

TEACHER STRATEGIES IN ONLINE LEARNING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A PRACTICE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the learning process in elementary schools was carried out from home by utilizing online media. The practice of online learning certainly has advantages and disadvantages, so to support success and minimize the shortcomings of online learning, teachers need to create strategies that can be applied to online learning. This study aims to describe the strategies of elementary school teachers in online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic in second grade Madrasah Ibtidaiyah NU Sumberpasir. This study uses a descriptive approach with interview, observation, and documentation techniques for data collection. The results showed that the strategy teacher in online learning for the Covid-19 pandemic was to (a) time management, which is presenting assignment information every week on a regular basis to give students the opportunity to prepare and complete assignments early (b) flexibility, relating to the use of simple and easy learning platforms, (c) providing assistance and development of learning materials in a simple, clear, and attractive manner, (d) conduct regular learning, and (e) carry out periodic and continuous monitoring and evaluation of learning.

Keywords: Primary education, online learning, covid-19 pandemic

1) INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic that hit Indonesia in the last 2 years has brought many changes to current educational practices. This change does not only occur in the world of education, but has a major impact on various aspects of life (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Batdı et al., 2021; Bryson & Andres, 2020; Carrillo & Flores, 2020) although this will be an opportunity for development of new, more sophisticated technologies. In general, the implementation of learning has shifted to online-based learning from various levels of education, both at the basic education level to the higher education level. This is one of the aims to break the chain of the spread of the Covid-19 virus in Indonesia. For approximately 2 years, learning from home activities have also been carried out by all educational institutions. In practice, educational institutions are forced to carry out learning from home because online learning is believed to be one of the best solutions in an effort to minimize learning loss and the spread of the COVID-19 virus, so students must learn from their respective homes with parental guidance and monitoring.

The role of parents is highly emphasized in the implementation of distance learning, where students spend a lot of time studying from home. This phenomenon certainly raises many problems at the technical level, there are many obstacles in the aspect of networking, lack of

parental assistance, and difficulties for teachers to ensure the achievement and development of student learning comprehensively. Learning in educational institutions which was originally carried out face-to-face directly in the classroom has now shifted to learning that is carried out online (learning from home) where this condition is very possible to provide learning opportunities without limitations of space and time. Online learning is a learning condition that allows learning to be carried out remotely via the internet. Even though students and teachers are in different places, learning can still be carried out, so that teacher and student interactions are carried out through electronic communication networks with online learning designs (König et al., 2020; Moawad, 2020; Nicol et al., 2003).

In principle, learning from home itself is divided into two types, the first is distance learning in the network and distance learning outside the network. Online distance learning in particular has combined elements of electronic technology and internet-based technology, while distance learning outside the network can be carried out through television broadcasts, radio, independent study modules, printed materials and learning media from objects in the student's environment. The Ministry of Education and Culture through Circular No. 15 of 2020 concerning guidelines for organizing learning from home in the emergency period of the spread of Covid-19, enforces regulations to fulfill students' rights to obtain educational services during the Covid-19 pandemic, protects citizens of education units from the adverse effects of Covid-19, prevent the spread and transmission of Covid-19 in education units and ensure the fulfillment of psychosocial support for teachers, students, and parents.

This online learning is essentially a form of learning that is carried out with the help of the internet network which in practice can be assisted through several tools or media such as computers, laptops, gadgets, and other supporting media. This online learning is also part of an effort to avoid learning poverty in educational institutions (Sadikin & Hamidah, 2020). Schools in implementing online learning can use a support platform that can help teachers and facilitate daily learning, so that the implementation of online learning is not expected to reduce the mastery of knowledge and skills that must be achieved by students (Kidd & Murray, 2020). Teachers must have the initiative to develop strategic steps so that schools can survive in the function of education during the Covid-19 pandemic (Assunção Flores & Gago, 2020; Carrillo & Flores, 2020).

