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Cases on Teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP) During COVID-19

Insights From Around the World

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Lucas Kohnke



Cases on Teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP) During COVID-19:

Insights From Around the World

Lucas Kohnke

The Education University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

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Russell Toth, The University of Sydney, Australia

A flu-like virus, COVID-19, has changed the course of tertiary education teaching and learning overnight. Universities globally, such as those in Australia, have been pushed to revise syllabi for face-to-face classroom teaching suited for online remote learning. This study adapts Connelly and Clandinin’s narrative inquiry method to retrace the experience of an Economic English course coordinator’s effort to quickly adapt to online education. It retells the coordinator’s stories of engaging in the process under certain constraints and discusses the impact of COVID-19 in higher education. Implications and recommendations are given to conclude the chapter.

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MARK Bedoya Ulla, Saint Louis University, Baguio City, Philippines

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While a number of studies have explored the challenges faced by teachers, little has been known about how they navigated the teaching presence in online remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. The present investigation explores how two English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teachers in a university in Thailand facilitated online language teaching and supported students’ language learning in an online environment. Findings from the online classroom observations and interviews revealed that classroom pedagogical skills, knowledge of the online teaching and learning platforms, and teaching presence played a crucial role in an emergency remote and online teaching environment. Despite the lack of training for online

language teaching, teachers' ability to strategize the transition to online teaching and their strong sense of resourcefulness and focus on the use of online platforms allowed them to mitigate the issues and face the challenges of the sudden shift to online teaching. The authors discussed the limitations and offered suggestions and implications for future studies.

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This chapter reports on how two university courses (EAP and ESP) adapted to online and hybrid learning through a combination of technology-mediated and blended learning strategies. This is followed by an examination on issues associated with online instruction from data collected through focus group interviews (N=14) involving teachers and students and a discussion on how students and faculty members feel about the prolonged use of technology in EAP and ESP courses. It is hoped that this chapter will enrich our understanding of delivering EAP and ESP courses in EMI contexts during these challenging times and learn about the struggles students and teachers went through.

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Content-Based ESP Instruction at Hong Kong Tertiary Level: Student and Teacher Perceptions of a Hybrid Approach in a State of Flux During the COVID-19 Pandemic80

Frankie Har, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong

This quantitative study explores pedagogical approaches to teaching business proposals, press releases, business presentations, and negotiation meetings in the third and fourth-year English Specific Purpose (ESP) course at an English Medium Instruction (EMI) university in Hong Kong. The findings reveal that the enactment of a hybrid approach rather than the teacher-led, direct-instruction approach assisted students in grasping the understanding of persuasive communication in both written and spoken contexts in the workplace environment. The study suggests that blending several inputs (i.e., videos, online quizzes, online annotated reading platform, corpora, face-to-face instruction) provided multimodal experiences that helped students develop their persuasive communication skills in a state of flux during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Trevor Raichura, Ritsumeikan University, Japan

William Fusco, Ritsumeikan University, Japan

This study gauges student satisfaction in EAP courses delivered via Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) in the Fall semester in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic using data from 529 Japanese university students' questionnaire responses. It follows up from a similar study conducted during the Spring semester and sought to determine whether changes to the method of teaching based on the Spring feedback resulted in better student experiences of ERT. Students evaluated modes of teaching (on demand, livestream, and mixed), various online tools (learning management system [LMS], teacher-created videos, Google Forms, Flipgrid, vocabulary software, Edmodo, and Zoom) and rated their overall satisfaction with online English classes. This chapter includes a background on the response to COVID-19 in Japan and how it shaped higher education, a summary of the Spring semester student experience, and the results of the questionnaire, which showed that students had a far higher overall satisfaction with ERT courses in the Fall semester.

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Eric Ho, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong

Sammy S. M. Ming, The Hong Kong Metropolitan University, Hong Kong

Research writing in second language has been a challenge for performing arts postgraduates. They need greater support from the EAP teacher in order to master the required writing skills for their research writing. However, the input from the EAP teacher was limited during the pandemic. Students may not know how to improve their artwork because they found it difficult to share their practices with their classmates. Consequently, it was deemed important to help performing arts postgraduates find peers with similar expertise regardless of online teaching. In this sense, peer review seemed a promising alternative. Peers could help each other to make their artwork productions better, whereas the teacher could assist them to textualise their productions in the research writing. The context of postgraduate performing arts curriculum in relation to L2 research writing has been underexplored, especially in the context of the pandemic. This chapter aims to add to the literature by analyzing the integration of peer review into the postgraduate performing arts curriculum.

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Andrew Northern, Imperial College London, UK

Julie Hartill, Imperial College London, UK

This chapter reports on how the challenge of transforming an on-campus pre-sessional into a fully online assessed format during the COVID-19 pandemic was addressed in the context of a leading UK university (Imperial College London). The chapter explains the core principles behind the transformational approach that was adopted and provides examples of practices that had unexpected affordances for teachers and learners. It is hoped these principles and practices can inform others considering a similar transition.

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David Michael Barnard, University of Aberdeen, UK

Adopting an agential realist perspective, this study reads data from a literature search into breakout rooms through the theory of intra-action and the researcher's experiences working as an EAP teacher across universities in the UK during the COVID-19 pandemic. This chapter is also an exploration of how a diffractive grating theory approach can help promote a closer reading of data, theory, and experience to inform professional development. The resulting conversation discusses points of wonder ranging from an active learning bias to increases in planning time, advice for giving instructions, and the importance of a good monitor. Although the chapter starts philosophically, the results are orientated more to the practitioner. It is hoped that the resulting conversations around the researcher's practice will help spur the reader into new and interesting areas for their own development.

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Gareth Richard Morris, Perse School, Suzhou, China

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This chapter considers EAP language teachers' perceptions of the working reality English educators are faced with during the 2021-2022 academic year. It draws on experiences at a specific case study institution, namely a Sino-British one based in China. Adopting a qualitative study design and interviewing eight practitioners, the results from semi-structured interviews suggest that for EAP teachers in a time of

technology-enhanced learning that a transition has occurred from pre-pandemic to today, a time in which the challenges of the pre-COVID-19 era now reside alongside the difficulties that the pandemic has presented. Some of these are global issues, such as how to integrate technology best and deal with new teaching norms and disruptions, while others may be more localised on a national and institutional level and include working around growing student numbers and expatriate departures which taken together can stretch resources. That said, technology, increased autonomy, and enhanced staff motivation (in some cases) are also positives that have been derived in some instances.

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Writing Instruction in English for Academic Purposes Classrooms During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Review of Current Evidence230

Dennis Foug, The University of British Columbia, Canada

Joanna Kwan, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong

The shift from face-to-face to online/blended teaching forced by the COVID-19 pandemic has given rise to studies of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) instruction during the pandemic, but few have explored EAP writing instruction. This chapter aims to synthesize the current evidence on EAP writing instruction in higher education during the pandemic and to identify the challenges and opportunities presented by such instruction. A total of 189 papers were identified in the literature search. After screening, 13 studies were included in the review. Their results indicated that, in general, writing instruction was conducted satisfactorily during the pandemic, and writing instruction was delivered more effectively than speaking and listening instruction in EAP classes. The opportunities and challenges of writing instruction were similar to those experienced before the pandemic. Planning, activity design, and the provision of feedback will remain key factors in EAP instruction after the pandemic and require continual improvement.

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Why Professional Development Is the Key to High Quality Provision in EMI Higher Education EAP in the Age of COVID-19249

Gareth Richard Morris, Perse School, Suzhou, China

Ji Zhang, Perse School, Suzhou, China

Xitong Dai, Perse School, Suzhou, China

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce readers to some of the ideas behind why professional development is essential for best quality provision in EMI higher education EAP courses. The chapter begins by discussing higher education, EAP, and professional development before focusing on the role professional development plays in ensuring EAP courses are as well designed and delivered as possible. It also goes on to consider some of the challenges education providers face in ensuring

that high quality PD is available to EAP teachers before considering ways in which it can be provided even when circumstances are taxing.

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Preface

The COVID-19 outbreak, which began in December 2019, has changed the educational landscape. Higher education institutions around the world were forced to close their physical campuses to slow or contain the spread of the virus (UNESCO, 2020) and adopt emergency remote teaching through learning management systems (e.g., Blackboard, Moodle, Canvas) and video-conferencing software (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Collaborate Ultra) (Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2020; Hodges et al., 2020). The rapid, unexpected, and forced transition to emergency remote teaching was especially challenging for second/foreign-language learners who rely on English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses to help them transition from secondary school to higher education and succeed in their academic studies. In universities that use English-medium instruction (EMI), second-language learners are often enrolled in pre-sessional or in-sessional EAP courses to advance their English language development (Yung & Fung, 2019) by expanding their academic lexical range and building their proficiency in academic writing conventions (Evans & Morrison, 2011). Such skills improve their ability to cope with the EMI environment. Blended, online, and distance learning have been routinely integrated into EAP courses worldwide to increase language exposure, but the sudden transition to emergency remote teaching was associated with constraints on EAP practitioners, as well as opportunities (Moorhouse & Kohnke, 2021a, 2021b; Kohnke & Zou, 2021; Kohnke & Jarvis, 2021).

This book provides describes the challenges that EAP practitioners faced in the higher education context and their efforts to transition to emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic while offering quality EAP provision to second/foreign-language students and preparing them for their university studies. By offering observations from Europe, Asia and North America, this book will contribute to the development of effective practices for supporting and sustaining EAP teaching in an EMI environment during and after a pandemic. It provides individual EAP teachers, teacher trainers and program administrators with both practical and theoretical insights.

The first chapter, written by Chun and Toth, reports the experience of an Economic English course coordinator at an Australian university during the rapid transition to online education. Based on their observations, the authors suggest that institutions make a range of online tools available so teachers can select those that suit their specific needs (e.g., teaching style, course content). Teachers who are asked to transition quickly to online learning often lack the technical skills to do so smoothly. If they are given suitable tools, the learning curve involved in adapting course materials for online delivery can be reduced. The authors also propose that teachers and learners collaborate to develop individualised materials that fit their needs and interests and recommend that course coordinators use short announcements on the virtual learning management platform to disseminate information about teaching, marking and meetings. The authors' recommendations are designed to help EAP teachers create more effective, engaging and interactive learning environments.

The second chapter, written by Ulla and Nguyen, investigates teaching presence in online teaching and learning at a Thai university. The authors note the lack of professional development opportunities and support for EAP teachers. They also stress the need for flexibility in emergency remote teaching. They suggest that teachers use an online platform with which they are familiar (e.g., Facebook, Google Meet, Line) to limit technical challenges, facilitate teaching and learning and feel confident about their online teaching presence and pedagogical skills.

In the third chapter, Ting reports on how teachers adapted EAP and ESP courses at a university in Hong Kong for use in online and hybrid emergency remote teaching using technology-mediated and blended-learning strategies. The teachers used a variety of synchronous and asynchronous tools to make learning fun and effective. However, both students and teachers reported that the forced transition to emergency remote teaching had negative effects, including increased workloads, stress, anxiety, and loneliness.

In the fourth chapter, Har introduces a hybrid approach for teaching persuasive writing and speaking skills to business students. The author argues that it is important to use various forms of input (e.g., videos, online quizzes, annotated online platforms, corpora, face-to-face instruction) to provide students with ample opportunities to understand and refine their subject knowledge. Also, multimodal inputs can help students improve their recall, better understand business discourse and retain valuable information. Online activities such as bite-sized videos and online quizzes, available through Student Response Systems (SRSs), increase flexibility and student engagement. However, the author notes that the multimodal approach is challenging and time-consuming as teachers must create various forms of content to facilitate hybrid learning.

Fuisting and colleagues, in the fifth chapter, investigate student satisfaction with emergency remote teaching at a Japanese university. The transition to emergency

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remote teaching was perceived to be especially challenging in Japan due to a lack of preparedness by all stakeholders (students, teachers, and institutions) and widespread reliance on paper rather than digital technologies. The students reported greater satisfaction during the second semester: they became more accustomed to online teaching and learning and appreciated the opportunities to communicate with their peers and teachers. The authors of this chapter put forward several recommendations for success in remote teaching, including increasing the number of live-streamed classes, providing instructional videos, and instructing students on how to use new e-learning software.

In the sixth chapter, Ho and Ming describe how Master of Fine Arts students who spoke English as a second language continued with their learning when their studio-based visual arts lessons were suspended due to COVID-19. The students improved their English academic writing skills through the use of a student-centred form of online learning. This entailed the implementation of a peer-review system, in which students helped each other generate creative ideas and describe their original artworks in writing. This process allowed EAP teachers who might not have expertise in the visual arts to focus on student linguistic competencies (e.g., syntax, lexis, discourse, morphology) and help the students to improve their writing quality.

In the seventh chapter, Northern and Harthill present the key principles that underpinned the resource-intensive transformation of an on-campus pre-sessional course at a British university to a fully online format. They discuss the importance of selecting and using appropriate technology, linking syllabi and materials for online learning, providing pedagogical and technical support for teachers and maximizing the affordances of technology for course design. The lessons they learnt have helped them to make pre-sessional courses at their university more flexible and sustainable in the long term.

In Chapter 8, Barnard describes his experiences of working with breakout rooms in summer pre-sessional courses at universities across the United Kingdom. The chapter provides insight into current thinking about the use of breakout rooms in online teaching and suggests possible improvements. Using an original diffractive grating approach that he designed and calls ‘diffraction in action’, Barnard takes a theoretical and experientially informed look at the literature on best practices in the use of breakout rooms when teaching online. The chapter begins with a brief overview of agential realism and the interactive methodology that underpins it. The author then describes how he used a diffractive methodology to create a diffractive grating theory approach that triangulates experience, theory and literature. He reports results in seven areas of interest, presenting them in a conversational style that he considers most representative of the method used. He offers insights into mentoring and lesson planning, the difference between online and offline work and the importance of providing students and teachers with technical training.

In the ninth chapter, Morris and colleagues report on a qualitative study of EAP teachers' experiences transitioning to online teaching at a Sino-British university in China. They examined how the teachers tackled challenges and how the experience influenced teachers' beliefs about effective teaching. In their study, they found that the teachers perceived the transition to online teaching as stressful, last minute, messy and chaotic. They were ill-prepared to use the technology for delivering online classes in a pedagogically sound fashion. Ultimately, they transitioned to hybrid learning and are likely to continue in this mode as it allows for greater flexibility than fully online learning. For maximum success in remote learning, Morris and colleagues suggest that schools create mentor-mentee programs, adopt blended learning, provide leadership training, and tailor work responsibilities.

Foung and Kwan, in the tenth chapter, synthesise published articles that have explored the challenges and opportunities of EAP writing instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic. A thematic analysis found that writing instruction continued to be conducted satisfactorily and was more effective than instruction in other elements of English (speaking, listening, and reading). Furthermore, the approach to writing instruction and the challenges involved in giving effective feedback were much as they had been before the pandemic. The authors suggest that EAP writing teachers strive to improve their performance by carefully planning courses and activities and providing sufficient feedback; these will remain the key factors for success in post-pandemic EAP instruction.

In the eleventh chapter, Morris et al. argue that professional development for EAP teachers is more important than ever before. The appropriate use of technology-enhanced language teaching, assessments and leadership has become crucial due to redefined workplace dynamics and practices. The authors propose that schools provide systematic hybrid professional development to ensure that learning opportunities are available and can be personalised by teachers to their needs.

All of the chapters in this book contribute to our growing knowledge of how blended, online, and distance learning have been integrated into EAP courses worldwide during the switch to emergency remote teaching. ERT and EAP researchers should continue to explore the use of technology in EAP practices and the new normal in EMI instruction. Future researchers can expand the knowledge base in three ways: by developing and refining theoretical models of ERT implementation and EAP teaching and learning, experimenting with new research methods and reporting on a greater variety of contexts.

Finally, in line with EAP practice, we must find ways to incorporate findings from such studies into practical teaching and learning contexts. A major question here is how to strike a balance between returning to face-to-face teaching and retaining the best practices from ERT in an EAP EMI teaching and learning context. There is

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much work still to be done. However, I hope that the chapters in this book represent a step in the right direction and prompt further research and investigation.

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Chapter 1

An Australian Narrative Coordinating an Economic English Course During COVID–19

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A flu-like virus, COVID-19, has changed the course of tertiary education teaching and learning overnight. Universities globally, such as those in Australia, have been pushed to revise syllabi for face-to-face classroom teaching suited for online remote learning. This study adapts Connelly and Clandinin’s narrative inquiry method to retrace the experience of an Economic English course coordinator’s effort to quickly adapt to online education. It retells the coordinator’s stories of engaging in the process under certain constraints and discusses the impact of COVID-19 in higher education. Implications and recommendations are given to conclude the chapter.

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INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on a coordinator's experience of a postgraduate English course for economics communication purposes who transitioned it from an in-person classroom to emergency online remote teaching and learning (Bensalah, Bokhari, Commisso, & Nacer, 2000) triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic. His experience converges into two themes: the experiences and actions taken to adapt to online education, and the lessons learned from the abrupt adaptation through this study's narrative inquiry. Meanwhile, the researcher joined the later part of the journey when he was recruited as the course's tutor during the second Covid-19 lockdown in late 2021. His participation in remote teaching the course eventually evolved into the current research project. The remainder introduces the course background and outline of the study.

In 2013, Alex (pseudonym) was aware that his management from the School of Economics at an Australian university had started discussing challenges that arose from an influx of international students who are speakers of English as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL), mostly mainland Chinese. According to the Australian government statistics on international student enrolment between 2000 and 2016, the enrollment rose from 190,000 in 2000 to a peak of around 240,000 in 2009. This figure followed by a slight drop to 200,000 in 2012 and rebounded to slightly more than 300,000 in 2016, a 33% increment (Department of Education and Training, 2018). Australia has become popular with Chinese students and is preferred to America and Britain. There are four crucial factors, including future migration opportunities after graduation, Australia's high quality of education, good reputation of institutions, and competitive lower tuition fees and cost of living, that attract Chinese students pursuing a university degree in Australia (Yang, 2007; Zhai, Gao, & Wang, 2019).

The discussions were put into action in a course proposal that the university subsequently approved. In late 2014, Alex was asked to create the economics communication course that would be offered in the first semester of 2015. One objective of the course should help address the needs of EFL/ESL overseas students. The overarching goal is to enhance all postgraduate economics students' communication capabilities. Studies found that lacking the expected or adequate English competency is the main obstacle in students' communication with lecturers in Australian universities (Ai, 2017; Banfield, 2006). Cultural factors, such as Chinese culture (Hui, 2005) and intercultural communication competency (Hong & Petraki, 2007), can also contribute to mainland students' learning difficulties in English as the medium of instructional context.

In January 2020, a mysterious new flu-like human-to-human transmission illness was identified around late 2019 (Katella, 2021) and the first case of the

disease was confirmed in Sydney on January 25, 2020 (Storen & Corrigan, 2021). In March 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) characterised Covid-19 as a pandemic. Australia's federal government announced a nationwide lockdown on March 23 2020. This lockdown marks the beginning of the temporary closure of all universities, which switches to entire online teaching and learning. The closure remains, although the New South Wales State (NSW) Government eased its lockdown restrictions on business activities and social gatherings by stages on May 3 2020, for nearly one year until the Delta-variant was ramping in Sydney, causing a second lockdown from around July 2021 (Knowlton, 2022 - see Appendix B for the timeline).

After the first report of the coronavirus in NSW, Alex's university started to shift face-to-face classroom teaching to hybrid and online learning, and almost all courses were taught online during semester one on the university's academic calendar after the first nationwide lockdown was implemented in late March 2020. Although Alex received an initial exception to continue delivering the course on campus for the semester due to its emphasis on in-person interaction in the classroom, the unknown of the virus and a continuous increase of causality and hospitalisation in NSW forced Alex to switch the course to be entirely online. The enrolment number has continued to increase steadily even after changing the course delivery mode to online.

Before the second term in 2021, a Covid-19 Delta-variant emerged in Sydney around May, so NSW entered its second lockdown from June 25, 2021 to October 11, 2021 for 108 days. Meanwhile, the online course delivery was extended to the end of the semester. Quite unexpectedly, the enrolment number in 2021 doubled from 150 in semester 1 to nearly 300 students in semester 2. This double increment allowed Alex to hire four extra tutors to seven totally, one of whom was the researcher of this study. Their primary duties included providing continuous feedback on the students' drafts of two writing and speaking assignments, guiding the online peer review of the assignments, and grading the final writing and speaking assessments in an academic and a semi-casual pose for professional and general public audiences, respectively.

This study uses narrative inquiry to bring storytelling and research together, whereby the participants' stories are used as research data, and storytelling is used as a tool for data analysis and presentation of findings. This study involved both the first- and third-person data and methods when telling its stories, coined as (auto) biographical by Benson (2004; cited from Barkhuizen, 2013, p.4).

There are two reasons for using narrative inquiry in the research method. First, it facilitated the researcher, acting as a narrative inquirer, to enter this study during his own life and the participant's life and the institutional, social, and linguistic narratives (Clandinin, Caine, Lessard, & Huber, 2016). Second, the approach allows the research puzzle to emerge, frame, and uncover the meanings and lessons from the pandemic when this autobiographical narration intertwines with the coordinator's retold stories

to shed a better understanding or interest in a particular phenomenon – coordinating an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course during Covid-19 pandemic.

This study investigates how the course coordinator adapted to online teaching due to the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak? This chapter begins with a literature review of the three challenges of switching classrooms from face-to-face to entirely online. It then explains the data analysis using the three-dimensional space narrative inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006) and thematic analysis. The findings that emerged from the data analysis are retold in narratives along with discussions to answer the research questions. The chapter concludes by proposing a reform of online education with recommendations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The brief account aforementioned was not an isolated story when Covid-19 was spreading around the globe. Online applications such as Zoom quickly replaced the physical classroom, and teachers were forced to “go ahead without much foresight; teaching a full module online was basically uncharted waters for many of them” (Wong, 2020, p. 82). Two main teaching challenges about materials and competencies brought to educators during Covid-19 are identified by Moorhouse and Kohnke’s (2021) systematic thematic review of 55 empirical peer-review research related to English-language teaching and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Challenge 1: The Readiness of Teaching Materials for Online Learning

The first challenge faced by many instructors is having teaching materials specifically designed for online delivery ready for the emergency online teaching. Since there is no “one-size-fits-all approach to successful online transition” (Davies et al., 2020, p. 82), practitioners had to adapt “unfamiliar teaching modes and digital technologies” (Moorhouse & Kohnke, 2021, p. 370) in responding to the unprecedented event. In adapting to the pandemic, using both asynchronous (accessing via a Learning Management System (LMS) at students’ own time) and synchronous (accessing via a video-conferencing software (VCS) at assigned real-time lessons) online teaching were the two most common modes (Moorhouse & Kohnke, 2021; Stadler & O’Reilly, 2021).

A significant benefit of online teaching is its ability to remove time and distance barriers and thus enhance its accessibility to large student populations, provided that the users have adequate information and communication technology access and support. This is especially the case during the pandemic because teachers

could promptly shift face-to-face teaching to emergency remote teaching (Ulla & Nguyen, 2022, this book).

However, under this sudden shift to an emergency remote online classroom, teachers had to create makeshift online teaching content and assessments, usually by transferring from the existing curriculum and content for the traditional classroom setting (Turchi, Bondar, & Aguilar, 2020; Ulla & Nguyen, 2022 this book). Can and Silman-Karanfil's (2022) study of a group of Cyprian English-language instructors transitioning to online teaching finds that the participants initially converted and uploaded the teaching materials they used in face-to-face instruction to LMS online as a coping tactic for the unprepared pedagogical switch. Moorhouse and Kohnke (2021) also stress that the pedagogical models, strategies, and principles of designing and implementing online course contents and assessments are lacking for teachers' disposal, especially for emergency remote teaching during Covid-19.

Challenge 2: The Readiness of Teachers for Online Teaching

Struggling to adapt to the online pedagogy is a second main challenge shared by teachers during the pandemic. Although the suddenness of the shift described above plays a part, instructors lacking the technical and pedagogical competencies required for online teaching are the real culprit (Moorhouse and Kohnke, 2021). Ulla and Nguyen (2022, this book) attest that the impromptu pedagogical shift forces educators to use new course management and teaching tools for adapting to virtual classrooms.

There are many challenges for teachers making an unprepared shift to online teaching.

The challenges, for example, may include minimum teacher-student interactions (Sepulveda-Escobar & Morrison, 2020), class management problems, and poor network connection (Gao & Zhang, 2020). In terms of pedagogical difficulties, unfamiliarity with online teaching tools, slow adjustment to online course delivery, ineffective online communication techniques (Pu, 2020), and weak technology literacy (British Council, 2020; cited from Abdel Latif, 2022) were commonly encountered by teachers in different countries when teaching online during Covid-19. Peachey (2017, p. 114) points out that synchronous online teaching requires a "new and extended skills set". These factors implied that adapting the course online was not straightforward for the coordinator during the pandemic.

These studies indicate that online teaching is not simply transferring face-to-face teaching content and methods to an e-learning environment. Keengwe and Kidd (2010, p. 537) even suggest that "not all educators are capable of teaching in an online environment" and "expected to know intuitively how to design and deliver an effective online course" when novice or seasoned teachers have not been exposed to techniques and techniques needed to coordinate or deliver online course successfully.

Challenge 3: The Readiness of Universities for Online Education

Apart from the adequacy of teaching materials and teachers' competences for online teaching and learning, institutional under-preparedness for online education poses further challenges for teachers' swift conversion to emergency online teaching. Universities face three common problems during the shift to online education, including a lack of sufficient educational content, tools, and pedagogies for online content delivery and evaluation during the pandemic (Rajcsányi-Molnár & Bacsa-Bán, 2021). Rajcsányi-Molnár and Bacsa-Bán (2021, p. 45) emphasise that online education is "a step forward in traditional pedagogy" that requires new knowledge and pedagogical practices.

In the International Association of Universities global survey report on the impact of Covid-19 on the teaching and management of universities worldwide conducted between March and April 2020, two-thirds of the respondents from 424 universities surveyed stated to have switched to online education, while some situated in countries even with sufficient internet coverage reported not to have the technical infrastructure or tools available for optimising online education. There were also cases of lacking a management structure that could provide remedial staff training to increase teaching capacity for teachers to shift towards the online classroom easily, and this thus often resulted in "learning by doing" approaches or imitating the in-person way of proceeding for online learning (Marinoni, Van't Land, & Jensen, 2020). This means that shifting to online education requires more than infrastructure and good internet penetration, but more about staff readiness and teaching materials prepared for a crisis like Covid-19. English-language teaching practitioners and scholars urge for more research on good online practices for teaching and evaluating the four core English-language skills as the need for new pedagogies is likely to shift from a 'remote possibility to a 'potential reality' (Can & Silman-Karanfil, 2022; Moorhouse & Kohnke, 2021).

METHODOLOGY

This methodology section covers this study's background, data collection, and data analysis to illustrate the rigorous steps the present study took to ensure its trustworthiness. This section first provides an explicit and detailed account of the data analysis procedure, followed by retelling the participant's true account of his experience as the course coordinator of adapting an in-class teaching module to be fully online due to Covid-19.

Narrative was chosen as the inquiry means because it reveals the participant's experience and creates a coherent storyline between the personal and social and across situations involving the researcher's perspective and voice (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In particular, Clandinin's narrative inquiry method, grounded on Dewey's (1938; cited from Clandinin, 2007) pragmatic philosophy (i.e., continuity, situation, and interaction), was adapted in this study because it assisted the study in exploring the course coordinator's three-dimensional adaptation to online teaching from the temporal-, contextual-, and (inter)actional-dimension comprehensively during Sydney's Covid-19 lockdown.

Moreover, the narrative inquiry process enabled the researcher to understand and interpret the coordinator's stories using his own experience as the course tutor. Such an experience resembled that of the coordinator so the researcher could make sense of the relevant data to answer the research questions. This research remained its objectiveness by detailing its design and methods of the data collection and analysis besides its use of the participants' subjective experiences (see Data Collection).

Finally, using the method for this research is also trustworthy. Although it is criticised that narrative inquiry lacks generalisability due to its emphasis on a particular and individual case, it appears that one case that proved effective might well prove effective in others, especially in teaching and learning situations that share some similarities with the one under study (Barkhuizen et al., 2013, pp. 89 – 93).

Settings and Participants

The research context is based on one leading research-intensive university in Australia. Alex is a senior lecturer in economics at the university who created the postgraduate economist communication course. The course core elements are divided into academic and public/professional communication, having two essays and two presentations, cumulative assessments including peer reviews and tutor/instructor feedback, without examinations. Alex has been the course lecturer and coordinator across the pre- and while-pandemic periods between 2015 and 2021. There were two gaps from 2020's semester two to 2021's first semester when he was not involved in the course (see Table 1 for a summary of his involvement in the module during the said period).

Data Collection

Interview was used to collect the data as it enabled this study to access Alex's personal perspectives on coordinating and teaching the course in the situated context (Barkhuizen et al., 2013). The researcher posed the five pre-set questions (see Appendix A) and follow-up questions to clarify and elaborate on more information

Table 1. Alex's involvement in the course between 2015 and 2021

Year / Semester	Involvement in the course	Modification in course delivery
2015/1	Material creator, Lecturer, Coordinator	Live lecture
2015/2	The course could be only offered for one semester in 2015 and 2016.	
2016-2019	Lecturer, Coordinator	Live lecture
2020/1	Lecturer, Coordinator	Live lecture (on Zoom)
2020 /2	No involvement beyond sharing course materials and giving advice to the lecturer.	
2021/1	No involvement beyond sharing course materials and giving advice to the lecturer.	
2021/2	Lecturer, Coordinator	Recorded lecture

from Alex based on a semi-structured interview format. This format could also embed a “distinctive personality” of Alex (Barkhuizen et al., 2013, p. 17) for the readers’ to gain a fuller experience of the retold narratives. The data were collected via one casual phone conversation for explaining the project’s concept and seeking the participation consent, six rounds of emails and about 60 to 70 odds WhatsApp messages on separate occasions for clarifying answers to the pre-set questions and asking follow-up questions based on the answers between the end of 2021 and early 2022 when the participant was on personal leave overseas.

Research Question

The overarching research question in this study is: How did the course coordinator adapt to online teaching due to the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak? To address this main question, three sub-research questions shape this investigation:

- 1) How did the course coordinator adapt to online teaching?
- 2) What factors influenced the coordinator’s adaptation to online teaching? and
- 3) What is the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on higher education?

Data Analysis

Narrative inquiry is a common research method for second and foreign teachers’ lives in language teaching and learning research because its main strength lies in understanding the participants’ inner mental worlds by focusing on how stories are used to make sense of experiences in areas of inquiring the phenomena from

the perspective of those who experience them (Barkhuizen et al., 2013). As in this study, Connelly and Clandinin's (2006) narrative inquiry method, grounded on Dewey's concepts of continuity, interaction, and situation, was adopted to allow the coordinator to tell, live, retell, and relive their stories. These three concepts provide the three dimensions for inquiring about the narratives.

The three-dimensional narrative inquiry method functioned as the framework for analysing the stories from three aspects: (1) *continuity* (the temporal development of the coordination between the pre-Covid [past] and the while-Covid [present] time, and the lessons learned for future coordination development), (2) *situation* (the social and cultural context of the Covid-19 lockdown in NSW, and (3) *interaction* (the participant's actions and decisions on coordinating the course in the given specific physical (e.g. the university) and nonphysical (e.g. Zoom) places where the inquiry and events took place (Clandinin et al., 2016). In practice, this study integrated the three-dimensional method with thematic analysis to explore the coordinator's experience managing the postgraduate communication course in analysing the data. The data analysis involved four stages, namely, data collection, story retelling, data analysis of field text, and story reporting, as to be explained below:

Stage 1: Data Collection

The researcher sought answers to five questions from the participant in the data collection process. The questions instigated the detailed background of the course from the initial conceptualisation to the design and implementation of the syllabus, the critical changes in the curriculum, syllabus, and/or fundamental pedagogy, the lessons he learned for teaching and professional development, and the recommendations on curriculum/syllabus design, course coordination or pedagogical practice for similar online courses in future (see Appendix A).

Stage 2: Story Retelling

The story retelling was an iterative process requiring collaboration and discussions between the researcher and the participants while repeatedly rereading the participant's stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). As in the case of this study, the researcher had inquired about the participant's role, including clarifying the stories by answering questions to verify the researcher's analysis and interpretation of the data.

Stage 3: Data Analysis of Field Text

Narrative inquiry concerns analysing data in three main aspects: interaction, continuity, and context, as explained below:

1. Interaction requires exploring both personal and social interactions when analysing the stories. This study focused on the participant's personal experiences and decisions on course management. The researcher captured the interactions by retelling the coordinator's stories about his actions in managing the course and interaction with his university and school in the first- or third-person perspective. They were examined under the different intentions, purposes, and standpoints on the story's topic.
2. Continuity involves the researcher analysing the data from the participant's past, present and future experiences. This means examining the data about the participants' past and present experiences illustrated in actions of an event or actions that possibly happen in the future.
3. Context, or a situation or a place, refers to the physical places or the sequence of the participant's places. This study extends the definition to nonphysical information technology spaces, such as Zoom and Canvas, where the teaching and learning took place for the course (see Table 2 for a rubrical presentation).

In addition, two types of knowledge, namely personal practical knowledge, and professional knowledge landscape, were employed in the data analysis process. The former examined the participant's individualised experiences based on the emotional elements and language used to construct their stories. Meanwhile, the latter focuses on existential conditions in the context/situation regarding other individuals' actions, reactions, intentions, purposes, and assumptions (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). To understand the meaning and social significance behind the stories, the researcher extracted the stories' latent meaning. The extraction exercise also tried to identify themes, tensions, and patterns in the stories.

To illustrate how the data analysis was done, the following is an example from the story on creating the postgraduate communication course, told by Alex when he answered the interview question on the course background.

The course emerged from discussions in the School of Economics around 2013/2014, realising that the cohort of non-native English speakers, mostly mainland Chinese, in the undergraduate and master's student body was growing, and the challenges this raises. I was not involved in the early discussions around creating a course at each level – undergrad and master's – to address these challenges. A proposal was put to the university for each course. Once the courses were approved, I was asked to take on and create the masters-level version, Communication in Economics, in sem1 2015. I can't remember if I requested to bring on a tutor who could focus on assessing students writing and oral communication, or if this was suggested to me, but I recruited and hired Anna (pseudonym) for that support role. A few ingredients

Table 2. A three-dimensional narrative inquiry space rubric

Interaction		Continuity			Context
Personal	Social	Past	Present	Future	Situation
Look inward to internal conditions, such as thoughts, feelings	Look outward to external conditions in the environment with other people and their intentions, purposes, viewpoints	Look backward to remembered experiences, feelings, and stories from an earlier time	Look at current experiences, feelings, and stories relating to actions of an event	Look forward to implied and possible experiences and plot lines	Look at the context, time, and place situated in a physical setting with spatial boundaries with characters' intentions, purposes, and viewpoints
Source: Ollerenshaw and Creswell, 2002, p. 340					

that went into the original course design, which quite honestly hasn't changed that much over time:

Stage 4: Stories Reporting

Finally, the researcher writes interim texts to find a narrative text that promotes an account. Interim research text is “situated in the spaces between field texts and final, published research texts” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 133). This study interpreted it as a kind of text that supplemented the stories’ essential information so there was a sense of continuity between the narratives.

After analysing the participants’ story content using the three criteria described in stage 3: data analysis above, this study coded the data inductively before categorising the codes generated into themes and sub-themes. Meanwhile, the themes from the participant’s narratives were examined and compared iteratively for their internal relationship (Barkuzien et al., 2013). Finally, the analysed data were organised into the research text (the findings).

Findings and Discussion

Through the three-dimensional data analysis, this study finds four themes related to the journey and challenges faced by the coordinator when switching the course online and the development of online education.

Table 3. An example of data analysis using the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space rubric

Interaction		Continuity			Context
Personal	Social	Past	Present	Future	Situation
Alex is not involved in the early discussions around creating a course at each level.	There are discussions on the challenges that arise from an increase of non-native English-speaking international students at The School of Economics.		The number of non-native English-speaking students, mostly mainland Chinese, is growing at the school in 2013/14.		There is an increase of mainland Chinese studying economics in an Australian university, where English is the language for instruction and assessment.
Alex is asked to take on and create the masters-level communication course (by the School of Economics)	The school puts forward a proposal for each course to the university.	The university approves the school's proposals.	Alex creates the postgraduate communication course.	<i>* The course continues to run to date.</i>	The University and the Schools take the challenges faced by the students seriously.
Alex hires Anna as a support for the course.					The University / School is willing to put funding into developing and running the course.
			A few ingredients that went into the original course design have not changed that much over time.	<i>* The key ingredients in the course design, such as the learning outcomes and assessments, will not change as major changes require a lengthy and complex approval/ accredited process.</i>	The course has not and will not change much due to the university's course regulations.

*Note: * refers to analysis derived from the researcher's personal practical knowledge and professional knowledge landscape.*

Narrative 1: Alex's Journey of Online Adaptation during the Covid-19 Pandemic

This first narrative was extracted from Alex's response to the interview question: "What critical changes in the syllabus were made to adapt to Covid-19?". His response was delineated in three stories according to two crucial time markers: the pre-, and while-Covid 19 times between 2020 and 2021. The researcher's voice was added in the last story after joining Alex's teaching team in semester two, 2021.

The first narrative depicted Alex's prompt actions when the exception of in-person classroom teaching granted to the course was withdrawn after the Australian government announced the first nationwide Covid-19 lockdown in February 2020. Alex demonstrated quick adaptability to switching the course from in-person to virtual classroom in a few days since the onset of the pandemic:

When Covid-19 concerns first emerged in Australia around February 2020, the university started to make preparations for learning adjustments for its classes, including hybrid and online learning. Week by week, the restrictions became tighter and tighter, until in the first half of March, nearly all classes that could go online had been mandated to do so. However, the [course] was received the exemption to this mandate given the reason that the course was designed significant in-person interaction in class through presentations, group activities, peer review sessions, etc. A week or two later, the university mandated that any classes not offered fully online would be cancelled. Hence, I was forced with a few days' notice to switch to a fully online model for the [course].

Switching to the online teaching environment promoted Alex's course management skills. Alex reflected that the practicality of the students' learning and pedagogical needs prompted reassessment on applying the suitable technology and means for teaching and communication of the course. After considering the low student turnout to live lectures and the expectation of constructive classroom interaction, Alex gradually adjusted the lectures from real-time to pre-recording, and the recording methods from in-class microphones prior to Covid-19 to laptop's in-built camera and microphone using Zoom (semester 1, 2020), and finally Echo 360 Studio (semester 2, 2020):

[In sem 1 2020,] I only did pre-recorded lectures (not live), and posted them on Canvas before 6 pm Thursday. In sem2 2021 when I next taught [the course], I actually didn't record them using Zoom, but rather another related tool called Echo360/EchoStudio. The latter is easier than Zoom because when I recorded the lecture, it's automatically recorded to the cloud and I could just click a few buttons

and it links to your Canvas site, whereas if I used Zoom I would have to record the video, download the (large) video from a video link, upload the video to the Echo studio platform, then link it to Canvas.

He reported, “even though there was no pressure to make such changes, I realised an urgency to improve the students’ learning experience and motivation, especially when learning was happening remotely.” This statement not only displays the growth of Alex’s technology competency, it further shows his understanding of using the necessity of using the appropriate Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools for performing tasks associated with online teaching, facilitating online learning, and communicating with students (Los, De Jaeger, & Stoesz, 2021).

