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Resilience in Language Teaching and Learning in the New Normal

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CHAPTER I: SWITCHING ONLINE-OFFLINE CLASSES SMOOTHLY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

“The dynamics of teaching and learning process continue to occur all the time. Thus, we have to cope with all situations and be resilient.”

Fajria Fatmasari
(Polytechnic APP Jakarta)

The situation changed drastically following the COVID-19 outbreak. At that time, the pandemic had a tremendous impact. There were changes in the teaching and learning process. Many transformations have been carried out by higher education institutions and teachers. In this chapter, there will be a discussion about the English teaching and learning process during the COVID-19 outbreak and post-Covid, also how to smoothly switch the process due to the situation.

LESSONS LEARNT FROM COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Technology Use Acceleration

At the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, the world was shocked and everything seemed to freeze. There are physical limitations that must be carried out at all levels of society. The teaching and learning process was immediately

carried out through online methods, namely the Whatsapp chat application, Google classroom, or e-learning platforms.

Yet, it was inadequate to meet the competence. In delivering the English learning process, it had been a tough time, specifically in English for Special Purposes (ESP) as taught in any Polytechnics. Many difficulties were encountered when explaining certain terms and maintaining the interaction in the online class. The absence of gadgets and a bad internet connection are also obstacles. Moreover, the duration of online meetings is very limited.

In sort of circumstances, literacy on devices and the internet must be mastered quickly. Various tools, applications, and platforms used were the best solutions for interactive online learning, for example, animation, clips, word searches, puzzles, or interactive quizzes.

In this situation, the COVID-19 outbreak seems to have had quite a positive impact. COVID-19 has evolved to be a catalyst for the adoption and increased use of digital technology (Joseph Amankwah-Amoah, 2021).

Creativity

Adjusting materials was the priority at that time. As teaching English for logistics class, it was impossible to ask students to tell the process of storing goods in the warehouse, considering that not all student residences have ideal warehouses similar to what is on campus. For this reason, the lecturer might shift the activity into simple activities that can be assigned to students at home. Taping

the process of storing goods into cupboards or other home activities applying process became the most possible thing. Another example was when students were asked to write captions on their Instagram platform to apply their understanding of prepositions and structure. This was enthusiastically welcomed by the students considering the freedom of designing sentences and captures. The students were able to independently learn.

It indicated that all effort was given to grasp the engagement and lively online classroom. Thus, it was seen in the study that the COVID-19 pandemic brought an increase in management, efficiency, and quality of the teaching process (Yusriadi, 2021). In this case, the creativity of the lecturer to improvise activities become important.

Empathy

In several studies that have been carried out, there is a feeling of hardship after going through online learning. Fatmasari, et al (2021) stated that major students at Polytechnics thought that the abilities achieved were not the same as when they went through classroom learning. Some problems become magnified in conditions of lockdown or restricted socializing. Feeling of loneliness and adversely affected well-being can be caused by poor experience (Achor et al., 2018).

Facing these hardships, empathy should be brought along. Empathy plays a fundamental role in the teaching and learning process during the COVID-19 outbreak. Empathetic

lecturers may try a “less is more” approach when it comes to the number of materials to ensure mastery of essentials (Yong, Fung Lan & Kong, Melinda, 2022). A simplification approach may be better. Communicating with students about the shortcomings and inconveniences they are experiencing may also promote academic engagement and success. Being empathetic toward students who are unable to promptly attend or complete online activities due to poor internet connectivity should take place as well.

Empathy is a way of connecting with others, allowing individuals to show that they understand what others are experiencing. Empathetic teachers possess several characteristics that they integrate into their teaching to show students that they understand what they are experiencing as more than just problems to resolve. A powerful attribute, empathy enables teachers to determine what is driving students’ behaviour and subsequently identify problem-solving strategies to address difficult issues together.

POST-COVID LEARNING PROCESS

Re-opening Offline Classroom

As COVID-19 cases declined in the final quarter of 2021, regular class is gradually open. The potential risk of college reopening to accelerate the COVID-19 pandemic among children, adolescents, young adults, and adults. Hence, there was a study done by Luís Carlos Lopes-Júnior et al (2021) that provided consistent evidence that will aid the decision-makers and stakeholders in the current

pandemic scenario. It brought better insights into safety in the return to school in the pandemic context, at a time when vaccination advances unevenly in several countries worldwide.

In the mid of 2021, some regular classes were re-opened starting from 50%, with half-class participants. Until 2022, almost all higher education institutions have re-opened classes up to 100% participation. Participants are allowed to take part in classroom learning while still implementing health protocols, such as providing a place for washing hands, recommending resting for teaching participants who are sick, and wearing masks. In several educational institutions, participants were asked to show proof of having been vaccinated as a prerequisite to being able to take part in classroom learning. Reopening regular classes, may better solution for those eligible for learning in some difficult circumstances such as poor connection, no money for internet, and no gadgets.

By re-opening the offline classroom, there are so many opportunities to promote and enhance the acquisition of English. Habituation and encouragement activities such as unlimited casual English talk can be carried out in regular classes. Thus, students will easily switch behaviour in the campus academic atmosphere.

