





Is it worth it? Instructor perceptions of a university-wide transformation to blended language learning

Theresa Schenker, Yale University 

Jorge Méndez-Seijas, Yale University 

Andrea Thompson Guiza, Yale University 

Shiri Goren, Yale University 

Abstract

Blended language learning (BLL), an instructional model that counterbalances face-to-face tasks and asynchronous online tasks, enhances language development by providing learners with a wide variety of engagement possibilities that are difficult to offer through monomodal methods. The effectiveness of BLL, as has been noted in the literature, depends greatly on the positive perceptions and support of stakeholders, including instructors. To further tap into the perceptions of instructors, a population that has received relatively little attention in scientific research about BLL, the current study analyzed data from 29 language faculty members across ten different programs: American Sign Language, Modern Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Turkish, Portuguese, Arabic, German, Chinese, and Spanish. All participants were involved in a university-wide transition from exclusively face-to-face instruction to BLL. The results reveal strong support from most instructors, most of whom judged BLL to be effective for enhancing students' learning. The primary reasons for their positive perceptions include the model's flexibility, the possibility of individualized and self-paced learning, and the added opportunities for personalized feedback. Additionally, instructors noted that BLL positively impacts students' and instructors' mental health by providing a break from traditional in-person instruction.

Keywords: *Blended Learning, Instructors, Higher Education, Asynchronous Language Learning*

Language(s) Learned in This Study: *American Sign Language, Modern Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Turkish, Portuguese, Arabic, German, Chinese, and Spanish*

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Introduction

Blended learning, also called hybrid learning, can be understood as “any programme of study that is delivered by appropriately combining both synchronous interactive study (usually face-to-face) and asynchronous (individual) study (usually online)” (King, 2016, p. 2), a definition that has been extended to include tasks that connect learners amongst themselves or with local or distant communities. Various forms of distance or blended language learning (BLL) have existed since the 1990s (Schwirzke et al., 2018), with several models of BLL also growing in popularity since then (Graham et al., 2013). In 2003, for instance, over 50% of private and non-private US institutions of higher education were offering at least one online or blended course (Allen & Seaman, 2003). There is no consensus as to how much of the instructional time should be delivered and in which mode (Hinkelman, 2018; Mizza & Rubio, 2020), but this is perhaps natural given that each institution must take into account the specific needs of their student population and

their programmatic goals (Neumeier, 2005, p. 163).

While much research has been conducted on the affordances of BLL (Bernard et al., 2014; Graham, 2013; King, 2016; Rubio, 2014), the necessity to understand its full potential and best practices has gained urgency since the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, there has been a significant surge in the number of publications on the topic (Panday et al., 2025). All this interest has also highlighted the importance of stakeholders' buy-in, especially instructors' (Comas-Quinn, 2011; Turnbull, 2002). This buy-in is crucial because anytime any curricular changes are made, instructors' prior experience may determine their level of comfort, as well as their willingness to cooperate, with the proposed changes. Not involving instructors in curricular reforms can make them feel frustrated and disempowered (Rahimi & Alavi, 2017). Teacher buy-in may also have a positive or negative impact on students' learning outcomes (Lee & Min, 2017) and on the overall success of curricular reforms (Boyd et al., 2009). Factors that may impact teacher buy-in into curricular revisions include opportunities for shared decision-making (Datnow & Castellano, 2000; Yoon, 2016), professional development opportunities, training, and support throughout the reform (Crumpler, 2023; Turnbull, 2002), as well as a system of rewards (Hinkelman, 2018; Pritchard et al., 2021; Shebansky, 2018). Understanding instructors' perspectives on BLL can also help programs and the university identify areas in need of adjustments and support.

In this context, the current study aims to contribute to our understanding of BLL by presenting and analyzing instructors' perspectives of the model and its implementation at a private university in northeastern United States. Based on responses to an anonymous survey, this investigation includes data from 29 instructors, all full-time faculty members, spanning ten different language programs (i.e., American Sign Language, Modern Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Turkish, Portuguese, Arabic, German, Chinese, and Spanish).

Literature Review

Blended learning has been present in educational contexts for decades and some consider it to be “perhaps the most prominent delivery mechanism in higher education” (Graham, 2006, p. 1). One reason for its popularity is that BLL allows programs to combine the best of both online and traditional language instruction (Godwin-Jones, 2020). This opinion is not unwarranted because, in general, research in the field has reported positive effects. King (2016), for example, pointed to eight key benefits of BLL, which include offering a degree of individualized attention that takes into account all learners' needs, maximizing classroom social interaction, enhancing learners' confidence, offering access to rich interactive input, providing just-in-time support, fostering autonomy, promoting deeper learning, and accommodating different learning styles. This last benefit has been particularly useful in creating inclusive language classrooms for students with learning differences (Altemueller & Lindquist, 2017). While focusing on individualized instruction through blended learning can be time-consuming for instructors, results are very promising (Yang et al., 2013). A meta-study by Cevikbas and Kaiser (2022) confirmed that BL can be a great tool for personalized learning.

