

Empirical Research on the Assessment and Enhancement of Blended Teaching Competence of Integrated English Teachers

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Abstract

This research aimed to assess Integrated English teachers' competence at Guangzhou Institute of Science and Technology. The participants of the study were 275 students who were enrolled in Integrated English course, and 11 teachers who teach this course. The study revealed that the level of teachers' competence in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes in Integrated English blended teaching was very high as assessed by the teacher and student participants. However, the challenges and problems encountered by teachers were limited time, insufficient supervision on students' study and difficulty in assessing individual outputs. Therefore, a plan of action was proposed to improve the teaching of Integrated English through blended mode.

Keywords

Integrated English, Blended Teaching, Teachers' Competence.

1. Introduction

In the contemporary educational landscape, the role of technology in enhancing teaching and learning practices has become increasingly prominent. As higher education institutions strive to adapt to the digital age, the integration of blended learning modes has emerged as a pivotal strategy to improve the quality and effectiveness of educational delivery. This study aims to contribute to this discourse by focusing specifically on the competence of teachers in the context of Integrated English courses at the Guangzhou Institute of Science and Technology.

Integrated English, as a fundamental course for English majors, plays a vital role in developing students' comprehensive language proficiency, critical thinking skills, and cross-cultural competencies. However, traditional teaching methods often prioritize vocabulary and grammar instruction over the cultivation of autonomous learning and communication skills, leading to a disconnect between educational objectives and the demands of the modern workplace and society. To address this gap, the integration of blended teaching modes, leveraging digital platforms like Chaoxing, presents a promising solution.

The objectives of this study are multifaceted. Firstly, it systematically investigates the current state of Integrated English teaching and the competence of teachers in this field. Secondly, it aims to identify strategies for enhancing teachers' blended teaching competence, thereby improving the quality of Integrated English instruction and student outcomes. By doing so, this research contributes to the broader discourse on educational innovation and the digital transformation of pedagogical practices.

Drawing upon existing literature and theoretical frameworks, this study defines teacher competence as an amalgamation of professional knowledge, teaching skills, attitudes, and values. It acknowledges that effective blended teaching necessitates not only mastery of digital tools but also a deep understanding of pedagogical principles and the ability to foster student engagement and learning. By examining the profile of teachers in terms of age, teaching

experience, educational attainment, and professional title, this research endeavors to uncover the relationship between these variables and teachers' competence in blended teaching.

Moreover, this study seeks to address specific research questions centered around the profile of teachers, their competence levels, and the correlation between the extent of blended teaching implementation and teacher competence. It also delves into the challenges encountered by teachers and students in the implementation of blended teaching modes and proposes actionable strategies to overcome these hurdles.

In summary, this research offers a comprehensive empirical analysis of the enhancement of blended teaching competence among Integrated English teachers. By bridging the gap between traditional teaching practices and digital innovation, this study contributes to the advancement of higher education and the preparation of future-ready graduates equipped with the language proficiency and critical thinking skills demanded by the global workplace.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

This study employed mixed research design utilizing quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative approach was used to determine the profile, level of teachers' competence in teaching Integrated English. Moreover, descriptive inferential analysis was employed to determine significant difference in the level of the teachers' competence in teaching Integrated English when they are grouped according to their profile variables. On the other hand, qualitative technique was used to analyze the problems encountered by the participants in the teaching of Integrated English using blended mode by using thematic analysis.

2.2. Participants of the Study

Two groups of participants were involved in the study, namely, the student participants and the teacher participants from Guangzhou Institute of Science and Technology during the first and second grade, academic year 2021-2022 and 2022-2023, detailed below:

Table 1. Participants of the Study

Participants	Number of participants
Students	275
Teachers	11
Total	286

There are 275 student-participants who are enrolled in the Integrated English course. The teacher participants include the population of Integrated English teachers for the first and second grade. There were eleven (11) teachers who were involved in the study. Total enumeration was employed in determining the participant population.

2.3. Instrumentation

The instrumentation that was used is a survey questionnaire consisted of four parts with the goal of proposing a plan of action for the enhancement of the teachers' competence in Integrated English course at Guangzhou Institute of Science and Technology.

Part 1 obtained information on the profile of the student-participants.

Part 2 gained data on the profile of the teacher participants: age, highest educational attainment, length of teaching experience and professional title.

