

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, research questions, purpose of the study, the scope of the study, and the significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

In the era of the massive development of technology, many sectors in life have effectively improved, particularly, learning system. Traditional classroom system which requires students' presence physically all the time has continually been shifted to online and blended learning system which allows students to interact more with their peers as well as the instructors aside from regular face-to-face meetings. Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2000), argue that there are mainly three presences that must be exist in the online learning environment, they are; teaching presence, cognitive presence, and social presence.

Teaching presence, which is associated with the role of the instructor in meaningfully designing and organizing the course content, facilitating the discourse and giving proper directions, instructions as well as questions is highly required for learning (Anderson et al., 2001). Eventhough teaching presence can be a shared responsibility for the learning community (Garrison et al, 2000); when it comes to setting up instructional design and organization, it solely becomes the responsibility of the instructors. The role of the instructors in diagnosing misconceptions, providing probing questions, comments, and additional

information is also needed to lead students to endure continuing cognitive development and to model critical thinking processes (Garrison, 2001), which is related with cognitive presence. Cognitive presence is the extent of students' ability to construct and confirm meaning through reflection and communication in an online discussion forum (Garrison et al., 2001). Branch out from the Dewey's Practical Inquiry model, cognitive presence has four phases for students to deal with the issues and topics being discussed; they are triggering events, exploration, integration, and resolution. The interplay between teaching presence and cognitive presence is complemented with the social presence. Social presence is the students' ability to project themselves socially in a learning community (Garrison et al., 2004). After all, those presences allow students in online and blended learning to experience similar learning processes like the one in a traditional classroom, by which, students of online and blended learning not only encouraged to collaborate with their peers, but they also need to be guided by the knowledgeable instructors in fulfilling tasks, sharing ideas and participating well in the learning processes.

Studies on teaching presence and cognitive presence have shown the effectiveness of those presences in online or blended learning context (Hosler & Arend, 2012; Hulkko & Jansson, 2013; Redmond, 2011; and Zhao & Sullivan, 2017). Redmond (2011)'s study tried to investigate the teaching and cognitive presence in blended undergraduate teacher education courses through a multi-case study with mixed methods of data collection and analysis procedure. The findings suggest that indicators of cognitive and teaching presence were found in a variety

of spaces within a blended course. The majority of instructors' contributions in online discussion were those of direct instruction, while the majority of student contributions were at the exploration phase of cognitive presence. These findings were supported by Hulkko and Jansson (2017) saying that direct instruction aspect was most likely to be found in participants' posts, also many studies (Garrison et al., 2001; McKlin et al., 2001; Meyer, 2003; Pawan et al., 2003; Vaughan & Garrison, 2005; Kanuka et al., 2007; Stein et al., 2007) have confirmed that exploration was the most common phase that students engage in the online discussion forum. Redmond (2011)'s study also showed that teaching presence can be found in a range of places beyond online discussion, it does change over time, and it can impact on students' cognitive presence which correlates to critical thinking in a course.

The present study tried to explore the teaching presence and cognitive presence in the four online discussion forums of writing courses in English Literature major, by using the teaching presence and cognitive presence indicators within the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework proposed by Garrison and Anderson (2001). This study will focus on the posts put up by the instructors and students in order to analyze the sense of teaching presence and the phases of cognitive presence. Some researchers conclude that teaching presence is very much interconnected to either cognitive presence, social presence, or even both of them, and thus, it becomes difficult to study in isolation (Arbaugh & Hwang, 2006; Shea, Fredericksen, Pickett, & Pelz, 2003). Furthermore, while it is quite noticeable to maintain the rhythm of natural and observable interaction associated

with teaching presence and cognitive presence in a traditional classroom, it becomes challenging to maintain such presences in the online discussion forum of a blended learning context.

1.2 Research Questions

This study aimed to examine further the teaching presence and cognitive presence in the online discussion forum of four writing courses conducted through blended learning in one of the private universities in Tangerang. It is; therefore, three research questions were set out to guide the study.

1. What aspects of teaching presence appeared in the four online discussion forums of writing courses?
2. What phases of cognitive presence did students engage in the four online discussion forums of writing courses?
3. What aspects of teaching presence mostly associated with the phases of cognitive presence in the four online discussion forums of writing courses?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

There are three purposes of this study:

1. To find out the aspects of teaching presence appeared in the four online discussion forums of writing courses;
2. To examine the phases of cognitive presence engaged by students in the four online discussion forums of writing courses;

3. To determine which aspects of teaching presence mostly associated with the phases of cognitive presence in the four online discussion forums of writing courses.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study was the teaching presence aspects, including instructional design and organization, facilitating discourse and direct instruction expressed by the participants, which mostly associated with the phases of cognitive presence, including triggering events, exploration, integration, and resolution represented by students' posts in the four online discussion forums of English Literature study program's writing courses in a private university in Tangerang.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The results of this study are expected to give new insights to the educators and institutions regarding teaching presence, cognitive presence, and how they are related in a blended learning context. The results of this study are also expected to give a reference for further researches especially in the field of teaching presence and cognitive presence in a blended learning context.