In addition, Rubio (2012) indicated that BLL has been demonstrated to be beneficial in other ways, such as increased retention and completion rates (Hughes, 2007; López-Pérez et al., 2011), high student satisfaction (Wu & Liu, 2013), reduced overall cost and less demand on classroom space (Niemic & Otte, 2019). Improved students' self-efficacy is a further strength of BLL as reported by a meta-analysis of 22 studies (Schmid et al., 2023). BLL has also been shown to support the development of cultural knowledge (Luka, 2021), higher-order thinking skills (Toyoda, 2015), self-efficacy (Schmid et al., 2023) and autonomous learning skills (Banditvilai, 2016). Moreover, it can positively impact students' motivation (Fisher et al., 2024; Gerasimova et al., 2022). Research has also investigated the effects of collaborative activities as well as students' perceptions of collaboration in BLL. In general, collaborative activities can be beneficial in fostering a variety of competencies (Dellatola et al., 2020), as well as student engagement and a sense of community (Espiritu Bersamin et al., 2024). However, instructors play a critical role in making collaboration successful in BLL. Mardena and Herrington (2020) present several design principles for BLL

and introduce practices that can support collaboration among students.

Prior research on BLL has shown that it is an effective model that supports the development of all language skills in students (Ferreira et al., 2014; Moreno & Malovrh, 2020; Tsurutani & Imura, 2016; Young, 2008), including speaking skills (cui, 2014), fluency (Rubio, 2012), listening skills (Caruso et al., 2017; cui, 2014), vocabulary learning (Tosun, 2015), reading and writing (Elverici, 2025). Many studies focus on the EFL context (Arslan, 2020; Elverici, 2025; Mulyono et al., 2021; Xu et al., 2020) and other languages are underrepresented in research. Linguistic outcomes of BLL courses appear to be on par with or better than traditional face-to-face (F2F) courses (Adair-Hauck et al., 2000; Chenoweth et al., 2006b; Hamilton, 2018; Romeo et al., 2017; Sagarra & Zapata, 2008; Thoms, 2012; Tosun, 2015). Two meta-analyses reported stronger outcomes for BLL (Bernard et al., 2014; Fisher et al., 2024). One study analyzing the switch to blended learning at the University of Virginia summarized their BLL learning implementation as having “achieved close to the ideal teaching and learning scenario in language acquisition” (Scida & Saury, 2006, p. 528). Prior research, thus, underlined both measurable linguistic benefits of BLL as well as the perceived benefits of this educational model.

Teachers carry a lot of responsibility in ensuring the success of BLL. As King (2016) emphasized, “in blended learning the teacher plays a central role and is omnipresent throughout the learning process” (p. 8). Because of this, there may be an increase in teachers’ workload with BLL, especially when initially setting up the new model (Graham, 2013; Hinkelman, 2018; Larsen, 2012). In fact, the time investment may deter some instructors or programs from implementing BLL (Spasova & Welsh, 2020). Nonetheless, the initial time and effort required of instructors or course designers developing BLL courses may save time in future iterations of the same class (Spasova & Welsh, 2020). While updating teaching materials from one year to the next is still required, this is a task that relates to both F2F and BLL models, whereas the time saved by adopting BLL is increased with every additional iteration of the course.

Even with the increased demands this model may pose on teachers’ time, overall, studies have reported predominantly positive instructor experiences with BLL (Aldosemani et al., 2019; Kosar, 2016; Mulyono et al., 2021). One study of 103 instructors at 50 different non-EFL language programs at over 39 colleges or universities in the US reported that the majority of teachers were somewhat satisfied with the setup of their blended courses and found them somewhat successful (Anderson, 2018). There was also a correlation between teacher satisfaction and years of having taught BL courses with higher levels of satisfaction reported by those with more experience in BLL.

Prior research reported various benefits of blended instruction perceived by instructors. Two benefits that stand out are the ability to address different learner needs and individualize instruction (Chatterjee, 2024; Sorbie, 2015) as well as the added flexibility and ability of students to work at their own pace (Alfares, 2024; Schenker et al., 2025; Vaughan, 2007). While individualized instruction can also happen in F2F classes, it is easier to achieve in BLL (King, 2016). As Goertler (2012) summarized, “In the online portion of blended courses, students can be encouraged to move through the materials in an individualized fashion that addresses their particular aptitude for language learning and their strengths and weaknesses in the linguistic subsets of their current language proficiency” (p. 39).

Instructors also reported that students can get through more material through a BLL approach, and that class time is freed up for communicative or other activities (Larsen, 2012; Spasova & Welsh, 2020). One underlying reason is the efficiency of the BLL model (Larsen, 2012) which allows students to work with more focus on specific tasks, and the opportunity for offering increased and varied types of input for learners (Spasova & Welsh, 2020). Similar to and perhaps as a result of the individualized learning affordances of BLL, additional benefits perceived by teachers include its student-centeredness (Sorbie, 2015) and higher engagement levels of students, in comparison with the traditional instructional model (Vaughan, 2007).

A meta review of 30 studies which discussed challenges of the online part of blended learning identified the use of technology and technological literacy as the main challenge experienced by teachers in blended courses (Rasheed et al., 2020). The review highlighted teachers’ anxiety or lack of willingness in having to

learn new technology, as well as inadequate experience with content creation on course management websites. In addition to challenges with technology, lack of training and support for blended learning have been reported as difficulties by instructors in various teaching contexts (Comas-Quinn, 2011; Kosar, 2016; Mulyono et al., 2021), which can prevent some teachers from implementing BLL (Shebansky, 2018). Even though some teachers may need only minimal training in BLL (Larsen, 2012), support for instructors new to BLL should be provided (Aldosemani et al., 2019; King, 2016) considering that both students and instructors have much to gain from guidance and technology assistance throughout BLL courses (Chenoweth et al., 2006b). Overall, many instructors perceive the extra time it takes to plan effective blended classes and the increased workload to be another main shortcoming of the BLL model (Chatterjee, 2024; Comas-Quinn, 2011; Kosar, 2016). Specifically, instructors reported that BLL takes more time beforehand. Some mentioned feeling “helpless” (Chatterje, 2024) and others “resentful” (Comas-Quinn, 2011) about the extra time required to design blended tasks. Instructors voiced concerns of managing both online and F2F instructional environments (Cheng et al., 2023). Several studies only mention a perceived increase in workload by instructors without detailing what this additional work consists of (Le et al., 2021; Tran-Thi-Thanh, 2024).

