The Effect of Blackboard Collaborate-Based Instruction on Pre-service Teachers' Achievement in the EFL Teaching Methods Course at Faculties of Education for Girls

Hussein El-ghamry Mohammad Hussein[1]

[1] Curriculum and Instruction Department, Ismailia Faculty of Education, Egypt

Correspondence: Hussein El-ghamry Mohammad Hussein, Curriculum and Instruction Department, Ismailia Faculty of Education, Egypt. E-mail: alghamry1962@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study investigated the effect of Blackboard-based instruction on pre-service teachers' achievement in the teaching methods course at The Faculty of Education for Girls, in Bisha, KSA. Forty seventh-level English Department students were randomly assigned into either the experimental group (N=20) or the control group (N=20). While studying their teaching methods course, the experimental group received instruction via Blackboard Collaborate, whereas the control group received traditional instruction. The two groups were pre-post tested using a teaching methods test prepared by the researcher. Two hypotheses were formulated and tested. Results obtained from Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test and Mann-Whitney Test revealed that Blackboard-based instruction was effective in enhancing the achievement of the experimental group. In addition, compared to traditional instruction, Blackboard-based instruction was more effective in improving the participants' achievement as it provided them with multiple opportunities to explore alternative means to interact with teachers, peers, course material and activities.

Keywords: blackboard collaborate, blackboard-based instruction, synchronous communication, asynchronous communication

1. Introduction

Over the last few years, language teaching has been changing as a result recent advances in science and technology. This change embraces a growing use of technology in higher education institutions around the world. Therefore, computer-based instruction is widely used in language teaching as it provides a constructive alternative to textbook-based learning, broadens appeal of language learning by allowing an interactive, context-embedded approach to simulate an authentic language-learning environment, enables the orchestration of various cognitive learning strategies and makes language instruction innovative and exciting (Liontas, 2002). Accordingly, increased access to information networks and technology-based instruction are changing the face of language instruction for both teachers and learners at all levels of education.

Being one of the recent contributions of these emerging technologies, Blackboard-based instruction has been adopted by many institutions due to its ubiquity, easiness, and accessibility as it provides numerous opportunities for EFL/ESL teachers and learners to meet via online classrooms. It encourages learners to get involved in online learning environment such as virtual classrooms, discussion forums, writing assignments, and getting feedback from teachers and peers (Mohsen & Shafeeq, 2014). This means that Blackboard-based instruction, if rooted in sound principles of pedagogical design, can lend itself to learner-centered, constructivist learning (Shih et al., 2007; Maslamani, 2013; Fageeh & Mekheimer, 2013).

Moreover, as indicated by Hismanoglu (2012), Blackboard-based instruction can ensure more equal participation among learners. In other words, whereas face-to-face discussions tend to be relatively unbalanced, -with one or two participants dominating class discussions, communication in Blackboard-based instruction features more balanced participation, with the participants sharing discussions more equally. It also allows learners to access learning materials at their own 'pace' and provides auditory, visual, and kinesthetic cues addressing a wide range of learning styles. (Farooq et al., 2012; Mekheimer, 2012; Martin et al., 2013; Al-Jabry et al., 2014; Almelhi, 2014).

1.2 Context of the Problem

King Khalid University lies in the city of Abha, in Asir region. It consists of 26 different campuses and 48 colleges, offering higher education. It allocates separate campuses for male and female students. Male teachers are not allowed to teach female learners in face-to-face classes and have to use studios where they give lectures to female learners who can watch through a television screen in the room next door. Thus, learners are only allowed to ask questions through a telephone attached to the wall. They also face another challenge when it comes to travelling to and from lectures; female students at KKU depend on male relatives to take them to and from lectures. A third challenge is embodied in the huge geography and dispersion of campuses which are overloading for teachers. Teachers have to spend a significant amount of their time travelling long distances to provide lectures. This led the university to establish its first e-learning center in 2005 and choose Blackboard Collaborate as the primary learning management system in 2008. However, none of the courses prescribed to English majors at Bisha Faculty of Education for Girls is taught through Blackboard Collaborate. Most- if not all- of the courses taught via Blackboard Collaborate are related to Computer Sciences.

EFL majors at The Faculty of Education for Girls study a 4- year program of courses in English language skills, English literature, linguistics, applied linguistics, and translation. They take only one course on EFL teaching methodology, which is not enough for the diverse needs of EFL teachers. They spend only the last semester of their program at intermediate or secondary schools as trainees, and are required to teach one or two courses (four to eight classes a week). This was supported by Al-Hazmi who concluded that, although Ministry of Education has done so much to improve and update English language curricula since 1991, it has lagged behind in doing the same for EFL teacher education programs (2003). He went on to state that the gap between the content of teacher education programs and the needs of the classroom widens. Accordingly, after graduating from university, many EFL teachers lack the essential language skills, especially the ability to speak the language (Al-Hazmi, 2003).

Accordingly, since Blackboard-based instruction has proved to be effective in improving EFL/ESL students' achievement by creating functional virtual communities where relevant, meaningful learning can be generated in dynamic, interactive contexts, (Shih et al., 2007; Farooq & Gulzar, 2011; Zaid, 2011; AlAjmi et al., 2012; Farooq et al., 2012; Aldosari, 2013; Almelhi, 2014), this study sought to investigate its effects on EFL pre-service teachers' achievement in the teaching methods course.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

King Khalid University, like other Saudi Universities, has long had to face the problem of providing education in large geographical areas with low population density in Aseer Region. One of the solutions has been launching distance online programs in all campuses. However, the problem -as identified by Romano (2003) -is that the capacity of technology to transform teaching and learning in teacher education programs is not fully grasped; thus, after many years of trial and error, its potential impact is still not realized. Also, Bowman (2000) concluded that teachers "did not see a single example for the infusion of technology in context" in their teacher education programs. The absence of technology in teacher education programs could be a major barrier to teachers' future use of technology in the classroom. One approach to resolving this dilemma is to integrate recent technology into these programs. Thus, this study was motivated by the theoretical claim that, although a great deal of educational programs at the tertiary level is technology driven, EFL teacher education programs are in need of technology integration (Romano, 2003; Maslamani, 2013).

In addition, as indicated by AlAjmi et al. (2012), there is a restricted amount of research examining the impact of recent technology on the learning effectiveness in KSA. Moreover, as concluded by Alqahtani (2011), most of the studies investigating the use of modern technology in education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have concentrated on the theoretical perspective such as defining the use of technology and identifying the potential barriers. Also, these studies have discussed the different views of academics and students regarding the application of modern technology in education. Consequently, more experimental studies are needed regarding the impact of recent technology such as Blackboard-based instruction on learners' achievement especially in the field of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL).

