


ORIGINAL

Recibido: 11/11/2020 | Aceptado: 07/04/2021

English Teaching with Face-to-Face and E-blended Modality: Do they Complement or Oppose?

La enseñanza de inglés con la modalidad presencial y semipresencial. ¿Se complementan o se oponen?

William Sosa Tamayo [wsosat@udg.co.cu] 

Especialista. Prof. Auxiliar.

Universidad de Granma. Bayamo, Cuba.

Aniuska Carrazana Cedeño [acarrazanac@udg.co.cu] 

Master en Ciencias. Asistente.

Universidad de Granma. Bayamo, Cuba.

Abstract

The didactic and pedagogy achievements make possible the application of technologies to educative models and learning environments which enable the introduction of changes in the educative and instructive strategies. Also the use of technologies in the teaching-learning process make possible the use of learning modalities that demands to be centered on self-learning and in the student. The objective is to determine the effectiveness of the blended-learning model in comparison with the traditional one in a specialty of Granma University. To measure the variables, the subjects in the experimental group received Blended Learning, while those in the control group received the face-to-face modality. It is concluded that positive results were achieved in B-learning, and it should be as effective as the face-to-face model. Besides blended learning method proved to stimulate the formation of mechanisms that allow the self-access to knowledge.



Resumen

Los avances en la Didáctica y la Pedagogía posibilitan la aplicación de las modernas tecnologías a los modelos educativos y ambientes de aprendizaje, los cuales permiten la introducción de cambios en las estrategias educativas e instructivas. Además, el uso de las tecnologías en el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje facilitan el uso de modalidades de enseñanza aprendizaje que presuponen el estar centradas en el autoaprendizaje y en el estudiante. El objetivo es determinar la efectividad del modelo semipresencial en comparación con el tradicional en una especialidad de la Universidad de Granma. Para medir las variables, los sujetos en el grupo experimental recibieron la modalidad semipresencial, mientras que el grupo de control recibió la modalidad presencial. Se concluye que al obtener resultados positivos en la enseñanza semipresencial esta puede ser tan efectiva como el modelo presencial. Además, el modelo semipresencial demostró estimular la formación de mecanismos que permiten el autoacceso al conocimiento.

Keywords: blended learning; technologies; face-to-face learning; self-learning.

Palabras claves: enseñanza semipresencial; tecnologías; modelo presencial; autoaprendizaje.

Introduction

It is well-known that the society nowadays demands the acquisition of knowledge more and more as a premise for the emerging of a sustainable source in the production of goods and services and the creation of wealth. Such demands require a permanent attention to teaching renewal with a greater speed and fluency of educative processes to answer the specific learning needs.



In our universities it was traditionally taught a unique pedagogical model. This model was characterized for the presence of the professor and students in the same teaching and learning context. The process was centered in the development of the teaching-learning process in order to provide the students' skills in the practical acquisition of language, more than in training skills to set learning strategies for self-learning.

The emerging of new technologies and their application in the most varieties fields of sciences and humankind cognitive activities, together with the appearance of new needs, which demanded the searching of more dynamic and objective learning variants, presupposed the use of new teaching methods. Nowadays the advances and findings in the field of psychology together with the uses of technologies have given rise to a series of educative systems that allow solving the limits prevailing so far in the traditional way of teaching.

In such sense it is stated that blended learning is the way of learning supplies through the efficient combination of different teaching methods, teaching models and learning styles based upon a transparent communication of all the areas implied in the course, (Heinze, & Procter, 2004). We also need to consider that it is a study modality different from the traditional one.

All the new teaching tendencies and methods incorporate the best achievements of other preceding teaching models and gives the possibility to match to surpass them, considering the students should be assigned a position or status in the educative arrangement, which implies their responsibility for self-formation in the content they need to learn. At the same time, it is necessary to be ready to ask and receive help from the tutors and professors guiding the teaching-learning process. Therefore, it would be practically impossible to satisfy the needs of acquiring knowledge, certain skills and to keep on learning only by putting into practice the traditional



methods and procedures. It is precisely due to this assertion that blended learning has shown a higher effectiveness in a continue learning beyond the academic courses.