Additional challenges can be a lack of supervision of how students spend their time on blended days for which they may need higher levels of self-regulation and motivation (Alfares, 2024; Spasova & Welsh, 2020). Switching from F2F to BLL requires careful rethinking of the curriculum and curricular goals so that the two parts of the course are well integrated and aligned (Gerbic, 2011). Research cautions against using pre-existing or vendor-designed blended learning curricula and recommends that instructors tailor their BLL to their own needs and contexts (Wilson-Armour, 2020). Even though the quality of commercially prepared BLL materials differs vastly, relying solely on online materials developed for BLL by textbook publishers is not recommended because “prepackaged, commercial language learning materials by and large do not provide the flexibility to accommodate local contexts/needs or student choice/agency” (Godwin-Jones, 2020, p. 6). Supplementing commercial products with resources designed by instructors for their specific curricular context, however, can improve the quality and appropriateness of the BLL material (Anderson, 2018). When well executed, BLL has the potential to transform the learning experience for students in a variety of meaningful ways (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004).

Most previous studies on BLL have focused on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts (Li et al., 2024). The present study fills a gap in the literature by looking at ten different languages, including some less commonly taught languages, and instructor-perceived benefits and challenges of switching to a blended approach in language classes at a private institution of higher education. As Comas-Quinn (2011) rightly explains, “how well blended learning works will depend largely on how well teachers make the transition from their traditional face-to-face classroom roles to the wider, more complex role that blended learning requires” (p. 218). This study, thus, aims to understand the strengths and challenges that instructors new to BLL experienced in their transition to a blended instructional model. Given the numerous pedagogical benefits associated with BLL, understanding faculty perceptions of BLL adoption becomes particularly crucial since “barriers related to institutional policies, structures, and lack of support can prevent large-scale faculty adoption of BL and the accompanying institutional benefits” (Graham et al., 2013, p. 11).

The study aims to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What are instructors’ overall preferences for the asynchronous components in their language courses?

RQ2: What do instructors perceive as strengths of blended language learning?

RQ3: What do instructors perceive as weaknesses of blended language learning?

RQ4: What activities do instructors perceive to work well on asynchronous days?

RQ5: What activities do instructors perceive to work poorly on asynchronous days?

Method

Context

The current study took place at a private university in the Northeast of the United States. Language classes at this academic institution had traditionally met in person five times a week; fully online courses are not offered during the regular academic year. This changed during the COVID-19 pandemic when all instruction were shifted online. During that time, language programs adopted a 4 +1 or 3 +2 pilot program to lessen Zoom time for students and instructors. The pilot consisted of three or four synchronous sessions per week plus one or two asynchronous days. When the university resumed F2F instruction in 2021, administrators supported implementing a blended language teaching approach, by keeping one asynchronous learning day per week. Language programs were allowed to join the pilot and to choose their preferred day of the week for the blended portion of the courses. They were also free to decide which class level (e.g., beginners or intermediate) would participate in the blended model as long as all sections of that level opted in. Initially, 13 languages participated in the blended pilot. Arabic, American Sign Language, German, Italian, Modern Greek, Chinese, and Swahili chose Friday as their asynchronous day; Hebrew, Portuguese, Spanish, and Turkish chose Wednesday; and Vietnamese and Yoruba selected Thursday. The opportunity to design an asynchronous day was offered only to instructors who teach modern languages at the elementary and intermediate levels (semester I through IV). In 2024, the university announced that the pilot program was successful, and languages were henceforward allowed to implement a continuous blended approach with a weekly asynchronous day of their choosing. In order to ensure a thoughtful integration of asynchronous days with the curriculum and its objectives, new language programs that wish to opt in for BLL were asked to send a proposal to be reviewed and approved by a center for language study that the university operates. While language programs were allowed to decide whether to implement a BLL approach, the center's mission was to ensure language programs adhered to specific institutional guidelines and a 4+1 pattern where only one day could be asynchronous.

While there was little formal training for programs wishing to utilize BLL, the center for language study offered a few general workshops with best practices for asynchronous learning and also served as a general support hub for language program directors and course coordinators, as well as individual instructors who required assistance or feedback on specific planned assignments, or technological tools. Each program chose the activities for their blended day themselves; these activities ranged from communicative tasks including interactions with native speakers through telecollaboration, directed watching and engaging with target-language videos, TV productions and films, completing various language practice activities or workbook exercises, reading authentic texts or literature, and engaging in service-learning or other project-based work. Instructional methods in the traditional F2F classes in the language programs varied from program to program; while some programs traditionally include a heavier focus on grammar, others are content-based and project-oriented. Many focus on the acquisition of (intercultural) communicative competence with an integrated approach to teaching all skills. These classes, to the best of the knowledge of the authors, were not flipped.

Data Collection

The present study utilizes a mixed methods approach. Following an approval by the university's Institutional review board (IRB), data was collected through an anonymous Qualtrics survey (see [Appendix A](#)) designed by the first author and reviewed by the second author. The survey consisted of 14 questions: three background questions, four Likert scale items, one yes-or-no question, and six open-ended questions. The link to the survey was distributed via email to all instructors whose language courses included an asynchronous day in the fall semester of 2023.

