TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS' AWARENESS TO EDUCATIONAL CHANGES

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Abstract

This study documented the teachers' perceptions of the essay writing project of the students emphasized on students' 4 C's skills incorporated into the hybrid learning of IMS Khalifa Junior High as a contribution to the teaching and learning revolution to equip the students to face global competition in industry 4.0. The research design was a descriptive qualitative approach. The data collecting techniques were undertaken from the observation of students' English essay writing projects and presentations as well as in-depth interviews with the board of teachers who were in charge of the program. The students did not show any difficulties in delivery since they used English for daily communication. However, the study found that the problems laid on their lack of collaboration and self-independent study in which both are the features of project-based learning. Finally, the researcher, along with the board of teachers in a forum of discussion strived to the upcoming improvement.

Introduction

The pandemic that occurred in the last two years, in fact, has benefited from the acceleration in the use of technology in the fields of education since the educators have no reason to stop providing excellent teaching and learning services, nor do the same old things with their teachings in different era. Consequently, adaptation towards changes is the keyword to meet the demands of complex real-life and work scenarios in recent years. The teaching and learning process that mainly focuses on traditional classroom settings alone might no longer accommodate the success of future lives and careers. Educational institutions, therefore, were struggling to respond to the challenge issue of global changes mentioned above, including the reform of education itself.

In the beginning, most teachers generally perceived that the teaching delivery method changes from conventional classroom to online, and then shifting to hybrid learning were quite formidable to adapt to as they seemed to be a completely new paradigm. Integrating web-based technology such as video streaming, and technological self-study instruction into pedagogical approach requires lifelong skill to adapt.

Meanwhile, the demand for educational changes in industry 4.0 occurred is also characterized by the shifting to a student-centered orientation that has become more widespread to offend the conventional one, so as the spoon-feeding to autonomous learning orientation. The practice of producing autonomous students is not as easy as it looks since it might have taken much time to get the students used to being independent and responsible to grow. In turn, the curriculum experienced such shifting to meet the demand of the future needs rather than cognitive ability alone. In addition to both teachers and students' mental awareness to response to the educational changes, the real-life situation learning is required to produce students to be critical thinking, creative, collaborative, and communicative as best described as the features of 21st century skills.

Considering the fact that advanced technology responds to the educational changes as the challenge issues, this study mainly discusses the aspects of students' 4C's skills in a form of documentation. Furthermore, it elicits the teachers' perceptions on their awareness and readiness to adapt to the shifting of the teaching and learning orientation to the students that is required to meet 21st century skills. How the researcher evaluated the progress as well as the teachers' and students' attitudes towards such changes are illustrated in the form of students' performance result and forum of discussions. There have been many researchers conducting the significant learning outcome of 4C's skills; almost none discuss the teachers' perception of the operation of online or hybrid learning. In relations to the teachers' perception of evaluating the project-based learning, (Habok & Nagy 2016) documented that the criteria of the project include the students' learning motivation, focus on student-centered process, familiarization with the core concepts, emphasizing cooperation in groups, and application of ICT tools, and so on. So, the teachers need to pay attention to such criteria to prepare students to face the challenges of life and working environment in Industry 4.0. Sharing the similar idea, (Putu Ratama et al., 2021) added that the importance of teaching 4C's skills provides students to be more sensible to higher order thinking skills, problem solving, as well as finding solution to their future challenge lives. The implementation of English essay writing is a school pilot for the 9th grader in Junior High. The project was designed as a trial to show the effectiveness of hybrid learning and other influential aspects. Such English essay writing program was conducted by either online or offline and subject to change due to pandemic condition within three months.

The significance of this study is expected to be an insight for the teachers to conduct project-based learning by considering the incorporation of advanced technology adaptation to the pedagogical approach - constructivism. Similarly, the students need to understand that their future challenge issue that will demand multitasking skills.

Method

The research was designed using a descriptive qualitative approach in the form of participant observation as well as in-depth interviews. The setting of the study was IMS Khalifa Junior high School in South Tangerang, Banten. The objects of observations were 23 students of 9th grade of Junior High. The researcher observed and evaluated their English essay projects as well as the presentation held on April 22nd – 23rd 2022. Later on, such observations served as data collection that was used to evaluate the project. The essay writing project and presentation using English language at the 9th grader was a school pilot project. Inviting the researcher to be the students' performance evaluator demonstrated the feature of project-based learning.

