

# Effectiveness of Blackboard in eLearning for English Language courses at King Khalid University: Faculty Perceptions

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## Abstract

In today's globalised world, being able to communicate in English is vital since it opens up a lot of options and is a need for both academic and professional success. In academic discourse, English is the universal language of communication. It enables people to access vast amounts of information given through books, internet resources, and scholarly publications. The aim of the study was to investigate the impact of Blackboard, a widely used learning management system (LMS), on English instruction in higher education. The introduction of Blackboard as an electronic learning platform at King Khalid University for English language programmes signifies a substantial shift in educational practices; hence, a thorough assessment of its efficacy from the faculty's viewpoint is required. This assessment is critical to understanding the platform's role in addressing the particular difficulties of language instruction in a culturally diverse setting as well as its value in improving teaching strategies and student engagement.

The opinions of faculty members offer priceless insights into the real-world use of the Blackboard application, highlighting both its advantages and shortcomings. The success of Blackboard and its widespread usage in the educational sector attest to the growing popularity of Learning Management Systems, or LMS. Within the learning ecosystem, these digital platforms serve as virtual hubs that simplify the delivery of courses, promote communication, and encourage teamwork. One of its benefits is that it can efficiently gather vast volumes of data from a variety of teachers and students. This study looked into how English instruction in higher education was affected by Blackboard, a popular Learning Management System (LMS). These results imply that using these technologies could encourage innovative teaching methods and raise student interest in the subject matter.

**Keywords:** Blackboard, Language, Learning, Technology, Higher Education

## 1. Introduction

Proficiency in English is essential in today's globalized society, as it provides numerous opportunities and is a vital prerequisite for achieving academic and professional success (Graddol, 2006; Crystal, 2003). English serves as a common language of communication in academic discourse, allowing individuals to access extensive collections of information shared through scholarly articles, educational texts, and online materials (UNESCO, 2013). Proficiency in English provides students with the necessary linguistic abilities to actively participate in critical thinking, analysis, and argumentation. These skills are essential for academic research and intellectual discourse (Hyland, 2006). Moreover, there is clear evidence that proficiency in English is directly associated with higher academic achievement, increased graduation rates, and greater employment prospects (Cummins, 2008; OECD, 2019). English proficiency is crucial in the global employment market because communication goes beyond geographical limits.

The implementation of Blackboard as an electronic learning platform in English language courses at King Khalid University represents a significant shift in educational paradigms, necessitating a comprehensive evaluation of its effectiveness from the faculty perspective. This evaluation is essential not only for determining the platform's utility in enhancing teaching methodologies and student engagement but also for understanding its role in addressing the unique challenges of language education within a culturally diverse context. The perceptions of faculty members provide invaluable insights into the practical application of Blackboard, revealing its strengths and areas that require improvement. This, in turn, can inform strategies for optimizing digital learning tools in higher education, ensuring that they effectively fulfill the evolving needs of both educators and students in the ever-changing global language education landscape.

## The Rise of Learning Management Systems: Blackboards and Beyond

Learning management systems (LMS) have gained considerable popularity in the educational sector, as evidenced by the usage and success of Blackboard. According to Bates (2019), these digital platforms function as virtual hubs that streamline course delivery, facilitate communication, and foster collaboration within the learning ecosystem. The increasing demand for flexible learning alternatives (Ally & Tsin, 2012), the rising popularity of online and blended learning models (UNESCO, 2019), and widespread access to technology

