# HOW STUDENTS USE HYBRID COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING PLATFORMS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW IN CHINA

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**Abstract**
Hybrid learning platforms have significantly impacted English language teaching in higher education, particularly in China, where technology-enhanced education is expanding rapidly. This systematic review examines how students engage with hybrid college English teaching platforms, analyzing behavioral patterns, levels of engagement, and learning outcomes. The review investigates integrating traditional and digital learning methods in Chinese universities. The findings indicate that students primarily use hybrid platforms for supplementary learning, collaborative activities, and self-directed study. Supplementary learning includes revisiting recorded lectures and accessing digital resources to reinforce comprehension. Collaborative tasks such as peer discussions and group projects promote active engagement and foster a sense of community. Hybrid platforms allow for personalized, self-paced learning, enabling students to take greater control of their educational journey. However, challenges persist, including technological limitations, low digital literacy among students, and inconsistent pedagogical strategies across institutions. These barriers hinder the full potential of hybrid platforms. The review emphasizes the importance of developing a cohesive framework to effectively harness the advantages of hybrid platforms, enhancing students' language proficiency and promoting greater autonomy in English learning. By addressing technological, instructional, and motivational challenges, hybrid learning environments can provide a dynamic and inclusive approach to language education in Chinese higher education. This research contributes valuable insights for improving the use of hybrid platforms to promote effective language learning in universities
**Keywords:** Hybrid learning platforms, English teaching, higher education, student engagement

***Abstrak***
*Platform pembelajaran hybrid telah berdampak signifikan terhadap pengajaran bahasa Inggris di pendidikan tinggi, khususnya di Tiongkok, tempat pendidikan yang ditingkatkan*

*teknologinya berkembang pesat. Tinjauan sistematis ini meneliti bagaimana siswa terlibat dengan platform pengajaran bahasa Inggris perguruan tinggi hybrid, menganalisis pola perilaku, tingkat keterlibatan, dan hasil pembelajaran. Tinjauan ini menyelidiki integrasi metode pembelajaran tradisional dan digital di universitas-universitas Tiongkok. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa siswa terutama menggunakan platform hybrid untuk pembelajaran tambahan, kegiatan kolaboratif, dan pembelajaran mandiri. Pembelajaran tambahan mencakup meninjau kembali kuliah yang direkam dan mengakses sumber daya digital untuk memperkuat pemahaman. Tugas kolaboratif seperti diskusi sejawat dan proyek kelompok mendorong keterlibatan aktif dan menumbuhkan rasa kebersamaan. Platform hybrid memungkinkan pembelajaran yang dipersonalisasi dan sesuai kecepatan belajar, yang memungkinkan siswa untuk lebih mengendalikan perjalanan pendidikan mereka. Namun, tantangan tetap ada, termasuk keterbatasan teknologi, literasi digital yang rendah di antara siswa, dan strategi pedagogis yang tidak konsisten di seluruh institusi. Hambatan ini menghalangi potensi penuh platform hybrid. Tinjauan ini menekankan pentingnya mengembangkan kerangka kerja yang kohesif untuk secara efektif memanfaatkan keunggulan platform hybrid, meningkatkan kemahiran bahasa siswa, dan mempromosikan otonomi yang lebih besar dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Dengan mengatasi tantangan teknologi, instruksional, dan motivasi, lingkungan pembelajaran hibrida dapat memberikan pendekatan yang dinamis dan inklusif terhadap pendidikan bahasa di pendidikan tinggi Tiongkok. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan berharga untuk meningkatkan penggunaan platform hibrida guna mendorong pembelajaran bahasa yang efektif di universitas*