Teaching the EFL teaching methods course to the seventh-level English Department students at Bisha Faculty of Education for girls for six years, the researcher observed that the performance of many students is far below the accepted level. This was evident through various manifestations: (1) although ten scores are allocated to participation, few students participate in class discussions. When asked about the reasons of their low participation, some students attributed it to the lack of microphones in the classrooms. Others imputed it to the large number of students in the classroom, which deprived them from taking an active part in class discussions,

(2) When they participate, students' performance shows that they lack the basic language skills to express their ideas, (3) Although the researcher always teaches students how to search the net for TEFL studies, most -if not all- of them resort to others (parents, colleagues or library staff) for conducting the search for them and (4) in the midterm and final exams, most of the students answer "True/False" questions (though they never correct false statements), and "Multiple Choice" questions ,while few students answer "Completion", "Comparison" or "Lesson Planning" questions. This reflects their low performance in the EFL teaching methods exams. This was supported by studies conducted by Al-Hazmi (2003) and Maslamani (2013). Moreover, although Blackboard-based instruction has proved to be effective in enhancing EFL/ESL students' achievement at the tertiary level (Zaid, 2011; Aldosari, 2013), it is not currently used in teaching any of the courses offered to English-Department students at Bisha Faculty of Education for Girls. Accordingly, no study has investigated the effect of Blackboard-based instruction on pre-service teachers' achievement in the EFL teaching methods course. Therefore, the present study attempted to fill these gaps and improve their performance in the prescribed course. To this end, two research questions were addressed:

1) What is the effect of Blackboard-based instruction on the seventh-level English department students' achievement in the EFL teaching methods course?

2) Which is more effective, Blackboard-based instruction or traditional instruction, in enhancing students' achievement?

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is three-fold:

1) To examine the effect of Blackboard-based instruction vs traditional instruction on students' achievement in the teaching methods course at Bisha Faculty of Education for Girls.

2) To develop a framework which would illustrate how to adopt Blackboard-based instruction in the teaching methods courses?

3) To determine, through research, which type of instruction is more effective in improving students' achievement.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Focusing on the types of instruction, namely, Blackboard-based instruction and traditional instruction, the current study claims that the comparative effectiveness of the two types of instruction is of great research value for the following reasons: (1) theoretically, studies in this area can inform issues such as the roles Blackboard-based instruction in TEFL and the role of modern technology in the teaching methods courses ; (2) pedagogically, research findings in this area may (a) provide EFL teachers and educators with useful insights into how to adopt Blackboard-based instruction and (b) fill in a research gap concerning the effectiveness of Blackboard-based instruction in enhancing students' achievement in the EFL teaching methods courses since no study has investigated the relative effectiveness blackboard- based instruction (Mekheimer, 2012).

1.6 Hypotheses

To probe into the effect of Blackboard-based instruction on students' achievement in the EFL teaching methods course, two hypotheses were formulated and tested.

1) There are statistically significant differences at 0.05 level between the pre-and-posttest mean scores of the experimental group in the EFL teaching methods test, in favor of the latter.

2) There are statistically significant differences at 0.05 level between the post-test mean scores of the experimental group and the control group in the EFL teaching methods test, in favor of the former.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

This study was limited to:

1) the seventh-level English Department students at the Faculty of Education for Girls in Bisha, KSA for the following reasons:

a.   Although their number was ninety-one at the beginning of the first term of the academic year 2013-2014, they attended as one group in a room designed for no more than forty students. Thus, the room was overcrowded and it was difficult for the students to attend the lecture standing up for three hours.

b.   The course schedule of some students was discordant with the time allocated for the teaching methods course.

c.   Many students come from distant places (from one-hundred and fifty to two-hundred kilometers) to attend the lecture.

d.   The allocated time of the lecture was from 12:00 to 2:00 pm on Monday and from 1:00 to 2:00 on Thursday. It was difficult for students to be active enough to attend the lecture. In addition, at this time, they should come back to their distant homes.

2. Definition of Terms

Some terms were repeatedly used in this study. The definition of these terms is presented below.

2.1 Blackboard Collaborate

In this study, the term 'Blackboard Collaborate' is used to mean a web conferencing system which allows teachers and students to communicate with one another synchronously and asynchronously, view presentations or videos, interact with other participants, and engage with resources in work groups.

2.2 Blackboard-based Instruction

This term is used to mean a learner-centered approach to teaching which integrates Blackboard Collaborate into the EFL teaching methods course. According to this approach the teacher, as a guide or facilitator, uses 'Blackboard Collaborate' to teach the course and enables the learners to benefit from its available facilities to perform their tasks successfully.

3. Review of Literature

This section consists of two parts. Part one ,'Blackboard Collaborate', deals with the definition of 'Blackboard Collaborate', advantages of Blackboard-based instruction, disadvantages of Blackboard-based instruction, the need for Blackboard-based instruction in King Khalid University, the technical requirements for 'Blackboard Collaborate', and components of 'Blackboard Collaborate'. In addition, it provides some implications for EFL teachers. Part two, 'The Teaching Methods Course ', sheds light on the teaching methods course offered to the seventh-level English Department students at the Faculty of Education for Girls in Bisha.

3.1 Blackboard Collaborate

Recent advances in technology have led to significant changes in all aspects of human life. With the availability of the Internet, information technologies have gained rapid acceleration and the development of various innovative tools has influenced the field of education since then. Being among the latest contributions of these emerging technologies, 'Blackboard Collaborate' provides numerous opportunities for teachers and learners to chat and study in cyberspace where they can surpass the limits of time and space. It has been serving as an interactive learning application for EFL teachers and learners all over the world.

3.1.1 Definition of 'Blackboard Collaborate'

The term 'Blackboard Collaborate' has been defined by many researchers. For example, while Kashghari and Asseel (2014: 36) look upon 'Blackboard Collaborate' as "one of the most popular course management systems for classroom and online educational assistance", Alelaiwi and Hossain (2015) consider it as an e-learning delivery tool which can be used as an e-learning platform and/or as supplementary tool for traditional teaching and learning. Furthermore, while Aljabre (2012) defines 'Blackboard Collaborate' as a distance learning management system serving as a medium through which students can attend live classes and participate in those classes by using the whiteboard, real-time quizzes, recording and playback capabilities, and application sharing, Al-Melhi (2014) considers it as a learning management system which provides electronic access to reading texts synchronously or asynchronously in the form of Blackboard Collaborate sessions. In this study, the term 'Blackboard Collaborate' (previously known as Eliminate Live) is used to mean a web conferencing system which allows participants (teachers and students) to communicate synchronously and asynchronously, view presentations or videos, interact with other participants, and engage with resources in work groups.

3.1.2 Advantages of Blackboard-based Instruction

The literature investigating the general features of Blackboard-based instruction and its potential benefits for teaching and learning has produced a long list of positive capabilities. The following are some advantages associated with adopting Blackboard-based instruction (Brown, 2007; Liaw, 2008; Heirdsfield et al., 2011; Fageeh and Mekheimer, 2013; Martin et al., 2013; Al-Jabry et al., 2014; Almelhi, 2014; Mohsen and Shafeeq, 2014).

3.1.2.1 Increased Accessibility and Availability

Both teachers and learners can benefit from Blackboard-based instruction at anytime and anywhere. Learners can

view and download course materials and other information and submit assignments online as soon as they are complete. That's why previous research (Bradford et al., 2007; Heirdsfield et al., 2007; Heirdsfield et al., 2011) indicates that it is the increased availability that most appeals to learners. For example, in a study conducted by Heirdsfield et al. (2011), learners commented on the importance of having lecture notes available both before the lecture and whenever they were subsequently needed. They liked being able to access unit materials, library databases and other materials such as homework and workshop tasks posted by the lecturer at any time of the day or night. In addition, the study revealed that access to contacts with the teaching team, other learners and university staff created opportunities for collaboration through blackboard. Moreover, having learning resources available in a central location and accessible for twenty-four hours a day was perceived as valuable in terms of efficient use of time and also valued as a resource for revision and examination preparation.

