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Learning achievement in purposive communication of ESL college students: A blended learning approach

Marlon S. Pontillas

College of Arts and Sciences, Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges, 4434, Philippines; arlpontillas@cspc.edu.ph

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Abstract: With the ongoing studies of blended learning in different areas, the study contrasts blended learning with online classes by analyzing pre/post-test scores, grades, and activity scores, indicating blended learning might offer superior outcomes. Additionally, it explores college students' experiences in a blended learning class, providing insights into its effectiveness and areas for improvement. Participants are engineering students from Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges, Camarines Sur, Philippines, which includes 45 participants for each group (controlled and experimental groups). The study was based on a triangulation approach of integrating Independent Samples T-test and Multiple Regression Analysis for quantitative data and semi-structured interviews for qualitative insights. Accordingly, certain activities were crucial in improving non-verbal communication, persuasive writing, and research skills that led to confidence build-up and improved students' performances. Narrative descriptions give more enlightening information about boosted confidence and better presentation competence due to better communication skills. Writing skills go a long way in improving students' academic achievement, and Research and writing practices are essential skills that help students achieve higher grades. Integrating the qualitative narratives and quantitative results adds credibility to the study since it gives a different perspective on the blended learning environment. The recommendations to instructors and instructional designers call for blending unique instruction methods, multimedia content, and individualized feedback options. It is also advised to make pedagogical revisions for less impactful activities and provide customized exercises to build student confidence. Finally, this study illustrates the transformative capabilities of blended learning to enhance ESL teaching practice. The insights deepen pedagogical practices and broadly contribute to ongoing discussions around effective ESL education strategies toward better learning.

Keywords: blended learning; communication skills development; ESL education; pedagogical innovations; purposive communication

1. Introduction

General education courses are the building blocks that set a good foundation for students' academic prowess and critical analysis. A vital course becoming more popular is one such fundamental course, Purposive Communication—transforming learners into purposeful, competent, and confident communicators across contexts. Educators must develop new teaching methods to provide more effective Purposive Communication courses for ESL students. This exploration occurs when there is a convergence between face-to-face classroom instruction and the latest online resources (Johnson and Locke, 2018).

This study derives its theoretical basis from Constructivism and Connectivism in ESL education. Constructivism considers learning an active, creative process in which students play a key role in generating knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978). The theory of

connectivism, one of the continuations of constructivism, emphasizes the role of digital networks in educational processes like ESL nowadays. The study uses these theories to form the conceptual foundation for exploring the impact of blended learning in Purposive Communication.

This research aims to study using purposive communication, an integral general education course in colleges, and integrating blended learning into it. The study uses quantitative assessments to evaluate the efficacy of the blended learning model on ESL college students' speaking competence. Concurrently, the study explores the qualitative aspects of student engagement and motivations in a blended learning environment to understand the complexities of how this modern pedagogical approach fosters students' active involvement and excitement in their studies.

This study is significant in various ways because it is about ESL education and not just about a general educational aspect. The results of such research are highly informative for instructors and curriculum makers as Purposive Communication courses start to become more commonplace in the college curriculum. The insight into how a blended learning approach can improve ESL students' purposive communication skills provides a transformational model for redesigning courses in general across disciplines. Also, the research on integrating digital into conventional classrooms discusses the more significant change in today's education, where technology is becoming critical for the digital-native generation learning experience.

Also, it will shed light on the overlapping between online pedagogy and blended learning in mainstream education, e.g., Purposive Communication in ESL-focused courses. The research is based on the theoretical principles of Constructivism and Connectivism and seeks to find out how blended learning transforms. This study moves innovatively by focusing on a fundamental college course to enhance ESL education and offer new insights into general education in tertiary institutions. The adoption of blended learning in general education, as the world continues to move into the digital age, constitutes pedagogical advancement and, arguably, is a significant milestone towards preparing students for the twenty-first century, including its opportunities and challenges.

Despite the growing use of blended learning in ESL education, especially in courses like Purposive Communication, there's a notable lack of concrete evidence on its effectiveness in enhancing students' speaking skills and engagement. This study aims to fill this gap by evaluating the impact of blended learning strategies on ESL students' communication competencies and motivation. The research seeks to provide actionable insights for educators and curriculum designers, highlighting the benefits of integrating digital and traditional teaching methods for the digital-native generation and contributing to the advancement of ESL education.

1.1. Literature review

There have been tremendous changes in the ESL education field due to the infusion of technology and contemporary pedagogy. These include the recent emergence of blended learning in ESL classrooms, which has attracted significant attention among researchers and educators. Therefore, there is a need for further

research in the context of ESL purposive communication courses, addressing the identified theoretical and methodological issues mentioned earlier.

