Students' Perceptions Towards Blended Learning Environment Using the OCC.

توجهات الطلبة نحو بيئة التعليم المدمج باستعمال وعاء المساقات.

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Abstract

The evolution of incorporating technology in EFL settings has enhanced the implementation of new instructional strategies to improve students' performance and increase variation in teaching English Language. This paper aims at investigating An-Najah National University students' perceptions towards Blended Learning environment using traditional methods in addition to OCC (Online Course Container) which is both a synchronous and asynchronous tool for computer assisted communication used to aid EFL learners improve their four language skills. The study included (92) students enrolled in a general English course (10103) offered at the language Center at the university. A questionnaire was designed to measure the students' attitudes towards BL (Blended Learning) using (OCC) in terms of: the process, ease of use, and content. Interviews were also conducted to validate the study and elicit more feedback. The study concludes that in general the students' attitudes towards BL were positive in terms of the three domains. Moreover, it reflects the students' internet and IT skills and interests due to internet availability and accessibility.

Keywords: Blended Learning, attitudes, EFL learners.

ملخص

لقد عمل ظهور دمج التكنولوجيا في مجال تعليم اللغة الانجليزية بوصفها لغة أجنبية على تشجيع استخدام استراتيجيات تعليمية جديدة من أجل تحسين أداء الطلبة وزيادة التنوع في مجال تعليم اللغة. تهدف هذه الورقة إلى دراسة توجهات طلبة جامعة النجاح نحو التعليم المدمج باستخدام (OCC) وعاء المساقات، واشتملت الدراسة على (٩٢) طالبا وطالبة مسجلين لمساق (١٠١٠٣) وهو متطلب جامعي. ولقياس توجهات الطلبة نحو وعاء المساقات قام الباحثان بتصميم استبيانه تتضمن ثلاثة مجالات هي: الإجراء، والمحتوى، وسهولة الاستخدام. وأجرى الباحثان مقابلات مع الطلبة من أجل الحصول على تغذية راجعة، وتعزيز مصداقية الدراسة. وخلصت الدراسة إلى أن توجهات الطلبة نحو التعليم المدمج بعامة كانت إيجابية في المجالات جميعها. وعكست كذلك اهتمامات الطلبة ومهاراتهم في مجال الانترنت وتكنولوجيا المعلومات ,وذلك لتوفرها وسهولة الحصول عليها.

Introduction:

Learning is a very complicated process that can never be limited to a classroom setting. E-learning, however, extends beyond the classroom and consists of material and communication over the internet accessed directly from the learners' PCs (personal computers). Thus, e-learning has experienced noticeable growth in recent years (Waterfield, 2004) that appealed not only to the learners, but also to employers and academia. Among the many cited advantages of e-learning according to (Munro and Munro, 2004) are: continuous learning, time saving and reduced travel costs.

In the past years, there has been considerable research into the use of online synchronous or asynchronous learning activities in education in general and in EFL in particular. The aim of many studies has been to investigate the learning strategies that implement online instruction along with the advantages of face-to-face instruction, from which the concept of Blended Learning has emerged. Studies have shown that Blended Learning can be used to improve pedagogy, increase cost-effectiveness, accessibility, flexibility, and simply revision (Brown, 2003; Graham, 2005; Osguthorpe & Graham, 2003).

To place this study within Blended Learning framework, it will combine online asynchronous activities and face-to-face instruction by

providing online materials similar or relevant to the course contents provided as online supplementary resources. Essentially, the two researchers (the instructor of the course and the other researcher) wanted to retain both the benefits of face-to-face class instruction and virtual learning.

What is Blended Learning

Information technology brought about tremendous political, social, economic and educational changes all over the world. IT facilitated access to information in many disciplines through the use of computers and Internet (Deniz, 1994). Thus, online teaching-learning environments and competition with face-to-face environment increased rapidly and became very widespread. However, Graham, Allen and Ure (2003) maintain that Blended Learning is more effective since it offers convenience and access to learning-teaching environments. Many supporters of Blended Learning methods believe that it "maximizes the best of both worlds", and it offers the chance to benefit from online and face-to-face environments (Morgan, 2002).

