Blended Learning Instruction of Foreign Languages at RIT Croatia: Students' Satisfaction

Šutalo, Dorotea

Undergraduate thesis / Završni rad

2021

Degree Grantor / Ustanova koja je dodijelila akademski / stručni stupanj: **RIT Croatia / RIT Croatia**

Permanent link / Trajna poveznica: https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:229:860171

Rights / Prava: In copyright/Zaštićeno autorskim pravom.

Download date / Datum preuzimanja: **2024-04-23**

Repository / Repozitorij:

RIT Croatia Digital repository - Rochester Institute of Technology

Blended Learning Instruction of Foreign Languages at RIT Croatia: Students' Satisfaction

Dorotea Šutalo

Barbara Perić

Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT Croatia)

HSPT.490.700-702 - Senior Capstone Project

Rebecca Charry

May 5, 2021

Abstract

Solutions for the transition from traditional learning environments to online learning environments of students and universities in this COVID-19 time can potentially be blended learning instructions. Blended learning instruction is balanced between traditional and online learning instruction. In traditional learning instruction students have higher external motivation and in person connection with professors and peers, while online learning instructions require higher intrinsic motivation from students and can also be the advantage for students for their future. Studies have shown that blended learning increases students' overall motivation and engages students the most in their own learning. The purpose of this research paper is to measure students' satisfaction towards blended learning of foreign languages at RIT Croatia. The hypothesis of this research paper is that traditional instruction of foreign languages provides higher levels of satisfaction among RIT Croatia students than blended learning instruction. We used Google forms survey and Likert scale to measure students' satisfaction. Results were described in mean values and percentages.

Keywords: Blended learning, Foreign languages, Students' satisfaction

Blended Learning Instruction of Foreign Languages at RIT Croatia: Students' Satisfaction

According to Sutton (2020), moving to online learning instruction caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has potentially a good future progress for online learning instruction. Both, faculty members and the administration of academic institutions are in leadership roles because without their adaptation students cannot do online learning instruction properly at the university level. Online learning instruction has become an issue especially for adult students because they have already adapted to traditional learning instruction over a long period of years. This issue has also become relevant in this period because of the long history of the usage of more traditional ways of instructions at universities. This paper will deal with students' level of satisfaction towards blended learning instruction of foreign languages at RIT Croatia. The purpose of this research study is to inform the audience about the level of satisfaction of RIT Croatia students towards blended learning instruction of foreign languages. The hypothesis of this research study is that traditional learning instruction of foreign languages provides higher levels of satisfaction among RIT Croatia students than blended learning instruction.

Traditional Learning vs. Online Learning

Thai et al. (2020) have divided four types of learning environment: traditional learning, blended learning, flipped classroom and e-learning. This research also provides data that shows how students who participate in the traditional learning instruction are outperforming the students who are in an online environment. Autonomy, competence and belonging, which are motivation related, are most important factors for satisfaction of students when it comes to traditional learning. Furthermore, people tend to work harder and behave in a more civilized way when they are in an environment with others, or when they are aware that their behavior is closely

monitored and observed constantly. Interesting research is done by Kemp & Grieve (2014) who state that introverted students seem to prefer traditional learning more than online learning because of immediate feedback of the professor. According to Zhu et al. (2020), professors tend to create a positive environment in a classroom and engage with students individually. Typically, students get more incentive and hope that they can improve their grades. In this way students also get more involved in the study of the course material.

Conrad D. & Openo (2019) state that we in today's world need to rethink what it means to be face-to-face and in classroom learning, since technology and online learning have been adapting rapidly to the learning environment. More people who are using online learning for an amount of time have grown accustomed to it as they attend class regularly. According to Sutton (2021) there is opportunity for universities to enroll more students. There are students who left college because of work, older adults who want to fast track and younger people who want to go to particular universities that are located in different cities. Melkonyan, A. & Matevosyan, A. (2020) state that technology and learning languages can complement one another. People should not blind the fact that technology can improve language learning. Authors also stated that new technology is improving more to replace human instructors. People who know that information should give professors credit for their authenticity, eye-contact, human engagement, smile, warmth, caring etc. The authors of the research conclude that professors give originality in language learning.