(Anderson & Shattuck, 2013) are among the factors that contribute to the growth of LMS. These learning management systems provide a range of features, such as online assessments, grading systems, and content management tools that enhance the learning experiences of both students and instructors. Furthermore, LMSs offer opportunities for personalized learning and adaptive instruction; allowing students to learn at their own pace and receive targeted support based on their individual needs. Blackboard, a pioneer in the LMS space, has been widely adopted in universities and colleges worldwide (Blackboard Inc., 2023) because of its capabilities, including online content delivery, discussion forums, assignment management, and grade monitoring. However, the LMS market has become highly competitive, with rivals such as Canvas, Moodle, and Acadly offering similar features and addressing a range of institutional requirements (Ebben & Murphy, 2014). This intense competition drives continuous innovation, resulting in constantly evolving features and functions that improve the educational experiences of both teachers and students (Siemens, 2004). The increasing use of learning management systems such as Blackboard and its competitors marks a significant change in the educational landscape, as technology is recognized for its potential to customize instruction, optimize workflows, and ultimately enhance academic achievement. These systems provide a diverse array of tools and resources that cater to different learning styles and preferences while also fostering collaboration and communication between students and teachers, creating a more interactive and engaging learning environment.

A significant transformation in education is occurring due to the increasing adoption of Learning Management Systems (LMS), such as Blackboard. These platforms are no longer merely storage spaces for course materials; they have evolved into dynamic learning centers (Bates, 2019). The primary drivers of this shift are the demand for flexible learning alternatives such as online and blended learning models (UNESCO, 2019), the wide spread availability of technology (Anderson & Shattuck, 2013), and the adoption of innovative pedagogical models (Ally & Tsin, 2012). Consequently, these systems have revolutionized education by streamlining administrative processes and facilitating collaboration, enabling educators to provide personalized and interactive learning experiences tailored to students' needs, regardless of their location or schedule. The integration of multimedia resources and interactive tools fosters student engagement and active learning, which leads to improved educational outcomes. As a leader in the industry, Blackboard's extensive feature set, which includes advanced grade tracking, efficient assignment administration, interactive forums, and online material delivery, has solidified its position in colleges and institutions worldwide.

### **Research significance**

This research is significant because it addresses two pressing issues: the global demand for English fluency and the escalating use of technology to enhance educational opportunities (Crystal, 2003; Bates, 2019). By examining how Blackboard affects English instruction and learning in the digital era, educators can refine their teaching strategies, ultimately enabling students to excel in their academic and communicative pursuits. This study bridges the gap between the recognized advantages of English language proficiency and the rapidly evolving LMS used to support efficient English language acquisition in higher education. Moreover, this research aims to investigate the challenges and obstacles that may arise when incorporating Blackboard into English instruction. Identifying these hurdles allows educators to devise targeted interventions and support systems, ensuring that students can fully benefit from the platform. Furthermore, understanding how Blackboard can be effectively employed in English language teaching has broader implications for integrating technology into other academic disciplines.

### **Research Questions**

- In what ways does the incorporation of Blackboard features impact the delivery of English language instruction with the aim of enhancing student learning outcomes compared to conventional classroom strategies?
- How does the integration of Blackboard tools affect instructors' methods of teaching English language abilities, and does it encourage the adoption of innovative and captivating teaching approaches that promote student engagement and comprehension?

### **2. Review of Literature**

The utilization of Learning Management Systems (LMS) such as Blackboard in teaching English in higher education has provoked discourse, as indicated by research conducted by Moonsamy and Govender (2018). Several studies have investigated the advantages and obstacles associated with employing Blackboard in this context. Research has demonstrated that Blackboard has a favorable impact on student contentment and language acquisition (Hassan & Shukri, 2017; Gordeslioglu & Yuzer, 2019). Blended learning methods, which combine traditional classroom instruction with Blackboard-based activities, have been found to increase student satisfaction with English language courses (Hassan & Shukri, 2017). This increased satisfaction may be attributed to diverse factors, including the wealth of learning materials accessible through Blackboard, the opportunity for interactive language learning in the target language, and the content's perceived appropriateness and diversity (Hassan and Shukri, 2017). Moreover, the diverse resources on Blackboard that cater to different learning styles can enhance language competence and acquisition (El-Hmoudovaa, 2017). Another crucial area of research is examining how Blackboard can improve specific language skills. Gordeslioglu and Yuzer (2019) found that incorporating speaking-based submissions through Blackboard and online listening practice exercises via Blackboard positively impacted students' perceptions of their speaking and listening abilities. This finding suggests that Blackboard is a valuable tool for enhancing oral and auditory language skills. Li and Wang (2018) found that Blackboard's interactive features, such as discussion boards and virtual classrooms, can augment students' writing and critical thinking abilities in language learning.

