THE USE OF EDMODO IN TEACHING WRITING IN A BLENDED LEARNING SETTING

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Abstract
The advancement of technology provides education with varioussolutions to create new learning environments. Edmodo as a learning platform is believed to offera solution in the teaching of English, particularly for teaching writing. This research was aimed to investigate how Edmodo as a learning platform,in a blended learning setting, was implemented in teaching writing in its combination with Genre-based Approach, how Edmodo facilitated students' engagement, and how students perceived the use of Edmodo in teaching and learning activities. This research employed a qualitative approach with case study design. The research involved 17 participants from the eleventh grade of a senior high school in Bandung, Indonesia. The data were collected through observations, document analysis, interviews, and questionnaires. The results showed that in teaching writing,it was possible to integrate Edmodo into GBA writing cycles. Edmodo also facilitated students' engagement cognitively during classroom sessions. The students showed various responses towards the use of Edmodo based on the Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) framework. Some issues on the use of Edmodo identified in this research were bandwidth, confusion in using Edmodo, incompatibility of smartphone applications, and students' lack responsibilities for learning. The suggestions for the authority and areas of further research are presented.

Keywords: Edmodo, blended learning, writing, students' engagement, UGT

The use of technology in language learning, specifically writing, is no longer a new phenomenon. Teaching paradigm has radically been changed by technology which makes teaching simpler without time or space restriction (Alonso et al, 2005). Technology is also trusted to provide language learners with a great number of possibilities to enhance language learning (Dudeney & Hockly, 2007). They specifically argue that technology, with its perpetual development, can give learners exposures, allow them to practice the knowledge, and bridge teachers to assess the learners' language ability. Applying technology in writing, which has been taught on paper especially in the past, becomes increasingly improved by the rapid development of technology. Westwood (2008) claims that in this information era, writing is not paper-based only, but it also uses richer media such as multimedia platforms.

However, it is a common consensus that students are not keen on writing and less enthusiastic to write as their reason to write is only due to classroom-bound activities at schools. It is a challenging homework for teachers in order to make students fall in love with writing and stimulate them to personally engage themselves in the process of writing. Therefore, teachers are supposed to find out suitable learning methods by looking for any

possible assistance to provide students with interesting, effective teaching and learning.

Edmodo, as a form of technological development for educational purposes, is believed to be of assistance for teachers in language classrooms. Edmodo is designed very modestly, almost similar to Facebook, and provides space for teachers, students, and even parents to maximize teaching and learning process (Kongchan, 2012). Writing, which seems to be burdensome and boring, will be less demanding, as Edmodo provides a lot of convenient features to practically aid teachers and students to conduct and organize teaching writing in such a baby step (scaffolding) either in classroom sessions or students' individual learning time at home(Lara, 2013).

LITERATURE REVIEW
Blended Learning, Edmodo and Writing
Blended learning or also called hybridization (Jacob, 2011) combines face-to-face learning with online learning (Bonk & Graham, 2005; Friesen, 2012). Blended learning occurs when technology is utilized in the process of learning (Clark & Mayer, 2011; Bates, 2005) and intended to enhance knowledge and performance (Rosenberg, 2001). In blended

learning, philosophically, students are stimulated to acquire new knowledge by relating their prior knowledge and experience (constructivism) and to learn from context (situated learning) (Morsound, 2005; Brown, Collins & Dugud, 1989 in Magambo, 2007; Cholewinski, 2009, Schunk, 2012).

Integrating technology to classroom learning is considered demanding (Erben, Ban, & Castañeda, 2009). Therefore, teachers should concern on the principles of applying technology in language classrooms. A number of criteria should be completed to provide students with meaningful learning environment (see Bersin, 2004; Bonk & Graham, 2005; Wilson & Smilanich, 2005; Bates, 2006; Erben, Ban, & Castañeda, 2009; Piotrowski, 2010). When the criteria are complied, the benefits of blended learning will occur (Rosenberg, 2001, p. 30; Thorne, 2003; Andrews, 2004; Bersin, 2004; Bates, 2005; Bonk & Graham, 2005; Wilson & Smilanich, 2005; Newby et al., 2006; Dudeney & Hockly, 2007; Aktaruzzaman, Shamim, & Clement, 2011; Clark & Mayer, 2011; Jacob 2011).

