

Applying Gilly Salmon's Five Stage Model For Designing Blended Courses

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Abstract

The article gives etymology of a contemporary term 'blended learning' and a reasonable insight into the understanding of G. Salmon's five-stage framework, and provides in-depth analysis of applying all the phases of the model for designing blended courses. The functions, principles and prerequisites of each stage which are to be followed while implementing to design courses are presented thoroughly within the example of a short-term blended course. The core aim of this framework is to develop and promote a mixture of active online and approachable traditional learning atmosphere which is one of the prominent tasks required from course designers. The course created in the framework of G.Salmon is piloted at one of the higher educational establishments, and the subjects are the students of MA programme. Moreover, the final evaluation which consists of two parts is rendered by the subjects of the study after the approbation of the current short course. It precisely elucidates and verifies the efficacious and active integration of blended learning to prepare future prosperous language teachers.

Keywords: blended learning; face-to-face learning; online learning; course design; blended course.

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Gilly Salmon'un Beş Aşamalı Modelinin Karma Derslerin Tasarımına Uygulanması

Öz

Bu makale, aktüel sayılmış 'harmanlanmış öğrenme' terimin etimolojisi ve G. Salmon'un beş aşamalı çerçevesinin anlaşılmasına ilişkin makul bir fikir vermeyi amaçlar ve harmanlanmış kursları tasarlamak için modelin tüm aşamalarının uygulanması hakkında derinlemesine bir analiz sağlar. Kurs tasarımcılarının uygulayacakları her aşamadaki işlevler, ilkeler, önkoşullar, kısa vadeli harmanlanmış bir kurs örneğinde ayrıntılı bir şekilde sunulmaktadır. Bu çerçevenin temel amacı, kurs tasarımcılarının öne çıkan görevlerinden biri olan aktif çevrimiçi ve ulaşılabilir geleneksel öğrenme ortamı karışımını geliştirmek ve tanıtmaktır. G.Salmon çerçevesinde oluşturulan kurs yüksek öğretim kurumlarından birinde pilot olarak denendi ve Yüksek Lisans programındaki öğrenciler seçildi. Ayrıca, iki bölümden oluşan nihai değerlendirme mevcut kısa dersin onaylanmasından sonra kurs öğrencileri tarafından verildi. Makale harmanlanmış öğrenmenin başarılı dil öğretmenleri hazırlamaya etkin ve aktif entegrasyonunu kesin olarak aydınlatır ve kanıtlar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: harmanlanmış öğrenme; yüz yüze eğitim; çevrimiçi öğrenme; kurs tasarımı.

There is no precise evidence to refute a phenomenal fact about considerable impacts and effective integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) to all spheres of human life with no exception to educational sectors. Individuals do not only obtain incredibly huge amount of information but also acquire numerous skills, which serve as a cornerstone of their prosperity, via the means of ICT. Currently, educational establishments are becoming fully equipped with the latest technologies and implementing contemporary approaches to teaching and learning.

Technological era with its use of the Internet put conspicuous advancement into the educational field in the last decades. It raised people's eagerness to teach and learn foreign languages through online recourses. Today, it has become highly important to spend time on creating new online applications or programs of the Internet, in particular in teaching process, to guarantee the achievement of learning objectives and ensure the quality of teaching via the Internet.

Currently, educational platforms in the process of foreign language learning and teaching are being widely used taking the current and future needs of users into consideration. These platforms serve as main tools while applying blended learning approach into education. The MOODLE that is modular object-oriented dynamic learning environment is a contemporary platform which is accepted and effectively used by a number of K-12 schools (publicly-supported school grades from the 1st till the 12th grade prior to college), colleges and universities.

For the time being there is a considerable upsurge in interest in blended learning and a number of educational institutions have taken up adopting blended learning to improve educational experiences of students. Researchers are working on codifying new approaches, tools, elements and resources to put insight into blended learning. It opens doors for students to improve and widen their existing knowledge, and for teachers to utilize online programs to consolidate their existing practice. According to Ben Jackson (2014), blended learning is a mixture of in-person and virtual learning which cannot replace good teaching, but it demands

good teaching. It is expected that by 2019 half of high school students will have been involved into some models of online study.