There´s no point of coincidence with the findings of some researchers about the doubt and skepticism shown for some professors who wonder if the students under e-learning or b-learning acquire skills and knowledge the same way that the ones under face to face methods. Some researchers, as Moore, Thompson, (1990), & Clark, (1991), have compared the first modality with the face to face one, and have concluded that e-learning and b-learning should be as effective as any other traditional way. Therefore, it may be assumed that whenever proper and proved methods together with the use of technologies rationally and very well-oriented, that is, every time the professor enables class interaction, and stimulates timely feedback it may be possible to achieve good learning results in a sustain way in spite of the applied modality.

B-learning is the proper field for the work with the “Learning Environments”. In this way the Collaborative Environment provides sites to develop individual and group skills taking as a point of departure the discussions emerged at the moment of exploring new concepts, being each student responsible of their own learning. The role of the professor should be to make these environments rich in possibilities to deep on contents and make possible the growing of the group. In this modality of learning where the student plays the most important role, the psychological factors come to be relevant. In such sense, it is of vital importance the fact that some researchers in the psychopedagogical field formulated a theory of E-learning, later transferred to B-learning which has resulted to be a contribution for education improvement. They found that knowledge building up started with our observation and recognizing events and objects through concepts we already have. (Ausubel, Novak,et al, 1976a).



Other important element exhibited in the theory of Ausubel, (1976b), which is applied to this work, is the significant learning focuses on clears up the conception lying in that the new material could only make the transformations of student's believing and thinking when they succeed in getting back the schemes already existing in thought. Students should be taught in such a way that can continue learning by themselves in the future. Based on this they sustain the validity of principles of education for all, learning to learn, and the personalized teaching-learning process. That is, learning with a variety of strategies for all life and in a permanent and continues way, therefore it should be used a proper study material and teaching aids to give relevance to learning. This point of view is also valued by Moreira, (2017) when he states that if the learning material is not potentially significant (no related in a high way and non-arbitrary to the cognitive structure) it is not possible the significant learning. It is obvious that it is necessary to build up new paths if the student does not react as builder subject.

It is of particular importance for B-learning the findings identified by Ludlow, (1994) who found means which generally bring about positive results on the part of students, such as high motivation levels, a good academic and technical help, and ethic and hard tasks. The support present in the whole class has defined, not only to deal with academic activities, but also the identification and solution of problems, as well as to provide opportunities for student to student and the professors-students interaction, as well as the skill of maintaining them highly motivated through the successes achieved and feedback.

To value the effectiveness of B-learning was up as main problem to demonstrate if a higher or lesser presence of the professor in class influence quantitatively and qualitatively, in any way, on getting communicative competence.



Subjects and samples

As Table 1 shows it was selected a sample of 50 students. They were distributed in two groups, representative of first year in the Accounting and Finance career of University at Granma. Both groups were taught the same program dealing with English with general purposes. The subject selection was not made at random, but they were part of groups already organized before the experience in order to guarantee the probability of an equivalency between both. The subjects in the experimental, group (A), were applied an English program with the blended learning modality within a period of ten months, while the ones in the control group, (B) maintained the traditional learning model (face to face) for the same period of time. It was used an experimental design with and independent variable for subjects in (A), where the presence of the professor facing the students was minimum, meanwhile students in group (B) were given the face to face modality. The sample chosen was clearly delimited focusing the objectives of the research and it was defined the first year students features by making a characterization of subjects based on interest data and an exploratory diagnose to value the level in language mastering as it is shown in the following table.

Table 1

Characterization of subjects in the sample assigned to each group.

Groups.	Sex		Total	Age			Procedence			Language Mastering		
	M	F		17	18	19-20	Preuniver.	Politécnica	Otras	B	FB	A
A1	14	11	25	9	10	6	16	4	5	4	6	15
A2	11	14	25	8	13	4	15	5	5	3	5	17

B: Beginners.

F.B. False beginners.

A: Advanced.



Analysis and Results

Both the Experimental and Control Group were applied periodical tests to value the behavior of each in acquiring the Speaking Skill, as the most important one to match the oral communication purpose.

As it is shown in Graph 1, the vertical figures show the percentages obtained when testing the speaking skill, and the horizontal shows the monthly periods, thus number 1 refers to the period September-October, number two refers to November-December, number three refers to January-February, number four deals with March-April and number five has to do with May-June. The results show that the percentages increased periodically in the Experiment Group in relation to the Control Group. As the independent variable was handled it appears the tendency to a marked sustained increase percent, while the dependent variable practically remained constant.

