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Hybrid Learning as an Effective Learning Solution on Intensive English Program in the New Normal Era

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Abstract

In this new normal era, the government has implemented new normal policies in various lines including education by reopening schools. The new policy has generated a lot of polemics in several parties, especially parents. Many of them are worried if their children have to study outside when the COVID-19 pandemic is still not over. This situation requires school community to adapt to this new normal era by complying with the health protocols set by the government. The lecturers as the main learning facilitator have very crucial role in forming new habits for students. Learning innovations and the usage of suitable and diverse media for learning significantly hold up enhancing the educational quality in the new normal era. One of the appropriate learning model solutions as a way to adapt in the new normal era is by applying hybrid learning in the Intensive English class which mixes face-to face and online by utilizing technological sophistication. This study aimed to explain hybrid as a form of learning solution on intensive English Program at STIKES Banyuwangi as an adaptation form to face the new normal era. This research applied a descriptive qualitative method to gain data about phenomena exist right now concerning the facts of hybrid learning implementation on Intensive English Program and the students' behavior related to this learning model. The results of study indicated that hybrid learning make students easier in practicing the conversation during Intensive English class and can improve their learning outcomes and scores, especially in their speaking. 71.7% students stated that hybrid learning increase effectiveness, efficiency and their attractiveness, so it is quite effective to be applied. Then 85 students (81.8%) prefer hybrid learning than full online learning or totally face to face learning.

Keywords: Hybrid Learning, Intensive English, New Normal Era.

Introduction

In this current new normal era, the education institutions are forced to adapt quickly. The Minister of Education and Culture states that each school must begin to prepare for the educational realization in this new normal phase. New normal is a new form of interaction that relies on certain Standard Operational Procedures to stem virus outbreaks when social interactions are carried out in

various sectors (Rita & Safitri, 2020). If the government reopens educational activities in schools, educational institutions are required to comply with all government policy regulations and implement the Covid-19 health protocol. The implementation of new normal phase is a new lifestyle in the midst of Corona virus pandemic in Indonesia. Considering the last few months the spread of COVID-19 is still not over, therefore if the implementation of reopening school activities is still carried out, mature readiness is badly needed.

The opening schools during the pandemic with the new normal policy is considered as an alternative in meeting the students' learning needs who have been studying from home with an online system. Face-to-face learning is still needed to improve the quality of education considering the lack of students' awareness to study independently at home and lack of literacy awareness in reading ability and providing references. This is in accordance with statement from (Noor et al., 2020) that stated if in online course the participation of students is minimal, it is at unsatisfactory level. The new policy has generated a lot of polemics in several parties, especially parents. Many of them are worried if their children have to study outside when the COVID-19 pandemic is still not over. Even though the life order has entered a new phase, however concerning to the unfold of Covid19 which continues, the fitness and protection of students, educators, principals and all school residents remains a major consideration in implementing education policies.

Various efforts must be realized related to the preparation for reopening educational activities. For example coordination which involve all educational institutions, scientists, parents, and health workers. So that future problems will not hinder the learning process. In addition, entering the new normal phase, every educational institution must meet the requirements of the Covid-19 health protocol standard because there are many educational institutions in Indonesia still do not meet these requirements. Therefore, this effort needs to be evaluated immediately at the beginning of new teachings in the new normal period. Education is important for students; however, the safety and comfort must be prioritized. The role of educational institutions and the COVID-19 health medical teams must be more intensive in guarding the learning process in the new normal period in order to facilitate control and urge students to always apply health protocols during learning activities. Likewise, learning methods for students must be further optimized and the learning curriculum system at each educational institution must adjust to regulations during the new normal period. This situation can be the right moment for educational world to create new breakthroughs by utilizing sophisticated technology (Mahmud, 2020). So, the learning process can run according to the students' needs.

