammar Book - Free https://www.grammarbook.com/

In the online learning stage, I asked them to use this website, select Grammar rules "who, which, that" to help students apply the grammar point "Relative clauses" in Unit 3: THE GREEN MOVEMENT - Language - English 12 to write sentences. Students checked their answers and received additional explanations from the teacher if necessary via GRADE QUIZZES.

Figure 7. The interface and exercise of the website Grammarbook.com

Flipped Classroom

The process of implementing this model includes two stages with four processes and the following steps:

Figure 8. Two stages and four processes of the Flipped Classroom model

Example: Here, I only illustrate the second stage with two processes in the lesson Unit 7: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE -Reading- English12

Process 1: Online Learning

My students self-studied online at home through lectures I had posted on the Padlet site, following a clearly step-by-step process.
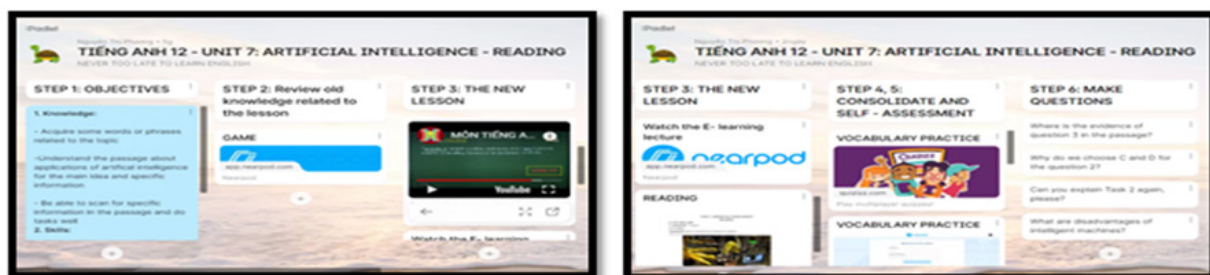

Figure 9. Six steps of the process 1: Online learning on Padlet

Step 1: Self-determine learning tasks

In this step, I defined the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that the lesson aimed to impart. Students were required to read attentively before proceeding to fulfill these objectives.

Step 2: Self-review the old knowledge

I used Nearpod to create two vocabulary games for my students. The first game involves matching pictures with words, and the second is a multiple-choice quiz to complete sentences with the correct words.

Step 3: Self-study the new lesson

Students engaged with the new lesson content through video, an E-learning lecture on Nearpod, or a PDF file, providing them with multiple options for learning. I encouraged them to explore all formats for a more comprehensive understanding.

Step 4: Self-consolidate and perfect knowledge

In this lesson, my students practiced new word memorization through interactive games. The first game on Nearpod involved listening and writing the words heard, while the second game on Quizizz required selecting the Vietnamese meaning for English words.

Step 5: Self-assess the new knowledge

Students self-assessed their new knowledge through textbook exercises, interactive games on platforms like Quizizz and Nearpod, as well as group discussions. After completion, students received notifications of their results and could review correct answers. Essay exercises and open-ended questions were personally assessed and discussed during in-class sessions.

Step 6: Make questions

At this step my students asked anything they did not understand or wanted to know after completing their self-studying on Padlet. These questions were synthesized and answered in the face – to – face class.

Process 2: Face-to-Face Learning

Following their online self-study, students engaged in traditional classroom activities.

Step 1: Test at the beginning of the lesson

I randomly selected students to answer questions from online self-study tasks, compared their responses with their online results to assess their comprehension, self-study habits, and provided timely feedback.

Step 2: Gather all the questions

I summarized self-study results and students' online learning questions, then displayed them on the screen for all students to view.

Step 3: Organize discussion

I facilitated discussions and provided answers to both the lesson's key questions and those posed by students during the online lecture. In this lesson, I had students discuss and present their answers for Tasks 2 and 3 while explaining their choices to ensure that all students comprehended the problem.

Figure 10. Tasks 2 and Task 3

Besides, to ensure students' understanding, I had them summarize the passage using the provided table.

Figure 11. Summary of the passage

Step 4: Conclude knowledge

In this step, I verified students' understanding of the lesson through analysis and answering the discussion questions.

Step 5: Apply and extend knowledge

In this step, teachers can diversify by assigning various activities to expand students' understanding of the lesson topic and enhance their language skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. For instance, I provided a short video and tasked students with identifying four applications of artificial intelligence used to manage the COVID-19 pandemic in China.

Figure 12. The video of artificial intelligence

Step 6: Homework

Teachers encourage students to complete homework, engage in online discussions, and self-study in preparation for the upcoming week.

Blended learning enhances students' competences by fostering improved communicative competences in English, autonomy, problem-solving, creativity, and informatics competence through online self-learning. It also promotes communication and collaboration competence during interactive in-class sessions.