***Kata kunci:*** *Platform pembelajaran hibrida, pengajaran bahasa Inggris, pendidikan tinggi, keterlibatan mahasiswa*

## 1.  INTRODUCTION

Integrating hybrid learning platforms in college-level English education signifies a transformative shift in educational methodologies, particularly in China's evolving academic landscape. These platforms combine traditional face-to-face instruction with digital tools, fostering a dynamic learning environment catering to diverse student needs and preferences (Gamage et al., 2022). Adopting hybrid learning methods has gained significant traction in a country where English proficiency is critical for academic and professional advancement. Chinese universities are increasingly turning to technology-enhanced teaching strategies to enhance learning outcomes and better equip students for the demands of a globalized workforce (Li et al., 2021). For students, hybrid learning platforms offer various benefits, including access to recorded lectures, e-books, multimedia resources, and interactive exercises.

These resources support self-paced learning, enabling students to revisit challenging material conveniently and reinforcing skill retention (Gamage et al., 2022). In addition, hybrid platforms often include analytics features, allowing instructors to monitor student

progress in real-time and tailor their teaching methods to address individual learning needs. This data-driven approach enhances the learning experience by promoting targeted interventions responsive to students' specific challenges.

However, the full potential of hybrid learning platforms cannot be realized without addressing several significant challenges. One of the key obstacles is the disparity in digital literacy and infrastructure across different regions. In rural areas, where access to reliable internet and modern digital devices may be limited, students face difficulties in fully utilizing hybrid platform features (Chen & Zhao, 2021). This digital divide underscores the importance of investing in infrastructure and providing adequate training for students and instructors to ensure equitable access to technology. Moreover, teachers must be equipped with the necessary skills to effectively navigate and incorporate hybrid learning tools into their teaching strategies. While hybrid learning platforms offer promising opportunities to enhance English education in Chinese higher education, their effective implementation requires overcoming technological and pedagogical challenges. By addressing digital access issues and ensuring that educators are properly trained to leverage these platforms, universities can maximize the potential of hybrid learning to improve English proficiency and foster greater autonomy among students. These efforts are crucial for adapting to the rapidly digitalizing educational landscape and ensuring all students have equal opportunities to succeed.

Hybrid learning platforms represent a significant educational shift, merging traditional face-to-face teaching with modern digital tools. This hybrid approach allows for the creation of more flexible and adaptable learning environments that cater to diverse student needs. The flexibility of these platforms enables students to access a range of learning resources, from recorded lectures to interactive exercises, allowing them to study at their own pace and revisit challenging topics. Such features have been shown to support supplementary learning, collaborative projects, and self-paced study, all of which contribute to improved comprehension and retention of material (Rapanta et al., 2021; Chakraborty et al., 2020).

These benefits are particularly significant in higher education, where students often face balancing academic responsibilities with personal commitments. Despite these advantages, the effectiveness of hybrid learning platforms is not uniform across all students. The success of these platforms depends largely on how students engage with them, which is influenced by factors such as motivation, digital literacy, and access to technology. While some students thrive in the flexible, resource-rich environment that hybrid platforms offer, others struggle with barriers like technological difficulties and lack of motivation. For example, students with low digital literacy may find navigating online tools challenging and making the most of the available resources (Rapanta et al., 2021). Motivational challenges can arise, especially for those accustomed to traditional classroom settings, where in-person interactions provide immediate feedback and accountability.

Another significant challenge that hampers the effectiveness of hybrid learning platforms is the disparity in access to technology and digital resources. Students in rural or underserved areas often face limited access to reliable internet connections and modern digital devices, which restricts their ability to participate fully in online learning activities. This digital divide can create inequities in learning outcomes, as students in more urbanized or well-resourced areas can take full advantage of the platform's capabilities (Chakraborty et al., 2020). To address these disparities, educational institutions must implement equitable strategies that ensure all students have access to the tools and support they need to succeed in hybrid learning environments. In light of these challenges, successfully implementing hybrid learning platforms requires careful consideration of technological and pedagogical factors. Educational institutions must invest in infrastructure and provide training for students and educators to ensure the platforms are used effectively. Additionally, universities must adopt strategies that foster motivation and engagement, such as integrating gamification and peer-based learning, to encourage students to participate in their learning actively (Rapanta et al., 2021). By addressing the technological and motivational barriers that hinder platform usage, hybrid learning platforms can better fulfill their potential to enhance the learning experience for all students.