There are several requirements that must be met by schools so that they are capable of performing face to face studying within side the class such as: 1) school area is in the green zone, 2) get permission from the local government, and the students get permission from their parents, 3) availability of sanitation and hygiene facilities such as clean toilets, hand washing by using soap with water flow or hand sanitizer, and disinfectants, 4) able to access health care facilities, 5) readiness to apply of wearing mask area, 6) have a thermo gun, 7) mapping of school community who are not allowed to take part in face-to-face learning

activities, such as having uncontrolled comorbidities, do not have transportation access that allows social distancing, having travelling history from the yellow, orange, and red zones or a history of contact with people who are confirmed positive for Covid-19 and have not completed self-isolation for 14 days, and 8) make an agreement with the education unit committee regarding the readiness to conduct face-to-face learning in the education unit by applying health protocols.

The new normal education apply forces us to adapt learning methods according to the current digital-based conditions, in which we must combine face-to face learning method in class and e-learning or we usually called it as hybrid learning. Offline learning in the new normal era is applied in a limited way with only 50% student ratio and the rest uses other synchronous or asynchronous learning media, for instance Whatsapp, google classroom, telegram, and other LMS. There was a shift system so that there are no large gatherings between students in one class, then arrange study hours between the morning and afternoon shifts so that there were no waves of students going home and coming to school at the same time. The government allows face-to-face learning in schools located in the green zone but with a limited number of students and study time. These limitations of space and time require the creativity and innovation of lecturers to implement strategies and learning media that are in line with the current situation. The combined learning between face to face and online (hybrid) is an alternative learning in the new normal era.

The abstractness of English material cannot be understood only by reading the material and listening to the lecturers' explanation delivered online, but it needs to be supported by conducting conversation practice so that language learning is more contextual and students' understanding is much better because Intensive English Program focuses more on communication. Besides, the characteristic of Intensive English which have a unique attention on improvement make the process of learning unable to be completely applied online due to it can hinder the process of learning. Therefore hybrid learning is the most suitable choice on Intensive English learning by integrating the use of proper ICT in the school surroundings in order that the learning practice can run successfully and efficiently according with current situations and proficiency to be accomplished whether in normal era, pandemic, and in new normal condition by applying health protocols.

According to (Hubbard, 2013) hybrid / blended learning is combination of conventional direct meeting and integration of technology in e-learning form, so that its implementation must be directly proportional to the strategies used by lecturers and students. Hybrid learning emphasizes the needs of traditional learning process and the importance of redesigning learning model by integrating it with technology. So hybrid learning is type of a learning which blends the power of direct face-to face in class and online class. (Bryan & Volchenkova, 2016) declared if hybrid learning system will enable mix of face-to face and computer-mediated experiences. Combining direct meeting in class and online will certainly reduce the full use of internet network and allow students to meet directly with teachers to get direct instructions as well. This learning model can be a solution for full online learning where the main problems are the difficulty of accessing internet, the high cost of purchasing data quotas and inadequate infrastructure

especially for rural communities (Febrianto et al., 2020).

Some previous studies have been conducted related to hybrid learning. The research result conducted by (Meydanlioglu & Arikan, 2014) showed if hybrid learning in higher education is greater powerful than full face to face or totally online studying, so that many institutions are interested to develop this model. Besides study carried out by (Hidayatullah & Anwar, 2020) indicated that hybrid learning provide broad opportunities in developing educators' competence, the development of technology and information in learning as well as more dynamic access so that it is possible for students to always adapt to the current development. On the other hand (Hediansah & Surjono, 2020) performed a research and the result claimed that hybrid learning give good impact on providing interactive environment among teachers and peers, shaping students into independent learners to upgrade their skills, and improving teachers' performance in learning management.

Furthermore, research findings from (Sutisna & Vonti, 2020) showed that hybrid learning gave advantages for both lecturers and students such as improving digital literacy. Hybrid is one of learning alternatives to increase quantity and quality of lectures. By means of hybrid, students and lecturers can communicate across the distance, space and time. Therefore, the researchers were inspired to design hybrid learning method to assist the application of Intensive English program in new normal time and even this model can be applied after the end of pandemic. This is an approach and precise solution for performing learning by using multimedia, making it more fun, easy and meaningful through technology. This study aimed to describe hybrid learning as an effective learning model in New Normal era on Intensive English Program at StikesBanyuwangi with the research questions:

➢ What are the students' activities on Intensive English class through hybrid learning in the new normal era?
➢ How is the effectiveness of hybrid learning on Intensive English class in the new normal era?
➢ How are the students' responses in hybrid learning on Intensive English Program in this new normal era?

