

# Readiness of Tertiary EFL Teachers Towards a Blended Learning Approach in the Post Covid-19 Era

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## Abstract

The landscape of the education system has changed significantly after the pandemic. UGC has made a policy on implementing Blended Learning approach in the universities of Bangladesh. So, the study concerns the readiness of Tertiary EFL teachers towards a Blended Learning approach in the post Covid-19 era. This study is a quantitative one. The researcher used a survey questionnaire with 35 items under the variables of demographic profile of the teachers, attitude of teachers towards Blended Learning, planning blended activities, technical literacy, and facilitating student-student and teacher-student interaction. The targeted population of the study is the tertiary EFL teachers of private universities of Bangladesh. To determine the sample size, Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table is employed. In the study, the population size is 60 and the sample size is 52. Moreover, the simple random sampling technique of probability sampling method is used. The participants of the study are the tertiary EFL teachers of four private universities located in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The findings of the study show that the tertiary EFL teachers have positive attitude towards Blended Learning. They are also ready for planning blended activities, technical literacy, and facilitating student-student and teacher-student interaction. The EFL teachers are ready to troubleshoot unfamiliar technological issues and they are optimistic about facilitating the interactions even though it takes more time as compared to the face-to-face interactions. The study states that the tertiary EFL teachers are ready to implement Blended Learning as a learning pedagogy in the post Covid-19 era.

**Keywords:** Readiness, Tertiary, EFL teachers, Blended Learning, Post Covid-19, Bangladesh

## Introduction

In the post Covid-19 era, illustrating the insight of the tertiary EFL teachers' readiness towards Blended Learning approach is crucial to ensure the proper implementation of the approach in tertiary EFL classrooms. Now, Blended Learning (BL) approach is going to be a shift for English language teachers at tertiary level of Bangladesh. BL is a combination of two teaching and learning environment such as face to face and e-learning (Roberts, 2004). A significant revolution in education took place when Covid-19 first hit the world. Prior to this pandemic, the education system of Bangladesh was sheer traditional but following the time, the education system radically shifted to the online classes which became the new normal to the

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educators and the students (Khan, 2021). UGC approved the policy of Blended Learning approach for higher education on 27 February 2022 for facing and overcoming the current challenges (Shahin, 2022). "Strategic Plan for Higher Education in Bangladesh: 2018-2030" is formulated by the policy of "Blended Learning for Bangladesh" to swift forward the higher education. Due to Covid-19, teachers had to cope up with the new pedagogy and assessment system. Blended Learning is new to Bangladeshi EFL teachers. Hence, it is not implemented in the classrooms yet. As UGC has approved the implementation of Blended Learning and assured of supplying needed fund to implement this approach in the classes, it is necessary for the EFL teachers to get ready towards the application of Blended Learning pedagogy to face the current challenges and smoothen the learning of the learners. As there is no recent study found regarding the readiness of tertiary EFL teachers towards BL approach, the researcher was motivated to conduct the study to assess the factors that influence the readiness of the tertiary EFL teachers towards the Blended Learning approach in the post Covid-19 era through investigating the research question: 1. What factors influence EFL teachers' readiness for a Blended Learning approach as a teaching pedagogy in the post Covid-19 era?

### Literature Review

In the post Covid-19 era, Blended Learning has become the most suitable learning approach in Bangladesh. Raman et al. (2020) stated that the main factor of the success of Blended Learning approach is the teachers' acceptance of it. The success of Blended Learning in an EFL class depends on the readiness of the teachers. According to Brooks and Grajek et al. (2020), the integration of educational technology depends on the skills and views of the teachers. It is necessary to determine the readiness of the teachers for achieving success in several modalities of technology integration. Vergonia and Mombas (2022) studied the Profiling Philippines high school teachers' readiness for Blended Learning in post Covid-19 era based on the indicators proposed by Graham et al. (2019). At present, Blended Learning is not implemented yet in Bangladeshi tertiary level EFL classes. So, a proper assessment of EFL teachers' readiness is required to ensure the success of the implementation of the BL approach. Li (2021) stated that the teachers should be constant self-motivated. However, teachers' motivation depends on some factors such as knowledge of pedagogical strategies in terms of online teaching, competency in using technology, and self-sufficiency in choosing teaching methods. Moreover, he suggests that Blended Learning will be in trend due to the pandemic situation. Yet, there are challenges regarding implementing BL approach in the tertiary EFL courses.