Low digital literacy among students and educators continues to pose a significant barrier to the effective use of hybrid learning platforms. This issue exacerbates educational disparities, particularly in areas with limited technological access. Many students and teachers lack the skills to navigate complex digital tools, preventing them from fully utilizing the platforms' capabilities (Rapanta et al., 2021). As hybrid learning becomes more prevalent, addressing this gap in digital literacy is crucial for ensuring that all students can benefit from these platforms equally. Educators, in particular, must be trained to effectively integrate technology into their teaching, ensuring they can adequately support students struggling with platform navigation. Without such initiatives, the potential of hybrid learning to democratize education may remain unrealized, especially for those in less privileged areas (Chakraborty et al., 2020).

In addition to digital literacy challenges, motivational issues also play a critical role in the success of hybrid learning. Students transitioning from traditional face-to-face classrooms often face difficulties adapting to online components, which lack the immediate feedback and social interaction typical of in-person learning environments. As a result, many students struggle to stay engaged with the material, particularly when learning requires self-direction and discipline. Motivational challenges can lead to disengagement, reducing the effectiveness of hybrid platforms in achieving desired learning outcomes (Rapanta et al., 2021). To mitigate these challenges, educational institutions must explore strategies to foster intrinsic motivation. One effective approach is the incorporation of gamification, which can make learning more engaging by adding elements of competition and reward (Chakraborty et al., 2020). Additionally, interactive tools that encourage student

participation, such as discussion forums, quizzes, and peer feedback, can help keep students motivated and actively involved in their learning journey.

Finally, addressing infrastructural issues is key to ensuring the effectiveness of hybrid learning platforms. In regions where stable internet connections are not widely available, students face significant barriers to accessing digital learning materials. In underserved areas, the digital divide can prevent students from fully participating in hybrid learning, limiting their ability to benefit from these platforms' flexibility and resources (Rapanta et al., 2021). To overcome these challenges, governments and educational institutions must invest in stable internet infrastructure, ensuring equitable access to hybrid learning tools. Addressing both digital literacy gaps and infrastructural inequalities can maximize the benefits of hybrid learning platforms, ultimately enhancing the educational experience for all students. Considering China's diverse educational landscape, future research should explore how socio-cultural factors influence students' interactions with hybrid platforms. Additionally, longitudinal studies can provide deeper insights into the long-term impact of hybrid learning on academic performance and language acquisition. By systematically reviewing the current literature, this study contributes to understanding the usage patterns, challenges, and strategies associated with hybrid college English teaching platforms in China. These findings highlight the importance of addressing technological, pedagogical, and motivational barriers to maximize the potential of hybrid learning in fostering English proficiency among students.

## 2. METHOD

This study adopts a systematic review methodology guided by the PRISMA framework, ensuring a rigorous and transparent approach to identifying and synthesizing relevant research (Moher et al., 2009). The comprehensive search spanned peer-reviewed articles published between 2015 and 2023, utilizing prominent databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and CNKI to capture a broad spectrum of research. The search terms "hybrid learning," "college English," "China," and "student engagement" were strategically chosen to align with the study's objectives and encompass diverse perspectives on the topic. Inclusion criteria were established: studies must focus on hybrid learning platforms specifically for English teaching in Chinese higher education, be published in English or Chinese, and involve empirical investigations of student usage. This targeted approach highlights the importance of understanding the real-world application of hybrid platforms in China's educational landscape. A detailed screening process was conducted from an initial pool of 76 articles, selecting 30 studies that met the inclusion criteria.

