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by Henny Putri

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A Reflection on Assessment and Evaluation Changes During COVID-19

Henny Putri Saking Wijaya^{1*}

⁴
¹English Department, Petra Christian University, Surabaya 60236, Indonesia
^{*}Corresponding author. Email: hennypsw@petra.ac.id

ABSTRACT

COVID-19 has forced changes in all aspects including education. Educational institutions have made a big change when moving from offline to online platforms. Teachers has to learn new tools to teach online. Within a short period of time, they need to use Google Classroom or other Learning Management Systems to teach. This change has also affected the assessment and evaluation in the classroom. Thus, teachers need to reflect on what they do in order to maximize the teaching and learning process that has been shifted suddenly due to the pandemic. In English Department, Petra Christian University, classes are categorized into skill classes and content classes. The assessment and evaluation of these classes are different. Even the assessment and evaluation among skill classes can be different from one another depending on the focus of the skill. This is a qualitative study, and the data were taken from three skill classes and three content classes. This paper will discuss the changes of assessment and evaluation in both skill and content courses, and how the teachers reflected on the changes.

Keywords: Reflection, Assessment, Evaluation, Changes

1. INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 pandemic has forced changes in all aspects including education. Educational institutions have made a big and sudden change when moving from offline to online platforms. Before the pandemic, teachers met their students face to face and taught using whiteboard or LCD projector. When the Indonesian government decided to implement physical distancing and school from home, teachers had to adapt themselves with the new condition and had to learn new tools to teach online.

A lot of schools do not have Learning Management System (LMS). Thus, within a short period of time, teachers needed to use Google Classroom, Moodle or other LMS to teach. This condition also happened in English Department, Petra Christian University. Lecturers had to move to online platform to teach and assess the students. One senior lecturer joined a lot of trainings conducted by the university to prepare the online classes. She needed to ask help from one of her students to help her understand how to use Google Meet [1]. Another lecturer learned how to use Google Classroom few days before the campus was lockdown.

She had to search by herself how to upload video in the Google Classroom and it took her one hour to do it [2].

Besides the teacher, the students also experienced problems with the online classes. When they returned to their home town, those living in small cities had limited access of internet. Even those living in big cities had limited quota of internet. This made them unable to have virtual meetings all the time.

These new conditions faced by lecturers and students has affected the assessment and evaluation in the classroom. Before the pandemic, most teachers assessed the students using essay tests and reading comprehension for reading skills [3]. Besides, the formative assessment, teachers had summative assessment by giving quizzes [4]. After the pandemic, lecturers need to reflect on what they do in order to maximize the teaching and learning process that has been shifted and need to consider the problems faced during the teaching and learning process.

In English Department, the classes are divided into two categories: skill classes and content classes. The assessment and evaluation of these classes are different. Even the assessment and evaluation among

skill classes can be different from one another depending on the focus of the skill. The purpose of this research is to find out the changes of assessment and evaluation in both skill and content classes and how the lecturers reflected on the changes.

1.1. Related Work

When moving to online teaching and learning, the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework, proposed by Garrison, Anderson & Archer [5], should be applied. The CoI framework points out three types of presence: social, cognitive and teaching. The first type, Social Presence, is defined as “the ability of participants to identify with the community, communicate purposefully in a trusting environment, and develop interpersonal relationships by way of projecting their individual personalities” [6]. In the Social Presence, there is engagement with the participants. The second type, Cognitive Presence, is “the extent to which learners are able to construct and confirm meaning through sustained reflection and discourse in a critical Community of Inquiry” [6]. The ability of doing the activities shows the Cognitive Presence of the learners. The last type, Teaching Presence, is defined as “the design, facilitation and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose of realizing personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes” [6]. When using LMS to upload instructions, videos, and activities, the lecturers show the Teaching Presence.

