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DEVELOPING STUDENTS' CREATIVITY IN TEACHING TEYL SUBJECTS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

by

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Abstract:

The COVID-19 pandemic has influenced the education world, especially teaching and learning. Students must be equipped with four skills to survive in the global competition of the 21st century, namely Collaboration, Critical Thinking, Creativity, and communication (4C). One of the essential skills is creativity. Teachers have to provide learning activities for students to develop their skills. As a result, teachers must adapt to the condition by selecting the appropriate strategies. One of the strategies which can be applied during the pandemic is Project Based Learning. This study aims to describe the process of developing creativity in the students using Project Based Learning in the Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) course and the student's responses towards the strategy applied by the lecturer. This study is qualitative; the data were collected by documentation, observation checklist, and interviews. The subjects are lecturers and students taking TEYL courses for the 2020/2021 academic year. This study found that the lecturer employed blended learning to implement the teaching and learning process. She assigned the students a project: learning activities for young learners in the form of a book chapter. Through creating the project in TEYL courses, the students could develop their creativity, especially in fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration.

Keywords: Creativity, Online Learning, Project Based Learning, Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL)

INTRODUCTION

Since March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has begun and influenced many aspects of human life, including education. This extraordinary situation caused the Indonesian government to publish a policy dealing with the teaching-learning process. On March 24, 2020, the Minister of Education and Culture issued circular letter 4 of 2020 Concerning the

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Implementation of Education Policies in Emergency Time the Spread of Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) (KEBUDAYAAN & INDONESIA, 2020). In this circular, the Minister of Education and Culture stated the policy of learning from home for the safety and health of students and their families.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a new challenge for teachers and lecturers. On the one hand, teachers have to adapt to new conditions related to learning from home. They inevitably have to use technology for the learning process. On the other hand, they must continue to provide learning experiences that develop the skills needed in the 21st century.

According to National Standard – Directorate of Higher Education (SN-DIKTI and KKNI), the elements of learning outcomes include attitudes and values, abilities, knowledge, and responsibilities/rights. The intended learning outcomes include hard and soft skills (Suhartono & Machmuddah, 2020). This statement is supported by the background and objectives of the independent campus program (*Program Kampus Merdeka*). The independent learning guidebook states that the independent learning program is designed and implemented correctly to form students' hard and soft skills. The existence of the independent learning program is intended to make students more prepared and relevant to the needs of the times. As a result, lecturers still have to sufficiently equip students with those skills to compete globally, even with the limitations of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Soft skills encompass personal, social, communication, and self-management behaviors. Scholars mentioned that soft skills cover a broad spectrum, including self-awareness, trust, awareness, adaptability, critical thinking, organizational awareness, attitude, initiative, empathy, self-confidence, integrity, self-control, leadership, problem-solving, decision-making risk, and time management (Peggy, 2007). Other scholars stated that the industrial revolution 4.0 resulted in a change in the educational paradigm that focused on knowledge production and innovative applications of knowledge (Turmudi, 2020a; Zubaidah, 2018). Moreover, in high education, students must master four skills, namely, Collaborative, Critical, Creative, and Communicative (4C), to survive in the 21st-century global competition. Therefore, it is essential to prepare a more innovative learning system and improve the competence of graduates who have 21st-century skills (Learning and Innovations Skills).

Creativity is one of the skills in the 4Cs, which has a relatively broad and complex definition. Firstly, (Jauk et al., 2014) define creativity into three perspectives, namely originality (finishing something in a way that has never been done before), novelty (creating

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something new), and difference or seeing things from a different perspective. Furthermore, (Krumm et al., 2016) added that creativity is the highest level of expressing a new idea and the ability to combine unrelated topics in different ways to avoid familiar patterns. Finally, scholars (Jahnke et al., 2017) define creativity as an innate intelligence that develops due to a combination of innate abilities and adaptation to the environment. In short, creativity is the ability to express ideas to create something new, or that has never been done before.

