



## THE IMPLEMENTATION OF VIRTUAL MODEL OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING (PBL) IN ENGLISH DRAMA COURSE

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to describe the implementation of the Virtual Model of Project-Based Learning in the English Drama course and to evaluate students' response toward the implementation. This study used mixed methods to integrate the qualitative and quantitative data. The subjects of the study were fourth-semester students of class AG 5/6 of English and Literature Department, Faculty of Adab and Humanities, UIN Alauddin Makassar. The object of research is the English Drama course by applying the Project-Based Learning model in the form of virtual drama performance. The research technique was carried out by observations, interviews, and surveys to answer research questions. The results showed that most of the students responded positively to the implementation of the virtual drama project and considered the process and implementation successful, especially in providing a positive correlation between drama theory and practice as the learning method in the English Drama course. Despite that, the project was carried out online, students have honed their various soft-skills which also enriched their multiple-intelligence through this Virtual Drama project.

**Keywords:** *Virtual Drama, PBL, Students Project, English Drama*

### ABSTRAK

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan pengimplementasian model virtual Project Based Learning pada mata kuliah English Drama dan mengevaluasi respon siswa terhadap implementasi tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode gabungan untuk mengintegrasikan data kualitatif dan kuantitatif. Subyek penelitian adalah mahasiswa semester IV kelas AG 5/6 Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Adab dan Humaniora, UIN Alauddin Makassar. Objek penelitian adalah mata kuliah English Drama dengan menerapkan model Project Based Learning berupa pertunjukan drama virtual. Teknik penelitian dilakukan dengan cara observasi, wawancara dan survei untuk menjawab pertanyaan penelitian. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar siswa merespon positif pelaksanaan proyek drama virtual dan menganggap proses dan implementasinya berhasil, terutama dalam memberikan korelasi positif antara teori dan praktik drama sebagai metode pembelajaran dalam mata kuliah English Drama. Meskipun proyek mahasiswa ini dilakukan secara online, namun mahasiswa telah mengasah berbagai soft-skills yang juga memperkaya kecerdasan ganda mereka melalui proyek Drama Virtual.*

**Kata kunci:** *Drama Virtual, PBL, Proyek Mahasiswa, English Drama*

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### INTRODUCTION

English Drama is a compulsory course taught to fourth-semester students of the English and Literature Department, Faculty of Adab and Humanities, UIN Alauddin Makassar. This course discusses various phenomenal western dramas based on the elements that shape a drama. A drama script contains stories about everyday life including various issues and problems regarding the social, economic, political, and

cultural life of a society. As stated by Letwin, et al. "Drama, for our puposes, can be taken to mean stories of human beings in conflict, performed through action for an audience, either live, over the radio, or on screen" (2008). Structurally as a literary work, it has elements of characters, storyline, setting, theme, and messages (Nurgiyantoro: 2005). In addition, Suroso (2015) stated that drama is different from other literary works because of its uniqueness from the point of view of language use and the delivery of its message.

In drama, language exposure is in the form of using behavioral instructions that describe the atmosphere and use of dialogue of the characters. Meanwhile, in terms of message content, the playwright tells various problems of human life. Suroso explained that the message conveyed by the playwright aims to provide information, to "educate", provide entertainment, as well as criticize problems that occur in society. Moreover, Shepherd and Wallis (2004: 1-2) wrote that "Dramatic shapes, especially around crisis and resolution, have provided models for the ways in which societies behave, or perform; cultures represent themselves to themselves in 'cultural performances' such as rites and ceremonies; and individual social behaviour and then identity have been thought of in terms of theatre and performance." Meanwhile, Abbotson (2003) stated that "Plays in which a discussion, often unresolved, superseded the plot, were preferable because they allowed audiences to judge events for themselves, thus making them an active part of the theatrical experience rather than merely passive viewers."