A research by Cleveland-Innes, Gauvreau, Richardson, Mishra, and Ostashevski found advantages of implementing CoI framework [7]:

1. Collaboration through connection of students and teachers
2. Increase of accessibility and flexibility through Teaching Presence
3. Increase interaction by giving students a voice to participate
4. Enhancement of learning by adding elements of active learning, and promoting reflective learning
5. Social presence by projecting themselves socially
6. Student engagement by the degree of interest, attention, curiosity
7. Open communication by creating an environment of trust
8. Motivation by having the desire to learn in a program

Besides the advantages, they also found challenges:

1. Lack of technical infrastructure

2. Designing courses
3. Cyber malice
4. Lack of skill set and training
5. Lack of student motivation/participation
6. Student, instructor and institutional buy-in

2. METHODS

This is a qualitative research. The data were taken from three skill classes and three content classes. There are five skill courses: Reading, Grammar, Listening, Speaking and Writing. The writer excluded Speaking and Writing classes because these two skill classes were not affected much with the changes from offline to online. There are two categories of content classes since there are two programs under English Department namely English for Creative Industry and English for Business. Because of this, the content classes were taken randomly because they were more various.

The data collection used questionnaires and interview. There were two sections of the questionnaire. The first section was the information related to the class and the second section was the description of the changes made and the considerations. There were six lecturers filling in the questionnaires. However, two were excluded since there were no changes made in the assessment and evaluation. The interview was conducted when there were unclear responses from the questionnaires.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data showed there were some changes in the assessment and evaluation. The changes occurred not only in skill classes but also in content classes. The lecturers changed both the grading components and the forms of assessment and evaluation.

3.1. Skill Classes

In skill classes, the changes happened in Listening and Reading classes. In Listening classes, before the pandemic, the assessment and evaluation were taken from five components: four tests and class participation. She was able to have Test 1 before the campus was lockdown. When moving to online classes, the lecturer decided to delete class participation from the assessment and evaluation. Then, she changed the grading policy into 25% for each test. During the offline condition, the students had in-class tests. They had to listen and do the test. Meanwhile, during the online condition, internet became a problem for both the lecturer and the students. This made the lecturer unable to conduct a

virtual class meeting every week. She often sent the class activities using Google Classroom. Thus, the weekly assignments became a form to assess and evaluate the students. These weekly assignments were used to replace Test 2. Meanwhile, for the midterm and final tests, she changed the type of questions. She made the questions more personal and prepared more sets of test in order to minimize cheating.

In Listening class, the social presence did not really occur since the lecturer focused more on the cognitive and teaching presence. This condition made the students unable to interact with their classmates and lecturer. It made students have less motivation to learn since what they did was doing the assignments by themselves. They felt bored. This condition was seen as a challenge by Cleveland-Innes, Gauvreau, Richardson, Mishra, and Ostashevski [7]. The teaching presence was dominant since the lecturer uploaded the materials and activities in Google Classroom every week.

In Reading class, the experience was different. The internet was not really a problem. Even though the internet connection was sometimes unstable, the lecturer and the students could have a virtual class meeting every week. There were slight changes in the grading policy. The lecturer decided to add more components in the class participation. Before the pandemic, the class participation was taken from the weekly quiz that the students did before the class started. During the online class, she considered the attendance and the assignments in the component.

The social presence in Reading class occurred well. The students could have interactions with their peers and the lecturer. They could have a group discussion and a class discussion so that the class was lively. Besides using Google Meet, the interaction also happened in LINE group. The students could ask questions to the lecturer in the group. Moreover, the social presence was included in the grading component. The cognitive presence was still the dominant type since it evaluates the critical thinking of the students. The teaching presence also existed since the lecturer uploaded materials and activities using Google Classroom. In this class, all types of presence were implemented in balance. This made the students have more motivation to learn even though it was online.

3.2. Content Classes

In content classes, the changes occurred in Business English (BE): Marketing and Business Documents classes. In BE: Marketing class, there were four components for the assessment and evaluation. When moving to online class, the lecturer decided to reduce the components into three. Besides the grading

policy, the changes also happened in the forms of assessment and evaluation. For Test 1, before COVID-19, the students were supposed to make a promotional video which required them to interact with a lot of people. During the pandemic, all residents had to stay at home. This condition made the students unable to create a promotional video. Because of this, the lecturer decided to change the form of Test 1. The students were asked to create a digital poster or a video discussing the tips to prevent the spread of COVID-19. For midterm test, the original plan was making a report from an interview with a company owner. Then, for Test 2, the design was theoretical questions. Since the students had to stay at home and some of them returned to their home town, the lecturer changed the form into analyzing an advertisement using the theories. This assessment became the combination of midterm test and Test 2. Finally, for the final exam, the lecturer asked the students to write a reflection paper.

