

Reconstructing Teaching Elementary School Pupils Through Blended Learning: Evidence From A Qualitative Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the application of a blended learning strategy in teaching elementary school students in East Lombok, Indonesia. Using a qualitative case study design, six teachers from SD Unggulan Hamzanwadi, in East Lombok, were purposively selected to explore preparation, instructional design, and assessment practices within blended learning. Data were gathered through interviews, observations, and documentation, then analyzed using ATLAS.ti 9 following Creswell's qualitative procedures. The findings reveal that successful blended learning for young learners requires thorough preparation, including assessing school readiness, establishing teacher-parent collaboration, designing structured lesson plans, and selecting developmentally appropriate media and platforms. The blended model was implemented through balanced or flexible combinations of face-to-face and online learning, adjusted according to subject characteristics. Face-to-face sessions supported demonstrations, practice-based activities, and direct guidance, while online learning facilitated material delivery, assignments, and access to digital resources. Assessment was conducted through integrated formative and summative approaches using projects, portfolios, observations, and online testing.

Keywords: *blended learning strategy, elementary school, educational technology*

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INTRODUCTION

Rapid developments in information and communication technologies have significantly influenced various sectors, including education. This transformation is evident in the increased availability of technological devices such as computers, tablets, and smartphones, as well as the expanding use of the internet as a learning resource. Learners growing up in the digital era are accustomed to information that is fast, visual, and interactive (Prensky, 2020), resulting in notable shifts in their learning preferences, behaviours, and expectations.

Existing studies showed that contemporary students display increasingly diverse learning styles characterized by preferences for flexible, collaborative, and experiential learning environments. Students tend to comprehend learning materials more effectively when they are presented through multimedia formats such as videos, simulations, and interactive digital activities. According to Hidayat and Rahmawati (2021), digital-native students exhibit a stronger interest in technology-enhanced learning compared to traditional, one-directional instructional approaches. Moreover, their shorter attention spans and need for continuous visual stimulation require educators to provide dynamic, adaptive, and personalized learning experiences.

In response to these shifts, blended learning has emerged as one of the most relevant instructional strategies. Blended learning is defined as an instructional approach that integrates face-to-face learning with online components to facilitate independent, interactive, and collaborative learning experiences (Ginting et al., 2021b). Graham (2019) emphasizes that blended learning effectively merges the strengths of online and in-person modalities, while Shamsuddin and Kaur (2020) highlight the teacher's role in harmonizing technological, interpersonal, and pedagogical elements within this approach. Thus, blended learning capitalizes on the advantages of both face-to-face and online instruction (Graham et al., 2019).

Various studies have proven the benefits of blended learning strategies, such as research conducted by Jost et al. (2021), which was conducted in a statistical psychology course at the Swiss Distance University Institute, which found that blended learning enhances flexibility and allows students to optimize their time outside the classroom. Similarly, Andrzej (2020) in his study on building automation engineering education concluded that blended learning offers innovative, engaging, and effective learning experiences that align with the demands of a rapidly evolving world. In the Indonesian context, Arifin (2021) reported that blended learning implemented at Al Manar Prambon Nganjuk Private Islamic High School provides several advantages, including improved access to information, accelerated learning, and increased active student participation.

However, based on the studies above, blended learning is commonly used by students in colleges and high schools. There are significant differences in developmental characteristics and learning styles between elementary, high school, and college students. Elementary school students are in the concrete operational stage, requiring more hands-on learning experiences, play activities, and concrete visual stimuli. They have shorter attention spans, motivation that relies heavily on external reinforcement, and low levels of learning independence and digital literacy, requiring intensive support from teachers and parents. In contrast, high school students have entered the formal operational stage and demonstrate better abstract thinking skills, longer focus, and greater learning independence. College students, as the most cognitively and metacognitively mature group, possess strong intrinsic motivation.

Recognizing these distinctions, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how blended learning is implemented in an elementary school context. By gathering comprehensive information and data, this study facilitates the improvement and development of research in blended learning for those interested in developing it.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. According to Tracy (2020), a case study is an in-depth contextual analysis of one or more examples of a naturalistic phenomenon, such as a person, an organization, a program, an event, a geographic area, or a choice. Research in the education field is appropriate to use a case study. Case study design is appropriate to use in social science, such as the education field (Yin, 2018). This research was conducted at one of the elementary schools in East Lombok, namely Sekolah Dasar Unggulan Hamzanwadi. It is a beginner in implementing blended learning. Sekolah Dasar Unggulan Hamzanwadi is an exemplary elementary school institution in East Lombok and has been categorized as a driving school by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia. It has become a model school in implementing renewable and sustainable learning.