Blended Learning is usually viewed as a combination of online and traditional methods (Usta, 2007). According to Young (2002) Blended Learning is a situation where online education is combined with traditional face-to-face instruction. In this study, Blended Learning involves incorporating different activities and technologies designed for a particular group of learners. In other words, it means supporting traditional instruction with electronic media and materials (Bersin, 2004). Therefore, Blended Learning is seen as a method for establishing suitable educational environments for students to help them gain their objectives easily and enhance their learning through the use of appropriate technology.

Blended Learning according to Thorne (2003) is "a way of meeting the challenges of tailoring learning and development to the needs of individuals by integrating the innovative and technological advances offered by online learning with interaction and participation offered in the best of traditional learning".

Blended Learning in an EFL setting:

Blended Learning in an EFL setting can be defined as a pedagogical approach that combines the effectiveness and socialization opportunities of the classroom with the technologically enhanced active learning possibilities of online environment (Dziuban et al., 2004).

E-learning can allow access to target language culture through the use of videos, blogs, chat rooms, and discussion forums (Duff & Uchida, 1997). These tools allow EFL learners to have more access to native speakers' language. AL-Jarf (2006) argues that online atmospheres help to make the students feel relaxed. It is evident that the online exposure can enable strategy use in the process of practicing all language skills. Also the online activities facilitate the self-directed learning in relevance to the course material (Barenfanger, 2005).

What is OCC:

An-Najah University is one of the universities that promotes Blended Learning to offer feasibility in the time and place of learning through the OCC (Online Course Container) model which is an online software that has been implemented in a Blended Learning pedagogical model. It is an interactive multimedia environment that houses all the materials and tools that learners need in a central web platform. The environment has been updated to meet the needs of almost all course objectives. There are special discussion forums to which the teachers can upload videos or visual aids. Moreover, teachers can send an online assignment or a notice to one or all the students enrolled in a course. The OCC platform is similar to the Blackboard or the Moodle systems adopted in online courses.

1. Literature Review:

Burgon and Williams (2003) clarify that Blended Learning arouses the interest of the students and that their satisfaction increases. They also found that the students even preferred the asynchronous approach to Blended Learning especially the forums and the e-mails. Iyer (2003)

examined the students' feedback regarding their satisfaction with the e-learning model in order to make the suitable changes.

Koohang's (2004) study of the students' perceptions towards a Blended Learning management course showed that there were gender and experience differences among students. Men were more inclined to use the blended environment than women.

A comparative study of accounting principles by Vamosi, Pierce and Slotkin (2004) touched upon the students' attitudes toward face-to-face and online lectures during the second half of the course. They found no significant differences in the attitudes of the students. Yet, in the post course survey, the students' reactions towards the online courses were positive. For that reason, the study affirms that students' satisfaction increased as the course progressed due to becoming familiar with the e-learning system.

Chen and Jones (2007) tried to find out the students' satisfaction with a blended course and revealed that students were more interested in taking a blended course. However, Jones and Chen (2008) found in a different study that the students in the blended course said that they had better contact with the teacher directly in the classroom, and they were concerned that one or two students of the group had to shoulder the load when their work was done in groups on the forum.

Akkoyunlu and Soylu (2006) conducted a study to investigate the view of students regarding the Blended Learning environment. The results of the study revealed that the more the students participated in the online discussion forums, the more they achieved and the more positive views they developed towards Blended Learning. Moreover, the study came up with the conclusion that both the face-to-face lectures and the online tasks contributed to the learning process. In the same vein, Sauers and Walker (2004) found that students in a blended course indicated that their course system is more beneficial than the traditional face-to-face lectures.

Hwang and Arbaugh (2006) examined the students' feedback regarding a blended management course and found that students who had

positive attitude towards the Blended Learning material participated more in the discussion forums. Moreover, the students who expressed a negative attitude were not active participants in the online activities.

Cottrell and Robinson (2003) investigated the students attitudes towards the use of Blended Learning in an accounting course and came up with the conclusion that students preferred the Blended Learning approach. Relatedly, Humbert & Vignare (2005) examined the students' perceptions towards introducing Blended Learning to their courses and found that the students liked the blended approach. However, other researchers came up with the idea that (Parkinson et al., 2003) proposed that the students in the traditional classes were satisfied with the class climate and indicated that the Blended Learning settings had no class community.

As far as the asynchronous approach is adopted, Wu & Hiltz (2004) investigated the students' perception of using the asynchronous online discussions and came up with the conclusion that students expressed that their learning increased due to the online activities. Also, Al-Jarf (2006) indicated that online tasks made the students feel relaxed; therefore, the researchers assumed that the OCC activities may positively affect the students' general attitudes towards using Blended Learning in their courses.