Part 3 obtained the assessment of on teachers' competence in Integrated English during blended teaching.

Part 4 gathered information on the challenges and problems encountered by the teachers during blended Integrated English class and suggestions to improve teaching in the blended Integrated English class.

2.4. Data Analysis

The data collected will be tallied and treated using the following analytic tools:

Frequency and Percentage. These will be used to describe the profile of the participants.

Mean. This was used to determine the level of teachers' competence in teaching Integrated English.

To interpret the means, the following scales were used:

Table 2. Scale for Interpreting the Data

Mean Range	Level of Competence
3.25 - 4.00	Very High
2.50 - 3.24	High
1.75 - 2.49	Moderate
1.00 - 1.74	Low

One-way ANOVA. This was used to determine the significant difference in the teachers' competence in teaching Integrated English when grouped according to their profile variables.

Thematic Analysis. This was used to analyze the problems encountered by the teachers in Integrated English class.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Profile of the Participants

3.1.1. Students

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Student-Participants when Grouped According to Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	38	13.82
Female	237	86.18
Total	275	100.00

Table 3 exhibits the frequency count and percentage distribution of the participants in terms of gender. As seen from the table, majority or 86.18% of the participants are female.

Table 4. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Student-Participants when Grouped According to Year Level

Year Level	Frequency	Percentage
Freshman	87	31.64
Sophomore	188	68.36
Total	275	100.00

As reflected in Table 4, the participants were freshmen and sophomores. Based on the result, majority or 68.36% of the participants are sophomore students.

3.1.2. Teachers

Table 5. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Teacher-Participants when Grouped According to Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
45 and above	3	27.27
35-44 years old	5	45.45
26-35 years Old	3	27.27
Total	11	100.00

Table 5 displays the frequency count and percentage distribution of the teacher-participants when grouped according to age. It can be deduced from the result that most or 45.45% of the teacher-participants are 35-44 years old.

Table 6. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Teacher-Participants when Grouped According to Number of Years in Teaching

Years of Service	Frequency	Percentage
26 and above	2	18.18
16 – 20 years	2	18.18
11 – 15 years	3	27.27
6 – 10 years	2	18.18
0 – 5 years	2	18.18
Total	11	100.00

Table 6 displays the frequency count and percentage distribution of the teacher-participants when grouped according to number of years teaching. It can be noticed that most or 27.27% of the teacher-participants have been teaching for 11-15 years.

Table 7. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Teacher-Participants when Grouped According to Highest Educational Attainment

Highest Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage
PhD in English Linguistics or allied program	1	9.09
Master in English Linguistics or Allied Program	5	45.45
Master in another field	5	45.45
Total	11	100.00

Table 7 displays the frequency count and percentage distribution of the teacher-participants when grouped according to highest educational attainment. It can be found that most or 45.45% of the teacher-participants are holders of master's degree in English Linguistics or allied program, and another 45.45% of the teacher-participants are master's degree holders in other fields.

Table 8. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Teacher-Participants when Grouped According to Professional Title

Position	Frequency	Percentage
Professor	1	9.09
Associate Professor	2	18.18
Lecturer	5	45.45
Assistant	3	27.27
Total	11	100.00

Table 8 displays the frequency count and percentage distribution of the teacher-participants when grouped according to professional title. As seen in the table, most or 45.45% of the participants have the professional title of lecturer.

3.2. Level of Teachers' Competence in Integrated English Blended Teaching

3.2.1. Knowledge

Table 9. Participants' Assessment of the Teachers' Level of Competence in Integrated English Blended Teaching in Terms of Knowledge

Indicators	Students		Teachers		Overall	
	Mean	DI	Mean	DI	Mean	DI
1.My teacher knows sufficient theories in blended teaching.	3.42	VHL	3.26	VHL	3.34	VHL
2.My teacher sets reasonable expectations about her students and help them to achieve these.	3.48	VHL	3.41	VHL	3.45	VHL
3.My teacher contributes to the development of classrooms and schools that value diversity and civic mindedness.	3.51	VHL	3.19	HL	3.35	VHL
Category Mean	3.47	VHL	3.29	VHL	3.38	VHL

Table 9 shows the participants' assessment of the teachers' level of competence in Integrated English blended teaching in terms of knowledge. As seen from the results, both the student and teacher participants rated the teachers' level of competence to a very high level as evidenced by the overall category mean of 3.38. The results imply that the teachers are very highly knowledgeable in Integrated English Blended Teaching.

