Reading Engagement Strategies in Blended Learning Context

Sharon R. Contaoi

University of the Cordilleras

Abstract

Blended learning has increasingly become a key educational practice, integrating online digital media with traditional classroom methods to offer flexible and active learning environments. This study explores the effectiveness of various reading engagement strategies within a blended learning framework, emphasizing teachers' perceptions and experiences. Through a qualitative, phenomenological approach, the research examines how different strategies—ranging from gamified quizzes to multimedia tools—affect reading engagement. Key findings indicate that teacher-student interactions, feedback mechanisms, and the use of technology play crucial roles in enhancing reading motivation and comprehension. This study contributes to the body of knowledge by providing fact-based recommendations for instructional strategies that effectively support diverse learner needs in blended learning settings.

Keywords: Blended Learning, Reading Engagement, Educational Technology, Teacher Perceptions, Student Motivation.

Introduction

Background of the Study

The development of new digital technologies transformed the traditional model of education, giving rise to a new approach known as blended learning – an educational practice characterized by the combined usage of online digital media and conventional classroom methods. Given that blended learning can offer more flexible and dynamic conditions for education, it has the potential to improve the quality of learning outcomes in numerous ways (Halverson et al., 2019).

Although the concept of blended learning has been thoroughly studied in the literature, there appears to be a significant gap concerning reading engagement strategies within this learning modality. This gap is particularly evident from the perspectives of teachers, who are tasked with creating and implementing these educational practices. Teachers are key in balancing online and classroom components to create an ideal learning environment (Jeffrey et al., 2014); however, their perceptions and experiences with utilizing various reading engagement strategies in blended learning contexts remain insufficiently explored.

Studies such as those by Wirawan et al. (2022) have validated the role of blended learning in improving reading skills, yet research is limited on which approaches are most effective and how teachers perceive these strategies. Several relevant issues are not investigated, such as the teacher's introduction of new interactive tools or gamified elements to adjust to the diverse learning needs of the students (Mese, 2019).

Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to investigate teachers' perspectives towards reading engagement strategies within the blended learning context. This research is important because it will significantly expand educational technology knowledge by creating fact-based recommendations for reading strategies. It will also help teachers to make more educated decisions regarding instructional strategies and experience-enhancement methods Finally, educational programs and course creators will also benefit from the current study because they will be able to assess alternative strategies for their students.

Review of Related Literature:
Theoretical Concepts
Several theoretical frameworks support effective educational practices in the realm of blended learning, a concept that integrates digital tools into traditional teaching approaches.

Halverson and Graham's Engagement Model
Halverson and Graham's engagement model provides a critical perspective on how engagement combines cognitive and affective aspects to yield informed decisions necessary to create impact instructional design for blended learning. This model suggests that engagement, characterized by active and emotional involvement, is important to achieving significant educational outcomes like academic achievement and student satisfaction. De Brito et al. (2021) in their study further support the validity of this model, demonstrating a higher engagement rate in blended situations than the traditional learning scenario. Additionally, Halverson et al. (2019) highlight a need for continued research to design means of stimulating engagement in varied educational contexts.

Self-Determination Theory
Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is helpful in blended learning environments, focusing on meeting the intrinsic needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness to improvement student motivation, particularly in reading activities. By developing autonomy, students can choose their reading materials and decide whether to participate in real-time discussions or engage asynchronously, which helps personalize their learning experience. Competence is developed through tailored and scaffolded reading tasks on digital platforms that provide personalized feedback, aiding in skill building and confidence. Relatedness is supported through online tools that connect students with their peers and instructors, promoting community engagement through virtual discussions and collaborative projects.

Integrating SDT into blended learning for reading not only meets key psychological needs but also boosts motivation, combining the advantages of traditional and digital methods to create a dynamic learning environment. This approach is pivotal for cultivating an engaged learning community. Research, such as that by Joo et al. (2013) and Chiu (2021), highlights how digital tools can effectively meet these needs, indicating that integrating technology thoughtfully could substantially improve both engagement and learning outcomes.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)
The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) provides a key framework for understanding technology adoption in educational settings, especially in blended learning. This model emphasizes perceived ease of use and usefulness as important factors influencing the acceptance of technology by educators and students. Research by Al-Maroof et al. (2021) shows TAM's effectiveness in predicting the adoption intentions of blended learning technologies. Additionally, Persada et al. (2019) used TAM alongside the Theory of Planned Behavior to explore how cultural contexts affect students' intentions to use blended

learning systems, showing that ease of use and perceived benefits are significant motivators.

