

'Blending' a Sociology Course to Promote Active Learning:

Experiences of a Sociology Classroom at the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

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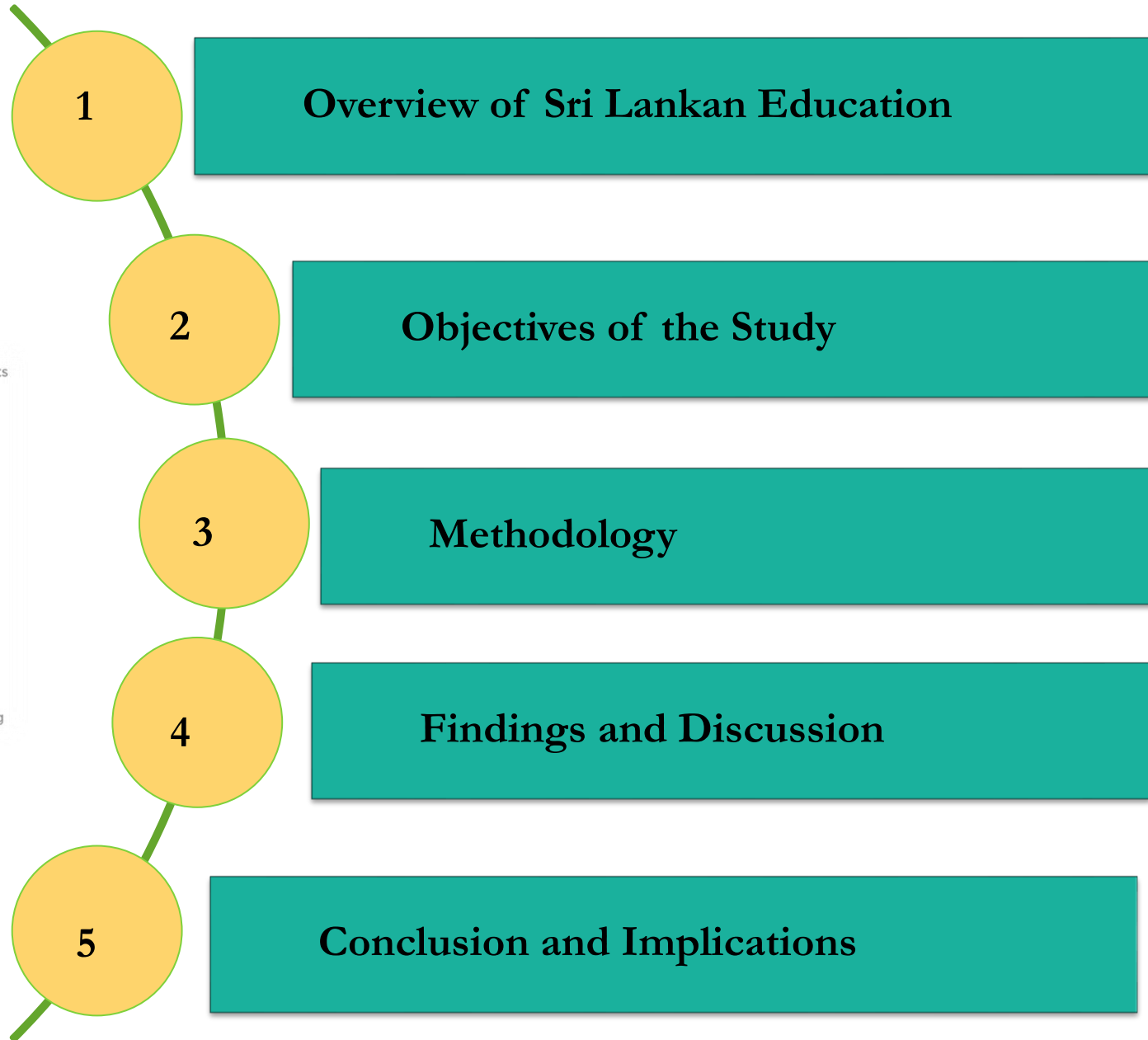
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*Presenting Author: Dinushika M. Yapa Abeywardhana
INQAAHE Conference, 2021*