Creativity has indicators that are used as a reference for teachers to assess student creativity in the classroom. According to the Guilford Divergent Thinking Model and the Torrance Test for creative thinking, there are six indicators of creativity. This list of creativity indicators has been created by Scientific American (Fields & Bisschoff, 2013). The six indicators are ideational fluency, variety and flexibility, originality, elaboration, problem sensitivity, and redefinition.

One of the ways to train students' creativity is by applying Project Based Learning (PBL). According to scholar (Bell, 2010), PBL is an innovative learning approach that teaches many strategies critical for success in the twenty-first century. Students drive their learning through inquiry and work collaboratively to research and create projects that reflect their knowledge. Scholars also stated that Project-Based Learning allows students to learn by doing and applying ideas (Syakur, Junining, & Sabat, 2020). Students engage in real-world activities that are similar to the activities that adult professionals engage in.

Many pieces of research prove that PBL is a precious strategy in teaching to foster soft skills. For example, a scholar (Rochmahwati, 2015) found that applying PBL can foster students' critical thinking skills. Then, some scholars (Anitha et al., 2018; Ismuwardani et al., 2019; Nurcahya & Sugesti, 2020; Syarifah & Emiliasari, 2019; Ummah et al., 2019) proved a significant increase in the implementation of PBL on students' creativity. Finally, other scholars (Setiawan & Nurhajati, 2021) proved that PBL is building their knowledge, attitudes, and behavior differently. The results of this research showed that the life skills obtained by the students were (1) self-awareness and personal life skills, (2) social skills, (3) thinking skills, (4) academic skills, and (5) vocational skills.

Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) is one of the subjects given to the students of the English Language Department at the University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri. In this subject, the students are introduced to the theory and practice of teaching English to young learners in the Indonesian context, such as the instructional materials and the teaching

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strategies. According to (SAHRONI, n.d.), TEYL is designed to prepare the students to be teachers or tutors for young learners. The emphasis of this subject is that the students can apply child-friendly learning. To reach the goal, the lecturer applied PBL. The students were assigned to create projects at the end of each topic material.

Realizing the facts, the researchers were interested in carrying out this research. The objectives were: 1) to describe the stages of Project Based Learning in the TEYL subject and 2) to explain the process of developing the student's creativity through each stage of Project-Based Learning in the TEYL subject.

METHOD

Design

The approach of the research is qualitative. It is a case study that describes the learning process in TEYL to develop the student's creativity carried out by TEYL lecturers to sixth-semester students at the University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri in the academic year 2020/2021.

Participant

The research subjects are the lecturer of the TEYL subject and three students as the representatives of sixth-semester students at the University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri in the academic year 2020/2021. These three students were selected as subjects by using the purposive sampling technique. The researcher used this technique because the subjects had these criteria: creativity highly developed, average developed, and less developed.

Instrument

The first instrument used in this research is documentation—the first data collected from lesson plans (RPS) that can be analyzed. Furthermore, the second data is taken from student projects, namely book chapters containing game manuals, learning songs, and short stories, resulting from a learning process that promotes creativity through PBL.

The second instrument used in this research is observation. The researcher used a complete observation technique, which means she participated in all activities carried out by

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the research subject. This technique was used to observe the steps in the lecturer's learning process and the learning process to train creativity.

The third instrument used is an interview. The researcher conducted interviews to obtain data that had not been obtained in the observation process. Stainback (1988) in Sugiyono (2013:232) states that interviewing provides the researcher with a purpose to gain a deeper understanding of how the participant interprets a situation or phenomenon that can be gained through observation. The researcher used this technique to obtain data from students regarding the teaching methods carried out by the lecturer and the impact of the learning process on their creativity.

Data Collecting Technique

The researchers used some techniques to collect the data. They were observation, interviews, and document analysis. The researchers observed the learning process to describe the steps of PBL applied by the lecturer in the classroom. The researchers also interviewed the lecturer and the three selected students to determine the strategy for developing the students' creativity. The researchers analyzed documents such as the TEYL lesson plan and the student's project: book chapters.

