

The Mental Set in Classroom Management During Distance Learning

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to reveal the English teachers' beliefs about their classroom management during distance learning. Moreover, this study also presented the solution that the expert teachers gave to conquer those difficulties. This study involved big number of participants and presented the solution, therefore the descriptive survey research design was chosen. A questionnaire and interview used to collect data in which the items were taken from three books related to Classroom Management. The findings showed that the English teachers found difficulties in the aspect of Mental Set. Related to those difficulties several suggestions were provided. The solutions were related to how the English teachers' dealt with burnout and anxiety, inappropriate emotions, etc.

In Indonesia, the pioneer of distance learning was Universitas Terbuka. UT was established in 1984 as the determination of Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia to follow the model of United Kingdom Open University (UKOU). The main purpose of UT was to remove the barrier in studying in the tertiary level, such as lack of funding, living in the remoted rural areas, and lack of time (Padmo & Belawati, 2018), because UT offered an experience of digital campus, flexibility, and high quality of *e-learning* (Rahmat ABD, Seminar KB, 2019). Since UT's establishment, there are more than 1.2 million students have enrolled which 95% of them are working adults, and 600.000 students have graduated and working in various field of profession. Adapting the distance learning concept, UT has developed multimedia learning materials for the students which mainly in the form of printed materials with audio-cassettes, video programs, web-based materials and online tutorials. Therefore, with the rapid development ICT, now UT heavily emphasized its learning activities on the ICT system. UT also offers limited tutorial sessions, such as face-to-face and online tutorials (Mutiarra et al., 2007).

Regarding language learning in the concept of distance learning, (White, 2008) categorized distance learning into three generations based on the response to the development of technology. First generation through the correspondence systems. In this early generation, printed materials were used to deliver the educational content. The interaction between the teachers and learners was one way which usually by post. However, few distance language courses were offered since the context was felt did not support the development of some skills, such as speaking and listening. The second generation through multimedia systems in which the incorporation of television supplemented the distance learning environment. In some cases, the phone was used to connect individual learner, or remote classrooms, to the teacher. At this point, the distance language courses offered. The used of audiocassettes and videocassettes become prominent parts of this courses. It can be concluded that the second generation, the distance language learning combined printed material with broadcast media and cassettes. The third generation through the online systems. This generation applies information and communication technology as its basis, which made it possible for the development of the interactive distance language learning. The early emergence of distance language learning was a Spanish course offered by Syracuse Language Systems which combined some features of third generation distance learning and computer-assisted language learning. The opportunities for interaction provides by computer-mediated communication (CMC) are essential for the third generation. The feature of this model is substantial and enhance interaction between teachers and learners, and between learners and their peers, either individually or within groups.

Due to the outbreak of COVID 19, Indonesia Government has instructed that all activities which include big number of people, should be restricted. It is including the learning activities (Solikhah & Suripah, 2021). In response to this outbreak, on March 24th 2020, Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia released an Official Letter Number 4 year 2020 about the implementation of learning activities during pandemic COVID 19. This official letter stated that all the learning activities should be done from home by adapting the distance learning via online. Therefore, about 170,000 primary schools, 40.000 lower secondary schools, 26,000 higher secondary schools, and 3.000 tertiary education, have obeyed the policy (Churiyah et al., 2020).

The implementation of the massive distance learning as stated by Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia (Kemendikbud) due to the pandemic of COVID-19 resulted a condition called *Learning Loss*. This condition found from the survey that was held from November 13 to December 17, 2020. It was based on the diagnostic assessment that the responder teachers have done (Hidayat, 2021). The result of this survey which based on the teachers' perception during diagnostic assessment in 2020 shows that 68% from 11.306 teachers stated that 50% or more students do not meet the standard of competency required for the distance learning. In details, 31,9% teachers stated their students meet the standard of competency, 47,6% teachers stated that only 50% of their students meet the standard of competency, while 20,6% teachers stated that only few of their students meet the standard of competency. It can be concluded that the students who meet the standard of competency below 50%. It is also assumed that this result shows the tendency of the *Learning Loss*. The survey also found that 48.4% teachers agree that they can teach optimally during distance learning, 8.2% are strongly agree, 20.1% are in doubt, 21.4% are disagree, while the rest are strongly disagreeing (Widyanurtikah & Puspita, 2021).

