

Chapter 13

Factors Related to Students' Performance of Hybrid Learning in an English Language Course

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ABSTRACT

Redesigning a course along the lines of a hybrid format that blends face-to-face and online learning brings about changes in instructional practice. This paper introduces hybrid teaching that uses multiple web-based tools to supplement the students' face-to-face learning environment in a difficult situation in Thailand. In order to examine factors related to student learning achievement in the hybrid teaching course, data regarding learning achievement score, amount of participation, comfort with technology, and course satisfaction were collected from 182 students enrolled in an English course and analyzed by using correlation coefficients and multiple regression analysis. The findings indicated that students had a moderate level of satisfaction with the hybrid course and comfort with technology use, and previous experience of hybrid courses did not have an effect on their satisfaction. Student learning achievement was positively correlated with how much participation students had, but was negatively correlated with students' comfort with technology. There were no correlations between student learning achievement and how satisfied they felt with the hybrid course. In addition, an analysis of benefits and drawbacks of this hybrid course allowed teachers insights into what changes were needed when adjusting the hybrid course for language teaching.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, applying technology in the learning process is growing fast. There is an increasing integration of web-based resources into instructional practice (Rodriguez, Ooms, & Montanez, 2008). So, new learning environments and teach-

ing methodologies based on the utilization of information and communication technologies such as e-learning, web-based learning, open and distance learning, and hybrid learning have been introduced in many courses. The face-to-face courses in conventional format have been modified to increase more on-line learning environments

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called 'hybrid teaching.' Hybrid teaching is a combination of formal class meetings and virtual learning to promote active, self-directed learning opportunities with added flexibility (Garnham & Kaleta, 2002). In a hybrid course, conventional learning is enriched with the use of appropriate learning technologies. An instructor reduces in-person classroom meetings and replaces a significant amount of that instructional time with online learning activities (Allan, 2006; Orhan, 2008).

Since the goal of a hybrid approach is to join the best aspects of face-to-face and online instruction, there are many benefits for both teachers and students. First, a hybrid approach provides flexibility and convenience for students to work and communicate with others. Students have a wide range of socio-emotional messages to convey their personal greetings, feelings, and humor which resulted in more interpersonal relationships (Fjermestad, Hiltz, & Zhang, 2005). Second, a hybrid course enables teachers to organize their teaching in a meaningful way. That is, face-to-face oral communication can be designed to integrate well with online written communication so as to serve the context and intended educational purposes (Graham, 2005; Bonk, Kim, & Zeng, 2006). Classroom time can be used to engage students in content which suits a face-to-face environment. Meanwhile, the online portion of the course can provide students with content at anytime and anywhere, depending on the needs of the students and the preferences of the instructor.

Teaching a hybrid course is a challenging task since it requires both online and face-to-face teaching skills. On-line activities mostly provide links to resources and downloadable text materials, administer online quizzes and electronic submission of assignments (Dabbagh & Bannan-Ritland, 2005). So, teachers new to technology need to study how to facilitate online learning to assist students in keeping their work on track and should find technical support on campus for themselves and for their students (Lin, 2009). Incorporating technology in the course depends

on the relative opportunities and constraints of its learning environment. For example, teachers may consider whether the course content and learning technologies are matched. Also, teachers should manage face-to-face classes to suit activities relating to verbal communication and body languages transmitted in a real-time.

Based on a literature review, it was found that hybrid teaching environments produced satisfactory results. Many studies revealed positive influences of hybrid learning on student performance (Ladyshevsky, 2004; Motteram, 2006) and student participation (DeGeorge-Walker & Keffe, 2010; Lopez-Perez, Perez-Lopez & Rodriguez-Ariza, 2011; Ugur, Akkoyunlu & Kurbanoglu, 2011). Moreover, Wu and Hiltz (2004) found that hybrid courses that utilized asynchronous means of communication improved students' perception of learning. According to Bhatti, Tubaisahat, and El-Quawasmeh (2005), student satisfaction about learning increased while the students' dependency on the instructor for assistance decreased. They explained that online materials provided students with the resources to seek out answers independent of the instructor. Moreover, Rodriguez and Anicete (2010) examined students' views of hybrid learning in an undergraduate Ecology course, which incorporated Modular Object Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment (MOODLE) into the on-line portion of the coursework. Results revealed that a majority of students had positive views and experiences with hybrid learning, despite some challenges. Implications were discussed in terms of how to better utilize this instructional format in general education courses to foster active learning.

Rivera, McAlister, and Rice (2002) surveyed student satisfaction among the three modes of learning (face to face, fully online, and hybrid) and found that student satisfaction was the highest with the hybrid learning model and that test scores were the same for all three methods of delivery. Young (2002 cited in Buzzetto-More & Sweat-Guy, 2006) examined hybrid and fully online teaching at several universities and concluded

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