In BE: Marketing class, the social presence was there. There were interactions between the lecturer and the students and among the students. They had the virtual class meeting every week using Google Meet. The students could ask questions to the lecturer using WhatsApp. Before changing the form of the test, the lecture discussed her plan with the students so that the engagement in this class was high. The cognitive presence existed in the forms of test. Meanwhile, the teaching presence was not high. The lecturer did not use any Learning Management Systems and she rarely uploaded materials for the students.

In Business Documents class, the lecturer and students had a weekly online class. Some of the students had problems with their internet connection. Internet connection was considered as a challenge of infrastructure [7]. Because of this, they preferred to turn off their camera during the class. Even though they turned off their camera, they still responded when the lecturer asked them. There were slight changes in the grading policy. The lecturer decided to include more components in the class participation. Before the pandemic, the class participation was taken from the weekly responses that the students made when the lecturer asked questions. During the online class, she considered the attendance and the assignments in the component.

The social presence in Business Documents class ran well. The students could have interactions with their peers and the lecturer. They could have a group discussion and a class discussion so that they could understand the materials well. The lecturer sometimes gave them a group assignment so that they could collaborate and learn from one another. Collaboration was one of the advantages mentioned by Cleveland-Innes, Gauvreau, Richardson, Mishra, and Ostashevski [7]. Moreover, the social presence was included in the

grading component. It means that the lecturer appreciated her students' efforts to be active in online classes. The cognitive presence was still the dominant type since it evaluates the critical thinking of the students. The teaching presence also existed since the lecturer uploaded activities, including tests, using Google Classroom. In this class, all types of presence were implemented equally.

When reflecting on the changes they made, all lecturers thought that the changes were necessary. They considered the students' conditions as well as the environment that was not ideal. This excerpt from the interview shows that the changes were made in relation to the condition: "During pandemic, students were not allowed to do activities outside their houses. Because of this, having an interview and a promotional video as the test was impossible to do" (Lecturer A)

Motivation is another issue that becomes a problem during the online classes. The number of attendance in some classes was decreasing. In order to maintain the students' motivation, the lecturer involved the students in the form of assessment. It can be seen from this excerpt: "When I asked the students to give responses related to the test, they were happy because the new form of test was appropriate with their conditions" (Lecturer B). It means there is an increase of interaction between the teacher and students, and among the students. Moreover, including the students' attendance in the grading component made them appreciated. During the offline meeting, most of the lecturers never included the attendance in the grading. "I never thought that including the attendance in the component would give a big impact on my students. They felt that I understood their efforts and struggle joining the online classes and working on the assignments" (Lecturer D). These reflections were in line with the research done by Cleveland-Innes, Gauvreau, Richardson, Mishra, and Ostashewski [7].

Methods of delivery were also important during the sudden change. One way communication was not effective to build the relationship with the students in online classes. The lecturers thought that two ways of communication were able to increase engagement in the online class: "I often called my students' name when having a discussion. In the offline meeting, it was difficult to remember the students' names. Using Google Meet, I could mention the students' names easily because there was a list of participants" (Lecturer C).

4. CONCLUSION

A sudden change of teaching and learning process was not easy for both the lecturers and the students. Both of them needed to adapt themselves with the new conditions. The changes in the assessment and evaluation could be avoided as well, both in the skill

and content classes. The changes were both in the grading components and the forms of the assessment and evaluations. When the components were not relevant to the condition/context, lecturers could modify or delete the components to make the learning process effective. Besides that, the implementation of three types of presence in balance and two ways of communication helped lecturers to maintain students' motivation in learning.

In conclusion, teachers need to reflect on their teaching regularly. The conditions of the offline class cannot be adopted directly to the online class. They need to make changes in the assessment and evaluation. The changes they made during the pandemic may work or may not work effectively when the offline class is allowed. The teachers need to consider again the components in order to make the learning process run well.

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