3.1.2.2. Synchronous and Asynchronous Communication

Blackboard-based instruction enables both EFL teachers and learners to communicate synchronously and asynchronously. In both synchronous and asynchronous communication, an environment of collaboration and scaffolding is established within the learning context. This virtual communication also enhances interaction which can take place in different forms. It may be between a learner and course materials, learner and learning activities, learner and teacher and among learners. Teachers can use synchronous communication technology without limits and build opulent learning communities that augment participation and invigorate innovation. They can set up virtual classrooms for scheduled classes where synchronous discussions occur in real time and have a stronger sense of social presence.

In addition, synchronous communication seems to increase psychological arousal through its ability to convey information that characterizes natural media (e.g., immediacy, feedback, facial or verbal expression, body language). So, "learners always feel more disposed towards using the synchronous chat to exchange social support and discuss less complex issues since this type of communication more closely resembles face-to-face interaction" (Hrastinski, 2008:51). Thus, synchronous communication provides learners with multiple opportunities to explore alternative means to interact with teachers, peers, course material and activities (Thurmond & Wambach, 2004; Farooq & Gulzar, 2011).

Asynchronous online communication, on the other hand, takes place over a delayed time period. It enables learners to interact frequently with each other and with the teacher. It also has the advantage of allowing learners to take time to think carefully about their responses before posting them online. In addition, it provides learners with the flexibility to participate according to their schedule, in an environment which is geographically separate from the teacher. Accordingly, both types of communication (synchronous or asynchronous) can enhance interaction with the teacher and other learners, which provide opportunities for knowledge building as much of learning occurs within social contexts (Liaw, 2008).

3.1.2.3 Verbal and Non-verbal Communication

There are many similar communication features between traditional instruction and blackboard-based instruction. In traditional instruction, teachers and learners can talk, see each other and send text messages either by putting words on a whiteboard or passing paper notes. Learners can also raise their hands, provide feedback with facial expressions and respond with a 'yes/no' to teacher's feedback. The same thing can happen in Blackboard-based instruction where teachers and participants can use 'The Audio and Video Panel" to speak, chat and see each other. In addition, they can raise their virtual hands, send feedback with emoticons and respond using the polling tool. Moreover, in addition to direct text/voice/video messaging, the participants can communicate in other ways: exchanging objects, moving in a shared space, i.e. an interface where the participants see the same collection of objects, can add objects, take them in their private space, edit them, delete them ... etc. Whiteboards are typical examples of these shared spaces.

3.1.2.4 Collaborative and Interactive Learning Environment

Blackboard-based instruction employs tools for collaborative and interactive learning. These include announcements, chat rooms, email, discussions and virtual classrooms. The announcements tool provides a simple, efficient way for sending messages to all learners in the group without wasting class time while the email facility provides learners with the opportunity to communicate with teachers on an as-needed basis. Also, asynchronous online discussions allow learners to interact frequently with each other and with the teacher. In addition, they have the advantage of providing learners with enough time to thoughtfully compose their responses before posting them online. Synchronous discussions, on the other hand, as evident in the virtual classroom facility, occur in real time and have a stronger sense of social presence (Malikowski et al., 2007). In both synchronous and asynchronous discussions, an environment of interaction and collaboration is established

among learners and teachers. Such virtual interactions enable teachers and learners to talk and work collaboratively without having to schedule a suitable time for all parties to meet. Thus, they are useful for time effectiveness for teachers and learners alike.

3.1.2.5 Addressing Different Learning Styles

According to Brown (2007), when instruction is matched to the students' learning styles, the student and performance is greatly enhanced. Blackboard-based instruction allows learners to access the learning materials at their own pace. In addition, it offers auditory, visual, and kinesthetic cues appealing to a broad range of learning styles.

3.1.2.6 Alleviating Performance Anxiety

Generally, many EFL learners suffer from performance anxiety in real communication. Since it is not acceptable for them to make mistakes and they don't like to embarrass themselves in public, they don't speak up. This suggests that other factors such as shyness, rather than failure to understand the discussions, might be causing some learners to eschew discussion in face-to-face modes but participate more equally in blackboard-based modes. At this juncture, Blackboard-based instruction helps such learners to alleviate their performance anxiety. Another factor which can alleviate performance anxiety is that weak and average learners can access the learning materials before and after the scheduled lectures, which enhances their comprehension.

3.1.2.7 Equality of Participation

Blackboard-based instruction, both in its asynchronous form (largely through e-mail discussion forums) and its synchronous form (through virtual classrooms and real-time discussions) provides learners with equal opportunities for participation. In other words, while discussions in traditional instruction tend to be relatively unbalanced, with one or two participants dominating class discussions or determining the topics due to lack of microphones -as the case in faculties of education for girls-, communication in Blackboard-based instruction features more balanced participation, with the learners sharing discussions more equally.

3.2 Disadvantages of Blackboard-Collaborate Based Instruction

Despite the benefits Blackboard-based instruction in foreign language teaching and learning due to its immersive and interactive nature, it has some drawbacks such as lack of learner awareness, the need for high end technology and frequent technical failures (Liaw, 20085; Heirdsfield et al., 2011).

3. 2.1 Lack of Learner Awareness

Blackboard-based instruction, as is the case with the new technology-based approaches, needs more time to infuse into the areas that it had failed to reach so far. So, while preparing learning courses via Blackboard Collaborate, teachers should consider learners' awareness and their ability to use the new technology in their learning practices. In this study, all the participants had more than three years of computer experience, and all had more than two years of Blackboard experience. They had various backgrounds about using computers, especially for emailing and doing assignments via Blackboard as the main Learning Management System (LMS) in King Khalid University. Thus, all the participants knew well about using the LMS.

3.2.2 The Need for High End Technology

Slow Internet connections and/or older computers may make it difficult for learners to join the scheduled virtual sessions and/or access the course materials, which may cause a frustrating technological problem. This may be solved by informing learners of the adequate computer specifications, providing proper technical support and training them in the use of different kinds of software (Heirdsfield et al., 2011).

3. 2.3 Frequent Technical Failures

From time to time, learners may encounter technical problems. For example, if the learning software doesn't work well with the computers or the Internet connection fails in the midst of a lesson, the teacher /learners may spend more time working with the software or repairing the connection than tackling the target learning material. The teacher should inform learners that, since Blackboard-based instruction is a growing technology-based approach, it requires patience until it achieves its objectives (Liaw, 2008).

3.3 The Need for Blackboard-based Instruction in King Khalid University

King Khalid University, which is headquartered in the city of Abha, was established in 1998. It consists of 26 different campuses and 48 colleges, offering higher education to a large number of students. Separate campuses are allocated for male and female students. Male teachers are not allowed to teach female students in face-to-face classes and use studios where they give lectures through a television screen in the room next door

where students are only permitted to ask questions through a telephone attached to the wall. This causes lack of interaction and participation. In addition, female students experience other challenges when it comes to travelling to and from their campuses. They depend on male relatives or drivers to take them to lectures. This is costly, time consuming.

