THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THREE TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING LITERAL READING AND ENGLISH FOR YOUNG LEARNERS

Yansyah
E-mail: yansyah.albalangi@yahoo.co.id

Abstract: In recent years, blended-learning is widely known as an effective and efficient technique in English Language Teaching. This report is a self-reflection on the implementation and evaluation of teaching practice using lecturing, presentation and discussion, and blended learning for undergraduate students. There were ten students consisted of three males and seven females. The subject taught was Literal Reading and English for Young Learners (EYL). The students were taught using three techniques: lecturing, presentation and discussion, and blended learning. The data for students’ activeness during the process of teaching and learning gained from lesson study and observation sheet. An in-depth interviewed also conducted for students who did not active to figure out their reasons. Finally, the result of observation showed that using the three techniques most of students became more active in the classroom and they could better understand the topic taught. The task to upload their works in the internet also helped them to become more creative in learning.

Keywords: Literal Reading, EYL, blended-learning approach

The advancement of technology gradually changes almost all aspects of human life, including education. It becomes important area for the development of teachers’ professionalism (Cahyono, 2013: 425). Teachers are forced to become more skilled and knowledgeable in operating technology, such as computer, LCD, internet and so forth since those tools have become a part of education itself.

Tomlinson and Whittaker (2013: 11) said that blended learning is not wholly a new approach to teaching and learning but it signifies the inclusion of computer technology providing online or offline activities and materials in the mix. Blended learning commonly combines both face-to-face learning and online learning. There are many terms and definitions of blended learning based on the presentation of face-to-face learning and the use of technology (online) in the classroom. Smith and Kurthen (in Tomlinson and Whittaker, 2013: 12) list taxonomy of terms related to blended learning as follows.

Table 1: Taxonomy of terms related to blended learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Web-enhanced</td>
<td>subjects that make use of minimal amount of online materials, such as posting a syllabus and course announcement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blended</td>
<td>subjects that utilize some significant online activities in otherwise face-to-face learning, but less than 45 per cent.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>subjects in which online activities replace 45-80 per cent of face-to-face class meetings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fully online</td>
<td>subjects in which 80 per cent or more of learning materials are conducted online.</td>
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From the table of terms above, it can be simply said that whatever the terms and the percentage of each technique, blended learning combines face-to-face learning and the use of technology to maximize the learning outcome.

Blended learning is recommended to be used in today teaching and learning since it offers some advantages. Thorne (2003: 18) mentioned that blended learning can create learning experiences that can provide the right learning at the right time and in the right time for each and every individual. It can be truly universal, crossing global boundaries and bringing group learners together through different cultures and time zones. In other words, blended learning is not limited by time and geographic location. According to Wilson and Smilanich (2005: 13), it widened reach of training because it offers opportunity for students who cannot physically present in the classroom to have access to learning through the use of internet and it is more economical because blended learning offer many options, teacher can choose the most economical one which meet his/her class need.

As mentioned above, blended-learning combines both face-to-face learning and online learning. The most common technique used in face-to-face learning in higher education is lecturing, then, followed by presentation and discussion. Lecturing method refers to oral presentation of information and ideas by a teacher (Sutherland, 1976: 30). The information conveyed commonly contains explanation of the materials. The lack of this method is that students’ cannot be active during the lesson. Students’ involvement in this teaching method is
just to listen and takes notes if necessary during the lecture. However, Faroq (2012) said that there are also some advantages of this method, such as: (1) in this teaching method a large amount of information can be covered in a single class period, (2) teacher can compliment and clarify text material, (3) it facilitates large class communication, and (4) it helps the students to develop listening skill.

Next, presentation and discussion are used to cover the lack of lecturing method. Students are asked to present a topic either in group or individual. Nowadays, most of presentation uses power point as media to present the ideas. The power point helps the presentation to be more effective since it provides visual aids. The presentation technique is fruitful since it makes students learn independently to prepare and present their presentation. Chan (2009) mentioned that the benefits of presentation are two folds: (1) it is an effective method to improve students’ public speaking skill and (2) make them easy to remember the materials that they have presented themselves. Discussion, then, hold after presentation session. This technique gives chance for other students to ask questions and the teacher to clarify what have been explained by the presenter(s). Therefore, this technique encourages students to become more active in the classroom.