In addition, this study focused on the fourth grade. To collect the data, six teachers who have been teaching at the school were selected as informants to obtain data related to the application of the blended learning strategy in teaching lessons. The informants selected consisted of three classroom teachers, an Arabic teacher, a *tahfidz* teacher, and an English teacher. The selection of informants was based on the researcher's objective to obtain information and perceptions from different experiences on the application of blended learning strategies. The researcher used three ways of data collection, including interviews, observation, and documentation. According to Spuck et al. (2006), data collection in qualitative research generally includes observations, interviews, and document analyses. To analyze the data, the researcher used computer-aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). According to Tracy (2020), "CAQDAS is computer software specifically designed for the qualitative analysis of data." The software used in analyzing the data in this study was ATLAS.ti 9. The researcher adopted the way to analysis data by Creswell. According to Creswell (2018), there are several stages in analyzing qualitative data using software, including organizing and preparing the data for analysis, reading or looking at all the data, starting to code all of the data, generating a description and themes, and representing the description and themes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Preparation for implementing blended learning

Based on the data derived from the research findings, the implementation of blended learning in elementary schools requires some preparation. These preparations are made to enhance the teaching and learning process. There were various answers that the researcher got from the results of interviews that were conducted. As shown in figure 4.1 below, the respondent explained some requirements that should be done before implementing blended learning, consisting of analyzing the readiness of the school to carry out blended learning, doing coordination with parents, preparing lesson plans or modules, determining the appropriate learning platform for online and offline, and selecting materials that are online and offline.

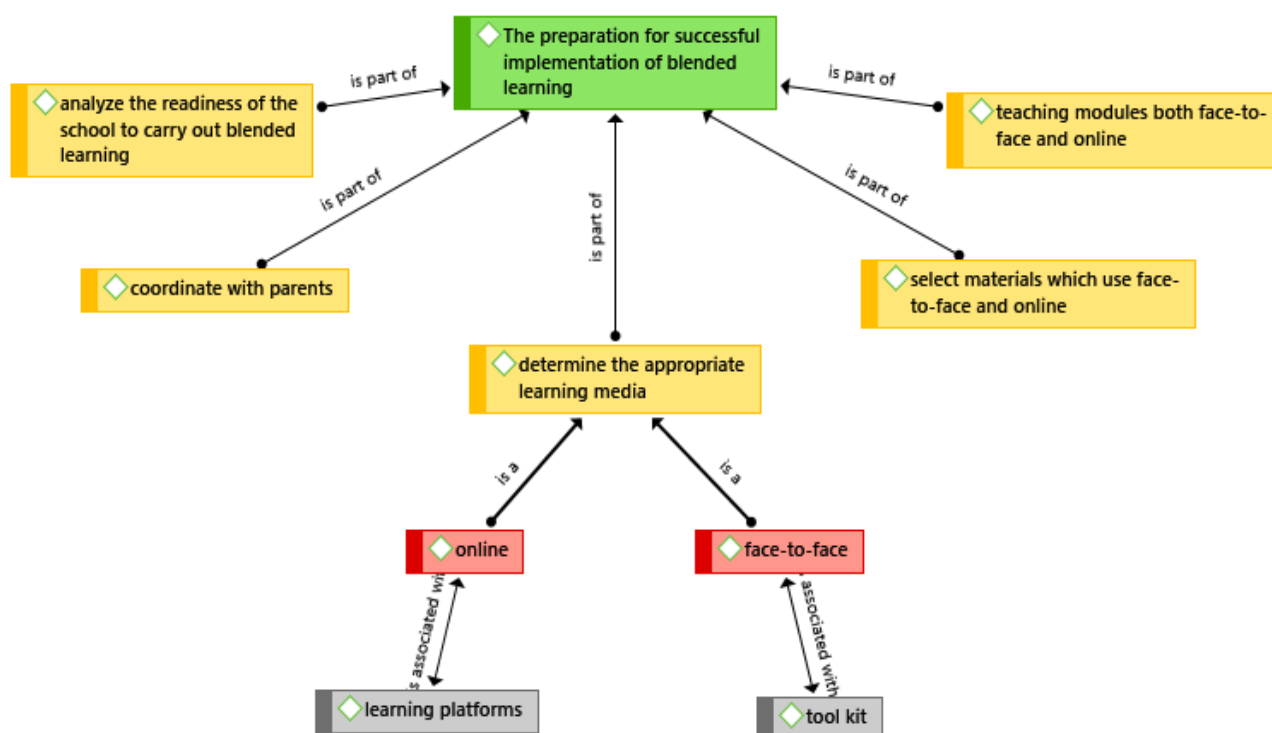


Figure 1. Data analysis of preparation in blended learning practice

Respondent 6 explained that the first step to implementing blended learning is to analyze the readiness of the school.

"First and foremost, we analyze the readiness of the school to carry out this combined learning process and determine what learning platform to use..." (R6)

Before implementing the blended learning process, it is important to analyze school readiness. The readiness analysis is closely related to the school's carrying capacity in implementing blended learning, especially for the online component. Subsequently, the school engaged in coordination with parents, as reported by the respondents.

