# Perspective on Blended Learning for Instrumental Music Learning

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**Abstract**

Today's world education has changed into e-learning, regardless of education level, from primary, secondary, and tertiary institutional. Alongside the Covid-19 pandemic, teachers worldwide need to recreate, rethink, and reinforce teaching and learn with various strategies. However, this is not an easy task in music instrumental lesson teachers because learning instrumental have been conducted face to face in nature. Other issues arise with the transition learning instrument to an online lesson. Teaching online is insufficient to tackle this issue due to students' low internet connection. Not all students can afford their musical instruments, such as the accordion. With movement control orders still enacted, students could not enter the campus. Hence, hindering them from borrowing musical instruments, especially students who are short of their musical instruments. This urges instrumental music educators to transform teaching materials into digitalisation mediums and blend them with online teaching and learning. This study conducted an extensive document analysis to investigate past literature reviews on how instrumental music lessons use blended learning strategies.

**Keywords:** Blended learning, Instrumental music learning, Music Education Strategies, E-learning for Instrumental Music, Hybrid Instrumental Learning Malaysia

## INTRODUCTION

Education is dynamic, and there will always be room for improvement, especially on how we deliver knowledge and skills in teaching, to align our mindset with the concept of Education 4.0. To execute the idea of hybrid in teaching and learning, what is needed is how can we merge digital skills and transform teaching and learning content into more interactive and collaborative ways (Mohd Noor et al., 2021).

This leads to blending various types of strategies in teaching and learning. Change and reformation in education are inevitable due to the increase in technology drive and its influence on the current world's needs. Instruction in music teaching and learning has been shown many challenges in the current situation. Likewise, learning music online is not new; informal learning music combined with face-to-face has been used for decades and

lacks teaching music resources (Ruokonen & Ruismaki, 2016). Another issue with online music learning is that not all educators are ready in transforming music teaching and learning online (Johnson, 2017).

Crawford (2017) concur that music education learning pedagogy needs a change to align with the twenty-century paradigm. He explains further that most technology usage in music education is one-way formation, not interactive. Teaching and learning online is not just for western music instrumental. Nor Azman et al. (2021) noted that traditional music learning, such as Gamelan ensemble, also misses the mark to deliver our teaching and learning, especially regarding instrument-playing techniques for Gamelan in the pandemic situation. On the other hand, Strahle (2020) suggested that online learning can help transcend autonomous learning among experience students; it is not the same as for

novice music students who depend more on physical demonstration.

Bruin (2021) also point out that the Covid-19 outbreak has opened up for all music educator to rethink how we maintain teaching, engage and communicate with students across all online platform. Rethink, relearning and unlearning in music pedagogy is crucial as education must be flexible, democratic and dynamic (Chamil Arkhasa Nikko & Mohd Hassan, 2020). Also, changes need to be made as current undergrad music students encounter not just the pandemic. They also happenstance the impact of learning instrumental music online.

Apart from the abovementioned issue, it clearly shows that every field in education applies diverse teaching and learning approaches, including instrumental music. In doing so, this study explores a specific learning approach, blended learning, vaguely in the instrumental music lesson.

## BLENDED LEARNING IN GENERAL TERMS

Our current situation in the world has forced educators all around the globe to change the way we conduct classes in every field of study. With that, music educators need to be competent in preparing music students to demonstrate musical skills, using various strategic planning and making sense of their situation to construct new understanding holistically (Cruywagen & Potgieter, 2020).

Hence, different strategies in teaching and learning are needed because, by nature, instrumental music lessons are taught face-to-

face in a studio-based setting that utilises one-to-one lessons. Indirectly, the process of learning instrumental music has been embedded with blended learning, such as various music discography or even videography. But blended learning has its definition, and a clear explanation in the contexts of instrumental music education is needed.

Several studies suggested that blended learning is a mixture of conventional instruction of face-to-face and digital learning (Digolo et al., 2011; Ruthmann & Hebert, 2012; Pike & Shoemaker, 2013; Ruokonen & Ruismaki, 2016; Crawford, 2017; Mdletshe, 2019; Stauffer, 2020; Armellini et al. 2021; Kim, 2021; Li et al. 2021; Ng et al. 2021). When blending conventional and online learning, indirectly, we can enhance and engage learners to become more independent in mastering their music instrument techniques and skills.

## INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC LEARNING FROM THE YEAR 2021 – 2022

We use the specific search on the Google Scholar database, using the keyword "blended learning in music" and specifically choosing related articles focused on instrumental or music education contexts and articles in English.

Other than that, articles will be discarded, including inaccessible documents. Across 36 available articles, only four clearly define blended music learning, and 32 more are discarded because of unrelated language barriers. The result is presented in **Table 1** below:

**Table 1.** Blended learning in music education

| Kim (2021) | Three-dimensional Benefits of Blended Learning (A), Challenges of Blended Learning (B) and Concern about Students (C). In (A) dimension consist of two categories, Educational Effects (A1) and Classroom Management (A2). Dimensions of (A), (B) and (C) are as follows: |
|---|---|
| | 1. Music improvement (A1) |
| | 2. Academic achievement (A1) |
| | 3. Motivation (A1) |
| | 4. Teacher and Students interaction (A1) |
| | 5. Interaction among students (A1) |
| | 6. Uploading class materials (A2) |
| | 7. Assigning classroom activities (A2) |
| | 8. Tracking assignment progress (A2) |