Questions of the study

The study is intended to answer the following questions:

1. What are the students' general attitudes regarding implementing BL through using OCC and face to face interaction for teaching general English courses?
2. What are the students' specific attitudes towards: the OCC ease of use , the BL content and process.
3. What is the correlation between students' attitudes and the variables of: gender, faculty, and students' education level**.**

Methodology

The objective of this study is to describe the students' perceptions towards the process, content and ease of using the OCC learning environment. To answer the questions of the study the following procedures were undertaken:

The population: The population of the study included all the students enrolled in English 10103 at An-Najah National University. There were 60 sections of English 10103. The course is a general one taught to students from different majors upon success in the University Placement Test of English or after taking a remedial course in English.

Sample: The study participants consisted of 92 EFL non-major students enrolled in two sections of an English Language compulsory course (10103) at An-Najah National University.

Data Collection Process: Data required for this study were collected by the two researchers through a questionnaire and interviews which included 92 students in the study. The questionnaire was distributed by the end of the course and 73 students filled it in. Additional data were gathered from interviews with the students regarding the difficulties they faced while using the OCC and the suggestions they propose. The statistical analyses of independent samples T-Test and One -Way ANOVA were used to answer the questions of the study.

Instruments: The questionnaire was developed to identify students' views on Blended Learning environment, that is the OCC. A 41 item questionnaire was designed by the researchers. Statements in the questionnaire were categorized into three main domains. The first 12 items identify the students' attitudes towards BL process. The items from 13-28 address the students attitudes toward the BL content. The rest of the items, except for items 30 and 41, are related to the domain of students' attitudes towards ease of use of computers and OCC. Items 30 and 41 address the accessibility of internet either from home or university. The variables of the study are: gender, major, and level of education. The scoring for the questionnaire was established as follows

following the five–Likert scale: Strongly Agree: 5 points; Agree: 4 points; Undecided: 3 points; Disagree: 2 points, and; Strongly Disagree: 1 point.

Procedures of the Study: For the purpose of the current study, the researchers made use of the online asynchronous approach (OCC module) since many researchers proved that it was an effective teaching strategy (Garrison & Anderson, 2003). The researchers also used the discussion forums and uploaded five tasks in accordance with the course objectives. The first task was commenting on a short written paragraph and finding the errors. The IT tool the students had to use was the discussion forums. The second task was an uploaded video and the students had to watch, listen and answer short questions on condition that they use two or more of the vocabulary items used in the videos or from the related articles they were required to read from the textbook in relation to the uploaded video. The third task was optional and it was an online quiz about the vocabulary items they should have learnt. The fourth task was divided into two parts: first they should listen to a podcast (a digital audio file) and then watch a simplified video about the differences between males and females (a topic they had to study in their textbook). Then the students are instructed to answer questions related to the videos. Finally, the fifth task was optional as it was related to congratulating classmates on the occasion of the Al-Adha Feast which was approaching. The students were expected to start chatting on the forum by greeting one another on the occasion and then by writing two statements answering the following question: "What did you do on the first two days of the Feast?". It is also noteworthy to state that the students could upload and download exercises, sample tests, and related information such as dates of exams. They can also stay in touch with the teacher and ,at the same time, comment on their classmates' answers. The main aim behind using such five tasks is to allow the students to employ the integrative approach to learning, that is they read, listen, watch, and comment at the same time in accordance with the course intended learning outcomes.

The researchers at that point encouraged the students and allowed them to communicate their ideas without receiving comments on their grammatical errors. The researchers' comments on the errors were sent in private messages to the students. In class, the teacher allowed the students to refer to their online discussions without commenting on each others' language errors ; they just communicated the ideas in-class. Then, it became the norm that the in-class communication is related to the online tasks since the online tasks were either pre- or post activities to the actual in-class lecture. The contents of the course were uploaded into the OCC every two weeks by the researchers. Participation in the forum environments and face to face sessions was obligatory and students were encouraged to participate and contribute to the process by dedicating 10 points for participating in each task in accordance with the rubrics for their online tasks.

Assessment: In order to evaluate students' overall achievement in the course , midterm examinations, online assignments and activities were taken into consideration and evaluated as follows: (20%) for the First exam, (20%) for the second exam, and for the final examination (50%). The last 10% of the total grade was given to online assignments and activities. The passing grade was set at 60%.

