

Blended Instructional Model to Encourage Adult Learners' Collaboration Skill

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Abstract: This paper presented the blended instructional model to encourage collaboration skill for adult learners. The theoretical perspectives and related researches were analyzed and synthesized, then applied at developing the blended instructional model to encourage SDU adult learners' collaboration skill and investigating the opinions of experts. This blended instructional model revealed that ten components consisted of 1) iPad 2) iTunes U and other apps, 3) Internet network, 4) learner, 5) teacher, 6) ICT support staff, 7) learning objective, 8) lesson content, 9) instructional activity and 10) work piece as well as three major procedures for encouraging collaboration included 3T or (1) Think (2) Talk and (3) Task. The results of this study will be a prototype for instruction of adult learners in a bachelor level and help lecturers design their curricula with iPad to gain more interesting in the learning activities.

Key words: Adult learner, blended instructional model, collaboration skill, iPad.

1. Introduction

Following the education reform era, National Education Act B.E. 2542 and amendment (No. 2) B.E. 2545 and (No. 3) B.E. 2553 of Thailand was deliberately considered adult education as lifelong learning for the individual and focused on using educational technology as a tool enhancing the learning experiences at any time in any place. Learning takes place in a wide range of settings and is aimed at adults who may not normally participate in education and training. Suan Dusit Rajabhat University (currently, Suan Dusit University) offers the undergraduate program for a caregiver under Local Administrative Organization of Ministry of Interior who does not complete the Early Childhood Education that can be studied full-time, though nearly all lectures were given in the weekend, it is a collaboration between Department of Local Administration, Suan Dusit University's campuses, and other Rajabhat Universities throughout Thailand and covers structured adult education classes taught by professionally qualified teachers; unstructured activity that leads to learning; online materials delivered in the iTunes U app on iPad and the private sector; WBSC (<https://wbsc.dusit.ac.th>); and self-organized groups through face to face groups, online communities in each region or personal projects.

Adult learners, consequently, would be motivated and fostered by equipping the knowledge, capabilities and skills for technological utilization in education settings as well as integrated in classroom teaching and learning to accommodate and respond to enthusiasm of the students to make full capacity. On the other hand, instructors need to create such instructional ways as a blended learning that occurs in and out of the classroom with the aimed goal to assist the learners' achievement. Blended learning, to put it differently, is a

combination of both traditional teaching and the e-learning environments; it can merge web-based instruction, videos, audio, synchronous, and asynchronous communication with face-to-face learning [1]. It allows institutions to gradually move learners from traditional classrooms to online in slow pace making easier for everyone to accept a series of transformation in the classroom [2]. Without this kind of learning, students would never get started in adopting technical devices in their early childhood classrooms helping them to support each child's learning development more easily.

The National Education Acts of Thailand have made a number of significant recommendations on various aspects of higher education. The one of major objectives is to prepare students for survival in the digital era. To this end, they must develop the competencies they need to live, learn, and work successfully in a rapidly changing society. To put it another way, collaborative learning needs to enable successful adult learning in community-based and workplace programs [3]. Collaboration skill and collaborative activities, thus, are effective means of learning for students [4], [5]. The ability to work well as part of a team is also an important skill in many careers in current society, including the education fields. The educator of Jackson State University, USA. [6] emphasized that collaborative teamwork provides the appropriate environment for effective teaching and learning. Research findings validate the benefits of collaborative work [7]. Some positive results of collaborative partnerships include a trusting school climate, improved student achievement, and positive influences on family quality-of-life outcomes.

In this study, the blended learning as an instructional model was proposed and integrated with iPad-based learning into face-to-face setting to provide learners with resources, activities, tasks, presentations, discussions, evaluation, and constructive feedback. Thus, it aims at offering adult students' opportunities for practicing and consolidating the collaboration skill necessary for their profession.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

This study developed the blended instructional model to encourage adult learners' collaboration skill and investigate the experts' opinions towards the model. These adult students seem to lack the collaboration skill in the digital era. To be more specific, this study addressed the following questions.

1.2. Question

- 1) What are the components and the procedures of a blended instructional model?
- 2) What is the effectiveness of this blended instructional model in expert's opinions?

1.3. Aim of the Study

This study aimed at proposing the blended instructional model to encourage adult learners' collaboration skill.

2. Scope

2.1. Population and Sample

The population consisted of curriculum and instruction, instructional technology and design, and Thai and teacher education experts. The samples comprised of nine experts using the Judgmental sampling.

