

Thinglink: An Alternative Platform to Make Students' More Involved In Online Class during Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

As the Corona virus pandemic occurs, the teaching and learning process at school runs in online. One of the teacher efforts is the use of digital tools, for example, Google Classroom, E-Learning, ThingLink, Quizizz, Quipper, and others. The function of this research is to know how the application of ThingLink is able to increase the students' engagement get participated networked English teaching and learning during Covid-19 pandemic. The approach taken is qualitative. Observation and questionnaire were used as tools for collecting the data. The results of analysis were as follow: (1) The regular English online teaching and learning by the use of WhatsApp had some problems to the students. (2) The use of ThingLink creates enjoyable learning, managable time, accessible outside of school hours. By the use of ThingLink collaborated with WhatsApp to communicate among tutor and all pupils, made the online learning environment more vary and active. (3) The teacher uses ThingLink to Increase the students' engagement in online English teaching and learning with steps: preparation, logging into the website, create, and share. To be concluded that the use of ThingLink can increase the students' engagement in online English teaching and learning since the students' perception that the use of ThingLink is very interesting, motivated, comfortable, not bored, effectively to

use, and assist them to learn English either along the course or outside.

Keywords: Entity Covid-19 Pandemic, online class, ThingLink

A. Introduction

As the Corona virus pandemic occurs, the teaching and learning process is affected by school closure which causes the online teaching and learning becomes more popular than before, so it happened in MAN 2 Ponorogo. Even before the pandemic there was rapid growth of the educational technology in teaching and learning, but there has been a surge in usage ever since.

As Putrayasa analyzed that the learning process in online will apply naturally in the form of students' works and experiences, not just transfer of knowledge from teacher to students. Students in the learning process will carry out learning activities which get them to the activity of learning for instance constructing questions, making idea, doing assignments, being able to answer teacher's questions and being able to cooperate with other students, as well as being responsible for the assignments.¹

Some people are of the opinion that the unplanned and hasty transition to online education—without adequate preparation, inadequate bandwidth, or training—will get the result in a poor experience of user that will be bad to long-term expansion. But some people believe that a new online model of learning will make the significant benefit. To reach those advantages, there requires to be a concerted effort to provide a structured environment to students-so that they are

¹Ida Bagus Putrayasa. 2013. *Penelusuran Miskonsepsi Dalam Pembelajaran Tata Kalimat Dengan Pendekatan Konstruktivisme Berbasis Inkuiri Pada Siswa Kelas I SMP Laboratorium Undiksha Singaraja*. Bali: LPPM-UPG.

not easily distracted-and go beyond replicating a physical class through digital interactive learning tool that promote students to get more involved in online teaching and learning more. Because studies have demonstrated that pupil apply their senses to learn extensively, then establishing funny learning and effective through the digital interactive learning tool is significant.

According to Handelsman as quoted by Triono in Putrayasa, the involvement of student is needed as a predictor that appears the level of attention, struggle, consistence, positive feeling, and commitment of a pupil in the learning activities. Furthermore, Fredrick (suggests that to make student more involved, there are three dimensions to pay attention namely emotional, cognitive and behavioral involvement. Positive and negative reactions to school activities, teachers, and classmates are the focus of emotional engagement. In contrast to cognitive involvement which is a student's effort to expert all abilities in understanding complex ideas and mastering difficult skills, student behavioral engagement is described as the idea of participating and engaging in academic, social, and extracurricular activities that involve effort and behavior.²

Finn argues that students who do not have student engagement (disengagement) will have an impact on lower achievement, are more likely to be frustration, and receive negative responses from teachers. The research finding

² Shane W. Frederick, and Mochon, Daniel. 2012. A Scale Distortion Theory of Anchoring. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 141(1), pp124-133. (<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0024006>, accessed on April 9th, 2021)

conducted by Finn have meaning for the importance of efforts to increase student engagement in schools.³

In the past, student engagement has been about boosting achievement, encouraging positive behavior, and giving all students a sense of belonging. However, middle school students and high school are the major focus to be developed. However, over time, student engagement, which was initially developed with the intention of addressing or re-engaging/reclaiming a minority of predominantly socioeconomically disadvantaged students who were at risk of dropping out of high school, was further developed and implemented more broadly as a means of managing classroom behavior. As a result, student engagement has emerged as a separate accountability objective or outcome as well as a strategic learning process. The fundamental idea of student engagement must be understood before further discussion of student engagement can proceed.

