Exploring Gen Y Lecturers' Strategies for Enhancing Student Engagement and Participation in Hybrid Learning Environments

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the strategies employed by Generation Y (Gen Y) lecturers to enhance student engagement and participation in hybrid learning environments at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Malaysia. Hybrid learning, which combines face-to-face and online instructional approaches, has become an increasingly important mode of delivery in higher education due to its flexibility and potential to support diverse student needs. However, maintaining student engagement and active participation in hybrid settings remains a significant challenge for educators. This study adopted a qualitative research design using a phenomenological approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of Gen Y lecturers who actively implement hybrid teaching practices. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with six purposively selected lecturers from UiTM campuses in Johor and Melaka, each with at least five years of experience in conducting hybrid classes. The interview data were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed seven key themes that represent the strategies used by Gen Y lecturers to promote student engagement and participation: blended teaching approach, use of interactive and gamified tools, active and collaborative learning, clear communication and structure, real-time participation and feedback, motivation and recognition, and monitoring and tracking. The results indicate that Gen Y lecturers are highly adaptable, technologically proficient, and student-centered in their instructional practices. They intentionally integrate synchronous and asynchronous learning activities, employ digital tools such as Kahoot, Padlet, and Google Classroom, and use rewards and participation-based monitoring to sustain student involvement. Despite challenges related to workload, digital readiness, and inconsistent student participation, Gen Y lecturers play a vital role in advancing effective hybrid learning practices. The study offers practical implications for institutional policy, professional development, and the continuous improvement of hybrid teaching and learning in Malaysian higher education.

Keywords: Hybrid learning, student engagement, student participation, Gen-Y lecturer, higher education

INTRODUCTION

Hybrid learning, also known as blended learning, is defined as the purposeful integration of synchronous online activities with face-to-face instruction. It is a model that purposely combines in-person and online learning experiences to leverage the strengths of both environments. It integrates synchronous (live) and asynchronous (recorded) learning, as well as physical and digital spaces for teaching and learning. Hybrid learning evolved from an emergency adoption during the COVID-19 pandemic to a mainstream delivery mode across higher education (Bustamante et al., 2022). International studies document clear advantages of hybrid learning, such as increased flexibility for students, opportunities for active and self-paced learning, and the potential to personalize feedback through digital analytics (Li et al., 2023). According to Kazu & Yalçin (2022), hybrid models often lead to improved academic achievement and deeper engagement, as students

benefit from personalized learning pathways, greater autonomy, and rich digital analytics that inform targeted feedback and support.

A key factor in hybrid learning is the role of Gen Y Lecturers. They were born between 1981 and 1996 and are known as Millennials. They hold a familiarity and comfort with digital technology, social media, and flexible work arrangements. Their digital fluency enables them to navigate and integrate learning management systems, communication platforms, and analytic tools more effectively. These will enhance the deployment of hybrid learning strategies. Furthermore, Gen Y lecturers tend to embrace collaborative, learner-centered pedagogies that align with hybrid learning's flexibility, facilitating interactive, student-driven learning experiences that actively engage learners. Their relatively close generational proximity to their largely Gen Z students also fosters better communication, understanding, and rapport in hybrid classrooms, potentially improving learning outcomes.

However, despite their technological aptitude and adaptability, Gen Y lecturers face challenges balancing the demands of synchronous and asynchronous teaching, necessitating robust institutional support and targeted professional development programs. Lecturers worldwide still report lower real-time interaction, heavier lesson design workloads, and difficulties in monitoring engagement when online and in-class cohorts run simultaneously (Ali et al., 2024; Alkaabi et al., 2023). Systematic reviews indicate that hybrid formats can expand access, especially for commuter and working students, but also reveal persistent barriers, including unstable connectivity, limited institutional support, and uneven digital literacy among academics (Mustapha et al., 2022; Tan et al., 2022). A recent integrative review of Global North–South implementations further highlights how resource gaps can exacerbate lecturers' workload and emotional strain, ultimately affecting teaching quality (Sareen & Mandal, 2024).