OVERVIEW OF SRI LANKAN EDUCATION

- School education system in Sri Lanka - 13 years in three cycles (primary, secondary, collegiate)
- GCE Advanced Level (A/L) examination at collegiate level - Arts/Commerce/Biology/ Mathematics/ Technology
- Medium of instruction– Sinhala/Tamil (the vernaculars) with English as a compulsory subject
- IT is taught as an optional subject
- General characteristics: Traditional teacher centered classroom/ physical face-to-face learning and teaching/ rote learning/ note-based teaching & learning/ no requirement for additional reading/ examination-oriented, individualistic and competitive/ less use of technology and English language in the classroom
- Undergraduates are put in an environment that challenges all the above
- Blended Learning has the capacity to remove these deep rooted practices

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- **Main objective:**
To develop blended learning activities that facilitate students' active involvement in their learning
- **Secondary Objective:**
To provide opportunities for students to improve their English language and IT skills by promoting LMS-based learning opportunities.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



Field: Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

**Sample: 50 students
(enrolled in the 3rd Year course entitled “Education and Society”/SOC 3267 in 2019)**

Quantitative data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel to generate descriptive statistics

Qualitative data was subjected to a thematic analysis

The BL Activities Implemented..

- Quizzes
- Chat sessions
- Forum
- Online submission of mid-term assessment
- Questionnaire for course evaluation
- Interactive videos (borrowed from YouTube with summary in Sinhala)
- Instructions and activities in Sinhala and English
- BL activities were used to supplement in-class teaching with more emphasis still placed on the teaching done in the class.



Navigation

Home

- My home
- Site pages
- My profile
- Current course
 - SOC 3267
 - Participants
 - Badges
 - General
 - ...යව යනු කුමක්ද? / What is Sociology of Education?
 - ...ාව්‍ය න්‍යායයන් / Classical theories of education
 - ...ව්‍ය න්‍යායයන් / Classical theories of education
 - ...ලිත න්‍යායයන් / More recent theories on education
 - ...ලිත න්‍යායයන් / More recent theories on education
 - ...මාජ්‍ය සහ අධ්‍යාපනය / Culture, society and education
 - සාසල සමාජ ඒකකයක් ලෙස / School as a social unit
 - ...මාජ



දයාබර ශිෂ්‍ය ශිෂ්‍යාවනි,

SOC 3267 (අධ්‍යාපනය සහ සමාජය) පාඨමාලාවට ඔබ සාදරයෙන් පිළිගනිමු. මෙම පාඨමාලාව තුළ අධ්‍යාපන සංස්ථාව හා සම්බන්ධ කරුණු සහ ගැටළු පිළිබඳව ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ පාසල් අධ්‍යාපනය කෙරෙහි විශේෂ අවධානය යොමු කරමින් සාකච්ඡා කෙරෙනු ඇත. ශ්‍රී ලංකාවට සම්බන්ධ කරමින් ගෝලීය න්‍යායයන් පිළිබඳව ඉගෙන ගැනීමට ඔබට අවකාශය ලැබෙනු ඇත. ඔබ විසින් අත්දැක ඇති වසර 13ක පාසල් අධ්‍යාපනය පිළිබඳව නැවත වරක් විචාරශීලීව සිතීමට මෙහි දී ඔබට මාර්ගය පැදවෙනු ඇත. අනාගතයේදී ගුරු වෘත්තීයට සම්බන්ධ වීමට අපේක්ෂා කරන ඔබටද මෙය මහඟු අවස්ථාවක් වනු ඇත.

පාඨමාලාව භාර ආචාරිනී: ආචාර්ය ඉරේෂා ලක්ෂ්මන්

සහාය කලීකාචාර්ය: දිනුෂිකා යාපා මෙනවිය

Dear Students,

Welcome to the course, Education and Society (SOC 3267). Here, we discuss matters and issues pertaining to the institution of education with particular attention placed on the school system of Sri Lanka. You will get to learn about global theories on education and discuss them in relation to the Sri Lankan case. This will be an ideal platform for you to re-examine 13 years of school that you have experienced. It will also provide a sound background for those of you who intend to seek a career as a teacher.

