USAGE DES PLATEFORMES D'APPRENTISSAGE DES LANGUES EN CONTEXTE UNIVERSITAIRE

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Exploring Pedagogical Potential of the Business Model Canvas in a Blended Business English Course on Moodle platform

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RÉSUMÉ

Cette étude explore les avantages et les défis perçus de l'utilisation du Business Model Canvas (BMC) dans un cours d'anglais des affaires. L'intégration du BMC dans un cours d'anglais des affaires hybride démontre son double rôle d'outil pédagogique et d'amélioration des compétences de communication professionnelle. S'appuyant sur des théories socioconstructivistes, Zone de développement proximal, théorie expérientielles et d'acceptation de la technologie, la recherche a utilisé une approche mixte. Les données quantitatives ont été recueillies par le biais d'enquêtes évaluant la facilité d'utilisation, l'utilité et les défis perçus, tandis que les données qualitatives ont été recueillies à partir de questions ouvertes affichées sur la plateforme Moodle. Cette étude révèle comment le BMC répond aux besoins de l'enseignant et des étudiants et fait le lien entre les concepts commerciaux abstraits et la rétention du vocabulaire, améliorant la collaboration et la clarté tout en soulevant quelques difficultés pour certains étudiants. Les résultats de cette étude fournissent des informations sur l'utilité du Business Model Canvas dans les environnements d'apprentissage hybride.

MOTS-CLÉS: Business Model Canvas, Zone de développement proximal, Modèle d'Acceptation des Technologies, spectres pédagogiques.

ABSTRACT

This study explores the perceived benefits and challenges of using the Business Model Canvas (BMC) in a business English course. The integration of BMC into a blended Business English course demonstrates its dual role as both a pedagogical tool and an enhancer of professional communication skills. Drawing on socio-constructivist, embodied in the Zone of Proximal Development, experiential, and technology acceptance theories, the research employed a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative data were collected through surveys assessing perceived ease of use, usefulness, and challenges, while qualitative data were gathered from open-ended questions posted on the Moodle platform. This study reveals how the BMC responds to the teacher and students' needs and bridges the abstract business concepts and vocabulary retention, enhancing collaboration, creativity, and clarity while raising some challenges for a few students. The outcomes from this study provide information regarding the utility of the Business Model Canvas in blended Learning environments.

KEYWORDS: Business Model Canvas, Zone of Proximal Development, Technology Acceptance Model, pedagogical spectrums.

1   Introduction

In a world of uncertainties, chaos, and economic shifts, change is pervasive, making the need for a paradigm shift in pedagogical approaches increasingly necessary. Thus, teachers must change as the curriculum evolves with the needs of the 21 st Century skills (Kadoouri . et al . 2024). Learners in business schools, particularly advanced economic students, need flexible thinking strategies, the ability to structure their thoughts in addition to updating their economic knowledge. Accordingly, this article describes a new approach to business English teaching: the use of Business Model Canvas. This tool is a strategic tool developed by Alexander Osterwalder, it is widely used to visualize and design business models. Its simplicity and visual nature make it a powerful framework for teaching Business English. It has been chosen because it is adaptable to different economic content lessons and business English activities and skills. By bridging business concepts with language learning, educators can create an array of options and immersive practical lessons that resonate with business contexts.

This article will inform educators or curriculum designers with actionable pedagogical strategies in their classes and with practical tips on how to incorporate BMC into their lessons or in their sample activities. Also, ensuring that the language objectives are met alongside business concepts since balance is key.

The study aims to specifically address and explore the effect of integrating the BMC in a blended course design in Moodle platform and it sets out to answer the following research questions:

- How do the blended modality, Moodle course design, and innovative activities facilitate learning and enhance engagement and collaboration?

- How does the integration of the Business Model Canvas align with the principles of Zone of Proximal Development?

- How do students perceive the BMC in terms of ease of use, usefulness, intention behaviour, and collaboration?

2   Theoretical background

The Business Modal Canvas is a powerful and versatile model because its strength lies in its adaptability to an array of theoretical frameworks that prioritize contextualized, interactionist, and collaborative learning. Among the key theories that align with the pedagogical integration of the BMC is Experiential Learning Theory.(Kolb, 1984). The BMC's iterative design supports Kolb's cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. For example, students might analyze a case study (concrete experience), critique a BMC reflective observation, revise it using business terminology (conceptualization), and pitch their model (experimentation). Additionally, the design thinking approach encourages solution-oriented and user-centered approaches to problem-solving. The BMC aligns with design thinking processes-empathizing, ideating, prototyping, and testing as it invites learners to creatively articulate value propositions, define their target audience (segments), and iterate their models based on feedback.

