



STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE ON HYBRID LEARNING AFTER THE COVID-19 BREAK : A LEARNING REFLECTION THROUGH PHOTOVOICE

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ABSTRACT

After the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the world of education, including universities, had to find a solution on how education could continue to run well. During the pandemic, lectures are conducted online. However, after the conditions improved, the lectures were shifted to hybrid learning. The aim of this study was as a self-reflection through the experiences and perspectives of EFL students regarding the application of hybrid learning as an adjustment to the COVID-19 pandemic. This study uses photo voice as a research methodology involving 5 EFL students from 4 different classes. The results showed that, according to participants, hybrid learning was not the right solution for lectures for one semester. Internet disturbances and the unpreparedness of lecturers in implementing hybrid learning are the causes.

Introduction

Higher education institutions have been experiencing digital transformation for some time; it is not a new occurrence (Kopp et al., 2019; Leszczyński et al., 2018). Universities must be up to the task of preparing potential professionals to be able to face challenges and provide solutions because the digital transformation of higher education institutions is a topical issue that several stakeholders in education must be concerned about (Bond et al., 2018; Sandkuhl & Lehmann, 2017). The current transformation, according to Hiltz and Turoff (2005), will be seen as revolutionary changes in the requirements of higher education as a process and as an

institution in the next 50 years because it has moved face-to-face instruction programs using objectivist, teacher-centered teaching methods for thousands of homegrown, provincial, and domestic universities to online and hybrid programs using digital technologies in enhancing learning. According to these academics, online learning is a cutting-edge social process that is gaining popularity as a substitute for traditional face-to-face instruction.

The Covid-19 pandemic started the process of higher education's digital transformation. As a result of the crisis that the Covid-19 pandemic caused, novelties in higher education that would typically take years due to various managerial regulations were presented quickly within a limited number of days (Strielkowski, 2020). While online learning on its own has benefits, such as flexibility, interactivity (Leszczyński et al., 2018), self-pacing, and opportunities, the current increase in its adoption by universities is born Universities, and other educational institutions have quickly transformed their instructional operations to be digital in response to the epidemic. However, it also has several significant disadvantages, which are presented as follows (Xie, Siau, and Nah, 2020):

1. The essential gear needed for online learning is a computer with Internet connectivity. Nevertheless, not every student can access a cutting-edge computer and continuous Internet service.
2. The needs of individual students are the main emphasis of online education. In a non-traditional learning setting where the culture of collective or collaborative learning may be non-existent or poor, generating a sense of belonging and connectivity is challenging. Students may feel exceptionally cut off from their teachers and other students. Students benefit from the social aspects of a school system or physical campus where possibilities for teamwork and friendships thrive, but such opportunities are few in online education.
3. It might be challenging to monitor or oversee students' learning in an online classroom. Students enrolled in online courses must exercise extreme self-control since they are susceptible to being quickly distracted by social media, the news, or gaming. Some students could lack the drive to finish their schoolwork, or there may not be a teacher around to motivate or remind them to do their work.
4. Many students rely on and require a structured plan that involves moving between several classrooms and visiting various classmates on a regular school day as part of their learning and development process. Online studying can occasionally cause anxiety, whereas a campus is bustling with life and activity. Long periods spent in

front of a computer can harm the body and eyes. In online learning, there may be a lack of direct student-teacher communication, a lack of emotional connection between teachers and students, and a lack of direct student-teacher communication among students.

The Covid-19 outbreak has made it more evident that the school system is vulnerable to outside threats (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). As stated by Ribeiro (2020), the digital revolution of instructional delivery comes with many logistical difficulties and changes in attitude. During the COVID-19 epidemic, online education is thrown into the spotlight and plays a significant role. The widespread use of online learning during a pandemic will likely alter students' opinions and lead to more extensive use of online learning in the post-pandemic era, which will become the new normal. After the pandemic, online learning will become a staple of school. It has been a growing trend. E-learning and conventional offline learning are compatible with one another (Xie, Siau, and Nah, 2020). However, some research has revealed that participants were happier with face-to-face education (Fishman, Konstantopoulos, & Kubitskey, 2013). Elshami et al. (2021), in their research, determined the elements influencing faculty and student satisfaction with online education during the COVID-19 epidemic. They found that 68.7% (n = 246) expressed less satisfaction with online learning, and 41.6% (n = 149) said they would not suggest it to others. 60.9% of students (n = 218) reported being happy with the communication during online learning, while over half (47.5%, n = 171) reported being happy with the flexibility available. One hundred twenty-six students and 15 faculty members answered the open-ended questions. The majority of students stated that technological issues and support were the most significant obstacles they encountered when learning online. Staying on-screen for an extended time was the second noted challenge. Rienties & Toetenel (2016) found no significant differences between well-designed online and face-to-face learning. Even though technology affects every aspect of our lives, face-to-face education still dominates university teaching and learning. Online learning is typically utilized as a supplement (Allen & Seaman, 2013), and a combined strategy of traditional and online-supported teaching can provide more effective learning results for students than either approach by itself.

