

A Comparison of the Learning Efficiency of Business English between the Blended Teaching and Conventional Teaching for College Students

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Abstract

Over the last thirty to forty years, as technology and supplementary broadcast networks have advanced, an increasing number of teachers have entered the classroom with new perspectives, such as providing students with resources and an environment that adheres to the blended teaching style. Learning can take place whenever and wherever it is desired with a blended teaching approach. The primary goal of this study was to investigate whether the blended teaching strategies and materials or the traditional teaching method in the Business English class increase students' learning satisfaction and academic achievement. Participants in this study included 56 undergraduate students majoring in Applied Foreign Languages in central Taiwan. Business English ESP courses were offered during the 108 and 109 academic years. The four-point Likert scale questionnaire was distributed after students took the course. Moreover, in-person interviews and class observations were also focused to reveal overall students' learning efficiency and perceptions on the preferences of teaching techniques in Business English and their learning satisfaction. As a result, students considered blended teaching an effective teaching strategy that increased their learning motivation with additional instructional activities. In addition, findings demonstrated that both handwritten exams (associated with traditional teaching methods) and interactive answering Apps (associated with blended teaching methods) work effectively based on different teaching methods. The outcomes of this study suggest that the majority of students have a positive attitude toward blended learning in the ESP program of business English and that their academic performance has obviously improved.

Keywords: learning efficiency, blending learning, traditional learning, business English courses, learning perceptions

1. Introduction

In today's extremely accessible network environment, it is even more critical for the public to provide opportunities for teachers and students to explore all the learning possibilities. As a result, education in schools must adapt to these changes rather than being limited by chalk, pencil, and paper, particularly in the age of the popularization of digital information on the Internet. Educators can perform the new function of a practical and knowledgeable teacher in the modern learning environment by utilizing flexible teaching resources in the classroom. Curriculum design and instructional materials are two of the most important factors in motivating children to study.

In addition, one of the most common and well-liked learning processes in schools over the past century has been didactic teaching, which combines face-to-face interaction in the classroom with the educator's ability to process various concepts, knowledge, and principles in systematic and logical ways with the aid of classrooms and textbooks to help students well organize what they have learned. With the development of technology and supplementary broadcast networks over the past thirty to forty years, an increasing number of teachers have entered the classroom with new perspectives, such as providing students with resources and an environment that follow the blended teaching style. With a mixed teaching approach, learning can take place whenever and wherever it is desired.

Students in our changing educational landscape appear to be less patient with traditional didactic teaching approaches that rely on rote memorization. Students today, on the other hand, frequently learn quickly and with the assistance of social media materials in order to demonstrate their creativity and individuality in certain disciplines. Traditional didactic teaching may be a practical style of instruction that fits the levels of students in schools. However, an increasing number of educators are incorporating blended teaching approaches into their curricula in order to create a more interactive learning environment with multiple purposes.

Many of Taiwan's largest companies, in particular, are essentially global; as a result, knowing English is no longer a sophisticated skill, but rather a fundamental one. In addition to acquiring business-related vocabulary and usage, Business English entails drafting official reports, reporting speeches in routine meetings, and learning how to use the right tone and words to help with coping abilities. A clearly defined learning incentive will make learning achievements more visible and allow application to be tailored to different contexts.

Most college departments have long considered Business English to be one of the most important major subjects, and numerous courses have been added to the list of required subjects to assist students in getting on the international business current in English track. People frequently ask: "What exactly does business English imply? What sets it apart from regular English?" Indeed, business English programs assist students not only in learning the language but also in avoiding "information errors" when interacting with coworkers and clients at the workplace. Business English is a type of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course that allows students to focus more on their professional subjects.

1.1 Purpose of Study

The primary objectives of this study were to determine whether student-centered instruction, such as blended teaching techniques, increases student motivation and achievement, and whether the use of multiple teaching resources has a significant impact on how effectively students learn in the Business English class.

1.2 Research Questions

The purpose of the study was to examine how traditional and blended teaching strategies affect college students' ability to communicate business English. The following four questions were used to summarize the precise goals.