These results behaved in such a way because of the relevant and novelty of both the content and the learning methodology. It is coincident with what is stated by psychologist Rogers (1994), in Harmer, (2003) when points out that the student must study what is relevant. They should experiment when learning, and not to be merely taught and that the personal and emotional factors should be included in the learning process.

There's a second motivation in this topic introduced by Bartolomé, (2007) in which it is clear that B-learning is a study modality which includes the best achievements of previous teaching-learning process, and sometimes, is able to overpass them when the student is given a role, a position and a status in the educative organization. The previous statement implies the responsibility in self-formation from the specific content someone needs to learn, and at the same



time, to be well-disposed to ask for and receive help from facilitators or guides which take part in the process.

In the classroom where a foreign language is taught and it is focused on oral communication, the linguistic concepts are as important as feelings and emotions, which emerge from the student itself. That's why it must ne always considered that this humanistic approach strengthens the interpersonal linguistic action as well as gives emphasis to communicative skill development.

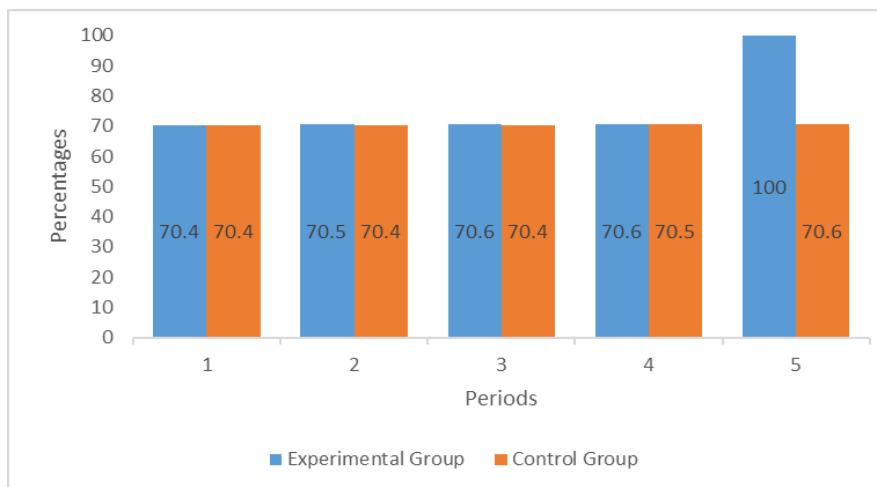
Also in Graph1, it is observed that the results maintained stable for both groups at the beginning of the experiment during the first period of two months (1), September-October. But in the following period, November-December, they raised systematically and were higher in the Experiment Group up to reach a 100% of affectivity when the Speaking Skill was tested in the last period (May-June).

This result evidenced that ten months later in the last stage of the study, the Experiment Group surpassed the expectancies established at the beginning of the experiment. These results were due to that the members assigned to the Experiment Group had free access to the self-access center with the availability of digital resources and means with audio and images to listen and observe without time limit imposed when learning in a classroom. They also could work in pairs, and record the dialogues and reproduce them later to check and make transpositions. This group also had time for self-evaluation and be evaluated for the partner and the facilitator. Besides they could experience the communicative situations in living and then create their own models using lexicon of their specialty to share in the participative forums or in the next class.



GRAPH 1

Results obtained periodically for the experimental and control group in Speaking Skill development.



The numbers from 1 to 1 5 correspond to the period from September- October to May-June.