The use of Blackboard offers the potential for independent study and targeted language exposure, which can lead to the development of

enhanced skills. However, not all studies have provided an accurate representation of its benefits. In contrast, Woods et al. (2004) revealed a more nuanced reality, finding that faculty members primarily utilize Blackboard as a course administration tool, with a focus on features such as document sharing and grade book management. The potential benefits of instruction and therapy, such as fostering participatory learning and improving the classroom atmosphere, are sometimes overlooked (Woods et al., 2004). This suggests that Blackboard's instructional potential may not be fully utilized, and further research is needed to explore ways to motivate teachers to harness their full capabilities. Moonsamy and Govender (2018) identified enabling conditions as critical in determining faculty acceptance and utilization of Blackboard. These factors included training, resources, and technical assistance. Universities must prioritize creating and sustaining an environment that empowers teachers to confidently and effectively integrate Blackboard into their teaching methods. In conclusion, current research indicates that using Blackboard for English language learning presents both persistent challenges and promising prospects.

While challenges in faculty acceptance and utilization of Blackboard for English language learning are apparent, universities must recognize its potential benefits. By providing adequate training, resources, and technical assistance, universities can create an enabling environment that empowers teachers to integrate Blackboard effectively into their teaching methods. This is crucial to fully harnessing the exciting prospects Blackboard offers for English language learning. Studies have shown that it can improve language proficiency, student happiness, and other abilities. However, issues regarding underutilization and the significance of supportive environments persist. Further investigation into specific pedagogical techniques, feature optimization, and faculty buy-in tactics is necessary to pave the way for Blackboard to fully realize its promise as a revolutionary tool for English language learning in higher education.

Blended learning models facilitated by platforms such as Blackboard are hypothesized to improve future learning outcomes and student engagement by offering personalized learning paths, interactive exercises, and digital resources. Advocates of these models characterize them as highly adaptable, enabling educators to leverage technology to design innovative lesson plans and customize instruction. However, detractors have raised concerns regarding issues such as student autonomy, superficial participation, and digital inequalities. These issues may arise because of students' over-reliance on technology, which could lead to a lack of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Access to technology may vary among students, resulting in unequal learning opportunities. Despite these concerns, proponents have argued that blended learning models can address these issues and provide a more inclusive and effective educational experience if properly implemented and supported.

### 3. Methodology

A survey research design provides an effective and adaptable framework for examining the complex effects of Blackboard on English language acquisition in higher education. A primary advantage of this methodology is its capacity to systematically collect extensive data from a wide range of faculty members and students. First, surveys provide researchers with access to a diversity of subjective experiences and viewpoints that directly contribute to our understanding of how Blackboard influences the classroom. Second, surveys facilitate efficient and economical data collection, especially when compared with qualitative techniques such as interviews or observations. This approach enables the attainment of a larger sample size, thereby improving the statistical validity and generalizability of the findings. The inclusion of instructors in the survey allowed us to investigate Blackboard's effects from several perspectives, providing insight into how it affects both teaching and learning strategies. Third, the surveys offered useful quantitative information for statistical examination. This makes it possible for academics to find trends and connections between particular Blackboard features and educational strategies, engagement levels, or learning objectives. Furthermore, surveys can help identify any potential barriers or challenges that instructors and students may face when using Blackboard, allowing for targeted interventions and support. Furthermore, by gathering feedback through surveys, we can gain a better understanding of the overall user experience and make informed decisions for future improvements and enhancements to the platform. A comprehensive picture of Blackboard's varied impact was created by combining the analysis of the quantitative data with the qualitative answers to the open-ended questions. Finally, participants can benefit from the flexibility and convenience of online survey administration. This boosts the response rates and guarantees that, despite time or location restrictions, the study reaches a varied teacher population. Using a survey study methodology provides a solid and comprehensive method to examine how Blackboard affects English language acquisition. Its capacity to compile rich qualitative data, record a variety of viewpoints, and provide statistically significant outcomes makes it an effective instrument for revealing the genuine possibilities and difficulties of this widely used LMS platform in the context of higher education.

