DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN
ENGLISH CONVERSATION COURSE FOR NURSING STUDENTS BY
THE APPLICATION OF THE BLENDED LEARNING APPROACH

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Abstract: This research aimed to 1) evaluate English communication skills of nursing students who studied English conversation course developed by the application of blended learning approach in teaching and learning, and 2) survey students' satisfaction on the application of blended learning approach in teaching and learning English conversation course of Nursing students. The samples were 32 of 2nd year nursing students, Faculty of Nursing, Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi (RMUTT), obtained by simple random sampling. The study was conducted by asking students to take English Conversation tests, pretest and posttest, which included listening and speaking parts, then attained the English Conversation course of 5 units for a total of 15 hours. The research instruments included 1) English conversation lesson plans, activities and blended learning materials for teaching and learning, 2) pretest and posttest that evaluated the use of English for communication in everyday conversation, and 3) the satisfaction questionnaire on English conversation course with the blended learning activities. The obtained data were analyzed by using t-test and the effect size to compare the ability to communicate in English in both before and after class, mean and standard deviation of the students' satisfaction in learning English conversation course with activities and teaching materials based on the blended learning approach. The results of the research were as follows: 1) English communication ability of the sample was higher after the course was statistically significant level of .05 and had a score difference of 5.12, 2) The sample group had a high satisfaction on blended learning activities in English conversation course.

Keywords: Blended Learning Approach, English Conversation, English Communication Skills, English Language Teaching and Learning

I. Introduction

English is the medium of communication around the world and is a global language that everyone in the global society should learn to communicate in both everyday life and professions. In Thailand, where Thai government stated in National Strategy Plan of the strategy for human capital development and strengthening in improving learning process and realizing multiple intelligence which extended a policy to develop English language communication skills [1]. Then the practices for language learning emphasized in which people can develop the knowledge and ability of using English language for communication in order to live in international societies and to compete in economics situations with other countries as well as be able to live happily without barriers for self-development and lifestyle. Therefore, the teaching
and learning of English must be continued continuously including the need to find the most effective way to develop English language teaching.

Teaching and learning styles in the present time must be consistent with the life of the people in the society in order to benefit the most learning for life[2][3][4]. The face-to-face teaching style alone may be inadequate and may not correspond to different learners' characteristics (learning styles) which will enable learners to learn or understand lessons and to use in real lives. Therefore, self-learning through technology such as computers, iPads, tablets, smartphones, mobile phones, smart watch other artificial intelligence tools, etc. become a way to develop a model of learning of this new generation. In addition, the promotion of self-learning through different media creates convenience for both the learner and the teacher in situations where they are in different locations at different times in which enable flexibility and freedom for learners to further education and self-development.[4][6]

Blended Learning model means the combining of different teaching methods in the teaching and learning; classroom teaching and learning, integration of technology in teaching and learning, self-directed methods which students can choose by themselves, group discussions both in person and on the web, teaching and teaching with a learning package via the Internet merged with normal classroom learning, e-learning and so on ... The blended learning strategies may be conformed in many elements that can make a student learn, such as learning from content submitted by e-learning tutors, Webinars, Conference call, Live or online meetings with an instructor, Teaching materials and other activities such as Facebook, email, chat room, podcasting, blog, Twitter, YouTube channel, Skype, web-board or other social media.[7][8]

It’s assumed that blended learning could help student success more effective than face-to-face learning when students can work by themselves and teachers can support individual students who may need special attention. It is a learning model in the present and future that teachers should provide to learners in line with learners’ needs. Blended learning not only has the advantages of meeting the needs of learners with different learning styles and is more effective than face-to-face or online learning alone. Blended learning can also reduce education costs. By organizing classrooms on an online area. The use of electronic equipment, and E-books which can be accessed digitally, will reduce the cost of purchasing textbooks, equipment, travelling, and other expenses in educations. Adopted software that automatically collects student data and measures academic progress, providing academic data and collecting scores automatically will be good advantages for teacher, students and parents. Student attendance system and study time will help assure the responsibility and this system will accommodate talented students or students with extracurricular interests provided by the school. It also gives the freedom to study with learners of different skill levels, studying at their own pace and speed.[9][10]