The item that was rated highest by the student-participants is "My teacher contributes to the development of classrooms and schools that value diversity and civic mindedness." with the resulting mean of 3.51 which is characterized as very high, while the item rated highest by the teacher-participants is "My teacher sets reasonable expectations about her students and help them to achieve these." with the resulting mean of 3.41 which is characterized as very high. However, the item that was rated lowest by the student-participants is "My teacher knows sufficient theories in blended teaching." with the resulting mean of 3.42 which is characterized as very high, while the item that was rated lowest by the teacher-participants is "My teacher contributes to the development of classrooms and schools that value diversity and civic mindedness." with the resulting mean of 3.19 which is characterized as high.

This is in consonance with Ye's research results. In the survey results of student satisfaction in Ye's (2021)^[1] Integrated English blended teaching experimental class and comparing class, 74.4% of students in the experimental class were satisfied with blended teaching in terms of teaching knowledge, while 53.9% of students in the comparing class were satisfied with blended teaching. This means that students rated teachers' competence in terms of knowledge to a high level.

3.2.2. Skills

Table 10. Participants' Assessment of the Teachers' Level of Competence in Integrated English Blended Teaching in Terms of Skills

Indicators	Students		Teachers		Overall	
	Mean	DI	Mean	DI	Mean	DI
1. My teacher assesses her students' learning using value-added test-based growth measures or alternative assessments.	3.39	VHL	3.55	VHL	3.47	VHL
2. My teacher uses diverse resources to plan and structure engaging learning opportunities.	3.33	VHL	3.55	VHL	3.44	VHL
3. My teacher monitors students' progress by using formative assessments and by adapting instruction as needed.	3.43	VHL	3.45	VHL	3.44	VHL
4. My teacher evaluates learning using multiple sources of evidence.	3.42	VHL	3.09	VHL	3.26	VHL
5. My teacher shows competence in the following:						
5.1. Browsing, searching, and filtering data, information, and digital content.	3.31	VHL	3.44	VHL	3.38	VHL
5.2. Evaluation of data, information, and digital content	3.41	VHL	3.19	HL	3.30	VHL
5.3. Management of data, information, and digital content	3.35	VHL	3.36	VHL	3.36	VHL
5.4. Interaction through digital technologies.	3.44	VHL	3.08	HL	3.26	VHL
5.5. Sharing through digital technologies	3.29	VHL	3.83	VHL	3.56	VHL
5.6. Using digital technologies creatively	3.19	HL	3.04	HL	3.12	HL
5.7. Field competencies	3.31	VHL	3.06	HL	3.19	HL
5.8. Research Competencies	3.35	VHL	3.48	VHL	3.42	VHL
5.9. Curriculum Competencies	3.32	VHL	3.35	VHL	3.34	VHL
5.10. Lifelong Learning Competencies.	3.33	VHL	3.00	HL	3.17	HL
5.11. Emotional Competencies	3.42	VHL	3.72	VHL	3.57	VHL
5.12. Communication Competencies.	3.20	HL	3.35	VHL	3.28	VHL
5.13. Environmental Competencies	3.18	HL	3.14	HL	3.16	HL
5.14. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Competencies	3.34	VHL	3.42	VHL	3.38	VHL
Category Mean	3.33	VHL	3.34	VHL	3.34	VHL

Table 10 shows the participants' assessment of the teachers' level of competence in Integrated English blended teaching in terms of skills. As shown in the table, both the student and teacher participants rated the teachers' competence to a very high level as evidenced by the overall category mean 3.34. The results imply that the teachers are very highly skilled in Integrated English Blended Teaching.

The item that was rated highest by the student-participants is "My teacher shows competence in the following: Interaction through digital technologies." with the resulting mean of 3.44 which is characterized as very high, while the item rated highest by the teacher-participants is "My teacher assesses her students' learning using value-added test-based growth measures or alternative assessments." and "My teacher uses diverse resources to plan and structure engaging learning opportunities." with the resulting mean of 3.55 which is characterized as very high. However, the item that was rated lowest by the student-participants is "My teacher shows competence in the following: Environmental Competencies" with the resulting mean of 3.18 which is characterized as high, while the item that was rated lowest by the teacher-participants

is “My teacher shows competence in the following: Lifelong Learning Competencies.” with the resulting mean of 3.00 which is characterized as high.

