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## English language teachers' success in blended and online e-learning

Nazime Tuncay <sup>a\*</sup>, Huseyin Uzunboyly <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>*Dr., Near East University, North Cyprus*

<sup>b</sup>*Prof.Dr., Near East University, North Cyprus*

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### Abstract

There is e-learning training need among teachers; therefore in-service training should be delivered. The problem was, was it better to deliver this training as blended or as online? And does such training differ according to the teachers using Second Life or not using Second Life? The study group consisted of 74 primary school, high school and university English Language Teachers, who are enrolled in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, The Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports, and whose ages differed between 21 and 61. 37 of them attended to the online course and 37 of them attended to the blended learning course. The number of teachers who have joined to the Second Life classes were 37 and the number of teachers who have not joined to the Second Life classes were 37. In the research study pre-test and post-test experimental design is used. As a result, a significant difference among the success of the English Language Teachers who have joined to second life, and who have not joined to second life is found. This is a very important result. Further researches are necessary to find out if Second Life can be used in other disciplines. If the proper delivery methods is used both blended and online education will be successful.

*Keywords: Second Life, English Language Teachers, Blended, Online*

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### 1. Introduction

There was e-learning training need among teachers (Tuncay & Uzunboyly, 2008). These needs differed among web-based e-learning training needs, technologically based e-learning training needs and administrative e-learning training needs. There is a digital divide among teachers (Youssef, 2005; Uzunboyly & Tuncay, 2009). This digital divide is among ICT teachers and not-ICT teachers, among internet users and not-internet users, among experienced teachers and not-experienced teachers. Several research results in primary schools, in secondary schools and in high schools revealed this e-learning training need. Based on the answers of the surveyed teachers we can conclude that the use of computer among teachers in the triennium of primary schools is not very encouraging (Hus, 2011). There were also lots of other obstacles for teachers delivering e-learning in their classrooms: Technology also requires English in order to make use of its facilities that will help to facilitate the understanding of difficult subjects, so students believe that while teachers are determining the aims of a lesson plan, they should consider the integration of technology (Hussein, 2010). If we want to bridge the digital divide between teachers, we can help those who are not using these technologies (Youssef, 2005). Information technology has powerful impact on learning and the central idea of the current e-learning technologies is to provide users the ability to use and reuse of learning objects, which must be compatible with the learning management systems and with any other future technology from that field (Smeureanu & Isaila, 2011). What is more, the use of informational technology may differ according to different institutions. It is recommended that the interaction between teaching and learning conditions should be checked in terms of the institutional expectations (Kurnaz & Arslan, Sağlam, 2010).

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\* Dr.Nazime Tuncay

E-mail address: [nazime.tuncay@gmail.com](mailto:nazime.tuncay@gmail.com)

A positive increase was seen in the views of students' studying with blended learning and e-learning methods according to post-test results after processing the lectures prepared in WordPress environment (Ozdamli, et al., 2009). Learners have different ways of learning and they issues such as instructional support, faculty motivation and enthusiasm, and technology problems have been raised as problems in developing online instruction in many institutions for a long time (Barr and Tag, 1995). Blended learning was aimed to improve online learning environments in which learners can be easily disoriented due to a lack of communication or direct guidance (Marsh II et al., 2004, Rossett, et al., 2003). Another study showed that blended instruction overcame "the shortcomings of online instruction" using "various instructional sequencing and delivery strategies to enhance learner satisfaction while attaining increased learning outcomes" (Lim, et. al., 2006, p. 810). Researchers showed that a lack of belonging sense to learning communities keeps learners from developing shared feelings and emotional comfort in online environments (Rovai and Jordan, 2004). A virtual learning environment can be used by teachers as a powerful tool which can assist them in the construction of an active learning environment, as a means of overcoming the difficulties that they face during their lectures, such as limited lecture time, the large number of students and the passive learning environment (Limniou & Whitehead, 2010). To address this in online environments, delivering vivid learning experiences, clear directions and enhancing social presence is crucial. This research study is implemented in TRNC Ministry of National Education, Youth And Sports which attaches considerable importance to online learning. The school has carried out a lot of projects in e-learning. However, the teachers of the school had problems about sharing online resources among themselves. There was also a lack of online communication with each other. Announcements between teachers were sent by an e-mail server, however, the announcements concerning students could not be sent via virtual environment. Another problem was that teachers could not give online assignments to students, thus, they were faced with the arduous task of correcting the assignments using pen-paper technology. Therefore this study is designed to solve the problems mentioned above.