Method
This research applied a descriptive qualitative method to gain data about phenomena exist right now concerning the facts of hybrid learning implementation on Intensive English Program in this new normal era and the students' behavior related to this learning model. The informants in this research were StikesBanyuwangi students who took Intensive English Program and applied hybrid learning models, they were from Bachelor of Nursing study program (72 students), and Diploma Three of Pharmacy (41 students) in the 2020/2021 academic year. So the total sample was 113 students. The sample was taken by using purposive sampling.This research tried to explore some points, they are: 1) some activities of students in Intensive English program by using hybrid learning, 2) the effectiveness of hybrid learning on Intensive English class in the new normal era, 3) how is the improvement and innovation of hybrid learning according to the student needs to get over weaknesses in implementing it, and 4) Students'

responses in hybrid learning on Intensive English Program in this new normal era.

The technique in collecting data was performed extensively through observation and interview deeply and also by distributing questionnaires. The observation was performed by observing various learning activities of Intensive English Program through hybrid learning. Then the questionnaire was shared to the students who joint Intensive English class through Google form and the answers were collected to see the results. Additional data sources in this study were interviews. The researchers interrogated a number of students at random to get additional data sources after gaining the results of questionnaire that had been shared. The questionnaire and interview were used to dig up more and more about students' performances and experiences in applying hybrid learning on Intensive English Program.

The process of analyzing data was conducted in interactive way and continuously till it finished, so as the data was flooded [Miles and Huberman in (Sugiyono, 2016)]. Some activities in analyzing data were reduction, display and verification / concluding. In the study, data reduction was carried out to collect all information obtained through observation, questionnaire, and interviews. While the data display was the result of data exposure that was not removed. The conclusion verification stage was the stage of drawing conclusions based on the factual phenomena obtained.

Data Reduction	→	Data Display	→	Conclusion Verification

Results

The questionnaire results related to the effectiveness of hybrid learning from 113 participants were listed below:
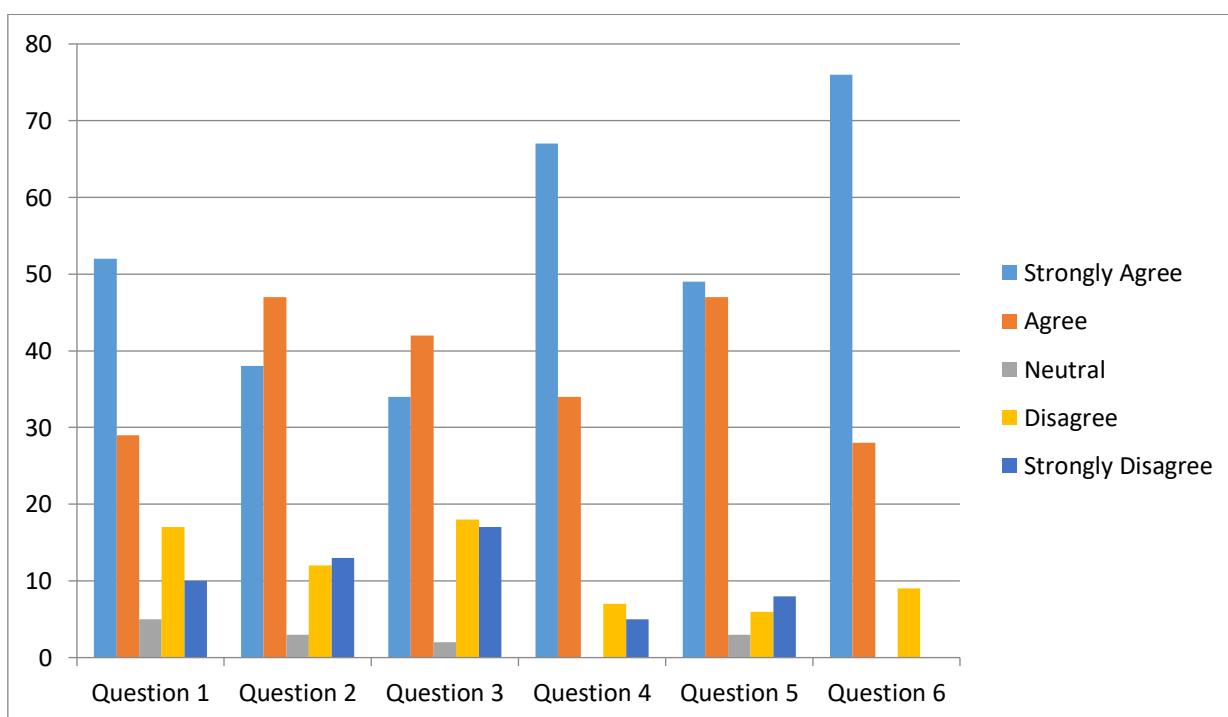
Figure 1. The survey results on the effectiveness of hybrid learning

