EFL STUDENTS' COURSE CONTENT PRACTICES BETWEEN CONVENTIONAL AND BLENDED LEARNING

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Abstract

Blended learning has increasingly been applied in higher education. The present study investigated the students' perception toward the practices of course content between conventional and blended learning. The study's design was a survey design conducted on second and third-year students. The students perceived that blended learning allows a wider chance to students to explore and practice their course knowledge and skills than conventional learning. Furthermore, the students perceived that the practices of course knowledge and skills in blended learning significantly contributed to their CGPA. However, the course knowledge and skills practices in conventional learning yielded a low effect on students' CGPA. This study implicates that applying blended learning in a course optimizes EFL students' course content competencies and increases their CGPA.

Keywords: blended learning, EFL Students, course knowledge, English teaching course skills

Introduction

Blended learning was widely applied in instruction at the higher education level to promote students' knowledge and skill. Blended learning combines face-to-face and online learning, while conventional learning classes are face-to-face teaching and learning activities conducted face-to-face in the classroom without any combination with online learning activities (Hadiyanto, 2019; Shand & Farrelly, 2018). The same method, structure, content, strategy, and learning activities can be implemented in online and face-to-face learning; nonetheless, it depends on teachers' creativity and initiation to adopt and develop teaching and learning components into his/her classroom.

The Indonesian higher education curriculum asserts that students center learning (SCL) is applied in online and face-to-face learning to develop students' course content competencies, including course knowledge and skills. As the basis of online learning, almost all E-learning platforms support student-centered learning (SCL), teachers can manage interactive learning activities to engage students in active learning. Teachers should have initiation and creativity to transform SCL into students' learning activities for students to integrate, interaction, presentation, discussion, sharing each other, and working in a group, e.tc. Those blended learning activities develop better students' course content competencies after completing the course than conventional learning (Hadiyanto et al., 2018; Singh, 2011).

Developing students' course content should be carried out through suitable learning strategies and activities. The fast and progress of students' strategies depend on how the teachers manage the student to learn and how the content is delivered to students in physical or virtual classrooms. Appropriate, active and creative learning methods impact students' course knowledge and skills (Cable & Cheung, 2017; Tan, Florendo, & Santos 2020). This study investigated students' perceptions of using conventional and blended learning in developing their course content knowledge

Literature Review

The course content

The term of course content is interchangeable with hard skills, discipline competencies and other similar terms (Cajander et al., 2011; Hadiyanto et al., 2019; Wibowo et al., 2020). Course content relates to specific knowledge, specific subject content, and technical skills of one's major (Gray & DiLoreto, 2016). Course content includes structure, skills, core concepts, ideas, values, facts, methods of inquiry, and the usage of technology for the content the teachers intend to teach (Dai, Asano, & Yoshikawa, 2016). Course content is one's possession of knowledge, capabilities and dispositions to organize and provide instruction at the appropriate level of the study, which inter-relate with other course content learned (Thach, 2018). Students must be able to apply their course knowledge and skills in various situations. For the aim of the study course, content competencies are one's ability to apply and generate his/her major course knowledge and skills in learning and real practice. Course content relates to the courses pursued by the students at the program. Then, course content are divided into two components; specific course knowledge and specific course skills (Hadiyanto et al., 2021; Wibowo et al., 2020).

- *Specific course knowledge* is a theoretical concept. Idea, factual, and actual matter that is possessed by someone on her/his major of knowledge.
- *Specific course skills* deal with someone's ability and capacity to apply his/her major-specific knowledge into the real context of working.

Blended learning and students' course content development

Blended learning is joining the best feature of face-to-face and online instruction. For instance, interactive learning sessions can be conducted to the students in the classroom, while online sessions with multimedia-rich content of the course can be accessed by students anywhere, anytime through internet access (Hadiyanto, 2019; Shand & Farrelly, 2018; Vanslambrouck et al., 2018). The aim of blended learning activities is giving different modes of content delivery to encourage students' interaction and benefit students in acquiring both knowledge and skills through physical classroom and being continued in online learning. Varies of learning activities and assignments can be set by a teacher where students work together that generally conducted in a physical classroom, and now it can be held through online learning or e-learning (Woodcock, Sisco, & Eady, 2015). They can report their assignment or present them to the e-learning class as a whole, and it will encourage student-to-student interaction and reflect on what they are learning. Moreover, the teacher himself can ensure clear directions and realistic goals for individual and group assignments in e-learning (Cable & Cheung, 2017).

