

The Implementation of Blended Learning in Early Childhood Education Teacher's Training

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Abstract—This study reports the implementation of blended learning applied in early childhood education teachers training in PP-PAUD dan Dikmas Jawa Barat, Indonesia. Operationally, there are two approaches concerning the implementation of blended learning, they are conventional approach and online approach. The two approaches were conducted according to the curriculum and the operational implementation in the syllabus of blended learning. This case study focuses on a particular phenomenon and situation which also describes the facts and characteristics of researched elements in systematic ways. The requirement of its implementation refers to the operational standards which are: operators and participants are required to have competences in mastering technology of information and communication and accessing internet connection and operating computer. The media of learning include laptop or computer, internet connection and the other online media such as mobile phone and android application.

Keywords—Blended Learning, Training, Early Childhood Education

I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, a country that ratified Dakar Declaration 2000, has global commitment to develop lifelong learning program that synergizes with education for all (UNESCO, 2000). Department of National Education, as a leading sector of lifelong learning program and education for all, has formed both programs as the principles of educational implementation. This is managed in Law of National Education System No. 20 of 2003. Therefore,

education in central, provincial, and regency/city implicates this law in plan, strategy, and learning program on the whole.

Lifelong learning program in Indonesia and other countries are divided into formal, non-formal, and informal educations. Learning is not only defined as a space and time activity, but it is also seen as educational process for all educational aspects and related to productive learning (Sudarsana, 2016; Biesta, 2006; La Belle T.J, 1982; Aspin D.N & Chapman J.D, 2000; Field. J, 2001). Lifelong learning program gives opportunity to learn reasonably and widely for every person based on their interest, age, and learning need. This is an opportunity that could be benefited through group and individual learning, and learned through mass media. This is a learning how to be, how to do, and how to live together. A learning society will be the prerequisite for the growth of educated society

The condition of Human Resources (HR) in Indonesia is relatively low when viewed from educational factors. It is based on the results of a survey conducted by UNESCO in 2017 showed that Indonesia's education rankings are currently ranked fifth among ASEAN countries and ranked 108th in the world with a score of 0.603. The data shows that Indonesia needs to do many ways to fix and improve the quality of human resources through education, one of which is by enhancing the quality of educators.

Educators have an important role in the continuity of the educational process and spearhead the success of achieving quality educational goals. Professional

educators are expected to participate in national development and able to compete with the demands of globalization in the improvement of science and technology. Based on these conditions, it is necessary to realize the quality of education services in the community in which it has to be supported by government policies and programs as well.

Some research results have proven the effectiveness of the use of blended learning in education. *Blended learning* can improve the independence of learners in PKBM (Community Learning Center), *blended learning* can improve the competence of teachers and education personnel in schools, and *blended learning* can affect student learning motivation in school. However, there has been no research done before related to a special research on the implementation of *blended learning* in training for *PAUD* teachers like which has just been done in *PP-PAUD dan Dikmas Jawa Barat* (Department of Development and Fostering of Early Childhood Education and Community Education of West Java).

Along with the launch of the ASEAN Economic Community (MEA), which opened access through internet and online network with affordability broadly indefinitely space and time, Indonesia through *PP-PAUD dan Dikmas Jawa Barat* designed blended learning in form of teacher training for *PAUD* teachers who combined learning through the internet and face-to-face network. Increasing the competence of *PAUD* teachers through learning in the network is one of the training programs done by utilizing the progress of information and communication technology. With this advancement, educators are no longer just learning conventionally by listening to lectures from facilitators and resource persons, but they are trained to learn independently by reading modules over the internet. Successful breakthrough programs that utilize the internet network are largely determined by several factors, such as the required content of educators, the supportive internet network, the necessary information and communication technology tools, face-to-face meetings as a form of reinforcement assisted by partner institutions, and most of all is the motivation and willingness of the teachers to be empowered and professional.

However, there is an essential problem found in the field as many *PAUD* teachers have not had the opportunity to attend the training. On the other hand, the opportunity to attend regular training held by the government is still limited. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct training that can provide many opportunities for *PAUD* teachers in a way that makes it easy for them to join the trainings. One way that

can be done is to include *PAUD* teachers in basic education through online (in network).

This study is very urgent to conduct in order to find empirical findings that can be an effort to improve the quality of competence of early childhood teachers in Basic Training and Education using *blended learning*. The results of this study can be used as a reference and evidence that the target of non-formal education programs can be reached widely and can follow the development of information and technology as a form of improving the quality and competence of *PAUD* teachers.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used case study research design. The subject of this research was *PP-PAUD dan Dikmas Jawa Barat* (Department of Development and Fostering of Early Childhood Education and Community Education of West Java) as the technical implementation unit (UPT) of the Ministry of Education and Culture which has been conducting training for *PAUD* teachers by using blended learning in 2017. This research was started by doing literature review about *blended learning* and training for *PAUD* teachers with the discussion of some experts on phenomena and urgency factors. The next step was preparing the research grid, instrument and research process which was done along with data processing. By doing so, the research results would always grow (snowball) to be able to answer the research question (Creswell, 2018).