2.2. Variables

The independent variable is the 3T blended instructional model.

The dependent variable is the quality of the 3T blended instructional model.

3. Method

There are three phases of this research method:

3.1. Phase 1: Analysis

Review documents, theories, and research regarding adult learning, blended learning, model design, 21st century skills (collaboration skill), then analyze the compositions of generic blended learning and instructional model for adult teacher, the procedure of collaboration skill and National Education Act B.E. 2542 and amendment (No. 2) B.E. 2545 and (No. 3) B.E. 2553 of Thailand

3.2. Phase 2: Development

The second phase is to develop a blended instructional model to encourage adult learners' collaboration skill based on the results of the above phase as well as create a rating tool of the instructional model

3.3. Phase 3: Evaluation

The last phase is to certify the quality of the instructional model by nine experts from three various fields: Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Technology and Design, and Thai and Teacher Education. At this phase, the instructional model was rectified as their opinions to be completed as much as possible.

4. Result

4.1. Component

The blended instructional model for adult learner to encouraging collaboration skill includes 10 components: 1) iPad 2) iTunes U and other apps, 3) Internet network, 4) learner, 5) teacher, 6) ICT support staff, 7) learning objective, 8) lesson content, 9) instructional activity and 10) work piece as shown in Fig. 1.

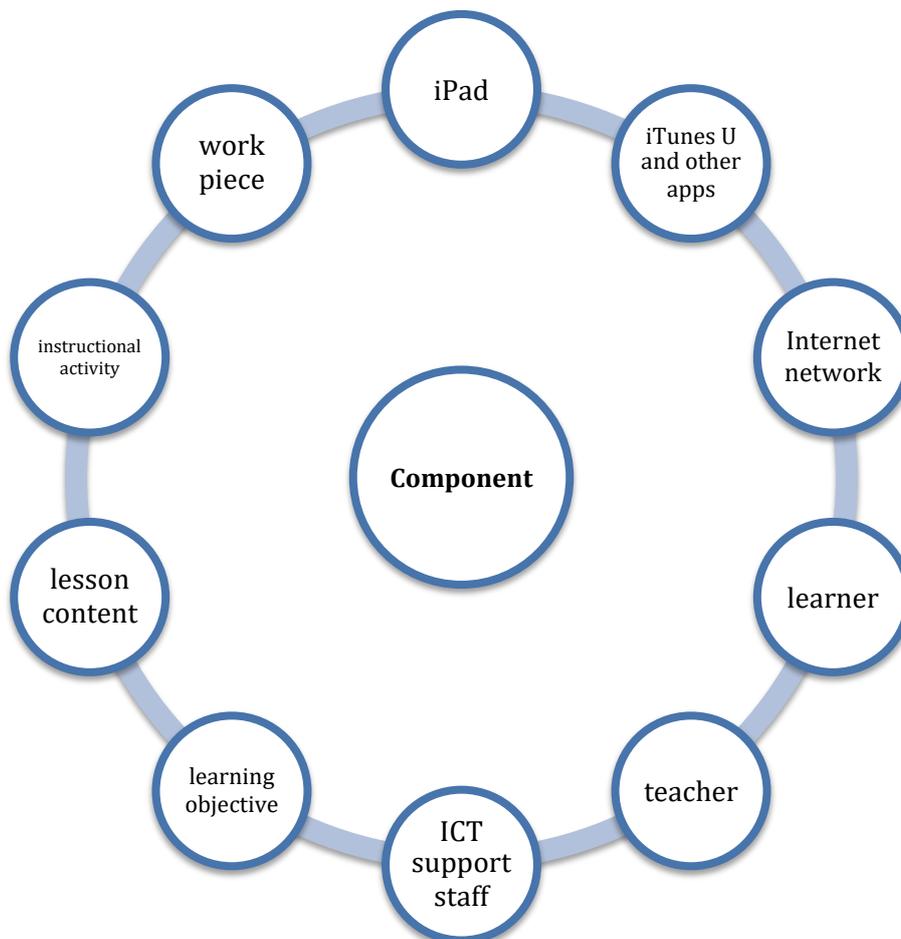


Fig. 1. The components of blended instructional model.