As a basis of education, constructivism highlights active and student-oriented learning (Vygotsky, 1978); learners build knowledge through engagement with their environment, which is highly compatible with the purposive ESL language of participation. Connectivism is an extension rooted in the digital age that examines technology and networks' role in learning (Siemens, 2004). However, a handful of studies explore the complexities of applying these theories in contexts specifically designed to improve ESL learner's communicative proficiency (Johnson, 2018).

Empirical studies on the effects of blended learning on ESL learning outcomes have been numerous (Garrison and Kanuka, 2004; Torissi-Steele and Drew, 2013; Alammery et al., 2014; Dziuban et al., 2018; Guo et al., 2020; Rasheed et al., 2020). Nevertheless, these studies concentrate more on quantitative evaluations, often ignoring the qualitative components. Rich qualitative methods such as interviews and classroom observation show a detailed picture of students' engagement and motivation in ESL purposive communication tasks. They reveal complex social relationships among students in the classroom, leading to communication success. In addition, Longitudinal studies are lacking, thereby limiting knowledge on the sustained impacts of blended learning on ESL students' communicative purposes over time (Chapelle, 2016). Blended learning longitudinal research is significant in examining such an approach's long-term effectivity and influence.

Among the body of blended learning research in K-12 education, the latest on this is the work of Villanueva et al. (2023) who used the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework to provide an insight about the Philippines experiencing of symbiotic relation between face-to-face and online learning modalities leading to the development of learning communities that is also very much common among the blended learning. Their study, enriched by a mixed-methods approach, discerned a triad of themes central to the positive reception of blended learning: create a learning environment for students where teaching transcends the boundaries of face-to-face and web learning modes, learning takes place in both the time and space with the opportunity for students to access classes from anywhere, and finally where advanced technology is galvanized as the main language of teaching. In the same vein, Li and Wang (2022) meta-analysis that was conducted concerning blended learning effectiveness across K to 12 settings showed an outstanding superiority of blended learning over traditional approaches, especially in regard to cognitive outcomes, which design factors of group activities and educational context massively affected. Finlay et al. (2022) explored the higher education sector as well, studying sport and exercise science students' behavioral tendencies during COVID-19 crisis. Specific survey-based research was carried out and exposed a preference towards a blended-learning model. It emphasized the fact that it has better ability to provide academic support, resources and allow integration into communities, that is very important in the light of applied disciplines faced with the challenges of COVID-19 pandemic. Combined, these studies reify the evocative out-take of blended learning whereby education can be transformed for better results in terms of learning outcomes and sustenance of engagement and satisfaction using in varying academic levels and setting for education innovation.

Despite the growing interest in ESL blended learning, very little attention has been paid to integrating culturally responsive pedagogy into this field. ESL classrooms usually contain learners from different cultures (Gay, 2018). Blended learning approaches must be adopted to meet this diversity and make learning inclusive and culturally sensitive. However, the research in this area is limited; thus, it has not been possible to develop culturally relevant blended learning strategies specific to ESL purposive communication courses. In addition, it is essential to investigate how culture can influence student interaction and learning experiences in blended classrooms to promote inclusive learning environments.

Challenges in blended learning in ESL courses include obstacles to technology integration, student readiness, and pedagogical adaptability (Hodges et al., 2020). Comprehending these challenges is significant in crafting effective support systems and training programs for ESL teachers. In addition, it would be essential to discover educators' feelings and experiences about these obstacles and how it would be easier for them to adapt to blended learning models (Sánchez-Gómez et al., 2019).

ESL blended learning shows vast potential for developing purposive communication skills. Nevertheless, research is necessary. However, within ESL's contextual purposive communication courses, frameworks like Constructivism and Connectivism provide a strong base upon which adaptation has to be undertaken. Empirical research, particularly qualitative and longitudinal studies, must be included to completely assess the effect of blended learning on ESL learners' communication competence. Culturally responsive pedagogy is still an untouched subject that necessitates research on the connection between cultural diversity and blended learning techniques. It is also important to address the challenges and barriers that educators face to ensure the smooth incorporation of blended learning into ESL purposive communication courses. In this way, future research will help fill gaps in blended learning models for ESL and advance ESL education into the digital era.

1.2. Objectives of the study

- 1) Compare the significant differences in learning achievements between blended learning and online classroom groups by analyzing the participants' pre and post-test scores, final grades, and activity scores.
- 2) Conduct regression analysis of the blended learning group's learning achievement.
- 3) Unpack college students' lived experiences and perspectives in a Purposive Communication blended learning class.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Research design

This study's quasi-experimental design is best suited as it conforms to the complications of real-life educational environments. It is generally difficult and impractical to randomly assign learners to different teaching methods, such as blended learning and online classrooms (Shadish and Luellen, 2012; Gopalan et al., 2020). The researcher can study the efficacy of an educational intervention using a quasi-

experimental design, thereby allowing the results to be generalizable within the natural constraints of classroom settings. Such a study will be able to make meaningful inferences on the effectiveness of purposive communication skills among ESL college students by simply making observations of and comparisons between different instructional methods without artificially manipulating variables.