Thai et al. (2020) stated that when it comes to e-learning, advantages are time flexibility, place and pace. Baxter et al. (2020) state that students accept knowledge through critical communication with teachers and other students, and not just passively acquiring knowledge. Discussions can become an interesting and valid part of course, because students can

share their opinions and critically exchange knowledge with each other. Racero et al. (2020) state that students gladly participate with motivation in activities that are interesting to them and that they see the value of it, and also can value the evident ease of the usage of certain on-line activities. This type of learning can be stimulating to students to learn the regular course material in a different and interesting way. In the book edited by Baxter et al. (2018), the authors also argue that online learning is good in a way that it allows students to present their responses and gives them the freedom to keep their anonymity. Online learning as a digital learning platform which provides and helps students with multisensory learning. It helps students to learn different types of communication. Students need to critically evaluate these types of education. Kemp & Grieve (2014) state that students feel less judgmental when they are learning online. It is well known that online learning is more anonymous than traditional learning. Students who prefer individuality may prefer an online learning setting to traditional methods.

Altmann et al. (2018) state that globalization of learning is connected to online learning. The opportunities for online learning instructions are enormous and universities should implement globalization when implementing online learning instructions. The implementation of online learning instruction should be seen as an opportunity and not as a current obstacle.

According to Zhu (2020) in order to have good performance in online learning instruction, students should have good self-motivation and self-regulation. The role of professors is to motivate externally their students, and students also motivate each other. Students tend to be more relaxed in an online learning instruction and forget about deadlines, and do not respect discipline measures in a same way. Alternatively, when students engage with online learning, they must be more organized and more interested in achieving their goals. Students must be more motivated to regularly attend classes and must improve their time management skills. Students

should learn for themselves and not only because of the need to address specific concerns and to make adjustments to learning environment. Students who learn this sooner than later will have an advantage vis-a-vis students who are not aware of how crucial this is. It is important first to raise the level of awareness of self-regulation and self-motivation between students. Those students will also be better prepared for a career and their personal life. Another research, conducted in 2019, by Salmons et al. states that students do not prefer to do collaborative assignments with other students that they not know personally well to be able to determine if they are responsible and will take their obligations seriously, because sometimes professors are not available to discuss issues within the online group.

According to the previously mentioned research from 2020, by Zhu et al., professors in online learning should focus more on improving social connections among students. This issue is becoming more and more relevant and more urgent to address especially in new circumstances caused by the pandemic. People are social beings and want to engage in relationships with others and desire to be in a warm and welcoming environment. The need to raise the level of awareness of this issue has become especially relevant in the last year, and there is still not enough research data to be able to make valid conclusions. Baxter et al. (2020), state that, while participating in online learning, teachers tend not to have enough insight into the ways how students engage with material that teachers provided to them. The optimal group discussions groups should be smaller but not reduced to only a few students. Teachers should not make wrong assumptions by believing that only active students are learning because passive students may learn by silently reflecting their knowledge through others. That is why it is important for teachers to make clear which outcome they want to have out of engaging students in discussion. It is also very beneficial to have teamwork among students in online learning. When doing group work online

it can be challenging for some students because many of them only want to do the minimum to pass. To protect others in the group project the work should be divided in parts where students share the same amount of responsibility. Salikhova et al. (2020) state that online learning should satisfy students' basic psychological needs. It includes interaction in real time. It gives examples of synchronous online courses that gives real time interaction while asynchronous online courses do not meet those needs. According to Racero et al. (2020) universities should implement ease of using technology for students. They should also present technology usage as it is for the wellbeing of the students.

Crnjac et al. (2020) in their research state that Croatia utilizes e-learning and becomes reality, however there is no research that confirms that Croatians have adapted to it. Puljak et al. (2020) suggested that students implemented well to online learning and they assume that universities are doing the same. However, not all universities could implement online learning very rapidly. Another possible problem is that some professors do not see the benefits of technology in learning according to the book Yang N. (2020). Mozrall (2020) from Rochester Business Journal suggested that universities should engage students and teach them how to use online learning instructions because in today's environment businesses are also done this way. In this way, students will be more prepared for their future careers. Melkonyan, A. and Matevosyan, A. (2020) state that technology and learning languages can complement one another. People should not blind the fact that technology can improve language learning. Nevertheless, it is also true that professors are requested to be more skillful in this area and know more about the usage of technology. Those online environments should be equipped with the most recent modern technological aids for online learning instruction.

