

## HYBRID LEARNING IN PRIMARY SCHOOL, DOES IT WORK?

Ida Ayu Mela Tustiawati<sup>1</sup>, Putu Anita Kusuma Yanti<sup>2</sup>

Faculty of foreign Languages  
Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar  
Denpasar, Indonesia

[mela.tustiawati@unmas.ac.id](mailto:mela.tustiawati@unmas.ac.id)<sup>1</sup>, [anitakusumayanti@gmail.com](mailto:anitakusumayanti@gmail.com)<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

Flexibility in teaching and learning activities raises its value in the current development of education in which students' and teachers' mobility is restricted. With the use of technology, teaching and learning not only can be delivered in the classroom but it can also be done anywhere and anytime. This trend brings us to a hybrid learning classroom. There seem to be many ways and perspectives in looking at hybrid learning. In the current study, it is considered as one of the teaching methods that combines both online and face to face learning at the same time. Online and face to face interaction will be conducted synchronously. This research is designed as qualitative research that describes the teachers' perspectives on the application of hybrid learning at primary school. A descriptive qualitative method is used as the main way to describe the findings of the study. Data for the study is collected through semi-structured interviews done with the teachers. The result is expected to provide an overview of the hybrid learning application from the teachers' perspectives. It also tries to provide an explanation on why some teachers are reluctant to apply the method at the primary level.

**Keywords** – *Hybrid learning, online learning, face to face learning*

### Introduction

Prolong restrictions on people's mobility have permanently marked a new chapter in the education system around the world, including Indonesia. A shift in education has been going on continuously, changing strategies, methods, and paradigms of education. Traditional teaching and learning have now moved to a possible remote teaching mode that incorporates technology in its application. It is a virtualization of the learning process that is conducted through online platforms (Chiu, Lin, & Lonka, 2021). There are some terms that closely refer to this type of learning method, such as blended, distributed, integrated, and flexible delivery learning (Oliver & Stallings, 2014). This type of learning method allows teachers and students to still have their teaching and learning activity without being present in the classroom at school, which means that the classrooms now move virtually.

In Indonesia, this teaching method has been applied at every educational institution from kindergarten to university level. Primary teaching as the first stage of formal learning for children is not an exception. Pinter classified primary learners as children aged 6-12 years old (as cited in Khafidhoh & Carolina, 2019). This age is considered the prime time for students to learn new things and information. New knowledge is gained faster and better by children compared to adults. It is also essential as it forms the fundamental attitude for learning, creates a better self and societal understanding, and encourages the learners to be active and responsible (Kundu, 2018). Therefore, designing a suitable teaching and learning methodology that meets the current circumstances at the primary level is crucial.

Despite its advantageous values in the education system, many studies concern the application of online learning for young learners, especially at the primary level. Online

learning appeared to have a considerably high impact on students' lack of motivation to study (Alfarimba, Ardianti, & Khamdun, 2021; Rigianti, 2020). Students' need for parents' guidance and supervision is also one of the barriers that need to be considered. Not all parents are capable and in a position to support their children which impacts the students' progress in learning online (Apriliana, 2021). Similarly, Rorimpandey & Midun (2021) strongly suggested that the application of online learning in primary school is highly dependent on the students' independence. To have students being independent without parents' supervision for primary students especially lower graders can only be partly possible. Students still need the parents' help especially when it is related to setting up the learning devices. Students' remote location also hampered the teaching and learning online which resulted in students being unable to follow the learning process (Asmuni, 2020). Overall, the application of online learning at the primary level is not only about the teaching and learning between the students and the teachers but also about the necessary involvement of the parents which will influence the learning success of the students. As revealed by Ferri, Grifoni, & Guzzo that technologies and pedagogical are not the only issues in conducting remote learning but it also involves social issues (as cited in Kulikowski, Przytula, & Sulkowski, 2021).

As more and more people are concerned about the long-term impact online learning has on students, especially primary students, a new trend in education namely, the hybrid learning method is introduced. Hybrid learning combines both virtual and physical classroom teaching and learning concurrently. Thorne (2003) stated that hybrid learning is the merger of active and real interaction that face-to-face learning has offered with the innovative and foremost technological advantage that is provided by online learning. It is a product of technology that allows the combination of face to face and online learning (Rorimpandey & Midun, 2021). Its application is in accordance with the regulation established by three ministers and the Covid-19 task force in Indonesia that only allowed 50% of the students to be in real classrooms; others should conduct online learning from home (Wibawanto, 2017). Miskiah, Suryono, & Sudrajat (2020) also explained that having fully online learning for primary students is not possible. It is still necessary to have students and teachers meet face to face in the classroom for learning.