Blended learning which came into existence at the end of the last century was codified differently by a handful of scholars and professors so it was an ambiguous phenomenon to define. The contributions of scientists such as Friesen, Driscoll, Elliot Masie, Cross, Moore and so forth into the definition of blended learning made the sense of the approach more obvious.

The origin of the term is ambiguous. The initial elucidation of the term appeared in 1999 from EPIC Learning, an Atlanta-based computer skill certification and software training business. The news emphasized that: the company currently operates 220 online courses, but will begin offering its Internet courseware using the company's *Blended Learning* methodology. Select courses will continue to offer the traditional course content online, but will also offer live instruction and other collaborative components, all from the student's desktop (Friesen, 2012).

However, that definition in EPIC Learning, an Atlanta-based computer skill certification and software training business was still vague. This is because do they mean that 'live instruction provides the online presence of both teacher and student or not, the teacher and student are online at the same time or not. Early definitions of the term faced multiple questions and this ambiguity led to the emergence of diverse definitions of the blended learning during the years 2002-2003. More precisely, blended learning is codified as followings:

- to combine or mix modes of web-based technology (e.g. live virtual classroom, self-paced instruction, collaborative learning, streaming video, audio and text) to accomplish an educational goal;
- to combine various pedagogical approaches (e.g. constructivism, behaviourism, cognitivism) to produce an optimal learning outcome with or without instructional technology;
- to combine any form of instructional technology (e.g. videotape, CD-ROM, web-based training, film) with face-to-face instructor-led training;
- to mix or combine instructional technology with actual job tasks in order to create a harmonious effect of learning and working (Driscoll, 2013).

Thus, blended learning is a fusion of web-based technology and pedagogical approaches or in other words, a blend of instructional technology along with face-to-face instructor-led training which is aimed at reaching educational aims and generating profound learning outcomes. Although, there are different perspectives on the meanings of the term, the core of the blended learning that is a mix of face-to-face and technological mediation is codified in each definition.

Another training expert Elliot Masie provided a broad definition of the blended learning by stating almost all forms of learning and instruction: “What is blended learning? It is the use of two or more distinct methods of training. This may include combinations such as: blended classroom instruction with online instruction, blended online instruction with access to a coach or faculty member, blending simulations with structured courses, blending on-the-job training with brownbag informal sessions, blending managerial coaching with e-learning activities” (Friesen, 2012).

Finally, in the middle of the first decade and in the beginning of the second decade on the 21st century, clear and widely acknowledged definitions of the term appeared. Moreover, the first *Handbook of Blended Learning* by Bonk, Graham, Cross and Moore was published in the year 2006 and a year later, another book which is called *Blended Learning in Higher Education: Framework, Principles, and Guidelines* by Randy Garrison and Norman Vaughan was published. The publications of the books put insight into the definition of the term. What is more, the blended learning became momentous in the higher education in comparison to other fields. By reviewing all the broad and early definitions of the blended learning, Graham made a conclusion by codifying that “[blended learning] is the combination of instruction from twp historically separate models of teaching and learning: traditional F2F learning systems and distributed learning systems. It also emphasizes the central role of computer-based technologies in blended learning” (Graham, 2006).

In brief, blended learning is the mix of two archetypal learning environments, namely online and face-to-face. Simply, a new approach is combining computers with conventional teaching. It purveys face-to-face learning which maintains the traditional model of teaching and learning where instructors and learners meet

constantly to confer on a subject; self-study learning which embraces a host of online activities and resources; and finally online collaborative learning which encourages both teachers and students work cooperatively. Students are provided with unlimited time and resources to gain adequate knowledge on a particular topic.