Lecturer-in-charge: Dr. Iresha Lakshman

Assisted by: Ms. Dinushika Yapa

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Syllabus

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Acknowledgement

Mid-Term Marks

[Please find your mid-term marks here](#)

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Latest news

Add a new topic...
 27 Sep, 14:57
 Iresha Lakshman
 පර්යේෂණය සඳහා අවසර
 ගැනීමේ ලිපිය
 Older topics ...

Upcoming events

There are no upcoming events
 Go to calendar...
 New event...

Recent activity

Activity since Tuesday, 11
 December 2018, 2:09 PM
 Full report of recent
 activity...
 Nothing new since your
 last login

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Navigation

Home

- My home
- ▶ Site pages
- ▶ My profile
- ▶ Current course
 - ▼ SOC 3267
 - ▶ Participants
 - ▶ Badges
 - ▶ General
 - ▶ ...යාව යනු කුමක්ද? / What is Sociology of Education?
 - ▶ ...ඉංග්‍රීසි න්‍යායයන් / Classical theories of education
 - ▶ ...භාවය න්‍යායයන් / Classical theories of education
 - ▶ ...ඉලින න්‍යායයන් / More recent theories on education
 - ▶ ...ඉලින න්‍යායයන් / More recent theories on education
 - ▶ ...මානව සහ අධ්‍යාපනය / Culture, society and education
 - ▶ සාසල සමාජ ඒකකයක් ලෙස / School as a social unit
 - ▶ ...මානව අසමානත්වය / Education and social inequality
 - ▶ ...english language in the Sri Lankan education system
 - ▶ ...ඉංජිනේරු ඇඟවුම් සතිය / Mid-semester presentation week

මධ්‍ය සෛමස්තර ඇඟවුම 2018/ Mid-term assessment 2018

මෙම ඇඟවුම සඳහා ඔබ කළ යුත්තේ ඔබගේ ස්මාර්ට් දුරකථනය භාවිත කොට පෙර සාසලක් කළ දර්ශන කිහිපයක් රූගත කොට එම රූගත කිරීම් ආශ්‍රය කරගනිමින් පහත සඳහන් ප්‍රශ්නයට විශ්ලේෂණාත්මක පිළිතුරක් කණ්ඩායමක් ලෙස ඉදිරිපත් කිරීමයි. ඔබට දේශනයේදී ලැබුණු උපදෙස් පිළිපදින්න.

ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ පෙර සාසල හෝ දුර්වල ළමා විය සංවර්ධණ මධ්‍යස්ථානවල කටයුතු නියාමනය කිරීම සඳහා කිසියම් පොදු යන්ත්‍රණයක් අවශ්‍යද?

ඔබගේ ඉදිරිපත් කිරීම් විනාඩි 20ක් නොඉක්මවිය යුතු අතර ඒ සඳහා ඔබ විවිධ මූලාශ්‍රවලින් සාහිත්‍ය සහ න්‍යායයන් සම්බන්ධ කරගත යුතුය. ඔබගේ ඉදිරිපත් කිරීමේ අවසාන දසුන්පත ලෙස ඔබගේ ආශ්‍රිත ග්‍රන්ථ නාමාවලියේ ඡායාරූපයක් ඇතුළත් කරන්න.

කණ්ඩායමේ සෑම සාමාජිකයන්ම පෙර සාසලේදී කරන ලද රූගත කිරීම් විශ්ලේෂණය කරමින් ඉදිරිපත් කිරීමට දායක විය යුතුය.

අවසානයේදී ඔබ මා වෙත එවිය යුත්තේ ඔබ විසින් සකස් කළ youtube එකේ URL එක සහ එය නැරඹීමට අවශ්‍ය රහස් අංකය ඇතුළත් MS Word පිටුවකි.

The presentations will be recording using your smartphones as per instructions given in the class. You are required to visit a pre-school and make recordings of various scenarios of the school-setting and provide a analysis as a group. All this has to be recorded using your smartphone.

Is a common mechanism to monitor preschools or early childhood development centres necessary in Sri Lanka?

The presentation should not exceed 20 minutes and must include literature and theory from various sources. As the final shot in your presentations, please provide a picture of your reference list.