"...The most important thing to do when carrying out the blended learning process is to coordinate with parents. Parents will be the companions and students to carry out the online learning process at home, so collaboration between teachers and parents is very important. (R1)

Parents do their duty in assisting children prepare for online learning by ensuring that children have a comfortable learning environment free from distractions. Because learning is done at home without direct instructions from the teacher, parents must help their children to set an effective study schedule and prepare the equipment and materials needed.

Furthermore, the most essential form of preparation is the development of the lesson plan. Many respondents stated that teachers must thoroughly prepare the lesson plan.

"...Teachers, together with school management, make detailed plans and programs that teachers will carry out during the blended learning process. (R6)

"What needs to be prepared for the implementation of blended learning is a module that contains the design of the learning program, including the learning outcomes that become the reference. And also, the way teachers combine face-to-face and online learning so that they can be complementary and sustainable" (R3)

The lesson plan is a formulation of instructions for teachers in mapping the learning objectives to be achieved, teaching techniques, materials, and tools or media used in the learning process to reduce trial-and-error activities in teaching. Finally, in the learning process, the teacher prepared the learning media.

"Of course, we have to prepare teaching materials and then learning platforms so that when the learning process takes place, everything runs smoothly." (R4)

"...and determine what learning platform to use" (R6)

In blended learning, respondents explained that there are two kinds of learning media, face-to-face and online. For face-to-face learning, the teacher uses a tool kit, the surrounding environment, and print-out images, while for online technological devices consist of computers, laptops, cellphones, and others. Learning Combination Model in the Elementary School.

The model of blended learning strategy implemented

The average respondents stated that the distribution of time allocation for face-to-face and online learning in blended learning was divided equally, but other teachers argued that it had longer portions for online.

"Actually, the learning portion is 50% face-to-face and 50% online because face-to-face learning in schools has been cut in half of the available time. But because online learning is done at home and the tahfidz study time adjusts to the student's opportunity, it appears that online learning at home has no time limit, meaning that it uses full time at home" (R1)

"Learning time for online more than face-to-face" (R4)

The difference views among the respondents indicated that the time allocation between face-to-face and online learning in the application of blended learning was not always carried out in the same time allocation, namely 50% versus 50%. The distribution of time allocation between face-to-face and online learning in blended learning depended on several factors, such as the learning objectives, the subject matter, and the availability of resources.

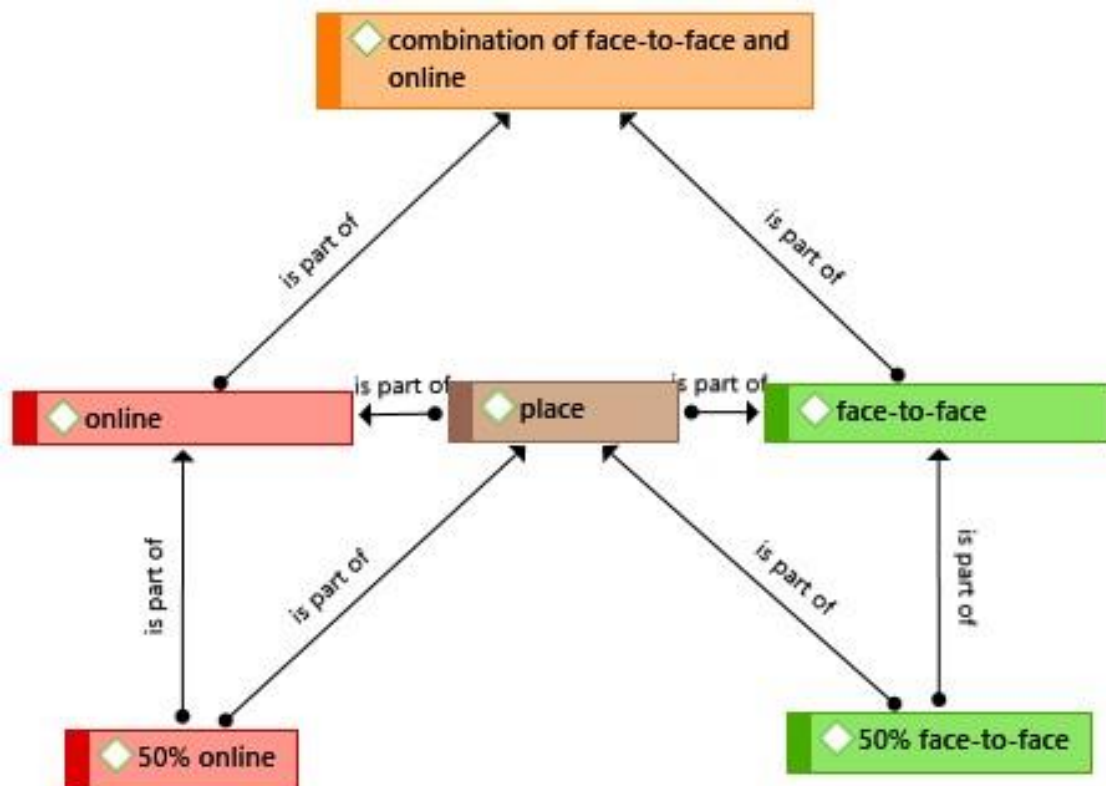


Figure 2. Data analysis of blended learning combination based on time allocation

Place of Study in Blended Learning

For the sharing of places for the implementation of learning, all respondents possess the same answer, namely, face-to-face at school and online at home.

