

## Puzzling Hybrid, Hybrid Puzzling

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This paper further develops information from a plenary address given during the inaugural UHAMKA International Conference on English Language Teaching (ELT) and Computer assisted language learning (CALL) (UICELL 2017) in Jakarta, Indonesia, November 23, 2017. This article encourages inquiry into hybrid (blended, connected, etc.) and second language acquisition (SLA) research, teaching, and learning. Panoramic sketches survey current hybrid research and practice. Heeding Fishman and Dede's (2016) advice, readers will be challenged to consider shifting from "educational evolution to transformation and disruption" and "investing in a robust, flexible infrastructure of people and tools" (pp. 1320-1321). Second language (L2) acquisition elements will offer potential to broaden the edges of various landscapes of L2 teaching and learning (e.g., face-to-face, online, and hybrid), while offering avenues of innovative research potential for hybrid types of investigations, in general. Readers will be enjoined to consider macro- and micro- issues where they can puzzle about the creation and development of vibrant (L2) hybrid (blended, connected, etc.) teaching, learning, and research agendas.

Keywords: *hybrid, blended, online, languages, hybrid research*

*Makalah ini lebih lanjut mengembangkan informasi dari alamat paripurna yang diberikan selama Konferensi Internasional UHAMKA perdana tentang Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris (ELT) dan Pembelajaran Bahasa Berbasis Komputer (CALL) (UICELL 2017) di Jakarta, Indonesia, 23 November 2017. Artikel ini mendorong penyelidikan hibrida (dicampur, terhubung, dll) dan penelitian akuisisi bahasa kedua (SLA), pengajaran, dan pembelajaran. Sketsa survei penelitian dan praktik hybrid saat ini. Mengadopsi nasihat Fishman dan Dede (2016), pembaca akan ditantang untuk mempertimbangkan beralih dari "evolusi pendidikan ke transformasi dan gangguan" dan "investasi dalam infrastruktur yang kuat dan fleksibel dari orang dan alat" (pp. 1320-1321). Unsur-unsur akuisisi bahasa kedua (L2) akan menawarkan potensi untuk memperluas berbagai lanskap pengajaran dan pembelajaran L2 (misalnya, tatap muka, online, dan hibrida), sambil menawarkan peluang bagi potensi penelitian inovatif untuk jenis investigasi hibrida, secara umum. Pembaca akan diharapkan untuk mempertimbangkan isu-isu makro dan mikro di mana mereka dapat membuat mempertimbangkan tentang penciptaan dan pengembangan program pembelajaran, pembelajaran, dan penelitian yang bersemangat (L2) hibrida, terhubung.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Online teaching and learning continue to gain momentum worldwide in the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Moving from face-to-face (f2f) to online classes creates opportunities and challenges for both teaching and learning. Incorporating f2f and online approaches, strategies, and techniques generate even more opportunities and challenges for teachers, learners, instructional designers, and learning. Research is then sketched to review current trends in hybrid teaching and learning, and revisiting elements of second language acquisition research and learning. The final section serves as an invitation administrator, among others. Hybrid (blended, connected, etc.) teaching and learning offer spaces for developing and/or changing teaching landscapes and stimulate various learning landscapes for individuals and community. Hybrid language teaching and learning further recognize theoretical and practical conundrums for teachers and learners. In this paper I want to share and encourage ideas where together we begin puzzling hybrid or hybrid puzzling; noting that both “puzzling” and “hybrid” take central focus in our explorations.

### **Theoretical Overview**

Puzzling hybrid or hybrid puzzling is not a solitary action. Going it alone is folly, and professionals need to consider how to theoretically and practically situate questions, queries, and explorations. Social organizational thought influences education throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (e.g., Lortie, 1975; Quintero, 2017; Rosenholtz, 1989; Waller, 1932). More recently, Fishman and Dede (2016) discuss the significance of melding sociology and technology and proffer a socio-technical approach that “asks in what ways the pedagogical approach and technology infrastructure interact such that digital displays and student response systems produce educational outcomes that are different than conventional instruction, and furthermore, what pedagogical approaches best leverage the affordances of these technologies” (p. 1270). Moreover, Brown (2016) acknowledges some further clarity for understanding a socio-technical practice enhancing hybrid learning and teaching: “Blending, on the course program, and institutional levels, is a dynamic process, which includes potential changes to curricular content, pedagogy, ICT infrastructures, student behaviour, faculty attitudes, and organizational conditions” (p. 1). Sociology and socio-technical approaches serve as theoretical grounding to explore interactions within hybrid practices between entities that include but are not limited to people, content, and context.