Vicki Trowler defined student's involvement considered as interconnection between the consuming period, struggle and some appropriate resources allowed by whether pupils and their establishment that intend to optimize students' past experience, enhance several result of learning process and increase of students' motivation and their performance, and reputation of the establishment.⁴ So, there is a high connection of the students and the institution to create the learning outcome that will influence to the

³ Finn, Jeremy D., and Zimmer, Kayla S. 2012. Student Engagement: What is it? Why does it matter? In Sandra L. Christenson, Amy L. Reschly, and Cathy Wylie (Eds.), *Handbook of research on student engagement* (p. 97–131). Springer Science + Business Media.

⁴ Vicki Trowler. 2010. Students' Engagement Literature Review. (Online). Department of Educational Research: Lancaster University. (<https://www.edglossary.org/student-engagement/>, accessed on April 20th, 2021)

reputation of the institution. In addition, cited by Report to the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations from Croninger and Lee,⁵ that increases in engagement have been connected to the development in academic outcomes and reductions in school absenteeism (Australian Catholic University and Erebus International). Then, classroom environment has an effect to the students' engagement. Hu and Kuh defines engagement as "students' involvement in educationally purposeful activities."⁶ The students who fully supported with facilities and opportunities provided by higher institutions, shall increase their process of learning, score and personal advance. Parsons and Taylor had opinion that student engagement is principally and historically about improving students' personal accomplishment, positive attitude, and all students is having a sense of belonging. This means that students' engagement is connected with the students' positive behavior and their achievement.⁷

Gibbs and Poskitt expressed that the main viewpoints and highlighted the intricacy of the idea of commitment: 1) includes students' feelings of connection and belonging to students institution, tutors , and friends, 2) involves students' sense of organization, self-confident, and determination to be great in both the classroom and in more general

⁵ Robert G. Croninger and Lee, Valerie E. 2001. Social Capital and Dropping out of High School: Benefits to at-risk students of teachers' support and guidance. Teachers College Record, 103(4), pp548-581. (<https://doi.org/10.1111/0161-4681.00127>, accessed on April 9th, 2021)

⁶ Hu, Shouping and Kuh, George D. 2001. Being (Dis)engaged in Educationally Purposeful Activities: The Influences of Student and Institutional Characteristics. Paper Presented at the American Educational Research Annual Conference, Seattle, WA, April 10th – 14th, 2001.

⁷ Parson, Jim and Taylor, Leah. 2011. Student engagement: What do we do and what should we do?. Alberta: University of Alberta.

extracurricular activities, 3) includes students' sense of organization, self-confident, and determination to be great in both the classroom and in more general extracurricular activities, 4) the degree to which learning is viewed as something that must be survived in order to get a reward or deflect punishment or is enjoyed for its own sake, 5) a fluctuating state that is affected by a variety of internal and external factors, such as the learning's perceived value or relevance and the availability of opportunities for students to experience appropriate levels of challenge and success in their studies, 6) adaptable to the actions of educators. Thus, Gibbs and Poskitt proposed the pedagogical approaches that promote and support student engagement, among of them are: nurturing trusting relationships by knowing about them, knowing them well, and being fair; letting students in fun learning activities by making learning fun, observe learning from a student opinion, learning discussion, cooperative learning, peer tutoring, problem-based learning, "actively" work, demonstrations, and apply of video games and technology.⁸

Later on, Poskitt reviewed the impacts of using devices on adolescents. He stated that tools create enjoyable learning, less consuming time, reachable anytime; and develop their research and presentation of learning. Ocassionally, colleague and their friend supported by showing information and new ideas, but sometime talking and distractions disturbed activity of learning. However, some pedagogical activity led by teachers (explicitly focused

⁸ Gibbs, Robyn and Poskitt, Jenny. 2010. Student Engagement in the Middle Years of Schooling (Years 7-10): A Literature Review Report to the Ministry of Education. Ministry Of Education, New Zealand. (Online). (<http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications>, accessed on April 20th, 2021)

teaching of literacy and technology insight method) and requirement choices, varied and active learning opportunities were felt to make the highest disparity to students' activity of studying.

