

REFLECTIONS ON PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Editor :

Hiqma Nur Agustina • Tri Bagus Irawan • Yani Sri Mulyani
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ISBN : 978-623-315-665-3

Design Cover :

Retnani Nur Brilliant

Layout :

Hasnah Aulia

Penerbit CV. Pena Persada Redaksi :
Jl. Gerilya No. 292 Purwokerto Selatan, Kab. Banyumas
Jawa Tengah

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Cetakan pertama : 2021

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Praise be to Allah SWT who has given us the strength to complete the writing of the anthology book entitled REFLECTIONS ON PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC. My deepest appreciation and pride, I give to the authors of this anthology, in particular Mr. Daniel Ginting, Ph.D. as Chair of the IELA (Indonesian English Lecturers Association) who has overseen and led this association, held an online seminar about teaching experiences during this pandemic.

This is a great effort to summarize bright ideas about educational theory and practice, especially English language education and teaching, during the COVID-19 pandemic. This anthology book will be very useful for teachers, lecturers, students, and education practitioners, especially language education, to gain experience that can be directly practiced in online, face-to-face classes, or a combination of online and face-to-face.

Hopefully, this small effort that has great benefits can be continued by IELA (Indonesian English Lecturer Association) in particular and seminar organizers in general to produce important writings containing theoretical and practical ideas that are useful for the advancement of education, especially language education in Indonesia. By sharing this knowledge and experience, we can transfer these smart ideas to fellow teachers and lecturers, researchers, and practitioners to be able to solve some teaching problems with this solution.

Finally, may Allah the Almighty always bless and launch our academic tasks now and in the future. Hopefully, this COVID-19 pandemic will disappear soon and we can carry out education and teaching in schools well and smoothly as usual. Thus, I hope that my remarks are useful to simply motivate myself in particular and to all readers in general. Thank you for your attention and cooperation. Keep the spirit to write. Be an active and productive writer to enlighten and educate the nation's life.

Semarang, July 2021

Prof. Dr. Rudi Hartono, S.S., M.Pd.

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Lessons Learned from Emergency Remote Teaching during the Pandemic: What is missing?

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Introduction

Running full online classes includes two inevitable sides. People often view that online classes result in problems such as buying internet quotas, teaching uncooperative learners, having low level of students' participation, encountering difficulties with technology, facing limited educational resources, experiencing the shortage of ICT knowledge, and relying on poor network infrastructure (Noor, Isa, & Mazhar, 2020). Sepulveda-Escobar and Morrison (2020) mention the lack of direct interaction with learners and the sudden change of setting are among those problems that have interfered with the learners' learning process.

However, we have to admit that the positives of the online classes are quite obvious. For example, online learning has encouraged the teachers to adapt to new knowledge and skills. They become accustomed to experiencing an e-learning environment. Moreover, they also become more and more creative than before. Shortly speaking, the pandemic seems to be successfully making them become digitally and technologically literate (Marshall & Ward, 2020; Rasmitadila, et al., 2020).

Teaching online classes is not always easy. When the government called for the implementation of online classes at the beginning of the global pandemic COVID-19 , I designed full online classes. The instructional materials in these classes were full of asynchronous activities (70%) more than the synchronous ones (30%). As a result, every week I assigned my students to access the materials, joined the discussions and completed the assignments on MS Team. The following week, I scheduled a teleconference meeting with the students. At the end of the semester, I read through the evaluation of my teaching performance in the email, and it was not satisfactory. Most of the students complained about my online teaching. Some said that I had given them too many assignments. Some others mentioned I had given little feedback. From this evaluation, I learned that I had to make improvements. What I used to believe about effective online classes is now being questioned.

I believe that improvement should start from commitment: the students need to be engaged in learning. As they are involved in such interactive activities, we succeed in making them practice new knowledge and make it part of their own. Heckart, et al. (2020) has said students' active participation through meaningful interaction can be established by a number of ways. For example, teaching the students though teleconference is likely to create interactions with the students. They enjoy seeing and interacting with the teacher and friends. Interactions through synchronous activities, when managed properly, are able to generate meaningful learning. The students are able to listen to the teacher' explanation and ask questions.

Drawing Attention

Learning something new requires attention from the students. They have to read the material and even listen to the explanation from the teacher. Susman (2021) defines attention as the ability to process detailed information. People' ability to process and store this information is very limited in terms of capacity and duration. Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) has extensively discussed the phenomenon of limited working memory capacity of humans in processing information through the triarchic theory of cognitive process: dual channel, limited working memory capacity and active processing (Sweller, 2004). Therefore, it is important for teachers to optimize the attention of students in a limited time by providing the essence of the lesson while carefully eliminating other irrelevant elements such as background music, animation, flowery speeches (Sweller, Chandler, Tierney, & Cooper, 1990).

Interleaving

The way I teach online classes is relatively straightforward. I only present important points in my teaching material. During the teleconference, I avoid giving too much new information at once such as long lists of words or a large number of PowerPoint slides. I believe it is likely to result in information overload and a failure to encode much of the information to memory. Instead, learners must at least devote attention to the task at hand in order to process new meaningful concepts at all.

Extending the duration of topics is better than teaching all of them in an intensive block. Conducting review and extension after a time delay is better than doing it immediately. Cepeda et al. (2008) have said that information is better

remembered if there is a larger rather than smaller interval between the first time it is studied and the second. Therefore, having two study sessions spaced apart is far more effective than a single session - in fact, the larger the gap, the better, within certain limits. In short, a time delay before restudy changes the context, boosts attention, and gives the learner more time to consolidate the first learning event via sleep. It also allows more time for forgetting, which (counterintuitively) might actually be helpful, because it makes the second study session more effortful, leading to it having a bigger impact (Pyc & Rawson, 2009).