The course lasted for four months. All data were entered into a statistical analysis package for a later analysis. Statistical analyses were conducted using independent t test and percentage analysis. All statistical tests reported in this study were conducted with a significance level of (α= 0.05) Negative items had their scoring reversed. The alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was found as .96. A jury of four subject specialists' opinions were taken about the content validation of the instrument. Table (1) clarifies the coefficient values of the questionnaire.

Table (1): Reliability Coefficients (Alpha) of the three domains of the questionnaire items.

Domain A: students' attitudes towards BL process	0.93
Domain B: Students attitudes toward BL content	0.89
Domain C: students' attitudes towards ease of use of computers and OCC	0.88
Total value of the reliability of the three domains	0.96

Table (2): The distribution of the sample due to the three domains of the study variables.

Variables	Faculty type	Frequencies	Percent
Faculty	Scientific	39	53.4%
	Humanities	34	46.6%
Total		73	100%
Gender	Male	42	57.5%
	Female	31	42.5%
Total		73	100%
Ed. Level	1 st year	3	4.1%
	2 nd year	22	30.1%
	3 rd year	30	41.1%
	4 th year	11	15.1%
	5 th year	7	9.6%
Total		**73**	**100%**

Findings and Discussion

The following are the results and findings of the research:

Students' general accessibility to internet from university and home:

The most important data to be gathered before conducting any research regarding the online Blended Learning attitudes in general was whether the students had internet access either from home or university.

This piece of information was accounted for in items (30, &41) in the questionnaire as clarified in tables (3, & 4):

Table (3): Analysis of item 30 in terms of internet accessibility from home.

Variables	Levels	Frequencies	Percent
Item 30: I have internet access from home	1: SD	17	23.3
	2: D	6	8.2
	3: U	3	4.1
	4: A	6	8.2
	5: SA	41	56.2
	Total	73	100 %
	Mean	**S. D.**	**Percent**
	2.34	1.72	46.8

Table (4): Analysis of item (41) of internet accessibility from university.

	Levels	Frequencies	Percent
Item 41: I have access to internet from University	1: SD	13	17.8
	2: D	8	11.0
	3: U	0	0
	4: A	11	15.1
	5: SA	41	56.2
	Total	73	100 %
	Mean	**S. D.**	**Percent**
	2.19	1.61	43.8

It is evident that 56 % of the students strongly agree that they have internet access from home and university. However, the interviews revealed some problems the students faced regarding the internet weak connection when the OCC module was accessed.

Students' attitudes towards the three domains of Blended Learning

The students' attitudes towards the three domains are analyzed in terms of the average mean score. The average mean score of (3) was

considered as a reference value for analyzing the attitudes since the mean scores over (3) were considered positive while those below (3) were valued as negative. The Means , standard deviations, and percentages for the three domains are arranged according to their means in a descending order. The following tables clarify the attitudes:

Table (5): Means, standard deviations, and percentages for the attitudes towards the Blended Learning process.

No.	Item	Mean	S.D.	Percent	Attitude
6	Applying BL for English courses enhanced the chance for interaction with the teacher.	4.18	0.86	83.6	Positive
3	Applying BL in teaching the English course helped me improve all my skills (writing, reading, listening, speaking).	4.07	0.87	81.4	Positive
12	By applying BL for English courses, the chance of interaction with my classmates was enhanced.	3.90	1.12	78.1	Positive
5	The technique of BL (OCC) encouraged me to learn.	3.88	1.03	77.5	Positive
1	I am in favor of applying BL to English courses	3.85	1.23	77.0	Positive
2	Applying BL in teaching the English course made me like English and more interested in English	3.85	0.92	77.0	Positive
4	I found the English course easier when applying BL in teaching.	3.84	0.99	76.7	Positive
9	Blended Learning helped me learn better.	3.75	1.10	75.1	Positive

… continue table (5)

No.	Item	Mean	S.D.	Percent	Attitude
10	Applying BL for English courses was more delightful and relaxing than traditional methods.	3.51	1.30	70.1	Positive
7	I enjoyed talking with others about BL.	3.40	1.19	67.9	Positive
8	I don't want to take part in this BL process again.	1.26	1.24	25.2	Negative
11	BL was a waste of time.	1.15	1.25	23	Negative
Total		**3.82**	**0.80**	**76.3**	**Positive**

In reference to the aforementioned table, It is evident that the majority of the students expressed their positive attitudes towards the Blended Learning process and the percentages ranged between 83.6% to 76.3. This confirms the findings of other researchers entailing that the students preferred the Blended Learning process in general (Chen &Jones, 2007; Slotkin, 2004). Only 25 % of the students expressed their disagreement concerning taking part in a learning process as such and this percent is statistically insignificant. It is noticed also that the highest percentage in this domain (83.6) was in favor of item (6) in Table (5) above.

