

Getting through Transition Phase between Online and Offline Learning for Students with Disabilities in Artherapy Center Widyatama Bandung

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Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the closure of schools for almost two years. The pattern of changes in community activities, especially in the field of learning, forces students to adapt to the online life pattern where learning is conducted remotely. After getting used to online learning patterns, now along with the new normal era, schools are reopening, and learning systems are now switching to offline learning. Psychologically, the transition from offline to online and then switching back again from online to offline has an impact on the emergence of several changes that occur in children's conditions, such as physical, social, and emotional. The transition from offline to online is even more difficult for students with disabilities because it can lead to mental health difficulties. The Art Therapy Center (ACT) Widyatama, as a special education institution for students with disabilities, must manage transition programs. How do students with disabilities deal with this transition period? How do transition programs help students with disabilities transition? This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data collection methods involving observation, interviews, and documentation. The results demonstrate that the program from ATC can support and assist students with disabilities in transitioning between online and offline learning

1 INTRODUCTION

The presence of COVID-19 has had an impact on various sectors of life, one of which is in the field of education, where the government issued an online learning policy as one of the best solutions to achieve learning goals without involving direct contact with students (Puspitorini, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the closure of schools for almost two years. The pattern of changes in community activities, especially in the field of learning, forces students to adapt to the online life pattern, where learning is carried out remotely. Psychologically, the transition situation from offline to online, then switching back again from online to offline has an impact on the emergence of several changes that occur in children's conditions,

such as physical, social, and emotional. This transition from offline to online is even more difficult for students with disabilities, because this can leads to mental issues. In a normal situation, learning accessibilities, understanding the learning subject are already a big challenge that students with disabilities have to deal with, then online learning makes these obstacle is harder. Students with disabilities are used to ongoing routine activities related to approach and therapy in a short period of time, continuous assistance, all of a sudden all of that has to be stopped and routine activities change. Changes in the learning system, such as physical, social, and mental distancing impacted in mental health. Feeling isolated, anxious, bored, and uncertain. They may feel fear and grief over the impact of the virus on their family (WHO, 2020). The effects on students with disabilities are loss

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interaction, losing meaning of life, frustrated leads to tantrum, anxiety disorder, depression, psychotic condition. Online learning is more difficult to understand.

After getting used to online learning patterns, now along with the new normal era, schools are reopening, and learning systems are now switching back to offline learning. There are pros and cons to online learning systems going offline; among the cons are the unpreparedness of the health protocol application system. The perspective taken is from two aspects; first, the parental aspect, some parents choose for their children to go to offline school, while not a few prefer to continue learning from home with concerns about the corona virus and omicron. Second, from the student perspective, the transition situation from online to offline has an impact on the emergence of several changes that occur in the conditions of students with disabilities, such as physical, social, and emotional.

To cope with this problem, Artheraphy Center Widyatama has programs that bridge the transition from online to offline learning. The Artheraphy Center (ACT) Widyatama, as one of special education institution for students with disabilities has to manage the transition phase with programs. How do students with disabilities deal with this transition period? How do transition programs help students with disabilities transition? The purpose of this study was to determine how the PFP Program can bridge the transition process from online to offline learning for students with disabilities in Artheraphy Centre Widyatama.

2 THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

In this section, will be discussed the description of the term transition phase, online and offline learning, and students with disabilities.

2.1 Transition Phase

According to Bridge (2005), in his book "Managing Transition" the problem faced today is not the complexity of the change, but the ineffective way in managing the changing phase itself. The Bridges Transition Model highlights the difference between change and transition.

"Change" happens to people, while "Transition", on the other hand, is internal: it's what happens in people's minds when facing and experiencing change. This model is used to understand how people feel as they go through

change. This model proposes three stages of transition that people go through when they are faced with change:

1. Ending, Losing, and Letting Go
2. The Neutral Zone
3. The New Beginning

Be sure to avoid trying to jump straight to stage 3, as this will likely lead to resistance, distress and only partially effective change.

Stage 1: Ending, Losing, and Letting Go

People enter this initial stage of transition when they first present themselves with change. This stage is often marked with resistance and emotional upheaval, because people are being forced to let go of something that they are comfortable with or value highly. At this stage, people may experience these emotions: fear, denial, anger, sadness, disorientation, frustration, uncertainty, a sense of loss. People will need to accept that something is ending before they can begin to accept the new idea. Guiding people through stage 1: it is important to accept people's resistance and to understand their emotions. Allow them a time to reflect on the current situation rather than simply demanding that they let go of it. Encourage everyone to talk about their memories to express what they will (and won't) miss, and what they're proud of having achieved. In these conversations, make sure that tutor listen empathically and communicate openly. Emphasize how people will be able to apply their accumulated skills, experience, and knowledge once the change is implemented. Explain what they need in the new environment. People often fear what they don't understand, so the more they are educated about the change situation, the likelier they are to move on to the next stage.

