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Research article title:

Exploring the use of Blended Learning to Change Perceptions towards Economics

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Abstract

The purpose of this exploratory research is to determine the effectiveness of using a blended learning teaching strategy to increase student engagement and changing student sentiment towards the subject of economics. Classroom lessons were extended to an online platform through the use of discussion forums, blogs and online activities. Data was collated using a cross sectional survey design where students were required to provide feedback on the blended learning approach and rank the most enjoyable activities through a questionnaire. The findings revealed that the use of blended learning helped to improve student sentiment towards economics and the relevance of the subject became more apparent. Students preferred activities that included group work and simulation exercises. This would imply that the use of a constructive learning theory in the classroom is an appropriate method to improving student engagement and student attitude towards economics.

1. Introduction

Within the context of a financial degree, the subject of economics is important, not only because of the necessity to obtain a thorough understanding of economic principles, but also because research, have shown that the study of economics broadens students' knowledge in decision making and financial awareness (Allgood, Bosshardt, van der Klaauw and Watts, 2012). The purpose of including economics in financial qualifications at higher education institutes is to provide a knowledge foundation for more informed opinions and decision making on vital financial issues (Van Wyk, 2012). As is the case in a financial qualification, knowledge of economics is also of value to information technology (IT) students as it provides students with a broad overview of the value of economic activities on the IT industry (Van Wyk, 2012).

Research by Soper and Walstad (1983), Hodgkinson and Perera (1996) and Van Wyk (2012), have established that students entering the higher education environment have a preconceived negative sentiment towards economics. Consequently, fewer students are enrolling for economics as a major subject, due to apprehension and anxiety towards economics (Shahidul, 2010).

These negative attitudes have a considerable impact on the success of the students. Darling-Hammond, Orcutt, Strobel, Kirsch, Lit, Martin and Comer [s.a.], indicate that emotions affect learning, influence the ability to process information and accurately understand elements of learning. Emotions have a physiological, behavioural and cognitive influence on an individual and feelings of anxiety and nervousness impacts on the students' ability to learn effectively.

Kobella (1989) refers to the role of teaching strategies that can change student attitudes. The author indicates that just as the educator can assist with the cognitive understanding of a particular subject, so too can the educator assist with the affective elements towards students' enjoyment of the subject. Therefore, in order to improve student success in a module, lecturers are required to improve students' attitude and feelings towards the module. This can be done by increasing engagement through exploring different teaching strategies (Killen, 2001).

Research by Korkmas and Karakus, (2009) and Movahedzadeh, (2011), investigated the use of the blended learning strategy to change student attitude towards a subject and effectively improving student achievement. The findings of these research indicate that blended learning was an effective teaching strategy to change student attitude towards the subjects of geography and science respectively, and improved student' academic achievement.

Technology have become an integral part of everyday life and are increasingly utilised in the teaching and learning environment. The millennial generation are comfortable with the use of technology in all aspects of their everyday life (Oblinger, 2003). Although online learning environments have become more popular, the benefits of face to face learning are absent. This has led to the notion of blended learning. Blended learning is an ideal platform where both modes of teaching are

utilised to enhance student engagement (Clayton Christensen Institute, 2012). This research will make use of blended learning strategies such as an online economics learning platform where the students can engage in discussion forums, view YouTube videos and post messages and thoughts in their personal blogs. The researcher will also undertake interactive classroom activities such as group work and simulation exercises to encourage active classroom learning. This form of online and classroom activities, known as blended learning, will aim to explore which teaching and learning styles appeals to the millennial students and in what way the combination of strategies will influence students' perceptions of the value of economics as a module within the broader IT qualification.

2. Description of the Problem

The findings from Mann and Fushfeld (1970), Soper and Walstad (1983) and Van Wyk (2012), indicate that there is a negative perception of students towards the study of economics. Soper and Walstad (1983), found a statistically positive relationship between the students' attitude to economics prior to undertaking economics and the students' performance in the subject. This research has shown that there could be a causal relationship between a negative attitude towards economics and the grade that the students achieve.

Different teaching strategies can be used to improve student engagement and change student attitude towards a subject (Killen, 2010). Blended learning as a teaching strategy, can be used since the population of millennial students are familiar and comfortable with the use of the technology and internet based activities (Oblinger, 2003).

2.1. Objectives of the Research

Within the context of the above, this exploratory research will aim to provide insights on the successful application of blended teaching and learning interventions on improving students' perceptions pertaining to economics within the broader IT qualification. Students will be exposed to a range of blended learning activities, thereby facilitating the transition from a teacher-centred mode of instruction to a more student-centred approach. The research will determine whether this encouraged student engagement in the material and a change in the overall perception of the value of economics as a qualification module.

2.2. Research Questions

Related to the objectives, the research will aim to answer the following research questions.

1. In what way can blended learning be employed to change the negative perceptions of students towards economics?
2. How does blended learning assist the students to realise the relevance of economics in the IT qualification?

3. Literature Review

Student attitude has been positively linked with student performance and the success of student performance could be related to the teaching strategy used by the educator (Killen, 2010). Several research studies such as Hodgkinson and Perera (1996), Zain, Subramaniam, Abd Rashid and Ghani (2009) and Korkmaz and Karakus (2009) have examined the use of different teaching strategies to change negative attitude of students. This research will draw on these three research articles that have aimed to find solutions to the problem of student adverse attitudes.