"Online learning is done at home, while face-to-face learning is done at home" (R1)

"In general, we do face-to-face at school, while online is done at home" (R2)

"I do face-to-face learning at school as usual and online at home using the learning platform" (R4)

The application of blended learning in elementary school is carried out in two places, namely at school and at home. The school continued to carry out face-to-face learning as usual, but with half the normal time. Then the students go back to their homes. To complete the face-to-face learning time at school, online learning was carried out at home.

To add a detailed explanation, the figure below is the result of coding from interviews with respondents about the combination of face-to-face and online, based on the place of implementation.

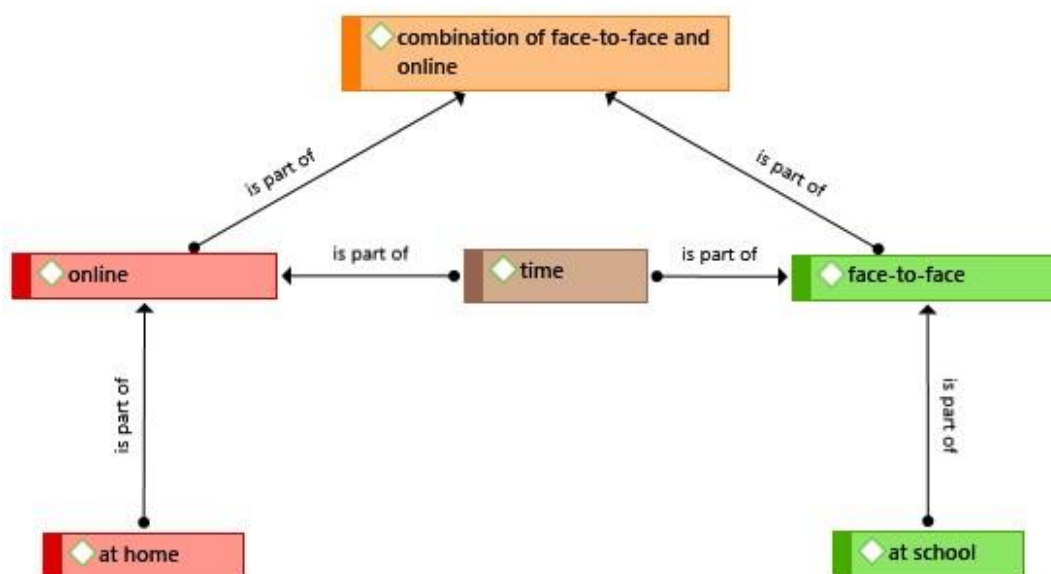


Figure 3. Data analysis of blended learning combination based on the place of learning

Materials Distribution in Blended Learning

The combination of blended learning is not only established based on the time allocation and place of study, but also on the distribution of teaching materials. Various opinions were obtained regarding the type of material or learning activities carried out by the teacher. This difference is closely related to the characteristics of the lesson being taught, which adjust to the feasibility functions of the two learning models.

"At school, I teach students how to write the hijaiyah letters in the verse, then I will give direct examples of how to read properly and correctly. After that, I ask students to repeat my reading" (R1)

"Learning that requires more teacher explanations and requires students to practice more will be used face-to-face, such as mathematics subjects" (R2)

"The materials, such as writing hijaiyah letters, I do face-to-face" (R3)

Respondents 1, 2, and 3 stated that face-to-face learning was used for practical activities. The practical activities were carried out with face-to-face learning, enabling students to be involved in direct activities and receive direct feedback from the teacher.

Meanwhile, respondent 6 stated that face-to-face was used to provide guidance. The face-to-face learning process is used as a preparation stage to participate in the online learning process, so it is necessary to provide students with technical guidance on implementation. Moreover, face-to-face is also used to provide online post-learning advice to clarify students' difficulties that cannot be solved online.