Regarding the Writing Skill, it was tested in a similar way as the Speaking one, but lower results oscillating in the 70% values were obtained. As the previous table for valuating speaking, the figures on horizontal line refers to the monthly periods matching two months for each number, while in the vertical line are described the percent parameters reached in each two months' period. As it is shown in Graph 2 the results for the Experiment Group were systematically increasing and were slightly higher than in the brother group. They reached a rank from 70.4% to 70.6 when compared to the Control Group, on which the results were lower ranking from 70.2 to 70.4. It happened that way due to the handling of the independent variable that included different kinds of additional materials to help in writing. These materials involved guides with exercises in writing compositions, use of mass media in English to write comments,

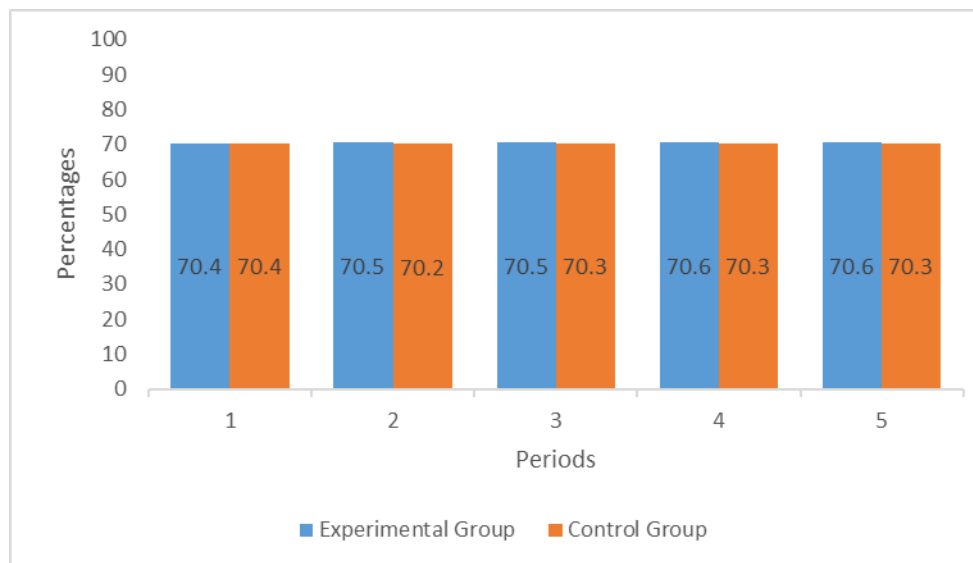


written expositions about a travelling experience, etc. while the Control Group only used the suggested material in the textbook as it is declared in the program.

The results shown in this graph justify the use of Moodle as a useful computer resource, which allows the interaction with the students as well as it helps to assign tasks, share questions and answers, self-evaluation, and made the course interactive and participative. The use of the e-mail was also a helpful mean to achieve higher results among the variety of activities suggested to share with the students. Among them were displaced different typologies of writing exercises that included from a simple fill in for grammar and lexicon to written dialogues and compositions related to a variety of topics and communicative functions.

GRAPH 2

General results obtained periodically for the Experimental Group and the Control Group in developing the Writing Skill.



The numbers from 1 to 5 correspond to the pair of months period from September-October to May-June.



To evaluate statistically if the Experiment Group differs from the Control Group in acquiring and mastering the Language skills, it was applied the “T” Test obtaining the results shown on Table II, where the confidence level got the meaning $P \leq 0.005$ as error possibility, this gives the certainty that both groups show significant differences for $P \leq 0.005$ at the time of valuating both skills. The best results were achieved in the Experiment Group with mean values of 4.8 and 4.13 in Speaking and Writing respectively as the two main skills for getting an efficient communicative competence.

The former results were possible with the enrichment of the learning means with the systematic attend to the self-access center. It caused to break the time and space barriers in using methods, technical support, and resources which make the teaching and learning process more effective and flexible by using technologies and related means such as interactive platforms, multimedia, virtual learning means, e-mail, internet, repositories and other resources available in the self-access rooms. In this way it allowed to leave the tight frame of the traditional class.

All these reinforce the ideas given by Moore, et al, (1990) who compared B-learning with the face to face modality and concluded that B-learning should be as effective and sometimes more successful as any other traditional way when adequate methods and technologies are used properly.

TABLE 2

Experimental and Control Group results in testing the main skills.

Skills	Experimental Group	ControlGroup	EE±
Speaking	4.8 ^a	3.87 ^b	0.171
Writing	4.13 ^a	3.2 ^b	0.257

^{ab} Means with different letters in the same line show significant differences for $P \leq 0.005$.

This Table shows a comparison of the results provided for the statistically study by means of “T” Test. These data, together with the ones shown in the periodical analysis, and the



final global achievements proved the effectiveness and viability of the experiment carried out, as well as the solution to the initial problem with the redesign of learning environments and new teaching methods to put into practice the B-learning modality supported for technologies.

