# TEACHING DRAMA IN A HYBRID CLASS

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**Abstract**
Although drama is meant to be performed, due to the pandemic situation, it cannot be done. Besides a government regulation about the maximum number of people who gather in a class or a room, the variants of the Covid-19 virus are not easily handled. But still, educators should conduct their learning process well. Some universities in Indonesia have also shifted online learning into a hybrid one. However, conducting a hybrid class, especially in relation to drama was quite challenging. Some real problems appeared and educators should be able to solve them. This article discussed those issues including some good practices to create a meaningful drama class. Data were collected through a questionnaire which included cognitive, behavioural, emotional engagement, motivation and time management. The problems covered audibility, bad internet connection, less attention and lack of technological tools. Two of the good practices done were a dramatic reading project and gamification to facilitate students who attended the class physically or virtually.

Keywords: drama, engagement, hybrid, practices, teaching

## Introduction

The spread of Covid 19 forced the world of education from face-to-face classes into an online learning mode. Managing online learning requires various aspects which include instructional materials (Suharyadi & Mulyani, 2022), assessment (Arifuddin, et al., 2021), the use of media (Khovivah, et al., 2021), students' engagement (Dumford & Miller, 2018), communication and interaction (Vlachopoulos & Makri, 2019). In addition, its success depends on the quality of institutions and services, student characteristics, internal motivation, instructor characteristics, infrastructure and system quality, quality of courses and information, and online learning environment (Yudiawan, et al., 2021). For some students and teachers, this online learning was enjoyable due to the flexible time and place (Downer, et al., 2021).

On the other side, it also had some weaknesses. Song, et al. (2004) discussed that when students or teachers had technical problems, online learning could not run well. Besides, the time constraints and lack of community sense could be other weaknesses. Dhawan (2020) underlined that online learning created a lack of direct communication as a result of technical problems. This also led to an imbalance in learning and teaching processes since the flexibility of time and place caused

students' nonseriousness. In conclusion, psychological and technological aspects were inadequate and have created an imbalance learning process. In line with Dhawan and Song, et al., Yulia (2020) stated that online learning which did not affect students' outcomes was considered a waste of time.

### *Theories of conducting a hybrid class*

Since the pandemic has progressively changed into an endemic and many people have realized the weaknesses of online learning, some universities have shifted the mode of online learning into a hybrid one (Fedorchenko-Kutuev & Kurovska, 2021; Yeo, et al., 2021). In Indonesia, there were some universities and schools that had a hybrid learning mode (Abdulhak & Wahyudin, 2018; Mutmainnah, et al., 2022; Permana, 2021). A hybrid classroom can be defined as a classroom where some students attend the class on campus and other individuals attend the class virtually from the place where they choose (Butz, et al., 2016; Hastie, et al., 2010). In short, the term hybrid refers to synchronous instruction of both remote and face-to-face students (Detienne, et al., 2018).

The hybrid learning mode is beneficial in terms of organizational and pedagogical purposes (Raes, et al., 2020). Organizational benefits cover a chance to increase recruitment rates, access to inclusive education and equal outcomes, the efficiency of teaching the same course twice, flexibility for choosing a learning environment, and an opportunity for a multifaceted student population. Pedagogical benefits include rich learning experiences, students' equal learning opportunities, enhanced instruction, and band technological encounters.

Besides its benefits, this hybrid learning has some aspects that support its success. Park, et al. (2019) underlined that students' individual backgrounds and participation played an important role in a successful hybrid learning process. Maspul & Amalia (2021) added that the role of parents also helped the success of hybrid learning. Ahlgren, et al. (2020) explained four success factors, namely: the teacher's identity, the teacher's pedagogical solutions, organizational practices and educational technologies or facilities. Based on some factors of successful hybrid learning, a hypothesis of the implementation of hybrid learning is constructed that it does not only focus on the technological tools used in a hybrid class. Its success also depends on students and teachers or lecturers. Previous studies showed students' perspectives toward the implementation of hybrid learning (Alghamadi, et al., 2022; Hall & Villareal, 2015; McGovern & Barnes, 2009; Raes, 2022).