The Blende Learning model has emerged in a number of discussions among educators, but it first clearly appeared in the 1960's, decades later, until the end of the year. 1990 when the blended methods was expanded the use of diverse technologies combined with classroom teaching and learning in 2006, the Blended Learning Manual (Blended Learning) was published by Bonk and Graham[8], focusing on blending one-on-one learning with learning. Teaching through computers. “Researcher Norm Friesen defines a blended learning model as the possibility of teaching and learning by combining the Internet and digital media with an organized classroom format”

The meaning of blended learning is a system of teaching and learning that combines face-to-face learning. With teaching and learning via computer networks and there is a definition of blended learning as learning that the learner gains mass. Learning experience independently through a
computer network system by Students can control themselves. Transform the way of self-learning in terms of time, place, and direction And their own learning rate Some of you concluded that Blended Learning is a learning program that uses a combination of e-learning or e-learning with classroom learning. \[11\]

The blended learning styles offered by education researchers and thinkers are varied and have different teaching and learning styles which may have any characteristics Combined from the following teaching and learning styles\[12\] \[13\] \[14\] \[11\] \[12\] \[13\] could be concluded as the following characteristics.

1. Faced classroom teaching (face-to-face) or traditional teaching style which emphasizes lectures, explanations, and teacher-centered presentation of activities.
2. Teaching in the classroom, but supplemented by digital technology media.
3. Knowledge-based instruction in which students rotate through knowledge-based activities with different characteristics together which the teacher provided.
4. Teaching in the classroom, but students study from an online or offline study program as directed by the teacher.
5. Learning and teaching with online learning programs without students having to attend class.
6. Laboratory teaching with the students operating by themselves may or may not have a teacher to provide assistance.
7. Self-study by students who decide how to learn.
8. Studying in pairs or group activities, organized in class or online groups.
9. The teaching and learning that the teacher teaches through an online communication system in real time.
10. On-site learning with an educator or an expert, with or without a teacher.
11. Learning from on-site experience
12. Learning from attending conferences, seminars or events that are held and can enhance knowledge and experience in the subject learned. And so on.

Whereas the strategies for managing media communication between teachers and students may be able to be organized as convenient and appropriate, such as using computer programs applications that support learning social media learning through e-learning programs, conferences, seminars through Facebook, line, Google software, Microsoft or any other LMS system with tools that students can use, such as desktop or laptop computers, mobile phone, tablet etc.

Figure 1: Key Activities in Blended Learning Approach in English Language Teaching & Learning
The blended instructional design based on the above activity guidelines and also based on course goals or objectives. By analyzing the course goals, which content, knowledge, skills, and experiences, teachers will get content and context to provide to students. Then, the design, development and teaching and learning stages will be in line with those goals. Teacher may use the same teaching method but use different activities in teaching and evaluating students or teach different contents by using various activities which are suitable for the students. Teachers may choose to teach one skill by organizing a combination of activities. Or they may teach you different skills with various activities suitable for each skill. It depends on the teacher's judgment with blended learning approach in their mind. The most important thing in designing course upon blended learning approach application was the course should be well designed and prepared as well as preparing careful blended lesson plan that is consistent with the objectives, courses, content, teaching activities and assessments. [6][12][13]

From research studies of experts in integrated teaching and learning management in Thailand, found that teaching and learning management by blended learning process. Help the students learn better and be satisfied in their learning. In this way, because it is consistent with the current living as well as responding well to the needs of learners with different learning skills. [7][6][15][12][13][14]

Many studies, research and experiment with the blended learning process with learners. Were found to be effective in promoting learning. And the development of learners with different learning skills. And the use of technology in teaching and learning will make it more interesting and effective. [11][10][16][17][18][19]

II. Research Objectives

1. To evaluate English communication skills of nursing students who studied English conversation course developed by the application of blended learning approach in teaching and learning.
2. To survey students’ satisfaction on the application of blended learning approach in teaching and learning English conversation course of Nursing students.

III. Research Methods

A. Research Design
1. The design of this research is one-group pretest-posttest experiment.
2. The design phase consists of
   2.1 Determination of learning objectives according to English Conversation course and blended learning activities which considering individual differences.
   2.2 Identification of knowledge categories content and skills that need to be developed in the learners
   2.3 Setting the context in teaching and learning
   2.4 Design of blended learning lesson and activities practical training and experiential training that fosters knowledge and skills according to the stated objectives.
   2.5 Designing or selecting instructional processes for learners such as self-study. Cooperative learning as a discussion group, etc.
3. Stage on the development of lessons and activities development and teaching and learning management by the application of blended learning approach which was designed in stage 2.
3.1 Classroom Teaching: Lessons focused on teaching and learning in the classroom which teachers can use or not use online technology materials. Group learning or matchmaking Laboratory learning with or without a supervised teacher.