Basic education is one level of education that requires a lot of assistance in the implementation of online learning. This is because the majority of students' developmental stages at this level still find it difficult to carry out independent learning, while in online learning practices the teacher cannot carry out optimal assistance during learning from home. This means that at this level of basic education, the implementation of online learning involves a lot of parents in an effort to foster student learning independence. In realizing the success of online learning at the basic education level, it is influenced by several aspects, including those related to student readiness, teacher readiness, and the readiness of parents to accompany online learning while students study from home.

On the other hand, from the aspect of teachers, it is also necessary to prepare all additional skills and competencies in the field of technology, because online learning involves a number of learning devices whose use requires a special skill or mastery of technology such as several applications that are widely available today including Google Classroom, Zoom, edmodo, google meet, moodle, whatsapp, schology and other apps. In addition, teachers also need to explain to students regarding expectations and assessment criteria to provide motivation and grow strength to face the challenges of online learning (Kearns, 2012; Leary, 2019; Youngblood et al., 2001). On the other hand, students must also have awareness and learning independence in the midst of online learning which makes it difficult for teachers to monitor student learning progress directly. Students who study from home of course also need parental assistance in the learning

mentoring process and ensure that students can participate properly in online learning experiences.

In general, online learning is part of a reform or shift in learning practices, especially in basic education during the Covid-19 pandemic. The materials needed to design online learning are very diverse. To assist the implementation of online learning, teachers can deliver learning materials in various forms such as image, text, video, and sound formats (Akrim, 2018; Zhang et al., 2004). Some of the advantages of online learning are of course also followed by several problems, especially for elementary school teachers, so that this becomes an interesting part to reveal as new knowledge and as information to evaluate learning and determine follow-up plans in an effort to improve learning. Online learning and a good learning environment have a positive impact on developing academic abilities and student achievement (Ibem et al., 2017). In addition, proper learning and classroom management will have an impact on students' social attitudes and foster an exciting learning atmosphere (Cahyanto et al., 2018; Popyk, 2021).

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Nahdlatul Ulama (MINU) Sumberpasir Malang is one of the elementary schools that implements online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. In practice online learning (learning from home) is carried out by building virtual communication. Based on observations, the implementation of online learning at MINU Sumberpasir does not always run smoothly. Data from interviews with classroom teachers show that online learning in class II still encounters several problems. In this online learning communication, student learning independence is very much needed, because a teacher cannot directly attend face-to-face activities (Cahyanto & Afifulloh, 2020). Based on the results of preliminary studies that have been carried out in schools, online learning practices have not fully run well and smoothly. The strategy or teacher's efforts to realize the success of online learning is one of the interesting issues to be revealed, so to find out all that it is necessary to do research related to teacher strategies in online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic in schools. Based on the description above, the researchers have an interest in revealing this, so this study aims to describe the strategies used by teachers to realize the success of online learning in schools.

2) METHODS

This study aims to describe the strategies used by teachers in the implementation of online learning at MINU Sumberpasir Malang. This research will explore the practical behavior of teachers in handling and realizing the success of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. The approach in this study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type, this is adapted to the purpose of research that wants to explore and describe a natural condition that emphasizes processes, meanings, and understanding in the form of words (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Kusumastuti & Mustamil, 2019) related to teacher strategies in online learning in schools. The second-grade teacher at MINU Sumberpasir Malang was chosen as the research subject with data collection techniques through interviews, observation, and documentation.

In an effort to obtain accurate research data, researchers use analytical techniques which include the stages of data reduction, presentation, verification and drawing conclusions (Miles et al., 2014). Data reduction is done by simplifying and making changes from the data that has been obtained roughly in the field, this process is carried out during research in the field until the data is actually collected, followed by presenting data or compiling information, so as to provide the possibility of drawing conclusions and taking action. from a researcher, as well as drawing conclusions from the results of data analysis where the initial conclusions are still temporary and can change if strong evidence is found to support the next stage of data collection. Furthermore, to obtain the validity of the research data, the researcher used triangulation technique.