Besides, this instance of switching from Zoom to Echo 360 for lecture recording had pressed Alex to learn new ICT for synchronous lecturing. When Alex noted the user-friendliness of Echo 360, he said, “The latter is easier than Zoom because when I recorded the lecture, it’s automatically recorded to the Cloud...”. He specifically selected the software because it avoided the cumbersome process of downloading large recordings and uploading them to Canvas when using Zoom. Similar findings by Can and Silman-Karanfil’s (2022) research report that a group of Cyprian English-language instructors had developed their technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) resulted in their efforts to integrate new online education tools such as public chat and online polling in their teaching for improving the synchronous online classroom interactions.

Furthermore, adapting to the online medium also pushed Alex to reflect on and improve teacher-student communications via the Learning Management System (LMS), but it was a stressful and challenging experience. Alex expressed that the abrupt transition to online teaching “was a real struggle as it was clear that some students weren’t keeping up with my instructions”. He explained, “In ‘normal’ times, teaching in person, there would be opportunities for students to approach me 1-1 before, during, or after (the) lecture, to ask a question and allow me to clarify until I can exactly answer their question.” This statement shows that Alex realised the old practice of posting long announcements used in physical classroom teaching was not applicable and effective for the online environment. He further admitted, “In the stress of the first COVID-19 wave, this clear communication gap led me to write longer and even more complex blast notifications, which in hindsight probably was (the) wrong way to go. In my teaching reviews after sem1 2020, these communication challenges were the main thing students mentioned. Therefore, he made two significant changes in 2021 accordingly.

The two main strategies Alex applied aimed to reduce the messages’ length and weight. First, he used “Ed”, a social media-style-liked message board that enabled students to ask questions in front of the whole class asynchronously. Second, shorter

“blast” announcements and listings were applied to convey important instructional details, such as deadlines, assessment requirements, and rubric, to improve students’ attention and understanding of essential course information. He hoped the measures could lower his frustration because “students weren’t paying enough attention (to the long announcements)”. The strategic display and presentation of the course information with regularity could create clear expectations and guidelines for students to follow (Stadler & O’Reilly, 2021), and seemed to have enhanced Alex’s communication with his online class.

Overall, Alex proactively reflected on the best practice for improving the communication with students by using the available online tools strategically and purposefully. In other words, Covid-19 might have encouraged or even promoted Alex’s technological repertoire. According to Los et al. (2021), Alex demonstrated certain technical capability, indicating his readiness to teach online. This study suggests that having a high level of technical knowledge and skills is essential for online coordination.

Narrative 2: Juggling between Resources Available and Students’ Expectations in an Online Environment

This second narrative focuses on how the availability of external and internal resources for the migration to online teaching while the content delivery meeting the students’ expectations and/or course outcomes influenced Alex’s course management decisions.

The main driving factor is the in-house technology capability on the internet and recording instruments. First, worrying that the capacity of the university’s bandwidth could not cope with a large number of students’ participation in the online presentations and discussions on Zoom, Alex restricted it to only the presenters, about 15 students per group, who could attend the assessment in semester 1, 2021. The restriction was relaxed when the bandwidth issue was resolved in semester 2, 2021:

A week or two later, the university mandated that any classes not offered fully online would be cancelled. Hence I was forced with a few days’ notice to switch to a fully online model for [the course]. All in-person assessments had to be adapted to online. Both presentations switched from in-person to online. To manage online bandwidth and coherence of the sessions, we only allowed those students presenting/discussing to join the online Zoom sessions [in sem 1 2021]. This restriction was relaxed in sem2 2021, with other class members allowed to join Zoom sessions.

Likewise, available in-house technological resources also determined Alex’s instructional methods, from using the in-room microphone and camcorder prior to

Covid-19 to online live lectures and pre-recording lectures using Zoom between 2020 and 2021 during the pandemic lockdown:

Lectures were already recorded in the 1-2 years prior to Covid-19, though it was typically a live lecture recording. [It used] in-room microphone, either a clip-on mic on your lapel, or a microphone, and then they record whatever is on the main computer screen in the lecture halls, so of mixed quality. Lectures were moved online. Live online lectures were still held in sem1 2020; however, I moved to recorded lectures in sem2 2021. I thought it's better to avoid the risk of internet outages and other challenges by simply pre-recording. I only started using Zoom lectures in sem 1 2020 [during the pandemic]. [I reasoned that] recordings of Zoom lectures would be with a camera focused closely on the speaker, and better-quality sound. Also, Pre-recording offers the opportunity to potentially edit and polish recordings for higher-quality content, but the resources simply aren't there to do so in any significant way.

In justifying the preference for pre-recording lectures, Alex explained, “[I reasoned that] recordings of Zoom lectures would be with a camera focused closely on the speaker, and better-quality sound.” Furthermore, “pre-recording offers the opportunity to potentially edit and polish recordings for higher-quality content, but the resources simply aren't there to do so in any significant way.” The last statement implies that lacking the needed technology hindered his ability to enhance the lesson recordings, lowering the teaching quality. Nevertheless, technology is not the single determining factor in quality online teaching, while other qualities such as perceptions, attitudes, visibility, compassion, communication, commitment, and general content knowledge all play a role in successful online teaching (Los et al., 2021).

Besides ensuring the course content's delivery quality with limited technology, Alex also had to balance the students' expectations and his pedagogical beliefs in the lecture interaction before deciding to replace real-time lectures with pre-recorded ones. Poor student attendance, with 20 out of 150 students attending a lecture in 2021's spring term, reinforced the decision, but Alex's preference for pre-recording had pre-existed before the pandemic:

Prior to Covid-19, the course had already scaled to the point where I had very little expectation of constructive interaction between teacher and students during the lecture. In July, 2021, before it was clear that classes would be fully online in sem2 2021, I was leaning toward pre-recording lectures even under the hybrid learning model. The other instructor in sem1 2021 had only had 20/150 students show up to live lectures, and there was very minimal interaction (e.g., people asking questions about the content), so I decided that it's not worth recording live. I thought it's

better to simply pre-record the lectures rather than having most students watch a low-quality recording of an attempted in-person lecture.

Under the circumstance of the poor attendance coupling with “very minimal interaction between teacher and students during the lecture”, Alex stated, “... so I decided that it’s not worth recording live [lectures]. I thought it’s better to simply pre-record the lectures rather than having most students watch a low-quality recording of an attempted in-person lecture”. This action indicates dampened enthusiasm for the remote teaching, but it also shows that the electronic medium failed to build an interactive dynamic teaching and learning environment that could promote knowledge co-construction between Alex and his class (Gao & Cui, 2022).

Despite the reasons given to support his decision, it is evident that Alex’s teaching belief precluded other pedagogies. He admitted that “I was leaning toward pre-recording lectures even under the hybrid learning model” in his interview indirectly. Many studies (e.g., Al-Rawahi, 2010; Chan, 2022; Fang, 1996; Gao & Cui, 2022) highlight that teachers’ pedagogical beliefs can influence instructors’ teaching and classroom practices. In Gao and Cui’s (2022) investigation of English teachers’ pedagogical beliefs about their roles and agentic actions in online teaching during Covid-19, they assert that “teacher’s core pedagogical beliefs and the teaching reality can shape teacher practices, particularly in an (emergency remote teaching) context” (p. 13) such as the Covid-19 pandemic. As in Alex’s case, he believed that recorded lectures offered a higher quality of recording for students’ access at any time. They recommend that universities offer prompt technical support and sufficient learning resources to develop teachers’ technology literacy for their future online and offline teaching.

Overall, this study suggests that teachers use self-assessment questionnaires to evaluate their academic readiness to teach online. Los’ et al., (2021) literature review uncovers three such instruments available for free. They include the *Readiness Assessment Tool* (Mercado, 2008): a 63-item for assessing teacher’s abilities, motivation, and behaviour; *The Faculty Self-Assessment: Preparing for Online Teaching* (Penn State University and Central Florida University, 2008): a 22-item instrument for assessing one’s online teaching competencies in terms of experience, organisation, communication, and technical skills; or OBTRA (Los et al., 2021): a 31-item measuring teacher’s technology, pedagogy, perception towards online/blended learning, and administration.

Narrative 3: The Continual Growth of Class Size in Higher Education

However, a point worth noting was the continuous expansion of class size, which had brought changes in the course instructions. To cope with the increased enrolment from about 50 to 300 students between 2020 and 2021, Alex expressed his unwillingness to change the mentoring structure from a mix-and-match to an allotment system whereby the students were no longer rematching with a different tutor in between assignments but assigned to a tutor throughout a whole semester. Moreover, the ten-minute speaking assessment had to be extended an extra week from two weeks:

Less due to Covid-19 than the growth of the course that continued during Covid-19, the decision was taken to have students (usually 35-40) attached to the same tutor throughout the semester, whereas previously, students and tutors tended to be rematched between assessments. A continued attachment has the downside of a potential bad match between student and tutor; however, the benefit is that the tutor can develop a deeper understanding of the students, their strengths and weaknesses, and more effectively mentor them as they hopefully improve throughout the semester. In the early years of [the course], the 10-minute [Assessment] 2 presentations were run in the last two weeks of the semester. However, as the class grew, this wasn't possible, so we extended that to the last three weeks of the semester.

Another plausible reason is that the course has been becoming widespread to business students and not just limited to economics students compulsorily, while remote online learning triggered by Covid-19 might contribute to students' willingness and acceptance to learning via the web (British Council, 2020). As Alex asserted:

The big long-term challenge with the course was scaling. I think the first time I taught it in sem1 2015, it had 18 students registered and about 12 who finished the course. By sem2 2021, we had about 300 students registered and about 275 completions. This has created a demand for more tutorial support, necessitating better-organised course content and more standardisation and making things like grading rubrics explicit.

Continual increment of class size can result in significant long-term challenges to teaching staff in higher education. Existing literature (Feldman, 1984; Marsh, Overall, & Kesler, 1979; Mateo & Fernández, 1996) discovers that class size can bring negative evaluation on teaching quality by students. Based on Wang and Calvano's (2022) study on the relationships between class size, student behaviours and educational outcomes with 280 students in an American university's business

school, there is no significant difference in student attentiveness, involvement, interaction with peers, and perceived teacher encouragement between large and small class size. However, teacher interaction can significantly impact the learning of knowledge and communication skills; thus, student satisfaction in large classes was notably lower than that in small classes.

Indeed, the pandemic has changed universities' teaching and learning landscape since many courses went through an emergency and intensive integration of technology. Wang and Calvano (2022) also point out that teachers must understand whether a change of modality of content delivery, such as hybrid, synchronous online, and asynchronous online, can affect the quality of teaching and learning. As reflected in Alex's narrative about his plan of transitioning the course from fully online to hybrid teaching in 2022's second semester, Australia is exiting from the Covid-19 pandemic like many countries. Alex indicated that adjustments would be required for in-person lectures. He claimed, "I will also need to think about how to adapt the class activities, as I have never delivered those in a blended environment – it was always either fully online or fully in-person" worryingly. He contemplated a possible strategy is to recruit a head tutor on top of the one for online classes to manage the face-to-face classroom experience.

Narrative 4: University's Swift Transition to Online Education under the Impact of Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the development of online education in higher education to a certain extent. Taking Alex's course as an example, the university mandated that all live lectures be recorded in 2018. As Covid-19 hit Australia, the university sprang into action by moving all face-to-face teaching to a hybrid mode, a mix of in-person and online, and finally, all teaching became fully online after the government implemented lockdown:

When COVID-19 concerns first emerged in Australia around February, 2020, the university started to make preparations for learning adjustments for its classes, including hybrid and online learning. Week by week, the restrictions became tighter and tighter, until in the first half of March, nearly all classes that could go online had been mandated to do so. Then by about just before mid-March, we went into full lockdown, so we were asked to do 100% online courses, basically nothing in person. The university mandated that any classes not offered fully online would be cancelled.

The university's decision to course cancellations was also found in some global institutions when they could not replace classroom teaching with online remote learning (Marinoni et al., 2020).

However, there was little progress in developing digital curriculum and/or resources even though the pandemic had boosted content digitalisation. The pandemic expedited the university to fully digitise all course content, including quizzes and lectures and this, therefore, could make learning easier for the students (Noviarani, Suherdi, & Kurniawan, 2021). As Alex remarked, “Essentially the same content was delivered in lecture before and during Covid-19, essentially the same readings were assigned, and essentially the same assessments were provided”. This statement implies that the course content and design used for face-to-face classrooms were chiefly appropriated for online teaching and learning.

Nevertheless, online education is more than disseminating course materials through LMS electronically or, as Alex highlighted, “merely digitalising contents and lectures for reusing or re-delivery”. This study proposes to reform online education to embed with a digital curriculum. A digital curriculum is a system of e-learning that support students to learn anytime and anywhere through interactive content provided through multimedia via the internet (Alamri, Jhanjhi, & Humayun, 2020).

The benefits of digital curricula can encompass multiple subjects and extra-curricular activities to enrich students’ learning experiences and achieve the desired goals (Alamri et al., 2020). Alamri et al., (2020) are confident that such a curriculum can cultivate learners’ critical thinking, cultural and social understanding and digital literacy by critically evaluating diverse and complex information provided on the internet, so it facilitates learners to plan, implement and evaluate their growth of academic and technical knowledge in an integrated approach more holistically. Additionally, digital curriculum resources can afford transformative learning experiences since teachers and learners can update, revise, customise and individualise the content and level of the materials to suit individual learner’s needs and study progress, whilst the content can become interactive that can be navigated via hyperlink and accessed through the web (Choppin & Borys, 2017).

CONCLUSION

This chapter investigates a lecturer’s experience in coordinating a postgraduate economist communication programme in an Australian university since the beginning of Covid-19. The pandemic speeded up the process of online education at an institution level in general and online learning in particular. It also enhanced the educator’s information communication technology knowledge and application skills as he had to adapt to the whole online classroom almost immediately without choices.

Relating to Alex’s experience in managing the postgraduate economics communication programme, the current study recommends that university course coordinators apply a social media-liked message board such as “Ed” in Canvas and

short “blast” announcements to convey important course information to online classes. If resources allow, coordinators must employ a head tutor to assist in disseminating timely information of teaching, marking, and meetings. At an institution level, customised online tools that tailor for the specific needs of the course should be made available for teachers’ requests because such customisations can improve teacher efficiency, teaching and learning quality and experiences.

Metaphorically speaking, the pandemic changed the shell of higher education from the in-person classroom to the electronic mode, but most contents were not changed. Suppose the goal of higher education is to provide a comprehensive learning experience through a holistic curriculum. In that case, a digital curriculum is proposed to offer individualised materials that can be tailor-made between teachers and learners collaboratively that fit the individual’s needs and interests by using the digital resources provided on the web interactively and critically. Higher education needs more than more research on good online practices in English language teaching. The need for a comprehensive e-education pedagogy in English-language teaching for academic or specific purposes (EAP/ESP) is not a ‘remote possibility’ anymore (Can & Silman-Karanfil, 2022).

The temporary remedial solutions for improving e-teaching/-learning include exploring the uses of LMS and pedagogies to create a more effective, engaging, interactive learning environment that can enhance learner autonomy and motivation (Can & Silman-Karanfil, 2022). In the mid- to long-term, universities are urged to enhance their higher education preparedness in five areas: technology (capacities, infrastructure, and equipment), content (teaching and learning materials), pedagogies (design and delivery of online/remote learning), monitoring, and assessment (UNESCO, 2020).

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APPENDIX 1

Questions for Teacher's Reflection / Storytelling

1. Detail the course background from the initial concept to the design, implementation and syllabus changes before and during Covid-19.
2. What critical changes in the syllabus were made to adapt to Covid-19?
3. What fundamental pedagogical changes were made to adapt to Covid-19?
4. What have you learnt/transformed your teaching / professional development?
5. 5. What are your recommendations on curriculum design, course coordination, and/or pedagogical practice learnt from teaching and coordinating the course during Covid-19?

APPENDIX 2

The timeline of key events in Sydney during Covid-19

January 2020: A scientist in China confirms that a mysterious new pneumonia-like illness identified in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, can be transmitted from human to human. Two days later, China puts Wuhan under strict lockdown. Meanwhile, on the other side of the globe, the U.S. sees its first case of the disease, later named Covid-19. The patient is a resident of Washington state who had travelled to Wuhan. The Trump Administration declares a public health emergency.

February 2020: Cases of Covid-19 begin to multiply around the world. Countries are restricting travel to contain the virus.

March 2020: The WHO characterises Covid-19 as a pandemic. In Australia, the federal government announced a nationwide lockdown on March 23, 2020.

April 2020: As cases continue to surge, countries keep their borders sealed. Businesses shut down (leading to massive job losses), schools close, sporting events cancel, and college students go home. People start wearing masks and practising “social distancing.”

December 2020: Two new vaccinations against Covid-19 are first approved in the U.S. But, as vaccinations begin, major variants of the virus are beginning to circulate.

February 2021: The first Covid-19 vaccine doses are administered in Australia.

June 2021: Sydney announces lockdown measures for suburbs across the city as the Bondi outbreak grows. The affected LGAs are Woollahra, Waverley, Randwick, and the City of Sydney, including the CBD.

October 2021: Sydney is released from lockdown on ‘freedom day’.

Source: Katella (2021), <https://www.yalemedicine.org/news/covid-timeline>; and


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Knowlton (2022), <https://www.timeout.com/melbourne/things-to-do/a-timeline-of-covid-19-in-australia-two-years-on>


Chapter 2

Teaching Presence During the COVID–19 Pandemic: Practices of EAP Teachers in a Thai University

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While a number of studies have explored the challenges faced by teachers, little has been known about how they navigated the teaching presence in online remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. The present investigation explores how two English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teachers in a university in Thailand facilitated online language teaching and supported students' language learning in an online environment. Findings from the online classroom observations and interviews revealed that classroom pedagogical skills, knowledge of the online teaching and learning platforms, and teaching presence played a crucial role in an emergency remote and online teaching environment. Despite the lack of training for online language teaching, teachers' ability to strategize the transition to online teaching and their strong sense of resourcefulness and focus on the use of online platforms allowed them to mitigate the issues and face the challenges of the sudden shift to online teaching. The authors discussed the limitations and offered suggestions and implications for future studies.

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INTRODUCTION

The sudden outbreak of the COVID-19 in late December 2019 has challenged the teaching practices among language teachers and other academic teachers around the world. For one, teachers may lack the skills and experience in online language teaching (Ulla & Perales, 2021), making them unprepared for the sudden transition of their teaching practice from classroom language teaching to online and remote teaching. Second, teachers may not have the technological skills and the means to move their physical classroom online, given that a number of them do not have electronic devices, internet connectivity, and even electricity (Nhu et al., 2019). Lastly, schools and universities may not have an available learning management system (LMS) where online classes can be conducted, and language learning can be supported (Ulla & Perales, 2021). When teachers faced these issues in their online language teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, their teaching presence, teaching practice, and students' language learning support could be affected. Apparently, "none of the teachers was sure about the effectiveness of such large-scale online language instruction. Worries and stress lingered on the teachers' minds" (Gao & Zhang, 2020, p. 2). Teachers worried not only about their online pedagogical and technological skills but also the delivery of their language instruction, language teaching and learning materials, and language assessments. These issues and challenges can be considered valid since teachers may not be trained to emergency online and remote language teaching and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teachers in a university in Thailand were of no exemption.

This chapter aims to explore and understand EAP teachers as regards their teaching practices and how they address and cope with the issues and challenges in a university in Thailand during the sudden transition to online and remote language teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, this chapter presents a qualitative empirical study on EAP teachers' teaching presence (Garrison et al., 2000) and the kind of language learning support they extended to their online language learners. It is hoped that this chapter advances the discussion of teaching presence, a concept introduced by Garrison et al. (2000) in a community of inquiry framework, in the context of an emergency online language teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic.

DISTANCE EDUCATION, E-LEARNING, ONLINE TEACHING, AND EMERGENCY REMOTE TEACHING

Since the technology was first incorporated into education, the notion of teaching and learning without a face-to-face classroom has been referred to as distance education (Conrad, 2006). As suggested by King et al. (2001), distance education

includes synchronous or asynchronous formalized instructions conducted to overcome geographic constraints. Although some readers may think distance education is computer-based, distance teaching may not necessarily require computers and electronic network connections because it can exploit CDs, DVDs, TV channels, radio broadcasts, or other electronic devices that help teachers deliver the lessons. Therefore, distance education is suitable for students who live far away from the institutions, especially students from other countries or those in remote areas without the Internet. In other words, distance education is the option that caters to the teaching and learning scenarios where face-to-face class meetings and tutorials are impossible, mostly due to geographical barriers.

Subsequently, with the technological progression of distance education, e-learning has emerged as a concept defining distance education where there is an application of electronic media for various learning goals. Unlike distance education which is the only choice for remote learning and teaching, e-learning allows teachers to combine online flexibly and offline sessions to create a form of flipped or blended classrooms. The purpose of e-learning ranges from complementing traditional classrooms to fully substituting face-to-face classes (Guri-Rosenblit, 2005). E-learning may also be described in the educational setting as instructional procedures that make use of information and communication technology (ICTs) to flexibly enable both synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning activities (Jereb & Mitek, 2006). Moore et al. (2011) emphasized that e-learning can cover content extensively in electronic networks such as the Internet, Lan, and other electronic media, including audios, videotapes, satellites, and interactive TVs. E-learning also includes both asynchronous modes of interaction such as assessment tools and web-based instructional materials and synchronous interaction through email communication, group discussion, and conferencing tools and platforms. Based on the teaching syllabus and other pedagogical considerations, school management and educators can adjust the ratio between offline and online as well as synchronous and asynchronous teaching sessions with the help of an e-learning system.

ONLINE LANGUAGE TEACHING VERSUS EMERGENCY ONLINE LANGUAGE TEACHING

While there is still the deep-rooted belief that online language teaching is inferior to face-to-face language classes, empirical studies into second language teaching and acquisition prove that there is no significant discrepancy between the effectiveness of both modes of instruction delivery (Means et al., 2012; Money Penny & Aldrich, 2016). In fact, online language teaching is even more advantageous in providing an environment that accommodates a larger multicultural community that affords

diverse opportunities for learners to experience different levels of social interaction, social ideologies, and communications (Gacs et al., 2020). Online language teaching also removes time and geographical barriers, enhancing its accessibility to a large audience. Because online language teaching may be sustainable for long-term implementation, teachers should consider linguistic resources, carefully designed language affordances, scientifically proven frameworks of assessment and evaluation, and constant technological support from the beginning till the end of the course. An effective online teaching system should provide students with up-to-date authentic linguistic materials and realia, and thus, help them acquire the required cultural awareness level without having to go abroad. In addition, students should be given a chance to acquire the target language with tailor-made communicative activities of different proficiency levels (Colpaert, 2013).

However, the abrupt transition to online teaching in response to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic to maintain the continuity of education is creating tremendous challenges for teachers and students, especially those who have no prior experience with online teaching. Turchi et al. (2020) suggest that the sudden shift from face-to-face to remote English has created three complex areas of change, including the environment, purposes, and teaching practices. First, rather than using a curriculum fully optimized for English language teaching, teachers have to transit the remaining course content of the offline courses to an online environment. Although there may be a number of English language courses that have digital applications to support the learning process, such as audio recordings, video clips, presentation files, self-studying applications, and cyber platforms (Mishan, 2021), teachers still have to make more efforts in transforming the classroom assessment, assignment, and projects for the online environment. The instructional space in emergency language classrooms forces teachers and students to get used to practices in the virtual classrooms. They have to learn how to use new teaching and learning tools while still maximizing interactions and communication, which is of paramount importance in developing students' English competence. Secondly, online lessons' objectives are also susceptible to modifications so that collaborative activities can be prioritized over one-way instruction and feedback from teachers to enhance interactivity. Additionally, while it is easier for teachers to monitor students' language learning in face-to-face classes, they have to develop independent tasks and collect formative evidence of language acquisition due to emergency classrooms' unpredictable and constantly changing nature in times of crises (Zou et al., 2021).

The global shift from face-to-face teaching to emergency remote teaching has also triggered an explosion in the number of studies about emergency language classes. Many studies focus on teachers' and students' perceptions of emergency and remote English language teaching (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020; Dogoriti, 2010; Sher Ryn & SC, 2020) and language learners' motivation (Al-Kumaim et al., 2021;

Fuentes Hernández & Flórez, 2020). Other studies also focus on how emergency language teaching is implemented (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020; Talidong, 2020) or how effective English skill training is in these classrooms (Forrester, 2020). Although numerous studies have touched upon different aspects of remote language teaching, a very limited body of research has been dedicated to teaching English for academic purposes (EAP) in emergency online language classes. Among the papers on teaching EAP during the COVID-19 pandemic, there is an article by Davies et al. (2020). The researchers investigated how four EAP courses in five Sino-foreign universities were conducted by analyzing lecturers' self-reflection. Although this study can point out the strengths and weaknesses the lecturers observed in the emergency online language classes per se, the study fails to provide a holistic picture of how an emergency online EAP class took place and the specific role of the lecturers in teaching these classes.

Similarly, Kohnke and Jarvis (2021) studied how university lecturers in Hong Kong prepared students in their EAP classes and what activities the lecturers deemed the most effective. Although the research successfully portrays opportunities and challenges that teachers have been through, it fails to distinguish the activities that the lecturers conducted in the synchronous and asynchronous modes. More noticeably, these studies did not rely on the comprehensive framework that can differentiate online teaching and learning environment from face-to-face classes. Therefore, it is important to call for research that can describe and provide an insight into EAP lecturers' emergency English language classroom community and culture with both synchronous and asynchronous modes of communication.

TEACHING PRESENCE

Scholars have attempted to construct updated models that reflect the distinctive and original characteristics of online education to promote pedagogical-based and empirically-informed teaching (Colpaert, 2013; Stickler & Hauck, 2016). Among these online teaching models, Community of Inquiry (COI), created by Garrison et al. (2000), has drawn attention among researchers of online teaching. The COI model suggests that effective online teaching is based on the interim of three types of presence, including cognitive presence, social presence, and teaching presence. Cognitive presence is the learners' ability to construct meaning and understanding when learners' capacity to present the real-self with individual characteristics differentiating them from other members of the society is social presence. Both cognitive and social presence are designed and facilitated by a teacher's capacity, which is the teaching presence. Theoretically, effective online learning is, thereby, the

outcome of well-designed and supported interactions between instructional material, students, and instructors mediated harmoniously by all three types of presence.

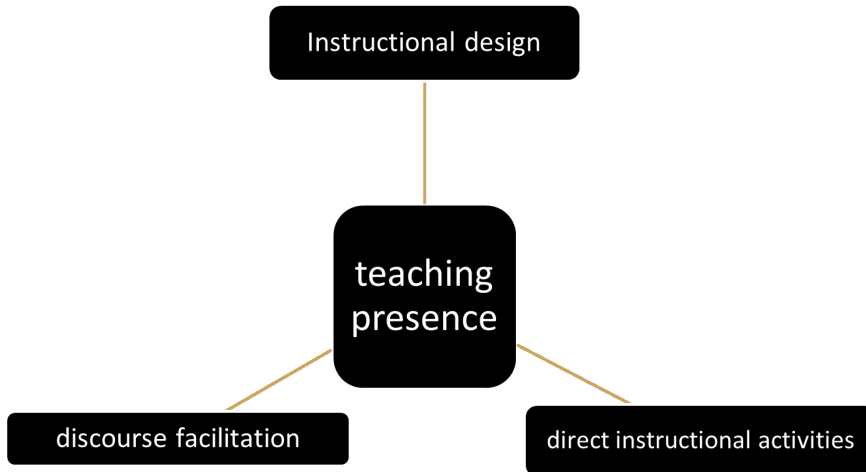
In the context of the current pandemic, among the three presence that the researchers used for the study to understand and describe the practices, roles, and behaviors of online teachers is the teaching presence. Its relevance played a critical role in the development of online teaching since most EAP teachers may not be prepared to shift to online teaching, considering the lack of training and technical skills.

As demonstrated in figure 1, teaching presence comprises three pillars: design, facilitation, and direct instruction (Garrison, 2007). In online teaching, teachers' presence does not only exist in the virtual classroom but even before the lesson begins as teachers design their instructional activities (Nagel & Kotzé, 2010). Thus, teaching presence includes planning, preparation, and organization of online course content. As the main designer of a course, the teacher sets objectives and goals, develops related teaching materials, and plans what digital and pedagogical tools are effective in helping students acquire the target language. This designing and organizing process can ensure there is not only a strong connection between the lesson goals and the activities but also a smooth transition between different phases of activities in an online lesson. After fulfilling the first role of instructional design, teachers also need to shoulder the responsibility of a facilitator in the online environment. Collison et al. (2000) mentioned that the facilitation discourse can take the form of voices in online learning, ranging from a generative guide, a conceptual facilitator, an inspiration creator, a reflective mentor, a mediator, and a role model of the target language. As teachers facilitate and mediate interaction and communication with and between learners, language acquisition takes place. Therefore, the facilitation of discourses is one of the critical roles of teachers.

The third pillar of teaching presence is direct instruction, which means that the teacher is an academic leader and a knowledge resource. Based on the premise that online teaching environment affords different learning and teaching opportunities, the way that teacher present the lesson, include extracurricular knowledge, provide feedback and assess student uptake of the knowledge may require further modifications and adaptations in comparison to their face-to-face practices.

Important as teaching presence is in mediating and connecting instruction design and discourse facilitation, the review of the literature reveals that a majority of studies only investigate the reliability and validity of the teaching presence as a construct of the COI scale or approach the COI from a quantitative approach (Abbitt & Boone, 2021; Díaz et al., 2010; Stenbom, 2018). Similarly, another dominant research trend is that the researchers use teacher presence to predict students' success and achievement in class (Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005; Marks et al., 2005). However, the sole reliance on numeric statistics and surveys may not provide in-depth knowledge about how teachers validate their presence in the online classes.

Figure 1. Three pillars of teaching presence



Also, the self-report data through students' and instructors' surveys may lack the reflective rigor to conclude any causal relationships between teaching presence and student academic performance or other psychological variables. There is also a severe limitation of research dedicated to comprehensively demonstrating how teachers practice their teaching presence in online classes from a humanistic perspective. Moreover, as aforementioned, while there is a proliferation of studies about emergency online language teaching, very few studies demonstrate the EAP teachers' presence when we conduct this research. It is, thus, important for us to conduct a study that can allow EAP teachers to voice their opinions about their roles in such a once-in-many generation event, as this pandemic from a more humanistic perspective. Specifically, this qualitative empirical inquiry sought to address the following questions?

1. How do EAP teachers facilitate the online language teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What are some pedagogical considerations they make in migrating to online and remote teaching?
3. How do they support students' language learning in an online environment?

METHODOLOGY

The present study follows the qualitative research design, employing netnography as a methodological approach. Introduced by Kozinets (2002) for an online marketing research, a netnography combines ‘internet’ and ethnography as a way to study online communities. In language education, the application of netnography as a methodological tool has also become popular (see Eaton & Pasquini, 2020; Kessler et al., 2021).

As an approach, netnography “adapts ethnographic research techniques to study the cultures and communities that are emerging through computer-mediated communications” (Kozinets, 2002, p. 62). It uses online classroom observations and interviews as data gathering methods. Researchers are either passive or participant observers in the online community. They should prepare “specific research questions and identify particular online forums appropriate to the types of questions that are of interest” (Kozinets, 2002, p. 63) to the online community.

Additionally, using netnography “provides a nuanced understanding of different social phenomena related to community practices” (Kessler et al., 2021, p. 6).

In the context of the current study, teaching English for academic purposes during the COVID-19 pandemic in a Thai university was a phenomenon that language teachers experienced. As shifting to online or remote teaching from residential classroom teaching was sudden, teachers may encounter a number of pedagogical and technological issues that affect the teaching and learning process. Exploring these issues and how EAP teachers mitigated such issues may give us a deeper understanding of teachers’ presence in online language teaching, especially when faced with a health crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Context and Participants

The study was conducted in two *English for Academic Communication* classes in a university in Thailand during the sudden transition to online and remote teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These classes were taught by two English language teachers who volunteered to participate in the study. Like all teachers from schools and universities around the world, these two teachers (all females) found some issues when teaching online. However, they mitigated those issues to carry out the teaching and learning process remotely by using an online platform in the absence of an organized learning management system (LMS). They were teaching English language courses for three and five years, respectively and both held Master’s degrees. To withhold their identity and maintain anonymity, they were given pseudonyms: Jing (30 years old) and Lily (34 years old). Both teachers acknowledged that they had no prior training as regards conducting online classes before. However, they

also mentioned that they had technical skills, especially using Zoom and Facebook for their online language classes. Thus, Jing used Zoom for her synchronous online classroom, and Lily used Facebook for her asynchronous online classes.

Teacher-participants were recruited through a 'call for participants' announcement on *Facebook* and direct messages using *LINE* and the institution's email. Among the 24 EAP teachers in the university, only two responded whose teaching schedules matched with the first author's free teaching time. Such a schedule was important because it determined the time also when the online classroom observation be done.

Likewise, all the students of these two courses were first-year students, taking different majors in the university. Both the participants and their students were informed about the study and its purpose. They were assured that their participation was voluntary and that all shared information would be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Before the conduct of the study, approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the first author's institution was sought. It was given an approval number of WUEC-21-277-01.

Data Gathering Procedure and Analysis

Since the study employed netnography as a methodological approach, data were taken from classroom observations and individual interviews. The first author spent 12 hours (6 hours each online classroom observation) in each online classroom observation. Since each class held one session every week for 3 hours, the first author observed two classes in a week for two weeks by joining the *Zoom* and *Facebook* classes conducted by the participants. Likewise, the first author did no interaction in the online class as he was only a participant observer. When entering the *Zoom* online class of Jing, the first author did not turn on his camera so that students would not be conscious and shy in participating in the online class discussion. Similarly, the first author also joined and observed the online class of Lily on *Facebook*, which was conducted asynchronously.

Finally, teacher-participants were also interviewed to validate the data taken from the classroom observation. The interview, which was done using the English language, lasted between 35 to 60 minutes and focused on the way how teacher-participants design, facilitate, and carry out their online language teaching.

Data analysis was done thematically based on the research questions posed for the study. Interview excerpts were also included in the presentation of the findings.

Findings

Jing's Online Classroom: Zoom for Synchronous Classes

Jing conducted her *English for Academic Communication* class in Zoom synchronously. The university provided her a Zoom account, where she could hold her online classes. Her students were also given the Zoom link to each of their online classes. This was already prepared by the university when these students enrolled for their classes during the term.

The class was scheduled to start from 10:00 o'clock in the morning to 1:00 o'clock in the afternoon. Jing had to log in as early as 9:30 in the morning as she had to prepare her online teaching materials. However, some students logged in 15 minutes before her class started. Thus, while she was waiting for the rest of the students to log in, she greeted everyone in the online room and started asking what their day was like or if they got any plans for the day. In the interview, she mentioned,

Did you also notice that? Yes, I always do that in my class [logging in early and greeting everyone in the online room before the class started]. When we were still teaching face-to-face, I always went to my classroom early to prepare. In the online teaching, I guess we should be logging in early too so that we can monitor students who are coming in the Zoom and prepare our materials...asking my students how their days were like is my form of greetings to them to make them feel that I cared for them, especially during this most difficult time.

Starting the Online Class in Zoom

At 10:00 o'clock in the morning, she started her class with a vocabulary exercise using the online *Socrative* application, where students had to answer vocabulary questions. She did this by sharing her screen and reminding everyone to participate in the vocabulary exercises. This went on for 15 minutes.

I give the vocabulary exercise every class session during the first 15 minutes of the class to prepare everyone for the class and also to monitor students who cannot attend our online class. If students could not come, I would give them a make-up exercise so they could cope with the lesson.

After the 15-item vocabulary exercise, she then proceeded to her lesson of the day. She recapitulated last week's lessons by calling students randomly to check if they could still remember the topic they had the previous week. She then asked if students had questions or clarifications regarding the lesson. After which, she

shared again her screen and presented the new lesson using the *PowerPoint* slides she prepared. She also called some students to read and share their thoughts about the lesson. Although some students did not turn on their camera, this did not become an issue for Jing. Students participated in the online discussion even without their cameras. And for Jing, this was all that mattered and important to her.

I actually don't mind and obliged my students to turn their cameras on during the class discussion. I just let them speak even without seeing their faces. As long as they participate in the online class discussion and contribute to the teaching and learning process, I am okay with it. But for speaking test, I required them to have their cameras turned on.

The online lecture with students participating in the online discussion continued from 30 to 45 minutes. Aside from presenting her lesson using the *PowerPoint* slides, she also referred back to their class textbook and played a 2-minute video from YouTube to reinforce her lesson. When asked about using different teaching materials, she revealed,

I had to prepare PowerPoint slides for my class. Even if we have our class textbook, students would love to see interesting and colorful visuals. And I think this also helps in making them become attentive and participative in my class. Sometimes, I also used the textbook. It is just a pdf copy though so it is easy to share online... Actually, for the YouTube videos, I am not using them in my class regularly. I only select the lesson that has an interesting and related videos in YouTube. If I couldn't find any video, I would not use it for my class.

The Breakout Rooms for Online Discussion

After the online class discussion, she created six breakout rooms and assigned students in each room to discuss among themselves their assigned topic. She asked each group to appoint a discussant to lead their group discussion and a reporter to report their discussions back to the main room. She gave them 15 minutes for this activity. After the given time, all of the students were back to the main room and each group presented their group discussion. Jing became a facilitator and a moderator in the online group discussion.

Actually, I do not assign breakout rooms every class session for my students for their group discussion. It also depends on the kind of lesson I have for the week...I believe this also creates a sense of community, and you know, support for my students

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that even if they are separated by distance, they still got the chance to talk to their classmates.

The *Zoom* online class finished with a reminder from Jing to her students about their group online role-play. She mentioned that she would post the complete instruction on their class *Facebook* group. In the interview, she said,

Even if I conduct my online class in Zoom, I still used Facebook. I used it for communication purposes and for other reminders, especially homework or other independent learning activities.

Challenges and Opportunities in Zoom Teaching

Jing also revealed during the interview that conducting an online class in *Zoom* was challenging since she did not have training about online teaching. One of the main issues that she pointed out was preparing the teaching and learning materials that she could use in her online class. She believed that although it was an online class, the language teaching materials should also reflect the course's objectives. She emphasized that these materials should be as enjoyable as possible since "students only interact mostly with their computer or phone's screen, with no teacher to guide them physically like in the face-to-face teaching". She also added that students should be considered when planning for the online lesson, maintaining that a sense of collaboration should be reflected when designing online class activities.

You have to become creative and I become creative in my teaching. I also think that students should feel the sense of community especially that they are away from their teacher and from their classmates. Students should be included and we should think of them when we design online teaching materials. There should be a collaboration between the teacher and the students. After all, we are a community.

Thus, having *PowerPoint* slides and using other online applications like *YouTube* and *Socrative*, Jing believed that they enhance and facilitate her teaching of the language during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, although she did not have prior training how to conduct the online class, she maintained that teaching *Academic Communication* courses during the pandemic developed her online pedagogical skills. In other words, she took her online teaching experience as a new professional development, where she grew in her teaching experience. She disclosed,

The pandemic challenged my teaching skills. It was very challenging but I think as a teacher, we need to be resilient and adaptive to change. They say, "change is the

only constant in this world” so we must embrace and learn from this new experience. For me, I took it as a challenge. I become creative and resourceful in my teaching. And I think, I developed in my profession.