Data analysis began in the following semester. Author four conducted the quantitative analysis, generating descriptive statistics. The qualitative data was analyzed using NVivo. Initially, authors one and three independently coded the open-ended responses to questions 9–13 to identify key themes. They then met to compare their codes and consolidate smaller themes into broader, overarching categories. Author one

subsequently coded all responses in NVivo using the collaboratively developed codebook. Once all open-ended questions were coded, author three proceeded to write the narrative report.

Table 1. *Participants*

ASL	Greek (Modern)	Hebrew	Italian	Turkish	Portuguese	Arabic	German	Chinese	Spanish
1	1	1	1	1	2	3	3	7	9

Note. Table 1 shows how many instructors from each participating language responded and provided consent for their surveys to be analyzed for research purposes.

In total, 29 responses were analyzed to answer the research questions. Of the respondents, 41% had taught intermediate level 1 language classes during fall 2023, 21% had taught intermediate level 2 classes, 38% had taught beginning language level 1 classes, and 14% had taught beginning language level 2 classes. Three instructors had taught intensive beginning or intermediate classes and two had taught classes for heritage learners. The majority of instructors (52%) reported that their asynchronous day had been Friday, closely followed by Wednesday (41%). Only 7% had taught with an asynchronous day on Thursday.

Results

Research Question 1: What are Instructors' Overall Preferences for Asynchronous Language Learning?

The first research question investigated instructors' views and experiences of the asynchronous day. As [Figure 1](#) below illustrates, a vast majority of the participants, 75.86%, reported that they were extremely happy with the asynchronous day while 13.19% were somewhat happy. 6.9% said they were extremely unhappy and only one instructor (3.45%) did not associate an emotion with the course component in question.

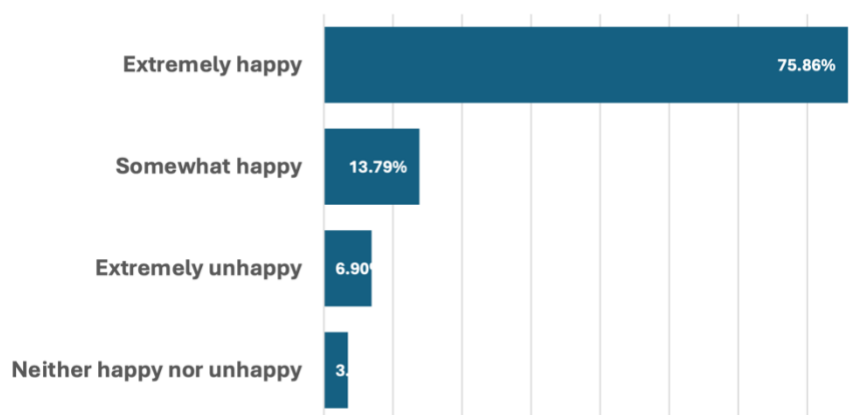


Figure 1. Satisfaction

Instructors also gave a high score to the effectiveness of the asynchronous day in helping students develop their linguistic abilities, as can be seen in [Figure 2](#). Slightly over 50% of all respondents thought the asynchronous day was extremely effective, close to 38% said it was very effective and about 10% chose moderately effective. None of the respondents selected “not effective at all” or “slightly effective.”

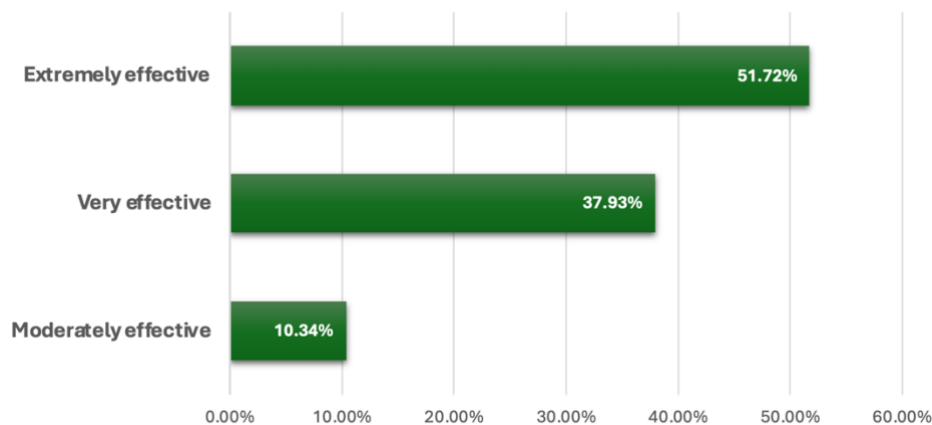


Figure 2. Effectiveness

All but four of the respondents (13.8%) said that they are content with the selected weekday on which their asynchronous class takes place. 25% of whose asynchronous day was on Wednesday would prefer to have it on Friday. One person whose asynchronous day was on Thursday would have preferred an asynchronous Friday as well. Since instructor buy-in has been said to be crucial for the success of curricular innovations (Comas-Quinn, 2011), giving instructors a choice in which day should be blended, is important.

Instructors' responses were mixed concerning the workload associated with adding an asynchronous day. For example, 27.59% said that their workload increased a little in preparation and grading; that is, the amount of work was slightly more than teaching five days a week. In contrast, however, 24.14% of respondents indicated that the volume of work was less than teaching five days a week. 17.24% felt that the amount of work was similar to teaching five days a week. Yet, a similar number of instructors (13.79%) reported that the amount of work was much higher than following a regular schedule of five F2F days a week.