The interviews were conducted with the three teachers who were in charge of the students' essay writing projects. The group of teachers were investigated to determine the problems lies on based on their perspectives. Prior to the interviews, the researcher arranged the interview protocol, which consisted of the time, place, the interviewees, the topic, and the media used. Next, the researcher prepared a list of questions that led to data collection. The responses were used as keyword analyses to identify the patterns of educational changes. Finally, the information gathered from the teachers' responses discovered the phenomena in a form of evaluation in a discussion section. Some parts of data collection can be accessed to the link https://www.instagram.com/tv/Cc07_VroZcs/?igshid=MDJmNzVkMjY= while other parts are confidential.

Result And Discussion

Creativity

Creativity is the ability of mental process to create something new, unique, or come up with the idea of the existing object by different perspectives. To do so, the teachers introduced to a wide variety of ideas such as brainstorming. Besides, they trained the students to elaborate and evaluate their ideas to improve their creativity. Meanwhile, the main core of this essay writing project expected the students to be able to acquire and apply their thoughts to real-world problem-solving contexts. The activities of this program started by allowing the students to select the topic interest them. Sharing the same view point, (Halvorsen, 2018) asserted that giving students a chance to be creative, the teachers need to be flexible, and let them choose where possible. Next, the students were required to report what and how well they understood to such topics through their daily literacy activities. Besides creating reading habit, this activity promotes their critical thinking skills as they were required to reflect what they got in their reading content. They were also needed to show the sources and consult to their teachers and peers either online or offline to have feedback and comments. Such way is expected to build their creativity to find solution to complex problem as they will know what to think in a creative way.

The students should connect their previous knowledge of their interest topic to the reading materials they gathered. The researcher found it interesting to start reading and getting more information based on their interests. The in–service teachers claimed that such activities promoted 4 cs skills namely critical, collaboration, and communication. Creativity skills lie on their way the choose their invaluable topics based on their learning interests. In addition, the way they design their ppt presentation. Teacher claimed that they did not limit the students' freedom to choose the topics. However, the teachers suggested some possible improvement for the meaningfulness of their creativity to a certain topic.

Critical thinking

Critical thinking is the ability to understand the relationship between the idea or fact in a logic and systematic ways such as comparison and contrast, cause and effects, the order of importance, and etc. (Chiruguru, 2020) shared the same idea that critical thinking is looking at problems in a new way and linking across subjects and disciplines. To do so, the teachers required the students to gather relevant information by selecting appropriate criteria for their own essay topic to write on. Such activity allowed them to get involved in a think and re-think process of what the importance aspects of a certain topic that might be useful for others, too. At the same time, such critical thinking activity they conducted also led them to be able to make summary, note takings, then prepare their interpretations in a form of writing project. Critical thinking was also exposed when they analyzed the topic and discuss with teacher and peers to find out the appropriate details and feedback. Critical thinking then should not always stand alone; collaboration to find a solution together and feedback, and the creativity in selecting topic and delivery are the two examples of other skills contribution.

Collaboration

Collaboration comes up with two or more people get involved to achieve their goal together. To increase students' collaboration skills, the teachers need to introduce the importance of working together that

can achieve certain goal easier compared to work alone. Therefore, they need to be taught to understand other people difficulty, and reminded that they would be at the same position one day. The teachers should introduce the differences between collaboration and competition in a clear way.

As a matter of fact, the collaboration among the 9th grade students of Khalifa was not successfully implemented. The students tended to refer to the teachers as their best problem solvers. The teachers thought that the students were so busy to their own project completion that did not care to other group members. It seemed that the students' lives are full of competition for another reason. Later on, the teachers realized that the design of essay writing independent project shaped the competition atmosphere among them rather than discussing the problem solving in a group. There must have been a misunderstanding to let the students choose their own topic based on personal interests. Selecting personal topic was intended to build their creativity, not to show that they were better than the others. The students were reluctant to share their works to their friends but demanding to the teachers. The role of social constructivism is one of the main objectives of project-based learning as the learning occurs in a social environment (Habok & Judit, 2016). Firstly, teachers need to provoke collaborative learning. By doing so, the students do not feel at lost while studying either at home or school. Collaborative learning gives large opportunity to interact among the students, and the teacher. Moreover, the collaborative learning allows the students to share either their knowledge to others or their learning difficulties.

Communication

Communication is the ability to express the ideas and thought in a clear way. The teacher needs to model the students by using easy-to-understand language by different media. The teachers should allocate the time to listen what the students feel as the need to do so as well. Meanwhile, communication skills are also sharpened while the sharing, feedback happened. Addressing students to conduct the English essay project is automatically building a rapport among the people who get involved in it. (Halvorsen, 2018) points out that Project-based learning, pair work, and group work are excellent to support the development of communication and collaboration. Within their week-by-week steps to essay writing project completion, the students were also trained what and how to deliver important ideas or messages to build an effective communication. Not only to talk or get information from the other sources, the students need to be able to select the accuracy of the information sources. Therefore, the essay writing project are invaluable to prepare the students to oral and written communication where such skills are needed in life and workforce environments such as; negotiation, explanation, presenting clear information, etc. The teachers realized that the English essay writing project with IMRAD method was not easy for them although the English language delivery for means of communication was not a problem for them.