Lily’s Online Classroom: Facebook for Asynchronous Classes

While Jing’s classroom was done in *Zoom* for her synchronous teaching, Lily did most of her online teaching on *Facebook*, where she created a closed-class *Facebook* group for her class. Like Jing, Lily also taught *English for Academic Communication* class with 30 students majoring in *Pharmacy*.

The university actually provides a Zoom account, where I can hold my classes. But I used it alternatively with our Facebook group. I found Facebook more convenient because I can easily monitor my students. If I want to post something about our lesson, I don’t need to wait for our class schedule and meet my students in Zoom to assign them the language tasks. I can easily do that on Facebook.

Although the university provided her with a *Zoom* account, conducting her online class on *Facebook* was more convenient and easy. She got to monitor and support her students remotely, considering that all of her students have a *Facebook* account. However, *Facebook* was only used as her online teaching platform every other week. She also used *Zoom* for consultation, office hours, and providing feedback to her students about their online class performance. In other words, although she conducted most of her classes on *Facebook*, she still utilized the university provided *Zoom* account to meet her students virtually.

The Facebook Classroom

During one of her asynchronous classes, Lily began her class by posting a series of online activities on her class *Facebook* group. She made the first post about the vocabulary activity, which students had to complete within the day. She shared the *Socratic Room Name* and told her students to log into the online website anytime during the day and complete the task. The second post she made was the *PowerPoint* slides of her lesson. She instructed the students to download the *PowerPoint* slides and read them. If students had some clarifications, they were told to post their comments in the post’s comment section. She clarified that if students had questions regarding the activities, she would address them the following week during their online meeting in *Zoom*. Her third post was a discussion forum, where students were instructed to answer the question posted and comment on their classmate’s answer. Furthermore, she told her students that their answers to the posted question and

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their comments to their classmate's answers should be limited only to 100 words. Finally, she posted a worksheet relating to their lesson, and students were given a week to finish the task.

In the interview, Lily revealed that using *Facebook* as her online classroom was her way of supporting her students who may have some difficulties with their internet connection or who may not be comfortable showing their faces and their background in *Zoom*.

I tried conducting my classes in Zoom, but I realized that some students messaged me that they could not join our class in Zoom because they had some important errands to do. Others were also in the hospital, either they were getting a vaccine or undergoing some COVID-19 tests. I also had a student who was in a quarantine facility because she was exposed to a COVID-19 positive patient. You know, all of these things we need to consider as teachers. Everyone is having an issue right now, and we need to understand that.

She also mentioned that conducting the online class on *Facebook* was not as challenging as doing it in *Zoom* because the teaching material that she had to prepare was only the *PowerPoint* slides taken from their class textbook. Likewise, the worksheets that were also given to her students, were taken from online sources. Thus, she just needed to post the *PowerPoint* slides and worksheets in her class *Facebook* group for her students to read and do the language activities. The only challenging part for her was the language assessment, as she could not devise a strategy that would be used effectively for measuring how much her students learned from their lesson. She revealed that she could use their *Facebook* group for an online discussion forum, where every student had to share their thoughts and ideas based on the guide question posted.

It is very hard to conduct language assessments online because we don't yet have that system where we can just upload our questions and students answer the test. But for our Facebook group, for me, it is effective when it comes to writing practices. When students post their answers, I can easily identify whether they are plagiarized or not because I can just copy and paste them in google, and google would tell me if those answers were copied. Also, I love doing the online discussion forum because students share and exchange their ideas about a particular question.

Such difficulty in assessing her students online allowed Lily to think of other ways to evaluate her students and provide feedback. She thought of using *Zoom* alongside *Facebook* only for speaking practices to check whether her students were performing well in speaking. Hence, every other week, she met her students online

in *Zoom* for speaking practices and providing feedback on their language learning. This can be observed during the second online classroom observation, where Lily started the class session by sharing her screen with speaking rubrics for her class speaking activity. She explained to her students what were the criteria that would be used to assess them in their speaking activity. Students were encouraged to ask questions and clarifications regarding the speaking rubrics. After which, she gave the instructions to her students and asked all of them to leave the main *Zoom* room and go to the breakout room to wait for their turn. The speaking exercise started with a student choosing one topic from the list of topics she shared on her screen. Students were only given two minutes to speak about their chosen topic.

In an interview, Lily also mentioned that she did not only use *Zoom* for speaking exercises but also for giving feedback and providing online support for her students. In other words, every other week, she also had to meet her students online in *Zoom* for online consultation and feedback. Likewise, Lily emphasized the importance of providing support to her students who were learning remotely. She mentioned,

Even if I used Facebook for my online class, I believe that students also need to see me and I also need to see them virtually once in a while. So, I am meeting them every other week after our language exercises to check on them, like asking them if how are they now, or if they have some problems learning online so I could also adjust the way how I deliver my lesson. After all, they are my students.

Opportunities in Online Teaching

When asked about her realizations in online teaching during the pandemic, she revealed that she took the online teaching as an opportunity to improve in her teaching profession. Like Jing, Lily valued the chance to be teaching online since she felt that she went back to being a pre-service language teacher, where there were a number of things yet to be learned and discovered. Although she did not have an online training about conducting online classes, she perceived that teaching online during the pandemic was the same as teaching face-to-face when she was still new in the teaching profession. Both had a number of teaching difficulties and other teaching issues that she encountered. However, she reiterated that those challenges and issues she faced were only at the beginning.

...no, I think teaching online during the pandemic was the same as teaching face-to-face when I started in my teaching profession. Those challenges are pretty normal. As long as you know what you are doing and you are ready to embrace new things and new experiences, I think you will learn to overcome them. These teaching challenges are only at the beginning, especially when you are new. For me, during

this pandemic where we have to do the online teaching, I think I went back to my university days where I was learning how to teach.

Discussion

The present investigation explores how EAP teachers in a university in Thailand facilitated the online language teaching and supported students' language learning in an online environment during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the findings, this study highlights the importance of classroom pedagogical skills, knowledge of the online teaching and learning platforms, and teaching presence in online teaching environment. In the current study, EAP teachers in Thailand employed previous classroom pedagogical knowledge to navigate online and remote language teaching as the new form of teaching modality. Preparing for and delivering the lessons, conducting and engaging students in various language activities, and using other online teaching and learning sources to reinforce the lessons were some of the in-person classroom pedagogical practices utilized in online teaching. Such knowledge allowed them to carry out and transform their face-to-face classes into online teaching despite the lack of experience and training as regards online pedagogy. In other words, although faced with teaching challenges online, teachers brought with them and modified their face-to-face classroom teaching skills when migrating to an online teaching environment. The differences in the pedagogical skills and knowledge they employed in the face-to-face classroom and online teaching were how such teaching practices were used in different and unique contexts. For instance, having breakout room discussions, screen sharing, online collaborative language learning activities are teaching techniques that can only be done and are unique in the online teaching platform.

Muntaner-Mas et al. (2017) maintained that teachers' teaching skills are important since they greatly impact on their students' academic experiences. This suggests that in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, when classroom teaching had to be moved online, familiarity and knowledge of one's teaching skills is essential. Although classroom face-to-face teaching may be different from online remote teaching, teachers role is certain and that is to ensure and support students learning process.

Findings also revealed that teachers demonstrated awareness of problem-solving strategies that addressed the issues in online teaching. In other words, teachers were able to address the need for continuous learning despite the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic. This was evident in their use of an online teaching and learning platform and their choice of teaching modality. Although the choice of the teaching platforms is both institutional and personal, they still considered some pedagogical and personal factors to maximize students' learning engagement in an online community. Such consideration provided them an option as to what online teaching platform could

better serve their teaching practices and support students' learning process. For example, while one teacher-participant opted to conduct her online class using the *Zoom* platform as she put premium on the synchronous teaching modality, the other teacher-participant chose to hold her online class in *Facebook*, where she could have the asynchronous teaching modality. However, although both teachers had different reasons why they chose one online teaching modality over the other, such choice always emphasized and considered students' learning as a primary factor in choosing a platform for online teaching. Gao and Zhang (2020) mentioned that "teachers acquired their ICT literacy through their clear understanding of students' learning needs and was facilitated by online teaching practice and integrating traditional classroom teaching" (p. 12). This suggests that teachers, despite the lack of online teaching training, have become creative and resourceful in conducting an online class during the COVID-19 pandemic. The use of *Zoom* and *Facebook* as an online teaching and learning platform made their teaching possible as students were engaged in different learning activities. Teachers also perceived that such platforms offered them convenience to carry out their online teaching since students were also familiar with the platforms. This finding corroborated the result of previous studies (Aydın & Özdemir, 2019; Henry et al. 2020; Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2020; Sánchez et al., 2019; Ulla & Perales, 2020) which highlighted that the use of *Facebook* and *Zoom* in teaching offers an opportunity for teachers and students to engage in the teaching and learning process given their video-call, screen-sharing, post, comment, and messaging features.

Online Teaching Presence during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Teaching presence, "which plays a key role in online learning and links learners and instructors who are not physically connected" (Zhang et al., 2016, p. 889) emphasizes the roles of the teachers in the online teaching environment. These roles include the planning, preparation, and organization of the online course contents so that teaching and learning process take place. In the current investigation, both teachers showed a strong teaching presence when migrating to online teaching as evident in their choice of the teaching platforms, the design of the teaching modality, the lesson organization, facilitation, direct instruction, and students' support. For instance, there is always a pattern of teacher-to-student and students-to-students interactions in the online teaching environment of the two teacher-participants. The breakout room sessions in *Zoom* allowed students to interact with their peers and co-create knowledge together. Likewise, the discussion forum on *Facebook* also gave the students the opportunity to present and exchange their thoughts about a given topic. Facilitating such students' interactions in online teaching requires time and effort for the teachers to plan and prepare the activities.

Moreover, it is also found that teaching and learning online were mostly based on materials rather than direct interaction. Such materials were taken from their course textbook and other online sources. The use of the *PowerPoint* slides, worksheets, discussion forum, and other online sources that reinforce students' learning were found common both in the *Zoom* and *Facebook* online teaching platforms. Rapanta et al. (2020) reported in their study that although teachers were able to integrate various materials for their online teaching, including the use of other online sources, teachers should produce or find good materials and be able to leverage on them (p. 928). This implies that teachers should consider the suitability of these materials when adapting them for their online class so that effective teaching and learning takes place.

Another important finding from the study is that while the role of the teachers and their teaching practices were challenged during the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers saw an opportunity to develop and grow in the teaching profession when transitioning to online teaching. Contrary to what Redmond (2011) mentioned that "for some instructors, when they change the place of teaching, they feel that their identities are under threat...and see their professional identity being tied to their past face-to-face teaching where they had a high level of expertise" (p. 1051), participants of the current study recognized the importance of learning new teaching skills in a different teaching environment. It must be noted that teachers acknowledged that they did not have prior training and experience in conducting online language classes. However, they reflected based on their experience that they became more resourceful and creative in their teaching. For instance, the integration of various online learning resources became prominent in their online classes as most of their teaching and learning materials were taken from online sources. They learned to modify and adapt such materials to suit their students' language learning abilities. This suggests that in-person classroom teaching material can be modified for online teaching by utilizing other online teaching resources.

Lastly, the teaching presence demonstrated by teacher-participants in their online teaching can be viewed as student-centered since students do the online language tasks without or with minimal supervision and guidance from their online teachers. Thus, the role of the teachers is viewed as online language learning facilitators since they managed and facilitated their online class, giving their students the opportunity to learn by themselves. Zhang et al. (2016) mentioned that as online facilitators, teachers "prepare the online course by designing its structure, developing multimedia lectures, creating learning tasks, and setting up schedules". However, when facilitating the course online, teachers as facilitators "not only facilitate students' interactions with the learning materials, with their peers, and with facilitators but also provide timely instructions and feedback to students, as well as monitoring online social activities". (p. 889).

CONCLUSION

This present investigation showed that classroom pedagogical skills, knowledge of the online teaching and learning platforms, and teaching presence in an online teaching environment are crucial factors in online language teaching and learning. Despite the lack of training for online language teaching, teachers ability to strategize the transition to online teaching and their strong sense of resourcefulness and focus on the use of online platforms allowed them to mitigate the issues and face the challenges of the sudden shift to online teaching brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. As EAP teachers, it is vital to recognize the importance of adaptability and flexibility in the changing language teaching landscape.

The findings of the study, although these were only limited to a specific teaching context and participants, offer implications for other EAP teachers and schools and universities who may have limited resources for online teaching. This paper suggests that although EAP teachers and their teaching skills were challenged in the online teaching environment, teaching presence must be flexible in emergency remote teaching, where teachers use an online platform that they are familiar with so that over-reliance on technical support from technology experts would be avoided. After all, teachers facilitate the class and not the technology. Therefore, if the school's LMS is unavailable, teachers should exploit platforms (both synchronous and asynchronous) that are readily accessible, or even popular so that no extensive training is required (e.g. *Facebook*, *LINE* or *Twitter* as asynchronous platforms, and *Zoom* or *Google Meets* as platforms for live teaching sessions). Likewise, schools and universities should provide teachers the support they need when moving classes online to achieve a smooth and successful transition.

Lastly, future studies should explore the value of professional development training during the sudden shift of teaching modalities among EAP teachers for education policy-makers, researchers, and practitioners to consider. Empirical studies that explore how teachers develop and form their sense of agency in professional development, especially during the emergency remote teaching, would inform the need for school reform in language education curriculum.

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Chapter 3

Teaching EAP and ESP to Undergraduates During COVID-19 in Hong Kong

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter reports on how two university courses (EAP and ESP) adapted to online and hybrid learning through a combination of technology-mediated and blended learning strategies. This is followed by an examination on issues associated with online instruction from data collected through focus group interviews (N=14) involving teachers and students and a discussion on how students and faculty members feel about the prolonged use of technology in EAP and ESP courses. It is hoped that this chapter will enrich our understanding of delivering EAP and ESP courses in EMI contexts during these challenging times and learn about the struggles students and teachers went through.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused chaos worldwide. In the wake of lockdowns and school closures, educators in many higher education institutions (HEIs) naturally resorted to using existing LMS such as Blackboard to continue teaching and assessing online as students stayed home to learn. In addition, many HEIs have used video conferencing platforms such as Zoom and MS Teams as alternatives to a learner management system (LMS), primarily for synchronous classes. This was initially

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seen as a short term emergency solution by most HEIs as a way to minimize the disruption.

Amid a myriad of terms describing the situation, this chapter uses the term emergency remote teaching (ERT) coined by Hodges et al. (2020) to describe the mode of delivery under the current pandemic, which encompasses a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning delivered either entirely online or through hybrid mode. The reason is that this is viewed as a mechanism to handle the situation in a transient manner rather than suggesting a permanent migration to a rigid online distance learning model. Further, the ERT model allows flexibility on delivery methods, which is important since learning activities and assessments often require different strategies in light of the fluidity of the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

ERT is considered by some as much an opportunity as it is a threat when it comes to online learning using technologies. Regardless of readiness and competence, tens of thousands of teachers worldwide were forced to teach online as a temporary measure. This has inadvertently become a mass global experiment in virtual schooling which in turn accelerated its realization in some sectors such as HE where there is already a strong desire to adapt blended or hybrid learning mode for their programs.

While ERT might have been a sensible substitute for face-to-face instruction, switching a course to online delivery unexpectedly without careful consideration is far from being ideal. To begin with, many teachers worldwide have inadequate ICT skills for online teaching (Lukas and Yunus, 2021). Delivering a language-based subject is particularly challenging as it demands much more student-centered strategies than a content-based subject. Online teaching, or distance learning, traditionally depends predominantly on asynchronous learning. Synchronous meetings are rare. This move is therefore unprecedented with unknown efficacy and drawbacks. It has been a common occurrence for English teachers to incorporate blended learning strategies to improve quality of teaching and learning, to prioritize higher order learning activities such as discussions over gap fills (Hockly and Dudeney, 2018). In a blended setting, using video conferencing tools for instruction can aid learning since face-to-face interaction, even delivered virtually, is invaluable when it comes to building rapport between learners and teachers (Jones, Kolloff, and Kolloff, 2013). More recently, Kohnke and Moorhouse (2020) reviewed and considered Zoom as a suitable synchronous meeting tool for teaching live ERT lessons as functions such as whiteboard, polls, and breakout rooms afford the opportunity for authentic and meaningful interaction in a language classroom.

Nevertheless, if the blended learning tasks are to be delivered synchronously, it is almost certain that teachers prepare for online teaching prior to its execution which inevitably will require even more of their time. Lominé, Warnecke, and St. John (2011) illustrated in detail the keys to planning a successful online conference are (i) anticipating technical difficulties, (ii) the role of teacher and participants,

(iii) expectation of learner involvement (iv) management of group dynamic and (v) time and contents for discussion. All of which require careful consideration and a great deal of time and effort.

HONG KONG'S COVID SITUATION

In the case of Hong Kong HEIs, face-to-face classes were initially suspended in early 2020. Hybrid mode was briefly trialled in the summer term. This practice combines face-to-face and online delivery whereby the two take place simultaneously in the traditional classroom where lectures are streamed in real time through video conferencing technology. Students are given the options to either attend lectures online or in person (Roman and Plopeanu, 2021). Masks had to be worn at all times and students must sit at least 1.5 meters apart in the classroom as per the government's social distancing guidelines. Thereafter, Hong Kong experienced three further waves of COVID-19, classes were delivered exclusively online (Lee, 2021) up until summer 2021. In September 2021, hybrid mode was formally implemented, but as the fifth wave of the pandemic hit the city in January 2022, teaching went back online once again.

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF ERT MEASURES

Many studies claim that learners enjoy online delivery during school and university closure. Bączek et al. (2021) reported online learning being received positively by Polish medical students in the early days of the pandemic. A total of 804 students participated in the questionnaire study. The results revealed that, despite not being able to interact with their peers and patients, 73% of respondents were satisfied with ERT arrangements and that ERT was rated just as effective as face-to-face learning ($p=.46$; no statistical difference), of which they appreciate being able to stay at home, having continuous access to online materials, and learning at your own pace. Similarly, Shim and Lee (2020) observed that Korean college students seemed to enjoy learning English online through using a number of tools which made learning engaging.

However, the success of ERT depends on a number of different factors that are highly contextual. In Pakistan, although HE students have the required IT skills to study online, they did not think ERT as effective owing to the lack of interaction with peers and that many had limited access to high speed internet connection (Adnan & Anwar, 2020). Likewise, students in the HE sector in Indonesia also found ERT to be ineffective. Not only did their initial enthusiasm for ERT wane shortly after

learning from home, it was also stressful for students in financial hardship as they had to pay for internet access in order to continue with their studies (Irawan et al., 2020). Therefore, it can be argued that socio-economic factors tend to undermine the effectiveness of ERT.

The Hong Kong context of ERT in HE has also been less than positive in terms of student satisfaction despite its widespread ownership of mobile electronic devices and affordable high-speed internet access. A study conducted by Xiong et al. (2020) examined the experience of ERT amongst Hong Kong university students. The survey included questions on respondents' online learning satisfaction, effectiveness and challenges, as well as their perceptions of the comparison between online courses and traditional face-to-face courses. Ninety percent of the 1,227 respondents from eight public universities in Hong Kong were taking live courses while half of total respondents were able to re-watch the recordings after classes. The results demonstrate that only a small proportion of respondents (27%) had a satisfactory experience with their ERT experiences. Meanwhile, approximately 60% of them deemed ERT to be inferior to face-to-face instruction in terms of its effectiveness for learning. Specifically, around half of the respondents found that online courses decreased their studying time and efficiency while increasing their studying pressure. The most common challenges respondents experienced include: (i) lack of self-discipline; (ii) poor learning atmosphere; (iii) eye-fatigue caused by excessive screen time; (iv) distractions from surroundings and; (v) unreliable Internet connection. Further, students took issue with the lack of 'in-class interactions' and 'after-class communication with instructors'. While the degree of interaction depends on the group dynamic of individual classes, it was felt that the university could have been much more supportive and that there was certainly room for improvement.

CHALLENGES FACING EAP AND ESP STUDENTS

The ability to write effective academic texts in English plays a pivotal role in EMI university settings. For undergraduate students, it is vital to be able to produce high quality written work in order to receive good grades, since academic work such as written assignments requires the writer to have good writing skills and the ability to follow academic conventions such as effective paraphrasing and synthesizing information (Bruce, 2011). Since more than three-quarters of undergraduate courses require students to produce written work, and that nearly all courses are assessed through written assessments and written exams (Graves and White, 2016), therefore as Tran (2013) highlights, possessing effective skills in writing academic texts is crucial to students as students' assignments are graded according to their writing skills.

Students in Hong Kong have struggled with academic writing long before the pandemic. There are many reasons to this. To begin with, academic writing is a complex construct in itself. There are many rules and conventions writers must follow when producing academic texts, such as adopting a formal writing style, using technical vocabulary, following the writing style of disciplines (e.g. length of sentence, clear topic sentence vs. factual information), and using the appropriate structure to organise content (Hyland, 2004). In order to understand the nature of academic writing, it is necessary to acknowledge that academic writing is not solely a process of constructing paragraphs by using words and sentences. Howard and Davies (2009) argued that academic skills such as paraphrasing and summarising information and ideas from sources are inherently difficult: not only are they demanding for students, but also for academics. In fact, students who speak English as their first language may not be familiar with English academic discourse and thus also experience difficulty when producing written academic texts (Wardle, 2007; Wingate, 2015). Furthermore, great emphasis is placed on the logical presentation of ideas in a coherent manner. Hyland (2013) stated that academic writing has communicative purposes and is situated in contexts. These specific situations, known as a genre, are shaped by how the text is written according to factors such as the writer's belief, purposes, audiences, and contexts (Hyland, 2018; Swales, 1990).

Wingate (2012), for example, illustrated that the argumentative essay, the most common type of text in academic English, is perhaps not very well understood by academics and students alike. Wingate surveyed a total of 117 English L1 undergraduates, analyzed tutor comments, and diary entries (n=8) recounting their experience writing their first graded assignment. It was found that students who produced low achieving essays often had a superficial understanding of what constitutes a good argument, and confusion as to what extent they needed to develop and support their viewpoints throughout the essay. There were also issues with source integration, structure, coherence, as well as being critical to source materials. The respondents found it particularly challenging to position their views, presenting arguments in a logical manner, and critiquing widely published authors as a novice writer. Overall, the results showed that these writing-related problems are equally as troubling amongst native and non-native writers. This also explains why even first language (L1) English students and second language (L2) graduate students with high English language testing scores struggle to write effective academic texts (Bloor & Bloor, 1991; Bruce, 2011, Hyland, 2018).

In addition, plagiarism is perceived as one of the most problematic issues amongst L2 learners in EAP. Many EAP teachers have encountered plagiarism in students' writing, varying in degree of seriousness (Bloor & Bloor, 1991). However, it was found that the concept of plagiarism is generally understood by L2 students (Li & Casanave, 2012) and therefore the problem is most likely to be students' low

language proficiency and the lack of writing practice, which explains why students still continue to plagiarize.

Other than EAP, students also receive ESP support in their studies. ESP can be understood as the teaching of English within a discipline or the use of English in a workplace among the different stakeholders in the field (Johns and Dudley-Evans, 1991). Some scholars like Richards & Rodgers (2001) define ESP as an approach that serves the learners' need in the use of English language for studies and their careers. In the context of this study, ESP courses focus on students' workplace communication (writing and speaking) in the future, using effective strategies to communicate discipline-specific contents with both insiders and non-specialists, i.e. presenting an engineering project idea to a general audience. It is believed that employers would appreciate graduates who are able to express their ideas not only with their fellow engineers but also the general public.

Another long-standing problem of ESP courses offered by the research site is that students do not see the need for the input. As previously mentioned, undergraduates are extremely busy with their major courses. Many of them see this mandatory ESP component as a burden, teaching them English they most probably would never need. Therefore, learners would very often prioritize other courses over this ESP module. As a result, many students lack motivation. This contradicts with Hutchinson & Waters' (1987) assumption that ESP is based on the learner's reason for learning as they do not see any immediate benefit for them to make an effort. Further, it is the author's observation that, in addition to low language proficiency similar to that of EAP students, the lack of motivation and exposure to disciplinary writing have also exacerbated the problem.

ONLINE AND BLENDED LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

For years, the university in the current study has used Blackboard as an LMS for every class offered. Before the pandemic, Blackboard was already used extensively in conjunction with face-to face teaching, for the purposes of making announcements, providing links to resources, completing online language-based exercises, sending mass emails, discussing ideas on forums, making reflective blog entries, submission of assessment through Turnitin, giving feedback, as well as grade entry. It can be said that teachers are generally comfortable using technology. In fact, many EAP and ESP practitioners have incorporated a plethora of different web tools to aid teaching and learning and improve motivation. Tools such as Kahoot are popular, as it motivates the learners by gamifying content. Students enjoy the competitive element of this quiz show style platform (Kohnke and Moorhouse, 2021a). This is an ideal way to stimulate interest in EAP and ESP courses which can be dry.

In the field of ELT, language educators have long been taking advantage of blended learning strategies with an aim to improve quality of learning and teaching (Hockly and Dudeney, 2018). HE practitioners regularly attempt to integrate technology and face-to-face teaching, using technology both inside and outside the classroom. There is a large body of research demonstrating the effectiveness of using different kinds of technology to help English learners develop writing skills, ranging from blogs, emails, to more recently, social media tools like Facebook and Whatsapp (Abdu, 2018).

In 2020, using Blackboard entirely to teach synchronously was (and still remains) a novel concept that challenges many educators. Compared with the chaos experienced by educators at the beginning of the pandemic two years ago, it can be safely assumed that most teachers have become much more competent and seasoned in teaching their subjects online. Even the most inexperienced; non-tech savvy teachers have had time to learn, adapt, adjust, and experiment with different online teaching strategies, and these teachers have shown they are indeed capable of doing so (Moorhouse and Wong, 2022). However, one cannot be complacent: there is still a constant need to rethink online lesson delivery and, in light of the findings presented by Xiong et al. (2020), it is necessary for teachers of EAP and ESP at university to change the way they teach accordingly as students continue to find learning online less than positive.

In order to engage learners, it is felt that EAP and ESP lessons should be made as interactive as possible. Classroom activities are to be mimicked using technology with priority given to the ones that address challenges students generally experience as previously discussed. Assessment tasks should also be made feasible subject to limitations of the online environment and the technology available to students.

The role of blended learning has been pivotal in implementing ERT. Moorhouse and Wong (2002) suggest that even in a 100% online environment, teaching cannot be delivered satisfactorily using either synchronous or asynchronous mode alone. Ideally, teachers might want to combine live teaching sessions with pre- and follow-up tasks students complete in their own time individually or collaboratively.

HYBRID LEARNING PROVISION

There are many possible ways for HEIs to arrange and implement hybrid mode as the nature and needs of individual subjects can vary enormously. For example, lecturers of an engineering-based subject may decide to deliver all lectures online and allow students to conduct laboratory work in small groups on campus (Potra et al., 2021).

In the Hong Kong EAP and ESP context, this approach is also known as HyFlex learning (Kohnke and Moorhouse, 2021b). The mode of delivery usually involves

small group teaching to a maximum of 25 students in a class. Teaching paradigms in many EAP and ESP classes consist of the presentation, practice, and produce (PPP) and the test-teach-test (TTT) approaches (Anderson, 2021). Naturally, these approaches continue to be utilized in online lessons. It is worth noting that these paradigms are drastically different to a disciplinary subject lecture where students often follow lectures passively without a chance to get involved in learning activities.

Hybrid mode is generally considered as a step toward returning to normalcy and a way to address the shortcomings of and students' dissatisfaction toward online delivery (Kohnke and Moorhouse, 2021b). Their study surveyed twelve postgraduate students taking a course on oral presentation skills in person or online. Despite its having several pedagogical advantages, students reported frustration in i) getting the teacher's attention during class when attending in person, ii) the lack of participation in activities among some online students as they ghosted part of the lesson iii) students in class were unable to read paralinguistic cues from the teachers.

Technology Used in Two ESP Course at a Hong Kong University

This section describes how teachers of two courses for undergraduates (an EAP and an ESP) adopted to ERT, the technology used to facilitate teaching and learning, as well as the planning strategies involved.

As there is no pedagogy embedded in video conferencing tools, it requires the teacher to build a framework of learning by introducing scaffolding activities in order for learning to take place. The next section first provides details of the two courses, assessments, and the skills students need to develop. It then describes how different web tools including LMS building blocks are used for synchronous and asynchronous teaching. With an aim to motivate and empower undergraduates learning in isolation, these activities aim to mitigate negative experiences and frustrations students might have after two years of ERT. These learning tasks are therefore designed to be interactive and collaborative.

This course typically requires different technology use at different stages:

I. Virtual whiteboard on Blackboard

Synchronous student teacher conferences can be run using Blackboard and Google Docs at the same time. This allows all group members to showcase their work to their teachers, who will give spontaneous spoken feedback based on what they see while controlling the screen. The teacher can make changes and remarks directly onto the document. Students can also edit in real time based on the feedback they receive (Ting, 2020).

Table 1. Professional English for engineers

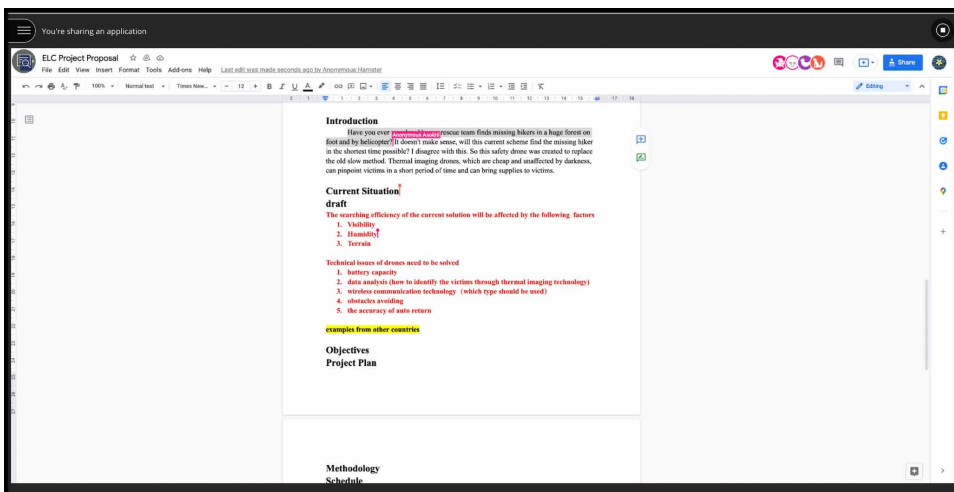
Objectives:	This subject aims to develop the language competence for professional communication in English required by students to communicate effectively with various parties and stakeholders in regard to engineering-related project proposals.
Learning outcomes	Upon completion of the subject, and in relation to effective communication with a variety of intended readers/audiences in English, students will be able to: 1. plan, organize and produce professionally acceptable project proposals with appropriate text structures and language for different intended readers; 2. plan, organize and deliver effective project-related oral presentations with appropriate interactive strategies and language for different intended audiences; and 3. adjust the style of expression and interactive strategies in writing and speaking in accordance with different intended readers/audiences. To achieve the above outcomes, students are expected to use language and text structure appropriate to the context, select information critically, and present and support stance and opinion.
Assessments	Project proposal writing (in groups of 4 or 5): The central theme of this ESP course is to work collaboratively to write a 2000 to 2500 word proposal for funding to enhance an existing product or a service. Students are required to agree on an idea for development and write a proposal with an aim to bid for funding. Project proposal presentations: students are asked to produce individual presentations around 7 minutes to give a brief overview on their proposed idea.
Skills to develop	Making notes Writing up on the details Giving opinions
Changes due to ERT	The only change in this course when delivered 100% online is the speaking assessment. When the course is offered face-to-face, students are required to work in groups to present their proposed idea in class (ca. 30 mins). This task has now become individual as (i) it is no longer possible for students and teachers to congregate in the classroom, and (ii) the logistics of delivering such a live presentation would be extremely difficult for students to manage.

Whiteboard can also be used to facilitate discussion (e.g. elicit ideas) when students are reluctant to speak. Students often feel embarrassed to tell their peers about their weaknesses, even in an online environment as their participation in discussions is not anonymized (Ting, 2020). Through using whiteboard, students can openly discuss their weaknesses anonymously unlike in a chat or a discussion board. In this activity, the teacher asks students to reflect on their previous experience and write down their strengths and weaknesses when talking to an audience. The aim is to discuss these issues and to help students give better presentations in English. Students are generally more willing to share their negative experience when they cannot be identified. The teacher can then explore these issues together with students and suggest ways to overcome them.

II. Using social media to stay in touch

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Figure 1. Teacher-student conference interaction using whiteboard



In this ESP course, there is a strong emphasis on group work. There is a need for project groups to stay in touch using communicative tools such as Whatsapp and WeChat are recommended since i) they are widely used in Hong Kong and China, ii) user-friendly iii) allow users to exchange pictures, files, documents, use text or voice chat, arrange video conferences to discuss ideas, and share links. For these reasons, WhatsApp and WeChat are the most common CMCs students opt for when communicating with their peers and is therefore an optimal social media for

Figure 2. Eliciting ideas for discussion using whiteboard

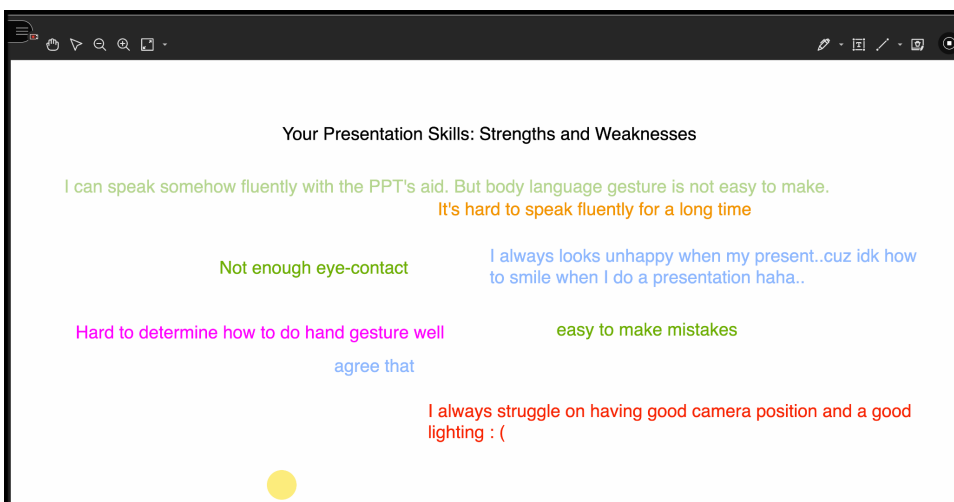


Table 2. Advanced English for university studies

Objectives	This subject aims to help you study more effectively in the University's English medium learning environment, and to improve and develop your English language proficiency within the framework of university study.
Learning outcomes	Upon successful completion of the subject, you will be able to: a. research relevant academic texts for a topic and integrate the sources into a position argument essay appropriately and effectively; b. plan, research for, write and revise a position argument essay; and c. present and justify views effectively in a mini oral defence.
Assessments	1. Writing a draft position argument essay (600 words) 2. Giving a mini-oral defense 3. Writing a final position argument essay (1200 words)
	Conducting research for a position argument Writing effective thesis statement Making arguments and counterarguments
Changes due to ERT	The speaking task used to be done in groups of 3 to 4, but is now conducted in pairs. The mode of assessment remains synchronous since the questions require spontaneous production of language rather than a rehearsed speech, e.g. in discussion.

asynchronous English language learning activities as well as group work (Kholis, 2020). Students generally find Whatsapp to be an effective tool for ERT, which is in line with the findings of Mulyono et.al. (2021)

As an alternative, students are also introduced to Padlet. This technology has been used to brainstorm project ideas, share files, and present initial findings. As students are based in different locations across time zones, there needs to be an easy to use virtual platform where group members can share ideas, research, files, and links asynchronously as real time meetings might be difficult to arrange.

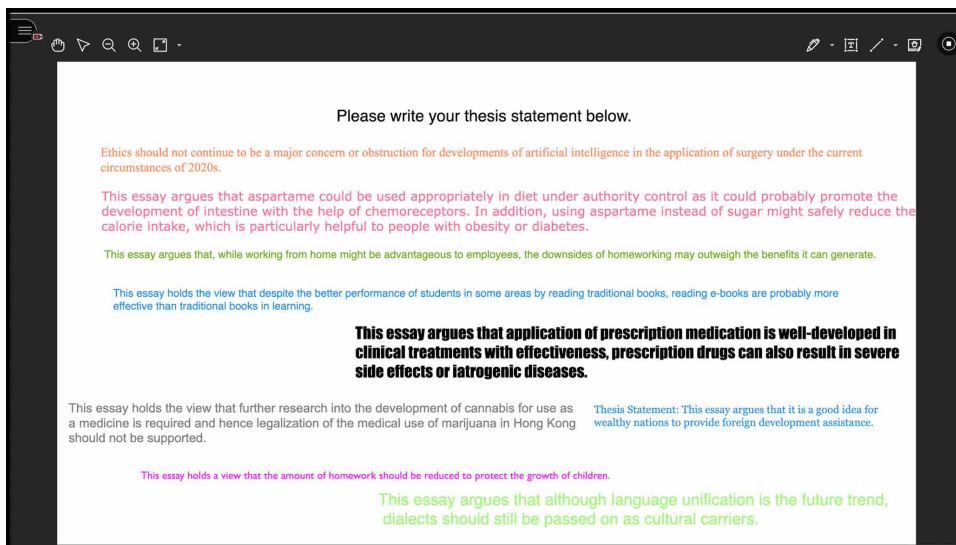
III. Collaborative writing tool

After viewing the shared materials, students then decide on one idea for the project proposal write up. For writing up the proposal, students are recommended to work on a Microsoft 365 Word document which is readily available to every undergraduate or a Google Doc (Ting, 2020).

Initial planning included i) identifying a suitable topic ii) researching the topic
Writing effective thesis statements has always been a problem among undergraduates. Students often have trouble articulating their ideas as to exactly what they try to address in their essays. Omission of details is the common problem facing these novice writers as they typically write short thesis statements that need elaboration and justification. In face-to face mode, many teachers would ask students

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Figure 3. Students sharing their thesis statements on whiteboard



to work in groups of 3 to 4 to peer evaluate each other's draft essays before final submission.

To help students with the aforementioned issues, teachers can use the whiteboard function for this activity. The aim is to replicate peer evaluation on Blackboard online classroom. However, with issues such as non-participation in mind, students are asked to work together in the main room rather than in breakout rooms if the group size is 12 or below so that the teacher can monitor progress easily.