The research article by Hodgkinson and Perera (1996), attempts to identify areas that could assist in improving student attitude towards economics and increasing the enrolments of economics in higher education. The authors suggest that reducing the class size, introducing new topics and varying assessment methods could assist in improving the view towards economics. Although the authors provide viable solutions to improving student sentiment, the study did not, however examine the role of educator intervention to changing the negative attitude.

The research by Zain, Subramaniam, Abd Rashid and Ghani, (2009), made use of the cooperative learning teaching strategy to determine any change in student attitude. The results of the experimental design research concluded that although the experimental groups did not show a significant difference in terms of academic performance, the experimental group that were taught using the cooperative teaching strategy did have a significantly better outlook towards the subject of economics. The conclusion was made that a cooperative learning teaching strategy was successful in changing student attitudes but did not have any significant effect on student academic performance.

The study by Korkmaz and Karakus, (2009), made use of experimental design methodology to determine if blended learning will have any change or effect on student attitude in a Geography module. The findings of the research showed a positive relationship with blended learning and student attitude. This ultimately led to an improvement in student grades.

These literary works have shown that different teaching interventions have been successful in changing student attitude and ultimately changing student success in a

subject. This research will draw on these literary works to study the use of blended learning in the economics module in particular. Face to face interaction inclusive of various activity and engagement types will be used as well as activities on the website outside the classroom environment. These activities include both synchronous and asynchronous elements and are designed to extend the classroom lessons in an online format.

3.1. Key Definitions

A number of key terminology requires definition to ensure a similar understanding of the content to this research study:

- a. Economics refers to a module studied at a higher education level including a number of relevant elements such as the principles of economics, understanding the functioning of markets as well as an in-depth explanation of the roles and functions of the public sector (Mohr and Fourie, 2008).
- b. Blended learning refers to any time a student learns in an online environment and also in a physical facility with some face to face interaction between student and lecturer (Team KEM, 2013).

4. Research Methodology and Design

The research will make use of a quantitative methodology and cross sectional survey design to answer the research questions. Creswell (2009), states that quantitative research is useful to describe, explain or predict a phenomenon under controlled conditions using numerical data. This research will aim to investigate if the use of different blended learning teaching strategies will influence students' perception of economics.

4.1. Research Paradigm and Methodology

a. Research Paradigm

Paradigms (worldviews) are used to identify the direction that the researcher will follow and will define the approach used in the research. Through the application of a worldview, the researcher is able to determine what aspects should be investigated and what processes to follow (Du Plooy- Cilliers *et al*, 2014).

Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, (2014) mentions that the main idea of interpretivism is that human beings change all the time and the context in which they find themselves influences them. This research will attempt use different experiences and interactions of blended learning to change the perception of the students towards the

economics module. By changing the reality of the students and the context in which they find themselves, the researcher aims to change their negative perceptions that students may have towards economics as a module that form part of the IT qualification. The research will attempt to make meaning of the students' perceptions as a result of the combination of strategies.

b. Quantitative Methodology

Quantitative research is used for testing theories among different variables and makes use of numeric data and statistical analysis (Creswell, 2009). The analytic focus of this research is to examine the relationship between different variables, being the blended learning teaching intervention (independent variable) and the negative sentiment of the students (dependant variable). This research will collect data in numerical form and use statistical types of data analysis. Therefore the quantitative research methodology is the most applicable for this study.

4.2. Research Design and Data Collection Method

a. Research Design

According Sage Publications Chapter 1 (2014), the goal of exploratory research is to understand the operation of human behaviour and represents basic knowledge on the connection between different variables. The purpose of this research is mainly to explore the connection between the role of the teaching interventions and student attitudes, therefore this research will by definition, apply to exploratory research.

Du Plooy – Cilliers *et al*, (2014), mentions that surveys are ideally used to gather information about people's attitudes and provides quantitative and numeric descriptions of attitudes of a population. The cross-sectional survey design is the most appropriate for this study as it attempts to create an understanding of the students change in perception at one point in time from respondents that share the same variables such as age, programme of study and lecturer. All these students also share the same adverse perception towards economics. The use of the cross-sectional design provides a snapshot of the students' perception and gauges any changes as a result of the teaching interventions.

b. Data Collection Method

The researcher will make use of group administered survey to collect the data from the respondents. All respondents will complete the questionnaire at the same time during one session. This will ensure that the response rate of the questionnaires will be high and the data collection time will be short.

The questionnaire will include a number of questions types. The questionnaire will make use of inventory questions, Likert style matrix questions, open ended questions and ranked questions. The questionnaire will be segmented into two sections. The first section will investigate the students' learning styles and views on economics and the second section will relate to the use of the different online teaching strategies in the classroom. These two distinct sections will be helpful in the data analysis process as it would provide information on the before and after scenarios.

4.3. Research Population and Sample

The population includes all the students registered for the IT qualification at the higher education institute. The sample was selected from the population by employing non-probability purposive sampling. This implies that the researcher selected the sample based on the specific characteristic of the sample members. This characteristic was the second-year cohort of IT students at an institute of higher education, who are required to complete the economics module as part of the qualification. The current population comprises of 54 (fifty-four) students.