In terms of reading engagement, TAM indicates that the successful integration of digital reading tools—like e-books and online resources—relies on their user-friendliness and apparent benefits. Features such as instant definitions and interactive discussions make these technologies valuable for enhancing the reading experience, thereby motivating students and accommodating diverse learning needs. By aligning reading technologies with these criteria, educators can significantly enhance reading engagement and academic success in blended learning environments, as evidenced by the findings of Al-Maroof et al. (2021) and Persada et al. (2019).

Conceptual Framework and Literature that Supports this Research Reading Engagement Reading Engagement is described as the way students participate in the reading activities and how interested and motivated they are while reading. This factor is essential because reading engagement is directly connected to reading achievement and retention and is thus a goal of literacy instruction. Normawati (2021) reported students' positive attitudes toward blended learning concepts and its potential for enhancing interactivity, communication, and involvement in reading.

Blended Learning Environment.

The blended learning environment combines traditional learning with in-person opportunities for interaction. It facilitates multiple learning styles and increases students' ability to access instructional resources. Heilporn et al. (2021) found that students' engagement improves under certain conditions in weekly courses by combining synchronous and asynchronous activities in most cases.

Reading Engagement Strategies

In blended learning, mixing both face-to-face and online instructional components allows teachers to use various strategies to enhance reading engagement. The use of digital tools to promote more interaction employ strategies that stimulate critical thinking and use deeper meaning. Kara (2018) found that using a blended learning model reinforced by Edmodo meaningfully increased reading engagement and comprehension, showing the effectiveness of integrating technology with traditional reading teaching methods.

In the context of blended learning, the use of reading logs serve as a key strategy where students write down their reflections and questions while reading, fostering a deeper connection with the material. Interactive reading logs, as highlighted by Normawati (2021), enhance this process by enabling easier communication, interaction, and cooperation among students, thereby increasing their engagement with the content. These logs not only support individual reflection but also encourage collaborative learning and discussion, which are integral to blended learning environments.

Also, effective feedback mechanisms play a key role in complementing reading logs by helping students measure their learning progress and sustain a continuous learning cycle. Hattie et al. (2007) underline the significant influence of feedback—both formative and summative—on student achievement, show how it shapes learning and motivation. Expanding on this, Thompson et al. (2012) emphasize that timely feedback in blended learning settings enables students to refine their learning strategies and enhance their performance, thereby facilitating a more adaptive and responsive learning process. This integration of interactive reading logs and strategic feedback mechanisms is key to cultivating an effective and engaging blended learning environment.

In both online and face-to-face settings, gamified quizzes and challenges are used to make the learning process more dynamic and engaging. Kara (2018) observed that gamification increases student interaction with the material, thereby boosting participation and understanding. In face-to-face contexts,

gamified elements can be integrated into live discussions and interactive lessons, while online platforms can host quizzes and challenges that provide instant feedback and scores, keeping students engaged regardless of their physical location.

Furthermore, both aspects of blended learning benefit significantly from multimedia resources, which cater to diverse learning preferences by simplifying complex information through visual and auditory elements. According to Palilonis et al. (2009), incorporating these elements enhances engagement and facilitates deeper learning outcomes. McQuiggan et al. (2025) further argue that multimedia tools, by engaging multiple senses, promote active learning and better retention of information. In face-to-face interactions, these resources can be presented during classroom lectures or interactive sessions; online, they can be embedded within digital course materials accessible at the student's convenience.

