Teachers' Experiences in the Implementation of Blended Learning

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Abstract: *The implementation of blended learning in higher education has become more intensive after the pandemic covid 19. How do teachers deal with it? This study aims at exploring teachers' experiences in implementing blended learning. The research data were taken from 22 lecturers who teaches in an English Education department program. Google form consisting of open-ended questions were distributed to collect the data. The data were then analyzed qualitatively through data collection, data reduction, data interpretation and conclusion. The findings of this research revealed that teachers' perception on the implementation of blended learning is not quite good. The problems encountered are various and the solution made is also various depending on what the problems are.*

Keywords: *experiences, implementation, blended learning*

1. INTRODUCTION

Blended learning is becoming more familiar to be implemented at school and other education institutions, especially during the pandemic covid 19. It has made teachers and students know technology more than before. Teachers are demanded to learn and implement technology to teach their students, moreover when teaching in a blended mode.

Research concerning the blended learning has been conducted by many researchers. Frederick, et al (2022) assessed the student perceptions of blended and online learning and found that blended learning facilitated greater understanding of course material, increase motivation among learners, provided more flexibility in workload completion, and was more enjoyable way to learn compared to traditional, didactic instruction. Meanwhile, F, Bashlinskaya (2022) studied the positive and negative qualities of main types of blended learning. The conclusion is that technologies need high quality technical equipment, training of teachers and personal responsibility of each student.

Maniruzzaman (2022) examined EFL student and teacher perceptions of and reactions to blended learning in the Department of English, Jahangirnagar University in the new normal. The findings revealed that majorities of students and teachers had mostly positive perception on blended learning although students had lack of sufficient exposure and teachers lack of insight in blended learning.

Another research was conducted by Baber and Qaisar (2022).The research highlighted the challenges of blended learning in public schools. The results show several issues like low budget and the technical tools that must be paid attention by the government.

A study of the satisfaction of blended learning was conducted by Freij (2022). It was conducted in higher education. The study found that there was a considerable satisfaction with the blended learning. However, there was low satisfaction concerning the interactivity and engagement. In addition, the instructors need to pursue a program that make them competence in designing feasible digital tools.

Those previous studies did not inform how blended learning was conducted using online and offline modes in one shot. Meanwhile, this research was conducted in classes where online and offline class was conducted in one shot. So, in one meeting in a classroom, a teacher had two different groups of

students. First those who came to the classroom, and the second who joined the class online. The teacher became busy, shifting from students in the classroom to the students in online mode, then back again to the classroom. There must be special challenges or experiences encountered by teachers which were different from those who teach in other blended models.

This research also studies blended learning, but from different perspective. The focus is on the teachers' experiences when applied the blended learning in EFL class using two modes in one shot. The aims are to know the teachers' perception on the implementation of blended learning, its problems and solution, also to gain teachers' suggestion for the betterment of blended learning class.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Blended learning is a learning model that combines onsite or face-to-face learning activity with the online learning (Gwang-Jo Kim, 2016). Meanwhile, blended learning is also described as an activity using significant online activity, with less than 45% of the whole activity, beside onsite activity (Smith and Kurthen in Tomlinson, 2017). Staker and Horn (2012) define blended learning as "a formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through online delivery of content and instruction with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace plus at least in part at a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home."