Due to the fact that hybrid learning and teaching processes have to be applied, educators need to adjust to it. Specifically, some teachers or lecturers realize that several subjects are more challenging than others due to their nature especially teaching art. Although a previous study could connect the humanities discipline with education (Mulatsih, 2018), the demand for conducting hybrid learning exists. One of those subjects is drama which requires physical interaction such as performing a drama script. Previous studies about students' perspectives on implementing hybrid learning still focused more on educational subjects or scientific subjects such as logistics engineering and others scientific subjects. This article provides different aspects in a form of teaching art or a humanities discipline that is literature. As it has been written before that drama means to be performed, teaching drama in a hybrid class becomes an issue that needs to be solved.

In accordance with that, this article discusses some good practices, engagement, motivation and problems which are explained from students' perspectives. Thus, the research questions are formulated as follows:

- What good practices were done when teaching drama in a hybrid class?
- What problems were faced in a hybrid class based on students' opinions?
- How did students engage during a hybrid class?

**Method**

This study was conducted through an online survey where participants were given a link to a google form. A written questionnaire was constructed by applying a theory from Krosnick (2018). It contained questions in relation to (1) students' gender and age, (2) good practices in a hybrid class, (3) problems faced during the hybrid learning process, (4) students' engagement, and (5) students' motivation and time management. There was only one closed question in relation to motivation. The rest questions were open. Participants answered all questions from 24th to 31st March 2022. This phase was conducted after six meetings of hybrid learning in a drama class which was held by a private university in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Data were gathered anonymously. Furthermore, its analysis was conducted through several steps. Firstly, the researcher spread the link to a google form. Secondly, the researcher read the answers carefully. After that, the researcher divided the answers into several categories. The theory of hybrid learning experience and satisfaction that was proposed by Xiao, et al. (2020) was applied to classify the results. The researcher also selected some significant answers which could represent other answers which had the same opinion. Then, the results of the data analysis were presented qualitatively. This research also applies qualitative methods (Creswell, 2007) since it discusses students' perspective or their voices about the implementation of hybrid learning.

*Participant characteristics*

Fifty-seven participants answered all questions in the questionnaire. Specifically, there were 40 female respondents and 17 male students. Their range of their age was from nineteen to 38 years old. The range can be seen below:
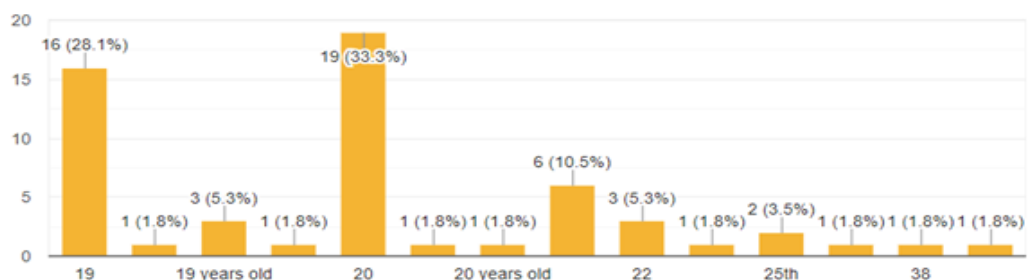


Figure 1. The proportion of participants' age

Some participants joined face-to-face classes but some who attended an online class could come freely into face-to-face classes. It means that the number of students who joined in face-to-face and online class varied. The data were also taken from all students without having a sampling method. The participants were in their fourth semester and they did not have any experience attending a face-to-

face class in their previous semesters due to the pandemic situation. Participants answered the answers in the written questionnaire naturalistically without manipulation since they did not provide their names and the results were not used as a scoring item.

## Findings and Discussion

This part is divided into four sections. The first deals with good practices that were done by the lecturer based on students' answers. The second relates to some real problems faced in a hybrid class. The third part reveals students' engagement. Then, the last is students' motivation and time management.