Blended Learning Instruction

According to Giannousi et al. (2009) blended learning is the balance between traditional learning instruction and online learning instruction. While this balance can be seen in few other studies, this research suggested high satisfaction and motivation of students with blended learning instruction and that student' satisfaction may even increase during blended learning instruction. Students were more likely to take more blended courses, as well as more prone and open to recommend them to other students. Blended learning provides advantages to professors and students. It could take best from traditional and e-learning. However, professors should be more flexible in the ways of teaching deliveries.

According to previously mentioned authors, students should have more control over blended learning and be provided with more meaningful opportunities. Students who are satisfied with the learning methods are learning with greater ease, are less likely to drop from the course, and they would take more similar courses again. Blended learning instruction is something new for many students, and due to that it is more interesting to students as a learning environment. New generations of students are seeking opportunities to learn in different environments. Students are seeking for opportunities to break the monotony of their learning. Blended learning instruction is the type of learning that focuses students on modern learning techniques and different channels of learning.

Blended Learning Instruction in Foreign Language Classes

Usaporn Sucaromana (2013) suggested that students who learned foreign languages in blended learning environment were the most satisfied. In this research, the author compared students who learned in a traditional learning environment with students who learned in a blended learning

environment and found out that those who learned in a blended learning environment felt more involved in their own learning of foreign language. Blended learning instruction in foreign language classes helped students to have saved lectures that they can read or watch when they are absent from the class session. This type of learning also provides students with sense of belonging and authenticity. They satisfy their social needs and have warm human feedback from professors. This research study will investigate students' level of satisfaction with blended learning Instruction on RIT Croatia.

Method

Participants

There were 60 participants in this study. The participants in this study were voluntary RIT Croatia students who enrolled blended learning foreign language courses in 2020 Fall-term. Participants' age ranges from 17 to 23 years old. In this study demographic background of students is not taken into consideration.

The Blended Course

The course duration was 15 weeks. One week of lecturing was in real time and one week were online assignments. In blended foreign language courses students had the opportunity to arrange private meetings with professors on Zoom by email. While taking the course students had the opportunity to come to campus and use the library, launch room, and computer lab. Exams were written in real time, and assignments were written online.

Data collection instrument

Students completed a survey made by the author: "RIT Croatia Students' Satisfaction on Blended Learning of Foreign Languages". Survey consisted of 13 questions. It was based on the Likert scale. Author decided to use the Likert scale because study is measuring attitudes and opinions of participants. Survey measured students' satisfaction in 5 objectives: time flexibility, connection with peers and professors, college equipment, course objectives and grades. The answers on questions in the survey were based on Likert scale: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree. Survey was made in Google Forms and distributed to students via college email. Data was collected between 31.03.2021. - 07.04.2021.

Limitations

Out of 150 students that attended blended learning instructions of foreign languages 60 of them answered to the survey.

<div align="center">

Results

</div>

Results of survey "RIT Croatia Students' Satisfaction on Blended Learning of Foreign Languages" disapproved the hypothesis. Results showed that students' satisfaction with blended learning of foreign languages is high. Students showed their indifference whether traditional learning is better than blended learning of foreign languages. However, all other responses showed satisfaction towards blended learning of foreign languages. 20% of students strongly agreed that "Blended learning of foreign languages is more effective than traditional learning.", 33.3% of students agreed with that statement, 16.7% of students had neutral response, 25% disagreed with the statement, and 5% strongly disagreed (m=3.38) . Results showed that blended learning foreign language course objectives are meaningful to students (35% strongly agree, 46.7% agree), (m=4.12). Students agreed (40% strongly agreed, 36.7% agreed), (m=4.12)