Implementing hybrid learning and engaging and motivating students have become critical challenges for higher education institutions. Student engagement and participation are vital for learning success, yet many educators struggle to maintain them across both physical and virtual platforms. Gen Y lecturers, known for their digital fluency and adaptability, are increasingly expected to lead innovative teaching practices in this evolving learning environment (Mamula, Radojević, & Slijepčević, 2016). In Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Generation Y lecturers now constitute a significant proportion of the academic staff and are generally more comfortable with educational technology. However, little empirical work has examined how these lecturers design and deliver hybrid courses and the challenges they prioritize. Addressing this gap is essential to ensuring that UiTM's strategic push toward hybrid learning translates into sustainable, high-quality practice rather than ad hoc adaptation. Consequently, the present study aims to identify the best-practice implementation strategies employed by UiTM Gen Y lecturers to ensure participation and student engagement, and to analyze the key challenges they face in hybrid learning.

However, the scope of this study is limited to an instructional approach that combines face-to-face (F2F) and online learning modes for the same group of students within a single course or subject. This model involves a deliberate integration where students alternate between attending physical classes and participating in virtual sessions, either synchronously or asynchronously. This study focuses on Gen Y lecturers because of their overall growth alongside the evolution of the internet, social media, and mobile technologies. This familiarity often translates to greater comfort and creativity in integrating technology into teaching and in engaging students across both physical and virtual platforms. Moreover, Gen Y lecturers are often more inclined to adopt student-centered, interactive, and collaborative approaches, aligning well with the demands of hybrid learning. Their communication styles, tech-savvy nature, and receptiveness to educational innovation offer a rich context for exploring effective engagement strategies. Thus, focusing on Gen Y provides deeper insight into how a generation of lecturers, who are also closer in age and mindset to current students, navigate and optimize hybrid teaching to enhance student participation. In this research, Gen Y lecturers are defined as those born between 1981 and 1996 who are currently teaching at UiTM. They demonstrate active use of both face-to-face and online platforms alternately in hybrid learning settings. The study's findings will inform institutional policy, targeted professional development, and future research on technology-enabled teaching in Malaysian higher education.

Problem Statement

The transition toward hybrid learning in higher education has marked a significant shift in pedagogical delivery, combining face-to-face and online components to create a flexible, inclusive learning environment. While the hybrid model has gained prominence globally, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic, its effectiveness depends on the strategies adopted, the challenges encountered, and educators' continuous improvement efforts (Bustamante et al., 2022). In Malaysia, higher education institutions such as Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) have begun embracing hybrid learning, particularly among Gen Y lecturers who are often more digitally adept and adaptive to change (Tan et al., 2022). Successful implementation involves practices such as structured lesson planning, flexible assessment strategies, active use of digital platforms, and consistent student monitoring (Li et al., 2023). Despite the integration of hybrid learning models in higher education, many institutions continue to face challenges in maintaining student engagement and participation, especially among digitally native Gen Y lecturers. Implementation of hybrid learning is often hindered by barriers, including limited digital infrastructure, inconsistent student participation, time constraints, and gaps in lecturers' digital literacy (Sareen & Mandal, 2024).

Van der Rijst, Guo, and Admiraal (2023) indicate there is a need for significant adjustments in traditional student engagement activities due to the shift to online and hybrid learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has resulted in challenges such as changing established routines, adapting teaching practices, and addressing issues like a lack of resources and communication. It is also supported by Eliveria, Serami, Famorca, and Cruz (2019) in their study, "Investigating Students' Engagement in a Hybrid Learning Environment," which calls for improving student performance and engagement in traditional learning settings by exploring alternative approaches, such as hybrid learning environments. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted higher education by causing students to feel disconnected and burdened with online learning, and there is a lack of understanding about the impact of hybrid teaching and learning on student experiences post-pandemic (Adi Badiozaman, Ng & Mung Ling, 2024). According to Mellita & Lestari (2023), both Gen X and Gen Y educators need to have digital literacy and technological skills to optimize hybrid learning. Thus, those skills will help the educators to develop students' engagement in a hybrid learning environment.