Note:
Question 1: Is hybrid learning the best choice to increase effectiveness, efficiency and students' attractiveness?
Question 2: Does hybrid learning encourage you to learn and use information technology to expand knowledge?
Question 3: Does hybrid improve your learning outcomes and score?
Question 4: Does hybrid learning make you easier in practicing English conversation?
Question 5: Does hybrid learning increase you to actively learn independently?
Question 6: Is the combination of distance learning and conventional on hybrid learning complementary each other in learning?

Based on the graph in figure 1 most of students (71.7%) is the best choice to increase effectiveness, efficiency and their attractiveness, the students also can utilize the technology to expand their knowledge. Hybrid learning can improve the students' outcomes and scores, it is proven by the chart there are 34 students (33%) strongly agree and 47 students (41.6%) agree. Besides the students are easier in practicing direct conversation practice during hybrid learning, it can be seen from the chart which showed 67 students (59.3%) strongly agree, 34 students (30.1%) agree, 7 students (6.2%) disagree, and 5 students (4.4%) students strongly disagree. The majority of students agree if hybrid learning makes them more actively to learn independent and they think that the combination of distance learning and conventional on hybrid learning complementary each other in learning.

The questionnaire results about the students' responses in hybrid learning on Intensive English Class can be seen in the following chart:
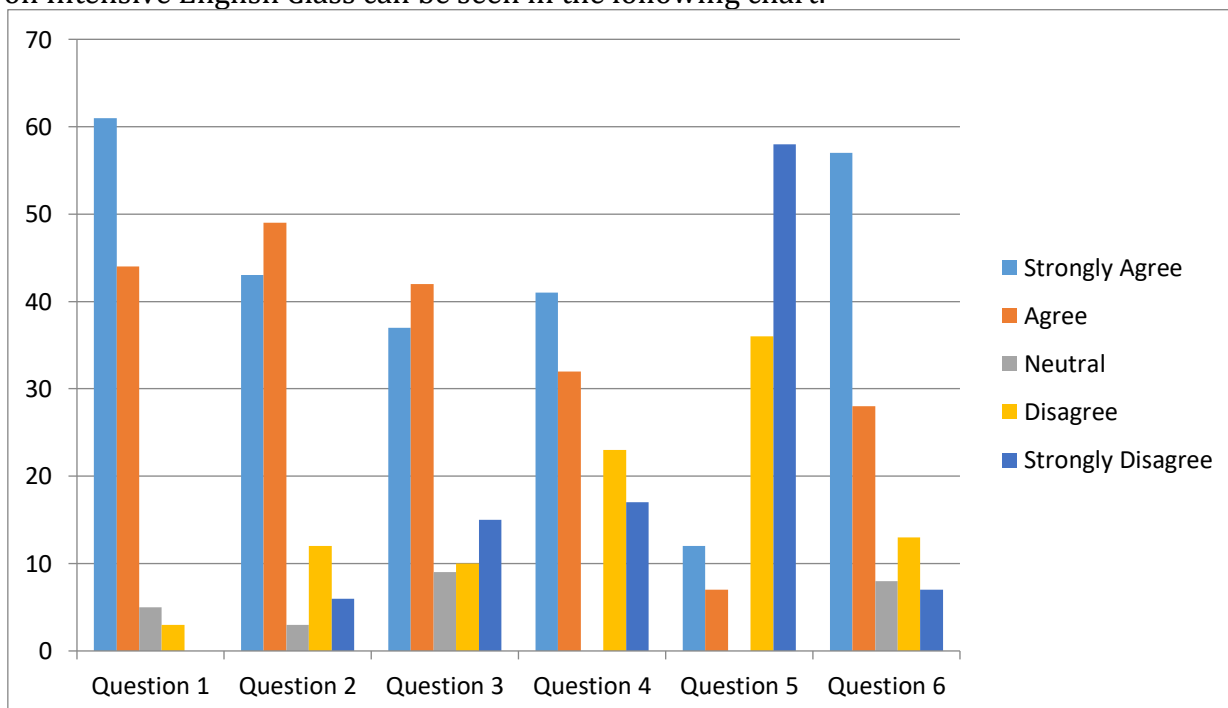