### *Good practices to maintain a hybrid class*

Based on students' answers in relation to good practices that the lecturer did to maintain a hybrid class, the results were classified into five parts, namely: paying attention to students' psychological aspect, gamification, providing and delivering various learning materials, promoting students' right, maintaining interaction and health protocol. The first group deals with psychological treatment. A student wrote that the lecturer had done "her best in teaching the hybrid class, such as always asking students whether they were in good health or not". Another student also underlined "good attention". Besides, a "communicative approach" was also stated. It refers to the lecturer's tolerance when students made mistakes so that students dared to participate in class. In addition, another student also answered about the improvement of counselling guidance to students. In short, students' psychological aspect is one of the elements that teachers or lecturers need to pay attention to. One simple action that can be done is by asking about their condition before the class. A lecturer or a teacher can start the class five minutes before the scheduled time for asking about students' conditions. A discussion plays an important role so that students can state their opinion and increase their creativity through some drama projects.

The second part deals with gamification and drama activities. Dealing with teaching drama in a hybrid class, students liked some activities such as playing a game and asking students to collaborate on making projects and presentations as other good practices. To be specific, students appreciated dramatic reading in a hybrid drama class. They answered: "the teacher can demonstrate the action of drama", "read the dialogue" and include "interactive learning activities". Students underlined the practice of dramatic reading in groups for teaching drama in a hybrid class. It allowed them to read some drama scripts based on their own choice, collaborate and discuss with their partners in the group. A teacher or lecturer could be the role model first then students would be brave enough to express their emotions when reading a chosen script. The freedom to choose a drama script was also able to start a discussion of a new topic contained in the script.

The third is about providing and delivering various learning materials. In this case, teachers' likeability plays an important role. Some students answered a question about the lecturer's good practice by underlining that the material was delivered in a very simple way but exciting. It relates to "the way the teacher makes the class alive". A student stated that "the presentation or explanation is enough to maintain the hybrid class". The lecturer also gave the lesson plan in the first meeting of the course. In line with it, the lecturer's excitement was also considered as a good

practice as written as follows: "she is excited when one of my friends answers or asks some questions" and "the lecturer always tried to make the class environment fun, easy and interesting". The pedagogical aspect was also stated: "make the learners get involved in the class by conducting some teaching methods". Various kinds of materials also mattered as two students wrote their opinion as follows: "setting up the good activity and materials during the learning process' and 'encourage students to do the quiz, make a lesson plan, practice the drama, provide some materials in various media like ppt, YouTube, pdf file, etc". In short, the teacher's pedagogical skill together with the teacher's likeability mattered in a hybrid class too.

The fourth part is about promoting students' rights. Paying attention to both students who joined the class virtually and physically was crucial. Some students underlined that the lecturer did "pay attention to both online and offline students". In line with it, a student also wrote "try to maintain constant interaction between the people at zoom and those in the face-to-face class, asking questions like what do people on Zoom think about this? Or explaining to those on Zoom what the people in the offline class asked or commented on and vice versa". Furthermore, the lecturer's decision to allow students who wanted to join face-to-face classes was also appreciated.

The last is maintaining health protocol and interaction. A student delivered his or her opinion that the class could run well by wearing a mask and keeping a distance. While maintaining the interaction with students was done by asking their opinion and motivating "the students to interact in class whether in the zoom or real class". Another student also wrote that "the lecturer always tried to maintain a positive atmosphere in the class by appreciating and interacting with students". The interaction between students and the lecturer or students with other students was required.

### *Real problems in the hybrid class*

There were three main problems faced during the hybrid class, namely: technological problems, lecturer's skills and equal attention. The first one dealt with the technological problem. Some students underlined the unclear voice by writing their answers as follows: "improve audio quality on zoom", "I think amplify the audio so that it can be heard on zoom", and "sometimes the voice is not heard". For solving the problem, a student also proposed that the lecturer "should prepare and make sure that everything is good for example the sound system, technology that is used". Besides its audio, the internet connection became a problem too. Some students expressed their thought that this hybrid class required a good internet connection since sometimes it was unstable.