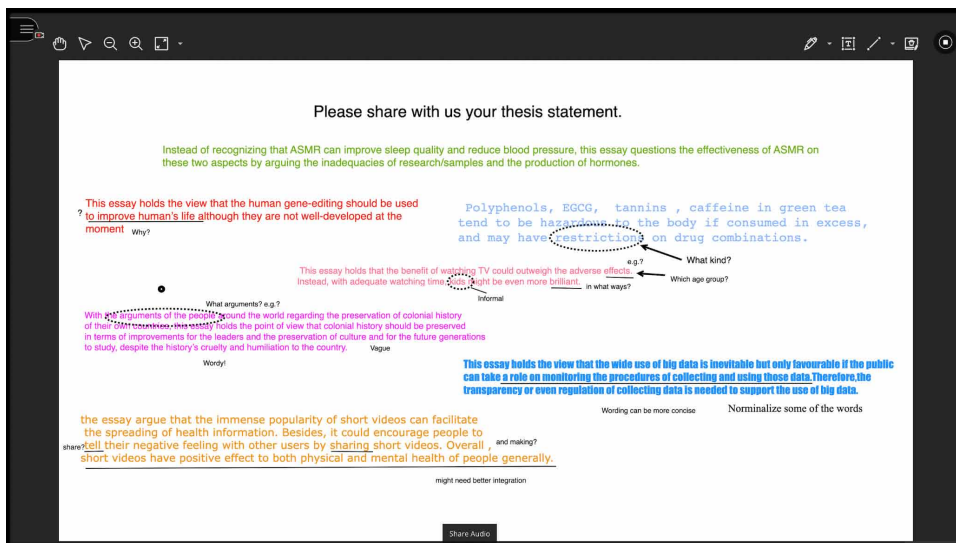
I. Interactive whiteboard in Blackboard

Teachers can ask students to prepare the sentences in advance using flipped classroom strategies (Moorhouse and Wong, 2022). This activity can also be adapted for an in-class topic sentence writing exercise by asking students to write on the spot either in groups or individually in a live lesson, mimicking classroom interaction. This activity has also been replicated successfully using Padlet for displaying topic sentences leading to peer review (asynchronous).

I. Presentation of PowerPoint Slides

When teaching synchronous sessions, teachers often use different tools to highlight, underline, circle and comment on important information on their PowerPoint

Figure 4. Teacher giving annotation on thesis statements as an example



slides. This allows teachers to highlight important information (e.g. assignment requirements).

Figure 5. Student annotation on thesis statements peer review exercise

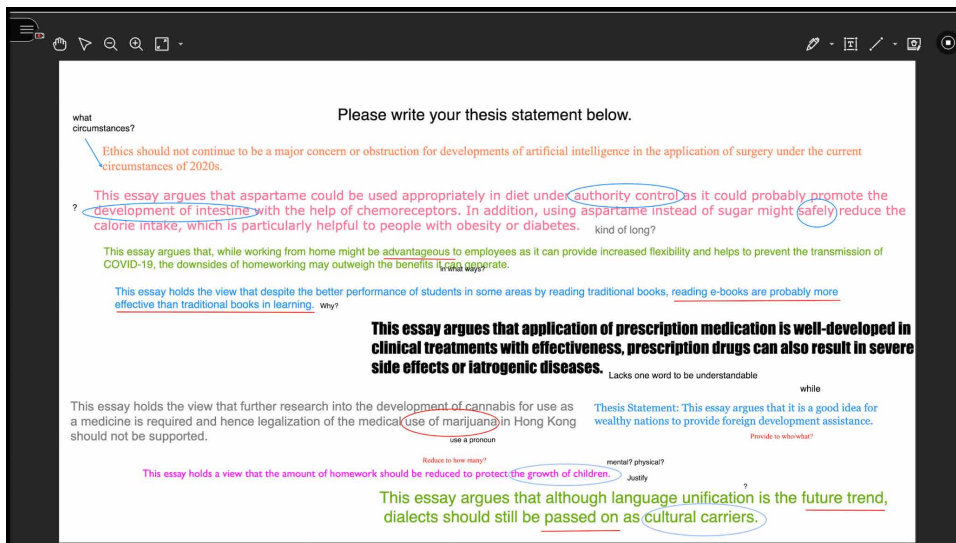
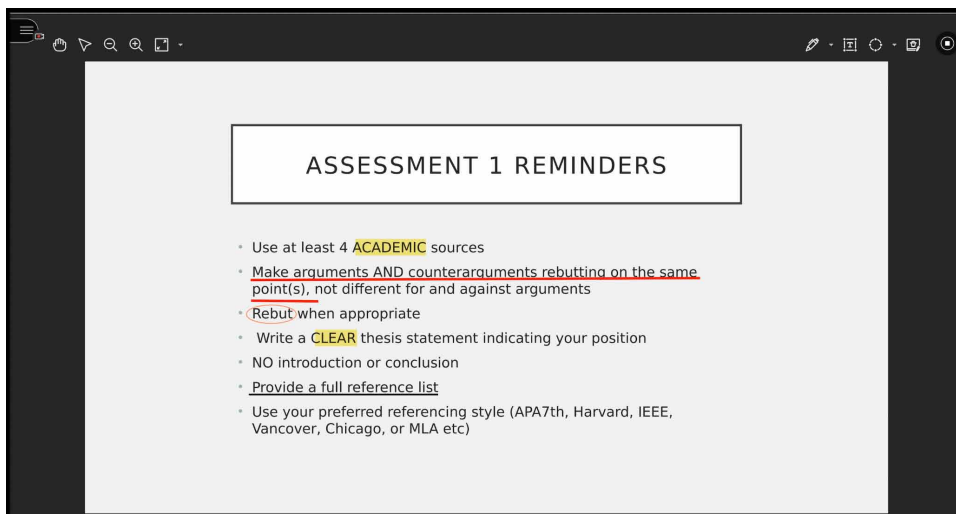


Figure 6. Teacher highlighting important information using different tools in real time



II. Using Kahoot! for revision

In an EAP course, it is important to consolidate learning constantly. Due to the sheer amount of course content, it is easy for students to forget what they have previously learnt.

Game-based learning platforms (GBLP) as highlighted by Kohnke and Moorhouse (2021), can be used to gamify review of course content where students work as a team to answer quiz questions while competing against other teams. Kahoot! works well in the physical classroom as well as online. It is also an effective way for teachers to check whether students have understood important academic writing concepts such as using reporting verbs, paraphrasing, and referencing.

THE CURRENT STUDY

This qualitative study aims to examine EAP and ESP students and teachers who learn and teach in an exclusively online ERT environment during the pandemic, their perceptions of its efficacy, problems encountered, and concerns on the effects online delivery has on the quality of teaching and learning.

In particular, the study explores the following questions:

1. How popular is technology use in ERT among students and teachers?

2. How do EAP and ESP students and teachers feel about using technology to teach online and hybrid classes over an extended period of time?
3. What are the perceived benefits and drawbacks ERT has among students and teachers?
4. What other concerns do students and teachers have related to ERT?

Data for this focus group study was collected toward the end of the first semester between late December 2021 and early January 2022. The author convened two separate focus group meetings involving four faculty members and ten students respectively. All participants were former students of the aforementioned courses (purposeful sampling). As they had already completed the respective courses with results already released, it was deemed that students would not be pressured to take part in the study and thus minimized any potential risk of response bias (Wetzel et al., 2016). Students were provided details of the study at the time of recruitment. Upon agreeing to partake in the study, participants signed a written consent form to confirm that they have understood the aim of the study and the procedures involved, giving their consent for the use of data for research purposes, and that they could withdraw from the study at any time with no consequence.

METHODOLOGY

A focus group is a qualitative method commonly used in social research and serves as a way to collect interview data from a group of participants moderated by a researcher (Punch, 2014). Unlike data generated through individual interviews, participants engage in discussion and interact with one another, the group dynamics thereby “produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group” (Morgan, 1988, p. 12). These kinds of data are particularly useful for studies that strive to understand attitudes, opinions, and experiences of research subjects in a particular context (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Participants are generally recruited from the population of the study so that their collective viewpoints can be examined. As well, a focus group is an opportunity for participants to validate the researchers’ understanding of an issue from other data types (Qi, 1998), in that participants can clarify their positions on a certain issue, provide further details and elaboration on what they have previously mentioned (e.g. in a questionnaire).

The ten student participants attended the semi-structured focus group meetings virtually on Zoom. Given the small sample size and the homogeneity of participant background, only two meetings were set up (n=5 per group). This arrangement is in line with Morgan’s (1988) suggestion that the number of focus group participants

should be kept between 4 and 12 to ensure adequate participation and avoid dominance by some participants.

In order to observe whether opinions differ amongst groups, the participants were recruited from 4 different classes. and the second group consisted of participants whose writing performance was rated medium or low. A number of discussion questions were asked and the participants were encouraged to express and elaborate their views as much as possible in Cantonese, participants' first language. The researcher acted as a facilitator for the discussion in order to generate interaction between participants as a way to allow data and themes to emerge (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2003). The focus group interviews lasted 25- 30 minutes. They were voice recorded, and subsequently translated, transcribed, and analyzed. Similarly, the focus group for teachers was conducted in the same way except English was used. The meeting lasted 42 minutes.

The coding of data collected from the focus groups was reviewed by a colleague of the author as a reliability measure. Following the coding guidelines of Syed and Nelson (2015), the researcher served as the master coder. The semi-structured focus group interviews conducted in Cantonese were summarized. A total of 11 themes were identified for coding under these categories, capturing the participants' experience and feelings toward ERT.

Four predetermined areas were discussed during the interview in order to generate discussion. It was the researchers' goal to let the participants speak as freely as possible without asking any leading questions. In order to gain a better insight into their ERT experiences, participants were asked to elaborate and exemplify whenever necessary. Respectively, these areas for discussion were:

- Positive experience with ERT
- Negative experience with ERT
- Tech tools used (like and dislike)
- Other concerns

RESULTS

The focus group results are presented by the themes identified. Data are categorized by participants' role (either students or teachers):

Students

Five students from each class participated in a sharing session to discuss their views on learning their English subjects online. The meeting lasted 30 minutes each.

Participants were asked specifically which activities they liked, disliked and made suggestions on how teaching and learning activities can be improved.

In particular, participants were instructed to comment on the impact (positive and negative) of online learning had on their studies. Overall, they had a positive attitude toward using technology during ERT.

“Technology is fun to use. I enjoy playing the games. They are quite useful, too.” (S5)

“I can write the whole essay from beginning to end on Padlet. It’s very handy.” (S9)

“I didn’t have enough time to use Padlet properly like my classmate but maybe in the future I can take full advantage of it.” (S7)

“I really enjoyed the exercise where we shared our thesis statements on the whiteboard.” (S2)

“Padlet was fun to use. I was able to follow my teacher’s example and planned my essay clearly. I had a hard time with making counterarguments for my essay. My teacher kept saying I need to argue on the same issue, and I simply made a different argument against my position. After using Padlet, I can see how the points relate to and juxtapose one another as I could clearly see my counterarguments were not on the same points.” (S4)

“Padlet is very user-friendly. It makes the writing process fun. Things could be quite boring. You can save photos, pdf files and even post videos on the wall. At the beginning you need to spend time building it out of nothing but later It saved me a lot of time when I started writing. I didn’t have to find my papers on the laptop or to scout for the reference list items - I had everything in one place. It was just a matter of copying and pasting.” (S6)

“I liked the games on Kahoot!. It has given me a much better idea on referencing and reporting verbs. Also it can help me find out what I still don’t know and the teacher would make recommendations on where to find the relevant information.” (S3)

“I liked the way the teacher got us to write arguments and topic sentences in class. It was useful to get feedback from him and some of my classmates. Everyone did that exercise so I got to learn from other people’s examples.” (S10)

In terms of disadvantages, many reported that they had trouble focusing on synchronous lectures delivered through an LMS platform:

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“I cannot concentrate for so long. Sometimes I have 2 to 3 lectures per day, and that means potentially up to 9 hours of screen time. It’s killing my eyes.” (S7)

“I find it hard to remember what I’ve learnt. I know I could read the notes and watch lecture recordings again but as soon as the course is over, I forget everything much quicker than a face-to-face course.” (S3)

“Watching a livestream lecture feels very different to attending it in person. Maybe it’s the audio quality? But I just can’t watch it for long. My mind goes blank after a while.” (S4)

“I often get more confused when I watch a livestream lecture. I don’t know why. Yes I can watch the recordings but I find it very boring.” (S2)

“I am still too shy to speak English. My English is bad. I don’t like to type or say things in class in case I make mistakes. I think many classmates are the same, so sometimes the lesson is boring because nobody participates, or you get the same people to answer all the questions.” (S4)

In addition, a student reported his habit of ghosting synchronous lessons:

“For me the best thing about online learning is that I can stay home. I know we are supposed to have synchronous lectures but if it is in the morning, I usually don’t attend. I can simply watch the lecture recording afterwards when I have time. It makes no difference. I could use the lesson time to focus on other tasks and study at night when I am most productive. I have a part-time job so not having to attend lectures at regular times, I have been able to work more hours, too.” (S1)

This is perhaps not surprising to educators who have large classes where interaction with students is minimal. There is no way to know whether students are indeed “present” despite their status apparently being so.

Some students complained about the minimal interaction with peers and the teacher the in ERT:

“It’s very frustrating when some of the learning activities like games and group work do not or cannot take place in online class. The last English module I took was fun but now I can’t even do a proper discussion. Others don’t take part in group work like discussions in breakout rooms.” (S3 & S8)

“In a face-to-face class, I often stay behind and talk to the teacher to get extra practice with my English, but it is hard to do that online. Although my teacher is so kind to stay behind in case you have questions, I don’t have any questions but just to chat with him. I feel bad about doing that because I know he must be busy, and it is much more awkward to have small chats after class online. The feeling is just different.” (S9)

Two participants said they attended classes in person when hybrid mode was offered. Unfortunately, their experience being in the face-to-face setting was only marginally better when compared with online mode. The lack of interaction was a major factor, as well as not having a suitable learning environment at home:

“It was a strange feeling [in the classroom]. Very few people attended and we couldn’t sit together closely. It was difficult to have discussions with them being far apart and we had to wear a mask. The teacher had to pay attention to the online classmates too so he could only come to us for a little while.” (S5)

“I only went back to class only to hang out with my good friend and because my home is always noisy and I needed a quiet place to study... Sometimes we had to do group work with students online but they wouldn’t respond to our messages.” (S2)

These feelings are similar to the ones reported in Kohnke and Moorhouse’s (2021b) study, which highlighted hybrid teaching mode could also be detrimental to motivated learners who are willing to participate, but are unable to do so due to their peers’ non-participation in learning activities. Teachers have in fact received similar feedback from students venting their frustration. This is of course far from being ideal as language learning requires a high degree of motivation through participation in group tasks.

Effectiveness of ERT

Students expressed their concerns on their mental health and academic success:

“I am worried about my studies. While as my teacher said I need good skills to write academic texts, I can’t follow the course content easily. This has been very frustrating for me because I can’t write other essays well.” (S7)

“Not sure how much longer I can learn online. Some of my friends have dropped out already. I don’t want to but I can’t learn much without attending class in person. You just can’t learn well online. I agree with some of your reasoning - if

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this continues, I will either quit or get a transfer to an overseas university where I can study face-to-face.” (S2)

“It is very stressful having to study online. I don’t feel right studying alone at home. There is still a lot of work to do but I miss being on campus where I can use the library to work on assignments and prepare for exams. I can concentrate a lot better on campus.” (S5)

Teachers

Four teachers teaching the two courses were invited to a sharing session to express their views on ERT and the changes to the way courses are delivered and assessed. They first shared some positive effects online mode had on teaching and the benefits to them about ERT and working from home:

“I enjoy using technology for ERT. It is quite convenient at times like this. LMS like Blackboard allows me to safely teach from home. It has pretty much everything I need to teach a live lesson.” (T2)

“Web tools like Padlet and Kahoot are fun to use. It is quite motivating - not clunky at all. My students enjoyed those Kahoot revision quizzes. It makes a boring subject a little bit more interesting.” (T1)

“For me the best thing about ERT is that I get to experiment with technologies. I am a novice and this gives me plenty of opportunities to try out different tools.” (T4)

“I quite enjoy working from home. It is certainly much less stressful than having to commute during rush hours. I also feel safe not having to go out during a pandemic.” (T3)

When it comes to giving and class management, however, their experiences were much less positive:

“I find myself having to repeatedly give instructions on learning tasks and assessments. It seems like no matter how many times you have told them what to do, there will always be a few who don’t follow your instructions, even though you remind them every week, send them emails, and post everything on the LMS.” (T2)

T3 recounted her experience of teaching non-responsive students:

“I know students have been ghosting my lessons. When I ask questions, hardly anyone answers! Sometimes this drives me crazy. I am still not accustomed to talking to myself!” (T3)

T1 made a similar comment about general reluctance to communicate among students:

“I have noticed that very few students would have informal chats with me like they would in the classroom. That is such a shame because teaching English isn’t just going through grammar or referencing rules. I am actually surprised and disappointed to see students being silent online. I read somewhere before that technology should encourage them to speak more, but sadly that isn’t the case.” (T1)

T4 shared her point of view and added that she had struggled getting students to participate. Like T3, she also suspected some students were not present during live sessions:

“For me the biggest struggle is managing group work online. Because of the University’s policy, we cannot force students to use their mic or webcam during class unless it’s an assessment. I really think many of them do not listen. This is evident as I often get the same questions week after week no matter how many times I have answered them already!” (T4)

“Weaker students now lag behind even more. I mean, last year the Year 1 students could not form an error free sentence together. They said nothing and contributed nothing in class. They did not take up the many opportunities I offered to help them. In the end, they barely managed to pass the course. This is very worrying to say the least.” (T1)

Student Motivation

T1 and T2 expressed frustration on their experience of students’ less than positive attitudes towards learning:

“You could only do so much to motivate them. I have used many games to encourage participation. Ultimately it is up to them to make an effort, whether teaching is face-to-face or online even though it is much more difficult to exercise self-discipline when learning online.” (T3)

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“The students’ lack of motivation, I think, has had an impact on my own enthusiasm as a teacher. I feel that I have far less control over what is happening in the classroom as we go online. I mean... we’ve always had weak and unmotivated students in class but at least I could do something about it, like giving them extra attention or help when needed.” (T2)

“I feel so frustrated when I have so little idea on their progress. In some of my classes they really do say nothing, even the good students. This is particularly difficult because I can’t give them the help they need or even gauge their level until they have submitted an assessment. Some don’t hand in their drafts so they have had no feedback from me, so they did really badly.” (T1)

Assessments

All four teachers expressed concern about students’ academic integrity, namely possible impersonation when it comes to out-of-class assessments. When talking to students, they felt that their language proficiency level was far lower than the standard of their work, but there was nothing they could do.

One ESP teachers remarked on the group writing assessment task:

“Group work has always been difficult but when teaching online this is 10 times worse! Students leave their group writing task until very close to the deadline. They don’t discuss their ideas enough, and they don’t spend much time on writing either. I noticed that many project groups had no leaders. Maybe they have given up on this course!” (T3)

Another teacher was concerned about students’ writing and listening skills:

“It is shocking to see my students’ poorly written assignments. I don’t know how they cope with their studies in EMI If they don’t even understand what I say in the lesson!” (T1)

Other Negative Effects ERT Brings

Teachers made other remarks related to ERT, namely on screen time, workload, their own mental health, stress, and personal issues.

“Screentime is making my eyes tired all the time. I sometimes have up to 6 hours of class a day. This is really tiring.”

“Admin work has gone up the roof. In a face-to-face setting, I don’t need to type up everything as an email or an announcement - I could just mention it in class!”

“I have to chase students up on assignment submission a lot more than usual. More students now miss deadlines; some have simply disappeared half way through the course. I think the attrition rate for our courses must have gone up, but I don’t have the details.”

“After 2 years of ERT it has started to affect my mental health. Working from home is far from being perfect. I get up in the morning, have breakfast, start teaching, have lunch, teach a bit more, then mark assignments... doing all that in my house alone, with no colleagues to talk to. The isolation is becoming unbearable.”

“I have children at home who also take online lessons. It is hard to juggle between work and family life when you are with them almost 24/7. When I finish work, I have to attend to them immediately. I feel anxious and stressed out, and would much prefer having a clear boundary between work and family.”

These teachers’ experiences with hybrid mode were mixed. On the one hand, they appreciated going back to the classroom having some face-to-face interaction with students and colleagues. On the other hand, that depended very much on whether students attend in person and their motivation. It was also difficult to attend to two groups of students at the same time when conducting group work. Inevitably, one group will receive more attention than the other.

DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The data yielded from this study provided corroborative evidence that, to some degree, using technology is considered to be a fun and effective way of learning and teaching in ERT. Technologies afford both synchronous and asynchronous modes of learning. In EAP and ESP courses, this is considered to be important. Using different kinds of technology in synchronous sessions can certainly help replicate some classroom based activities, thereby engaging learners and improving the quality of learning and teaching. In particular, using GBLT like Kahoot!, Padlet, and the virtual whiteboard in ERT has been fun and useful.

However, it can be categorically concluded that both students and teachers are keen to return to face-to-face EAP and ESP teaching. This finding is in line with most COVID-19 ERT studies cited in this chapter. While teaching and learning remotely can have its advantages such as being able to stay home and not having to

commute, the novelty wears off rather rapidly since the overall experience, whether it is for the students or the teachers, is negative. They believe that ERT has led to lowered academic performance in part due to reduced classroom interaction and difficulty to concentrate during synchronous sessions. These factors have led to not only students being unmotivated to learn but also teachers losing their enthusiasm for teaching having to grapple with this less than desirable virtual learning environment over an extended period of time.

The results also revealed that both students and teachers considered prolonged ERT to have a negative impact on their mental health. Increased workload, compounded by isolation, stress and anxiety, have taken their toll on the wellbeing of teachers and students. This finding is indeed worrying and is worthy of attention. In particular, loneliness is the biggest drawback in ERT. Compounded with other factors such as family commitments and personal circumstances brought about by the pandemic, the experience can be overwhelmingly stressful. Further, teachers have also expressed working in isolation in the past two years with no face-to-face contact with students to be unhealthy and quite possibly detrimental to their teaching skills in general.

In EAP and ESP courses, the impact of ERT is especially concerning. Pursuing degree programs in an EMI context, learners must acquire the necessary writing skills in order to excel in their studies. If this is a skill they fail to hone in ERT, the impact can be potentially catastrophic to their academic performance and even their future careers. EAP and ESP teachers have noted a decline in writing standard among the students during ERT, this might, unfortunately, take years to rectify.

This pandemic is unique in its own right as this is probably the first time in history that societies were simultaneously locked down. The lesson learnt in HE, however, is certainly useful in preparing for future crises that require similar ERT responses. First, institutes would need to devote more time and resources to develop a much more robust online curriculum for EAP and ESP not only to prepare for emergency use but also as an alternative to face-to-face teaching which they could use for pre-session courses. That requires a complete overhaul to properly adopt the pedagogy of synchronous contents where the number of contact hours might not be as important. There needs to be more pre-recorded lectures for input (Le, 2022), and the blended and flipped classroom activities mentioned should be systematically and seamlessly integrated. Assessments will also need to be altered to reflect learners' needs and what technology could afford. Hybrid mode, although a good idea, will require much more careful planning for it to be worthwhile in light of the shortcomings highlighted in this chapter. Team teaching might be one possibility, either with other language teachers or in partnership with subject lecturers, to better engage learners in different settings when conducting group activities.

CONCLUSION

This chapter explored the use of technology in COVID-19 ERT arrangement in an EAP and an ESP course at a Hong Kong university. It examined their effectiveness through the lenses of the students and teachers surveyed, and gave a voice to students and teachers to express their views on the impact extended ERT has on them. Although some use of technology has been effective and should be adopted when face-to-face teaching resumes, the ERT experience, both online and hybrid modes, has been generally negative and that the overwhelming majority wish to go back to the traditional classroom for better quality teaching and learning. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted many shortcomings of ERT. It requires a great deal of further research into its negative effects on EAP and ESP education that is much more student-centered than content subjects. To prepare for similar future events, careful planning is of paramount importance.

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Chapter 4

Content-Based ESP Instruction at Hong Kong Tertiary Level: Student and Teacher Perceptions of a Hybrid Approach in a State of Flux During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This quantitative study explores pedagogical approaches to teaching business proposals, press releases, business presentations, and negotiation meetings in the third and fourth-year English Specific Purpose (ESP) course at an English Medium Instruction (EMI) university in Hong Kong. The findings reveal that the enactment of a hybrid approach rather than the teacher-led, direct-instruction approach assisted students in grasping the understanding of persuasive communication in both written and spoken contexts in the workplace environment. The study suggests that blending several inputs (i.e., videos, online quizzes, online annotated reading platform, corpora, face-to-face instruction) provided multimodal experiences that helped students develop their persuasive communication skills in a state of flux during the COVID-19 pandemic.

INTRODUCTION

In the aftermath of the global COVID-19 pandemic, which began in early 2020,

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there has been a wide range of measures taken by governments to combat the spread of the virus, including shutting down universities in many countries. Starting from 2020, Hong Kong has experienced severe changes in the epidemic changes. Social distancing measures have been tightened by the Hong Kong SAR Government to the most severe levels, as seen in the third and fourth waves, and were further tightened for the more severe fifth wave in 2022. As announced by the HKSAR Government to combat the latest epidemic outbreak, most university classes were held exclusively online and in synchronous mode. Face-to-face instruction has largely been suspended across the world and English language teachers have had no alternative but to change how they interact with their students (Bozher et al., 2020). In the age of technology, educators including English language teachers can now take advantage of a variety of online tools that facilitate student learning, called synchronous meeting tools (SMTs) such as Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Google Meet (Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2020) in both EAP and ESP contexts, regardless of the proximity between teachers and students. Despite the widespread availability of synchronous meeting tools in the market, it is still challenging for ESP teachers to utilise various online learning activities to maintain students' engagement, but they also need to provide timely feedback to keep them engaged. It is therefore essential to abandon or adapt strategies that would usually be used in conventional face-to-face classes to suit the online environment, often without giving any thought to the condition of both teachers and students. Teaching online instead of face-to-face instruction is more than just using available synchronous platforms. It goes far beyond that. The varying levels of preparedness of teachers for conducting online classes and the different learning environments of students should also be considered.

In the ESP teaching context, language instruction in ESP caters to the needs of learners who belong to a particular discipline or profession, and it focuses on the language that is appropriate to such activities. In many universities all over the world, ESP is integral to their curricula since they recognize the importance of helping English language learners master the functions and linguistic conventions of texts they need to read and write in their disciplines and professions (Hyon, 1996). This study focuses on the pedagogical approaches of teaching and assessing Business English in the ESP Course "Workplace English for Business Students" for third or fourth-year undergraduate students at an EMI university in Hong Kong during the COVID-19. As stated by Ku & Zussman (2010), English is considered to be the modern lingua franca on bilateral trade flows. Evans (2013) stated that both written and spoken forms of English play a crucial role in business communication. Nation (2009) believes that such skills will prove invaluable to students in their future endeavors. The ability to formulate a compelling, professional and persuasive business proposal and press release as well as business presentation and negotiation

meeting is a stepping stone to one's success in today's business world; however, it is particularly challenging for L2 learners due to their inability to generate ideas in the L2 (Hyland, 1996), not to mention presenting more reasoning, utilizing ample justification and highly formal business language to set forth their idea in both written and spoken ways (Mirabent, 2013). Researchers have argued that, with a thorough and stringent ESP curriculum and teaching material design, ESL/EFL students can overcome the difficulties of ESP instruction (Bhatia, Anthony & Noguchi, 2011). However, it is not clear which pedagogical approach(es) students perceive to be the most useful in a state of flux during the COVID-19. In this chapter, how ESP teaching is taking place in the current situations I am experiencing due to COVID-19 will be described.

This chapter explores a hybrid approach of various methods of teaching Business English, incorporating Perusall, which is an online annotated reading platform, and other multimodal tools including videos, online quizzes, corpora as well as face-to-face instruction to tertiary-level learners.

The present study was guided by the following specific questions:

1. What were students' attitudes and beliefs concerning the various methods of learning Business English?
2. Which method(s) provided students with a thorough understanding of persuasive communication skills from students' perspective?

Literature Review

In the ever-changing workplace environment and globalised communication network, the key to success lies in the art of strategic communication (Conrad & Newberry, 2012). Hyland (2008) pointed out that persuasive writing is done through language. However, it is the language that demonstrates legitimacy. That is why writers should understand and choose rhetorical options available in their fields to appeal to readers from within their specific fields. He (2008) also emphasized that the writers should assess their audience and themselves against the topics they are covering: how they want to present themselves to their readers, and how they want to be perceived by them. By the same token, persuasion requires the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create various communication strategies for varying contexts and use the key language features to do so effectively (Chan, 2020). Many researchers have pursued their investigations of persuasive communication practices in diverse settings such as in the field of academia, science and business. L2 students majoring in Business who enter an English Medium Instruction (EMI) university are expected to compose well-written business documents ranging from leaflets to business proposals and present their ideas effectively. They, therefore, must grasp

the knowledge of persuasive communication strategies to produce and deliver cogent, compelling and convincing written and spoken texts. This is quite different from their high school experience which is relatively less demanding. In this way, an additional burden on L2 learners of Business English is placed. The process of pinpointing exactly what are the language, skills, and genres of particular groups on which we need to base learning priorities could well lead to costly, time-consuming and skill-intense endeavors (Hyland, 2002). In higher education, the quality of the texts that L2 students produce in English is often linked to their academic achievement (Kohnke & Har, 2021). Eventually, L2 learners must learn how to present their ideas effectively and persuasively as to achieve academic betterment. That is to say, to demonstrate expertise in a subject, one should be able to use its discourses in a specific way that is likely to be effective and persuasive for the readers (Hyland, 2002). The importance of L2 learners of English successfully developing persuasive writing and speaking skills calls for exploring a multi-modal approach. This chapter examines which pedagogical approach(es) students find most useful when it comes to teaching and learning persuasive writing and speaking.

Study Context

Course Description and Instruction

This study took place at an EMI University in Hong Kong in which Year 3 and Year 4 students and Senior Intake students, who are majoring in Business-related disciplines including Accounting, Accounting and Finance, Financial Services, Management, Global Supply Chain Management, International Shipping and Transport Logistics and Aviation Management Logistics are required to take the three-credit ESP (English for Specific Purpose) course. This course runs 3 hours each week for 13 weeks during the COVID-19 pandemic. Students needed to submit two written assignments including business proposal and press release, and two speaking tasks including an individual pre-recorded business presentation and a synchronous negotiation meeting with another partner. The course aims at developing the advanced English language skills required by students to communicate effectively for business project management in their future professional careers.

Around 730 students attended the sessions of the course while this study was conducted. Students enroll in their specific groups according to their Business major subject disciplines (i.e. students studying Global Supply Chain Management were assigned in the same ESP group). The learning outcomes of the course are to (a) plan, organise and write convincing business proposals, (b) propose strategies, plans and projects effectively and persuasively in business presentations, (c) conduct business meetings effectively and participate actively in discussions and negotiations, and (d)

plan, organise and produce effective promotional literature. The course commences by introducing the organizational plan of an effective business proposal with the consideration of the factor of innovation, followed by the usage of accurate and appropriate sentence structures and vocabulary in business proposals. Then the focus turns toward planning and organising persuasive business proposal presentations, designing effective visual aids to help deliver presentations, and grasping a good understanding of business presentation etiquette when delivering a presentation. The third unit introduces various strategies to participate in business proposal meetings and consolidates students' negotiation skills by practising in role-play discussion. The last unit brings students understanding of the purpose of different kinds of promotional literature and the importance of newsworthiness and applies this concept to writing a press release, followed by planning and organising ideas logically into various sections of a press release.

For the out-of-class business project proposal, students were given a business simulation context on an assigned scenario (i.e., working in an international business conglomerate, E&C Holdings Limited (E&C) which has been established for more than 5 decades). In this written assignment, students were given a set of criteria to act as essential prerequisites for the success of the project, namely Creativity, Fulfillment of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), and within a budget of HK\$100,000, which is considered to be the budget constraint.

The second out-of-class spoken assessment involved producing a pre-recorded video to introduce a student's project persuasively to the managing director (i.e., the teacher) and justify why E&C Holdings Limited should implement it. Students should demonstrate their non-verbal communication cues including facial expressions, gestures, and the slides they adopt when presenting their project ideas.

Moving on to the third assessment, which is the synchronous negotiation meeting spoken assessment, students were asked to participate in a meeting to sell and defend their business project proposal. Before the assessment, every two students were first paired up by the teacher and they were required to view the business presentation video submitted by another project manager (i.e., his/her classmate) students were paired up with. Subsequently, during the meeting, a pair of students were required to justify why their projects should be the best ones to be implemented by the E&C Holdings Limited (E&C) when comparing the two projects on the grounds of one of the three project requirements mentioned (i.e., Creativity, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) fulfillment and within a budget of HK\$100,000 at the beginning of the spoken assessment.

The last assessment is the out-of-class press release writing. If the managing director (students' teacher) has chosen a particular project from the pool as the best one for implementation, students were asked to write a newsworthy press release to promote their business projects to the public.

Hybrid Approach

Pedagogically speaking, I believe a hybrid teaching approach would be a sound and promising strategy to assist students in transitioning from one educational setting to another (e.g., from secondary to tertiary) during the COVID-19 pandemic. By this means, students could maintain their engagement, develop workplace communication skills and foster meaningful online interaction. A major tenet of this approach is the adoption of multimodal inputs to help students write and speak persuasively. In practice, these five inputs are nested within the hybrid approach framework (videos, online quizzes, online annotated reading platform, corpora, face-to-face instruction). Learners can recall their memory and improve their comprehension and retention, ultimately resulting in more valuable learning experiences. Learning through short, online activities both increases flexibility and leads to higher levels of engagement. These serve as part of a broader integrated learning experience to motivate learners to repeat the tasks several times. This variety of input methods is intended to help students better understand persuasive writing and speaking and improve their performance. The five input methods (see Figure 1) will be presented here.

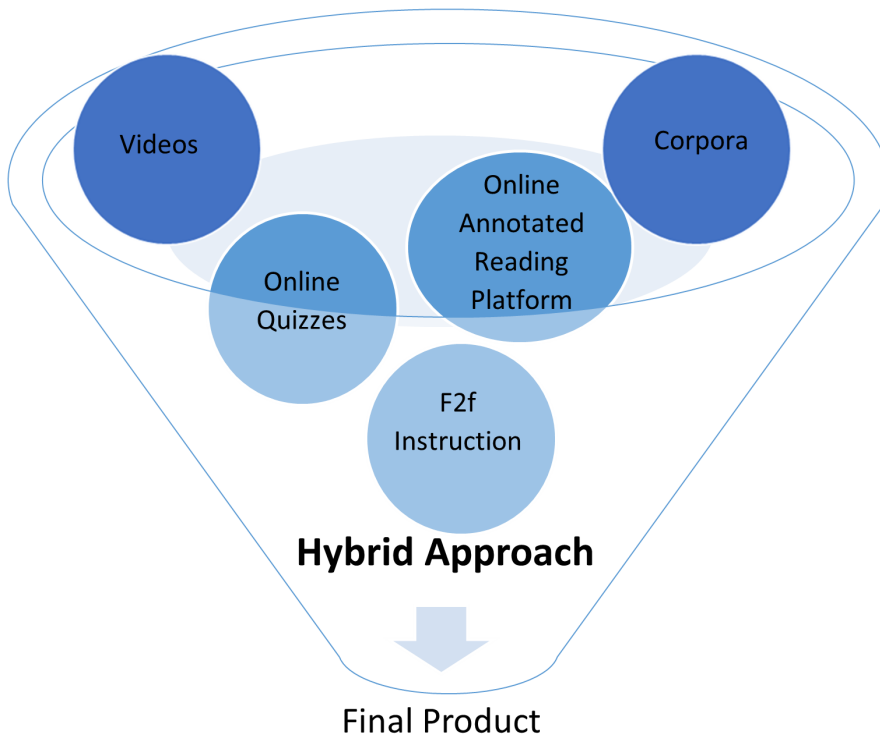
Videos

The integration of videos with persuasion lessons provides and reinforces input before and after the hybrid lessons. Videos stimulate better recall and retention than other media, and learners generally prefer them to other media (Hung, Kinshuk, & Chen, 2018). When carefully chosen, videos can provide students with valuable opportunities to analyse situations outside of the classroom through the use of authentic language materials (Negoescu & Boştină-Bratu, 2016). In my course, videos are particularly useful for “just-in-time” learning on business related topics including SWOT analysis, invention and innovation, unique selling point, art of persuasion, press release writing, negotiation meeting and persuasive business presentation. Multiple viewings of the video content will ensure full understanding by allowing students to pause and rewind the video. The bite-sized videos (usually between three and five minutes in length) will be available to students outside the classroom to optimize their engagement and learning impact.

Online Quizzes

With the help of Student Response Systems’ (SRS) such as Kahoot and Mentimeter, classrooms can be transformed into fun and competitive places that encourage students’ motivation and ambition (Bicen & Kocakoyun, 2018; Ismail & Mohammad, 2017; Licorish, Owen, Daniel, & George, 2018), and, therefore, improve their subject

Figure 1. Hybrid model for teaching ESP Business English course



knowledge. The quizzes used in this study comprise multiple-choice quizzes, true or false, puzzle, poll, word cloud and flashcard. Teachers can adopt those digital game-based learning platforms within the classroom as to provide a competitive, interactive and collaborative classroom experience. Alternatively, playing live games in a student-paced manner is a wonderful way for students to consolidate what they've learned in class and repeat, practice, and reinforce new concepts they learned. In their own time, they can focus on the parts of the game that were challenging for them without any pressure to finish before time runs out. Students' engagement and motivation are crucial to eliciting meaningful learning (Biggs & Tang, 2011), as many researchers believe. Student Response Systems' (SRS) real-time feedback allows teachers to engage in further learning activities and to clarify misunderstandings in follow-up face-to-face sessions.

Online Annotated Reading Platform

The Online annotated reading platform, Perusall, enables students to annotate readings together and respond to each other's comments and questions. With teachers' instruction, students use Perusall as a pre-class assignment in a flipped classroom setting. Alternatively, they use the platform during the class to actively engage with the teacher and other classmates. The online annotated reading platform allows students to have more reading engagement and interactions with others using diverse built-in features including sectioning, avatars, and comment upvoting.

Corpora

Using the Business English Corpus (BEC) (Nelson, 2006) and Hong Kong Financial Services Corpus (HKFSC) compiled by the Research Centre for Professional Communication in English (RCPCE) at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, students were encouraged to investigate the semantic associations (i.e., collocations) of words taken from the Business English domain. The corpora make learning business English more convenient by providing a variety of materials for students to use. This makes it easier for them to identify and acquire specialized vocabulary, thereby improving the authenticity and naturalness of English usage, not to mention producing both highly persuasive written and spoken work.

Face-to-Face Instruction

Throughout the semester, face-to-face sessions take place for three hours per week. These sessions reinforce what students have already learned as well as introduce new information. For instance, subject content involves figuring out the difference between a proposal and a report, features of a proposal, judging criteria of a good business proposal; identifying the fundamental qualities of a successful presenter and both communication and non-communication cues; exploring the nature of a business proposal meeting, effective strategies for a business proposal meeting, the art of persuasion; and exploring various types of promotional literature, newsworthiness, the language and the step of writing a persuasive press release. Within the course, authentic samples of both solicited and unsolicited business proposals, together with press releases taken from listed and unlisted companies are extracted to critically evaluate their persuasiveness and newsworthiness. By doing so, students develop a skillset for sound persuasion and gain an understanding of the kind of writing they are required to produce.