Some previous research had found some benefits of using blended learning, such as improving students' motivation, attitude, academic achievement, and learning skills. Students are given wide opportunities outside the classroom to develop their knowledge, skills, and competencies through online learning activities (Hadiyanto et al. 2017). Regarding the present study context, blended learning is believed to develop students' course content competencies, where knowledge and skills are integrated into it. The students' course knowledge and skills development is determined by selecting delivery methods and implementation, whether in conventional class or online learning activities. A suitable learning method can provide an explicit focus on developing both course content in detail, thus providing students with opportunities to interact, explore, discuss and work with each other to gain content of learning and competencies or course content (Shand & Farrelly, 2018; Thach, 2018).

Combining conventional and online learning reduces classroom-oriented learning and allows teachers to arrange flexible schedules, create innovatively, and manipulate active learning methods (Shand & Farrelly, 2018). Learning methods should be designed for students' center learning. Today e-learning platforms support students' centered learning such as video presentation, group discussion, group project, information, and resources sharing etc. However, blended learning will be effective if the students engage, interact, work with others, and do real activities in conventional class and online learning.

Methodology

The survey design was applied in the study. The sample of this study was the second-year and third-year students at the English Education department at a university in Jambi. One hundred and twelve students (112 out of 138) fill the questionnaire. The number of respondents represents

the second and third-year students' total population (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). The first-year students were not included because that they had not been exposed enough to conventional and blended learning, and it could be very difficult for them to rate the practices of course content in the learning process.

Totally 206 respondents of the study were students at the English education department at a university. Majority of the respondents (72, 64, 3%) were female and 40 respondents (35,7%) male. Among respondents, 38 (33, 9%) had CGPA 3,5 and above, 44 (39,3%) 3,00 to 3,49, and 29 (26,8%) within 2,70 to 2,99. According to the year of the study, 77 (68, 8%) were the second year, 35 (31,3%) third year.

Instrument, reliability, and validity

Self-report questionnaires with 5-point Likert scales (never, rarely, sometimes, often, and very often) were used to measure their practice of students' course content in both modes of learning; conventional learning and blended learning class. The questionnaire was classified into two main constructs; course knowledge and skills. The instrument's reliability and validity had been tested by Cronbach alpha (α) and corrected item-total correlation coefficient. Cronbach alpha (α) coefficient at .60 for a construct consists of 10 items and below, and Corrected item-total correlation at 0.30 is acceptable (Pallant, 2011). The test results Cronbach alpha coefficient .86 and corrected item-total correlation at 0.30 and above. In short, the instruments were reliable and valid to measure the students' course content practices through learning activities.

Data analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were used to explore data and report the findings. Descriptive analysis was used to report the mean score and the level course content practices through conventional and blended learning. The students' responses between the Likert scale 1- 5 were descriptively calculated and interpreted in five levels as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *Interpretations of mean scores*

Mean Score	Interpretation
1.00 to 1.80	Very Low Frequency
1.81 to 2.60	Low Frequency
2.61 to 3.40	Medium Frequency
3.41 to 4.20	High Frequency
4.21 to 5.00	Very High Frequency

Paired sample t-test was used for further analysis. It was used to seek differences in the mean scores of course content practices in conventional learning and blended learning class. Paired sample t-test is appropriate to compare two between two mean scores. A significant (p) value at 0.05 to 0.1 is used to judge the significant deference of two comparative scores (Hair et al., 2006).

Findings

Comparison of course content practices between conventional learning class and blended learning class

Figure 1 displays students' perception toward course content practices in conventional and blended learning methods. Students perceive that the course content practices through blended learning are higher than the conventional learning method. Specifically, the course knowledge and skills practices in blended learning are more intense than in conventional learning.