In observing study in the college environment context, Chickering and Gamson spoke that idea to assure of students' involvement: "Seven foundations for awesome implementation in Undergraduate institution".⁹ The seven main foundations observed in this framework list that pupils are more enthusiastic when the commands (1) developed the connection among pupils and school, (2) gives pupils choice to act in group cooperatively, (3) let pupils applying active learning method, (4) provides feedback on students' academic progress, (5) requires pupils spending quality time on academic assignment, (6) create high standards for acceptable academic activity, and (7) give direction for different learner needs in the learning process. Several of these seven ways used to the online learning situation despite the fact that pupils were proposed for the real classroom.

More about the way to increase student engagement, some experts still debate about the multiple definition that can be related to learning and teaching. For instance, 'students' engagement with learning' means their involvement in notable academic activities, as mentioned by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) survey, it referred to students' engagement with their courses or it

⁹ Chickering, Arthur W. and Gamson, Zelda F. 1987. Seven Principles For Good Practice In Undergraduate Education. AAHE Bulletin, Vol. March. p3-7. American Association for Higher Education, Washington, D.C.

could refer to students' involvement with the insight that they are studied on their curriculum.¹⁰

Concerning with student involvement in online teaching and learning, the educators are suggested to transform the interesting and challenging learning process with fun and meaningful classroom activities. Teachers can use a variety of teaching methods (expectional learning) to put that knowledge into practice by involving students in their work through group projects, topical PPT or multimedia demonstration, and project-based learning. Zoom, Google Meet, WhatsApp, YouTube, and a number of other applications can all be used on portable devices. Teachers can send individual and group photos, audio, documents, and videos using these applications, which offer a variety of facilities. Then, teachers can also send materials, exercises, and tests that are used as the evaluation.

The way where tutors make and expand online learning situations for students is - implicitly or explicitly—concerning the theory or idea of how they think students will study. Likewise, the selection of interactive learning tools used by teachers in delivering their materials is an urgent matter to be implied in the design of student learning environment.

As teachers should understand comprehensively about the characteristics of their students including their learning style, Madeleine Olson and Kiel Maurath in Evaluating the Learning Experiences tated that theories of learning and

¹⁰ Ashwin, Paul and McVitty, Debbie. 2014. Knowledge, curriculum, and student understanding in higher education, in The Meanings of Student Engagement: Implications for Policies and Practices, ResearchGate, (Online).(https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312862857_The_Meanings_of_Student_Engagement_Implications_for_Policies_and_Practices, accessed on March 22nd, 2021)

Bloom's concept can be a guidance for choosing digital stuff and application that will probably support the learning experiences and pupils need according to the type and their subtly of pupils' knowledge and even ability that they have to understand.¹¹

Patrick J. Fahy in *The Theory and Practice of Online Learning* stated that online learning is appropriate relating to the device and technologies supporting learning, and to an appropriate pedagogy for their use. He mentioned some tools used in online learning completed with their weakness and strength. Among of them are print and text, graphic and video, videoconferencing, audio: iPods, mp3 players, and VoIP, PDAs, and the internet. He analyzed the characteristics of each related with online learning.¹²

One of Education technology expert, Ashutosh Chauhan in www.elearningindustry.com (<https://elearningindustry.com/digital-education-tools-teachersstudents>) wrote 11 digital education tools for teachers and students, they are Edmodo, Socrativeis, Projeqt, ThingLink, TED-Ed, cK-12, ClassDojo, eduClipper, Storybird, Animoto, Kahoot!

Among of them, ThingLink is one of media which is able to make annotating digital items in simple way. In this media, we can use images, appropriate videos, or 360-degree communicative pictures for tagging. By tag additional, the students can build an interaction using the media, even draw more explicit from that. The goodness of ThingLink is its

¹¹ Madelaine Olson and Kiel Maurath. 2020. Evaluating the Learning Experience. In T. Trust (Ed.), *Teaching with Digital Tools and Apps*. EdTech Books (Online). (<https://edtechbooks.org/digitaltoolsapps/evaluatinglearningexperience>, accessed on April 10, 2021)

¹² Patrick J. Fahy 2004. *The theory and Practice of Online Learning*. Edmonton: AU Press, Athabasca University.

feature to pull in so many various types of media stuffs for instance web links, images, videos, and much more.