More specifically, this study draws upon the socio-constructivism embodied in the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978), and Technology Acceptance Model. The zone of proximal development emerged as a central pillar of our framework, the next section provides a further explanation of this framework.

2-1 Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky)

The zone of proximal Development posit that learners build knowledge through interaction with real-world scenarios. According to Vygotsky, individuals acquire new knowledge and skills either on their own or through the assistance of others. Learning without help is sufficient for some things, but for more complex tasks and topics, learners need help to traverse the ZPD. According to ZPD framework the educator 's role is to guide learners as they move through the zone of proximal development by providing supportive activities, also known as scaffolding, with the goal of achieving independent competence.

The ZPD emphasizes three key components which aid the learning process, the first is an educator guide whose knowledge and skills exceed that of the learner. The second component is for opportunities to be built into the process that allows interaction between people. Interactions can be with the professor, teaching assistants, tutors, and peers. These interactions provide opportunities for active learning by students. The final key component in the ZPD framework is the provision of scaffolding, or supportive activities, to aid the students through the zone of competency. Scaffolding, a term coined by Wood et al. (1976), consists of the various pedagogy provided by the educator to facilitate learning. As a matter of fact, the BMC visual and modular structure aligns with this by enabling students to co-create business models collaboratively, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Furthermore, the BMC provides a scaffolded structure that helps learners make sense of complex systems by mapping relationships, identifying key resources, and recognizing value creation.

Additionally, Courses, which are designed with social constructivist principles, encourage student-to-student interactions which may lead to classroom community development and connectedness. Rovai (2001 b) identifies the sense of connectedness through four subscales of classroom community: spirit, trust, interaction, and goals in learning. Rovai (2002 b) sees that the sense of connectedness is a valid dimension in measuring the sense of classroom community, because it indicates the feeling of membership, friendliness, group cohesion, and enjoyment, and all these elements are essential for classroom community (Rovai,2002a).

2-2 The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology:

It is a foundational theory in information systems that explains how users adopt and use technology. It was originally proposed by Fred Davis in 1989, then it has been expanded and integrated with other frameworks like the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT). Understandably, its core constructs are perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, behavioural intention, and actual use. Through applying this framework, the study seeks to explore student's perceptions of the BMC as an easy and useful tool for structuring business ideas.

3- The Business Model Canvas

The Business Model Canvas, introduced by Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010), transformed the field of business strategy. It is a simple, one-page graphic and visual template; it is a purpose-oriented and iterative document that changes continuously. Additionally, it helps the cognitive organization of students' ideas. It stimulates their imagination and creativity, it is also considered as a Universal shared language (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010). According to Coes (2014), it is a widely used tool for creating and developing business models (Coes, 2014). As matter of a fact, its simplicity and adaptability have led to a large adoption in business education (Neo, 2003).