The four assessments from the course including business proposal writing, delivering business presentation, participating in negotiation meeting and press

release writing are mutually intertwined. To allow students to fully engage in their business plan journeys, the question brainstorming approach was adopted by asking students to consider a number of critical questions (e.g. their roles within the E & C Holdings, reasons for the clients to approach E& C Holdings to implore its assistance, mutual benefits that both parties can gain from each other etc.) as to fulfill the 3 project requirements aforesaid towards the end of the previous section 'Course Description and Instruction'. The main purpose here is to help students generate ideas, mulling the whole business plan over from different perspectives, veto killer ideas and most importantly, aiding them in developing and promoting their business plans at a later stage of the learning journey. The cornerstone of my pedagogical framework is a multimodal approach encompassing online and face-to-face instruction and a variety of input sources including videos, online quizzes, online annotated reading platform, corpora, and face-to-face instruction.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Participants for this study were selected from among full-time Year 3, Year 4 students and Senior Intake Business English students at an EMI university in Hong Kong between September 2021 and February 2022. For the selection procedure, the convenience sampling method was used, whereby the nearest respondents were chosen to serve as subjects (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). An email invitation was sent to all students enrolling to the three credit English for Special Purpose (ESP) course, and around 70 students initially expressed interest in participating in this study. A total of 39 students were selected in the final pool of participants to provide statistically significant results. No previous experience in similar ESP courses at other tertiary institutions in Hong Kong or their home country was considered a prerequisite for selection. I strived to ensure that the final selection of students is as diverse as possible, taking into account factors such as gender, place of origin, year in university, and study fields. The participants were originally from Hong Kong (n=7), India (n=5), Mainland China (n=7), Malaysia (n=5), Pakistan (n=5), South Korea (n=5) and Taiwan (n=5). They included 20 females and 19 males either from Year 3 or Year 4 entry, totally representing five study disciplines in the School of Business. Anonymity was guaranteed to participants, and participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Methods of Data Collection and Data Analysis

Data came from 39 semi-structured recorded and transcribed interviews with students enrolled in the ESP course; interviewing times ranged from 20 minutes to 42 minutes. Participants were interviewed in a nonthreatening and comfortable environment in English in order to gather information in a way that yielded rich responses, and I explored the ways in which they perceived all sources of input to provide a better understanding of persuasive writing and speaking. The data was confirmed as reliable by two-rounds of member checks (Merriam, 2017). The transcripts of all interviews were approved by all participants without changes.

Due to the relatively small sample size, the data using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework was analysed manually. By using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework, it was possible to analyse the data as well as discover a rich, detailed, and complex account of the findings. Using thematic forms of analysis allows researchers to incorporate their key ideas and viewpoints while still maintaining flexibility. Participants completed the second member check by confirming that the final research results and discussion accurately reflected their experiences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RQ 1. What were students' attitudes and beliefs concerning the various methods of learning Business English?

The study sought to investigate how students perceived various online and in-person methods to establish a general understanding of persuasion and the concept of persuasion. Students found that three sources of input (videos, online quizzes and online annotated reading platform) were particularly helpful in understanding persuasion. Corpora and Face-to-face (F2f) instruction elicited mixed reactions, however.

Videos

The students who were interviewed expressed that unlimited access to videos reduced their anxiety to learn and the materials helped them consolidate their knowledge and skills. Bruce, one of the interviewees, clarified this idea:

I think videos are really a good way for me to learn before the class begins and after class time. I can replay the videos many times, paused the videos and jotted down a few notes, and then played the videos again. I think I am more comfortable and

well-prepared myself before the next class. I could also prepare some questions for my teacher later on.

Another student, Ricky, said that:

Online videos are quite short, usually around several minutes. It won't give me lots of pressure to watch them and I can watch wherever I want, maybe on the MTR train, coffee shop, on the bed, or even in the loo. I think I can understand those business concepts, for example, the differences between invention and innovation, unique selling point, the art of persuasion without a hitch.

Another student, Johanna agreed with what both Bruce and Ricky said. On top of this, she added:

The bite-size videos helped me grasp key business concepts and some important key messages brought from the course handouts because I can watch them anytime and anywhere. In the 21st century, just chalk and talk made by teachers doesn't work. Students can have more say to choose what and how they learn. So, I feel videos can help me prepare for class and review major learning objectives.

In general, the students perceived that the mode of video integration in the ESP course works well with young learners in the 21st century and their learning mode preferences. This similar aligns with other research conducted previously including Kessler (2018) who emphasized that today's students are IT savvy, and they expect to see or to use technology in everyday lessons. This could somehow nurture them to learn both skills and languages of persuasion.

Online Quizzes

The student interviewees thought that online quizzes particularly Kahoot and Mentimeter could help them evaluate their learning effectiveness of persuasive languages in both written and spoken contexts. For instance, one of the student interviewees, Meeko, found online quizzes particularly useful in both classroom and self-directed learning approaches to track her learning pace and degree of understanding of persuasion and the word choices to persuade others. She commented:

Online quizzes used by teachers are a fantastic tool to help me to learn and check my understanding. Having stayed in an online learning environment for a long time every day makes me feel hard to concentrate, particularly to those 3-hour lessons. Sometimes, when I stayed in front of the computer to have Blackboard Ultra, Zoom

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or MS Teams online classes for such a long time, I may get lost. It's hard for me to concentrate and understand lots of knowledge. But the use of Kahoot and Mentimeter quizzes can really help me remember what I've learnt so far.

Fiona concurred with Meeko by saying:

I love the way that Kahoot works. Besides playing the game in the class, I love playing the game in my own pace during the spare time depending on my schedule. During playing the game, I can check my learning progress, review the key concepts learnt in classes and consolidate the concept of persuading target readers and audience. Also, I can feel the interaction and dynamics when I play Kahoot and Mentimeter quizzes during the class.

Overall, all comments suggested that online quizzes including Kahoot and Mentimeter do help students to undertake an extensive review and foster their conceptual understanding of relevant business concepts, together with the persuasive skills, thereby boosting their confidence in learning. As a result of the online quizzes, students learned how to communicate persuasively and understood the persuasive concepts better. More time was allocated for in-class activities that followed up active negotiation practices and stimulated lively class discussions.

Online Annotated Reading Platform

The students felt that by utilizing annotations and comments, Perusall, an online annotated reading platform, could encourage them collaborative and thoughtful course engagement, facilitate the sharing of ideas, reflections, and connections between students and the instructor, and provide students with an alternative method of contributing to class discussion, without any time-space bound reachability particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Jessie, for instance, reaffirmed its effectiveness of Perusall:

I am the one who doesn't like reading at all. If you ask me to read, most likely I will just read it because of my teacher. If my teacher asks me to do the reading, then I will do so. But after using Persuall, I feel that I am now very happy to participate in the class reading activities. I can have more interactions with my classmates in the class, but not just simply do reading myself. Reading is no longer a lonely journey by using Perusall.

Another student, Jackie, added:

When I was still studying in the high school, my teachers forced me to read in class. If they asked me to read and do the book report outside the class time, I usually just ignored what they said or simply copied some other people's work. Now, I feel that I am very active in reading before and during the class because I can have more interactions with my classmates in the online learning situation. You know, studying online sometimes is very helpless and lonely. I can have some fun in Perusall by asking questions, leaving comments and interacting with my classmates. Reading with Perusall is not an independent activity anymore especially during the pandemic. If I like, I can review those comments on the Perusall platform anytime and anywhere and consolidate what I've learnt.

The participants described the integration of an online annotated reading platform into English classes as engaging, interactive and uplifting especially during the COVID-19 pandemic since Perusall can be used before the lesson commencement and during the class time as consolidation. The way Perusall makes comments demonstrates and activates the metacognitive process (Woodward & Neunaber, 2020).

Although all students indicated the value of videos, online quizzes, and online annotated reading platform in learning persuasive writing and speaking, several students thought that corpora and face-to-face instruction contributed less to their learning.

Corpora

Hamilton expressed a belief that was prevalent among the students: corpora were practically useful in understanding professional language; he, however, pointed out that the size of corpora and its representation affected the representation of the naturalness of Business English language patterns. He reckoned:

It is useful if I search certain Business English phrases from corpora as it is efficient. It may take some time to learn how to do corpus search, but the crucial problem is sometimes, the corpora could not show what I want. I guess it is because of the size of the corpora. Although searching results were presented, they did not have enough samples tagged by the system. Also, I am not a business professional, I am not so sure if I should use such pattern in my written and spoken assignments, so finally, I may just use it trial-and-error in my assignments.

Such feeling was found among the student interviewees. It can be a knotty problem for students to self-evaluate the appropriateness of specific language features in Business English on grounds of insufficient exposure to authentic Business English usage (Flowerdew, 2004).

Face-to-Face Instruction

Face-to-face instruction also elicited mixed reaction among the student respondents. Some student interviewees, Johnathan and Zoe, commented respectively:

I can see the value of attending the face-to-face class. I can ask teacher's questions. I can talk to my mates, but I think now I can do everything online through Blackboard Ultra and Zoom. There is no need for me to be back to the campus to have lessons.

I live very far away from the campus. It takes me almost two hours for travelling. If I come back to the class and look at the teacher using Zoom again in front of the projector and screen, then I would rather stay at home. Even though it may be the case, I may still come back to the class sometimes to see if I can get some tips and comments from my teacher for my assignments.

The mixed responses of Johnathan and Zoe suggest that despite the comparatively negative perceptions towards face-to-face instruction, it is, withal, a feasible way to allow students to have an academic exchange between teachers and students.

As a whole, the participants concurred that each method complements the other, and my experience is that these collective methods provide a successful holistic model to learn about persuasion. Teachers who are committed to developing students' persuasive skills should incorporate diverse methods of delivering multifaceted learning to reach all students, according to this study. It appears that the modes of delivery I utilized provided students with convenient, engaging, and stimulating learning experiences through practical, real-world scenarios that teach them how to persuade others.

RQ 2. Which method(s) provided students with a thorough understanding of persuasive communication skills from students' perspective?

A second research question sought to establish a general benchmark based on what type of input method(s) respondents preferred for learning persuasive communication skills. Getting success in the business world requires the ability to write persuasive messages, according to the participants. Overall, participants indicated that the input methods gave them a comprehensive and clear understanding of persuasive writing and speaking, and that they gained a better understanding of the concept of persuasiveness as a result. Moreover, they said that the different teaching methods helped them learn multiple strategies to coax potential investors and buyers. To

address concerns students voiced concerning persuasive communication skills, the subsections below discuss these findings in more detail.

Modes of Persuasion

Business writers and speakers need to use constructive persuasive techniques to establish credibility, seek out the shared ground, and make emotional connections with their audience (Pascarella, 1998). Such persuasive skills are required for business project's success. Therefore, it should not be surprising that the students noted difficulties in establishing mutual trust with readers and audiences in their persuasive writing and public speaking. One of the respondents, Francis, noted:

My teacher always criticised that my persuasion techniques are too naïve.

Another student respondent, Jasmine, also stated:

It seems my business proposal and press release are not convincing enough. My business presentation and negotiation meeting also have the same problem. I was thinking I have persuaded others successfully; however, this is not the case based on what teacher commented. I have no idea where I should start improving my persuasive skills.

Modes of persuasion were found to be very challenging for the student respondents. In response to this situation, they said that the videos assisted in explaining how to let others buy into their ideas. For instance, Isaac, stressed the importance of bite-sized videos in helping him grasp the hands-on persuasive skills:

The short videos teachers borrowed are very helpful. They show me several persuasion principles and the art of persuasion. For example, ways to maintain a good rapport with the audience before a business negotiation meeting. Depending on my study pace and need, I can choose to watch particular videos as many times as possible.

Steven held the similar viewpoint when sharing the perception towards the face-to-face instruction:

The teacher in the class showed us some short videos about persuasive writing and speaking skills. From the videos, I learnt the importance of cultural awareness in a business meeting. Different people may have different ways to get down to business. Knowing how to build bridges across cultures can overcome intercultural barriers. So eventually, we can share experience, common interest, or even reach a common goal. At the same time, I prefer the live comments given by the teacher during the face-to-face classes since it is sometimes difficult for me to raise questions via Zoom.

The quotations indicate that videos were particularly well-received as learning aids, but some students also liked having face-to-face interactions with the teacher to ensure they understood the ideas and so they were more confident about persuasion and achieved academic success.

Persuasive Language

In addition to the modes of persuasion, students also raised concerns regarding their word choice when producing persuasive writing and speech. They expressed that it was extremely difficult to determine the appropriate words and phrases to be used in persuasive texts. Abby, for instance, questioned:

How can I know the words chosen are correctly used in persuasion? There are so many business words that come up in my mind, but I have no idea whether they are used properly when they are put together in a text. Also, I don't know too much about the right tone and style in persuasive messages.

<https://www.grammarly.com/blog/persuasive-writing/>

This quote suggests that some student respondents may feel perplexed about what to do for the word choices. Even though teachers highlighted the importance of business collocation during the face-to-face instruction, many respondents were still quite clueless about what they should do next. On the other hand, other student respondents valued the usefulness of an online annotated reading platform (i.e., Perusall) and corpora in helping learners to grasp the knowledge of business words and phrases since the students were supposed to closely analyze the appropriateness and naturalness of word choices and even the persuasive tone expressed by the author. Donald and Hamilton expressed:

I feel that everybody is on the same boat to do the analysis together. By Perusall, students can learn how words are put together from authentic business samples. Later on, we can use corpora to double check if those business word patterns sound natural English or not. But again, just like what I said before, sometimes the searching results cannot reflect the collocation pattern because of the small size of the corpora. Also, I was not familiar with the corpora use because I am not IT savvy.

According to what was stated above, students found Perusall useful in providing a forum for information exchange amongst each other, which led to a greater emphasis being placed on word choice in persuasive texts. Meanwhile, others questioned the

effectiveness of corpora in the learning of Business English due to their complexity and low level of representation.

CONCLUSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of my research is to determine the effectiveness of a hybrid approach for teaching convincing writing and speaking to L2 business students. As this chapter emphasizes, diverse input methods are integral to helping L2 students develop their persuasion skills and their ability to present persuasive arguments in business presentations, proposals, press releases, and negotiations. In general, the results of my study revealed that this hybrid approach to teaching students persuasive communication was highly successful.

As a result of my research, several factors contribute to the effectiveness of this hybrid approach, including videos, online quizzes, the online annotated platform, corpora, and face-to-face instruction. These input methods enable students to use dynamic and interactive quizzes along with an annotated reading platform where they can practice, refine, and self-correct their persuasive techniques. The students were aware that persuasive discourse quality depends on the ability to read persuasive material (Crowhurst, 1991). It was encouraging to see that incorporating various input methods was considered valuable as well.

As this chapter demonstrated, no single method is optimal for teaching persuasive discourse. Instead, students can develop both a persuasive text and a deeper understanding of how persuasion works by using a combination of closely interconnected input methods. The implementation of a hybrid approach like the one I discussed in this chapter is, however, quite challenging. A teacher will, for example, have to select appropriate videos and create online quizzes, annotated reading texts and corresponding questions, and produce tasks that teach specialized collocations throughout corpora along with preparing for face-to-face instruction. Choosing the right medium for the activities is a labor- and time-consuming task. Before that, it is wiser to elicit questions such as “What is the student required to acquire?” and “Will the student find this resource helpful?”. As my study demonstrated, incorporating a variety of input methods into a course can initially seem challenging and time-consuming. However, allowing students to choose their preferred input methods can help facilitate learning in the course. It is my suggestion that the timeframe of those non-face-to-face input methods should be relatively short (15-30 minutes) within a 3-hour session and students should receive and interact with content in an active manner.

Given the relatively small sample size, this study cannot be representative of all Hong Kong ESP students currently studying Business English. In any case, I hope

that these findings can still contribute to the discussion on whether multiple input methods are useful for educating students on persuasive communication skills by illustrating what students value. The current results provide insight into students' perceptions, but adding perspectives of other potential participants, such as teachers, would broaden the scope of the study. Having examined the retrospective dimension of this chapter, we see how students perceived the hybrid approach; the prospective dimension will offer exciting pedagogical insights in ESP in the future. Meanwhile, the strategies for using hybrid approaches in teaching persuasive discourse have opened up new opportunities in this burgeoning field.

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Chapter 5

Lessons Learnt From ERT: An EAP Case Study at a Japanese University

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study gauges student satisfaction in EAP courses delivered via Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) in the Fall semester in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic using data from 529 Japanese university students' questionnaire responses. It follows up from a similar study conducted during the Spring semester and sought to determine whether changes to the method of teaching based on the Spring feedback resulted in better student experiences of ERT. Students evaluated modes of teaching (on demand, livestream, and mixed), various online tools (learning management system [LMS], teacher-created videos, Google Forms, Flipgrid, vocabulary software, Edmodo, and Zoom) and rated their overall satisfaction with online English classes. This chapter includes a background on the response to COVID-19 in Japan and how it shaped higher education, a summary of the Spring semester student experience, and the results of the questionnaire, which showed that students had a far higher overall satisfaction with ERT courses in the Fall semester.

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INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic was greeted by governments, institutions, and people around the world, in 2020, with confusion and uncertainty, with Japan being one of the first countries affected and forced to make responsive public health decisions. Initially, the Japanese government opted for a policy of containment, with overseas travellers repatriated and a cruise ship, The Diamond Princess, containing around 700 infected passengers, docked in Yokohama Harbour during February 2020 (Nakazawa, Ino & Akabayashi, 2020). However, as this failed to prevent infections in the country, government policy switched to a strategy of mitigation as well as tracking and tracing the infections and implementing a strategy of avoiding the 3 Cs (closed places, crowded spaces, and close-contact settings) (Oshitani, 2022). A number of universities, particularly in areas hardest hit by the spread of Covid-19, substituted face-to-face classes with Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT), a form of online education in which institutions, teachers and students must switch to web-based classes without adequate preparation. This study investigates student satisfaction in one such university, specifically in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses in the fall semester, following up on a similar study in the spring semester, and how lessons learnt from that were applied to ERT delivery.

BACKGROUND

Online Learning versus Emergency Remote Teaching

Although EAP courses have been conducted online prior to the pandemic, Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) has been distinguished from other forms of online learning primarily in terms of preparedness and choice. Hockly (2015) has divided online language learning into categories such as formal courses offered by universities and schools, or informal modes of learning such as virtual worlds, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), online language learning communities or mobile apps. Students, teachers and administrators who have been involved with such online learning courses have typically been able to tailor their expectations to the mode of learning whereas ERT takes place due to external factors beyond the control of the stakeholders. Hodges et. al (2020) observe that “well-planned online learning experiences are meaningfully different from courses offered in response to a crisis or a disaster” (paragraph 1). They point out that whereas online courses typically require six to nine months of planning and preparation, ERT typically occurs without the time for instructors to be trained in the new teaching medium, and often without the infrastructure and careful administrative planning of an online course. This also

means that institutional memory is lacking as instructors are unable to share tried and tested methods, and students may begin courses without the requisite computer skills or equipment. In addition, online learning can benefit from institutional budgeting in ways that ERT often cannot. An overview of the differences between online learning and emergency remote teaching is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Online learning vs emergency remote teaching

Online Learning	Emergency Remote Teaching
Instructors have experience and knowledge with online platforms.	Instructors may have no experience with online instruction and platforms.
Delivery methods have been planned and prepared over a period of months or years.	Delivery methods have to be urgently chosen.
Materials are designed for online teaching.	Materials are designed for classroom teaching.
Platforms and infrastructure receive suitable investment.	Platforms and infrastructure may not be up to the task or budgeted for.
Online learning is chosen by students.	Online learning is not chosen by students.

(Reproduced from Lafleur et al, 2021)

EAP via ERT in Japan

The switch to ERT was particularly challenging in Japan due to the relative lack of preparedness of students, instructors, and institutions compared with other nations in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and also due to Japanese society’s reliance on paper rather than digital technology. Each aspect will be explored in this section following a brief description of EAP in Japanese higher education.

EAP in Japan

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is described by Charles (2013) as the teaching and researching of “English needed by those who use the language to perform academic tasks”. In Japan, university students will have had six years of compulsory English education, but in many cases this is limited to general English communication classes. As a result, there is often a need for students to learn academic writing, how to conduct research and use academic vocabulary, particularly if students want to study in universities abroad or take courses in English-medium instruction (EMI) in university in Japan. Ruegg and Williams (2018) point out that while there is an increased provision of EAP courses, academic skills are still often lacking, with

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TOEIC tests often standing in for EAP attainments. The Covid-19 pandemic added another hurdle to the efforts of students to attain academic English skills, and for teachers and institutions to provide means of developing them.

Students

There were various challenges for students taking EAP courses via ERT as, in addition to a deficiency in an understanding of basic academic concepts, they also lacked e-readiness, and opportunities to collaborate and socialize with their peers. Although Japan is often considered a technologically advanced country, researchers prior to the pandemic noted that, despite the ubiquity of smartphones, students lacked competence, training, and willingness for formal online language learning (Mehran et al. 2017). In particular, they were reported as being unfamiliar with learning software, preferring information and communications technology (ICT) for entertainment rather than education, and favouring face-to-face over online learning. According to the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), in 2018, only 61% of students reported having computers at home to use for schoolwork, compared with an 89% average (OECD, 2020). In practical terms, without access to the university campus, and without the reasonable assumption of a traditional online course that students would have their own up-to-date computers, students had to make do with whatever they had at home. In many cases, this might have meant sharing with other family members, or may have meant that they lacked necessary equipment for livestreaming such as functioning webcams and microphones. In addition, social issues would become a problem with many first-year students, in particular, unable to gather and make friends with their classmates. With students unable to access the campus, relationships would have to be made online, which then became dependent on decisions that teachers and institutions made such as whether learning would take place synchronously (live streaming using Zoom, Skype or Teams), or whether it would take place asynchronously (using an institution's LMS). The decisions would often be made according to what instructors felt comfortable using as well as whatever tools the institutions had available (Apple & Mills, 2022).

Instructors

In addition to students being unprepared for e-learning, instructors also tended to be completely out of their depth when it came to using ICT and online learning platforms. The OECD noted that Japan ranked the lowest of all TALIS-participating countries in terms of teachers feeling they could support students in using digital technology, with only 35% answering that they could "quite a bit" or "a lot", compared with an average of 67%. In addition, 39% of teachers in Japan reported the need for a high

level of professional development in ICT skills, which was higher than any other TALIS country, and well above the average of 18% (OECD, 2020). Furthermore, principals of schools in Japan report a low level of assistance in collaboration with teachers to develop ICT in schools, and for principals who felt their schools were prepared for online learning platforms (OECD, 2020). To the extent that instructors used technology in class in Japan prior to the pandemic, it was mostly the result of personal initiative and mostly a case of the use of blended learning with face-to-face lessons augmented with tech such as LMS forums or teaching software (Bradford and Brown, 2017).

Institutions

Education institutions in Japan made very little use of technology compared with most other OECD countries. Although exceptions existed such as the high school described by Noxon (2017) that used Google apps for its curriculum, it was considered unusual for the very reason that it made use of technology that was seldom seen in other classrooms in Japan. Similarly, compared with most of North America and Europe, Japanese universities lagged behind (Shigeta, et. al., 2017). Nakamura (2017) points out that although Japan had two long-running distance-learning programs in the Open University of Japan (based on the British model) and the Japanese Massive Open Online Education Promotion Council (JMOOC), the numbers of universities in Japan offering online/distance-learning courses were 74% for national universities, but only 34% and 28% for public and private universities respectively. She argues that this figure had remained steady from 2006 and 2016 suggesting a stagnation in online acceptance for Japanese universities. Nae (2020) cites a survey by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) that LMS such as Moodle, Blackboard and Google Classroom had a far lower adoption rate in Japanese universities than those in the US or South Korea. Colpitts et. al (2020) note a failure to implement technology in institutions across Japan such as mobile-assisted language learning (MALL). Part of the reason for this may stem from Japanese society at large tending to be very paper-oriented. Ohashi (2019), in her study of a particular university, noted that online tools were generally under-utilized in English language education in Japan with a focus on more traditional tools including blackboards and chalk, with many university students having to learn basic ICT skills in their first year of university. These problems show how Japanese institutions lacked infrastructure and official support prior to the pandemic, in addition to students and teachers being unprepared for moving to online courses. Unsurprisingly then, university students and teachers across Japan were soon reported to be struggling with the new and unexpected emergency remote teaching circumstances (Shoji, 2020; Yamamoto, 2020).

COVID-19'S IMPACT ON STUDY CONTEXT

The Covid outbreak had a significant impact on universities and students around the world including in Japan. For a more detailed timeline of events in Japan see Appendix A.

Impact on Universities and Students

In April 2020 most universities, including the university in this case study, decided to start the semester with a period of about 4 weeks of online classes. The beginning of online university classes did not go as planned in most cases due not only to students and teachers being unprepared but that the technical infrastructure at universities quickly became overwhelmed and LMSs crashing (Apple & Mills, 2022). Furthermore, on April 7, 2020 the Japanese government declared the first of what later became a series of States of Emergency (SoE) that was supposed to last until May 6, 2020. In response, all classes at higher education institutes, including ours, were suspended. On May 7 higher education institutions resumed classes but they were conducted online. As of July 1, 23.8% of higher educational institutions were using all distance learning, 60.1% are having a combination of in person and distance learning and 16.2% have in person classes, mainly colleges of technology (33.3%) and private universities (17.6%) (MEXT, 2020). During the rest of the spring semester, ranging from 10-15 weeks depending on if the institution rescheduled or cancelled the classes missed during the first SoE, universities used a mixture of asynchronous lessons (aka on demand), synchronous lessons using video conferencing tools such as Zoom, Skype and Teams, and face-to-face classes with anti-virus measures (mask wearing, social distancing, increased ventilation, and limited group work) in place. The decision of which type of teaching was utilised varied between institutions, departments within institutions, and even within departments themselves, depending on a range of factors, such as types of classes being taught, the number of students, the capacity of classrooms, university and faculty members attitudes towards risk of the virus, the health and age of teachers, and the ability of teachers to utilise the new tools needed for teaching online (Apple & Mills, 2022). Throughout the spring semester in Japan students and teachers alike struggled to adapt to online classes. A study conducted in spring of 2020 of 208 students from three different universities found that students had negative experiences as measured according to the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) of perceived ease of use, usefulness, attitudes towards use, anxiety, and behavioural intention (Dizon & Thanyawatpokin, 2021). Students felt they did not experience a proper university life, struggled to make friends, and questioned if it was worth the fees charged (Misono, 2021). In some cases, teachers reported that the remote situation stymied their teaching techniques

or stated that they felt their classes lacked humour, whilst students complained about the increased amount of homework assignments and less effective classes (Gupta, 2020). Kennedy (2022) describes the difficulty that instructors expressed through interviews in making connections with their students and establishing norms such as those regarding expected language use, machine translation and plagiarism. Such a situation forms the background to this study of students in EAP classes and it is the response by the university of the authors, and the cascading effects on teachers and students to which this study now turns.

Our University's Response to Covid-19

As outlined above, our university reached an initial decision to conduct the first four weeks of AY 2020 spring semester online and then move back to the classroom setting. Our particular department met and exchanged ideas about how to rearrange EAP course syllabi so that tasks that did not necessarily require face-to-face interactions could be conducted during the four weeks online, at which point we could complete interactive tasks in the classroom from Week 5 onwards. Teachers drew on their experiences with blended learning, and software that they had been introduced to at conferences or learning apps introduced on YouTube and other internet sources. However, two problems immediately forced us back to square one. First, the Japanese government declared a State of Emergency for our prefecture on April 7 (the second day of Week 1 of classes). Our university determined that because some students did not have appropriate equipment (i.e., a laptop computer and a stable Wi-fi environment) to take classes online from home, and our campus was rendered inaccessible due to the SoE, that courses would be postponed until May 6, when the SoE was to come to an end. The second problem was that the school's LMS became overwhelmed with too many students accessing it simultaneously, which led to a systemic breakdown. By May 6, both issues were resolved, and the semester was carried out almost exclusively on demand (asynchronously) until July 21, which was the originally scheduled end date for the semester.

English for Specific Purposes (EAP) at the University

The English program at the faculty where the study took place consists of 4-6 classes of English for General Academic Purposes in the first year, 2-4 classes of English for Specific Academic Purposes (with a focus on Academic English for Business classes) in the second year and 1 class of English for Specific Academic Purposes in the third year. In addition students can take elective English classes during their 2nd to 4th years. In these courses, students learn how to write academic paragraphs and essays, with advanced students writing research papers. Students are also taught

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basic academic honesty, such as what plagiarism is and how to avoid it as well as why they should not use machine translation for their submitted assignments. As students of writing classes are engaged in a form of process writing that involves peer reviewing of classmates' paragraphs and essays, one of the challenges of the ERT situation would be enabling students to send, collect, review and return each others' work. Similarly, with courses that involve developing presentation skills, an alternative to classroom presentations would need to be found.

Given that the researchers were all primarily teachers of productive EAP skills, an attempt was made to replicate the classroom setting and to give students interactive ways of using English without being in the same physical or digital space, at least synchronously. As such, most teachers created instructional videos of some form, which were then uploaded to YouTube or some other platform. Writing exercises were uploaded either to the school's LMS, Manaba+R, or sites such as Edmodo, which is a global education network that allows teachers to establish classrooms, quizzes, and assignments (NetDragon Websoft Holdings Limited, 2022). Edmodo was used in addition to Manaba because of functions such as a browser that allowed teachers to read and comment directly onto student submissions enabling meaningful feedback. Some teachers created feedback videos on a platform called Loom, which included screencasting of the student's work, plus verbal feedback. Uploading drafts of written assignments to the LMS also gave students a virtual space from which they could conduct asynchronous peer feedback sessions. Additionally, some teachers paired up students in writing classes to have them peer-review each other's assignments and sending each other the reviews by email. However, this became a problem when some students were late providing feedback, so students were then put into groups of three with the intention of increasing the chances that they would receive feedback from at least one of their group members before the deadline. Speaking was the most difficult skill to provide practice for students. It was ultimately decided that Flipgrid, a video producing, editing, and sharing platform, would allow students to safely upload videos of themselves speaking on designated topics (Flipgrid Privacy Features - Flipgrid Help Center, n.d.). Only the instructor and classmates were permitted to view such videos, and they could also create response videos, which created a sort of asynchronous conversation.

Some teachers also elected to use vocabulary acquisition software, which, in some cases, they had already implemented in their classes before ERT, in a blended learning format. The principal platform was Quizlet, which is an attractive and intuitive online (computer, tablet and smartphone) digital flashcard platform (Ashcroft & Imrie, 2014). With the use of a teacher (paid) account, it was possible to check students' progress and assess them accordingly. Another vocabulary learning platform used was Eigomemo, which is a vocabulary software that combines the concepts of spaced

repetition (interval-based study) and task interleaving (the practice of multiple skills or concepts) (Lafleur, 2020).

Due to a significant amount of overlap between teachers in terms of courses taught (i.e., different sections of the same course were taught by multiple teachers), the five full-time teachers determined that it would be helpful if each teacher took responsibility to coordinate and create basic teaching materials for one or two courses. In addition to the five full-time teachers, several part-timers were to teach similarly-designed writing classes (of which there were 12 sections). As a result, one teacher designed basic lesson plans and materials that could be shared by the remainder of the teachers for that course. This sharing of materials was done in other courses that we taught as well: Speaking, Speaking and Writing (three variations), Business English (four variations) and Project English.

To find out how the ERT was received by the students we conducted a survey at the end of the spring semester of their perceived *overall satisfaction with ERT*, *satisfaction with online learning tools*, and *advantages and disadvantages of ERT* (Lafleur, et. al. 2021). The results indicated that students were slightly more satisfied with a mixed approach to class modality, specifically a mix of on-demand and livestream lesson formats. Out of 6 online tool categories surveyed, students showed a preference to the use of the school's LMS with accompanying teacher videos while less familiar platforms proved less popular. Furthermore, the study highlighted the lack of social interaction that students were accustomed to in the classroom as a major disadvantage of ERT lessons as they were taught in the Spring semester of 2020. This research builds on the findings of the previous study.

When the university determined that the fall semester would also be conducted entirely online, instructors decided to evaluate which tools used in the first semester were worth carrying over, as well as which should be modified or discarded. Also, given the option of conducting any (or all) classes synchronously on Zoom, some of the tools used in the first semester, particularly Flipgrid (which received lukewarm responses from students in the spring semester survey), would no longer have much value. Students were able to speak with each other in real time in the privacy of breakout rooms on Zoom, thus eliminating the need to create and upload videos via Flipgrid.

METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology

This follow-up study followed a similar methodology as in the previous study by using a questionnaire that collected both quantitative and qualitative data (Lafleur et al, 2021).

Research Questions

To find out how successful the Fall Semester would be, we used the following research questions:

RQ1. How satisfied overall were students with ERT in the EAP curriculum in the second semester of 2020 (compared with the previous semester)?

RQ2. What is the best ratio of livestream to on-demand lessons?

RQ3. Are the more challenging/demanding online tools less popular with lower-level students?

Participants

All students in compulsory and elective EAP courses in the department were asked to participate following Jupp's voluntary response sample method (2006). The data collection was done with the informed consent of the students and followed the institutional ethical guidelines. The fact that the survey was optional, anonymous, and that the decision to complete the survey or not had no bearing on their grades was conveyed to the students in both Japanese and English. The questionnaire was administered in 79 classes with approximately 1,500 students enrolled. We received 529 valid answers for an answer rate just over 35%. We received the most answers, 348, from 1st year students, followed by 140 answers from 2nd year students, 29 from 3rd year students and 12 answers from 4th year or higher students. In the English program most of the compulsory English classes are in the first year and some in the second year, and only one compulsory course in the first semester in the third year. Elective English courses are offered to students who achieve a certain test score in 2nd, 3rd and 4th year. The first year and second year students were streamed into levels based on an English test administered before the semester started the first year, and for the second year classes based on a TOEIC test administered towards the end of the second semester in year 1. The levels are Pre-Intermediate (PI), Intermediate (IM), Upper Intermediate (UI) and Advanced (AD).

Questionnaire

Google Forms was used to construct the questionnaire, which was bilingual in English and Japanese. The authors translated the questionnaire into Japanese and the translation was checked for accuracy by two L1 Japanese speakers. The design of the questionnaire meant that students only answered the relevant questions for the classes they took, and the tools used in those classes. It was made up of four demographic questions, four questions regarding the class style, followed by 20 questions about the online tools, and four questions about their overall online learning experiences. After the initial demographic questions, students were asked about the style of the class, i.e., whether the class was conducted on demand, livestreamed or a mixture of the two options. Students were asked how many of the total 15 classes were livestreamed during the fall semester with five options given from 1-3 to 13-15 classes and then how satisfied they were with this ratio on a 5-point scale. The questionnaire then focused on the use of the various online tools used by teachers in our department. These were Zoom, Google Forms, Quizlet/Eigomemo (vocabulary study), Flipgrid, pre-recorded videos (made by the instructors), Manaba+R (LMS) and Edmodo (used for submitting and giving feedback on writing assignments). First, students were asked if their teacher used a specific tool, such as Flipgrid, in the class. The students who answered “yes”, were then asked to rate how easy it was to access the tool, how useful the tool was, and how interesting they found it on a 5-point Likert scale. An optional open-ended question where participants could include any general comments about each online tool was also included in each section. This was repeated for all tools listed above. After that, the questionnaire asked students to rate the overall online experience on a 10-point Likert scale and select from a checklist what aspects they had had enjoyed and not enjoyed about online learning during the semester. Finally, there was an optional comment box for students to add any final comments, thoughts, or ideas. Each class teacher posted a link to the Google form survey on the school LMS in early January. A sample of the questions asked can be found in Appendix B.

Analysis Procedures

Internal consistency of 5-point Likert scale items was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha. In order to uncover statistical variances the following values were calculated: p values, one-way ANOVAs, Welch and Brown-Forsythe tests (for stricter analysis when comparing extremely uneven groups), Pearson’s r, mean, and standard deviation values using Google Sheets, and IBM SPSS Statistics. We analysed the optional qualitative survey responses from participants to identify common themes (Parson & Brown, 2002) which contributed and influenced this paper’s discussion section.

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Table 2. Online tools/software in-class implementation

Tool	Semester	#responses	Yes	Sometimes	No
Manaba+R	Spring 2020	1117	1071 (95.9%)		46 (4.1%)
	Fall 2020	434	429 (98.85%)		5 (1.15%)
Google Forms	Spring 2020	1117	759 (67.9%)	108 (9.7%)	250 (22.4%)
	Fall 2020	434	322 (74.2%)	67 (15.45%)	45 (10.35%)
Pre-recorded videos*	Spring 2020	1117	419 (37.5%)	144 (12.9%)	544 (49.6%)
	Fall 2020	434	191 (44%)	101 (23.3%)	142 (32.7%)
Flipgrid	Spring 2020	1117	283 (25.3%)	121 (10.8%)	713 (63.8%)
	Fall 2020	434	72 (16.6%)	32 (7.35%)	330 (76.05%)
Quizlet/ Eigomemo	Spring 2020	1117	348 (31.2%)		769 (68.8%)
	Fall 2020	434	184 (42.4%)		250 (57.6%)
Edmodo	Spring 2020	1117	N / A	N / A	N / A
	Fall 2020	434	233 (53.7%)		201 (46.3%)
Zoom/Skype	Spring 2020	1178	120 (10.2%)	127 (10.8%)	931 (79%)
	Fall 2020	529	413 (78.05%)	106 (20.05%)	10 (1.9%)

* “Most of the time” responses for Pre-recorded videos were entered as “Yes” responses

RESULTS

The collected data and various variables/categories were shuffled/re-arranged to create the following tables in hopes to provide further insight through statistical significance testing and correlational analysis. In regard to internal consistency testing, Cronbach’s alpha of 5-point Likert scale items revealed high reliability, .980 for the spring semester items and .973 for the fall semester items.

Table 2 “Online Tools/Software in-Class Implementation” shows the extent of software implementation for online classes across both semesters. The participants were asked whether or not these various tools were implemented in the class for which they were answering the survey. The most utilised online tool was the university’s official LMS system Manaba+R used by 95.9% (spring) and 98.85% (fall) of respondents. The most important difference between the first and second semester was a considerable increase in the implementation of Zoom. In spring, 79% of online classes did not utilise Zoom/Skype while only 1.9% of students reported that it was not used in their classes in the fall semester.

Table 3 “Overall Satisfaction by Participant Collegiate Year across Two Semesters” shows that participants who were in the fourth year or beyond were the most satisfied and those in the first year the least across both semesters. Pearson

Table 3. Overall satisfaction by participant collegiate year across two semesters

Collegiate year	Semester	#responses	Mean (SD)	Difference
1st year	Spring 2020	735	5.51 (2.22)	M= +1.72
	Fall 2020	348	7.23 (1.94)	SD= -0.28
2nd year	Spring 2020	331	5.88 (2.23)	M= +1.47
	Fall 2020	140	7.35 (1.77)	SD= -0.46
3rd year	Spring 2020	91	5.56 (2.21)	M= +2.44
	Fall 2020	29	8.00 (1.91)	SD= -0.30
4th year	Spring 2020	21	7.57 (2.40)	M= +0.68
	Fall 2020	12	8.25 (1.91)	SD= -0.49
Total	Spring 2020	1178	5.66 (2.24)	M= +1.67
	Fall 2020	529	7.33 (1.90)	SD= -0.34
<i>Note:</i> 10-point Likert scale, 1 = poor (satisfaction), 10 = excellent (satisfaction) SD = Standard Deviation				
*See Appendix C for a more detailed 1~10 likert scale score breakdown for both semesters				

r calculations produced similar results (a significant, yet low positive correlation between collegiate year and satisfaction) for both semesters: *Pearson* $r(1176) = .092$ $p = .002$ (Spring 2020) and *Pearson* $r(527) = .108$ $p = .013$ (Fall 2020). However it should be noted that the fall 2020 collegiate year results were revealed as perhaps not being significant: ANOVA $F = 2.503$ $p = .058$. Moreover, stricter tests produced results clearly over $p > .05$ such as Brown-Forsythe $F^a = 2.536$ $p = .064$, and finally Welch $F^a = 2.372$ $p = .084$. Therefore, discussions and conclusions related specifically to the participants' collegiate years for the fall 2020 semester should consider these mixed results in terms of their significance.