"The composition of face-to-face learning is mostly used to explain learning materials" (R6)

"Assignments will be done at home using online, I will determine time allocation for students to finish and submit the assignments" (R3)

Teachers can more easily give scores to students. Teachers do not bother to print students' exam questions, but the teacher uploads the questions. In addition, it is easier for teachers to correct and immediately get out their grades

Finally, the activity of finding and reading subject matter by students is done online. The use of online takes advantage of the openness of widely available references accessed on the internet. As respondent 5 said

below:

"Reading materials are done online" (R5)

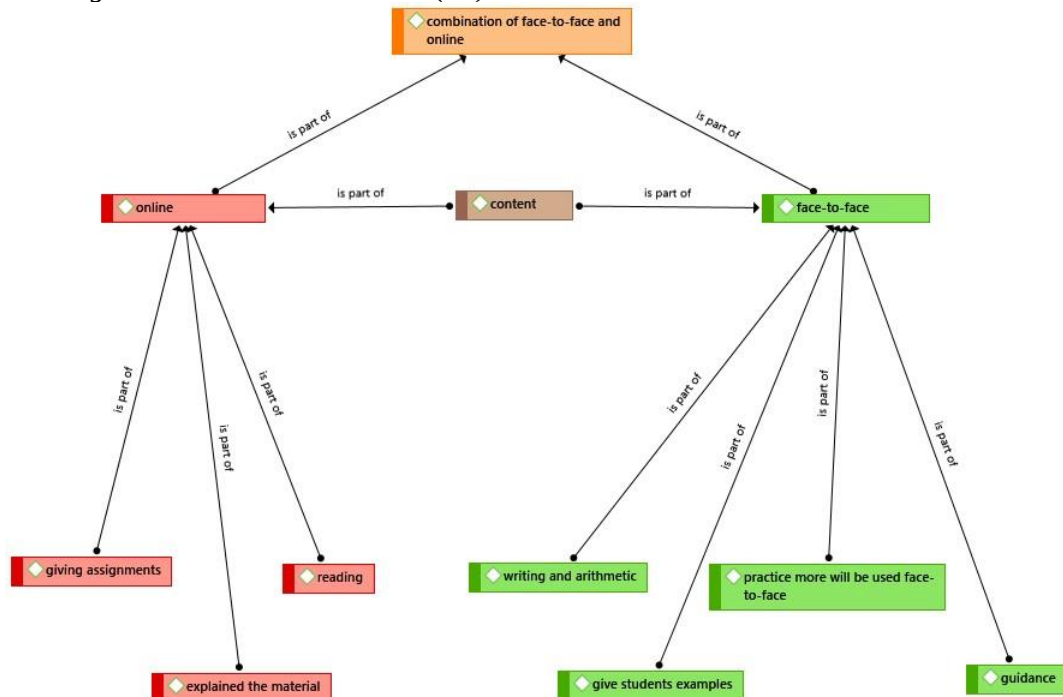


Figure 4. Data analysis of blended learning combination based on content delivery

Assessments process in blended learning

Another important process in implementing blended learning is determining how successful the learning process is in achieving the expected goals. Based on several statements from respondents, the researcher summarized the aspects of assessments carried out based on the kinds of assessments carried out. The assessment process in blended learning is carried out through two aspects, namely summative and formative, both face-to-face and online.

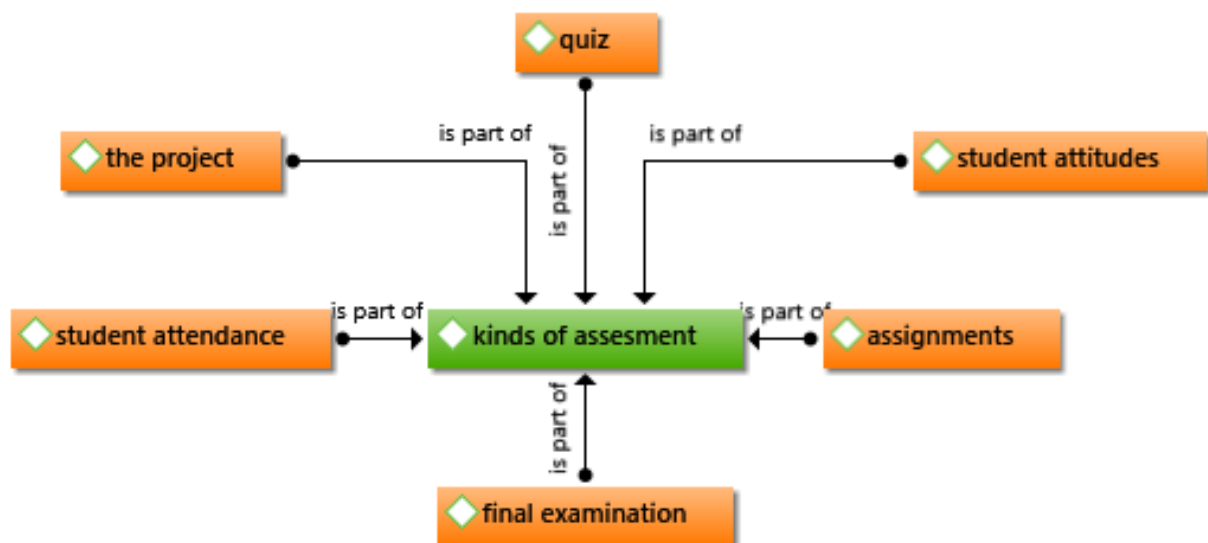


Figure 5. Data analysis of various assessments

Formative assessment is an ongoing process of gathering evidence of student learning and using that evidence to guide instruction. There are several ways to conduct a formative assessment according to information from respondents. Each respondent used different ways to carry out a formative assessment. Respondent 2 explained that the formative assessment was carried out by giving project assignments to students.