Sire (2022) stated that, the universities of Bangladesh will face numerous challenges regarding implementing Blended Learning Approach as it requires strong infrastructure. Both teacher and the students must have apt knowledge on this versatile way of teaching and learning. Rahim (2019) stated that the learners are not willing to co-operate the teachers to complete their task while using BL approach and they also have miscommunication with their peers. Then, the teachers face difficulties in managing the students and keeping their focus on the given task. It is also difficult for a teacher to assign a particular role to a student for a particular activity in BL approach. According to Bozionelos (2001), Blended Learning causes negative attitude towards computer technology and computer anxiety that leads to stress, fear, and discomfort.

Setyawan et al. (2022) stated that the students and the teachers both gave positive feedback about Blended Learning method. This method can mould the teachers' role by using new technologies in the learning system. This is how students' can get a new experience a new way of learning based on technology. However, teachers need professional development that can help the students to be successful in the learning outcome using blended method. In addition, BL approach will bring a different dimension in the teaching system of English as a Foreign Language. The objective of this study is to find out the factors that influence EFL teachers' readiness for a Blended Learning approach as a teaching pedagogy in the post Covid-19 era.

### **Research Methodology**

The study has been done using quantitative method. According to Chris (2021), quantitative research includes collection of numerical data and employing mathematical analyses to make predictions, study the trends, examine hypotheses and run experiments. A survey research design was adapted to meet the objective of the study. Survey research is a collection of data obtained by asking a set of question to a person, individuals, or groups on paper or online (Chyung et al., 2017). It is the most appropriate design of research to fulfill the purpose of this study, which aims to portray the overall profile of teachers' readiness for Blended Learning in universities of Bangladesh.

According to Hair et al., (2019), population must be particularly defined based on the objectives of the research. Therefore, for this study, the target population was defined as the EFL teachers of tertiary level teaching in Bangladeshi private universities in the post pandemic era who are getting ready to accept Blended Learning approach as a learning pedagogy. The study covers four private universities in Dhaka. In this study, simple random sampling technique is used by the

researchers. The researcher employed simple probability sampling so that each member of the population gets the same chance of being chosen. The tertiary EFL teachers from four private universities of Bangladesh are the samples of the study. Succeeding Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the sample size in this study is 52 EFL teachers and the population size is 60, who are the residents of Bangladesh and who are teaching in Bangladesh at tertiary level. This sample size is appropriate because they cover other tertiary level EFL teachers who are getting ready to implement BL approach in the post Covid-19 era.

The questionnaire is adapted from Vergonia and Mombas (2022) and Aban and Nicart (2022). In this research, a questionnaire was used to analyze the factors that influence the readiness of tertiary EFL teachers towards the Blended Learning approach as a learning pedagogy in the post Covid-19 era. The survey consists of 35 questions and divided into four parts. The designing of the survey questionnaire of the study is developed into some particular steps considering the objective of the study. The survey questions used a 5-point Likert Scale; with responses varying from strongly disagree to strongly agree to respond to their agreement stage and the questionnaire is divided into four parts. Firstly, the researcher employed the results of the past studies that are related to the relevant variables. Secondly, the design of the survey questionnaire was compared with the similar studies. Thirdly, the researcher employed multi-measures to capture the meaning of each construct. Finally, the researchers collected comments from the tertiary EFL teachers who are preparing to implement BL in their classrooms after the pandemic.