Data Analysis Technique

In this research, the researchers used data analysis proposed by Miles and Huberman (Miles et al., 2014). Data analysis procedures were reduction, display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction was made while collecting information in the classroom. The recorded data focused on the learning process and the impact or results felt by the students from the learning process that promotes creativity through PBL. Reducing the data, the researchers presented a summary and classification of the data that had been compiled so that further conclusions could be drawn. The data analysis model tracked the previous scholar in the same data category (Turmudi, 2020b). In this research, the researchers presented the data in a short description or narrative text. In the conclusion-drawing stage, they included primary data in the conclusions made to be more transparent. They need to be supported by valid evidence obtained from the research process researchers. On the other hand, we also employed offline cited works using Mendeley software to arrange all in-text citations and references (Turmudi, 2020a).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION***Results***

TEYL is one of the English subjects to train students to develop appropriate learning materials for young learners and implement them in the classroom. The subject is divided into two parts, theoretical and practical activities. In the first part, the students learn the theories dealing with the implementation of TEYL, while in the second part, they are trained to practice by performing various skills. Besides, the students are equipped with soft skills (4-Cs). To achieve the objectives of the TEYL subject, lecturers apply PBL.

The stages of PBL in teaching TEYL are classified into two, preparation and classroom implementation. In preparation, the lecturer made a plan for the implementation in the class. The classroom implementation stage covers selecting material, planning, developing, and presenting.

1. Preparation

At the beginning of the lesson, the lecturer explained in advance the TEYL subject. Then, he explained the purpose of the subject, introduced the material to be studied for one semester, explained the project that should be done at the end of the semester, and the course contract. The projects mentioned during the course contract included making book chapters and videos of the learning and teaching process.

Furthermore, in the next TEYL lesson, the lecturer began to provide students with materials for TEYL. These materials included the theory underlying TEYL, the goals of TEYL, the approach to TEYL, learning strategies for teaching young learners, characteristics of young learners, child-friendly learning, implementation of TEYL, and so on. Moreover, the lecturer gave assignments that aimed to trigger students' creativity. In this stage, students' creativity has yet to emerge; however, they have been able to get ideas for working on the project that the lecturer had explained.

2. Classroom Implementation

The learning activities of the TEYL course were implemented online through the Zoom Cloud Meeting. Furthermore, in implementing this project, the lecturer gave the assignments that the students had to do individually or in groups. With this assignment, they could practice their creativity in completing projects. Besides, the results of this assignment could also be included in the final project results. The first task given by the lecturer was an

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individual task. The lecturer assigns students to summarize the material presented when the lecturer delivers the material so that students focus on the material presented. The next task was a group assignment. Before this group assignment, the lecturer gave a list of young learners learning materials. Then, the lecturer asked the students to choose and develop teaching materials for young learners. The material that the students developed included vocabulary lists, examples of simple sentences/expressions, songs, short stories, and games according to the selected material. This assignment was given periodically. Every TEYL class ends with the deadline for submission one week after the assignment is given. Tasks were given, such as making short stories, games manuals, and songs in this stage, form students' creativity more formed. It can be seen by how the students modified existing games as they wanted. In addition, students' creativity could also be seen in their ability to compose songs and short stories according to the topics given.

Here are the following stages:

a. Selecting material

The first step in the selecting material stage was that the lecturer chose learning materials for young learners for projects that students would do. Next, the lecturer asked the students to form groups with three members and choose the material to be developed for their book-chapter project. The following is the material that students must choose: 1) Fruit, 2) Foods and Drinks, 3) Family, 4) Things in the classroom, 5) Things in the Living room, 6) Professions, 7) Daily Activities, 8) My Hobbies, 9) Public Places, 10) Animals, and 11) Parts of the Body. In this stage, the lecturer provides examples of existing assignments. The lecturer gave examples of opening and closing songs that can be used in class. He also showed game manuals to make young learners happier in learning English, short stories with simple sentences to be easily understood by young learners, simple sentences to introduce vocabulary to young learners, and an example of a book-chapter design.

