

ICER 2013



The 6th International Conference
on Educational Research:
Challenging Education for Future Change



ICER2013

13-14
September, 2013

Faculty of Education, Khon Kaen University, Thailand



Khon Kaen University



Faculty of Education



The Hong Kong Institute
of Education, China



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The 6th International Conference on Educational Research: *Challenging Education for Future Change*

Faculty of Education, Khon Kaen University, THAILAND

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Message from the Dean
Faculty of Education Khon Kaen University, THAILAND

Greeting to all participants and welcome to Faculty of Education, Khon Kaen University

The International Conference on Educational Research (ICER) 2013: *Challenging Education for Future Change* is the 6th annual conference to celebrate the 45th anniversary of the establishment of Faculty of Education, Khon Kaen University. The ICER 2013 is jointly organized by the Faculty of Education, Khon Kaen University of Thailand, The Hong Kong Institute of Education of China, Thailand Education Deans Council and the Consortium of Sixteen Education Dean of Thailand (Group 16).

The goals of this conference are to give international educators the opportunity to share ideas and form networks while working together on challenging education for future change. It is anticipated that the exchange of ideas and research findings will contribute greatly to future generations.

During the ICER 2013 event, the APEC-Khon Kaen International Symposium 2013 with its theme “*Innovation of Mathematics Education through Lesson Study - Challenging from Mathematics Education to Emergency Preparedness Education*” is also held at the Faculty of Education starting from September 13 to September 16, 2013. So the two events will share the plenary sessions during the first two days of APEC symposium.

On behalf of the Faculty of Education, Khon Kaen University, I would like to express my gratitude and my sincere appreciation to our co-host institutions, the guest speakers and the organizing committees for their efforts. I also would like to thank all delegations and participants who come from afar to join this event.

I hope the prosperous education will not stop developing as far as the network we form is concerned. The pace of growing should move through the fast changing world as we all expected.



(Assistant Professor Maitree Inprasitha, Ph.D.)
Dean, Faculty of Education
Khon Kaen University
THAILAND



Message from Co-host The Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIED)

The Hong Kong Institute of Education is a multidisciplinary education focussed institution with a strong research emphasis. It has a growing international reputation for excellence in preparing globally aware professional educators, providing culturally enriched educational experiences, and producing research of distinction. Central to the Institute's values is a commitment to developing international and regional networks that will facilitate the integration of intercultural and global dimensions into its teaching, learning, and research.

At HKIED we particularly value collaborative research with international partners. We seek to understand better the contexts that influence people in the Asia Pacific region and to identify ways of improving social outcomes for all. We see international partnerships as important opportunities for enhancing the impact of our research.

HKIED is proud to join with Khon Kaen University to co-host the 2013 International Conference on Educational Research.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Allan".

(Professor Allan Walker)
Joseph Lau Chair Professor of International Educational Leadership
Dean, Faculty of Education and Human Development
The Hong Kong Institute of Education
HONG KONG SAR
People's Republic of China

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An Exploration of the Students' Perception and Learning Experiences in Blended Learning: A Case Study of the Higher Education Online Pedagogical Interactions

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Abstract

Blended learning, or courses mixing both conventional classroom and online methods to manage instruction and learning, has been significantly more popular in the Indonesian higher education instructional activities. This paper is focusing on the students' perception and learning experiences in utilizing a blended learning classroom among the students of the School of Cultural Studies, University of Brawijaya, Indonesia. It is a qualitative case study of the six different classes studying three subject courses in a blended instruction method over a two semester period to provide the data of the pedagogical interaction practices. Online and offline interviews, questionnaires, and observation were conducted to obtain the data. This study finds that at the beginning of the courses most students find technical difficulties. However, they able to solve their problems with the peer assistance and start to participate the whole courses effectively. This study also reveals that the students enjoy working in online learning activities and satisfied with the blended learning. This blended learning creates a democratization of learning in which both the students and instructor interacting each other in an egalitarian atmosphere. Most students do not find any communication barriers in online interaction within their groups as well as with the instructor to share their ideas about particular topics. And the last, some students feel more confident expressing opinion through online learning rather than in a face-to-face classroom, they have positive attitude toward online learning, and they find that this method is a meaningful learning experience for their study.