Accordingly, King Khalid University set up an e-learning center in 2005 and launched 'Blackboard Collaborate' to as the main LMS. Accordingly, Blackboard-based instruction has enabled teachers and students to attend classes anywhere at any time through an Internet connection. It also helps students to access content materials such as lesson overviews, tasks, assessments, links to online resources and downloadable training resources and files.

Blackboard-based instruction also provides more opportunities for female students -who are denied admission to higher education because of overcrowding - to be admitted to the university. It also provides students, not living in one of the major cities where most of the university campuses are located, the opportunity to receive higher education. Thus, the increase in enrollment, specifically the increase in female students in new educational programs and courses, validates the need for Blackboard-based instruction which offers them the opportunity to better manage home and education (Aljabre, 2012).

3.4 Components of Blackboard Collaborate

As seen in figure (1), Blackboard Collaborate includes ten components Dimas (2015):

3.4.1 The Title Bar

'The Title Bar/Page Header' displays information about the current screen. Its purpose is to orient the participants.

3.4.2 The Menu Bar

'The Menu Bar' contains navigation elements that allow participants to access specific areas of a course or other parts of the Blackboard. It changes depending on where the participants are in Blackboard. It contains: File, Edit, View, Tools, Windows and Help Menus.

3.4.3 The Audio and Video Panel

'The Audio and Video Panel' contains the tools for using the microphone function and for monitoring and controlling the microphone and its volume levels. It also contains a window for video streamed from the participants' webcams as well as the controls for activating streaming from the teacher's webcam. Also, it enables participants to take part in conversations either using a microphone and speakers (or headset) or via a teleconference. In addition, it allows them to transmit and receive video during sessions. Moreover, it enables teachers to preview their videos before transmitting them.

3.4.4 The Participants Panel

'The Participants Panel' shows all session participants, including learners and teachers, along with certain user-inputs such as poll responses and emoticons. It also contains a set of buttons for raising hands, adding emoticons and stepping away from the session. Furthermore, it provides information about the participants' current activities, such as talking (Audio), transmitting video, sending a chat message, using the Whiteboard drawing tools and conducting an application sharing session.

3.4.5 The Chat Panel

'The Chat Panel' enables the participants to send chat messages to everyone in the session or to the teacher only. By selecting names in the participants list, private chat messages can be sent to individuals. Also, messages can be printed and saved to track session communication.

3.4.6 The Minimize Button

3.4.7 The Maximize Button

3.4.8 The Close Button

3.4.9 The Collaboration Toolbar

'The Collaboration Toolbar' contains three buttons for switching between the three content modes (Whiteboard, Application Sharing and Web Tour), 'The Information Menu' for obtaining session information (e.g., connection type) and starting the 'Timer', 'a Load Content Button' for loading content into the session and the Record Button.

3.4.10 The Content Area

The Content area is the main presentation panel. Teachers can use this region to load presentations, where learning materials are displayed. Participants can use the tools on the Whiteboard to write or draw. Participants can also print the Whiteboard pages or save them to a file to review later (unless the Whiteboard has been protected).
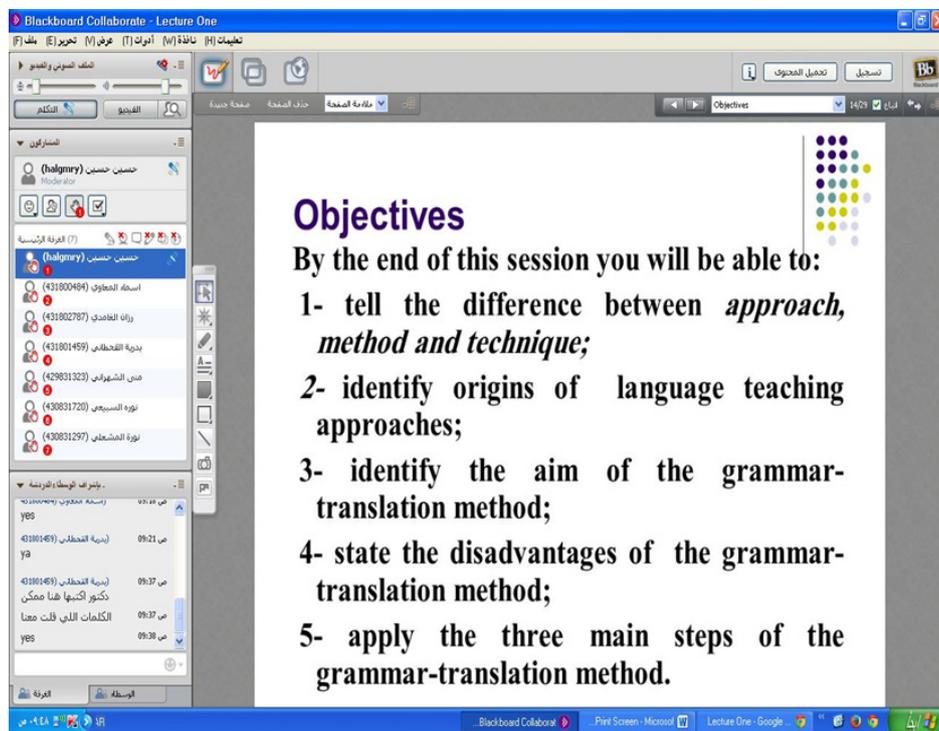

Figure 1. Components of blackboard collaborate

3.5 Part two: The Teaching Methods Course

At The Faculties of Education for Girls, English department students study their teaching methods course at the seventh level. Then they start their teaching practice at eighth level. This course aims to help them acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for their teaching practice. It tackles not only the planning of lessons in an EFL setting but also its implementation. It enriches the students' theoretical background and provides an ample opportunity for practice through group discussions, a number of micro-teaching sessions and various consultations. The course consists of forty-two hours, covering twenty-three items which are shown in Table 1.

4. Methodology

4.1 Design

The design of the study is quasi-experimental consisting of two groups: a control group (N=20) and an experimental group (N=20). At the beginning of the second week of the first term of the academic year 2013-2014, the pre-test (The EFL Teaching Methods Test) was administered to the two groups. Then, the two groups were taught the teaching methods course. The duration of the experiment was about fourteen weeks, three hours a week. At the end of the experiment, the two groups were post-tested using the same test (The EFL Teaching Methods Test).

4.2 Participants

Out of ninety-one seventh-level English Department students, forty were randomly assigned into either the experimental groups (N=20) or the control group (N=20). While studying their teaching methods course, the experimental group received instruction via Blackboard Collaborate whereas the control group received traditional instruction. All the participants had more than three years of computer experience and had more than two years of Blackboard experience. They had various backgrounds of using the computer, especially for emailing and doing assignments via Blackboard as the main LMS in King Khalid University.

4.3 Instruments

To collect data, a teaching methods test was prepared and used as a pre-posttest. The test was designed to measure students' achievement in the teaching methods course. The test consisted of fifty items (Appendix One).The test included five questions: True-False, Multiple Choice, Completion, Comparison and Lesson Planning.