At this stage, the student's creativity began to develop. After analyzing the lecturer's examples, they got some ideas for working on the project assignments. Even so, the lecturer still needed to approach the students so that students' creativity could develop.

b. planning

The planning stage for this book-chapter project was carried out periodically, namely when the lecturer gave an assignment at the end of the lesson. In group assignments, each

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group made a plan about the objectives and indicators of the selected material. In addition, although groups had been formed, each student had to make short stories and games according to the selected material.

At this stage, the lecturer gave assignments according to the steps in the project task of making book chapters. Here the lecturer gave sequential assignments starting from individual tasks, namely making games and short stories that were used to foster student creativity that has begun to appear at the stage of selecting materials. Furthermore, this individual task was developed by working on group assignments.

Then the next step was making lesson plans, learning objectives, and indicators, choosing vocabulary, making simple sentences, and core songs according to the learning material, games, and short stories to practice questions as group assignments. In addition, the lecturer informed the students about the time allocation for working on the book-chapter project assignment, which must be completed at the end of the semester. In this stage, students' creativity has begun to form with assignments given by the lecturer that forced them to explore their creativity.

c. Developing

At this stage, the students have developed the results of each task or directly used their assignments in their group book-chapter project. When developing their songs, the students were free to choose songs with which the children were familiar and creatively change the lyrics according to the topic. In making games, they were required to make these games to train children's motor and sensory skills, cohesiveness, and children's vocabulary understanding. Moreover, in this stage, students' creativity has developed.

d. Presenting

In this last stage, the students presented their project results to the lecturer and other groups. At the end of the presentation, the lecturer provided feedback to all groups for project improvement. Besides, the students from different groups commented on the projects' positiveness and weaknesses. After they improved based on the feedback, they revised the projects and arranged them into book chapters. The final stage was the students practiced how to implement the materials they developed in the class for teaching practice. Each group performed as teachers who taught the students, while other students were elementary students. Here they were required to express their creativity, and they were able to show it through

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presentations and the final results of making book chapters.

The second finding of this study showed that the use of PBL has been successful in helping the students to explore their creativity. The researchers measured students' creativity using the creativity indicators by Fields & Bisschoff (2013). Accordingly, indicators of the Guilford Divergent Thinking Model and the Torrance Test for creative thinking have been made by Scientific American as cited by Fields & Bisschoff (2013). The six indicators are ideational fluency, variety and flexibility, originality, elaboration, problem sensitivity, and redefinition. However, in this study, the researchers focused on the following indicators: fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration.

The creative abilities that the students obtained after using PBL can be presented as follows:

1. Fluency

Based on the results of interviews with three students (initially written as IN, PR, and DS) as class representatives, it was found that they could think fluently about the project they had worked on. The three students were able to express their ideas fluently. They revealed that making a book-chapter layout or design requires them to think creatively because the book design will attract the attention of young learners.

Supporting what has been mentioned, they also conveyed the purpose of their ideas, ideas about implementing child-friendly learning, and the content in the chapters of the learning books they made. I revealed that in this assignment, their groups were required to be able to think creatively. She also reveals that cartoons inspired the ideas she came up with in the 2000s, which were quite entertaining and considered to be able to educate young learners. Furthermore, the ideas from PR are more focused on the design and content of the book chapter. He explained that the determination of the material and the design of the book chapter is an essential aspect of the project of making this book chapter. A good design can attract students' attention to study.

Moreover, the idea conveyed by DS related to making songs. He explained that his idea was to make it easier for students to learn the learning material. He used a familiar and then created the lyrics according to the theme and melody of the song. In addition, he also chose interesting movements that matched the vocabulary to be introduced.

In short, the students have used their creative thinking skills for the projects they have

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worked on. They conveyed their ideas well, which were their ideas or adaptations. In addition, students' fluency in making songs can be seen in the example below.