This age group known as millennials Pedro, (2006), are the first generation to be brought up surrounded by digital media and most of their activities in deal are through the use of technology. Oblinger (2003) characterises these students as individuals that learn best when they engage in experiential learning to construct meaning for themselves.

These characteristics of the millennial students are particularly important to this research since the researcher has used the students' characteristics and proficiency with technology when creating the teaching intervention. The teaching interventions have been designed to give the students the opportunity to engage with the subject materials themselves through the use of technology.

4.4. Limitations Applicable to the Research

The number of students that enrol for the module of economics is not limited to the IT students at the higher education institute. Economics is also undertaken by the finance, accounting and marketing students. The requirements of this research proposal has limited the study to only one group of students and therefore the proposal and study will only include the IT students. This however creates an opportunity for further research to include all the economics students at the higher education institute and to expand the study to students at other Further Education and Training Colleges (FET).

The economic challenges faced by most of the students may hinder the students' ability to optimally engage in the online platform as Internet access may not be

affordable to respondents. To overcome this, the researcher has made the computer labs available to the students to participate in the discussion forums and to complete the online activities.

4.5. Ethical Considerations

A number of ethical elements need to be considered for the research proposal. The researcher shall inform the respondents and the higher education institute on the purpose, nature, data collection methods and extent of the research prior to commencement. The researcher will obtain the written consent from respondents and the higher education institution prior to commencement of the study. Through the ethical clearance documents, the researcher will guarantee that none of the respondents will be harmed in a physical or psychological manner. Prior to collecting the data, the respondents will be advised on the nature, purpose and procedures of the research and will be requested to complete a respondent consent form. The researcher will stress that the participation in the research is completely voluntary and will have no bearing on the respondents' assessments or grades. The data collection tool will be completed anonymously by the respondents thereby ensuring their anonymity. The information collected as well as the data collected will be kept privately and the identities of the participants will not be revealed in any way.

5. Data Analysis

The initial step in the data analysis process entailed screening the completed questionnaires and identifying and excluding the questionnaires that were incomplete and inconsistent. There were thirty seven (37) respondents that participated in the data collection process. However, eleven (11) questionnaires were excluded from the final data set due to incompleteness or inconsistencies. The results of each question were captured using Microsoft Excel and the various tools within Excel were utilised to calculate the percentages and the central measures. The data was analysed in two sections, in accordance with the questionnaire. Section 1 examined the preferred learning style and views on economics and Section 2 studied the success of the teaching strategies.

Feedback on the findings is presented below. Inclusive of each is an analysis of the data to come to conclusions related to the overall findings pertaining to the research questions.

5.1. Section 1: Preferred Learning Style and View on Economics

The aim of this section is to determine the perception of the students towards economics. Questions 1-5 of the questionnaire relates to this section. More detail on each question and a description of the findings follow.

Question 1: Your preferred learning style.

The aim of this question is to determine the preferred learning style of the respondents as well as how receptive the respondents were in using technology in the classroom. The question relates to the use of blended learning to increase student engagement.

The respondents were given the option to select a number of learning styles. The findings are represented in Figure 1.