Keywords: *blended learning, learning experiences, pedagogical interaction, perception*

Introduction

Blended learning is a learning model that integrates conventional classroom learning with an online or Internet-based method of managing the learning process. Blended learning combines class activities and meetings in the form of activities that are mediated by a computer network to create an integrated learning approach. Universally, there is no single consensus regarding the definition of blended learning. Terms like "blended", "hybrid", and "mixed-mode" are often used interchangeably with the same meaning, but "blended learning" is the most frequently encountered term. Over the past few decades, blended learning has extended learning methodologies, opening up opportunities for open and distance learning as well as challenging more traditional methods. Most recently the term 'blend' has been attached to e-learning, and this blending of e-learning with traditional methods is attracting the interest of many teachers in further and higher education (Littlejohn and Pegler in Holt et al., 2011 p.xi)

True to its name of "blended learning", this mode of learning contains two sessions, one online and one offline. The implementation of both sessions vary in their function and role in learning, and this depends on the context of the learning itself. In several cases, the offline session is only utilized as a complement to stabilize learning which stresses the online session. On the other hand, there are some models which utilize the online session just as a

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learning medium to create a more interesting learning environment. In other cases, the portions of the online and offline sessions are balanced.

The reason which has always been cited for the benefit of blended learning is the teacher can select and sort curriculum contents and learning activities, whether online or face to face, based on the level of difficulty, interests, and learning styles of students. Furthermore the teacher can let students decide when to learn at their own discretion as well as what to do if they cannot attend the face-to-face sessions. In the context of learning, blended learning can be implemented with adjustments and modifications accordingly with the conditions of the school. With blended learning, it is expected that students and teachers develop a culture of technological competence within themselves, and also a culture of critical thinking and inquiry within students by comparing or elaborating materials provided by teachers with resources that are virtually available.

Blended learning can be utilized as an information sharing medium with other parties that are concerned with the development of education and scientific study of their fields. Through blended learning, teachers can sort a compressed curriculum and present it face-to-face or online, in the process increasing the quality of learning which leads to an increase in learning retention. Based on the development of technology which can be utilized for learning, at this time there is no single ideal learning method for all types of learning or training, because any form of technology has its own advantages. As well, blended learning allows learning to become more professional to handle learning needs in a way that is most effective and efficient, and has high appeal.

A program using the blended learning model covers several forms of learning tools, such as real-time collaboration software, online Web-based programs, and electronics which support the performance system in the learning environment and the knowledge management system. A blended learning model contains various activities, including face-to-face learning, e-learning, and independent learning. The blended learning model is a model which mixes learning led by a traditional instructor, online synchronous learning, independent asynchronous learning, and task-based structured training from a lecturer or mentor. The goal of blended learning is to combine the experience of face-to-face learning with the online learning experience. As a whole, the blended learning model refers to the integration or the mixing of e-learning tools and assignment submission with traditional face-to-face learning.

The elements of blended learning, which combines face-to-face and e-learning, at the least include face-to-face interaction, independent learning, application, tutorial, cooperation, and evaluation. Face-to-face learning is conducted in the traditional way with the teacher as the primary source for learning. The teacher presents the materials, answers questions, conducts discussions, gives advice, creates assignments, and administers exams. All is done in a synchronous manner, which means that all students study the materials at the same time and place. Variations can be implemented in the methods; for example, the lecturer can divide meetings to cover the topics to be discussed by students, and the students can create and present a paper to the others in order to clarify, answer questions, and solve problems. With student-centred learning, courses are done using tutorials, textbooks, paper-writing, and evaluation. Moreover, for students who are only used to face-to-face instruction, the blended learning model provides room for autonomous development, self-efficacy, and organizational skills. It also provides learning consistency. Furthermore, the blended learning environment provided students with a rich learning context in which they were equipped to achieve their individual goals and to experience a considerable diversity of theoretical and experiential knowledge, again enhancing the depth and breadth of learner engagement in the course (George-Walker et al., 2010, p.29).