### **Some Guiding Challenges**

Three guiding challenges create palettes that continually require attention when puzzling hybrid, socio-culturally or otherwise. My experiences have taught me that I am constantly negotiating meaning (e.g., sense-making) about three overarching themes with colleagues and learners: technological change and complexity, hybrid definitions (blended, connected, etc.), and time. These themes visit at each hybrid puzzling or when puzzling hybrid, especially where interactions, f2f or online, among people of any kind are contemplated, developed, and planned.

The first palette focuses on the complexity of technological change. Selwyn (2016) warns that “Technological change is a complex process” (p. 26) where digital technology reconfigures how information and knowledge are created, accessed, and used.

Selwyn further proposes that such actions are rapidly altering cornerstones of education. Similarly, Fishman and Dede (2016) view “Technology as a tool for educational transformation,” where teaching and technologies consider the “adaptations, opportunities, and challenges that new technologies present to and for teaching and teachers” (p. 1269). The complexities of adapting hybrid with technology daily confront teaching and learning; how then are 21<sup>st</sup> Century teachers and learners involving themselves with the various opportunities and challenges of puzzling these concerns? How can puzzling become part of teaching and learning tasks? More importantly, how can teachers and learners view the interactions (either f2f or online) concerning technology and education as part of a metacognitive puzzling process? Technological change enhancing education transformation is not for the faint-hearted. Change and transformation demand community involvement with hybrid instruction; reconfiguring and rethinking actions that teachers and learners daily confront.

The second palette targets a definition for hybrid. The literature is replete with hybrid terms (e.g., blended, connected to, flipped, inverted [e.g., Park, Yu, & Jo, 2016]). Definitions further intensify additional complexity: just how much time should be given to face-to-face and online interactions and activities within one hybrid course? One source continually cited within the literature is that of Allen & Seaman (2013). For instance, Means, Bakia, and Murphy (2014) write: “Finally, the terms “blended” and “hybrid” are used interchangeable to describe a course where at least 30 percent of the content is delivered online but there are face-to-face meetings for at least 21 percent of the content” (Allen & Seaman, 2013, as cited in Means et al., 2014, p.7). Interestingly, the burgeoning literature continues with the conundrum of just what percentage should be f2f and what percentage should be online (e.g., Alammary, Carbone, & Sheard, 2015; Asarta & Schmidt, 2015; Gerbic, 2010; McGee & Reis, 2012; McMurtrie, 2017b; Owston & York, 2018). Seldom is there probing discussion about why and when to use the percentages for either f2f or online learning. Nonetheless, Caulfield (2011) recommends that “A well designed hybrid course is a joint and provocative exploration of the discipline by teacher and learner in which the roles of teacher and learner are fluid—sometimes the teacher takes the role of learner and sometimes the learner takes the role of the teacher” (p. 4). If this is the case, how learners and teachers collaborate, f2f or online, affords a meaning-making-potential between members as they provocatively explore and puzzle hybrid interactions, before, during, and after course sessions. How teachers and students understand why they are either interacting f2f or online in blended instruction requires further intensive examination. How teachers and students negotiate their meaning about and explore blended instruction and its outcomes remain rife for study.

The third palette attends to teachers’ concerns of time involvement when preparing and teaching a hybrid course. Means et al. (2014) comment that “designing and developing online learning experiences are labor-intensive activities often performed under time pressure to be ready for the next academic term” (p. 37). Teachers in various international contexts remind me about the time-pressures that are real to them. Queries surrounding time, workloads, and resources development (Samarawickrema, 2009) abound and become the drivers of specific hybrid teaching and learning environments. Learners’ conceptions of time, workloads, and resources development and implementation seem just as relevant. How are

learners involved with understanding time pressures where hybrid teaching and learning occur?