To meet the changing demands of the students who anticipate or prefer the inclusion of online learning as part of their involvement with their studies, a hybrid method integrates online components with face-to-face learning (Jefferies & Hyde, 2010). Hybrid learning is "a varied and increasing field of design and investigation that mixes face-to-face and online modalities" (Halverson, Graham, Spring, and Drysdale, 2012: 381). According to Qi and Tian (2011), there

are four characteristics of hybrid learning that have been introduced: (1) a mix of group and individual learning; (2) synchronous and asynchronous learning; (3) self-paced and group-paced learning; and (4) a mix of formal and non-formal learning in terms of lifelong learning incorporation and/or setting of learning. According to Nguyen (2011), hybrid learning combines individual and collective learning and is facilitated by multi-agent systems' collective intelligence when used in a collaborative setting. This intelligence is used in conjunction with the learner's method, strategies, and channels for processing and communicating instructions. With hybrid learning, students, teachers, and any other specialists or institutions involved in the process can take a flexible approach to learn. The main characteristic of hybrid learning, according to the four recognized components, is that it can be modified to meet the learner's needs, the course's requirements, and other essential indicators like pace, time, and space. For those with limited time and space, hybrid learning may provide a variety of alternatives in contrast to traditional learning methods. Additionally, hybrid learning has been proven to be conceptually sound and valuable in a variety of cross-disciplinary, institutional, and informal learning contexts (Alnajdi, 2014).

Suresh et al. (2022) provided a hybrid curriculum concept, successfully preserving favorable sentiments about the underprivileged for over a year. First-year medical students reported having a better understanding of the difficulties MUCs encounter and more self-assurance while dealing with MUCs in a clinical setting. The effectiveness of virtual techniques for community engagement and service learning in undergraduate medical education is demonstrated by the favorable influence the hybrid curriculum had on students' motivation to work with underserved groups in the future.

Abunamous et al. (2022) looked at how conventional and online learning affected students' success and accomplishment during the COVID-19 epidemic to see if it was the first step toward a society without schools. The researchers concluded that it is possible to create a society without schools after looking at student opinions and perceptions of e-learning in quarantine as a practical approach to stop the spread of the COVID-19 impact on education and the impact of e-learning compared to traditional education on student achievement and satisfaction. This study recommends adopting e-learning as a new educational system because it has demonstrated its efficacy in times of crises and disasters, conducting research to address all challenges to this education, training educational staff and enhancing their capabilities to deal with virtual education, establishing innovative ideas, and developing technology for education. Also, the research suggests using a hybrid approach to education that combines face-

to-face instruction with online learning since this may help students maintain a good psychological balance and meet the demands of the twenty-first century.

Johnson et al. (2018) found that most participants (62%; N 21) doubted their talents and capabilities when participating in hybrid learning activities since they assessed their computer literacy as intermediate or did not remark on it. They deemed these tasks "overwhelming" and "too much," and, as a result, recommended more instruction in an online course management system. The main issues raised by participants were the internet, energy, and financial difficulties. The participants then acknowledged the lecturers' and students' participation. Participants discussed the expertise and abilities of the lecturers to instruct and help students. Participants' opinions of their self-efficacy highlighted students' personal engagement the most. The time allotted for each module was too short for the participants to understand the demanding and challenging topic fully. Students' perceptions of their effectiveness as learners impact their drive to achieve academically and how they engage with their self-regulated learning processes. The influence of students' self-efficacy beliefs should be considered by those who create hybrid learning courses for adult learners, and assistance for students in this area should be implemented. Participants also mentioned how the module material "opened my mind and thinking, forced me to think," and "it capacitated us," among other comments on intellectual engagement. It emphasizes the need to consider the highest level of intellectual engagement chances when building hybrid learning programs—opportunities to display critical thinking and reflection on our views, values, and attitudes (Pittaway & Moss, 2014).

