Negotiating the Online Classes in Primary School in Indonesia

1 Bertiani Eka Sukaca, 2Benjarut Prempiwong
1SD N Bogem 2 Kalasan, 1Indonesia
2Chiang Rai Rajabhat University, 2Thailand

To cite this article:

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Bertiani Eka Sukaca¹, Benjarut Prempiwong²
SD N Bogem 2 Kalasan¹, Indonesia¹
Chiang Rai Rajabhat University², Thailand²
tyber2009@gmail.com¹

Abstract

Running online classes for grade 1 of primary school in suburban in Indonesia has become a big challenge for teacher. On one hand, teacher has to reach a target of making the students achieve specific competencies as on the national curriculum 2013. On the other hand, different level of students’ skills, and internet credit expanses are two most cases required to be concerned. After doing the second treatment on 28 students of State Primary School 2 Bogem, Kalasan, the researcher found that the appropriate media used were WhatsApp and printed assignments. The teacher conducted WhatsApp classes twice a week and sent printed assignments every fortnight. Through these two media, the parents’ companion on the students’ learning process is getting optimum.

Keywords: Online Class, Primary School, Grade 1

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemics in Indonesia has forced all educational levels to run the online classes. Zoom and Google Classroom have become the most popular platforms used firstly. Both students and teachers enable to see each other virtually. The teaching and learning process seem to be fine. The teachers have delivered their teaching materials easily by showing slides of their PowerPoint files. On the other hand, the students have also enabled to follow the teachers’ instructions and explanations, as well as ask questions. Running online classes using those two platforms seems to be fine. Some people have felt confident in doing online classes using Zoom and Google Classroom. Moreover, the government has also provided several facilities for supporting the online classes.

The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, Nadiem Makarim stated that the schools are allowed to allocate the School Operational Budget (BOS) for internet credit expenses (Prodjo, 2020). This infers that internet credit must not be a problem. Both teachers and students receive internet credit vouchers monthly. Besides, the e-text books used in the teaching and learning process have been accessed easily on internet. The government has also collaborated with some online learning platform and national television called TVRI for supporting the online classes. The TV program designed is Belajar dari rumah is for all education levels, started from preschool to senior high school (Harususilo, 2020).

For the secondary school as well as higher education levels, online classes seem to be fine. The students seem to be happy as the online learning seems to be flexible for them. However, for primary school students, especially Grade 1, online learning has become hard to follow.

Graduates of kindergarten schools are commonly unable to read, write and count. Based on the kindergarten curriculum in Indonesia, during the kindergarten learning process, the students are only introduced alphabet through playing (PAUD Jateng, 2015). This means that the students only recognize letters, not in words, sentences, or even paragraphs. In math, the indicator of passing the math is that the students are able to mention and recognize the number symbols one to ten (PAUD Jateng, 2015). In writing and reading, the students are able to write and pronounce letters, and write as well as read their own names (PAUD Jateng, 2015). Therefore, it is understandable if the kindergarten graduates cannot read, write and count well as they only learn the basis.

Unfortunately, the Grade 1 materials hoop very high from the kindergarten materials. All materials on the Grade 1 of the primary school require the students’ reading skills. The materials are presented in paragraphs and story.
The exercises give required reading comprehension of the students. Consequently, building a bridge between the kindergarten competencies and the Grade 1 competencies becomes the hardest task of the Grade 1 teachers.

Teachers in this case must be aware of the situation. Teachers must find various ways to make sure that each student understand the reading content, understand how to write the answer of the task, and understand more calculation. The teacher tasks have become harder as they cannot meet the students face-to-face. They cannot monitor the real cognitive development of the students. As there is no way except conducting online class, the teachers at least must make sure that every student can access the learning materials easily and can communicate easily with teachers.

Method

The recent study follows an action research procedure in which there are four stages in each cycle namely planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, 2014). Before doing the steps, the researcher conducted a need analysis on what the students’ needs, the teacher’s need and the parents’ need. The results of the need analysis were used as the basis of the planning design on the first stage of the first cycle.

The participants on the current research were Grade 1 students of SDN Bogem 2, Kalasan, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The school is located in suburban near the Prambanan Temple.

Results and Discussion

The preliminary research before doing the cycles found that the goal of the teaching and learning process on the First Grade of Primary School is to fulfill the minimum requirement stated on the national curriculum 2013. On 6 July 2020, the teacher did an informal test on communication and reading. This was for the students’ competence mapping on how the students communicate and read some words. The result shows that most students were unable to read the given words fluently.