This finding proves the students' satisfaction with BL as it enhanced their interaction with their teacher. In addition, this reflects the notion that BL as a process could be a very effective tool in indirect communication between students and their teachers since it lessens face to face teacher intimidation and increases student interaction with the teacher .

Table (6): Means, standard deviations, and percentages for the students attitudes toward BL content.

No.	Item	Mean	S.D.	Percent	Attitude
27	The online activities on the OCC were related to the course objectives (ILOs).	4.48	0.63	89.6	Positive
26	The online activities were not long.	4.14	0.79	82.7	Positive
13	With BL, I could listen to videos more than once to improve my pronunciation.	4.11	1.11	82.2	Positive
25	The BL content encouraged me to learn.	4.11	1.01	82.2	Positive
28	BL activities gave me the chance to read, give opinion, and interact with other students on topics related to the material.	4.07	0.98	81.4	Positive
22	The online videos allowed us to listen to native speakers.	4.04	0.93	80.8	Positive
20	The discussion forums increased my writing abilities.	3.95	0.97	78.9	Positive
19	Using visual aids with Blended Learning made learning English interesting.	3.93	1.11	78.6	Positive
14	BL gave me the chance to learn English through discussion forums.	3.92	1.09	78.4	Positive
23	The discussion forums were interesting.	3.82	1.11	76.4	Positive
15	listening and commenting on podcasts.	3.67	1.26	73.4	Positive
17	getting engaged in error analysis exercises.	3.67	1.34	73.4	Positive

… continue table (5)

No.	Item	Mean	S.D.	Percent	Attitude
16	watching videos and getting engaged in discussion forums.	3.59	1.14	71.8	Positive
18	doing an online quiz.	3.14	1.44	62.7	Positive
21	The videos uploaded on the forums were boring.	1.63	1.34	32.6	Negative
24	The discussion forums didn't encourage me to interact with my classmates.	1.59	1.28	31.8	Negative
	Total	3.84	0.66	76.8	Positive

In relevance to the general attitude of the students, it is evident that 89.6% of the students reflected a positive stand towards the blended content (Burgon & Williams, 2003). This positive attitude is due to the researchers' employment of different methods and materials, and real life situations such as The Al-Adha Eid statements. Therefore, the students liked participating in the material relevant to the topics they were dealing with in their textbooks, and also they enjoyed talking about actual settings such as greeting one another on The Feast Vacation. These real life situations motivated them to interestingly participate in these activities. Two statistically insignificant attitudinal items have shown that only 31.8% and 32.6% of the students stated that the videos were boring or that videos as such didn't encourage them to interact with the students.

A quick look at table (6) in this domain indicates that item (27) has the highest percentage (89.6 %) in table (6) above.

This finding illustrates the importance of the ILOs (intended learning outcomes) regarding the course objectives and their correspondence with the online activities. It is worth mentioning here that among the course objectives that were met through the OCC and were introduced side by side with the face to face meetings were:

- make predictions and generate ideas about videos related to textbook material (The first and fourth tasks)
- identify contrasting ideas. (The fourth task)

- write well-formed different types of paragraphs (The first task).
- identify and paraphrase main ideas (The third task).
- scan for details (The second task).
- support answers with evidence from the text (The second task).
- relate information in the text to personal experience (The second task).
- identify contrasting ideas (The fourth task).

Table (7): Means, standard deviations, and percentages for the students' attitudes towards ease of use of computers and OCC.