Figure 2. The results of survey about the students' responses in hybrid learning on Intensive English Class

Note:
Question 1: Is technology-based learning necessary in educational institutions?
Question 2: Does hybrid learning facilitate communication, collaboration and information sharing?
Question 3: Does hybrid learning overcome the limitations of academic services?
Question 4: Are your facilities fulfilled to support hybrid learning activities?
Question 5: Are the facilities provided by the campus adequate to support hybrid learning activities?
Question 6: Do you prefer hybrid learning to full online learning or totally face to face learning?

According to the chart in figure 2 most of students (89.4%) agree if in this modern era we need technology in our educational institution. They think that hybrid learning can facilitate communication, collaboration, and information sharing. It is proven by the result in graph there are 43 students (38%) strongly agree, 49 students (43.4%) agree, 3 students (2.7%) are neutral, 12 students (10.6%) disagree, and 6 students (5.3%) strongly disagree. Hybrid learning also can overcome the limitations of academic services. Then related to the facilities to support hybrid learning activities, it commonly becomes the problem. From the students' facilities, most of them has fulfilled the criteria, but unfortunately the facilities provided by campus are inadequate to support hybrid learning, it is shown by the graph that 36 (31.8%) students disagree and 58 (51.3%) students strongly disagree. The students mentioned that usually in their class are difficult of internet access and the speaker audio are commonly trouble when they are used in hybrid learning, so the students who are joining the online class through zoom was interrupted. Then most of students 85 (75.2%) students prefer hybrid learning to full online learning or totally face to face learning.

The research results indicated if the use of hybrid learning methods could increase learning outcomes in Intensive English class especially in students' speaking ability rather than who study fully online. Hybrid learning method is quite effective to be applied, it is proved by the results of student questionnaire as many as 81 (71.7%) students agree if hybrid learning can increase effectiveness, efficiency and students' attractiveness. The results of interview also strengthen students' answers to the questionnaire and showed that students have good motivation in carrying out hybrid learning in intensive English class. By means of hybrid model, the process of learning will be more efficient due to the traditional teaching model would be supported by ICT based e-learning and possible to do every time and everywhere (Syarif, 2012).

Discussion

Before implementing face-to-face learning in the new normal era, institution's readiness was reviewed where each institution must meet the criteria and conditions set out in the Covid-19 Health Protocol regulations, including at StikesBanyuwangi such as must wear a mask, prepare a place for washing hands and hand sanitizer, keep a distance, avoid crowds, and only 50% (fifty percent) of students who are allowed in one subject. If the institutions do not meet these

requirements, then they are not allowed to carry out face-to-face learning activities at school or campus. After checking by satgas Covid-19, Stikesbanyuwangi was declared to be able to carry out face-to-face learning in this new normal era. The teaching learning activities in the normal era in campus will certainly need an adaptation process as an adjustment step to the conditions experienced. There are several concepts can be used as alternatives that can be applied in schools amidst the covid19 pandemic, one of them is hybrid learning which combining direct face to face learning and virtual. Hybrid aimed to bring students to a new teaching and learning atmosphere so that students do not get bored easily doing learning in class from morning till the lectures hours are over.

