EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING MODEL WITH BLENDED LEARNING IN EFL ACADEMIC READING

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Abstract-Academic reading is one of the important skills for success in higher education which involves some EFL reading texts as an academic lesson. The research purpose is to describe and identify the educators' perception of the problem-based learning model with blended learning in EFL academic reading. Six educators became research respondents. The method for collecting the data is 28 statements of a questionnaire. The result shows that educators have positive perceptions of the implementation of the problem-based learning model with blended learning in EFL academic reading. It can be seen that all statements in the questionnaire are responded to in the category of strongly agree (12 statements) and agree (16 statements). The researchers recommend that the problem-based learning model through BL can be applied in EFL academic reading learning.

Keywords:*perception, problem-based learning, blended learning, academic reading.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Reading is a multifaceted process including a combination of perceptual, psycholinguistic, and cognitive abilities (Carrell, 1988). Reading is also defined as the recognition of text and word symbols in the daily environment(Horn et al., 2021). Reading is considered to be a crucial means oflearning, not only to obtain new information but also for gaining access to different interpretations of the world(Alfarwan, 2021). While, academic Reading is a vital skill, important for many aspects of our daily lives(Schwabe et al., 2022).

There are many studies undertakenon academic reading, such as Hubbard & Hubbard (2021) explored factors that can impact an individual's ability to comprehend academic reading. They found that the impact of academic reading comprehension is the reading situation, the experience and motivation of the reader, and the way that the text is structured and written.Mizrachi et al.(2016)focused on student behavior and attitudes in academic reading. Students' perceptions of theirreading habits(Deale et al., 2021). How academic reading seminars reflect the theoretical notion of academic literacies and deliver a learning environment for improving academic and professional learning and engagement(Afdal et al., 2022).

Several problems were found in academic reading, such as low motivation to complete reading assignments, lack of reading skills, having limited time and underestimating the importance of reading(Kerr & Frese, 2017) and not having the motivation to read been found tobe a significant factor in students choosing

not to read(Deale et al., 2021). To overcome the problem of EFL reading academics, the researchers used problem-based learning.

Problem-based learning (PBL) is defined as a pedagogical approach that uses cases and problems as departure points to accomplish the intended learning objectives (Birgili, 2015). PBL is a learning approach that emphasizes students' collaboration (Brassler & Dettmers, 2017) on a real-life or authentic problem (Makrakis & Kostoulas-makrakis, 2017). PBL is a student-centered approach in which problems are the stimulus for learning (Merrienboer & Vleuten, 2015). PBL is also defined as a learning process of working with problems, which involves identification, analysis, and solution(Mann et al., 2021). PBE is designed to prepare students for the practice of a profession or occupation (EFPI, 2015).PBL is built upon collaborative learning by assuming that deliberation and discussion advance knowledge and understanding (Bijsmans & Schakel, 2018). PBL is still seen as a method fordeveloping problem-solving skills rather than as a vehicle for understanding the underlyingprinciples or mechanisms that produce these phenomena(Servant-Miklos, 2019).

There are four characteristics of PBL, namely: learning is students center, learning occurs in small student groups, teachers are facilitators or guides, problems form the organizing focus and stimulus for learning, problems are a vehicle for the development of clinical problem-solving skills, and new information is acquired through self-directed learning (Barrows, 1996). While according to Merrienboer & Vleuten(2015), the characteristics of PBL are learning by addressing professionally relevant problems, all students work on the same problems, learning in small groups, one teacher facilitates each small group, students start with an initial discussion in the group to determine issues that need further self-study, all students study the same set of learning issues during individual self-study, the group meets again to share and discuss findings, six to ten students per group, students are randomly assigned to the groups, group members stay together in a group for 6 to 10 weeks and discuss several problems, and a limited number of supplementary lectures is included which take place after self-study and after the final discussion in the small group. The other characteristics of PBL, namely problem as a purpose for learning; learning through identification, analysis, and solution; learning as a social activity within a team; self-directed toward framing of a problem; selection of knowledge and skills to be developed; and integration of knowledge and skill (Mann et al., 2021).

Many researchers have found that the significant effect of PBL, such as makingstudents gain better scores, perform, and improvement in creative thinking (Dawilai et al., 2019), increasing students' attitudes and interest (Laforce & Noble, 2017), receiving better score during a clinical performance because PBL provides a hypothetical-deductive method of reasoning and an opportunity to practice skills(Birgili, 2015), challenging students to solve authentic problems in information rich settings (Birgili, 2015), some opponents state that all problem-based searching make working memory force a heavy demand. A high working memory load does not lead to the accumulation of knowledge in long-term memory because working memory becomes used to search for problem solutions so that it cannot be used to learn (Birgili, 2015), enhancing students' interdisciplinary competence (Brassler & Dettmers, 2017), motivating students

with realistic problem cases (Brassler & Dettmers, 2017). PBL in this article is applied with blended learning.