Getting Out of Comfort Zone

Staying at home for a while creates a comfort zone. Imagine you can take online lectures from your room, no

need to walk to campus. The students can also independently learn materials from any source, and also seek the best answer for the assignments easily.

Sometimes, it was cheating intentionally. Because of poor connection, students may turn off the camera and do hidden cheating. They may open Google Translate, an online dictionary, or a textbook to finish the exam. Thus, the lecturer may not be able to distinguish the one who passes the exam well. As stated by Yulianto, D. & Mujtahin, N.M. (2021), some obstacles were faced by the EFL teachers while conducting the assessment test, such as (1) the internet connection; (2) the validity of the assessment; (3) and the low of students' enthusiasm.

In post-COVID-19, hidden cheating may no longer happen. Cheating is inevitable, but at least, it will make the students think for thousand times in the regular classroom. Thus, the students have to set a new behaviour. They also have to go to college to join the class, so they have to set a new daily schedule. Getting out of the comfort zone is probably the right phrase. They must be able to accept changes in dynamic situations and follow the patterns that take place in social life.

Hybrid Learning Adaptations

The implementation of a hybrid English e-learning course could perhaps be a promising approach for the teaching and learning process post-COVID-19. It promoted motivation and collaborative work for the students. In terms

of test results, there was no significant difference in the hybrid e-learning approach (Yauri et al, 2018). Similarly, Rianto (2020) showed that most of the students perceived positively both the online and regular classroom modes used in their blended EFL courses, although they tended to have negative views on certain online technical aspects.

Hybrid learning allows online and offline learning to occur simultaneously. It is defined as learning approaches with pedagogy or mixed media which is focused more on teaching than learning or a combination of face-to-face interactions and online technology-based interactions (Bliuc, Goodyear, & Ellis, 2007). It utilizes a hybrid infrastructure that combines open educational practices and real-time learning spaces, both online and offline. This can be done considering uncertain future situations.

Switching Online-Offline Mode Smoothly

Yesterday's pandemic situation at least gave an idea of how we must move quickly and change. The switch from offline to the online learning process, and vice versa, must be passed smoothly. The things lecturers can do in dealing with the switch are: 1) Maintain an interactive feel, 2) Remains technology literate, and 3) Maintain good engagement with students. Instead of changing the entire teaching system immediately, it is rather to carry out the change smoothly. We can still use various tools or platforms in teaching English in an offline classroom, and we also need to maintain engagement, even if it is online. Keeping

up with the previous nuance will smooth the shift in this circumstance.

The dynamics of the teaching and learning process continue to occur all the time. Thus, we have to cope with all situations and be resilient. To be resilient in the post-COVID-19 learning process, it needs more consideration from the leader of the educational institution as well. The higher education institution needs to identify survival strategies for when the crisis comes under control (Nandy et al, 2021). To reduce resistance when applying ideas in practice, leaders in higher education institutions should follow the approach to deal with the varying levels of individual risk associated with uncertainties in the post-COVID-19 period.

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BIO



Fajria Fatmasari, M.A. has been teaching English for Specific Purposes since 2011 at Polytechnic APP Jakarta, under the Ministry of Industry. Her ESP teaching experience majors in international business, marketing, and logistics. She is also a member of TEFLIN and IELA, Markplus Facilitator, and an assessor. Email address: fatmasari.fajria@gmail.com

ABOUT IELA



Indonesian English Lecturers Association (IELA), inaugurated on January 1st 2021, is a non-profit professional organization that unites lecturers and teachers teaching English to enhance and empower their professional development through collaborative works and academic activity forums. This association is a home of Indonesian English lecturers and teachers to gather, share, and collaborate through some academic programs and activities. The IELA main programs are Teaching, Research, and Community Service. Therefore, the IELA's activities are mostly related to *Tri Dharma Perguruan Tinggi*. Apart from conducting national & international webinars, research paper writing projects, etc. publishing books that collect chapters from the members is one of the IELA yearly programs. This *“Resilience in Language Teaching and Learning in the New Normal”* is IELA's second book after last year's first release titled *“Reflections on Pedagogical Practices during COVID-19 Pandemic”*.

Resilience in Language Teaching and Learning in the New Normal

Switching from online to offline classes post-pandemic might not be as major of an issue as when maneuvering classroom to distance learning, but it cannot just be run as the way it was used to be, because e-learning practices amidst the pandemic brought a lot of changes and new visions of future English pedagogy.

Shall we now hold classes fully offline as it was before the pandemic, or shall we do blended or even hybrid learning? Which e-learning media shall we continue using and which ones do we need to simply leave out? How should I and my students react and adapt to these online-to-offline changes?

Consisting of 14 thought-provoking chapters, this Resilience in Language Teaching and Learning in the New Normal book provides answers to those and other related queries thoroughly, based on the practical and theoretical pedagogic reflections from many English educators around Indonesia. Resilience, the central issue on this book, can refer to the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties or toughness. After recovering from an intense pedagogical crisis due to COVID-19, we are now being pushed to shift our mode of teaching again. Are we resilient enough to lead our future English language teaching through these drastic changes?



This book is presented by:
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