4.3.1 Test Validity

Two methods were used for determining the test validity, namely, face validity and intrinsic validity.

a) Face Validity

The teaching methods test was submitted to a jury of five college staff members to state how far the test items measure the skills they were intended to measure and make the necessary modifications (Appendix Two). Based on the jury members' remarks, items of questionable validity were revised or deleted. In addition, other new items were added.

b) Intrinsic Validity

The test intrinsic validity was determined through the square root of the test reliability coefficient (El-Said, 1979:553). The test reliability coefficient was $\sqrt{0.862}$. The intrinsic validity is 0.928. Thus, the test was valid.

4.3.2 Test Reliability

The test-retest reliability was adopted. The test was administered to forty-one seventh-level English Department students by the end of the second term of the academic year 2012-2013 with an interval of two weeks. Pearson Product-moment correlation coefficient was calculated (Brown, 1996). It was 0.862. Thus, the calculated correlation coefficient is larger than the critical value (0.3218). This means that the calculated correlation coefficient is statistically significant (Brown, 1996).

4.4 Procedures

Before the experiment, the teaching methods test was designed. Then, the test validity and reliability were identified by the end of the second term of the academic year 2012-2013. At the beginning of the experiment (the second week of the first term of the academic year 2013-2014), the participants were introduced to the purposes of the study. Then, they were assigned either to the control group (N=20) or the experimental group (N=20). Afterwards, the researcher explained to each group what to do during the experiment. The experimental group received training in manipulating the teaching methods course via Blackboard Collaborate. Next, the pre-test (The Teaching Methods Test) was administered to the two groups.

During the experiment which lasted for fourteen weeks, the researcher taught the teaching methods course applying Blackboard-based instruction with the experimental group whereas the control group received traditional instruction. The experimental group accessed the online course from home, as they had no internet access from college.

At the end of the experiment, the post-test (The Teaching Methods Test) was administered to the two groups. Finally, based on the statistical analysis of the obtained data, results were discussed and recommendations were made.

4.5 Materials

4.5.1 The Course Goals

By the end of the teaching methods course, the participants were expected to be able to:

1). identify the various language skills they ought to help their primary and preparatory school pupils develop;

2). identify the language input provided in the textbook;

3). formulate behavioral objectives;

4). identify questioning strategies;

5). recognize and use error correction techniques;

6). recognize and use classroom management techniques;

7). recognize and use various techniques for designing and presenting teaching aids;

8). recognize and use various warming up activities;

9). recognize and use various presentation methods;

10). recognize and use a number of practice techniques;

11). recognize and use various evaluation techniques;

12). plan and implement a whole lesson;

13). develop self and peer evaluation;

14). make use of feedback given to them in their teaching.

4.5.2 The Course Calendar, Contents , Assignments and Contact Hours

The following Table 1 shows the course calendar, contents, assignments and contact hours.

Table 1. The course calendar, contents, assignments and contact hours

No. of Weeks	Topics	Assignments	Contact hours
First week	**First Session:** Introduction to the course –the components of the teaching/learning process – the characteristics of a competent EFL teacher spelled out in behavioral terms – taxonomy of language skills. **Second Session:** Discussion of students' needs and expectations about the course.	Writing a paragraph about the characteristics of a competent EFL teacher.	3
Second week	**First Session:** Lesson planning: phases and skills. **Second Session:** Use of lesson planning formats	Reviewing sample lessons	3
Third week	**First Session**: Aims and behavioral objectives **Second Session:** Practice of writing objective	Formulating sample Objectives.	3
Fourth week	**First Session:** Warming-up activities: brainstorming techniques, games, riddles, pictorial stimuli, use of teaching aids ….. etc. **Second Session:** Peer teaching (Practice of warming-up).	Preparing some warming-up activities	3
Fifth week	**First Session:** Presentation: effective presentation, procedures , explanations and instructions. Presenting new vocabulary and structure. **Second Session:** Peer teaching (Practice of effective presentation techniques)	Adopting some techniques for presenting new vocabulary and structure.	3
Sixth week	**First Session:** Practice: the function of practice, characteristics of good practice activities and phases of practice. **Second Session :**Peer teaching (language practice activities)	Preparing sample practice activities.	3
Seventh week	**First Session:** Closure and evaluation techniques **Second Session:** Peer teaching (practice of closure and evaluation	Preparing sample closure and evaluation techniques	3

techniques

Eighth week	**First session:** Mid-term written exam. **Second Session**: Giving model answers and discussing results		3
Ninth week	**First Session:** Questioning strategies. Error correction techniques and student-teacher interaction. **Second Session:** Peer teaching (practice of questioning and error correction techniques)	Adopting some questioning and error correction strategies.	3
Tenth week	**First Session:** Classroom management Placing and class watching. **Second Session:** Peer teaching.	Applying some classroom management techniques.	3
Eleventh week	**First Session:** Teaching Listening. Second session: Teaching Speaking.	Adopting techniques for presenting writing, reading, listening and speaking.	3
Twelfth week	**First Session:** Teaching Reading. **Second Session:** Teaching writing.		3
Thirteenth week	Peer teaching of a whole lesson for both first and second sessions.		3
Fourteenth week	Revision and course closure		3

4.5.3. Student Evaluation

Table 2 shows the scores allocated for student evaluation.

Table 2. The scores allocated for student evaluation

Effective attendance and in-class activities	15 marks
Midterm written exam	20 marks
Peer-teaching	15 marks
Final written exam	50 marks
Total	100

5. Results and Discussion

To make sure that there were no significant differences between the experimental group and the control group at the beginning of the experiment, Mann-Whitney Test was used. Table 3 shows Mean Ranks, Sum of Ranks and Z Values of the two groups on the Pre-Test.

Table 3. Mean ranks, sum of ranks and z values of the two groups on the pre-test

Dimension	Group	N.	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	df	Z Values	Sig.
One	Control Group	20	20.33	406.50			
	Ex. Group	20	20.68	413.50	2	0.102	0.925
Two	Control Group	20	20.08	401.50			
	Ex. Group	20	20.93	418.50	2	0.248	0.820
Three	Control Group	20	19.90	398.00			
	Ex. Group	20	21. 10	422.00	2	0.349	0.758
Four	Control Group	20	20.70	414.00			
	Ex. Group	20	20.30	406.00	2	0. 119	0.925
Five	Control Group	20	19.73	394.50			
	Ex. Group	20	21. 28	435.50	2	0.466	0.678
Total	Control Group	20	19.90	398.00			
	Ex. Group	20	21. 10	422.00	2	1.328	0.758

Results in Table 3 show that there were no significant differences between the mean ranks of the experimental group and the control group at the beginning of the experiment. This indicates that the two groups were homogeneous at the beginning of the experiment. Results also reveal that the mean ranks of the two groups were relatively low. This may be attributed to the fact that students had come from the summer vacation in which they might not have read any books about teaching methods. Another plausible interpretation is that the participants hadn't studied any teaching methods courses before the seventh level.

In response to the first research question, "What is the effect of blackboard- based instruction on the seventh-level English department students' achievement in the EFL teaching methods course?", Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used. Table 4 shows mean ranks, sum of ranks and Z values of the experimental group on the pre and post-test.