Figure 1. *Mean comparison of course content between conventional learning and blended learning Method*
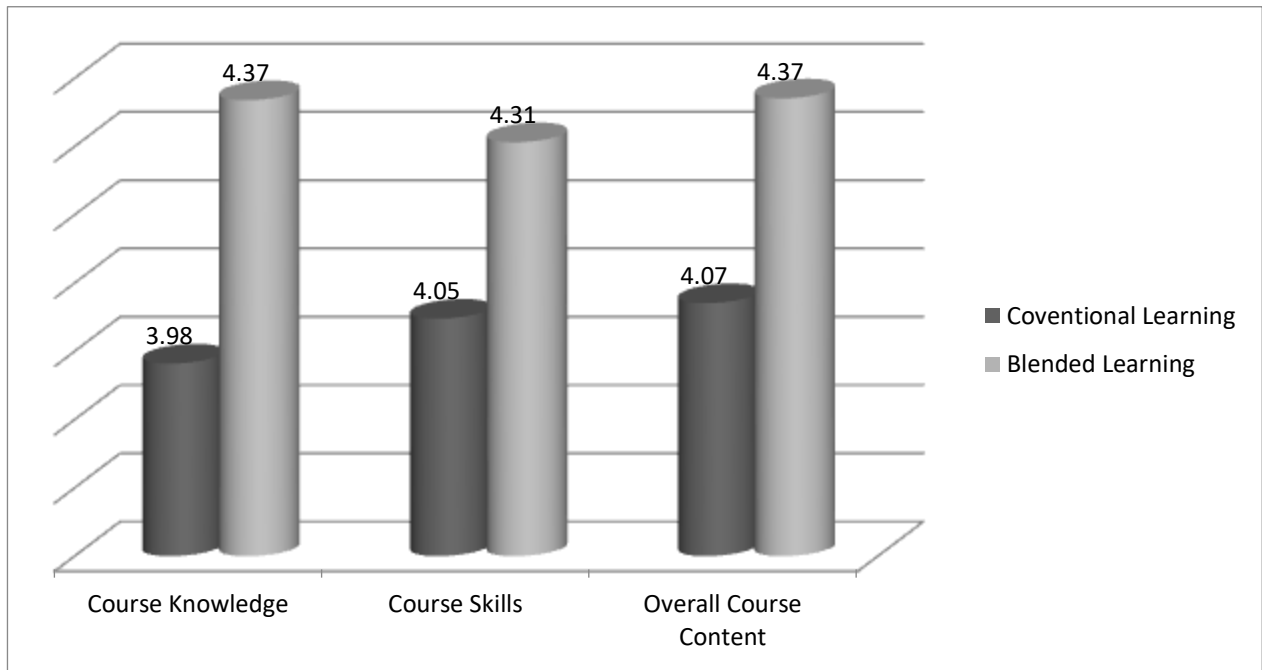

Table 1 reveals that the practices of course content indicators through blended learning are higher than conventional learning. Students rated all course content indicators in blended learning at very high practices except the indicator G2 at a high level, while in conventional learning, all indicators were high. There is no indicator of very high practices in conventional learning. Furthermore, inferential statistics were conducted to investigate differences in the in value of course content practices through conventional and blended learning (Table 2).

Table 1. *Mean comparison of course content practices between conventional learning and blended learning class*

Course Content	Conventional Learning			Blended Learning		
	Mean	S.td	Level	Mean	S.td	Level
G1. Presenting course content specifically both oral and writing	4,09	,519	High	4,28	,787	V.High
G2. Discussing specific course content with your colleaque	3,93	,408	High	4,17	,851	High
G3. Connecting course content across topics	3,97	,510	High	4,66	,509	V.High
G4. Answering questions, giving specific and practical explanations	4,13	,455	High	4,43	,611	V.High
G5. Contributing specific ideas of course content in group work	3,76	,536	High	4,26	,629	V.High
Overall Course Knowledge	3,98	,270	High	4,36	,444	V.High
G6. Practicing the course content knowledge	4,23	,483	High	4,42	,564	V.High
G7. Applying what has been studied	4,19	,517	High	4,35	,613	V.High
G8. Applying course skills in practical assignment	4,10	,590	High	4,33	,669	V.High
G9. Giving an example of the course content practices	4,23	,483	High	4,34	,625	V.High
G10.Improving and updating course skills	4,02	,283	High	4,37	,486	V.High
Course Skills	4,04	,289	High	4,30	,399	V.High
Overall Course content	4,07	,194	High	4,37	,376	V.High

*V.High = Very high

Table 2 presents the paired sample t-test toward course content practices between conventional and blended learning classes. The findings reveal that there are significant differences in the overall course content practices ($p<.05$), course knowledge ($p<,05$), and course skills ($p <,05$) between conventional learning and blended learning. These findings mean that blended learning provides effective learning to a student to acquire both course knowledge and skills competencies.

