Practices in Distance Education and Learning: A Case Study at Flame Lingua

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Abstract

This article describes about how distance learning practices can be presented more interestingly. It is a case study in an informal institution of *Flame Lingua*. which already runs various practices of distance learning for learners. Related with the pandemic era, practices distance learning can be used as an alternative way appropriately. In addition, the use of technology also has a pivotal role in the educational field. It can facilitate the learners around the world to learn more efficiently, because they can learn in everywhere or every time that they want. Furthermore, online facilitation is also needed to enhance the practice of distance education because it becomes an important tool to be used. As a result, the demanding to use technology in educational field is also increasing (Tugun, 2016). It emerges to be a greater prominence. Related about that, One of the technology examples that can be implemented is web-based applications. It can be used to enhance learner's interest in distance education. It also provides an interesting and powerful resources for the learners. There are some web based applications which already have applied in *Flame Lingua.* The teacher and the learners in *Flame Lingua* are able to have a commnicative teaching and learning process through *Google Meeting*. They also can learn through an interactive quiz or games, such as *Bamboozle* and *ISL Collective*. Those applications are beneficial to attain the teaching and learning process becomes more interestingly, especially in distance education. So, practices in distance education and learning is needed.

Keywords : Practices, Distance Education, Applications

INTRODUCTION

The emerging of distance education becomes a common thing in educational field, especially in a pandemic era (Dedi, 2020 : 118). It is not a new thing anymore for educational field, even it has quite popular there is a survey which has been conducted by the Sloan Consortium, a digital faculty (Simonson, 2015 : 4). It is a recent annual report about the latest data of the growth and spread of online education, it indicated that online or distance education was growing rapidly. It becomes significantly more popular (Simonson, 2015 :4). Recently, there are many institutions both formal or informal which have already provided a system of distance education for their program. For example, in USA some universities have

already offered a distance education and learning for the learners. (Borje, 2005 : 11). Moreover, the flexibility is also the main benefit that can be achieved from a distance education and learning (Nsiah, 2013: 762). Here, the learners can learn in everywhere or every time. Even the teacher and the learners do not meet in a real physical contact, they still can do a teaching and learning process through a tool of technology. Then, the teacher and learners also can do the interaction communicatively through a platform of various technologies. Moreover, the methods and media of technology that are used also vary greatly in this distance education (Borje, 2005 : 12).

Related about that, the demanding to use technology as a tool for teaching and learning process is increasing, especially in a distance education. Furthermore, web-based applications become one of the powerful resources which are able to engage the learners' motivation in learning (Ojokoh, 2016: 145). There are some web-based applications that can be used in teaching and learning process, for example video conferencing. It can be used for facilitating a distance education. The teacher and the students can interact through that application. They also can share their screen for presenting. So, from the visual aspect is also attained. The other web-based applications which can support the distance education is providing web quiz or game. It can attract the learners in a distance learning because the students will feel that they are enjoying something which is fun, but in fact they are still learning about the material itself. The students will also be more engaged because they are participating directly to learn through a quiz or game.

Practicing web-based applications as a tool of technology is very important for distance education. It can support the teaching and learning process to be interesting and communicative. As a result, all of the elements (including teacher and learners) need to have more practices. It is the key for distance education to attain the goal of teaching and learning process. If the elements are accustomed to have practices in using web-based applications, the learning process can go smoothly.

Related about that, there is an informal institution which has already run the practices by using web based applications for distance education and learning. The informal education here is an English course at *Flame Lingua*. It has already implemented interesting web based applications as a tool of technology for the learners. Here, the learners seems so enjoyable in doing a distance education learning. So, the writer decides to conduct a research of case study to see how the distance learning practices can be presented interestingly for the learners at *Flame Lingua*.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Distance Education

Distance education is neither an isolated concept, nor in its practice an isolated creation. It is education of a special type, like all types of education dependent on and influenced by values, opinions, experience and external conditions. While it is different from conventional schooling and has so many

characteristics of its own that as an academic area of study it may be regarded as a discipline in its own right.

Every educational endeavour has a purpose. Distance teaching and learning, like any kind of teaching and learning, can serve different ends. It makes little sense on the basis of purposes to distinguish between education proper and training of certain skills (Wedemeyer 1981). Any learning can be an educational experience. Distance learning primarily serves those who cannot or do not want to make use of classroom teaching, for example above all, adults with social, professional and family commitments. Learning implies more than acquisition of knowledge, for example, abstracting meaning from complicated presentations and interpreting phenomena and contexts;' [it] is the process of transforming experience into knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, senses and emotions' (Jarvis 1993:180).

