

Teaching Film in New Normal Era: A Case Study of Asynchronous Teaching at Film Department, Universitas Multimedia Nusantara

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Abstract

COVID-19 pandemic has forced many people to adjust to the new situation. Adaptation in many sectors is needed. One of them is in education. The Indonesian education system has been changed dramatically and drastically because of this pandemic. Most academic institutions switch directly to online learning, smothering their students with online courses and assignments. As a result, many students experience zoom fatigue. The same thing also happened in the writer's university. Adjustment toward the teaching-learning strategies is needed in order to avoid this exhaustion. In this research, the writer would elaborate on some adjustments applied in teaching film at the Film Department of Universitas Multimedia Nusantara. The regular class requires human interaction. However, with the current situation, the writer has to comply with some changes.

Keywords: *adjustment, teaching film, asynchronous*

INTRODUCTION

Since Covid-19 outbreaks in January 2020, people around the world have been forced to adapt to a new way of living. This virus has impacted every aspect of the human being, including education. Schools and universities are closed and migrate from traditional face-to-face learning to online learning (Bao 2020; Rajhans et al. 2020; UNESCO 2020). For institutions that have integrated online learning in their system, this change may not give sudden impacts. However, for the majority of schools in Indonesia, the conversion has shaken the pedagogical framework. Many teachers are not prepared and equipped with facilities, skills and knowledge in online teaching (Moralista and Oducado 2020; The Conversation 2020). Online teaching is not just about altering the medium. It is also about course design, technical skill to use the learning management system (LMS), and understanding of how learners learn in an online environment (Martin et al. 2019). Instructors in online learning need to change their roles in teaching from “teacher-centered to student-centered, low-interactor to high-interactor, and low-initiator to high-

initiator” (Beck and Ferdig 2008). Martin et al. (2019) summarize the roles and responsibility of online instructors into five parts as follow:

1. **Facilitator**: supports the learners during their online session. For example: consistently checking in with students, communicate both in synchronous and asynchronous, and encourage students to participate and complete the tasks.
2. **Course designer**: focuses on the connection between learning results, assessments and teaching activities. S/he must make sure the relationship between those elements is aligned with the content and delivery approach. Depending on the support from the institution, this role may be done by a collaborative team and prepared earlier before the course begins.
3. **Course manager**: concentrates on dealing with content and assessing students' learning.
4. **Subject matter expert**: substantiates expertise on content.
5. **Mentor**: counsels students in academic and professional development.

Online learning has two types: synchronous and asynchronous.

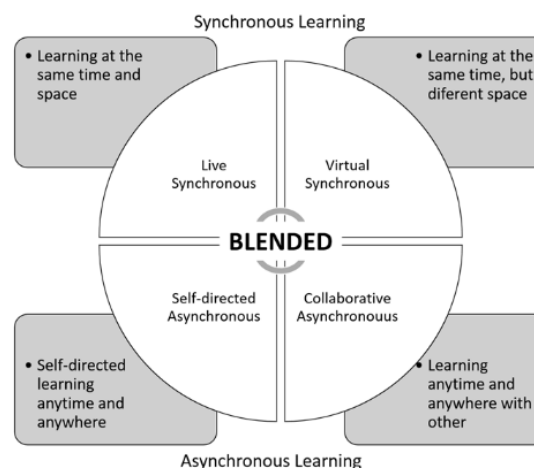


Figure 1. Quadrant of Blended Learning Setting (Anis Chaeruman, Wibawa, and Syahrial 2018)

Chaeruman, Wibawa dan Syahrial give examples of activities for each category above as follow:

No	Types	Activities
1.	Live synchronous	lecture, group discussion, lab practice, etc.
2.	Virtual synchronous	audio or video conference.
3.	Collaborative asynchronous	Discussion forum, online assignment, etc.
4.	Self-directed asynchronous	learning objects in the form of text, audio-visual, simulation, etc.