Thus, studying drama can also develop students' insight and character. From the book *Drama in the Classroom* by Beddall, it is stated that drama provides many positive influences for the children to learn, such as genuine communication, fun class, can motivate students and help them to speak more freely, and miming activities help to develop useful strategies for overcoming gaps in knowledge when communicating in a foreign language. Drama in education, not only as an approach but also an effective method is really important for cross-cultural education, to raise awareness on cultural differences and barriers, and as one of the components that help people to live peacefully together as a society (Akbulut & Vural: 2017). Therefore, students are not only expected to be able to interpret the aesthetic value of a literary work, but they are also expected to understand and appreciate the diversity of existing cultures. They can have an open insight into the language, culture, and customs of other countries through literary works so there would be no cultural exclusivity that can trigger extremism.

It is undeniable that the exclusivity of groups, ideologies, or religions, without tolerance and mutual respect, can become a disease that triggers segregation and raises attitudes, and behaviors of radicalism, fanaticism, intolerance and discrimination between students. This negative attitude is far from the ideals of the nation as contained in the Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of Indonesia as well as the concept promoted by the Ministry of Religion through the Religious Moderation book published in 2019.

Therefore, it is important to build a sense of tolerance within students' character through a proper learning method in the classroom, such as drama performance. Various competencies can also be developed through drama production, both from developing language skills, creativity, and management skills in script production or performances. Therefore to develop the student's multiple-intelligence, studying drama is not enough only by studying the theory itself but better combined with the application, a drama performance. Considering the meaning of drama itself in Greek, "action" which also means "to do" or "to act", learning drama should be complexity of a series of exercises and practices for understanding the script, acting, directing, to production management as a single unit in the production process. As stated by

Anderson "students should be able to make judgments about the work from a critical perspective based upon her aesthetic understanding which incorporates the ways the social and historical context has been incorporated into the development of meaning in the work" (2012).

Project-Based Learning as explained by Thomas (2000) is "complex tasks, based on challenging questions or problems, involving students in design, problem-solving, decision making, or investigative activities; giving students the opportunity to work relatively autonomously over extended periods of time; and culminating in realistic products or presentations". In other words, PBL is a creative and complex way for engaging students with some developing, expanding, and cultivating projects. Meanwhile, this project as a communicative language teaching method could also enhance student's speaking skills, their fluency, clarity and accuracy. Where it is common to find that many students have problems and insecurity in speaking English, lack confidence, lack of vocabulary, feeling shy, etc (Haliwanda: 2021). At the same time reading as a therapy could heal people from mental problem and increase self-ability, as what have been discussed by Mendrofa in her research that there is a positive impact of reading fiction for a better life (2020).

The virtual project-based learning model in the classroom is also carried out within the framework of responding to the challenges of "Merdeka Belajar" concept launched by the Minister of Education and Culture of Indonesia, where students and educators are given the flexibility to conduct experiments in learning, especially in creating digital learning innovation. Universities become the centers for the development of science and technology, including being a medium for developing and strengthening the character of the nation's children, must be supported by a futuristic and dynamic learning development program. In particular, the quality of education at PTKIN (State Islamic Higher Education) will not evolve without any innovation in the development of learning models, especially those related to performing arts. The online class system should not be an obstacle for performing arts innovations in the form of virtual drama performances. The importance of these issues becomes the reason why this research is conducted.

Based on the explanation above, this research intended to examine 1. The implementation of Virtual Project-Based Learning model in the English Drama Course; 2. The response of English Language and Literature students to the implementation of the Virtual Project-Based Learning model in English Drama Course.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

There are several studies that discussed the application of Project-Based Learning in classroom learning. One of them by Imam Baihaki with the research title "Pembelajaran Drama dengan Metode *Role Playing* Berbasis *Project Learning* bagi Mahasiswa PSBI Universitas Tidar" (2019). Baihaki provides stage experience for his students through the Role-Playing method to help students explore acting in drama performances. In addition, to apply the theory that has been learned by the students. This study aimed at giving students another level of experience by learning drama through Role-Playing method. This research used qualitative method by means of observations and library study. The results showed that after learning drama through Role Playing model students become more confident to act and capable to conduct a drama performance.