The condition called as Learning Loss determines as the impact of the shock of the school closures. The real concern of the Learning Loss is not the a few months of learning that was lost, however that these losses will accumulate into a larger and permanent learning loss as many children fall behind during the school closures and never catch up (Kaffenberger, 2020). This concern is also supported by the result of a study conducted by other researcher (Andrabi et al., 2021). This study analyzed the impact of Pakistan earthquake in 2005 to the children's learning ability. It was explained that the schools in the affected area were closed for 14 weeks which means a little more than 3 months. By comparing the learning ability of this children in the affected area with the children with similar household in the area which farther away from the affected area, and then four years later, it was found out that the children in the affected were not just 3 months behind, but they were the learning equivalent of 1.5 years of schooling behind.

According to Stewart (2008), the distance learning can be as rich and productive as the traditional learning when appropriate classroom management is applied. He stated that the classroom management which covered the clear rules and procedure that students were encouraged to get familiar with, teacher's efficient feedback via learning platforms, a sense of school community, and variety of lesson and assessment types were fundamental for the success of distance learning. However, when the learning condition is on the contrary, both teachers and students will suffer. The teachers will find it hard to teach, while the students will possibly learn much less than they should (Marzano et al., 2005). Moreover, much of the learning hour can be leaded into unproductive activity (Richard & Renandya, 2002).

The absolute goal of classroom management is to provide learning opportunities and help the students to learn the most by experiencing it in the class, immersing within meaningful interaction, and growing into confident and independent students (Todorova & Ivanova, 2020). Teachers must know their content, develop the lesson plan, prepare the students for the various kinds of assessment, and learn to manage the school and district policies. Nonetheless, all those skills will be worthless if the teachers are unable to manage the order in the class and build positive learning environment. No matter how well-prepared the teachers are, the classroom management is fundamental for learning to occur in the classroom (Davis, 2018). This idea is in line with Marzano et al., (2005) who stated that Classroom Management is frequently describe as the important factor in students learning process. Classroom Management defines as a combination of approaches and processes that teachers use to achieve and preserve a classroom environment where they can educate and teach, the adoption of tools and techniques to construct behavioral change as demanded, and restrain discipline problems (Romi et al., 2013). Within the context of language learning, classroom management is ultimately needed for the teacher to manage the class in order to make it most productive (Richards & Renandya, 2002).

Creative positive learning environment and the positive teacher-student relationship refers to a skill that teachers have to possessed. Similarly, the engaging and well-managed classroom is also an outcome of the teacher's investment. However, they do not just happen naturally, but an effective classroom management is absolutely needed. An effective classroom management gives more opportunities for the students to learn much more in less disruptive classroom (Dyson et al., 2018). Moreover, adaptive classroom management includes effective monitoring, low-threshold intervention, and clear rules, which lead to effective use of time and increase learning time as well as learning success (Scherzinger & Wettstein, 2019).

When it comes to classroom management, several aspects are closely related to it. Based on the books written by Smith & Laslett (2002), Marzano et al., (2005) and Garrett (2014), numerous aspects of classroom managements are found. Although those aspects are various and distinct in each book, however an aspect is selected in this study. The aspect is Mental Set in which it has two sub-aspects related to develop 'withitness' and emotional objectivity.

METHOD

As the objective of this study is to discover English teachers' beliefs on the difficulties and the solution of classroom management in distance learning and it involved big number of participants, therefore quantitative research design applied. Precisely, a descriptive survey research design employed in this research. Based on Latief (2019), survey is used to described opinions, preferences, and perceptions of the research subjects or their self-reports towards particular topic (Mertens, 2010). This descriptive survey study will apply cross-sectional design to collect data at one point in time. In essence, this research design is beneficial to collect data in shorter time frame.

This research is conducted in Singosari district in Malang, and the English teachers in the level of secondary school will be the research subject. The English teachers who participate in this research are them who work in the public school. The English teachers must possess the under-graduate degree as the minimum requirement. It can be concluded that the teachers have passed all language skills courses and content knowledge courses. Moreover, it also assumes that the teachers have learned about classroom management during their college study and practice it in their class.

Thirty-seven English teachers from 10 different public schools participated in this study. They consisted of 16% male teachers and 84% female teachers. Some of the teachers are graduated from the English graduate program (22%), while the majority are graduated from the English undergraduate program (88%). Additionally, some of the English teachers have been teaching English more than 5 years (53%), while others have been teaching English less than 5 years (47%). It is also found out that the majority of the English teachers' claim that they have the 19 average skill of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) (52%), some claim that they have above average skill in ICT (30%), and the rest claim that they have excellent skill in ICT (16%). In order to collect the data and information about belief, perception, attitude, and behavior, the most suitable instrument is questionnaire (Creswell, 2014). The questionnaire is used to collect basic data from the large sample. Therefore, the interview is used to follow-up the responses on the questionnaire.