All members of the group must make their oral presentations analyzing the recordings done at the preschool.

Last of all, you will have to send me a Word file with the URL of your youtube video and the password necessary for me to watch that.

Grading summary

Groups	15
Drafts	1
Submitted	11
Due date	Wednesday, 14 November 2018, 11:55 PM
Time remaining	Assignment is due
Late submissions	No more submissions accepted

[View/grade all submissions](#)

Submission status

Group	Default group
Submission status	Submitted for grading
Grading status	Not graded
Due date	Wednesday, 14 November 2018, 11:55 PM
Time remaining	Assignment is overdue by: 26 days 23 hours
Last modified	Wednesday, 14 November 2018, 4:59 PM
Submission comments	▶ Comments (0)

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Interactive Video with Sinhala Summary



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Home ▶ My courses ▶ Sociology ▶ Third Year(Special) ▶ Semester Two ▶ SOC 3267 ▶ ...මානව සහ අධ්‍යාපනය / Culture, society and education ▶ The Flipped Classroom

Navigation

Home

- My home
- Site pages
- My profile
- Current course
 - SOC 3267
 - Participants
 - Badges
 - General
 - ...යාව යනු කුමක්ද? / What is Sociology of Education?
 - ...ාමය න්‍යායයන් / Classical theories of education
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 - ...ාලිත න්‍යායයන් / More recent theories on education
 - ...ාලිත න්‍යායයන් / More recent theories on education
 - ...මානව සහ අධ්‍යාපනය / Culture, society and education

The Flipped Classroom

Flipping the Classroom: Explained

සිංහල සාරාංශය

මේ නියෝජන පන්ති කාමරයක්. ගුරුවරයා ඉදිරියේ ඉඳගෙන උගන්නනවා. ළමයි වාඩි වෙලා ගුරුවරයා දිනා බලාගෙන ඉන්නවා. ඔබ හෝ ඔබගේ දෙමාපියන් ඉගෙන ගත් පන්ති කාමර ඔබට මතක් වනවා ඇති.