3) RESULTS

The results showed that the teacher's strategy in online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic was by (a) time management, namely providing task information at the beginning of each week periodically to give students the opportunity to prepare and complete assignments early (b) flexibility, namely the use of a learning platform that is simple and easy for students, (c) provides assistance and development of learning materials in a simple, clear, and interesting manner, (d) communicates with parents intensely, and (e) carries out monitoring and evaluation of learning on a regular and ongoing basis. In general, the teacher's strategy in online learning can be simplified as shown in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1. Teacher's Strategy in Online Learning

First, time management, namely providing assignment information at the beginning of each week periodically to give students the opportunity to prepare and complete assignments early. One of the differences between online learning and face-to-face learning is that it lies in the processes and methods used in learning. Based on the results of interviews and observations of online learning practices (13/9/21), teachers conduct learning using several online-based learning applications. In addition, the use of learning applications is also supported by the use of WhatsApp to communicate with students and parents synchronously and asynchronously. At the beginning of the week the teacher provides information and an overview related to assignments and bills that will be completed during the next week. This has the aim of providing opportunities for students to prepare and complete assignments early, although the teacher also always reminds students of daily learning to foster student discipline and independence. Likewise for information and descriptions of learning objectives and activities that will be carried out by students the following week. All of this is communicated with parents in the hope of increasing the role of supervision and mentoring while students study from home.

Second, flexibility is related to the use of learning platforms and applications that are simple and easy for students. In conditions that are not ideal, of course, the implementation of online learning is expected to be able to adapt to the existing conditions in each educational unit. The condition of students and parents as companions and part of the student learning community at home is one of the considerations for determining the use of platforms or applications that will be used in online learning. The teacher uses the WhatsApp application and google form for the process of collecting student assignments and bills. So far, the application is believed to provide convenience for students and parents to operate. At certain moments the teacher also uses an integrated communication platform which is done by combining several features such as conversation, file storage, and video conferencing. This has been discussed with all schools to provide optimal services to students and parents.

Third, provide assistance and develop learning materials in a simple, clear, and interesting manner. In the practice of online learning, of course, the packaging of learning materials is different from face-to-face learning directly. Teachers need to develop materials that are tailored

to current needs. The attractiveness of teaching materials is one of the determining factors for the success of online learning. The class II teacher at MINU Sumberpasir Malang simplifies the material and packs it in a simple form, this is done because the teacher does not have much time to deliver the material synchronously. The problem of an unstable internet network makes teachers develop teaching materials in the form of videos and mind map images. This teaching material is very helpful for the teacher, if the learning has been completed this material can be sent to students to be re-studied at their respective homes. That way, when students experience problems related to the internet network, they can still study independently.

Fourth, communicate with parents intensely. The role of schools, people, and the community has a lot of impact on the success of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. To anticipate various learning problems, teachers always monitor student learning progress at home through parents. This communication is carried out using social media assistance and several WhatsApp groups, in addition to knowing information on student learning developments, this communication also aims to provide education to parents to help provide learning assistance from home. In practice this communication pattern often experiences problems because parents are not always together during learning hours, but with intense and periodic communication this can help teachers to minimize unresolved student assignments which is one of the problems of online learning in schools. Fifth, carry out monitoring and evaluation of learning on a regular and ongoing basis. This monitoring is carried out by school principals and classroom teachers, looking at how online learning is being carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic, both related to internal schools and from external factors. If a problem occurs, the teacher always reports to the school which in turn becomes an evaluation material to determine learning improvement policies.

4) DICUSSION

The Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia has had a lot of influence on learning practices in elementary schools. This change does not only occur in the world of education, but has a major impact on various aspects of life (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Batdı et al., 2021; Bryson & Andres, 2020; Carrillo & Flores, 2020) although this will be an opportunity for development of new, more sophisticated technologies. At the implementation stage of learning at the basic education level, of course, there are also some problems that arise due to the transition from face-to-face learning to online learning. This study reveals matters relating to teacher strategies in minimizing the problems that exist in the implementation of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. Many strategic steps have been taken by MINU Sumberpasir Malang teachers to help students study well while at home. The teacher has done management and time management well, providing information on assignments at the beginning of each week periodically with the aim of giving students the opportunity to prepare and complete assignments early. Teacher support, especially in helping to meet the needs of students, is an important part in the effort to realize the success of online learning in schools (Chiu, 2021; Dinh & Nguyen, 2020).