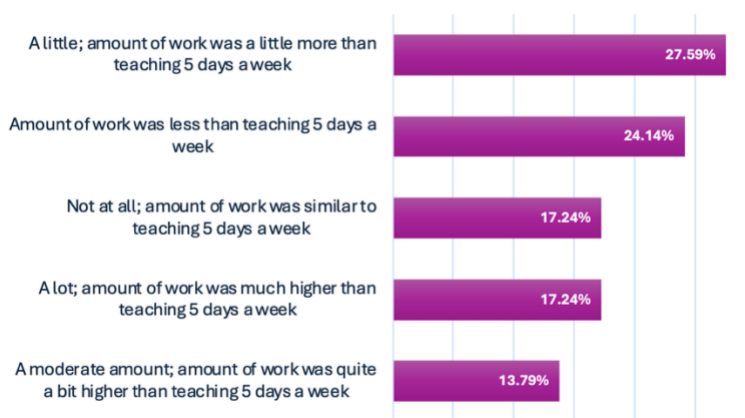


Figure 3. Workload

Responding to the question on whether instructors who teach in the 4:1 model would prefer to teach five synchronous (face-to-face) language class sessions, an overwhelming majority (86.21%) indicated that they prefer to continue with the blended model.

Research Question 2: What do Instructors Perceive as Strengths of Blended Language Learning?

The second research question aimed to identify the strengths that instructors perceived in incorporating asynchronous days into the language curriculum. The survey included two open-ended questions (questions 9 and 13). The answers were combined to reveal several key themes. Broadly, instructors noted the following strengths and affordances of asynchronous learning days, in order of frequency: 1) flexibility; 2) increased motivation and in-class participation; 3) opportunities for individualized feedback and differentiation; 4) increased learning; 5) relief for both students and instructors; and 6) other. Themes two, three, and four were mentioned an equal number of times.

In the recorded responses, flexibility and self-pacing were overwhelmingly identified as highlights of the asynchronous day and were the most frequently mentioned. 23 respondents specifically mentioned flexibility as a significant benefit, while an additional eight emphasized the role of self-paced work in fostering flexibility. The design of the blended days by each program affected how flexible and self-paced the asynchronous day was; while some languages used strict due dates for assignments, others were more accommodating thereby promoting stronger opportunities for independent learning.

At the same time, some respondents further commented on the compounding benefits afforded by the asynchronous day, which facilitates a more relaxed learning environment while also encouraging agency and autonomy on behalf of the learner. As one instructor succinctly pointed out:

I value allowing students time to work at their own pace and needs in activities specifically designed to be completed outside of class. In this way, students can manage their time and complete activities without feeling rushed. Each student has a personal learning style, and the asynchronous days allow them to gain autonomy in their own learning process.

Another added benefit of BLL is a perceived increase in student motivation and class participation. Ten of the respondents acknowledged that the asynchronous day allowed students to use the extra time for review, showing up to in person classes more prepared and thus “causing them to produce better in the target language.” At the same time, the opportunity for instructors to assign scaffolded projects and activities that went beyond the textbook allowed students to improve their linguistic and intercultural competences beyond the classroom. To this end, instructors perceived that their students showed up to class both more motivated and better prepared. Thus, another main strength of the asynchronous day for instructors was: “enhanced preparation from students, increased participation.”

For instructors, asynchronous days opened opportunities for providing more individualized feedback, as mentioned in ten responses across the two questions. The addition of an asynchronous day also allowed instructors to experiment and expand their activity repertoire to be more student-centered. For example, one respondent noted that the addition of an asynchronous day, “gives instructors more opportunities to meet each student’s individual needs and strength.” Others highlighted “individualized learning” and “individualized feedback” as main benefits. There is a strong perception among the instructors who responded to the survey that blended learning can “enhance differentiated instruction in accommodating students’ differing needs,” as summed up by one respondent.

Blended learning can also help students increase their learning, according to instructors. They mentioned positive effects on both language skills and intercultural competence. As one explained, the asynchronous day “strengthened their linguistic and cultural proficiencies,” as a result of having more opportunities for reinforcing learned material and getting additional and targeted practice.

Finally, instructors appreciated that the asynchronous day provided a relief from a traditional heavy five-day a week teaching schedule. This was mentioned ten times and was seen as a strength both by teachers as well as students. One respondent noted: “it also provides a break in the weekly routine, which does not mean any less work or productivity (for instructors or students) but does make the week feel more varied and manageable for all.” Importantly, the asynchronous day was regarded as “beneficial for the health of

the instructors.”

The “other” category comprises themes that were mentioned less than ten times across the two questions and used to analyze research question 1. These themes include the ability to complete different kinds of activities, such as “one-on-one sessions with native speakers abroad” or “projects and activities that are sometimes harder to get done in class.” Another theme was the ability to assess and evaluate the curriculum and make any necessary changes, as well as having focused time for grading and class preparation.

Research Question 3: What do Instructors Perceive as Weaknesses of Blended Language Learning?

The third research question aimed to identify the perceived weaknesses of incorporating asynchronous days into the language curriculum. Again, two open-ended questions (questions 10 and 13) were asked with their answers combined to reveal four key themes. Instructors indicated the following weaknesses and difficulties of asynchronous learning days in order of frequency: 1) a higher workload for instructors; 2) other weaknesses, such as student procrastination, lack of accountability, difficulties coordinating larger projects, and lack of control; 3) no weaknesses at all; and 4) a lack of speaking practice and interaction.