One of the recent technologies applied in language classrooms is Edmodo, a blended learning platform designed by O'Hara and Borg in 2008 and is now available at www.edmodo.com(Kongchan, 2012) and designed almost similar to Facebookbut intended for educational purposes (Kongchan, 2013). Edmodo is used by many educational institutions all over the world for its attracting features (Delacruz, 2013; www.support.edmodo.com, 2013, 2014): user-friendliness (Kongchan, 2012; Thongmak, 2013); free and secure online environment (Kongchan, 2013); the top teaching and learning websites developing innovation, and creativity (Kongchan, 2012); literacy learning and communicating facility (Delacruz, 2013; Paulsen, 2003; Jenkins, 2006; Stroud, 2010). Therefore, there is no doubt about how Edmodo facilitates students' learning experience to take place.

Edmodo is believed to be applicable in teaching writing. Some studies have proved how Edmodo works in writing classes (Adas & Bakir, 2013; Gardner, 2013; Pop, 2013; Karyawati, 2014; Abadi, Ahmadi & Mehrdad, 2015) through the adaptation of GBA (Genre Based Approach) as corroborated by Lara (2013). The results of the research mostly reveal that Edmodo is able to be integrated into writing.

GBA is specifically appropriate for students of English for specific purposes (Harmer, 2007b). However, Harmer also claims that the approach is also beneficial for those who learn general English. He also believes that this approach may even help poor learners to write. The approach, according to Rothery (1996) in Emilia (2011) emphasizes that teachers should guide students in the process of writing by explicitly teaching them how to construct a good text. It means that in order to produce a good text, teachers' guidance- by delivering explicit teaching- is needed during the process of writing.

The model of teaching in GBA has been gradually developed. The current model in conducting the approach comprises of four cycles (Halliday, 1976, 1985, 1994; as cited in Emilia, 2011):1) BKOF (Building Knowledge of the Field); 2) modeling; 3) joint construction (in collaborative work or groups (see also Bean, 2011), and 4) independent construction. When starting to write in the second cycle, students are given writing format to assist them write more easily (Emilia, 2011) and it further can be used to check students' critical thinking (Shea & Whitla, 2005). Since writing is the most productive activity (Saville-Troike, 2006) and it also involves processes (Brown, 2001; Harmer, 2007b), recursive process, which includes planning, drafting, reviewing and editing or revising (Brown, 2001; Gebhard, 2009; Emilia, 2011), takes place. It is fair to say that writing is not an easy process as it involves the process of thinking. For its challenge, students frequently make common mistakes such as organizing ideas and mechanics (Harmer, 2007a; Westwood, 2008; Gebhard, 2009).

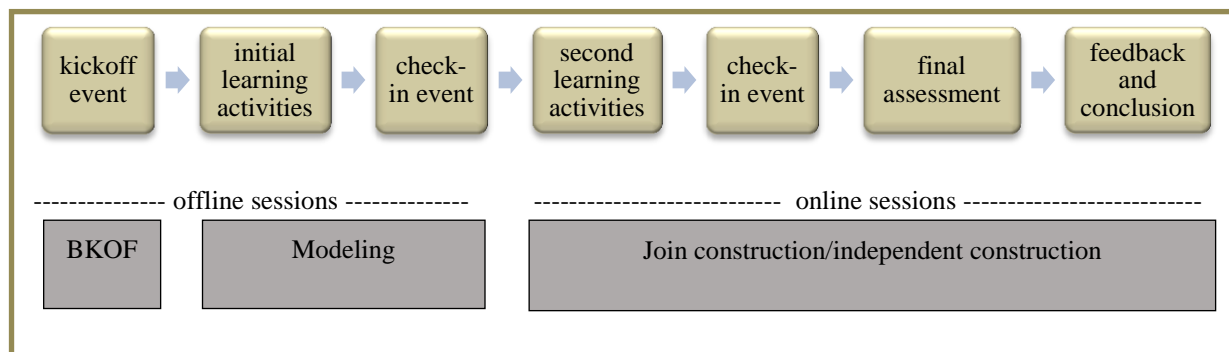The four writing cycles of GBA model are then adapted into blended learning program flow as follows.