Also, Heilporn et al. (2021) advocate for collaborative reading strategies where students work together to read, discuss, and annotate texts, which enhances behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. In the face-to-face component of blended learning, these strategies might involve group discussions and shared annotations during class. Online, similar interactions can occur in virtual discussion boards or through collaborative digital tools that allow real-time communication and annotation. Furthermore, Chiu (2021) highlights the importance of a supportive learning environment, facilitated by positive teacher-student relationships, which is crucial both in-person and online. This support system helps fulfill students' needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence, crucial for engaging students deeply in their learning journey.

Another reading strategy is incorporating students' interests and real-world connections: Engaging students effectively involves integrating their personal interests into the curriculum and linking academic content to real-world applications. Dimaano (2021) highlights that personalizing content to reflect what students encounter in their daily lives makes the learning process more relevant and engaging. Similarly, Shroff et al. (2010) demonstrate that students are more motivated and perform better academically when they understand how their studies apply to real-world scenarios. In face-to-face settings, this might involve project-based learning where students choose topics that interest them and explore how these topics interact with the world. Online, teachers can use digital tools to present real-world problems and simulate environments that allow students to explore these issues, enhancing the relevance and immediacy of their learning experiences.

Lastly, role-Playing and simulations are also examples of reading strategies in blended learning contexts. These strategies immerse students in learning experiences that foster empathy and provide a deep engagement with the material. Jaipal et al. (2018) show that role-playing and simulations can significantly increase student motivation and understanding, especially in complex subjects. Vogel et al. (2016) further support this, noting that interactive scenarios enable students to apply theoretical knowledge in practical contexts, thus improving learning outcomes. In a face-to-face classroom, role-playing might involve students acting out roles from a text or historical event, providing a tangible and interactive way to understand different perspectives. Online, simulations can be implemented through virtual environments where students engage in decision-making processes that mimic real-life situations, allowing them to experiment with and apply what they have learned in a controlled, impactful manner.

Research Questions:

1. What are English teachers' perceptions of reading engagement strategies in blended learning environments?
2. How do reading engagement strategies contribute to enhancing students' reading engagement

in blended learning environments?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used a qualitative research design, particularly a phenomenological approach. This methodology allows an understanding of the lived experiences and perceptions of English teachers using reading engagement strategies in blended learning contexts. The phenomenological method permits the collection of rich, detailed insights from participants, focusing on their subjective experiences, challenges, strategies employed, and the effectiveness of these strategies in enhancing student reading engagement.

Population and Sampling

The population composed of English teachers teaching in schools implementing blended learning approaches within the Division of Baguio City. Purposive sampling was used to select participants with significant experience and involvement in utilizing reading engagement

strategies in a blended learning setting. To this extent, seven English teachers who met the criteria above were invited to participate.

Data Gathering Tools

Data collection utilized a semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Semi- structured interviews included open-ended questions designed to gather detailed responses about teachers' perceptions of and experiences with reading engagement strategies in blended learning environments. Additionally, relevant documents such as lesson plans, instructional materials, and examples of student work were analyzed to supplement and corroborate the interview data.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering process started with the identification and recruitment of participants based on specified criteria. After obtaining consent, individual interviews were scheduled at convenient times. Each interview was audio-recorded with participants' permission and later transcribed for analysis. Document collection involves gathering digital copies of instructional materials and other relevant documents directly from participants or through their educational platforms, with proper consent.

Treatment of Data

Transcribed interview data and collected documents underwent thematic analysis to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) within the data. The analysis involved coding the data in several phases to refine and categorize the themes closely related to the research questions. This qualitative analysis aimed to reveal the depth of teachers' perceptions and experiences with reading engagement strategies in blended learning environments. Findings were presented descriptively, with direct quotations from participants to demonstrate key points, ensuring the anonymity and confidentiality of all participants. The identified themes ertr then discussed in relation to the existing literature on reading engagement strategies in blended learning contexts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

The results of this phenomenological study provide a detailed insight into the perceptions and experiences of English teachers regarding the effectiveness of various reading engagement strategies in blended learning environments. Table 1 summarizes the primary themes identified from the semi-structured interviews with seven English teachers, highlighting the frequency of each theme and

providing representative sample responses. These themes reflect the diverse strategies implemented by teachers to enhance reading engagement among students and emphasize the complexities of adapting these strategies to blended learning contexts.