More importantly, how and when are learners involved in the processes of hybrid teaching and learning? How do teachers and students understand their potential roles when interacting with content, other students, teachers (or facilitators, instructional designers, adjunct faculty) and how do all view time regarding time spent for class, reading materials, teacher and classmate interactions, and using technology resources? McMurtie (2017a) finds that faculty members are skeptical of online learning, “But they think technology can make them better teachers. They want more high-tech tools but prefer not to do anything too complicated with them. They want more research on whether technology improves learning but often rely on colleagues when figuring out what to use” (para 2). Students similarly may be skeptical of online learning, but think technology makes them better learners. Learners, too, might want more high-tech tools but prefer not to do anything too complicated with them. Learners may want technology that improves learning, but how involved do they want to be in figuring out what to use? How do teachers and students (among other stakeholders) negotiate time, workloads, resources development (for teaching *and* learning), and implementation in hybrid (or any other) teaching and learning? These and other questions raise salient hybrid instruction queries involving teachers and learners’ time palette.

These three palettes require perpetual negotiation and sense-making among hybrid teaching and learning communities. Negotiation, as Savignon (1983) reminds is “a process whereby a participant in a speech event uses various sources of information—prior experience, the context, another participant—to achieve understanding” (pp. 307-308). How are any stakeholders negotiating (expressing, and/or interpreting) ideas of integrating technology to their hybrid learning and teaching processes, particularly when contemplating to what extent they are “using technology to *do conventional things better* versus using technology to *do better things*” (Roschelle et al., 2000 as cited in Fishman & Dede, 2016, p. 1269, italics original)? How are stakeholders considering and negotiating various hybrid terms and definitions, concerning themselves with the how and why of what should be done f2f and online? How are f2f and online interactions among people, content, and context promoting, creating, and enhancing outcomes for hybrid teaching and learning? Questions, conundrums, and queries pervade not only hybrid course preparation tasks, but an awareness of negotiation among stakeholders participating in hybrid experiences of any kind. The three palettes offer provision for metacognitive activities that confront and scaffold hybrid courses (both those “in-preparation,” and those “in-progress”).

## **Hybrid Teaching and Learning Research**

Hybrid teaching and learning research has intensified in the early decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (e.g., Bonk & Graham, 2006; Drysdale, Graham, Spring, & Halverson, 2013; Halverson, Graham, Spring, & Drysdale, 2012; Halverson, Graham, Spring, Drysdale, & Henrie, 2014; Means, Bakia, & Murphy, 2014). Research interest in hybrid teaching and learning attends to the conundrums within practical and theoretical hybrid arenas. Halverson and colleagues review an extensive literature that studies hybrid (i.e., blended) learning and identify methodological (empirical, non-empirical, combined) and topical trends (theoretical frameworks and research questions). Their topical trends concerning research questions

include instructional design, dispositions, exploration, learner outcomes, comparison, technology, interaction, and additional minor trends (notably in their latter article the trend exploration “was created to capture the numerous articles focused on exploring and defining the domain of blended learning research” [Halverson et al., 2014, p. 21]).

The three trends discussed in this article include interaction, exploration, and an “additional minor trend” labeled professional development [PD]. To be sure, the other trends are salient and offer grist for theory and practice; nonetheless, space limits discussion. The three trends selected extend issues discussed in the three palettes and attend to practical issues teachers and students seem to be concerned about when participating in hybrid teaching and learning.

Hybrid interactions in the research literature encompass student-student and student-instructor and consider general interactions, collaboration, community, and social presence; a surprising lack of evidence, though, was found for student-content interactions (Drysdale et al., 2013; Halverson et al., 2014; Halverson et al., 2012). Still, as Means et al. (2014) emphasize “learning experiences get implemented with different levels of *student-content*, *student-instructor*, and *student-student interaction*” (p. 13, italics original). Interactions within a hybrid community involve social presence, general interactions, and collaboration among teachers, students, and potentially others. The topics with which stakeholders interact are pivotal to ensuring (online) meaningful exchanges, discussions, and conversations. Yet, how does course content or using various media that share course content fit in the planning process of hybrid teaching and learning? Moreover, how is time allocated, f2f and/or online, for interactions between students and content, students and students, students and teacher? How do those involved with hybrid teaching and learning negotiate, manage these and other types of interactions? There is yet much to research with interactions of all types.

