

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**INTEGRATING BLENDED  
LEARNING WITH PBL IN  
COLLEGE ENGLISH TO FOSTER  
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

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## ABSTRACT

Blended learning has become a “new normal” in higher education, especially after the intrusion of Covid-19. However, students’ engagement (SE) at some universities in College English blended learning course is not high. College English is a compulsory subject in Chinese higher education, and English is an essential skill for students' future jobs. At the same time, student engagement is a predictor of performance and academic success. According to current literature, both Blended Learning (BL) and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) have the potential to foster students’ engagement. Based on the features and requirements of College English, this study aims to increase students’ engagement by integrating blended learning and PBL in College English. A quantitative method was utilised to identify the differences in students' behavioural engagement (BE), cognitive engagement (CE) and emotional engagement (EE) among different gender, ages, majors and English scores in College English and the levels of students' BE, CE and EE in the College English blended course in a private university in Guangdong, China. To generate 400 sample, a set of criteria and purposive sampling technique was used, an appropriate instrument was adapted to collect their feedback. Thereafter, this study analyses the results of a survey completed by two groups of respondents, with 49 participants undergoing BL integrating PBL in College English, while the 50 participants underwent BL without integrating PBL in this course. According to the data analyses with SPSS 26, the integration of BL and PBL significantly affects College English students' behavioural and cognitive engagement. Although it is not statistically significant on students' EE, the mean values of EE scores increased after the treatment. In addition, the thematic analysis procedure was utilised to analyse data gathered from the interview sessions and coded using Nvivo 12 plus. It was discovered that the use of face-to-face (FTF), the Learning Management System (LMS), and group work dedicate to fostering students' behavioural engagement. Real-life situational settings, the PBL process, and problem discussion contribute to students' cognitive engagement; the provision of interesting resources and material and group study can foster students' emotional engagement. Moreover, it was found that group study plays an important role in improving students' BE, CE and EE. More support and guidance are needed to enhance students’ inner drive to learn English. Findings in this study could be provided as implications for students, instructors, practices, Chinese Ministry of Higher Education and institutions, which adds to the body of prior research on effectiveness of integrating BL and PBL on SE, as well as supplying corresponding suggestions in the process of integrating BL and PBL in College English.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>CONFIRMATION BY PANEL OF EXAMINERS</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>AUTHOR'S DECLARATION</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>xiv</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>xvi</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Research Background	6
1.2.1 New Requirements for College English Teaching	8
1.2.2 The Dilemma of Traditional Classroom Teaching Mode	10
1.3 Problem Statement	12
1.4 Research Objectives	17
1.5 Research Questions	18
1.6 Significance of Study	19
1.7 Scope and Limitation of Study	21
1.8 Operation Definition	23
1.9 Summary of the Chapter	24
<b>CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>24</b>
2.1 Introduction	24
2.2 English Language Teaching in China	24
2.3 English Language Teaching in Chinese Colleges	28
2.4 Technology in English as a Foreign Language	33
2.5 Blended Learning	37
2.6 Different Models of Blended Learning	40

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

The college classroom used to be an enclosed room where students and teachers converse. With the rapid development of information technology, mobile phones, laptops and other smart devices are increasingly popular, and learning resources are readily available on the network. The closed space of the college classroom is now like a "window" in which college students can keep in touch with the outside world through their learning process. In addition, college students can also use MOOC websites and other tools and resources to carry out learning whether it is in a real-time or asynchronous interactive communication through timely communication tools, e-mail or discussion groups. At the same time, information technology is gradually being integrated into every aspect of college education and teaching, in the process of supporting the innovation of college teaching and learning and promoting the reform of curriculum teaching. As a teaching mode that combines the advantages of classroom teaching and online learning, blended learning (BL) has gradually become the new normal in college education. BL refers to the integration of face-to-face and online instruction (Aspden & Helm, 2004; Graham & Robison, 2007; Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). Scholars now place a high importance on the instructional quality of blended learning (Dziuban et al., 2018).

However, as Coates (2005) noted, current quality assurance procedures concentrate an insufficient amount of emphasis on what students are actually doing in universities and instead place excessive emphasis on data relating to institutions and teaching. To demonstrate excellence in teaching and learning in higher education institutions, a rising number of surveys focusing on students' engagement have been administered in nations like the USA, the UK, Australia, and China (Coates, 2010; Kuh, 2009; Richardson, Slater, and Wilson 2007; Shi et al. 2014). For instance, an annual survey of graduates' course experiences and career choices has been conducted by the