Table 1. Example of Learning Activities (Anis Chaeruman, Wibawa, and Syahrial 2018)

This paper aims to share the writer's experience in adjusting to online teaching during the university's closure due to Covid-19. The adjustment is applied in FF561 Image and Sound Concept, at the Film Department, Universitas Multimedia Nusantara. In this course, students have to formulate images and a sound concept for their film. This film is going to be their final project as a requirement to graduate from the university. The writer collaborates with the E-learning team of Universitas Multimedia Nusantara to create asynchronous materials for the course.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The preparation for this research had been done since January 2020. The teaching team collaborated with the E-learning team to prepare online materials for the course, FF561 Image and Sound Concept. The roles of both parties follow Martin et al. description of online instructors. The teaching team acted as facilitator, course manager, subject matter expert and mentor. At the same time, the E-learning team acted as a course designer.

The teaching team prepared video materials, slides, quizzes, discussion topics and assignments. Simultaneously, the E-learning team was in charge of editing videos, applying interactive tools, uploading to the LMS, and duplicating to other parallel classes. There were five classes with a total of 162 students. The materials were divided into four categories: slide, teaching video, quiz, forum and assignment.

No.	Categories	Description
1.	Slide	Teaching materials in the form of Pdf.
2.	Video	Each video is 8-10 minutes length. For each meeting, it may have 1 to 3 videos depending on the complexity of the topic.
3.	Quiz	Quiz usually consists of 10-15 true-false or multiple-choice questions.
4.	Forum	It is a discussion forum. Students and the lecturer discuss questions/issues related to the topic.
5.	Assignment	It is a project (paper, student video presentation, etc.) submitted in one or two weeks after the task is given.

Table 2. Designed materials for FF561

These descriptions follow the blended learning scheme of PEDATI (Chaeruman Anis 2017), which consists of:

1. **PE**lajari (learn): through slides and videos
2. **DA**lami (comprehend): through an online discussion forum
3. **Te**rapkan (apply): through an assignment

4. EvaluasI (evaluate): through a quiz

The research was conducted from the third week of February to May 2020. Originally the course was designed with four face-to-face meetings and ten blended learning activities. However, in March, the university was closed due to Covid-19 outbreaks. Thus, some adjustment was made to fit the scenario. The face-to-face meeting, group discussion and student-teacher consultation were replaced with online meetings using Zoom. At the end of the semester, students were asked to fill in questionnaire about the course. The items asked were as follow:

1. 5-point Likert scale questions about lecturer's teaching competencies, which include clarity in teaching, pace of delivering materials, interactivity, time for discussion, assistance to help students, and fairness in grading.
2. 5-point Likert scale questions about materials given during online sessions, which include relevance to course objectives and syllabus, preparation of materials, balance of course assignment to course credit, appropriateness class activities to course objectives, and students' participation in-class activities.
3. Yes/no/other-response type question about whether the shifting from offline to online worked well.
4. Multiple choice questions about the choice of learning during university's closure: synchronous (online meeting) or blended learning (four online meetings + ten asynchronous activities).
5. An open-ended question about students' suggestions toward the course.

FINDINGS

Among 162 students who enrolled in the course, only 53 students participated in the questionnaire. The result of the questionnaire is as follow:

1. Lecturer's teaching competences

a. Clarity in teaching

There were 16 students who strongly agreed that the lecturer delivered the materials clearly in synchronous and synchronous meetings. 23 students agreed that the lecturer delivered the materials clearly. 7 students answered neutral. 4 students disagreed, and 3 students strongly disagreed with the statement that the lecturer delivered the materials clearly in synchronous and synchronous meetings.

b. The pace of delivering materials

There were 15 students who strongly agreed that the lecturer taught with appropriate pace in synchronous and synchronous settings. 22 students agreed to the idea. 14 students were neutral. None

disagreed, and 2 students strongly disagreed that the lecturer taught with appropriate pace in synchronous and synchronous settings.