Table 1. The Mapping of the Reading Ability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disable to Read at all</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing Alphabet</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Syllables</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consonant-end Syllables</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluent Reading</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table above it can be seen that only seven students are fluent in reading the given Indonesia words. The eleven students enabled to recognize some consonant-end syllables such as mandi, sabun, gosok, and sarapan. However, they were often silent for a while to memorize. Another seven students were able to read syllables without the consonant-end such as saya, pagi, mama, and papa. The two last types are for knowing alphabet and disable to read at all with two students and one student respectively.

Dealing with the communication skills of the students, most students enabled to respond the teacher’s questions well even though some students were active physically.

On the first trial of the Google Meet, only 16 of 28 students participated on the virtual class. The Google Meet was used for engagement. This is because all students have never met before in one class. The Google Meet was done once, on 17 July 2020. Unfortunately, more than nine students could not join the Google Meet.

Cycle 1

The Figure 1 shows the cycle one of the present action research.
Planning
- compatible and reachable application/media for both teacher and students

Action
- printed assignments
- WA Instruction
- JB Class Istimewa

Reflection
- need more detail information
- find other media

Observation
- late participation and response

Planning
As Google meet application was not compatible for all students in joining the online class, the researcher designed the online classes using WhatsApp (WA) which was supported by printed materials and other online class application. The researcher prepared some printed learning materials and asked the parent coordinators to pick the printed materials at school then share to other parents. The online application chosen was the Jogja Belajar Class Istimewa (JB Class). The government through the education department in Yogyakarta Province develops the application for students in Yogyakarta. In other words, JB Class is the online class application prepared by the government for supporting the online class process. As this is a part of the government program, the JB Class is only for the formal schools as to register JB Class, the users must enter the school code and national student number.

Action
On this stage, the teacher as the collaborator run an online classes in some procedures. First, the teacher shared the instructions via WA group that all students should register on the JB Class. On the WA announcement dated 5 July 2020, the teacher also showed how to register and join the JB Class.

1. Install the JB Class Istimewa on Playstore
2. Click the registrasi siswa (student registration)
3. Create the account name and password
4. Log in the JB Class
5. Search the class
6. Register to the selected class
7. Wait for the teacher’s confirmation

From the first announcement from the teacher, the parents responded well. They directly registered to the JB Class. Some parents faced several troubles for the JB Class registration. Two parents who did not have email account needed the teacher’s help to register. One parent was failed in installing the application on mobile phone. The registration was then using the Google engine. Overall, all students succeeded to register the JB Class.

Observation
The teacher posted the first assignment and invited the students accompanied by the parents to do the assignment. Unfortunately, not all students participated immediately. For reminding the parents in accompanying the students in doing the JB Class assignment, the teacher posted the list of students who had done and had not done the JB Class assignment on WA.
The responses of the parents on the teacher’s reminding post and instruction were also slow. In this phase, the teacher did not know why the parents did not respond fast. Consequently, the teacher could not set the next learning materials. After more than two weeks, the teacher noted that only one student did not respond the JB Class assignment.

**Reflection**

The participation of the students were not optimal using the JB Class due to late participation. The teacher decided to find more information about the parents’ background.

**Cycle 2**

**Planning**
- detail information on students' family backgrounds
- use other online media

**Action**
- assignment control sheet
- parent WA group
- WA VC group
- assignment WA group
- assignment submission

**Reflection**
- find other media

**Observation**
- all were effective except the WA VC and Google Meet

**Planning**

There were two problems found on the first cycle of the current study: late participation on the online class and limited internet credit. The teacher searched the family backgrounds to find out why the students participated late during the JB Class practice. From the interview, the teacher found that some parents did not have enough time to accompany their children in doing the assignment. Most parents worked from morning to evening as farmer, workers or entrepreneurs. That is why, some students were late in doing the assignment as they should wait their parents.

Some students also found it difficult to access the JB Class because of limited internet credit. Many parents did not have extra budget for the internet credit. Consequently, they were unable to buy the internet credit and did the JB Class assignment. The teacher planned to introduce some online media which could be accessed easily by all students. Moreover, the media should be in low budget.