Table 4 "Overall Satisfaction by Class Modality across Two Semesters" shows that participants for both semesters answering the survey on behalf of an on-demand class had significantly lower satisfaction. One important difference between the semesters, was a changing of the guard between mixed (spring 2020) to livestream (fall 2020) as the modality which yielded the highest satisfaction. *Pearson* r calculations produced similar results (a significant, yet low positive correlation between modality and satisfaction: on demand → livestream → mixed) for both semesters: *Pearson* $r(1176) = .083$ $p = .005$ (Spring 2020) and *Pearson* $r(527) = .126$ $p = .004$ (Fall 2020).

Table 5 "Overall Online Tool Satisfaction Comparison" shows participant online tool satisfaction for two academic semesters. The highest rated online tool for both semesters was the university's official LMS system Manaba+R. All tools were rated better in the second semester along with equal or slightly lower standard deviation

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Table 4. Overall satisfaction by class modality across two semesters

Modality	Semester	#responses	Mean (SD)	Difference
On demand	Spring 2020	982	5.59 (2.25)	M= -0.48
	Fall 2020	18	5.11 (2.61)	SD= +0.36
Livestream	Spring 2020	61	5.84 (2.18)	M= +1.65
	Fall 2020	95	7.49 (1.98)	SD= -0.20
Mixed	Spring 2020	135	6.13 (2.21)	M= +1.25
	Fall 2020	416	7.38 (1.79)	SD= -0.42
Total	Spring 2020	1178	5.66 (2.24)	M= +1.67
	Fall 2020	529	7.33 (1.90)	SD= -0.34

Note: 10-point Likert scale, 1 = poor (satisfaction), 10 = excellent (satisfaction) SD = Standard Deviation

*See Appendix C for a more detailed 1~10 likert scale score breakdown for both semesters

scores which reflect slightly higher agreement between the participants. The most substantial increase in satisfaction between both semesters was Zoom, and the least was Flipgrid. Cronbach’s alpha was calculated across the 5-point Likert scale items (spring = .980, fall = .973).

Table 6 “Overall Satisfaction by Livestream Class Ratio (Fall 2020)” shows both specific and overall participant satisfaction in regard to livestream class ratio (live stream class number / 15 total classes) which varied considerably from class to class during the fall 2020 semester. The results show a higher ratio of livestream classes overall.

Table 7 “Overall Online Tool Satisfaction Comparison per Student Level Category” shows participant online tool satisfaction for two academic semesters according to participant class level (arranged from lowest to highest: PI → AD). Overall, the results show a statistically significant correlation of $r(10365) = 0.132$ for Spring 2020 and $r(6393) = 0.225$ for Fall 2020. In other words, higher student/ group proficiency levels are indicative of greater tool satisfaction.

DISCUSSION

Returning to the research questions:

Table 5. Overall online tool satisfaction comparison

Tool	Semester	#responses	Mean (SD)	Difference	Rank (in semester)
Manaba+R	Spring 2020	3180	3.93 (1.04)	M= +0.32	1st
	Fall 2020	1274	4.25 (0.90)	SD= -0.14	1st
Pre-recorded videos	Spring 2020	1662	3.86 (1.04)	M= +0.27	2nd
	Fall 2020	873	4.13 (0.88)	SD= -0.16	3rd
Zoom	Spring 2020	735	3.71 (1.06)	M= +0.46	3rd
	Fall 2020	1547	4.17 (0.92)	SD= -0.14	2nd
Google Forms	Spring 2020	2586	3.69 (1.12)	M= +0.30	4th
	Fall 2020	1161	3.99 (1.02)	SD= -0.10	4th
Flipgrid	Spring 2020	1206	3.45 (1.19)	M= +0.22	5th
	Fall 2020	311	3.67 (1.19)	SD= 0.00	7th
Quizlet / Eigomemo	Spring 2020	1023	3.38 (1.20)	M= +0.44	6th
	Fall 2020	546	3.82 (1.09)	SD= -0.11	5th
*Edmodo	Spring 2020	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Fall 2020	698	3.78 (1.12)		6th
#responses were collected under 3 categories (Ease of use, Interest, and Usefulness) on a 5-point likert scale					
(*) Edmodo was only assessed in the fall 2020 survey, thus cannot be compared.					
**See Appendix C for a more detailed 1~5 likert scale score breakdown for both semesters					

Table 6. Overall satisfaction by livestream class ratio (Fall 2020)

Ratio of livestream classes (*/15)	#responses	Ratio Satisfaction	Overall Satisfaction
		Mean (SD) (5-point)	Mean (SD) (10-point)
1~3	26	3.27 (1.15)	6.08 (2.53)
4~6	125	3.71 (0.83)	7.00 (1.84)
7~9	239	4.00 (0.90)	7.45 (1.8)
10~12	47	4.02 (0.79)	7.11 (2.24)
13~15	80	4.31 (0.67)	7.90 (1.43)
Unclear data	12	N/A	N/A
Total	529	3.94 (0.89)	7.31 (1.89)
Note: (ratio) 5-point Likert scale, 1 = poor (satisfaction), 5 = excellent (satisfaction) SD = Standard Deviation			
(overall) 10-point Likert scale, 1 = poor (satisfaction), 10 = excellent (satisfaction) SD = Standard Deviation			

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Table 7. Overall online tool satisfaction comparison per student level category

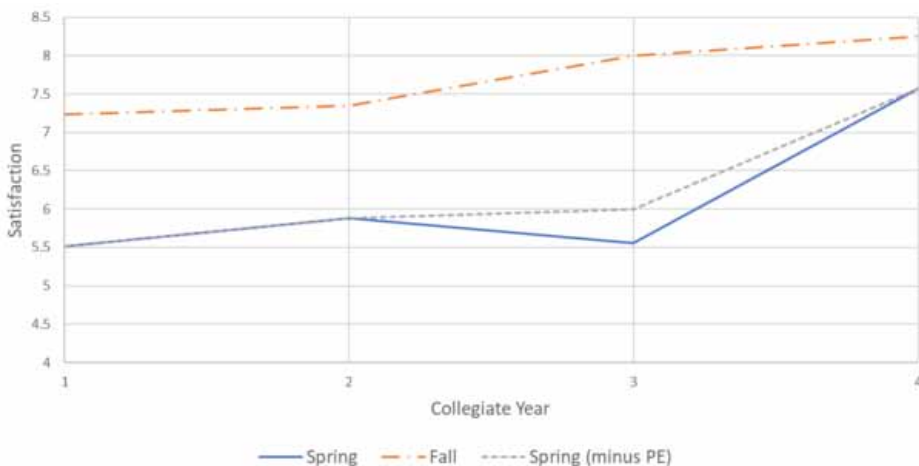
Tool	Semester	PI level	IM level	UI level	AD level	Pearson r
		[#] Mean (SD)	[#] Mean (SD)	[#] Mean (SD)	[#] Mean (SD)	correlation
Manaba+R	Spring 2020	[444] 3.63 (1.01)	[1175] 3.90 (1.04)	[1367] 4.04 (1.03)	[185] 4.09 (1.00)	$r(3169) = .127$
	Fall 2020	[102] 3.83 (0.98)	[487] 4.11 (0.98)	[611] 4.41 (0.78)	[71] 4.54 (0.73)	$r(1269) = .215$
Pre-recorded videos	Spring 2020	[219] 3.29 (1.00)	[462] 3.80 (0.99)	[864] 4.03 (1.01)	[105] 3.87 (1.13)	$r(1648) = .199$
	Fall 2020	[72] 3.46 (1.03)	[297] 3.99 (0.86)	[459] 4.29 (0.82)	[42] 4.62 (0.70)	$r(868) = .290$
Zoom	Spring 2020	[60] 3.52 (1.26)	[150] 3.83 (1.00)	[418] 3.65 (1.03)	[96] 4.10 (0.99)	$r(722) = .079$
	Fall 2020	[111] 3.53 (1.13)	[572] 4.08 (0.92)	[744] 4.28 (0.84)	[117] 4.50 (0.82)	$r(1542) = .222$
Google Forms	Spring 2020	[389] 3.27 (1.11)	[880] 3.71 (1.10)	[1124] 3.80 (1.13)	[188] 3.83 (1.09)	$r(2579) = .138$
	Fall 2020	[90] 3.31 (1.16)	[444] 3.87 (1.02)	[555] 4.15 (0.94)	[69] 4.35 (1.00)	$r(1156) = .233$
Flipgrid	Spring 2020	[158] 2.87 (1.24)	[332] 3.53 (1.12)	[639] 3.47 (1.18)	[78] 3.99 (1.13)	$r(1205) = .067$
	Fall 2020	[33] 2.79 (1.24)	[113] 3.69 (1.08)	[153] 3.77 (1.17)	[12] 4.50 (1.00)	$r(309) = .241$
Quizlet / Eigomemo	Spring 2020	[314] 3.04 (1.18)	[349] 3.52 (1.19)	[335] 3.55 (1.17)	[36] 3.36 (1.22)	$r(1032) = .149$
	Fall 2020	N / A	[197] 3.55 (1.09)	[340] 3.95 (1.07)	[9] 4.56 (0.53)	$r(544) = .193$
*Edmodo	Spring 2020	N / A	N / A	N / A	N / A	N / A
	Fall 2020	[27] 2.63 (1.21)	[264] 3.58 (1.13)	[341] 3.93 (1.06)	[63] 4.33 (0.86)	$r(693) = .276$
Total	Spring 2020	[1584] 3.30 (1.13)	[3348] 3.76 (1.08)	[4747] 3.83 (1.10)	[688] 3.94 (1.08)	$r(10365) = 0.132$
	Fall 2020	[435] 3.43 (1.15)	[2374] 3.92 (1.01)	[3203] 4.19 (0.93)	[383] 4.46 (0.83)	$r(6393) = 0.225$
Ritsumeikan University Class Level Classification from Lowest to Highest:						
PI= Pre-Intermediate						
IM= Intermediate						
UI= Upper Intermediate						
AD= Advanced						
#responses were collected under 3 categories (Ease of use, Interest, and Usefulness)						
(*) Edmodo was only assessed in the fall 2020 survey, thus cannot be compared.						

Research Question 1: How Satisfied Overall Were Students with ERT In the EAP Curriculum in The Second Semester Of 2020 (Compared with The Previous Semester)?

Overall student satisfaction with ERT rose considerably in the second semester compared with the spring semester. Tables 3, 4 and 5 compared student satisfaction in the spring and fall in terms of collegiate year and modality satisfaction, as well as satisfaction with specific tools. In the spring semester there were a higher number of responses, 1178, compared with 529 for the fall semester.

In terms of collegiate year, satisfaction for the first-year students was lower than that of all other years. In the spring, the value was 5.51, whereas in the fall semester it rose to 7.23. Second-year student satisfaction rose from 5.88 to 7.35, and third and fourth year student satisfaction rose from 5.56 to 8.00 and from 7.57 to 8.25 respectively. Broadly speaking, satisfaction was seen to be higher among older students than younger students in both the spring and the fall. The lone exception was that third-year students in spring 2020 were less satisfied than second-year students. However, in every collegiate year, student satisfaction rose in the fall compared to spring with the biggest increases being among third years and first years. For third year students, the increase can be explained in part because many third year respondents in the spring survey had taken a compulsory course, whereas there were only elective courses offered to third year students in the fall semester. If we were to remove the survey results from third-year students who took that compulsory English course in the spring semester, there would have been 35 respondents (down from 91) whose satisfaction score averaged 6.00 (up from 5.56). Figure 1 shows the

Figure 1. Satisfaction by collegiate year



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ascending order of satisfaction by collegiate year for both the spring (blue) and fall semester (orange broken). The grey broken line represents the results when survey results from Project English (PE) participants are removed.

To further explain the lower satisfaction score among third-year students in the spring, those who took the compulsory course were required to collaborate within groups, which was reported as particularly difficult, as one Project English student commented, “[some] group members didn’t do any work. Also, I can’t contact with one member, because, he didn’t reply [to] our message. So, I wonder if he will receive the same rating as us.” A certain amount of caution needs to be taken in interpreting the results of the third and fourth year students given the relatively small numbers of students who volunteered their feedback on the questionnaire, but the overall trend is clearly for an increased satisfaction level in emergency remote teaching.

The question can then be what accounts for the rise in satisfaction. Open-ended responses indicate several possibilities, likely acting in combination. Firstly, for the survey item, *What did you not enjoy about online learning?*, which allowed for multiple selections, 65.2% of students in the fall semester survey agreed with the statement, “I cannot communicate with my classmates and teachers face-to-face”. Although this was the most common response, indicating that students were negatively affected by a lack of face-to-face interaction, student comments show a shift in the perception of interaction in online learning. Fall semester saw a heavier reliance on livestream lessons which may have been an alleviating factor to the lack of classroom interaction. When identifying themes found in the open-ended survey items, positive comments relating to online interaction with either classmates or the teacher in the livestream lessons were the most common. The following student quote characterises a trend identified in student perceptions of the fall semester class format; “It was fun to talk to my friend and teacher in the Zoom class”. Another student commented, “I was able to enjoy conversations with people I met for the first time even with zoom.” The many positive comments pertaining to opportunities for interaction signals that livestream lessons may act to mitigate the missing social elements of a conventional classroom environment.

Furthermore, increased interaction with the teacher and classmates may have provided an increased understanding of lesson content by giving students access to confirm instructions and ask questions. One student responded, “Because classes were not only on demand but also on Zoom, we were able to divide the workload and network with each other. Also, if we ever had problems understanding the on-demand lessons, we were able to ask questions about it during the next Zoom class.”. Similarly, another commented, “Compare[d] to spring semester, there were more zoom lessons which helped me to get [advise] directly from the teacher.” Finally, some students felt that the shift toward livestream lessons enhanced their learning experience with one student commenting, “In the class, we get to practice speaking

a lot. Also, I really liked that we discuss different topics every week, and exchange the ideas with students.”

However, while many students felt an improvement associated with the shift to increased livestream lessons, not all students felt that in class language tasks, whether communicative or linguistic, were effective in the livestream format. The following quotes indicate difficulties students had when engaging in group discussions and other communicative tasks: Concerning discussions, “In a group session, sometimes it is hard to work with another person because sometimes people are nowhere to be found (no response) and unable to communicate with them.” Concerning speaking assessments, “I was nervous about the interview at zoom.” Another student commented on peer review work, “I thought partner work was not effective in learning English. Especially peer reviewing because students don’t really tell honest comments or look for mistakes in content.”

Research Question 2: What Is the Best Ratio of Livestream to On-Demand Lessons?

A greater number of EAP classes were held using the livestream platform, Zoom, in courses that either became entirely livestream or used a mixture of livestream and on demand in the Fall Semester. Students were asked about their satisfaction levels with the ratio of livestream to on-demand classes as well as their satisfaction overall with the three different instruction modalities of on demand, livestream and mixed. First, regarding student satisfaction according to perceived modality (Table 4), on a 10-point likert scale, students in the fall semester preferred livestream courses most of all, with an overall satisfaction of 7.49, an increase from spring semester when it was rated at 5.84; and those that used a mixture of livestream and on demand at 7.38, up from 6.13. On demand was the lowest rated at a mere 5.11 in the fall, down from the spring in which it was rated at 5.59. This strongly suggests that students had become far more receptive to livestream lessons, not only to supplement their on-demand classes, but also to replace them. This is further underlined by the fact that students consistently reported a higher level of satisfaction on a 5-point likert scale in ascending order of how many live streamed lessons they had (Table 6). Students were asked to state how many of their classes were provided to them as livestream lessons (with options rising in increments of 3 in recognition that students may not remember precisely), and a clear trend can be seen of students stating a higher satisfaction the more lessons were live streamed, from only 3.27 in courses that were held with only 1-3 lessons provided by livestream compared with 4.31 for those who had 13-15 classes via livestream. Therefore, the increase in satisfaction of livestream lessons as well as the ratio to which they are taught indicate that a relatively high ratio of livestream to on-demand lessons is favourable.

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Furthermore, when looking at the online tools that were used, Table 5 indicates that student satisfaction rose with every tool, but none more so than Zoom which increased by 28%. Pre-recorded videos are a commonly used feature in on-demand lessons, and Manaba is used for all courses to provide students with information about their courses, and as a place to submit assignments and from which to download lesson materials. The fact that Zoom was so highly rated in the fall semester suggests that interaction with classmates and the teacher even in livestream lessons is significant. Put simply by one student, “I’m grateful for the time I had to interact with my classmates.”

Research Question 3: Are the More Challenging/Demanding Online Tools Less Popular with Lower-Level Students?

In addition to the modality of the EAP courses, the question of how tools would be perceived by students according to their ease of use was also examined. In particular, this study looks into whether or not the level of students determined how easy the tools were to use and subsequently how satisfied they were with them. Tools such as Manaba, Zoom and pre-recorded videos are familiar to students because they are applicable to courses throughout the university, whereas the quiz software, Google Forms, the vocabulary software programs, Quizlet and Eigomemo, and the video-sharing software, Flipgrid, were less likely to be familiar to students and far less likely to be used in other courses. Table 7 shows that each ascending academic level displays a general increase in satisfaction of individual online tools with several exceptions between the two semesters. That is to say, the stronger the student level category, the higher the mean satisfaction score. The *PI level* reported the lowest satisfaction across all online tool categories, and the *IM level* reported higher satisfaction than the *UI level* only for the use of Zoom in Spring semester. With some exceptions, a relationship can be found between student level category and online tool satisfaction. However, while less familiar online tools were the least popular with the lowest student level category, with satisfaction generally continuing to the highest student level category, the data shows the same can be said for all the online tools surveyed. This again points to an overall increase in proficiency or familiarisation with all online tools for both students and teachers.

Limitations and Future Research

The data presented here may act as a starting point for identifying changes in student perceptions of ERT across the initial year of its implementation in EAP classes. While there are various potential factors that influence the results found here, it is not possible at present to discern any reasoning for the upward progression in

satisfaction from Spring to Fall, nor can we draw any definitive conclusions for preferences to individual online tools. There is also a discrepancy in the number of students that responded in the Fall semester compared to the Spring semester, due to the fact that both the administering of- and responding to the survey was voluntary for teachers and students respectively, which might lessen the conclusions made. Furthermore, there is a lot of room to explore student affect based on level. Although the data indicates increases in satisfaction relative to an increase in student group level, there is no clear indication of the specific causes, linguistic or otherwise leading to these results. Further research should look to explore these causes in order to provide better support strategies for lower-level students. Future studies should aim to identify reasons why students displayed the preferences found in this study.

CONCLUSION

The fall 2020 survey results demonstrated that students were far more satisfied taking EAP courses via ERT than they had been in the spring semester. There are several possible factors for this, ranging from students having become more accustomed to using online tools, to students having emotionally recovered from the initial shock of moving online. The results clearly show students expressed more satisfaction with classes that were either livestreamed or that combined livestream lessons with on-demand learning. After spending the vast majority of the spring semester in a pandemic-imposed bubble, students appeared thankful for opportunities to communicate with their classmates and teachers. Although students often reported a desire to return to the classroom, lessons on Zoom helped break the social ice, by allowing students to meet their classmates and teachers virtually. The use of breakout rooms allowed students to negotiate the meaning of tasks and assignments with one another, as well as to ask the teacher questions for clarification. In particular, cognitively demanding tasks such as peer-reviewing academic paragraphs and essays appeared to be more successfully completed in a synchronous medium, rather than the more impersonal and time-consuming on demand process. On the other side of the equation, teachers generally found better ways to implement online learning tools and run livestream classes in an engaging manner. It is also possible that looser restrictions on meeting in public places meant they could at least get a partial taste of “normal” university life.

As for recommendations, Table 6 indicates that the more livestream classes conducted, the greater student satisfaction was. In cases where on-demand lessons are deemed best, it is preferable that teachers create instructional videos that include L1 support for students, particularly those in lower-level classes. Software should be streamlined as much as possible and teachers need to make sure that the rationale

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for using each tool is clearly imparted to students. Learning how to use the tools is important for success in online learning. Instructing students on how to use the less intuitive tools needs to be sensitive to the English level of the students, especially when it comes to tech support, which may need to be carried out in the students' L1. Finally, although achieving course objectives is still important, consideration needs to be made for students' workloads and screen time. When deemed appropriate, teachers should not ignore the need to reduce the number of assignments they give students.

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APPENDIX 1

Timeline

This timeline covers some of the major events that took place in Japan from January 2020 until end of classes in January 2021 and is compiled with data from (Kyodo News, 2021), (Wikipedia, 2022) and (Our World in Data, 2022) as well as some details from the authors' university (the events relating to the authors' university are in bold font).

Jan 16, 2020 First confirmed case of Covid-19 in Japan from a person who had visited Wuhan, China.

Jan 27 Novel coronavirus designated as a “designated infectious disease”.

Feb 03 The Diamond Princess cruise ship arrives in Yokohama with several infected people on board. The ship is put into a 15-day quarantine.

Mar 02 Government closes all elementary, junior high and senior high schools, and students study from home (some online).

Mar 18 Government announce avodies of 3Cs (Closed spaces, Crowded places & Close-contact settings)

Mar 24 Tokyo Olympic Games postponed until 2021.

Apr 06 **University semester classes start, initially with 4 weeks of online classes.** University LMS repeatedly crashes.

Apr 07 Government declares a State of Emergency (SoE) from 8 April to 6 May for Tokyo and the prefectures of Kanagawa, Saitama, Chiba, Osaka, Hyogo and Fukuoka. Most universities, including the authors', take a 4-week break in classes. **Campuses closed to all students.**

Apr 15 First wave of Covid-19 peaks at around 4,300 confirmed weekly cases.

Apr 16 The State of Emergency expanded to all of Japan. Government announced a plan to give all registered residents in Japan ¥100,000 yen.

May 01 ¥100,000 stimulus payments to residents begin to be distributed in smaller towns. Larger cities start in the next 2 months.

May 02 Coronavirus deaths in Japan top 500.

May 04 SoE extended to the end of May.

May 07 Some elementary, junior high and senior high schools reopen. **Most universities, including ours, start online classes.**

May 14 SoE lifted in 39 out of 47 prefectures (not Osaka or Tokyo).

May 21 SoE lifted in Osaka (where the case study was conducted).

May 25 SoE lifted in all of Japan.

May 28 A 117.1 trillion yen relief package was approved by the government to aid companies and individuals that have been struggling due to the impact of the virus.

June 02 Tokyo Governor warns of resurgence in corona cases.

July 21 **University classes finish for Spring semester.**

July 22 Japan's domestic travel subsidy campaign begins to help revive the tourism industry severely impacted by coronavirus, excluding Tokyo.

July 24 Total number of confirmed Covid infections exceeded 30,000 in Japan.

Aug 09 Second wave of Covid-19 peaks at close to 11,000 confirmed weekly cases.

Aug 12 Total number of confirmed Covid infections exceeded 50,000.

Aug 22 Total number of confirmed Covid infections exceeded 60,000.

Aug 27 Prime Minister Abe steps down for health reasons amid low approval ratings of the government's handling of the Corona crisis.

Sep 04 Total number of confirmed Covid infections exceeded 70,000.

Sep 19 Japan eases restrictions on the size of crowds at professional sports matches, cinemas and other events.

Sep 24 Total number of confirmed Covid infections exceeded 80,000.

Sep 29 University classes begin. Some universities have face-to-face classes.

In the department of the case study, all classes decided to remain online for Fall Semester.

Oct 14 Total number of confirmed Covid infections exceeded 90,000.

Oct 29 Total number of confirmed Covid infections exceeded 100,000.

End of Oct Third wave of Covid-19 in Japan starts.

Nov 22 Coronavirus deaths in Japan top 2,000.

Dec 14 Prime minister Suga announces suspension of travel subsidy program during end of year holidays.

Dec 21 Total number of confirmed Covid infections exceeded 200,000.

Dec 22 Coronavirus deaths in Japan top 3,000.

Jan 08, 2021 State of emergency was announced for Tokyo and surrounding areas.

Jan 11 Third wave of Covid-19 peaks at close to 51,000 confirmed weekly cases.

Jan 13 State of emergency expanded to 13 prefectures including Osaka.

Jan 19 **University classes finish for Fall semester.**

APPENDIX 2

Questionnaire Sample Questions

(Please note that this questionnaire was originally conducted via Google forms so formatting is not representative.)

On-Demand Class Contents – Flipgrid オンデマンド:Flipgrid

*Required

1. Does your teacher use Flipgrid? 先生は、授業でFlipgridを利用していますか。*

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Mark only one oval.

Yes *Skip to question 3*

Sometimes *Skip to question 3*

No

2. Would you like your teacher to use Flipgrid in your class? 先生にFlipgridを使ってほしいですか?

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

Maybe

I don't know

Other _____

3. How easy is it to access Flipgrid? Flipgridへのアクセスはいかがですか。*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Very difficult Very easy

4. How useful are Flipgrid tasks? Flipgridは役に立ちますか。*

Mark only one oval

1 2 3 4 5

Not useful at all Very useful

5. How interesting are Flipgrid tasks? Flipgridは興味深いですか。*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Not interesting at all Very interesting

6. Comments on how to improve Flipgrid tasks. Flipgridの感想、改善法、要望があれば教えてください。

Online Learning–Overall experience オンライン学習:総合

1. How would you rate your overall online experience this semester? 今学期のオンラインの授業を総合的に評価してください。*

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Poor (satisfaction) Excellent

2. What have you enjoyed about online learning? オンライン学習の良いところは?*

Tick all that apply.

The workload is fairly light 学習する量が比較的少ない

I can create my own schedule for myself 自分で決めたスケジュールで学習できる

I don't have to commute to school 通学しなくて済む

I don't have to wake up early 早起しなくて済む

I don't need to interact with my teacher and classmates

先生やクラスメイトとやりとりしなくて済む

I can try out new technology / applications

新しいテクノロジー,ソフト,アプリなどを試すことができる

I haven't enjoyed it at all! 全く良いところはない

Other:

3. What have you NOT enjoyed about online learning? オンライン学習の良くないところは? *

Tick all that apply.

The workload is heavier than I expected 思ったより学習量が多い

It is difficult to balance my schedule 自分でスケジュールを決めるのは難しい

Every teacher's way of doing things is different, so it is hard to follow

先生によってやり方が異なるため,理解するのが難しい

I cannot communicate with my classmates and teachers face-to-face

クラスメイトや先生とコミュニケーションを十分に取れない

There are too many different platforms (Flipgrid, Google, Manaba, Quizlet, etc)

and it is hard to keep track of everything フリップグリッドやマナバなど学習方法が多すぎるため,全てを把握するのが難しい

There are many technical problems 技術上の問題が多い

I enjoy everything about online learning! No complaints!

オンライン学習についての不満点は何もない

Other:

4. If you have any final comments, thoughts, or ideas you would like to share, please do so here. コメント,意見,要望などがあれば教えてください。

APPENDIX 3

Table 8. Overall satisfaction by collegiate year (Spring 2020) n=1178

Groups #responses	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	Mean SD
1st year (735)	34 4.6%	39 5.3%	68 9.3%	92 12.5%	139 18.9%	100 13.6%	117 15.9%	90 12.25%	27 3.7%	29 3.95%	M=5.51 SD=2.22
2nd year (331)	13 3.9%	15 4.55%	30 9.1%	24 7.3%	52 15.7%	57 17.2%	50 15.1%	56 16.9%	23 6.95%	11 3.3%	M=5.88 SD=2.23
3rd year (91)	3 3.3%	7 7.7%	10 11%	8 8.8%	13 14.25%	14 15.4%	19 20.85%	9 9.9%	7 7.7%	1 1.1%	M=5.56 SD=2.21
4th year(+) (21)	0	1 4.8%	1 4.8%	1 4.8%	0	4 19%	1 4.8%	3 14.3%	5 23.8%	5 23.8%	M=7.57 SD=2.40
Total (1178)	50 4.2%	62 5.3%	109 9.3%	125 10.6%	204 17.3%	175 14.85%	187 15.9%	158 13.4%	62 5.25%	46 3.9%	M=5.66 SD=2.24

Note: (10-point Likert scale, 1 = poor (satisfaction), 10 = excellent (satisfaction) M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Table 9. Overall satisfaction by collegiate year (Fall 2020) n=529

Groups #responses	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	Mean SD
1st year (348)	7 2%	4 1.1%	7 2%	15 4.3%	26 7.5%	35 10.1%	65 18.7%	106 30.5%	54 15.5%	29 8.3%	M=7.23 SD=1.94
2nd year (140)	0	1 0.7%	4 2.9%	7 5%	8 5.7%	20 14.3%	21 15%	44 31.4%	22 15.7%	13 9.3%	M=7.35 SD=1.77
3rd year (29)	0	0	2 6.9%	0	0	3 10.3%	5 17.25%	5 17.25%	7 24.15%	7 24.15%	M=8.00 SD=1.91
4th year(+) (12)	0	0	1 8.35%	0	0	0	1 8.35%	4 33.3%	3 25%	3 25%	M=8.25 SD=1.91
Total (529)	7 1.3%	5 0.95%	14 2.65%*	22 4.15%	34 6.4%	58 11%	92 17.4%	159 30.1%	86 16.25%	52 9.8%	M=7.33 SD=1.90

Note: (10-point Likert scale, 1 = poor (satisfaction), 10 = excellent (satisfaction) M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Table 10. Class modality satisfaction comparison (Spring 2020) n=1178

Modality #responses	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	Mean SD
On demand (982)	47 4.8%	58 5.9%	92 9.35%	100 10.2%	164 16.7%	155 15.8%	160 16.3%	121 12.3%	49 5%	36 3.65%	M=5.59 SD=2.25
Livestream (61)	1 1.6%	2 3.3%	7 11.5%	7 11.5%	13 21.3%	5 8.2%	11 18%	8 13.1%	4 6.6%	3 4.9%	M=5.84 SD=2.18
Mixed (135)	2 1.5%	2 1.5%	10 7.4%	18 13.3%	27 20%	15 11.1%	16 11.8%	29 21.5%	9 6.7%	7 5.2%	M=6.13 SD=2.10
Total (1178)	50 4.2%	62 5.3%	109 9.3%	125 10.6%	204 17.3%	175 14.85%	187 15.9%	158 13.4%	62 5.25%	46 3.9%	M=5.66 SD=2.24

Note: (10-point Likert scale, 1 = poor (satisfaction), 10 = excellent (satisfaction) M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Table 11. Class modality satisfaction comparison (Fall 2020) n=529

Modality #responses	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	Mean SD
On demand (18)	2 11.1%	2 11.1%	1 5.55%	3 16.7%	0	4 22.2%	3 16.7%	2 11.1%	0	1 5.55%	M=5.11 SD=2.61
Livestream (95)	1 1.05%	2 2.1%	2 2.1%	4 4.2%	4 4.2%	10 10.5%	14 14.75%	28 29.5%	17 17.9%	13 13.7%	M=7.49 SD=1.98
Mixed (416)	4 0.95%	1 0.25%	11 2.65%*	15 3.6%	30 7.2%	44 10.6%	75 18.05%	129 31%	69 16.6%	38 9.1%	M=7.38 SD=1.79
Total (529)	7 1.3%	5 0.95%	14 2.65%	22 4.15%*	34 6.4%	58 11%	92 17.4%	159 30.1%	86 16.25%	52 9.8%	M=7.33 SD=1.90

Note: (10-point Likert scale, 1 = poor (satisfaction), 10 = excellent (satisfaction) M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Table 12. Class level satisfaction comparison (Spring 2020) n=1168*

Modality #responses	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	Mean SD
Pre-Intermediate (166)	7 4.2%	7 4.2%	15 9.05%	18 10.85%	41 24.7%	20 12.05%	26 15.65%	16 9.65%	11 6.65%	5 3%	M=5.55 SD=2.16
Intermediate (426)	24 5.65%	24 5.65%	41 9.6%	52 12.2%	71 16.65%	65 15.25%	59 13.85%	56 13.15%	24 5.65%	10 2.35%	M=5.46 SD=2.26
Upper Intermediate (503)	14 2.8%	31 6.15%	45 8.95%	47 9.35%	74 14.7%	83 16.5%	89 17.7%	71 14.1%	26 5.2%	23 4.55%	M=5.81 SD=2.22
Advanced (73)	5 6.85%	0	8 10.95%	6 8.2%	17 23.3%	7 9.6%	8 10.95%	13 17.8%	1 1.4%	8 10.95%	M=5.88 SD=2.45
Total (1168*)	50 4.3%	62 5.3%	109 9.35%	123 10.55%	203 17.35%	175 15%	182 15.6%	156 13.35%	62 5.3%	46 3.9%	M=5.65 SD=2.24

Note: *Ten responses were unclear (10-point Likert scale, 1 = poor (satisfaction), 10 = excellent (satisfaction) M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Table 13. Class level satisfaction comparison (Fall 2020) n=528*

Modality #responses	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	Mean SD
Pre-Intermediate (37)	2 5.4%	0	3 8.1%	2 5.4%	3 8.1%	6 16.25%	9 24.35%	10 27%	1 2.7%	1 2.7%	M=6.27 SD=2.1
Intermediate (200)	3 1.5%	4 2%	4 2%	11 5.5%	15 7.5%	26 13%	32 16%	64 32%	26 13%	15 7.5%	M=7.09 SD=2.0
Upper Intermediate (252)	2 0.8%	0	7 2.8%	9 3.55%	15 5.95%	23 9.15%	44 17.45%	78 30.95%	49 19.45%	25 9.9%	M=7.52 SD=1.8
Advanced (39)	0	1 2.55%	0	0	1 2.55%	3 7.7%	7 17.95%	7 17.95%	9 23.1%	11 28.2%	M=8.23 SD=1.7
Total (528*)	7 1.35%	5 0.95%	14 2.65%	22 4.15%	34 6.45%	58 11%	92 17.4%	159 30.1%	85 16.1%	52 9.85%	M=5.66 SD=2.24

Note: *One response was unclear (10-point Likert scale, 1 = poor (satisfaction), 10 = excellent (satisfaction) M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

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Table 14. Online tool combined usability, interest and usefulness satisfaction (Spring 2020)

Tool	#responses	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean & SD
Manaba+R	3180	72 (2.3%)	189 (5.9%)	833 (26.2%)	875 (27.5%)	1211 (38.1%)	M=3.93 SD=1.04
Pre-recorded videos	1662	27 (1.6%)	144 (8.7%)	436 (26.2%)	488 (29.4%)	567 (34.1%)	M=3.86 SD=1.04
Zoom/Skype	735	22 (3%)	48 (6.55%)	273 (37.15%)	167 (22.7%)	225 (30.6%)	M=3.71 SD=1.06
Google Forms	2586	121 (4.7%)	212 (8.2%)	801 (30.95%)	669 (25.85%)	783 (30.3%)	M=3.69 SD=1.12
Flipgrid	1206	92 (7.6%)	153 (12.7%)	365 (30.3%)	317 (26.3%)	279 (23.1%)	M=3.45 SD=1.19
Quizlet/Eigomemo	1023	86 (8.4%)	135 (13.2%)	325 (31.8%)	256 (25%)	221 (21.6%)	M=3.38 SD=1.20
<i>Notes:</i> (5-point Likert scale, 1 = not satisfied, 5 = highly satisfied) M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation *Some questions here may have been skipped when deemed non-applicable by a participant.							

Table 15. Online tool combined usability, interest and usefulness satisfaction (Fall 2020)

Tool	#responses	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean & SD
Manaba+R	1274	14 (1.1%)	25 (1.95%)	230 (18.05%)	359 (28.2%)	646 (50.7%)	M=4.25 SD=0.89
Zoom/Skype	1547	20 (1.3%)	43 (2.8%)	295 (19.05%)	489 (31.6%)	700 (45.25%)	M=4.17 SD=0.92
Pre-recorded videos	873	6 (0.7%)	24 (2.75%)	182 (20.85%)	296 (33.9%)	365 (41.8%)	M=4.13 SD=0.88
Google Forms	1161	28 (2.4%)	59 (5.1%)	266 (22.9%)	350 (30.15%)	458 (39.45%)	M=3.99 SD=1.02
Quizlet/Eigomemo	546	21 (3.85%)	43 (7.9%)	129 (23.6%)	175 (32.05%)	178 (32.6%)	M=3.82 SD=1.09
Edmodo	698	20 (2.85%)	76 (10.9%)	183 (26.2%)	177 (25.35%)	242 (34.7%)	M=3.78 SD=1.12
Flipgrid	311	20 (6.45%)	24 (7.7%)	95 (30.55%)	73 (23.45%)	99 (31.85%)	M=3.67 SD=1.18
<i>Notes:</i> (5-point Likert scale, 1 = not satisfied, 5 = highly satisfied) M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation *Some questions here may have been skipped when deemed non-applicable by a participant.							

Chapter 6

Responding to COVID–19: Teaching of EAP to Non–Native Postgraduates of Performing Arts

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research writing in second language has been a challenge for performing arts postgraduates. They need greater support from the EAP teacher in order to master the required writing skills for their research writing. However, the input from the EAP teacher was limited during the pandemic. Students may not know how to improve their artwork because they found it difficult to share their practices with their classmates. Consequently, it was deemed important to help performing arts postgraduates find peers with similar expertise regardless of online teaching. In this sense, peer review seemed a promising alternative. Peers could help each other to make their artwork productions better, whereas the teacher could assist them to textualise their productions in the research writing. The context of postgraduate performing arts curriculum in relation to L2 research writing has been underexplored, especially in the context of the pandemic. This chapter aims to add to the literature by analyzing the integration of peer review into the postgraduate performing arts curriculum.

INTRODUCTION

For students wishing to pursue a career in the studio arts, universities across Europe

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and North America have well established Master of Fine Arts (MFA) programmes (Apps & Mamchur, 2009). In Hong Kong however, MFA is a fairly recent offering within the higher degree landscape and has brought some problematic issues to light. The MFA curriculum is unique in that it requires students to produce a written thesis as well as original artwork productions, for example, choreography in dancing or composition in music. For students accustomed to the studio-based performing arts industry, scholarly research might be quite a foreign concept. Indeed, in a university adopting English as the medium of instruction (EMI), English as a second language (ESL) students have encountered difficulties and demonstrated poor performances in research writing (Micciche, 2014). Generating creative productions and then writing an academic thesis, in a second language (L2), poses a major challenge to ESL students (Hyland et al., 2022).

On an institutional level, there is generally insufficient support for performing arts students transitioning to a research-based curriculum, but this was further exacerbated when the university was forced to adopt emergency remote teaching (ERT) during the pandemic (Hodges et al., 2020). Certainly, performing arts students appreciate face-to-face learning (Biggs & Karlsson, 2011) because of the role that collaboration and oral discussion with peers play in studio practices. However, with the suspension of face-to-face learning this collaboration and discussion was seriously reduced, leaving students significantly disadvantaged in their artwork productions and thesis writing.