The Business Model Canvas depicts nine business model elements on a single page. The suggested proceeding begins on the right side of the canvas and moves to the left side. The two sides are compared to the sides of the brain. The right-side items represent emotions, or the value that is created, while the components on the left side rely on logical understanding. First, Customer Segments are identified, followed by the Value proposition. Afterwards, Delivery Channels and Customer Relationships are mapped before Revenue Streams are visualized. Key Resources, Key Activities, and Key Partnerships follow before the Canvas is completed by visualizing the Cost Structure.
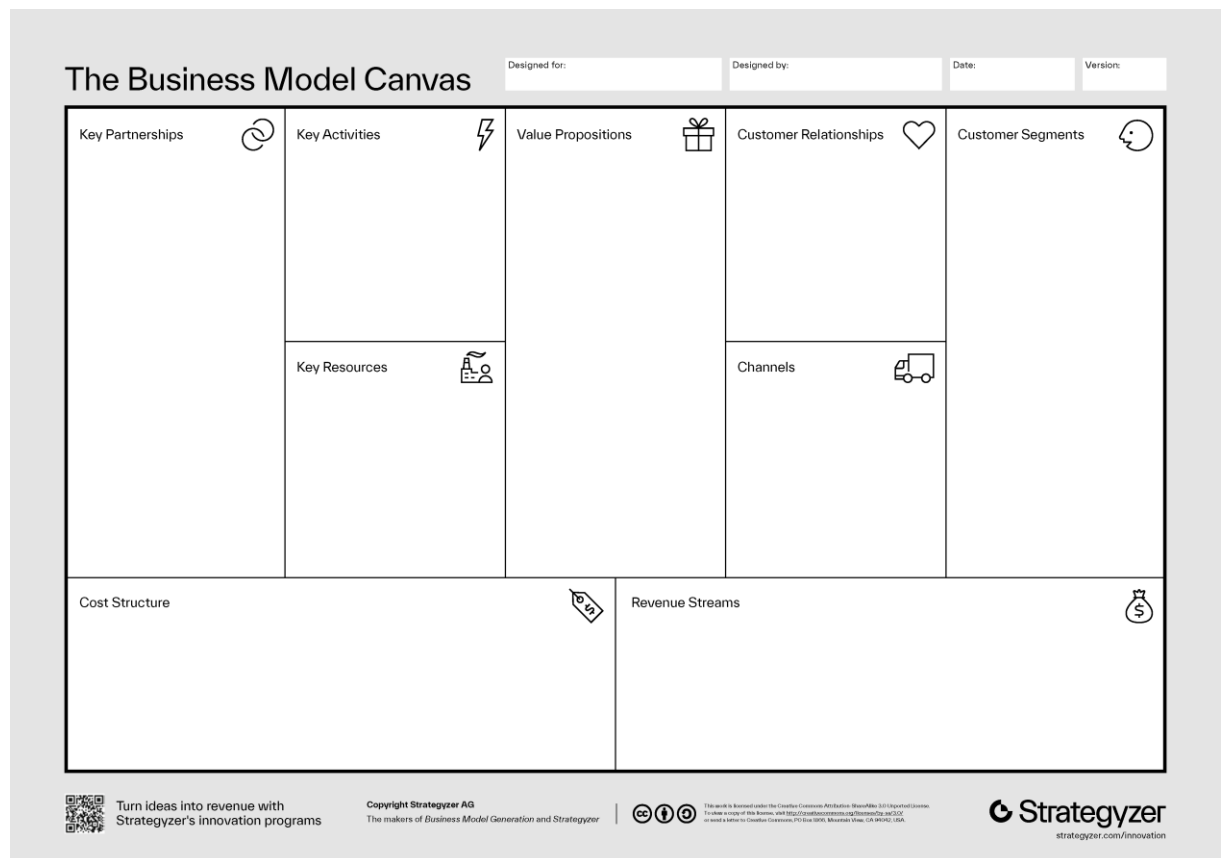

Figure 1: presentation the Business Model Canvas nine blocks designed by Osterwalder and Pigneur

Recent studies explore its efficiency in enhancing critical thinking, collaboration, and real-world problem-solving (Welsh & Dehler, 2013). The business model canvas is also widely used as a tool for experiential learning. One study explored its use as the foundation for an entrepreneurship assignment and found it enhanced creativity and students' innovation in project work (Torres & Augusto, 2021). Further research on pedagogical applications of the BMC has been done for enhancing decision making, for instance, a study at Yogyakarta university demonstrated that integrating BMC into online learning improved students 'motivation, decision making, and risk taking abilities (Nurseto, T., Sulasmi, S., & Alwi, A.C,_2024).

In another example, the BMC was applied to teach business information literacy, helping students understand and use information sources effectively in the context of planning and developing business ideas (Holdford, D,A, & Smith, M. 2021). Additionally, Fritscher & Pigneur (2014) advocated for the BMC as dynamic storytelling tool that integrates message, medium, and audience,

Recent research focus on applying the BMC across disciplines through expanding its use beyond business education, including fields such as social sciences, engineering, or language learning. Another study of implementing business canvas in teaching Business English has been conducted in 2022 by Sharifullina, in which he investigates how BMC enhances students' understanding of business concepts and improves their language skills within a business context. The study involved designing lesson plans that utilized the BMC framework, allowing students to engage with real world business scenarios. The author concluded that the course design heightened students' motivation and confidence.

This literature highlights the BMC's effectiveness in an array of learning environments, but the gap persists in the need for further research on deeper theoretical grounding and culturally responsive adaptations. Therefore, in this study the author is attempting to contribute in this research on implementing the theoretical construct of ZPD in a blended business English course through the integration of the Business Modal Canvas.

3-1 The Pedagogical Potential of Business Model Canvas

From the pedagogical view, the canvas can be exploited from different Spectrums; notably: the spectrum of content, language, vocabulary, skills, activities, strategic thinking, and personal development.

Considering the spectrum of content, teachers can assign presentations to students to search for all the possible canvases of famous global companies and firms.

