

Blended Learning Stimulating Students' Activeness in English Teaching Learning Process

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Abstract

Student activeness in the learning process is very important because it encourages their deeper and more meaningful engagement with the subject matter. The problem of student activeness in learning is a challenge that is often faced in the world of education, where students are less involved or actively participate in the teaching and learning process. The purpose of this study is to explore how blended learning can stimulate students' activeness especially in the English learning process to class A, sixth semester students of English education study program at University of Nias. To conduct this research, the researchers used a qualitative descriptive method with data collection techniques through interviews. The results of the data obtained about Blended learning stimulating students activeness in English teaching-learning process is Blended learning in English classes enhances students participation and activeness by utilizing online platforms and face to face group for interactive discussions and activities. With the results of this study, it is hoped that the teaching-learning methods carried out can vary and be tailored to the needs and interests of students such as this blended learning method so that students are more enthusiastic and comfortable when learning, especially when the teaching-learning process is taking place.

Keywords: Blended learning, Stimulating, Students' activeness

Abstrak

Keaktifan siswa dalam proses pembelajaran sangat penting karena mendorong keterlibatan mereka yang lebih dalam dan bermakna terhadap materi pelajaran. Masalah keaktifan siswa dalam belajar merupakan tantangan yang sering dihadapi dalam dunia pendidikan, dimana siswa kurang terlibat atau berpartisipasi aktif dalam proses belajar mengajar. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana blended learning dapat menstimulasi keaktifan mahasiswa khususnya dalam proses pembelajaran bahasa Inggris pada mahasiswa kelas A, semester enam program studi pendidikan bahasa Inggris di Universitas Nias. Untuk melakukan penelitian ini, peneliti menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui wawancara. Hasil data yang diperoleh tentang Blended learning merangsang keaktifan siswa dalam proses belajar-mengajar bahasa Inggris adalah Blended learning di kelas bahasa Inggris meningkatkan partisipasi dan keaktifan siswa dengan memanfaatkan platform online dan kelompok tatap muka untuk diskusi dan kegiatan interaktif. Dengan hasil penelitian ini, diharapkan metode belajar-mengajar yang dilakukan dapat bervariasi dan disesuaikan dengan kebutuhan dan minat siswa seperti metode blended learning ini agar siswa lebih antusias dan nyaman saat belajar, terutama saat proses belajar-mengajar berlangsung.

Kata kunci: Blended learning, Merangsang, Keaktifan mahasiswa

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INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, technology has permeated many aspects of life, including education. In the digital era, innovative and adaptive learning approaches are crucial to support student interest and engagement. One of the increasingly popular approaches is blended learning, which is a

combination of traditional face-to-face learning and online learning. Blended learning provides flexibility for students to learn at their own pace and allows access to various learning resources that are not limited by time and place. According to Kaur (2013): Effective integration of various delivery methods, instructional models, and learning styles within an engaging, interactive learning environment” is what is meant by “blended learning. Lalima (2017), defines A teaching and learning strategy known as "blended learning" blends live instruction with the assistance of instructional technology. From the definitions outlined by these two experts' opinions, it can be understood that blended learning is a combination of learning styles between face to face learning and online learning supported by the use of technology to create a more effective learning environment that can support students' interaction environment. According to Yulianti (2020), the technology applied in the blended learning model is a combination of media-based virtual learning and in-person education. Previous research shows that the use of technology in English language teaching can increase students' interest and motivation. With online learning platforms, students can practice their English skills through various interactive activities such as videos, quizzes, forum discussions and collaborative tasks. In addition, teachers can also utilize technology to provide faster and more specific feedback, which can help students to continuously improve their skills. More and more Teachers and administrators agree that students can become more motivated and engaged, that the internet and digital tools can accommodate kids with different learning styles, and that these resources can improve the quality of instruction. (Zhao, 2005) in Richards (2015).

Blended Learning in language education is particularly effective in language education, including English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction. It provides opportunities for students to practice language skills in various contexts, both in and out of the classroom. According to Neumeier (2005), A range of resources and exercises are included in blended learning environments to support the growth of communication skills. UMass Faculty (2003: 5) in Setyawan (2019), defines "Faculty-delivered instruction via the Internet" is the definition of online teaching and learning. Real-time (synchronous) and anytime, anywhere (asynchronous) interactions are part of online education. This model provides flexibility in terms of time and place, allowing learners to learn according to their own pace and needs. In addition, online learning also allows the use of various interactive media, such as videos, discussion forums, and online quizzes, which can increase student engagement and understanding. Meanwhile Miller (2019), defines about Face-to-face instruction takes place in a physical classroom and is a contextual learning environment. This context enhances collaborative learning experiences and supports diverse learning styles through real-time communication. Online learning provides flexibility and access to a variety of resources, while in-class interaction encourages lively discussions and collaboration between students. By combining these two methods, students can be more motivated, feel more connected to the material and classmates, and actively participate in varied learning activities.