Another research is a thesis written by Adelia Frans Setyaningtyas with the title “Pembelajaran Apresiasi Drama dengan Model *Project Based Learning* di SMA Negeri 2 Wonogiri” (2013). This study aims to determine the factors that support the success of the Project-Based Learning model in learning drama appreciation. The researchers used survey method. The results showed that there are several factors that support successful learning, such as competent teachers and a good planning in RPS, enthusiastic students, learning material, evaluation of learning process and product, collaborative learning, etc.

The latest research was conducted by Tseng Chia-Ti under the title “Drama-Based Group Projects in EFL Classroom” (2021). This study examined the effectiveness of using drama-based group projects in EFL class to learn English. This research conducted by means of observations, questionnaires and interviews. The results showed students’ improvement in language skills as well on their awareness and understanding of the pragmatic aspects on the target language use.

This research has a different approach in applying PBL, mainly because the project model applied was in the form of virtual drama performances carried out from students’ homes using the digital platform, considering that the learning process is still conducted online during the pandemic. Therefore, the method was relatively new, especially in the learning process of the English Drama course.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study used mixed methods which combined qualitative and quantitative approaches. The subjects or population of this study were fourth-semester students (39 students) of class AG 5/6 of English and Literature Department of Adab and Humanities Faculty, UIN Alauddin Makassar. The object of the research was English Drama Course using a Project-Based Learning model in the form of virtual drama performances. The research took place online for one semester.

The research technique was carried out by observation, interviews, surveys, questionnaires, and document analysis to answer the research questions. This study used a Project-Based Learning approach, “Project-based learning is a student-centered form of instruction which is based on three constructivist principles: learning is context-specific, learners are involved actively in the learning process and they achieve their goals through social interactions and the sharing of knowledge and understanding” (Cocco, 2006). Furthermore, there are several criteria in Project-Based Learning, one of which is stated by Stoller (2006): must be both process-oriented and product-oriented; students must have a say in shaping the process and product; must encourage skill integration; must give students support in both language and content learning; students must work in groups/pairs/teams as well as on their own; must require students to be responsible for their learning in the target language; must allow for time to focus on language and direct teaching if needed; must result in a final, tangible product; must conclude with students' reflection on both process and product.

The implementation phase of this research was divided into three stages: (1) preliminary study, (2) model implementation, and (3) model evaluation.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

This Virtual Project is a trial for Project-Based Learning (PBL) in English Drama Course, considered this method has never been done before. Through the implementation of the virtual form, we could see whether it will be as effective as when it’s done offline as the previous performances.

There were three stages carried out in this drama performance, which will be discussed as follows.

### **1. Preliminary Study**

The preliminary stage was carried out for a total of the first 7 weeks during online class meetings. This stage includes preparation and surveys related to students' initial understanding of English Drama through interviews and distributing questionnaires. The fourth-semester students of class AG 5/6 were asked whether they know about plays written or produced by British or American writers. The answer was the students had very little understanding of western playwrights. When the researcher mentioned examples of William Shakespeare and his works, the students only know Romeo and Juliet Drama. Therefore, the researcher introduced several types of scripts including the works of William Shakespeare for students to study. Students were also explained about the plan for Virtual PBL as an important part of the English Drama course this semester in the form of drama/theater performances as the result of its final project.

In the preliminary stage, interviews and initial surveys were also conducted to the students as the research subject. Students were interviewed 2 questions, the first is whether they know the definition of drama. Some only answered Korean drama, which is popular nowadays. However, the drama referred to in this course is totally different from television drama, which is a stage art drama that is performed directly to the audience. Students were given an explanation of these differences. The second, students were asked if they knew the elements of drama as important elements that build a drama story and all students were silent and unable to answer. This means they did not understand drama theory. Starting from the initial interview results, which turned out to be unexpected because of the lack of knowledge and experience of the students in drama, the researcher then provided material on drama theories from the book *Understanding Drama* (Shivaji University, 2015: 6-10), about the meaning of drama and how to understand drama through drama elements.