The current study looks at the application of two learning modes conducted in one of the private schools in Denpasar: the fully online learning and hybrid learning modes. It is conducted to describe the teachers' perspectives on the issues faced by the application of the two learning modes. The study explores the teachers' understanding of teaching and learning barriers in online and hybrid learning and their experience conducting both fully online learning and hybrid learning activities for their young learners. Finally, their thoughts on the application of hybrid learning at the primary level are discussed.

## **Methods**

### **The Context**

The study was conducted in one of the private primary schools in Denpasar, Indonesia. In March 2020, the school shifted the teaching and learning process into a fully online learning arrangement as a response to the government restriction on mobility to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus. In September 2021, after the new introduction of the new-normal habits, the school attempted to apply hybrid teaching and learning in which some students with parental consent would be at school, and some would study from home at the same time. The application of this method required teachers to deliver material to the students synchronously at the same time for students at school and students at home. At first, the majority of the teachers welcomed the idea of having the two teaching modes at the same time. Yet, after its application, most of them faced challenges that required the school to immediately change the teaching and learning

procedure to face to face learning at school and online learning from home despite a strong encouragement from the government to apply the hybrid learning.

### Participants

Five teachers who participated in the study were from the lower-grade teachers (grade 1-3). It was necessary to have the lower-grade teachers as they faced more severe problems than the upper-grade teachers. Each participant is an English teacher and has more than 5-year experience in teaching young learners. Four of the participants were female teachers, and one was a male teacher. The researcher described the project and the purpose of the project prior to the interview sessions. Their participation and anonymity have also been ensured in the consent given to the participants.

### Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected from interview sessions with each participant separately. The interviews were designed as semi-structured interviews. It was used to find out the teachers’ perspectives on teaching young learners, their perspectives on the issue of the application of online learning for children, and finally, their perspectives on the issues of the application of hybrid learning at the primary level. Data in this study were analysed following the data analysis procedure from Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) that consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion. To ensure the validity of the data, the themes found in the study were re-examined by the interviewees. The following illustrates how data were collected and analysed in this study:

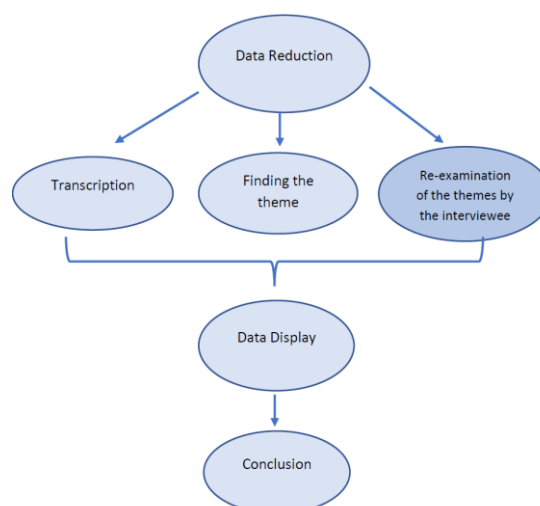


Figure 1: Data Collection and Analysis modified from Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014)

### Finding and Discussion

The result of the interview with the teachers about their teaching perspectives on young learners is detailed in Table 1.

Table 3: Teachers' Perspective on Teaching Young Learners

Teachers' perspective on teaching young learners	
Young learners' characteristics	Children are full of curiosity and ask many questions Children are not that aware of their responsibilities Children tend to not be that serious about things Children are playful Children have their own world Children have a different way to analyse things around them Children learn for fun Children like to play
Teaching and learning environment for young learners	Teaching and learning environment cannot be monotonous Teaching and learning require varieties of media, pictures, videos, songs, etc. to attract the students' attention Teaching and learning should be in a way that students will feel like they do not study Teaching requires many ice breakers activities to keep the students engaged

The result of the interview about the teachers' perspectives on the online learning issues for primary students is detailed in Table 2.