3.2 Integrated technology by online teaching and learning: Lessons and learning management through technology media provided by teachers in a combination of time. (Synchronous) or not merging time (Asynchronous) without students in the classroom.

3.3 Self-Study: Lessons focused on self-learning of the learners. In which the learners can choose their own sources of knowledge, information, experiences, educators, and teachers may define learning boundaries.

3.4 Group discussion and Experienced Exercises: Lessons focused on on-site experience training by the participation in organized events or seeking knowledge from specialists (foreign teachers) to enhance appropriate knowledge and skills and fulfill the purpose of a predetermined lesson or course.

4. Design and development the instruments for the studies; students and teacher manual, worksheet, test papers, course materials, online materials, environment, questionnaire to survey satisfactions.

B. Research Process

The samples used in the experiment of blended learning methods obtained by simple random sampling of 32 persons from 64 of 2nd year Nursing students, Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi, who enrolled in English Conversation course in the second semester of academic year 2019. The sample group was in a great need as they have to practice internship in hospitals in a near future. Therefore, developing communication skills is important for them. And this group of students still have a modern attitude towards the use of new technology in teaching and learning. They also have good academic motivation as English Conversation is a compulsory course which they have to enroll for the degree.

The research tools were: 1) Pretest and Posttest. 2) English Conversation lessons focus on English for communication in everyday life and 3) Student satisfaction questionnaire. It consists of the following essence. Part 1 General information of students. Part 2: Satisfaction in learning English conversation applied by a blended learning approach. Part 3 Comments and suggestions on the blended learning approach teaching and learning. The experimental site and collecting data from this research study, the details of the research process are as follows

Step 1: Design Phrase: Context Analysis for operation of English Conversation course, equipment, and environments.
Step 2: Design Phrase: Development tools and teaching materials by the application of blended learning approach for teaching English Conversation course.
Step 3: Try-out Process with group of 3 students similar to the sample group.
Step 4: Improve the tools and materials and apply to the sample group
Step 5: Survey the satisfaction.

IV. Results

The methods of teaching according to Instructional Model based on Blended Learning approach could help learners achieve maximum learning. According to the data from reviewing documents and research which found that online group discussions, self-study or Self-directed Learning, studying through pre-packaged programs on smartphones or tablets by themselves and/or with teachers in the classroom with or without electronic media. It is a blended teaching process that
has been accepted that led to the development on learners’ achievement in learning. The following table showed blended learning methods with activities and evaluation which suited to learners different learning styles and identified characters of blended learning approach. The evaluation was designed to answer the course objectives; 1) to develop listening and speaking skills of students, 2) to enhance communication skills in real life, and 3) to encourage learners to communication in English language in everyday situations.

Table 1 Activity characteristics according to the blended learning approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching methods</th>
<th>Blended Learning Methods</th>
<th>Blended Learning Activities</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Class-based teaching by teachers with or without electronic media</td>
<td>The teacher presents the lessons with materials according to the teacher's aptitude</td>
<td>Listening, Speaking test, and paper test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Group Discussion: Face to Face and on web board and interview foreign teachers</td>
<td>The teacher defines the topics and details to discuss and assign tasks to do.</td>
<td>Observations, attending group discussions, and the contribution made. Recorded interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Studying with on-board lessons on the web (Web-based Program), via PC, Laptop, smart phone or tablet</td>
<td>The teacher selects a program lesson to study according to his needs and assign tasks to</td>
<td>Record the attendance and grades in the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Choosing a self-study method (Self-directed Learning) through social media (YouTube, Facebook, Line, IG, Twitter, blog, website or else) upon demand of students’ need (students specify learning methods in the assigned subject line).</td>
<td>The teacher gives the desired output according to selected self-study methods.</td>
<td>Listening, Speaking test, and paper test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Live online tutoring by MS Teams channel</td>
<td>Teachers make appointments with students and conduct live lessons online where students can join a group to interact with their teachers.</td>
<td>Listening, Speaking test, and paper test</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whereas the principles for designing such activities obtained from relevant theoretical reviews and from studying former research data and results, therefore, a method of learning that can be considered as a combination of digital technology is involved in the organization of teaching and learning activities by itself. The selection of content that is used to communicate in everyday situations which topics included: Nice to meet you, Meet my family, Weekdays and Weekends, Our neighborhood, Let’s catch up encouraged students to engage in own experiences and realities which help motivate them to participate more and more in blended learning activities. The course contents was well selected by considering students’ opportunities to communicate with foreigners in their daily lives and work practices. With the flexible evaluation methods with
a focus on listening speaking test, students might fell more relaxed to perform their communication skills and abilities.