**Action**

For increasing the students’ participation on the online learning activities, the teacher has set several things, as follows:
1. Assignment Control Sheet
The teacher provided schedule, assignment checklist and printed assignments which were compiled into an assignment control sheet. The teacher made a two-week schedule completed with the list of assignment the students should complete and instruction. Here is the example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tanggal</th>
<th>Kegiatan di rumah</th>
<th>Bentuk pengumpulan</th>
<th>EET</th>
<th>TTD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26 Agustus 2020</td>
<td>Agama islam dengan ibu siti Arriyutun Pramukti dengan ibu Siti Nurhayati Agama Katolik dengan ibu Edo Sekolah malam 3 mengururkan angka, mengururkan pola tugas 4 praktek mencampur warna tugas 5 menggambar veasal pola</td>
<td>Tugas 4 diperlukan boleh diletak atau diwajibkan dan dikumpulkan tanggal 8 September 2020 pengumpulan barus sesuai tanggal pengumpulan yang sudah dikerjakan disimpan dahulu, di HP.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tugas 7 mencetak mencetak dengan jari, pelepas pisang, belimbing kecil caranya: cat air ditambah air wadah tanpa diberi air, kemudian tempe belimbing/pelepas pisang mulai di cap di kertas gambar contoh:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Assignment Control Sheet Example](image)

Figure 3. The Assignment Control Sheet

After two weeks, only one student did not submit the assignments listed since the student could not read and write at all. The family members often did the assignments. Consequently, the student did not show the progress.

2. Parent WhatsApp group
Besides giving instruction on the Assignment Control Sheet, the teacher also reminded the parents for accompanying their children in doing their assignments. The teacher also added some supplementary materials such as video or art examples on the WhatsApp group. In this case, only one parent who frequently changed the WhatsApp number. As a result, the student missed the information and additional instruction.

3. WhatsApp Video Call
Before doing a teaching and learning using the WA Video Call, the teacher asked the parents to choose morning time (10.00 AM) or evening time (18.30). In one call, the teacher called five to six students at once...
using WA video call. Unfortunately, this was not a good choice since the teacher could not catch the students’ responses as mostly all students spoke at once. The teacher, then, changed the WhatsApp Video Call mode by calling one by one for reducing unclear responses of the students. The second mode also invited troubles on internet connection such as the limited internet credit and the internet signal.

4. Assignment WA
To store all the class assignments, the teacher created one more WA group. The group is only for backing up the printed assignments.

5. Assignment Submission
Based on the ASN, the students had to submit the assignments based on the due dates. Some should submit before the two weeks ends, via picture or video. The rests should be submitted to the school. Due to the COVID-19 protocol, the submission procedure was grouped based on the location. Students who are in one area submitted the assignments to the group coordinator. The coordinator, then, submitted all to the school.

Observation

Among the five schemes of the teaching and learning activities practices, only the WA Video Call and the Google Meet which could not meet the expectation. The Assignment Control Sheet was very effective in organizing the assignment. The parents, as well, were easy to do checklist for all assignments. As a result, the missing assignment submissions could be minimized. Through the WA group, the parents also have opportunities to confirm or ask about the assignment printed on the ASN. The assignment WA group and the assignment submission procedure were also run well without significant problems appeared.

The WA Video Call was only done once during 15-16 July 2020. This is because the internet connection in some places were not good. Consequently, the video and sound were not synchronized well. Besides, nine students could not be called because of some reasons, such as 1) incompatible gadget, 2) unavailable gadget, and 3) insufficient internet credit.

Reflection
The observation shows that only the WA Video Call and the Google Meet did not work for the online class practice among students Grade 1 of SD N 2 Bogem. This means that WA is the appropriate medium for running the online class for the participants in the present study.

Conclusion
Having a good communication with parents of Grade 1 is the prominent key in succeeding the learning process of the Grade 1 students. Teacher should understand not only the students’ skills and competences at the beginning of the learning, but also knowing the students’ family backgrounds. Teacher must negotiate the situation, in which not all students are from middle and upper social stratification. That is why, proper online media should be compatible and accessible for all. The recent study shows that WhatsApp is the best media used. Teacher can deliver the materials and monitor the progress of the students. The internet credit for running the WhatsApp is not really hard for the parents. However, the online classes cannot be run well without the support of school stakeholders.

Acknowledgements or Notes
This article is a part of community services product which was conducted by Ima Widyastuti from English Education Department, Universitas Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa in an introduction to research among primary school teachers in 2020.

References

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-4560-67-2


Authors Information

Bertiani Eka Sukaca, S.Pd. SD
SD N Bogem 2 Kalasan
Bogem, Tamanmartani, Kalasan, Sleman, Yogyakarta
Contact:
E-mail Address: tyber2009@gmail.com

Biography of the First Author
She started her career in teaching in 2010. She had worked at Model Kindergarten and Primary School for 9 years before she has been in Bogem 2 State Primary School in 2019. Her research interests are in primary school teaching and learning practices.

Benjarut Prempiwong
Chiang Rai Rajabhat University
9, Phaholythin Road, Muang Chiang Rai, 57100, Chiang Rai, Thailand

Biography of the Second Author
She is the student of Chiang Rai Rajabhat University, Thailand. She joined a Sea Teacher at Universitas Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa. Her research interest is in teaching young learners.