My colleague and I are beginning to examine how students bring their wealth of experiences to an online course and how to promote discussion of background and course content (Kleinsasser & Hong, 2017); our attention to student interactions concerning their background and interests are also starting points for understanding potential hybrid interactions (Kleinsasser & Hong, 2016). Castno-Munoz, Duarte, & Sancho-Vinuesa (2014) suggest “increasing the time spent studying online is only useful when it takes place as some form of interactive learning” (p. 157). If this is the case, online and hybrid teaching and learning interactions need to include at least content, student, and instructor; interactions with content deserving more evidence in burgeoning hybrid research and practices.

The more recent topic of exploration of hybrid learning includes subtopics of its 1) nature and role, 2) benefits and challenges, 3) current trends in and future predictions, 4) persuasion (position) or argumentation for or against, 5) purposes, and 6) transformative potential (Halverson et al., 2014). These themes hold interest for practitioners and researchers, alike. Exploring, scrutinizing, and analyzing hybrid teaching and learning contain rich evidence for the profession (e.g., Bonk & Graham, 2006; Halverson et al., 2014; Means et al., 2014). Teachers and learners’ awareness of hybrid teaching and learning explorations need to be tapped and all stakeholders need to see their inquiry as part of hybrid teaching and learning processes. Exploration and inquiry go hand in hand; how one teaches, how one learns, how one interacts with content, students, and instructors assists in uncovering

the benefits and challenges of hybrid teaching and learning. Through such inquiry, evidence serves as an argument for or against hybrid learning (e.g., Asarta & Schmidt, 2017; Parkes et al., 2015; Owston, York, & Murtha, 2013) and potentially experiences that explore and enhance (or not) successful hybrid teaching and learning.

Professional development [PD] themes in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century highlight professional learning and reflection processes, mediating through facilitation and collaboration, acknowledging school cultures and their macro-conditions, and considering PD effectiveness (e.g., student learning, teachers' changes in cognition, beliefs, and actions, among others [Avalos, 2011]). Hargreaves (2013) admonishes that "the days when individual teachers could just do anything they liked" are obsolete: "Teaching is a profession with shared purposes, collective responsibility and mutual learning" (p. 234). Moreover, Kwo (2013) recommends teacher learning "requires co-construction of perception of problems and changing understanding of long-established assumptions across the professional lifespan" (p. 266). 21<sup>st</sup> Century PD is an individual *and* collective endeavor in f2f, online, and hybrid teaching and learning. Glover, Hepplestone, Parkin, Rodger, and Irwin (2016) support "pedagogy first" when developing technology enhanced learning (of which hybrid is a part). They state: "From the literature it becomes clear that, for technology enhanced learning to have a wide-spread impact, teachers must be fully engaged in its use, and that using their existing practice as the engine of change could be a key" (p. 995). Essential for such a 21<sup>st</sup> Century professional development to be successful, Glover et al., identify "examples should be locally focused," "development should follow a consultative approach," and "resources should be non-prescriptive" (p. 996). These issues hold promise for research and practice with hybrid teaching and learning. Jonker, Marz, & Voogt (2018) discuss tantalizing evidence of teacher educators' identity development transitioning from teaching f2f to hybrid; they identify four positions (i.e., facilitators of student learning, transmitters of knowledge, personal coaches of students, and communicators) reflecting whether teacher educators accept or avoid blended curriculum changes. Although evidence accumulates around the world, there remains yet much to do for a prospering topic mostly hidden in a subtitle labeled "additional minor trends" (Drysdale et al., 2013; Halverson et al., 2014).