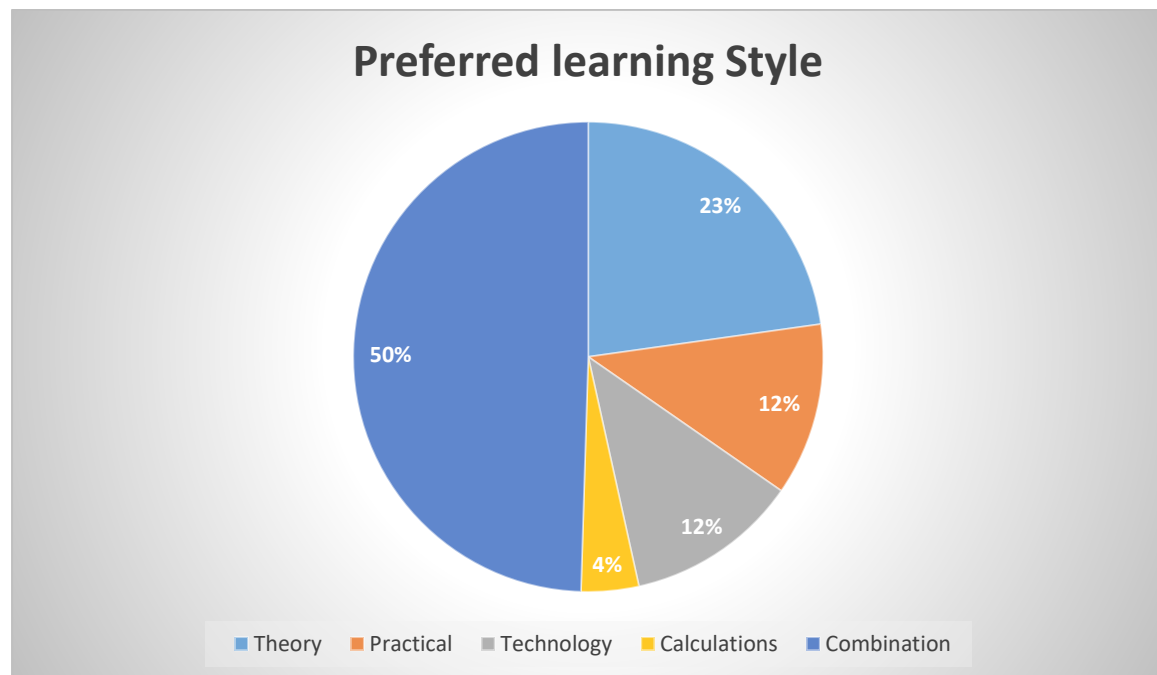


Figure 1 - Preferred Learning Styles

Based on the information presented in Figure 1, it is evident that only four (4%) percent of the respondents prefer to make use of calculations and analysis when learning, twelve (12%) percent of the respondents prefer learning through practical methods or through the use of technology. Twenty-three (23%) percent of the respondents prefer the use of theoretical articles with graphs and pictures to enhance their understanding. Fifty (50%) percent preferred a combination of teaching and learning methods in the classroom.

This confirms the view of education theorists such as Dewey, (1989) and Jordan, Carlile and Stack, (2008) that the constructivist learning theory is the most effective to promote and implement active learning. Proponents of the constructivist theory create opportunities for students to use a variety or combination of different teaching and learning methods to construct information and knowledge for themselves.

Question 2: Prior Knowledge of Economics

This question provides detail on the respondents' prior knowledge of economics and serves as a precursor to the next question, which tries to identify the respondents' perception of economics at the beginning of the semester.

Respondents were given the option to choose how they came to know of the subject of economics. The findings are represented in Figure 2.

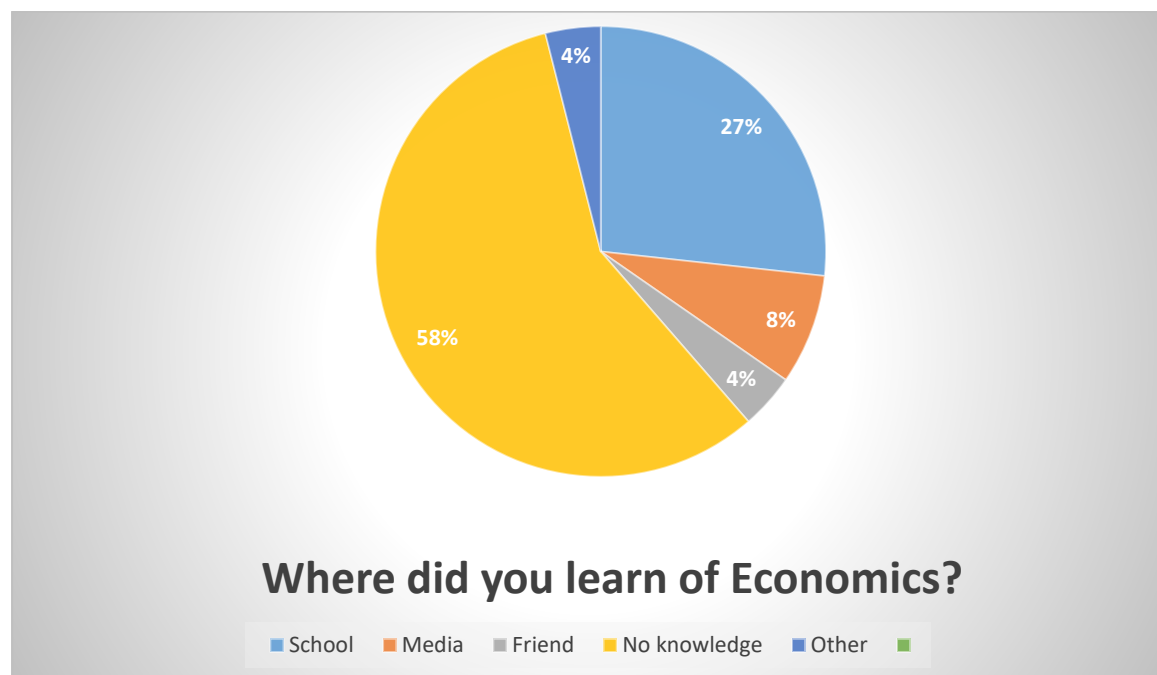


Figure 2- Prior knowledge of economics

Since the population of the respondents were limited to the IT students, fifty eight (58%) percent as illustrated in figure 2, indicated that they did not have any prior knowledge of economics. The results of the question correlate with the characteristic of the population since IT respondents may not be very aware of a business subject like economics. These respondents may not realise that the IT environment works in a business context and therefore the understanding of business principles and practices are equally important than IT knowledge.

Question 3: Perception of Economics.

Related to the previous question, the aim of this question was to obtain an understanding of the opinion of the respondents towards the subject of economics. The findings are presented in Figure 3.

