

# PROMOTING A HUNDRED PERCENT ONLINE LEARNING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN INDONESIA UNIVERSITIES

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## Abstract

*As technology develops fast, learning can be established easily by using online learning which is a learning that takes place via the internet. Some considerations for applying online learning must be concerned such as faculty that should provide good academic system, well-prepared teachers who are good at using online application, learners' need, requirements and assessment, and online technology that is used in the learning to make the online learning run well. Therefore, this article proposes a hundred percent online learning in English language teaching in university level since there are still a few Indonesian universities applying it and it is very beneficial for students.*

**Key words:** online learning, technology, modern teaching

## INTRODUCTION

In this modern era, many sophisticated technologies have been developed rapidly to help human activities in many aspects such as social, politic, economic and education. One of the technologies used to enhance education quality is the internet use for online learning. Dudeney and Hockly (2007:136) define online learning as a learning that takes place via the internet. As such, online learning is a facet of e-learning which refers to learning that takes place using technology such as the internet, CD-ROMs and portable devices like mobile phones or MP3 players. The key concept of online learning is that a very significant part of the course delivery and coursework takes place virtually, using the internet.

Another view point about online learning is proposed by Khan (1997, in Anderson, 2008:17) who states that online instruction as an innovative approach for delivering instruction to a remote audience, using the Web as the medium. Online learning, however, involves more than just the presentation and delivery of materials using the Web: the learner and the learning process should be the focus of online learning. As a result, he defines online learning as the use of the Internet to access learning materials; to interact with the content, instructor, and other learners; and to obtain support during the learning process, in order to acquire knowledge, to construct personal meaning, and to grow from the learning experience.

Online education has gone through significant changes in terms of both available technology and the ways in which online technologies can improve the quality of learning and opportunities for learners. Connolly and Stansfiels (in press) identify three distinct generations of online education. The first generation, which was based mainly on the

passive use of the internet (circa 1994-1999), focused primarily on the conversion of course material to an online format, basic mentoring via e-mail and low-fidelity streamed audio and/or video. The second generation (circa 2000-2003) was characterized by the use of more advanced technologies with high-bandwidth access, rich streaming media and virtual learning environment (VLEs) providing access to course material, communication facilities, and student services. VLEs became capable of supporting a constructivist form of learning encouraging more reflection and rigorous thinking, which helped learners to make connections among ideas and to construct internal, coherent knowledge structures. The third generation (since 2003) is characterized by more collaborative learning environments based more on constructivist epistemology, promoting reflective practice through tools such as e-portfolios, blogs, wikis, games-based online learning, and highly interactive online simulations (Inoue, 2007).

## **DISCUSSION**

Online learning can be designed in different styles in which preferred by the lecturer and the faculty. Dudeney and Hockly (2007:138) propose three kinds of design of online learning for English course.

### **Course 1: A 100 percent online language learning course**

This course is likely to be instigated by an institution in response to a perceived demand in the market, or perhaps as part of a government sponsored initiative. The course is not unlike a course book online, with ten units covering four skills (reading, listening, writing and speaking), grammar and vocabulary. Learners work their way through a series of materials and activities online, which include reading and listening texts, and writing, grammar and vocabulary activities. Many of the activities are self-marking, with feedback given automatically by the computer, but activities such as writing texts are sent to a tutor via email. Speaking is dealt via phone or Skype tutorial event unit and learners also need to spend regular voice mail to their tutor. The course can be taken by an individual learner who works through the course material at their own pace or by small group of learners, who all start at the same time and have set the deadlines for work. For example, learners need to complete one unit per month, and certain activities within that unit by specified date in the month. In the case of a small group, additional facilities like online forums and a text/audio chat room are provided for group members to discuss issues and materials, and to meet in regularly with and without tutor.

### **Course 2: A blended language learning course**

A language learning course delivered 75 percent online and 25 percent face-to-face. This course is similar to Course 1 in that it is likely to be instigated by an institution in response to a perceived demand in the market or as part of government sponsored initiative, but learners meet once in a month face-to-face in a group with a teacher. Similar material to those found in Course 1 covering the four skills, grammar and vocabulary are delivered both online and face-to-face but speaking activities are carried out mainly face-to-face. Phone contact and Skype may provide extra speaking practice for learners on this course.

### **Course 3: A face-to-face language learning course with additional online materials**

A typical language learning course, which uses online tools to support and extend face-to-face lessons. Strictly speaking this is not an online course, but it is the way most teachers get involved in online learning and become more confident with using online tools with their learners at a distance. The teacher uses the following online tools:

- a. A tutor blog to provide extra reading and listening practice, to set homework and to provide summaries of class work.
- b. Learners email the teacher all class assignments, which are returned via email.
- c. The teacher offers regular chat session via Skype for the learners, outside class time, for example every second weekend at a specific time, for an hour.
- d. The teacher does project work with the class involving ICT tools like blogs, wikis or podcasts and encourages learners to work on these projects outside class time, in virtual groups.