No.	Item	Mean	S. D.	Percent	Attitude
34	The OCC was easy to use.	4.10	1.07	81.9	Positive
32	The instructions provided on the OCC were easy to follow.	4.04	0.86	80.8	Positive
38	I was able to learn OCC techniques quickly.	4.01	1.11	80.3	Positive
36	The OCC helped me to use internet effectively.	3.88	1.05	77.5	Positive
39	The OCC allowed me to use different computer programs.	3.68	1.19	73.7	Positive
31	The OCC improved my computer skills.	3.52	1.29	70.4	Positive
40	The OCC helped me manage computer technical problems.	3.52	1.11	70.4	Positive
33	I got scared when I operated BL techniques on OCC.	2.26	1.37	45.2	Negative
37	I felt my knowledge regarding using OCC was limited compared to my peers.	1.84	1.44	36.8	Negative
29	I hated using the OCC environment.	1.23	1.25	24.6	Negative
35	The OCC was complicated.	1.05	1.25	21	Negative
Total		**3.67**	**0.76**	**73.4**	**Positive**

As far as An-Najah University students are concerned, they are digital savvy. It is customary for them to be fully engaged in knowing how to use the OCC IT tools. It is no wonder ,therefore, that the students' positive attitudes were very high and ranged between 81.9 to 70.4% and that there were insignificant complaints referred to in items (29,33,35,37) regarding the OCC use. Moreover, item (34) which was about ease of use and accessibility of the OCC got the highest percentage (81.9):

34	The OCC was easy to use.	4.10	1.07	81.9	Positive

Such a high degree shows that when online environments are designed in a way that is feasible and easy to use, learners will be encouraged to get engaged in the activities and eventually learn better.

Table (8): shows the total degree for the three domains of the attitudes.

No.	**Total degree for all the domains**	**Mean**	**S. D.**	**Percent**	**Attitude**
Total		3.78	0.68	75.7	Positive

This tables indicates that 75.7 % of the students had positive stands towards the three domains of the OCC ease of use , and the Blended Learning content and process.

Table (9): The results of T- test for the differences in the domains according to faculty variable.

Domain	**Means**		**S. D.**		**df**	**t**	**Sig**
	Scientific	**Humanities.**	**Scientific**	**Humanities.**			
A: students' attitudes towards BL process	3.84	3.79	0.60	0.99	71	1.723	0.763
B: Students attitudes toward BL content	3.93	3.73	0.52	0.79	71	1.341	0.192

…continue table (9)

Domain	Means		S. D.		df	t	Sig
	Scientific	Humanities.	Scientific	Humanities.			
C: students' attitudes towards ease of use of computers and OCC	3.77	3.55	0.50	0.97	71	0.565	0.221
Indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following activities you have participated in on the forum	3.60	3.43	0.77	0.97	71	2.573	0.409
Total	**3.86**	**3.70**	**0.48**	**0.86**	**71**	**1.328**	**0.314**

- Significant at (α=0.05)

It was found that although the means of the domains indicated insignificant differences in favor of the scientific students, all the students regardless of their faculty variable liked the Blended Learning approach. This could be due to the fact that IT skills are a must at An-Najah National University regardless of the faculty variable.

Table (10): The results of T- test for the differences in the domains according to gender variable.

Domain	Means		S. D.		df	t	Sig
	Male	Female.	Male	Female.			
A: students' attitudes towards BL process	3.70	3.97	0.93	0.58	71	1.44	0.156
B: Students attitudes toward BL content	3.72	4.00	0.72	0.54	71	1.88	0.065
C: students' attitudes towards ease of use of computers and OCC	3.63	3.72	0.89	0.53	71	0.53	0.601
Indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following activities you have participated in on the forum	3.38	3.71	0.90	0.80	71	1.65	0.104
Total	**3.69**	**3.92**	**0.79**	**0.48**	**71**	**1.42**	**0.160**

Significant at (α=0.05)

There were no significant differences in terms of gender even though the highest means were in favor of the females. This was evident in the researchers' observation that the females were the first participants when the first task was uploaded to the OCC. However, other researchers contended that males liked the Blended Learning component more than the females (Koohang's ,2004).

Table (11): Means and standard deviations for the domains and the **total degree** according to educational level domain.