This is aligned with Ye's research results. According to Ye's (2021) Integrated English blended teaching student satisfaction survey results, in terms of teaching skills, 81.4% of students in the experimental class are satisfied with blended teaching, while 66.6% of students in the control class are satisfied with blended teaching. This means that students rated teachers' competence in terms of knowledge to a high level.

In addition, Wang (2023)^[2] believes that the development of modern information technology has provided abundant resources for blended teaching, enabling teachers and students to access learning resources through various channels. College English teachers have continuously sustained their teaching skills to meet the dynamic learning needs of students.

3.2.3. Attitude

Table 11. Participants' Assessment of the Teachers' Level of Competence in Integrated English Blended Teaching in Terms of Attitude

Indicators	Students		Teachers		Overall	
	Mean	DI	Mean	DI	Mean	DI
1. My teacher takes it as a responsibility to contribute to positive academic and social outcomes of her students.	3.49	VHL	3.55	VHL	3.52	VHL
2. My teacher is responsible for her students' on-time promotion to the next grade level and their on-time graduation.	3.49	VHL	3.55	VHL	3.52	VHL
3. My teacher encourages and assists her students towards self-efficacy and cooperative behavior.	3.52	VHL	3.45	VHL	3.49	VHL
4. My teacher collaborates with other teachers, administrators, and education professionals to ensure student success.	3.47	VHL	3.27	VHL	3.37	VHL
5. My teacher gives truthful feedback to her students regarding their academic and behavioral standing.	3.48	VHL	3.55	VHL	3.52	VHL
Category Mean	3.49	VHL	3.47	VHL	3.48	VHL

Table 11 shows the participants' assessment of the teachers' level of competence in Integrated English blended teaching in terms of attitudes. As shown in the table, both the student and teacher participants rated the teachers' competence to a very high level as evidenced by the overall category mean 3.48. The results imply that the teachers have very good attitude towards Integrated English Blended Teaching.

The item that was rated highest by the student-participants is “My teacher encourages and assists her students towards self-efficacy and cooperative behavior.” with the resulting mean of 3.52 which is characterized as very high, while the item rated highest by the teacher-participants is “My teacher takes it as a responsibility to contribute to positive academic and social outcomes of her students.”, “My teacher is responsible for her students' on-time promotion to the next grade level and their on-time graduation.” and “My teacher gives truthful feedback to her students regarding their academic and behavioral standing.” with the resulting mean of 3.55 which is characterized as very high. However, the item that was rated lowest both by the student and teacher participants is “My teacher collaborates with other teachers, administrators, and education professionals to ensure student success.” with the resulting mean of 3.47 which is characterized as very high.

This is also supported by Ye's comprehensive English blended teaching survey results. Ye (2021)^[1] found that in terms of teaching interaction, 81.4% of students in the experimental class were satisfied with blended teaching, while 66.6% of students in the control class were satisfied with blended teaching. This means that students rated teachers' competence in terms of knowledge to a high level.

Table 12. Summary Table on the Participants' Assessment of the Teachers' Level of Competence in Integrated English Blended Teaching

Dimensions	Students		Teachers		Overall	
	Mean	DI	Mean	DI	Mean	DI
Knowledge	3.47	VHL	3.29	VHL	3.38	VHL
Skills	3.33	VHL	3.34	VHL	3.34	VHL
Attitudes	3.49	VHL	3.47	VHL	3.48	VHL
Overall Mean	3.43	VHL	3.37	VHL	3.40	VHL

Table 12 reveals the participants' overall assessment of the teachers' level of competence in Integrated English blended teaching. As shown in the table, both the students and teachers assessed the level of the teachers' competence in Integrated English blended teaching to a very high level, as indicated by the category mean of 3.43 and 3.37 respectively and an overall mean of 3.40. All the indicators obtained means ranging from 3.29 to 3.49, descriptively interpreted as very high level. The results show that level of the teachers' competence in teaching Integrated English is very high.

The highest rated dimension by both the student and teacher participants is "attitudes" with category means of 3.49 and 3.47 respectively to a very high extent. Nevertheless, the dimension rated lowest by the student-participants is "Skills" with a category mean of 3.33 characterized as very high extent, while the dimension rated lowest by the teacher-participants is "Knowledge" with a category mean of 3.29 characterized as very high extent.

