

STUDENT'S AND TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF HYFLEX LEARNING IN ENGLISH READING INSTRUCTION AT INDONESIAN VOCATIONAL SCHOOL: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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Abstract:

This study investigates the experiences of both students and teachers in applying the HyFlex model for English reading instruction in Indonesian vocational schools. A qualitative interview method was employed to gather data from participants, which were then analyzed using thematic analysis guided by Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory. The results indicate that HyFlex learning offers greater flexibility, enhances student motivation, and supports the development of reading skills. Nevertheless, several challenges were identified, including unstable internet connectivity, limited technological resources, and issues related to student discipline. The findings emphasize the crucial role of adequate technological infrastructure and effective pedagogical preparation in ensuring the successful implementation of the HyFlex model.

Keywords:

Experiential learning,
HyFlex, English
Reading, Vocational
School



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INTRODUCTION

English plays an important role in today's global education environment. The ability to read in English is not only essential for communication but also for accessing global knowledge, academic resources, research findings, and broader career opportunities. In the era of digitalization and globalization, English literacy has become one of the key competencies needed by students to participate actively in academic and professional contexts.

However, teaching English reading in Indonesia still faces several challenges. Many students experience difficulties in comprehending English texts effectively. These difficulties are influenced by various factors, such as limited learning resources, less effective teaching methods, and differences in students' abilities, motivation, and learning preferences. In vocational schools, these challenges become more complex because students are expected to develop both academic literacy and vocational competencies simultaneously.

Along with the rapid development of technology and changes in educational practices, learning methods have also transformed significantly. One learning approach that has gained increasing attention is HyFlex learning. HyFlex, or Hybrid-Flexible learning, combines face-to-face and online learning environments, allowing students to choose how they participate in the learning process according to their needs and circumstances. This flexibility provides opportunities for more personalized and accessible learning experiences.

The HyFlex model offers several potential benefits for English reading instruction. By integrating technology into the learning process, HyFlex learning can increase students' motivation, participation, and engagement. It also enables students to access a wider variety of learning resources, such as digital texts, instructional videos, online discussions, and interactive exercises, which may enrich students' reading experiences and improve comprehension skills (Allen & Davies, 2009).

Despite the growing use of HyFlex learning in various educational contexts, research on its implementation in Indonesia remains limited, particularly in vocational schools and English reading instruction. Most previous studies Nussli & Oh (2024) have focused on higher education settings or general online learning practices, while little attention has been given to how HyFlex learning is implemented in vocational high schools, where students have unique academic and practical learning needs. In addition, limited studies have explored the experiences of both teachers and students in applying HyFlex learning to English reading activities in the Indonesian vocational education context. This gap highlights the need for further investigation into the effectiveness and practical implementation of HyFlex learning in vocational English classrooms.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the implementation of the HyFlex model in English reading instruction at vocational high schools in Indonesia. Specifically, the study investigates how teachers and students experience the use of HyFlex learning in reading classes and examines its potential contribution to improving students' reading engagement and literacy skills. It is expected that this study will provide meaningful insights into the development of innovative and flexible English learning practices in vocational education. The research question is stated as: How do students and teachers experience English reading instruction through the HyFlex mode?

Literature Review

Understanding and Concepts of the HyFlex Model

The HyFlex (Hybrid-Flexible) model is an approach that combines learning methods stare face as face-to-face and online, delivering flexibility to students to choose a method to study the most suitable to their needs. Bonk and Graham (2012) defined the HyFlex model as the integration of learning traditional and digital are possible participation of students in a way simultaneously or alternate in various learning modes. This model is designed to increase accessibility, engagement, and results. Students utilize technology education optimally. As defined and applied by Beatty (2006), learning mixture hyperflex is a combination of hybrid learning and learning flexibility. Learning hybrid entered as

content classes offered Good in a way, start advanced or online. Temporary flexibility was introduced because the ability to choose what is combined means learning is placed in the hands of each student, who can choose sustainably. Good for presenting online or in a way that starts an advanced class (Beatty, 2014).