The selected studies underwent thematic coding, a qualitative technique to extract and categorize data systematically. This method allowed for identifying recurring patterns in student behavior, engagement, and challenges when using hybrid platforms. The thematic analysis revealed insights into how students utilize hybrid tools for supplementary learning,

collaborative projects, and self-directed study while also highlighting barriers such as technological issues, low digital literacy, and inconsistent pedagogical strategies. The application of PRISMA guidelines and the use of thematic coding contribute to the robustness of this review, ensuring that the findings provide a comprehensive overview of hybrid learning practices in Chinese higher education. By focusing on empirical studies, this research not only captures a snapshot of current practices but also lays the groundwork for developing more effective and inclusive hybrid learning strategies tailored to the needs of students in a rapidly evolving educational environment. Future research could expand on this foundation by exploring longitudinal impacts and comparative analyses across cultural or institutional settings.

## 3. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide an in-depth analysis of hybrid learning platform utilization in college-level English teaching within the context of Chinese higher education. By examining various engagement patterns, challenges, and best practices, the research reveals a nuanced view of hybrid learning, demonstrating its transformative potential and the limitations faced in practice. Integrating digital tools alongside traditional face-to-face instruction offers significant opportunities for enhancing the learning experience, allowing students to access a broader range of resources and learning methods (Liu & Chen, 2023). These platforms have effectively accommodated diverse student needs, making education more flexible and personalized. However, the study also highlights certain barriers, such as technological constraints, inconsistent access to digital tools, and disparities in digital literacy, which can hinder fully realizing hybrid learning's potential (Gamage et al., 2022; Li & Zhao, 2021).

The rapid digitalization of education worldwide has led to a growing reliance on blended learning methods, especially in countries like China, where English proficiency is crucial for academic and professional success. The research emphasizes that hybrid platforms can address the varying needs of students, offering opportunities for supplementary learning, collaborative projects, and self-directed study (Wang & Liu, 2022). However, these benefits are often tempered by practical challenges. For instance, students in rural or underdeveloped regions may struggle to access stable internet connections or navigate the platforms effectively due to limited digital literacy (Chen & Zhao, 2021). Furthermore, the lack of standardized teaching strategies across institutions can result in inconsistent educational experiences, affecting student engagement and learning outcomes (Xu et al., 2021).

While hybrid learning platforms are promising to revolutionize English education in Chinese higher education, their success depends on overcoming technological, pedagogical, and infrastructural challenges. The study underscores the need for a comprehensive framework that integrates effective teaching practices, digital literacy training, and equitable

access to technology to maximize the potential of hybrid learning platforms (Zhou et al., 2021). As the demand for English proficiency continues to grow, developing these strategies will ensure that hybrid learning can fulfill its role in fostering autonomous and resourceful learners.

## Patterns of Platform Usage

Hybrid learning platforms have fundamentally transformed educational interaction by blending traditional and digital methods. These platforms provide tools tailored to diverse learning styles, such as lecture recordings for revisiting complex topics, e-books, multimedia resources, and interactive quizzes. These features enhance flexibility, comprehension, and real-time application of concepts. Collaborative tools like discussion forums and group projects also foster peer engagement, which is essential for developing critical thinking and teamwork skills. These innovations underscore hybrid learning's potential to create inclusive and effective educational environments, aligning with best practices in modern pedagogy (Gamage et al., 2022; Nikolopoulou & Zacharias, 2023).

Self-directed learning is central to hybrid platforms, offering students tools such as progress trackers and personalized study plans to monitor achievements and guide learning objectives. Features like quizzes and self-assessments enable students to evaluate their understanding and identify areas for improvement, fostering greater autonomy. However, effectively utilizing these tools is often contingent on students' digital literacy and motivation. The research underscores the importance of digital readiness and structured support to enhance engagement with self-directed learning tools (Vaičiūnienė & Kazlauskienė, 2023). Furthermore, motivational strategies such as gamification and collaborative elements can help overcome engagement barriers (Kizilcec & Schneider, 2015). These interventions ensure that hybrid platforms fulfill their potential to develop resourceful and independent learners.