Table 4. Mean ranks, sum of ranks and Z Values of the Experimental group on the pre and post test

Dimension	Ranks	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z values	Sig.
One	Negative Ranks	0	0.00	0.00		
	Positive Ranks	20	10.50	210.00	3.941	.000
	Ties	0				
	Total	20				
Two	Negative Ranks	0	0.00	0.00		
	Positive Ranks	19	10.00	190.00	3.846	.000
	Ties	1				
	Total	20				
Three	Negative Ranks	0	0.00	0.00		
	Positive Ranks	20	10.50	210.00	3.943	.000
	Ties	0				
	Total	20				
Four	Negative Ranks	0	0.00	0.00		
	Positive Ranks	20	10.50	210.00	3.980	.000
	Ties	0				
	Total	20				
Five	Negative Ranks	0	0.00	0.00		
	Positive Ranks	19	10.00	190.00	3.850	.000
	Ties	1				
	Total	20				
Total	Negative Ranks	0	0.00	0.00		
	Positive Ranks	20	10.50	210.00	3.926	.000
	Ties	0				
	Total	20				

Results in Table 4 show that, in spite of the low performance of the participants in the pretest, there were significant differences at 0.01 level between the pre-and-post mean ranks of the experimental group in the five dimensions of the teaching methods test, in favor of the latter. Thus, the first hypothesis stating that "there are significant differences at 0.05 level between the pre-and-posttest mean scores of the experimental group in the EFL teaching methods test, in favor of the latter", was verified. These results mean that Blackboard-based instruction led to significant improvement in the participants' achievement in the teaching methods course. This improvement may be due to the strong equalizing effect of Blackboard-based instruction. Compared to traditional instruction where discussions tend to be relatively unbalanced, -with one or two participants dominating class discussions due to lack of microphones, Blackboard-based instruction provides learners with equal opportunities for participation. These results are congruent with the conclusions of Warschauer (1996), Alvine (2000) and Farooq and Gulzar (2011) that electronic communication can bring about more equal participation among second and foreign language learners.

Another plausible interpretation is that Blackboard-based instruction employs tools for collaboration and interaction which are important aspects of effective learning environment. These include announcements, chat, email, discussions and virtual classrooms. The announcements tool provided the participants with a simple, efficient way of relaying messages on to all the participants in the group without wasting class time while the email facility provided them with the opportunity to communicate with the teacher on an as-needed basis. Thus, Blackboard-based instruction created an environment of interaction and collaboration which enabled the teacher and the participants to work collaboratively in a flexible learning environment. This was supported by previous studies revealing that Blackboard-based instruction enhances collaboration and interaction which have positive

effects on EFL/ESL learners' achievement (Blake, 2005; Heckman & Annabi, 2005; Malikowski et al., 2007; Shih et al., 2007; Aldosari, 2013; Alelaiwi & Hossain, 2015).

A third possible interpretation is that, since Blackboard-based instruction employs different multi-sensory tools, it appealed to the participants' various learning styles and multiple intelligences. It enabled them to access the course materials at their own pace and offered multi-sensory cues appealing to the broad range of learning styles. Thus, by addressing the participants' different learning styles and multiple intelligences, Blackboard-based instruction encouraged them to try harder and at the same time made the learning environment as meaningful and enjoyable as possible for them.

A fourth possible interpretation is that Blackboard-based instruction provided the participants with various techniques of feedback. The teacher used oral, written, immediate and delayed feedback techniques which enabled the participants to locate the source of errors in their performance and carry out the cognitive comparison needed to notice the gap between their errors and the target performance and bridge that gap. In this way, Blackboard-based instruction created a scaffolding learning environment which encouraged the participants to interact with their teacher and colleagues while receiving constructive feedback on their performance. This commensurate with prior research findings about the positive effects Blackboard-based instruction on EFL/ESL learners' attitudes and achievement as it addresses their learning styles and multiple intelligences (Richards and Rogers, 2001; Larsen–Freeman, 2002; Christison, 2005; Mekheimer, 2012; Fageeh & Mekheimer, 2013).

To answer the second research question: "Which is more effective, blackboard-based instruction or traditional instruction, in enhancing students' achievement?", Mann-Whitney Test was used to compare the scores of the two groups. Table (5) shows Mean Ranks, Sum of Ranks and Z Values of the control group and the experimental group on the Post-Test

Table 5. Mean ranks, sum of ranks and Z values of the control group and the experimental group on the post-test

Dimension	Group	N.	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	df	Z Values	Sig.
One	Ex. Group	20	26.83	536.50			
	Control Group	20	14.18	283.50	2	3.483	0.000
Two	Ex. Group	20	27.25	545.00			
	Control Group	20	13.75	275.00	2	3.688	0.000
Three	Ex. Group	20	27.55	551.00			
	Control Group	20	13. 45	269.00	2	3.856	0.000
Four	Ex. Group	20	28.23	564.50			
	Control Group	20	12.78	255.50	2	4. 232	0.000
Five	Ex. Group	20	28.55	571.00			
	Control Group	20	12. 45	249.00	2	4.401	0.000
Total	Ex. Group	20	28.60	572.00			
	Control Group	20	12. 40	248.00	2	4.389	0.000

Results in Table 5 show that there were significant differences at 0.01 level between the post mean ranks of the control group and the experimental group in the five dimensions of the teaching methods test, in favor of the experimental group. Thus, the second hypothesis stating that "There are significant differences at 0.05 level between the post-test mean scores of the experimental group and the control group in the EFL teaching methods test, in favor of the former." was verified. This proves that Blackboard-based instruction was more effective in

improving the participants' achievement than traditional instruction. The superiority of the experimental group over the control group may be due to the increased accessibility and availability associated with Blackboard-based instruction. The participants of the experimental group were more able to access Blackboard via the internet at anytime and anywhere. Thus, they could view, download the course materials and other information and submit assignments online as soon as they were complete. Moreover, it allowed the participants to record classes as they happen, including any presentation audio and visuals. This means that the course content was accessible even after being delivered, an important benefit for the participants who did not fully understand the first time. Accordingly, Blackboard-based instruction made learning less daunting and helped with revision before exams for the participants. These results provided empirical support for the studies which highlighted the increased accessibility and availability associated with Blackboard-based instruction as a key factor in improving EFL/ESL learners' achievement (Bradford et al., 2007; Heirdsfield et al., 2007; Heirdsfield et al.,2 011; Prasad et al., 2013).

Also, this superiority can be explained by the fact that, compared to traditional instruction, Blackboard-based instruction enabled the participants to communicate synchronously and asynchronously with their colleagues as well as teacher. This created an environment of collaboration and scaffolding which had positive effects on the participants' achievement. It also enhanced interaction which took place in different forms: between the participants and course materials, the participants and learning activities, the participants and teacher and among the participants. Thus, compared to traditional instruction where interaction is impeded by the lack of microphones, Blackboard-based instruction provided the participants with multiple opportunities to explore alternative means to interact with teacher, peers, course material and activities. In addition, it provided the participants with the flexibility to communicate according to their schedule, in an environment which is geographically separate from the teacher. These results are supported by previous studies which revealed that both types of communication (synchronous or asynchronous) can enhance interaction with the teacher and other learners and provide opportunities for knowledge building as much of learning occurs within social contexts (Thurmond & Wambach, 2004; Liaw, 2008; Farooq & Gulzar , 2011).