This chapter is a summary of the results of the qualitative exploration towards an implementation of blended learning at the School of Cultural Studies, University of Brawijaya, Indonesia. The researcher conducted an exploration of six parallel classes in two different semesters, for three different courses. One class was conducted in 2012, and the other five classes were conducted in 2013. The class which was conducted in 2012 utilized the FIB E-learning online sessions, an online learning facility which was provided by the school. The five other classes which were conducted in 2013 utilized the Edmodo online medium, an online learning system which appears like social media. As in all other forms of blended learning, both explorations utilize both online and offline sessions. Both of these explorations are meant to describe the perceptions and learning experiences of students, in particular focusing on the special issues among which are the technical difficulties faced by students, the differences in self-expression between online and offline learning, the learning experience obtained through the use of blended learning, and the participative experience and the activeness of students in going through a course using blended learning. The data and facts collected through interviews, questionnaires, and observations are descriptively explained in this chapter.

FIB E-Learning: School-Provided Facilities

The School of Cultural Studies of University of Brawijaya provides an online learning facility in order to support conventional learning. The facilities were provided to the ten study programs present and made available each semester for all classes offered in that semester, accessed by <http://elearning-fib.ub.ac.id/>. In 2012 the researcher attempted to apply blended learning for a particular course which the researcher taught, which was Cross Cultural Understanding (henceforth mentioned as CCU) for second-semester students of the English Literature Study Program.

As previously mentioned, blended learning always contains online and offline components. In the application to the CCU course, the researcher used the online sessions as a complement to the offline or conventional sessions. This course in general is directed to provide students with competence of understanding between cultures. After taking this course, students are expected to have an understanding of the importance of cross-cultural communication and be able to demonstrate cross-cultural communication in English speaking. A side goal of this course is to increase students' integrated English competence, whether in vocabulary, reading, writing, listening, or speaking. In the offline sessions, course learning management strategies are done conventionally in the form of traditional classes with lectures, group discussions, class discussions, presentations, and exercises. The learning resource utilizes a single book handed by the researcher at the start of the course. The book is titled *Beyond Language: Cross Cultural Communication*, written by Levine and Adelman (1992). Each of the chapters in the book consists of two main parts: reading text and exercises. The reading texts cover American culture and the strategies of communication with American people. The exercises are in the form of various English-language skill exercises like comprehension questions, writing, grammar, and speaking exercises. All the students have a copy of the book as a primary learning resource.

In the offline classroom learning sessions, the researcher stressed on class discussion by having students create presentations to show in front of the class. The presenters are groups of four to six students each. Each chapter is presented by two student groups; one group presents the reading text and the other presents the exercises. In presenting the reading text, the presenting group displays a presentation consisting of a summary of the text, then takes questions from other students and answers them. The group that presents the exercises leads a class discussion to work out the integrated English-language exercises for the selected chapter.

Meanwhile in the online session, the researcher uses the assignments and discussion forum functions for learning management. In this session, the researcher posted questions taken from the content of the previous meeting. The questions are only opinion questions to see how much opinion students have regarding issues of understanding between cultures. In addition to posting questions after the offline meeting, the researcher sometimes uses the online session in place of face-to-face meetings where the researcher was not able to attend, by posting opinion questions taken from the reading text. Another use by the researcher of this faculty-provided facility is as a part of learning evaluation. Not only are the midterm and final examinations conducted online, but also the researcher uses the students' responses from the researcher's questions as one of the study evaluation materials for each student. From one semester of observation and interviews done by the researcher, some interesting findings were encountered. The first set of findings, which relates to whether or not there were problems or technical difficulties that students run into in utilizing this faculty-provided online learning system, shows that a majority of students do not have serious problems in perusing this online system. If there were, they only occurred at the beginning and only regarding sign-in problems caused by the length of the password that the provider requested. This is evident in one explanation by a student:

I do not get any trouble for Log-in "E-Learning". But for the set of the password of an account, please make it easier. I understand if the mixed unique word could increase the protection to expect the hack on log-in. But many of my friends had forgotten the password because of it; even they reset the password from their email. And sometimes the email facility to reset the password is not working. The notification email to reset password is not delivered as it said in the blog. Please Fix it. (Student A)

In posting answers to the questions advanced by the researcher in the online sessions, most students also do not experience significant problems. However, some students lack the motivation to post their answers because the lecturer sometimes fails to respond.