Table 2. *Paired sample t-test toward the course content practices in conventional learning and blended learning*

Variable	Paired Variable Learning Strategy	N	Mean Different	Std.	t	Sig.
Course Knowledge	Conventional Learning Blended Learning	112	-,385	,460	-8,8	,00
Course Skills	Conventional Learning	112	-,258	,458	-5,9	,00
	Blended Learning	112				
Overall Course content	Conventional Learning	112	-,300	,388	-8.18	,00
	Blended Learning	112				

Sig. at 05

Association of course content practices toward Students' CGPA

Two Regression analyses were conducted separately in conventional learning and blended learning. These analyses were run to search on the association value of course content practices in the conventional and blended learning separately.

Association of course content practices toward students' CGPA in conventional learning

Multiple regression analyses were run to search the association of course content practices upon CGPA. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is equal to 1 (not less than 1), and tolerance is also equal to (greater than 0.1). The value indicates that collinearity or multicollinearity does not exist in this study (see Table 3). Then the statistical assumption underlying the analysis was met (Pallant, 2011). Multiple Regressions with Stepwise Method used to find predictors value (course knowledge and skills) upon students CGPA. The method can select independent variables that significantly associate directly with a dependent variable (Pallant, 2011).

Table 4 shows a significant course knowledge variant (F =4 190, p <.05) upon students' CGPA, while course skills were excluded. As displayed in Table 5, course knowledge yielded a weak association to graduates' CGPA at the strength R^2=.0253, β =,192 means that if the hard skills increase 1 unit, the students' CGPA will increase .192 units. Referring to R^2 values, course knowledge practices contributed 0,028% to CGPA. On the other hand, course content practices were not highly applied to measure students' course achievement.

Table 3. *Variants of course content practices across graduates' CGPA*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	,642	1	,642	4,190	,043
	Residual	16,862	110	,153		
	Total	17,505	111			

The significant level at 0.05
a. Predictors: (Constant), Course Knowledge,
b. Dependent Variable: CGPA

Table 4. *Multiple regression course content practices across graduates' CGPA*

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	R2	Contribution	Tolerance	VIF
								Colinearity Statistics	
Constant	2,080	,548		3,795	,000				
Course Skills	,281	,137	,192	2,047	,043	,028	,28%	,999	1,001

R = ,187(a); R² = ,037(a); Adjusted R²= ,028 ; Constant = 2,080
Standard Error = ,548; the regression equation with 2 predictors is Y=2,080+,192X1+,548; Y= Students' CGPA
X1= Course Knowledge; Excluded variable = Course Skills

Association of course content practices toward students' CGPA in blended learning

The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is equal to 1 (not less than 1), and tolerance is also equal to (greater than 0.1). This means that collinearity or multicollinearity does not exist in this study see Table 15 column colinearity statistics (Hair et al. 2006). The assumption of analysis was met.

The stepwise method was applied in these regressions. Table 5 shows a significant variant of course knowledge (F =69,253, p <.05), and course skills (F =38,041, p <.05) upon students' CGPA. As displayed in Table 6, course knowledge is associated with students' CGPA at the strength R^2=.388, β =,515, and course skills R^2=,411, β =,187. The β value means that if the course knowledge increase by 1 unit, the students' CGPA will increase by .515 units, and if course skills increase by 1 unit, the students' CGPA will increase .187 units. Referring to R^2 values, course knowledge contributed 38.8%, and course skills contributed 2.3% to students' CGPA.