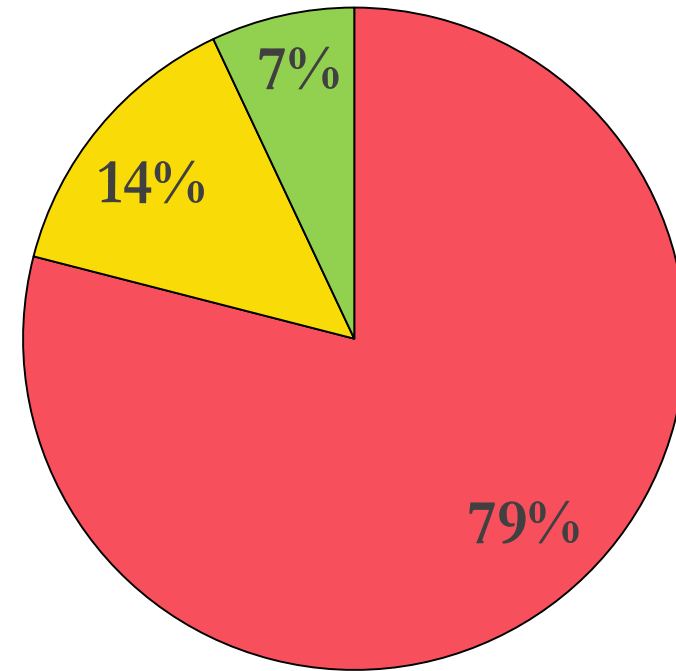
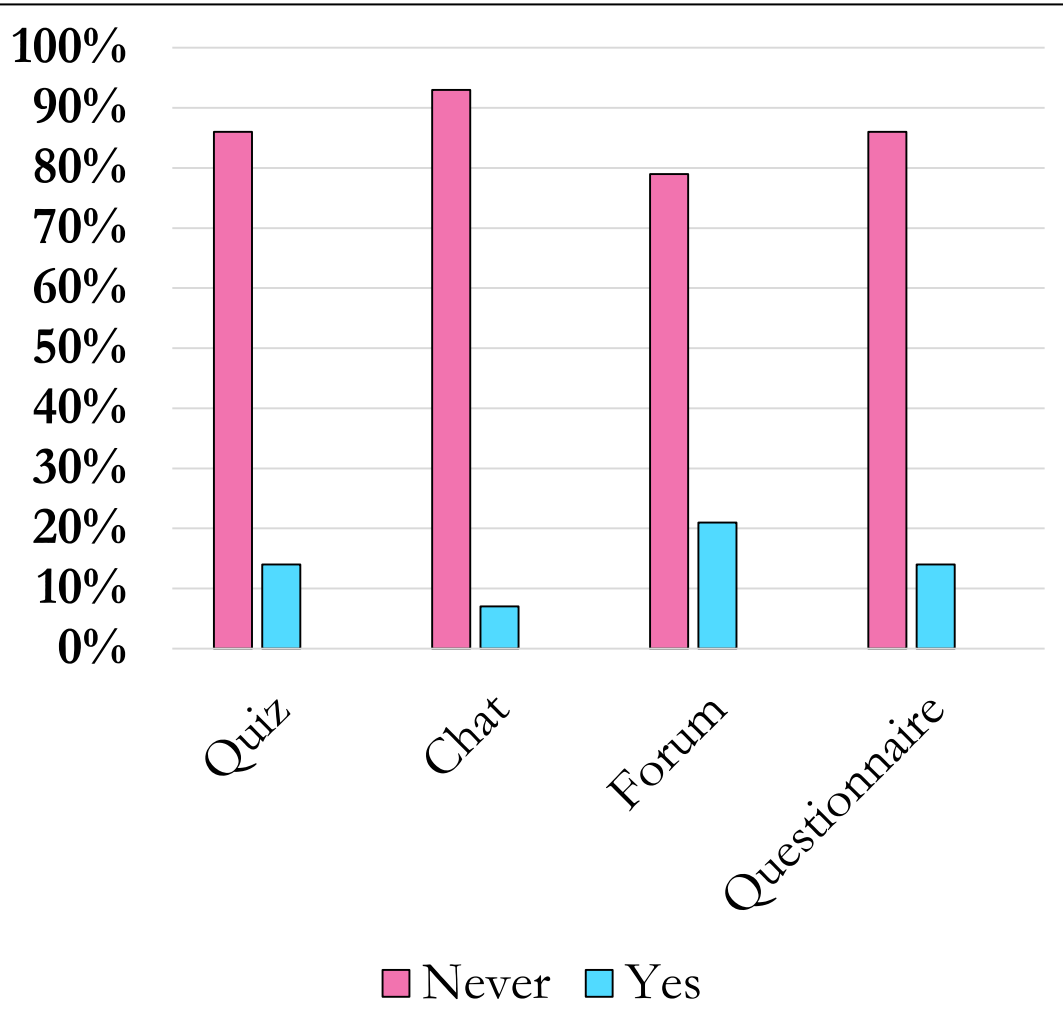
0:00 / 1:49

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Classroom VS online participation of students

A Have you ever used the LMS for ...?

B For what have you used the LMS in the past?