The data collection procedure is fully online based due to easiness of reaching to the participants. The survey is shared to the respondents through E-mail. The survey data was collected in three weeks for the participants to fill in the Google Forms questionnaire. According to Zikmund (1997), it is very important to reduce the possibility of respondent fatigue or confusion through careful administration of the survey to achieve a high response level. Wording principles were used while drafting of the questionnaire (Cooper and Schindler, 2001). Moreover, the researcher developed the questionnaire in such a way that the respondents would be able to answer and complete the questionnaire easily. To avoid response bias and encourage participation, the researcher employed close-ended structured response formats based on the nature of the questions. To get optimal results in this study, a total design approach, combining both practical and theoretical considerations was used.

### **Analysis and Discussion**

This part of the study shows the factors that influence EFL teachers' readiness for a Blended Learning approach in post Covid-19 era considering four items-

Attitude of Teachers Toward Blended Learning, Planning blended activities, Technical Literacy, and Facilitating Student-Student and Teacher-Student Interaction. Inclusion of the demographic profile of the tertiary EFL teachers was mandatory to find out the background information of the respondents. This part shows that there were 44.2% male teachers and 55.8% female teachers. The Designation Status of the respondents are- lecturer is 59.6%, Assistant Professor is 21.2%, Associate Professor is 9.6%, Professor is 3.8%, N/A is 0%, and Senior lecturer is 5.8%. The majority of the teachers' designation status is lecturer.

Table 1. Readiness of Tertiary EFL Teachers Towards a Blended Learning Approach in the Post Covid-19 Era

Sl	Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>Attitude of Teachers toward Blended Learning</b>						
1.	I believe that high quality learning experiences can occur without interacting with students face-to-face.	1.9%	15.4 %	23.1%	42.3%	17.3%
2.	I support learner-to-learner interaction and collaborative activity as a central means of teaching.	42.3%	50%	3.8%	3.8%	0%
3.	I recognize that community building is an important component of blended teaching.	26.9%	69.2 %	3.8%	0%	0%
4.	I encourage students to bring life experiences into the classroom and create activities that draw on those experiences.	63.5%	30.8 %	5.8%	0%	0%
5.	I am critical thinker and can develop assignments that encourage critical thinking in my students.	57.7%	40.4 %	1.9%	0%	0%
6.	I believe that lecture is the best way to convey content in mind discipline.	54.8%	40.5 %	4.8%	0%	0%
<b>Planning Blended Activities</b>						
1.	I am ready to create activities that combine online and in-class components to help students develop important life skills.	36.5%	57.7 %	5.8%	0%	0%
2.	I am ready to sequence activities of online and in-class learning in an easy-to-follow format.	23.1%	67.3 %	9.6%	0%	0%
3.	I provide lessons and activities that are connected to real-world applications.	63.5%	34.6 %	1.9%	0%	0%
4.	I am ready to strategically combine online and in-class activities that enable students' ownership of the learning.	28.8%	59.6 %	11.5%	0%	0%