Intensive English class whose main aspect is psychomotor which emphasizes on speaking/communication will certainly be a challenge in developing learning models according to the new normal adaptation. The significant influence of face-to-face learning on the expected psychomotor mastery still cannot be replaced by currently developing information and technology. Hybrid learning method can be one way out in applying new normal adaptation in Intensive English class. In this case students are directed to learn face-to-face in class but outside the classroom, they are also assisted by a variety of media like videos, websites, and Learning Management Systems (LMS). Based on government regulations in this new normal era where direct face to face meeting only 50% students come to class become a new problem for us as lecturers how to handle them with only 50% face to face and the rest 50% students must join online class. So the Intensive English Program also followed the regulation to conduct Intensive English class applied hybrid learning as an effective learning solution. This hybrid learning model began to be implemented in the 2020/2021 academic year in the odd semester. Automatically, the learning system and educational curriculum in this new normal era need to be adjusted.

In implementing hybrid learning model, face-to-face learning process was divided into several groups to apply social distancing between students and it was only used for direct conversation practice, while the rest students were learning from home so we emphasized on the use of innovative and creative methods. Meanwhile in giving explanations/theories, lecturers used Zoom Clouds Meeting or Google meet as a media, and Whatsapp group for discussion and collecting assignments. Whatsapp can be a promising tool to support communication and collaboration inside and outside the classroom (Qamar et al., 2019). Actually there is no special formulation in designing hybrid learning; it varies widely depending on the course content nature, learning needs, students, lecturers, the course goals, and the technology available. There were 4 elements in implementing hybrid learning on Intensive English class, they were:

a. Direct face-to face learning

In direct face-to face meeting (conventional) process, it was only 50% students who are allowed to come in class. But we still divided them into several groups if it categorized as large class to keep distance between students. The face to face learning was only used for practicing conversation among the students; it is in accordance with the objectives of intensive English program which emphasizes on speaking skills. Face to face activities were carried out to see and monitor the students' conversation, their fluency, accuracy,

pronunciations, expressions, and their active participation in classroom. Besides, by traditional face to face learning lecturers can interact directly with the students, see their condition, greet, facilitate students' questions and difficulties in learning and communicate other important things.

b. Virtual Learning

The virtual class is used by lecturers to provide material/theories for the students. In this case, certain applications or platforms that support communication and interaction with students are badly needed. The platforms commonly used include Google Meet, Zoom Cloud Meetings, and WhatsApp Group. These applications are useful to deliver material, send assignments, assess students' work, tutorial media to give the students academic assistance. Through the platforms students can communicate and discuss many things with lecturers or peers related to materials and their difficulties during Intensive English Program.

c. Independent Learning

Independent learning was applied when 50% students had to attend offline class for having conversation practice, then the rest 50% students must learning from home. Students deepen their material understanding by independent study in which sources of learning, period and location can be decided by themselves. When conducting autonomous study from home, students can make note some new things and troubles faced, and then discuss them to the lecturers. Although the college students study autonomously, lecturers keep monitoring and lead them to comprehend material sent by lecturers in online classes through the application used. They can be in the form of video, YouTube link, eBooks, power point presentation, learning resources link, and links to scientific journals as reference material.

d. Evaluation

In its implementation, hybrid learning does not always run smoothly as planned, there have to be many boundaries, so that an assessment or evaluation is required to develop the process of learning. The system of evaluation on hybrid is disparate from the one in regular face-to face learning. The hybrid learning evaluation is based on process and result through assessing student performance with various platforms, including Whatsapp group, Zoom cloud meetings, Google forms, games, or portfolio-based assignments. Assessment is not only from the lecturers, but also from peers. Peer assessment can foster students' self-confidence, increase student contribution in learning, enhance the interactions and mutual believe among students, students more concentrate their awareness on learning process other than the product (outcome). Besides, they are able to recognize their power and shortcomings as the valuable feedback they receive, it push and foster students to be truthful as they are obliged to be objective in giving assessments. Even so, the assessment form with quizzes, assignments, and direct conversation practices which is usually adjusted in traditional learning still necessary, but they are not the only one means of assessment.