Using a Personalized Approach

Using more personalized language is one of the most effective strategies to attract students' attention. Personalized means a way to make the classroom more real or closer to our daily lives that students can relate to or feel directly. With a personalized approach, I use examples in everyday life. In addition, using informal language or mentioning the names of our students are other examples of the personalized approach. This personalized way can have an impact on the emotional aspects of students. Emotion also plays a key role in prompting attention. Pupils tend to pay more attention to things that attract them on an emotional level - from amusement to curiosity, and even disgust. Things that are funny, surprising or rude tend to be better remembered than things that are bland or repetitive. This does not mean that we need to shock our learners every day or that everything has to be funny, but we should be wary of making the presentation of content overly standardized. In short, personalising topics by presenting them via real-life stories can also help to boost attention and engagement. It certainly helps to make things relevant to individual learners, activating their schemas and finding analogies that they can relate to.

Start the Lesson with the Questions

Giving questions that challenge their critical thinking. Catching learners' attention involves stimulating curiosity via simple strategies. One example is to avoid starting lessons with a set of facts, but instead to begin with the questions or problems. This is a kind of hook that arouses their curiosity and trains their critical thinking power. For example, in TEFL class, I ask my students, "What makes students cheat on the test?" Most of them never expected this question to be asked at the beginning of the lesson. However, asking questions at the beginning of the lesson proved to be effective in creating interactions between me and my students.

In online classes, I try not to assign too many assignments to students. It's not that I underestimate the quality of assignments. However, giving assignments that they lacked was not a wise choice. Teachers should avoid giving too many assignments. This is likely to result in students' shortage of sleeping hours. On the other hand, homework should be designed to be as brief as possible, to avoid learners having to stay up late working on it. Teachers cannot have much control over student sleep or lesson timing. Instead, we should encourage good and regular sleep habits.

Retrieval Practice

I always give quizzes or small tests to students after teaching online via teleconference. Of course, I gave them enough time to ask me questions or give them the opportunity to review the current course material. They need sufficient time to consolidate the new knowledge they receive. After that, I gave them a little test using Socrative or Google Form.

I have certain reasons to explain why I gave the test to my students. This is retrieval technique (Smith & Firth, 2018). In general, the term retrieval can be interpreted as the term used to mean accessing our memories and recalling the facts and skills, and could include many types of event: performing a piece of music, making a link between new information and something previously studied, or answering a multiple-choice question are all examples of retrieval. Related to my online class, giving a retrieval exercise in the form of this small test is as a study strategy - people learn better when they are tested than when revising more passively. As a learning strategy, this is commonly known as retrieval practice, and is considered one of the most effective educational interventions (Dunlosky et al., 2013), along with spacing. It should be noted that the use of retrieval practice is not the same as formative assessment - a method of using performance to identify weaknesses and priorities (although the two can complement each other). Retrieval practice helps because the active use of learned information appears to consolidate that memory and make it less likely to be forgotten (Karpicke et al., 2014).

Conclusions

Learning from remote teaching during the pandemic, the pandemic has led education to a virtual learning environment. The E-learning environment is one of the teaching instructional deliveries most teachers do during the pandemic. Teachers are demanded to always be adaptive to any new situations. In spite of different teaching approaches, teachers should never neglect the importance of promoting interactions with the students. Through these interactions, teachers help their students learn new knowledge and build favourable emotional bonds. Like in any traditional classes, online teachers should monitor students' learning progress, maintain quality discussion through question-and-answer sessions, provide

regular feedback, help low achievers with some extra attention, etc.

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About the author



Daniel Ginting received his doctorate in English Language Teaching from State University in Malang (2015). He is a member of the IMOOC (Indonesian Massive Open Online Course) module development team, a program initiated by the Regional Language Official (RELO) of the American Embassy, 2016-2017. In 2018, he was the specialist responsible for facilitating IMOOC instructors. In 2020, he and a team of lecturers from State Surabaya Technology Institute University of ITS Sepuluh November developed the Massive Open Online Course for Non-academic staff. Daniel is currently the editor in chief of *Klausa* journal, and a reviewer for *Humaniora* journal, *Sage Open*, *World Journal of English Language*, *Mextesol*, and *Lenguas En Contexto Mexico*.

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The COVID-19 pandemic has forced educators to provide instruction in an online environment. Indeed, online learning is not a new concept in the field of education. Yet, the quick shift of moving traditional education to a virtual setting is a daunting task in a short amount of time.

Schools and teachers' preparedness for using digital devices effectively, students' lack of access to technology and the internet, alternate modes for academic activities, and limited opportunities for more in-depth explanations from teachers are the difficulties identified during online teaching and learning. In short, transitioning to a virtual setting has been in challenge to teachers and students.

Apart from unexpected learning outcomes, pandemics also teach educators positive values. Educators and students are taught to be more adaptive to the e-learning-based learning environment. Teachers should use e-learning effective tools to encourage students to incorporate multiple means of instruction, engage students in virtual learning strategies, invite collaboration with fellow educators, and maintain communication with students and parents. School administrators ensure that educators are prepared for teaching during the pandemic while focusing their efforts on providing technology resources and training to deliver special education services for students.

This Anthology Book is a collection of popular scientific writings from Indonesian English Lecturers Association members. This is reflective writing depicting their struggles, commitment, and dedication to education during the pandemic. The authors have shared the same vision. May this book serve as a source of inspiration for those who are tireless and concerned with the progress and education quality of the nation.



ISSN 978-623-315-665-3



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