- 1) What elements of traditional or blended teaching techniques continue to be effective?
- 2) Which traditional or blended teaching techniques, in your opinion, need to be strengthened?
- 3) Are the traditional and blended teaching methods used in classes today appropriate for the students?
- 4) Which teaching method had the greatest impact on college students' performance and motivation in the Business English ESP course?

2. Literature Review

2.1 English for Specific (ESP)

Since English became the international language of technology and business, ESP has emerged. Many people desire to learn English for a variety of reasons. One of them wants to learn English to help with their work, while others need to learn English to understand textbooks in school. Learners' motivation to learn English will be influenced by their needs and interests. According to Dudley-Evans and St. Jones (1998), ESP is a type of English for a specific purpose that can be specified, such as English for academic studies or English for vocational purposes. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), ESP is not a language or methodology, but rather a method of studying language learning based on the needs of the learner. Since 1990, English education academics and instructors all across the world have increasingly come to recognize the significance of ESP. English is now used for more than just one topic in school; it is also used in a variety of professions and for a range of objectives. Additionally, the ESP curriculum of domestic higher education is in the process of being developed. It emphasizes student needs as a factor of teaching practice and helps students be prepared to compete in a global economy (Zou, 2009).

2.2 Blended Learning

Blended learning (BL) refers to the combination of two modes of instruction, e-learning and didactic (face-to-face) teaching (Kiviniemi, 2014). This method avoids the constraints of time and location, increasing both student and faculty productivity. de Jong N, Savin-Baden M, Cunningham AM, Verstegen (2014) implemented a BL system by using various instructional approaches in a student-centered manner. As a result, BL fosters a positive and collaborative learning environment. According to Edginton and Holbrook, students

were initially concerned about decreased instructor communication in the blended learning system, but such concerns were overcome by increased attention. The majority of research findings from papers on blended learning from the past 20 years indicate that after the implementation of blended learning, students are more satisfied with the curriculum, achieve good learning results, and express positive affirmation of their learning motivation, attitude, and satisfaction. According to research conducted by Chang and Chang (2006), students can learn intermediate English courses through blended learning effectively, and their learning achievement, learning satisfaction, and learning willingness have all significantly increased. Another study found that after operating the exchange activity of English emails across schools, there were significant differences in students' responses to English reading, English writing, and the combination of English (Peng, 2007).

In line with the description proposed by Yan Xiuling (2011), who gathered the opinions of academics, blended learning might be a combination of multiple teaching methodologies, distinct teaching media, or supporting teaching environments. Blended learning is a strategy that mixes online and in-person learning, according to the website of the New South Wales Department of Education and Training in Australia. Numerous academics have defined blended learning, which can be broadly divided into three categories.

To begin, blended learning combines traditional learning with a variety of educational media, such as television, the Internet, and audio, mail, or video conferencing systems (Bersin & Associates, 2003; Singh & Reed, 2001). Second, combining two or more different teaching strategies (Driscoll, 2002; Rossett, 2002); third, combining two or more different teaching environments (Reay, 2001; Rooney, 2003; Young, 2002); and fourth, combining online instruction with traditional face-to-face instruction, as in one of the approaches referred to as "a digital sandwich" (Ward & LaBranche, 2003). The definition of blended learning, which combines media with online learning, and the environment are the study's main focus points.

2.3 Effectiveness of Learning

The learner's academic performance is the primary indicator of learning efficacy, according to this definition (test, exam, mid-term and final performance...etc.) Most studies also employ satisfaction as an additional metric to measure and evaluate the efficacy of learning (Piccoli, Ahmad, & Ives, 2001). Liu (2005) defined learning effectiveness by using learning satisfaction and performance questionnaires (self-rating scale) as the primary criteria for assessing learning effectiveness for both handwriting and online tests.

In addition, learning effectiveness refers to that students who complete an online program receive education that reflects the institution's distinct quality. The goal is for learning at least as good as learning through the institution's other modes of delivery, particularly traditional face-to-face, classroom-based instruction... Interaction is essential. (Sloan, 2002).