Stage 2: The Neutral Zone

In this stage, people affected by the change are often confused, uncertain, and impatient. Depending on how well the change is managed, they may also experience a higher workload as they get used to new systems and new ways of working. Think of this phase as the bridge between the old and the new – people may still be attached to the old, and it probably won't be clear what the new is. This is a great time to encourage people to try new ways of thinking or working. Guiding people through stage 2: Guidance is incredibly important as people go through this neutral period. This can be a particularly uncomfortable time, because it can feel

like drifting, and it can seem that little progress is being made. What the change is and where is headed may be unclear during the neutral zone, so let them know that it's ok to feel lost or unsettled.

Stage 3: The New Beginning

The last transition stage is a time of acceptance and energy. People have begun to embrace the change initiative. They're building the skills they need to work successfully in the new way, and they're starting to see early wins from their efforts. At this stage, people are likely to experience: high energy, openness to learning, renewed commitment to the group or their role. Guiding people through stage 3: as people begin to adopt the change, it's essential that you help them sustain it.

2.2 Online and Offline Learning

The biggest difference between online and offline learning is the location. With online learning, students can study anytime and anywhere, even in the comfort of your own home. Offline learning requires students to travel to a classroom location and arrive on time. Offline learning is better because it allows students to interact with fellow students in a real-life environment. They can ask questions and solve problems, and they can get one-to-one feedback from your teacher. Another advantage of offline classes is the fact that they are more reliable. Students can also have more personal interaction with the teacher, which is important for student with disabilities.

2.3 Students with Disabilities

Persons with disabilities according to Law 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities are any person who experiences physical, intellectual, mental and/or sensory limitations for a long time in interacting with the environment may experience obstacles and difficulties to participate fully and effectively with other citizens based on equal rights. Equal Opportunity is a situation that provides opportunities and/or provides access for Persons with Disabilities to channel their potential in all aspects of administering the state and society.

Children with disabilities require special treatment because of developmental disorders and abnormalities experienced by them, have limitations in one or several abilities, both physical

and psychological. They can be defined in three categories: (a) In a biological context, they are associated with genetic abnormalities and disorders such as brain injury which results in multiple disability; (b) In a psychological context, in terms of attitudes and behaviour, such as disturbances in learning abilities in slow learner children, disturbances in emotional abilities and interactions in children with autism, speech disorders in children with autism and ADHD; and (3) In the socio-cultural aspect, they are characterized by abilities and behaviour that are not in general, so they require special handling (Desiningrum, 2016).

3 RESEARCH METHODS

This research is using qualitative approach, using case study method with data collection techniques in the form of observations, interviews and documentations.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Artherapy Center Widyatama

Artherapy Centre (ATC) Widyatama was established by Widyatama Foundation in the form of a special vocational education institution for students with disabilities (physical, mental, sensory, intellectual disabilities) with the concept of creative-based education through art and design, that focuses on developing life skills and behaviour through activities based on art, design, psychology, and other sciences. Its vision is to make the ATC Widyatama as an education and job training institution for persons with disabilities who are competent in the fields of art and design in accordance with Indonesia's creative industries. ATC Widyatama provides learning activities program for students with physical or mental disabilities in the middle function to high function categories, aged 16-25 years old, graduated from high school (Equivalent with Inclusive SMALB/SMA). The learning systems in ATC classrooms with audio, visual, visual motor, and language approaches, supported by psychological treatment facilities. Regular activities are directed at building student competency in terms of: (1) Creativity, Invention, Innovation, and Modification; (2) Manual and Digital technical capabilities; (3) Business Plan; (4)

Entrepreneurship; (5) Internship.

ATC Widyatama has three main program's competencies, adapted to the interests and talents of the students, namely: (1) Department of Music: learning process of creating songs, jingles, producing and performing music, opening a great opportunities for students with disabilities to work as musicians in the digital era; (2) Department of Craft: learning activities of processing natural raw materials that can be designed into a work of the craft merchandise industry, aesthetic elements, and textile products, the training activity provides opportunities in the field of entrepreneurship for students with disabilities; (3) Department of Graphic Design: learning activities of processing visuals/images and digital information in Graphic Design has the potential to provide opportunities for students with disabilities to become financially independent.

The learning program in ATC Widyatama is using behaviour treatment based on "Sensation Method". Dr. Anne Nurfarina, S.Sn., M.Sn, founder of ATC Widyatama, mentioned that:

"The Sensation Method was discovered in 2012, through an analysis of the social behaviour of autistic children in the dissertation research process for 7 years. It is proven that these children improve their communication response skills through audio-visual media, so that their cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects can be improved. This method is based on audio-visual media to identify natural stimuli and stimuli formed by the subject as a lesson plan. Those learning includes matters relating to skills and behaviouristic. In its development, the Sensation Method is also appropriate to be applied to students with disabilities with other symptoms, both physical and mental, so that the learning output produces works that are worth selling."