A third possible interpretation is that, since many EFL/ESL learners suffer from performance anxiety in face-to-face communication as it is not acceptable for them to make mistakes and they don't like to embarrass themselves in public, Blackboard-based instruction helped the participants to alleviate their performance anxiety as it provided them with various modes of participation (orally and/or in writing; synchronously and/or asynchronously). Another important factor which might have alleviated the participants' anxiety was that Blackboard-based instruction enabled them to give and get feedback in different modes (orally and/or in writing; synchronously and/or asynchronously; individually and/or in groups). A third factor which might have alleviated the participants' anxiety was that weak and average participants could access the course materials before and after the scheduled lectures, which enhances their comprehension. These results are commensurate with the studies of Soukup, (2004), Alexander and Boud (2001) and Prasad et al. (2013) which revealed that Blackboard-based instruction plays a major role in alleviating EFL/ESL learners' anxiety.

A fourth possible interpretation is that, compared to traditional instruction, Blackboard-based instruction provided the participants with more learning varieties including (1) live interactive virtual classes (2) email (course messages) and electronic discussion groups (chat rooms); (2) bulletin boards (course announcements) ; 3) downloadable recorded course materials or tutorials; 4) interactive tutorials on the Web; and 5) informatics. These various learning varieties dispelled boredom and monotony which are looked upon as a bitter enemy of effective learning. In addition, they injected new vitality in the participants who showed more interest in the teaching methods course. Accordingly, Blackboard-based instruction gave scope for the participants and the teacher to go beyond chalk and talk method. Although these results seem to run counter to the conclusions of Hundsberger (2009), which generally revealed no significant differences between technology-based instruction and traditional instruction, they are commensurate with the conclusions of Mathew and Alidmat (2013) and Mohsen and Shafeeq (2014) about the positive effects of the learning varieties offered by Blackboard-based instruction on EFL/ESL learners' achievement and motivation.

5. Conclusion

The present study sought to investigate the effect of blackboard- based instruction on pre-service teachers' achievement in the EFL teaching methods course at The Faculty of Education for Girls, in Bisha, KSA. Results are encouraging as far as the effect of blackboard-based instruction on the participants' achievement is concerned. They revealed that Blackboard-based instruction was effective in enhancing the participants' achievement in the EFL teaching methods course. In addition, compared to traditional instruction, Blackboard-based instruction was more effective in improving the participants' achievement. The superiority of Blackboard-based instruction over

traditional instruction, theoretically, highlights the beneficial role of such new approach in the EFL teaching methods courses and implies that, pedagogically, Blackboard-based instruction is a better choice for EFL teachers at The Faculties of Education for Girls. These results substantiate the importance of integrating Blackboard-based instruction into the EFL teaching methods courses as it proved to be conductive to better achievement through its affordable learning environment which enabled the participants to attend their classes and participate in class discussions and access their course materials regardless of their geographic location. In addition, it enabled the participants to communicate synchronously and asynchronously with their colleagues as well as the teacher. This created an environment of collaboration and scaffolding which had positive effects on the participants' achievement.

6. Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1). EFL teachers should be encouraged to adopt Blackboard-based instruction in their teaching methods courses.

2). EFL teachers should be trained to use the(delete) Blackboard-based instruction in their teaching at The Faculties of Education for Girls.

3). Blackboard-based instruction should be integrated into the EFL teaching methods course.

4). The activities of the EFL teaching methods course should be adapted to suit blackboard-based instruction.

5). EFL teachers should empower students by creating learner-centered environment in which they are actively and safely engaged in the teaching process via Blackboard Collaborate.

6). EFL students should have a clear idea of why they use Blackboard Collaborate, what they use it for and how they use it.

7). EFL teachers should encourage all types of online feedback (oral, written, immediate and delayed).

7. Suggestions for Further Research

-Future research can investigate the effect of synchronous tools such as virtual classrooms and online chat versus asynchronous tools such as email communications and discussion forums on EFL learners' achievement in the teaching methods course.

-Future research can investigate the effect of Blackboard-based instruction on EFL learners' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

-It is possible to investigate the effect of Blackboard-based instruction on EFL learners' attitudes towards the teaching methods course.

-Since this study was conducted on female students and because it is likely that male and female students learn better through different teaching methods, the present study needs to be replicated with male students.

-Future research studies can direct due attention to investigating the effect Blackboard-based instruction on EFL teachers' attitudes towards the teaching profession.

References

AlAjmi, M. F, Khan, S., & Zamani, A. S. (2012). Using Instructive Data Mining Methods to Revise the Impact of Virtual Classroom in E-Learning, *International Journal of Advanced Science and Technology*, *45*, 125-134.

Aldosari, H. (2013). Effectiveness of a Wikis-Based Applied Linguistics Course on Learning Outcomes and Attitudes towards the Course, *Global Journal of Human Social Science*, *13*(13), 39-46.

Alelaiwi, A., & Hossain, M. S. (2015). Evaluating and Testing User Interfaces for E-Learning System: Blackboard Usability Testing. *Journal of Information Engineering and Applications*, *5*(1), 23-30.

Alexander, S., & Boud, D. (2001). Learners Still Learn from Experience When Online. In J. Stephenson (Ed.), *Teaching and Learning Online: Pedagogies for New Technologies* (pp. 1-15). London: Kogan Page.

Al-Hajailan, T. (1999). Evaluation of English as a Foreign Language *Textbook for Third Grade Secondary Boys' Schools in Saudi Arabia*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Mississippi State University.

Al-Hazmi, S.(2003). EFL Teacher Preparation Programs in Saudi Arabia: Trends and Challenges. *TESOL Quarterly*, *37*(2), 342-345. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3588509

Aljabre, A. (2012). An Exploration of Distance Learning in Saudi Arabian Universities: Current Practices and Future Possibilities. *International Journal of Business, Humanities and Technology, 2*(2), 131-137.

Alvine, L. (2000). A 20th century English Teacher Educator Enters the 21st Century: A Response to Pope and Golub. *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education, 1*(1), 102-106.

Almelhi, A. M. (2014). Effects of Teaching Argumentative Reading and Writing by Integration in an E-Learning Environment on Literacy Development in EFL College Students. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, *4*(5), 85-102.

Al-Melhi, A. A. (2014). Effects on and Predictability of Computer-mediated Glosses in Reading Comprehension of EFL College Students. *The Reading Matrix*, *14*(2), 65-77.

Al-Jabry, H., Salahuddin, M., & Al-Shazly, A. (2014). Developing and Piloting a Literature Course Learnable Via Blackboard for EFL Literature Instruction. *Studies in Literature and Language, 8*(1), 85-95.

Armstrong, T. (1994). Multiple Intelligences: Seven Ways to Approach Curriculum. *Educational Leadership*, *52*(3), 26-28.

Becker, H. J. (2000). The "Exemplary Teacher" Paper- How It Arose and How It Changed Its Author's Research Program. *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education*, *1*(2), 1-9.

Blake, R. J. (2005). Bimodal CMC: The Glue of Language Learning at a Distance. *CALICO Journal, 22*(3), 497-511.

Bowman, C. A. (2000). Infusing Technology-based Instructional Frameworks in the Methods Courses: A Response to Pope and Golub. *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education*, *1*(1), 98-101.