There are some definition terms of distance. It can be geographical distance, time distance, and possibly even intellectual distance. Dan Coldeway, of South Dakota's Dakota State University, provided a framework to define four ways in which education can be practiced. It considers the two variables of time and place. It also gives insight into different approaches to the practice of education and distance education (Simonson, 2015 :4).

Then, there is also a term of open learning, but open learning is not synonymous with distance education; nor is distance education a sub-set of open learning. Distance education is a mode of learning with certain characteristics which distinguish it from the campus-based mode of learning. Whereas, Open learning is a state of mind. It is an approach taken from the planning, design, preparation and presentation of courses by educators, and an approach taken to the selection and use of learning strategies and associated resources by students. This approach seeks to provide students with as much choice and control as possible over content and learning strategies,

The aims of education, including distance education, cover a wide spectrum: from the development of personality and cognitive structure, via guided learning and problem-solving, to the training of knowledgeable and well-adapted professionals or examinees. Each of these aims means more than merely conveying information or imparting knowledge. To the present author, teaching means facilitation of learning (see Rogers 1969), which is seen as a basically individual activity intended to lead to a goal of some kind (self-realization, an examination, DISTANCE EDUCATION professional competence, or some other goal). This definition is important for ridding us of an otherwise wellgrounded objection to treating teaching and learning as one package.

What this means to distance-teaching organizations and their overall planning is far from universally clear. Needs and conditions in the societies concerned are decisive, but real knowledge about relevant circumstances is seldom easily available. What can be called market research and a kind of corporate planning are required. In the early 1970s the present writer made what proved to be an abortive

attempt to develop a generalizable approach to such planning and published a booklet in Swedish about this (Holmberg 1972). A more fecund approach of immediate relevance in the 1990s has been introduced by the Canadian Open Learning Agency in a 'scan of the British Columbian Environment' (Bates 1990b and 1993; Segal 1990). While strategic planning must remain a concern of each national, regional and local organizing body there are more easily generalizable principles that apply to the planning of the processes of distance education. Here we have to consider the system itself, its students and their learning, course planning based on the needs of the target groups concerned, the goals and objectives of the teaching and learning.

Distance educaton also have vast potentials application not only for independent study attractive to adults but also for mass education, through what has been described as industrial methods, and for highly individualized study and personal approaches with a great deal of rapport between the teaching and learning. There is a system of distance education below.
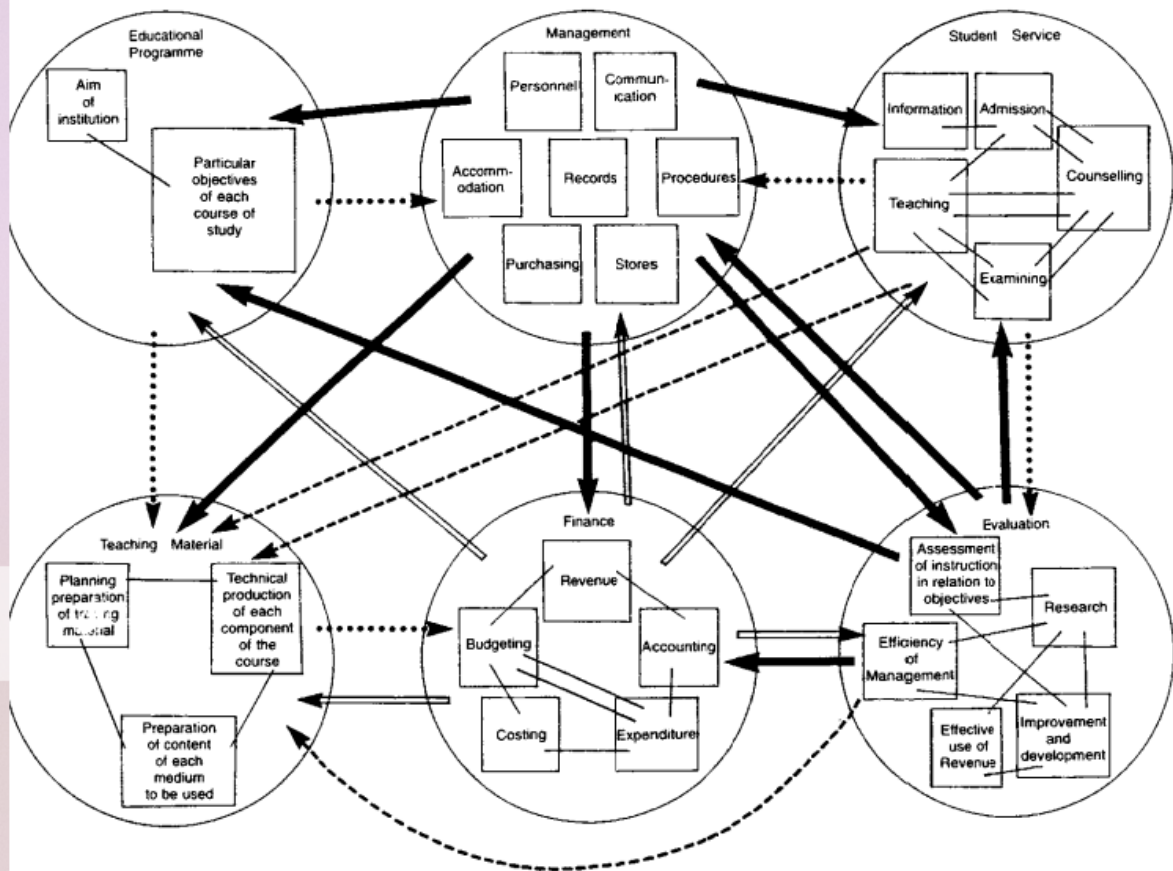
Educational
Programme

