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Experience-Based Analysis of Hybrid Tutoring for University Instructors at Batna 1 University

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Abstract

A pedagogical assistance program for instructors with a B2 level in English has been developed by Batna 1 University as part of continuous changes to improve the use of English in Algerian higher education. While preserving the quality of education in their respective disciplines, this hybrid tutoring strategy seeks to support teachers in delivering their courses in English. The descriptive analysis in this study, which is based on interviews with eleven Batna1 University subject-matter participating teachers (session 2023–2024), emphasizes the contribution of tutoring to the uptake and modification of English-medium instruction (EMI). According to the results, the majority of teachers believe that hybrid tutoring is crucial for organizing their classes, increasing their self-assurance, and making the switch to EMI easier. These findings are consistent with a number of studies that highlight the necessity of focused assistance to guarantee EMI's success in postsecondary education. To address the difficulties of teaching their subject matter in English, all participants emphasize the need for long-term hybrid tutoring. In the end, this study emphasizes the value of customized hybrid tutoring as a pedagogical support system, guaranteeing a seamless transition to EMI and opening the door for additional research into more varied and individualized methodologies.

Keywords: hybrid tutoring, English-medium instruction (EMI), pedagogical support, teacher training, instructional adaptation

1. Introduction

Algerian universities have implemented a number of important reforms in the past ten years with the goal of improving instruction and encouraging the advancement of scientific research. The digitization of educational procedures and the progressive adoption of English as a teaching and learning language are two noteworthy examples of these changes. These programs demonstrate an institutional dedication to meeting the changing needs of a more interconnected academic community while bringing Algeria's university system into compliance with international standards.

Building upon these reforms and with the active support of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Batna 1 University has established a comprehensive pedagogical support program designed to strengthen English language proficiency among its academic community. This training was created for university instructors who held a B2 level

in English using a mixed tutoring approach. The aim was to facilitate the teachers' transition to English Medium Instruction (EMI), while maintaining the quality of their specialized training.

The training program, which spanned eleven months during the 2023-2024 academic year, brought together 47 subject-matter instructors from diverse literary and scientific disciplines at Batna 1 University. Among these, 20 participants—seven from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and 13 from the Faculty of Economics, Business, and Management—engaged in the EMI hybrid program under the guidance of the present researcher.

This research, therefore, presents an experience-based analysis drawing on interviews with eleven consenting participants from the aforementioned cohort. These faculty members shared valuable insights regarding their engagement with hybrid tutoring and articulated their perspectives on the efficacy and constraints of this pedagogical support framework, specifically in relation to facilitating the transition toward English-Medium Instruction (EMI) at Batna 1 University.

2. Hybrid Tutoring Definition

One might be inclined to perceive hybrid teaching and blended learning as two manifestations of the same pedagogical paradigm; in other words, “Two sides of the same coin”. While this assertion contains elements of truth, it warrants a more nuanced perspective. At their core, both approaches refer to ways of teaching that integrate face-to-face (in-person) and online learning (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Graham, 2013). On one side, blended teaching integrates online and face-to-face instruction to support one another (Graham, 2013). Hybrid teaching, on the other side, is more integrated and adaptable, letting students pick how they want to study (Rovai, 2002). Ultimately, both strategies seek to produce a more adaptable, customized, and easily available educational experience. In this context, the term 'hybrid' fits our study perfectly as it accurately captures Batna 1 University's flexible approach. This strategy gave teachers the freedom to choose between in-person classes, online sessions, or a mix of both. Ultimately, this combined approach was preferred for English language training.

Accordingly, hybrid tutoring is a teaching strategy that offers flexible and individualized learning help by fusing online and in-person teaching techniques. This paradigm incorporates digital tools and virtual learning environments to improve accessibility and learners' engagement while utilizing the advantages of traditional tutoring, including direct connection, quick feedback, and hands-on supervision (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008).

Hrastinski (2019) asserts that hybrid tutoring establishes a well-balanced learning environment in which synchronous (live, real-time) and asynchronous (self-paced) activities enhance one another, giving learners the opportunity to engage with peers and tutors while also having the freedom to go over the material at their own speed. According to research by Means et al. (2010), because hybrid learning leverages many modalities of information transfer and learner interaction, it improves learning outcomes when compared to wholly

online or solely in-person education. This includes hybrid tutoring. Thus, within the framework of the current pedagogical approach targeting university faculty who, constantly in demand, must balance diverse teaching and research commitments, hybrid tutoring emerges as particularly well aligned with their professional status and temporal constraints.