After giving the basic material about drama, a survey was conducted by distributing questionnaires to research subjects. One of the results is: after explaining the drama material, 100% of the 40 respondents answered that they understood the meaning of drama, and for the second question, 77.5% of respondents understood the material elements of drama, and only 22% answered that they did not understand. These results showed that the introduction of drama material has been successfully conducted in the early stages of learning English Drama.

### **2. Model Implementation**

The second stage is the implementation of the model which includes the stages of material selection, rehearsing/training, and the last drama performance. Students were explained about the importance of Project-Based Learning approach which characterizes "must be both process-oriented and product-oriented" (Stoller, 2016). This characteristic is very suitable for the implementation of virtual drama performance, students learn during the process and target to achieve the product goals which is drama performance.

The students chose the script "A Midsummer Night's Dream" by William Shakespeare to be performed. Students were also directed to work together as a group to be able to coordinate and manage their own and their groups to achieve the common goal, as the Project-Based Learning principle "students must work in

groups/pairs/teams as well as on their own". In addition, students of the drama performance group were given the responsibility of choosing or volunteering as a drama crew, namely the director who is responsible for leading the whole drama performance. The director was assisted by 2 artistic crews, who arrange costumes, music/sounds, and other general equipment. In the learning process, students were given the responsibility and trust to manage drama projects to be successful as the learning objectives, which emphasize in the process and the final result as stated by Stoller (2016) "must result in a final, tangible product". Students have explained the tasks and schedule of exercises before the performance.

The arranged timetable was the first 8 weeks for drama theory and the last 8 weeks of a total of 16 online class meetings in the form of rehearsing for drama performances at the end of the meeting. This schedule is in line with the principle of PBL which "must allow for time to focus on language and direct teaching if needed". The Researcher was involved in the process. The early process was conducted for 7 weeks. The next step is the rehearsing process includes reading which was carried out for 3 weeks.

Reading is the process to understand the script according to each student's role, to learn the character of each player. Reading was led by a director and supervised by the researcher. Reading was conducted from the beginning of the script until the end of the dialogue. Because the original script is too long to be performed by the students, so they were assigned to rewrite and adapt the script by taking the important elements of the script and compressing it to become more suitable for them and should only last for a maximum of 45 minutes when it is performed. The idea was to avoid the boredom of the audience if watching a drama for more than 60 minutes. In addition, the limited rehearsal time did not allow for the production of a long script.

The Reading practice was conducted online via the Google Meet application. Because the performance will only be held virtually, the researcher emphasizes the importance of the voice character, sharp expressions, and bold movements of the actors during the performance. Another important element is also regarding blocking or the position of the actor on the stage. Blocking is adjusted to the shape of the stage, position with another actor, acting positions, etc. In addition, timing and rhythm also should be considered in every move, how the actor manages the time/tempo of acting and rhythm. This part is crucial because it will affect the mood of the actors and the audiences, the harmony in delivering the story content, will determine the tension or emotion of the entire story. The wrong timing will have a fatal impact on the performance. All of these techniques were taught in the form of a seminar.

Before the General Rehearsal, the researcher gave a seminar to all the fourth-semester students, classes AG I/2, AG ¾, and AG 5/6 about Theory and Practice of Drama. This material is important as reinforcement for students since every process conducted online. At the 14th meeting, students who were better at acting with their respective roles and dialogues were instructed to do a General Rehearsal led by the director. General Rehearsal on the 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting includes the whole process of acting the entire script of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* including using costumes, properties, and so on. Since internet connection has always become an issue during online classes, especially students from the rural areas, so the students only used recorded video to capture their acting from home complete with costumes and makeup. The videos then were collected and combined and an editing process was carried out to make an interesting tape until it became a complete performance of the drama "*A Midsummer Night's Dream*".