c. Interactivity

There were 14 students who strongly agreed that the lecturer taught the course interactively both in synchronous and synchronous sessions. 23 students agreed the lecturer taught interactively. 11 were neutral. 3 students disagreed, and 2 students strongly disagreed to the idea that the lecturer taught the course interactively.

d. Time for discussion

17 students strongly agreed that the lecturer gave them enough time for discussion. There were 23 who agreed. 10 students were neutral. None disagreed, and 3 strongly disagreed that the lecturer gave them enough time for discussion.

e. Assistance to help students

There were 12 students who strongly agreed that the lecturer helped students when they were confused or had questions. 21 students agreed to the statement. 12 were neutral. 5 disagreed, and 3 students strongly disagreed that the lecturer helped them when they were confused or had questions.

f. Fairness in grading

There were 11 students who strongly agreed that the lecturer gave fair and clear grading. 25 students agreed to the statement. 11 students neither agreed nor disagreed. 3 students disagreed, and 3 other students strongly disagreed that the lecturer gave fair and clear grading.

2. Materials gave during the online session

a. Relevance to course objectives and syllabus

There were 15 students who strongly agreed, and 27 students agreed that the materials given were relevant to the course objectives and syllabus. 9 students were neutral. 1 student disagreed, and another one strongly disagreed that the materials given were relevant to the course objectives and syllabus.

b. Preparation of materials

There were 17 students who strongly agreed that the online materials were well prepared. 26 students agreed to the statement as well. 8 students neither agreed nor disagreed. 1 student disagreed, and 1 strongly disagreed that the online materials were well prepared.

c. Balance of course assignment to course credit

15 students strongly agreed, and 23 agreed that a load of course assignment fitted the course credit. 9 students were neutral. 5

disagreed, and 1 strongly disagreed that a load of course assignment fitted the course credit.

d. Appropriateness class activities to course objectives

There were 13 students who strongly agreed that the class activities were designed to meet course objectives. 24 students agreed to the statement. 11 students were neutral. The remaining 5 disagreed with the statement.

e. Students' participation in in-class activities

12 students strongly agreed, and 24 agreed that the activities were designed so that students could actively participate in every exercise. 12 students neither agreed nor disagreed to the statement. 4 disagreed, and 1 strongly disagreed that the activities were designed to make students participate actively.

3. The shifting from offline to online

In this question, students were asked whether the shifting from offline to online went well. 42 students answered, yes. 5 students answered no. 4 students mentioned that they did not find any significant difference because they were accustomed to asynchronous learning. 2 students mentioned that the portions between synchronous and asynchronous were not balanced.

4. The choice of learning during the university's closure.

In this question, students were asked whether they prefer synchronous or asynchronous learning. 41 students prefer asynchronous learning, whereas the remaining 12 prefer synchronous learning.

5. Students' suggestions toward the course

There were several suggestions for this course. Some students suggested making the grading and attendance systems to be more lenient since the attendance required the completion of all assignments for each meeting. Some preferred to get more reminders about the upcoming assignments. Others suggested that the lecturer give comments to their work faster and involve more in the discussions.

DISCUSSION

FF561 Image and Sound Concept is designed as a course that prepares students prior to their Final Project. In this course, students prepared the concept of the film that they would make in the following semester. The course combined theory, group work, and discussion to formulate ideas into visible projects. The course was originally designed for a traditional face-to-face meeting. Since the university encouraged all departments to integrate more blended learning, this course was later

offered as an experiment from the Film Department. This decision turned out to be a blessing in disguise because the Covid-19 outbreaks later forced the university to close and migrate all learning activities to online.

The course was first designed to have four face-to-face meetings and ten blended learning, which combined videos, quizzes, assignments and online discussions. Two face-to-face meetings were in the first and second meetings, and the remaining two were in the last two meetings. Each blended learning was designed to start with the slides of materials that students had to read. After that, students must watch lecturing videos (1-3 videos depending on the complexity of the topic discussed), followed by a quiz.