The problem of student activeness in learning is a challenge that is often faced in the world of education, where students are less involved or actively participate in the teaching and learning process. This can be caused by various factors, such as low learning motivation, uninteresting teaching methods, and an unsupportive learning environment. Students who have difficulty understanding the material or have personal problems also tend to be passive in class. To overcome this problem, a comprehensive approach is needed, including efforts to increase student motivation, use more interactive teaching methods, and create a conducive learning environment, as well as providing support for students in need. Active learning strategies are crucial for fostering student engagement and participation. Blended learning environments can stimulate student activeness by incorporating interactive and collaborative online tools. Bonk and Graham (2006) note that Higher levels of engagement are promoted by encouraging students to participate more actively in their education through blended learning. In the context of English language teaching, blended learning has great potential to improve student engagement. Student engagement is one of the key factors in the success of the learning process, as active students tend to be more engaged, motivated and have a better understanding of the material learned. However, the main challenge in teaching English is how to create a learning environment that can encourage students to be more active. Pupils who actively participate in the learning process by making the most of their mental, emotional, and physical capacities are said to be active learners. (Anurrahman, 2012: 19) in Rasimin (2021). A benchmark for learning success is obtaining student competencies in the process of teaching and learning. The degree of participation from the students during the instruction and learning involve students who are eager to learn, respond to inquiries from the teacher, complete assigned activities, and present their work to the class. Nuryasintia (2018), says that In educational activities, being active is essential. Students must constantly actively digest and apply the knowledge they have acquired. In order for teaching and learning to take place, students must actively participate in the process rather than merely listening and recording but during instruction, pupils must also contribute by responding. According to Singgih (2006) the following components can motivate learners to take an active role in their education: 1) Supplying educational materials that might compel and grab students' interest to encourage participation in class activities; 2) Describe to students the learning objectives (basic ability); 3) Bringing up learning competencies with students; 4) Present stimuli (problems, subjects, and ideas to be studied); 5) Give pupils guidance on how to acquire the material; 6) Discuss activities and students' involvement in educational endeavors; 7) Offer criticism; 8) Using assessments as a bill of goods against students to ensure that their proficiency is constantly tracked and measured; 9) Compiling a summary of all the content covered at the conclusion of each class.

Effective blended learning requires thoughtful integration of pedagogical strategies that promote student activeness. Flipped classrooms, project-based learning, and collaborative group work are some of the approaches that have been shown to be effective. Strayer (2012) argues that Increased student engagement and active involvement can result from flipped classroom models, in

which students work with lecture materials outside of class and take part in interactive activities during class time. Several studies have demonstrated the positive impact of blended learning on student activeness in English language learning. For instance, a study by Wu, Tennyson, and Hsia (2010) found that When compared to traditional classroom settings, students in blended learning environments demonstrated better levels of interest and participation. Additionally, Chen and Jones (2007) reported that Improved language competency and increased student satisfaction were the results of blended learning approaches.

So the explanation above can be understood that student activeness in the learning process is very important because it encourages their deeper and more meaningful involvement with the subject matter. Active students tend to better understand and remember information, as well as being able to apply their knowledge in real situations. In addition, being active in learning increases intrinsic motivation, making learning more interesting and relevant to students. Thus, student engagement not only improves their academic results, but also helps them become independent and competent learners. Blended learning offers a promising approach to enhancing student activeness in the English teaching and learning process. By combining traditional and digital instructional methods, educators can create more engaging and interactive learning experiences. However, successful implementation requires careful planning, the use of appropriate technological tools, and the integration of effective pedagogical strategies. As the educational landscape continues to evolve, blended learning will likely play an increasingly important role in fostering active and engaged learners. Therefore, this research aims to explore how blended learning can stimulate students' activeness in the English learning process.