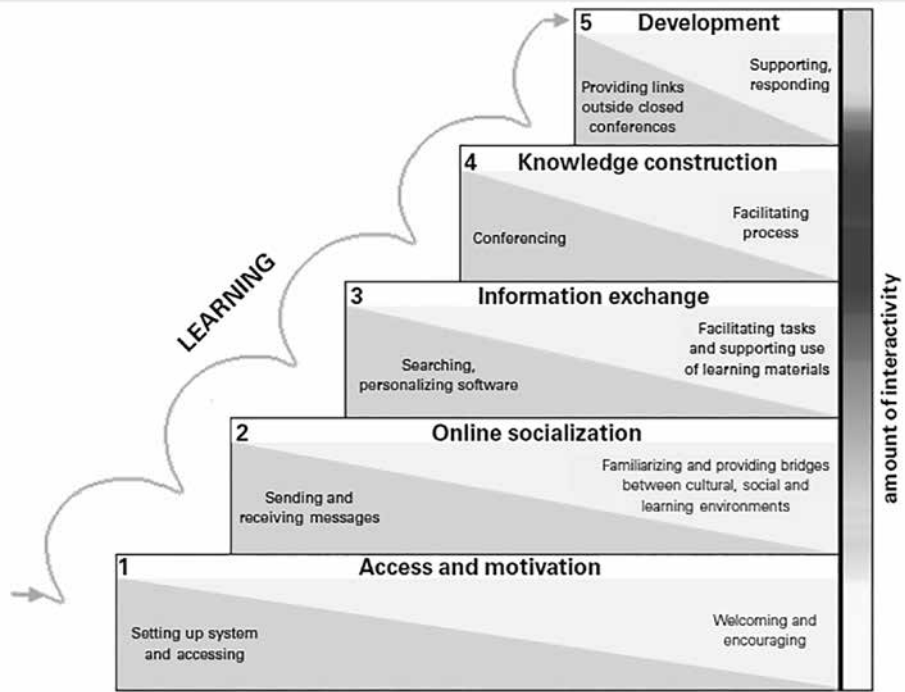
The data obtained based upon research experience in recent years proved that delivering courses with the help of ICT is rather demanding and requires ongoing experiments and analysis from teachers. The implementation of blended learning to teaching foreign languages and preparing prospective personnel was launched in 2015 at Uzbekistan State World Languages University. A year experiment and a year teaching courses via the blended approach encouraged to scrutinize existing courses and develop such new ones which are both approachable and applicable to teach learners with no challenges.

There are a plenty of frameworks to create online and blended courses. Each has its own functions and principles to follow while implementing. However, it is again teachers' onus to think and select a proper one so that aims and objectives of the course can be reached. This paper is going to illustrate a deep analysis of using Gilly Salmon's five stage framework in the creation of an initial short blended course of mine for MA students at university.

The reason behind the design of the course on the framework of G.Salmon was the outcomes of qualitative study on one of the blended courses of MA students which was so-called *English Language Improvement*. Relying on the students' needs and interests towards a number of methodological and pedagogical issues, a new blended course was designed. A structured developmental process, that is structured learning scaffold was to be offered to support students' needs. Scaffolding was essential to build learners' expertise in learning online and face-to-face, and this model supports this process including the following five stages, namely,

- access and motivation;
- online socialization;
- information exchange;
- knowledge structure;
- development.

Figure 1. Model of teaching and learning online through online networking (Salmon, 2002)



The core purpose of the model is to create surpassing interaction and participation among e-learners in blended courses. It provides participants with benefits to develop skill and comfort through working online and face-to-face. Moreover, moderators' deliberate attempts to success at each stage of the course motivate learners, build agreeable atmosphere with the help of proper e-tivities and stride learners' progress in training and development.

One of the main prerequisites of this framework is to encourage individual access and introduction of learners to an online learning procedure which is carried out at Stage 1. The sequencing stage (Stage 2) entails participants setting up their online individualities and groups to interact and collaborate during the course. At Stage 3, learners commence swapping information to create mutuality. Discussions at Stage 4 stimulate students to work towards their group goal. Finally, participants reflect on their learning proceeding to find the benefits gained and goals reached.

The analysis of the current framework in accordance with the sample blended course designed purveys a deep insight into the integration of Salmon's five stage model. The 14-week course is designed for MA students and covers the topics students have had an interest after the completion of the blended course *English Language Improvement*. The topics are chosen on the basis of students' final reflection on the course, and they are as followings:

- Teacher-student relationships;
- Teacher talk;
- Time management;
- Dealing/working with teaching resources.