Moreover, the idea of hybrid tutoring looks more relevant when you consider that teachers who are switching to English-medium instruction (EMI) require ongoing and flexible support. Macaro et al. (2018) asserts that hybrid tutoring in EMI contexts assists teachers in improving their language proficiency and teaching strategies, through a systematic fusion of individualized coaching and digital materials. Further details on the role of hybrid tutoring in EMI transition will be developed in the coming section.

3. Review of Literature on the Role of Hybrid Tutoring in EMI Transition

Transitioning to English as a medium of instruction within academic environments presents an arduous challenge. Confronted with diverse linguistic, pedagogical, and cultural demands, university instructors encounter substantial hurdles when implementing English-Medium Instruction (EMI). In order to accommodate English language learners, many teachers may first need to adapt their teaching methods and materials since they lack the necessary proficiency in the language (Dearden, 2015; Macaro et al., 2018). Second, EMI requires teachers to handle assessment and evaluation concerns, manage linguistic and cognitive resources, and negotiate cultural and disciplinary disparities (Doiz et al., 2013; Kiczkowiak & Piechurska-Kuciel, 2020); tasks that prove substantially demanding even in one's native language.

Additionally, logistical, technological, and institutional support difficulties may exacerbate the challenges faced by teachers (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Hamdan & McKnight, 2013). Those limitations all attest to the fact that faculty must undergo significant adjustment when they transition to teaching English. They require proper support and adequate resources to successfully navigate this transition and ensure effective teaching.

Ultimately, whether in-person or virtually, EMI hybrid tutoring is the ideal environment for faculty teachers to practice their English. The interactive sessions have for goal the improvement of the teachers' ability to communicate in English, which gave them more confidence when giving lectures (Lasagabaster & Doiz, 2016).

Moreover, giving instructors freedom in their learning while allowing them to systematically and methodically improve their teaching strategies in addition to the English language competency is another aim of this dual-mode teaching. The efficiency of such a method was confirmed by Garrison and Kanuka (2004) and Macaro et al. (2018), on the basis of its ability to combine the benefits of traditional in-person coaching with readily available digital learning resources.

Furthermore, hybrid tutoring assists teachers in gaining the abilities needed to engage with students in English-Medium Instruction settings, per Dafouz and Smit's (2020) research. In a similar vein, Airey (2012) has verified that this approach is effective in EMI classrooms.

This tutoring approach not only offers immediate training but also serves as a helpful template that educators can adapt for future subject-matter instruction. Therefore, subject-matter instructors can employ hybrid tutoring to incorporate best practices in EMI pedagogy by carefully organizing their English lesson plans and resources.

Moreover, allowing teachers personalized feedback and guidance from tutors while simultaneously enabling them to access resources and assistance at their convenience was the aim of this hybrid method. In other words, instructors no longer have to worry about making the long commute to the training on their days off thanks to the adoption of the online instruction mode. With remote access to the course materials, teachers are expected to have greater flexibility and work-life balance by being able to complete the training program from the comfort of their homes.

In addition, from a psychological standpoint, studies show that teachers who receive hybrid tutoring in EMI settings are more confident and effective in their instructional delivery (Dearden, 2015; Kiczowskiak & Piechurska-Kuciel, 2020). Studies also reveal that hybrid tutoring can boost teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and student performance (Hamdan & McKnight, 2013; Means et al., 2010).

Furthermore, it is important to highlight that the hybrid teaching approach serves as a valuable alternative to face-to-face instruction, particularly when in-person classes are not feasible. Research indicates that delivering meaningful and engaging learning experiences requires instructors and academic leaders to establish appropriate infrastructure to support hybrid and blended learning methods (Kingham et al., 2021). This approach proves especially effective during crises or uncontrollable circumstances, such as the Covid-19 pandemic. The following quotation illustrates this point*:

It is extremely important to focus on capacity building of faculty so they become more familiar with online learning approaches, e-Learning tools, and usage of innovative technology to facilitate teaching and learning. High level of emergency preparedness is also needed so faculty, administrators, and students can quickly adapt to changes that are beyond one's control. This preparedness will require resource allocation to deal with mental health challenges and additional training in pedagogical methods so teachers can build relationships and work towards enhancing social presence, teaching presence, and cognitive presence even in online medium of instruction.[†]

In all, the hybrid tutoring approach implemented at Batna 1 University was mainly designed to provide a practical solution to the challenges associated with the transition to English-Medium Instruction. This approach aims to empower educators by offering ongoing support through a hybrid method that combines online sessions with face-to-face meetings. In other words, the hybrid tutoring approach was adopted to address Batna1 teachers' need for support in overcoming the challenges of transitioning to EMI instruction, while also accommodating their requirement for a flexible learning experience tailored to their status as faculty members and researchers, and compatible with their scheduling constraints.