Table 1: Themes, Sample Responses, and Frequency of Mentions

Themes	Sample Responses	Frequency
Teacher-Student Interactions	"Knowing what areas each student struggles with in reading allows me to use the content in a more targeted manner" "Regular one-on-one discussions help me understand my students' perspectives and address their specific concerns, enhancing their learning experience."	7
Feedback Mechanisms	"Feedback is most beneficial when received as quickly as possible" "Reading quizzes help students refine their strategies quickly. This facilitates immediate understanding and trigger more critical thinking when reading and after reading"	7
Role-Playing Simulations	"Role-playing characters from the books we read has deeply engaged students, helping them understand complex narratives" 'Role-playing and simulations from our reading books have awarded students the depth of understanding of challenging narratives"	6
Multimedia Integration	"Videos and slide shows made interactive breakdown complex reading materials into enjoyable bite-size chunks" "Video and audio materials, including images pool more ideas and questions from students"	6
Gamified Quizzes	"Students look forward to the reading quizzes that include gamification elements, which increase their engagement and anticipation for literature classes." "Many students now look forward to gamified reading quizzes, which increases the spread and thirst for literature in literature classes "	5
Online Discussion Forums	"Online discussions help students articulate their thoughts about readings more deeply." "Forums have been an extension of classroom discussions from which quieter students can comfortably discuss their own interpretation."	5
Interactive Reading Logs	"Logs follow up from where students video themselves reading material and log their reactions and questions." "This note is a stepping stone through which students can review their roots and have paths to which to pass."	4

Teacher-Student Interactions

The findings from this study emphasize the significant role of teacher-student interactions in improving reading engagement in both face-to-face and online modalities of blended learning. Participants particularly emphasized the critical importance of understanding individual student needs to effectively modify educational content. Through personalized interactions, educators are able to significantly boost student engagement and learning. This finding supports the principles of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which posits that fulfilling the needs for competence and relatedness are key motivators for students (Ryan et al., 2000).

Moreover, the current study extends the work of Chiu (2021), who notes that personalized interactions provide individual learning needs and significantly enhance engagement, especially in digital classes where students might otherwise feel isolated. This corroborates Chiu's findings, suggesting that effective teacher-student interactions are important in creating an adaptive and responsive educational environment that meets the different needs of students.

By maximizing digital tools to track student progress and provide customized feedback, teachers in this study could enhance reading engagement, which is consistent with contemporary educational theories that emphasize the importance of technology in personalized education (Persada et al., 2020). This use of technology not only supports the findings of previous studies but also demonstrates the practical application of theoretical principles in real-world educational settings.

Feedback Mechanism

The important role of feedback mechanisms in refining students' reading strategies and enhancing their understanding is mainly identified by all the participants. Teachers have highlighted the importance of timely and specific feedback in helping students adjust their reading approaches, which is important for their development in comprehension and critical thinking skills. This emphasis aligns with Hattie's (2007) research, which points to effective feedback as one of the most significant contributors to student learning and achievement. Additionally, the benefit of feedback in a blended learning context is often improved by digital tools that provide immediate responses. This supports the findings of Persada et al. (2020), who emphasize the role of technology in enhancing learning engagement and outcomes.

The integration of automated feedback systems in digital reading platforms represents a practical application of these findings, allowing for immediate corrections and suggestions that not only enhance learning outcomes but also keep students actively engaged and motivated to improve. Schools are encouraged to adopt such platforms to strengthen their blended learning strategies, thereby ensuring that feedback is not only continuous but also impactful.

By emphasizing feedback mechanisms, this study reinforces the experiential nature of learning, illustrating how immediate and modified responses can significantly transform the educational experience. This not only supports the findings of Hattie (2007) and Persada et al. (2020) but also extends them by demonstrating effective implementation in real-world educational settings.