FINDINGS

Mental Set deals with the English teacher's emotion and feelings and how he/she behaves in the classroom from time to time during the distance learning. Mental Set includes the development of 'Withitness' and development of emotional objectivity. Regarding this aspects, the result of the questionnaire from 37 English teachers obtained the average score of 12.51%. This score classified as few difficulties.

English Teachers' Beliefs and Their Viewpoints to Solve Difficulties about Develop "Withitness" in Students in the aspect of Mental Set

The first sub-aspects in the Mental Set is develop 'Withitness'. Within this sub-aspect, a statement was stated. The statement mentioned that recognize students' potential problem in distance learning was difficult, which received agreement form 40.5% of the respondents. On the other hand, 40.5% of the respondents disagree with this statements.

Table 1. English Teachers' Beliefs on Developing 'Whititness'

Items	Statements	Response	N	Percentage
1	Recognize students' potential problem in distance learning is difficult.	Disagree	15	40.5%
		Agree	22	59.5%

For the sake to finding out the ways to solve the difficulty from the statement above, the interview revealed some activities that were done by the English teachers. Teacher 3 revealed that in the beginning of the semester the students were instructed to fill in the questionnaire in the Google Form link that was shared for them. The form was to find out the possibilities of the learning problem that the students might face.

At beginning of the semester we ask the students to fill the questionnaire in the Google Forms in which they are asked about their learning style and possible learning difficulties during online learning. However, when some issue arises, I offer that particular student to study offline in the school. (T3)

The participants also mentioned that they were always ready to talk to their students. They explained that they would help the students to solve their learning problem as well as gave suggestions or ideas. Teacher 1 and Teacher 4 stated that:

For the students who have some learning issues, I will contact them personally. Some problems that I found was that they got up late, the bad internet connection, and that the students forgot that their schedule. (T1)

I ask them to talk to me privately about the problems that they deal with. I allow the students to talk to me via private chat, then I try to help them to give maybe suggestions or ideas. (T4)

This sub-aspect revealed that the respondents of English teachers found it hard to recognize students' potential problem during distance learning. Therefore, in recognizing the students' potential problem during distance learning, the English teachers used several activities, such as distributing a questionnaire and communicating via online. They also tried to analyse the students' learning problems and gave suggestions accordingly.

English Teachers' Beliefs and Their Viewpoints to Solve Difficulties about Develop Emotional Objectivity in the aspect of Mental Set

The second sub-aspect in Mental Set is develop emotional objectivity. In this sub-aspects, four statements are presented. The first statement about control yourself thoughts in distance learning was difficult which obtained agreement from 65.1% of the respondents. The second statement about maintain a calm attitude towards students' misbehavior during distance learning was difficult which obtained disagreement form 62.2% of the respondents. The third statement about prevent yourself from anxiety and burnout during distance learning was difficult which acquired disagreement from 67.6% of the respondents. The last statement about recover yourself from anxiety and burnout was difficult which acquired agreement from 40.5% of the respondents.

Table 2. English Teachers' Beliefs on Developing Emotional Objectivity

Items	Statements	Response	N	Percentage
2	Control or regulate your self-thoughts and emotion in distance learning is difficult.	Disagree	13	34.9%
		Agree	24	65.1%
3	Maintain a calm attitude towards students' misbehavior in distance learning is difficult.	Disagree	23	62.2%
		Agree	14	37.8%
4	Prevent yourself from anxiety and burnout during distance learning is difficult.	Disagree	25	67.6%
		Agree	12	32.4%
5	Recover yourself from anxiety and burnout during distance learning is difficult.	Disagree	15	59.5%
		Agree	22	40.5%

Several questions were raised regarded the Mental Set in which revealed various responses from the participants. Teacher 1 and Teacher 4 claimed that they never had anxiety, burnout, or stress during distance learning. Teacher 1 also added that the distance learning helped teachers to be more literate about the latest and current communication technology as well as the current development of learning platform.

I pray to Allah and try to see the benefits of this online learning. Because through the online learning, it improves my knowledge about IT as I am an old teacher. It means that I really illiterate about IT before. I also like online learning because I can study, study, and study more about IT. (T1)

So far *Alhamdulillah*, I never get stress during the online learning. Because I always try to see the positive things in everything, specifically the online learning. (T2)

The participants also informed some strategies that they did to recover from the anxiety and burnout. Calming down by taking some minutes was done by Teacher 2 to reduce the anxiety. While, listening to music together with the students was done by Teacher 4 to get recovered from stress.