Figure 1. The Adaptation of Blended Learning Program Flow into GBA
(adapted from Bersin, 2004;Halliday, 1976, 1985, 1994; as cited in Emilia, 2011)

Students'Engagement in ICT

Students' engagement is attitudes, interests and self-efficacy in particular learning domain (Zake et al., 2010). Appleton et al. (2006) prefer to say that engagement is a reflection of a person's active involvement in a task or activity (Reeve et al., 2004). Coates (2007) in Trowler (2010)tends to define student engagement in its concern about the interaction between time, effort and other relevant resources invested by students and institutions to optimize students' learning experience and performance. Shneiderman (1994, 1998) and Kearsley (1997 as cited in Kearsley (1999) state that fundamentally the theory expects students to involve themselves in learning activities through interaction with others and valuable tasks. From those definitions, it is appropriate to say that students' engagement is to do with students' active attitudes or involvement with certain objectives in a particular domain taking place through interaction and tasks.

One of the students' engagement dimensions is cognitive engagement; the other two are behavioral and emotional engagement (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Davis, Summers & Miller; 2012), in which it has to do with students' willingness in relation to their work, skills and strategies to finish their work (Davis, Summers, & Miller, 2012) and to understand learning materials (Appleton, Christenson, & Furlong, 2008). Psychologically, Newmann, Wehlarge, and Greene (1992) as cited in Smiley and Anderson (2011) tend to define cognitive engagement as efforts towards learning. Those mentioned definitions suggest that cognitive engagement is to do with students' motivation to learn, both how to work on task (learning strategies) and how to master learning materials (skills).

Connecting to learning strategies, Bandura (1989) suggests cognitive processes which are influenced by students' self-efficacy to reach cognitive goals or achievement. Bandura confirms that those who have a high sense of self-efficacy are able to guide themselves into high academic performance (see also Zimmerman, 1989; Ryan & Deci, 2000). It means that cognitive processes have a cause-effect relationship with self-efficacy. Further, Bandura (1989, 1991) sees that cognitive processes allow students to predict what scenarios they should apply to solve problems provided in school tasks. Emphasizing the idea, Fredericks, Blumenfeld and Paris (2004) mention cognitive engagement sharply deals with self-regulating and strategies. Bandura further claims that this process will then contribute to students' critical thinking and finally affects their performance accomplishment towards school assignments. It surely means that cognitive processes in engagement are beneficial in enhancing students learning strategies which finally contribute to students' critical thinking.

Students' critical thinking, specifically in writing, can be identified by the application of order thinking suggested by Bloom (1956, as cited in Krathwohl, 2002). When students' order thinking has developed to the highest level, critical thinking takes place. Garrison and Kanuka (2004) support the ideas by mentioning that the order thinking may contribute to the attainment of critical thinking. This means that the order thinking developed by Bloom is intended to shape students' critical thinking from the lowest to the highest level.

The infusion of technology is further trusted enhancing students' engagement as confirmed by Coffman (2009), Rank, Warren and Millum (2011). Beforehand, Kearsley and Shneiderman (1999) affirm that technology, fundamentally, is able to facilitate engagement through two things: interaction and meaningful tasks. Lonn (2009) corroborates the notion of interaction in his study by saying that most of the participants interact successfully each other by using a particular platform of LMS (Learning Management System). The interaction type takes place can be various. It can be in form of three following interaction as suggested by (Moore & Kearsley, 1996; as cited in Lonn, 2009): learner-content interaction (occurring between students with subject matters), learner-instructor interaction (taking place when teachers or instructors give counseling, supports and encouragement), and learner-learner or peer interaction (communication among students with or without instructors' presence). Meanwhile, in relation with meaningful tasks, Kearsley and Shneiderman (1999) give a strict guidance: meaningful tasks designed in ICT-based learning should be able to be defined by students and they can focus on applying their ideas to a specific context.

More detail criteria of students' engagement in ICT are developed by Reading (2008), and Reading and Levins (2010). The following is the samples of the criteria adapted in the study.
a) Working independently within groups;
b) More concerning on the work quality;
c) Taking parts in learning situations;
d) Seeing ICT as part of learning.