Blended learning can be classified into some models. Staker and Horn (2012) illustrate in the figure below.
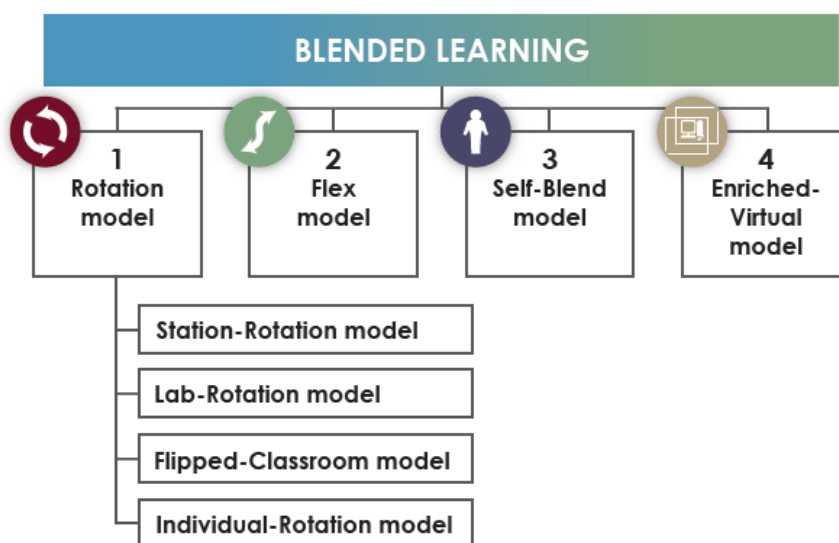
Source: *Staker and Horn (2012)*

According to Staker and Horn blended learning are built from brick-and mortar + online learning. The combination of the two are differentiated into four models: rotation, flex, self-blended, and enriched-virtual models.

1. The rotation model is a blended learning in which students rotate on permanent schedule between two modes of learning and one of them is online learning.

   This is a program where students cycle between learning modalities, at least one of which is online learning, on a set timetable or at the teacher's discretion within a particular course or subject.

2. The Flex model is conducted by delivering content and instruction primarily by internet. This is a program in which the teacher of record is present, students choose between learning modes on a personalized, flexible timetable, and the majority of the content and teaching is delivered online.

3. The Self-Blend model

    In the self-blend model students decide to attend one or more completely online courses to supplement their traditional courses, with the online teacher serving as the official instructor. On-site or off-site enrolment in the online courses is an option for students. Because this is not a whole-school experience, it differs from full-time online education and the Enriched-Virtual model. Some of the courses that students do individually online are self-blended, while other courses are taken on a traditional campus with in-person instructors.

4. The Enriched-virtual model

    This is a program that takes place across the entire school in which students split their time between physically attending a campus and learning remotely using online content and instruction for each course (for example, arithmetic).Many Enriched-Virtual programs started out as full-time online colleges before creating blended curricula to give students access to traditional classroom settings.

Blended learning is not a new model of learning. However, in Indonesia it becomes more popular in the new normal era. Teachers are getting more literate in technology. They are demanded to learn and use technology in the teaching and learning activity.

There are some reasons for implementing blended learning. Stein and Graham (2013)insist that blended learning not only fits into the modern lifestyle, but also give specific benefits for students such as increase access and convenience to students, teachers, and administration. Those benefits can be obtained if the blended learning is done intentionally.

3. METHOD

This is qualitative research in which data are collected through questionnaires, the open ended one, so that respondent can answer freely as many explanations as they want to answer. The respondent are 22 English teachers. The questionnaires consist of 5 questions. The collected data are then analyzed by following the steps: classification, reducing data, interpreting, and drawing a conclusion. In addition, a percentage is added to make the data more easily identified.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Teacher perception on the implementation of blended learning

The research findings show that among 22 lectures 63.36% has negative perception on the blended learning implemented. Meanwhile, 27% has positive effect, and 9 % of them are neutral. The following chart shows the percentage of teachers' perception.
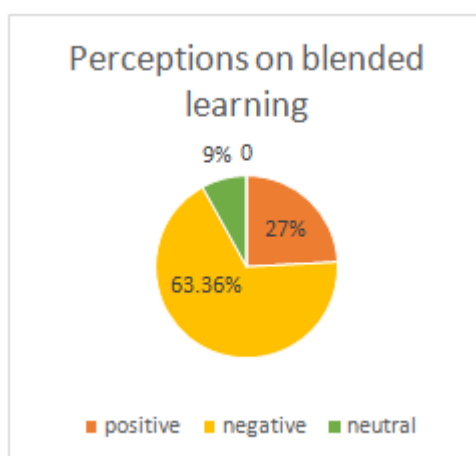
The negative perception is identified from their expressions about the implementation of blended learning. They stated that blended learning is rather complicated, not quite effective, not optimum and tiring due to managing two modes in one meeting, bothering and not pleasant, really ineffective due to technical problems, cannot focus for attention is divided, less effective, not efficient, not effective caused by technical and non-technical matters, and less effective. This is in contrast with the finding of research conducted by Frederich (2022) which showed positive perception that is blended learning

facilitated greater understanding of course material, increase motivation among learners, provided more flexibility in workload completion, and was more enjoyable way to learn compared to traditional. A contrast is also found between this research result and statement made byStein and Graham (2013).They stated that blended learning not only fits into the modern lifestyle, but also give specific benefits for students such as increase access and convenience to students, teachers, and administration.