To summarize, online and offline blended teaching requires high levels of teaching knowledge, skills, and attitudes from teachers. Students have a high evaluation of these three ability dimensions of teachers, which means that students in the university have a high evaluation of teachers' abilities, further reflecting the high quality of blended teaching in the university.

3.3. Inferential Test Results on the Significant Difference in the Teachers' Competence in Integrated English Blended Teaching when they are Grouped According to their Profile Variables

3.3.1. Age

Table 13 shows the analysis results on the significant difference on the teachers' level of competence in Integrated English blended teaching when grouped according to age. As shown in the table, the computed probability values of all three dimensions are greater than 0.05 level of significance; hence, the null hypotheses are accepted. The results suggest that there are no significant differences on the teachers' level of competence in teaching Integrated English blended teaching at Guangzhou Institute of Science and Technology when grouped according to age. It further implies that age does not affect the teachers' level of competence in Integrated English blended teaching at Guangzhou Institute of Science and Technology.

Wu et al. (2023)^[3] believe that universities should ensure a balance in the age structure of team members, achieve a balanced proportion of the elderly, middle aged, and young, in order to complement each other's advantages. Elderly teachers should not only have rich teaching experience and outstanding teaching achievements, but also have good professional ethics and conduct. They should be willing to impart experience to young teachers and help them grow.

Middle aged teachers should have certain scientific research achievements and be ranked in teaching evaluations or lecture competitions. Young teachers should have positive performance in their daily work, be hardworking, down-to-earth, hardworking, and eager to learn.

Table 13. F-test Analysis Results on the Significant Difference on the Teachers' Level of Competence in Teaching Integrated English Blended Teaching When Grouped According to Age

Dimensions	Age	Mean	F	PV	Decision
Knowledge	55 years old and above	1.17	2.003	0.202	Accept Ho
	45-54 years Old	2.67			
	35-44 years old	1.27			
	26-35 years Old	1.89			
	Total	3.38			
Skills	55 years old and above	1.39	1.599	0.274	Accept Ho
	45-54 years Old	2.33			
	35-44 years old	1.30			
	26-35 years Old	1.69			
	Total	3.48			
Attitude	55 years old and above	1.00	1.792	0.236	Accept Ho
	45-54 years Old	2.20			
	35-44 years old	1.36			
	26-35 years Old	1.33			
	Total	3.40			

3.3.2. Number of Years of Teaching

Table 14. F-test Analysis Results on the Significant Difference on the Teachers' Level of Competence in English Blended Teaching When Grouped According to Number of Years in Teaching

Dimensions	Years in Teaching	Mean	F	PV	Decision
Knowledge	30 years and more	3.35	0.485	0.777	Accept Ho
	26 – 30 years	3.38			
	16 – 20 years	3.42			
	11 – 15 years	3.35			
	6 – 10 years	3.36			
	0 – 5 years	3.41			
	Total	3.38			
Skills	30 years and more	3.31	0.394	0.835	Accept Ho
	26 – 30 years	3.29			
	16 – 20 years	3.32			
	11 – 15 years	3.33			
	6 – 10 years	3.40			
	0 – 5 years	3.38			
	Total	3.34			
Attitude	30 years and more	3.49	1.928	0.244	Accept Ho
	26 – 30 years	3.51			
	16 – 20 years	3.45			
	11 – 15 years	3.51			
	6 – 10 years	3.45			
	0 – 5 years	3.48			
	Total	3.48			

Table 14 shows the analysis results on the significant difference on the teachers' level of competence in teaching Integrated English blended teaching when grouped according to number of years of teaching. As shown in the table, the computed probability values of all three dimensions are greater than 0.05 significance level; hence, the null hypotheses are accepted. The results suggest that there are no significant differences on the teachers' level of competence in teaching Integrated English blended teaching at Guangzhou Institute of Science and Technology when grouped according to number of years of teaching. This means that number of years of teaching does not influence teacher-participants' level of competence in teaching Integrated English at Guangzhou Institute of Science and Technology.

This is contrary to the analysis of Zhao and Wen (2023)^[4], who found from the survey results that there are differences among teachers when grouping according to their number of years of teaching. Among them, teachers exhibit different dimensions of cognitive ease of use, that is, with the increase of teaching experience, their cognitive ease of use continuously decreases. However, teachers with shorter years of teaching showed higher recognition in terms of cognitive ease of use.