Reviewing all those advantages, the teaching practice class at graduate program in English Language Teaching suggested the students to implement blended learning technique in their teaching presentation. Each student asked to teach using three techniques, those are lecturing, presentation and discussion, and blended learning approach. Each student had equal chance to present and freely to choose his or her specialty subject to teach. After finishing the presentation, each student asked to upload his or her works to the internet in form of a web blog. The materials uploaded consist of the video of teaching presentations, the power point slides accompanied with the audio explaining the contents of each slide, and the teaching materials. As the result, everyone who browses the web blog, including the students and the supervisor, can see and give comments to the presentation. Finally, it is expected that students get more valuable feedback through this way and improve their teaching skill.

Here, the writer as a student then tried to report his work on the implementation and evaluation of the three techniques in form of a self-reflection report. He taught Literal Reading for the skill course and English for Young Learners (EYL) for the content course. This report, then, tried to details the process of teaching and learning, the students’ responses, and the writer’s impression toward those techniques, and what the writer’s gain from the implementation of those techniques. Thus, the objectives of this report are: (1) to describe the implementation and the evaluation of blended learning approach in teaching practice class, (2) to share the writer’s impression and opinion toward the three techniques (lecturing, PPt presentation and discussion, and blended learning approach), and (3) to briefly explain what the writer’s gain from the implementation of those three techniques.

Method

This report used descriptive qualitative approach to describe the process of developing the course outline, the lesson plan, and the implementation of three techniques. The subjects of the study were ten students consisted of three males and seven females. The students were taught using the three techniques: lecturing, presentation and discussion, and blended learning. These techniques were implemented to both skill course (Literal Reading) and content course (EYL). To evaluate the effectiveness of these techniques, two instruments were utilized: lesson study and observation sheet. Lesson study employed to check students’ activeness during the lesson. An observer sat in the back to check the students’ language, fluency, content, and activeness. Meanwhile, the observation sheet had two functions: to check students’ concentration during the lesson and to give comments’ on the teacher’s presentation. Last, the writer’s comments and his impression toward the three techniques also would be described qualitatively.

Result and Discussion

The development of Course Outline (CO), Lesson Plan (LP), and materials selection. The CO and LP was developed using a skill-centered approach. Thus, the teacher arranged the topic based on the skills that the students need to learn. In Literal reading, for example, the students need to learn about how to identify topic and main idea of a paragraph. In EYL, they need to learn how to use games and songs in EYL class. Meanwhile, the selection of materials was selected from various sources, for literal reading, the sources are adopted from several course books that provided example of texts and exercises. Meanwhile, for EYL, the materials are adopted from a textbook, online video, and internet such as from www.britishcouncil.org.

The presentation of skill and content course. Literal Reading was taught on Wednesday, 25 September 2013. The time allotment was 25 minutes. The topic taught was Identifying topic and Main Idea of a Paragraph. The instructional goal was students were able to choose best topic for a paragraph, to determine topic of a paragraph, and to choose the best main-idea statement. Classroom activities were arranged into three sections, namely three-phrase technique. Brown (2007: 375) suggests this framework for teaching reading. He
explains that in teaching reading, it is recommended to plan before reading activity which build students’ background knowledge about the topic. Then, while students read, it is better to give students a sense of purpose for reading. After that, in post-reading activity, teachers can give exercises on comprehension, vocabulary test, discussion on the content, etc. The teacher implemented the same framework. In pre-reading, he designed the activity to build the students’ background knowledge and familiarity with the topic using pictures then asked them about the topic of those pictures. Next, in whilst-reading, the teacher gave explanation using power point presentation and gave example on how to identify topic and main idea of a paragraph. The rest activity, then, was much more on doing exercises and discussing the students’ answers.

Meanwhile, EYL class conducted on November 6. The time allotment was same i.e. 25 minutes. The topic taught was the Use of Songs and Games in EYL class. The goal of teaching was make students are able to use games and song in EYL classroom creatively and designed classroom activities using those techniques and media. The teacher used Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) technique as the method of delivery. Harmer (2001: 82) said that this technique is appropriate for higher-level students. Using this technique, students are forced to be more active and creative to produce their idea. In presentation section, the teacher explained the materials using power point. He showed example of songs and games in form of video. He also showed example of mini lesson on how to use games and songs in EYL class. Next, in Practice section, the students were asked to discuss their idea on using games and song in EYL class. They also were asked to review a journal, which discussed the same topic. Hence, students were expected to learn from research-based material. Article from a journal was assumed as a worthwhile material since students could learn to criticize the article, read the literature review about the reasons for using games and songs, and gave them idea on how to use songs and games from a real classroom report. Finally, in Production section, each group presented their idea in front of the class and other group gave comment. Based on the writer’s observation, the process of teaching and learning ran smoothly and successfully. Each activity planned in the lesson plan could be well implemented step by step.