METHOD

The research method in this research uses qualitative research with descriptive research type. Gea (2023), says that many descriptive studies attempt to characterize reality using a methodical, strictly adhered-to methodology and focus on the phenomena of human experiences in their natural environments. Qualitative research is a research approach that aims to deeply understand social phenomena and human behavior through non-numerical data, such as interviews, observations, and text analysis. The goal is to comprehend how people create their worlds, how they interpret their experiences, and what significance they attach to those experiences. For data collection techniques, researchers conducted interviews by asking five interview questions that could explore the opinions of class A, sixth semester students of English education study programs at University of Nias as the participants of this study. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), the definition of an interview is a structured conversation with an aim. It is a professional conversation that aims to gather descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena. The five interview questions asked by the researchers are:

1. How does the implementation of blended learning in English class help to increase your

- participation and activeness during the learning process?
2. Can you explain the difference you felt in terms of learning engagement between the blended learning method and the traditional learning method in English class?
 3. Does the use of the online platform in blended learning make you interact more with the teacher and classmates? If so, how does it affect your engagement in learning English?
 4. How do the tasks and activities provided through the blended learning method affect your engagement in learning English? Do you feel more motivated to complete these tasks?
 5. What aspects of blended learning do you think are most effective in stimulating students' engagement in learning English, and why?

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

From the results of research data collection, it was found that 25 out of 38 students in class A semester six of the English language education study programme at University of Nias have provided answers to the proposed interview. The results of the study can be illustrated through the table and graph below.

Table 1. The results of the five interview questions on how Blended learning stimulates students' activeness in the English teaching-learning process.

| Interview Questions | Result 1 | Result 2 | Implication |
|--|---|--|---|
| 1. How does the implementation of blended learning in English class help to increase your participation and activeness during the learning process? | 24 students answered that the application of Blended Learning in English classes helped me increase my participation and activeness during the learning process because I could access the material anytime and anywhere. So that I can learn according to my own pace and needs. | 1 student answered: so far the use of blended learning in class is not often done (face-to-face learning & independent online learning), what I have experienced is that the lecturer sends the material the day before studying in class, so that I have the opportunity to study at home. And that made me prepare myself. | Application of Blended Learning in English Classes: helps to increase students participation and activeness during the learning process, aided by the online platform to actively participate in class discussions and online activities. |
| 2. Can you explain the difference you felt in terms of learning engagement between the blended learning method and the traditional learning method in English class? | 23 students answered: in the blended learning method, I feel more active because of the variety in teaching methods. Traditional methods tend to be monotonous by only relying on lectures in class, while blended learning provides a | 2 students answered: when the lecturer uses blended learning (online learning) I like to be lazy to study because I don't have to meet face to face. Whereas when using the traditional method I am more active during discussions to | The difference in learning activeness between blended learning method and traditional method: In the blended learning method, students feel more active compared to the traditional method |

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|---|---|--|--|
| | wide variety of activities such as online discussions, interactive quizzes, and collaborative projects that make the learning process more interesting and challenging. | ask and answer questions from the lecturer. | which tends to be monotonous. |
| 3. Does the use of the online platform in blended learning make you interact more with the teacher and classmates? If so, how does this affect your engagement in learning English? | 21 students answered: Using online platforms in blended learning makes me interact more often with teachers and classmates. This allows me to ask questions and discuss easily, as well as participate in more interactive learning. This more frequent interaction influences my activeness in learning English because I feel more involved and motivated to learn. | 4 students answered: The use of online platforms in blended learning is not very effective in increasing learning activity. They feel that there is no platform that is truly implemented and considered suitable for students, especially in learning English, other than Google applications or AI websites. | The use of online platforms in blended learning makes them interact more often with teachers and classmates because it allows them to ask questions, discuss and participate in more interactive learning, which in turn increases the activeness of learning English. |
| 1. How do the tasks and activities provided through the blended learning method affect your activeness in learning English? Do you feel more motivated to complete these tasks? | 22 students answered: The tasks and activities provided through blended learning methods tend to be more varied and challenging. For example, I might be assigned to create a video presentation or participate in an online discussion that requires in-depth research. This makes me more engaged and motivated to complete such tasks as they feel relevant and challenging. | 3 students answered: I felt assignments and activities do not affect my engagement in learning English when using blended learning because I like face-to-face learning. And I am not motivated to complete tasks quickly. | The activities provided through the blended learning method influence their involvement in learning English and motivate them because the assignments are more interactive and collaborative based on the large variety of assignments so that students do not feel bored when completing assignments. |