Students not only can choose to come up with a method that surpasses advanced traditional methods but also can choose to join in synchronous, however, distance learning remotely, via a video conferencing platform. Besides, they possibly choose to finish the exercise through asynchronous online learning on Sunday. (More so again, after choosing a session class, students are given the same choice for every session class next (Miller et al., 2021) . This format offers students for choice of what learning mixture is for them, and provides them flexibility for students facing constraint changes like work, schedule, challenging family, illness, or tons challenge other. Give students choice and autonomy, which are things that are in harmony with the frequent demands faced by student maturity (Malczyk, 2019a), as well as technology that students routinely encounter in life daily (Miller, Risser, & Griffiths, 2013).

Beatty (2010) elaborates on several mixed core principles of Effective HyFlex in learning, which include 1) choice of learner, 2) equality, 3) can be used return, and 4) accessibility. Choice learners have the power to decide, like what blended learning holds in the hands of each student. Providing students with strength is very important, and is the “flexible” part of the model. Equality guides teaching because faculty must design alternative approaches to challenge learning students in order for them to still remain involved, regardless of the selected modality. Can used return is the principle that as students develop and utilize artifacts such as videos, podcasts, discussion post boards, etc., they consume and produce valuable learning sources Power regardless of the selected modality, for producing or consuming them. Lastly, accessibility underlines service to students in accordance need their needs. If they cannot present in an advanced way, they need a worthy alternative. If their possible internet connectivity is unreliable, another alternative is required.

Each principle returns to the core principles of the HyFlex learning model mix, utilizes technology through learning hybrid, and provides students more flexibility big with giving them a learning sustainable chance to choose the modality most appropriate learning for them at the moment. Whereas discussion of learning models can be found in the publication at the beginning of 2006 (Beatty, 2006), the literature is not extensive and deep education work social almost no. There is. Need to be noted that the application moment is limited on purpose to give a definition-based learning mixture HyFlex and to apply the use of pilot from approach in the arrangement of education social work.

HyFlex Model Implementation in Learning

A study conducted by Beatty (2019) shows that implementation of the HyFlex model needs careful planning, esp in the matter of designing curriculum and providing source Power technology. Teachers must be ready to serve material in two different formats stare face to face-to-face and online, with the same quality. According to Kohnke & Moorhouse (2021) The success of the HyFlex model is highly dependent on the support of adequate technology, such as a Learning Management System (LMS) platform, multimedia devices, and stable internet access.

Application HyFlex also features a series of challenges Santandreu Calonge et al (2023) and opportunities in matter infrastructure, technical, design room class, and room study.

On one side, flexibility HyFlex requires schools and institutions tertiary for invest in infrastructure, often expensive technologies, such as equipment quality video conferencing and System Management Learning (LMS), to support smooth communication and delivery of content. Apart from that, the design room class must consider important factors like acoustics (Baker et al., 2024), lighting, and placement of the camera to ensure fair engagement. Good for participants not to advance too far or distance far. On the other hand, HyFlex offers the opportunity to think about returning room learning traditional (and in-room teaching/facilitation. Institutions can adopt a spatial layout Versatile, easy classes adaptable, and inclusive, accommodating students physically and virtually. Additionally, HyFlex pushes instructors to attend courses/workshops to develop sustainable and/ or explore approaches to pedagogy, such as learning strategies, working team stare face-to-face and online, and flip room classes, for maximizing engagement and interaction in all modalities.

Heather (2023) describes room learning as something intrinsic, mutually connected, and mutually dependent component more ecosystem large consisting of various element keys: students, teachers (how they interact, in a way synchronous and asynchronous, respectively individual or group), pedagogical strategies (e.g., learning based cases, lectures, work same, result expected learning, etc.), tools learning technologies system management, camera, live poll, board digital writing, applications, etc.) and furniture (chairs, podiums, etc.). The opinion is that the main focus needed is on point meetings between both of the tasks (and activities Study teaching) requested for students and elements design in its physical and social domains. Thinking about design intentionally and strategic space (Malczyk, 2019 ; Nathan & Lakshmy, 2022) Selection technology and pedagogy are important for ensuring: a) engagement, persistence, satisfaction, and learning, b) an equitable learning experience, and c) participation all over the student.