Table 4: Teachers' Perspective on the Online Learning Issues

Teachers' perspective on the online learning issue for primary students	
Classroom Interaction and management	It's hard for teachers, students, and parents It's hard to get the attention of the students Students get distracted easily Stay focused during the teaching and learning is hard Students' mood swings are hard to manage Lack of engagement in the online classroom Lack of eye contact and gesture Lack of interaction during virtual class Lack of personal connection between teachers and students, and inter-students Lack of learning motivation Communication and social skills are not developed well
Classroom materials and activities	Teachers need varieties of attractive activities for students to stay focused Not all activities can be applied online Limited game activities to the online games only (not many physical activity games can be applied online) Limited physical activities Materials given are simplified

The result of the interview about the teachers' perspectives on hybrid learning issues for primary students is detailed in Table 3.

Table 5: Teachers' Perspective on Hybrid Learning Issues

Teachers' perspective on hybrid learning issues for primary students	
Classroom interaction and management	Internet issue not only influences the interaction between online students but also the face to face students There are two groups of students that need to be considered and look after at the same time (the online students and the face to face students) Virtual meeting hinders the interaction between students and teachers in the face to face classroom Students are less independent as they are dependent on parents for their learning

---

	<p>Lack of personal connection</p> <p>Lack of eye contact and gesture</p> <p>Lack of interaction during virtual class</p> <p>It's hard to get the attention of the students</p> <p>Students and teachers are easily distracted</p> <p>Ensure both students at school and online students get the same treatment during the teaching and learning is hard to manage</p> <p>Teachers' attention and support are divided between the online students and face to face students</p> <p>Encourage and keep the students engaged in learning is hard</p> <p>Students are lack of learning motivation</p>
Classroom materials and activities	<p>The learning experience is not maximum</p> <p>Limited method of discussion</p> <p>Creating a new teaching method, material, and technique that will work for online and face to face classrooms at the same time is not easy</p> <p>Materials given are simplified</p> <p>Teachers are required to be extra creative with their teaching activities</p>

---

Despite its advantageous solution offered by both online and hybrid learning during the uncertain situation, judging from the data above it can be seen that teachers are not fully supportive of its application at the primary level. This finding is similar to the previous study conducted by Widikasih, Widiani, & Margunayasa (2021) which looked at the issues from the students' perspectives. The study also mentioned eight factors that make the application of online learning for primary students may not be fully applicable. Based on the current study one of the reasons why online or hybrid learning may not be possible for primary students is mainly because the students' characteristics at the primary level are different from adult learners. They are the type of students who like to learn and do things directly with their teachers and friends. In the learning process, young learners have a better ability to absorb knowledge than adults and prefer to study from real experiences and do practical things (Khafidhoh & Carolina, 2019). Their fundamental character as children makes them enthusiastic pupils. This excitement is not accommodated fully in online and hybrid learning classrooms.

The other main issue based on the result of the interviews is the lack of interaction during teaching and learning. It appears to be a major shortcoming for online and hybrid learning applications at the primary level. It is closely related to the materials and activities provided by the teachers during the learning time. Better interaction between teachers and students and inter-students can be developed when the activities are engaging. Yet, teachers have limited options of teaching activities for online and hybrid learning modes. Parents' cooperation is also necessary to encourage better interaction and better experience in learning during online and hybrid learning modes. Alfarimba, Ardianti, & Khamdun (2021) explained that parents' support is part of the external factor that influences students' motivation in learning which plays an important role in the students' learning progress. Students' independence in learning has been closely related to parent support at the primary level. From the teachers' perspectives in this study, the majority of the primary students, especially the lower-grade students are heavily dependent on their parents to support them during their remote learning. Although interaction does not fully disappear from teaching and learning online, yet it is different from the interaction that teachers and students have when they meet physically in the classroom. Students have different responses towards activities in online classrooms (Putri. et al., 2020). Teachers find it hard to get the students involved in the discussion during the virtual class.

Finally, designing suitable classroom materials and activities also hinders the application of fully online and hybrid learning for primary students. Creating learning materials

has now become more challenging for teachers. They need to prepare materials that will work for online, face to face, and hybrid learning settings (Putri, et al., 2020). Not only creating it, but teachers also have to master these materials to provide learning environments that will not put so much burden on students (Apriliana, 2021). Furthermore, teachers should be able to design the learning activities as interesting as possible as it impacts the students' engagement in the virtual or physical classroom. Failure in preparing the right learning media and activities by the teachers may result in the lack of students' understanding of the material (Widikasih, Widiana, & Margunayasa, 2021). Even so, all teachers in the present study agreed that their creativity is hampered due to the limited choices that they have. Not all face to face activities can be applied in the online classroom and vice versa.