2.2. Participants

This study is, therefore, based on 90 participants, 45 from the controlled group and those from the experimental group selected from the pool of engineering students enrolled in the purposive communication class during the academic year 2022–2023 under the researcher’s class at Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges, Camarines Sur, Philippines. Focusing on only one class with direct instruction from the researcher improves the study’s internal validity. The study minimizes possible confounding variables among the instructors in different classes. Homogeneity among participants on academic backgrounds and similar curriculum exposure makes the study capable of isolating the influence of teaching methods because the groups are more accurately compared.

2.3. Data gathering procedure

In this study, purposive communication involves a well-detailed data collection process that seeks to explain the effect of blended learning on the learning achievement of engineering students. A mixed-methods approach, which draws on quantitative and qualitative approaches, allows an exhaustive investigation of the main issues.

2.3.1. Quantitative data collection

The study relies on quantitative support from pre and post-tests, activity scores, and final grades. In this study, a multifaceted approach was adopted, employing two robust statistical tools: Independent Samples T-test (Sedgwick, 2010) and Multiple Regression Analysis (Stolzenberg, 2004). The analytical techniques helped break down the complex aspects of student performance in the blended learning model. Independent sampled t-tests made it possible to compare test scores and activity performances online and blended learning approaches and gave important information about the effectiveness of various instructional modalities. The study also used Multiple Regression Analysis to isolate and determine the effects some activities had on final grades, revealing the complex connections of various learning factors. This study attempted to achieve an understanding of the factors that influence ESL students’ academic achievement through a blended learning environment by applying various analytical techniques.

2.3.2. Qualitative data collection

By including quantitative methods like interviews, surveys, or open-ended questionnaires, the study becomes richer as it considers the students’ thoughts, moods, and feelings about things. Through interviews, the researcher explores the intricacies of the learning paths taken by the students, delving into their personal experiences. Surveys and open-ended questionnaires give a broader perspective, allowing students to freely share their views and challenges. The qualitative data complement statistical results, analyzed thematically, providing an understanding of the underlying motives,

preferred learning techniques, and issues encountered. The study's construct validity is reinforced through collaboration between the qualitative layer and quantitative results. In addition, it provides a more comprehensive picture of student experience in the blended learning environment. Thematic analysis, underpinned by systematic coding procedures, was applied to qualitative data gathered through semi-structured interviews. Moreover, intercoder reliability was ensured (Lombard et al., 2010), with an 88% agreement reached, signifying the consistency and accuracy of the qualitative data interpretation.

2.4. Research instruments

Using reliable and valid instruments to select and design them in educational research is crucial. To make their findings robust, researchers in this study have utilized meticulously chosen instruments to measure and test different facets of students' learning achievement, engagement, and purposive communication class experiences.

2.4.1. Pre and post tests

Pre and post-test are one of the measures used to assess what the students knew before the intervention and what they learned after the intervention had been carried out (Dugard and Todman, 1995). The test for this purposive communication class is meticulously designed to fit the course's objectives. These tests involve the same set of skills and are administered at the beginning and end of the course to give a direct indication of learning gains. The questions are meant to be specific, brief, and reflect the key contents taught, allowing the testing instruments to be reliable for a long time. Further, the pre and post-tests have been piloted to refine the questions to suit the target group, thus ensuring the validity of the results.

2.4.2. Activity scores and final grades

The activity rating is, thus, an essential tool to look at the involvement of students in particular learning activities. These scores are computed depending on a student's involvement, input and output, and performance in diverse activities within the blended learning platform. There is transparency in the award of activity scores, given the predefined criteria for awarding scores. Final grades are also based on a clear grading rubric, which considers the course objectives and the assessment criteria. Establishing these tests in existing educational standards ensures the reliability and validity of the general student performance, participation, and grades.

2.4.3. Qualitative instruments

Students are required to express themselves freely in the interview. Qualitative research methods are employed to design interview protocols. They are designed to elicit elaborate answers and make it possible to get deep and broad qualitative data. These pilot tests and expert reviews will be done to refine the instruments to increase their validity and reliability.

In a nutshell, the instruments for this study will be meticulously developed, fine-tuned, and standardized to acquire accurate, valid, and dependable data. Using mixed quantitative and qualitative instruments, the study offers an integrative analysis of ESL students' purposive communication class, after exposure to the blended learning

approach. The choice and validation of these instruments provide a basis for the study’s legitimate and insightful results that have implications for ESL education and instructional design.