* SINGH Jitendra, STEELE Keely and SINGH Lovely, (2021)

[†] The authors are making reference to the importance of Hybrid and blended learning methods.

4. Statement of the Problem

Despite ongoing reforms and the increasing adoption of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in Algerian higher education, university instructors face persistent challenges in delivering subject-matter courses in English. These challenges include limited language proficiency, lack of pedagogical support, and difficulties adapting teaching methods to EMI contexts. While hybrid tutoring programs have been introduced to address these issues, there is limited research on their effectiveness in supporting faculty during the transition to EMI, particularly in terms of confidence, instructional adaptation, and long-term sustainability. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the impact of a customized hybrid tutoring program at Batna 1 University on instructors' ability to teach in English while maintaining disciplinary quality.

5. Research Aim

The aim of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of a hybrid tutoring program in supporting university instructors with a B2 level in English as they transition to English-Medium Instruction (EMI). The study focuses on the program's impact on teachers' confidence, pedagogical adaptation, and course organization, as well as its potential for long-term support and scalability within Algerian higher education.

6. Research Questions

6.1. Main Question

The primary aim of this research is to address the following central question:

How does a customized hybrid tutoring program influence university instructors' confidence, pedagogical adaptation, and ability to deliver subject-matter courses in English during the transition to English-Medium Instruction (EMI) at Batna 1 University?

6.2. Sub-Questions

1. What are instructors' perceptions of the hybrid tutoring program in terms of its flexibility, accessibility, and relevance to their professional needs?
2. What specific challenges do instructors encounter when adapting their teaching methods to EMI, and how does hybrid tutoring help address these challenges?
3. In what ways does structured pedagogical support through hybrid tutoring contribute to teachers' skill development and self-assurance in EMI contexts?
4. What tangible improvements in teaching practice and student engagement do instructors attribute to participation in the hybrid tutoring program?
5. What recommendations do instructors have for enhancing or expanding the hybrid tutoring model to better support EMI implementation and address ongoing challenges?

On the basis of what preceded, the hypothesis of this research stands as follows:
A customized hybrid tutoring program will significantly enhance university instructors'

confidence, pedagogical adaptation, and ability to deliver subject-matter courses in English during the transition to English-Medium Instruction (EMI) at Batna 1 University.

7. Design and Methodology

The present study adopts a qualitative research paradigm, drawing on the researcher's own experience with hybrid tutoring as its foundational case. Additionally, data were collected through descriptive analysis of semi-structured interviews with eleven participants—seven instructors from the Faculty of Economics, Business, and Management, and four from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences—providing in-depth insights into the impact of hybrid tutoring on English-Medium Instruction. All the interviewees were randomly selected from 20 Batna 1 subject-matter teachers who received EMI hybrid tutoring under the current researcher's supervision. The sample covers six professors, four associate professors and one assistant professor.

To ensure accurate and extensive data collection, participants' comments were digitally recorded utilizing a 32 GB voice recorder, allowing for in-depth analysis while increasing efficiency by reducing transcribing time. The interviews lasted between 41 and 83 minutes. Initially, they sought to assess the effectiveness of hybrid tutoring in assisting instructors in transitioning to English-Medium Instruction (EMI) and to identify any obstacles or constraints connected with pedagogical coaching. The primary areas explored are:

- Teachers' perceptions of hybrid tutoring
- Challenges encountered during the transition to EMI
- The perceived benefits of structured pedagogical support through hybrid tutoring.

Six open-ended questions made up the interviews; these were specifically crafted to allow for the subtleties of descriptive research, and to provide teachers the freedom to go into detail in their answers. In order to accommodate the interviewees' level of ability, the questions were occasionally paraphrased, simplified, or even somewhat translated into Arabic or French. However, the majority of the questions were asked in English, as evidenced by the interview (see the Appendix).

Furthermore, the interviews were predominantly conducted in the teachers' offices at dates and times of their selection, with the intention of establishing an environment conducive to comfort and full engagement with the interview questions.