Referring to www.techlearning.com (accessed on May 24, 2021), ThingLink is not only for teachers, but also for creative students since it is a valuable application for making and hand in work, motivating pupils to incorporate various sources of information and overlay it all into one coherent project. ThingLink is on hand online even on iOS and Android apps. It has low impact use on devices because its data is saved on the cloud and easy to share with a simple link. To use ThingLink, one should begin with an image either from the personal gallery or from the internet. After select an image, then tagging begun by selecting something on the image wanted to tag, tap it and either enter text, tap the microphone to record voice, or paste link in from an external source. The tags shown are editable. When finished, the project can be uploaded to the ThingLink servers, and ready to share the link which is shorten by the server.

MAN 2 Ponorogo is one of many schools that carrying out the online learning process as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. All teachers try their best to sustain materials delivery to students as well as to gain students engagement. The use of any technologies which related with internet connection as the impact of the change of traditional into online learning becomes common. One of platforms suggested to use by the teachers is E-learning launched by Religious Affairs Department. Meanwhile, the use of others platforms are allowed as support, such as WhatsApp, Zoom, Google Meet, Google Classroom, ThingLink, Quizizz, Kahoot!, Quipper, and so on. Albeit getting away from board and book learning and into more "fun" and fascinating exersdes drew in understudies and decrease conduct issues in homerooms, the reason for understudy commitment

actually need to responsively fixed as was its objective still to have all understudies doing what educators believed them should do, realizing what educators ‘maintained that them should learn, by adding a few varieties to how they learned it. Although it was suggested to reorganize some of the materials into essential and non-essential categories, the content, procedure, and evaluation format of the curriculum remained roughly unchanged. The students did their best to follow along as the teacher continued to be in charge expertly, utilizing a few additional new tools.

To describe the students’ engagement, this research applies the theory of student involvement conducted by Poskitt.¹³ It was considered that for young people, availability of media created learning more: amusing, managable, reachable anytime ; and enhanced their research and presentation of learning. At times, friends helped by sharing information and new ideas, but sometime talking and distractions hindered learning. However, the pedagogical activity of educators (particularly explicit, focused teaching of literacy and technology knowledge strategies) and provision of choices, varied and active learning opportunities were concerned to create the various to pupils’ learning.

Based on preliminary study conducted on February 6, 2021 in MAN 2 Ponorogo, especially in online English teaching and learning at class X MIPA 6, it was found that some students did not sign in, some did not motivate to work with their friends, some were late in submitting assignments,

¹³ Jenny Poskitt. 2016. What Young Adolescents Think About Effective Pedagogy And Technology Use. Australian Journal of Middle Schooling, (Online), Vol. 16, No. 1, May 2016. (<https://www.adolescentsuccess.org.au/resources/Documents/Adolescent%20Success%20May%20Volume%2016-1.pdf>, accessed on April 20th, 2021)

some were inactive to response the teacher's questions, and some others chose to be silent when they did not understand the material. They looked like boring and not exciting when the learning process running, even some of them made noise during the learning process. There may be issues with students' participation in online education, and it is necessary to investigate the causes and potential solutions. One of teacher's efforts is the use of digital interactive learning tool as the way to increase the students' engagement in online English teaching and learning. In accordance with the fact above, the researcher is highly motivated to find out how the use of one of digital interactive learning tool, it is ThingLink, can increase the students' engagement in online English teaching and learning during Covid-19.

Finally, the researcher excited to conduct a study about the use of ThingLink which was aimed to increase the students' engagement in online English teaching and learning during Covid-19 pandemic.

B. Methodology

The researcher considered to implement qualitative method as method of research. It is same with Creswell's idea that to answer a research problem which the variables are not known and need to be explored, qualitative method is appropriate.¹⁴ Mack says that qualitative research is appropriate in finding specific information about the meaningful context, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts in particular populations.¹⁵ She explains that significant goal

¹⁴ W Creswell, John. Educational Research. Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2012, 205.