Hence, insufficient digital infrastructure, inconsistent teaching strategies, and varying levels of digital literacy among students contribute to ineffective learning experiences (Dhawan, 2020). This not only affects students' academic performance and digital competency but also impedes the organization's goal of delivering high-quality, innovative education (Rasheed, Kamsin, & Abdullah, 2020). If left unaddressed, these gaps may impact the institution's academic reputation, graduate employability, and long-term performance in the evolving digital education landscape (Alammary, 2019). Understanding how Gen Y lecturers in Malaysia, particularly those at UiTM, approach, experience, and seek to improve hybrid learning is critical for enhancing both teaching quality and student outcomes. Therefore, this study aims to explore the best practices and implementation strategies adopted by Gen Y lecturers at UiTM and to identify the challenges they face. Through this, the research provides a phenomenal understanding of the hybrid teaching landscape in Malaysian higher education, offering implications for policy, practice, and future research.

Research Objective

To explore the strategies used by Gen Y lecturers to promote student engagement and participation in the hybrid learning environments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hybrid learning promises an instructional approach that blends the advantages of face-to-face and online learning, encourages flexibility and access, and presents new challenges for educators, institutions, and students.

Hybrid Learning

Hybrid learning has emerged as a transformative educational approach in response to the evolving demands of digital-age learners and the rapid advancement of educational technologies. It is increasingly adopted worldwide in higher education, representing a transformative shift that integrates the best elements of face-to-face instruction with the flexibility and scalability of online learning environments. According to Gudoniene et al. (2025), the hybrid learning model allows students to engage in a blend of synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous (self-paced) activities, providing unparalleled flexibility to accommodate diverse learning preferences, personal schedules, and responsibilities. Nikolopoulou (2022) also reported that hybrid models can enhance collaboration and expose learners to different perspectives. Studies by Saadé et al. (2023), Mushtaq & Iqbal (2024), and Nechita et al. (2023) affirm that when properly designed, hybrid classes improve student engagement and foster an interactive learning environment compared to strictly on-site or online courses.

Hybrid Learning in the Malaysian Context

Malaysian universities, including Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), are increasingly adopting hybrid learning models. There is a growing need to understand how this approach is implemented, the challenges educators face, and the strategies that can enhance its effectiveness. Traditional learning models prioritize face-to-face interaction, whereas online learning relies solely on digital platforms. Hybrid learning, on the other hand, integrates these two approaches, creating a balanced educational model (Hamid et al., 2025). It involves more than just transferring half of the syllabus to a virtual classroom, as it is a holistic strategy that integrates the most effective elements of in-person and online education to foster an optimal learning experience (Anis, 2023). Malaysian higher education institutions are increasingly implementing hybrid learning models. This educational approach allows some students to attend in-person classes while others participate virtually from home using video conferencing tools. This approach goes beyond simply relocating part of the syllabus online; it offers a deliberately integrated experience that combines the strengths of face-to-face interaction with the flexibility of online learning. Many hybrid classes also include asynchronous elements, such as pre-recorded instructional videos and interactive online exercises, which complement live sessions (Anis, 2023).

Gen Y Lecturers

Gen Y lecturers, recognized for their digital adaptability, have implemented various strategies to integrate hybrid learning effectively. They creatively integrate synchronous tools, such as Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, and the i-Learn platform, with asynchronous content, including pre-recorded lectures, discussion forums, and online quizzes (Shah et al., 2023). Many lecturers adopt flipped classroom strategies, encouraging students to engage with content before class and use live sessions for discussion and application. Tools like Kahoot and Padlet are also employed to make learning interactive and engaging. Additionally, UiTM has supported these efforts by offering incentives, such as honoraria and reduced teaching loads, to encourage the creation of e-learning modules (Ab Ghani et al., 2016). These practices align with global trends, where hybrid models that prioritize interaction, flexibility, and active learning, such as flipped classrooms, are associated with improved learning outcomes (Cao, 2023; Alammary, 2019). Moreover, when hybrid learning is well-designed, students demonstrate higher satisfaction, autonomy, and academic performance (Lakhal et al., 2021).