The interview first explored teachers' perceptions regarding the impact of hybrid tutoring on their pedagogical style in an English-Medium Instruction (EMI) context. Participants were invited to reflect on how this approach influenced their teaching methods and to summarize their overall experience with the program. This section aimed to gather personal testimonies about the pedagogical transformations experienced by the instructors.

The second part of the interview focused on the specific difficulties encountered by teachers when adapting their teaching methods to an English-language instruction environment. Participants were encouraged to identify the particular obstacles they faced and

to describe the strategies they implemented to overcome these challenges. This exploration helped map the main barriers to EMI adoption and the adaptation mechanisms developed by the teachers.

The interview then addressed the contribution of organized pedagogical support within the hybrid-tutoring model. Participants were invited to explain how this support contributed to the development of their skills and the improvement of their confidence as EMI instructors. This section aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the support structures put in place to facilitate the transition to teaching in English.

The fourth theme explored concerned the positive effects that hybrid tutoring may have had on teachers' ability to deliver their courses and interact with their students in an EMI context. Participants were encouraged to identify concrete improvements in their teaching practice that they attribute directly to this tutoring approach. This part of the interview allowed for an assessment of the tangible benefits of the program on teaching skills.

Finally, the interview solicited participants' recommendations for improving or expanding the EMI hybrid-tutoring model. Teachers were invited to propose concrete ways to enhance the effectiveness of the program in supporting instructors facing the transition to EMI and the challenges that come with it. This final section aimed to gather practical perspectives for the future evolution of the support system.

8. Key Findings

Using MAXQDA 2024 software, a specialist tool for qualitative data analysis, the teachers' replies were painstakingly gathered and examined. After being imported into the application as multimedia files, the eleven audio recordings underwent a methodical analysis procedure. In order to code and categorize the data, segments have to be labeled and arranged based on pertinent themes or topics. Word frequency and sentiment analysis were also included in the analysis to give a thorough grasp of the data.

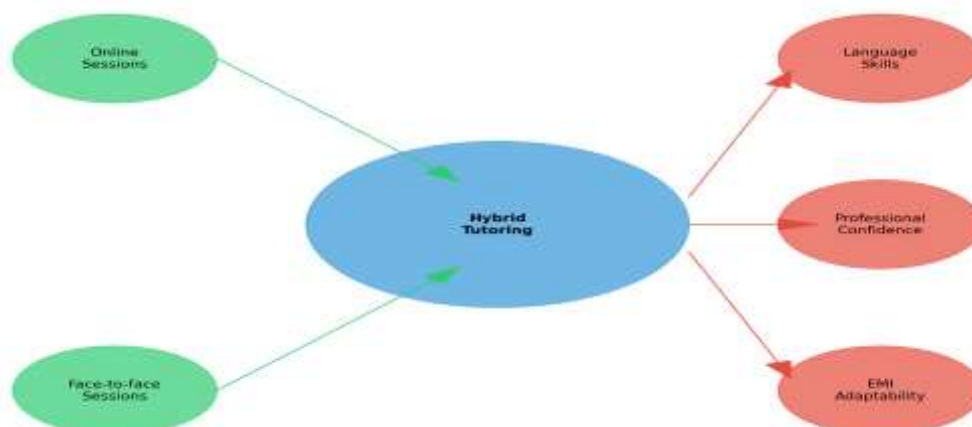


Figure N°01: Conceptual model for Hybrid Tutoring for EMI Transition

Initially, the topic analysis of "Teachers' Perceptions of Hybrid Tutoring" showed that the vast majority of teachers had a positive experience with hybrid tutoring (see Figure N°1), emphasizing its flexibility and customized support as its main benefits. Nine teachers specifically highlighted how online sessions' flexibility allowed them to better reconcile their obligations to their families and their careers.

Second, based on the difficulties faced during the EMI shift, teachers noted that important obstacles to EMI adaptation included language competency, cultural differences, and technology problems. Peer mentoring, technical training and general English language instruction were among the methods some mentioned employing to get past these obstacles. To prevent ambiguity and student resistance, the vast majority of them (10 participants) complained about the students' poor proficiency in English, which frequently resulted in the students switching to Arabic or French (French being the first foreign language in Algeria). Teachers also stressed the importance of assessment on the ground.