Students discuss real companies' business models and can easily familiarize themselves with trending economic topics, which helps them stay updated on real-world business issues. Specifically, from a linguistic perspective, teachers can utilize the canvas to review language, as well as specialized vocabulary related to marketing, sales, finance, and logistics. The potential movement from one box to another helps them have a logical flow of discussions. Teachers can realize that their students can make a transition from receptive vocabulary to the productive stage of vocabulary use. While presenting their own canvas, students can effectively categorize vocabulary based on the logical progression between the nine blocks.

Furthermore, and as mentioned above the BMC s strength lies in its adaptability to theoretical frameworks that prioritize contextualized, collaborative learning. For example: To implement the constructivist design, a lesson might task students with redesigning Airbnb BMC, requiring them to apply business vocabulary (e.g., channels, customer relationship while justifying strategic shifts. Educators could also explore how BMC components e.g.; cost structure reflect socioeconomic disparities prompting discussions and debate on inclusive business practices.

Some further samples of practical classroom strategies

a-Startup Simulation

Task: Students create a BMC for a fictional start-up.

Language Focus: Pitch presentations, negotiating partnerships, drafting value propositions.

Outcome: Collaborative dialogue and persuasive language practice.

b- Case Study Analysis:

Task: choose a company's BMC (e.g., Airbnb, Tesla).

Language focus: Descriptive language, cause-effect , connectors : due to , as a result

Outcome: Enhanced analytical writing and group discussion skills.

c- Role-play scenarios:

Example: Negotiating a key partnership.

Language focus: Formal informal register, persuasive techniques.

Additionally, through the canvas, and the activities devised by the teacher; students can develop a range of skills including, the language of speculation and prediction, presenting, reporting, describing trends, storytelling about their own imaginative start-ups, debating, problem-solving as well as negotiating. In summary, the most productive way to use the Business Model Canvas is through teamwork.

Furthermore, the business model canvas is versatile, as it can be used for business strategy, it is also used for personal development, it supports metacognition, helping learners reflect on their strengths, aspiration, and resources. Also, it can be used to visualise the career path to draw the elements of life goals, dreams, desires, and personal projects.

4- Blended Course Design and course description

Course design is not just about structure, it is about preparation, flexibility, clarity, diversity, and ensuring students see real needs and benefits from each task. A meaningful and comprehensive course design helps educators balance between planning, adaptability, and practical strategies.

The course was designed to help students reach an understanding and articulation of:

- Content: Business concepts and companies business models. Business plan

- Skills: presenting, creativity, critical thinking, discussing and collaborating.

- Language: specialised business vocabulary, linkers, cause and effect connectors

- Technology: Concerning the platform setup, a dedicated Moodle course page hosted three spaces

- Integrated Business Model Canvas workspace: A collaborative wiki where groups co-edited BMC templates for mock business projects.

- Modality: From face-to-face to blended modality

  The following table shows the components of the course design.

Content	Language	Skill	Moodle platform technological tools	Modality
-Business content -Business concepts	-Business vocabulary terms -Linkers and -Cause effect connectors	Creativity Presenting Discussing Critical thinking Collaboration	-Wiki space -Forum space -Resources -Videos -Quizzes	-Rotation shift from face to face to blended modality -Flipped modality

-Companies Business models			-Glossary	

Table 1: Components of course description

Regarding the course phases, they align relatively with the phases of the Zone of Proximal Development. The first phase involves a face-to-face modality over the first two weeks. This phase serves as an introduction to and explanation of the Business plan. Then, the Business Model Canvas, delivered through video lectures, detailed explanations, PowerPoint presentations, and quizzes. Additionally, this phase entailed the classification of the wiki learning domain, the assignment of the collaborative task, opening a topic for discussion in the forum space, and finally, determining the assessment and evaluation measures for the course.

The second phase consists of four weeks in which the process of collaborative BMC development starts in groups of five with weekly forum prompts.

The final phase consists of presenting the final outcomes and peer assessments via Moodle's workshop tool. In a nutshell, we can notice that it is the duty of the teacher to choose the tools that can respond to the pedagogical requirements of the course. (Houat 2012).

The course aims first to make students understand the concept of business plan and then develop their own business model canvas.