Existing research shows that there are two major reasons to explain this deficiency in writing skills for ESL performing arts students. First, the demonstration or use of research writing within a performing arts classroom is likely to be a highly unusual practice, resulting in a general lack of writing literacy awareness among the students (Kill, 2006). Second, the very concept of textualising a visual performance would be considered as unnecessary to these students (Collinson, 2005). Attempting to express studio-based activities textually stands in opposition to the creative self and could even be disruptive to a performance (Kill, 2006; Hockey, 2007). MFA students have, understandably, underestimated the importance of L2 writing when describing or discussing the process within the academic context. This “translative gap” between academic research and artistic skills in the MFA curriculum needs to be addressed (Kill, 2006, p.309). During the pandemic, it is of even greater importance for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teachers to enhance the oral component of the MFA curriculum. They must assist students to produce a critical analysis in research writing which is necessary for the broader academic context of performing arts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing Difficulties in a Studio-Based MFA Curriculum

At universities around the world, postgraduate students, regardless of their major, must fulfil a writing requirement which is used to demonstrate the student's discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence (Hyland, 2003). However for ESL students, this can be an immense challenge due to a reliance on textbooks and an examination-oriented culture. They may lack sufficient experience in academic discourses in order to tailor their own written communications in a way that would "appeal to the current interactants" (Hyland 2020, p.1). Therefore, EAP teachers must support these students by focusing on four areas; syntax, lexis, discourse and morphology (Chan, 2010). In addition, Miller and Pessoa (2016) have identified another common error in L2 writing where students seem unable to use the appropriate tone for academic writing or meet the genre requirements of the discipline. This may be attributed to a lack of the "skills of positioning and persuading, and the language resources" that are required in academic writing (Swain, 2009, p.168).

In the MFA curriculum, students are required to produce both a visual component and a written component, which Paltridger et al. (2011) points to as quite unique from other disciplines and presents its own set of difficulties. MFA students are expected to integrate both visual and textual components into a single written work yet there are evident problems of text interpretation and text generation in the L2 writing process (Weigle, 2002). Frontline performing arts practitioners, such as dancers and singers, have expressed that L2 writing is difficult (Hockey & Allen-Collison, 2005; Morrison & Evans, 2018) and even question its necessity in the MFA curriculum (Candlin, 2000). Furthermore, the EAP teachers are unlikely to have the performing arts expertise to help students revise the content of the research writing. Thus, this dual component curriculum presents several difficulties in L2 writing which cannot be resolved by simply teaching the academic writing skills, as may be done in other disciplines. Nevertheless, research writing has been deemed necessary and MFA students must demonstrate their mastery of the discipline knowledge as well as contribute knowledge to their professional community. To meet these scholarly requirements, Dally et al. (2004) believe that critical discussion among knowledgeable peers is a vital step. However, access to meaningful peer contact during the pandemic has been limited and the opportunities to share studio practices and receive feedback from classmates are few. This essentially removes the meaningful peer input necessary to support text interpretation and text generation. Although students would likely receive some peer feedback in online classes, it may be insufficient quality or quantity to help them critically evaluate their artwork.

Peer Review on Academic Writing

Although peer review has been widely used in tertiary education, the implementation of this writing has not been systematic in Hong Kong (Ho, 2021). Boud et al. (2001) and Falchikov (2001) believe that a good peer review practice should benefit both the reviewer and the reviewee, of similar academic levels, by sharing knowledge, ideas and experience. These three elements are important in the MFA curriculum since students can better understand the discipline and contribute their knowledge to the professional community. Studio practices also require students to share their opinions with others for better performances in the future. Since oral communication has been the dominant mode of communication in studio practices (Biggs & Karlsson, 2011), suspension of face-to-face teaching has made sharing difficult. The exchange of ideas with peers that inform the artwork is certainly needed and should be maintained regardless of the teaching mode during the pandemic.

An examination of the existing research on peer review shows that the main focus has been on how peers assist each other to write, and how students write in collaboration with a writing centre (Adams, 2011; O'Sullivan & Cleary, 2014). This exposes a void in the literature on peer review practices at institutions that do not possess a writing centre (Voigt & Girgensohn, 2015). In the case of Hong Kong, where an examination-oriented culture dominates, students are relatively passive and tend to await clear instructions from teachers rather than looking to peers for guidance (Huang et al., 2005; Shek et al., 2015). These students may find the peer review process too cognitively demanding as they have insufficient linguistic knowledge (Williams, 2004). In fact, these students find writing their own essays difficult enough, let alone reading and giving feedback on others'.

Regardless of these challenges, peer review is valued in higher education and several studies have found that students respond positively to peer feedback and find it useful to supplement a teacher's feedback on the content (Weigle & Nelson, 2004; Gielen et al., 2010; Ruegg, 2015). Yang et al (2006) conclude that peer review is most helpful when peers offer feedback on idea development, an area which teachers might neglect in favour of academic writing features. Students also enjoy discussing their ideas with peers whom they feel intellectually closer (Kohnke & Har, 2021). Peer review should then be encouraged as it "promotes more self-correction, and less misinterpretation of writing prompts and fewer incorrect revisions" (Li & Ngai, 2018, p.106).

Despite the clear benefits of peer review practices, there is a lack of data on how peer review can be implemented for MFA/ESL students, and at a time when interactions between teachers, students and classmates may be very limited. Therefore, the authors of this article seek to add to the literature by analyzing the

implementation of a peer review process to MFA curriculum, during the pandemic period. This chapter was framed by the following research questions:

1. How did peer review improve your English writing during the pandemic?
2. How did you find the implementation of peer review during the pandemic?

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Participants in this study were Year-1 MFA students at an English medium of instruction university in Hong Kong. During the Spring semester of 2020/2021, participants were required to complete a 14-week English writing course. Since there was only one English writing course in the MFA curriculum, convenience sampling was adopted in this study (Etikan et al., 2016). An invitation email was sent to the course participants after the subject registration period. Students who met the following three criteria were invited to participate in the research: (1) students who were non-native English speakers, (2) students whose undergraduate degrees were performing arts related, and (3) students who had not studied in other disciplines, for example, humanities and social sciences. In total, 44 ESL students voluntarily participated in the research and one student [S16] allowed the researchers to use his essay for illustration purposes. The demographic data are shown in table 1. Participants were also informed that their confidentiality was guaranteed, there would be no advantage in their grade, and they were allowed to withdraw from the research at anytime.

Table 1. Students' demographics

Student's major	Cinema	Dance	Drama	Music	Theatre
	2	16	6	18	2
Student's nationality	Chinese/Hong Kong			Chinese/Mainland China	
	24			20	

The Course

The 14-week English writing course took place in the second semester of the MFA curriculum. Each student was required to write a research essay and conduct

a presentation which discussed the making of the artwork. The course adopted a process-writing approach. Assessment tasks consisted of two essay drafts (20% each), a final draft (40%) and an individual oral presentation (20%).

Peer Review Implementation during the Pandemic

With peer review inserted into the curriculum, a peer review session was conducted two weeks before each draft submission (Ho, 2020). The semester was divided into four phases with Table 2 showing the timeline of peer review and the assessment tasks. The mandatory peer review tasks were to be conducted during class time, however, due to the pandemic, all classes transitioned to online. Video-conferencing was conducted on the Zoom platform and cloud services were through Microsoft OneDrive. To reduce the cognitive load, the class was divided into groups of three or four students of the same major. Being from the same discipline, students could better understand the artwork and the related studio practice being discussed. Conducting peer review with three to four classmates was also considered manageable for peer reviewers (Ho, 2020). It was thought that students could provide greater feedback on content that they were familiar with.

Phase 1 - Peer Review Training

Prior to the first peer review task, a small-scale Zoom training was organised in week 4. The purpose of which was to familiarize students with the peer review process, provide a clear understanding of the draft requirements, and to relay the etiquette of providing feedback. Li and Ngai (2018) emphasise that this type of training is necessary because “weaker students sometimes misunderstand the task requirements, resulting in poor performance” (p.108). During this training, the teacher guided students through the assessment process and provided them with a sample essay, the assessment rubric and draft checklists. Students were asked to read the essay and then provide feedback according to the rubric descriptors. This would not only help reviewers to better understand their duties but also demonstrate the ideal organization of peer feedback. Students were given the opportunity to clarify any possible misunderstandings before the first peer review session.

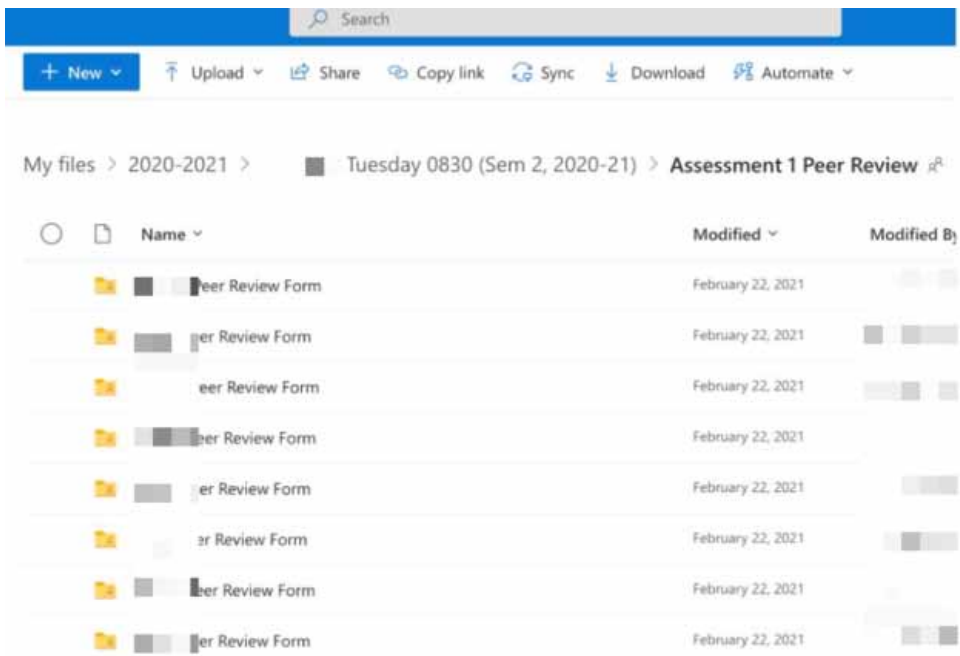
Phases 2 and 3 - Peer Review of Essay Draft

Students were required to upload their drafts onto the Microsoft OneDrive folder before the first review task. With respect to confidentiality, each folder, as shown in figure 1, could only be accessed by the assigned group members.

Table 2. Timeline of peer review related tasks

Phase	Week	Task(s)
Phase 1	1	Introduction of the course and the assessment tasks
	2	Introduction of peer review
	3	Group formation after the subject registration period
	4	Peer review training
Phase 2	5	Peer review on first draft (700 words) (written and oral feedback)
	6	First draft revision
	7	First draft submission
	8	Teacher's feedback on first draft
Phase 3	9	Peer review on second draft (1500 words) (written and oral feedback)
	10	Second draft revision
	11	Second draft submission
Phase 4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Individual oral presentation (20 minutes) ● Peer review on final draft through listening to the presentation (oral feedback)
	13	Teacher's feedback on second draft
	14	Final draft submission (2000 words)

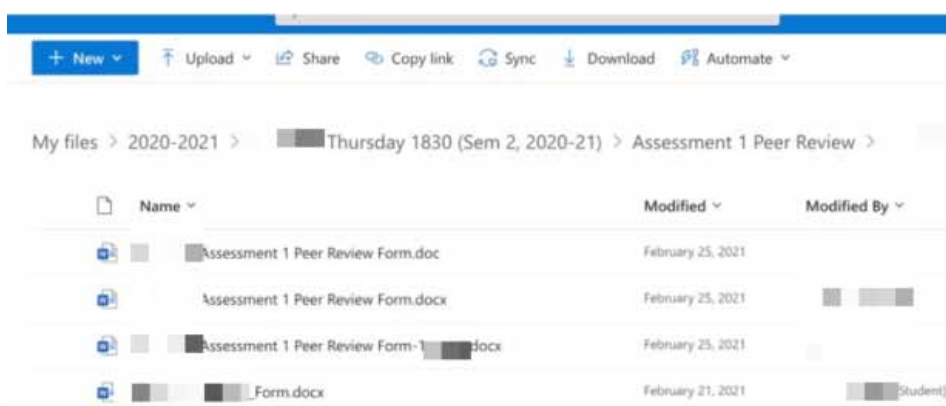
Figure 1. Interface of Microsoft OneDrive



Responding to COVID-19

Prior to the week 5 lecture, the teacher confirmed that all students had uploaded their drafts. During the class, students were given approximately 60 minutes to conduct their peer review, with the teacher standing by on Zoom to answer questions. To ensure that the feedback was consistent and less cognitively demanding, a peer review form was distributed to students (Ho, 2020). After reviewing a student's draft, each peer reviewer was to upload the completed form to the corresponding folder, as illustrated in figure 2, which allowed writers to access their drafts and the corresponding forms conveniently.

Figure 2. Peer review forms uploaded onto Microsoft OneDrive



As previously established, written communication is an uncommon practice in the performing arts. Therefore, students were given time to discuss the feedback with their peers in a breakout room on Zoom. This dialogue can help the reviewee to clarify any peer feedback and further develop improvement plans together with the peer reviewers who have “an asymmetrical relation and a common, known and shared objective” (Duran & Monereo, 2005, p.181). Productive discussion should also aid the reviewee to develop “abilities to evaluate the discrepancies between their own work and their peers’ performances” (Ho, 2020, p.7). The second peer review, Phase 3, was conducted from weeks 9 to 11.

Phase 4 - Peer Review through Listening to Presentations

Considering the level of literacy practices in performing arts, it may have been too demanding to ask students to read 2,000 word draft papers, two or three times. To tackle this problem and to support students in their essays, the final peer review task was providing verbal feedback to oral presentations on Zoom. Without the need to

read a draft paper, the reviewer could better focus on the ideas being presented. This might also compensate for the limited expertise of the EAP teacher in the students' essay topics. Students were further given time for discussions with peers after the presentation. All students then had two weeks for final editing.

Data Collection and Analysis

This qualitative study explored MFA students' perspective on integrating peer review in an English writing course, during the pandemic. Data was collected from 11 semi-structured interviews, ranging from 38 to 64 minutes in length. The interpretive approach was adopted in order to investigate how peer review influenced students' writing process and their strategies (Alase, 2017). All interviews were conducted in groups of 4, with the intention of collecting more information through dynamic group interaction (Göras et al., 2020). Interviewees were allowed to use their native language of Cantonese or Putonghua in order to fully express their opinions (Brinkmann, 2014). All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. The following questions were asked:

1. Which criterion was the most difficult in each draft? And Why?
2. How did you make judgement on your peer's writing performance?
3. How did peer review help you write?
4. How did you use the rubric to help you write?
5. What have you learnt from peer review?

In order to protect the validity of the data, several precautions were taken. The interview data were evaluated using thematic analysis by two researchers in the study (Nowell et al. 2017). To confirm the data's stability and dependability over time, it was coded following the guidelines of Denzin and Lincole (2013); checking understanding, asking for clarification and discussing differences (Alase, 2017). Two rounds of independent coding were conducted two weeks apart and showed nearly identical data, indicating a high dependability of the findings. Representative quotes were selected with reference to the interpretive approach (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017) and data trustworthiness was ensured by the two member checks (Crawford et al., 2020). Each interviewee received a copy of the transcripts and no requests for amendments were received. The mean score of each draft was also recorded to see if there was any impact in the students' writing performances.

FINDINGS

Interviews were conducted to evaluate the impact of peer review on English writing during the pandemic. Students' writing performances were assessed using four criteria; content (35%), language (35%), organization (15%) and referencing (15%). The interview began by asking interviewees to indicate the most difficult criteria in the essay writing. Table 3 shows the distribution of their views on the four criteria.

Table 3. Students' views on the most difficult criteria in the three drafts

Criteria	First draft (N=44)	Second draft (N=44)	Final draft (N=44)
Content	15	17	14
Language	20	20	26
Organization	5	3	2
Referencing	4	4	2

The mean score of each draft was recorded in order to see the overall performance of the participants in different drafts. Table 4 shows that there were progressive improvements.

Table 4. Mean score of each draft

	First draft	Second draft	Final draft
Mean score (out of 100) (N=44)	59.72	65.99	71.49

The improved mean score of each draft can be further illustrated by the number of grades in each draft, as displayed in figure 3. Students' improvements can be indicated by greater number of higher grades in the second and final drafts. The overall grade distribution shifted to the left after each peer review.

Upon exploring the students' perspectives, a total of 142 responses were coded through the thematic analysis and four themes were identified. The thematic map showing responses is illustrated in figure 4.

Figure 3. Grade distribution of each draft

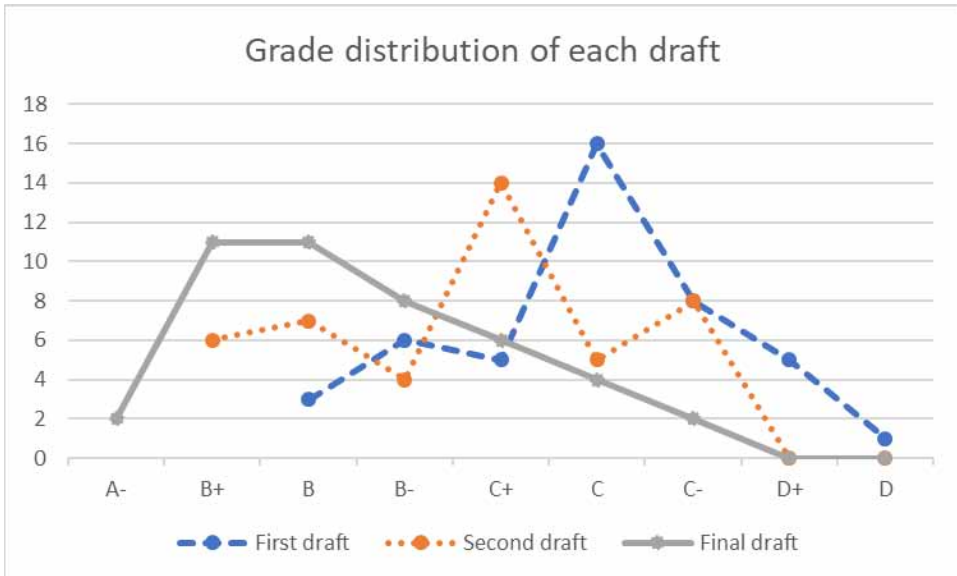


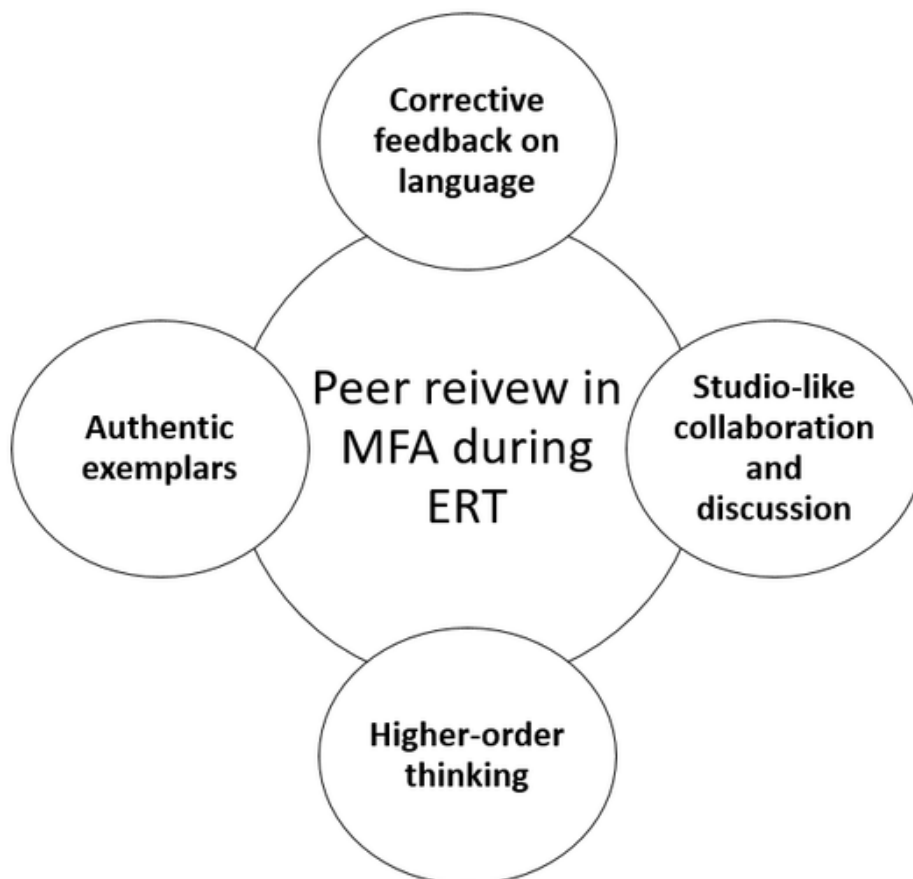
Figure 4. Thematic map

My creation was inspired by the Peking Opera piece 'Three Forks in the Road' and a photograph from the lives of native Africans. At the beginning, I only had two references of inspiration to refer to, a Peking Opera piece called "Three Forks in the Road" and a picture of an African native with fruit on his head. I was sure that I needed a table, because the tale of the Peking Opera "Three Forks in the Road" revolves around a table, and I also needed a table to play with my gymnastic and acrobatic movements, from my own point of view. But how do you blend the images from Africa into the movements? I thought of putting the table on my head, and why? The first reason was that we were invited to an outdoor festival and we wanted to do it in such a way that the audience would stop and watch my performance. The second reason was to imagine the table as the pressure in our lives, to make the pressure a real object on our heads and see how we would dance against that 'pressure'? This would naturally fit in with the core idea of what we were trying to say in the piece.

DISCUSSION

The four themes which emerged from the data, offer important insights into the MFA students' writing experience with peer review during ERT. More importantly, these perspectives might shape the future pedagogical practices of the English writing course curriculum.

Figure 5. S16's introduction showing informal writing



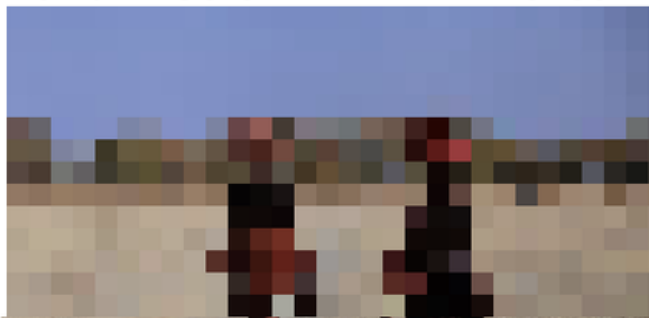
Corrective Feedback on Language

Participants reported that *language* was the most difficult criterion in each of the three drafts. This may be the result of being exposed to mainly studio-based classes and a reliance on first language in oral communication. Major problems included the use of academic tone and formal lexical items. For example, S3 was frustrated by not knowing ‘*the differences between conversational and academic English*’. Although the use of conversational language in the daily routines of performing arts students is acceptable, this poses difficulties when transferred into research writing. Such language issues can be illustrated by S16’s introduction in the first draft, as displayed in figure 5. In addition to the earlier findings of Chan (2010) and Miller and Pessoa (2016), a general lack of knowledge in scholarly writing is evident when students

Figure 6. S16's introduction in the second draft

In 2019, I was invited to choreograph a dance piece for th [redacted] and the main themes of this platform are "is a platform project divided into two parts: Body Travel (Dancing Around) and Body Playground, doing work that can only be performed in the theatre outdoors and combining it with the beautiful historical background of Macau, it will be a different kind of 'environmental dance'.

My creation was inspired by the Peking Opera piece 'Three Forks in the Road' and a photograph from the lives of native Africans.



used items such as personal pronouns or rhetorical questions in research writing. It is noted that S34 believed that such a writing style was *'more appropriate to show the inspiration of the production'*, however it remains that the use of inappropriate language may exclude works from the literature of the professional community.

Apart from academic writing features, peer review could help with some basic language corrections, for example, subject-verb agreement and tenses. Given the limited time frame and the linguistic competence of the group members, spotting grammatical mistakes was *'acceptable and appreciated'* by reviewees [S1, S2, S6, S7, S9, S12, S28, S31, S37]. S12 and S31 stated that the peer review of the first draft was most helpful as it exposed grammatical errors, which in turn led them to *'pay closer attention to grammar accuracy in subsequent drafts'*. Sato and Lyster's (2012) work on peer corrective feedback can be demonstrated by the changes S16 made to their introduction in the second draft, as displayed in figure 6. With fewer grammatical errors and informal writing features in the revised text, peer corrective feedback is shown to have a positive effect. S16 further explained that the introduction in the second draft was shorter because he would like to *'confirm everything was right'* before continuing. Corrective feedback also enabled students to enhance their language accuracy and appropriacy in research writing. In light of such benefits, peer feedback might also help to compensate for the insufficient attention from the teacher during ERT.

Studio-Like Collaboration and Discussion

Peer review sessions, during ERT, also provided opportunities for MFA students to discuss and collaborate in a way that simulated studio practices. This type of discussion is considered essential in artwork production, but the subjective nature of art can pose a challenge when writing about it for the professional community. Thus, it is no wonder that participants considered content to be the second major difficulty they encountered. As writing itself is an uncommon literacy practice in the performing arts, S8 found that *'writing alone in English and written expressions were difficult'*. Other students explained that they did not have sufficient *'vocabulary'* in L2 writing [S3, S4, S5, S7, S16, S18, S25, S27, S21, S40, S43] and they did not have opportunities to *'discuss'* [S2, S5, S8, S16, S21, S22, S27, S32, S34, S44]. This is in line with the findings of Biggs and Karlsson (2011) that oral communication is significant to performing arts practitioners. When asked if peer review could help, students expressed an appreciation for the further discussion in a Zoom breakout room [S1, S12, S16, S37]. This type of collaboration often concluded in finding some context-appropriate lexis and helped to develop their ideas from the reader's perspective. This seems to address Hyland's (2020) concern about writing in an academic discourse that is appropriate to the target readers. Figure 6 shows the second draft of S16, who was encouraged by his peers to use an image to better illustrate his inspiration. This kind of conversation seemed to simulate discussions which students routinely had in their studio practices. After expressing ideas in conversation, students seem better able to produce text that is clearer and more concise for potential readers.

Higher-Order Thinking

One element of critical and higher-order thinking, which many MFA students found arduous, was the generating of ideas in scholarly language and then expressing that in written form. The research phase also exposed difficulties in the reading and comprehension of academic articles and other sources of information [S3, S8, S9, S12, S17, S28, S35, S39] which left students unable to elaborate on their ideas, in written form. Echoing Weigle (2002), S16 and S40 expressed their difficulties in *'understanding the source information in English'*. Accepting that reading is an uncommon literacy practice in performing arts, students still found the research process frustrating because "many of the standard university texts were beyond their level of comprehension" (Cotterall & Cohen, 2013, p.163).

Easing these frustrations during the pandemic, students utilised the online peer review sessions. Through the feedback interviews, students expressed that they could discuss and elicit the source information with their classmates in a Zoom

breakout room [S2, S15, S20, S31]. This type of discussion helped scaffold students by enhancing their meaning-making capabilities (Eryilmaz, et al., 2013) and also confirmed the conclusions of Warsah et al. (2021) that reading in higher education should be conducted in an interactive and collaborative environment. Reinforcing this, S9 stated that interpreting source information together could ‘*assist them to look at their ideas critically and then insert higher-order thinking into their writing*’.

Students appreciated the online peer review sessions because they eased feelings of isolation during the pandemic, as well as provided fruitful peer discussions. These interactions with peers helped them to ‘*draw links between ideas*’ [S5], think from different perspectives [S1, S8, S10, S27, S31] and to write with more consideration of academic research. Looking again at S16’s written work, there is a definite improvement from figure 6 to figure 7, showing the inspiration of the choreography but still written in an academic manner. The integration of the source information, regardless of the referencing error, indicates his research-based inspiration. This type of collaboration is essential in performing arts as it helps students create better works.

Figure 7. S16’s writing improvement on introducing his inspiration

My creation was inspired by the Peking Opera piece ‘Three Forks in the Road’ and a photograph from the lives of native Africans. The countries and tribes along and around the equator from eastern to western Africa, men, women and children alike, are really good at carrying things on their heads, not only in terms of resistance to pressure, but also in terms of stabilisation skills. The strongest workers on the construction sites, whether they are carrying steel and wood, sand, gravel, cement, buckets of mortar, empty petrol drums, or even a wicker basket or a shovel, prefer to walk on their heads rather than carry them on their shoulders, backs or hands. The women’s skill with their heads was also amazing, as poor women often walked with a bundle of firewood or a bucket full of water on their heads, carrying or carrying a small child on their backs, both steadily and quickly; some little girls also ran with a kettle or ceramic pot full of water on their heads. The most skillful of all are the vendors who sell along the streets. (Lu Sheng Jun. (2001). 刚果人的服饰 Congolese costume , 顶功和脚力 Weight-bearing with the top of the head and strong calf strength. *Century Line*, (2), 35-35.)

Authentic Exemplars

Considering that writing tasks are challenging to MFA students, it is understandable that the chance to compare classmates’ essays would have a motivating effect to improve their writing. S31 believed that she was ‘*inspired*’ by her classmates and that she became ‘*more confident*’ to achieve that quality. Others felt a sense of relief when they saw that their classmates performed at a similar level to themselves [S4, S6, S16, S21, S28, S35, S44]. S2 confirmed this when commenting that peer review allowed her to become ‘*more relaxed*’. These positive notes on peer review stand in opposition to the findings of Hendry et al. (2011). One possible explanation is

that because MFA students are already accustomed to working collaboratively in studio settings, they might be less competitive than students from other disciplines. S39 '*enjoyed reading both good and bad essays*', while S38 states that he could '*learn from both good and bad elements in the essay*'. Due to the students' weak awareness in writing, exemplars of different levels (To & Carless, 2016; Ambridge, 2020) seem not essential for them.

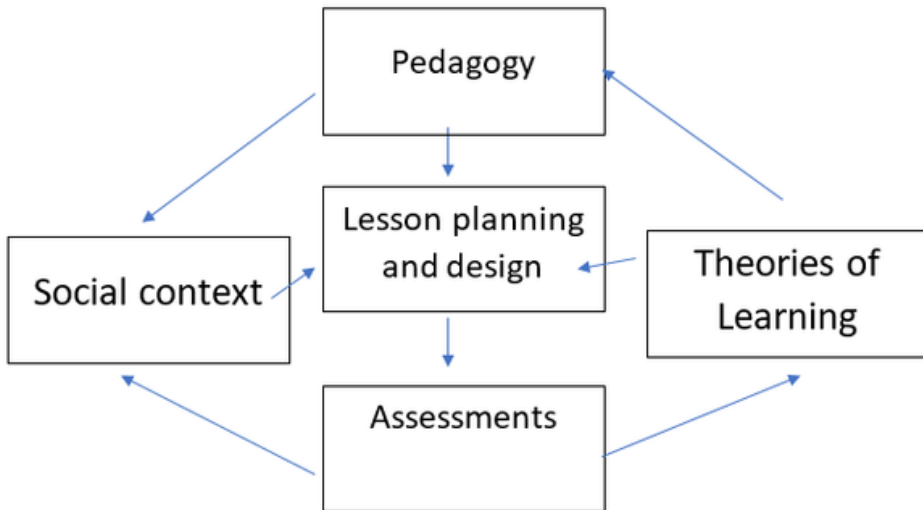
Peer review during the pandemic seemed to provide MFA students with a certain amount of cognitive and emotional support. The positive effects of such support could be illustrated by the improved mean score and grade distribution of each draft along the writing process. The criticizing of classmates' drafts occurred less in the Zoom breakout room as students appeared more interested in reflecting on their draft quality. Quite often students would ask classmates about their '*knowledge of writing*', in order to revise their own drafts [S9, S11, S20, S23, S34, S40]. This trusting environment within Zoom discussions, could possibly "build healthy levels of persistence and resilience when students know their work is yet to reach the required standard" (Dixon et al., 2019, p.468).

IMPLICATIONS

With the integration of peer review throughout the semester, each student received three sets of feedback before the final submission; twice on their written work and once their presentation. After each peer review session, the students were given discussion time with their group in order to clarify, elaborate on ideas, and develop personalised plans for improvement (Winstone & Carless, 2020). These discussion opportunities gave students an enhanced feedback system, which is generally not the case under normal research writing conditions. Feedback in classroom settings can be limited due to several factors; a relatively high student-teacher ratio (Ho, 2021), a presumed sense of a teacher's authority in assessments (Tong et al., 2020) and a simple lack of class time (Lee et al., 2018). Therefore, the establishment of a feedback system, especially during a pandemic, could significantly boost effective interactions between students. From the student responses it seems they enjoy peer feedback on language and content items, more so than the teacher's post-assessment feedback. Formative peer feedback in this study was able to provide them with prompt, discipline-specific guidance that helped them to meet expectations and more effectively complete the essay.

Although students were isolated during the pandemic, this study suggests that students' interactions were deemed important in the context of performing arts. In addition to the change from a studio-based curriculum to a research-based curriculum, academic writing in L2 was also a great challenge that requires extra

Figure 8. Model for assessment in relation to pedagogy



academic support. In the case of MFA, where essay topics are based on original artworks, feedback from MFA peers became more important than feedback from EAP teachers. In this scenario, it seems most effective for students to first develop their discipline-specific ideas within peer review sessions, followed by guidance from EAP teachers on the aspects of academic writing.

The peer review process in this study reveals an enhancement in student engagement as participants collaborated on a variety of issues affecting their drafts. This result is in line with Smith et al. (2005), stating that students need to assist each other to promote group success, whether by orally explaining the task, solving the problems, or discussing the concepts and strategies to be employed. Johnson et al. (2007) confirm that this kind of explaining problems, discussing subject matters, and connecting present and past learning can be conducive to promotive interaction. Not limited to only MFA students, the fostering of group dynamics is a valuable tool among all students. In this case study, peer interactions in the online class also improved students' communication outside the classroom. Students affirmed that more engagement in the classroom could lead to strengthened peer ties and further collaboration on future projects.

From Black and Wiliam's (2018) model for assessment in relation to pedagogy, as shown in figure 8, task design should be coupled with the social context. Educational activities and associated assessments can be stemmed by various factors including; pedagogical theories, instruction and learning, subject discipline, and the wider context of education. Based on this approach, EAP teachers that instruct

MFA students during ERT could consider integrating peer review into the MFA curriculum. Once engrained, this could become an essential part of learning and assessment tasks for MFA students.

It should be acknowledged that the sample size in this study was relatively small and that the implementation of this peer review process was also a pilot project. Therefore, any findings must be handled with some caution. Despite this, certain patterns are observable in the online peer review process. Online teaching and learning should become more student-centred and also attempt to simulate the normal routines of performing arts practitioners and classrooms. Such integration was valued by the peer review participants and was reflected in their improved academic writing skills, overall subject grades and their interview responses.

CONCLUSION

As the world adapts to the necessities of the global pandemic, traditional forms of teaching and learning have been forced to evolve. Although there is certainly a deficit of research on issues affecting MFA students, the pandemic has brought several elements to the forefront. MFA/ESL students find it challenging to translate their artwork into an acceptable written format because English is not their native language and writing itself is uncommon within the performing arts. In order to support these students in their transition from studio-based to a research-based curriculum, as well as provide more student-centred online learning, peer review seems a promising alternative. The implementation of peer review can help students support each other to generate ideas and allow EAP teachers to focus more on linguistic competencies. From this dual line of support, students are much better prepared to satisfy the requirements of the written curriculum. This integration can be considered an effective measure because the students' mean score showed significant improvement with each peer review task. With all of these considerations, it is clear that a systematic peer review process has been beneficial to MFA/ESL students during the pandemic and should therefore be formally inserted into the MFA curriculum.

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Chapter 7

Responding to the Challenges of Moving an On-Campus Pre-Sessional Course Online During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter reports on how the challenge of transforming an on-campus pre-sessional into a fully online assessed format during the COVID-19 pandemic was addressed in the context of a leading UK university (Imperial College London). The chapter explains the core principles behind the transformational approach that was adopted and provides examples of practices that had unexpected affordances for teachers and learners. It is hoped these principles and practices can inform others considering a similar transition.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has been widely perceived as having changed education irreversibly (Li & Lalani, 2020). In the context of higher education in the United

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Kingdom, the rapid switch from on-campus to fully remote online learning and teaching in March 2020 necessitated a choice between a temporary ‘emergency’ approach of simply transplanting a course (Inglesias-Pradas et al., 2020; Bruce & Stakounis, 2021), and a careful but resource-intensive transformation of course design to maintain a quality learner experience. At the forefront of this rapid switch, because of their position in the academic calendar (in July and August), were pre-sessional courses. Pre-sessional courses are high stakes, intensive preparatory language and study courses for prospective international students – high stakes because students’ entry to their chosen degree programme depends on successful completion of the course. Pre-sessional courses are recognised as having a ‘double duty’ (Seviour, 2015). While they are a means for students to meet the university’s language entry requirement and be admitted on to their degree courses, they also enable students to acquire study and academic language and communication competency to ensure a smooth transition to degree-level study. Because pre-sessional students’ entry onto their degree programmes depends on successful completion of these courses, the quality of the learning experience in fully online pre-sessional courses in 2020 needed to at least match that of the on-campus version. This chapter will explore how this challenge of shifting to a fully online assessed format was addressed in the context of a leading UK university (Imperial College London) by explaining the principles behind the transformational approach and examples of practice that were adopted. It is hoped these principles and practices can inform others considering a similar transition.

CONTEXT

In the last five years, Imperial College London has been implementing a wide-scale pedagogy-focused review of its curriculum. Part of this pedagogical review has involved a repurposing of physical teaching spaces to move towards more flexible learning spaces, with more personalised digital resources replacing the traditional in-person cohort lecture. The rationale is to make space for more interactive small-group and problem-based learning. However, because of the scope of the reconceptualisation of teaching and learning across the university and the workload this necessitated, the pedagogical changes implemented up until the COVID-19 pandemic had been gradual and incremental rather than immediate and wholesale. To align with these institution-wide shifts towards more active, task-based live learning alongside flipped digital learning, prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, incremental changes had already been made to the design of the on-campus pre-sessional course year on year. Language and content that was previously delivered by teachers in classrooms had been converted into flipped digital learning content

that was assigned to students in timetabled autonomous study slots. Class time then involved more interactive small-group tasks to practise and consolidate the language and content being acquired. The sudden loss of the on-campus environment as a learning space in 2020 was the catalyst for a further necessary redesign to ensure that the goals of the on-campus version could be achieved online for both remote teachers and students.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter presents a series of key principles that underpinned the transformation of the on-campus pre-sessional course. These principles are explained in relation to the course designers' transformation of the course and discussed by providing examples of practice and reflections on implementation on a level that ensures they can be applied more widely by other course designers and coordinators looking to make a similar transition. The chapter explains the affordances of the technology used in the university context outlined above before discussing how the online version of the course was carefully designed to pre-empt and avoid known deficits of online learning as well as to compensate for elements of the on-campus experience that would no longer be available to learners. The chapter also highlights the pedagogical principles that were emphasised more in the online version of the course and reveals several unexpected affordances of the online version of the course that emerged from the transition.

