

Improving Students' Writing Skill Through Blended Learning During Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: Writing is regarded as the most difficult skill for students. Improving students' writing skill can be done in many ways, including applying online learning platform during covid-19 pandemic. This research aims to describe the implementation of blended learning to improve students' writing skill and to describe whether blended learning can improve the students' writing skill or not. This research employed Collaborative Classroom Action Research. It was conducted into two cycles. The subject of the research are a second-year students of IKIP Siliwangi, who enrolled English for Academic Writing class. The research data were collected by using techniques of observation and test. The results of this study show that after the implementation of blended Learning in every cycle, the students' writing score were getting better. It can be seen from the result of students' mean score in Cycle 1 was 74 and Cycle 2 was 84. This means that the implementation of Blended Learning can improve students' writing skill. In addition, blended learning also can enhance students' interest in writing

Keyword: Writing Skill, Blended Learning, covid-19 pandemic

Abstrak: Menulis dianggap sebagai keterampilan yang paling sulit bagi siswa. Meningkatkan keterampilan menulis siswa dapat dilakukan dengan banyak cara, termasuk dengan menerapkan platform pembelajaran online di masa pandemic covid-19. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan penerapan blended learning untuk meningkatkan keterampilan menulis siswa dan untuk mendeskripsikan apakah blended learning dapat meningkatkan keterampilan menulis siswa atau tidak. Penelitian ini menggunakan Penelitian Tindakan Kelas Kolaboratif. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus. Subjek penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa tahun kedua IKIP Siliwangi, yang mendaftar Bahasa Inggris untuk kelas Academic Writing. Data penelitian dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan Teknik observasi dan tes. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa setelah penerapan Blended Learning di setiap siklus, nilai menulis siswa semakin baik. Hal ini terlihat dari nilai rata-rata siswa di siklus 1 adalah 74 dan siklus 2 adalah 84. Artinya, penerapan blended learning dapat meningkatkan keterampilan menulis siswa. Selain itu, blended learning juga dapat meningkatkan minat siswa dalam menulis.

Kata Kunci: Keterampilan menulis, Blended learning, Pandemi covid 19

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic that is currently sweeping the world, especially Indonesia, the education system is faced with a situation that requires teachers to be able to master online learning media. As reported by CNN (2020) that to break the chain of covid-19 spread in the education area, the government established the

regulations where learning is done by online.

At present, almost all education actors make online learning a learning solution in dealing with the Covid-19 Pandemic outbreak situation. Online learning that is carried out is expected to be able to improve students' writing skills.

Writing is very important because through writing the students can develop

their ideas into a good paragraph. Besides that, through the students can organize the sentence to be a good text (Harmentita, Reszy and Tiarina, 2013).

However, writing is regarded as the most difficult skill. It is supported by Wardani et al (2014: 1) that among the language skills, writing seems to be the most difficult one. As supported by Richards and Renandya (2002: 303) in Ardyan & Saunir (2014), writing is the most difficult skill for second language students (EFL).

Based on the problem above, the teachers need a solution to improve students' writing ability during the pandemic. Since the existence of the Covid-19 pandemic has made all learning activities in Indonesia that used to be face-to-face learning turned into online learning, thus, blended learning can be applied as the solution toward the problem.

Quevedo (2011) defines Blended learning can be seen as a combination of learning that combines web-based communication, video, audio, synchronous, and asynchronous with face-to-face learning. Furthermore, Garrison and Vaughan (2008: 5) add that blended learning as "a design approach whereby both face-to-face and online learning are made better by the presence of the other", and the combination of offline and online learning enables the one to compliment the other. It can be inferred that in recent days blended learning is defined as an instructional approach that combines offline learning method with online learning method, and each learning method is the supplement to one another for better learning quality.

Sharma (2007) cited in Tomlinson and Whittaker (2013) argued that an effective blended learning could be done if two component parts between the technology complementation and efforts of

the teacher in classroom were integrated well.

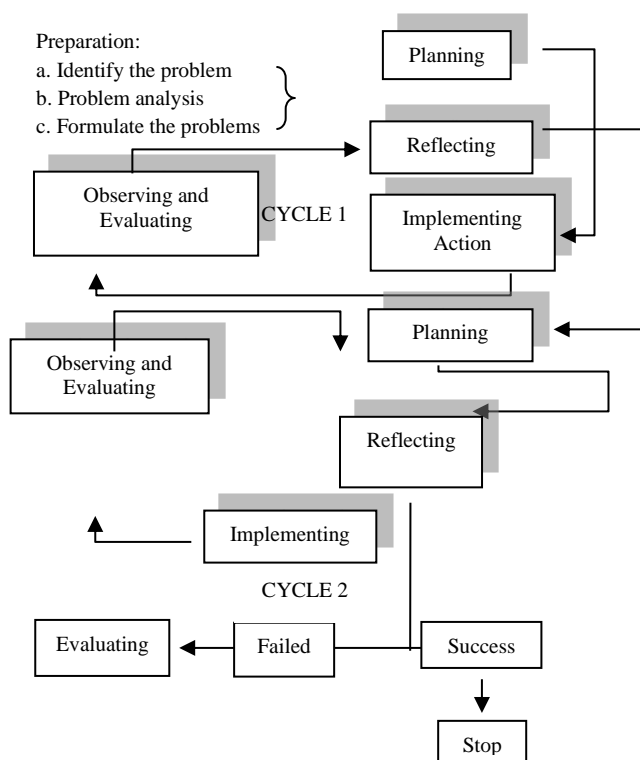
The application of the blended learning model requires the help of computer-based media (online) that can support online learning activities. The media used in this study was Google Classroom