Table 5. *Variants of course knowledge and course content across students' CGPA*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	6,785	1	6,785	69,628	,000
1	Residual	10,719	110	,097		
	Total	17,505	111			
	Regression	7,196	2	3,598	38,041	,000
2	Residual	10,309	109	,095		
	Total	17,505	111			

The significant level at 0.01
a. Predictors: (Constant), Course Knowledge, and course content
b. Dependent Variable: CGPA

Table 6. *Multiple regression course content across students' CGPA*

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	R2	Contribution	Colinearity Statistics	
								Tolerance	VIF
Constant	,387	,342		1,132	,260				
Course Knowledge	,461	,080	,515	5,730	,000	,388	38,8%	,669	1,495
Course Skills	,186	,089	,187	2,083	,040	,411	2,3%	,669	1,495

R = ,623(a); ,641(b); R^2 = ,388(a). .411(b); Adjusted R^2= ,400; Constant = ,387; Standard Error = ,382
The regression equation with 2 predictors is Y=,387+,515X1+,187X2+,342
Y= Students' CGPA
X1= Course Knowledge
X2= Course Skills
Excluded variable = 0

Discussion

Students perceive course content practices are more effective in blended learning than conventional learning activities. The students also ensure course knowledge, and skills practices that

are more effective through blended learning. Blended learning class recorded that the mean score of all indicators of the course content was significantly higher than conventional learning. Blended learning gave students chances to continue learning from classroom to online learning. In that way, the students have more opportunities to interact, share, discuss, and give feedback. Students learn from a different perspective, use some applications and features in online learning. Blended learning gives the students opportunities in flexible time and at any place to interact, communicate, present, and work in a group, discuss, share ideas and resources (Tan et al., 2020; Thach, 2018). As part of blended learning, online learning promotes students, course knowledge, and skills (Gray & DiLoreto, 2016) . As a result, more intense of student blended learning activities positively impact on increasing course content practices and achievement.

Students learn and practice course content through learning activities such as group discussions, group projects, individual assignments, and presentations. Blended learning offers could offer such as activities (Hadiyanto et al., 2021; Ma, Li, & Liang, 2019). In addition, blended learning allows students to develop their learning capacity and explore their content knowledge through a video presentation, ideas and resources sharing, assignment submission, quiz, discussion, question and answer, and free discussion related to courses. Students developed their presentations independently, using different methods, resources, and combining media. They were free to select resources and develop their way of presenting their assignment. This way allows students to optimize their practices of course content and maximize their gaining of course content and academic achievement as well (Hadiyanto et al., 2021).

Both conventional and blended learning allows students to practice the course content in the learning process. Teachers have pedagogy competencies to develop students' course content as they had joined some training dealing with developing students' knowledge, skills, and competence through students' centered learning as directed by the Ministry of Education in Indonesia (Indonesian Directorate General of Higher Education. 2020). Blended learning has also high impacts on students' GPA. Students perceive blended learning would increase higher GPA achievement than conventional learning. The high impact was shown by course knowledge on students CGPA, yet course skills yield weak impact. The findings imply that the teacher weighs course knowledge in measuring student achievement (Hadiyanto et al., 2021; Hairi, Toee, & Razzaly, 2011). The practices of course content intensely bridge the students to obtain higher academic as well. It was confirmed by the result of blended learning group practice on course content that gives much better than conventional learning. Another related study revealed that blended learning had significantly impacted better students' oral English proficiency (Shaykina, 2015).

Conclusion

The study reports the differences in course content practices; course knowledge, and skills through conventional and blended learning.   The result concludes that the implementation of Blended learning gives more opportunity for students to practice course content. It allows students to explore their ideas, develop discussion, acquire learning strategies, question, give feedback, use ICT, communicate, and solve problems. As a result, the practice of course content becomes more frequent and impacts their level of CGPA. Then the finding implies that it is essential to mix between face-to-face and online learning, which is called blended learning, as it contributes to increasing the students' course content practices. The study also yielded added value on online learning as one tool to develop students' knowledge and skills. The study opens the door of new

avenues for further research in this regard. For instance, future research is expected to explore the effect of blended on students' course content through experimental research. Since the present studies and some previous studies proved some benefits of using blended learning, it is suggested that teachers apply, explore and improve the usage of blended learning to enhance students' knowledge and skills based on pedagogical principles.

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