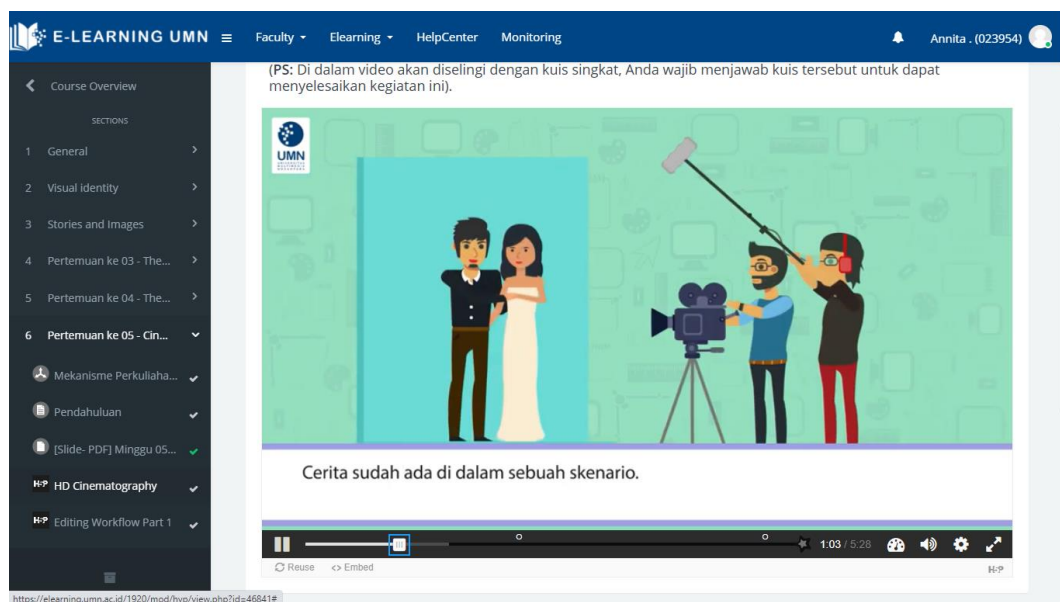


Figure 2. Example of the video in FF561 Image and Sound Concept

Finished with the quiz, students must participate in an online discussion forum. They must give opinions, ask questions or respond to their peers' comments related to the topic discussed. In the end, students had to submit an assignment. It might be in the form of progress reports of their project, analysis of similar reference films, etc. which they had to submit within a week. Once the students completed all blended learning activities, the LMS would record the students' attendance for the particular session.