Bradford, P., Porciello, M., Balkon, N., & Backus, D. (2007). The Blackboard Learning System: The be All and End All in Educational Instruction? *Journal of Educational Technology Systems*, *35*(3), 301-314. http://dx.doi.org/10.2190/X137-X73L-5261-5656

Brown, J. (1996). *Testing in Language programs.* New Jersey: Prentice Hall Regents.

Brown, D. B. (2007). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* (6th ed.).White Plains, NY: Pearson.

Christison, M. A. (2005). *Multiple Intelligences and Language Learning: A Guidebook of Theory, Activities, Inventories and Resources*. Burlingame, CA: Alta Book Center.

El-Said, F. A. (1979). *Statistical Psychology and Human Mind Measurement* (3rd ed) Cairo. Dar Al Fekr Al Arabi (In Arabic).

Fageeh, A., & Mekheimer, M. (2013). Effects of blackboard on EFL academic writing and attitudes. *The JALTCALL Journal*, *9*(2)*,* 169-196.

Farooq, U., & Gulzar, M. A. (2011). Interaction with Tutors and Peers in a Virtual Classroom: A Case Study of Online English Language Teaching Program in Pakistan. *The Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, *XIX(1)*, 21-42.

Farooq, M. U., Al Asmari, A., & Javid, C. Z. (2012). A Study of Online English Language Teacher Education Programmes in Distance Education Context in Pakistan, *English Language Teaching*, *5*(11), 91-103. http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n11p91

Gass, S., & Selinker, L. (2008). *Second Language Acquisition: An Introductory Course* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Heckman, R., & Annabi, H. (2005). A Content Analytic Comparison of Learning Processes in Online and Face-to-Face Case Study Discussions , *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 10*(2), 00.

Heirdsfield, A., Davis, J., Lennox, S., Walker, S., & Zhang, W. (2007). Online learning environments: What early childhood teacher education students say. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education, 28*(2), 115-126. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10901020701366699

Heirdsfield, A., Walker, S., Tambyah, M., & Beutel, D. (2011). Blackboard as an Online Learning Environment: What Do Teacher Education Students and Staff Think? *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 36*(7), 1-16. http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2011v36n7.4

Hismanoglu, M. (2012). Integrating Second Life into an EFL Classroom: A New Dimension in Foreign Language Learning and Teaching. *International Journal on New Trends in Education and Their Implications*, *3(4),* 100-110

Hrastinski, S. (2008). Asynchronous and Synchronous e-learning: A Study of Asynchronous and Synchronous e-learning Methods Discovered that Each Supports Different Purposes. *EDUCAUSE Quarterly*, **31**(4),

51-55.

Hundsberger, S. (2009). *Foreign Language Learning in Second Life and the Implications for Resource Provision in Academic Libraries*. Retrieved on August 15, 2015, from http://arcadiaproject.lib.cam.ac.uk/docs/second_life.pdf

Hyslop-Margison, E. J. (2004). Technology, human Agency and Dewey's Constructivism: Opening Democratic Spaces in Virtual Classrooms. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology, 20*(2), 137-148.

Kashghari, B., & Asseel, D. (2014). *Collaboration and Interactivity in EFL Learning via Blackboard Collaborate: A Pilot Study*, Paper presented at the International Conference ICT for Language Learning, 13 - 14 November 2014, Lungarno del Tempio 44, Florence

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2002). *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching* (2nd ed). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Liaw, S-S. (2008). Investigating Students' Perceived Satisfaction, Behavioural Intention, and Effectiveness of e-Learning: A Case Study of the Blackboard System. *Computers and Education*, *51*(2), 864-873. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2007.09.005

Liontas, J. I. (2002). CALL Media Digital Technology: Whither in the New Millennium? *CALICO Journal, 19*(2), 315-330.

Malikowski, S. R., Thompson, S. R., & Theis, J. G. (2007). A Model for Research into Course Management Systems: Bridging Technology and Learning Theory. *Journal of Educational Computing Research, 36*(2), 149-173. http://dx.doi.org/10.2190/1002-1T50-27G2-H3V7

Martin, F, Parker, M., & Oyarzun, B. A. (2013). A Case Study on the Adoption and use of Synchronous Virtual Classrooms. *The Electronic Journal of e-Learning*, *11*(2), 124-138.

Maslamani, J. A. (2013). Potential Integration of a Computer-Mediated Communication Platform into the Saudi EFL Classroom: A Synthetic Review. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 3*(15), 72-87.

Mathew, N. G., & Alidmat, A. O. (2013). A Study on the Usefulness of Audio-Visual Aids in EFL Classroom: Implications for Effective Instruction, *International Journal of Higher Education*, *2*(2), 86-92. http://dx.doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v2n2p86

Mekheimer, M. A. A. (2012). Assessing Aptitude and Attitude Development upon Teaching Translation Skills Using LMS and an Online Dictionary. *CALICO Journal, 29*(2), 321-340. http://dx.doi.org/10.11139/cj.29.2.321-340

Mohsen, M. A., & Shafeeq, C. P. (2014). EFL Teachers' Perceptions on Blackboard Applications. *English Language Teaching*, *7*(11), 108-118. http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v7n11p108

Perkins, D. N. (1992b). What Constructivism Demands of the Learner. In T. M. Duffy, & D. H. Jonassen (Eds.), *Constructivism and the Technology of Instruction: A conversation* (pp. 161-166). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Pope, C., & Golub, J. (2000). Preparing Tomorrow's English Language Arts Teachers Today: Principles and Practices for Infusing Technology. *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education, 1*(1), 89-97.

Powers, S. M., & Mitchell, J. (1997). Student Perceptions and Performance in a Virtual Classroom Environment. *Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association* (Chicago, IL, March 24-28).

Prasad, M. R., Manjula, B., & Bapuji, V. (2013). Virtual Classroom Pedagogy: New Tendency in Higher Education Institutions. *International Journal of Information and Computation Technology, 3*(7), 671-676.

Richards, J., & Rogers, T. (2001). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching* (2nd ed). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511667305

Royce, T. (2002). Multimodality in the TESOL classroom: Exploring Visual-Verbal Synergy. *TESOL Quarterly, 36*(2), 191-206. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3588330

Romano, M. T. (2003). *Empowering Teachers with Technology: Making it Happen*. Oxford: Scarecrow Press.

Shih, Y., Lin, Y., & Yang, M. (2007). The Development of an Online Virtual English Classroom: VEC3D, *Journal of Information Technology and Applications*, *2*(2), 61-68.

Soukup, C. (2004). Multimedia Performance in a Computer-Mediated Community: Communication as a Virtual

Drama. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *9*(4), 26-37. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2004.tb00294.x

Thurmond, V., & Wambach, K. (2004). Understanding interactions in distance education: A review of the literature. *International Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning*, *1*(1), 9-25.

Warschauer, M. (1996). Comparing Face-to-Face and Electronic Discussion in the Second Language Classroom. *CALICO Journal*, *13*(2), 7-26.

Zaid, M. A. (1993). *Comprehensive Analysis of the Current System of Teaching English as a Foreign Language in the Saudi Arabian Intermediate Schools.* Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Colorado, Boulder.

Zaid, M. A. (2011). Effects of Web-Based Pre-Writing Activities on College EFL Students' Writing Performance and their Writing Apprehension. *Journal of King Saud University – Languages and Translation*, *23*, 77-85. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jksult.2011.04.003

Copyrights