¹⁵ Mack, N., Woodsong, Cynthia., Macqueen, Kathleen., Guest, Greg., and Namey, Emily. (2005). Qualitative Research Methods: A Data

of qualitative research is to elaborate variation, to describe and explain relationships, to explain individual experiences, and to describe group norms as well. Furthermore, according to Lodico qualitative research has few forms. Some are: researches in qualitative method are enforced in naturalistic situations, in qualitative the researchers ask expand research question designed.¹⁶

Before enrolling in the use of ThingLink in online English teaching and learning, the students will pass regular online English teaching and learning which was meant by giving instructions and assignments through WhatsApp Group Chat. Then, the researcher will use ThingLink in online English teaching and learning and study how the use ThingLink can increase the students' engagement in online English teaching and learning during Covid-19 pandemic. Due to COVID-19's requirement that learning activities be conducted online, the researcher conducted this study on the teaching strategies of English teachers at MAN 2 Ponorogo using an online method in class X MIPA 6. This research was conducted from the end of April to the beginning of May 2021. The regular online teaching and learning was held on April 24, 2021 by the researcher as well as the teacher. Then, the application of ThingLink in online teaching and learning was held on 8% of May 2021 by the researcher as well as the teacher. Due to the enactment of WFH (Work from Home), so the researcher conducted this research by online. The researcher also conducted

Collector's Field Guide. Family health International. (Online). (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/215666086_Qualitative_Research_Methods_A_Data_Collector's_Field_Guide, accessed on April 22nd, 2021)

¹⁶ Lodico, M., Spaulding, D. and Voegtke, K. 2010. Methods in Educational Research: From Theory to Practice, 2nd Edition. E-Book. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

observation and questionnaire during the end of April to mid of May 2021.

The data was in the forms of field notes, observation checklist, and questionnaire results. In this research, the researcher was also as a participant because the researcher is the English teacher of X MIPA 6 at MAN 2 Ponorogo. Thus, the researcher is able to collect very detailed data. Observation and questionnaire were used as the instrument to collect the data of the research. Observation was conducted to find the data about the students' presence and activeness to response, while the questionnaire will be given to the students of MAN 2 Ponorogo, especially the students of X MIPA 6 as population of this research, to find out the students' perception about their engagement in the online English teaching and learning. These perceptions will prove the rate of students' engagement viewed from the students' perception whether the online English teaching and learning was amusing, less time consuming, reachable anytime, and enhanced their outcomes and presentation of learning.

C. Finding and Discussion

This research was purposed to find how the use of ThingLink can increase the students' engagement in online English teaching and learning. [t refers to some aspects investigated in both questionnaire 1 and questionnaire 2 given after delivering material in online English teaching and learning. The both questionnaires were designed on the purpose of knowing how the use of ThingLink can increase the students' engagement in online English teaching and learning instead of regular online English teaching and learning using WhatsApp only, which was hold at class X MIPA 6 of MAN 2 Ponorogo.

Both questionnaires consisted of 30 questions including the students' perception on online learning process as asked at item 1 and 2 to investigate the students' interest, item 4, 9, and 13 to investigate the students' feeling about the services given by the media used, item 3 and 14 to find the student's feeling about the communication happened along the course, item 5 was asked about the learning outcomes due to the use of the media, item 6 and 8 were asked to find the students' interest to learn other material using the same media. For aspect of the teacher's way in delivering material along the course, item 7, 10, 11, 12, and 15 were asked to know the students' feeling in learning used the media. To investigate the students' feeling to engage in the course, item 16 and 18 were asked to know the students' interest with the teacher's use of personal experiences and humor within the course. Item 20, 22, and 23 were asked to find the students' feeling about the teacher's services in giving feedback and access, inviting to personal chat, and giving praise. While item 25 and 28 were asked to know the students' feeling about the teacher's assistance in guiding participants to keep on task. To know about the students' feeling in good communication along the course, item 19, 24, 27, and 29 were asked, so that the result could describe how the communication occurred between the teacher and the students along the course. Item 26 and 30 were asked to find the students' learning outcomes by the role of the teacher along the course. To investigate the students' feeling about the online environment, item 17 and 21 were asked, including the teacher's support to promote the students' activeness in responding.