Student's Engagement and Participation in Hybrid Learning

Despite its advantages, there are also concerns about the equitable participation and engagement of online students. Cao (2023) noted that student engagement does not automatically improve unless the hybrid components are pedagogically aligned and purposefully integrated. Saadé, et.al (2023) also noted that student engagement and participation in hybrid learning depend on flexible access, interactive and inclusive pedagogical practices, strong digital and interpersonal connections, and adequate institutional support. According to Jaya & Nurqamarani (2023), student engagement and participation in hybrid learning involve cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions. Almusaed, Almssad, and Rico Cortez (2023) indicate that students tend to be more motivated and invested when they feel connected and included in the learning process. Hybrid models can facilitate various interactive activities, multimedia resources, and opportunities for

collaborative learning both online and offline.

UiTM lecturers also face significant barriers to student participation due to the digital divide. Muhamad Ali et al. (2024) in their qualitative study focusing on B40 (low-income) students during and after the COVID-19 pandemic revealed that students and lecturers struggle with unreliable internet connectivity, insufficient digital devices, and communication breakdowns, issues that negatively impact both educational engagement and well-being. From the lecturers' perspective, preparing and delivering hybrid content is time-consuming and requires continuous effort, particularly when managing both online and face-to-face learners simultaneously (Kechil et al., 2017). Many lecturers also lack formal training in hybrid instructional design, often relying on trial-and-error to identify effective teaching methods (Ab Ghani et al., 2016). Globally, similar challenges exist. Faculty members often experience increased workloads, cognitive fatigue, and difficulty maintaining student motivation and engagement in hybrid formats (Qiong et al., 2025; Warren, 2024).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore Gen Y Lecturers' Strategies for Enhancing Student Engagement and Participation in Hybrid Learning Environments. The qualitative approach was chosen to facilitate an in-depth exploration of lecturers lived experiences, teaching practices, and personal insights within their natural educational contexts. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), qualitative research is particularly effective in understanding how individuals make meaning of their experiences, which aligns with the study's focus on capturing real-world teaching strategies. This research adopted a phenomenological approach, emphasizing the voices and reflections of Gen Y lecturers who have been implementing hybrid learning methods, particularly since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 1: Details of Informant's Profile

Informant ID	Gender	Age	Designation	Education	Years of Teaching Experience
Informant 1	Female	41	Senior Lecturer	Master's in information science	11
Informant 2	Female	43	Senior Lecturer	Master's in information systems management	15
Informant 3	Female	42	Senior Lecturer	Master’s in business administration	16
Informant 4	Female	44	Senior Lecturer	Master's in economics	17
Informant 5	Female	42	Senior Lecturer	Master’s in economics	16
Informant 6	Female	44	Senior Lecturer	Master’s in business administration	16

A total of six informants were selected using a non-probability purposive sampling technique as shown in Table 1. The selection criteria required participants to be academic staff at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) in Johor and Melaka, to be Generation Y (born between 1981 and 1996), and to have at least 5 years of experience in conducting hybrid classes. All six participants were directly involved in delivering hybrid learning modules across various UiTM campuses and disciplines, ensuring diverse perspectives on subject matter, teaching styles, and regional academic contexts. The informants have teaching experience ranging from early-career educators to mid-level academic professionals. This diversity provided a broader understanding of how Gen Y educators navigate hybrid instruction and student engagement from different teaching backgrounds.

Data was collected through semi-structured online interviews via Google Meet in July 2025. Each interview lasted approximately 15 to 25 minutes and followed a flexible protocol that allowed for spontaneous elaboration of relevant themes. Questions were designed to probe into the lecturers' strategies for student engagement, use of digital platforms, feedback practices, and the specific challenges encountered in the hybrid learning environment. All interviews were video recorded with informed consent, transcribed verbatim using the Turboscribe website, and analyzed using a thematic analysis with an inductive coding approach. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally

organizes and describes your data in detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It emphasizes pinpointing, examining, and recording patterns (themes) within data. Themes are patterns across data sets that are important to the description of a phenomenon and are associated with a specific research question. These themes become the categories for analysis.