2.5. Arrangement of classes in two groups

The course design for a control group is that all lessons are presented either onsite or offsite. In this case, every topic receives three or one and a half hours according to its complexity and importance. This sums up to exactly 54 h for the whole course. This careful organization ensures that the controlled group is taught the basics of communication and the more complex topics like oral presentations and research methods. The classes are online, but with a structured approach, the students thoroughly understand each topic. As such, they appreciate purposive communication within an online learning setting. The controlled group explores different aspects of communication within the limits of offsite education by using a curriculum tailored for the controlled group.

The course design for the experimental group is carefully constructed to include both onsite and offsite classes. Hybrid learning is a model employed by the experimental group whereby some classes are taken in physical classrooms, allowing for direct face-to-face interaction. In contrast, others are held online, enabling students’ flexibility and accessibility. The onsite sessions involve hands-on activities, talks about communication principles, and interactive speeches, creating a conducive environment for learning.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Comparative analysis of test scores in online and blended learning approaches

Table 1 presents the Independent Samples test results on the test scores comparison between the online and blended learning approaches. This statistical analysis aimed to reveal whether there were any notable distinctions in students’ achievement concerning the two instructional modalities.

Table 1. Independent samples test: Online vs. Blended learning approach test scores.

Variable	t-test for equality of means			
	Mean Diff.	t-statistic	df	p-value
Pre-test score	0.42	0.41	88	0.68
Post-test score	6.64	6.63	88	0.00
Increase in score	6.22	4.75	88	0.00

The analysis showed that the pre-test scores of blended and online learning groups did not differ significantly ($t = 0.41$, $df = 88$, p -value = 0.68). This implies that initially, students in the two groups did not differ significantly in their respective levels of knowledge. This pre-test equivalence demonstrates the interchangeability of the two groups, providing a reference point for assessing subsequent learning outcomes comparison.

However, the post-test scores differed significantly between the two groups ($t = 6.63$, $df = 88$, $p = 0.00$). The blended learning group excelled over the online learning group, which showed a better understanding and more knowledge acquired after the learning sessions. This result reveals that the combined learning method works well among others to facilitate students' understanding and recollection of the taught material.

The scores also gave credence to the fact that the blended learning approach was better. For a significant reason ($t = 4.75$, $df = 88$, $p = 0.00$), the blended learning group showed more improvement scores than the online learning group. In addition, this indicates that the blended learning approach resulted in higher post-test scores with a higher level of improvement during a given learning period.

The results show that the blended learning approach outperformed the post-test scores and overall gains in the scores. Thus, the interactivity and adaptability of a blended learning approach incorporating multimedia material, online forums, and self-paced sessions increased students' involvement in learning and comprehension. Arguably, the high performance could be attributed to the personalized feedback and focused support available during the blended learning environment.

The study findings are consistent with previous works highlighting the advantages of interactive digital learning environments (Means, 2018). Personalized feedback and adaptivity in technology-enhanced learning also find support (Block et al., 2021). Challenges of online discussion have been noted (Smith et al., 2003). Nevertheless, the positive result of the study proves the potential benefits of a well-designed blended learning environment, showing the necessity for personalized help and interactive tools to achieve the best out of the student experience.

3.2. Comparative analysis of activity scores in online and blended learning approaches

As shown in **Table 2**, the results reveal a deep knowledge of how each activity can improve student performance. The Independent Samples Test was conducted to evaluate how particular actions affect test scores between the online and blended learning groups.

In Activity #1: Communication essentials, the performance of the blended learning group (Mean Diff. = 0.71) indicates that the two groups achieved similar results and that both techniques were equally effective in conveying communication basics. This means every topic was taught in full detail, regardless of the instructional method.

For Activity #2: The power of non-verbal communication, the blended learning group has a substantial mean difference of 1.67 ($t = 12.43$, $df = 88$, $p = 0.00$), establishing their superiority. It shows that a blended approach to teaching non-verbal communication is effective probably because online resources are interactive with multimedia elements, thus providing more learning.

Concerning Activity #3: Global communication in the digital age, although the difference is small (Mean Diff. = -0.31, $t = -2.60$, $df = 88$, $p = 0.01$), it suggests equal performance. However, it is worth noting that the blended group performed fairly well in comprehending global communication's fundamental concepts and principles.

Table 2. Independent samples test: Online vs. Blended learning approach activity scores.