On the 16th week, the students presented their virtual drama performance as the culmination of the project combined with a national literature seminar. The festival was called "The 2nd Enlite Fest 2021". The virtual drama "A Midsummer Night's Dream" by students of IV AG 5/6 was performed on zoom on July 4, 2021, and lived on YouTube via Fayus Learning Channel. The seminar and drama performance have been able to increase the interest of the students and motivate them to appreciate and love literature which can be seen from the number of participants who attended the seminar enthusiastically. More than 200 students joined the webinar that day. The drama performance was successfully executed both in terms of process and result. The literature festival has become a medium to accommodate and appreciate the student's creativity which is essential in building students' character.

The virtual drama has become a performance that can be enjoyed by its audience. These results were conveyed in the researcher's interview session with the MC (host) of The 2nd Enlite Fest 2021. In terms of acting, students were able to use English properly, speaking each of its dialogues properly in the drama A Midsummer Night's Dream. Students were also able to appreciate and explore their respective roles, provide good acting and show sincerity in the process and result. The audiences were also able to understand the story and enjoy the virtual drama staged by the students. Therefore, the purpose of implementing virtual Project Based Learning can be said to have been effective and successful. The results of these observations were conveyed by the researcher after watching students' performance.

### **3. Model Evaluation**

The last stage of the entire process and results of the project implementation is model evaluation. Whether a program works effectively or not, it must go through an evaluation stage to create good learning products and measurable success so the project can be implemented again in the following years. In this study, the existing research data was collected for analysis, and then the project model was evaluated based on student responses to the implementation of the project. This is in line with PBL's characteristic "must conclude with students' reflection on both process and product". From the student's response, we can evaluate whether the method of learning model that has been carried out has been successful or not. Considering during the pandemic when staging activities were only done virtually, which is different from previous years, where students can act on the real stage in groups.

Another characteristic of a successful PBL is "must encourage skill integration" where the implementation of this virtual drama has combined and integrated various student skills, especially student soft-skills, such as English skills, acting/role-playing skills, and as a process has developed students' organizational management skills. Students have been able to coordinate activities through solid team performance. As a team, the students were proved to be able to present a virtual work of drama in a slick and interesting performance video. Students have done their dialogue, role-play and put on some make-up and costumes according to their roles through directed management under the director and artistic team. So it can be concluded that their process as an individual and a group has been successful in carrying out virtual drama projects according to the direction of the lecturer. This process has also supported the nature of PBL "must give students support in both language and content learning".

In addition, project evaluation was carried out through distributing questionnaires to research subjects after class action. The evaluation questionnaire was given at the end of the activity after the virtual drama ended. There were 39 respondents

filled out the questionnaire consisting of students IV AG5 and IVAG 6. An evaluation was carried out on the implementation of PBL Virtual Drama. The results obtained can be described as follows: A total of 79.5% responded that the Practicum Preparation Phase was suitable to the plan or concept and the remaining 20.5% considered it less, meanwhile none of the respondents answered the option 'unsuitable'. As for the implementation, 69.2% of the respondents or as many as 27 students answered that the implementation had complied with the regulations (according to the plan, schedule, theme/concept), while the remaining 12 people or 30.8% of other students answered less, and no one chose 'not complied'.

On the question of the Practicum Implementation Phase (designing activities) as many as 51.3% answered suitable, while 43.6% less and only 5.1% or 2 respondents answered not suitable. Then as much as 59% answered that it was suitable and 41% answered that less and 2.6% answered that it was not suitable to the question of the relationship between drama theory and practice. In the final practicum stage, 66.7% of respondents answered that the use of time was according to the schedule, while 33.3% answered that it was less and no one answered not according to schedule.

From the series of questionnaires, it can be seen the majority of the respondents assessed that the implementation of PBL virtual drama has been successfully executed according to the stages planned that have been agreed upon in the classroom. Those were including project planning, implementation, and evaluation. Likewise, the lecturer's monitoring response to the project. Students assessed that the lecturers had been involved in the project process and that there was a positive correlation between the theory and drama practice/projects that were in sync with the process of learning English Drama. Almost no respondent answered that the implementation of the project was not suitable according to the plan.

