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Conceptual Paper

Utilizing Edmodo to Teach Writing with GBA in The Blended Learning Platform

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KEYWORDS

*Edmodo;
 Genre Based Approach;
 Teaching Writing;
 Blended Learning.*

ABSTRACT

This conceptual paper provides a future study based on a strategy of utilizing Edmodo to teach writing with a genre based approach (GBA) in the blended learning platform. Innovation in English teaching and learning process, especially in writing skills in this rapid growth technology era becomes challenge for teachers. Lack of time allocation, students' writing skill, and the attention of writing significance become the obstacles in teaching and learning process. However, teaching writing needs appropriate approach in order to have good capability in writing skills. This paper went on to analyze suitable approach in teaching writing. This paper consists of the stages of genre-based approach namely Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF), Modeling of the Text (MOT), Joining Construction of the Text (JCOT), and Independent Construction of the Text (ICOT) will be implemented through face to face activity and online by taking the advantage of Edmodo. The classroom activity was conducted to provide students with the basic concept of writing while the online activity was carried out in addressing the issues of limited time allotment for English writing, lack of students writing skill, and writing process significance in learning English. The conceptual paper signifies to supplement literatures for academics as reference for their research. The result of this future research may provide information about utilizing Edmodo to teach writing with a genre based approach. It will also be relevant to teachers who have difficulty in teaching writing.

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INTRODUCTION

Technology has been taking part in the students' world as well as in the academic environment. Students in the recent period have been called as digital learners because technology hardly can be separated with their daily social lives (Brown and Lee, 2015). Thus, in daily teaching and learning, teachers should find the most effective way to integrate technology in the learning activities. Regarding the current issue of teaching English in senior high school, some teachers find it difficult to teach writing skill effectively since the limited time allocation for English subject. In curriculum of 2013, English subject in senior high school only gets 90 minutes

per week or a meeting a week with a lot of materials to be covered. Regarding the importance of mastering writing, teaching writing skill somehow is being neglected by some teachers because the limited time allotment that the teachers have in the classroom.

Addressing the issue of teaching writing for senior high school students, teachers can take the advantage of technology to make the learning activities become more effective. Implementing technology in the classroom can be performed in numerous methods such as by taking advantages of social networks. There have been many discussions and studies dealing with social networks to support English teaching and learning. A number of social

networks administered in the learning activity such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Blog, and many more have been identified to make the teaching writing activities become more effective. A study conducted by Ibrahim (2013) found that Facebook has a big role on improving Students' Writing Skills in English. This is also in line with Cahyono and Yanuar (2012) states that Facebook can be used to improve English department students' skill in writing essay.

However, some recent studies dealing with social networks have several aspects that may interfere the teaching and learning process such as minimum features for teaching and learning, lack of parents' control, and inappropriate advertisements appears in the social network itself. Those interferences may appear because the social networks used by the previous researchers are not intentionally designed for teaching and learning. This paper introduces a social network, Edmodo, that is specially designed for teaching and learning so that teachers will be able to minimize all those interferences.

Edmodo is an educational website that takes the ideas of a social network and refines them and makes it appropriate for a classroom. As cited in Edmodo website, was found by Nic Borg, Jeff O'Hara, and Crystal Hutter in Chicago 2008. Edmodo has more than 80 billion members on November 2017. Therefore, it is obvious that English teachers are highly suggested to utilize Edmodo to optimize their teaching and learning. Edmodo has a lot of features that meet with the pedagogy of teaching. Since Edmodo is a social network, Edmodo increases the number of students' social interaction between peers as well as their teachers. Using Edmodo, teachers have tried to bring technology development in the teaching and learning process. Having technology in daily teaching and learning in this current era is one of ways to make the students engaged in the lesson. Rahman (2015) reveals that teachers administering technology in the English language classrooms are more successful than those who do not. Many studies show that Edmodo can improve the students' English skill. Ayuningtyas (2017) found that Edmodo can enhance students' writing skill in SMPN 1 Yogyakarta. Furthermore, Qalaja (2015) has examined that having Edmodo to teach writing not only improve the students' writing achievement but also it makes the students have a positive attitude toward writing activity. Regarding the effectiveness of Edmodo in improving students' writing skill, studies on implementing Edmodo with GBA in blended learning setting is a rare undertaking.