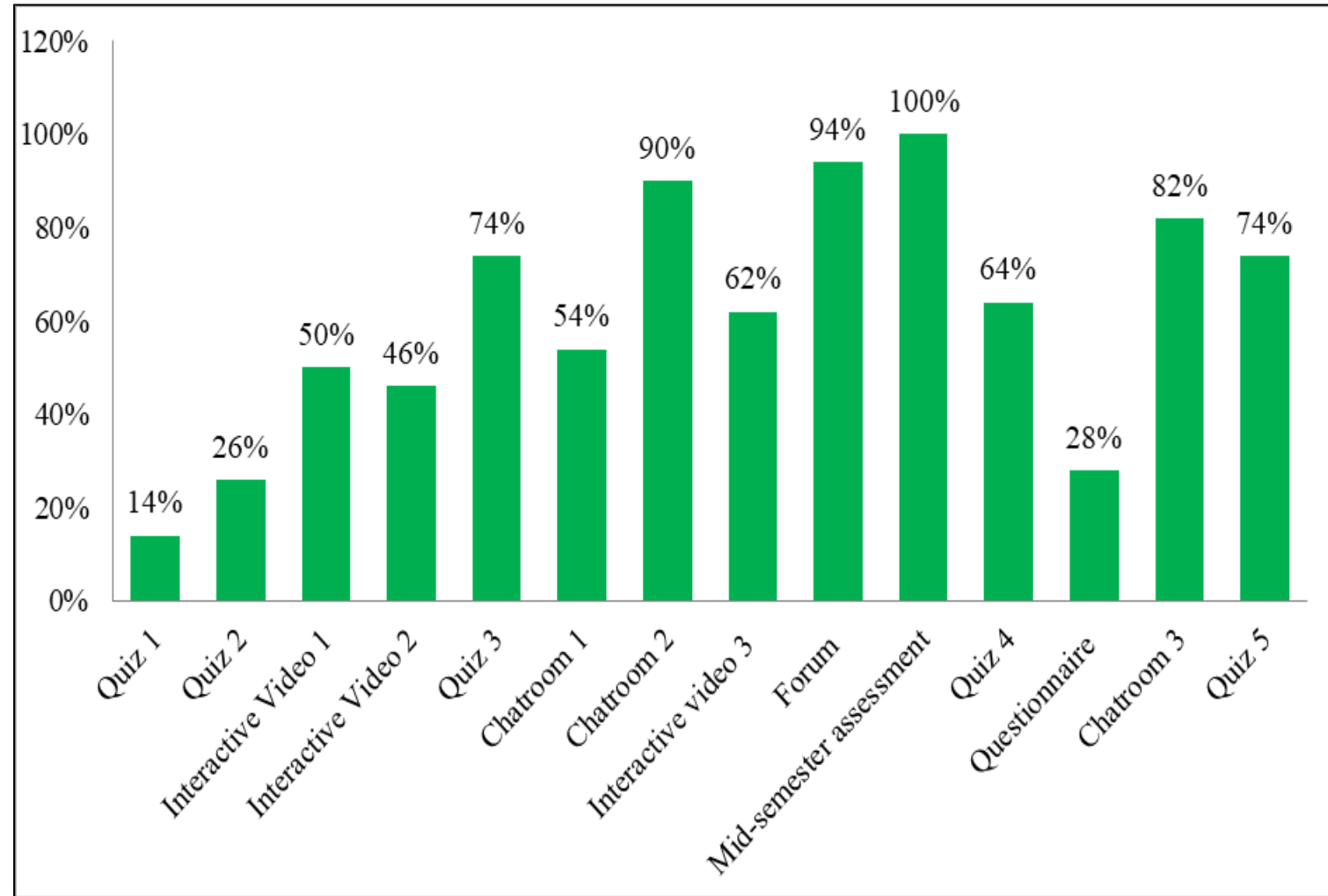


- Downloading lecture slides
- Downloading readings
- Online submission



Student Participation in Online Activities

- Lower participation at the beginning
- Situation improved with,
 - Provision of incentives
 - Encouragement
 - Persuasion
 - Training

