

## THE POTENTIAL OF BLENDED ESOL COURSES: ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES AMONG THE UK

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Lots of immigrants in the United Kingdom confront challenges as they immigrate and acculturate into a new way of life, where language proficiency opens doors to social acceptance, economic security and cultural understanding. The needs of and provisions for adult immigrants to learn English include specific considerations for the recently arrived and those who have been living in the UK for a rather long time, but still do not speak English. While most learning of English takes place in informal contexts and the English-speaking environment, formal institutions in the UK and immigrants' native countries can also offer useful language training. In many classrooms, the days when a printed course book was the learners' only aid are quickly vanishing and adult education institutions are increasingly looking for ways to incorporate online resources into their teaching. Assuming that learners who need to progress quickly opt for more intensively-paced learning and knowing that professional commitments, business trips, illness or other reasons can prevent them from coming to class, blended learning has become more attractive among the adult learners who are surrounded by technology in their everyday lives. The rapid advancement of communication technologies has boosted the use of increased variety of digital language teaching forms: online learning, e-learning, distance learning, blended learning or even virtual mobility. The study aims at exploring the UK immigrants' experiences concerning learning English within the curricula of ESOL courses in Boston and their needs in regard to blended learning of English. Quantitative research methodology was used applying a questionnaire survey method. To get a closer insight into main obstacles to learning English, a semi-structured interview was developed. The research questions are based on the learners' experience and opportunities for learning English in the UK, the effectiveness of the methodology used at ESOL courses and its relevance to the students' successful social, linguistic and cultural integration into a new country. The study also explores main obstacles to learning English, such as students' needs and diagnosis of the problems faced by students who have psychological fear of speaking a foreign language and selection of activities which promote learners' inclusion. Finally, an attempt is being made to answer the question whether a blended strategy of language learning organized by the students' native countries institutions could create more possibilities for emigrant learners and help not lose connection with their native country. In this respect the study overviews the potential of virtual mobility at Vytautas Magnus University, which is successfully making its way to blended language teaching.