METHOD

Due to the complexity of writing, students cannot avoid having the difficulties of writing and barely to solve it. A large number of EFL writing teachers state that they fail to solve writing problems in class. Since students have been familiarized by the use of technology, so, technology

integration in teaching writing is required. The teaching approach and method that are applied in class should follow the times. The factors that play role on students' writing failure in class are caused by lack of time allocation, students writing skill, and the attention of writing process significance. Most of Teachers focus on student writing production rather than writing process. However, the focus of writing should be emphasized on the writing process and idea generation rather than their result only (Hyland, 2003).

The conceptual paper is intended to identify utilization Edmodo to teach writing with GBA in the blended learning platform. As such, research questions that will be addressed are:

1. What are Edmodo's features that facilitate teachers in teaching English?
2. What strategy that is used in utilizing Edmodo to teach writing in the blended learning platform?

The conceptual paper is significant as it will provide the implication of technology integration in GBA approach. This paper addressing the issues of limited time allotment for English writing, lack of students' writing skill, and writing process significance in learning English. The conceptual paper signifies to supplement literatures for academics as reference for their research. The result of this future research may provide information about utilizing Edmodo to teach writing with a genre based approach. It will also be relevant to teachers who have difficulty in teaching writing. Regarding the effectiveness of Edmodo in improving students' writing skill, studies on implementing Edmodo with GBA in blended learning setting is a rare undertaking. This conceptual paper is delimited by insufficient readings of literatures related to technology integration in GBA. This conceptual paper is barely applied by teachers and students who have no internet infrastructure.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Edmodo's Features that Facilitate Teachers in Teaching English

There are a lot of features in Edmodo that can support the teaching and learning. Edmodo can connect between teacher and student when both have internet connection. Edmodo is also compatible in both personal computer and mobile phone. Furthermore, since Edmodo is intentionally designed for supporting teachers in teaching, Edmodo has some special features that other social networks may not have such as multiple account, quiz organizer, badge, and many more. In the first page of Edmodo, teachers will catch Edmodo's special feature that other social networks may not have it. Edmodo offers three different accounts that teachers can choose before signing up. Those three accounts are teacher, parent, and student's account. Each account has different role and authority in Edmodo.

When teachers sign up using teacher account, the teachers will get all the features of Edmodo. The teachers can add or remove any member in their Edmodo class. The teachers can also give their students any assignment, badge, and many more. It makes the teachers have full of authority just like in the classroom. Besides, Edmodo also has a feature called co-teaching. This feature allows teachers to invite another teacher to join in the Edmodo class. This co-teacher has almost the same authority just like the teacher account. However, the co-teacher cannot delete any of the student account.

In the student's account, there is a feature that provides the students some options on how the students like to learn such as Hands-on, audio, or visual. This feature will help teachers to know little bit about the characteristic of their students' learning style. However, the student accounts do not have full authority of the Edmodo class. Student accounts are just like the passive form of the teacher account. The other is parent's account where this account gives an opportunity to students' parent to supervise their children. This account will help the parents to know the assignments and grades of their children. Also, parent accounts can send message to their children as well as the teacher. It makes the teachers have an opportunity to know what the parents think about the class activity and build up a good relationship with the students' parents. This is in line with the theory of home contingency states "Teachers, as effective classroom managers, must take advantage of every opportunity to build a solid partnership with parents, the most behaviorally influential people in students' lives." (Marzano, et. al., 2005)

Furthermore, Edmodo offers teachers a help whether they want to have a quiz, assignment or even poll. This feature can help teachers to give a pre-test or follow up activity to reinforce students' understanding toward the lesson. When the teachers want to conduct a quiz, Edmodo offers some different kind of quizzes. Teachers can determine whether they want to have a quiz in the form of multiple choice, true false, fill in the blank, or short answer. Not only determining the form of the quizzes but also teachers can attach any file to support the quizzes or assignments. Teachers also have authority to set the due date and time allotment for each quiz. After posting the quiz, the teachers can directly know who have done the quiz and what score for each student. Not only showing the score, Edmodo also helps teachers to grade the students based on the result of their quizzes. To give an appreciation for the students, Edmodo has a badge feature. This feature allows teachers to give some badges to the students for any good thing they have done. The feature is in line with the idea of tangible reward. Marzano, et. al. (2005) state that tangible reward is concrete symbols or tokens given to the students for their appropriate behaviors. Regarding the various features of Edmodo, taking advantage of Edmodo to help teachers in improving the students'

English skill especially writing is believed as one of the best alternatives.