Third, in line with the findings of Hobson et al. (2010, p. 234), instructors felt that the structured pedagogical assistance of hybrid tutoring helped them develop skills and confidence in areas such as lesson planning, classroom management, and language instruction. They also valued the opportunity to reflect on their practice and receive input from colleagues and mentors (see Figure N°2). The emphasis of hybrid pedagogical tutoring on allowing a smooth transition to English instruction significantly increased subject-matter teachers' self-confidence and sense of security, as testified by all the participants. Because it presented significant risks to their pedagogical and cognitive approaches, these latter were extremely concerned about the sudden switch to teaching in English. Most respondents stated that losing credibility in front of students and experiencing long-term professional stagnation were the worst-case scenarios. Therefore, EMI hybrid tutoring was instrumental in enhancing the pedagogical abilities of teachers and bolstering their self-assurance.

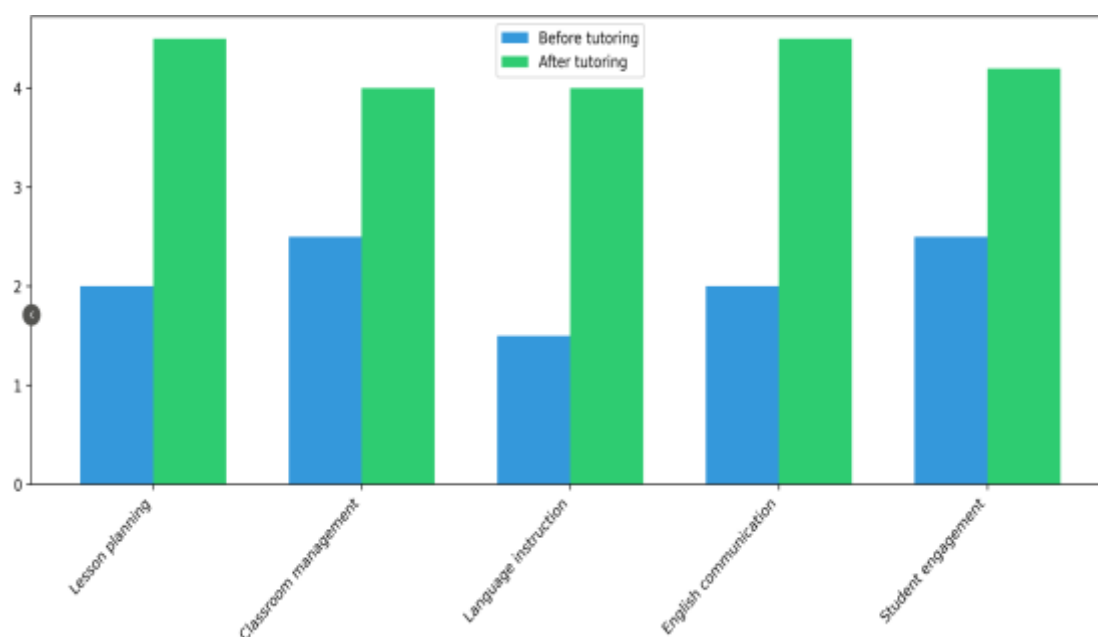


Figure N°2: Impact of Hybrid Tutoring on Teachers' Skills

Fourth, in terms of the efficiency of English-Medium Instruction (EMI), teachers reported that hybrid tutoring improved their ability to teach and communicate effectively with students. This was attributed to the program's focus on language support, instructional advice, and technical training. As a result, teachers reported improved student involvement, motivation, and language competency. Furthermore, the freedom to tailor their English instruction to students' linguistic ability levels and switch to Arabic or French when appropriate minimized possible crisis scenarios that could come from exclusive English instruction in an EMI context. This is because one of the objective of this hybrid-tutoring program was to alleviate the burden put on educators who believed they were prohibited from utilizing languages other than English in difficult situations.

In summary, the results show that teachers generally view hybrid tutoring as an essential tool for course organization, confidence building, and EMI adaptability. According to participants, the program's main advantages are better course organization, boosted self-esteem, and successful pedagogical adaptation. These findings are consistent with previous studies as demonstrated in the review of literature section. Teachers claimed that they were able to employ best practices in EMI pedagogy by using hybrid tutoring to organize their English lesson plans and resources in a methodical manner. The interactive sessions also helped them become more proficient communicators in English, which increased their confidence while delivering lectures on specialized topics. Teachers also learned effective ways to engage students in EMI situations. Hence, this tutoring approach ultimately provides immediate training as well as a helpful blueprint that subject-matter teachers can utilize to guide their future specialized instruction.