Analyzing that the majority gave 'a suitable' response means that the project implementation has been successful according to the objectives and plans of the researcher. This claim is supported by the answers to the essays given by the respondents. From the answers to the essay, the respondents agreed that the implementation of the virtual drama project had been successful. This result is certainly encouraging considering the long process that was passed and strived for the goal of this project.

The evaluation in terms of the process obtained answers: On the question of team coordination during online projects, 43.6% answered that it was suitable, while 59% answered less. This means that online projects experience problems in coordination between one student and another as a team. This was influenced by many factors, the internet network, the distance from one another which impacted in difficulties to do joint practices or direct meetings for discussion or rehearsal. This becomes another obstacle in the process of PBL.

In teamwork (cooperation) during project implementation (according to their respective duties, principals, and functions) 56.4% answered that they were appropriate, 43.6% answered quite appropriate and 2.6% answered that they were not. Here the answer is positive because most students have played a role and were responsible for their respective duties which are important elements in the implementation and success of a project, especially with online project challenges. From this process, students learn about production management, especially drama/theatre production. Most of the students (more than 90%) gave positive responses and impressions both in terms of process and implementation with some technical criticisms on the implementation,



which is a natural thing to happen. There were no significant obstacles that occurred during the project.

From the project observations, it is undeniable that the implementation of a new project, with new models and approaches in teaching especially in the English Drama, has faced some challenges and problems both for Lecturers and students. The problems and obstacles faced include the pandemic situation which effected the process for students and lecturers to meet. All activities were carried out online. Students found it difficult to gather for a drama rehearsal when communication, interaction, and coordination will be more effective when done directly face to face. The pandemic has pushed everyone to change the way we live and interact, to use digital media as a medium to interact with one another.

The limited internet network in rural areas also adds to the challenges for students. Not all students have good internet access, quota, or network. Therefore, coordination between students is often hampered, especially for working on the costume, equipment, editing, or the process of taking videos. Lecturers were also limited in controlling the student's project process directly, it can only be done via zoom or another digital platforms like Whatsapp group. Another obstacle is the limited budget, the costumes, make-up, or other equipment for student performances were only provided in modest ways. The splendor and sophistication of property in drama performances generally cannot be accommodated. It was not permissible to rent a theater or fancy building that usually makes the performance more sacred. In addition, partial video fragments were difficult for students to edit, especially by non-professional video editors, so the quality of the video is still not optimal.

In terms of acting, as amateur actors, students were still unable to play roles like the professionals, especially because they couldn't act face to face directly so lack of connection and emotions. These obstacles were faced mainly due to online, long-distance training, without long assistance from professional trainers simultaneously. The short time of practicing was also one of these obstacles because generally, a professional theater prepares for a minimum of 6 months of practicing and organizing, but this class only had 16 meetings or 4 months in total.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Virtual Project-Based Learning model in learning English Drama for students of English Language and Literature class IV AG5/6 has been successfully carried out. This result can be seen from the implementation of the project that connected with the target and objectives of the implementation which has been set and approved by all students. Virtual projects were possible to implement with digital platforms and a good internet connection as the medium. Students have honed their various skills which can enrich their multiple-intelligence. Meanwhile, based on the results of the evaluation, it was found that students gave positive responses to the implementation of the Virtual Project-Based Learning model in the English Drama Course.

Even so, several obstacles were recognized as challenges for project implementation, especially because of the situation during the pandemic, various online media were utilized in quite minimal resources. However, from the limited time, place, and resources, students were able to carry out a virtual drama project successfully. One of the determinants is a project needs a good and fixed plan, control, and support by sufficient systems and various resources or media. Thus, the virtual drama performance becomes a place for students to express themselves, understand drama theory through

role-playing practice so that students gain a thorough understanding of the English Drama course, which is a combination of English lessons and drama performance.

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