#### Sample Description

This study aimed to investigate the impact of Blackboard, a widely used learning management system (LMS), on English instruction in higher education. To achieve this objective, the study collected viewpoints from English language instructors who utilized Blackboard as a teaching tool. A structured methodology was implemented to explore the opinions of faculty members, resulting in significant revelations about the impact of Blackboard on English language instruction in higher education. The faculty group consisted of 64% females and 36% males, corresponding to the gender distribution in the broader academic community, making the findings relevant to the typical faculty demographic. The faculty group consisted of 44 males and 78 females, all of whom were English language instructors. Their input is essential in understanding how they utilize Blackboard in their teaching, integrate various resources, and tackle challenges in implementing their teaching methods. This faculty-centered approach guarantees that the research captures the intricacies of eLearning from an educator's perspective, focusing on the practicalities and pedagogical implications of using Blackboard in higher education. Target institutions and demographics will not be shared for confidentiality reasons. Within the broader context of English language

acquisition in higher education, this sample provides significant insights. To strategically adopt and optimize Blackboard in English language courses, this survey approach seeks to understand how Blackboard interacts with pedagogy and language learning. This study aims to probe deeper and reveal the real effects of Blackboard on teachers in the field of English language acquisition in higher education. By being aware of its advantages and disadvantages, we may strive towards a day when technology enhances student language acquisition while empowering educators.

**Description of the Questionnaire**

The primary research question addressed in Part A of the questionnaire was whether the utilization of Blackboard features facilitates a more efficient and effective delivery of English language education compared to traditional classroom approaches, thereby enhancing learning outcomes. The questionnaire focused on five critical domains: organizational management, communicative environments, student collaboration, support for diverse learning styles, and student feedback and engagement. These sections were designed to investigate whether Blackboard features can promote more effective and efficient instruction relative to conventional methodologies. Each section targeted specific functional components of Blackboard to gather comprehensive data for a thorough examination of the research inquiry. Part B of the questionnaire addressed the following research question: What effects does the incorporation of Blackboard technologies have on teachers’ methods for imparting English language skills? Does it support creative and captivating teaching strategies that deepen student comprehension and engagement?

The second section of this questionnaire on English language learning examined how Blackboard integration impacts pedagogical methods. This section aims to evaluate how the platform influences instructional strategies and its potential to promote innovative pedagogies that foster deeper student engagement and conceptual understanding. Instructor perceptions were examined through statements covering potential drawbacks (focus on classroom management) and benefits (collaborative environment, pedagogical flexibility, balanced management, and teaching). Examining the experiences of teachers offers a comprehensive understanding of Blackboard’s contribution to improving English language instruction in higher education.

**4. Results**

Table 1. Impact of LMS of Learning

Statement	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Enhanced Learner Organization	1.64	7.38	19.74	42.62	28.6
Communicative Environment	1.64	5.74	20.5	45.9	26.23
Facilitation of Student Collaboration	2.46	10.66	22.95	40.16	23.77
Support for Diverse Learning Styles	2.46	7.38	21.31	43.44	25.41
Student Feedback and Participation	1.64	7.38	22.13	41.8	27.05

The purpose of this English language learning questionnaire was to evaluate whether Blackboard facilitates more effective and efficient instruction compared to conventional techniques, ultimately leading to improved learning outcomes. The instrument comprises five assertions designed to explore student perceptions of Blackboard's features. Each statement addresses a specific functional area: organizational management, communicative environments, collaborative facilitation, support for diverse learning styles, and student engagement. An analysis of the responses denotes that over 70% of faculty members “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the contention regarding collaboration, communication, organization, and pedagogical support. These findings suggest that the platform may enhance both efficiency and engagement. While these results rely on faculty perceptions rather than direct measurements of student performance, they provide a robust foundation for future research. Subsequent studies incorporating objective data and multi-stakeholder perspectives will be essential to definitively determine Blackboard’s impact on English language acquisition in higher education.