Then when I post my answer, there's no difficulty anymore. Every time and everywhere, I can post and upload my assignment in-learning. It's very simple and easy enough. Alhamdulillah, I always post and answer my task. Even though, sometimes I'm lazy to do it. But I struggle to answer my task and finally I'm able to post my assignment in e-learning. (Student B)

I didn't post my task on the 1st week, because I was lazy to make an account in E-learning. But then, I always upload my task. (Student F)

The preparedness of students in using blended learning media can be described as very well and that there are no significant problems. Instead, interesting findings were encountered when the researcher interviewed other lecturers regarding their perception and experience in making use of this online learning facility provided by the faculty. No more than 10 % from the total number of lecturers were interested to make use of the online learning facility, so almost all of the lecturers have not made use of this network-based learning mode. Their reasons for not using the facility varies, from the assumption that online learning needs high computer literacy, no comprehensive training regarding online learning, no requirement from supervisors to use the system, to the inappropriateness of online learning with the course subject being taught.

In terms of their experience in expressing opinions, the majority of students feel more independent and more comfortable in utilizing the online sessions rather than doing so in conventional classes for a variety of reasons. Some feel that they have more time in answering because of the asynchronous timing; some say that they can revise their answers;

and even some say that they are not afraid of losing face when expressing their opinions, as is the case with the following student:

I think I am more independent to answer the question in E-learning, because I can say something or answer the question by myself without faced with the lecturer and other students directly, so I feel more independent. But, I don't know whether my answer true or not. If in the class, we can discuss that answer together with the lecturer. So, I think both of them are important to do, but I prefer to be active in E-learning than in class. Because I'm an introvert one, I really-really enjoy this method of giving opinions by writing in E-learning. I think this way is helping the students who are not confident to speak at class. Because not all of the students are confident enough to speak up at class. Just like me. So, I appreciate this one! (student F)

Class observations done by the researcher indeed shows that there is a difference in students' expression between the online and offline sessions. In the offline sessions, students rarely pose questions, comments, or opinions. They tend to show themselves as introverted, passive, and silent students even after being given a question. But in the online sessions, students dare to show themselves openly with written answers of good quality, and dare to comment well on other students so that significant pedagogical interactions occur. One student in particular gave an opinion online that "Silence is the loudest women cry"; when the researcher asked that student in the offline session about the meaning of silence across cultures, the student instead became shy and silent in response to an enquiry regarding the meaning of the response which was put forth online.

Edmodo: Online Learning Facility in a Social Media Format

In 2013, the researcher tried to make use of Edmodo (located at <http://www.edmodo.com>), a learning medium in a social media format using an attractive appearance styled after popular culture, to manage five courses. The five courses were American Studies for semester four students of the English Literature Study Program, Cross Cultural Studies for semester two students of the English Literature Study Program, and three parallel Classroom Management courses for semester four students of the English Language and Literature Education Study Program.

The researcher uses the Edmodo medium as a complement to offline sessions, conventional courses with face-to-face interaction. Edmodo was chosen as the online session medium because the medium has some features which were believed to be appropriate for students and learning management. In addition, the appearance of Edmodo which resembles other social media such as Facebook became a consideration in selecting this medium to manage the aforementioned five classes. With this appearance, hopefully students felt comfortable and learning became fun for them, and at the same time they did not feel as if they are learning but virtually interacting like in social media.

Edmodo has a few learning tools which support the process of planning, management, and evaluation of learning. In learning planning, Edmodo allows the lecturer to post the semester course plan as well as to provide the learning resources in different formats, whether textual, audiovisual, or multimedia. In learning management, the lecturer can post assignments, quizzes, and discussion topics, as well as to facilitate a discussion forum among students. In learning evaluation, the lecturer can give feedback regarding the learning progress using the grading feature provided. The lecturer can give feedback on structured assignments, midterm and final examinations, as well as quizzes using an array of interesting icons. Students can use this medium to post their learning "status" like in Facebook, turn in assignments, answer questions, be actively involved in online discussion, and comment on other students' "status".