"At school, we use projects more often. It aims to accommodate students' abilities according to their respective skills" (R2)

The figure below shows student activity when project assignments were given by the teacher to carry out formative assessments.



Figure 6. Assessment by project

In the figure above, students can be seen working together with their peers to complete the tasks given. All students worked together according to their respective expertise. Projects would be a very effective way to differentiate instruction and allow students to showcase their skills and abilities in different ways. Meanwhile, respondent 6 used the project only to see student abilities, while for assessing student activities, he used a portfolio as mentioned below:

"To find out student activity, I use portfolio assessment, while for student abilities, I give a project and test questions (R6)

A student portfolio is a collection of documents or presentations that demonstrate a student's skills, achievements, experience, and academic and career goals. Student portfolios contained many types of documents, such as grade transcripts, certificates, awards, proof of achievement, letters of reference, and samples of work or projects. Other information was also obtained from R4 that formative assessment was

carried out online using the Quizizz platform.

"I do a summative assessment by giving games from the Quiziz application and project assignments" (R4)

Quizizz allows teachers to see students' work in real time, including which questions were difficult, their completion rate, and the time spent on the assignment, allowing them to take immediate corrective action. It also helps students instantly identify correct and incorrect answers, helping them understand where improvements need to be made. The teachers also conducted summative assessments related to students' cognitive knowledge. There are several forms of summative assessment that teachers use in primary schools, including assessments and final examinations.

"In mathematics, the teacher is more concerned with giving scores from the results of student exercises" (R6)

When implementing blended learning, assessments are not only carried out manually via face-to-face but also carried out online via an online platform. Figure 7 below is an example of a summative assessment carried out using the Quizizz platform.

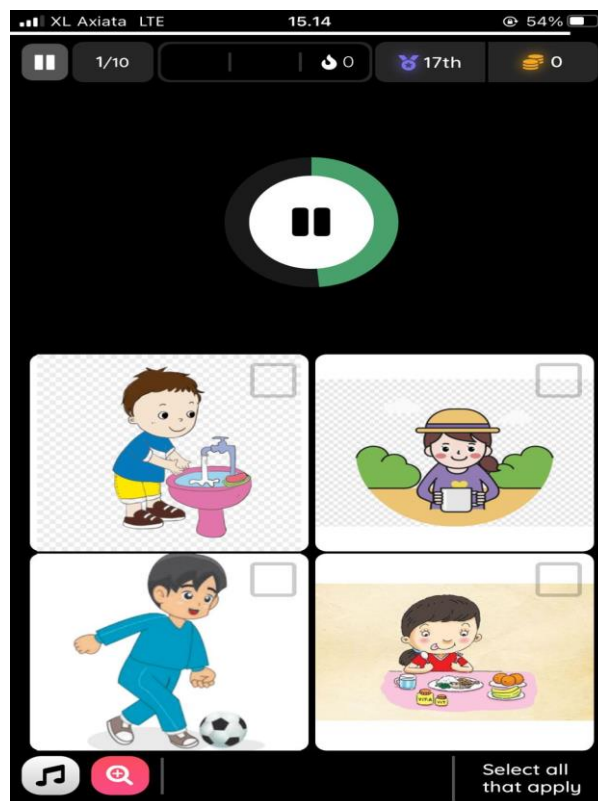


Figure 7. Summative assessment using Quiziz Application

Using the Quiziz platform, teachers gave students assignments to get summative grades. The researcher observed taking grades with a fun online application that made the fear of taking exams go away. With the online platform, now students are no longer afraid of every exam. Moreover, the results of exams

using online platforms could be seen directly, sometimes after the exam ends, without having to wait a long time.

DISCUSSION

The continuity of implementing a learning strategy requires systematic educational management. As explained by Putri et al. (2022), the success of the learning process is achieved when there is effective management supported by the establishment of a standardized learning management system. Based on the findings of this study, the application of the blended learning strategy at SD Unggulan Hamzanwadi, Lombok, is divided into three stages: preparation, implementation, and evaluation, which are described in detail as follows:

Preparation

The first stage before initiating the blended learning process is the preparation of learning activities. This stage is considered crucial because implementing blended learning in elementary schools presents significant challenges, particularly in integrating learning with technological use. According to Amelia et al. (2021), thorough preparation is a determining factor in ensuring the meaningfulness of learning. Preparation begins with analyzing school readiness. School readiness in implementing blended learning refers to the capacity to conduct both face-to-face and online learning effectively.