Strategy in Utilizing Edmodo To Teach Writing in the Blended Learning Platform

There are various strategies to gain an effective learning. Among of those strategies, blended learning or combining face to face and online activities is considered to make the learning more efficient. In the area of teaching writing, many studies have found that implementing a blended learning setting has been successfully improved the students writing achievement (Harb, 2013; Mabuan and Ebron, 2016; Geta and Olango, 2016; Adas and Bakir, 2013). Thus, utilizing Edmodo in the teaching and learning by collaborating Edmodo with the face to face activity will help teachers to make the teaching becomes more effective. In this case, teachers are able to combine Edmodo with genre based approach. Agustien as cited in Cahyono and Yanuar (2012) states that genre based approach consists of four stages namely Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF), Modeling of the Text (MOT), Join Construction of the Text (JCOT), and Independent Construction of the Text (ICOT).

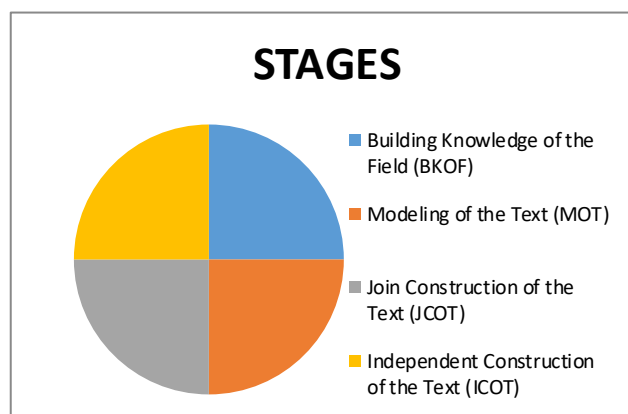


Figure 1. states that genre based approach

In the first stage or BKOF stage, teachers should build the students' knowledge by giving the basic concept on how to write correctly by implementing genre based approach. This building theory is required to be conducted in the class because this is the basic of the writing itself which is very crucial. In the MOT stage, the teachers are also required to carry out this activity in the face to face learning activity because in this stage, the teachers not only show the model text but also they have to explain the model text in detail. Moreover, it is possible after showing the model of the text, several students will ask a lot of questions related to the model text. Having a direct question and answer will make students more understand about the model of the text as well as the concept on how to develop the text.

The next stage is JCOT. In this stage, teachers can do the online activity by giving the students a topic and asking them to develop it by online. The online activity is expected to make the students have a chance to communicate with their

peers so that they can solve their own problem in writing. The teachers can ask the students to discuss any difficulty that the students found in the model text with their peers. Even if the JCOT is not conducted in the classroom but by having Edmodo, teachers can still control the students. Teachers can also ask some questions in the middle of JCOT proses to check whether or not the students are ready to construct the writing by their own. The last stage is ICOT, teachers can ask their students to independently construct their writing text outside the classroom. However, when the students find any difficulty, they can just post their questions in Edmodo to be solved together. After finishing their drafts, students are ordered to post their writing in Edmodo and the other classmates should give comments or suggestions to improve their friends' writing. This activity also called peer assessment because each student has a chance to assess their friends. After having finished with all the processes of genre based-approach, teachers can have self-assessment through Edmodo as well. Self- assessment is crucial to make the teachers have a better performance on teaching. Having Edmodo, teacher can have self-assessment easily. The teachers can ask their students to post what they feel after the teaching and learning process through Edmodo. Regardless the importance of self-assessment, there are a lot of teachers forget to have this activity.

CONCLUSION

Addressing the issue of the limited time, low students writing skills, and the significance of writing process in learning English can be solved by technology integration in teaching and learning process. Technology integration in writing is crucial to make the learning become more effective. Teachers can have a blended learning platform to implement the technology such as Edmodo in the classroom. A blended learning platform is a strategy to combine between traditional learning activity and online activity. Edmodo is necessary to be involved in the online teaching activity process because it is a social network that is specially designed for learning activities that has a lot of educational features which may help teachers to handle the online class. To make the blended learning becomes more powerful, an appropriate approach is also required. Genre based approach is taken into account since the stages of this approach can be implemented well in both face to face and online activity. In implementing, the blended learning, however, the teachers are suggested to make themselves have a good understanding of technology implementation in the classroom. Some English classes may not be ready to have the blended learning due to the lack of school facility or the unreadiness of the students.

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