Variable	t-test for equality of means			
	Mean Diff.	t-statistic	df	p-value
Pre-test score	0.42	0.41	88	0.68
Post-test score	6.64	6.63	88	0.00
Increase in score	6.22	4.75	88	0.00
Activity #1: Communication essentials	0.71	5.72	88	0.00
Activity #2: The power of non-verbal communication	1.67	12.43	88	0.00
Activity #3: Global communication in the digital age	-0.31	-2.60	88	0.01
Activity #4: Embracing diversity	-1.91	-14.52	88	0.00
Activity #5: Effective writing and documentation	0.89	5.67	88	0.00
Activity #6: Art of persuasion and presentation	1.82	9.48	88	0.00
Activity #7: Mastering research and academic writing	0.33	2.29	88	0.02
Activity average	0.46	3.50	85.07	0.00

Also, in Activity #4: Embracing diversity, significantly different group means -1.91 ($t = 14.52$, $df = 88$, $p = 0.00$) indicating pronounced higher levels in the online group. Diversity-related information is better learned online since it involves subtle conversations and contextual learning chances. In Activity #5: Effective writing and documentation, the blended learning group showed a change score of 0.89 ($t = 5.67$, $df = 88$, $p = 0.00$), which was higher than that of the other group. Blended learning probably improved writing skills, including multimedia resources and asynchronous learning chances.

Then, for Activity #6: Art of persuasion and presentation, the blended learning group did better in persuasive skills and presentations with a mean difference of 1.82 ($t = 9.48$, $df = 88$, $p = 0.00$). This could be attributed to interactive online features that stimulated creative expression and refined presentation skills. Lastly, for Activity #7: Mastering research and academic writing, the blended learning group had a mean of 0.33 ($t = 2.29$, $df = 88$, $p = 0.02$), reflecting a moderate advantage. Though the gap in research skills using blended learning was not as apparent, it may have led towards utilizing online databases and collaborative digital tools.

The mean difference of 0.46 ($t = 3.50$, $df = 85.07$, $p = 0.00$) indicates that the blended learning group was consistently better throughout. Mixing face-to-face and online methods throughout activities repeatedly proved to result in better results, showing the general advantages of the blended learning approach.

The complex results from this study complement those provided in education psychology and pedagogy. This confirms observations made by Anderson and Rivera Vargas (2020) that online platforms are interactive and can be used to develop non-verbal and persuasive communication skills. Furthermore, in global communication, the same performance is similar to information in Smith and Johnson's (2019) study, which highlights the flexibility of blended learning in culturally different conditions.

Nonetheless, the challenges encountered in diversity-related instruction notwithstanding, Chang and Fang (2020) highlight that online platforms cannot support delicate dialogue on important issues for effective learning. These results are

comparable with those presented by Zhang et al. (2017), who argued that the collaborative and exploratory nature inherent in online platforms can improve research skills in research and academic writing.

Essentially, the results emphasize the complex nature of blended learning and illustrate its utility for achieving some objectives and limitations in promoting an in-depth understanding of selected issues. Further, these findings offer valuable information for educators aiming to enhance blended learning environments for purposes suited to different learning objectives of students.

3.3. Comparative analysis of final grades in online and blended learning approaches

Table 3 compares final grades for online and blended learning groups using the Independent Samples Test, which showed significant results about the effectiveness of those instructional approaches.

Table 3. Independent samples test: Online vs. Blended learning approach final grades.

Variable	t-test for equality of means			
	Mean Diff.	t-statistic	df	p-value
Final grade	2.84	5.25	88	0.00

A significant advantage of the blended learning group over other groups based on the mean difference of 2.84 points ($t = 5.25$, $df = 88$, $p = 0.00$). Students who benefited from blended learning methods performed better than those who learned conventionally, hence rejecting the null hypothesis (H_0).

Notably, the students' final grades show the effectiveness of blended learning as a tool for promoting better learning. Many causes could be responsible for this advantage. The interactive online components, the personalized feedback, and the flexible learning schedules that formed part of blended learning likely ensured enhanced student engagement, ultimately leading to a better understanding and retention of the course content. Also, the flexibility of mixed teaching that addresses different learning styles and speeds probably significantly impacted students' final grades.

Smith and Johnson (2019) observed the benefits of blended learning on students' performance. The study highlighted the flexible and tailored learning opportunities associated with blended settings, mirroring the improved learner results documented in this research.

Moreover, the outcomes are relevant to the study done by Anderson et al. (2020), which highlighted how online platforms can support students' involvement and comprehension, hence the improved grading. On the other hand, the flexibility of blended learning towards meeting students' diverse learning needs, as noted in an article by Wang and Chen (2018), complements what was discovered to be an edge for the blended learning group. The personalized feedback mechanisms identified by Vaughan (2014) also resonate here, emphasizing the efficacy of such support systems in enhancing learner performance within blended classrooms.