The facilitator and learning subjects need to keep in mind the basic concept founded for some researchers that stated that B-learning is the learning supply through the efficient combination of different teaching methods, teaching models and learning styles based on a transparent communication of all the areas involved in the course. (Heinze and Procter, 2004).

During the development of this research it was used a solid methodological base for the work with the communication and computer technologies as an alternative support for the course they resulted to be a powerful motivating instrument. It is clear that the simple inclusion of these aids as substitute of professor's responsibilities, and role and the necessary methodological base may produce a harmful effect to those searched for, that is a demotivating and a failure of the educative experience as it has happened in certain language academics of last generation. It is in agreement to what Cabero (2002) has stated that when using the technologies there is a demand of a previous pedagogical project which provides logical sense and theoretical covering.

The considerations of other authors allow to accept as positive the findings exposed in this experiment under B-learning conditions, as has been stated that due to the changes occurring in the higher education and in the educative systems in general the most important thing is not to acquire information, but the mastering of skills to self-getting the knowledge (Grabowski, 1991). On the other hand, the learners who previously has looked up and managed the content on line may ask, demand clarifying and then, in a given set of self-learning assessing activities, they can rehearse or adapt the demonstrated experience, (Cassany,1999). It is a sense of significant learning that provides the learner a completely independent role. This author considers that the



student should be given methods of learning in such a way that guarantees to keep on learning by himself in the future.

Conclusions

1. The results achieved shows the possibility of teaching students in different pedagogical models on the bases of the generalization of blended- learning English teaching supported by technologies and interactive platforms.
2. Blended-learning modality enable that the future professional becomes the builder of knowledge. It allows to integrate the new contents and self-learning skills to the professional profile areas, due to it enables to keep on learning independently beyond the academic and curriculum environment. IT also makes possible the achieving of higher goals in the b-learning English teaching focused in strengthen autonomous learning strategies as self-learning, self-evaluation, learn to learn and having access to knowledge self-acquisition.
3. IT has been shown that B-learning guarantees the training of a pro-active professional according to their needs to create new knowledge, apart from the field of competence by using learning tools and different strategies in order to go to a higher stage.

Bibliographic Referencics

Ausubel, D.P. (1976a) *Psicología evolutiva Un Punto de vista cognitivo*. México:Trillas.

Ausubel D.P. Novak y J.D. (1976b). *Psicología Educativa, un punto de vista cognoscitivo*. México: Trillas.

Bartolomé, A. (2007). *Blended Learning. Conceptos Básicos*. Píxel-Bit. Revista de Medios y Educación, 23, pp. 7-20.



- Cassany, D. (1999). *Construir la escritura*, Barcelona: Editorial Paidós, pp. 20-36.
- Cabero, J. (2002). *Los recursos didácticos y las TIC*. En González, A.P. *Ensenyament, professors i universitat*, Tarragona, Institut de Ciències de història, pp. 18-24.
- Grabowski, B.L. & Curtis, R. (1991). *Information, instruction and learning: a hypermedia perspective*. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, 4 (3), pp.2-12.
- Harmer, J. (2003). *The practice of English Language Teaching*. England: Longman, pp. 56-63.
- Heinze, A. & Procter, C. (2004). *Reflections on the Use of Blended Learning. Education in a Changing Environment*. University of Salford. Education Development Unit, pp. 14-30.
- Ludlow, B.L. (1994). *A comparison of traditional and distance education models*. Proceedings of the Annual National Conference of the American Council on Rural Special Education, Austin, TX. (ED 369 599), pp. 7-16.
- Moreira, M.A (2017). *Aprendizaje Significativo: un concepto subyacente*. Recovered on January, 2018 from <<https://www.arnaldo martinez.net/docencia universitaria/ausubel03.pdf>>
- Moore, M.G. & Thompson, M.M., and Clark, G.C., (1990). *The effects of distance learning: A summary of the literature Research*. Monograph No. 2. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University, American Center for the Study of Distance Education, pp. 47-60.
- Rogers, C. (1994). *Freedom to Learn*. En Harmer, J. (2003). *The practice of English Language Teaching*. England: Longman, pp. 38-46.