UGT (Uses and Gratification Theory)

Gratification or satisfaction is conceptualized as people's positive or negative feeling (Sangwan, 2005) towards media they use (Wang, Sun & Haridakis, 2009). Gratifications are also interpreted as all aspects of satisfaction self-reported by users (Stafford et al., 2004 in Sangwan, 2005). Karimi et al. (2014) further state that UGT is also applicable to find individual motivation in using media. Those definitions infer that gratifications are users' feelings either positive or negative about the media they utilize.

UGT is applicable for all media such as television (Katz & Brumler, 1974; as cited in Yuan, 2011) and internet (Rosengren, 1974 and Lin, 1999; as cited in Wang, Sun, & Haridakis, 2004). Further use of UGT recently is on learning platforms such as Edmodo(Cankaya, Durak, & Yunkul, 2013).

Katz and Brumler (1974) (cited in Yuan, 2011; Cankaya, Durak & Yunkul, 2013) argue that people tend to use communication media based on the following needs: cognitive, affective, personal, social, and escape needs. Zolkepli and Kamarulzaman (2011) believe that the UGT widely grows time by time due to the development of media and people needs, for example for communication. It is started by the emergence and use of televisions, magazines to the recent uses of internet. For example, Kim and Hahn (2012) find other gratifications which enrich the first five-mentioned gratifications stated by the prior experts: relaxation, entertainment, fashion, inclusion, affection, sociability, and escape. This development indicates that the UGT framework is enhanced by the development of technology itself, in which people use the technology for multiple intentions. The more details criteria of UGT have been developed by Mondi, Woods, and Rafi (2008). The criteria are developed as detail measurements to see how students perceive technology in their classroom. Therefore, the constructs developed by them are adapted in the present study.

METHOD
Consistent with the purpose of the present research, a qualitative approach (Creswell, 1998, 2003) with a case study design (Merriam, 1998; Creswell, 1998) was utilized.

Participants
The participants involved were a class of 11th grade of a private senior high school in Cimahi, West Java, which consisted of 20 students with a purposive sampling technique (Creswell, 2003). However, during the research, only 17 students were involved, since the three students had limited access to online learning.

Data Collection
Four instruments were used to collect the data. First, observations (Creswell, 2003) were utilized to see how Edmodo was implemented in teaching writing in which the researcher acted as a teacher-researcher(Stake, 1995). Second, documents analysis(Creswell, 1998)which were taken from the documents posted in Edmodo both the teacher's and students' posts. Third, it was focus group interviews with a semi-structured design (Creswell, 2003; Bell, 2005; Mack et al., 2005; Heigham & Croker, 2009). Document analysis and interviews were mainly utilized to get data for students' engagement.

Fourth, open-ended questionnaires (Heigham & Croker, 2009) were used to check students' opinion about the use of Edmodo. The data were first collected through observations with the presence of an observer to avoid bias during the learning session, and then collected the documents posted in Edmodo, administered the focus group interviews and finally distributed the questionnaires to the students.

Data Analysis
The analysis on the whole data was organized in such a way to get the findings interpreted precisely. The analysis was conducted by adapting Creswell's theory (2003) as well. It began with organizing and preparing data, followed by reading them to get general senses. The next step was coding data, generating description of the whole data, and representing the description and themes. The last step to do was interpreting data before the data were finally presented.

Validity and Reliability
The data collected from the four instruments were then validated by triangulation (Creswell, 1998; Silverman, 2005). Triangulation was regarded crucial as an effort to make sure that the data collected from the observations, group interviews, documents and questionnaires were matched each other.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS
Edmodo Implementation in Teaching Writing
Edmodo in teaching writing is implemented by integrating blended learning program flows(Bersin, 2004) into GBA writing cycles (Halliday, 1976, 1985, 1994; as cited in Emilia, 2011). Some studies have also corroborated how Edmodo is integrated into teaching writing models (Adas & Bakir, 2013; Gardner, 2013; Karyawati, 2014; Abadi, Ahmadi & Mehrdad, 2015) particularly GBA (Lara, 2013). Each flow of the integration is discussed and justified as follows.

Kickoff events (BKOF)
The first flow in the implementation was an initial step in which students were introduced to the course. The teacher motivated the students to get involved in the learning process followed by introducing texts to discuss. This is considered as an initial exposure to build students' knowledge as suggested by Emilia (2011). Bersin (2004)agrees that this is an introductory step for opening the course.