Figure 2: Overview of the Business Model Canva on the school platform (Moodle)

As mentioned above, The ZPD framework was used to guide students to develop their business plan and then their business model canvas. The task of completing a business plan fits the framework because it is an assignment that students cannot do on their own without assistance, it is not too difficult to complete given the right amount and type of guidance. Opportunities for interaction or affordances between learners and teachers were built into the learning process through activities and assignments that encouraged conversations between peers. Other opportunities built into the course design included also the assignment of participating in the Forum space to share their difficulties or suggest new ideas for the course development. Additionally, they were encouraged to communicate with each other by leaving comments, sharing resources, and also for responding to the open-ended research discussions. The teacher communicated with participants on the forum pages offering guidance on areas for expansion, utilization of resources, and encouragement.
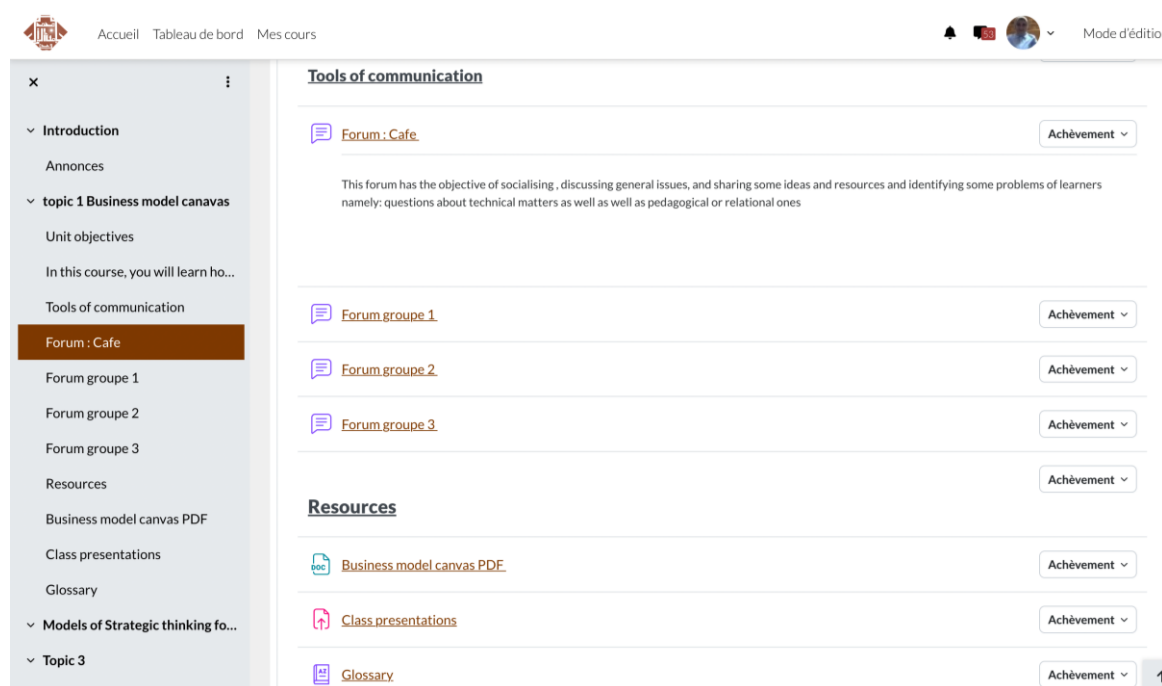

Figure 3: Overview of the forum space

The above screen-capture shows the classification of the forum space domains and the opening of the forum café in which students can share and express all their opinions and suggestions, and also the difficulties they confront throughout the process of working on their assignments.

The following image shows the Business Model Canvas workspace in a collaborative wiki space where groups co-edited their BMC templates for mock business projects.
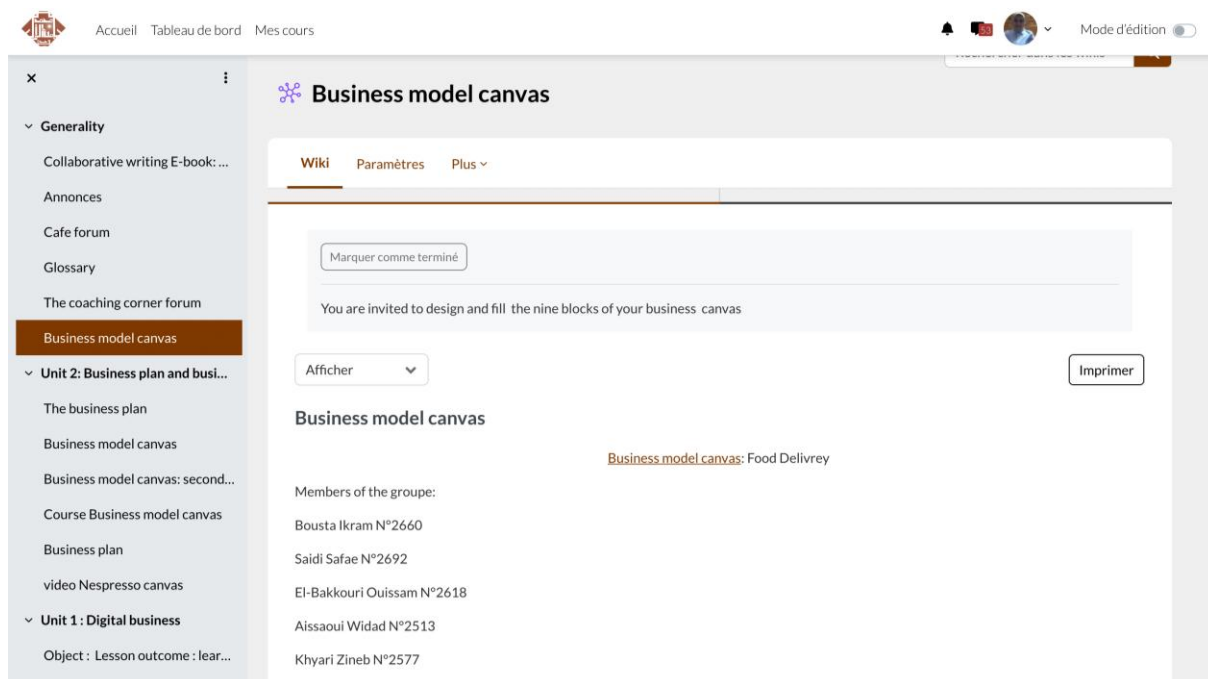
Figure 4: Overview of the WIKI space of the Business English course

