

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Significant changes have occurred as we enter the 21st century, primarily in education. Education in the 21st century no longer focuses on students' numbers or exam scores. However, it focuses on preparing students to have the ability to contribute and succeed in their environment and globalised world as the essential goals of learning (Bedir, 2019; Selman & Jaedun, 2020). The demand for human resources always grows in line with the development of the world. Hence, school as an educational institution presents itself as a centre for interactive learning where students can acquire knowledge and practice skills essential in facilitating students. In order to keep up with the development of the 21st century, it is expected that most countries also change their curriculum. Moreover, the role of teachers is also changing in the 21st century, where teachers need to introduce 21st century skills to the students in the learning process (Rao, 2020).

The skills a person requires to address the challenges of the globally connected in the 21st century are referred to as 21st century skills. The Partnership for 21st Century (P21), a US-based organisation, emphasised some 21st century skills and one of them is called 4C skills, which consists of communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity skills. Studies suggested that communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity skills should be promoted in teaching essential subject areas as fundamental 21st-century learning and innovation skills (Joynes et al., 2019; Erdoğan, 2019). The ability for learning and innovation of students determines their readiness for the increasingly complex living and working situations of today's society. In addition, students' readiness also determines how the teacher performs in the class to create an effective learning process (Wahyu et al., 2021).

Teachers should understand and implement teaching strategies that support 21st century goals in the classroom appropriately. Based on the procedures, efforts, or strategies teachers utilise to transfer their knowledge to students, a teaching strategy is a way for teachers to support themselves in carrying out their goals for the learning process (Hayati et al., 2021). Additionally, a new strategy that consider the current characteristics of students in classroom learning is required (Zubaidah, 2016). In preparing students to have the abilities in order to succeed in their environment, there are a few elements that need to be taken into account: a) instruction should be student-centred, b) education should be open to collaboration, c) learning should be contextualised, and d) schools should be integrated with society (Nichols, 2019).

Additionally, there is a blended learning school in Indonesia. The implementation of the blended learning in the school is utilising digital technology with the combination of face-to-face learning (live session teacher and students) and online learning (students may learn outside the classroom). In this context, blended learning allows students to learn independently through learning management system (LMS) provided by the school. This learning management system (LMS) contains learning materials in form of learning videos, infographics, slide presentations, quizzes, and assignments contains case studies or projects. Typically, students are asked to learn in the learning management system related to the subject matter, afterwards the teacher and students will have discussions about the subject matter given in a live session.

Moreover, the teachers from its school already integrate 21st century learning skills in the classroom with any teaching methods, such as using problem-based methods where the teacher gives a case study approach about the material, asks students in groups to solve the problems, and find the solutions together. As Pacific Policy Research Center (2010) mentioned, problem-based methods are a part of project-based, which enable students to concentrate on complex real-world situations, support students to

communicate each other and think critically and creatively in groups (collaborative).

Numerous studies have focused on how Indonesian teachers integrate 21st century learning skills in English lesson plans and implement them in the classroom, which revealed that the teachers had implemented 21st century learning skills in the classroom (Azhary & Ratmanida, 2021; Radifan & Dewanti, 2020; Tamela & Dwi, 2021). Another study investigated teachers' perspectives on their knowledge, advantages, and challenges in implementing 21st century learning skills in ESL classrooms in Malaysia, which revealed the teachers already have suitable qualifications shown from the result of the research questionnaire (Muhamad & Seng, 2019).

Yet, teachers' perception toward the implementation of 21st century learning skills in English blended learning classrooms need to be more known. Therefore, this study presents the teachers' perception toward the implementation of 21st century learning skills (communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity) in English blended learning classrooms. This study is expected to be beneficial for the teachers in English language teaching fields in considering implementing 21st century learning skills with the integration of digital technology that uses various multimedia resources and to create 21st century learning environments.

1.2. Formulation of the Problem

Based on the background of the study, one research question is addressed in this study, “What is teachers’ perception toward the implementation of 21st century learning skills in English blended learning classrooms?”

1.3. Operational Definitions

To avoid misunderstandings about the terms of this study, the researcher provides the following definitions:

1.3.1. Teacher Perception

Teachers' views are based on their teaching-learning experiences with students regarding the implementation 21st century learning skills in English blended learning classrooms.

1.3.2. 21st Century Learning Skills

21st century learning skills include communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. The importance for students mastering 21st century learning skills is to allow them to communicate and work with others effectively on an international scale, analyse and evaluate information, and create fresh and different ideas to contribute to the environment positively. Teachers should master the concept of 21st century learning skills before introducing the skills to students.

1.3.3. Blended Learning

Blended learning is an approach to a learning process that combines synchronous (face-to-face learning) and asynchronous (guided/self-guided) learning activities.

1.4. Aim of the Research

As the formulation of the problem already mentioned above, this study aims to describe the perception of English teachers toward the implementation of 21st century learning skills in blended learning classrooms.

1.5. Significance of the Study

1.5.1. Theoretical Contribution

The findings of this study contribute to a better understanding of further references for other researchers considering researching the teachers' perception toward the implementation of 21st century learning skills and how teachers integrate the skills during the English teaching-learning process with any teaching strategies used

and the integration of technology as helpful tools to create 21st century learning environments.

1.5.2. Practical Contribution

The practical contribution of this study can provide new knowledge on 21st century learning skills viewed from English blended learning teachers and their integration of the skills in the classroom that can be referenced for other teachers. For the researcher, this study can give new insights into educational research, which can be applied in the future as an English teacher.