Initial learning activities - check in events (modeling)
Initial learning activities were begun by introducing content of the topic to be discussed in the lessons.

Having finished the first text in the kickoff events-BKOF, the students were then given another text. The main materials such as the explanation of genre, its social purposes and language features were also delivered in the stage as suggested by Bersin (2004) that a teacher or instructor might begin delivering learning materials in the second flow. The materials were delivered explicitly, in line with explicit teaching suggested by Rothery (1996) in Emilia (2011) in order to enable students to produce a good text.

The second flow activities were conducted more in offline sessions in which the instructor or teacher must present. Offline sessions, or what Bersin (2004) calls as physical meetings is one of the choices in initial learning activities. Self-study and a live-check process (Bersin, 2004) were implemented during the second flow, in the form of working in group or collaborative work to discuss and answer questions given in the text. The students were guided by the teacher to discuss the text and assisted if they found any difficulties in comprehending the text. In blended learning, to Bersin (2004), the teacher's or instructor's presence in the stage is crucial for students. Further, borrowing Friesen's idea (2012), blended learning covers pedagogy functionality feature, which also includes teachers' presence.

Second learning activities - check in events - final assessment - feedback and conclusion (join construction)
The last flow in the blended learning was organized by the teacher researcher through the following steps: 1) the teacher gave a writing plan format of hortatory exposition text to students; 2) the teacher uploaded the writing plan into Edmodo (Library menu); 3) the students wrote offline and the teacher gave them directions; 4) the students posted their works in Edmodo Note menu in small groups; 5) the students were given comments and feedback; and 6) the students posted the writing final draft in Edmodo.

This phase was the continuum of the initial learning activity - check-in events (modeling) in which materials were still discussed in the phase as Bersin's (2004) suggestion. Beforehand, the students should check-in small groups in which they were going to work together. Groups or small groups are believed to be effective by Bean (2011) since they provide a great opportunity to coach students' critical thinking such as brainstorming ideas, and discovering arguments for their writing. They are also believed to personalize learning (www.support.edmodo.com, 2014).

Having checked-in the small groups, final assessments were then given to students in which they were asked to write their own text with the same topic discussed on that day right away after they were given a writing plan. Bersin (2004) views

this as a form of final assessment to see whether the course in the two previous stages has met students' ability or not.

Having given the final assessments, the students started writing by the guidance from the teacher both in offline or online classes. In both classes the teacher was able to monitor students' work by giving them feedback. Feedback, to Bersin (2004), can be directly given right away after students share their works.

When starting to write in Edmodo Note menu, students constructed their own language in the real context in which they need to engage their ideas altogether by using Edmodo. They have got modeling (what made a good text and how to use Edmodo) in the first and second flow intended to direct them to create a good text. This is what constructivism and situated learning theory intended for: acquiring new knowledge by relating past experience as prior knowledge to a new context (Morsound, 2005; Magambo, 2007; Cholewinski, 2009; Schunk, 2012).

When producing a text, students could not produce it in a single meeting since writing requires not only organizing ideas but also mechanics. To Gebhard (2009) and Harmer (2007a), mechanics (such as punctuation, spelling and handwriting as well as layouts) and organizing ideas (to be cohesive and coherent) are indeed not easy to apply. Therefore, it is not surprising to see the students make errors quite often.

Edmodo Facility for Students' Engagement
The present research suggests Edmodo facilitates students' engagement cognitively through Note menu. This is a delight fact since basically students' engagement accommodation in learning is one of the promises offered by e-learning or blended learning (Adrews, 2004; Coffman, 2009; Clark & Mayer, 2011; Rank, Warren & Millum, 2011).