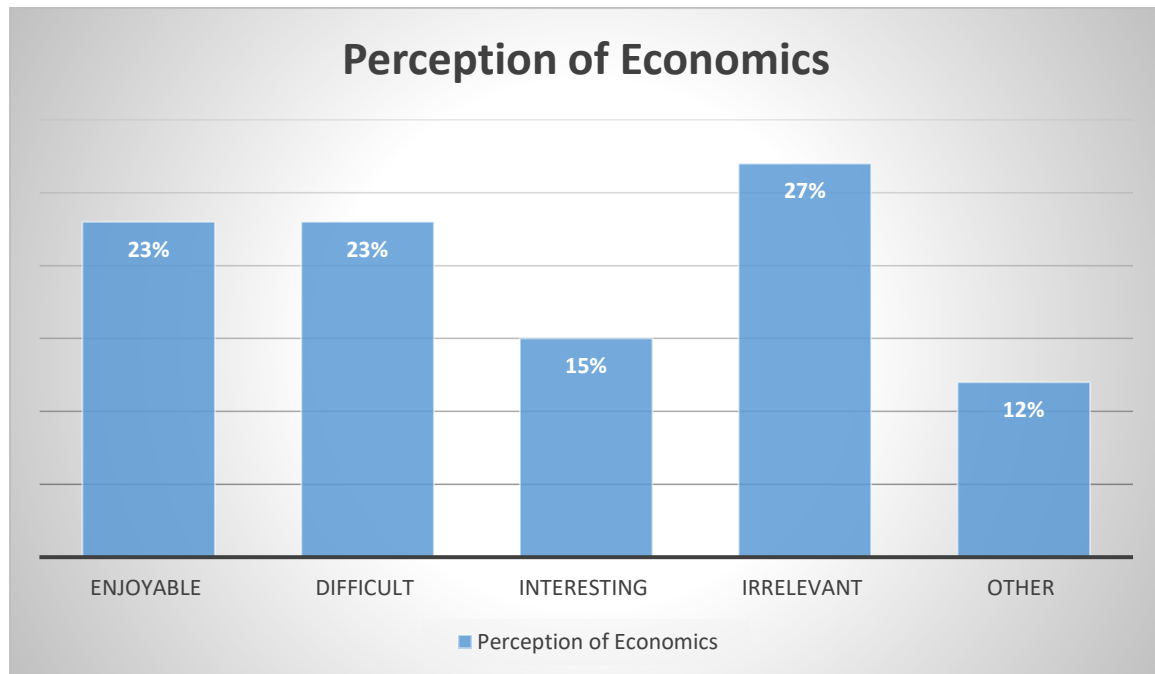


Figure 3 - Perception of Economics

Based on the information in Figure 3, twenty seven (27%) percent of respondents believed economics to be an irrelevant subject towards their IT qualification, and a further twenty three (23) percent respectively, believed economics to be either enjoyable or difficult. The implication of this finding is that the majority of the respondents believed economics to be difficult and irrelevant with fifteen (15%) percent believing economics to be interesting.

This confirms the view of Hodgkinson and Perera (1996), Zain, Subramaniam, Abd Rashid and Ghani, (2009) and Shahidul, (2010) that students have a preconceived negative sentiment towards economics. These findings will be used to make comparisons on whether the teaching interventions have been successful in dispelling the negative perceptions of the students.

Questions 4 and 5: Relevance and usefulness of economics in the workplace and in everyday life.

The purposes of questions 4 and 5 were to determine if the respondents realised the importance of economics in their careers and in their everyday life. In order to analyse the data from these open ended questions, the researcher examined the responses of each respondent and categorised it into four main common themes. Table 1 presents an analysis of the common themes and the results.

Table 1 - Common Themes

Theme	Results
Economics has increased my knowledge of operations of the economy	20%
Economics has increased my knowledge of the business environment	22%
Economics will help me to make sound decisions in the workplace	50%
Economics is not helpful	8%

The results from these questions show that the fifty (50%) percent of the respondents believed economics will be helpful in their work environment and in their everyday life. Twenty (20%) percent of the respondents believed economics to be helpful and made them more knowledgeable about the economy and twenty two (22%) believed that economics gave them more knowledge of the economic structure within which they will be required to work.

The conclusion can be drawn that although the respondents began the semester with a general negative perception of economics as indicated in question 3, as the semester progressed, the respondents were able to realise the value and relevance of the module.

5.2. Section 2: Teaching Strategies Used

Section 2 aims to determine if the change in the respondents' perception is due to different teaching interventions. Questions 7-11 relate to this section of the questionnaire.

Questions 6, 7 and 8: Views on Teaching Interventions

Findings of questions 6 to 8 are grouped together as the focus of all three questions was to determine views of respondents towards different blended teaching interventions used in the classroom to improve their enthusiasm towards the module.

Respondents were required to rate their satisfaction of the various strategies on a scale ranging from very enjoyable to not enjoyable. The results are represented in Figure 4.