Tips: don't get impatient or try to push people through to stage 3; instead, do what you can to guide them positively and sensitively through the change process.

4.2 ATC Transition Program

The sensation method is applied in the student's daily learning activities program, and every students, practically, need to be assisted and monitored by the lecturer and the trainer. The learning system is more effective in form of face-to-face or together in a classroom with other students. The students consider these learning activities as a routine, consistent activities, which support the improvement of the student's capabilities. As the

pandemic COVID-19 condition forced the system into online learning, the students may feel uncomfortable.

After getting used to online learning patterns, the students have almost two years of learning at home, now along with the new normal era, schools are reopening and learning systems are now switching back to offline learning, ATC Widyatama provides programs to support their students getting through the transitions phase between online and offline learning.

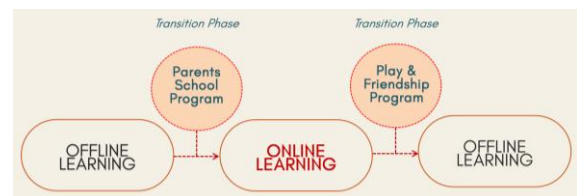


Figure 1: ATC Program for Transition Phase

a) Parent School (PS)

Parent School (PS) in ATC Widyatama is a collaborative-innovative school with the objective of a meaningful and happier family. Parent School as a discussion space to facilitate parents of ATC Widyatama students in providing support for the development of their sons/daughters. The program includes Parenting Classes, Group Counseling, Individual Counseling, Home Visits, and inspiring family shows on the Widyatama Art Therapy Center YouTube channel for students, parents, and families. Inspiring Family is a program on YouTube that covers visits to the families of Widyatama Artherapy Center students to talk with family members about the background of student parenting and development that can inspire other families. The Parenting Class is a learning class for all parents of students in aligning the education and handling of their children at home, which is held once a month. The Counseling Group is attended by a maximum of five participants from parents of students with a more specific discussion theme. Individual Counseling is carried out through referrals from Affective Observers to Psychotherapist Counselors for students who experience certain problems.

The home visit is a program that is carried out by visiting the homes of students who experience certain problems to see the conditions and facilities that can be used as an effort. Home visits are carried out if after individual counseling the affective has not shown improvement. The results of this home visit were made a Semester Learning Plan (RPS)

which was made specifically for these students which involved discussions between the Psychotherapist Counselor, Affective Observer, Teacher, and the parents of the student concerned.

b) Play and Friendship Program (PFP)

The purpose of the program is to answer the challenges of going back to offline learning for students with disabilities, considering four aspects:

- (1) Socio-Emotional Support: helping students to develop their socio-emotional skills when they are back to school, which should be provided by schools through counselling and support along with sessions in managing emotions and rebuilding their social skills, building resilience, and helping them support each other to reconnect and maintain a sense of community;
- (2) Coping Fear and Anxiety: assuring parents that there is nothing to be feared of, fear of meeting new social life, meeting new friends and new environment;
- (3) Adjusting the Environment: After almost two years of schooling at home, going through struggling phase online learning, switching back to offline learning;
- (4) Restoring Routines: as the changing phase from offline to online learning resulted in the students losing of steady routine, affected to their achieved skills, pattern changed, starting over again from the beginning to build the routines.

Table 1: This caption has one line so it is centered.

No	Bridges' Model	Parents School Program	Play & Friendship Program
1	Ending, Losing, and Letting Go	Getting easy with the changing condition, enough information about what to do	Preparing for letting go the things that used to be the habits during online learning
2	The Neutral Zone	Parents cope with the situation, learning program to teach at home	Playing, getting know new friends
3	The New Beginning	Adapt to the new situation. Learning at home using	Feeling relax and calm, comfortable before joining the class

Through the Play and Friendship Program, the students feel that this activities help them to ease their feeling before joining back the classroom and

receiving the learning material.

One of the students of ATC, namely Sonia (Students with disabilities, Autism, Department of Craft, ATC Widyatama, 22 years old), she has already gone through transition from offline to online learning, then now the system is back to offline and she has practiced the Play and Friendship Program as a transition before she starts the regular class. She mentioned that:

"With activity play and friendship, I can interact with other, getting acquainted with new friends, also can play together, can communicate with others. The effect after play and friendship, I feel more excited, getting more friends, more chit chat, I don't feel lonely, and more enthusiast to enter the class and start the lesson. It is so much fun to be together with friends. Online learning was so irritating, just sitting at home, bored, no friend to play with. But now, after play and friendship, I feel so happy."

5 CONCLUSION

From the description mentioned above, can be concluded that students with disabilities need assistance and support to pass through the transitions between online and offline learning. Students with disabilities in ATC Widyatama can deal with the transition phase because ATC provides the program as a solutions to the problem of the transition between online and offline learning.

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