| | |
|---|---|
| | 9. Feedback on assignment (A2) <br> 10. Adoption of innovation/lacks of ICT skills (B) <br> 11. Pressure on making/finding online resources (B) <br> 12. Classroom behaviours (C) <br> 13. Access to inappropriate materials (C) <br> 14. Negative attitude toward blended learning (C) |
| **Armellini, Antunes & Howe (2021)** | It consists of three main dimensions Learning Experience in Active Blended Learning (A), Social Experiences (B) and Learning Support (C). All three dimensions are divided into eleven such as: <br> 1. Linking theory and practice (A) <br> 2. Variability in learning experiences (A) <br> 3. Usage of technologies in learning (A) <br> 4. Engaging learning experiences (A) <br> 5. Pre-session activities (A) <br> 6. Student attendance (A) <br> 7. Assessment (A) <br> 8. Communication (B) <br> 9. staff-student partnerships (B) <br> 10. Classroom-based support (C) <br> 11. Support beyond the classroom (C) |
| **Li, Li & Han (2021)** | Hybrid learning in performing arts education which divided into two-mode, E-learning (A) and Synchronous Teaching (B). Both learning modes consist of: <br> 1. Multimedia Video (A) – Demonstration of practice and video of training <br> 2. Interactive web components (A) – Online quizzes, discussion board and an electronic copy of study materials <br> 3. Lectures (B) – Classroom teaching and usage of Powerpoints <br> 4. Webinar (B) – Experience sharing from teachers and experts <br> 5. Innovative performance projects (B) – Team-based exercises, promoting students arts self-efficacy and enhancing team collaboration |
| **Ng, Ng & Chu (2021)** | They are exploring blended learning strategies by using an online flipped classroom approach. Blended learning in the context of Shubailan music-making should be aligned with flexible lesson preparation and a collaborative online, face-to-face learning environment. Firstly, learning occurs online, in which learners will be studying preassigned materials like instructional videos before face-to-face online classes—second, blending with recorded videos, web conferencing software and musical instrument application—lastly, learning tools, mobile services and platforms. |

## METHODOLOGY

This study examined the article using the Eight-step qualitative content analysis technique proposed by Roller (2019). These eight-steps, categories in two-phase, as shown in Figure 1 below:
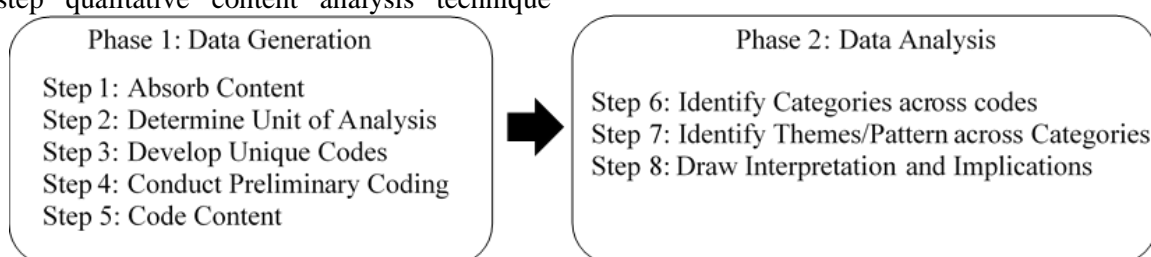


**Figure 1** Eight-steps of qualitative content analysis

In phase 1 data generation and step 1, documents were gathered using Google Scholar Database. Step 2, the unit of analysis, will be defined as specific criteria in searching for articles written in English and can be fully accessed. Following step 3, developing unique codes are the relevant keywords for this study, such as *instrumental music education*, *online music education*, blended learning, and *blended learning music education*, without using "punctuation marks".

The results appear to be 330,000 articles for instrumental music education, a total of 1,930,000 search results for online music education, 836,000 results using blended learning keywords and lastly, 55,400 results for blended learning music education. With a tremendous amount of articles, we strategies criteria for deduction by using "punctuation marks" with the keywords "blended learning in music" from 2021 to 2022.

Results show around 36 available articles. Accordingly, choosing a suitable keyword is vital; that is why a screening process needs to be done to deduct irrelevant documents. Once relevant articles are gathered, each article's contents will be reviewed, and only pertinent data will be presented.

## DISCUSSION

Merging blended learning in an instrumental music lesson is not easy because music education involves theory and practice (Digolo et al., 2011). Despite that, the general idea of blended learning also shared the exact definition of hybrid learning. Another profound summary of blended learning, we can conclude it is not just about the music contents, but how can we transform music content using various available online technologies platforms, which is significantly shown in Armellini et al. (2021), Kim (2021), Li et al. (2021) and Ng et al. (2021).

By using the idea of blending in instrumental music lessons, music educators or instrumental teachers can save time discussing more on the technical aspect of instruments, rather than focusing on lectures or demonstrating music materials that can be recorded much earlier before starting the lessons.

Likewise, students and teachers can be more engaged in learning musical instruments. In order to engage learners, educators need to develop interactive music material. In doing so, learners will most likely be engaging in classes more actively, due to reducing time in explaining the theory and more toward practicality of chosen music instruments. Both educators and learners also need to equip with decent knowledge of online platforms. Regarding connectivity and the internet, learners accessing inappropriate content and such is part of blended learning experiences, but it is out of the league, as external factors that will hinder both parties in an online lesson experience.

When learners are active, means that they are actively involved in the learning process. Music instrument educators also need to simplify their music teaching materials, rather bombarded with plenty of information for learners. Hence, this will give space to discuss ideas, experiment and feedback in both ways for educators and learners.

Combing blended learning in instrumental music lessons can embrace both learners and educators with different kinds of available technologies online. By recording and uploading online, learners can have more plenty of time to pre-record their instrument practices. With that, indirectly learners are moving toward the idea of heutagogy, a form of self-determined learning approaches (Blaschke, 2012).

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