Research by Sullivan and Freishtat (2013) focuses on analyzing part-time graduate students' experiences with hybrid course discussion boards and asks students for their impressions and comments on their learning as feedback to the instructor, checkpoints for the students' meta-learning, and a way to evaluate student learning, mainly when formative assessment is being discussed. The findings of this study support some of the best practices in teaching and learning that have been documented in the literature and further highlight the factors and techniques that can and should be used to have the most considerable influence on student learning while using online chats. It is generally acknowledged that the best learning opportunities frequently arise when faculty members can plan student-centered learning experiences that successfully incorporate aspects of collaboration and group work, are motivated by project-based learning, and offer a variety of flexible learning opportunities.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic is a global problem, local solutions are required (Tashiro & Shaw, 2020), and the process of adjustment is heavily influenced by the

sociocultural environment, including our relationships with others and the networks that bind us (Kitayama & Park, 2020). In Indonesia, hybrid learning is chosen as a solution for implementing higher education after the COVID-19 break. Refers to this policy, the purpose of this study was to determine the students' perspectives and experiences while studying with a hybrid learning system in 1 semester as a reflection of the learning process. The learning reflections from the student's perspective on hybrid learning after the COVID-19 break are still rarely studied since most research still discusses online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially using photovoice as the research method. Photovoice allows the students to express their perspectives and experiences through pictures with description based on their perspectives and experiences. It helps the researcher understand the participants' perspectives and experiences deeply. Furthermore, the research findings are hoped to help consider what elements should be considered when designing more hybrid learning programs for adult learners so the learning process is more effective and efficient.

Method

This study uses photovoice as a research method. Photovoice is

one creative-based method for generating knowledge that both participant groups engaged in was photovoice – an approach to investigating phenomena in which people utilize photography to raise awareness and make change. [...] once documented, [participants] crafted texts to accompany their photographs, thus providing outsiders with insiders' knowledge about aspects of their communities. (McIntyre 2008, 22)

Using this research method, participants were allowed to convey their perspectives and experiences through pictures and descriptions of hybrid learning for one semester, which was implemented for the first time on campus after previously learning was conducted online during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The participants of this study were EFL students at a public university in Indonesia. Hybrid learning at this university includes both synchronous and asynchronous discussion forums. Asynchronously, half of the students in one class attend lectures face-to-face, while the other half goes through zoom at the same time consecutively. Synchronous is done using e-learning that was implemented before the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Sixty-seven students from four classes volunteered to participate in the research to share their experiences and perspectives on hybrid learning. These classes were selected because they learnt by using hybrid learning system. The photovoice data then were chosen by considering the suitability between pictures

and its descriptions and research questions. In addition, these photovoice use metaphors in figuring their perspectives and experiences. However, only five photovoice results were suitable to the problem formulations and using metaphors. The photovoice results were then analyzed by coding, profound interpretation, and participant interviews to confirm the suitability of the interpretation with the experiences and perspectives described by the participants in the photovoice (Ferdiansyah et al, 2020).

Findings

Through photovoice, participants conveyed various experiences and perspectives about the hybrid learning they underwent during one semester.



Figure 1. Hybrid Learning Like Water Hyacinth

Through the image of the water hyacinth, Maya (pseudo name) describes how the experience of hybrid learning is. According to her, hybrid learning for one semester has not been maximized. When it is her turn to take classes online (using the zoom application), many lecturers' explanations are not understandable due to unsupported internet signals. Unlike when she takes face-to-face classes, the lecture's material is clear and understandable. Therefore, Maya likens her experience during hybrid learning in one semester to that of a water hyacinth, which, if placed in a place without water, this plant cannot survive. Furthermore, according to the virtual perspective, hybrid learning is detrimental due to the high costs incurred.

In my opinion or view regarding hybrid learning that is being carried out at the moment, this system is causing much harm to us, including me. Because this system consists of offline and online, now in this system we have to prepare everything, such as the maximum internet quota and the

necessities of life here. Now, if we only do offline, we do not need to prepare the maximum quota because, basically, we study face-to-face, so we do not need to prepare the maximum quota. Moreover, as I said before, the lecturer is limited to explaining material during online learning.



Figure 2. Messy Book

Sofi (pseudo name) described hybrid learning with messy books in line with what happened to Maya.

This picture that I made represents my heart and feelings, which are very messy, mixed with the learning system this semester. Actually, I am confused about how to handle this situation, and hopefully, in the next semester, I can adapt more and be able to adjust better to the time I have.

This new learning method she feels gives a different experience where there are ease and difficulties that are felt simultaneously. After taking lectures online, which made Sofi more relaxed in time management, hybrid learning allowed her to be more organized from sleeping, waking, and studying because she had to go to campus during face-to-face sessions. For her, face-to-face meetings provide an opportunity to understand the material better. However, according to her, problems arise when lecturers choose lectures to be held fully face-to-face, while the following courses must go through zoom.