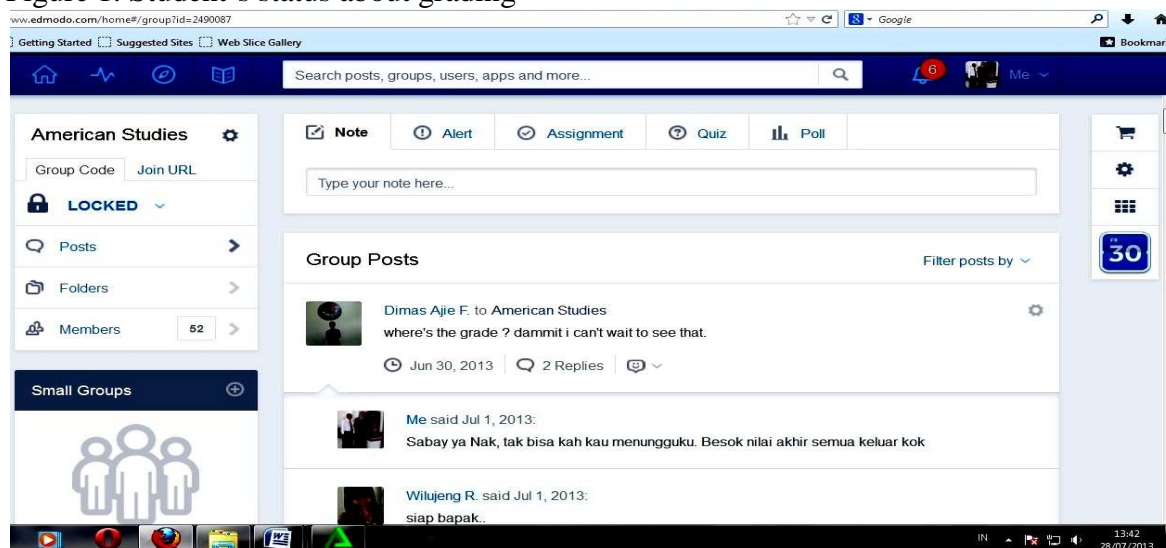
From observations, questionnaires, and interviews with students, some interesting things were found regarding their perceptions and learning experience in using Edmodo as a learning medium. The five classes that were observed had very different pedagogical interaction characteristics.

American Studies

In the American Studies course, the researcher made use of Edmodo for submission of structured assignments. The assignments were to be turned in after offline sessions discussing particular topics. In these assignments, the researcher advanced opinion questions to students regarding how they view the issues discussed in the offline session classes. In the online session, it was found that students not only use the Edmodo medium to upload the assignments requested by the lecturer, but also to communicate other academic matters. As an example, at the end of the semester when the lecturer asked the students to hold a poster exhibition, students used the Edmodo medium to coordinate the preparations for the exhibition by reminding, requesting, and asking for the opinion of other students for what should be prepared for the exhibition.

Another interesting finding regards lecturer feedback in grading form. In the online session, the American Studies course is the only one where the researcher as the active lecturer provided feedback in the form of grading. So on one occasion when the researcher did not provide grades on an assignment, the student posted a “status” enquiring for the grade for that assignment. Figure 1 below shows the student enquiring for the grade they should have received on an assignment.

Figure 1. Student’s status about grading



Cross Cultural Understanding

The use of Edmodo for the Cross Cultural Understanding course was also to support the offline sessions. In the previous year, the researcher also taught this course, but using the FIB e-learning medium provided by the university, as explained in the previous part. There are some differences between the online sessions using the FIB e-learning medium and Edmodo. There were still technical difficulties on the first sign-in using the FIB e-learning medium, while in Edmodo, students do not relatively find any difficulty because the appearance of Edmodo is familiar to them due to the fact that it resembles other forms of social media, in particular Facebook. This student’s opinion how the resemblance of Edmodo with Facebook makes them feel at ease when using it: “I don’t find difficult when I first sign

up in edmodo because it seems like Facebook but different between with Edmodo is Facebook for social and find friends and Edmodo is for learning and share with other students in around world.” (Student 2A). However, other technical problems encountered with Edmodo in this class was when students wanted to enter a course group, they had to enter a code they do not know and had to wait for an announcement from the lecturer which was delivered offline, as the following student explains: *“No, in fact very easy. Initially had difficulty when registering as a student should require students and the new Code can be known code themselves after being told by a lecturer with the Code “4WS2BP”, rest in enrolling in “Edmodo” I feel pretty easy.”* (Student 2B)