Learning to Read English at School Intermediate Vocational (SMK)

Learning to read English in vocational schools has characteristics related unique needs of vocational students. According to Heriansyah (2016), vocational school students need the ability to read English not only for academic needs but also to understand material relevant to technical and vocational skills in the field. Therefore, the method of applied learning must accommodate the need for this specific skill.

Studying the English language can become a challenging task for students School Intermediate Vocational (SMK) in Indonesia because of various factors. Several problems generally possible they face include: Limited English: English Possible No Language Mainly used at home or in society. Limited exposure. This can cause a lack of familiarity with language and sounds, which complicates things for students in understanding Skills, reading Fan & Yan (2020) . Next reported (Cirocki & Farrell, 2019) factor the i.e., Source no power adequate: Vocational school in Indonesia is possible. No, always does not always have access to material reading. Language: Adequate English, like books, articles, or source digital power. Lack of this can hinder the ability of students

to practice and develop Skills, read and understand them in a way effectively. System phonetics is foreign: English own system of different phonetics from Indonesian. Control alphabet Language English and its corresponding sounds can become a challenge, so difficult for students to solve the current code word read.

Empirical evidence is also shown by Nurweni & Read (1999) That factor, namely, grammar and structure, Sentence: grammar and structure sentence Language English different in a significant way from Indonesian. Students may possibly have difficulty understanding rules and applying them at the Correct moment, which can influence understanding. A temporary report (Skarpaas & Hellekjær, 2021) that is, a lack of cultural reading: In some cases, perhaps no. There is strong reading in the environment or school. The absence of encouragement for reading for pleasure can impact the negative motivation of students to train to read in the English language.

Experience Learning

David A. Kolb's Experiential Learning, introduced in 1984, is a theory that emphasizes learning importance of experience directly as a base for learning and development. This theory is based on the idea that individuals study through cycles involving four stages: 1) Experience Concrete, Observational Reflective, Conceptualization Abstract, and Experimentation Active. Experience Concrete: at this stage, the individual is involved directly in experiencing a new situation. This can form a practical activity, meeting with a new situation, or participation in an activity, 2) Observational Reflective: after concretely experiencing something, the individual then ponders the experience. At this stage, they observe and identify what happened, consider various perspectives, and evaluate results from experience, 3) Conceptualization Abstract: at this stage, individuals develop a draft or theory based on the reflection they experience. They try to understand patterns or underlying principles, experience them, and integrate new knowledge with existing knowledge, 4) Experimentation Active: At this stage, individuals apply a draft or theory that they have developed to try new ways in a real situation. They endeavor to see how to draft the works in practice and test the hypothesis (David A. Kolb, 1984).

METHOD

Context and Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design using semi-structured interviews to explore the experiences and perceptions of teachers and students regarding English reading instruction through the HyFlex mode in Indonesian vocational high schools. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences within a flexible and technology-supported learning environment.

The study was conducted over a three-month period at a vocational high school in Indonesia using purposive sampling. The participants consisted of 20 twelfth-grade students and 2 English teachers who had implemented HyFlex learning in English reading classes. The selection of twelfth-grade students was based on the consideration that they had sufficient learning experience and readiness to participate in technology-based instruction before entering higher education or the workforce. In addition, the vocational school context was chosen because English instruction in vocational education emphasizes both academic literacy and workplace readiness.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted both face-to-face and online. Each interview lasted approximately 30–45 minutes and was audio-recorded with participants' consent. The researcher used a flexible interview guide that allowed participants to explain their experiences openly and in depth. The interview questions focused on four main themes: (1) participants' experiences in English reading instruction through HyFlex learning, (2) perceptions of the advantages and challenges of HyFlex learning, (3) the role of teachers in supporting the learning process, and (4) strategies and activities used to enhance the effectiveness of English reading instruction.