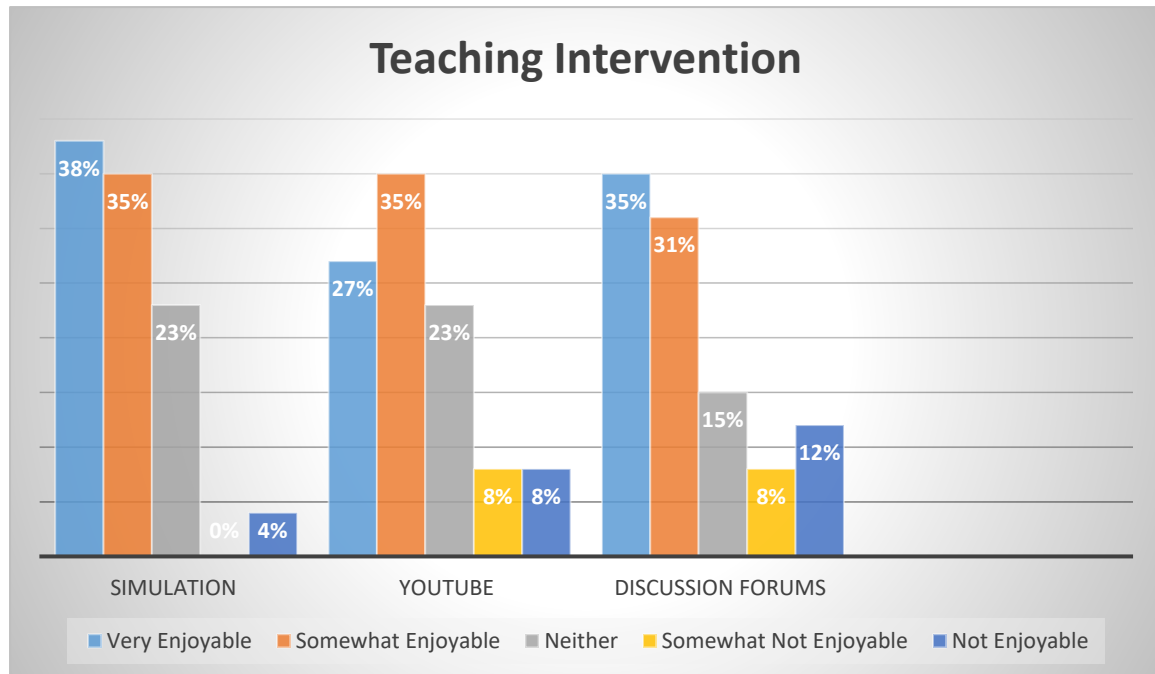


Figure 4 – Comparison of Teaching Interventions

The results, depicted in figure 4, indicate that most of the respondents found the simulation interventions to be most enjoyable. The YouTube videos appealed to the respondents' visual stimuli with sixty two (62%) percent of the respondents indicating that it was very enjoyable or somewhat enjoyable. Although thirty-five (35%) percent of the respondents found the discussion forums to be very enjoyable, a significant percentage twenty (20%) percent, found it to be somewhat not enjoyable.

The findings indicates that the respondents enjoy a variety of teaching methods. This would imply that the IT respondents prefer using their creative ability to imagine scenarios and confirms the views of Sternberg's Triarchic Theory of Intelligence, Giger (2006), that the use of creative intelligence (like simulation) is valuable to construct meaning and apply knowledge.

Question 9: Rankings of Teaching Intervention

The aim of question 9 was to determine which of the teaching interventions were the most successful. Respondents were required to rank the different teaching interventions from a range of boring to most interesting. The results of the rankings are represented in Figure 5.

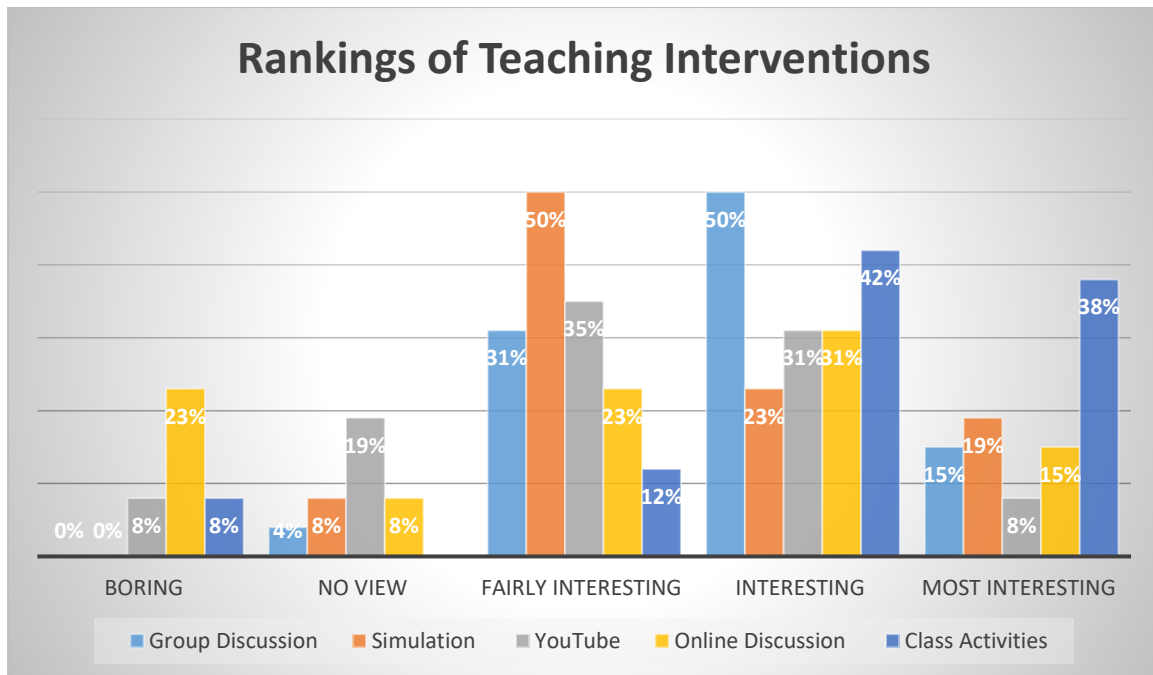


Figure 5 - Rankings of Teaching Interventions

Figure 5 illustrates that the simulation activities have once again ranked highly with fifty (50%) percent of the respondents indicating that it was fairly interesting. The group discussions were also ranked highly with fifty percent (50%) of the respondents indicating that it was interesting and a further forty-two (42%) percent indicating that the class activities were most interesting.