3.3.3. Highest Educational Attainment

Table 15. F-test Analysis Results on the Significant Difference on the Teachers' Level of Competence in Integrated English Blended Teaching When Grouped According to Highest Educational Attainment

Dimensions	Highest Educational Attainment	Mean	F	PV	Decision
Knowledge	PhD in English Linguistics or Allied Program	3.41	0.689	0.53	Accept Ho
	Master in English Linguistics or Allied Program	3.35			
	Master in other field	3.39			
	Total	3.38			
Skills	PhD in English Linguistics or Allied Program	3.33	0.393	0.688	Accept Ho
	Master in English Linguistics or Allied Program	3.35			
	Master in other field	3.33			
	Total	3.34			
Attitude	PhD in English Linguistics or Allied Program	3.46	0.061	0.941	Accept Ho
	Master in English Linguistics or Allied Program	3.48			
	Master in other field	3.50			
	Total	3.48			

Table 15 shows the analysis results on the significant difference on the teachers' level of competence in Integrated English blended teaching when grouped according to highest educational attainment. As shown in the table, the computed probability values of all three dimensions are greater than 0.05; hence, the null hypotheses are accepted. The results suggest that there are no significant differences on the teachers' level of competence in teaching Integrated English blended teaching at Guangzhou Institute of Science and Technology when grouped according to highest educational attainment. Furthermore, educational attainment does not affect the teachers' level of competence in teaching Integrated English blended teaching at Guangzhou Institute of Science and Technology.

This is in accordance with the study of Zhao and Wen (2023)^[4], who found that teachers of different educational attainments did not show significant differences in their blended teaching.

3.3.4. Professional Title

Table 16. F-test Analysis Results on the Significant Difference on the Teachers' Level of Competence in Integrated English Blended Teaching When Grouped According to Professional Title

Dimensions	Position	Mean	F	PV	Decision
Knowledge	Professor	3.35	0.557	0.660	Accept Ho
	Associate	3.37			
	Professor	3.41			
	Lecturer	3.37			
	Assistant	3.38			
	Total	3.38			
Skills	Professor	3.28	0.376	0.773	Accept Ho
	Associate	3.34			
	Professor	3.33			
	Lecturer	3.42			
	Assistant	3.34			
	Total	3.34			
Attitude	Professor	3.35	1.024	0.438	Accept Ho
	Associate	3.36			
	Professor	3.32			
	Lecturer	3.33			
	Assistant	3.34			
	Total	3.34			

Table 16 shows the analysis results on the significant difference on the teachers' level of competence in Integrated English blended teaching when grouped according to professional title. As shown in the table, the computed probability values of all three dimensions are greater than 0.05 level of significance; hence, the null hypotheses are accepted. The results suggest that there are no significant differences on the teachers' level of competence in teaching Integrated English blended teaching at Guangzhou Institute of Science and Technology when grouped according to professional title. It means that professional titles do not affect the teachers' level of competence in teaching Integrated English blended teaching at Guangzhou Institute of Science and Technology.

This is supported by the study of Zhao and Wen (2023)^[4], who found that teachers of different professional titles did not show significant differences in their blended teaching.

3.4. Problems Encountered by the Students in the learning of Integrated English Using Blended Mode

Based on the responses to the open-ended item in the questionnaire, the problems encountered in the learning of Integrated English using blended mode are presented below.

3.4.1. Limited Time

In terms of limited time, the problems teachers encountered are mainly how to distribute time in teaching Integrated English online and offline more efficiently.

3.4.1.1 Distributing time properly between teaching and academic research

Here are teachers' verbatim responses:

T5P1 "Students' strong desire for knowledge pushes teachers to continuously increase their professional knowledge."

T7P2 “Besides professional knowledge, pedagogy knowledge should also be improved by doing research.”

T8P2 “Academic research can feedback and promote teachers to improve their teaching.”

T11P3 “Teachers can also do research together with students on the English topic to improve both teacher’s competence and promote student’s motivation.”

Yin (2020)^[5] explored the relationship between teachers’ professional competence, students’ learning motivation and talent cultivation through the whole-person training model. Through multiple investigations, this dissertation analyzed the current Integrated English blended teaching in Guangzhou Institute of Science and Technology, and put forward plans to improve Integrated English blended teaching.