RESULTS OF THE PRE AND POST – TESTS
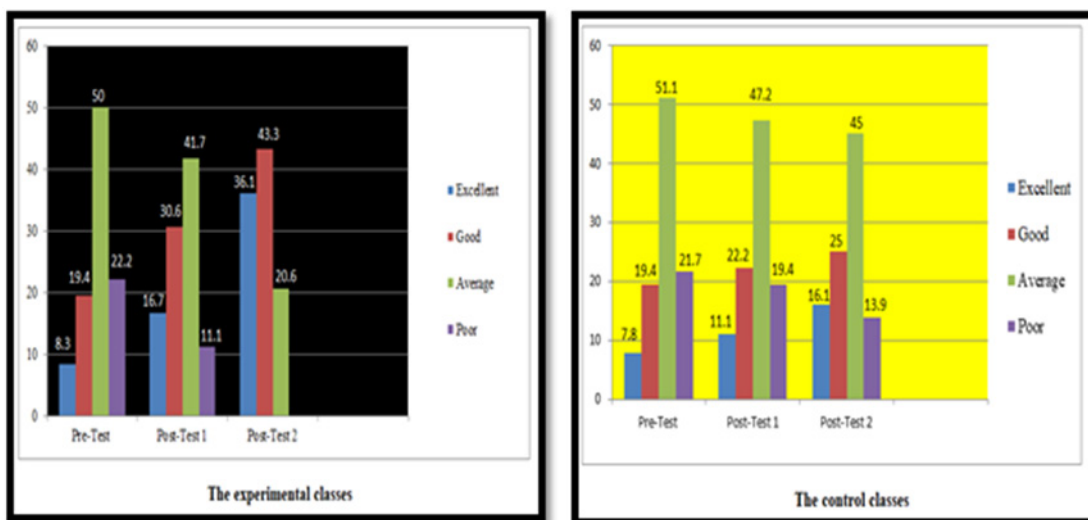
Figure 13. Students' development of communicative competences in English

Pre- test and Post – test focused on all four students' language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Comparing the results from pre-test, post-test1 and post-test 2 in the experimental classes and the control classes at Binh Duong High school, it can be said that the application of blended learning in teaching has brought a clear effect. Students in the experimental classes had a great change in terms of the learning result. There are not weak students; excellent and good students doubled compared to the classes that were not applied blended learning. This means that students in the experimental classes have significantly improved their communicative competence in English compared to the control classes.

Results of the Questionnaire

Development of General Competences

Table 1. Students' development of general competences

Item	Statements	Percentage				
		1	2	3	4	5
	Autonomy and self-learning competence					
1.1	I set learning goals for myself to strive for.	0%	0%	3.3 %	41.1%	55.6%
1.2	I know how to make and implement a study plan	0%	0%	1 %	40.5%	59.5%
1.3	I can choose the right learning resources	0%	2%	2.3%	39.7%	56%
1.4	I Know how to take notes and preserve selective information	1%	1.5%	3.5%	50.2%	44.8%
1.5	I can identify and correct my errors and limitations	0%	0%	4.4%	45.6%	50%

1.6	I always actively seek help from others in learning	0%	0%	0%	47.3%	52.7%
	Communication and Collaboration Competence					
1.7	I listen and actively perform the tasks assigned, at the same time participate in proposing to adjust the assignment plan and organize cooperative activities in the group.	0%	0%	5%	33.9%	61.1%
1.8	I always listen to opinions of other members as well as confidently present, share and discuss with others in the group.	0%	2.3%	5.7%	42.4%	49.6%
1.9	I participate in self-assessment and evaluate the results of other members with a sharing and constructive attitude.	0%	0%	3%	30%	67%
1.10	I know how to find materials in English for study purposes	0%	0%	2.2%	40.3%	57.5%
1.11	I can be proactive in communication; confident and know how to control emotions and attitudes when speaking in front of many people.	0%	0%	5.3%	47%	47.7%
	Problem-solving and Creativity Competence					
1.12	I can analyze learning situations; detect and state problem situations in learning and in life.	0%	0%	7%	40%	53%
1.13	I can collect, analyze and clarify information related to learning issues; know how to propose and analyze some solutions to solve problems; choose the most suitable solution.	1%	3.2%	5.8%	37.5%	52.5%
1.14	I know how to plan learning activities with appropriate objectives, content, form and means of activities.	0%	2%	3.3%	39.7%	55%
1.15	I can adjust the plan, the method and the process of solving problems to suit the situation and become effective.	0%	0%	1.4%	40.6%	58%
1.16	I always make questions in the learning process and know how to self-assess the effectiveness of solutions and my own learning activities.	0%	0%	2.9%	45%	52.1%
	Informatics Competence					
1.17	I know how to effectively use applications and tools on the Internet to support my learning	0%	0%	1%	48.9%	51%
1.18	I know how to behave appropriately in the digital environment	0%	0%	2.5%	35.5%	62%
1.19	I can solve my own learning problems with the help of ICT	0%	2.3%	5.7%	40%	52%
1.20	I apply ICT in my self - learning process	0%	3.2%	4.3%	36.8%	55.7%
1.21	I know how to seek cooperation in the digital environment.	0%	0%	2.1%	40%	57.9%

1 = Strongly Disagree   2 = Somewhat Disagree   3 = Neutral   4 = Somewhat Agree   5 = Strongly Agree

Table 1 provides important insights into the effectiveness of applying blended learning to develop students' general competences. These criteria are based on the competence assessment framework of the Ministry of Education and Training according to the 2018 General Education Program.