I usually just tell myself to slow down and if I became panic for example, I will just stay quiet for a bit and I will ask some times for the students to wait. Sometime I didn't know what to talk in the classroom. I will ask them to wait and then continue from where I wanted to talk. (T2)
I always feel happy to see my students. I rarely feel stress during this online learning. However, sometimes I play music to cheer up myself and my students. While they are working on the assignments, they listen to the music. (T4)

The participants revealed some strategies that they did in order to maintain their mental set. Some of the participants believed that praying could help to prevent them from anxiety, burnout or even stress. They believed that by seeing the positive side from the distance learning would hinder them from any negative attitude. Additionally, in recovering from anxiety and burnout, the participants mentioned strategies such as calming down and listening music.

DISCUSSION

Mental set refers to how the teacher feels, thinks and behaves in the classroom from time to time. Inappropriate mental set affects to the work of others classroom management elements. In short, without appropriate mental set, none of the aspects of classroom management works efficiently.

English Teachers' Beliefs about Develop "Withitness" in the aspect of Mental Set

Withitness defines as the ability to constantly monitor students' behavior and recognize immediately the potential problems. The findings revealed that the English teachers agreed that recognizing students' potential problem in distance learning was difficult. Accordingly, it was stated that questionnaire which distributed at the beginning of the semester helped to prevent the potential problems to occur. This activity resembled the idea given by Marzano, et al (2005) which was forecasting problems. This idea, in short, predicted the possible misbehavior or problems by noticing the behavior which may lead to discipline problems. Hence, the teacher could prevent those misbehaviors and maintain the less-disruptive learning environment.

English Teachers' Beliefs about Develop Emotional Objectivity in the aspect of Mental Set

Although the English teachers claimed that they disagreed that prevent themselves from anxiety and burnout during distance learning was difficult, but they agreed that recovered form anxiety and burnout was difficult. As a result, the findings also showed several approaches that done by the English teachers to solve their emotional issues. The approaches were praying to God, recognizing the positive impact of distance learning, and listening to music together with the students.

These approaches were in accordance with the notion of Smith & Laslett (2002) that teachers were human being with emotions and feelings, and to deal with the inappropriate emotions by recognizing the source of those feelings. Furthermore, recognizing the source of those feelings needed to be explained in detail as it was claimed to be helpful. Additionally, the teachers also suggested to talk to colleagues who could be considered to be an expert or knew about the class or others who was trusted, in order to reduce the inappropriate emotions.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, English teachers in state secondary school in Singosari found few difficulties in their classroom management during distance learning which in the aspect of Mental Set. In the Mental Set, two sub-aspects included: developing 'withitness' and developing emotional objectivity. Moreover, the teachers gave insight of the approaches that proved to be effective.

In the aspect of Mental Set during distance learning, the teacher distributed a questionnaire at the beginning of the semester. This questionnaire used to find out the students' learning styles and the possible learning difficulties that may happen during their distance learning. Additionally, dealing with anxiety, burnout, and stress, the teachers most likely to pray to God and found inner peace. They also mentioned that they found the positive side of the distance learning which that force them to be literate of the development of internet communication technology.

Several suggestions are proposed based on the result of the present study concerning classroom management in distance learning. The suggestions are as follows: (1) Faculty members of teacher training program are encouraged to take a look at the findings and discussion of the present study. It may help them to give insight about the real practice of the classroom management in distance learning, especially for the English language subject. It may also be beneficial as the examples of the real practice of teaching experience during distance learning; (2) English teachers in the level of secondary school are suggested to interpret the findings and discussion of the present study. It helps the teacher to manage the class in distance learning better with the approaches that proven to be effective. The four aspects in the present study provides sub-aspects in details in which it may help the English teachers to conquer the similar difficulties that they have in their classroom management in the distance learning; (3) Future researchers who concerning about the same topic are recommended to do a follow-up activity after envision

the findings and the discussion of the present study. However, it should be noted that the respondents of the present study were the English teachers in the secondary state school in Singosari, Malang and the present study limited to the aspect of classroom management in distance learning. Therefore, the future researchers are suggested to add more aspects into the study. They may also conduct study to compare the classroom management in the distance learning and hybrid learning. They may also include more participants from another level of education.

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