3.4.1.2 Stimulating students’ motivation for learning

T1P2 “Some suspense should be set in class to stimulate students’ learning motivation.”

T2P2 “The enhancement of a teacher’s grammar teaching competence can promote students’ learning.”

T7P3 “It’s important to balance the homework online and offline.”

T10P1 “Homework should motivate students to consolidate the knowledge learned in class.”

Zhao (2020)^[6] believed that the design of homework can change students’ passive learning into active learning. He conducted research on the problem that students were passive in finishing homework, and as a result, he proposed that homework was an important way to evaluate students’ study, and it also served to improve students’ interest in learning.

3.4.2. Insufficient Supervision on Students’ Progress

In terms of insufficient supervision on students’ progress, the problems teachers encounter are mainly how to supervise students’ study both online and offline more efficiently in teaching Integrated English.

3.4.2.1 Creating effective interaction in class

The following are some verbatim responses of teachers:

T3P1 “The interaction between teachers and students is only confined to questions and answers in class.”

T7P2 “Teachers can provide students with more opportunities to demonstrate themselves in class.”

Lei (2020)^[7] held that teachers should participate in students’ learning process, provide guidance and assistance, teach accordingly with students of different levels, and provide students with opportunities to demonstrate themselves. Largely, students’ good performance can promote their interest and ability in English. The Integrated English blended class should provide students with more opportunities to express and communicate, which also can form effective interaction between teachers and students. This interaction can help teachers to supervise the study situation of students to some extent.

3.4.2.2 Obtaining the learning and testing data of students online

The following are some verbatim responses of teachers:

T2P2 “Discussion on open topics need more time, and giving feedback needs a long time, so it can be done on Chaoxing Platform.”

T4P3 “Teachers can give students test and exams respectively through the Chaoxing platform after class.”

Liu (2022)^[8] believes that since the Chaoxing Learning Platform has the function of automatically saving the attendance and learning behaviors of each student, teachers can clearly obtain various learning data of each student through the platform, which is convenient for teachers to objectively assess and evaluate students’ learning process. Whether before,

during, or after class, teachers and students can carry out interactive teaching activities on the platform, providing feedback and evaluation immediately. The Chaoxing Learning Platform provides a guarantee for implementing blended learning.

3.4.3. Difficulty in Assessing Individual Outputs

In terms of difficulty in assessing individual outputs, the problems teachers encounter are mainly how to assess students' learning outputs in the Integrated English class.

3.4.3.1 Expanding evaluation methods

Here are some verbatim responses of teachers:

T6P2 "Assumptive evaluation, especially score, is currently the most commonly used evaluation method in teaching."

T7P2 "Before students enter university, they can organize some tests to determine their current level."

T11P3 "Due to the large number of students in P53, the internal evaluation of individuals still needs to be improved."

Zhang (2020)^[9] believes that teaching evaluation is the most important part of English teaching. At present, there are problems in the evaluation of comprehensive English teaching, such as single evaluation standards and methods, lack of innovation in evaluation content, and single evaluation subjects, which seriously restrict the quality of college English classroom teaching and affect students' learning interests. In order to improve the quality of English teaching and students' interest in learning, English teachers can establish a diversified teaching evaluation system, implement developmental teaching evaluation, and implement formative teaching evaluation.

3.4.3.2 Utilizing multimedia and other information technologies to assist in evaluation

Here are some verbatim responses of teachers:

T8P2 "The school's equipment needs to be updated, and multimedia equipment teaching is simple."

T9P3 "Teachers should participate in more information technology training to understand the evaluation techniques."

T10P3 "The school should add some online courses such as micro courses to assist in evaluation."

Wu (2019)^[10] found that in current English teaching, some students are slow and lack of enthusiasm in English classes, and rarely participate in classroom teaching. Therefore, he proposed that teachers should respect the uniqueness of students, enrich teaching contexts, enhance students' interest in learning, and thereby improve the quality of teaching. Multimedia and other information technologies can stimulate students' interests based on their differences. Teachers can also use information technology to calculate students' learning outcomes and conduct effective evaluations.