First, Edmodo through Note menu allowed students to work independently within the small group feature. Edmodo (www.support.edmodo, 2013, 2014) confirms that collaborative work in Edmodo is intended to personalize learning, in which students will have their own space for learning without any disturbance from others. The idea is supported by Reading (2008) as well as Reading and Levins (2010), that technology including learning platform should give facilities for students to work independently. Second, it enabled students to concern on their quality of work. From the documents posted it could be concluded that the students were eager to correct their works by welcoming teachers' feedback, showing that participation and work involvement took place (Reading, 2008).This is also the students' strategy to be skillful in writing as a part of cognitive engagement: how to work on tasks and how they master learning materials (Davis, Summers, &

Miller, 2012; Appleton, Christenson, and Furlong, 2008). Psychologically, the strategies are students' efforts to finish working on the tasks (Newmann, Wehlarge, & Greene, 1992; as cited in Smiley & Anderson, 2011). Third, it enabled students to take parts in learning situations (by getting involved into discussions). During the discussion, questions-answers activities were commonly applied. These activities are one indicator of cognitive engagement criteria according to Reading (2008). However, having observed online and offline classes, not all students took part actively in online and offline classes. High users and low users were then identified from the frequency of students' attendance and involvement observed in Note menu. This involvement shows student's interest towards learning (Zake et al., 2010) reflected in doing tasks or activities (Appleton et al., 2006; Reeve et al., 2004). Those who were interested commonly signed-in Edmodo very often, while the rest did not. As confirmed by some students in the interview session that they preferred offline to online learning. Fourth, it directed students to see Edmodo as a part of learning. The interviewees revealed that they utilized Edmodo because it had to do with academic matters. School assignments and learning preferences were the main reasons. Those observed facts, to Coates (2007) in Trowler (2010) indicate students' involvement in academic activities to enrich their schooling experience.

Another facility provided by Edmodo was interaction and meaningful tasks. Note menu provided opportunities for the students and the teacher to interact by posting something or giving comments to a post. Interaction also took place when the students post or ask genuine questions to the teacher such as when they find difficulties to access Edmodo features. Interaction in communication among technology users, in the view of Kearsley and Shneiderman (1999), is a basic requirement in language-based teaching and learning (see also Bates, 2005). The communication occurred in Note menu also indicates interaction types (Moore & Kearsley, 1996; as cited in Lonn, 2009) experienced by the students and the teacher which are learner-content interaction, learner-instructor interaction and peer interaction. While meaningful tasks are observed for Edmodo through Note menu provides students with facility for writing tasks or assignments. The writing tasks comprise of a lot of activities, started from composing, posting, revising to publishing writing (Brown, 2001; Gebhard, 2009; Emilia, 2011). Those heaps of activities are believed to be meaningful, which at the end coach students' ability to define the tasks and apply ideas for another task (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1999).

Further, Edmodo through Note menu also facilitated cognitive processes for students in writing. As writing is not only to create a product (Saville-Troike, 2006) but also to involve processes (Brown, 2001; Harmer 2007b), cognitive processes in the writing, indeed, cannot be neglected. The cognitive processes such as composing, synthesizing ideas, and publishing writing are the forms of activities of order thinking suggested by Bloom (1956, as cited in Krathwohl, 2002). This is not only applicable in paper-based writing, but also writing in multimedia environment. Reading (2008) highlights this higher-order thinking as a multimedia learning activities in cognitive domain which can be used to measure students' engagement. Further, it is believed to lead students to high academic performance (Bandura, 1989, 1991; Zimmerman, 1989; Fredericks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004; Garrison & Kanuka, 2004) motivated by self-efficacy or self-regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

The order thinking facilitated by Note menu is 'create'. 'Creating', according to Bloom's revised taxonomy (Krathwohl, 2002) is the highest order thinking for the occurrence of 'generating', 'organizing', and 'producing'. In the program flow, the students were generating ideas from the first and second flow in which they were given a text model, then in the third flow, organizing ideas based on the writing format and applying their ideas.

'Creating' is also further claimed to be closely related to critical thinking (Krathwohl, 2002). When producing a text, the students need to formulate their thesis, arguments, and recommendations in which critical thinking is needed. Garrison and Kanuka (2004) claim critical thinking contributes to students' higher level of learning. In other words, higher learning is achieved or mediated through critical thinking.

The students' critical thinking was simply identified from how they generated their ideas such as developing a thesis to show their position, developing arguments and concluding the topic by giving recommendation. When writing their ideas, the students were provided with the writing format intended to divide ideas based on the generic structure (Emilia, 2011). This writing format, according to Shea and Whitla (2005), also contributes to the students' critical thinking process, as it can be the tool for checking the students' critical thinking.