Blended Learning (BL) is a system that combines face-to-face instruction with computer-mediated instruction(Wang et al., 2019),a combination of in-person instruction in the same physical location classroom (face-to-face) and online components of teaching(Lane et al., 2021),combine online and physical elements, such as instruction, material, resources, and learning activities (Bergdahl & Bond, 2021). BL is alsopointed out as the integration of face-to-faceinstruction with computer-mediated instruction (Cihad, 2020),which combines face-to-face (F2F) instruction with online instruction (Zhu et al., 2021). In addition,the definition of BL is the thoughtful integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learningexperiences(Alamri & Watson, 2021).

Research has found the positive effect of BL, such as improving performance, increasing attendance and satisfaction, enhancing knowledge construction and problem-solving abilities, and providing a strong sense of community in the learning experiences (Zhu et al., 2021),increasing students' classroom engagement(Rice & Kundu, 2020),making students gain better scores, perform, and improvement in creative thinking (Dawilai et al., 2019), and has an overall positive effect on the students' English conversation performance (C. Wang, 2020). This study is focused on identifyingeducators' perceptionsof the PBL model with blended learning in EFL academic reading.

The research aims todescribe and identify the educators' perception of the problem-based learning model with blended learning in EFL academic reading.

II. METHODOLOGY

Method applied in this research is a survey of six educators at the English education program Muhammadiyah University of Mataram and UNDIKMA University after applyingthe PBL model with blended learning in EFL reading academics in the small group trial. The data was collected through 28 statements of a questionnaire which consists of three variables namely comprehending concept, model component, and learning impact. The data analysis is conducted through thematic analysis which was adopted from Braun and Clarke (2006)is consisted of familiarizingthe data,generating initial codes,defining and naming themes,reviewing themes,and searching for themes.

III. RESULT

The research aim is to identify the educators' perceptions of the PBL model with blended learning in EFL academic reading. The result ofthe survey from 28 statements that were distributed to the educators can be pointed out as follow.

Table 1. The result of educators' perception

NO	Statements	Average score	Categories
1	This learning model helps students to understand the concept of academic reading.	4.3	Agree

2	This learning model helps students to comprehend reading text.	4.3	Agree
3	This model helps students enrich their vocabulary mastery.	4.3	Agree
4	This learning model motivates students to solve problems.	4.7	StronglyAgree
5	This learning model arouses students' curiosity.	4.3	Agree
6	This learning model makes educators facilitators.	4.5	StronglyAgree
7	This model encourages collaboration between students.	4.3	Agree
8	This model encourages collaboration between students and lecturers.	4.7	StronglyAgree
9	This learning model prioritizes the value of the process.	4.2	Agree
10	The learning model helps increase students' knowledge about the steps of PBL.	4.2	Agree
11	This learning model encourages the improvement of critical thinking skills.	4.3	Agree
12	This learning model encourages students to develop their problem-solving skills.	4.8	StronglyAgree
13	This learning model encourages to increased creativity.	4.5	StronglyAgree
14	This learning model encourages the development of communication skills.	4.3	Agree
15	This learning model encourages the improvement of collaboration skills.	4.5	StronglyAgree
16	This learning model is student-centered.	4.2	Agree
17	This learning model helps students increase the use of learning technology.	4.3	Agree
18	This learning model involves students concluding solutions to solving the problems that have been discussed.	4.7	StronglyAgree
19	This learning model involves students expressing reflections on each lesson.	4.2	Agree
20	This learning model encourages students to use blended learning.	4.5	StronglyAgree
21	This learning model fosters the courage to convey the solutions that have been found in front of other students.	4	Agree
22	This model encourages students to respect each other's opinions.	4.5	StronglyAgree
23	This model makes learning a fun process.	4.5	StronglyAgree
24	This learning model encourages student leadership skills.	4	Agree
25	This model emphasizes students collect	4.5	StronglyAgree

	information.		
26	This model encourages students to improve their ability to ask questions.	4.5	StronglyAgree
27	This learning model is the ability to write investigative reports.	4.3	Agree
28	This learning model encourages students to increase their confidence in making decisions.	4.3	Agree

The results of the analysis show that all statements in the questionnaire are in the category of strongly agree and agree about the use of the PBL model with blended learning in EFL academic reading.In statements numbers1-3, educators agree that this PBL model can help to understand the concept of academic reading, comprehend reading texts and enrich vocabulary mastery.Numbers 1-10 indicate that three statements are responded to strongly agree namely the learning model motivates students to solve problems, makes educators facilitators, and encourages collaboration between students and lecturers.Meanwhile, those who answered in the agreement were that the learning model arouses students' curiosity, encourages collaboration between students, prioritizes the value of the process, and helps increase students' knowledge about the steps of PBL.