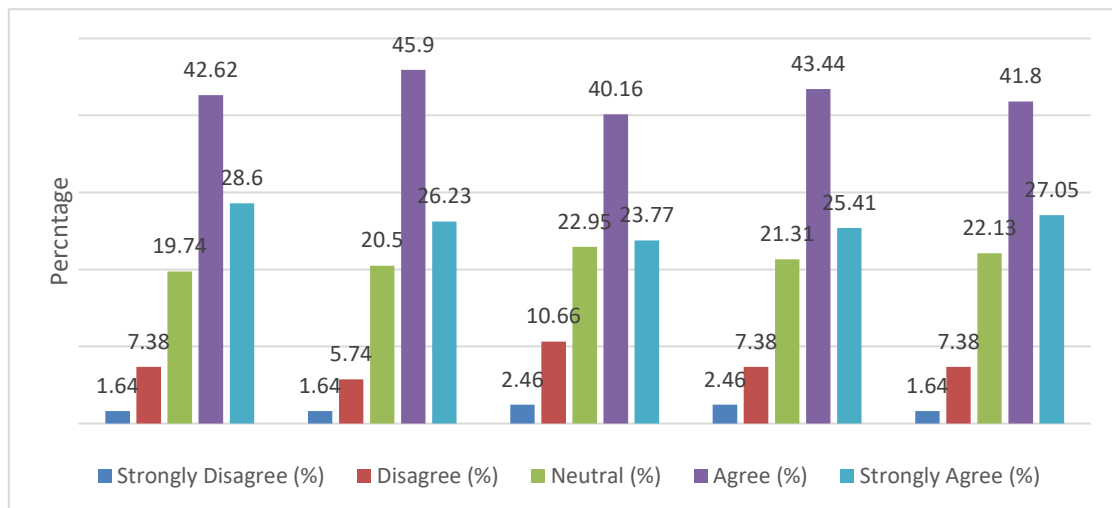


Figure 1. Impact of Black Board

According to the questionnaire on English language learning that examined faculty perceptions of the platform's features, Blackboard demonstrates the potential to increase efficiency and engagement. This is evidenced by the high level of agreement regarding its organizational, communicative, and collaborative capabilities, as well as its support for diverse learning styles. However, the findings also indicate that learning improvements cannot be definitively assessed based solely on faculty judgments.

Table 2. Statement Findings

Statement	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Innovative Knowledge Presentation	1.64	5.74	10.66	32.79	49.17
Diverse Teaching Strategies	2.46	7.38	14.75	35.25	40.16
No Difference with Traditional Methods	11.5	16.4	24.58	29.5	18.02
Flexibility in Content Delivery	2.46	5.74	12.3	37.7	42.8
Enhanced Student Engagement	3.28	8.2	16.4	34.42	37.7

The findings of this study into faculty opinions regarding Blackboard's features, as assessed through in a questionnaire survey, indicate the platform's potential to significantly influence instructional methods for teaching English language proficiency. The results reveal that more than half of the respondents strongly agreed that Blackboard enables innovative information presentation and facilitates diverse instructional strategies, suggesting its capacity to enhance pedagogical approaches. Moreover, a small proportion of participants reported no significant discrepancy with conventional techniques, which implies that Blackboard can foster interactive activities. Additionally, over 40% of respondents strongly agreed that Blackboard enhances student engagement and facilitates adaptable content delivery, indicating its potential to cater to diverse learner needs and promote deeper learning. These results strongly suggest that Blackboard integration may influence instructors' adoption of creative and engaging pedagogical approaches, potentially resulting in increased student engagement and comprehension of English language skills.