**Table 2 Details of lessons used in teaching and learning according to the blended learning approach.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Chapter title</th>
<th>Function language</th>
<th>Situation used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nice to Meet You</td>
<td>Hospitality vocabulary, structure and expressions Introducing yourself and others</td>
<td>Greeting, introducing yourself Introducing others, starting conversations with new people, Talking about personal profiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Meet My Family</td>
<td>Structural vocabulary and expressions used for talking about jobs and families' members</td>
<td>Talking about family members and jobs. Describing Jobs’ duties, pros and cons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Weekdays and Weekends</td>
<td>Structural vocabulary and expressions language used for describing routines and everyday activities</td>
<td>Talking about routines, free time activities, telling times and frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Our Neighborhoods</td>
<td>Structural terms and language expressions used for describing places and giving directions</td>
<td>Talking about places around the neighborhoods, locating and giving direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Let’s Catch Up</td>
<td>Structural vocabulary and expressions for the language used for making invitation and talking about food and drinks</td>
<td>Making invitations and talking about food and drinks, suggesting restaurants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be seen that the content and situations in teaching and learning followed a blended learning methods focused on the development of English communication focusing listening-speaking skills by organizing the lessons which was suitable for practical application in the communication of the students.

Pretest and posttest scores of sample groups who have passed English Conversation course with the application of blended learning methods in teaching and learning appeared that the scores after study is higher than the score before the studies. The highest pretest score was 41 and the lowest is 13. The highest posttest score is 84 and the lowest is 49. The difference between the pretest and posttest scores is 41 and the lowest is 36. Where the average score for English communication after study was 55.63, which is higher than the pretest score of 29.50. The mean difference before and after study is 26.13.

In addition, the result shows the statistical value t equal to 36.68. This demonstrated that the English communication ability of the sample group after learning the English for Communication model based on the Blended Learning approach was higher than before. Statistically significant at the 0.05 level (Sig = 0.000 ≤ 0.05). The analysis of the effect size of the direct speaking score before and after the training of the sample was 5.12. Which had a high level of difference in scores before and after the study, with all learners in the sample. There is an increase in scores from learning English for all occupations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The satisfaction of the learners</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>Translate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) satisfaction with English conversation course with the application</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Blended Learning approach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) satisfaction with the content topics</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>highest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Satisfaction in teaching and learning activities</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>highest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Satisfaction with the evaluation method</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Satisfaction in an instructional environment and instruments</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Satisfaction teaching by classroom teachers</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Satisfaction with the students' choices of learning methods</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>highest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) satisfaction in learning in group discussions</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Satisfaction in learning using a package program.</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Satisfaction in learning by live online teaching</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be seen that the students were satisfied with the students' choices of learning methods at the highest level at 4.85, then the content topics at 4.75 and the teaching and learning activities at 4.66, respectively. According to the students satisfactions on the evaluation methods at 3.76 and the instructional environment and instruments at 3.79, it’s assumed that the technological equipment was very important in performing and operation blended learning approach into real teaching and learning situations.

V. Discussions

The students in sample group was based on English Conversation course which consisted by the proper curriculum so the students felt that they need higher scores in order to get good grade in this subject. This attitude toward the subject allowed them to work hard with less enjoy working together in some activities as you can see from the result, the students showed only 3.76 of satisfaction level in evaluation methods.\[^{[11]}\]

The requirement for making clear understanding of what instruments were needed for the operating of blended learning approach between teachers and facilitators was a crucial matter. The stuck of internet signal and the shortage of computer PC disappointed students who preferred to use wide screen of computer for clearer image and nicer sound. This effected in the score of satisfaction on environment and instrument at 3.97.