## Readiness of Tertiary EFL Teachers Towards a Blended Learning Approach in the Post Covid-19 Era

5.	I am ready to create new online learning materials when relevant content is not available.	44.2%	42.3 %	13.5%	0%	0%
6.	I use a variety of teaching strategies to help my students learn.	61.5%	34.6 %	3.8%	0%	0%
7.	I enjoy trying new teaching approaches.	53.8%	44.2 %	1.9%	0%	0%
<b>Technical Literacy</b>						
1.	I am ready to master new online technologies for Blended Learning.	65.4%	30.8 %	3.8%	0%	0%
2.	I can easily use Microsoft Office tools such as Word and PowerPoint to create documents.	67.3%	26.9 %	5.8%	0%	0%
3.	I can easily perform file management tasks on my computer such as copying, moving, renaming, and deleting files or folders.	65.4%	30.8 %	3.8%	0%	0%
4.	I enjoy conversing with others online through social media or other discussion forums.	34.6%	46.2 %	13.5%	5.8%	0%
5.	I use the Internet to locate resources for teaching.	51.9%	42.3 %	3.8%	1.9%	0%
6.	I can record video of myself or other people/ places/ things with my phone, tablet, or computer webcam.	42.3%	44.2 %	13.5%	0%	0%
7.	I am ready to successfully troubleshoot unfamiliar technological issues that often occur.	19.2%	55.8 %	17.3%	5.8%	1.9%
8.	I am ready to use the tools commonly found in a learning management system, such as grade book, announcements, content pages, and quizzes.	38.5%	46.2 %	13.5%	1.9%	0%
9.	I am ready to use content-specific educational software such as science educational software and educational games.	26.9%	48.1 %	17.3%	7.7%	0%
10.	I am ready to find quality online content resources which are relevant to students' learning needs.	50%	42.3 %	5.8%	1.9%	0%
11.	I'm concerned about copyright law for online classes because everything is Fair Use.	38.5%	48.1 %	11.5%	1.9%	0%
<b>Facilitating Student-Student and Teacher-Student Interaction in BL</b>						
1.	I am available to my students on a regular basis for questions and assistance.	53.8%	40.4 %	5.8%	0%	0%
2.	I am ready to facilitate students' small-group collaboration on projects online (in addition to in-class).	48.1%	40.4 %	11.5%	0%	0%
3.	I am ready to strengthen students' sense of belonging to the classroom community using online communication.	34.6%	50%	13.5%	1.9%	0%

4.	I am ready to ensure that students are comfortable communicating with me online and in-class.	46.2%	50%	3.8%	0%	0%
5.	I communicate my expectations about participation, behavior, and work quality to my students.	46.2%	48.1%	5.8%	0%	0%
6.	I expect online teaching to take more time than face-to-face instruction, and I am prepared for it.	17.3%	38.5%	26.9%	17.3%	0%

### Attitude of Teachers Toward Blended Learning

The purpose of exploring attitude of the tertiary EFL teachers toward Blended Learning approach in the post Covid-19 is significant for the study. The data suggest that maximum tertiary EFL teachers disagreed that high quality learning experiences can occur without interacting with students’ face-to-face (42.3%). Then, the data shows that, majority of the teachers agreed that they support learner-to-learner interaction and collaborative activity as a central means of teaching (50%). Most of the teachers recognize that community building is an important component of blended teaching (69.2%). In addition, majority of the teachers strongly agreed that they encourage students to bring life experiences into the classroom and create activities that draw on those experiences (63.5%). Maximum respondents strongly agreed (57.7%) that they are critical thinker and can develop assignments that encourage critical thinking in their students. Moreover, the study findings reveal that the tertiary EFL teachers strongly agreed that giving lecture is the best way to convey content in mind discipline (54.8%).

However, the study reveals that the majority of the tertiary EFL teachers have the positive attitude towards implementing Blended Learning approach in the post Covid-19 era. Most of the teachers responded that high quality learning experiences cannot occur without interacting with students’ face-to-face and majority of the teachers agreed that they support learner-to-learner interaction and collaborative activity as a central means of teaching. Most of the teachers recognized the importance of community building in Blended Learning. In a nutshell, though the tertiary EFL teachers find face to face interaction is more effective, they are positive about implementing Blended Learning approach as they strongly agreed that they can develop assignments encouraging critical thinking in their students.

### Planning Blended Activities

Emphasizing on the tertiary EFL teachers’ planning on BL activities is important to meet the objective of the study. The data shows that maximum EFL teachers are ready to create activities that combine online and in-class components to help students develop important life skills (57.7%). Moreover, they positively responded that they are ready to sequence activities of online and in-class learning in an easy-to-follow format (67.3%). Most of the tertiary EFL teachers believe that

they provide lessons and activities that are connected to real-world applications (63.5%). The data suggests that the teachers are ready to strategically combine online and in-class activities that enable students' ownership of the learning (59.6%). It is visible in the findings that majority of the teachers are prepare to create new online learning materials when relevant content is not available (44.2%). In addition, the teachers strongly agreed that they use a variety of teaching strategies to help their students learn (61.5%) and they also strongly agreed that they enjoy trying new teaching approaches (53.8%).