Numbers 7-20, educators responded that the statements were answered in agreement namely the learning model encourages students to develop their problem-solving skills, increase creativity, improve collaboration skills, use blended learning, and involves students to concludesolving the problems that have been discussed.While those who answered agreed, there were also five points, namely the learning model helps increase students' knowledge about the steps of PBL, encourages the improvement of critical thinking skills, encourage the development of communication skills, student-centered learning, increases the use of learning technology, and involves students to express reflections on each lesson.

Numbers 21-28 pointed out that four statements were responded to strongly agree that the model encourages students to respect each other's opinions, makes learning a fun process, emphasizes students to collect information, and encourages students to improve their ability to askquestions.And, which were responded by agreeing to consist of four statements, namely the learning model fosters the courage to convey the solutions that have been found in front of other students, encourages student leadership skills, improves the ability to write investigative reports, and encourages students to increasetheir confidence in making decisions.

Based on the data from the questionnaire, it shows that educators have positive perceptions of the implementation of the PBL model with blended learning in EFL academic reading, so it can also be put forward that this model is suitable for use in the EFL academic reading learning process both from understanding the concept, model components, and learning impact.

IV. *DISCUSSION*

Based on the result of the distribution of questionnaires, it can appear that educators' perceptions were generally positive such as educators agreeing that the

PBL model can help to understand the concept of academic reading, comprehend reading texts, and enrich vocabulary mastery. Then, three statements are responded to strongly agree, theyare the learning model motivates students to solve problems, makes educators as facilitators, and encourages collaboration between students and lecturers.The perceptions are in line withBirgili's findings puts forward that PBL can be utilized to motivate students in the teaching and learning process (Birgili, 2015),Brassler & Dettmers(2017) state that PBL can increase problem-solving skills, and Barrows (1996) andMerrienboer & Vleuten(2015) state that educators are as facilitators in using PBL model.Meanwhile, those who answered in agreement that the learning model arouses students' curiosity, encourages collaboration between studentsare supported by Mann et al. (2021), which prioritizes the value of the process, and helps increase students' knowledge about the steps of PBL.

Educators responded that there were five statements that were answered in agreement that the learning model encourages students to develop their problem-solving skills, increase creativity, improve collaboration skills, use blended learning, and involves students to draw conclusions fromsolving the problems that have been discussed supported by Mann et al. (2021), (Birgili, 2015), andBrassler & Dettmers(2017).While those who answered agreed, there were also five points, namely the learning model helps increase students' knowledge about the steps of PBL, encourages the improvement of critical thinking skills in line with the research which is carried out by Dawilai et al. found that one of the significanteffects of PBL is an improvement of creative thinking(Dawilai et al., 2019), encourages the development of communication skills, student-centered learning(Mann et al., 2021), increases the use of learning technology, and involves students to express reflections on each lesson.

The four statements that were responded to strongly agree that the model encourages students to respect each other's opinions, make learning a fun process, emphasizes students to collect information, and encourages students to improve their ability to askquestions.And, which were responded by agreeing consist of four statements, namely the learning model fosters the courage to convey the solutions that have been found in front of other students which is in line with (Mann et al., 2021) and (Brassler & Dettmers, 2017), encourages student leadership skills, improves the ability to write investigative reports, and encourages students to increasetheir confidence in making decisions.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The implementation of PBL via blended learning has a positive perception on learning ofEFL reading academicsand is suitable for use in the EFL academic reading learning process both from comprehending the concept, such as the concept of EFL reading academics, comprehend reading text, enrich vocabularies mastery, and the stage of PBL; the model components, likes collect information to overcome the problem, undertake a collaboration, make an investigation report, present the result, convey reflection, and perform evaluation; and the learning impact, namely develops self-confidence, ability to ask some questions, respect each other's opinions, usage of technology,improve creativity, communication, critical thinking, leadership, and problem-solving skills.The researchers

recommend to future researchers expand research respondents so that they can truly represent that this model has a positive impact on students who are learning EFL academic reading and also conduct research by combining the PBL model with case-based models or other models to be utilized in EFL academic reading learning.

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