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STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD BLENDED LEARNING THROUGH GOOGLE CLASSROOM IN GENERAL ENGLISH COURSE

Irfan Fajrul Falah[1], Chairuddin[2]
[1]STKIP Muhammadiyah Kuningan, Jawa Barat, Indonesia
[2]Universitas Samudra, Aceh, Indonesia
Corresponding author's email: chairyfkip@unsam.ac.id

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Abstract

During the pandemic of Covid-19, offline and online learning are recommended by the government of Indonesia. By using both offline and online, students will have the opportunity to enhance their self-regulated learning, which seems very effective in this challenging time. Therefore, this study investigated the students' attitudes on implementing blended learning, especially in general English courses. This study employed survey method in gaining the data where around 92 students of Primary School Education Study Program were involved both in filling questionaire. Interview was also conducted by the researchers to validate and elicite more feedback on this study. The finding shows that almost 76.3% of the students were positive and satisfied on the implementation of blended learning. By applying blended learning, students were also permited to repeat or re-open the lesson without any pressure. By conducting this study, several shortages were also appeared where internet connection was the main problem. Theacher's lack of online learning design was also a thing to take into consideration. Blended learning has been very effective. Hence, this study support the refinement of the implementation especially in the area where internet connection is a thing to be concerned.

Keywords: *Blended learning, students' self-regulated learning, learning experiences*

INTRODUCTION

Learning is a complex process that should never be confined to a classroom and school system. Fadlia, Rahmiati, Asra, and Mahatir (2021) state school systems seek to improve their outcomes and practices worldwide. On the other hand, E-learning extends beyond the classroom and includes information and communication via the internet, which learners can access directly from their laptops or even smartphones. Thus, e-learning has seen significant expansion in recent years (Osguthorpe & Graham, 2003), appealing to both learners, companies, and academia. According to several experts (Munro & Munro, 2004; Isda, Imran, Purwati, & Rahmiati, 2021) some of the

numerous claimed benefits of e-learning include continual learning, time savings, and reduced trip expenditures. In this pandemic Covid-19 especially in Indonesia, the trends of e-learning is increasing significantly. Despite the governement recommends it, it offers a lot of innovations and opportunities, especially for the teachers in optimizing their efforts to improve students' learning outcomes with various solutions (Purnawarman, Susilawati, & Sundayana 2016; Garrison, 2004). However, since technology advancement is not balanced yet in every region in Indonesia, the use of full e-learning will be a burden especially for the students. Therefore, teacher should adopt and make it appropiate to be used in teaching and learning. Blended learning is one method for implementing e-learning. Blended Learning is a blend of face-to-face and online learning activities that makes the best use of resources to address critical institutional concerns (Graham, 2006) It also provides an effective blend of diverse modes of delivery, teaching models, and learning styles that are used in an interactively meaningful learning environment (Kaur, 2012).

Blended learning has become a new learning environment in recent years. A study conducted by Purnawarman, Susilawati, & Sundayana 2016) shows that blended learning can be an alternative and an effort for the teacher to integrate technology into the teaching and learning process which is undeniable. Whereas Brenda (2017) claimed that teaching through blended setting provides the flexibility for the students to study with their own paces. In addition, Spodark (2001) stated that online environments give students more time to respond and participate, which may increase their motivation, especially for shy students. Osguthorpe and Graham (2004) assumed blended learning is about combining face to face (traditional) and online. It offered something that attracts students' interest, moreover, it provides them to learn independently by seeking the material that related to their interest. On the other hand, Fadde and Vu (2013) on their research explained that the real challenge is not only in integrating technology or create an online platform but to find a balance proportion of offline and online instruction thus the students can take the benefits of it. Somehow, implementing blended learning is not as easy as it seems since both teacher and student are not familiar enough to the technology.

As seen above, research on blended learning and its success is much and varied especially in its implementation. But, somehow, it still deserved further study in different aspects such as students' attitude. Indeed, this study was intended to investigate the students' attitude toward blended learning in English for General Academic, especially by using Google Classroom since it is easier to use as a learning management system (LMS) and available for free.

Blended Learning

Globally, information technology has resulted in enormous political, social, economic, and educational transformations. Through computers and the Internet, ICT facilitated access to information in many fields (Kaur, 2013). As a result, online teaching-learning settings and competition with face-to-face environments grew swiftly and expanded widely. Osguthorpe and Graham (2003), on the other hand, claim that Blended learning is more efficient than traditional methods because it makes it simpler and more convenient to access learning and teaching environments. Blended learning is gaining popularity because many educators believe it "combines the best of both worlds" by giving students the opportunity to learn in both online and traditional classroom settings (Eydelman, 2012).