The students’ activeness during the process of teaching and learning. Based on the lesson study and observation sheet given by the observer, most of students were active. In Literal Reading class, there were only two out of nine students who did not active. They still paid attention on teacher’s explanation but they did not asked questions or actively participated to respond teachers’ questions as other students did. Based on the interview, they said that they could not keep up with the teacher’s explanation since it was too fast. Meanwhile, in EYL class, all students were active. They enjoyed the lesson and all of them participated in discussion and presented their ideas on using games and song in EYL class. However, the observer criticized that the time allotment for discussing the students’ idea on using songs and games were too long. By setting it shorter, it would provide a longer time for students’ to present their ideas. Overall, both presentations using the three techniques were quite successful since most of students in the class were active and showed their enthusiasm during the lesson.

The implementation of blended learning approach. Blended learning took part in the process of evaluating the students’ presentation in the web log. Thus, each student are asked to upload their works in form of video, power point accompanied with audio, and the teaching materials. Therefore, each student should capable and familiar with technology to do all those things. It is quite fruitful since Cahyono (2013: 425) mentioned that information and communication technology is a part of teacher professional development. In 21 centuries, literacy in ICT is needed to be mastered not only by the students, but also by the teachers (Pacific Literacy Research Center, 2010). It is due to the reason that the use of social media and technology has affected almost all aspects of human life, including education. Then, by uploading the teaching presentation in the internet, there will be more people who can see and give comment toward the presentation. As mentioned by Thorne (2003: 18), blended learning offers a truly universal learning, it is not limited by time and geographic location. Consequently, of course, the teacher then get more valuable feedback for his/her presentation and he/she can learn from those feedback to improve his/her teaching skill.

The writer’s impression and opinion toward the three techniques. Based on the lesson study and observation sheet, then, the writer claimed that the used of three techniques can motivate students to become more active in teaching and learning. He saw the students enjoyed the teaching and learning process using those techniques. The lecturing technique provided a chance for teacher to explain his materials, the presentation and discussion also provided the opportunity for students to take part in the lesson, and the blended learning approach widening the possibility for the teacher to get more valuable feedback from the viewers in the web blog.

Experiences and lessons that the writer’s gain from the implementation of the three techniques. It was showed that the implementation of the three techniques provided several advantages for both teacher and students. The students could better understand the topic through the use of those techniques. They seemed to be more enthusiasts in learning since the teaching and learning process is more students-centered approach. For the teacher, he learned a lot from this technique. He learned to be more creative to prepare the materials. He also
forced to become more skilled and knowledgeable to use technology, especially when he asked to combine his slides with the audio. He also got opportunity to learn how to upload the materials to internet.

What had been done in teaching practice class, actually, was in line with Brown’s suggestion for teaching adult (2007: 104). He said that adult students’ should give more opportunities to make choices about what they will do in and out of the classroom. The concept of three techniques (lecturing, presentation and discussion, and blended learning) is appropriate with this suggestion. The variety of techniques used allows both teacher and students to be more engaged and productive during the lesson. The implementation of blended learning also motivates them to learn out of the class (Bath and Bourke, 2010: 9). After finishing the class, they still have task to upload the materials to the web blog. That is why through blended learning, students and teacher have more opportunities to learn outside the classroom.

Conclusion
To sum up, the use of lecturing, PPT presentation and discussion, and blended learning approach was fruitful for teaching both skill course (Literal Reading) and content course (EYL). The students were more motivated and creative in learning. Besides, the teacher also forced to become more skilled and knowledgeable in integrating technology in teaching and learning process. Therefore, the use of the three techniques was suitable and showed positive impact toward the learning outcomes and the teacher’s professional development.

References


Biodata
Yansyah is currently studying at graduate program in English Language Teaching, University of Malang. He received his undergraduate degree in the same major at State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN) Antasari, Banjarmasin. His main areas of interest include English for Young Learners (EYL), Sociolinguistics, and TEFL.