The study examines that most of the tertiary EFL teachers are ready for planning BL activities. The findings of the study matches with the study of Vergonia and Mombas (2022) that the teachers are ready to generate activities combining online and offline courses to aid the students' learning implementing BL approach. However, their study also suggests that the teachers are somewhat ready for organizing the classroom space as required to employ the planned online and offline activities. In addition, the study presents that majority EFL teachers enjoy trying new teaching approaches and use a variety of teaching strategies to help their students learn. They are ready to create activities that combine online and in-class components to help students develop important life skills. Moreover, they are ready to sequence activities of online and in-class learning in an easy-to-follow format. The teachers are prepared to create new online learning materials when relevant content is not available. So, the novelty of the study is the tertiary EFL teachers are prepared to give effort in planning BL activities.

### **Technical Literacy**

Technical literacy is one of the key components of the findings of the study. The readiness of tertiary EFL teachers can be determined by their ability to use technology in their courses. The study suggests that majority of the teachers strongly agreed that they are ready to master new online technologies for Blended Learning (65.4%). Then, most of the teachers can easily use Microsoft Office tools such as Word and PowerPoint to create documents (67.3%). Moreover, the data shows that, majority of the teachers strongly agreed that they can easily perform file management tasks on their computer such as copying, moving, renaming, and deleting files or folders (65.4%). Among the respondents, most of the tertiary EFL teachers enjoy conversing with others online through social media or other discussion forums (46.2%). They strongly agree that they use the Internet to locate resources for teaching (51.9%). In addition, maximum EFL teachers agreed that they can record video of themselves or other people/places/things with their phone, tablet, or computer webcam (44.2%). The tertiary EFL teachers agreed that they are ready to successfully troubleshoot unfamiliar technological issues that often occur (55.8%). Respondents are also item ready to use the tools commonly found in a learning manage

ment system, such as grade book, announcements, content pages, and quizzes (46.2%).

The EFL teachers agreed that they are ready to use content-specific educational software such as science educational software and educational games (48.1%). Moreover, the data shows that, majority of the teachers strongly agreed that they are ready to find quality online content resources which are relevant to students' learning needs (50%). Likewise, Majority of the respondents agreed that they concerned about copyright law for online classes because everything is Fair Use (48.1%).

The findings of the study expose that maximum tertiary EFL teachers are ready to implement BL approach in the post pandemic era concerning technical literacy. Most of the teachers strongly agreed that they are ready to master new online technologies for Blended Learning and can easily use Microsoft Office tools to create documents and they are skilled in management tasks on their computer. The teachers are also ready to troubleshoot unfamiliar technological issues that often occur. Moreover, they agreed to use educational games and apps according to their content. They are also able to record video with phone, tablet, or computer webcam. Most importantly, the tertiary EFL teachers are well aware of copyright law. Moreover, the majority of the teachers are ready to find quality online content resources which are relevant to students' learning needs.

### **Facilitating Student-Student and Teacher-Student Interaction in BL**

The readiness of tertiary EFL teachers' facilitating student-student and teacher-student interaction in BL approach influences learning and growth of the students. Majority of the respondents strongly agreed that they are available to their students on a regular basis for questions and assistance (53.8%). The teachers strongly agreed that they are ready to facilitate students' small-group collaboration on projects online (in addition to in-class) (48.1%). Moreover, the respondents are ready to strengthen students' sense of belonging to the classroom community using online communication (50%). Majority of the teachers agreed that they are ready to ensure that students are comfortable communicating with them online and in-class (50%). They also agreed to communicate their expectation about participation, behavior, and work quality to their students (48.1%). Additionally, most of the teachers agreed that they expect online teaching to take more time than face-to-face instruction, and they are prepared for (38.5%).

The study findings indicate that majority of the tertiary EFL teachers are available to their students on a regular basis for questions and assistance. The teachers give priority to make their students feel comfortable communicating in both online and offline. The teachers are ready to facilitate students' small-group collabo

ration on projects online and also to in-class. Moreover, they also communicate their expectation about participation, behavior, and work quality to their students. The teachers are so ready that even if they need some extra time in online classes than face-to-face instruction, they are ready to provide it for the better outcome of their students.