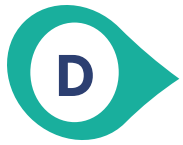


Key factors that determine students' participation in online activities

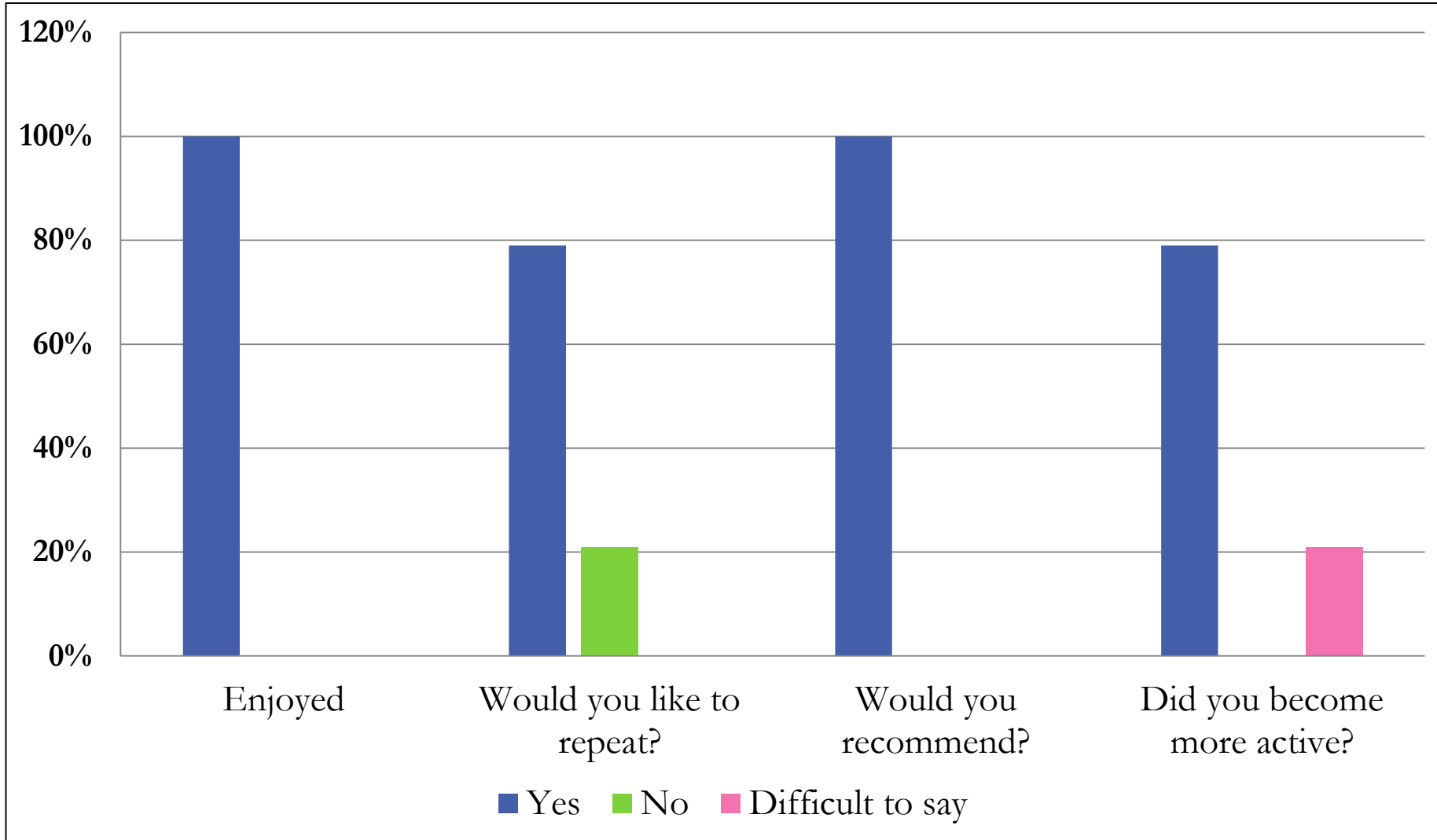
- Whether formative or summative assessments are conducted online
- Award of marks
- Nature of activity
- Chat sessions recorded high participation - virtual platform, no face-to-face interaction, students were free from all restrictions usually seen in a classroom
- Learning was still passive as students expected teacher intervention for participation in online activities

Key challenges facing BL: examination-oriented and teacher-centered learning

- Highly examination oriented and teacher-centered educational system in SL
- Students' overwhelming preference for in-class teaching instead of online
- Students not appreciative of/ comfortable with the freedom given to them during online activities
- Online activities as opposed to onsite, can be effectively used for allocating marks for active participation
- Lack of IT and English literacy – not comfortable to learn in an online environment/ almost all of the prescribed readings are available only in English



Did you enjoy the course?



Conclusion and Implications

- Students prefer a teacher-centered approach which provided the ‘comfort zone’ they enjoyed during 13-years of school
- The traditional classroom setting does not demand the active participation of students.
- Sri Lankan students are conditioned to believe that their passive contribution to learning is desired
- Teaching-learning culture that promotes examination-oriented learning
- Lack of English language proficiency and technical knowhow could be overcome through means such as, translations/trainings
- If BL can be promoted, it is likely that students will voluntarily explore the opportunities provided



**THANK
YOU**