(Figure2) that blended learning helps them to manage their time. This answer matches with previous research on the topic of blended learning. Satisfaction with college equipment regarding online course time of blended learning was very high (58.3% strongly agreed), (m=4.36), (Figure 3). Previous researches showed that college equipment had an important role in overall students' satisfaction with online learning. Students also agreed that their overall interest towards the course increased because of diverse learning (36.7% strongly agreed, 28.3% agreed), (m=3.90), (Figure 4).Students are satisfied with deadlines of assignments attached to blended learning courses (53.3% strongly agreed) (m=4.25). Students answered that their grade in foreign language courses increased after they enrolled in a blended learning foreign language course (41.7% strongly agreed, 23.3% agreed), (m=3.96), (Figure 5). It is interesting that connection with the professor in the blended learning foreign language course had the most agreeable answers (61.7% strongly agreed), (m=4.42), (Figure 6). While satisfaction with connection with peers was one of the most disagreeable (26.7% strongly agree, 25% agree, 26.7% were neutral, 15% disagree, and 6.7% strongly disagree), (m=3.5). Half of the students strongly agreed that they would take a blended course again if they would have the opportunity, (m=4), (Figure 7). Also, 66.1 % of students agreed (47.5 % strongly agreed, 18.6% agreed) that they would recommend blended learning foreign language courses to their peers (m=3.93). Students also agreed that there should be more blended learning foreign language courses on RIT Croatia (41.7% strongly agreed, 18.3% agreed), (m=3.7). Students also agreed on the last question whether blended learning foreign language courses will succeed in RIT Croatia in the long run (51.7% agreed), (m=4,12), (Figure 8).

Discussion

The interesting fact from this study research is that results disapproved the hypothesis. Results suggest that RIT Croatia students are satisfied with blended learning of foreign languages and they are indifferent whether traditional learning is better than blended learning of foreign languages. Results of this research suggest that students at RIT Croatia are highly satisfied with connection with professors and with equipment during blended learning instructions of foreign languages. Satisfaction with connections with professors and equipment during blended learning instructions are crucial for success of blended learning instructions. As stated by Kemp & Grieve (2014), Zhu et al. (2019), and Salmons et al. (2019) poor connection with professors can cause caution among students not to enroll in blended learning courses. Melkonyan, A. & Matevosyan, A. (2020) state that technology and language learning can complement one another if online environments are up to date. Another issue that influences blended learning is connection among peers. The level of satisfaction regarding it among RIT Croatia students was more positive than negative. The author of this research expected to get more negative responses toward connections with professors, connection with peers, with equipment, and especially toward responses for connection with peers.

Results of this research align with researches of Giannousi et al. (2009) and Usaporn Sucaromana (2013) who state that students are highly satisfied with blended learning instructions. Researches also align with the statements that students found learning more interesting because of diverse learning attached to blended learning instructions. This research aligns with the statement of Usaporn Sucaromana (2013) that attending blended learning instructions make students feel more involved in their own learning.

Other responses regarding course objectives of blended learning instructions of foreign language courses and deadlines of assignments have high satisfaction rates. This study has shown that RIT Croatia faculty members and administration are prepared well for a blended learning environment. While time flexibility which is a very important component of blended learning instructions maintained the same, students had more interesting courses, improved their grades, and had satisfying connections with professors and peers. As results showed many students would take this type of language instructions again and they would recommend the same to their peers. According to these findings, blended learning instructions of foreign languages are successfully held at RIT Croatia and they will be in the long run.

Literature

Altmann, A., Ebersberger, B., Mössenlechner, C., & Wieser, D. (2018). The Disruptive Power of

Online Education : Challenges, Opportunities, Responses. Emerald Publishing Limited.

Baxter, J., Callaghan, G. & McAvoy, J. (2018). Creativity and critique in online learning. Palgrave

Macmillan, Cham. https://doi-org.ezproxy.rit.edu/10.1007/978-3-319-78298-0

Conrad, D. & Openo, J. (2018). Assessment Strategies for Online Learning : Engagement and

Authenticity. Athabasca University Press.

Crnjac Milić, D., Krpić, Z. & Sušac, F. (2020). E-learning in business practice, a case study during

COVID-19 in Croatia. J. J. Strossmayer University of Osijek, Faculty of Electrical Engineering.

https://doi.org/10.31449/inf.v44i4.3261. Informatica 44 (2020) 313–322 313.

Giannousi, M., Vernadakis, N., Derri, V., Michalopoulos, M. & Kioumourtzoglou, E. (2009). Students'

satisfaction from blended learning instruction. Department of Physical Education & Sport

Science Democritus University of Thrace University Campus, Komotini, Greece.

Kemp, N. & Grieve, R. (2014). Face-to-face or face-to-screen? Undergraduates' opinions and test

performance in classroom vs. online learning. Discipline of Psychology, School of Medicine,

University of Tasmania. Front. Psychol. 5:1278. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2014.01278

Salmons, J. & Wilson, A. L. (2019). Learning to Collaborate, Collaborating to Learn : Engaging

Students in the Classroom and Online. Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Melkonyan, A. & Matevosyan A. (2020). Technology-assisted foreign language learning (TALL) in the

digital age. A. SHS Web of Conferences; Les Ulis, Vol. 88, (2020).