Nevertheless, this erratic lecture method sometimes makes my study schedule a mess. Some lecturers want total participants who come in for face-to-face learning. Others want only half of a class to be allowed in. It causes in one day; I can come to campus to study one course only. After I finished, I went home. And sometimes, this entire course is in the first hour, and in the second hour, I have to leave and take lectures via zoom. Lessons have started while I am sometimes still on the road.

This condition causes her to miss much information if it is her turn to take online classes, for example, information about assignments that she can miss, thus making her have to collect impromptu assignments.

Sometimes some lecturers give assignments to students who study face-to-face, but those of me who take online learning sometimes do not hear or do not understand what assignments are given; a wrong network usually causes this, so zoom does not run smoothly.

Online classes provide benefits for her, who is an expatriate. She can return home early in the holy month of Ramadan. However, at the same time, she has to face conditions where the internet network is unstable and disrupts his learning.



Figure 3. Abstract Painting

Similar perspectives and experiences are also described as abstract paintings by Tasya (pseudo name). For her, hybrid lectures are very chaotic. When it was her turn to attend lectures via zoom, it was a feeling of being ignored by the lecturers because the lecturers were more focused on students attending face-to-face lectures.

According to my perspective, hybrid learning is not optimal in learning. Why is that? Because online learning is challenging for students to accept the material presented by the lecturers. Moreover, as I feel right now, we use the concept of half face-to-face learning and online learning. The concept of learning like this complicates me. Where the lecturer's focus is divided when explaining the material, so those online feels neglected. So, it is difficult for us to accept the material presented by the lecturer.

Tina also conveyed the same thing, describing her experience and perspective on hybrid learning like waves in the ocean.



Figure 4. Waves in the Oceans

Face-to-face learning is like a giant wave with a huge impact. Through face-to-face learning, she had the opportunity to understand the material more quickly and not miss out on information. On the other hand, when it was her turn to attend lectures via zoom, lectures felt like calm waves. The lecture's material is more challenging to understand because of network disturbances. The lecturer's voice is not heard, or the voice is intermittent, making the information obtained through the zoom meeting application not optimal.



Figure 5. Tall and short building

The fifth participant, Nana (pseudo name), described hybrid learning as buildings that are not the same height. Lectures that are undertaken have positive and negative sides but are dominated by opposing sides. Like the other four participants, online lectures have a negative side in the form of an unstable internet network that makes the lecturer's voice disjointed and

disturbances from people around (noise) that interfere with concentration. For her, face-to-face lectures have a positive impact on online lectures.

One of the offline sides is that we can interact directly with lecturers, focus more on listening to lecturers, and quickly understand something that is explained and technically. Moreover, by studying offline, I can interact with friends and get to know each other. Furthermore, in my opinion, the offline learning system is more effective, and much liked by students and lecturers because lecturers also do not repeatedly explain the material to students who do not understand their teachings online.

Discussion

This study found that according to the experience and perspective of the participants, hybrid learning was not a practical choice of learning method to be used as a solution in lectures after the COVID-19 break as what suggested by Abunamous et al. (2022). When it was the participants' turn to attend lectures via zoom, the internet network became the most significant obstacle to their process of capturing the material and information presented by the lecturer, even though online learning was more flexible than face-to-face as what Leszczyński et al., (2018) found. Also, they have to provide extra costs to get better internet quality. It results in a lack of understanding of the material taught by lecturers and delays in collecting assignments, or they must submit assignments suddenly. On the other hand, face-to-face lectures are their most preferred method because they can interact directly with lecturers and their colleagues. In addition, they can learn the material clearly, and there are no gaps in getting information. This finding contrasts with Suresh et al. (2022) research finding who found that hybrid learning can help students more easily understand the difficulties MUCs (medically underserved communities) encounter and more self-assurance while dealing with MUCs in a clinical setting. However, the results of this study are in line with the results of research by Johnson et al. (2018), who found that participants had difficulty participating in online sessions due to the internet network, cost difficulties, and energy drains, as well as reduced interactions with lecturers and colleagues which is also found by Xie, Siau, and Nah, (2020).

Based on the participants' photovoice experiences and perspectives, none of them explained the obstacles in using e-learning as part of synchronous learning. It is because e-learning had been implemented on this campus for several years before the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

Conclusion

This study found that hybrid learning was not the right solution for lectures after the COVID-19 break at the research location. Several factors, such as internet network interference and lecturers who change the lecture system as the cause of hybrid learning, cannot be implemented effectively. It is a suggestion for the campus to re-evaluate the stability of the internet network on campus, as well as the lecturers' understanding, readiness, and ability to implement a hybrid learning system. Thus, it is hoped that implementing hybrid learning in the next semester can be more efficient and effective so that students and lecturers get a better experience than in the previous semester.

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