However, it is important to note that these findings are limited by their reliance on perceptions. Further research utilizing a variety of data sources and methods is necessary to thoroughly investigate Blackboard's impact within this specific learning context and to provide a definitive answer to the study's question. This could include both quantitative data, such as student performance metrics, and qualitative data, such as interviews or observations. Future studies could also explore the impact of blackboard integration in other subject areas to better understand its potential benefits in diverse educational settings.

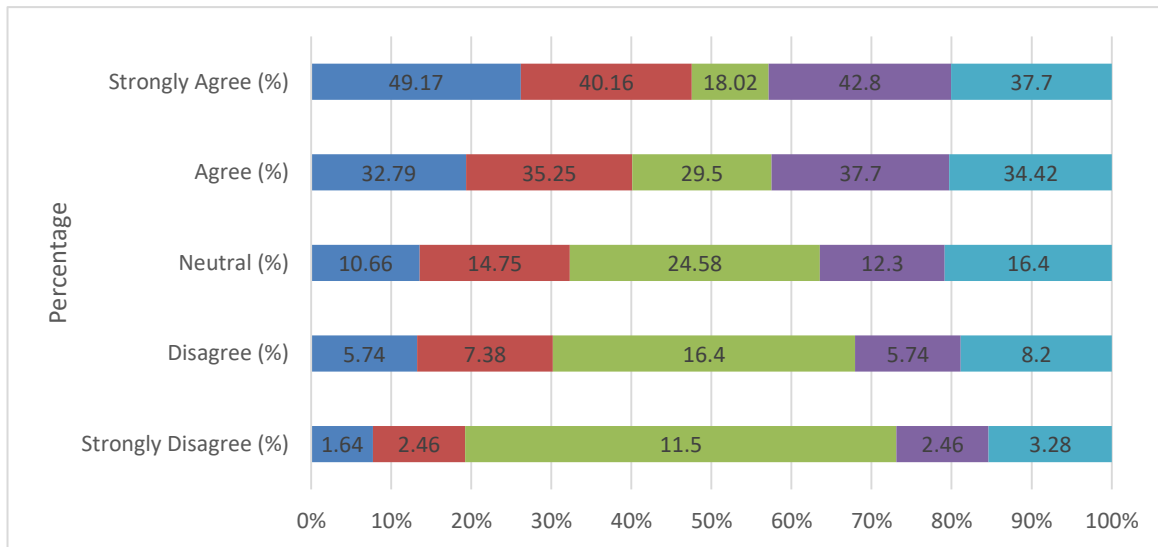


Figure 2. Pedagogical Effectiveness

The application of Blackboard technologies in English language instruction was explored through a questionnaire, which revealed its potential impact on pedagogical methods. An analysis of faculty perspectives indicated that Blackboard empowers educators to move beyond traditional paradigms and adopt more innovative, student-centered teaching techniques. This aligns with the focus of this study on how Blackboard may promote such activities and enhance student engagement and comprehension. The platform's emphasis on advanced information displays, various instructional methodologies, and flexible content distribution options further reinforces this possibility. Although instructors' opinions are generally positive, it is crucial to recognize that they cannot independently prove their influence on student outcomes. To thoroughly investigate Blackboard's impact on this particular learning environment and provide a definitive response to the study question, additional research incorporating direct observation of teaching methods and student data analysis is necessary.

**5. Discussion**

The results of this study align with other research demonstrating that Blackboard can enhance English-language instruction and learning.

This is due to the active support of knowledge production provided by instructors through various tools and resources, which aligns with constructivist- and learner-centered frameworks. Additionally, the employment of multiple teaching tactics supports learner autonomy and individualized education, whereas blended learning approaches promote self-directed learning and accessibility. The importance of teacher assistance and training in fully utilizing Blackboard's potential is emphasized in this study. Group projects and discussion boards can be used to create a collaborative learning environment that maximizes student involvement and engagement. Although faculty perceptions were largely favorable, certain assertions did not receive a majority consensus. Further investigation is required to examine the variables affecting the adoption and integration of Blackboard features, as usage may be constrained by institutional limitations, pedagogical predispositions, or technical barriers. While the study's strengths lie in its alignment with theoretical frameworks and its focus on faculty perspectives, the potential for self-reported bias and the absence of direct observations of instructional strategies or student outcomes limit its generalizability. Future mixed-methods studies, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data, would provide a more comprehensive understanding of Blackboard's long-term impact.