To sum up, the essay writing project conducted to 9th grader of IMS Khalifa generated all students' 4C's skills exposures. For example, the students need to analyze the information in ambiguous situation they get from various sources, where they are needed to solve the problems that involve group of people from different background. They need to communicate the solution effectively. Thus, such multitasking ability is needed in their more complicated life and workforce environments.

Annotation/Interview Script

The first question concerns the teaching and learning process related to the material delivery to equip hybrid learning while and post-pandemic. They all agreed that they did not find any difficulties to provide materials in online learning setting. In fact, the students would be at advantage to get fully comprehensive materials that they could access long before the synchronous video conference schedule. Also, the students could access the materials anytime anywhere and learned the materials with their own pace. The teachers also claimed that they would provide other extended practice and external links for enrichment if necessary.

The responses showed that the teachers did not find any difficulties to deliver online materials, nor did the student found them in their learning platforms. The teachers showed how the materials distributed from week-by-week session during 3 months of students' training project. The feature of implementing 4C's skills is the readiness to adapt to advanced technology use as (Astuti et al., 2019) confirmed that the 21st century generation has the characteristics of multitasking, multimedia, and online info searching. They also added that teachers and students are required to have digital skills

The second question focused on how the teachers measure their students' learning success and feeling. The group of teachers said that *"as we previously mentioned, we believe that the students understood what they needed to learn for best. They seemed to welcome such changes and started to learn by exploring the unlimited learning resources from the internet. To your surprise, sometimes, they had already known the sequence of the lessons. For examples, some of them asking me if they were able to use personal opinion to collect data while at that time, we have not discussed the lesson of data collection yet". (Although not many of them, it signaled me that the students had desire to learn something new). Moreover, most of them got involved in the online video conference online as well as took many parts in interactions. However, majority of the teachers said that although the students*

were excited to deal with blended learning, they are not ready enough to be independent learners. They needed to be accompanied to gain knowledge and to material completion.

The third question is about how the teachers evaluated the success of their 9th grade students' final project completion. T: *Firstly, the students tended to work individually on project presentation and report rather than shared the information and guided their peers on the groupwork. I mean, yes, it was a personal project, but it does not mean that they had to work individually. Although the topic was based on the personal interests, they need to discuss, at least the format of the writing and the presentation that they needed to work together – in a collaborative way. So, we admitted that we lose the essence of collaboration as the type of essay writing emphasized on individual to make them independent, not to be selfish. Secondly, the students initially need promoting to autonomous learners. They need to understand their weaknesses, hence they need to catch up materials provided in websites for further information. Lastly, they need to talk and consult their learning difficulty. Some students seemed to have misperception towards autonomous learning. It does not mean the students need to gain the knowledge by themselves, they also need to consult to their teachers of what they need to know as a part of learning. The passive students might not get advantage of blended learning. In addition to spoon feeding and lack of collaboration, passive students will not get the essence of the changes of educational system changes to meet 4 c's skills.*

Thus, the shifting of conventional classroom to hybrid learning resulting the effective content delivery methods as most of the students started to understand the essence of autonomous learning, while the few of them still demanding to be spoon-feeding. As a result, the shift role of the teachers to learning facilitators is still in need of another further study as the teachers often complained that they had to share the same information repeatedly. (Dorand, 2020) added in relations to the shifting to online based learning needs to be supported by the people who got involved; including the attitudes, readiness, and interactivity among them all.

Conclusion

The practice of essay writing project conducted to the 9th grader of Khalifa Junior High has documented the success of 4 C's skills implementation incorporating to hybrid learning since the students were able to conduct a series of project completely. Next, by addressing professional or expertise guest to evaluate the success of students' project depicted the seriousness to improve project-based learning program.

As a leading national plus school, the group of teachers claimed that they needed to adapt the internal curriculum to students' 4 C's skills to prepare our students to future life and work environments without neglecting the government policy in education as a mandatory. However, such project has just begun this year, both researcher and the teachers agreed to note some important points for improvement highlighting the students' engagement in hybrid learning in a term of collaboration and autonomous learning, considering the students' project itself as a process of learning.

Lastly, the project involving teacher-student investigation will be considered as problem-solving, discovery, and a model of building process in the upcoming research.

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