FINDINGS

Thematic analysis was chosen for its flexibility and suitability in uncovering insights driven by participants. The analysis process began with open coding of raw interview transcripts to identify key statements, followed by the development of axial codes to group related ideas. The final selective coding phase yielded seven major themes, each with corresponding subthemes, reflecting the core strategies Gen Y lecturers employ to promote engagement in hybrid classrooms.

Open Coding

Open coding of each transcript has been conducted individually to identify the initial strategies and insights used by Gen Y lecturers in hybrid learning environments. Each code listed in Table 2 was directly derived from the informant's spoken responses during the semi-structured interviews. As reflected in the table, the codes capture specific actions, tools, or strategies such as "Quizzes and Kahoot," "Mock-up applications," or "Feedback focus." While the participants were interviewed separately, the researchers later reviewed and discussed the raw data collectively to ensure consistency and reliability in the coding process. During this process, differences in interpretation emerged because each lecturer expressed and illustrated their points in unique ways. Some codes appeared duplicated across informants but were retained due to narrow contextual differences; for example, "Attendance-based engagement" and "Submission as attendance" both reflect strategies, even though in different formats. The codes were grouped by informants to maintain clarity and to identify their teaching approaches and experiences. Through thorough discussion and comparison, the researchers reached consensus on the most accurate and representative codes, which served as the basis for further thematic analysis.

Table 2: Open Coding

Informant	Codes / Strategies	Focus / Highlights
Informant 1	• Structured platforms (Google Classroom, Google Meet) • Quizzes, Kahoot • Clear instructions & schedules • Group work • Feedback focus	Blended activities, technical challenges, and student feedback emphasis.
Informant 2	• Multi-platform use • Mock-up applications • Animated content • Rewards and bonus marks • Tutorials for critical thinking	Gamification, student motivation, and digital literacy.
Informant 3	• Interactive platforms (UFuture, WhatsApp) • Online games & rewatchable content • Attendance-based engagement	Asynchronous learning, system simplicity, and connectivity issues.
Informant 4	• Google Classroom & Meet • Real-time quizzes • Feedback and questioning • Group face-to-face discussions	Task-based learning, real-time feedback, focus challenges.
Informant 5	• Micro-credentials • In-class quizzes • Bonus marks/gifts	Reinforcement, calling names, and hybrid readiness support.

	• Active tutorial participation	
Informant 6	• Use of UFuture, Google Forms • Submission as attendance • WhatsApp for engagement tracking	Minimalist hybrid tools, internet/device limitations, and monitoring.

Themes and Subthemes

Based on the open coding analysis, the researchers identified a total of seven (7) main themes and fifteen (15) subthemes, as shown in Table 3. These themes (Blended Teaching Approach, Use of Interactive and Gamified Tools, Active and Collaborative Learning, Clear Communication and Structure, Real-Time Participation and Feedback, Motivation and Recognition, and Monitoring and Tracking) encompass the broader strategies Gen Y lecturers employ to enhance student engagement and participation in hybrid learning. At the same time, the subthemes capture more specific methods and tools used in practice.

Table 3: Themes and Subthemes

Themes	Subthemes
Blended Teaching Approach	• Combining synchronous and asynchronous learning • Flipped classroom strategy
Use of Interactive and Gamified Tools	• Quizziz, Kahoot, and online quizzes • Gamified booklets/apps/mock-up games • IGIME platform (game-based learning)
Active and Collaborative Learning	• Group projects, discussions, and tutorials • Collaborative tools like Google Docs and Padlet
Clear Communication and Structure	• Setting expectations and learning outcomes clearly • Pre-class announcements via WhatsApp/Telegram
Real-Time Participation and Feedback	• Calling students by name and assigning live tasks • Immediate feedback on submissions
Motivation and Recognition	• Bonus marks and rewards for active learners • Certification via micro-credentialing
Monitoring and Tracking	• Participation as attendance • Monitoring quiz/test submissions