Objectives of any course show its value to worth learning and its benefits after the completion of the course. The recommended course for MA students also possesses its objectives to be carried out. They are as followings:

- develop and consolidate teacher skills professionally;
- provide insight into teacher professional development through both online and face-to-face tasks;
- develop themselves professionally in the sphere of teacher development by attending in an online community of practice and sharing worth ideas through forum discussions;
- accelerate the interaction amongst participants or between teachers and learner teachers both in F2F and online environments;
- create universal, professional bonds with colleagues in the respect of teacher professional development that will last beyond the scope of the course.

In the initial week of the course, participants are to be oriented to the course by their moderators. Having access quickly and successfully to online system and being motivated are the keys to primary achievement in the course.

Week	Phase	Topics	Online task	F2F & Assessment
1	Access and motivation	Orientation to Course	Welcome and encouragement; Guidance on where to find technical support; Taking pre-test	F2F: Orientation and ice-breaking

Table 1. The first week of the course: Stage I: Access and motivation

Although students are mobilized at the early stage of the course, they have to be directed how to attend actively without being able to read only what they have on their screens. Therefore, participants are to be instructed how to perceive the most common and essential elements of the course and become a part of it. Another crucial factor to be considered at this stage is students' awareness how to utilize software tools. Small face-to-face sessions to present essential rules to access to the platform and interesting and relevant online e-tivities or taking pre-tests can be efficacious technical support.

Motivation, on the other hand, provides students' smooth engagement to the course. E-tivities related to the use of technology should enable students to increase their comfort and start their contribution to the course. Their key purpose of this stage is to raise participants' understanding as to "why they are learning in this way as well as what they have to do to take part in" (Salmon, 2002). The feedback by moderators indicates what and how they are learning and advancing at the initial stage. Thus, it is to be certified that online group is established with a welcome message by instructors and participants are aware of accessing to the system with no difficulties.

In the second week, two stages – *online socialization* and *information exchange* are to be proceeded.

Week	Phase	Topics	Online task	F2F & Assessment
2	Online socialization	Getting to know each other	Forum discussion: Sharing information on your family, work, hobby, interests, etc	
	Information Exchange	Sharing teaching experience	Forum discussion: Sharing information on your teaching experience (teaching styles, achievements, challenges, students' level, age, interest, etc) and expectations.	Frequency of Sts participation in the post will be evaluated.

Table 2. The second week of the course: Stage II: Online socialization;
Stage III: Information exchange

The two stages are accomplished via online forum discussions since virtual environment is more efficient than face-to-face classrooms. At stage 2, participants will be busy with establishing their micro-community by their active participation in forum discussions where they share information on their family, work, hobbies, interests and daily activities in general. Although the existence of micro-community will not last for ages, it is an ideal opportunity to learn within the platform. Establishing mutual connections at this stage is considered to be significant for the success of other stages. The lack of face-to-face classrooms is not regarded as a barrier. On the contrary, this is a good potential to get to know each other since “the professors have indicated that they know the distance-learning students better than their counterparts in the physical classroom” (Mill, 2000).

At stage 3, information is swapped in the form of e-tivities which are short and initiate action and interaction with the course content and individuals,

that is moderators and participants. E-tivities at this stage are called ‘spark’ and most of them are organized in the forum patterns. In the present course, participants share their experience in teaching, for instance, teaching styles, challenges, students’ level, age, expectations, etc (Table 2). Moreover, at this stage, course content, links to online resources, web pages and sites can be presented by moderators. E-tivities should be well-structured so that participants could obtain adequate directions to meet the requirements of further stages. Significantly, familiarity with the utilization of software tools must be reached by this stage. Consequently, this stage is considered to be completed when all its participants learn how to navigate on the platform, to find and exchange information efficiently and properly.

Starting from week 3 till week 10, the rest two stages will be proceeded, these are *knowledge construction* and *development*.