This contributes significantly to the ongoing debate over blended learning by contributing hard facts about its effect on final grades. The present study also strengthens the understanding that combining online and face-to-face learning can improve academic performance. The emphasis is placed on an integrated strategy with active web components offering customized assistance that addresses several types of learners and promotes an animated learning space.

3.4. Predictors of academic success in multiple linear regression analysis

Table 4 shows crucial information regarding the factors determining students' final grades from the multiple linear regression analysis.

Table 4. Multiple linear regression analysis for final grade predictors.

Predictor	Coefficient of correlation test		
	Coefficient	t-statistic	p-value
(Constant)	22.01	4.41	0.00
Post-test score	-0.03	-0.90	0.37
Activity #1 score	0.31	0.16	0.87
Activity #2 score	1.70	2.04	0.05
Activity #3 score	-0.70	-0.46	0.65
Activity #4 score	0.32	0.69	0.49
Activity #5 score	1.32	3.61	0.00
Activity #6 score	-0.77	-1.55	0.13
Activity #7 score	1.72	3.39	0.00
Dependent variable	Adj. R^2	-	-
Final grade	0.802	-	-

Activities 2, 5, and 7 were found to have a significant impact on the predictor variables. Final grades were significantly higher on average by 1.70 points for each one point added to the Activity #2 score. As such, activity #5 and #7 score increases by one point were also related to corresponding increases of 1.32-point and 1.72-point, respectively, for final grades. These ratios emphasize how these activities directly influence academic achievement.

The Adj. R^2 value of 0.802 implies that the variation in the final grades is a function of the main predictor variables. The adjusted R squared value of 0.802 indicates that approximately 80.2% of the variance in the final grades can be explained by these chosen predictor variables: score attained from activity numbers 2, 5, and 7, respectively.

Robustness of the Adj. R^2 value shows a high possibility that these three activities are credible predictors of academic performance. Thus, the high score points that this implies suggest that integrating these activities in the syllabus is crucial for the student's performance in class, which means a close connection between the students' participation in those activities and their final grades.

These results indicate the significance of particular exercises in the course. "The power of non-verbal communication" is activity #2, greatly influencing the learner's accomplishment. This focus on enhancing non-verbal communication abilities seems

to increase significantly comprehension and performance. Concerning “Effective Writing and Documentation” in activity #5, improving written communication skills significantly raises students’ grades. Activity #7, Mastering Research and Academic Writing, highlights the need for research skills and academic writing that directly translates to higher academic grades.

These have important implications for educational practices. Educators must strategically target Activities number 2, 5, and 7 with resources and attention. The use of novel teaching techniques, multimedia interactive resources, and specialized personalized feedback systems concerning these actions may be used to increase the effectiveness of these actions even more. At the same time, pedagogical revision is required for Activities #1 and #4, which has no statistical significance. The meticulous redrawing of their assessment formats may lead to an increased impact on the student’s final grades. Conversely, activities number 3 and 6 showing adverse effects require immediate reassessment. It is therefore important to tailor these activities or replace the ineffective ones with better alternatives to achieve a comprehensive and integrated curriculum.

This also agrees with past studies highlighting interventional and specific education methods. These activities probably capture student attention and promote learning as they relate to the study by Smith and Hill (2019), which echoes the importance of activities #2, #5, and #7. The implications align with what Brown (2022) found on personalized feedback in blended learning, emphasizing the need to tailor feedback mechanisms to different learning activities to maximize their impact on student outcomes. Combining these empirical findings and established literature adds to the overall educational significance of these activities.

It is worth noting that the mentioned results show the clear impact of certain activities on the students’ final marks. Through these inferences, educators can design targeted interventions to bring more meaningful learning experiences to students. Activities #2, #5, and #7 form a sound basis for integrating empirical evidence with established educational theories as the foundations for more effective and customized approaches in pedagogy.

3.5. Lived experiences of students

To complement the robust quantitative multi-regression analysis findings, a qualitative dimension was incorporated into this study. This research sought to explore in-depth how students experience and the interaction between specific activities and academic performance. The qualitative information from these interviews further enriched the findings and enhanced the understanding of how students experienced these key activities as part of their education journey.

3.5.1. Empowering learning through non-verbal communication skills

In digging deeper into the complex network of predictors of academic success, participants (P1, P2) shared their experiences with passion, revealing the transformative power of Activity 2 called “The Power of Nonverbal Communication”. Similarly, (P2) confirmed that such knowledge enabled them to perform better and boosted their confidence levels. The empirical results obtained through regression analysis confirmed Activity #2 as the major contributing factor for high academic

performance in their narratives. This is evident by the palpable increase in the students' confidence and how much they are engaged.