The most common weakness identified in the survey was the higher workload, with workload-related concerns appearing 16 times across the two questions. In such cases, instructors relayed the time-consuming process of having to design, implement, and modify the asynchronous additions to the curriculum while also, in many cases, dedicating extra time to providing individualized feedback to graded asynchronous assignments. Instructors did not specify what caused the extra workload but rather explained generally that there was increased “work in terms of preparation and grading.” One potential explanation for the stress emphasized by instructors regarding the additional workload is the perception that certain stakeholders within their academic institution regard the transition to a blended learning model as indicative of decreased rigor for students, and consequently, less work for the instructors. With that, it is important to note that several respondents acknowledged that some of the extra work required is only a temporary adjustment, expressing that even with the extra work, they still welcome the addition of an asynchronous day to their teaching curricula. For example, one instructor wrote that, “with 15 students in my class, I spent triple time on that day. But when I saw what students did, it was all worth it”.

A relatively small number of respondents mentioned student procrastination (2) and lack of accountability (2) as weaknesses to the asynchronous day, with one instructor pointing out that “students who are less motivated will try to evade work and take it as a day off.” At the same time, some respondents highlighted difficulties coordinating larger projects, and of a lack of control (1) were also recorded, with one instructor explaining: “coordinating students is difficult for both students and teachers. We hope to implement a few modifications next semester to remedy this issue.”

Promisingly, nine different recorded responses indicated that instructors either found no notable weaknesses or found that the benefits significantly overshadowed the weaknesses to the point of erasing any possible grievances. One instructor, for example, shared that they did not “see a negative point once they [the students] are producing and working with the target language.”

Respondents also acknowledged some issues associated with the addition of an asynchronous day. Here, the loss of the communicative classroom environment emerged as a common theme but was overall mentioned only four times. While BLL allows for new and innovative activities that engage students more broadly, active communication proves easier in an in-person classroom environment as opposed to an online format. As one instructor mentioned, “students can never get enough speaking/communicative practice.” While video and audio recordings can be integrated into the asynchronous curriculum, along with other modes of fostering communication and interaction, instructors noted that such online exchanges are often “not as [effective as] the exchanges and interactions in class.” Using providers such as TalkAbroad or LinguaMeeting may be one way to overcome this limitation, as these programs provide more authentic communication practice. Moreover, with the rapid advancement of AI capabilities, individualized speaking practices are becoming more accessible and affordable and could potentially help address these reported

challenges.

Research Question 4: What Activities do Instructors Perceive to Work Well on Asynchronous Days?

The fourth research question aimed to identify which activities instructors perceived as working well within the parameters of an asynchronous day. Responses from 29 instructors on question 11 of the survey revealed the following themes: 1) collaborative activities or project-based work (41%); 2) reading tasks and reflections (28%); 3) viewing films or videos, completing listening comprehension tasks (24%); 4) oral tasks or telecollaboration (21%); 5) writing assignments (17%); 6) other (41%). Many respondents mentioned more than one type of activity that had worked well for them.

Collaborative projects or project-based work was favored by most respondents (41%). One respondent explained that, in group projects “students hold each other accountable for conducting work in Spanish (or, at least, for Spanish class) during the only day of the week when instructors cannot actively supervise them.” Another instructor shared that collaborative projects “enhanced students’ interaction, engagement, and peer learning.” Some participants mentioned “project-based activities” but did not specify whether this work was done collaboratively or individually.

The opportunity to engage in reading tasks as well as personal reflections also surfaced as a theme, with 28% of instructors mentioning each as promising asynchronous assignments that bolster preparation for in-person participation in the language classroom. 24% of respondents highlighted the suitability of listening comprehension tasks, videos and films for asynchronous days. Activities involving an oral component were also reported as successful additions to the asynchronous classroom (21%), with two respondents specifically mentioning online platforms that facilitate learner communication with native speakers, noting that: “In L1/L2, my students really benefited from speaking with native speakers through platforms like LinguaMeeting”.

Finally, writing assignments were also a notable mention with 17% of participating instructors. In the words of one instructor: “Asynchronous days are useful for written reflections that can then lead to more productive in-class discussions.” Other activities that were mentioned by less than five instructors included grammar exercises, take-home quizzes and assessments, research, and enhancing vocabulary.

Research Question 5: What Activities do Instructors Perceive Not to Work Well on Asynchronous Days?

The last research question, based on survey question 12, sought to identify activities that were ill-suited as asynchronous day assignments. Here, four key themes emerged: 1) collaborative work (24%); 2) speaking tasks (17%); 3) grammar activities (13%), and 4) other, including long readings, discussions, and writing (35%). Interesting to note is that some of the themes identified here overlap with activities reported as working well in the previous question, showing a lack of consensus among respondents. This lack of consensus may stem from different pedagogical styles and preferences, resulting in varying interpretations of what constitutes “successful” asynchronous learning. Additionally, class size, student proficiency, and access to technology may shape the way asynchronous tasks are completed and evaluated.

24% of instructors reported that for their classes, collaborative activities did not work well on asynchronous days. Those instructors thought that elements such as student accountability and sustained use of the target language were difficult to oversee when students work asynchronously. One instructor reported that, “whenever students have to collaborate in groups for a cultural project, it is evident that they end up using English in the group.” Speaking activities were also brought up as generally unsuccessful additions to the asynchronous day by 17% of instructors. Instructors mentioned that “speaking spontaneously (with more pressure)” and “oral presentations, [...] and other oral activities” did not work as well as other types of assignments.