- 1) iPad is a touchscreen tablet PC developed by Apple Inc., which should be run the latest IOS mobile operating system and always connected with the network during in class. It is used in shooting video, taking photos, creating documents or presentations, performing Internet functions such as web-browsing, emailing, social networking with peers, or referencing by downloading and installing free apps of Apple and third parties. However, iPad must be provided by individual with a BYOD policy.
- 2) iTunes U is used for creating lessons, building assignments, sharing the details, posing a debate that gets everyone talking, importing materials (documents, worksheets, web links, photos and videos), grading the projects and delivering everything students need to be engaged. Other recommended apps depend on what courses the students enroll in each semester, but the common factors are free, small (less than 50 MB), relevant, and well-integrated features.
- 3) Internet network provided by ICT support staffs, requires for quality high-speed internet services in every classroom and connects with Apple TV to get access to iPad of teacher and learners for presenting any contents or work pieces.
- 4) learner is a highly active participant, who is ready to learn, focuses his attention on activities, interact with the other participants in the classroom, and produce the work pieces
- 5) teacher supports the learners during the whole lesson cycle, facilitate learning to help them succeed, provide opportunities and feedback, and assess their progress or performance.
- 6) ICT support staff is required to be on duty for solving any technical problem on allocated time.
- 7) learning objective provides guidance on the selection and development of instructional activity, state what the learner will be able to do or know at the end of lessons. It is essential that a learning objective state a student behavior that is specific, observable, and measurable by using a strong action verb reflecting Bloom's Taxonomy. varies
- 8) lesson content is dictated by the curriculum requirements. Teachers of Suan Dusit University are responsible for creating engaging contents linked to curriculum strands and uploading to iTunes U as medium of instruction for teachers in other universities.
- 9) instructional activity is developed to support educational trends, curriculum and best practices. Teachers of other university may adopt when encountering a diverse range of learners in each region to better engage them, minimize frustration when it is not going according to plan
- 10) work piece is a product produced or accomplished through the instructional activity of learners in the classroom. It could be both hard or soft copy which is presented for obtaining feedback.

4.2. Procedure

The key procedures of the blended instructional model were divided into three stages: 1) Think 2) Talk and 3) Task as well as the sub-stages as the following details.

Before starting the instructional model, only for the first week of instruction, the teacher should:

- 1) Open the video clip to introduce the course and explain more about the course description, teaching methodology, activity and work, and measurement and assessment.
- 2) Explain how to study, the learning strategies, the use of iPads and other apps in this semester.
- 3) Divide learners in groups and allow them to ask questions, then start the first stage:

Stage 1: Think

- 1) Set questions concerning the topic of the lesson that led to brainstorming to find a solution of the problem using the Keynote on iPad.
- 2) Let learner sit in a circle, each of the groups acts as the head and another is the notetaker. The head firstly starts his thought and decides to select the best thought and the note takers writes down all thoughts on iPad and then present it to the group.

- 3) Brainstorm to find a solution, starting from the head and loop to the right. At this sub-stage does not judge the quality of thoughts but collecting a lot of ideas and when the idea is enough, the notetakers logs into the LINE or Facebook app of the group to consider the idea gathered.
- 4) Vote to choose the best 5 thoughts and merge all into one or decide to select the best one.
- 5) present their thought in front of the class, other groups and teacher make some suggestions.

Stage 2: Talk

- 1) Describe the purpose of study and allow students to study the lesson content from the iTunes U, discuss the content together, and then conclude the content as a mind map using the SimpleMind or other appropriate apps.
- 2) Each group studies all the media and resources on the iTunes U while teacher aids them during self-learning and explains or answers to their questions.
- 3) Sharing information, opinions, and finding ways or practical approaches within the group to create a work piece from the study.

Stage 3: Task

- 1) Create the work piece of the group by using the appropriate apps or that the teacher sets or offers.
- 2) Present the work piece by individual or group, other groups and teacher consider and suggest modifying before posting the work piece on the Facebook Group with the hash tag (#) as determined by teachers.
- 3) Summarize the lesson content, activities, and what is acquired from the work creation.

The 3T procedures of blended instructional model can be represented in Fig. 2 as follows.