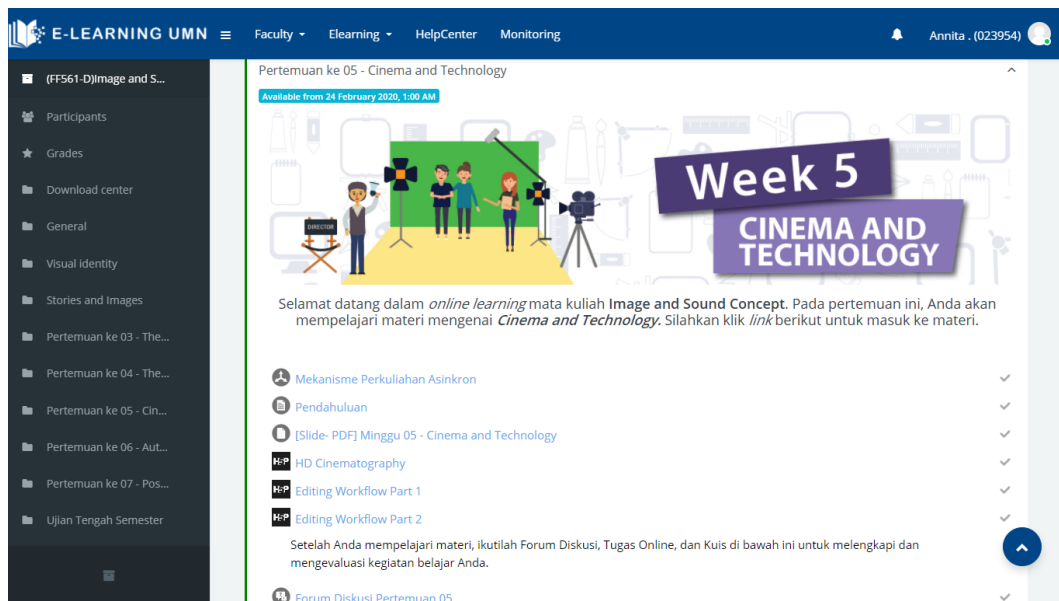


Figure 3. The example of blended learning in FF561 Image and Sound Concept

From the questionnaire at the end of the semester, it may be concluded that the majority of students seem to be adjusting well with the online scheme. Students can still get knowledge, although they have to switch to an online setting. In general, students can cope with the deliverance of materials, clarity of the subjects, assignments to be completed and access to the lecturer. On the other hand, there are issues related to the lack of human interaction (physical group work, discussion with the lecturer, etc.) and limited exercises students can get in order to make a film. The integration of blended learning in this course is supported by the E-learning team. This division provides technical guidance, rules and strict supervision for every material the teaching team delivers. The E-learning team make sure that the blended learning produced, follow the guidelines from PEDATI (Chaeruman Anis 2017). This division, as mentioned by Martin et al., have been a great help in technical matters; thus, lecturers may concentrate on the content.

In terms of content, adjustment toward online learning is quite challenging. This is because of the nature of the film education itself. Film education at Universitas Multimedia Nusantara requires both theory and practice to produce films. Students can not learn just from literature or watching films. In order to be a filmmaker, they have to make films. In a normal situation, although it uses an online setting, students can still gather and shoot their films. However, this is quite hard in the new normal era because of social and physical distancing.

The adjustments that are made in FF561 Image and Sound Concept to answer to this problem are:

1. Postpone all the social activities until it is "safe" to do the shooting. This provides more time for students to prepare their projects. The course serves as a means to guarantee the quality of students' concept for their film, and prepare the production so the shooting, later on, can be done effectively. However, the postponement may delay students from graduating on time.
2. Collaborate with animation students to create a film. Instead of making a full live-action film, students may use animation to visualize their ideas. This might take a long time since the timeline for animation production is longer than live-action shooting.
3. Adjust the concept of the film to the new normal setting. This enables students to experiment with creative ideas like vertical-video film, or collaborative online shooting. An example of this experiment is a short film entitled "Cerita Tentang Jendela" produced by Studio Antelope. This film collaborated shots gathered from their followers and created them into a story. The shots are about various perspectives of the lock-down situation from people's windows.

CONCLUSION

The new normal era is a very challenging time for all people around the world. Social and physical distancing makes it hard to do whatever that we usually do in a normal setting. However, changes should be made in order to survive this period. In education, migration to online learning needs to be done. Blended learning can be an option. Integrating learning videos, texts, quizzes, and assignments in an LMS, provides learning solutions for students. Students can access and learn the course anytime, anywhere. There are still some issues especially related to limited practice and lack of human interaction, due to the social and physical distancing. The questionnaire confirms this conclusion. However, the lack of participants in the questionnaire may not be a decent representative of the conclusion.

Covid-19 may be a challenge for education, but it may prompt educators to come up with creative ideas to cope with this problematic situation. Examples mentioned above are the emergence of vertical videos and the collaborative shots woven to create a film. For further research, the effectiveness of blended learning in practice-based courses can be analyzed since many research available nowadays focus more on theory-based courses. Another topic that can be explored is about new creative ways of teaching and learning. Physical distancing may cause people to socially

secluded. However, enhanced virtual appearance like 3d-moving hologram might create the existence and proximity that is lacked today.

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