### 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to drive out the success of English Language Teachers' in blended and online e-learning course about their e-learning training needs. And further researchers are delivered to find out if this need differs according to the

- a) Sex
- b) Work Place
- c) Age
- d) Schools
- e) Second Life Usage

## 2.Method

### 2.1 Population

The study group consisted of 74 the primary school, high school and university English Language Teachers, who are enrolled in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, The Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports, and whose ages differed between 21 and 61.

### 2.2 Instrument

A measurement tool consisting of 50 questions was developed by researchers professional help form 5 measurement and evaluation expert was taken for validity of test items. To evaluate the items in the questionnaires, experts' evaluation (n = 17) was taken. An expert group of instructional technologists evaluated the data-gathering scale, both individually and collaboratively. Under the suggestions of the experts, necessary corrections were made to the draft form of the questionnaire. Thus, the content validity was maintained with the help of the educational technologist experts. 68 experts participated in data collection and analysis. The reliability coefficient alpha value was calculated as 0, 93. As Garson (2007) indicates, an alpha value of 0, 93 are widely accepted in social sciences. Number of questions and Cronbach's Alpha values for each construct are listed in appendix A.

### 2.3 Procedure

After having the course materials and course platforms evaluated and corrected; a “blended” course and a “online” course were delivered to fulfill the English language teachers’ e-learning training needs, between 6<sup>th</sup> of June and 26<sup>th</sup> of November 2011. In total they were 74 teachers; where 37 of them attended to the blended course and 37 of them were attended to the online course. The class capacities were announced as 37, and the choice of being online or blended was left to the teachers. Both courses were supported by training channels in YouTube and several facilities of Facebook. And volunteers from online and blended group have attained to the Second Life courses.

### 2.4. Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse and to report the data gained from the questionnaires. The frequencies and percentages were used for data analysis. Also, SPSS 17 was used.

## 3. Results and Discussion

According to the student scores, and according to the student interviews, results were driven. The student interviews are explained in the following sections: Student scores; interview with the learners; Google groups; online quizzes; online attendance; general structure of the online course; traditional education or blended education; and online education or blended education

### 3.1 Sex

11 men and 63 women attained to the ELEM course. Their average success results are given at Figure 1. The average pre-test score of the man who have attended to the blended group (M=25) was higher than the average pre-test of the woman who have attended to the blended group (M=43, 5). The average post-test score of the man who have attended to the blended group (M=75) was similar to the average post-test of the woman who have attended to the blended group (M=78, 84). This showed that the ELEM course made a difference on the e-learning competences of man and woman who have attained to the blended group.

On the other hand, the average pre-test score of the man who have attended to the online group (M=42) was higher than the average pre-test of the woman who have attended to the blended group (M=35, 94). The average post-test score of the man who have attended to the blended group (M=84) was similar to the average post-test of the woman who have attended to the blended group (M=78, 75). This showed that the ELEM course made a difference on the e-learning competences of man and woman who have attained to the online group (see Figure 1).

Sex	Blended		Online	
	Pre-test Average Success Grade	Post-test Average Success Grade	Pre-test Average Success Grade	Post-test Average Success Grade
<b>Man</b>	25	75	42	84
<b>Woman</b>	43,28	78,84	35,94	78,75

Figure 1. Success Scores of Man and Woman teachers

### 3.2 Work Place

The average pre-test score (M=43,75) of the English Language Teachers in Kyrenia who have attended to the blended group was higher than the than the average pre-test score (M=40,71) of the English Language Teachers in