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|--|--|---|---|
| <p>2. What aspects of blended learning do you think are most effective in stimulating students' activeness in learning English, and why?</p> | <p>20 students gave opinions that were in line with: The most effective aspects of blended learning in stimulating student engagement are flexibility and variety of teaching methods. Flexibility allows students to study according to their schedule, while the variety of teaching methods such as videos, interactive quizzes, and online discussions make the learning process more interesting and dynamic. This combination helps maintain students' interest and engagement throughout the learning process”.</p> | <p>5 students where they were more dominant chose collaboration as the most effective aspect for learning because it made it easier for them to exchange ideas, help each other in resolving conflicts.</p> | <p>The most effective aspect of learning English using blended learning is the face-to-face, online and self-paced aspect because it can increase students' active participation where the combination of face-to-face, online and self-paced learning encourages students to be directly involved in the learning process, both physically or virtual.</p> |
|--|--|---|---|

Based on the opinions of the participants described in the table above, can be discussed as follows:

For the implementation of blended learning in English class, 24 students answered “*The application of Blended Learning in English classes helped me increase my participation and activeness during the learning process because I could access the material anytime and anywhere. So that I can learn according to my own pace and needs*”. From their opinions, it can be understood that the application of blended learning in the English teaching-learning process in class, they can feel that the blended learning method has a positive effect on them as students because it can help increase their participations and activeness in learning. This learning method is considered suitable for their needs in the English teaching-learning process. Aji (2017) about blended learning says that in addition, as a result of the growing use of information technology in the classroom, blended learning has become a popular learning environment. In these situations, teachers play a crucial role in piqueing students' interests. However, researchers also found 1 different opinion from one student who said “*So far the use of blended learning in class is not often done (face-to-face learning & independent online learning), what I have experienced is that the lecturer sends the material the day before studying in class, so that I have the opportunity to study at home. And that made me prepare myself*”. From the answers, it can be understood that these students did not really feel the effect of

blended learning on his participation and activity in the English teaching-learning process in class because it was rarely applied.

For the difference in terms of learning engagement between the blended learning method and the traditional learning method in English class, 23 students answered: *“In the blended learning method, I feel more active because of the variety in teaching methods. Traditional methods tend to be monotonous by only relying on lectures in class, while blended learning provides a wide variety of activities such as online discussions, interactive quizzes, and collaborative projects that make the learning process more interesting and challenging”*. In this answer, it can be seen that the difference between the blended learning method and the traditional learning method is that the blended learning method makes them more active in learning because there are various activities in this method that make the learning process more interesting and challenging. Christopher McMorran (2013) in Vickers (2015), suggests that collaborative technology can boost student engagement, improve active involvement (through content creation), and enrich the learning process when implemented in a classroom. While the traditional learning method tends to be monotonous by only relying on lectures in class which makes them easily feel bored and not interested in learning. However, there were 2 students who gave contrasting answers about the difference between blended learning and face to face group method *“When the lecturer uses blended learning I like to be lazy to learn because I don't have to meet face to face. Whereas when using the traditional learning method I am more active during discussions to ask and answer questions from the lecturer”*. From this statement it can be interpreted that some of these students also prefer the traditional learning method (face to face group) rather than blended learning. Whereas in the face to face group they feel more interested and active to follow and participate in the teaching-learning process, when blended learning they feel lazy or can be called not too concerned in the teaching-learning process because interaction is limited especially if it is not done face to face.

About students' interaction in using the online platform in blended learning and its influence on their engagement in the English teaching-learning process, 21 students responded: *“Using online platforms in blended learning makes me interact more often with teachers and classmates. This allows me to ask questions and discuss easily, as well as participate in more interactive learning. This more frequent interaction influences my activeness in learning English because I feel more involved and motivated to learn”*. From this answer, it can be concluded that the implementation of blended learning using online platforms, these students interact more with both teachers and friends and make it easier for them to discuss during the English teaching-learning process because using online platforms can be anytime and anywhere they are and of course this makes them feel more active and often involved in the teaching-learning process. Hrastinski (2019) in Hafeez (2021), demonstrated that the use of a blended learning technique improves learning. By utilizing this learning approach, students not only gained more knowledge but also showed greater engagement and communication with teachers. However, there were also 4 students who had a different opinion

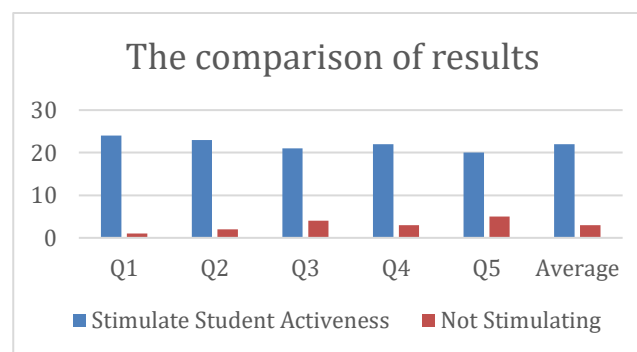
by answering: *“The use of online platforms in blended learning is not very effective in increasing learning activity. They feel that there is no platform that is truly implemented and considered suitable for students, especially in learning English, other than Google applications or AI websites”*. The opinions of these four students seem to contradict the opinions of many students who feel that the implementation of blended learning using online platforms makes them interact more and be more active in the English teaching-learning process with each other. However, it should also be noted that not all online platforms in blended learning can stimulate students, because of course the needs and interests of each student to the online platforms used are different which may also be influenced by the advantages and disadvantages of different online platforms.