This study concentrates solely on faculty perspectives regarding Blackboard's efficacy in English language courses at King Khalid University. While this provides valuable insights from an instructional standpoint, it also has certain limitations. First, it neglects the student's perspective, which is vital for a complete understanding of the eLearning experience. Student feedback can offer essential information on user experience, engagement levels, and learning outcomes, which are essential for evaluating Blackboard's overall effectiveness. Moreover, the absence of student data restricts the ability to cross-reference and validate faculty observations, which could lead to a limited understanding of the impact of the platform. This limitation is significant because student engagement and satisfaction are critical indicators of the success of educational tools. Consequently, this study may not adequately capture the nuances of the e-learning environment from the learners' perspective, which is crucial for developing a comprehensive understanding of the pedagogical effectiveness of digital platforms such as Blackboard in higher education.

## 6. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate the influence of Blackboard technologies on English language instruction and learning as perceived by faculty members. These findings suggest that the implementation of these tools may promote innovative pedagogy and increase student engagement. Educators have the opportunity to utilize diversified methods to disseminate their knowledge and various pedagogical approaches that align with constructivist and learner-centered frameworks. Blackboard enables flexible instructional delivery through blended and asynchronous learning strategies, catering to individual students' needs and preferences. Instructors have reported improvements in organization, communication, collaboration, and support for multiple learning styles. However, further research is required to determine whether the use of Blackboard leads to quantifiable gains in student performance. By analyzing student data and conducting direct observations, researchers can gain insights into specific areas where the platform has the most significant impact on learning outcomes. Directly observing students using Blackboard will also enable researchers to gain a deeper understanding of how the platform influences student engagement and participation. Ultimately, further empirical inquiry can strengthen the evidence regarding the impact of Blackboard within learner-centered frameworks.

Additional research is necessary, including longitudinal studies, comparative analyses of learning management systems, and qualitative inquiries into the roles of both instructors and students in effectively leveraging Blackboard. A more comprehensive understanding of Blackboard's strengths and limitations can aid in formulating optimal strategies for incorporating technology into language instruction and in advancing student learning outcomes. Although this research highlights to Blackboard's potential for teaching English, further investigation is required to explore its pedagogical implications.

Longitudinal studies that monitor language competence and academic achievement over an extended period could provide vital data on Blackboard's long-term effects on student outcomes. Furthermore, comparative analyses of various learning environments and LMS platforms have yielded valuable insights into Blackboard's efficacy within specific educational contexts. Investigating the factors that influence teacher and student agency in determining the effectiveness of Blackboard may offer strategies for optimizing its pedagogical potential. Qualitative research using interviews and classroom observations may reveal unforeseen difficulties that quantitative data might miss. Examining the interactions between Blackboard and other educational technologies may also pave the way for developing integrated learning environments. By analyzing Blackboard's performance in tandem with interactive language learning applications, virtual reality simulators, or cooperative online platforms, researchers can devise innovative teaching strategies that go beyond the limitations of a single technology. Future studies should expand the research focus beyond the viewpoints of educators and explore different approaches to gain a comprehensive understanding of Blackboard's impact on English language learning. This knowledge will eventually guide the development of techniques that effectively leverage technology to empower educators, engage students, and optimize learning outcomes. By exploring alternative platforms and methodologies, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of how technologies such as simulations or collaborative online platforms—can enhance English language acquisition. This information will enable the implementation of innovative techniques that harness the power of technology to create a dynamic and effective learning environment for both instructors and students, leading to superior learning outcomes and more immersive educational experiences.

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#### **Competing interests**

The authors declare that none of the work reported in this study could have been influenced by any known competing financial interests or personal relationships.

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#### **Data sharing statement**

No additional data are available.

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