Role-Playing Simulations

Role-playing and simulations have been identified by the participants as particularly effective for engaging students in blended learning environments. These interactive strategies are not just classroom activities; they start with students reading the stories at home, processing the material during their face-to-face classes, and culminating in collaborative activities like role- playing simulations. This method

immerses students deeply in the learning material, allowing them to embody characters and scenarios, thereby enhancing their understanding of complex narratives. Teachers in this study have noted that these methods facilitate active interactions with the text, making comprehension of difficult subjects more accessible and engaging.

The effectiveness of this approach finds strong support in the research by Jaipal et al. (2018), who observed that simulations and role-playing significantly boost student motivation and understanding, particularly in challenging subjects. This aligns with Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, which emphasizes that active involvement in the learning process enhances its effectiveness and retention. The sequence of reading at home, followed by processing and interactive role-play in class, effectively incorporates these principles, offering a structured yet engaging way to deepen students' engagement and comprehension.

Integrating role-playing and simulation-based activities into the curriculum, therefore, not only aligns with established theoretical frameworks but also provides practical ways for enhancing student engagement and comprehension. This structured approach ensures that students are not only prepared by their at-home reading but are also able to actively apply and process this knowledge through experiential learning in the classroom, thereby maximizing the educational impact of these activities

Multimedia Integration

Teachers in this study emphasized the role of multimedia integration in boosting reading engagement across both face-to-face and online environments. By incorporating videos, interactive slideshows, and audio aids, complex reading materials are broken down into easier and engaging segments, making learning more accessible and appealing. This method effectively accommodates diverse learning styles, providing an active educational experience that engages students.

In face-to-face settings, multimedia tools such as video clips enhance textual materials by making abstract concepts tangible and visually stimulating. These clips can provide historical context or clarify complex text, enhancing comprehension. Online, multimedia's importance escalates, maintaining student attention and transforming passive reading into an interactive experience. Tools like annotated texts and clickable media promote active engagement and deeper cognitive processing, making the learning experience more immersive.

Multimedia is essential, not merely supplementary, in contemporary educational strategies to maximize engagement and educational outcomes. Its consistent use across various teaching modalities ensures a seamless and effective educational journey for all students.

The importance of multimedia is also supported by Mayer (2001) and Palilonis et al. (2009). Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning argues that combining words and pictures enhances learning more effectively than using words alone, emphasizing multimedia's role in improving comprehension and retention. Similarly, Palilonis et al. (2009) highlight that multimedia resources significantly boost motivation and retention by diversifying engagement methods. These studies confirm that multimedia not only elevates student engagement but also supports the learning process by catering to different learning needs, underscoring its vital role in modern education.

Gamified Quizzes

Most teachers in the study reported that gamified quizzes significantly enhance student engagement, with many observing that while these activities are traditionally implemented during face-to-face

classes, engagement levels are equally high, if not higher, when the quizzes

are conducted online. This suggests that the interactive and playful nature of gamified quizzes effectively takes students' interest regardless of the learning environment.

Gamified quizzes merge elements of competition and fun into reading assessments, effectively improving the natural human inclination for play as a learning tool. This method deepens student interaction with the material and enhances their learning experience. Kara (2018) has previously noted that gamification in educational settings not only boosts student interaction but also improves learning outcomes, particularly in content areas that might otherwise engage students less. Similarly, Dicheva et al. (2015) highlight the broad applicability and benefits of gamification, stating that it significantly increases motivation and engagement across various educational contexts.

Implementing gamified elements in both online and in-person classes has transformed the learning experience, making it more appealing and effective. Consequently, schools should consider providing training for teachers to develop and use gamified content in their lessons, thereby developing a more interactive and engaging educational environment. The impact of this approach on student engagement is profound, transforming reading from a routine task to an engaging and interactive activity, and thereby reshaping students' attitudes and connections to the material.

Online Discussion Forums

Online discussion forums are utilized for their ability to foster deeper understanding and enhance dialogue, particularly benefiting students who are quieter in traditional classroom settings. According to most of the participants, these platforms not only extend classroom discussions but also create a space where students can express their thoughts more freely and thoughtfully, thereby enhancing the learning process through enriched social interaction.