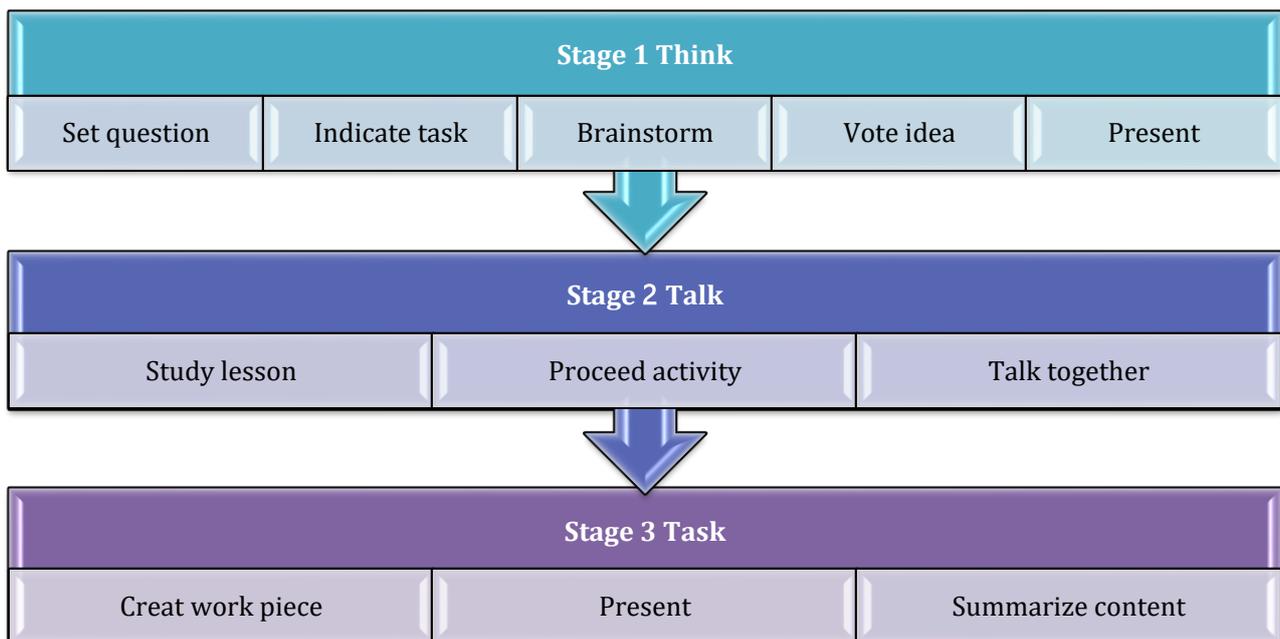


Fig. 2. The 3T procedures of blended instructional model.

4.3. Opinion

The 3T blended instructional model assumes the primary importance of developing collaboration ability of adult learners. It also emphasizes the development of learner’s ability to understand information and communication technology (especially, iPad) broadly enough to be able to apply it productively at work and in their learning, and to continually adapt to the changes in and advancement of it.

Consequently, the results showed that the quality of the model was at very high level ($\bar{X} = 4.86$, S.D. = 0.35)

and some given additional suggestions concluded that the user of this instructional model should remind that iPad is only a supportive tool in educational settings, and do not use it instead of the teacher, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The Overall Results of the Model

Description	\bar{X}	S.D.	Meaning
1. Principle	4.90	0.31	Very high
2. Purpose	4.88	0.33	Very high
3. Procedure	4.79	0.48	Very high
Total	4.86	0.35	Very high

5. Conclusion

Teaching adults is not exactly like teaching younger students. Adult learners do not need come to class every day, and they often cannot give nearly as much of their time. On the contrary, they are driven by a want or a need to learn new skills and improve their knowledge anywhere and anytime. This blended instructional model thus represented an opportunity to integrate the innovative and technological advances offered by online learning with the interaction and participation offered in the best of the traditional learning. In addition, this paper highlighted that the use of technical devices such as iPad or tablets has increased the engagement of young pupils in lessons in their classrooms. Additionally, technology gives teachers or caregivers the ability to design unique learning environments for children. This is because the use of iPad allows them to bring interesting sources into the class and provide children with a much more interactive experience by using apps or online tasks. In the same way, the article addressed the important for an online activity in learning that was going to be a significant advance in the way students were able to interact with each other for producing a collaborative work piece. Finally, it illustrated the blended instructional model based on theoretical perspectives and related researches for adult learners.

6. Recommendation

This 3T blended instruction model was developed as systematic methods for teachers who are interested in using iPad in and out of the classroom. Also, the model's processes help fosters adult learners' collaboration skill. For better understanding of using the model step-by-step, it is recommended that teachers should read the model and related documents thoroughly and be willing to learn using iPads, finding free apps on App Store and accepting their new roles in 21st century classroom.

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