

Effectiveness of Blended Learning at the Tertiary Level ESL Classrooms: Special Reference to the First year Arts Students, University of Jaffna

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Abstract: In the present ESL educational environment, there has been a significant movement towards online learning. 'Blended learning' is a current approach to education that integrates both traditional face-to-face learning and online learning aided by ICT platforms. Focusing on enhancing the learning outcomes, this paper tries to investigate the effectiveness of implementing blended learning to foster the proficiency level of learners. In the modern ESL classrooms, it is suggested by the language scholars that teachers are supposed to maximize learning opportunities through Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL)/ Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL). The present study was carried out with thirty-six first year Arts students for one semester. Questionnaire, classroom observation and informal interviews were used to collect data. Though the study is of qualitative type, the participant learners were taught by routine method and then through blended learning mode for seven weeks each. When the results were qualitatively analysed at the end of the study, it was observed that the learners showed much willingness to get engaged in the classroom activities while implementing the blended learning approach. Through their active participation the proficiency level is expected to be maximized. For e-learning in the classroom, personal mobile phones of the learners were used. Although considerable constraints were recognized regarding the availability of physical resources and internet facilities, the method found to be productive to our context. Hence, learners' potential and proficiency level can be enhanced by the appropriate use of blended learning.

Keywords: Blended learning, ESL classroom, Scaffolding, Proficiency level, MALL