2.4 Learning Satisfaction

Cardozo (1965) advanced the customer satisfaction theory, which inspired the learning satisfactory theory. Learning satisfaction is the result of the processes that occurred during the teaching and learning sessions in which the students participated. Furthermore, satisfaction can be viewed as a comparison of the outcomes of expectation and perceived service with pleasure or displeasure (Oliver, 1999). Learning satisfaction is defined as the extent to which learners have met expectations and needs during learning activities in the learning process. A common method of gauging the efficiency of learning in the context and process is learning satisfaction (Piccoli et al, 2001; Liu, 2005). Students' feelings or the psychological responses that are produced following learning activities are referred to as satisfaction (Knowles, 1970; Tough, 1982). The course content, learning environment, learning style, etc. are just a few of the factors that can influence how satisfied you are with your education. The learners' pleasure is crucial since blended learning differs from traditional classroom instruction in its learning methodology. It can be used to gauge and forecast students' future propensity and opportunity to engage in learning strategies (Piccoli et al., 2001).

3. Methodology

3.1 Participation

The purpose of this research intended to compare the learning effectiveness between the blended instructional model and the traditional teaching in a college Business English class, as well as to provide perceptions and learning satisfaction of college students. The study's design was a quantitative research, and the research was carried out during the first semester of the 108, 109 academic year at one of Taiwan's central universities. The study's participants (N= 56) were from the intact class of the English Business English class, which had a weekly 60-minute class period. 75% (n=42) of the participants were female students, while 25% (n=14) were male

students. All participants were first-year English majors, ages 18 to 19, who have been studying English for an average of ten years.

3.2 Research Instruments

This scale primarily compares the business English proficiency of college students using the traditional teaching method model and the blended learning model. The "Research Project Learning Effectiveness Scale" that was adopted in this study was created in accordance with its goals and objectives. The questionnaire was available in Chinese version and was divided into four sections: "Course taking motivation," "Group cooperative learning," "Self-reflection thinking," and "Learning satisfaction." In this survey, participants answered a total of 20 questions using a four-point Likert scale to assess the overall ESP course content and learning efficiency with the two instructional methods. There are five responses available: "strongly agree," "agree," "normal," "disagree," and "strongly disagree." In that order, reverse questions receive 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 points, while forward questions receive 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 point. After that, the total score is computed by adding the points for each question. The more points the participants received, the happier they were with the blended learning methodology. Instead, they prefer the traditional teaching style model.

3.3 Procedure

The first step would be to select 56 senior and junior college students who took the Business English course to complete the questionnaire. The researcher's criteria for selecting participants are 1.) students with similar levels of English ability. 2.) Students who have had an equivalent amount of time 3.) Students from similar backgrounds who are learning English. A total of 56 students from the Department of Applied Foreign Languages were employed as test subjects after the questions have been revised.

Following data collection, the researcher would compute the data and analyze the results using the SPSS system's online software. The learners from the Applied Foreign Languages who took the business English ESP course during the school's 108 and 109 academic years were the focus of this study. Two different teaching methods were implemented in the ESP classroom: traditional teaching method (textbook teaching, stage presentation, handwritten exams) and blended teaching method (combined video teaching, actual exchange of letters, online exams) to assess students' learning effectiveness and outcomes through mutual evaluation, self-evaluation, and the final of a survey of students' learning satisfaction with various teaching techniques.

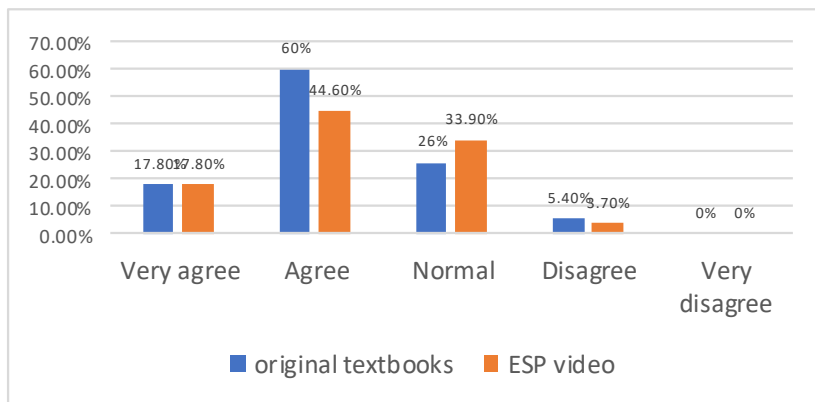
4. Research Findings

4.1 What Elements of Traditional or Hybrid Teaching Techniques Continue to be Effective

The questions 8, 10, 12, 13, and 14 demonstrated how traditional teaching methods work in the middle of the class, while the questions 9, 11, 14 demonstrated the blended method.