Refined Themes and Subthemes

Based on the refined analysis, the researchers retained the original seven (7) main themes and redefined the fifteen (15) subthemes using simpler, more concise terms for clarity and consistency. These updated subthemes better reflect the specific strategies and practices used by Gen Y lecturers in hybrid learning environments, as illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4: Refined Themes and Subthemes

Themes	**Subthemes**
Blended Teaching Approach	Blended delivery Pre-class learning
Use of Interactive and Gamified Tools	Gamified quizzes Educational games Subject-based learning
Active and Collaborative Learning	Group activities Shared tools

Clear Communication and Structure	Learning goals Early reminders
Real-Time Participation and Feedback	Live interaction Instant feedback
Motivation and Recognition	Participation rewards Digital certification
Monitoring and Tracking	Activity-based attendance Submission tracking

DISCUSSION

The thematic analysis identified seven major themes and 15 refined subthemes that represent the strategies Gen Y lecturers use to enhance student engagement and participation in hybrid learning environments. These themes were derived from the open coding process, where codes were grouped based on similar meanings and pedagogical design. Each theme captures a distinct dimension of teaching practice, while the subthemes reflect specific methods, digital tools, or techniques reported by the informants.

Blended Teaching Approach

This approach represents a deliberate instructional strategy that combines synchronous (real-time, face-to-face or virtual meetings) and asynchronous (self-paced) teaching methods. This hybrid format allows lecturers to cater to diverse student needs, enhance learning flexibility, and manage instructional time effectively. Gen Y lecturers from UiTM emphasized the importance of adapting to students' digital habits and balancing structured lessons with flexible learning experiences. Some blended teaching approaches include blended delivery and pre-class learning.

Blended Delivery

It refers to the thoughtful combination of live teaching sessions with asynchronous activities such as video lectures, discussion forums, online readings, or digital assignments. This method enables students to absorb course material at their own pace while still benefiting from direct interaction with the lecturer.

"I mix Google Meet sessions with online tasks so students can learn at their own pace." - **Informant 4.**

This quote demonstrates how lecturers intentionally design their lesson plans to offer both real-time guidance and independent learning opportunities. The blend also accommodates students who may face connectivity issues or scheduling conflicts, ensuring inclusivity and sustained engagement.

Pre-Class Learning

It involves preparing students before the formal lesson begins. This strategy includes sending materials such as notes, videos, or learning outcomes in advance so that students can come to class ready to discuss or apply what they have learned. It supports a flipped classroom model, encouraging active learning during the synchronous session.

"I always inform students ahead of time in the Telegram group to prepare them." - **Informant 1**.

This form of early communication not only sets clear expectations but also motivates students to engage with the content beforehand, promoting accountability and better classroom participation.

Use of Interactive and Gamified Tools

This theme highlights the strategic use of digital tools and gamification techniques to stimulate student engagement, enhance participation, and make hybrid learning more enjoyable and interactive. Gen Y lecturers from UiTM emphasized that today's students respond better to interactive platforms and game-like

experiences, which help break the monotony of traditional online teaching. Some of the interactive and gamified tools are gamified quizzes, educational games, and subject-based learning tools.

Gamified Quizzes

Lecturers widely use gamified quizzes such as Kahoot, Quizziz, and Wordwall to test understanding in a fun, low-pressure way. These tools promote healthy competition and real-time feedback, which increase motivation and focus during hybrid lessons.

"I use Quizziz and Kahoot to quiz them during online sessions."- **Informant 4.**

These platforms allow students to respond anonymously or competitively, encouraging those who may be shy to participate actively.

Educational Games

Some lecturers went a step further by designing their educational games or mock-up applications tailored to specific subjects. These innovations support active learning and promote long-term knowledge retention.

"I used my mock-up app and a gamified booklet for Economics to make it more engaging." - **Informant 5.**

Such tools are particularly effective in breaking down complex subjects and maintaining student interest in an online environment.

Subject-Based Learning Tools

Subject-specific platforms, such as IGIME (developed internally by the lecturer), integrate game mechanics into curriculum delivery, enhancing cognitive engagement and interactivity.