P1: "The importance of learning about the power of nonverbal communication cannot be overemphasized. This lesson went beyond understanding body language and gesturing, but it was a revelation. This gave me newfound confidence, which showed through my grades and made me more capable in my presentations. It wasn't simply a skill; it was an empowerment."

P2: "The second activity was like a revolution towards me. Previously, I could not express my thoughts without words. My grades were high as well, in addition to having an added level of confidence about the subject matter that I had not experienced before in this regard. It was as if I finally found my voice through gestures and facial expressions, which impacted how I formulated my arguments and ultimately presented my papers."

Through the revelations drawn from these first-person accounts, it is evident that teachers should focus on helping students develop their non-verbal communication. Thus, by developing these capabilities, educators can boost the students' confidence in their studies and significantly increase their performances. Teaching is essential, but it should be more than just teaching students to speak correctly. The sense lies far beyond language. Activity #2 is more like a gateway, enabling students to easily maneuver through the complexities of communicating, a vital skill for academic and professional life.

Established research can be found on the significance of non-verbal communication skills. Specifically, Johnson et al. (2019) and Smith et al. (2003) carefully outlined the centrality of non-verbal communication as the backbone underlying the attainment of academic success, a notion supported by the present study. Moreover, De Gale and Boisselle's (2015) finding also reveal that high confidence is associated with better academic performance, further strengthening the importance of Activity #2. The stories are so poignant as they continue to affirm the same tune of education literature that advocates for specific and aimed at individual intervention (Smith, 2020).

This exploration goes beyond confirmation, calling for a more comprehensive pedagogical need for specific and contextualized teaching approaches. They are not just conduits of knowledge; they become catalysts that lead students in academic assurance and sculpt a generation of confident, articulate, and academically sound young people to face all challenges that arise in this changing world.

3.5.2. Enhancing academic writing and research skills

In delving into the intricate web of factors influencing academic success, participants (P3, P4) passionately emphasized the significance of Activity #7, 'Mastering Research and Academic Writing'.

Activity #7 emerged as a robust predictor in the regression analysis, aligning with improved academic performance. The participants' narratives underscored the activity's effectiveness in honing research skills, emphasizing the necessity for educators to prioritize the development of research and writing abilities. Tailored interventions, integrating innovative teaching methods and personalized guidance, can enhance students' research skills, positively influencing their academic achievements.

These findings resonate with previous research by Brown and Smith (2019), emphasizing the importance of activities promoting intensive writing. Studies by Johnson (2018) and Smith and Davis (2020) stress the significance of personalized feedback in academic writing, supporting the impact of Activity #7. Garrison and Archer's (2000) comprehensive approach to academic writing aligns with the need for individualized support and detailed feedback highlighted in this study.

P3: "Activity #7 paved the way for significant improvement in my research and writing skills. Understanding academic discourse greatly elevated the quality of my schoolwork. It was like learning a new language that now feels natural to me, opening doors to deeper knowledge."

P4: "Understanding Activity #7 felt like a secret weapon in the academic world. It earned me high grades and provided a deeper understanding of science and research. It's a treasure I now carry into every aspect of my studies."

These first-hand accounts underscore the transformative impact of Activity #7, highlighting its role in refining research and writing competencies. The participants' experiences and established literature emphasize the need for tailored teaching methodologies, ensuring students grasp the intricacies of academic writing. With these insights, educators can sculpt a generation of articulate, confident, and academically proficient individuals, equipping them to face the challenges of our evolving world.

3.5.3. Effective persuasion and presentation techniques

In exploring factors shaping academic success, participants (P5, P6) fervently underscored the transformative influence of Activity #5, 'Effective Writing and Documentation.' (P5) shared, "Activity #5 honed my persuasive abilities and communication skills," a sentiment echoed by (P6): The fifth activity was the key predictor contributing to better academic performance. Through their improved communication and presentation skills, participants' understanding of persuasive communication is advanced, directly boosting their grades in the course.

P5: "Activity #5 opened the door for me to improve my articulation and communication skills. It provided me with higher proficiency in persuasion and explanation. Understanding how to express ideas effectively contributed significantly to my academic progress."

P6: "Engaging in Activity #5 honed my abilities in persuasive communication and presentation. I learned valuable techniques that enhanced my eloquence and confidence in public speaking. This newfound skill set not only improved my grades but also empowered me in various aspects of my academic journey."

The resultant revelations advocate for incorporating persuasion and presentation skills in the curriculum. These can be cultivated through interactive ways and actual scenarios. Furthermore, peer evaluations can improve persuasion skills, leading to higher achievements. These findings are consistent with the extant literature (Johnson et al., 2004; Brown et al., 2014) that underscores the necessity of persuasive skills in communication. They also attested to interactive demonstration as one of the approaches that may improve persuasibility, and therefore, Activity #5 plays a significant role.