In wiki space, the whole groups were invited to posit the design of their own canvas after filling the nine blocks. Thus, to help students achieve competency by working through the ZPD framework, they were guided while filling in the nine blocks of the canvas. It is worth-noting that students were provided with a structured choice in which they could choose from a list of business ideas already prepared by the teacher. Students were also given an alternative option to propose their own ideas, or use simulation of real companies.
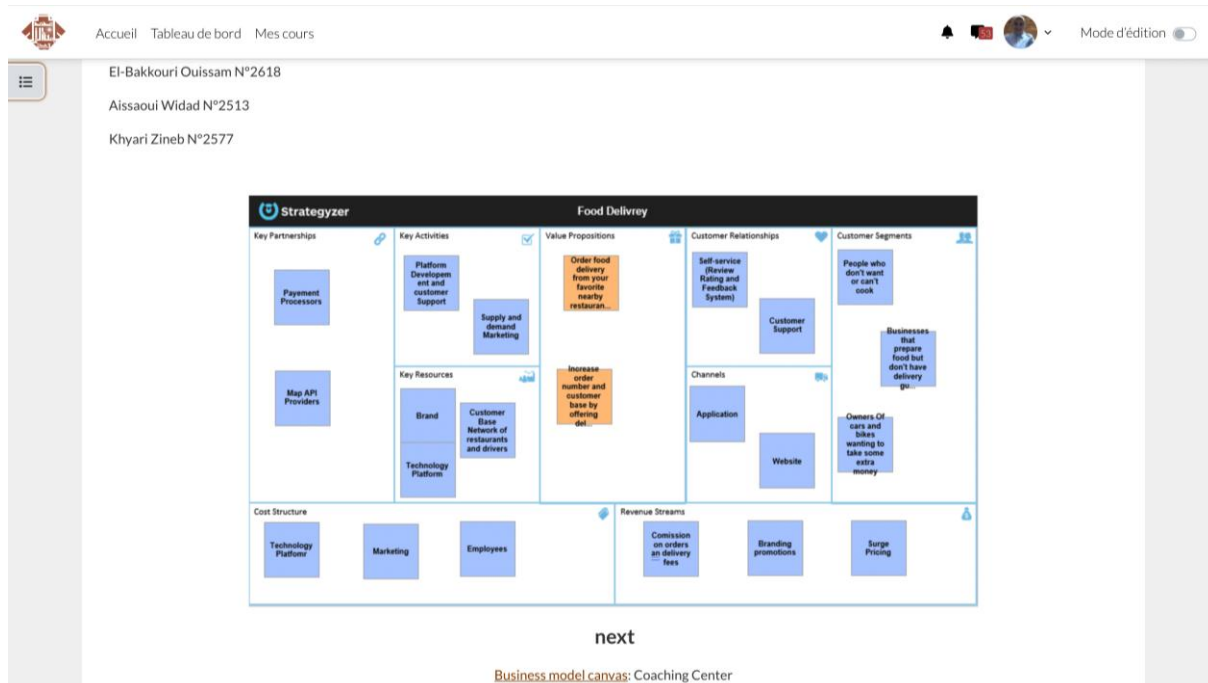

Figure 5: A sample BMC of a group of students (Group 4)

5- Methodology

The section presents the research design and outlines the sources of data collection. It also justifies the use of qualitative research and explains that the quantitative data was used to support the findings of the qualitative data.