To begin with the teaching materials, approximately 67.8% of the students agreed with the original textbook and believed it is the necessary materials in this ESP class; however, videos based on English were one of the typical blended teaching materials, and 62.5% of the students believed videos are the necessary materials.

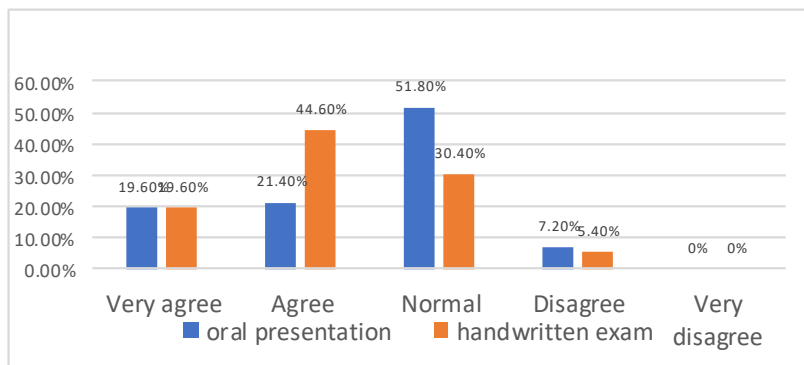
Table 1. Preferred teaching materials in the Business English class



Secondly, according to the findings, students preferred both oral presentations and handwritten exams and tests as traditional teaching methods in terms of the classroom teaching methods. Almost 70% of students were more diligent with the preparation of content for oral presentations, and they were generally satisfied with their performances; as for the handwritten part, approximately 60.7% of respondents agreed that they were diligent

with the exams and tests; interestingly, they also considered the handwritten exam to be a necessary part of this course, even higher than the oral presentation, at 19.7%. (Table 2 with question number 10, 12, 13).

Table 2. Preferred teaching materials in the Business English class



Third, interactive answering Apps and filming assignment video were comparable in terms of blended learning. According to the collected data, 37.5% of students were satisfied with their performance when using interactive answering apps, compared to 32% when filming a video. Furthermore, approximately 37.5% of students believed that filming video was more stressful for them, while only 12.5% believed that using interactive answering Apps was not as stressful, which was the lowest numerical value (less stressful) of all teaching methods (Table 3, Table 4, with question number 11, 14).

Table 3. Self-satisfaction of learning media in the Business English Class

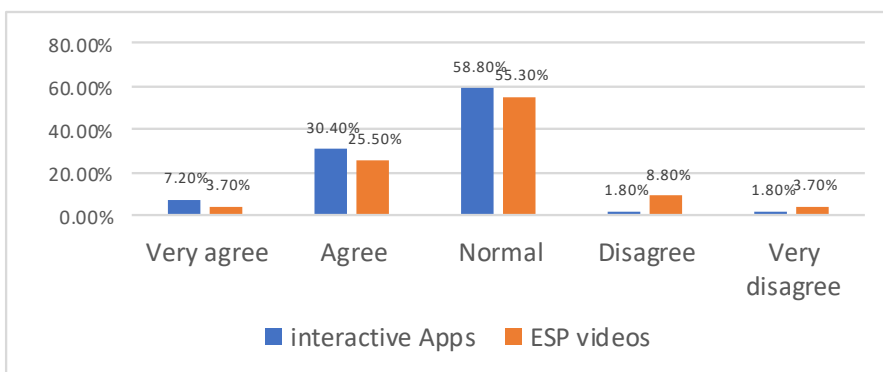
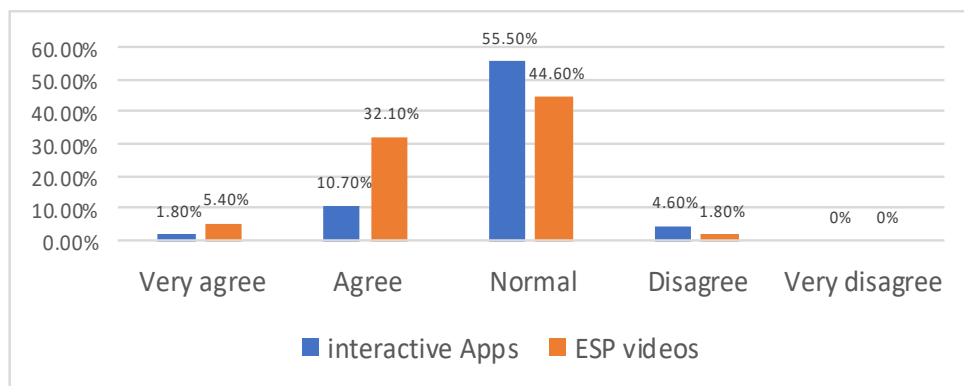