Aim
of
institution

Particular
objectives
of each
course of
study

Management

Personnel   Commun-
ication

Accomm-   Records   Procedures
odation

Purchasing   Stores

Student Service

Information   Admission

Counselling

Teaching

Examining

Teaching Material

Planning
preparation
of training
material

Technical
production
of each
component
of the
course

Preparation
of content
of each
medium
to be used

Finance

Revenue

Budgeting   Accounting

Costing   Expenditure

Evaluation

Assessment
of instruction
in relation to
objectives

Research

Efficiency
of
Management

Effective
use of
Revenue

Improvement
and
development

Figure 1.
System of distance education
In agreement with systems thinking, it is to be expected that these components influence one another (a change in one will affect the others). The systems approach is not necessarily a step-by-step process. Analysis, synthesis and evaluation are recurring stages repeated throughout the process and not necessarily in the traditional format of beginning, middle and end' (Romiszowski 1986:58).

Related about that, distance education has another meaning. It is a process of teaching and learning without the real phsyical, there is no face to face contact. However, the elements of teachers and learners here can still meet one to another through a technology which provides some web-based applications to

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accommodate the teaching and learing process go smoothly like a common learning in a classroom. That's why distance education is also a program which serves a combination of media and technology (Simonson, 2015 : 4). Those elements can achieve the goal of communicative teaching and learning process. It also help the students to feel more comfortable and motivated in doing a distance learning. Furthermore, Hormberg (2005) also states that there are some advantages of distance education, such as convenience, flexibility, and adaptability for the students' need. Based on the advantages before, it is important for all of the elements from educational field, such as the teacher and the learners to be cooperative in practicing distance education and learning through a technology or Information Communication Technology (ICT).

Related about that, The system of distance education also can be applied by using a tool of technology such as web-based applications. The rapid development of web applications is increasing in a distance education (Trajanovic, 2010). As a result, the notion of distance education is not new anymore. Here, learners can still interact with the teacher or another learner by using video conferencing, such as Zoom and Google Meeting. They can have an interactive teaching through this kind of technology, but it will be more beneficial if the teacher can combine about the appropriate method with the platform of video conference. For example, the teacher can use games or quiz based application for teaching the content of the material. They also can share their screen for presenting. There are many features that can be implemented from those web-applications.

The last two categories focus on education occurring in different places. Instruction can be delivered to different places at the same time when telecommunications systems are used. Often, television is used to connect the local classroom with the teacher and students to learners at a distance. Satellite, compressed video, fiber-optic systems, and webcasting are increasingly used for same-time, different-place education. Increasingly, web-based video systems such as Zoom are being used to deliver live instruction. This approach is also called synchronous distance learning. Students can also learn at different times and in different places

Practices in Using the Web Applications

Practicing is the main key that have to be attained in distance education, especially in using the web applications. As Nordin states that the way to use the web applications is a solution for delivering online classroom (Adefowoke et al, 2016). Moreover, the lecturers also can share their materials creatively through interactive task based activities, such as design the questions in Quizizz web. It provides a concept of game. It has an attractive features such as music background, leader board, and various theme. When the learners use this web application, they feel like playing a game but the content is about the materials of their lesson (Mac Namara & Murphy, 2017).