Week	Phase	Topics	Online task	F2F & Assessment
3-4	Knowledge construction	Teacher-student relationships	Forum discussion: Discussion of factors which influence on T-S relationship	Frequency of Sts participation in the post will be evaluated.
	Development		Task: Conducting self-evaluation and identifying strengths and weaknesses	The task will be graded by the tutor (5 %)
5-6	Knowledge construction	Teacher Talk	Forum discussion: Discussion of the analysis of observation	F2F: Sts visit their peer to observe each other's class
	Development		Task: Video record and analysis of its segment	The task will be graded by the tutor (5 %)

7	Knowledge construction	Time Management	Forum discussion: Discussion of examples from reading which change your teaching	Frequency of Sts participation in the post will be evaluated.
8	Development		Task: Writing a reflective essay	The task will be graded by the tutor (5 %)
9	Knowledge construction	Dealing/Working with Teaching Resources	Forum discussion: Discussion about teaching resources	Frequency of Sts participation in the post will be evaluated. F2F: Sts visit the PDC (professional development centre to explore and evaluate language teaching materials.
10	Development		Task: Dealing with materials of the textbook; an online test	The task will be graded by the tutor (5 %).

Table 3. Weeks 3-10: Stage IV: Knowledge construction;
Stage V: Development

The four topics are conducted during 8 weeks and the delivery of each theme is carried out in the last two phases. The participants construct knowledge on a certain topic and they will develop it by doing online and face-to-face tasks. When one theme is over, the instructor enables students to build knowledge on the next topic and this cycle repeats in the content delivery of each topic.

At stage 4, learners commence realizing one of the key potentials of the course, that is “taking control of their own knowledge construction in new ways”

(Salmon 2002). E-tivities related to this phase are oriented to developing a host of skills such as critical thinking including judging, assessing, comparing and contrasting; creative skills including discovering, inventing and hypothesizing; practical thinking including applying, using and practicing. E-tivities belonging to this stage in the current course are online forum discussions and face-to-face tasks (e.g. lesson observation, evaluating language teaching materials) which directly serve to the facilitated advance of skills counted above.

Stage 5, on the other hand, is inextricably linked with participants' reflection. That is, they work on building their own ideas which are obtained through e-tivities of the whole course and implementing acquired knowledge to their own individual context. In this case, each participant will have a variety of approaches to cope with ideas and knowledge in accordance with learning styles they possess.

Students, in general, are asked to look back through the entire course to reflect on their knowledge constructed. Furthermore, they may look through the responses they made for the previous tasks and discussions. E-tivities in the course are entirely aimed to reflect on the knowledge which is built in the previous phase. More precisely, in week 7 students will do reading pertinent to time management in knowledge construction stage and, afterwards, they will write a reflective essay in the development phase. During the course, students are weekly graded by the instructor. In week 11-12, students work on the final project and they contact online to provide peer review for the project. Finally, in the last two weeks, the instructor wraps up the course and students leave their final reflection for the course.

The new course created on the basis of the framework by G.Salmon was piloted in Uzbekistan State World Languages University. The subjects of the study were the first year students of Master's Department. In the beginning of the academic year (2015-2016), two experimental groups were made up as the subjects of the blended course. Both groups have the same opportunities to access to the identical course content and to attend face-to-face classrooms equally.

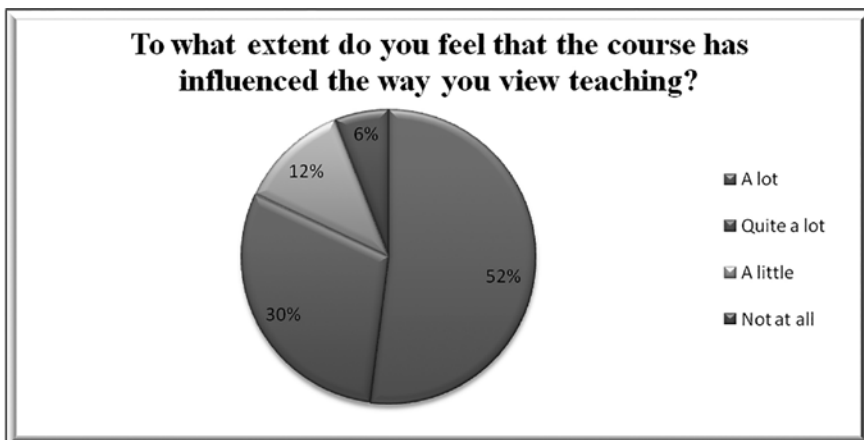
Overall, 17 students attended in the blended course. All of them were in their twenties. They were selected exactly to the piloting of this course by checking their language skills by the faculty at the beginning of the academic year.