The items revolve around general competences including autonomy and self-learning, communication and collaboration, problem-solving and creativity and informatics competence, extremely important competences that students need to achieve in the 2018 General Education Program. As can be observed from Table 1, the majority of students are in favor of the "Strongly Agree" and "Somewhat Agree" with quite a large number of proportions (> 80%) for developing all competences after applying blended learning in English teaching and learning. Meanwhile, little students choose "Strongly Disagree" and "Somewhat Disagree". The "Neutral" item is scored at a much smaller rate (< 8%). From these numbers, it is quite obvious that the application of blended learning models has brought about positive effects.

The results from the questionnaires were completely consistent with the results from the classroom observation. During the experimental teaching process, we carefully observed the students' activities, took notes and marked criteria on the checklist. We found that students actively participated in learning activities requested by teachers, self-studied materials to solve problems, and were willing to cooperate, share and ask questions. In particular, they became proficient in using information technology to serve their learning.

Students' Perceptions on the Application of Blended Learning in EFL Classroom

Table 2. Students' perceptions on the application of Blended Learning

Items	Statements	Percentage				
		1	2	3	4	5
2.1	Teachers' teaching methods are engaging and motivating	0%	0%	4.2 %	35.9%	59.9%
2.2	Teachers' assistance and consultancy help you learn effectively	0%	0%	2.2 %	42.7%	54.1%
2.3	Online tools are used to support English learning effectively	0%	0%	2.3%	39.7%	56%
2.4	You have more opportunities to approach the language environment	0%	0%	2.5%	50.3%	47.2%
2.5	You have many opportunities to discuss, share ideas and interact with teachers as well as classmates	0%	0%	4.4%	45.6%	50%
2.6	You easily absorb and remember knowledge	0%	0%	5%	33.9%	61.1%
2.7	English lessons are interesting, designed suitably for your ability	0%	0%	0%	48.3%	51.7%
2.8	Tasks are very diverse to help improve and develop communicative competences in English and general competences to meet future occupational requirements	0%	0%	2.4%	47.3%	50.3%
2.9	Teachers' feedbacks are helpful to you	0%	0%	3.7%	43.4%	48.6%
2.10	Teachers have effective formative assessment of the students.	0%	0%	3%	30.2%	66.8%
2.11	You feel encouraged and equal in your learning process.	0%	0%	2.2%	40.3%	57.5%

1=Strongly Disagree   2=Somewhat Disagree 3=Neutral   4=Somewhat Agree   5=Strongly Agree

Table 2 reveals the amount of interest the students had for teachers' teaching methods, the way of designing lessons and formative assessment in the teaching and learning process. This part aims to answer the research question "How do the students perceive the application of blended learning in an EFL classroom?"

We first investigated their thoughts on teachers' teaching methods (from item 2.1 to item 2.6). The items 2.7 and 2.8 address the way of designing lessons. The objective of the last part of the survey was to find out the students' attitude towards teachers' formative assessment from items 2.9 to 2.11 in Table 2. As can be inferred from the data, on the whole, the majority of the participants remained somewhat agree and strongly agree(over 90% chose option 4 and 5 for all items). Little students expressed neutrality of all items (less than 6% choose option 3). Besides, no one chose the options 1 and 2. This was a sign that a large proportion approved of the application of blended learning.

Indeed, it is not difficult to apply these blended learning models, even teachers who are not good at technology can quickly grasp and carry out. At the same time, it is suitable for all students and all types of schools. These blended learning models can be replicated at any grades, or any subjects. Besides, there are no restrictive conditions when applying these blended learning

models as long as teachers and students have personal electronic devices connected to the Internet. However, blended learning still has some models that I have not implemented; therefore, we propose to continue researching and apply the rest of the models in the future.

CONCLUSION

In this research, we focused on in-depth exploitation and experimental teaching of three blended learning models that are suitable for the conditions and reality of teaching at high schools in general and Binh Duong high schools in particular as well as how to deploy and design teaching and learning activities in each model. After trying for a semester in the group of students at grade 12, the results were extremely positive. With the ability to be flexible, creative, autonomous and effective, the blended learning model helped improve effectiveness in teaching and learning, developing general and subject-specific competences for students. At the same time, research results showed that students highly appreciated and were very interested in this model. This study also emphasizes the importance of the blended learning model in innovating teaching methods, improving and enhancing the quality of training in general and English in particular.

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