DOI:10.1051/shsconf/20208802005

Mozrall, J. (2020). Remote learning evolution: Monitoring connectedness, technological advances.

    Rochester Business Journal; Rochester Vol. 36, Iss. 29, (Oct 30, 2020): 40,43

Puljak, L.; Čivljak, M.; Haramina, A., Mališa, S., Čavić, D.; et al. Attitudes and concerns of

    undergraduate university health sciences students in Croatia regarding complete switch to e-

    learning during COVID-19 pandemic: a survey.BMC Medical Education (2020); London Vol.

    20, (2020): 1-11. DOI:10.1186/s12909-020-02343-7

Racero, F. J., Bueno, S. & Gallego, M. D. (2020). Predicting students' behavioral intention to use open

    source software: A combined view of the Technology Acceptance Model and Self-Determination

    Theory. Applied Sciences; Basel Vol. 10, Iss. 8, (2020): 2711. DOI:10.3390/app10082711

Sucaromana, U. (2013). The Effects of Blended Learning on the Intrinsic Motivation of Thai EFL

    Students. Department of Western Languages, Faculty of Humanities, Srinakharinwirot

    University, Thailand Correspondence: Usaporn Sucaromana, Faculty of Humanities,

    Srinakharinwirot University, Sukhumvit 23 Rd., doi:10.5539/elt.v6n5p141

Salikhova, N. R, Lynch, M. F. & Salikhova, A. B. Psychological aspects of digital learning: A Self-

    Determination Theory Perspective..Contemporary Educational Technology; Eskisehir Vol. 12,

    Iss. 2, (Oct 2020): ep280. DOI:10.30935/cedtech/8584

Sutton, H. (2021). COVID-19 accelerates online learning trends, need for portable credentials

    https://doi-org.ezproxy.rit.edu/10.1002/dap.30825

Thai, N. T., De Wever, B. & Valcke, M. (2020). Face-to-face, blended, flipped, or online learning

    environment? Impact on learning performance and student cognitions. Peer Review The peer

    review history for this article is available at https://publons.com/publon/10.1111/jcal.12423.

Funding information: Vietnamese Goverment_ Project 911, Grant/Award Number: No. 911/QD-TTg https://doi-org.ezproxy.rit.edu/10.1111/jcal.12423

Zhu, Y., Zhang, J.H., Au, W & Yates, G. (2020). University students' online learning attitudes and continuous intention to undertake online courses: a self-regulated learning perspective. Educational Technology Research and Development. volume 68, pages 1485–1519. 10.1007/s11423-020-09753-w

Yang, N. (2020). eLearning for Quality Teaching in Higher Education Teachers' Perception, Practice, and Interventions. Springer.

Figure 1

Blended learning of foreign languages is more effective than traditional learning.
60 responses
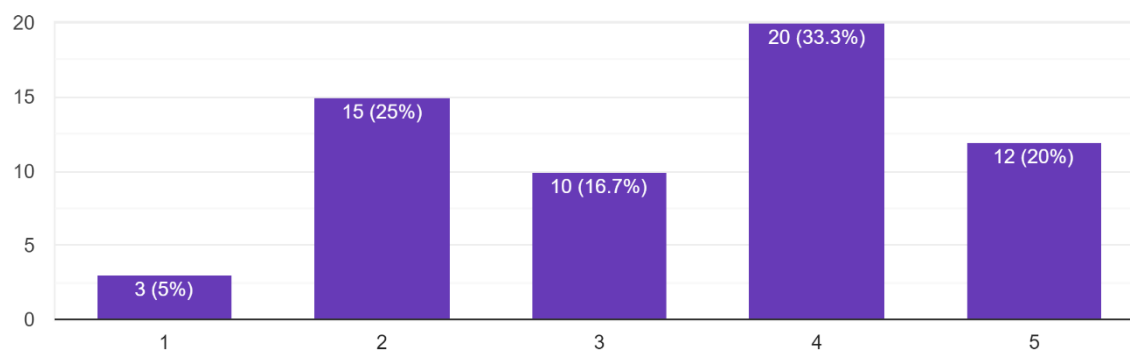
Figure 2