According to Iftitah & Syamsudin (2022), assessing the readiness of educational institutions to conduct face-to-face learning is essential to ensure that schools can provide adequate facilities that support effective learning. Similarly, Amin et al. (2022) emphasized that readiness indicators for face-to-face learning must align with operational standards and pedagogical procedures established by educational authorities. In this study, preparations for face-to-face learning within the blended learning model include ensuring the availability of appropriate classroom facilities, arranging flexible schedules that support the integration of online and offline activities, and providing sufficient learning materials and instructional media. Schools must also manage class sizes, seating arrangements, and classroom layouts to facilitate collaboration, interaction, and student engagement. Thus, implementing blended learning requires schools to develop clear standard operating procedures, optimize classroom environments for active learning, ensure the availability of adequate instructional tools, and coordinate learning activities to support smooth transitions between online and in-person learning components.

For conducting online learning, Nadeak & Juwita (2020) stated that schools must prepare facilities and infrastructure that support online instruction, taking into account the available resources. School administrators need to evaluate existing facilities in the form of hardware and software required for online learning, such as computers, tablets, cameras, microphones, and learning management software. Adequate infrastructure enables teachers and students to access the technological tools and applications necessary for effective online learning. Salim (2022) highlighted that the inability of schools to provide sufficient online learning support, such as digital devices and reliable internet access, creates barriers that negatively affect the learning process and its outcomes.

Another important preparation step is ensuring teacher readiness in carrying out blended learning. In the blended learning strategy, teachers initially conduct face-to-face learning, but online learning represents a new instructional approach requiring adaptation. Since blended learning is relatively new in many schools, teachers must make several adjustments as the main implementers of instruction. Putri & Mulianingsih (2022) emphasized that strong teacher readiness is essential when implementing blended learning-based distance education.

Teacher readiness in the online component of blended learning is reflected in their ability to adapt quickly to new learning environments and operate digital learning platforms. Therefore, before implementing blended learning, teachers must receive adequate training and demonstrate readiness to teach online. Teachers need to understand the technology and software used for online learning and utilize digital tools effectively to facilitate instruction. Ginting et al. (2021a) stated that teachers' ability to access and use digital technology in

the teaching and learning process is essential and non-negotiable.

Furthermore, coordination with parents is a critical aspect of preparing blended learning for elementary school students. As noted by Juwandani et al. (2021), teachers must communicate with parents before implementing blended learning. The successful application of blended learning requires not only teachers and schools to adapt to changes but also parents and students (Schlenz et al., 2020). Elementary school students still have limited independence and require parental guidance during online learning. Parents play an active role by providing facilities and assisting students throughout the learning process. Zulfitra et al. (2020) asserted that collaboration between teachers and parents is essential under these conditions.

The next preparation is the development of lesson plans. To support the integration of learning, schools must have clear plans and strategies for managing blended learning, including scheduling, curriculum development, and assessment. Blended learning management systems, such as organizing online and offline learning platforms, arranging schedules, conducting examinations, and managing virtual and face-to-face classrooms, must be systematically developed and implemented. According to Perwitasari (2021), preparing lesson plans is mandatory for all teachers because they contain essential components of the teaching and learning process.

The lesson plans prepared by teachers are adapted to the new curriculum launched by the Ministry of Education, known as Merdeka Belajar, which emphasizes a deep learning approach. These plans include learning objectives, instructional techniques, learning materials, assignments or assessments, supporting resources, and self-evaluation components. Under the blended learning model, lesson plans are designed to integrate both face-to-face and online learning activities.

To ensure the smooth implementation of learning, the final preparation step is the provision of technological devices. These devices play a critical role in determining the success of blended learning. The required devices include computers, laptops, mobile phones, and other supporting technologies. After preparing the devices, teachers select appropriate learning platforms. Although many platforms, both free and paid, are available, teachers must select those that are suitable and user-friendly for elementary school children. As stated by Ginting et al. (2021a), teachers must take the initiative in selecting learning media that best support each learning topic. Teacher initiative greatly contributes to increasing student motivation, and such initiative requires attentiveness and an understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Implementation

The second stage in the application of blended learning is the implementation phase. The alternating pattern of face-to-face and online learning applied at SD Unggulan Hamzanwadi, as described previously, is categorized as a blended learning strategy with a flipped classroom model. As stated by Graham (2019), students traditionally got direct teaching at school and then applied what they had learned at home. Students traditionally receive direct instruction at school and then apply what they have learned at home. The flipped classroom model reverses these traditional roles of classroom time and homework activities. Learning is conducted online outside of class or at home using content that has been provided in advance. In a flipped classroom, students watch or read instructional materials, such as videos or articles, independently through online platforms. After completing the online learning process outside of school, students deepen their understanding, clarify difficult material, and engage in interactive activities such as discussions, projects, or problem-solving exercises at school with teachers and peers. To provide students with meaningful and motivating learning opportunities, blended learning is defined as the convergence of face-to-face instruction and e-learning (Dakduk et al., 2018). In essence, blended learning integrates in-person instruction with online learning experiences and combines various media to support interaction and direct communication between students and other participants through synchronous and asynchronous strategies such as webinars, social networks, blogs, forums, and live chats.