Reflecting on the issues listed above, all teachers who participated in the study chose to have their classrooms either fully face to face or fully online. A hybrid classroom is not considered as an option at the primary level not because the method is unapplicable but mainly because the method does not support the characteristics of young learners teaching and learning. They agreed that upper-grade teachers and students have a more manageable hybrid learning experience compared to lower-grade teachers and students. For these teachers, what the students need the most during their primary education is having good interaction between students and teacher and inter-students. One of the teachers even said that "having the students interact in the classroom with one another will help them to build their social skills and characters as a person". Another teacher mentioned that "students are able to experience different emotions and practise expressing their emotion right away with their friends" and "students will be able to create a personal connection that will help them grow as a person in the future".

## Conclusions

Online and hybrid learning are the two methods that allow teaching and learning to continue despite no physical meeting and classroom for teachers and students. It makes learning still possible for students regardless of their location. However, its application is not without any barriers and shortcomings. Its successful application for adult learners may not be seen fully at the primary level. Teachers are reluctant to fully apply online or hybrid learning due to a couple of reasons. The first reason is the characteristics of young learners that are not suitable for online learning. Second is the need to have physical interaction that cannot be provided by online and hybrid learning. Finally, varieties of teaching and learning activities are limited as not all activities can be applied in both teaching and learning situations. Due to these reasons, teachers in the current study prefer to have their teaching and learning classroom either as fully face to face or fully online learning.

## References

- Alfarimba, R., Ardianti, S.D., & Khamdun. (2021). The impact of online learning on the learning motivation of primary school students. *Progress Pendidikan*, 2(2), 94-99. DOI: 10.29393/prospek.v2i2.i46.
- Apriliana, N. (2021). The problem of online learning in Islamic primary school in Yogyakarta. *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education Studies*, 4(1), 1-16. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33367/ijies.v4i1.1593>.
- Asmuni. (2020). Problematika pembelajaran daring dimasa pandemi Covid-19 dan solusi pemecahannya. *Journal Pedagogy: Journal Penelitian dan Pengembangan Pendidikan*, 7(4), 281-288.

- Chiu, T. K. F., Lin, T. J., Lonka, K. (2021). Motivating online learning: The challenges of Covid-19 and beyond. *Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 30(3), 187-190. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-021-00566-w>
- Khafidhoh & Carolina, A. (2019). Using pictures for teaching vocabulary to the junior high school students. *English Language Teaching Educational Journal*, 2(1), 32-38.
- Kulikowski, K., Przytuła, S., & Sułkowski, Ł. The Motivation of Academics in Remote Teaching during the Covid-19 Pandemic in Polish Universities—Opening the Debate on a New Equilibrium in e-Learning. *Sustainability*, 13, 2752.
- Kundu, A. (2018). Blended learning in Indian elementary education: problems and prospects. *Journal of Online Learning Research*, 4(2), 199-227.
- Mile, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: a methods analysis*. United States of America: Sage Publication, inc.
- Miskiah, Suryono, Y., & Sudrajat, A. (2020). The effects of blended learning on Elementary school students' creativity and activeness. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 8(9), 3958-3964. DOI: 10.13189/ujer.2020.080920.
- Oliver, K. M., & Stallings, D. T. (2014). Preparing teachers for emerging blended learning environment. *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*, 22(1), 79-103.
- Putri, R.S. et al. (2020) Impact of covid-19 pandemic on online home learning: an explorative study of primary school in Indonesia. *International Journal of Advanced Science Technology*, 29(5), 4809-4818.
- Rianti, H.A. (2020) Kendala pembelajaran daring guru sekolah dasar di kabupaten Banjarnegara. *Elementary School*, 7(2), 297-302.
- Rorimpandey, W.H.F., & Midun, H. (2021). Effect of hybrid learning strategy and self-efficacy on learning outcomes. *Journal of Hunan University*, 48(8), 181-189.
- Thorne, K. (2003). *Blended learning: How to integrate online and traditional learning*. London: UK. Kogan Page.
- Wibawanto, T. (2017). *Memaksimalkan pembelajaran disaat pandemic melalui hybrid learning dengan portal rumah belajar*. Retrieved from: <https://lpmp Lampung.kemdikbud.go.id/detailpost/memaksimalkan-pembelajaran-disaat-pandemi-melalui-hybrid-learning-dengan-portal-rumah-belajar>
- Widikasih, P.A., Widiana, I.W., & Margunayasa, I.G. (2021). Online learning problems for elementary school students. *Journal of Educational Research and Evaluation*. 5(30), 489-497.