3.5. Proposed Plan of Action to Improve Teachers' Competence

According to the result of the study, most student and teacher participants have a great extent of assessment towards teachers' competence in blended teaching in integrated English course at Guangzhou Institute of Science and Technology. However, limited time, insufficient supervision on students' study and difficulty in assessing individual outputs are the challenges and problems encountered by teachers. Therefore, a plan of action was proposed.

General Objectives

The proposed plan of action aims to enhance teachers' competence in Integrated English course through blended mode at Guangzhou Institute of Science and Technology. Specifically, it has the following specific objectives:

1. Distribute teachers' time properly between teaching and academic research;
2. Stimulate students' motivation for learning;
3. Create effective interaction between teachers and students in class;
4. Train teachers to obtain the learning and testing data of students online;
5. Expand evaluation methods on assessing individual student's outputs.

Table 18. Plan of Action to Improve Teachers' Competence

Focus Area	Objectives	Strategies/ Activities	Persons Involved
1. Teaching and research time balance	To distribute teachers' time properly between teaching and academic research	1. Reduce some lectures to ensure time for academic research; 2. Let the research guide the teaching as feedback.	1. English Teachers 2. Research Program Coordinator for Social Sciences and Humanities 3. Resource Persons
2. Stimulation of students' motivation	To stimulate students' motivation for learning	1. Relate the class activities with students' interests and hobbies; 2. Integrate some fashion elements into the class; 3. Have emotional interaction with students; 4. Encourage students to participate in the English related groups after class;	1. Students 2. English Teachers
3. Enhancement of interaction	To create effective interaction between teachers and students in class	1. Create pre-class discussion area online; 2. Organize group activities offline; 3. Encourage students to express themselves; 4. Strengthen the relationship between students and teachers through extra-curriculum activities.	1. Students 2. teachers
4. Teachers' online skill training	To train teachers to obtain the learning and testing data of students online	1. Invite technical experts to train teachers' online skills; 2. Distribute technical guidance videos; 3. Learn to operate on how to obtain data	1. English Teachers 2. School administrators 3. Resource Persons
5. Evaluation methods expansion	To expand evaluation methods on assessing individual student's outputs	1. Categorize various evaluation methods; 2. Choose the evaluation methods appropriate for students at GZIST; 3. Test the validity of the evaluation methods.	1. English Teachers 2. School administrators 3. School headers 4. Resource Persons
6. Very high knowledge, skills and attitude of the teachers through the blended mode	To sustain the high knowledge, skills and attitude of the teachers in Integrated English blended teaching	1. Enrich teachers knowledge by training and research in blended teaching; 2. Enhance the blended teaching skills by joining seminar on information technology and pedagogy; 3. Invite experts to guide on attitudes towards blended teaching.	1. English Teachers 2. Administration staff

4. Conclusion

The present study has yielded valuable insights into the competence of teachers engaged in Integrated English teaching at Guangzhou Institute of Science and Technology within a blended learning environment. The findings, analyzed from multiple perspectives, highlight the strengths and challenges faced by teachers in this innovative teaching mode.

On one hand, the study reveals that teachers participating in this research possess a high level of competence in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to blended teaching in Integrated English courses. This competence is reflected in their ability to effectively integrate digital tools and traditional teaching methods, resulting in a dynamic and engaging learning experience for students. Importantly, the level of teachers' competence did not significantly vary based on their individual profiles, including age, years of teaching experience, educational attainment, and professional title. This finding underscores the importance of professional development opportunities that are accessible and inclusive for teachers at all stages of their careers.

On the other, the study also identified challenges faced by teachers in the blended teaching context, particularly related to time management, supervision of student progress, and the assessment of individual learning outputs. These challenges highlight the need for ongoing support and resources to help teachers effectively navigate the complexities of blended teaching.

Based on these findings, the study proposes a comprehensive plan of action aimed at further enhancing the blended teaching competence of Integrated English teachers. This plan emphasizes the importance of professional development programs tailored to the specific needs of teachers engaged in blended learning, as well as the integration of innovative assessment strategies that accurately measure student learning outcomes in this dynamic environment.

In conclusion, this research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on blended teaching practices in higher education, with a particular focus on the competence of Integrated English teachers. By illuminating both the strengths and challenges associated with this innovative teaching mode, the study provides a roadmap for institutions seeking to improve the quality and effectiveness of their English language instruction. Ultimately, this research underscores the critical role of teacher competence in realizing the full potential of blended learning to transform higher education and prepare students for the demands of the 21st century.

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