Level	1 N=3		2 N=22		3 N=30		4 N=11		5 N=7	
Domain	**Mean**	**S.D.**	**Mean**	**S.D.**	**Mean**	**S.D.**	**Mean**	**S.D.**	**Mean**	**S.D.**
A: students' attitudes towards BL process	3.83	0.38	3.84	0.66	3.83	0.92	3.82	0.60	3.86	1.20
B: Students attitudes toward BL content	4.35	0.59	3.95	0.53	3.73	0.75	3.80	0.45	3.79	0.91
C: students' attitudes towards ease of use of computers and OCC	4.09	0.33	3.86	0.48	3.54	0.87	3.50	0.42	3.70	1.29
Indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following activities you have participated in on the forum	4.42	0.63	3.53	0.74	3.43	0.97	3.52	0.54	3.43	1.23
Total	**4.12**	**0.38**	**3.89**	**0.51**	**3.71**	**0.79**	**3.72**	**0.40**	**3.73**	**1.10**

Table (11) reflects that there were no significant differences in terms of educational level although the highest means were in favor of first year students (4.12%). This could be attributed to the fact that freshmen

are more online active learners and believe in the contribution of online courses as they prefer employing technology.

Table (12): The results of One-Way ANOVA for the differences of the domains and the total degree according to educational level variable.

Domain		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
A: students' attitudes towards BL process	Between Groups	0.153	4	0.038	0.056	0.994
	Within Groups	46.217	68	0.680		
	Total	46.370	72			
B: Students attitudes toward BL content	Between Groups	1.509	4	0.377	0.859	0.493
	Within Groups	29.880	68	0.439		
	Total	31.389	72			
C: students' attitudes towards ease of use of computers and OCC	Between Groups	2.119	4	0.530	0.924	0.455
	Within Groups	38.980	68	0.573		
	Total	41.099	72			
Indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following activities you have participated in on the forum	Between Groups	2.700	4	0.675	0.890	0.475
	Within Groups	51.591	68	0.759		
	Total	54.291	72			
Total	Between Groups	0.841	4	0.210	0.437	0.782
	Within Groups	32.742	68	0.482		
	Total	33.583	72			

Significant at (α=0.05)

Table (12) shows that there were no significant differences in the students' attitudes due to their educational level. This indicates that the OCC suitability meets the needs of all the students from different levels.

The interview

The researchers interviewed the students of the two sections all in groups to answer three open-ended questions about the implementation

of the general process of Blended Learning. The questions and the answers are listed as follows:

1. **What do you suggest to improve the OCC module as related to the course objectives?**

The majority of the students agreed that the OCC should be improved and it would be more practical if a new icon entitled "edit" is attached to the posts of the students so that they can add or omit unnecessary information. They added that sometimes they watch the videos again and again and they had something in mind to write, so adding their answers to the same thread would be easier and less annoying. Very few students were irritated because the OCC posting to the forum didn't show their spelling mistakes, so they had to use the dictionary to make sure that they have employed the correct spelling. One student affirmed that he doesn't like the idea that other students read his own postings. Another student, however, expressed his enthusiasm and indicated that the OCC should be used in all courses.

2. **Did you face any difficulties regarding the accessibility of internet from university or home?**

Some students confirmed that opening the videos from the university (library, computer labs) was very difficult since the internet accessibility was so many times denied, adding that the internet server should be strengthened. Two students said that their internet connection was very low (24 megabytes per second) from home when they opened the OCC module. Other students said that internet accessibility from home is so slow when they open the OCC. One student said that using the videos was difficult for her because every time she tried to press the reply button to upload her comment, the server was not found.

Other students said that they were annoyed because when they tried to listen to some of the videos in the university computer labs, some links were blocked. It was also evident that the students couldn't listen to the videos in the university labs as headphones were not available in all the labs.

3. Do you have any further suggestions or comments?

The students' responses varied as half of them agreed on the idea that the wireless internet accessibility should be improved so that it could be reached on campus , outside the library, and even in the cafeteria. Some students suggested that the university should allow free accessibility to the OCC on campus so that the students can attach the software or network to their mobiles (Mobile Learning). a new trend in the field of Blended Learning. Few students indicated that they are in need of more computer labs. Others suggested that on the forums, they preferred being divided into groups to benefit from each other and engage in group work.

It is evident that interviews had given voice to some of the internet technically related problems which could be easy to solve. Using interviews affirms that the researchers conducting research on attitudes should also interview students and listen to their comments so as to improve the OCC environment. In addition , it is obvious that more than one instrument is better to come up with an objective view towards the Blended Learning process (the OCC module). The researchers concluded that although the students had complaints, most of them expressed their high interest in using the internet technology in learning as they considered themselves technology savvy.

