**Blended Learning in English Learning—A Case Study of Wuhan Donghu University**

Xiaojia Xu

**Abstract**

Blended Learning is employed in college English teaching. The present research indicates that most of the students agree on Blended Learning. But keeping the students motivated is still challenging and teachers’ efforts and role can’t be replaced in the process.

**Keywords**: Blended Learning; English Learning; College English Teaching

1. **Introduction**

English learning in China has gained more popularity and importance. At present, English learning does not mean that students simply memorize some grammar points, learn how to read and write English, but that they also learn how to communicate fluently in the language in real situations, apply their language skills to information technology, and maintaining life-long learning. The term blended learning originated in the business world in connection with corporate training (Sharma and Barrett, 2007), then was employed in higher education (MacDonald, 2006) and lastly it appeared in language teaching and learning. It is difficult to say exactly when the term became commonplace in English Language Teaching. With reference to blended learning in higher education, it has been defined as: ‘a combination of technology and classroom instruction in a flexible approach to learning that recognizes the benefits of delivering some training and assessment online but also uses other modes to make up a complete training program which can improve learning outcomes and/or save costs’ (Banados, 2006).

2. **Students’ Acceptance on Blended Learning in English Learning**

We make a questionnaire to investigate whether the students agree on the blended learning method or not and their acceptance on Blended Learning Method. We designed a lot of questions about Blended Learning. If they completely agree on it, they are scored 5. If they don’t agree on it totally, they are scored 1. The score is on a scale from 1 to 5. The following statistic results show us the students’ situation of using Blended Learning with the development of technology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average score</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>42</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>1</td>
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From table 1, we know that most of the students agree on blended learning. However, from the students interviewed, we come to a conclusion that even though, the students are willing to use

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1. Wuhan Donghu University, Wuhan, 430212
blended learning methods, keeping them motivated throughout the whole duration of the English teaching process is one of the difficult aspects.

3. Teachers’ Role in Blended Learning in English Learning
The blended learning model undoubtedly changes the classroom teacher’s focus away from more traditional curricular and administrative tasks in the direction of working with data and providing more individualized support to students. In blended learning, a student’s day typically includes a combination of online learning and small group instruction time with teachers. Because the focus in blended learning has shifted from planning lessons and delivering content to being a facilitator of student learning, the classroom teacher’s role can expand in challenging and stimulating ways. Teachers no longer follow the traditional roles of sharing content and grading papers. The teacher should be prepared to be trained for proper professional development. Teachers need to be able to manage a classroom effectively and have more individual time with students and can give their students enough support they need because the students may have more personalized questions in Blended Learning process. Most importantly, it is hard to keep students motivated in blended learning process. Therefore, the teachers should have strategies in place to keep students motivated and engaged. Teachers are given crucial information by technology to understand individual needs of students to support and strengthen their learning. If teachers make the best use of the technology effectively, it provides teachers the power to become even greater experts in the field they teach. So teachers should keep learning to gain more power in the use of technology.

4. Conclusion
Although, students’ acceptance on Blended Learning in language learning is quite encouraging, the difficult aspects are still challenging. Students are still dependent on their teachers’ and peers’ feedback on their performance on language learning. Even though there are still some obstacles to apply blended learning in college English teaching completely, we can blend step by step or change face-to-face classroom teaching into the increasing proportion by blended learning. To apply blended learning model in college English teaching doesn’t reduce the present English teaching time, but complement the normal teaching by some other learning activities on line and the teachers’ role cannot be replaced. Teachers’ role changes according to the tasks they need to finish. Their role will undoubtedly become more and more challenging. The teachers should be open to new teaching strategies. They need a wide breadth of content knowledge in order to teach multiple subjects and answer various questions raised by students. In a word, both students and teachers take on new challenges and advance themselves in Blended Learning.

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References