Lastly, instructors noted that materials and assignments that explicitly dealt with grammar were not effective on asynchronous days. Specifically, 13% of instructors noted that their inability to answer

questions or correct mistakes in real time became barriers to assigning asynchronous grammar practice. While there might be programs with automated feedback options, these were either not used by instructors or deemed not effective by the users. Thus, grammar was generally singled out as a part of the curriculum better left for synchronous and in-person days. As one instructor points out, “If the assigned activities involve grammar study or practice, it might be good to review them in class for clarification.” Finally, fewer than five instructors mentioned other activities that had not worked well, including longer reading. They pointed out that their classes included “[t]exts that are too difficult to read on their own,” or which had questions that were not adequate for asynchronous days.

Discussion

Instructors’ overwhelmingly positive responses underscore their enthusiasm and investment in blended language learning, factors that have partly resulted from institutional and language programs’ efforts to gain instructors’ buy-in. At all times and through regular meetings, workshops, and discussions, instructors partook in decision-making, collaboration that avoided feelings of frustration and powerlessness (Rahimi & Alavi, 2017). In addition, giving instructors a voice, as our data indicate, can have a positive effect on students’ learning outcomes (Lee & Min, 2017) and on the overall success of curricular reforms (Boyd et al., 2009).

Overall, the findings from our survey data are in line with prior research, which has identified a high level of instructor satisfaction with BLL (Aldosemani et al., 2019; Anderson, 2018; Kosar, 2016; Mulyono et al., 2021). Although the present study did not empirically analyze the effectiveness of blended learning, as some prior studies have (Chenoweth et al., 2006a; Ferreira et al., 2014; Fisher et al., 2024; Luka, 2021; Young, 2008), instructors indicated that, in their assessment, the blended courses they taught were extremely (52%) or very (38%) effective for students’ progress. This level of satisfaction is slightly higher than the one reported by Anderson (2018), where 60% of the 103 instructors participating from different schools felt that their blended classes had been “somewhat successful” and 22% “very successful”. Considering the larger sample size and diversity of languages and programs, this discrepancy could stem, among other things, from varying levels of support for BLL instruction at these different institutions. In line with the generally positive instructor perceptions of BLL, a vast majority of instructors in the current study felt that there were no weaknesses to having an asynchronous day.

As it pertains to the format adopted, the 4+1 model was beneficial. In line with prior research on blended learning (Alfares, 2024; Vaughan, 2007), instructors in the present study emphasized flexibility and self-paced learning as the strongest benefit. Additionally, results showed that instructors appreciated the ability for individualized feedback and differentiated instruction, which was also shown as a perceived benefit in two dissertations exploring blended learning (Chatterjee, 2024; Sorbie, 2015). These findings are also in line with prior studies emphasizing the suitability of BLL for offering personalized learning options (Cevikbas & Kaiser, 2022), addressing different learning styles (King, 2016), and promoting differentiated and inclusive learning (Altemueller & Lindquist, 2017).

Not mentioned in prior research, many instructors in the current study indicated that blended learning has provided a welcome break for them (and students), which has been crucial for their own mental health. This aligns with students’ perception of the model (Schenker et al., 2025). Research on mental well-being of faculty members at institutions of higher education has suggested that flexible schedules or a shorter work week can have a positive impact on their well-being (Hammoudi Halat et al., 2023). While prior research on BLL has not focused on the effects of BLL on instructors’ mental health and overall well-being, the findings from this study suggest that there may be a positive effect that warrants further exploration.

As it pertains to the perceived weaknesses of BLL, and in line with some previous research (Chatterjee, 2024; Comas-Quinn, 2011; Kosar, 2016), there were instructors in our data that identified an increase in their workload; nonetheless, most respondents across the ten different language programs – including several LCTL - included in the study favored the inclusion of an asynchronous day into their instruction. An increased workload, as some respondents indicated, may happen when initially making the switch to

BLL. Once the blended activities have been designed and set up, it will likely be less time-consuming in future iterations of the same course. Interestingly, the other identified weaknesses were mentioned with low frequency, indicating that, overall, instructors felt that the benefits far outweighed any potential shortcomings. While lack of control over students' focus and work on blended days was mentioned only a few times, this theme appeared more often in prior studies (Alfares, 2024; Spasova & Welsh, 2020). Perhaps this challenge is more pronounced when instruction includes more than one blended day each week, or when teachers are afforded limited time in preparation for BLL (for example, during the shift to online instruction during the pandemic). It is also possible that students were less accustomed to doing online work in the past, making the model more challenging. Similarly, while a small number of instructors worried about lack of oral practice on blended days, research has generally shown that BLL can be effective in fostering students' speaking skills and fluency as well (cui, 2014; Rubio, 2012). In fact, with the recent advancements and affordances of large language models (LLM), asynchronous days could be effectively used to practice speaking with AI (Huu, 2025; Zhou et al., 2025). However, limitations of the effectiveness of using AI for speaking practice need to be kept in mind when designing such tasks (Wang et al., 2025)

Even though prior research has identified technological problems or lack of training as a main shortcoming perceived by instructors (Comas-Quinn, 2011; Kosar, 2016; Rasheed et al., 2020), this was not mentioned by the participants in the present study. One explanation for this might be the support language programs received through the Center for Language Study at the institution where this study took place. Prior research emphasized the importance of providing training, guidance, and support for instructors who wish to use a blended instruction model (Aldosemani et al., 2019; Chenoweth et al., 2006b; King, 2016). This type of support was provided to the university programs examined in this study. Another explanation could be that instructors felt more comfortable with online technologies because of their experiences teaching during COVID-19.