According to Syafi'i (2020) Google Classroom is a tool which facilitates students and teacher collaboration; also teacher can create and distribute assignments for students in an online classroom for free. It indicates that through Google Classroom, assignment is created and Gmail is used to provide classroom communication which makes teachers easier to announce and ask questions to students in classes (Perez, 2015). Thus, teachers can create active lessons which are student-centered, collaborative, and unforgettable just through Google Classroom, because it provides easy-to-use learning features with students of all categories able to cooperate (Nagele, 2017).

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that Google Classroom's design purposefully simplifies the instructional interface and options used for delivering and tracking assignments; communication with the entire course or individuals is also simplified through announcements, email, and push notifications" (Janzen, 2014).

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed Collaborative Classroom Action Research. The following is a brief overview of the CAR cycle adapted from Wiriaatmadja (2005) in Parmawati & Yufiati (2017).



The data were collected through test and observation. In the observation stage, the researchers collected the data through tests in the form of pre-tests and post-tests (in each cycle). Descriptive statistical analysis was adapted from Mertler (2019).

$$M = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

M = Mean Score

$\sum X$ = Total Score

N = Number of Students

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Implementation of Blended Learning

Collaborative classroom action research (CAR) was used in this research which consists of several phases, namely planning, implementation, observation and reflection for cycle 1 and cycle 2. The writing tests were used through pretest and posttest for each cycle. Pretest and posttest are used to find out students' writing ability

after doing writing using blended learning. There are several aspects used as the criteria in writing assessment such as content, organization, vocabulary, language, mechanics.

a. Pre test

The pre-test was carried out on October 5, 2020. The results of the pre-test can be seen in the following table:

Table 1
The result of pre test
Based on criteria of writing aspect

Content	Organization	Vocabulary	Language	Mechanics
68.64	68.08	68.31	68.55	68.52

Table 2
The result of pre test

No	Criteria	Score
1	The highest score	78
2	The lowest score	65
3	The average score	71.5

The data above show that students' writing skill is still low. The data showed that the average score was 71.5. From 44 students, there were only 43,18% students who got the score above 70, while 56,82% students got score under 70. This indicated that the students faced many problems in writing. This might be due to influenced by several factors such as difficulty in developing ideas, lack of motivation in writing.

b. Cycle 1 and post test 1

The cycle 1 was carried out on October 12-15, 2020. The results of the post test in cycle 1 can be seen in the following table:

Table 3
The result of post test 1
Based on criteria of writing aspect

Content	Organization	Vocabulary	Language	Mechanics
75.08	75	75.15	74.73	75.20

Table 4
The result of post test 1

No	Criteria	Score
1	The highest score	81
2	The lowest score	68
3	The average score	74

The data above showed that the average score was 74. From 44 students, there were only 20,45% students who got the score above 70, while 79,54% students got score under 70.

Based on the result of the cycle I, there was some reflecting that should be paid attention in maximizing students' writing skills. The researchers found some weakness that happened during the teaching and learning process in cycle 1. The data from observation showed that students' vocabulary mastery was limited. Then, in this cycle, the students were given the video to add their vocabularies before writing. Then, they were instructed to analyze and write down information while the video was played.

c. Cycle 2 and post test 2

The cycle 2 was carried out on November 2-5, 2020. The results of the post test in cycle 2 can be seen in the following table:

Table 5
The result of post test 2
Based on criteria of writing aspect

Content	Organization	Vocabulary	Language	Mechanics
81.64	81.34	81.18	81.27	81.22

Table 6
The result of post test 2

No	Criteria	Score
1	The highest score	90
2	The lowest score	78
3	The average score	84

The table above revealed that the result of students' writing test in cycle 2 was increased. The mean score was 74 in cycle one and 84 in cycle two. It

indicated that teaching writing using Blended Learning improved the students' writing skill. In addition, The passing grade (KKM) was 70. In the cycle II, 100% of the students could pass the passing grade. It means that there was improvement of students' writing skills by using blended learning.

CONCLUSION

The result of this research shows that the implementation of blended learning improved the students' skills in writing. There was an improvement of students' writing skill of second-year students of IKIP Siliwangi. It can be seen from students' scores of pre-test and posttest. Before blended learning was implemented, there were 43.18 % of the students who did not pass the passing grade, and only 42.85 % of the students who could pass the passing grade. Meanwhile, in cycle 1 the post-test result showed that there was 9.04% of the students who could not reach the passing grade on the post-test, and there was 56.82 % of the students who could pass the passing grade. While, the result of the cycle II showed that 100% of the students could pass the passing grade. It means that the implementation of Blended Learning was successful to improve students' writing skills.

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