The second problem was the lecturer's skills in using various media and tools which needed to be improved. Student answers varied as follows: "the skills of using new media or tools", "I think the media should be added so that we who attend the class online through zoom meeting could see (and probably also interact) with friends who attend the class offline". The previous section discusses various activities but, in this case, students also added that the lecturer needed to add various teaching media too.

The last problem dealt with equal attention for students who attended both the face-to-face class and the online class. Although some students wrote that the

lecturer has paid attention to both students who attended the class physically and virtually in the previous section, some students proposed the concept of balancing the attention more. Some students who attended the class through zoom wrote: "the lecturer could pay more attention to students taking the online class", "give more attention to the online students" and "build more interaction with the students in zoom". This problem could be faced by asking students who were in the zoom meeting frequently so that they did not feel unequal attention.

### *Students' engagement*

There were three parts in this section, namely: cognitive engagement, behavioural engagement and emotional engagement. As it has been written in the introduction part that the success of a hybrid learning implementation relied not only on teachers or lecturers, but students also took part through their engagement. Most students underlined cognitive engagement as their answers. Students' cognitive engagement was reflected in their answers such as "I always do my task on time by working carefully and diligently, doing my best", "I read the material before the class, find out another reference to support the material and pay the fullest attention to the lecturer", "learning independently before the class started", "review the materials and self-study". There was one student who connected his or her engagement with motivation: "I tried to increase my motivation and time to learn" and "Searching for some references due to the material keeps my cognitive skills alive. Taking some notes in a creative way such as adding some pictures, colours and footnotes in my notes. And sometimes I do some work out and sleep well to make me feel comfortable with my mental conditions". Their cognitive engagement also referred to self-regulated learning as represented by their answers: "I also used to read the material before attending the class so I can study better later on", "Sometimes in my spare time, I look for other information related to the material in class" and "I wake up early and sometimes I read some materials to prepare my class".

Not only cognitive engagement but the emotional engagement was also presented through students' awareness of identifying themselves with lectures and friends. Their answers varied as follows: "I always try to appreciate my lecturer and my friends during the learning session", "I personally love to come to the class, by attending an offline class" and "I try to open my camera so that I can show my respect to my lecturer. I am trying to engage in the class not only physically but also my thought". In addition to that, two students also answered that "praying helps me to keep my emotions balanced" so that they could manage their emotional engagement. Furthermore, this engagement was presented when some students wrote: "I tried to follow it with a relaxed feeling so that I could follow the class well", "I will motivate myself to enjoy the class. I always try my best to focus in class" and "I try to always follow the learning activities held by the lecturer even though I cannot come to the class". Although some students could not come to the face-to-face class, they tried their best to attend the class attentively which showed their emotional engagement.

The last type of engagement is behavioral. This engagement was represented through students' responses. Some students wrote: "through answering question or giving reaction in the zoom meeting", "follow the class from the beginning until the end", "discuss with friends" and "listen and also take notes of lecturer's

explanation". Some students also showed that they tried to be active as reflected in their answers: "keep trying to be active and follow lecture activities well", "I always attend the class unless there's something important to do. I always try my best to actively participate in class too" and "always be active and follow every material I learn with all my heart". In line with that, students' behavioural engagement was shown when students "focus on the learning process", "don't forget about the manner, and stay healthy", "follow the class outline", "read the material while listening to the teacher" and "always do the activity given by the lecturer. I always try to face and appreciate the challenges in the course also. I always try my best to do the assignments too". In conclusion, most students tried to engage with hybrid learning cognitively, emotionally and behaviorally.

### *Students' motivation and time management*

There were some factors that related to students' motivation whether it was from their interests or other factors outside themselves. The first was the mode of learning and friends' presence. The students wrote that "I really enjoy the offline class". They were "excited to meet my friends". In line with it, a student answered: "I have best friend who is quite enthusiastic to attend this class". In addition, a face-to-face class was considered more alive as stated follows: "some subjects especially drama is more 'alive' when conducting offline". A hybrid class opened a chance for some students who like the face-to-face class so that they could also meet their friends.