III. RESULTS

The Center for the Development and Fostering of Early Childhood Education and Community Education (PP-PAUD dan Dikmas Jawa Barat) as a government institution responsible for improving the quality of *PAUD* teachers has always been trying to make a breakthrough in improving the competence of *PAUD* teachers, one of them is through education and training activities for *PAUD* teachers.

The trainees were *PAUD* teachers with the following criteria: 1) minimum education qualification of SMA (Senior High School), 2) has never attended basic level of early childhood education training, 3) has become *PAUD* teacher at least 1 (one) year, 4) has basic ability of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), 5) willing to join in the training from beginning to end, and 6) can access the internet (PP-PAUD Dikmas, 2017).

Learning facilities consist of laptop/PC, internet network and other online media such as mobile phones with certain applications. Media and teaching materials uploaded on the network that participants can download include modules, PowerPoint slides/video/animation, task sheets, instrument formats and evaluation sheets (pre-tests, processes and post-tests). Other tools needed for practical activities are appropriate for use in online and offline activities. Training materials include one policy material, and nine competence materials for young assistants. The materials were presented through face-to-face, online, tutorial, and self-supporting both online and offline.

Strategies used in the implementation of training for PAUD teachers are as follows: 1) face-to-face online aims to provide understanding to the participants of the material delivered through *video conference* facilities by resource persons and experts. Each module is a one-time video conference. *Video conference* activities become the evidence of attendance participants in learning. The total number of *video conference* activities was 10 times of meetings, 1 for policy materials and 9 for materials in training manual, 2) tutorial aimed at guiding problem solving or difficulties faced by participants in understanding modules, doing tasks and implementing modules. Tutorial activities were done through discussion forums (*WhatsApp* and/or email). Participation in the tutorial has function as evidence of attendance of participants in learning. Participant's involvement to ask or answer questions in the discussion forum (*WhatsApp*) is counted as liveliness in learning. The schedule of the discussion forum is determined by agreement between the mentor and the mentees, 3) the independent activities were done online (in network) and offline (outside the network/face to face). Self-activities were conducted for 25 working days (200 hours of lessons) and would be facilitated by mentors for learning, local admin for administration, and 4) evaluation and reporting activities conducted online and offline. Online activities were conducted to solve difficulties and problems in the preparation of activity reports by participants. Meanwhile, offline activities were conducted to check the completeness and conformity of self-employment report conducted by the trainees as well as the independent instrument collection from the head of the management unit of education.

IV. DISCUSSION

The competence of PAUD teachers is expected to increase after they join the competence improvement activities, one of them through training. The form of training that is often done is using the conventional

method of face-to-face. However, with a wide range of targets, wide areas, and different levels of motivation from both PAUD teachers as training participants and partner institutions or organizations can follow the training mechanisms in the network and to increase their maximum and potential competencies.

Based on the existing components in *Blended e-Learning*, then the learning theory that underlies the learning model is the learning theory of Constructivism (individual learning) of Piaget. Moreover, the characteristics of constructivism learning theory (individual learning) for blended e-learning are as follows: 1) *Active learners*, 2) *Learners construct their knowledge*, 3) *Subjective, dynamic and expanding*, 4) *Processing and understanding of information*, and 4) *Leaner has his own learning* (Hasibuan, 2006: 4).

Blended learning is a learning that combines learning strategies using face-to-face activities, computer-based learning (offline), and online computer (internet and mobile learning). The main purpose of *blended learning* is to provide opportunities for various characteristics of learners to become self-sustaining, sustainable, and developing throughout life, so that learning will be more effective, more efficient, and more interesting and able to achieve predetermined educational goals (Brown R, 2003).

Meanwhile, *activities in network* are a learning that is implemented by utilizing computer network technology and internet. Online learning activities that can be implemented are through *video conference*, direct communication through media chat, indirect communication through discussion forums and electronic mail (email). Learning can be done through an instructional system that independently provides instruction and learning services to training participants without directly involving the speakers and resource persons in the implementation process. The instructional system includes the registration process, the implementation of learning, the initial test, the assignment, the final test, and the determining the training participants' graduation.

Face-to-face outside the network is part of the learning system where there is direct interaction between resource persons/assistants with training participants. Learning interactions that occur in the face-to-face include the provision of material input, frequently asked questions, discussions, exercises, quizzes, practices, and assignments. Offline facing can be done through *in house training* (IHT) as well

as coaching by involving all components i.e. central/regional resource, mentor, and the companion.

V. CONCLUSION

Professional educators have the main task of educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students, both in Early Childhood Education (PAUD) and further education. To perform their duties professionally, a PAUD teacher has to master the pre-required competencies.

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