Güzelyurt; and this was higher than the average pre-test score (M=37,14) of the English Language Teachers in İskele; which was higher than the average pre-test score (M=40,71) of the English Language Teachers in Nicosia and this score was higher than the average pre-test score (M=36,43) of the teachers in Famagusta. However, it was very interesting that after course, all teachers' success scores have increased. The average post-test score (M=73,13) of the English Language Teachers in Kyrenia who have attended to the blended group; the average post-test score (M=66,43) of the English Language Teachers in Güzelyurt who have attended to the blended group; average post-test score (M=62,14) of the English Language Teachers in İskele who have attended to the blended group; average post-test score (M=80,63) of the English Language Teachers in Nicosia who have attended to the blended group and average post-test score (M=87,86) of the English Language Teachers in Famagusta who have attended to the blended group were all higher than the pre-test group scores.

Similarly, The average post-test score (M=76,07) of the English Language Teachers in Kyrenia who have attended to the online group; the average post-test score (M=81,25) of the English Language Teachers in Güzelyurt who have attended to the online group; average post-test score (M=81,79) of the English Language Teachers in İskele who have attended to the online group; average post-test score (M=82,86) of the English Language Teachers in Nicosia who have attended to the online group and average post-test score (M=75,63) of the English Language Teachers in Famagusta who have attended to the online group were all higher than the pre-test group scores. Teachers from all different work areas had higher post-test results than their pre-test results (see Figure 2).

Place	Blended		Online	
	Pre-test Average Success Grade	Post-test Average Success Grade	Pre-test Average Success Grade	Post-test Average Success Grade
Kyrenia	43,75	73,13	45	76,07
Güzelyurt	40,71	66,43	43,13	81,25
İskele	37,14	62,14	32,86	81,79
Nicosia	38,75	80,63	37,86	82,86
Famagusta	36,43	87,86	25,63	75,63

Figure 2. Scores according to their work areas

### 3.3 Age

The teachers' who have attained to the blended courses and whom ages are between 21 and 40; have higher average post test scores (M=75, 25) than their average pre-test scores (M=41, 25). Similarly, the teachers who have attained to the blended courses and whom ages are between 41 and 60; have higher average post test scores (M=72, 31) than their average pre-test scores (M=35, 15). The teachers who have attained to the online courses and whom ages are between 21 and 40; have higher average post test scores (M=76, 54) than their average pre-test scores (M=36, 15). Similarly, the teachers who have attained to the blended courses and whom ages are between 41 and 60; have higher average post test scores (M=81, 04) than their average pre-test scores (M=37, 08). Therefore, these results can be interpreted as, the course pre-test and post-test results do not differ according to the teachers' age group (see Figure 3).

Age	Blended		Online	
	Pre-test Average Success Grade	Post-test Average Success Grade	Pre-test Average Success Grade	Post-test Average Success Grade
21–40	41,25	75,21	36,15	76,54
41–60	35,15	72,31	37,08	81,04

Figure 3. Teachers' scores according to their ages

### 3.4 Schools

Average post-test results (69,17) of the *Primary School English Language Teachers* who have attained to the blended course was higher than their average pre-test results (37,5). Average post-test results (73,85) of the *Secondary School English Language Teachers* who have attained to the blended course was higher than their average pre-test results (44,62). On the other hand, average post-test results (79,58) of the *Secondary School English Language Teachers* who have attained to the blended course was higher than their average pre-test results (35,83).

Schools	Blended		Online	
	Pre-test Average Success Grade	Post-test Average Success Grade	Pre-test Average Success Grade	Post-test Average Success Grade
<b>Primary School</b>	37,5	69,17	37,69	80,58
<b>Secondary School</b>	44,62	73,85	27,08	70,83
<b>High School</b>	35,83	79,58	45,42	86,88

Figure 4. Teachers' scores according to their ages

Average post-test results (80,58) of the *Primary School English Language Teachers* who have attained to the online course was higher than their average pre-test results (37,69). Average post-test results (70,83) of the *Secondary School English Language Teachers* who have attained to the online course was higher than their average pre-test results (27,08). On the other hand, average post-test results (86,88) of the *Secondary School English Language Teachers* who have attained to the online course was higher than their average pre-test results (45,42) (see Figure 4).