Instructors' responses about activities that are well and ill-suited for their asynchronous day revealed mixed results. On the one hand, 41% of instructors mentioned that collaborative activities and project-based work were most efficient; on the other hand, 24% also said that collaboration did not work well on asynchronous days. Previous studies have not focused on instructors' perceived value of different activities on blended learning days, but research has investigated collaboration in BLL and found that it can have positive effects on learning outcomes (Dellatola et al., 2020; Espiritu Bersamin et al., 2024). Since the design of BLL activities is crucial in the success of collaboration (Mardena & Herrington, 2020), it is possible that instructors who felt that collaboration was unsuccessful may need more assistance in making these activities meaningful.

Finally, reading and writing tasks were also perceived as effective for asynchronous learning by instructors in the present study, corroborating prior research analyzing the linguistic effects of BLL on the skill areas reading and writing (Elverici, 2025). Perhaps not surprisingly, instructors felt that all activities related to authentic media and listening comprehension practice were very effective. While no proficiency data was collected, previous studies have demonstrated the positive impact of BLL on listening skills (Caruso et al., 2017; cui, 2014). Additionally, several instructors were convinced of the suitability of connecting students with native speakers on the asynchronous days, indicating that they thought it was an excellent opportunity for student practice in authentic contexts. These types of speaking activities were seen as more beneficial than one-way oral tasks, which lacked interaction.

Limitations and Future Research

Overall, the present study is in line with prior research on instructors' perceptions of BLL. A noteworthy finding is related to the importance that BLL can have on instructors' mental health and well-being. While research often highlights the benefits of BLL for students, it is important to also keep in mind how it affects instructors. Faculty buy-in to the blended model at the current institution was strong; and no large barriers to its implementation were identified, suggesting that large-scale implementation could be successful here (Graham et al., 2013). As not all language programs have opted for the blended model yet, the positive results from this study could encourage them to join in and reap the various benefits of BLL.

As with all studies, however, this one is not without its limitations. The generalizability of the conclusions, for instance, may be limited due to the fact that this study took place at a considerably affluent private institution, where a variety of support mechanisms exist. This may not be the reality in other universities, private and public. Additionally, the sample size of 29 is somewhat small, and several language programs were represented only by one instructor. A larger and more diverse sample size, with several instructors per language program, may provide more generalizable results.

Future studies could also further investigate the relationship between BLL and mental health, both of instructors and students, as well as the optimal blend for language classes, whether there is a preferred weekday for the asynchronous activities and if there is a connection between the effectiveness of certain activity types and student progress in the language, and how BLL functions in different language levels.

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Appendix A. Instructor Survey

Q1 What language did you teach in fall 2023?

- Arabic
- ASL
- Chinese
- German
- Greek (Modern)
- Hebrew
- Italian
- Portuguese
- Spanish

- Swahili
- Turkish
- Vietnamese
- Yoruba

Q2 What level did you teach?

- 110
- 120
- 130
- 140
- 125
- 112
- 132

Q3 What day was the asynchronous day?

- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday

Q4 Overall, how happy or unhappy were you with having an asynchronous day?

- Extremely unhappy
- Somewhat unhappy
- Neither happy nor unhappy
- Somewhat happy
- Extremely happy

Q5 How effective did you find the asynchronous day for your students' progress in the language you taught?

- Not effective at all
- Slightly effective
- Moderately effective
- Very effective
- Extremely effective

Q6 If given the choice, what day would you select for the asynchronous day? Please write in the comment

box why you'd select this day.

- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday

Q7 In comparison to teaching five days a week, how did having an asynchronous day affect your workload? (think of preparation and grading, for example; read all answer choices carefully)

- Not at all; amount of work was similar to teaching 5 days a week
- A little; amount of work was a little more than teaching 5 days a week
- A moderate amount; amount of work was quite a bit higher than teaching 5 days a week
- A lot; amount of work was much higher than teaching 5 days a week
- Amount of work was less than teaching 5 days a week

Q8 Would you prefer to teach five synchronous (face-to-face) language class sessions?

- No
- Yes

Q9 Overall, what did you like best about the asynchronous day?

Q10 Overall, what did you like least about the asynchronous day?

Q11 In your opinion, what activities worked best on the asynchronous day?

Q12 In your opinion, which activities did not work well on the asynchronous day and should be done in class instead?

Q13 What do you see as strengths and weaknesses of adding an asynchronous day to language classes both for the students and instructors?

Q14 Do you have any additional comments about the asynchronous day?

About the Authors

Theresa Schenker (PhD, Michigan State University) is a Senior Lecturer II and Associate Research Scholar at Yale University. She is Language Program Director of German. Her research interests include the development of intercultural competence and second language acquisition through telecollaboration as well as study abroad. She is also interested in all aspects of technology-enhanced language teaching and learning.

E-mail: theresa.schenker@yale.edu

Jorge Méndez-Seijas (PhD, Georgetown University) is a Senior Lecturer II and Associate Research Scholar at Yale University. He serves as the Director of the Spanish Language Program. His areas of research include second language acquisition, applied linguistics, phonetics and phonology, curriculum design, and heritage language education.

E-mail: jorge.mendez-seijas@yale.edu

Andrea Thompson Guiza is a 3rd year PhD student in Germanic Languages & Literatures and a fellow at the Center for Language Study at Yale University. Her interests include discourses of national identity and

belonging in contemporary German and American literatures and exploring the role of emerging technologies in second language acquisition.

E-mail: andrea.thompsonguiza@yale.edu

Shiri Goren (PhD, New York University) is a Senior Lecturer II at Yale University. She is the Director of the Hebrew Program and a faculty member in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. Her teaching and research include graphic novels and other cultural productions in Israel/Palestine, second language acquisition and inclusive teaching of culture.

E-mail: shiri.goren@yale.edu