Examples of questions addressed to students included their experiences in managing face-to-face and online learning, the challenges encountered during HyFlex instruction, and their perceptions of the effectiveness of the learning model. Meanwhile, the questions directed to teachers focused on their experiences in implementing HyFlex learning, students' responses to the model, challenges encountered during implementation, and strategies used to increase student engagement in English reading activities.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis process involved several stages, including transcribing the interview data, repeatedly reading the transcripts, identifying significant codes, grouping the codes into major themes, and interpreting the meaning of each theme. This method was used to identify patterns in participants' experiences and perceptions regarding the implementation of HyFlex learning in English reading instruction.

This approach encourage the researchers to obtain rich and contextual data regarding the implementation of HyFlex learning in Indonesian vocational schools, including issues related to technological readiness, instructional support, implementation challenges, and the experiences of teachers and students throughout the learning process. Therefore, this study is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the application of HyFlex learning in the context of vocational education in Indonesia.

Recruitment participants

Before doing the Work field empirical, for recruiting participants, we held a meeting beforehand with six (6) English teachers. We explain the informed consent form and distribute it to them via WhatsApp chat. Seven (7) class XII vocational school students, consisting of four female students and 17 male students, in fact, volunteered to participate. Twenty-one student participants. This takes major accountancy. Age they range between 16-18 years. We use coding for anonymizing the Name participant study. For consideration of ethics and privacy, the data is presented as X-1, X-2,..., X-7 in the form quoted in native Indonesian from the interview directly in Indonesian, as long as not more than 60 minutes.

Data Analysis

The researchers analyzed the collected empirical data qualitatively and categorized them using an analysis coding theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This involved repeated reading and analysis of data to identify patterns, themes, and insights. This process needed an inspection to repeat and check the data through reading repetition and comprehensive analysis. The goal was to see recurring patterns, identify themes thoroughly, and extract meaningful insight from moderate information considered. Through a systematic and comprehensive approach, the method aimed to reveal connections hidden, trending, or knowledge-embedded value in the data set, to increase understanding and facilitate making the right decision. This owns lots of interpretation guided by the framework theory of experiential learning from David A. Kolb (1984) which emphasizes the importance of experience as base learning. Kolb's learning consisted of four stages: experience concrete, reflection observational, conceptualization abstract, and experimental active (see Table 1).

Table 1. Experiential Learning

NO	KOLB'S LEARNING STAGE	INTERPRETATION
1	Concrete Experience	1. Engaging in something activity or experiencing reality. 2. Individuals experience situations new or interpret existing experiences.
2	Reflection Observational	1. Individuals ponder new experiences just experienced. 2. The focus is on observation and analysis from various corners. 3. Individuals Possibly take notes on what happened, how they feel, and the impact of actions taken.
3	Conceptual Abstract	1. Engaging in making concepts and generalizations from experience. 2. Individuals develop theories or models to explain observations and reflections that have been made. 3. Focus on the formation of an understanding of theoretical principles.
4	Experiment Active	1. Individuals apply theories or models that have been developed for the situation. 2. It involves testing new ideas and seeing results from actions taken. 3. Individuals use understanding to plan and do activities with new

Source: David A. Kolb (1984)

This coding helps us catch several emerging findings related to the question study. We transcribe interviews and compare the response bait back from each participant to identify similarities and differences. To ensure thorough and consistent analysis, we repeatedly reviewed question research, data collection, and framework theory, going back and forth between questions (Widodo, 2014). The analysis process covers data recognition, creation categorization, beginning, completion pattern, making a report ending, and synthesis categorization that has been perfected, as well as insights gained from data analysis, so give description comprehensive and conclusive on findings.