Blended learning of foreign languages helps me to manage my time.
60 responses
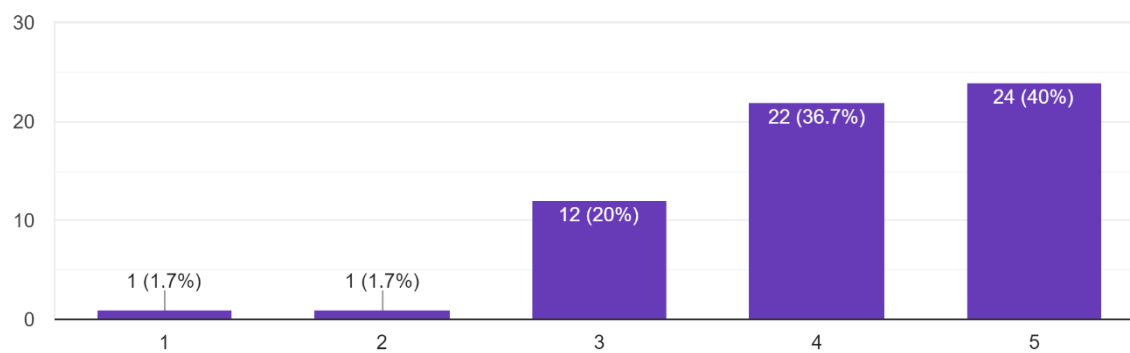
Figure 3

I am satisfied with college equipment (mycourses, zoom, rit gmail, polycom) regarding blended learning.
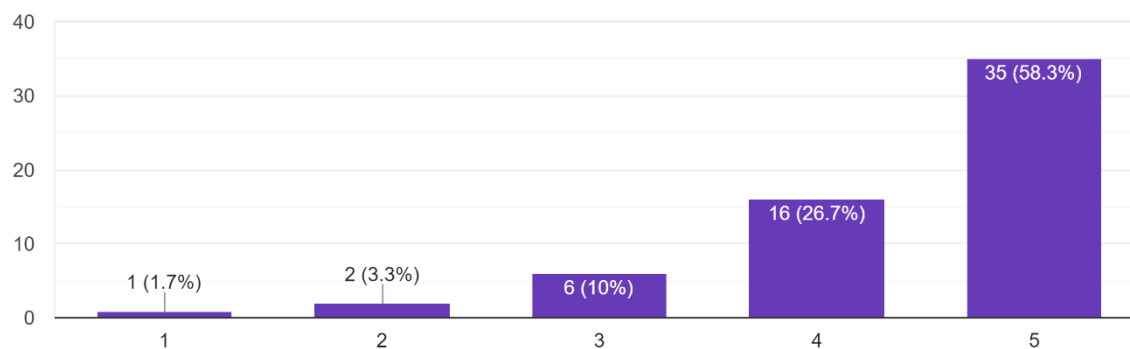60 responses

Figure 4

Through diverse learning (online assignments, discussions, exams, in class) I have more interest in learning.
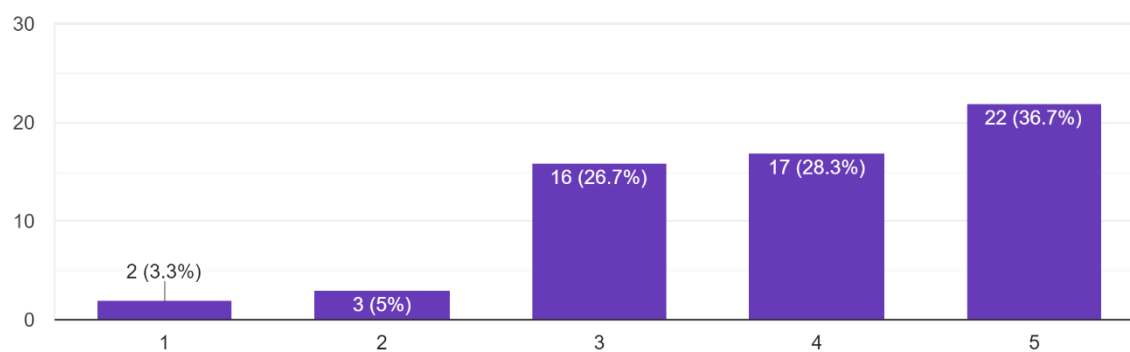60 responses