Classroom Management

The researcher taught three parallel classes for this Classroom Management course and all of them used the Edmodo medium to manage the online sessions of blended learning. In this class, in a contrast to the other classes which used the online sessions to support the offline ones, the researcher made use of this medium to deliver the soft copy of learning materials so that students are prepared to discuss them in the offline sessions. Thus the researcher only needed to make use of the assignments and announcements functions. The researcher did not utilize the online sessions for feedback because feedback was mostly given in the offline sessions. From the observations and interviews done by the researcher, these three classes had a specific and unique character in terms of pedagogical interaction.

These three classes belong to the English Language and Literature Education Study Program, which is headed by the researcher himself. Informally outside the classroom, the researcher has a higher level of familiarity with the students of this program than students from the English Literature Study Program since the researcher often develops their collegiate extracurricular activities in their organization. Their organization is called AELLS, which stands for Association of English Language and Literature Students. This organization has a Facebook page which is linked to the Facebook page of the researcher, and the assignments that the researcher posts using Edmodo are often inquired on the Facebook page. Another finding is that in this class students seem to feel free in discussing anything outside the context of the discussion of classroom management learning, like posting the lyrics for a song. If that happens, the researcher tries to direct the discussion topic back to classroom matters. This different kind of pedagogical interaction which is present in the Edmodo medium for this class shows the existence of solidarity among students in discussing assignments and examinations. Some of the comments that have appeared include ones that sought clarification on posted assignments, or to remind about the offline practicum schedule which was to be done outside of the course schedule and taught by the assistant lecturer. The use of Facebook as a medium in communication educational issue is supported by Erzurum and Ttiriyakioglu (2011, p.136) who explain that:

When overall approach to Facebook is considered, it was revealed out that instructors had positive attitudes and they were using the network particularly for communicating and sharing. The use for making announcement to and sharing with friends in the profile list is widespread. It is also used for learning reactions of others to events and messages shared and for forming an opinion. Instructors found participation to social networks easy, learning the use of this environment not difficult, and the software user-friendly. It appears that Facebook provides support for enabling users communicate and share comfortably and easily.

Students’ Perceptions and Learning Experience

From the observations of the two modes of online learning used by the researcher to apply blended learning, which are FIB e-learning and Edmodo, in general it can be seen that

students do not experience significant technical difficulties in making use of these online media. In addition, a majority of students also felt freer in expressing their opinions in the online session rather than vocally in the classroom. From the users of Edmodo, more or less the same situation occurs as with FIB e-learning, as the following student describes:

The differences are we should write down our opinion within Edmodo wherever we are, but in the classroom we should speak up in front of the class. We can erase what we are gonna talking about in here, so we can limited the mistakes because we can correct it. But if we give opinion orally in front of the class, sometimes we can be nervous and cannot limited our mistakes, so we should say anything correctly. Actually I more confident expressing my opinion using Edmodo, as the others cannot look at me, because sometimes I feel shy to speak up in front of the class :). Moreover we can correct our opinion whatever we want. (Student 3A)

The above statement from the student is in line with the finding of Danah Boyd research in 2007 (p.1) when one of an observed student says that she used to feel nobody in her classroom but blended learning applied by her teacher makes he confident and felt to be appreciated, as this following statement:

“I’m in the 7th grade. I’m 13. I’m not a cheerleader. I’m not the president of the student body. Or captain of the debate team. I’m not the prettiest girl in my class. I’m not the most popular girl in my class. I’m just a kid. I’m a little shy. And it’s really hard in this school to impress people enough to be your friend if you’re not any of those things. But I go on these really great vacations with my parents between Christmas and New Year’s every year. And I take pictures of places we go. And I write about those places. And I post this on my Xanga. Because I think if kids in school read what I have to say and how I say it, they’ll want to be my friend.” – Vivien,