However, apart from Edmodo Note menu accommodation towards the four cognitive criteria, interaction and meaningful tasks, and cognitive processes of writing, it was found out that some students tended to be less responsible for their group works. It seemed that collaborative works conducted during classroom sessions did not succeed maximally. There was a pattern found in almost every group that the low users relied on particular students (which usually high users) to post the writing draft, whereas responsibility ideally should be enhanced by the integrated technology in the classroom (Wilson & Smilanich, 2005; Reading,

2008; Reading & Levins, 2008; Clark & Mayer, 2011).

Students' Perception towards the Use of Edmodo
The data showed that the students gave positive and negative responses towards the use of Edmodo in their writing classes, which admitted by Sangwan (2005) as a basic concept of UGT framework itself. The responses are presented in the following categories based on the UGT (Uses and Gratification Theory) adapted from Mondi, Woods, and Rafi (2008).

Cognitively, most students viewed Edmodo giving them new insight and experience of learning, but since Edmodo is new for them, they did not have any clue what they should do with Edmodo. Therefore, introducing Edmodo is crucial before students start using it. That is what Erben, Ban and Castañeda (2009) mention in the principles of integrating e-learning in the classrooms and proved in a research conducted by Karyawati (2014).The students also revealed that that was their first time learning to write online, in which they admitted that the more organized writing occurred. The more organized writing mechanism is actually a respect provided by blended learning program flow and GBA. Blended learning program flow adapted from Bersin (2004) offers step-by-step flow to conduct teaching, and GBA (Halliday, 1976, 1985, 1994; as cited in Emilia, 2011) completes it by making scaffolding steps to guide students. Adas and Bakir (2010), Lara (2013) and Abadi, Ahmadi and Mehrdad (2015) support the ideas since they have observed that writing in blended learning yields good writing and responses from students. Besides, most students conceded that Edmodo facilitated them with Library menu in which they could download the learning materials uploaded by teachers. This digital library or what Paulsen (2003) calls as electronic learning material is one of the features provided by Edmodo(Stroud, 2012; www.support.edmodo.com, 2013). Thorne (2003) and Coffman (2009) also believe that easy access towards learning materials is the one of blended learning accommodation.

Affectively, the students revealed that they like using Edmodo for its uniqueness, newness, and attraction. It means that Edmodo fulfills the novelty principle of using technology in the classroom (Bates, 2005).Edmodo simplicity and easy application in learning writing are also admitted by students. These two strengths have actually been admitted by some studies conducted earlier (Kongchan, 2012, 2013; Adas & Bakir, 2013; Lara, 2013; Thongmak, 2013; Abadi, Ahmadi & Mehrdad, 2015).However, when being asked whether or not they like talking about Edmodo to their acquaintances outside the school, only two students reveal that they do. Katz and Brumler (1974) in Cankaya, Durak and Yunkul (2013) claim

that talking to others about the learning platform used is done for pleasurable reason and emotional satisfaction (see also Kim & Hahn, 2012), although in this case, the two students seem to do it for academic needs.

Personally, the students admitted that learning writing with Edmodo was easy and simple as well as it motivated them to write. Benefits in writing online have been claimed by Adas and Bakir (2010), Pop (2013), Lara (2013) and Abadi, Ahmadi and Mehrdad (2015) as it provides students with good writing mechanism. The students were also in agreement that Edmodo gave them unlimited time and space for learning such as learning from smartphones and learning in leisure time. Rosenberg (2001) acknowledges this as 24/7 learning as technology now has made learning accessible almost anywhere and anytime and available 24 hours a day (see also Alonso et al., 2004; Bates, 2005; Bonk & Graham, 2005; Wilson & Smilanich, 2005; Newby et al., 2006; Dudeney & Hockly, 2007; Aktaruzzaman, Shamim, & Clement, 2011; Clark & Mayer, 2011; Jacob, 2011). Besides, the students admitted that they were able to get access to multimedia learning materials. Wilson and Smilanich (2005) recognize that widen reach including access into multimedia sources is one of the advantages of blended learning. Bonk and Graham (2005) admit the fidelity of such materials in blended learning as another strength of blended learning (see also Garrison and Kanuka, 2004; Jenkins, 2006).