Figure 5

My grades are improved in foreign language when attending blended learning of foreign languages.
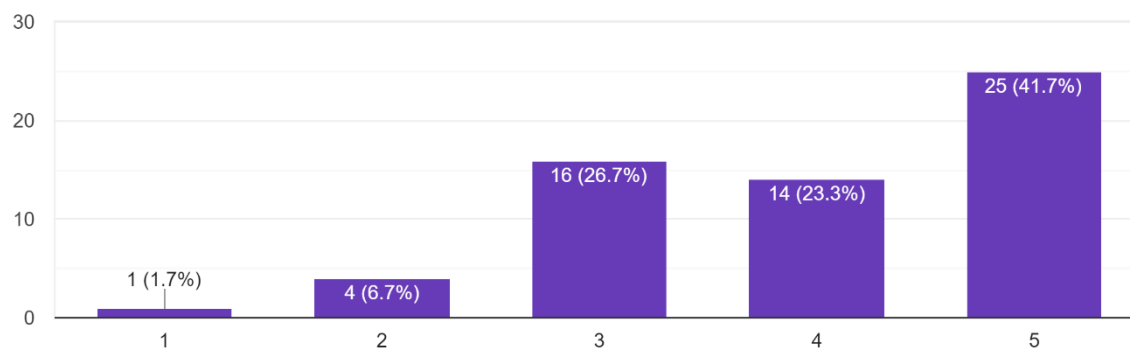60 responses

Figure 6

I am satisfied with connection with professor in blended learning foreign language courses.
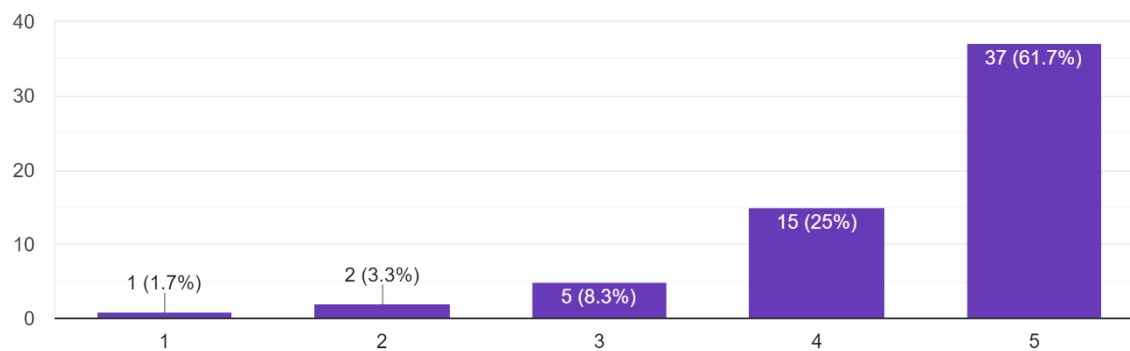60 responses

Figure 7

If I would have the opportunity, I would take blended learning course again.
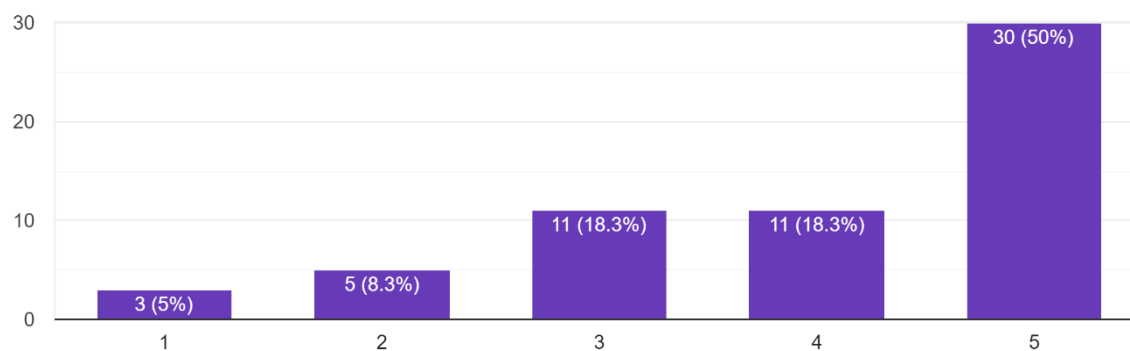60 responses

Figure 8

Blended learning of foreign languages will succeed on RIT Croatia college in the long run.
60 responses