Ultimately, hybrid platforms are powerful tools for enhancing the learning experience, offering flexibility, interactivity, and autonomy. However, maximizing their impact requires addressing barriers such as low motivation and student digital literacy. Institutions that invest in user training, technical support, and motivational strategies will likely see greater success in leveraging these platforms to achieve educational outcomes.

## Engagement Levels and Barriers

Variations in student engagement with hybrid platforms are influenced by infrastructure quality, technology access, and individual factors like motivation and digital literacy. Studies highlight that urban universities with better infrastructure and reliable internet access often see higher engagement levels among students. This facilitates smoother integration of hybrid learning tools, such as digital resources, online discussions, and assignment submission systems. In contrast, students in rural areas frequently face

challenges like limited connectivity, which hampers their ability to fully utilize these platforms (Bedi, 2023; Jaya & Sucipto, 2023).

In contrast, rural institutions face considerable challenges in implementing hybrid learning effectively. Limited internet access and outdated technology hinder students' ability to interact fully with the platforms. For instance, unstable connections may disrupt live classes or delay access to educational materials, creating significant barriers to learning. These technological disparities often exacerbate the digital divide, leaving students in rural areas at a disadvantage compared to their urban counterparts. Addressing this issue requires substantial investment in digital infrastructure to ensure equitable access to education across all regions. Digital literacy is another critical factor influencing student engagement with hybrid platforms. Students with advanced technological skills are better equipped to navigate these platforms, use their features effectively, and engage with their peers and instructors. This proficiency enhances academic performance and boosts confidence in using digital tools, fostering a positive learning experience. Conversely, students with limited digital literacy often struggle with basic platform functionalities, such as uploading assignments or participating in online discussions, leading to frustration and disengagement (Almusaed et al., 2023).

Motivation further impacts engagement levels, as intrinsically driven students are more likely to explore and utilize the full range of hybrid platform features. These students actively participate in self-directed learning activities, such as completing online quizzes or setting personal academic goals. In contrast, those with low motivation may only engage minimally, focusing solely on mandatory tasks and neglecting opportunities for deeper learning. Educators can address this by incorporating gamification, which has been shown to enhance motivation and encourage greater interaction with digital platforms (Kizilcec & Schneider, 2015). Ultimately, ensuring equitable engagement with hybrid platforms requires a multi-faceted approach. Investments in digital infrastructure must go hand-in-hand with initiatives to improve digital literacy among students and faculty alike. Moreover, motivational strategies tailored to different learning contexts can play a pivotal role in increasing participation. By addressing these factors comprehensively, educational institutions can maximize the potential of hybrid platforms to deliver inclusive and effective learning experiences.

## Challenges in Hybrid Learning

The effectiveness of hybrid learning platforms is often constrained by challenges that limit their potential to deliver holistic educational experiences. Among the most significant barriers are technological shortcomings, including outdated software systems, limited access to advanced tools, and insufficient technical support for faculty and students. For instance, many platforms fail to keep pace with evolving educational technologies, leaving users with slow interfaces and limited functionality. These issues can discourage students

from engaging fully with the platform, reducing its effectiveness in fostering a dynamic learning environment (Chen et al., 2020).

A critical challenge lies in the limited training provided to faculty and students. Educators unfamiliar with hybrid platforms may struggle to effectively incorporate digital tools into their teaching, leading to suboptimal course delivery. Similarly, students who lack proper orientation on using these platforms often find themselves underprepared, negatively impacting their engagement and learning outcomes. Without adequate training, the potential of hybrid platforms to enhance collaboration, interactivity, and self-directed learning remains largely untapped. Another issue is the insufficient integration between online and offline components. Hybrid learning platforms are designed to seamlessly blend traditional face-to-face teaching with digital resources, but poor synchronization between these elements often results in a fragmented learning experience. For example, assignments may be discussed in class but not reflected clearly on the platform, or online resources may lack alignment with the curriculum covered during in-person sessions (Vaičiūnienė & Kazlauskienė, 2023). Such inconsistencies disrupt the continuity of learning, causing confusion and disengagement among students.