2. Teacher problems and solution in conducting blended learning

The problems found by teachers cover: unable to be interactive, students come and go, repeat instructions and feedback for online and offline, problems with tools such as sound are not clear from both lecturers and students, online signal problems in their area so students do not respond, lack of motivation so they chose online so that they did not need to go to campus to study and was able to do other activities, required patience and foresight in conditioning and monitoring student activities, facilities and infrastructure were not yet supportive so it was difficult to control students who were online and divided attention between online and offline, the internet was not stable so material was not delivered smoothly as well as a lack of students who attended onsite because they chose to attend online, students were on the road, the facilities were not simple/easy to use so communication with students was limited as well because students did not focus on one activity, interactions with lecturers that were not balance between those participating onsite and online, poor signals and unsupportive devices, students were unresponsive and did not show good engagement, unfamiliar with online tools and students haven't moved on from full online class, not all of them get to present assignments because there was not enough time, the lecturers were not capable enough to make students active, could not control students' activities, it was also difficult to motivate students Learning was often constrained by the network, interpersonal interaction was not optimal, there were still misunderstandings between lecturers and students, software and hardware were not fully ready. In addition, not all students were ready for face-to-face learning. Teachers said that it was more troublesome because they have to manage a number of supporting devices such as cameras, speakers, headsets, etc. and at the same time had to handle students who were present offline, had to be active in direct teaching but also had to use online platforms such as zoom or g-meet, which made the focus of teaching split in two modes, communication was not well established.

To solve those problems teachers had applied some strategies. They asked students to do presentations, stayed focused with students who focus on the link, provided material before the meeting was held so that the class did not start activities from zero, focused on those participating in face-to-face classes and repeated instructions in whatsapp group even though it was still not effective, started the meeting with mutually agreed rules at the beginning of lectures in relation to activities during online learning, communicate the class activities earlier before the class, used and maximized existing infrastructure and tried to be more well prepared with the teaching material.

Teachers also made sure there were no technical problems with internet, adapter setting, and the laptop can be connected to the additional devices, such as webcam, smoothly. In addition, teachers also discussed with the students to make sure who would attend offline and who would take online lecture, suggested them to choose appropriate place when online, prepared activities that made students more active in class participation, maintained

student-lecturer engagement through fun quizzes and free applications, asked students who were online to open camera and try the device before class starting Teachers also tried to maximize face-to-face meetings to get used to being offline. To make students get better understanding of the materials, the result of group work and pair work were discussed not only once.

3. Teacher suggestion for the betterment of blended learning class

Several suggestions on the implementation of blended learning are given by the lecturers. They include the followings;

   a. The blended learning should not be conducted by having two modes in one meeting. It is better to have blocked blended learning, all online and all offline.

   b. The lecturers need to have offline instruction as soon as the condition is safe to have face to face interaction.

c. To conduct blended learning class the institution needs to prepare the instrument for online activity and its alternatives.

d. Teachers must be trained with innovative teaching and learning in the blended learning context.

e. During the online class students have to be on camera, at least when they are talking.

f. There should be a forum to share the blended learning practice.

g. Online learning is just for assignments/ task, not for teaching activity.

h. Students need to be motivated on the importance of independent learning

5. CONCLUSION

The blended learning done is perceived as negative by the teachers. This is because online and offline modes was conducted in every meeting. The teachers found some problems especially with attention that should be shared between the two groups so that the teaching and learning process cannot be done effectively. Teachers have used some strategies in order that the students' teaching and learning process can be more effective and the students get good understanding.

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