## **Second Language Acquisition Research**

Exploration of hybrid teaching and learning offers numerous avenues for research and practice. I would quickly add, that exploration in (online and hybrid) second language acquisition affords additional fertile ground for study and teaching. Savignon's (1983) Kaleidoscope View of Second Language Acquisition reminds everyone about an inquiry into online and hybrid second language acquisition potential. The four major topics of the Kaleidoscope to revisit include *who*, *what*, *where*, and *how* (see Savignon, 1983, p. 57). *Who* refers to learner variable including but not limited to age, sex, formal education, other language code(s), intelligence, needs, attitudes, and personality. *What* consists of areas of communicative competence including grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic. *Where* reminds to be alert to settings and situations (formal/informal, amount of time, role models access to second language, etc.), *How* details strategies and processes (e.g., interaction with L2, learning style, cognitive processes, structuring, practice, and activities). The Kaleidoscope reminds one that second language acquisition processes are also

experiences requiring continual negotiation, expression, and interpretation. Negotiated online experiences in second language acquisition require investigations that study and document technology enriched, hybrid teaching and learning while considering time variables and what online interactions engender appropriate language acquisition processes. There are beginning to appear insights into online and hybrid language teaching, learning, and language teacher professional development (e.g., England, 2012; Filipi, 2017; Hampel & Stickler, 2015; Isbell, Rawal, Oh, & Loewen, 2017; Jimenez & O'Shanahan, 2016; Kleinsasser, 2012a, 2012b; Liu & Kleinsasser, 2014; 2015; Romeo, Bernhardt, Miano, & Leffell, C.M., 2017; Sato, Chen, & Jourdain, 2017; Yi & Anday-Crowder, 2016). Yet, there remains much to do to map landscapes and uncovering boundaries of such evidence when thinking about hybrid second language acquisition, teaching, and learning.

### **Future Research and Practice**

Research and practice in hybrid teaching and learning is a booming commodity (e.g., Bonk & Graham, 2006; Caulfield, 2011; Cuban, 2018; Dziuban, Picciano, Graham, & Moskal, 2016; Graham, 2012; Hampel & Stickler, 2015; Linder, 2017; Means et al., 2013; Selwyn, 2016; Stacey & Gerbic, 2009; Stannard & Matharu, 2015). Nonetheless, Means et al. (2014) caution, “There is a huge gap between the kinds of learning environments we have the scientific and technological capabilities to design and what is typically provided in online [blended] courses (Bakia et al., 2013)” (Means et al., 2014, p. 179). As the profession continues to create and refine definitions for and courses in various hybrid teaching and learning forms, Moskal, Dziuban, & Hartman (2013) remind of a “complex mix of variables that are based at least in part on the culture, resources, and instructional philosophy of the institution and educator” (p. 20). One would want to quickly add learners to such a complexity mix. Additionally, Owston & York (2018) recognize context as an overarching variable that attends to contingencies such as human resources (“e.g., student characteristics and learning preferences, instructor experience and teaching style”), curriculum (“e.g., the nature of the course and instructional goals, online resources, availability of technology”), and institution (“e.g., institutional goals and priorities, quality assurance standards” [Owston & York, 2018, p. 23]). Finally, Brown (2016) suggests that scholars of blended instructional practices (what Brown terms “BIP”) name the relevant systems of their activities where they identify elements, attendant levels of interactions, and sequential ordering of how the system unfolds. These various resources afford seeds to challenge and grow second language acquisition hybrid teaching and learning landscapes. Such landscapes should carefully attend to voices of students (e.g., Manca, Grion, Aermellini, & Devecchi, 2017), among others. Selwyn goes so far to articulate:

In short, we need to change the conversation about technology and education to focus accurately and honestly on matters that concern the majority, and seek to stimulate a better ‘public understanding of technology and education’. *This involves repositioning all students, educators and parents as the subjects (rather than the objects) of digital education.* This involves giving otherwise marginalized voices an agentic role in determining and discussing what digital is, and what it should be. (Selwyn, 2016, pp. 155-156, italics added)

Paraphrasing Krathwohl (1993) then, researchers, teachers, students, instructional designers, among various others creatively combine and negotiate methods in hybrid research and practice in any way that makes the best sense for the hybrid study and teaching that they want to accomplish. Their only limits are their own imagination and the necessity of presenting their findings and relating their teaching and learning convincingly (Krathwohl, 1993, p. 31; see also: Dziuban et al., 2016; Hampel & Stickler, 2015). The imagination of conference goers (as well as those who could not attend) are a great place to start to see second language acquisition hybrid learning and teaching become salient 21<sup>st</sup> century theoretical and practical phenomena.

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