Additionally, the design of hybrid platforms frequently fails to accommodate the diverse needs of students. Inflexible interfaces, a lack of accessibility features, and limited customization options further restrict the platforms' usability. For students with disabilities or those from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, these barriers exacerbate existing inequalities in education. Addressing these challenges requires a more inclusive approach to platform design, ensuring all learners can access and benefit from hybrid learning environments. Strategic interventions are necessary at multiple levels. Investment in updated infrastructure, including software upgrades and reliable technical support systems, enhances platform functionality. Comprehensive training programs for faculty and students can bridge knowledge gaps, enabling users to maximize the platforms' potential. Furthermore, integrating online and offline components through meticulous instructional design can create a cohesive learning experience. By addressing these challenges systematically, educational institutions can transform hybrid learning platforms into powerful tools for achieving equitable and effective education.

## Best Practices

Despite the challenges in implementing hybrid learning platforms, several best practices have emerged from successful cases demonstrating their potential to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. One of the key strategies is a clear instructional design that integrates both online and offline components seamlessly. This alignment ensures that students have a continuous and cohesive learning experience where the content delivered in the classroom complements what is available on the platform. A well-structured approach to instructional design helps students understand the connection between in-

person lectures and online resources, reducing confusion and enhancing overall learning efficiency (Vaičiūnienė & Kazlauskienė, 2023).

Incorporating gamified elements into hybrid platforms has also significantly boosted student engagement. Features such as leaderboards, badges, and rewards transform learning into a more interactive and enjoyable experience. This approach motivates students to participate actively and provides them with a sense of achievement as they progress through the material (Rapanta et al., 2021; Chakraborty et al., 2020). By turning learning into a more game-like experience, students are encouraged to engage with the content more frequently, leading to improved academic performance and greater overall satisfaction with the course. Another effective strategy is the implementation of regular feedback mechanisms and opportunities for self-assessment. These elements empower students by allowing them to monitor their progress and identify areas for improvement. By offering frequent feedback, educators can guide students in their learning process, while self-assessment activities encourage autonomy, helping students take ownership of their academic development (Rapanta et al., 2021; Chakraborty et al., 2020). This promotes long-term growth and enhances students' sense of responsibility for their learning.

These findings underscore the importance of designing hybrid platforms that cater to the diverse needs of students, particularly by addressing systemic challenges such as technological barriers and inconsistencies between online and offline learning components. By applying these best practices, higher education institutions can significantly improve the effectiveness of hybrid learning, ultimately enhancing students' proficiency in English and increasing their satisfaction with the learning experience. This comprehensive approach benefits students' academic development and contributes to the broader goals of improving educational quality in a digital age.

## 4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, hybrid college English teaching platforms present a valuable opportunity to improve English proficiency among students in China. While these platforms provide flexibility and access to diverse learning resources, their full potential is contingent upon overcoming technological barriers, ensuring a seamless integration of pedagogy with platform features, and enhancing student engagement. By addressing these challenges, hybrid learning platforms can create more effective and personalized student learning experiences, fostering greater autonomy and improving academic outcomes. Future research should focus on developing innovative strategies to bridge existing gaps in hybrid learning, such as enhancing digital literacy, providing adequate technical support, and refining instructional design. This would ensure that hybrid learning becomes a central component of higher education in China, offering a sustainable and inclusive model that supports the evolving needs of students and prepares them for the demands of the globalized

world. With continuous improvements, hybrid platforms can significantly contribute to advancing English language education in the country.

## 5. FUNDING

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