To increase credibility and trust analysis qualitatively, we conduct an iterative dialogue between researchers and participants for analysis and interpretation of confirmatory data

through session provision. Dependency in the study This addressed through a strict thematic methodology, coding strictly thematically, to ensure consistency and reliability in data collection and analysis. The explanation is detailed and transparent regarding the research process moment, and the possible reader evaluates the application findings in a similar context. After the analysis process, it is important to involve participants in session debriefing, which is in session they are given a summary of insights and patterns main results obtained from the contributions. This matters. Not only works as a checking member, but it also delivers a chance for participants to validate the accuracy and relevance of the interpretation made from their data. The session provision growth approach is collaborative and transparent, enabling participants to share perspectives, correcting the potential for misinterpretation, and offering outlook addition (Kaimaxi & Lakioti, 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Concrete Experience

The interview with teacher PW revealed that HyFlex learning provided significant flexibility for students and enabled them to remain engaged in learning despite geographical or time limitations. According to the teacher, students could choose whether to participate in face-to-face or online classes based on their individual circumstances, which increased accessibility to English reading instruction. Teacher PW also emphasized that one of the major strengths of HyFlex learning was its ability to accommodate diverse student needs and learning preferences. This flexibility allowed students to manage their learning schedules more independently while still accessing the same instructional materials. Such findings indicate that HyFlex learning may support more inclusive learning environments, particularly for vocational school students who often face different personal and academic challenges.

However, the findings also revealed several important implementation challenges. The teacher identified unstable internet connectivity, unequal access to technological devices, and difficulties maintaining balanced interaction between online and face-to-face students as major obstacles. These challenges suggest that HyFlex learning is not merely a matter of combining online and offline instruction but also requires careful classroom management, technological preparedness, and instructional adaptation.

In relation to Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, this stage reflects *Reflective Observation*, in which teachers observed and evaluated students' learning experiences during HyFlex implementation. Through observation, the teacher identified both the strengths and limitations of the learning model, particularly regarding student participation and engagement. Reflection on these experiences allowed the teacher to recognize areas requiring improvement, such as increasing interaction and strengthening technological support.

The findings further highlight the important role of teachers in maintaining meaningful learning experiences in HyFlex classrooms. Teachers were not only responsible for delivering materials but also for facilitating discussion, monitoring student participation, and providing constructive feedback in both learning environments. This indicates that

successful HyFlex implementation requires teachers to possess pedagogical flexibility, digital literacy, and classroom management skills simultaneously. Critically, the findings demonstrate that HyFlex learning may unintentionally create unequal learning experiences when technological resources are not equally accessible to all students. Although the model promotes flexibility, students with poor internet access or limited digital devices may experience lower participation and engagement. Therefore, institutional support, teacher training, and infrastructure development are essential to ensure equitable learning opportunities in HyFlex environments.

Abstract Conceptualization

The interviews with teacher MR showed that HyFlex learning was implemented as a combination of simultaneous face-to-face and online instruction to provide flexibility and accessibility in English reading classes. The teacher explained that the main motivation for adopting HyFlex learning was to accommodate students' diverse needs and learning conditions while simultaneously improving their digital literacy skills.

The findings revealed that students generally responded positively to the implementation of HyFlex learning. Some students felt more comfortable and focused learning from home, while others preferred direct classroom interaction. This suggests that HyFlex learning may support personalized learning experiences by allowing students to select learning modes that match their preferences and circumstances.

Teacher MR also observed improvements in students' reading abilities and learning independence after the implementation of HyFlex learning. Students became more active in exploring learning resources independently and participating in discussions. These findings indicate that HyFlex learning can encourage self-directed learning and active engagement in reading activities. Nevertheless, several challenges remained evident. The teacher reported difficulties ensuring equal learning experiences for online and face-to-face students, especially in maintaining balanced participation and interaction. Technical issues such as unstable internet connections and limited access to devices also continued to affect the learning process. These findings demonstrate that the effectiveness of HyFlex learning is closely connected to technological infrastructure and instructional preparedness.

From the perspective of Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, these findings represent the stage of *Abstract Conceptualization*. At this stage, teachers reflected on their experiences and developed broader understandings regarding effective strategies for HyFlex learning. Based on previous teaching experiences, the teacher identified the importance of flexibility, digital accessibility, and interactive learning activities in supporting students' reading development.