Another way of practicing web application is from video conferencing, for example in Zoom or Google meet. It facilitates both the lecturer and the learners access a distance education easily. They just

need to connect with the internet and they can do a teaching and learning process from the online screen. It beomes a common activity in educational field for using a video conferencing as a tool for learning process (Ashby, 2002).

In addition, practicing web applications is an alternative way to attain the goal of distance education. The others web applications that can be used is ISL Collective. It provides not only the video lessons, but also worksheet for the learners. It is very interesting because the learner seems like enjoying a movie but the content of that video is about the questions from their lesson. Moreover, the other practice that have to be implemented is providing fun learning activity in distance education. It can be presented through a Bamboozle web. It is also a game-web based which the learner can work in a team to answer the questions. The questions are vary depend on the topics that have been choosen. The students who are playing this game will also get points or scores on the screen. For the students who get the questions do not mean that they will get the score directly. The decision is inside the box whether they will get score, lost score or may be reset the score. Therefore, the atmosphere of the learning situation is very interesting.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The writer uses a case study for conducting this research. The main aim of case study is to explore a phenomenon in a depth way (Yasir Rashid et al, 2019). Then, a descriptive method is also used to answer the question of how practices distance learning can be presented more interestingly. Related about that, the writer presents the object of this research is an informal institution. It is F*lame Lingua*. It is located in Cilegon, Banten-Serang (Indonesia). It is an English course which already runs a system of distance education during the pandemic era.

Flame Lingua is an informal institution which already has 200 students with a vary age start from toddler until adults. It has 10 teachers as a tutor for the learners. This English course provides a fun and active learning for online learning or distance education. Then, the learners of Flame Lingua are also seem enjoyable, even the activity is not real physical. They still can interact one to another communicatively. This English course also has various practices in distance education.

The researcher conducted a research of this case study through an observation and interview. The purpose is to know about how they can present the online teaching and learning process becomes so interesting. In fact, they apply some web based applications. One of the web application that they used for teaching and learning process is video conferencing of *Google Meeting*. Based on the interview from the teachers and the learners, it is more applicable to be accessed, especially for kids who operate their own laptop by themselves. The reason why *Flame Lingua* also chooses this application is because of the flexibility. Here, the learners do not need to type the passcode (the way to join in another application, for example Zoom). again if they lose for a signal or when they have bad connection of internet. So, it will be easier too

Another web application that the teachers and learners use is Bamboozle. It is a game based application that they used for a warming up activity. It is an interesting application, where the students can work in group. So , there will be two groups for playing this game. The teacher is not only can find out the game based on the materials but also for fun purpose activity. The aim to use this web application is to make the students feel ready before learn about the lesson. Moreover, the students will not feel bored when they have online class. All of the learners can participate actively through this game because theu will answer the question one by one. If the learners ready to learn. It will be easier too for them to be engage with the material of the lesson that will be taught in online learning. It is really important in order to bring the students' mood swing in order to be focus when they see the screen.

In addition, practicing for using those web applications are really beneficial, both for the teachers and also the learners. Related about that, there is a web application that have been run by Flame Lingua. It is ISL Collective. It provides many features such as video lessons, worksheet, ESL powerpoint etc. Here, the teacher can apply the video based on the topic of the lesson. In this video there are some questions related about the topic. It is presented through a short movie. If the learners can answer correctly, there will be a notification of "Bingo", but if it is incorrect the notification is "Oops". So, the learners will know about their response directly. It is very interesting because the learners at *Flame Lingua* looks so enthusiastic. They can engage with their online classes.

CONCLUSION

Distance learning is not a new concept in the educational field. Therefore, the notion of interesting teaching and learning process have to be achieved through practices. There are many applications or tools of the technology which is able to be attained by the elements of educational field, such as the lecturer and the learners. One of the example is through web based application. Web based applications can give the solution for giving practices in distance learning, such as the using of video conference of google meeting and games or quiz based application. From that games or quiz based application, Bamboozle and ISL Collective can be applied in distance education and learning process. The sources is very powerful and attractive. The learners are not only learn about the lesson, but also they can enjoy the presentation through an interactive quiz and video. The topic about the quiz and vudei lesson are also vary. It depends on the topic that the lecturer's choosen. It has proved from in an informal institution of Flame Lingua. They have applied a fun and communicative learning process for students.

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