The online discussion has once again fared poorly with thirty-one (31%) percent of the respondents ranking it as boring or had no view on it. These results correlate with the results from figure 4, where 20% of the respondents ranked the online discussion as somewhat not enjoyable. An analysis of these results would indicate that the respondents preferred the activities that had a social interactive element to it

This confirms the view of Oblinger (2003), who states that millennials are social beings and prefer being in constant communication and interaction with their peers and value the views of their peers highly, as a result, the group and interactive activities were ranked highly. These self-directed students want to apply what they have learned immediately and as a result the simulation activity was the most successful.

The conclusion can be drawn that the blended learning activities have helped to make economics more enjoyable for the respondents thereby encouraging the respondents to actively engage with the module. This supports the view of Piaget, Vygotsky and Bruner that the constructivist learning theory is the most successful and effective to promote active learning (Jordan *et al*, 2008).

Question 10: Student Attitude

The purpose of question 10 is to conduct an attitude analysis of the respondents towards economics at the end of the semester and to directly gauge whether the use of blended learning has been successful. Respondents were required to answer questions on their outlook towards economics. The results are depicted in Table 2.

Table 1 - Outlook towards economics

Question 10: I feel that

	YES	NO
10.1. I am still not comfortable with economics	38%	62%
10.2. I can see the value of economics as IT specialist	81%	19%
10.3. Economics challenges my thinking	77%	23%
10.4. I feel nervous during economics test or exam	73%	27%
10.5. Economics is relevant to me	69%	31%
10.6. I am better at solving economic problems	42%	58%
10.7. I am able to understand economic concepts	62%	38%

An examination of table 2 confirms that sixty two (62) percent of the respondents felt more comfortable with economics and are able to understand economic concepts more clearly after being exposed to a number of teaching strategies aimed at improving their understanding of the module content. Table 2 indicates that eighty-one (81%) percent of the respondents can perceive the value of economics towards their IT qualification and sixty-nine (69%) of the respondents believe that economics is relevant to them. The conclusion can be made that blended learning has changed the respondents' perception of economics and has also made the relevance and importance of economics more apparent.

A significantly large number of respondents, seventy three (73%) percent still felt nervous during economics tests and examinations. This would indicate that the researcher could make use of the expectancy theory of motivation as held by Lunenberg (2011) to dispel this negative approach to economics assessments. The researcher could set smaller more manageable informal tasks known as formative assessments, (Gravett and Geyser, 2004) that will ensure student success. This will help to boost the respondents' confidence when attempting the more formal assessments known as summative assessments (Gravett and Geyser, 2004).

Question 11: Suggestions

Respondents were required to make suggestions to improve the subject in this open-ended question. The researcher identified common themes and all responses were categorised into these themes.

Table 2 - Improvement suggestions

Question 11: Suggestions to enhance understanding in the subject.	
a. Provide more material	18%
b. Create opportunities for the students to do active learning	15%
c. Happy with status quo	23%
d. Extra classes	15%
e. Increased use of technology	19%
f. Use IT specific case studies and scenarios	15%
g. Show relevance of economics	4%

The results as presented in table 3, do not indicate a dominant response as the respondents made a range of suggestions. The results indicate that twenty-three (23%) percent of the respondents were happy with the current mode and method of instruction, while eighteen (18%) percent of the respondents required more material.

6. Discussion of Findings

The findings of the research corroborate with previous research done by Hodgkinson and Perera (1996) and Zain, Subramaniam, Abd Rashid and Ghani, (2009), that students are fearful and anxious towards the subject of economics. The data was able to successfully answer the research questions and clearly indicated that the respondents preferred a combination of learning styles and teaching strategies.

This would imply that the constructivist learning theory would be the most appropriate for this population. The data also revealed that the implementation of the different blended learning activities have helped to increase student engagement and participation and has provided insight into the research questions. Despite the success in the use of blended learning, the study also showed that the respondents were still fearful when during economics assessments. The different teaching strategies have not been able to ease the respondents' fears during the assessments. This implies that the lecturer may need to create opportunities to motivate respondents and engage in activities so that the respondents become less fearful of the subject.

7. Recommendations

This research has attempted to show that, just as the educator is able to assist students with the cognitive understanding of a particular subject, so too can the educator assist with the affective elements towards students' enjoyment of the subject. The blended learning teaching strategy is an effective tool to increase respondent engagement in a subject and consequently enhance respondent enjoyment in the subject. Educators should seek to create opportunities for more social activities in the classroom and in the online space.

Lecturers also need to include student oriented activities that allow the students to engage with the material and construct meaning for themselves. This will not only enhance respondent understanding of the subject but also help to improve attitude towards the subject. Further studies into the role of other teaching strategies such as role play, group work and class discussions can be undertaken to determine if it will be successful in increasing student engagement.

