

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Undergraduate Education

An exploratory case study of student preferences and perceptions of blended tutorial approaches in an Agrotechnology program

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Abstract

This study examines students' preferences and perceptions of tutorial formats in a blended learning environment, focusing on those enrolled in an Agrotechnology program. Thirty-five students from two academic years participated in a descriptive exploratory survey with open-ended qualitative responses that combined survey data with thematic analysis of open-ended responses. The study aimed to understand how students experienced individual and group tutorials and how these formats supported their perceived learning needs. The findings show that kinesthetic and visual preferences were most commonly reported, while most students rated tutorial effectiveness, lecturer support, and satisfaction within moderate-to-positive categories. The qualitative findings explain this pattern by showing that students valued individual tutorials for focus, independence, and self-paced thinking but also found them limited in peer discussion and immediate clarification. Group tutorials were valued for idea sharing, peer learning, and collaboration but were also affected by unequal participation and free-rider issues. These findings extend existing knowledge by showing that students' responses to blended tutorials are not simply a matter of format preference but are shaped by design tensions between autonomy, peer interaction, structure, and lecturer guidance. In the Agrotechnology context, these findings are relevant because students need both independent technical judgement and collaborative problem-solving skills for field-based and applied agricultural tasks. The study suggests that blended tutorials can support learning more effectively when they combine clear instructions, structured group roles, lecturer feedback, and practical problem-solving activities linked to agricultural technology education.

Plain Language Summary

This study examined how Agrotechnology students experienced blended tutorials that combined individual and group sessions. The results indicated that students perceived benefits in both formats. Individual tutorials enabled them to focus, think independently, and receive more personalized guidance, while group