In terms of learning experiences, there are many students that have positive perceptions and attitudes toward blended learning. They feel that the existence of online sessions which were used to support online sessions offers sufficiently new and interesting knowledge as well as challenges for them. Some of them at first felt doubtful regarding these online sessions, but later on they felt that these online sessions have made them impressed and satisfied regarding this learning model, as is the case with the following student:

When the first I use Edmodo I little bit confuse when my lecturer said that we want to answer our homework we just post it in Edmodo. I think that we answer in Edmodo the answer from all student will appear in it. And if the answer can see by all student is it possible for them to cheating. But after use it, I learn that this online learning system is not like that. It is so private, the only one who can read my answer is my lecturer and I need this privacy for my answer. Edmodo teach me to become an independent person when I get a task. Edmodo also show me the other learning method that provides teachers and students a secure place to connect and collaborate, share content and educational applications, and access homework, grades, class discussions and notifications. I prefer using the traditional version, in my opinion using social media which is the respondent can not see face to face I think it doesn’t improve our ability to talk with other, I know if we use Edmodo or using this media is free or sometimes for some people using media is the easiest way especially for introvert one. (Student 3C)

Active participation in the online sessions for blended learning is quite significant, because nearly every student always posts what the lecturer asks for. The following table explains the student-lecturer pedagogical interaction patterns, in particular those that relate to student

involvement and participation in the online sessions. The table also shows how active the lecturer was in responding to student activity.

Table 1. Pedagogical interaction in online session using Emodo

Subject: American Studies (51 students)			
No.	Assignment topic	Turned-in	Feedback
1.	Manifest Destiny	44	44
2.	Sixties	47	47
3.	Mid-semester test	47	47
4.	Edmodo Reflection	44	-
Subject: Cross-Cultural Understanding (50 students)			
	Assignment topic	Turned-in	Feedback
1.	Introduction to CCU	38	-
2.	Verbal patterns	45	-
3.	Mid-semester test	51	51
4.	Friendship	43	-
5.	Family Values	50	-
6.	Education Values	47	-
7.	Final test	49	-
Subject: Classroom management A (32 students)			
	Assignment topic	Turned-in	Feedback
1.	Mid semester test	27	-
2.	Classroom management style	15	-
3.	Final test	32	-
Subject: Classroom management B (23 students)			
	Assignment topic	Turned-in	Feedback
1.	Leaning experiences	8	-
2.	Mid semester test	12	-
3.	Classroom management style	4	-
4.	Reflection	8	-
Subject: Classroom management D (49 students)			
	Assignment topic	Turned-in	Feedback
1.	Leaning experiences	8	-
2.	Mid semester test	49	-
3.	Classroom management style	25	-
4.	Reflection	49	-

It turns out that problems also occur on the lecturer's side with lack of online feedback toward student postings. From the table above, it can be seen that the lecturer only gave online feedback in two courses only, which are American Studies and Cross Cultural Understanding. The context of learning in Indonesian colleges, where lecturers also have to perform numerous administrative tasks, becomes the primary reason why the researcher here rarely gives feedback. This was initially a problem for students since they felt that they did not receive proper credit. Yet the researcher as the lecturer tried to explain this matter during conventional classes or the offline sessions that even though the researcher does not always have the chance to give feedback, he always reads all the students' responses. Further, regarding the problem of grades that are not always given online, this is also explained by the reasoning that everyone will receive a final score at the end of the semester.

Conclusion

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that the blended learning model gives a positive contribution to learning management, in particular at the University of Brawijaya, Indonesia. This learning model allows students to feel challenged, motivated, and involved in interactive learning. The observed students have a sufficiently high level of

critical thinking, proven from the quality of the postings they made. Observations have also shown that students feel more confident expressing their opinions online rather than offline. The online expression of opinions online creates a positive democratization of learning because within social media everyone is treated equally at the same level. As well, students feel that by learning with the blended learning model, especially online sessions using an online learning medium that appears to resemble social media, they feel comfortable and do not have feelings of stress in learning. In the future, this learning model is expected to be utilized and developed to be more interactive and communicative, and to be able to give new challenges for students' cognitive development.

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