Socially, the students acknowledged that Edmodo facilitated communication with their surroundings (teachers and classmates) by joining groups and commenting on posts/chats as well as joining learning community feature. The discussion of using Edmodo for communication also emerges in Piotrowski (2010) as functionality offered by technology (Charney & Greenberg, 2002; in Zolkepli & Kamarulzaman, 2011)in learning and students' connection in academic surroundings (Delacruz, 2013; Gardner, 2013).However, the low Edmodo users claimed that Edmodo did not give them chances to join learning communities as their limited knowledge and use of Edmodo as well as bandwidth. This preference, following what Karimi et al. (2014) report, has to do with motivation in learning. Besides communication, the students agreed that the teacher provided feedback in Edmodo for their writing. Seeing how the students reacted, it was clear that the students expressed positive responses towards the feedback. The feedback focused on some common mistakes made by beginners namely organizing ideas, spelling, structure, and vocabulary as mentioned by Westwood (2008).

However, difficulties were found during the implementation of Edmodo as expressed by the low user students, meanwhile the high-Edmodo users

living in the school dormitory - whose internet connection was always on and speedy- showed their positive feeling inferring satisfactory (Stafford et al., 2004 in Sangwan, 2005; Wang, Sun & Haridakis, 2009) towards Edmodo.

1) *Bandwidth.* It was found that bandwidth became the main problem coming up during the study conducted. Bandwidth indeed has to do with the choice of technology as identified by Bersin (2004) that the technology chosen should highlight that crucial issue (see also Bates 2006, and Ertmer1999) in Newby et al., 2006; Erben, Ban, & Castañeda, 2009).

2) *Confusion in using Edmodo.* Most of the students confirmed that that Edmodo was confusing since that was their first encounter with Edmodo. Therefore, adequate training in using Edmodo is required. Erben, Ban, and Castañeda (2009) exaggerate that teachers should introduce the infused technology in such baby steps to make students familiar with it.

3) *Incompatibility of smartphone applications.* The students used various media to access Edmodo such as computers, laptops and smartphones. However, the students revealed that smartphones access was limited for some features did not show up in smartphones as identified by Cankaya, Durak and Yunkul (2013).

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the present research indicate that Edmodo blended learning platform are implemented to teach writing at senior high schools by integrating the blended learning program flow into GBA writing cycles. The implementation of Edmodo in teaching writing also shows that Edmodo facilitates the students' engagement cognitively through Note menu. The Note menu which is used during the writing process apparently facilitates the students with interactivity and meaningful writing tasks. To be more detail, Edmodo through Note menu facilitates the students' cognitive engagement by: 1) allowing the students to work independently within groups; 2) allowing the students to be concerning on quality of their work; 3) enabling the students to take parts in learning situations; and 4) directing the students to see Edmodo as a part of learning. Cognitive processes of order thinking specifically 'create', which contributes to critical thinking, are also facilitated by Note menu during the third flow. However, it is also identified that the students have lack responsibilities for their learning since they rely on each other on submitting tasks and rarely join the online classes. In conjunction with the implementation and engagement, the students show various responses both positive and negative towards the use

of Edmodo. Bandwidth issue, students' confusion in using Edmodo, and incompatibility of smartphone applications learning are also identified.

Apart from the findings of the research, there are a number of matters have not been covered by the present research. First, the implementation of Edmodo in teaching writing is limited to only one single month. Therefore, to get more reliable data, longer research is suggested performing. Second, the effectiveness of using blended learning integrated into writing approach has not been investigated frequently in Indonesian context, specifically in remote areas in which technology is regarded as new. For that reason, further research can be conducted to measure whether or not blended learning works in improving students' learning outcome in remote areas. Third, another domain of engagement, behavioral or emotional, is also worth researching to see how students completely engage themselves in blended learning environment.

Regarding the findings of the study, a number of considerations are suggested. First, to create a stable blended learning environment, bandwidth and compatible devices come as utmost factors; providing students with sufficient internet facilities is an absolute prerequisite. Second, it is a challenge for teachers to implement Edmodo in teaching writing collaboratively (group works) since the students apparently rely on each other to upload the writing drafts; therefore trying out individual works in Edmodo is suggested. Third, to avoid confusion in using Edmodo, introducing Edmodo pleadingly is suggested. Finally, the students' engagement should be more enhanced by the use of Edmodo in blended learning classes. Improving the students' motivation to engage and take full responsibility in blended learning will be a key point in implementing a successful blended learning.

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