The prominence of the module is that it provides an empirical focus and is particularly designed for prospective teachers with a non-English speaking background who are demanded to teach English or ESP/EAP courses. **The principal aim** of the module is to recommend students chances to ameliorate their own English language skills and to advance students' credence in using and teaching English in the curriculum subject classroom and English language classroom.

Concerning **module learning outcomes** the participants will have gained confidence in using language in order to perform as a teacher in the language classroom by the end of the module. They will have been aware of areas of English which are identical to and distinctive from those demanded by the general language user; have improved the target language, and their knowledge of vocabulary on particular topics pertinent to language syllabuses and course-books.

The ultimate tool to analyze the effective implication of this blended course was final evaluation by students on the entire module. The final evaluation form was fulfilled by 17 subjects of the module course. The tool comprised two parts, the former was to research the influence of the course, the relevance of ideas, the interest of students and the course satisfaction; the latter one was to scrutinize the balance of material and activities in online and face-to-face environments along with the students' view on the course entirely.

The analysis of part 1 of the evaluation
Diagram 1

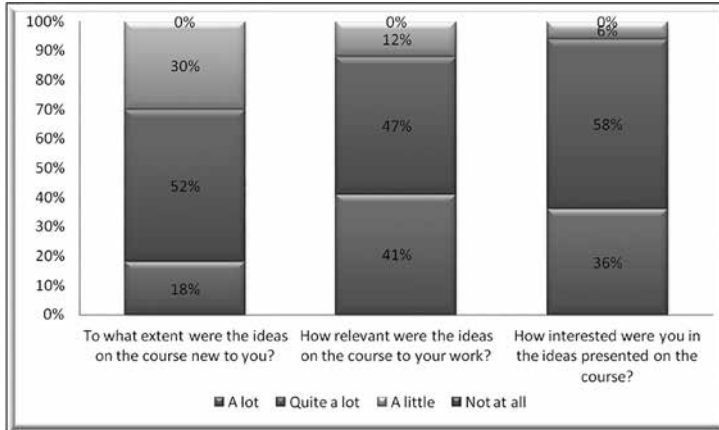


The pie chart reveals an outright answer to the question “To what extent do you feel that the course has influenced the way you view teaching?” It is apparent from the figures that a large proportion of the participants were content with the course since it has a significant impact on their future profession as a teacher. 30% of them answered that they were satisfied quite a lot. Only a small number of students considered that the course did not have a noticeable influence on them, with 12% and 6% respectively. Thus, a huge quantity of the subjects deliberated that the blended course had impacted the way they view teaching.

Diagram 2



The course satisfaction in accordance with the stability of online and face-to-face learning was elevated. More precisely, nearly all the students were satisfied with the balance between online and face-to-face environments (40% with an answer “a lot” and 36% with an answer “quite a lot” accordingly). A few number of students found dissatisfaction with the stability with two conditions, 12% answering “a little satisfaction” and 12% answering “no satisfaction”. A little dissatisfaction with the balance of two environments does not detect that blended learning is not efficacious.

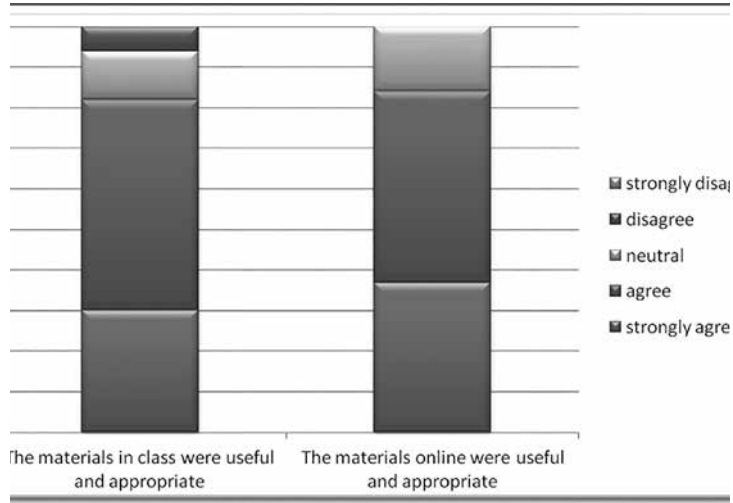
Diagram 3

The bar chart above illustrates how much the ideas were new, relevant, and interesting in the module. It can be clearly seen, the majority of students rates that the novelty, relevance of ideas and students' interest in them was quite a lot, 52%, 47% and 58% respectively. 30 percent of students answered that the novelty of ideas was a little, but very few of them stated that the relevance of the ideas and their interest in them was a little 12% and 6% accordingly. Overall, students found ideas and materials up-to-date and authentic.