About tasks and activities in blended learning method affect for engagement in learning English, 22 students answered: *“The tasks and activities provided through blended learning methods tend to be more varied and challenging. For example, I might be assigned to create a video presentation or participate in an online discussion that requires in-depth research. This makes me more engaged and motivated to complete such tasks as they feel relevant and challenging”*. From their opinions, it can be seen that the students felt the stimulation of blended learning towards the activities and assignments delivered. This is evident from their statements that they like the activities and tasks delivered through blended learning in the English teaching-learning process because it is more varied and challenging to do so that they are more enthusiastic about the activities and tasks. According to Halasa & Abusalim (2020), says that utilizing technology to incorporate interactive learning, video courses, and online interaction where students can take the lead in the learning process is one way to achieve student-centered learning. While the other 3 students also have different opinions by saying: *“Assignments and activities do not affect my engagement in learning English when using blended learning because I like face-to-face learning. And I am not motivated to complete tasks quickly”*. It can be understood that some of the students also find the application of blended learning method in terms of assignments and other activities in it does not really affect their activeness. This is because they prefer face-to-face learning rather than online learning. Because of this, they are not motivated to do their assignments well through this blended learning.

For the aspects of blended learning that they think are most effective in stimulating students' activeness in learning English, 20 students gave opinions that were in line with : *“The most effective aspects of blended learning in stimulating student engagement are flexibility and variety of teaching methods. Flexibility allows students to study according to their schedule, while the variety of teaching methods such as videos, interactive quizzes, and online discussions make the learning process more interesting and dynamic. This combination helps maintain students' interest and engagement throughout the learning process”*. From this statement, the aspects of blended learning that they find effective are mainly the flexibility and variety of teaching methods. These two aspects are considered to be in accordance with what they need in terms of learning English while the teaching aspect provides variations that are not monotonous so that the learning process is more

interesting and makes them more interested and not bored during the teaching-learning process. However, there are 5 students who give different opinions from the others about the effective aspects in blended learning that enable stimulating students' activeness in learning English, namely that *"They were more dominant chose collaboration as the most effective aspect for learning because it made it easier for them to exchange ideas, help each other in resolving conflicts"*. From this opinion, that some of these students also feel that the collaboration aspect of blended learning is more effective in blended learning when learning English. The reason is that they feel that collaboration makes it easier for them to exchange ideas such as when discussing and solving each other's problems.

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that of the 25 students who participated in giving their opinions about blended learning in the English teaching and learning process, most of them felt that blended learning stimulates their liveliness, increases their participation in the English teaching and learning process by utilizing online platforms for discussions and interactive and varied activities. This method encourages interaction with the teacher and classmates and increases engagement. The wide variety of tasks and the interactive nature of blended learning tasks motivate students. The most effective aspect of blended learning is the combination of face-to-face, online, and self-paced learning, encouraging direct involvement in the learning process, both physically and virtually.



The graph above illustrates the results regarding the comparison of the number of students who are stimulated and not stimulated by the use of blended learning stimulating students activeness in the English teaching-learning process based on the results of interviews related to the use of blended learning conducted by researchers to 25 students. The number of stimulated students is color-coded blue while the number of unstimulated students is color-coded red. And from the graph presented, it shows the number of students who are stimulated is higher than the number of students who are not stimulated.

CONCLUSION

From the description above, it can be seen that blended learning in English classes enhances student participation and activeness by utilizing online platforms for interactive discussions and

activities. This method encourages interaction with teachers and classmates, promoting activeness. The large variety of assignments and interactive nature of blended learning assignments motivate students. The most effective aspect of blended learning is the combination of face-to-face, online, and self-paced learning, encouraging direct involvement in the learning process, both physically and virtually.

With the results of this study, researchers hope that education can apply methods in the teaching-learning process that are varied and tailored to the needs and comfort of their learning which can at the same time increase the interest, enthusiasm and activeness of students in participating in the teaching-learning process so that the objectives of learning can be realized.

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