In this paper, the writer promotes course 1 with a 100 percent online language learning course since there are many outstanding universities that have successfully provided students with pure online learning, such as University of Oxford, Harvard University, University of Cambridge, Stanford University, Boston University, The Pennsylvania State University, etc. Every university has different learning standard and criteria, so students who are willing to pursue certain course have to pay attention on them. Carliner and Shank (2008:20) state that The Sloan Consortium found that students are as satisfied with online courses as they are with classroom - based courses and the learning outcomes are equivalent, matching results from other studies showing that media and technologies are not the preeminent factors impacting instructional outcomes.

In Indonesia, there are still a few universities that apply pure online learning such as UNIKOM (Univeritas Komputer Indonesia) which provide their students with online course for degree program, CEUO (Ciputra University Entrepreneurship Online) which gives entrepreneurship online course for free but it is for non-degree program, and Bina Nusantara University also applies online courses degree program. Therefore, this paper provides some insights that can be used by higher education to implement online learning since there are many students need online learning. As undergraduate students are too abundant for taking online learning, the university can apply it for postgraduate degree for the beginning. Because there are many students coming from other cities or islands, online learning will be useful for them particularly for students who already have families.

In Indonesia, Online learning can be applied for several courses with lecturers who have capability and the course can be managed in online learning since certain courses might need face-to-face learning. In a hundred percent online learning, the schedule of the courses has been arranged by the university at fixed time. The students can join the course which is taught by the lecturer at the fixed time while the group work and free discussion can be done at any time. They can do their group work and discussion at their own home. By using the online learning technology, the students are able to access the assignments and sources easily.

Establishing online learning is something easy to be applied in universities. As stated in Illionis University Online Network, in an online course, with instant access to vast

resources of data and information, students are no longer totally dependent on faculty for knowledge. As faculty is beginning to teach online, learning is becoming more collaborative, contextual and active. Educators must first design their curriculum, goals and objectives and then consider how the online environment can best serve the instructional objectives and activities of that curriculum. This requires changes in pedagogy, with instructors taking the role of facilitators of information while guiding students toward solutions.

In teaching and learning process, goals and outcomes are important aspects to be concerned. Teachers and faculty must stick to them so they have a compass to deliver teaching materials and run the online learning. Therefore, they can measure what they have reached and what they have not done. Zhu, et al (2003) said that instructors need to define their course goals and outcomes when designing an online course, just as they do when designing a face-to-face course. Their course goals will determine the choice of technology tools, which influence the format online activities and assessment techniques. Carliner and Shank (2008:19) also supported the idea, they assume that delivering instructional content online (or elsewhere) is insufficient to produce learning or usable skills. Desirable outcomes require far more effort than building instructional content.

### **Teacher Consideration**

Teacher plays important role in online learning process since he or she is the one who is responsible to teach students. Teacher who leads the learning online is required to have capabilities and gets support from faculty. Bennett and Lockyer (2004, in Inoue, 2007) further note that online instructors need to:

1. Design and facilitate collaborative and cooperative activities for learners who are working in different places, at different times, and with varying facilities
2. Develop a schedule and study guide around milestones rather than classes
3. Create and integrate a greater range of electronic resources
4. Develop skills and strategies for using computer-mediated tools as the primary means of communication

### **Learner Consideration**

Learners should be informed of the learning outcomes of the lesson, so they know what is expected of them and will be able to gauge when they have achieved the lesson outcomes. An advance organizer should be provided to establish a structure, to organize the details in the online lesson, or to bridge between what learners already know and need to know. Learners must be told the prerequisite requirements so that they can check whether they are ready for the lesson. Providing the prerequisites to learners also activates the required cognitive structure to help them learn the materials (Anderson, 2008:36).

Another significant aspect for the learner consideration is about assessment. Anderson (2008:36-38) suggests that a self-assessment should be provided at the start of the lesson to allow learners to check whether they already have the knowledge and skills taught in the online lesson. If learners think they have the knowledge and skills, they should be allowed to take that lesson's final test. The self-assessment also helps learners to organize the lesson materials and to recognize the important materials in the lesson. Once

learners are prepared for the details of the lesson, they can go on to complete the online learning activities and to learn the details of the lesson.

### **Online Technology**

Technology which is the basis of online learning process must be understood well. Dudeny and Hockey (2007:137) point out that online learning is commonly delivered via a learning 'platform' or Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), also known as a Learner Management System (LMS), or a virtual classroom, a VLE is a web-based platform on which course content can be stored. It is accessed by learners on the internet and they cannot only see course content, such as documents, audio and video lectures, but also do activities such as quizzes, questionnaires and tests or use communication tools like discussion forums or text and audio chat. Newer VLEs even integrates blogs and wikis. Increasingly popular in the VLEs are WebCT, which recently merged with Blackboard and First Class, although neither of these is free.