### Conclusion

In post Covid-19 era, the whole education system has changed innovatively. The Bangladesh University Grants Commission has approved the policy on implementing Blended Learning in tertiary level. Blended Learning approach is very new to the teachers of Bangladesh. So, before implementing BL approach in the classroom, it is important to identify the factors that influence the readiness of tertiary EFL teachers towards BL approach in the post Covid-19 era. The findings of the study assure that the EFL teachers have positive attitude towards Blended Learning. They are ready to plan blended activities. Moreover, the teachers are optimistic regarding their technical literacy and they are ready to facilitate student-student and teacher-student interaction. Moreover, the findings from this study directly contribute to the growing body of research on teachers' readiness towards BL approach. Here, we also came to learn about the factors that influence the readiness of tertiary EFL teachers. To sum up, the researcher attempted to find out the factors that influence their readiness regarding Blended Learning approach in post Covid-19 era as well as recommended valuable tips to roadmap the future studies.

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## Appendix 1. Survey (Questionnaire)

Readiness of Tertiary EFL Teachers Towards a Blended Learning Approach in the Post Covid-19 Era

*Demographic Profile:*

Sex: Male/Female

Age:

Highest Degree:

Designation: Lecturer/Asst. Prof./Associate Prof./Professor

Type of Graduated University: Public/Private

SI	Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>Attitude of Teachers toward Blended Learning</b>						
1.	I believe that high quality learning experiences can occur without interacting with students face-to-face.					
2.	I support learner-to-learner interaction and collaborative activity as a central means of teaching.					
3.	I recognize that community building is an important component of blended teaching.					
4.	I encourage students to bring life experiences into the classroom and create activities that draw on those experiences.					
5.	I am critical thinker and can develop assignments that encourage critical thinking in my students.					
6.	I believe that lecture is the best way to convey content in mind discipline.					
<b>Planning Blended Activities</b>						
1.	I am ready to create activities that combine online and in-class components to help students develop important life skills.					
2.	I am ready to sequence activities of online and in-class learning in an easy-to-follow format.					
3.	I provide lessons and activities that are connected to real-world applications.					
4.	I am ready to strategically combine online and in-class activities that enable students' ownership of the learning.					
5.	I am ready to create new online learning materials when relevant content is not available.					
6.	I use a variety of teaching strategies to help my students learn.					
7.	I enjoy trying new teaching approaches.					

Technical Literacy						
1.	I am ready to master new online technologies for Blended Learning.					
2.	I can easily use Microsoft Office tools such as Word and PowerPoint to create documents.					
3.	I can easily perform file management tasks on my computer such as copying, moving, renaming, and deleting files or folders.					
4.	I enjoy conversing with others online through social media or other discussion forums.					
5.	I use the Internet to locate resources for teaching.					
6.	I can record video of myself or other people/places/things with my phone, tablet, or computer webcam.					
7.	I am ready to successfully troubleshoot unfamiliar technological issues that often occur.					
8.	I am ready to use the tools commonly found in a learning management system, such as grade book, announcements, content pages, and quizzes.					
9.	I am ready to use content-specific educational software such as science educational software and educational games.					
10.	I am ready to find quality online content resources which are relevant to students' learning needs.					
11.	I'm concerned about copyright law for online classes because everything is Fair Use.					
Facilitating Student-Student and Teacher-Student Interaction in BL						
1.	I am available to my students on a regular basis for questions and assistance.					
2.	I am ready to facilitate students' small-group collaboration on projects online (in addition to in-class).					
3.	I am ready to strengthen students' sense of belonging to the classroom community using online communication.					
4.	I am ready to ensure that students are comfortable communicating with me online and in-class.					
5.	I communicate my expectations about participation, behavior, and work quality to my students.					
6.	I expect online teaching to take more time than face-to-face instruction, and I am prepared for it.					