### 3.5 Second Life Usage

Average post-test scores (M=90,56) of the English Language teachers who **have attained** to the Second Life and Blended course was higher than average post-test scores (M=58,68) of the English Language teachers who **have not attained** to the Second Life and were in the Blended course group.

Average post-test scores (M=89,08) of the English Language teachers who **have attained** to the Second Life and online course was higher than average post-test scores (M=69,31) of the English Language teachers who **have not attained** to the Second Life and were in the online course group.

Second Life	Blended		Online	
	Pre-test Average Success Grade	Post-test Average Success Grade	Pre-test Average Success Grade	Post-test Average Success Grade
<b>Not Attained</b>	35,26	58,68	38,89	69,31
<b>Attained</b>	43,89	90,56	34,74	89,08

Figure 5. Usage of Second Life and Scores

This result may be due to the Second Life world's being a more suitable place for cooperative learning. The cooperative learning method in comparison with the traditional learning method is of much higher effectiveness on the social skills of students (Lavasani, Afzali and Afzali, 2011) (see Figure 5).

### 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

This research study is carried out as a necessity of teachers training needs in the e-learning area. The ELEM course which was delivered as two groups (online and blended) to English Language teachers was the first course in the literature delivered for the purpose of fulfilling E-Learning training needs of a specific area of teachers.

Pre-test and post tests were applied to this group. It was concluded that the sex, work place, school, age differences of teachers did not made any significant differences on their average scores. However, as a most important result of this research study, the teachers success scores differed according to the fact that they have used Second Life or not. Second Life was found to be a useful virtual world for in-service training purposes. Also, guidance of students may be beneficial, with regards to engaging them in in-depth discussions and in improving the quality of models and research reports (Demirci, 2010).

The following are the suggested topics for further research studies:

- Second Life's effect on teachers' motivation.
- Usage of e-learning activities delivered in Second Life, in universities.
- How Second Life can help teachers to develop more e-learning activities in their classes?
- Usage of Second Life in different disciplines.

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**APPENDIX A.** Cronbach Alpha Values of the Questionnarrie Items.

		Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted			Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
S1	20,3636	105,527	,351	,935	S34	20,3636	103,558	,546	,934
S2	20,5000	106,008	,324	,936	S36	20,1818	104,736	,451	,935
S3	20,1970	104,099	,512	,934	S37	20,4697	105,699	,348	,935
S6	20,3788	106,762	,230	,936	S38	20,1667	103,126	,627	,933
S9	20,3788	106,208	,285	,936	S39	20,3485	103,461	,555	,934
S10	20,2879	103,808	,523	,934	S40	20,1212	103,800	,580	,934
S11	20,3182	103,574	,544	,934	S41	20,0909	104,607	,510	,934
S12	20,2879	105,531	,351	,935	S42	20,3939	104,181	,487	,934
S16	20,3333	102,933	,608	,933	S43	20,4091	105,630	,344	,935
S17	20,4848	104,807	,444	,935	S44	20,3636	105,435	,360	,935
S18	20,3485	105,184	,384	,935	S14	20,1667	104,510	,480	,934
S20	20,3333	106,226	,281	,936	S46	20,0909	104,084	,570	,934
S22	20,2727	106,417	,265	,936	S47	20,1667	103,249	,614	,933
S23	20,3788	103,193	,584	,933	S48	20,2424	103,386	,573	,934
S24	20,5000	105,762	,350	,935	S49	20,1364	102,920	,667	,933
S25	20,3485	103,646	,537	,934	S50	20,3939	102,981	,608	,933
S27	20,1818	104,243	,503	,934					
S28	20,3788	102,393	,666	,933					
S29	20,4545	101,575	,770	,932					
S30	20,4242	102,617	,652	,933					
S31	20,4545	102,067	,719	,932					
S32	20,3182	101,697	,734	,932					
S33	20,2879	104,177	,486	,934					
S34	20,3636	103,558	,546	,934					
S35	20,1818	103,074	,625	,933					
S32	20,3182	101,697	,734	,932					
S33	20,2879	104,177	,486	,934					