Conclusions:

This study was important in the sense that it revealed the students' attitudes about BL and the use of OCC .The results revealed that overall mean score for students' views for all the domains on Blended Learning environment is 75.7%. There were no significant differences in terms of the students' gender, level of education and faculty since all the students responded positively when the ease of use, content and process of applying Blended Learning were accomplished. This could be due to the fact the researchers have applied Blended Learning in previous courses and learnt many lessons about how to implement Blended Learning effectively. The most important tip was starting with the simple method of OCC use and reducing the number of online tasks so as not to overload the students with the assignments. As a result, the implementation of the OCC online learning environment increased the

students' acceptance of the online environment of the course, motivated them and enhanced their learning.

The OCC module paved the way for the students who were shy of participating in the traditional classroom setting to share their opinions with their classmates on the forum. It also allowed the students to think, interact, and improve their language skills at their own pace. This is an important point as the students enrolled in such a course are from different majors and therefore, their levels in English language skills vary.

Finally, the findings of this study indicated the importance of obtaining data from more than one group of students of different majors and educational levels using more than one instrument when assessing students attitudes. This study also indicated that Blended Learning will perhaps be a more significant growth area than fully online learning.

Recommendations

Online learning at An Najah is still in the developmental stage and it needs effective improvement of the OCC in terms of infrastructure and training of instructors and learners with efficient skills in teaching and learning online. In fact, research and development in the virtual classroom have been limited so far. Therefore, there is a need for further research that address types of Blended Learning and instructor training for designing online activities that lead to the success of Blended Learning.

Moreover, the researchers recommend that follow-up studies be conducted focusing on aspects of Blended Learning that An-Najah University needs to address, such as students' different learning styles as related to their attitudes, and the students' attitudes towards Blended Learning in view of their frequencies of online participation and achievement level.

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Appendix
Attitude Questionnaire

Major: _____
Gender: Male / Female
Age: _____
Educational Level: 1st year / 2nd year / 3d year / 4th year / 5th year

SA Strongly agree	**A** Agree	**U** Undecided	**D** Disagree	**SD** Strongly Disagree
أوافق بشدة	أوافق	لا رأي	أعارض	أعارض بشدة

Item	**SA**	**A**	**U**	**D**	**SD**
Domain A: students' attitudes towards BL process.					
1. I am in favor of applying BL to English courses					
2. Applying BL in teaching the English course made me like English and more interested in English					
3. Applying BL in teaching the English course helped me improve all my skills (writing, reading, listening, speaking).					
4. I found the English course easier when applying BL in teaching.					
5. The technique of BL (OCC) encouraged me to learn.					
6. Applying BL for English courses enhanced the chance for interaction with the teacher.					
7. I enjoyed talking with others about BL.					
8. I don't want to take part in this BL process again.					
9. Blended learning helped me learn better.					
10. Applying BL for English courses was more delightful and relaxing than traditional methods.					
11. BL was a waste of time.					
12. By applying BL for English courses, the chance of interaction with my classmates was enhanced.					
B. Domain B: Students attitudes toward BL content:					
13.With BL, I could listen to videos more than once to improve my pronunciation.					
14. BL gave me the chance to learn English through discussion forums.					
15. Indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following activities you have participated in on the forum: **a.** listening and commenting on podcasts.					

16. **b.** watching videos and getting engaged in discussion forums.					
17. **c.** getting engaged in error analysis exercises.					
18. **d.** doing an online quiz.					
19. Using visual aids with Blended learning made learning English interesting.					
20. The discussion forums increased my writing abilities.					
21. The videos uploaded on the forums were boring.					
22.The online videos allowed us to listen to native speakers.					
23. The discussion forums were interesting.					
24. The discussion forums didn't encourage me to interact with my classmates.					
25. The BL content encouraged me to learn.					
26. The online activities were not long.					
27. The online activities on the OCC were related to the course objectives (ILOs).					
28. BL activities gave me the chance to read, give opinion, and interact with other students on topics related to the material.					
C. Domain C: students' attitudes towards ease of use of computers and OCC.					
29. I hated using the OCC environment.					
30. I don't have internet access from home.					
31. The OCC improved my computer skills.					
32. The instructions provided on the OCC were easy to follow.					
33. I got scared when I operated BL techniques on OCC.					
34. The OCC was easy to use.					
35. The OCC was complicated.					
36. The OCC helped me to use internet effectively.					
37. I felt my knowledge regarding using OCC was limited compared to my peers.					
38. I was able to learn OCC techniques quickly.					
39. The OCC allowed me to use different computer programs.					
40. The OCC helped me manage computer technical problems.					