The proportion of learning activities is arranged by considering the advantages and disadvantages of each method. According to Yamin (2022), this learning design is effective because it allows both approaches

to complement one another. Educators continue to interact with students and carry out their instructional roles while also utilizing technology to conduct online learning.

This study found that face-to-face learning is used by teachers to involve students in interactive experiences, such as providing instructions and explaining materials that students find difficult to understand online. Face-to-face learning is also implemented for activities requiring hands-on practice and for cultivating students' character. Meanwhile, online learning is widely used for delivering materials, sending files, communicating with parents, and assigning tasks. The delivery of assignments becomes more convenient and flexible, without requiring students to wait for scheduled study time at school, as in conventional learning (Sanjaya, 2019). Moreover, research conducted by Yamin (2022) shows that blended learning provides students with new learning experiences. Students who were previously accustomed only to face-to-face learning by listening to the teacher become more active in observing, doing, and demonstrating during online learning.

Evaluation

The final stage in applying the learning model is the learning evaluation. Evaluation is a crucial component that must be conducted appropriately after completing the learning process because it provides teachers with valid data regarding students' abilities (Miftha Huljannah, 2021). These data serve as the basis for teachers' decision-making related to instruction. In addition, evaluation functions as a tool for teacher reflection, enabling improvements in teaching quality and classroom management. Evaluation also aims to determine the extent to which students master the learning material and to measure changes in students' attitudes after participating in learning activities.

In this study, evaluation within the learning process is referred to as assessment. Generally, assessment is divided into two types: formative and summative. Formative assessment relates to students' mastery of learning materials, while summative assessment relates to changes in students' attitudes after completing the learning process. In blended learning, assessments are conducted in two modes: online and offline. Online assessments are used for summative evaluation, whereas offline assessments are used for formative evaluation. In online learning, assessments are conducted through assignments submitted via WhatsApp or Google Forms. Online scoring allows teachers to provide results automatically, which can be viewed directly by students. As stated by Stein & Graham (2014), automated assessments commonly used in online learning environments may also provide immediate, corrective feedback that directs students to revisit learning materials (Stein & Graham, 2014).

Meanwhile, assessments during face-to-face learning are carried out conventionally through the observation of student behavior at school, as well as through portfolios and performance tasks completed by students. Finally, to optimize the overall learning process, teachers distribute questionnaires to students and parents. These questionnaires help teachers identify weaknesses in the learning process from external perspectives, allowing for future improvements. They are also useful in highlighting the strengths of the learning activities, which can then be maintained.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The implementation of blended learning at SD Unggulan Hamzanwadi is conducted through comprehensive preparation, which includes analyzing school readiness, coordinating with parents, developing lesson plans or learning modules, and selecting appropriate learning media and platforms. The blended learning model is applied by allocating time between face-to-face and online learning in a flexible manner based on the needs of each subject. Face-to-face sessions are utilized for practical activities, demonstrations, and direct mentoring, whereas online learning is designed for delivering instructional materials, administering assignments, and providing access to digital learning resources.

The assessment process incorporated both formative and summative evaluations conducted through face-to-face and online. Overall, blended learning is found to enhance learning effectiveness by optimizing

direct interaction, maximizing the use of technology, and fostering active collaboration among teachers, students, and parents. Furthermore, considering that elementary school students generally lack technological skills, strong collaboration between teachers and parents is essential to provide continuous guidance, ensure students' active participation, and support the wise and responsible use of technology.

Limitation

Students who are the subjects in the learning process cannot be interviewed because they are not yet fluent in conveying ideas completely. However, Creswell (2013) stated that in qualitative research using purposeful sampling procedures, researchers should identify interviewees who can best answer those questions. Therefore, six teachers were selected as the informants in this research.

Credit authorship contribution statement

First Author: Qualitative research design; Development of interview/observation guidelines; Coding and thematic analysis using ATLAS.ti; Writing original draft. Second Author: Data curation; Transcription and preparation of qualitative data; Validation of codebook; Writing review & editing. Third Author: Triangulation and credibility checking; Interpretation of themes. Last Author: Supervision; Primary data collection; Critical revision of the manuscript; translation; Final approval of the version to be published.

Declaration of competing interest

This research was conducted with appropriate procedures, and there was no conflict of interest.

Ethical Declaration

All participants provided informed consent prior to their involvement in the study. They were informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence.

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