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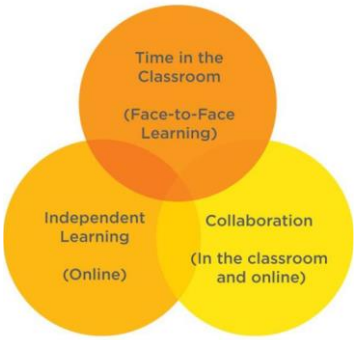


Figure 1. Blended Learning Concept (Osguthorpe & Graham, 2003)

Blended learning combines online and offline learning (Purnawarman, Susilawati, & Sundayana 2016). Blended Learning, as defined by Graham (2004), is a method of learning that combines the advantages of traditional classroom instruction with those of more modern online instruction. In the context of this investigation, the term "blended learning" refers to the process of incorporating a variety of activities and technology designed for a particular class of students. To phrase it another way, it entails enhancing conventional teaching methods using digitally-based resources, such as videos and documents (Kaur, 2010). Blended learning is seen as a technique for developing acceptable educational environments for students, allowing them to easily attain their goals and boost their learning through appropriate technology. As a consequence of this, blended learning is regarded as a strategy.

Blended Learning in an EFL setting is a pedagogical strategy that accommodates students' effectiveness and opportunities for enhancing technology in the learning process (Dziuban, Hartman, & Moskal 2004). Through videos, blogs, chat rooms, and discussion forums, e-learning can provide access to target language culture (Duff & Uchida, 1997). These tools provide EFL learners with more access to the language of native speakers. According to Graham (2006), online environments help pupils feel at ease. Online exposure can facilitate the employment of strategies in training all language skills. Online activities also assist self-directed learning concerning course material (Barenfanger, 2005).

The changing of learning environment has also lead the changing of learning paradigm. In this term, the student-centered approach is more suitable for enhancing technology into a learning activity. For example, a study by Eydelman (2012) shows us how blended learning can change a teacher-centered platform that is usually used by Russian during their classes where the position of teacher is more dominant than the student was started to be left. This is one of the reasons blended learning is applicable in every subject, especially in teaching English where the students' opportunity is broader due to the language used.

Google Classroom

Google Classroom is a relatively new initiative that Google has launched for educational institutions in order to create a platform for blended learning that can generate, distribute, and grade assignments without the need of paper (Janzen, 2017). As a result, it is a simple approach

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for professors to engage students online for questions, discussions with teachers and classmates, and assignment submission. According to Iftakhar (2016), Google Classroom allows teachers to spend more time with their students and less time on paperwork, and it is now much better. Google's most recent announcement expands the functionality of Google Classroom. The ability to add more than one teacher, as well as plan sessions in a and preparee new feature (Rabbi, Za).

METHODOLOGY

The method that employed in this study was survey method. The samples of this study were the fifth semester of primary school education students' in STKIP Muhammadiyah Kuningan, consisting of 92 students from three classes. The data were collected through questionnaires and interviews to validate and elicit the feedback. The questionnaire was developed to identify students' view on blended learning environment, which is Google Classroom. The questionnaire consisted of 12 items to identify students' attitude toward blended learning process. The scoring for the questionnaire was established according to the five–Likert scale: Strongly Agree: 5 points; Agree: 4 points; Undecided: 3 points; Disagree: 2 points, and; Strongly Disagree:1 point. The quantitative data from questionnaire were analyzed by descriptive statistic while triangulation was used to analyze the qualitative data obtained. It is based on Creswell (1998) and Silverman (2005) who acknowledged triangulation is a crucial effort in analyzing the qualitative data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

General English course in STKIP Muhammadiyah is a compulsory subject that enrolled by every student from every study program. It is consisted of 14 meetings where it is conducted in the language center. The proportion of blended used in this subject during the semester consisted of 70% face to face instruction and only 30% was conducted in online learning since the authority is still finding the right proportion. It offered the students the four language skills: listening, reading, speaking and writing. At the half of the course, the writer spread a questionnaire to investigate students' responses through this blended learning implementation. The questionnaire has three aspects; students' attitude towards the process, students' attitude towards the content and the last students' attitude toward the ease of Google Classroom. However, in this current study, only the attitudes towards process that will be displayed since the instrument for content and easiness' are still to be validated.

Table 1. Students' attitude towards blended learning process

No	Item	Mean	S.D	%	Attitude
1	I support the use of blended learning in the General English course.	3.85	1.23	77.0	Positive
2	Blended learning in General English made me like English and become more interested in it.	3.85	0.92	77.0	Positive
3	Blended learning in General English improved my skills (writing, reading, listening, speaking).	4.07	0.87	81.4	Positive
4	When I used blended learning, I found the subject of General English to be easier.	3.84	0.99	76.7	Positive
5	Google Classroom inspired me to learn more.	3.88	1.03	77.5	Positive

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6	Blended learning in General English subject gives me the chance to interact with the teacher.	4.18	0.86	83.6	Positive
7	I enjoyed discussing blended learning with others.	3.40	1.19	67.9	Positive
8	I don't want to go through this blended learning experience again.	1.26	1.24	25.2	Negative
9	Blended learning assisted me in learning more effectively.	3.75	1.10	75.1	Positive
10	Blended learning in the topic of General English was more enjoyable and relaxing than traditional techniques.	3.51	1.30	70.1	Positive
11	Blended learning was a complete waste of time.	1.15	1.25	23	Negative
12	Blended learning in General English subject give me the chance to interact with other students	3.90	1.12	78.1	Positive
	Total	3.82	0.80	76.3	Positive

Although final examination scores have been the key criterion for determining the legitimacy of student evaluations, these numbers provide only a limited view of student learning outcomes. In fact, according to one study, student perceptions of learning in a course were significantly more connected with student ratings of instruction than changes between pre- and post-test scores (Moore, 1989). In addition, Baker (2010) discovered that student perceptions of learning were substantially associated with their overall judgments of the efficacy of the teacher.