Creswell's emphasis on using simultaneous methods mixed methods underscores the growing recognition that student's interaction with other students, with teachers, with technology, and with course environments often require multiple approaches for a comprehensive understanding (Creswell, 2014). Thus, this study employed a mixed methods exploratory design to evaluate student's perception of the integration of BMC in a blended learning environment.

The participants in this study are 7th-semester National School of Commerce and Management) ENCGO students enrolled in the Business English course. Their ages ranged from 22 to 23 years old. The researcher chooses one group of 50 students. Research questions were created to specifically address whether or not students perceive the use of the canvas to be useful and easy to use. Quantitative data was collected depending on a Likert scale survey on perceived components. Concerning the Qualitative data, the forum posts prove to be very helpful in collecting students' responses to open-ended prompts. Moreover, reflective forums and forum café also help detail individual experiences with BMC collaboration. The open-ended questions allow the researcher to explore more deeply the phenomenon. The research was designed not to yield definitive evidence but to explore students' opinions and perception of this innovative pedagogical experience.

The sampling strategy applied in this study is purposeful sampling which does not rely on random selection, but rather on the researcher 's judgement in selecting cases that are convenient to the research questions. According to Guests et al (2006, p.61-69), it is one of the most commonly employed techniques in qualitative research, where the concept of saturation guides the sample size-the point at which additional data collection no longer yields novel insights or themes relevant to the study. This criterion of saturation indicates that further interviews would likely repeat the same observed patterns, hindering the understanding of the new aspects of the research problem (Khoa et al., 2023, p. 192-199).

In this study, Purposeful sampling meant all participants were familiar with the tool business model canvas, the thing which facilitates the exploration of their perspectives and perceptions on the application of the tool in the course curriculum. Although this approach lacks randomization and statistical verification inherent to probabilistic sampling, it is well suited to qualitative studies, where the aim is to uncover a pedagogical phenomenon rather than generalizing findings to a broader population. Therefore, this procedure provides the researcher with meaningful insights without the need for rigorous statistical validation.

6- Findings and discussion

6-1 Perceived benefits and Challenges

For perceived ease of use, the results indicate that the majority of students agreed and strongly agreed that the canvas is easy to use and simple to navigate 80%, this aligns with Davis's TAM where simplicity drives adoption (Davis, 1989).

For perceived usefulness, most students highly rated the BMC 's clarity and structure with mean > 4.0.

Over 75% agreed that the integration of BMC in the blended course improved business vocabulary and presentation skills. Moreover, it facilitates collaborative knowledge (75%), This

process aligns with the social constructivist view of learning as a collaborative and interactive process, where knowledge is constructed through social interactions and the exchange of ideas (Vygotsky, 1978). More specifically, the results resonate with the notion of scaffolding which exemplifies the dynamic and interactive nature of learning, underscoring the importance of tailored assistance and tailored design in promoting cognitive development.

Despite the recognized benefits, students also noted several minor challenges, with a lower mean score of 3.1 for adapting to its nine blocks. Additionally, only 22% reported difficulties with terms such as 'revenue streams' and 'customer segments.

As for Behavioural Intention, over 80`% expressed intention to use the BMC in future projects.

Finally, the perceived benefits and challenges identified in this study highlight the effectiveness of Canvas as a tool. However, one informant mentioned that the framework requires assumption about customer behaviours, market conditions, which may not hold true in practice. This speculative nature introduces potential gaps between the business model canvas and real-world outcomes, emphasizing the need for contextual validation and refinement.

Further research is needed to explore additional factors and strategies that can be used to optimize student learning and engagement in this environment. The data indicates that Canvas is widely regarded as an efficient tool and easy to use.

The following table presents student 'perceptions of the Business Model Canvas (BMC), focusing on its usability, effectiveness, and challenges

No	Statements	Mean	Agree/Strongly Agree	Disagree
1	Canvas is easy to use	4.04	88%	0.7
2	Canvas improved my vocabulary	4.1	75%	0.9
3	Canvas helps structure ideas clearly	4.3	85%	0.8
4	Canvas made it easier to present ideas	4.2	72%	0.9
5	The BMC enhanced collaboration	4.0	75%	0.9
6	I will use the BMC in future	4.6	94%	0.5
7	I found it challenging to adapt to BMC	3.1	22%	1.2

Table 2 : Students' Perceptions of the Business Model Canvas (BMC)

6-2 Qualitative Feedback

The aim of open-ended questions is to uncover perceptions and explore students' feelings, attitudes, and opinions in a deeper way.