Table 4. Stress of learning media in the Business English Class

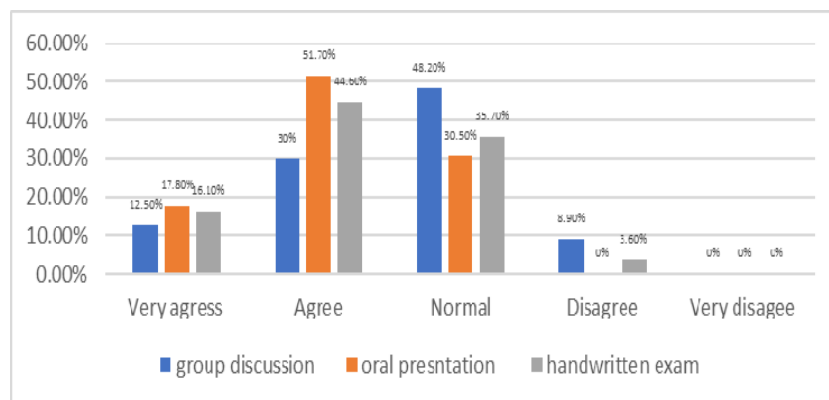


The analysis of the questionnaires showed that doing handwritten exams and using interactive answering Apps in ESP courses are necessary and more efficient for absorbing the contents. Furthermore, respondents may be more stressed when preparing handwritten exams but feel less stressed when answering through interactive answering Apps. As a result, the research demonstrated that both handwritten exams (associated with traditional teaching methods) and interactive answering Apps (associated with blended teaching methods) work effectively based on different teaching methods.

4.2 Which Traditional or Blended Teaching Techniques, in Your Opinion, Need to Be Strengthened

Following the collection and analysis of all questionnaires, the research reveals that, when compared to other traditional teaching methods, respondents show less diligence on group discussion, with 42.8% on the sum of agree and very agree. The other two methods receive 70% and 60.7% of the degrees, which are slightly higher than the group discussion in the ESP course (Table 5).

Table 5. Perception of teaching methods in the Business English class



The main point that needs to be reinforced for students, on the other hand, is filming videos related to blended teaching methods. Most respondents believed they used interactive answering Apps with the same diligence, but they were more stressed during the filming process. In comparison to the 12.5% of students who agreed that they are under pressure when using interactive answering Apps in class, approximately 37.5% of students felt stressed during the filming portion, which is a total of 25% higher than the former.

Overall, the research demonstration and diagrams could highlight the importance of group discussion (related to traditional teaching methods) and filming assignment videos (related to blended learning methods) for students. It means that, as respondents' exposure to more stressful programs increases, teachers in ESP classes should provide more opportunities for students to practice.

4.3 Are the Traditional and Blended Teaching Methods Used in Classes Today Appropriate for the Students

Question 6 and 7 were tentative for respondents at the start of the questionnaire in order to give them some examples of different teaching methods and could be viewed as an initial test for respondents. In contrast, question 16 revealed that the majority of students in business ESP courses were concerned with their grade and learning effectiveness. According to the research, approximately 75% of respondents agreed or strongly agree with the caring of scores, and 89.2% hold learning effectiveness in high regard. Notably, even the high diligence respondents took, but they appeared to have opinions based on their semester-end performance. On average, 46.4% of students were satisfied with their grades, which was less than half of the total.