The second connected to the subject and personal interest as reflected in their answers: "I like this course and I want to know deeper about drama elements" and "I know the importance of attending a class for me". Besides their interest, the class role's flexibility also built students' motivation as stated follows: "I can choose whether I want to study online or offline" and "Yes, I'm motivated cause its flexibility". The combination of some aspects was also stated by a student as described below: "I feel motivated to attend the hybrid class because the topics we are studying are very interesting, the teacher is excellent, the dynamics of the class are fun and having the opportunity to see my classmates again in face-to-face classes". The last statement showed that the source of students' motivation varied from the materials, activities, the teacher and also friends.

The third factor of motivation is related to the lecturer's likeability. Some of their answers showed that the teacher's likeability became their motivation too as stated below: "a very pleasant lecturer so I like to join", "I like to see her funny enthusiasm", "you encouraged the students", "you have tried your best to engage your student and pay attention for us" and "you are always patient to your students". The teacher did not only teach, he or she could encourage students, perform with enthusiasm and be patient.

In the case of motivation, four students felt unmotivated for attending the class. Two of them answered the closed question directly without providing further explanation. Only two students clarified their answers "to be honest, I'm not really motivated to come to the hybrid class yet because I've started to adjust to the current situation which is attending classes from home" and "I feel less motivated because to be honest sometimes students who are on zoom are not given the same opportunity to answer questions given by lecturers". Students' answers could be a

trigger for the teacher or lecturer to improve the way of teaching specifically equal attention for students who attended an online class through zoom.

53 students felt motivated. It was performed in their answers when they did some actions to manage their time. Some of them were: "I always make a schedule and try to make some checklists to manage my time", "making to do list everyday", "making sure I prepared for the next day", "prioritize college stuff", "not postpone and do the assignments", "be discipline", "I used scale of priority to do something and try to follow it" and "plan ahead". Some students found it hard to rely on themselves. Because of that they tried to find their supporting system such as "finding friends to remind each other". In addition, a student also improved his motivation as follows: "I try to increase my motivation by connecting the materials with everyday life".

This article has explained students' perspectives on the implementation of teaching drama in a hybrid class. Their perspective was reflected in their answers which were gathered through a questionnaire. However, the limitation of this study dealt with its data gathering. The questionnaire, if it were combined with the interview method, would be more complete. For facing that weakness, the researcher combined the results of data analysis with the researcher's experience when conducting hybrid learning in the drama class. Thus, it could cover good practices, problems, student engagement, time management and motivation.

The data which were drawn from real implementation would be beneficial for other teachers or lecturers who have to teach drama or other humanity subjects in a hybrid class. The same problems may appear and this article also provides some ways to face them. Besides, some good practices that have been elaborated can be applied in future hybrid drama classes. In a nutshell, teaching drama in a hybrid class needs not only pedagogical skills but also various activities to perform drama in a fun way including the use of some media.

**Conclusion**

Technological problems which are faced in a hybrid class can be solved in several ways such as learning additional media, providing technological tools such as a good microphone, or increasing the bandwidth of the internet connection. Aside from these problems, the pedagogical aspects need to be fully paid attention to. It can start with the teacher's likeability, various activities, and flexibility. A teacher or a lecturer should also pay equal attention to students who attend a face-to-face class and an online one.

To be specific, a drama course can be taught in a hybrid class through several activities such as a dramatic reading project, constructing a simple lesson plan or gamification. Some students have also mentioned that dramatic reading and gamification were considered to be good practices. In addition to that, students' psychological side plays an important role. Some treatments are required. A simple example is by asking some questions about students' well-being.

This article also proposes a motion that every class is unique. Teachers' or lecturers' adaptive skill is needed. One of the ways is through listening to students' feedback on the implementation of hybrid learning so that educators can learn and improve the quality of their teaching and learning processes. For future research, studies of teaching art or humanity subjects in a hybrid class can be conducted since

this kind of learning mode will be continuously applied although the pandemic is over.

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