Based on the results of interviews and observations of online learning practices (13/9/21), teachers conduct learning using several online-based learning applications. In addition, the use of learning applications is also supported by the use of WhatsApp to communicate with students and parents synchronously and asynchronously. This is in line with the view (König et al., 2020) which explains that the use and mastery of information and communication technology (ICT) especially digital literacy plays an important role in the adaptation process from face-to-face learning to online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In addition, the implementation of learning also begins by providing information and an overview related to the material and assignments that will be completed by students during the following week. Teachers must have the initiative to develop strategic steps so that schools can survive in the function of education during the Covid-19 pandemic (Assunção Flores & Gago,

2020; Carrillo & Flores, 2020). The purpose of this step is to provide opportunities for students to prepare and complete assignments early, although the teacher also always reminds students of daily learning so that student discipline and independence can develop. All of this is communicated with the parents of students in the hope of increasing the role of supervision and mentoring while students study from home.

Another strategy that has been developed by the teacher is to implement learning that is based on flexibility, which is related to the use of platforms and learning applications that are simple and easy for students. In conditions that are not ideal, of course, the implementation of online learning is expected to be able to adapt to the conditions that exist in each educational unit in the midst of various existing problems (Zapata-Cuervo et al., 2021). The condition of students and parents is also one of the considerations in determining the use of platforms or applications for online learning, especially with regard to mastery of digital technology devices (König et al., 2020). Taking all that into account, the teacher uses the WhatsApp application and google form for the process of collecting student assignments and bills. So far, the application is believed to provide convenience for students and parents to operate. At certain moments the teacher also uses an integrated communication platform which is done by combining several features such as conversation, file storage, and video conferencing to foster student motivation (Zapata-Cuervo et al., 2021). The role of technology and communication devices (ICT) is proven to be able to provide variety in learning and can minimize student learning boredom (Fiş Erümit, 2021; König et al., 2020; Starkey et al., 2021).

In addition, the teacher provides assistance and development of learning materials in a simple, clear, and interesting way. In the practice of online learning, of course, the packaging of learning materials is different from face-to-face learning directly. Teachers need to develop materials that are tailored to current needs. This is done because teachers do not have much time to deliver material synchronously, so this time limitation can be anticipated by preparing teaching materials that can be accessed by students whenever and wherever they are. These teaching materials are also very helpful for teachers, so that students can learn independently while at their respective homes (Dinh & Nguyen, 2020).

Furthermore, the teacher builds a pattern of intense communication with parents. The role of schools, people, and the community has a lot of impact on the success of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. To anticipate various learning problems, teachers always monitor student learning progress at home through communication with parents. This is one part of the communication innovations made by teachers after the Covid-19 pandemic hit (Scull et al., 2020), this communication is done simply with the help of social media and WhatsApp groups which aim to find out the progress of student learning and provide education to parents to help with mentoring learning from home. This is in line with (Claessens et al., 2017; Landrum et al., 2021; Selçuk et al., 2021) which explains that a harmonious and positive relationship between teachers, students, and the learning community needs to be continuously developed in learning, including discussion outside the context of class and conversation on various other topics. The last strategic step taken by the teacher is to carry out monitoring and evaluation of learning on a regular and ongoing basis. This monitoring is carried out by school principals and classroom teachers, to monitor the implementation of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, both related to internal schools and from external factors.

5) CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it shows that the teacher's strategy in online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic is by (a) time management, namely providing information on assignments at the beginning of each week periodically to give students the opportunity to prepare and complete assignments early (b) flexibility, related to by using a simple and easy learning platform for students, (c) providing assistance and development of learning materials in a simple, clear,

and interesting manner, (d) communicating with parents intensely, and (e) carrying out monitoring and evaluation of learning on a regular basis and sustainable. It is suggested that further researchers can conduct research involving more schools and teachers.

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