Closing song
(Using London Bridge is Falling Down song's melody)

"Say thank you to the teacher (thank you miss 2x)
The teacher says thank you and you are welcome
Now it's time to (say good bye 3x)
Now it's time to say good bye see you later."

Figure 1.1 Example of the opening song on students' works

2. Flexibility

Flexibility refers to the ability to adapt ideas according to the conditions. It is known that some students already have ideas that are different from the examples found, but in the process, existing ideas still inspire students. Students observe examples, imitate existing examples, modify those found, and create new ideas. Meanwhile, DS revealed that his ideas were similar to the examples found. However, the students could adapt their ideas to the situations they experienced and express their opinions on ideas from members considered less suitable for the project they worked on. For example, some students adapt their games to keep their distance, considering the pandemic conditions that require students to keep their distance and avoid physical contact. In addition, they also selected the tone of the song that could be used in this project. I expressed her ideas as follows:

"As an example, initially, there was an idea for the learning song, we wanted to use the tone of an English song, but because the children here do not understand English songs, we changed it to a song that is often heard and popular in the local community, so that vocabulary learning can be easier to understand."

Furthermore, DS also expressed his ideas to change the song's lyrics so that it could contain the vocabularies that would be taught in the learning material and adjust it to the selected song.

Their flexibility could be seen when they presented project results. They have been able to make fun games but keep their distance and avoid physical contact between students. Moreover, when they presented the song, they could make the audience sing along because of the tone and adjustment of the lyrics.

The examples of game manuals and theme songs that students have made can be seen below.



Figure 1.2 Example of game manual on students' works

Based on the finding above, creating a book chapter project can help develop the students' flexibility.

3. Originality

Originality is the ability to think of something original in the creative process. The students need to think hard to be able to produce original ideas. In this book chapter project, each student has a different idea. Each student had an idea to make a game different from the other groups, an idea to teach vocabulary by using simple words, and an idea to teach the material more effectively. I revealed that she had yet to have a new idea in working on his project. In working on a book chapter project, she only used ideas that she got because other people inspired her.

Unlike IN, PR innovated in the idea of making his game. He used some examples of objects which is used as a tool for playing games. The idea is that students can better understand the material while playing games. Furthermore, the idea of DS was to compile song lyrics, children's stories, and games related to the material and adapt to conditions during the pandemic.

Things in the Classroom theme song
(Using 5 Duck song's melody)

Please put your bag on the table
And show me what is in your bag
I have a book and pencil case
Please take out your pencil case
And show me what you got in it
I have some pen and colored pencil

Eraser, ruler, and pencil

Figure 1.3 Example of the theme song on students' work

Furthermore, it was found that there were still students who needed help to generate pure ideas from their thoughts and still needed to find a source of inspiration first. Even so, some students have been able to innovate with their ideas.

4. Elaboration

In this research, the students have been able to develop, add, and enrich their ideas individually and through group discussions.

In this project, the students have been able to compose song lyrics to introduce vocabulary adapted to the song, create their versions of games, and design products as attractive as possible but still per the teaching material. They had also been able to provide details in detail about the projects they had worked on. They had to create the opening and closing songs for learning. The songs must be suitable for learning materials for vocabulary introduction, the introduction of vocabulary accompanied by pictures, and their use according to the context of everyday life, use of TPR on children's learning, making games and short stories. In this book chapter project, students stated that they had been able to expand an idea into more ideas.

Some students had to try hard to get an idea. However, when they started to focus and look for other references, they felt getting ideas became much more manageable and could simultaneously provoke other new ideas.

From the findings, it is known that the use of PBL can increase students' creativity. The students' creativity in question is when students can think fluently, be flexible, original, and elaborate in detail in working on a given project. The ability of these students is obtained from

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the use of PBL, which has a preparation stage, and classroom implementation, in which there are stages of selecting material, planning, developing, and presenting. Furthermore, PBL can train and develop students' creativity through the projects they work on.