The regular program of Intensive English that emphasizes on speaking need direct conversation practice. At the beginning Covid-19 occurred, learning had to switch totally 100% online which had reduced student motivation and enthusiasm,

but in the current new normal era when hybrid learning was implemented, students' enthusiasm increases and getting better. The unique result was found during hybrid learning, students feel more comfortable in practicing conversation with their friends directly and lecturers can give feedback and correction directly because during online learning they can only practice conversation virtually through Whatsapp Video call and Zoom cloud meetings.This is in accordance with the statement from student who said that:

> "During the New Normal Era I was very happy to learn through hybrid learning because I still can have opportunity to meet my friends and lecturers directly and easily practice the English conversation because it was not interesting to have conversation practice through video call. It can reduce quota data uses. Besides I am also very happy because theoretical material can be explained online, so I do not need to come to campus every day".

Hybrid learning does not replace either virtual or direct face to face meeting, but it creates new atmosphere and more effective learning space. Hybrid concept is not only a simple mixture between online and offline class, but it more focuses in maximizing the learning objectives achievement by implementing proper technologies used which in shape with the precise learning, time, person and place. Hybrid learning combines the best sides of face-to face activities, online learning, and contextual practices. It is indisputable that the technology usage in hybrid towards the New Normal era definitely has both good and bad side. One of the good sides on hybrid is giving students freedom to express their idea which not visible when lectures process in class due to shyness, hesitant, afraid and even inadequate verbal skills. It also eliminate the traditional 'top and down' teaching pattern where lecturers know the whole thing and students only comply all the lecturers utter and it enlarge students' and lecturers' creativeness and freedom in upgrading themselves with latest knowledge. Besides, through hybrid learning students are more accustomed to use technology in learning, and reducing dependence on the tutors' attendance like in face-to-face meeting. It is in line with (Park, 2011) who applied hybrid learning format and it provided positive learning experience for students. He implemented hybrid learning 50/50 (50% online and 50% face to face), this approach is better than 100% traditional face to face, it is more flexible, makes students more responsible in their learning and more sensitive to their learning styles and needs.

Whereas the bad aspect of hybrid is not all students have the equal competencies and understanding level of material. For diligent students it will be smooth to soak up information, however for those who are much less acquainted with it will be hard to catch the point of materials given by lecturers and adapt on the technology application used in activities of learning. In a fact, the responsibility on studying from home becomes critical impediment for students. They often complain about the difficulty of internet connection, the exhausted internet quota package, and are often lazy and less motivated. Furthermore, technology may construct an immediately mindset from the users. Lecturers and students could be pampered by the simplicity of copy-paste the assignments. Gradually the disappearance of physical contact due to lectures delivered via online impacts on the lack of humanity like concern for others and empathy. So it is reasonable that lecturers' physical presence in real class is impossible to be substituted by technology.

Conclusion

The process of learning in New Normal is totally contrasted with normal learning. The application of hybrid learning which unite direct and online learning by applying the development of modern technology gave some benefits for students such as it can facilitate Intensive English program during the new normal era due to reach learning targets. So it is not surprising that many colleges have considered and implemented hybrid learning models. Nevertheless, the fruitfulness of hybrid was not happen instantly. The main factors that support the triumph of hybrid should consider pedagogic and design of instructional correlated with the usage of best technological devices, assist interaction among students, stimulate students, and organize the greatest material to be conveyed, although some obstacles are faced like the boundaries of facilities and the lack of encouragement to study.

In order that the application of hybrid runs ideally in the new normal era, the lecturers must prepare learning as well such as choosing the right online learning platform complete with supporting infrastructure so both students who are getting direct face to face meeting in class and virtual through platform can follow the learning process well. Besides, the lecturers must prepare the appropriate learning for face to face meeting, providing assignments or evaluations that are not burdensome students but still in accordance with the learning objectives, simply re-determining learning outcomes which one can be delivered by e-learning or offline learning, determining the appropriate assessment method and platform for each achievement, paying attention to the time according to the level of students' affective and cognitive abilities, likewise in giving the assignment, always motivating students to stay enthusiastic in learning even though in hybrid learning, and setting creative assignments to stimulate students' brains and their enthusiastic in learning.The limitation of this research is only focuses on the application of hybrid in Intensive English class at StikesBanyuwnagi. This finding could be different if it is implemented on other subjects in other schools or institutions.We hope this research result is useful for further researchers as a reference by improving better media and materialsand deepen this research to obtain feasible results.

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