8.1 The Need for Long-Term Support

Even though the preliminary results point to promising results, every participant emphasized the importance of long-term hybrid tutoring. They underlined that overcoming enduring difficulties related to teaching specific subject matters in English requires a consistent tutoring program. Making the switch to EMI is a difficult process that calls both ongoing coaching and linguistic and methodological reinforcement. Differently said, all of the participants to this research recommended enhancing the hybrid tutoring approach and broadening peer mentorship opportunities by increasing the frequency and length of the training program. In this concern, research demonstrates that continuous faculty development initiatives are critical to the successful implementation of EMI (Galloway et al., 2020). To develop long-term competency in higher education taught in English, teachers need pedagogical training and prolonged exposure to linguistic immersion (Wilkinson, 2013).

8.2 The Need for Additional Technical Support in English

Teachers also advocated for additional technical training and support, particularly regarding the development of English-language online courses on the Moodle platform, which has been adopted by Batna 1 University for distance education. Teaching specialized content in English already presents a significant challenge, but delivering it online adds another layer of complexity. Faculty members emphasized that this combination creates a dual hurdle

requiring special consideration. Consequently, they recommended incorporating other tutors into the program, such as engineers and educational science specialists.

9. Conclusion and Future Perspectives

Batna1 University's implementation of a hybrid tutoring approach—combining online and in-person sessions to continuously support subject-matter experts in their transition to English-Medium Instruction (EMI)—has proven remarkably effective. This study highlighted the significance of customized hybrid tutoring as a pedagogical support system, both at Batna1 University specifically and in higher education generally. Findings demonstrate that hybrid tutoring facilitates the transition to EMI by providing a learning framework that is both structured and flexible. These results align with previous research emphasizing the necessity of targeted support initiatives to ensure effective implementation of English-Medium Instruction.

Teachers' perceptions of hybrid tutoring were overwhelmingly positive, with most instructors valuing the flexibility and personalized support it offered. The program allowed them to balance professional and personal commitments while developing their English proficiency and pedagogical skills. However, the transition to EMI was not without challenges. Teachers encountered difficulties such as limited language proficiency, adapting teaching materials, technological barriers, and student resistance due to low English skills. These obstacles required them to adopt new strategies, including code-switching and collaboration with language specialists, to maintain effective instruction.

Structured pedagogical support through hybrid tutoring emerged as a crucial factor in overcoming these challenges. The ongoing guidance and feedback from tutors and peers helped teachers build confidence, improve lesson planning, and adapt their teaching methods for EMI. This support system fostered professional growth, enhanced classroom management, and created a collaborative teaching culture. The program significantly boosted teachers' self-assurance, alleviating fears of losing credibility with students or experiencing professional stagnation. Interactive sessions improved their ability to communicate effectively in English and engage students, while offering flexibility to adapt their teaching to learners' linguistic levels.

Ultimately, hybrid tutoring proved to be an essential tool for course organization, confidence building, and EMI adaptability, providing not only immediate training but also a model that teachers can use to guide their future specialized instruction. Future studies could examine more individualized and varied hybrid tutoring strategies that take into account the unique requirements of teachers from different fields. The long-term effects of such programs on student learning outcomes and EMI teaching efficacy in online settings could also be evaluated by additional research

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Appendix: Interview Inquiries

Personal Information

Rank: Assistant Professor ☐

Associate Professor ☐

Professor ☐

Faculty :

Department :

Specialty :

Age :

Teachers' Perceptions of Hybrid Tutoring

1. How has the hybrid tutoring affected your teaching style in an English-Medium Instruction (EMI) setting? Could you sum up your overall experience with the program?

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Challenges Encountered during the Transition to EMI

2. In modifying your teaching methods for an EMI setting, what particular difficulties have you encountered?

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3. How have you attempted to overcome these challenges?

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Perceived Benefits of Structured Pedagogical Support/Coaching

4. How has the hybrid tutoring model's organized pedagogical support aided in building up your abilities and self-assurance as an EMI instructor?

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Effectiveness of Hybrid Tutoring in EMI

5. What positive effects do you believe the hybrid-tutoring approach has had on your capacity to instruct and interact with students in an EMI setting?

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Suggestions for Future Improvements

6. What suggestions do you have for improving or broadening the hybrid-tutoring model to help instructors make the switch to EMI and deal with the difficulties that come with it?

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