Supporting this view, Stacey et al. (2009) highlight the effectiveness of online forums in boosting critical thinking and comprehension through collaborative learning dynamics. This enhancement is in line with Vygotsky's social constructivism theory, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in learning. Additionally, research by Gao et al. (2013) found that online forums facilitate continuous student engagement and can significantly improve academic achievement by developing a collaborative environment where ideas are freely exchanged. This further corroborates the beneficial impact of online forums in educational settings.

Given these benefits, teachers are encouraged to improve online forums to facilitate richer academic discussions that meet diverse student personalities and learning paces. Providing teachers with training in effective online moderation and discussion facilitation can significantly improve the outcomes of these digital learning environments. The impact of these shared experiences within online forums underscores the essence of learning as an intersubjective

process, which deepens the communal aspect of education. This theme illustrates how virtual discussions can develop inclusive educational experiences that accommodate a wider range of student needs and preferences, thus transforming how students interact with each other and with the material they are learning. This experience not only broadens the educational reach but also deepens the impact of learning through ongoing, dynamic exchanges.

Interactive Reading Logs

Interactive reading logs are important tools for students to document and reflect on their reading

experiences. These logs not only serve as a reflective practice but also provide teachers with insights into student understanding and engagement, fostering a more personalized learning experience.

Normawati (2021) presented that interactive tools like reading logs significantly enhance engagement by promoting reflective learning and personal connections with the material. Encouraging the use of reading logs in schools can improve students' metacognitive skills and reading comprehension. Training for teachers on how to integrate and evaluate these logs can maximize their benefits, supporting students in becoming more organized and thoughtful readers.

Reflecting on these experiences through reading logs summarizes the principle of understanding individual experiences within educational research. This theme provides a window into the students' lived experiences with texts, showing how these tools help articulate and track the evolving perceptions and understandings of students.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This research on Reading Engagement Strategies in Blended Learning Contexts has revealed key insights into the effective strategies employed by English teachers to enhance student engagement in reading. The study identified key strategies such as teacher-student interactions, feedback mechanisms, role-playing simulations, multimedia integration, gamified quizzes, online discussion forums, and interactive reading logs, which have markedly improved reading engagement in blended learning setups. Significantly, teacher-student interactions and feedback mechanisms were the most frequently mentioned, emphasizing the critical importance of personalized and responsive educational approaches. These strategies enhance individual learning needs and significantly increase motivation and engagement with reading tasks. Innovative methods like role-playing simulations and multimedia integration were also highly effective, making reading activities more relatable, engaging, and accessible, thus improving students' comprehension and retention of material. Additionally, the integration of gamified elements and online forums introduced a central aspect of interactivity and peer learning, dynamic for maintaining student interest and enhancing participation.

The phenomenological approach of this study provided deep insights into teachers' subjective experiences, offering valuable perspectives that are instrumental in designing and implementing effective reading engagement strategies within blended learning environments. The findings strongly advocate for a holistic approach that combines traditional teaching methods with innovative digital tools to significantly enhance reading engagement and academic performance in blended settings.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of this research, the following recommendations are made to educators, curriculum developers, and educational institutions aiming to optimize reading engagement in blended learning environments:

1. Enhance platforms and initiatives that promote regular and meaningful interactions between teachers and students in both online and face-to-face formats. This could include the use of personalized feedback and digital communication tools to maintain continuous dialogue.
2. Employ a variety of engagement strategies tailored to blended learning environments, such as multimedia integration, role-playing, gamification, and interactive reading logs. These should be utilized to meet the diverse needs of learners, ensuring that reading activities are engaging across

different modalities.

3. Develop ongoing professional development programs that train educators on the effective use of digital and traditional resources to support blended learning. Focus on strategies that blend technological and pedagogical skills to optimize both online and face-to-face educational interactions.

4. Implement structured feedback systems that provide timely and actionable feedback through digital platforms, enhancing the responsiveness of educational interactions and allowing for the adjustment of teaching strategies based on student needs.

5. Encourage the use of online discussion forums and other collaborative tools that foster a community of inquiry and discussion among students. Such environments are key for developing critical thinking and deepening understanding through peer interaction.

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