The analysis of part 2 of the evaluation

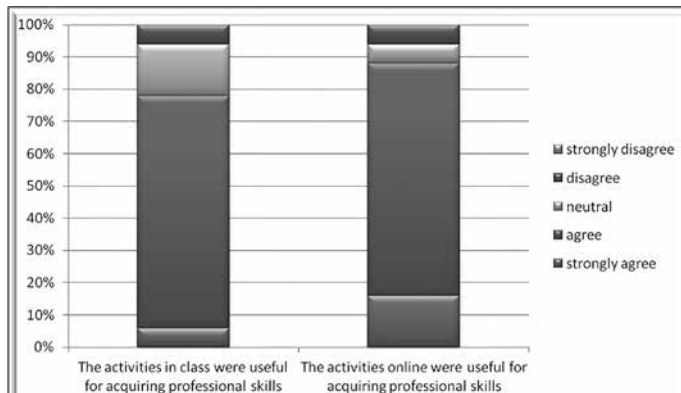
In the second part of the final evaluation 10 statements were given to scrutinize students' opinions towards them. The analysis of the second part was done by the researcher and illustrated in the following diagrams.

Diagram 4



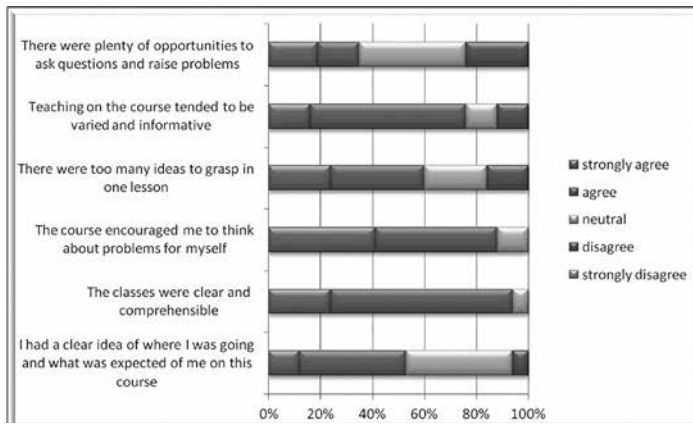
The bar chart above reveals the appropriateness and usefulness of online and face-to-face materials. As can be seen from the graph, 30 and 35 percentage of students firmly confirmed the appropriateness and benefits of resources in class and online. Over 50 percentage of students agreed with the fact that materials were applicable. An insignificant proportion of subjects disagreed with the appropriateness of the materials.

Diagram 5



In terms of activities in class and online to attain professional skills, a host of students showed their agreement (72% for both online and face-to-face activities). On the contrary, the fewest number of students presented their disagreement towards the activities for acquiring professional skills. A small percentage of students were neutral on the statement with 16% for activities in class and 6% for activities online.

Diagram 6



An extensive diagram deals with the students’ views on seven statements provided above. Overall, it can be noticed that almost for each statement students presents their agreement. Only in some cases we may spot a small percentage of students’ disagreement concerning the amount of ideas to understand, variety of teaching on the course and so on.

The study on scrutinizing the efficacious implementation of blended learning to teacher education was thoroughly conducted and the researcher found out informative and relevant data. The final evaluation of the course revealed how much the course influenced the way the subjects view teaching, how much the ideas were informative, relevant and interesting, how much the materials in class and online were appropriate and how well the stability between online and face-to-face environments were maintained.

All facts considered, it is to be accentuated that applying G. Salmon's five-stage framework to design blended courses teach both moderators and participants teaching and learning by mixing online and traditional face-to-face classroom. The model could highly result in providing active online and traditional learning, good contributions, interactions among participants and both teachers' and students' satisfaction.

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