Overall, the outcomes of the open-ended questions, which were posted on the Moodle platform in the Forum space, reflect students' acceptance of the Canvas and the whole course design. They found that this pedagogical experience allowed them to practice their skills in a fun and systematic way. Additionally, they perceived the blended course   design as well-structured and organized.

Excerpts

« It is very easy to use, structured, and organized, I like the design, it makes me want to navigate between the blocks and fill them ».

« The BMC visuals made it easier to communicate ideas. »

Another student reported that it makes him feel more confident:

Excerpts

« When I use the canvas as a tool for learning, I feel more confident and excited».

Excerpts

« What I like about the course is that we feel responsible to add our own ideas and gives us possibilities to be more creative ».

Additionally, students perceived it as an excellent tool for fostering an interactive environment.

Excerpts

« it encourages active participation in the course content, we liked the discussion in the forum ».

Some students mentioned some challenges:

« We debated key partners vs key resources, but after checking the glossary on Moodle, we compromised by splitting the section. »

Here we notice that glossary in Moodle platform facilitate and replace the teacher' s role in defining the business terms and concepts, this aligns with the principle of affordance in the Zone of Proximal Development.

Additionally, the canvas encourages active participation in forum discussions.

A student stated that:

« the canvas facilitated our collaboration because each member took charge of one block and then we complete the coordination through our interaction in the Forum ».

Thus, the persistence of communication in asynchronous discussions allows for the creation of collective knowledge base that evolves throughout the course. The gradual building and refinement of ideas over time in asynchronous discussions aligns with zone of proximal Development forum.

Overall, students have held positive perceptions and felt that the canvas is an attractive and practical tool. Besides, they liked working in teams and having the opportunity to be creative.

These findings find resonance in other studies. For instance, Sharifullina, D. (2022) reported that students were generally satisfied with the integration of the canvas. He investigates how BMC enhances students' understanding of business concepts and improves their language skills within a business context. The study involved designing lesson plans that utilized the BMC framework, allowing students to engage with real world business scenarios. The author concluded that the course design also played a major role in maximizing students' motivation and confidence.

In their research, Fritscher & Pigneur (2014) also acknowledged the interdependence between the platform tools, activities and the BMC assignments in the blended modality. Understandably, their findings echo the findings of this study in which the systemic

organization of the design of the course, the choice of the appropriate platform tools, the tailored assignments and the chronological order of the tasks ensure the relevance of the notion of affordances which facilitate the crossing of the Zone of proximal development to the student's independent competency.

It is worth-noting that the convergence of both quantitative and qualitative findings reveals a clear alignment of perception and practice relative to the theoretical construct of the zone of proximal development.

No one of the participants indicated that the experience was a waste of time, although few students were not comfortable mainly because of internet connectivity issues and also because of the increased workload of other parallel subjects.

Finally, teachers need to develop a range of pedagogical and technological skills to maximize the Business Modal Canvas usefulness and hence foster meaningful learning outcomes.

7- Conclusion

The study contributes significantly to both theoretical understanding through applying the Zone of proximal development and also through practical implementation of the Business Modal canvas in a blended environment in a Moodle platform.

This study highlights how blended modality, meaningful course design and Moodle's collaborative tools can scaffold both business language learning and business strategy development. Moreover, this study affirms the Business Model Canvas as a helpful tool for business English education.

Additionally, the business model Canvas can form a portion of the scaffolding needed for business students to cross the Zone of Proximal Development to independent competency. All tasks can be completed at a high level by students with appropriate guidance and affordances. When provided with the right activities, the right ideas, guidance, and feedback, students can generate a positive learning outcome.

Through incorporating the business model canvas in business English curriculum this offers a theoretically grounded and pedagogically rich framework. Understandably, the Business Model Canvas's structured approach and visual appeal improve clarity, vocabulary retention, and confidence in professional English. Additionally, the capacity of this approach lies in bridging the gap between business English language, business content, and skills building mainly creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration. Thus, it is particularly suited for teaching business English to advanced learners. While the BMC shows promising results in education, the following recommendations emerge:

- Adapting the BMC to Educational Contexts or to glocal design framework through customizing the canvas elements to reflect the real context of learners.

- Training educators through providing appropriate training for teachers to use the BMC effectively in class or online.

- Applying the BMC across disciplines through expanding its use beyond business education, including fields such as humanities, social sciences, engineering and language learning.

Finally, future research should address the lack of longitudinal studies on BMC 's impact on language proficiency and its scalability across diverse educational settings.

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