It was also found that Learners have a need for the readiness and ease of use of digital technology for their education. Because in this research study, it was found that the students had obstacles in the use of learning equipment, namely computers and software. Therefore, it causes some delays and disruptions to online searching for information and learning. However, the use of the blended learning curriculum has significantly helped learners improve their English
communication skills. Because of the combination of technology that students use in daily life to participate in teaching and learning as in the former studies.\[5\][6][20] The teaching and learning using a blended learning approach should include information on the needs of all areas involved such as learners, instructors, school administrators at all graduate levels and support staff or employers in order to obtain information that is truthfully correct in the study. The analysis of the current social situation on digital technology, educational software, and social environment were important factors in the development of blended learning approach in teaching and learning as in the former studies.\[10\][16][17][18][19]

In summary, the obvious advantages of blended learning and should be used in modern day teaching and learning to keep up with the changing needs of education include:
1. Responding to the needs of learners with different learning styles (Learning Style) due to the various teaching and learning styles that allow each person to learn according to their own aptitudes and have Equality
2. Able to attract and stimulate the interest of the learners because the learners are used to learning in the classroom. And the use of technology in daily life. The combination of these two things makes the learner more comfortable and familiar.
3. A blended learning model offers self-study opportunities at a time and place that are convenient for them. And can also choose what interests you. It is the most effective learning method in teaching and learning management. The blended learning model supports the development of individual learners to have the potential to develop themselves according to their needs and aptitudes.
4. Reduce education expenses and budgets. Preparation of publications Site preparation and teaching materials Plus the use of less specialized tutors
5. It is the development of teaching personnel to have various abilities. Able to carry out research work Academic Service and more creative work when organizing their own courses in a combination can set the time to work more conveniently
6. Course connection and synchronization is easy. This is because the teaching and learning management information system is mostly digital. This makes the collection of credit banks or online open educational systems (MOOCs) convenient. It may be classified as an activity or part of teaching
7. A blended learning management model Responding to a new way of life (New Normal) in the changing conditions of society and environment that occur all the time. A wide variety of teaching and learning styles Make students and teachers familiar with the application and creation of learning to suit the situation around them. Has fluency in problem management and is able to change well to the environment around him. And also cultivate ideas Develop self-learning skills throughout life (Life Long Learning) in the learner systematically.

VI. Recommendations

A. Recommendations for Practices
The recommendation for practices were as following:
1. The readiness of students in learning by this approach, students should have a level of digital literacy which they can cope with learning by using new technology and software.
2. The sufficient equipment and instrument used in teaching and learning.
3. The blended environment has to be well prepared.
4. The effective design of course curriculum, materials and environment.

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B. Recommendations for Further Research

1. The further study should be expanded to use the blended learning curriculum model in teaching a course in order to find suitable curriculum styles to be used in teaching and learning.

2. There should be research and development the method for assessing learner performance that is most suitable and effective with blended learning approach.

3. There should be in-depth student interviews to gain an understanding of their needs on learning in order to create the best learning experience for the learner.

4. There should study for suitable environment for blended learning approach in order to enable students to learn comfortably and to develop knowledge and competence arising from effective blended learning approach.

VII. Conclusion

It can be seen that blended learning is very beneficial for learners' learning and it is a style that deserves to be used in the social situation at the moment, the combination ways of teaching methods to develop people's intelligence by using technology to drive the global society. It is a suitable integration and approach to education for the present and the future. However, this form of education, should be in more research study. Extensive in the form of activities that make students most successful, the use of technology for teaching and learning based on this blended learning approach may be disrupted, inconvenient or delayed. This must be prevented from problems that arise by preparing and understanding the students first. And there should be a support system that can be replaced while the other one may be damaged or unusable. The effective well-prepared student manual may help students to be more comfortable and enjoyable to learn by the Blended Learning curriculum.

Therefore, recommended success factors of implementing a blended learning model in teaching and learning may be concluded in 4-key factors:

1. Teacher with experienced in curriculum design, educational technology and blended learning approach, seems faster on the use knowledge course contents and the use of media technology in teaching with corresponding systematic assessment. This is a reason for training teachers on the application of blended learning curriculum.

2. Methods introduced in blended learning approach will serve different teaching and learning styles.

3. Course contents is important to organize activities in accordance with the knowledge and skills needed to develop learners. Therefore, by analyzing the content and skills clearly and clearly, it will be able to use the appropriate learning activities appropriate to contents.

4. The organization and resources to support the teaching and learning according to the integrated learning model are very important parts. If educational institutions are ready to support in tools, internet system, computer network connection, software for online teaching materials, multimedia, security systems, confidentiality system, classroom privacy, supporting information (Database) and so on, those are necessary factors for teaching and learning by blended learning approach successfully.
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