The findings also suggest that HyFlex learning encourages teachers to rethink traditional teaching practices and adapt instructional approaches to more student-centered and technology-integrated learning environments. However, the process requires continuous professional development and institutional support because teachers must simultaneously manage pedagogical, technological, and interactional demands within HyFlex classrooms. Also, the findings demonstrate that HyFlex learning has strong potential to support flexible and interactive English reading instruction in vocational schools. However, its successful implementation requires adequate infrastructure, teacher readiness, student self-

regulation, and continuous pedagogical adaptation to ensure meaningful and equitable learning experiences for all students.

Active Experimentation

The findings from the interview with teacher IR demonstrated how reflective experiences were transformed into new instructional practices within HyFlex English reading classes. The teacher explained that previous teaching experiences and student feedback were used as the basis for designing more interactive and collaborative learning activities.

One example of this innovation was the integration of online breakout-room discussions with face-to-face classroom interaction. Students from both learning modes collaborated in small groups to discuss reading tasks and present their findings to the entire class. This activity increased student participation and encouraged collaboration between online and offline learners. The teacher also emphasized the importance of clear instructions, continuous monitoring, and direct feedback to ensure the effectiveness of these activities. Reflection sessions conducted after the activities helped students evaluate their learning experiences and improve future collaboration. These findings indicate that effective HyFlex learning requires continuous adjustment and experimentation by teachers to maintain student engagement across different learning environments.

Despite these innovations, challenges continued to emerge, particularly regarding coordination between online and face-to-face students. Technical preparation, internet stability, and student participation remained critical concerns during implementation. To address these issues, the teacher prepared technical aspects carefully and involved students in activity planning to increase responsibility and engagement.

In relation to Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, these findings reflect the stage of *Active Experimentation*, in which teachers apply new ideas and strategies based on reflection and conceptual understanding. Teachers experimented with collaborative digital activities, interactive discussions, and technology-supported learning approaches to improve students' reading engagement and comprehension. Critically, the findings suggest that HyFlex learning is not automatically effective simply because technology is integrated into instruction. The effectiveness of the model depends on how teachers adapt learning activities, manage interaction, and respond to students' needs. Without careful instructional planning and continuous evaluation, HyFlex learning may risk creating passive participation, unequal engagement, and fragmented learning experiences between online and face-to-face students.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the implementation of HyFlex learning in English reading instruction at vocational high schools in Indonesia. The findings revealed that HyFlex learning provides significant flexibility for students to participate in either face-to-face or online learning based on their individual needs and circumstances. This flexibility supported

students' engagement, learning autonomy, and digital literacy development through the use of technological platforms such as Zoom and Google Classroom.

The study also found that students generally responded positively to HyFlex learning because it allowed them to manage their learning more independently and access learning materials more easily. In addition, HyFlex learning encouraged students to become more active in reading activities, classroom discussions, and independent learning. Teachers played an essential role in facilitating meaningful interaction, providing accessible learning materials, and designing collaborative learning activities that integrated both online and face-to-face participation.

However, several challenges were identified during the implementation process, including unstable internet connections, limited technological devices, unequal participation between online and offline students, and difficulties maintaining student engagement in virtual settings. These findings indicate that successful HyFlex implementation requires not only technological infrastructure but also strong pedagogical preparation, teacher digital competence, and effective classroom management strategies.

From the perspective of Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, the findings demonstrate how students and teachers moved through the stages of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation during the HyFlex learning process. This suggests that HyFlex learning can support experiential and student-centered learning when supported by reflective teaching practices and interactive learning activities. Practically, this study implies that teachers should develop flexible instructional strategies and strengthen their digital pedagogical skills to manage HyFlex classrooms effectively. Schools need to provide adequate technological infrastructure and continuous technical support, while policymakers should promote professional development programs and institutional policies that support equitable access to HyFlex learning environments.

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