This phenomenon demonstrates that the deliberate use of both teaching methods produces potential opportunities to stimulate students' talents in the business field, and it could also work in tandem with the subject in question number 16, which shows that nearly 60% of students are interested in business. Respondents indicated an interest in working in this field (Table 6). Last, 76.7% of respondents (43 out of 56) agree with the current use of teaching methods via the data gathered in response to question number 18. To summarize, approximately three-quarters of students are qualified for current ESP teaching methods (Table 7).

Table 6. The elements of learning efficiency in the Business English class

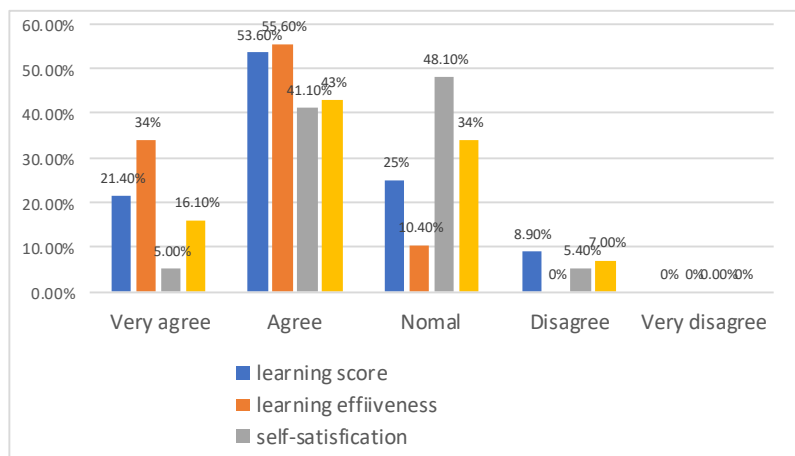
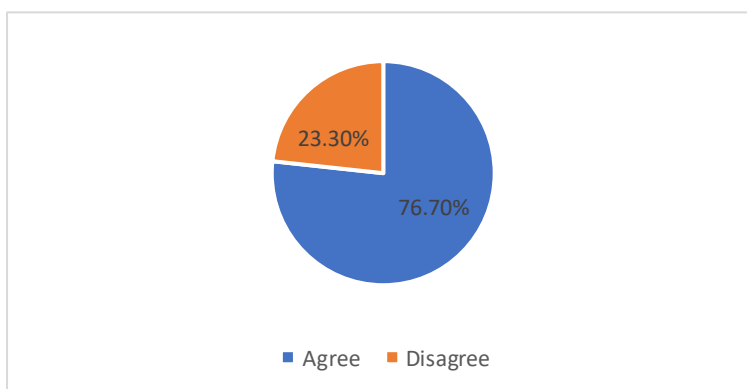


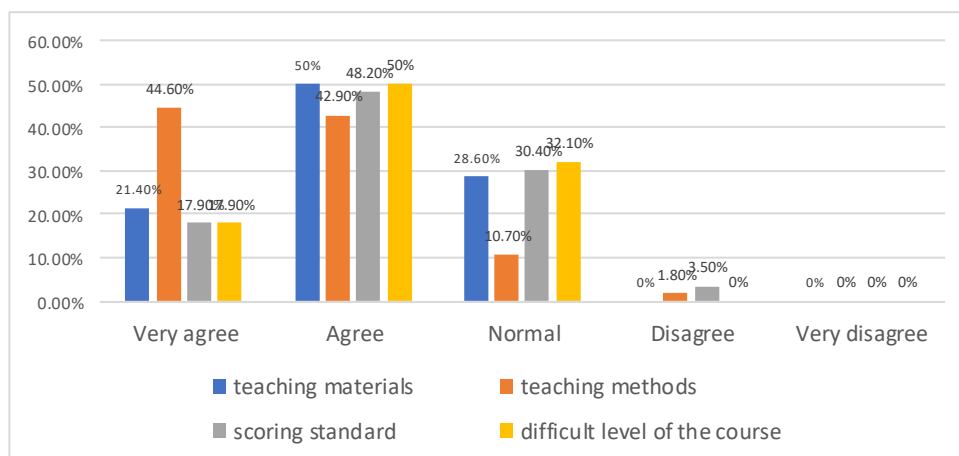
Table 7. Agreement of the portion of two instructions implemented in the Business English class