The research findings showed that in regular English online teaching and learning could be interpreted that the regular English online teaching and learning by the use of

WhatsApp had some problems to the students such as, the use and the performance of WhatsApp chat group were rather interesting, the students felt rather easy for the services provided by WhatsApp chat group, it was rather easy for the students' learning outcomes, it was also rather interested for the students to use WhatsApp chat group only to learn other materials, the students were rather happy learning with WhatsApp chat group, students were also rather comfortable and suitable, rather boring, and rather motivated with WhatsApp chat group used, the students were rather interested in the teacher's use of personal experiences and humor along the course, the students did not feel engaged with the course as the services provided by the teacher were not good, the students also did not feel engaged to the course since there was not good communication between the teacher and the students within the use of WhatsApp chat group, the learning outcomes using WhatsApp chat group in this regular online English teaching and learning had low rank of percentage, and it also occurred in online environment. These problems were treated by the use of ThingLink as the digital interactive tool to deliver English online teaching and learning. It was also treated by the improvement of teacher's way in delivering material and teacher's services including good communication and good online environment. The researcher also treated with the enhancement of the teacher's role by:

- 1) Provide more feedback and access to students' works
- 2) Provide more helps to guide and keep the class on task
- 3) Provide more clear instruction
- 4) Provide more support to encourage students to respond

In this case, the teacher took Event Advertisement as the main material of English online teaching and learning at

class X MIPA 6 which used ThingLink as the digital interactive tool in online teaching and learning to deliver. To create ThingLink, firstly, the teacher provided the written material about the definition of Event advertisement, the function of Event advertisement, the structure of Event advertisement, and the language features used in Event advertisement. The teacher also prepared a video about the wide explanation in Event advertisement taken from Youtube. Besides, the teacher provided the link for quiz taken from teacher's own library in quizizz platform account. Then the teacher made ThingLink by log into www.ThingLink.com and started to create. The teacher chose an image suitable with the main material (Event advertisement) as the background, so the students could have prior description about the content. Then, the teacher recorded her voice to give opening to the link as well as instruction how to open the link. After that, the teacher added a tag on the image by adding text and media. At the end, the teacher shorted the link and shared it to the class via WhatsApp group chat.

Furthermore, findings of the use of Thinglink in online English teaching and learning showed that the use of ThingLink create learning more enthusiastic, manageable, accessible outside of school hours; and at specific period and colleagues were helped by sharing news and detail opinion. However, the pedagogical activity of tutors which focused teaching of literacy, by reading the material in written text and watching the video, and technology knowledge strategy, by the use of ThingLink collaborated with WhatsApp to communicate between the teacher and students, made the online teaching and learning more vary and active. The learning opportunities provided by asynchronous method were believed to establish the distinction to pupils learning

to reach good learning outcomes instead of regular online teaching and learning.

D. Conclusion

There were some problems occurred within the regular online English teaching and learning by the use of WhatsApp which had been implemented by the teacher at class X MIPA 6 of MAN 2 Ponorogo. The students did not feel engaged with the course because some of them did not understand clearly about the teacher's instruction. Thus, they were afraid of making mistakes in responding the teacher's questions. The researcher's analysis found that the problems came from 3 factor, they were students, teacher, and the media used in regular online English teaching and learning. To overcome those problems, the teacher gave treatment for the students by means of the use of ThingLink as the media, collaborated with WhatsApp chat group as means of communication. The teacher also treated with the enhancement of the teacher's roles, such as provide more feedback and access to students' works, more helps to guide and keep the class on task, more clear instruction, and more support to encourage students to respond. To implement ThingLink in online English teaching and learning which is aimed to increase students' engagement, the teacher did some steps: preparation, log into ThingLink website, create, and share.

Overall, the students' perception of the use of ThingLink in the online English teaching and learning is very good. Besides, the use of ThingLink which is collaborated with WhatsApp as the means of communication between teacher and students interactively can support the students to be more engaged in online teaching and learning

process. It also helps them to gain the expected learning outcomes by building interactive online environment.

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