8. Conclusions

Although economics is usually perceived as a business subject, the relevance of economics in the IT qualification is equally important. Economics not only provides knowledge of business operations but also studies the different market participants to gain insight of market operations. IT students fail to realise the relevance of economics towards their IT qualifications and therefore the economics lecturer is faced with many challenges.

Economics lecturers are required to provide the cognitive material and also to motivate the students by highlighting the relevance of economics through the use of effective teaching strategies. By adopting a student centred approach, students are able to effectively engage with the material and the importance of economics becomes apparent. Through the use of technology and social intensive activities, lecturers can make the learning experience a more memorable and encouraging.

The blended learning activities allows the lecturer to be a guide and facilitator rather than the sole source of knowledge and creates opportunities for the students to engage with the material and construct meaning for themselves. This constructivist approach will help the student to retain and understand information and serve as a motivator for the student to seek their own knowledge.

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Annexure A - Questionnaire

Dear student

During this semester you undertook the subject of economics as part of your qualification. You may have had a certain perception of the subject at the beginning of the semester and this perception may or may not have changed during the semester. You also participated in different activities during the lessons such as simulations, video lectures, class lectures and online discussion forums. In order to assess the effectiveness and success of these different teaching strategies, this survey requests that you provide us feedback on whether your view on the importance of economics as a subject within your qualification has changed. Your views will not only assess the value of these teaching strategies to change perceptions related to economics but will also serve as a guide to the lecturer for future classes.

Your participation in this survey will be highly appreciated and the completion of the survey will take less than five minutes. Please complete the survey as honestly as possible. The survey is completely anonymous and confidential and will in no manner have any bearing on your results. You are not required to provide your name or student number to complete the survey. The survey is also voluntary and students can choose to participate in the survey entirely at their own will.

Thanking you in advance for your contribution.

Instructions:

Where applicable, please mark your answer with an **X**.

In questions where you are required to present an opinion, please provide an honest answer.

Section 1: Preferred Learning Style and Views on Economics.

Question 1: Your preferred learning style.

Which is your most preferred learning style. Please tick the relevant box.

Mostly theory. I do not mind theoretical articles with pictures and graphs to enhance my understanding	
Mostly practical. I prefer a practical approach to the subject with the use of practical activities like simulations and role play to enhance my understanding	
Mostly technology and internet based activities. I prefer making use of online activities to enhance my understanding	
Mostly calculations and data analysis	
A combination of all of the above	

Question 2: Where did you learn of economics? Select the most applicable option.

I did economics as a school subject	
I learned of economics from the media	
I learned of economics from a family member or friend	
I did not have any knowledge of economics	
Other, please specify.	

Question 3: How did you feel about economics at the beginning of the semester? Select the most applicable option.

I believed economics to be an enjoyable subject	
I believed economics to be a difficult subject	
I believed economics to be an interesting subject	
I believed economics to be irrelevant towards my IT qualification	
I believed economics to be relevant towards my IT qualification	
Other, please specify.	

Question 4: Now that you have done economics this semester, do you believe that the knowledge of the economy will assist you in your future job prospects? Please explain your answer.

Question 5: Now that you have done economics, in what way do you believe that the knowledge of the economy will be useful in your everyday life?

Section 2: Teaching Strategies Used

Question 6: How would you rate the classroom simulation lessons (creating your own island) relating to the production possibility curve (PPC) and how that changed your perception of the topic?]

Very enjoyable	
Somewhat enjoyable	
Neither enjoyable nor not enjoyable	
Somewhat not enjoyable	
Not enjoyable	

Question 7: How would you rate the classroom lesson relating to the YouTube video recording to adapt your view on the value of economic knowledge?

Very enjoyable	
Somewhat enjoyable	
Neither enjoyable nor not enjoyable	
Somewhat not enjoyable	
Not enjoyable	

Question 8: How would you rate the classroom lesson relating to the use of online discussion forums to encourage you to engage more actively with the module content?

Very enjoyable	
Somewhat enjoyable	
Neither enjoyable nor not enjoyable	
Somewhat not enjoyable	
Not enjoyable	

Question 9: Please rank how these classroom activities helped you to improve your understanding of the module content of economics.

	Boring	No View	Fairly interesting	Interesting	Most interesting
9.1. Group discussion with peers					
9.2. Simulation lessons such as creating your own island to understand PPC					
9.3. Making use of YouTube videos to understand the concepts of					

	demand and supply					
9.4.	Online discussion forums					
9.5.	Class activities such as use of graphs and diagrams					

Question 10: After engaging with the various class activities, I feel that: (Please provide a yes / no answer to each option)

	YES	NO
10.1. I am still not comfortable with economics		
10.2. I can see the value of understanding economics as an IT specialist		
10.3. I enjoy economics as it challenges my thinking		
10.4. I feel nervous or frustrated during the economics test or examination		
10.5. Economics is a subject that is relevant to me		
10.6. I am better at solving economic problems		
10.7. I am able to understand economics concepts and theories more easily		

Question 11: Can you provide any suggestions or types of activities that will help to enhance students understanding of the subject and improve their perceptions on the value of economics as part of the IT qualification?

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY. YOUR RESPONSES WILL BE AN INVALUABLE HELP FOR FUTURE CLASSES 😊