These narratives highlight the importance of integrating comprehensive strategies that enhance persuasive communication skills. Experiential learning becomes a vital

pedagogy. By incorporating these strategies, educators can make students effectively persuade and confidently speak, which is critical to academic excellence (Kolb, 2014). This holistic approach ensures that students can communicate persuasively and be equipped with the life skills required for effective communication in a multicultural world, preparing them for real challenges.

3.5.4. Enhancing learning through reimagined assessment formats

Narratives from the participants highlight an ongoing challenge in education, where assessment often does not match educational objectives. Before this study, several researchers, for instance, Pereira et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of assessment in testing student knowledge and the need for compatibility between teaching and learning approaches. Such may be due to a mismatch of learning content and assessment strategies, resulting in a difference between apparent and actual student proficiency (Walvoord and Anderson, 2011). As a result, it usually leads to lost chances of deep learning and knowledge integration.

P7: "Activity #1 could have been better if the assessments were role plays or real life scenarios, then it would have been a complete lesson."

P8: Assessments in activity #4 were quite shallow. Therefore, instead of the typical tasks that compelled us to dig in the different facets of diversity, we needed something else. Rather, it involved superficial questions that we did not question. An exploratory and reflective appraisal might have made all the difference."

These ideas echo previous studies. Taylor and Nolen (2006) explain that such contextualized assessments should be the mirror of real-world challenges, which will enhance critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Brown and Johnson (2018) point out that this alignment between assessments and practical scenarios results in better understanding and retention of complex ideas. More so, it is worth mentioning that a study by Sharma (2014) highlights the importance of assessments as a form of instruction and learning rather than merely assessment.

The narratives from participants demonstrate the importance of pedagogical change, particularly regarding assessment design. With authentic assessment strategies like case studies, simulations, and project-based assessments, educators can fill the gap between theory and practice (Doppelt, 2003). Combining these methodologies with assessment formats makes it possible for students not only to be assessed but also to develop a better understanding of the topic.

Overall, the qualitative results support the importance of assessments as catalysts in meaningful learning experiences. The mismatch between instructional materials and assessment methods that were shown in the first activity and the fourth activity highlights a new education paradigm. Instead of traditional approaches to assessing performance, educators should rethink how they can help learners use theory in actual situations. This transformative approach helps improve the academic performance of students. It instills vital life and corporate skills critical for their personal and professional development, as suggested in previous studies, and towards a better and more effective education system.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

This study has enlightened on how blended learning can transform ESL education, especially in a Purposive Communication course. However, well-planned and incorporating activities focused on non-verbal communication, persuasive writing, and research will significantly improve students' performance. Such exercises increased academic performance, instilled confidence in the students, and helped them feel more confident about their academic careers.

Accordingly, some suggestions should be forwarded to educators and instructional designers. Therefore, the primary focus should be improving non-verbal communication, persuasive writing, and research competence. Educators should invest in innovative teaching methods, instructional materials, and multimedia resources to make the activities dynamic, engaging, and targeted at the needs of students. It is necessary to revise other activities and re-assess some particular ones. Incorporating real-world situations and peer evaluation of these activities may improve their effectiveness.

Technology use should also involve providing personalized feedback systems in which feedback is directed at specific students. Educators must undergo regular professional education to keep pace with changing pedagogies and innovative materials. Equally important is encouraging students' confidence via artwork, oral presentations, and other communication skills. Such confidence-building exercises could also find their way into the curriculums, helping to boost students' confidence in themselves and their ability to perform well academically.

This study has far-reaching consequences that go beyond the current study. This provides ESL educators with knowledge on enhancing and customizing their learning environments. A blend of learning with targeted linguistic and cultural-specific activities that prepare students both as academic experts and life-situated persons is vital in today's globalized world.

Further studies may be conducted on the implications of blended learning interventions on ESL students, examining the impacts on them over a period longer than that of one course. This would show how skills learned in these undertakings can be transferred to practical scenarios. Also, comparative studies involving different ESL cohorts or different cultures would help explore whether this relationship is universal.

Finally, this research highlights the transformative power of blended teaching in ESL learning. These activities include non-verbal communication, persuasive writing, and research skills; students can improve themselves academically and develop vital skills needed in life after school and at work. However, blended learning is tailor-made with interactive instructional material and designed for specific learning objectives, and it can become a catalyst to empower ESL students. Education is on its way to changing and accepting novel types of instruction, such as blended learning, which not only entails options but is necessary if we are to produce a generation capable of articulating with confidence across various contexts while adapting to a complicated world. This work illustrates the effectiveness of combining conventional teaching methods with technological advances in the ELT field.

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