As we can see from the table, the highest percentage is on item no 6 (83.6%) where blended learning allows students to interact with the teacher. Interaction between students and teacher is very important especially for students' feedback. The exchange can be one-to-one or one-to-many or private between the instructor and one student or more public with the entire class. Students may feel more confidence interacting with the teacher online rather than in person during class. Online communication differs from face-to-face engagement because it does not use paralinguistic elements to compliment students, such as gestures and facial expressions. As a result, it is critical to provide individual feedback and applaud individual and group accomplishments to motivate and urge pupils to take on new tasks (Krasnova & Popova, 2016). The course content's structure and the teacher's presence inside that subject establish learner-to-instructor interaction (Baker, 2010). Interaction between students and instructors can provide emotional or motivational support, which can help to stimulate students' interest in course content (Moore, 1989). Including a synchronous component, such as audiovisual calls or chats, boosts instructor presence because students often interact with the instructor directly (Baker, 2010). The instructor may use discussion boards and emails in asynchronous systems to offer direct instruction or clarification and inject personality and comedy (Moore, 1989). Student happiness, feeling of community, and greater teacher presence have all been connected to learner-to-instructor interaction (Wise et al., 2004). (Shea, Li, & Pickett, 2006).

The second higher percentage is the belief that blended learning can improve students' skills or understanding (81.4%). Isti'anah (2017) explained that blended learning gives the students opportunities to be autonomous learners so their skills will be easier to develop. The exposure

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provided in the LMS can assist students recall their grasp of the materials and practise their abilities. As a result, it establishes a new culture of second language learning. Students are aware of their responsibilities to access online materials and assignments. It reflects their self-regulated learning and autonomy. It is consistent with Shen and Liu (2011)'s previous proposal that blended learning can promote students' self-regulated learning.

The following item that has high percentage is on student-to-student interaction (78.1%). The student-to-student exchange is critical to a quality online class (Krasnova & Popova, 2016). It is believed that this kind of interaction will benefit both sides in improving their understanding of the material delivered by the teacher during the blended learning process. In online classes, instructors frequently give students with opportunities for learner-to-learner engagement through group projects and threaded discussion boards. This type of collaboratourages students to study numerous situations or prompttoto gain new knowledge (Ravenna, Foster, & Bishop, 2012). Students can participate in the knowledge development process through learner-to-learner interaction. Moore (1993) defined "collective intelligence" as the shared learning experience between and among students, which he further described as the most advanced form of the instructional process (Medeiros et al., 2014). Increased student happiness with the online environment has been connected to student-to-student interactions (Garrison & Akyol, 2013).

According to the table above, most students indicated a good attitude toward the blended learning process, with the average being about 76.3 percent. It backs up other researches' conclusions that pupils liked the blended learning method in general (Chen &Jones, 2007; Slotkin, 2004) Only around a quarter of students disagreed with taking part in a learning process as such, and this percentage is statistically insignificant. Statistically, the mean average of all item is 3.84 which is quite high. While the attitudes of students toward the process of blended learning implementation is in “positive” category or 76.3%.

The result of the interview adds several information related to the implementation of blended learning where there are some difficulties that experienced by the majority students during the process of blended learning implementation especially in uploading a video into Classroom where the quality of the video is high definition. The unstable internet connection whether from campus or self-access is probably the issue. Purnawarman, Susilawati, & Sundayana (2016) argued that a good internet connection must be implemented in online learning. It is in line with Isti’anah (2017) who stated that a school should be equipped with good internet access to have maximum online learning results. One thing that should be addressed on current study based on the interview is the lack of group interaction while making a discussion. Teachers need to use another application that provides direct chat (e.g. WhatsApp and Facebook) to make a discussion lively. However, those who have difficulty operating Classroom from their smartphone or not into ICT admitted that blended learning is hard enough to follow. They prefer a more conventional classroom because they are used to it for a long time. Jazmen (2017) explains the enhancement of ICT cannot replace the traditional classroom. Thus, the presence of both teacher and student in the classroom is still needed since it has been on our mind that teaching and learning is affiliated with face to face learning.

CONCLUSION

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Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the implementation of blended learning through Google Classroom in general English course was run well. It can be seen from the perspective that shown by the students was positve where 76.3% of them were satisfied on blended learning implementation. It was also believed that by using blended learning, students were permited to repeat lessons without judgment or pressure. However, regarding the study's findings, several considerations are recommended. First, a stable blended learning with good facilities such as internet connection is needed. Second, teachers should be more creative since most students are new to use the technology and the last but not least, teachers should find a better formula to create a good proportion between online and offline learning.

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