4.4 Which Teaching Method had the Greatest Impact on College Students' Performance and Motivation in the Business English ESP Course

The questionnaire's question order was designed to help respondents understand the differences between two types of teaching methods. Aside from the previous 14 main questionnaire questions, the fifteenth question, which includes four subjects, could indicate whether the teaching methods influence students' performance and motivation to take the ESP course. Respondents should rate every aspect of their own experience before answering the four subjects, which are "teaching materials, teaching methods, scoring standard, and course hardness level." According to the collected data, "teaching methods" receive 44.6% strongly agree, while the remaining options are 21.4% in teaching materials and 17.9% in both scoring standard and course hardness level. It is clear that teaching methods is a critical factor influencing students' performance. Respondents should rate every aspect of their own experience before answering the four subjects, which are teaching materials, teaching methods, scoring standard, and course hardness level. It is obvious that teaching methods have a significant impact on students' motivation and performance in business ESP courses (Table 8).

Table 8. Motivation to take the Business English class



5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion of the Significant Findings

- 1) According to the research, both handwritten exams and interactive answering Apps work well based on different teaching methods.
- 2) The research demonstration and diagrams could indicate that group discussion and filming assignment videos are both aspects that students should be strengthened in. It means that teachers in ESP classes could arrange more opportunities for students to practice the more stressful programs respondents may have.
- 3) According to the collected data, "teaching methods" received 44.6 percent strongly agreement degrees when compared to the other options, which included "teaching materials, scoring standard, and course hardness level." It is clear that teaching methods have a significant impact on students' motivation and performance in business ESP courses.

5.2 Teaching Implications

First, the preferences of teaching methods are discussed. As the results of this study, the finding demonstrated that students benefit from both teaching methods in various forms, including a blending, traditional and digital instruction. If the class are provided intriguing teaching technique with lots of interaction, students' motivation increases and pay more attention in class. Secondly, the preferred learning assessment is investigated. According to the research, students continue to prefer oral presentations and handwritten exams as the current values in class. Interacting answering Apps, on the other hand, are effective educational tools for some students. Although students perceive the live Q&A in face to face to be more stressful, they also see it as an effective way to strengthen their business English application.

Despite the fact that, on average, 46.4 percent of students are satisfied with their performances, and roughly three quarters of students are suitable for today's teaching methods in ESP courses, improving the effect of satisfaction remains a high threshold. It may also only reflect the unilateral part of students' opinions and make suggestions to teachers, without taking into account effectiveness and efficiency. On the other hand, the research must include a pre-test and post-test design in order to analyze the overall comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching methods. We could take the involved suggestions and comments for the research, but there is no control group to observe the final results.

According to previous research, satisfaction refers to students' feelings or feelings are the psychological reactions produced after learning activities (Knowles, 1970; Tough, 1982).

The current data collection study only shows the respondents' school learning situation. In the future, researchers can use additional variables such as the frequency of learning channels outside of class, the duration of study abroad, and the reconstruction ratio of review to evaluate learning satisfaction in ESP classes in colleges more concisely. Furthermore, future research could look into incorporating remote teaching methods programs into blended learning methods as an excellent addition and example in business expressing programs.

5.3 Limitation of Application

Despite the fact that 46.4% of students were satisfied with their performances on average, and roughly three-quarters of students were suitable for today's teaching methods in ESP courses, improving the effect of satisfaction remains a high threshold. It was also could only reflect the unilateral part of students' opinions and make suggestions to teachers and not be able to generalize the great significant effectiveness and efficiency. Therefore, further research is suggested that must also include a pre-test and post-test design in order to analyze the entire comprehensive evaluation of efficacy of teaching methods. Furthermore, the research should include an experimental study with a control group and an experimental group to determine the precise difference and implementation.

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