The advantage of a VLE for course delivery is that everything is in one place, and most VLEs provide tracking facilities, so that the online tutor can see who has logged in when, and see what activities learners have done, or what documents and forums they have accessed. VLEs also usually provide fairly sophisticated tools for assessment and grading with record kept for each learner. Thus a teacher can evaluate a learner's written work or assignments in the VLE, as well as their contributions to forums and these grades are automatically recorded. Results for automatically graded activities will also be fed into learners 'grade book' with the learner able to consult their grades and check progress at any point (Dudeny and Hockey, 2007:138).

### **Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Learning**

Online learning gives the flexibility in length and time of study, automated assessment and feedback, and discussion between remote users which facilitate self-directed learning (McPherson & Nunes, 2004). Besides, those who are less verbal may fare better in this format as every student is almost guaranteed a chance to say something. No one sits in the back row; no one has to wait a long to be recognized (Maeroff, 2003). The ability of personal identities to remain concealed that all students regardless of race, sex, disability, or appearance are on equal ground. With the option of multiple representations of a concept embedded in an online course, students can store and retrieve information more effectively (Richardson and Swan, 2003, in Inoue, 2007).

Since the traditional teaching and learning needs many classes to accommodate many students, the online learning can be the best solution for this problem. The students do not need to come to the class as they are only required to access the courses at home. In addition, one of the causes of traffic jam in big cities is the students of the university who ride their own vehicle or picked up by their parents. When they go to university and go home, the traffic jam cannot be avoided. Therefore, online learning is beneficial to reduce the traffic that makes people frustrated nowadays.

On the other hand, web-based or online learning environments are not as effective as traditional learning environments because of the lack of face-to-face interactions or rapport, and that students taking online courses feel disconnected from other classmates

because the lack of facial and vocal expressions and other features common to traditional classroom environments including direct communication and feedback (Richardson and Swan, 2003, in Inoue, 2007). It is taken for granted that the classroom is the normal place for learning. Yet there is little evidence to support the claim that traditional education is the standard. The basic assumption is that face-to-face students form a cohesive group, participating alike in discussion, listening to lectures, building intellectual and social relationships with teachers and peers inside and outside class. But, as Anthony Picciano points out, this is not always the case. Classroom students often feel alienated, drawing away from others and isolating themselves (Picciano, 2002, in Ubell, 2010).

In addition, the impersonal nature of learning and technical problems including breakdown in multimedia software and insufficient processor speed are the disadvantages of online learning (Maeroff, 2003). Many universities probably need more budget to establish online learning with good technology and fast internet access to facilitate the learning. In this learning, technology and internet access are the core of online learning which must be prepared carefully by the university.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The writer proposes a hundred online learning to be applied in postgraduate program in universities since it has many advantages. Another aspect to be considered appropriately in online learning is the course. According to Dibiase and Rademacher (2005, in Inoue, 2007), successful online course implementation should focus on the following:

1. Setup and coordination including tasks associated with readying new implementations of the course within the course management system and ongoing tasks related to administration and coordination;
2. Content development and maintenance including changes to course content such as corrections, revisions, and additions to text and graphics;
3. Communication including daily communications with students via threaded discussion, e-mail, and occasional telephone calls or in-person conversations; and
4. Assessment and feedback including development and revision of rubrics, evaluation of projects published in e-portfolios, and grade reports and comments sent to individual students.

Even though online learning still has some weaknesses, it is not kind of obstacles to establish a hundred percent online learning because every problem has solution. The lack of face-to-face problem can be overcome by the use of Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) program that can facilitate students to have online discussion where they can see each other faces. This is a good way for the students interaction, moreover, nowadays student tend to like chat conversation in social media. Therefore, face-to-face is not something that can obstruct the online learning any more. Furthermore, university applying online learning has to use good internet connection system and sophisticated software to facilitate the learning. Therefore, in preparing the online learning facilities, the university can cooperate with the government and private institution so the funding can be handled and the learning does not cost much. Today, the internet service provider such as Telkom

has many internet features with low price which is very beneficial to be used by students, so the internet connection is not a problem anymore.

Other tips for successful online learning are also suggested by Dudeney and Hockly (2007:142-143) who provide some detail explanation.

1. Take an online course. Experiencing online yourself will make you much more aware of- and empathetic to-difficulties your own online learners may encounter, as well as issues of online group dynamics, the importance of contact with the tutor, and so on.
2. Ensure that all design and delivery issues are resolved at the planning stage. See the checklist above. Be prepared to spend a lot of time on course preparation and on tutoring.
3. Find out about your learner's expectations about online course, and deal with any unrealistic expectations, early on.
4. Create interactive tasks at the beginning of your online course to introduce the learners to the technicalities of the online environment if you are using a VLE.
5. Create an online community by providing opportunities for learners to interact with each other socially from the very beginning of the course.
6. Create spaces, communication channels and norms for dealing with issues and conflict. This can be done both publicly and privately, and should be available throughout the course.
7. Establish norms, protocols or guidelines for group interaction and behavior. These can be negotiated by participants or provided by you. Provide clear guidelines as to tutor roles, contact times and turnaround time for responding to work and emails.
8. Allow for group closure by, for example, celebrating achievements, disseminating products, providing feedback, designing 'closing' activities and providing for post-course contact and development.

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