Discussion

In this study, PBL was used to increase students' creativity by providing projects to create book chapters. Through this book chapter project, students have been able to generate ideas and convey their ideas in their way. In addition, the PBL stages applied by the lecturer have helped the students to develop their creative abilities.

The first finding of this research is the stages of implementing PBL, which lecturers apply. These stages are mentioned in (Nurhajati, 2020): preparation and classroom implementation with sub-stages of selecting material, planning, developing and presenting. The stages that play a role in increasing students' creative abilities are the planning and developing stages. Students' creativity has increased because, in both stages, students prepare, explore ideas, exchange ideas with groups, and create and develop the projects they do. It is still in line with (Nurhajati, 2021), who states that students' creativity can be enhanced as they must prepare the projects, create them, and perform.

Further findings show the fulfillment of student creativity indicators after implementing PBL in TEYL learning. By applying PBL, the students have met the creativity indicators of fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. However, in working on this book-chapter project, the students needed help getting ideas while working on the project. They can overcome these difficulties by looking for references and group discussions. The difficulty experienced by the students in this study is the same as the students' problems experienced in the study (Syarifah & Emiliasari, 2019). However, a discussion with group members has overcome these problems. With group discussions, students can exchange ideas and opinions on project work.

Furthermore, other studies that applied PBL in the research were conducted by scholars (Ismuwardani et al. 2019; Nurcahya & Sugesti, 2020; Syarifah & Emiliasari, 2019). The results show that using PBL could develop and enhance students' creativity. The definite difference between this study and previous research is in its purpose. The three previous research used PBL to train students' creativity in writing, while in this research, PBL was used to train students' creativity in making book chapters, which means students seem to play the

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role of teachers. Furthermore, another research conducted by (Setiawan & Nurhajati, 2021) shows that the application of PBL helps students obtain life skills such as (1) self-awareness and personal life skills, (2) social skills, (3) thinking skills, (4) academic skills, (5) vocational skills. From the findings of these previous researches, applying PBL in the classroom could train students' creativity and soft skills needed to compete in the 21st century. It is in line with (Bell, 2010), who says that PBL is an innovative approach to learning that teaches many strategies critical for success in the twenty-first century.

Moreover, this research also has similarities with research conducted by (Nurhajati, 2021), which shows that to increase students' creativity during the pandemic, the lecturer used PBL to do several projects, such as making videos, games manuals, and English books for elementary school students. The similarity is the use of PBL to increase student creativity during the pandemic. The difference is that this research focuses on how the lecturer applies PBL in the classroom. In contrast, the research conducted by (Nurhajati, 2021) focused more on describing the teaching strategies employed by the lecturer in English Profession to promote creativity and explain the teaching strategies to enhance the students' creativity and research.

Based on the discussion, the application of PBL helps students to be able to develop their soft skills and hard skills by working on projects that the lecturer has given. In addition, by implementing PBL, students become more active in class. Lecturers still have to guide and provide feedback so students can understand and complete projects well. With a good application of PBL, the goal of PBL for student success in the 21st century can be achieved.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

Using PBL in TEYL learning is the right strategy to develop students' creativity during the Covid-19 Pandemic. The project assigned by the lecturer has been able to train students' creativity. The ability of students' creativity can be seen through the ability of students to think fluently, the ability of students to adapt the ideas they have or the ability of flexibility, the ability of students to think of original ideas, and the ability to elaborate the project in groups. The PBL stages that play a significant role in developing students' creativity are the planning and developing stages, where students must prepare, explore ideas, exchange

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ideas with groups, and create and develop their ideas for their projects. In short, students' creativity can be trained by choosing the right learning strategy.

Implication

Realizing that PBL gives many advantages, it is recommended that other researchers research the implementation of PBL to measure students' skills in collaboration, communication, and critical thinking. They can also research the implementation of creating projects in schools from different areas in Indonesia, as *Kurikulum Merdeka* is implemented in most of the schools.

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