"I created a game-based platform for info management. We named it IGIME." - **Informant 1.**

This shows how lecturers tailor gamification to suit their academic content, demonstrating both creativity and commitment to student-centered learning.

Active and Collaborative Learning

This theme emphasizes strategies that promote student interaction and foster teamwork in hybrid learning environments. Gen Y lecturers intentionally incorporated collaborative tasks and peer-based learning activities to cultivate student involvement and encourage the exchange of ideas, whether students were attending in person or virtually. The strategies include group activities and shared tools.

Group Activities

Lecturers assigned group-based projects such as infographics, video presentations, and discussion-based assignments to stimulate cooperative learning. These activities not only enhanced engagement but also developed students' soft skills, such as communication, critical thinking, and accountability.

"I gave them group projects like infographics and presentations using shared tools." - **Informant 4.**

By encouraging students to work together, lecturers ensured that everyone contributed, leading to more meaningful participation and improved academic performance.

Shared Tools

Digital collaboration tools such as Padlet and Google Docs were frequently used to enable real-time contributions from both online and in-person students. These tools facilitated active engagement by enabling students to brainstorm, comment, and co-create content during lessons.

"Padlet helped both physical and online students share ideas at the same time." - **Informant 2.**

Such platforms bridge the gap between students in different learning modes and support inclusiveness, ensuring no student feels left out due to physical absence.

Clear Communication and Structure

This theme focuses on how Gen Y lecturers use structured communication and transparent planning to improve students' clarity, preparedness, and participation in hybrid learning. By setting clear expectations and maintaining consistent communication, such as setting learning goals and making early reminders, lecturers help students stay on track and feel more confident in navigating hybrid environments.

Learning Goals

Clearly stated learning outcomes, or Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs), at the beginning of each session helps students understand the lesson's purpose and what is expected of them. This practice keeps students focused and aligns their efforts with assessment criteria.

"Each session, I outline the goals, so they know what to expect." - **Informant 1**.

By making objectives visible from the start, students are more likely to engage actively with the content and understand its relevance.

Early Reminders

Lecturers also emphasized the importance of sending class reminders or updates the day before the session, typically via messaging platforms such as Telegram or WhatsApp. This proactive communication helps reduce absenteeism and prepares students mentally and technically for upcoming activities.

"I will send them early reminders, usually one day before, using Telegram." - **Informant 1**.

This strategy reinforces time management and encourages accountability among students, especially in asynchronous or online settings where disengagement is easier to avoid.

Real-Time Participation and Feedback

This theme captures how Gen Y lecturers keep students actively involved during live sessions and ensure continuous improvement through timely feedback. In hybrid learning environments, where distractions and disengagement can occur easily, real-time or live interaction and immediate responses or instant feedback are essential for sustaining student motivation and learning.

Live Interaction

To avoid passive learning, lecturers employed strategies such as calling students by name, asking spontaneous questions, and assigning live tasks during synchronous sessions. This kept students alert and encouraged them to participate, even when joining remotely. For example, some lecturers would directly address students to check their understanding or confirm their presence. Though not all quotes explicitly mentioned this strategy, several informants described creating space for active responses in real time.

Instant Feedback

Providing feedback immediately after task completion or participation was a common technique to affirm students' effort and guide their learning progress. Timely responses help students identify their mistakes, reinforce correct understanding, and feel acknowledged.

"I give them one-hour tasks and then provide feedback straight after submission." - **Informant 3.**

"Feedback needs to be given right away, especially when we are online." - **Informant 2**.

This prompt feedback loop is especially valuable in hybrid environments where delays or a lack of lecturer visibility can affect students' motivation.

Motivation and Recognition

This theme focuses on how Gen Y lecturers use motivational strategies and recognition tools to boost student participation and morale in hybrid learning environments. By making efforts to be rewarding and by acknowledging achievements with a digital certification, lecturers create a positive learning environment that encourages students to remain engaged both online and offline.

Participation Rewards

To motivate students to take part in discussions and complete tasks, some lecturers offered bonus marks or small incentives as a form of appreciation. These rewards not only increased participation but also made students feel seen and valued.

"Students like being acknowledged… I give bonus marks for those who actively participate." - **Informant 4.**

Even minimal rewards serve as extrinsic motivators, especially effective for maintaining energy during longer online sessions.

Digital Certification

Some lecturers also introduced digital certificates or micro-credentials for completing specific online modules or for consistent participation. This form of recognition gives students a tangible sense of accomplishment and can be added to their learning portfolios.

"I offer digital certificates for completing certain online modules." - **Informant 5.**

These methods reflect an understanding of both gamification and adult learning principles; students are more likely to commit to tasks when they receive meaningful recognition for their efforts.

Monitoring and Tracking

This theme highlights how Gen Y lecturers use digital tools and activity-based monitoring to track student engagement and presence in hybrid learning. Instead of relying solely on traditional attendance-taking methods, they assess student participation through tangible outputs and system logs, ensuring that students remain actively involved.

Activity-Based Attendance

Rather than checking names alone, lecturers considered task submissions, quiz participation, or discussion involvement as valid indicators of student attendance. This approach shifts the focus from mere presence to meaningful engagement.

"If they submit tasks or join discussions, I take that as their attendance." - **Informant 6**.

This method acknowledges different forms of engagement, particularly useful in hybrid or asynchronous settings where students may face scheduling or connectivity challenges.

Submission Tracking

Lecturers used tools such as Google Forms, Learning Management Systems (LMS), and chat logs to monitor who accessed materials, submitted assignments, or responded to quizzes. This helped them identify students who might be disengaged and required follow-up.

"I review their Google Form answers and LMS logs to see who is involved." - **Informant 5.**

By relying on these systems, lecturers maintained a data-informed approach to engagement, making participation more measurable and responsive.

CONCLUSION

This study has provided meaningful insights into the strategies employed by Gen Y lecturers at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) to enhance student engagement and participation in hybrid learning environments. Through a qualitative, phenomenological approach and thematic analysis of six informants' experiences, the findings demonstrate that Gen Y lecturers are proactive, digitally fluent, and highly adaptable in navigating hybrid instruction. Seven major themes were identified: blended teaching approach, interactive and gamified tools, active and collaborative learning, clear communication and structure, real-time participation and feedback, motivation and recognition, and monitoring and tracking, each revealing thoughtful practices and innovations that cater to today's learners' needs.

These strategies illustrate a deliberate effort to bridge the gap between face-to-face and online modalities while maintaining high levels of student involvement. Gen Y lecturers skillfully employ a combination of synchronous and asynchronous methods, utilize gamified and subject-based learning tools, and foster collaborative engagement through group activities and shared platforms. Clear planning, consistent reminders, and feedback loops further support students' learning journeys. Moreover, integrating rewards and tracking mechanisms ensures accountability and recognition, motivating students to remain active in hybrid settings. Briefly, the findings suggest that Gen Y lecturers are well-positioned to lead the evolution of hybrid teaching, given their comfort with technology, alignment with student-centered pedagogies, and innovative instructional approaches. These insights hold practical implications for institutional policymaking, professional development, and future research aimed at strengthening hybrid learning implementation across Malaysian higher education.

Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed. First, higher education institutions should provide continuous professional development opportunities focused on hybrid instructional design, digital pedagogy, and the use of emerging educational technologies. Second, investment in stable digital infrastructure and user-friendly learning management systems is critical to support seamless hybrid delivery. Third, creating institutional guidelines and toolkits aligned with hybrid learning best practices can help lecturers plan and deliver effective hybrid lessons. Lastly, recognition and incentive systems should be implemented to acknowledge lecturers who demonstrate excellence in hybrid teaching, thereby encouraging innovation and continuous improvement.

While this study has highlighted effective strategies from the perspective of Gen Y lecturers, future research may expand by incorporating student voices to gain a more comprehensive understanding of engagement and participation in hybrid learning. Comparative studies involving Gen X or Gen Z lecturers could also offer generational insights into teaching styles and technology adoption. Additionally, longitudinal studies exploring how these strategies evolve with changing technologies and policies would enrich the discourse on sustainable hybrid learning practices in higher education.

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