MAXIMISING THE AFFORDANCES OF THE ONLINE PLATFORM

To ensure effective delivery and facilitate student learning and participation, an online course needs a platform that is intuitive and flexible. O'Shea et al. (2015) reported that one of the main hurdles to learner engagement in online study was the learners' lack of familiarity with the technology, which could negatively affect their participation and motivation. In addition, Harrell (2008) and Wojciechowski and Palmer (2005) highlight the importance of ensuring comfort and confidence in using the online system as a factor in learner engagement and their successful completion of online courses. When developing the on-campus version of this pre-sessional course, the version of the institution's Learning Management System that was available (Blackboard Learn) was rejected early on by the course designers because it was too static and "information-centric" (Butson & Thomson 2014, p. 145). This choice was made based on first-hand experience of the large amount of time and training needed to modify and upload content when using that platform.

Instead, an alternative institutionally supported platform, Microsoft 365 (M365), was adopted as it afforded a flexible, “people-centric, web-based environment” (Butson & Thomson 2014, p. 145).

The adoption of M365 as a platform was not a sudden transition that came about with the COVID-19 pandemic but an incremental implementation over several years as the apps themselves were evolving and their potential for teaching and learning was becoming increasingly more apparent. To replicate the functions of a learning management system, a series of M365 apps was introduced into the on-campus course to house different elements of the course: SharePoint for course information and self-study resources, OneNote Notebooks as a course handbook for teachers, and OneNote Class Notebooks for coursework and materials for students. SharePoint Online is a tool that enables site owners (including Microsoft Teams owners) to organise content and share access to a single intranet site. OneNote is a digital note-taking app that functions as a notebook and binder simultaneously, while the content is stored in the cloud, so it can be accessed from any web-based device. The Class Notebook extension gives added functionality for class teachers, with a read-only Content Library for reference materials, a Teacher Only space to store teacher notes and materials, a private section for each student shared only with the teacher, and an editable Collaboration Space for all members of the group to work in collaboratively. The range of functionality of the Class Notebook and its familiar interface, similar to that of Microsoft Word, were decisive factors in adopting M365. These M365 apps offered the opportunity to build teacher confidence more quickly with limited time available for orientation. Teachers also received the course handbook as a OneNote prior to joining the live induction to develop their initial familiarity. The induction then took their familiarity a step further as they were given hands-on experience managing a Class Notebook. This was then supplemented throughout the course with training videos to help all users to further build their confidence and skills.

In the on-campus course, Microsoft Teams was introduced solely as a communication tool for staff and students as an alternative to email. However, take-up of Teams among both staff and students was inconsistent, perhaps because of its novelty at the time and the availability of more immediate and familiar communication options. However, by the time the pre-sessional course needed to be migrated online, the benefits of using M365 with Teams as the central communication hub for the course had become apparent. Any course-hosting platform needed to be stable and internationally available because pre-sessional students studying remotely online may be located anywhere in the world. Teams, as part of M365, met this essential requirement. Support from the university’s central ICT service was an important factor, as was the availability of support from the wider technology community for the use of M365 in education, such as through the Microsoft Education Center and Microsoft Innovative Educator Experts (MIEE) community forums.

As Microsoft Teams had a suitable range of functionality and a reasonably intuitive interface, what was previously done using Blackboard as a learning management system together with shared documents on network drives, could be done in one space by using Teams as a central hub. To further promote use of Teams as the central hub, any go-to M365 apps that had overlapping or identical functions were avoided on the online course (cf. Borthwick, 2021; Martin & Tapp 2019), such as Outlook for emails and calendar scheduling. Various equivalent built-in functions within Teams were used instead to communicate directly on multiple levels: cohort, class, group, and individual. Teams channel announcements replaced lost face-to-face interaction on a cohort level, while built-in chat messaging provided a valuable means of personal communication to clarify and respond promptly to questions and issues as they arose at the class, group and individual levels. Live video conferencing as a tool for running classes enabled purposeful communication and promoted genuine sharing of knowledge. The built-in 'Assignments' feature in Teams provided a single tool to manage student completion and submission of key tasks as well as provision and monitoring of feedback on these tasks. Integration of Teams and the Class Notebooks provided teachers, learners and coordinators with constant access to the course syllabus and enabled teachers to facilitate and monitor students' learning while affording coordinators a wider overview of the cohort as a whole. The functionality of the Class Notebook app in turn enabled course designers to embed various file types such as images, audio and video, interactive quizzes and Flipgrids (an interactive asynchronous video tool for student video submissions) in one easily accessible place.

A hidden affordance of using Teams and OneNote in tandem was the ease with which inclusivity became integral to course design and delivery. Scheduling live sessions for students located in different time zones was straightforward through Teams Calendar. Teams Assignments created a comprehensive learning record for each student and an easily searchable repository of work for the whole cohort. Class Notebooks presented a clear overview of the course structure so that students could understand the syllabus as a coherent whole and how each scheduled activity fits within the wider syllabus. The availability of materials through the Class Notebook whenever students logged on, meant that they could learn at their own pace and focus on the areas that were important to them. They were able to revisit or preview materials as preferred. Because the notebooks were not static, course designers were able to easily insert videos, instructions and other supporting visual materials on topics that needed expansion or further explanation, while teachers could easily distribute answer keys and feedback to groups or to individuals to support students' learning. Microsoft's built-in accessibility tools such as 'immersive reader' in OneNote, Forms and Edge and live captions in Teams also meant that the course was able to better support students with disabilities and learning differences (Thompson

& Copeland, 2020). Students, meanwhile, had the advantage of exploring how to incorporate the accessibility tools available to them into their own study processes before joining their main programme.

It was expected that students might feel isolated studying on the online platform in the absence of the social peer groups they naturally formed on campus. Willging and Johnson (2009) highlight how a lack of social connectedness can negatively impact on participation and attendance on online courses. However, despite their benefits, social peer groups can also create social pressure and awareness of status among peers. This awareness is sometimes observed to be an affective factor impacting negatively on task performance and learning (White et al., 2020). The online course, in contrast, seemed to foster a strong learning community with significantly less peer pressure. This positive sense of an online peer community may have emerged because students were able to establish a clear boundary between their life on and off the learning platform. Teachers on the course observed that there was a more balanced and focused group dynamic online. One teacher commented that “more reticent students are more inclined to speak”, while another reported that small groups spaces (channels and breakout rooms) felt safer for students as they feel less threatened and more confident with “an extra layer of protection and thinking time in their participation in live classes and events” (White et al., 2020). Increased confidence was evident in students’ more frequent use of the language of the institution, English, when communicating ideas and concepts in all live Teams meetings, not just classes. Scheduled student-led social activities on the online platform were also conducted in the target language without frequent code switching, perhaps because these activities were seen as more instrumental and related to students’ future need to communicate at Imperial.

BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL BELONGING INTO THE COURSE DESIGN

While the chosen institutional platform enabled teachers to work synchronously with students and students to follow a guided pathway asynchronously in their study, the challenge of compensating for the remoteness of their learning experience away from the physical campus still needed to be addressed. As a stronger sense of belonging to the institutional course provider has been strongly correlated with higher levels of student satisfaction and academic achievement (Ahn & Davis, 2020; Skelcher et al., 2020), a guiding principle in transforming the on-campus course into an online course was to retain a sense of belonging to the university. The sense of belonging was fostered as early as possible from course orientation onwards (as recommended by Harrell, 2008, p.39). Prior to their full enrolment, prospective students and offer-

holders were invited to pre-course open-house meetings and given interactive resources about the course and the technology that they would use. The aim in hosting these events and providing these resources was to proactively build a sense of anticipation and establish connections with students. The messages provided at these events helped reassure the students that they could expect a high level of support throughout the course. This support would help them persist through any potential personal, technological or learning difficulties they might encounter (Yang et al., 2017). At the same time, the message of their belonging to the university on the course was communicated visually through Imperial-themed visuals such as ‘virtual campus’ welcome pages (on the SharePoint site) and campus-themed Teams background effects. This ensured that the university’s buildings and logo were familiar to the students and gave the course a sense of a unified online community.

The on-campus pre-sessional course always aimed to build an experience that was not simply an English language course in a university environment, but an immersive institution-focused experience where relevant language and communication strategies were learnt through authentic input embedded within a task-based, process-oriented syllabus. However, the online course needed to go a step further and be carefully designed in such a way that the remote students’ and teachers’ sense of belonging to the institution would align with the mission and values that are part of the unique culture of the institution (cf. Lean & Emery, 2021). The College’s mission is to produce world-class, collaborative research in the fields of STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine) with a global outlook, to be applied in industry, commerce and healthcare (Imperial College London, 2020). A sense of belonging was created through the learning materials by rejecting generic off-the-shelf materials and instead developing all tasks and activities using real interdisciplinary STEMM texts, videos and speakers available in the institution’s community. Whereas the on-campus version of the course had used some more general STEMM sources such as briefing notes from the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology and videos from BBC science documentaries, the reading and listening input on the online course was developed from Imperial research communications (e.g., briefing documents, press releases, review articles, interviews and lectures). From March 2020 onwards, as Imperial had implemented a policy of remote working, teaching and learning, these materials became more abundantly available.

The on-campus pre-sessional course incorporated engaging activities and events that included guided visits to service hubs and departments, and in-person interactions with librarians, researchers and lecturers. For example, an interactive, exhibition-style research event was held with stalls staffed by researchers showing and demonstrating their work. Transferring this event online required a clearer definition of the target performance and key elements that held students back. The online transition was used as an opportunity to develop a carefully designed structured series of learning

tasks. Asynchronous input accustomed students to each researcher's work and way of speaking and prepared them more fully for the subsequent live online interactions with the researchers. The online experience of these events differed from the on-campus experience but had unexpected affordances. The 'buzzy' atmosphere generated on campus was lost and could not be replicated online. However, this was not as significant a loss as expected as evidenced by teacher observations that an event that was 'buzzy' for some could be 'sensory overload' for others. The lack of background noise meant that all participants were able to hear each other more clearly and speakers were engaging more directly with their audience. The more flexible nature of the online meeting spaces also helped to make the experience more inclusive for neurodiverse students and a student with a hearing impairment, allowing them time to think before needing to contribute more fully to interaction and reducing the distraction of the noisy environment. A final hidden affordance of the new institutional online mode of working was its convenience. For example, arranging guest speakers for the course was much easier as they no longer needed to physically travel in their non-contact time.

The clear institutional focus to all materials, tasks and live events generated real and engaging input and communication to facilitate and enhance students' transition into the university (Skelcher et al., 2020). Together, these all instilled an increasing sense of familiarity with and pride in the university's collaborative research output. At the same time, students could understand and acquire the communicative and learning strategies and competencies they would need to participate in this interdisciplinary community (Hyland, 2012), which is the ultimate aim of the pre-sessional course.

CREATING AND USING WASHBACK

The approach to assessment on the pre-sessional course is to create tests of achievement that are not only consistent with external standards, but also meet the construct validity for the context (Messick, 1996). The course designers interpreted this to mean that an assessment should evaluate students' readiness for the study of STEMM subjects through the medium of English at the university. The assessment should therefore contain "direct, authentic examples", comprise tasks that integrate skills and replicate target performances and in so doing generate positive washback for learning and teaching (Messick, 1996).

Following a large-scale review of the pre-sessional course in 2017, test development became more evidence-based. The development of new tests was driven by the course designers' research into the institutional context, interviews and discussions with staff in academic departments and feedback from students, as well as their own reflections on courses delivered. It was identified that in terms of written research

communication, to meet the academic standard required on their degree programmes, students needed to be able to use and synthesise sources selectively and effectively, thereby demonstrating academic integrity. While all students receive comprehensive inductions on avoiding plagiarism and guidance on how to complete assignments when they join their degree, there is little time and opportunity to develop the necessary academic practices and control of language to do this effectively and understand the nuances of effective communication of research. In terms of spoken research communication, to meet the standards to contribute effectively on their degree programme, students at the institution need to be able to explain complex science fluently and accurately, collaborating with others or engaging with an audience as they do so. The ability to communicate successfully in these situations requires a large productive language resource, which needs to be developed through multiple opportunities for rehearsal and practice.

The large-scale review of the pre-sessional course was not undertaken in isolation but alongside colleagues in other departments as part of an institution-wide initiative to embed consistency and coherence into all courses. The framework that was applied for this initiative was constructive alignment (CA) (Biggs 2014). In this framework, assessment is central to course design with learning activities being devised to achieve the learning outcomes as measured by means of the course assessments. CA seemed to suit the learning styles of the highly capable, instrumentally motivated STEM students at the university. The result of adopting CA on the on-campus pre-sessional course was the development of a process-oriented approach to testing reading-into-writing, and an interactive viva voce (henceforth referred to as ‘viva’) to test oral communication of scientific concepts.

For the reading-into-writing test, the conventional essay genre and the multi-draft extended project format were both rejected in favour of tailor-made STEM communication tasks that simulate the academic processes students need to follow in their departments. The assessment tested the competencies underpinning these processes: students’ ability to read selectively, extract and paraphrase relevant information, and then use those ideas as the basis of a new written communication task for a general STEM audience. A test format was chosen rather than project work because this was the favoured format of many departments and courses.

The viva, meanwhile, was preferred as an alternative to the conventional assessed oral presentation as it meant that students’ interaction, communication, language and delivery (e.g. fluency and clarity of pronunciation) could be assessed equally and fairly as they discussed a discipline-specific, personal research project with a teacher, who took on the role of the interlocutor in the presence of an assessor. The viva assessment washed back positively because students could see how both the content and the format of the task aligned with their future study context. The scenario of explaining key concepts from their discipline to a teacher-interlocutor created an

authentic knowledge gap and simulated interactions they would encounter on their future degree course. The task required them not just to demonstrate understanding of their course content but competence in communicating in a live interaction while showing awareness of the listener. The viva assessment also washed back through the course by creating an incentive to improve and build confidence during low-stakes events that offered practice in authentic research communication.

When the pre-sessional course moved online, the only change to the existing assessments was to deliver them both through Office 365 apps. The issues of fairness and security (Weiner & Hartz, 2017; Langenfeld, 2020) were legitimate concerns, but not as pressing as the practical pedagogical concerns. The former concerns could be adequately addressed for both the reading-into-writing test and viva. A simple e-proctoring solution was introduced for the reading-into-writing test as a measure to complement the teachers' familiarity with students' writing. Online security for the viva was guaranteed as the teacher-interlocutor was familiar with the students so the representativeness of their performance could be judged fairly and complement the more objective perspective of the assessor. Practical concerns focused more around whether the instrumentally motivated students could engage sufficiently with tasks throughout the course to achieve the target performance and whether their communication skills would be negatively affected by the lack of immersion. An additional concern was that the online timetable reduced teacher-student contact time thus reducing the opportunities for much of the informal or incidental monitoring that took place on campus as students worked on texts and tasks related to their future discipline.

The solution to ensuring monitoring of student engagement throughout the course was to introduce a third assessment in the form of an e-portfolio. Drawing on principles of assessment for learning (e.g., Lee, 2011), an e-portfolio assessment was devised, the Personal Research Portfolio (PRP), which promoted the sharing of goals for learning (following a similar principle to CA discussed above), transparent assessment criteria, actionable feedback, and a cycle of rehearsal and improvement. Although portfolios on similar courses are used to develop students' academic writing process and practices (e.g. Hirvela 1997; Romova & Andrew 2011), on this pre-sessional course the PRP was used to record and foster the development of students' communication skills for STEM. The PRP consisted of a series of formative tasks embedded in the students' OneNote Class Notebook. Students completed a series of collaborative tasks and reflections and identified successes and areas for improvement at key points throughout the course. They shared and led discussions on videos related to future study topics, performed and shared discourse analyses of self-selected readings to develop their language awareness, and recorded their collaborative work to prepare a paired poster. In the absence of a physical classroom, where teachers can respond to student performance and adjust pedagogy as necessary,

students' portfolio entries were a way for students to provide evidence of application of learning and for teachers to check that they were on track throughout the course, hitting the relevant milestones at the appropriate point. The portfolio tasks were therefore not add-ons but integral to students' learning.

An affordance of moving the pre-sessional course online was that it allowed for more multi-modal assessments (e.g., recorded portfolio entries) to be incorporated into the course. Students were able to upload more multi-modal content, such as video recordings, web links diagrams and annotated texts, to the OneNote for their PRP as evidence of their learning and reflection. Completion of the portfolio was a requirement to pass the course because completion of the tasks was integral to students' preparation for the two summative end-of-course assessments. A more surprising affordance was that, although online conferencing tools are often framed as impersonal, allowing students to hide behind a screen, the Teams environment in fact made the students more visible and participation in tasks that lead up to assessments was more equally shared among students than before. As a result of this, the oral assessment was possibly more effective online because the set up with the regular teacher as interlocutor and a second non-familiar teacher as assessor was perhaps less intrusive because of the absence of any potentially distracting physical presence during the assessment. An equally surprising affordance of moving the written assessment online was the positive impact on pedagogy as feedback became more targeted, structured, direct and process-oriented because Teams Assignments made it more apparent what process issues students were encountering (e.g., plagiarism, time management, note making).

BUILDING CYCLES OF SCAFFOLDED PEDAGOGY

Transitioning to a fully online pre-sessional course meant moving away from a course built so that learner autonomy could be developed incrementally and responsively and towards a course that required immediate self-directed learning from the start (Broadbent & Poon, 2015). This new reality necessitated a systematic shift of focus away from teaching materials and towards an environment for asynchronous learning that would provide a comfortable and intuitive daily learning experience for all learners. The asynchronous input activities that preceded the relevant class time were designed to deliver core information. Rather than transplanting materials, this was a principled redesign to use one-way mediated interaction (e.g. video recordings with concept checking questions) to efficiently deliver information that did not need to be delivered in the live class (Anderson, 2003; Bernard et al., 2009). These input activities not only needed to prepare learners to learn by applying the input in interactive group tasks and receiving feedback in the relevant class time, but

also needed to be presented in a reassuringly consistent format. This ensured that learners could measure their weekly progress and remote learner engagement could be maintained in the absence of informal peer support in their immediate surrounding physical environment (Lee, Yeung & Ip, 2007; Wandler & Imbriale, 2017).

Keeping the format of the asynchronous learning activities consistent helped create a steady learning pathway. The learning pathway consisted of learning cycles that moved the learner forward in the development and reinforcement of the competencies they would need for the end-of-course assessments and on their degree courses in the university. All tasks from the on-campus pre-sessional course were re-evaluated in the light of whether they were fully aligned with the assessment criteria and were either discarded or incorporated as input in the learning cycles accordingly. A positive washback effect was created here too by carefully and incrementally interweaving throughout the course the language, strategies and opportunities for practice that were needed to achieve the standard of communication required to pass the final assessments. This predictable and increasingly challenging learning pattern allowed learners to feel supported in their goals and motivated to take formative feedback on board as they could see how the feedback moved them towards a clearly defined performance goal in the assessments (Nicol and McFarlane-Dick 2006).

The implementation of learning cycles resulted in a shift in the emphasis in the course design on where group work was considered most beneficial. On campus, group work had typically been pre-task in the form of hands-on collaboration tasks to produce a single communicative outcome. These collaborations were useful for cohort building but not necessarily conducive to learner self-monitoring and self-direction because the balance of student contributions in groupwork tended to be dependent on the dynamics in the group when working under pressure to a deadline to generate an outcome. On the online course, however, many of these group collaboration tasks were replaced with flipped, asynchronous learner input on strategies and principles that would then consistently be echoed through the course. The group work was moved to post-task review activities so learners could apply the principles from the flipped input to evaluate their own and their peers' output. This shift helped to develop a full and consistent collaborative peer feedback system, which was not something that had been established satisfactorily in the on-campus version of the course.

For the online pre-sessional course, the course designers assumed responsibility for consistently scaffolding the pedagogy across the cohort. The learning experience was carefully curated to ensure that each week had a progressively more advanced cycle of input, doing and feedback for students to engage with, applying Vygotsky's notion of the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1979). Multimodal online platforms afforded the use of a wider range of scaffolding techniques as well as more flexibility in building extra scaffolding into the course design where and when

needed in response to student performance. The fact that this extra scaffolding can be provided promptly and equally across the cohort is a major advantage of the online platform. For example, Microsoft Teams has general channels that can be used for messaging across the cohort and/or across a class. Microsoft Stream provides the possibility of embedding concept clarifying videos within a Microsoft Form, together with concept checking questions to gauge student understanding.

All Class Notebook input activities followed a consistently structured format that began with key learning points and then engaged the student with reflective prompts to acquire language and strategies based on authentic examples. The Class Notebook was used to carefully construct individualisable pathways so that students were able to align their learning on the pre-sessional course with the content, format, and language of their disciplines in preparation for the viva. At the same time, they learnt to communicate STEM research across disciplines in their preparations for the reading-into-writing assessment, where they learnt common patterns for communicating STEM writing such as general-specific, problem-solution and current-future applications of technology. These two assessment strands reinforced each other as the skills acquired in preparing for one were subsequently applied when preparing for the other. For example, locating relevant information and making notes from the reading texts for interdisciplinary writing in preparation for the reading-into-writing test simultaneously prepared learners to locate relevant information and make notes when reading textbooks from course reading lists in preparation for the viva assessment.

The online learning experience was at all times underpinned by a pedagogy of scaffolded strategies that were constructed in iterative cycles throughout the course design. On campus, these strategies were often taught discretely in a single class. For example, strategies for vocabulary development were taught in a one-off designated class in the timetable. Although these strategies were expected to then be applied more widely by students, they were not explicitly reinforced in the course design and so their reinforcement and transfer depended on each individual teacher's grasp of the needs of STEM students. On the online course, however, students were explicitly tasked with building a bank of relevant STEM phrases from example texts and reminded to keep doing so in the asynchronous activities each week. This strategy was reinforced every time they encountered a text or speech sample that could be used as input, which made it a consistent learning thread throughout the course and hence increased the likelihood of it becoming ingrained as an essential lifelong strategy.

To make sure the students were taking the input on board and not simply going through the motions each week, the scaffold was faded so that students took on increasing responsibility for their own learning (Sharma & Hannafin, 2007). Looking again at the example of vocabulary development, the initial scaffold provided

students with templated assistance with locating the academic phrases that were of interdisciplinary relevance in example texts as speech as opposed to those that were technical or discipline-specific, to develop their own personalised bank of vocabulary. As students became progressively more accustomed to mining STEM texts and speech for functional academic vocabulary in this way, the scaffolds were faded so that students located, categorised and recorded the grammatical behaviour of the phrases autonomously. This dynamic and scaffolded and personalised approach to vocabulary acquisition as a strategy applied in context contrasts with the static and generalisable approach that underpins vocabulary acquisition elsewhere in the field, such as the decontextualised use of the Academic Word List (Coxhead, 2000) and Academic Phrasebank (Davis & Morley, 2015; Davis & Morley, 2018). This personalised scaffolded input on vocabulary development was complemented by cycles of scaffolded input and live feedback on clarity of student language output, including on the originality of their work, which gave students a clearer and more nuanced understanding of what constituted academic integrity. This scaffolded support ensured that plagiarism was not an issue in the assessments at the end of the course.

The scaffolding was necessary because in an online learning environment, the teacher was no longer solely responsible for the learner input or for making explicit to students the connections between each individual task and the overall assessed learning outcomes. Making these explicit connections became the responsibility of the course designers, who mapped out the learning pathway on the platform so that the bigger picture was always apparent for both the students and the teachers. Teachers on the online course thus no longer mediated the course syllabus but assumed responsibility for facilitating practice while co-navigating the syllabus alongside the students. This reconceptualisation gave a new focus to teacher training and induction, as teachers were trained to work in tandem with the course design while handing over autonomy to students and letting go of the perception that learning takes place only in the live, teacher-led sessions. The online pre-sessional course was thus intentionally designed and constructively aligned so that students and teacher who engaged in the flipped activities on the course platform and attended the live consolidation sessions could “not escape without learning” (Biggs, 2002, p.2). From the end-of-course survey of teachers, it was clear that several teachers felt that teaching a course with this design constituted continued professional development in and of itself.

DESIGNING STUDENT FEEDBACK LITERACY INTO THE COURSE

Effective feedback at the university level is acknowledged as being “a dialogic process in which learners make sense of information from varied sources and use it to enhance the quality of their work or learning strategies” (Carless & Boud, 2018, p.1315). Transitioning to the online pre-sessional course was an opportunity to formalise this concept of feedback and embed it within the course design. Rather than feedback being an add-on after the performance, its vital function at the end of a rehearsal cycle was recognised as a whole day was devoted to responding to and acting on feedback. Actionable points for improving performance that arose from this engagement with the feedback were fed forward into the next rehearsal cycle for the following week. Without maximising the feedback in this way, progress from one scaffolded rehearsal cycle to the next could not be guaranteed.

Despite the increasing focus in the literature on student feedback literacy as crucial to students’ uptake of feedback and development (Winstone et al., 2022), the opportunity to explicitly train students on how to engage with feedback has rarely been embedded into practice (Carless & Boud, 2018). The asynchronous input on the designated feedback focus days explicitly trained students to engage with and act on the feedback they were receiving from multiple channels. The feedback literacy input provided prior to the live class meeting trained students to evaluate successful and less successful example assignment responses on the same assignment task they had completed earlier in the week. It also prepared them for more meaningful peer review in the live class as they were urged to apply the same focused guiding questions that they had answered in relation to the example assignment responses to their own writing and that of their peers. Feedback literacy development was not a passive process as students engaged with a series of tasks on a personal page of the Class Notebook that they were responsible for completing throughout the day. At the end of the feedback process, students were required to record a two-minute audio reflection on the feedback they had received, complete a three-point personal study plan in response to the feedback and in preparation for the next assignment with reference to the assessment criteria, and compile an editing checklist to feed forward to future writing assignments.

The ability to monitor student processes during tasks through the online platform transformed the role of the teacher to that of a guide and facilitator who could provide timely and relevant feedback. The technology made the rehearsal process more transparent so teacher feedback could be more targeted to the needs of the individual. This targeted, formative feedback on their learning process when performing tasks that were constructively aligned to the end-of-course assessments familiarised the students with the expectations and requirements of the assessments. This helped to

address misconceptions about the assessment procedure and what constituted an adequate performance so that student could prioritise relevant and useful actions in their personal study plans. At the same time, teacher feedback comments were modelled for the teachers in the teacher handbook and monitored by coordinators via Teams Assignments to make sure they were actionable and that they guided students to revisit relevant elements of the course. One aspect of this was training teachers to replace overly general feedback comments such as “improve your formal academic vocabulary”, or overly corrective feedback that takes the learning out of the learner’s hands and creates teacher dependence such as “use the more formal term X instead of the less formal term Y”, with more measurable and actionable course-integrated feedback such as: “compare your writing with the successful example assignment responses and note how the writer’s verb choice differs from yours”. An unexpected advantage of the Teams Assignment interface was that it allowed teachers to informally moderate their own feedback comments by learning from the feedback practices of their colleagues. The overall aim of the course designers was to encourage teachers to then start a constructive ongoing dialogue starting in the live class meeting and continuing via the student’s personal feedback pages in the Class Notebook, where the teacher could see students’ responses, reflections and enactments of the feedback (or feed forward). The online course design was therefore a practical, embedded application of what Carless (2019) terms “feedback loops and spirals”.

CONCLUSION

The enforced switch to remote teaching and learning in 2020 brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic presented a monumental challenge for the provision of intensive assessed pre-sessional courses in universities in the UK (Bruce & Stakounis, 2021; Syska, 2021; Watermeyer et al., 2021; Borthwick, 2021). This chapter has considered the core set of principles that guided the response to this challenge at Imperial College London. Knowing that a direct transplantation of the course would be insufficient, a principled but more resource-intensive pedagogical transformation of the on-campus pre-sessional course into a fully online course was undertaken. Despite this carefully considered approach, the expectation was still that the online course would lose a great deal. However, it was observed that the lack of hands-on, free, informal, incidental communication and monitoring could be compensated for in the Imperial context by a principled design to maintain student engagement and progress throughout the course. In the absence of the physical campus, alternative means were devised to promote active engagement with the university’s academic community and familiarity with its language, values and practices, an attenuated

practical realisation of Lave and Wenger's theory of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

The response to the crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic was challenging and a strain on resources, but equally became an opportunity to make the pre-sessional course more inclusive and accessible through careful selection and use of appropriate technology (Thompson & Copeland, 2020). As M365 apps integrated seamlessly through the Teams interface and provided assistive technology for all learners, Teams therefore became the central hub for the course. The ease of use of the online platform and tools and the consistent, coherent mapping of syllabus and materials helped teachers adapt to the change in their pedagogical role, taking on the role of facilitating practice, consolidating learning, guiding progression and managing an online feedback dialogue. For the course designers, the online platform and tools provided an easily available and comprehensive overview of the progress and achievement of each student on the course. It became possible to intervene and build further scaffolding where necessary at individual, class and cohort level in ways that had not been possible previously. The outcome therefore made the investment of resources worthwhile.

The principles described were maximising the affordances of the technology; recognising the need to build institutional belonging into the course design from the outset; creating and using assessments that generated positive wash back from the institution through the course; consciously constructing cycles of scaffolded pedagogy; and explicitly designing student feedback literacy into the course. Although the factors that made the online course more impactful than anticipated are limited to the Imperial context, it is hoped that the principles set out in this chapter are transferable to other contexts and across a full range of disciplines beyond EAP for STEMM.

The gains that became apparent at the end of the course after applying the principles explained in this chapter were not anticipated at the beginning of the course transformation process. The process has not only provided a temporary fix, but has made the pre-sessional course more flexible and sustainable in the long term, which is essential in the ongoing climate of global uncertainty around the COVID-19 pandemic. Since there is trust in the online platforms as they are routinely updated and developed to provide increasingly seamless integration of learning apps and tools needed by educators, rather than reverting immediately to the on-campus version of the course, any future version of the on-campus pre-sessional is therefore likely to be online or include a strong online element and be built around the same design principles and technological platforms as the current online version, with interactive on-campus elements added where needed within this design. A blended or hybrid course of this kind is also more desirable because the purpose of a pre-sessional course and the role of pre-sessional course designers and teachers is to

prepare students for their future modes of learning, which have changed irreversibly as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Future modes of learning, both at Imperial College London (Imperial College London, 2020) and across the higher education sector, are likely to be technology-enhanced and necessitate a reconsideration of physical learning space to include elements of hybrid design. The goal in higher education is likely to increasingly be to provide flexibility by offering students remote online study options that make access to learning more fair, inclusive and oriented to lifelong learning and pre-sessional courses will therefore need to undergo continuous principled review and transformation.

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ADDITIONAL READING

Watermeyer, R., Crick, T., Knight, C., & Goodall, J. (2021). COVID-19 and digital disruption in UK universities: Afflictions and affordances of emergency online migration. *Higher Education*, 81(3), 623–641. doi:10.1007/10734-020-00561-y PMID:32836334

KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Constructive Alignment: An approach to curriculum design linked to the work of Biggs (2002) whereby assessment, learning outcomes, tasks and intended learning objectives are constructed in conjunction with each other to optimise learning.

Flipped Learning: A pedagogical approach that involves students studying input materials remotely before class and attending the class to consolidate, deepen and apply knowledge e.g. through guided discussion, group work and problem-solving.

Microsoft 365 (M365): a subscription-based service that gives access to an extended suite of cloud-based Microsoft applications (previously Office 365).

Scaffolding: The use of pedagogical techniques to structure learning materials and activities to enable learners to become more autonomous in their work through the duration of a course.

STEMM: Science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine.


Washback: The influence that testing can have on teaching and learning, motivation, attitude and behaviours.

Viva Voce or Viva: An interactive summative, oral examination in the presence of an examiner and a facilitator/interlocutor.

Chapter 8

Developing Practice With Breakout Rooms: A Diffracted Intra-Active Reading for Professional Development

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Adopting an agential realist perspective, this study reads data from a literature search into breakout rooms through the theory of intra-action and the researcher's experiences working as an EAP teacher across universities in the UK during the COVID-19 pandemic. This chapter is also an exploration of how a diffractive grating theory approach can help promote a closer reading of data, theory, and experience to inform professional development. The resulting conversation discusses points of wonder ranging from an active learning bias to increases in planning time, advice for giving instructions, and the importance of a good monitor. Although the chapter starts philosophically, the results are orientated more to the practitioner. It is hoped that the resulting conversations around the researcher's practice will help spur the reader into new and interesting areas for their own development.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports on an original and unconventional diffractive study that aims to contribute to the discussion around the practical use of breakout rooms (BORs)

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when teaching online. Insights are gleaned from experiences the author gained whilst teaching on summer pre-sessional courses in higher educational institutions across the U.K. during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study uses an original diffractive grating technique created by the author, which produces a conversation between experience, theory, and current educational research into BORs. The resultant dialogue, as related in the results and discussion section, offers authentic insights into practice with BORs that are contextually, theoretically (Intra-action [Barad, 2007]) and research based. Such insights are designed to perturb (disrupt) thinking around practice and to aid development through critical engagement by the reader. Thus, this study aims to be useful in two ways; first, to provide a conversation around using BORs that can be used critically to improve practice. Second, it offers an example of how such conversations can be achieved through a ‘diffraction on action’ approach to professional development.

The chapter begins with a brief consideration of the research question for the study. The first section then goes into detail regarding the study’s methodology and diffraction on action. Additionally, it provides information on how the diffractive grating theory approach (DGTA) can be applied and gives an example of the method in practice. The second section of the chapter takes a more unconventional tone by replicating the conversational nature of the method to produce an exploration of practice with BORs. The chapter has been split into two sections so readers who are less interested in the research methodology and philosophy can quickly move to the more practically relevant information. However, should you do this, please be aware that the fundamental nature of the study does not follow ‘normal’ traditions for western scientific discourse.

Research Question

The chapter’s introduction clearly states the two aims of the chapter, to both provide a dialogue for further critical practice and explain and give an example of diffraction on action. Both aims are designed to provide useful information for the reader regarding their thinking and practice. To help guide the study, the following research question emerged:

- What differences emerge from the diffractive grating theory approach as mattering, and how do disclosed intra-active relations bring meaning for practice with BORs?

This is a complicated research question due to the nature of the philosophy and methodology of the piece. As such, you may wish to come back to this later. However, to help demystify the language somewhat, a more traditional research question may

read: What is current thinking around the use of Breakout Rooms in practice, and how can practice be improved?

The study itself reads together experience, data and intra-active theory, producing a conversation around the use of BORs. The reported conversation provides original ideas around the use of BORs in practice. These ideas are discussed in the results section and are designed to provoke thought and consideration into teaching practice to facilitate development.

A secondary aim of the piece is to provide an example of a DGTA and a role it can play in a 'diffraction on action', which can provide original encounters with data and theory for the professional development of educational professionals.

SECTION 1: DIFFRACTION ON ACTION: STUDY METHODOLOGY

1.1 Conceptual Framework

The following sections outline the core philosophy and methodology that underpin the work of the study. The section then goes on to consider the problems of reflective practice and how diffraction on action could offer an alternative pedagogical professional development practice, before providing an example of how a diffractive grating theory approach can be conducted. Finally, the diffractive grating used for this study is considered in more detail.

1.1.1 Philosophy and Design

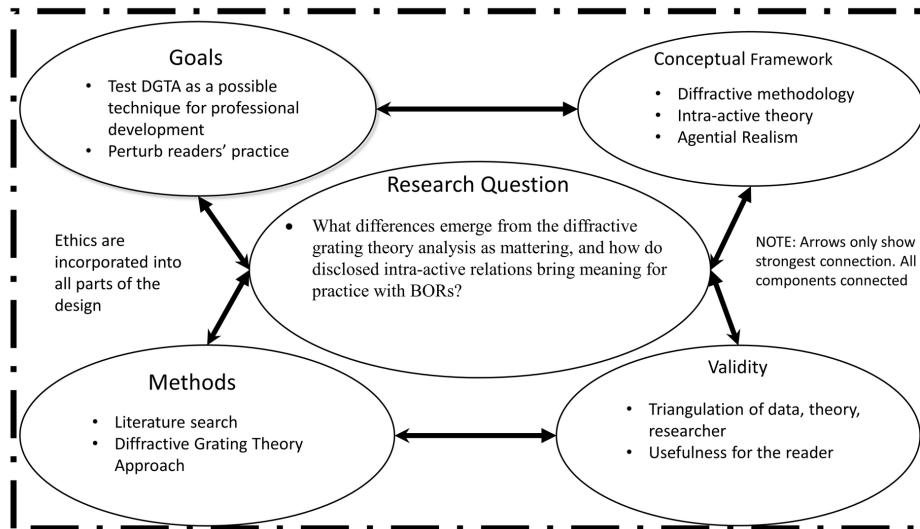
The philosophical foundation for the study is Barad's (2007) Agential Realist (AR) interpretation of quantum mechanics and her ethico-onto-epistemology. This produces several challenges to traditional scientific thinking and are described in brief here as they are related to the understanding of the study design and a diffractive methodology. An ethico-onto-epistemology (Ethics + Ontology + Epistemology) describes the world as intimately connected through intra-actions (see sub-section 1.3.2) between agentially active matter. To oversimplify, this means that rather than consider the world in terms of objectivity, of independent objects and observers, instead it is one of a single living matter. This is somewhat akin to some eastern religious thinking, although this instance is built on an interpretation of the quantum mechanical world. This mono-materialist position understands that all bodies are created from the same matter-energy and are relationally connected to form meaning (Barad, 2007, p.151). Consider the atom, for example, a complex entanglement of electrons, protons and neutrons. Then consider the billions of small relations that produce the meaning of

a single human body. Then, scaling up, consider the relations between the billions of humans on the earth that produce the planet's social culture. This is important for the study as to be able to work diffractively is to embrace the ideas that all matter is linked, is alive, and that the connections built between matter create the meaning of the world. Thus, later the study talks of a conversation between equals, the researcher's experience, the living theory of interaction, and the aliveness of the published educational research, each with their own values and responsibilities and ability to affect action taken (agency). These understandings draw from new materialist and Posthumanist work (Barad, 2007; Bennett, 2010; Braidotti, 2016; Coole & Frost, 2010; Ferrando, 2013; Fox & Alldred, 2015). As this philosophy is not the focus of this work, the chapter will not deal with AR in education in any more detail. However, should the reader be interested, the references above should provide an introduction to the philosophy.

The reported study is conceived around Maxwell's (2013) interactive design as it provides a clear framework based on traditional research design principles (conceptual framework, research questions, goals, methods, validity, and ethics). However, it also allows for each principle to interact in dynamic and complex ways, rather than in other strictly linear approaches (See Figure 1). Hence, whilst the study's reporting here is linear, due to limitations of the medium, the research process itself has been complex, with each part interacting with the other dynamically. For example, the conceptual framework affects the wording and style of the research questions and how they have changed throughout the work, which affects how and what emerges from the study. Ethical considerations also run throughout the study and have been an integral part of the design. Although there are no traditionally 'live' participants in the study, an AR foundation means that consideration should also be given to the live material actors. In practice, this means affording the voice of both data and theory an equal footing with the researcher's, acknowledging their agential effects and responsibilities. To this end the chapter describes methods clearly and treats the data honestly, transparently, and fairly.

The notion of validity also requires a slight re-working, as, without the understanding of an objective world, typical measurements do not apply. Therefore, validity for the study should not be derived from the traditionally understood notion of 'truth about the world', but from the cohesive strength of the proffered narrative and cohesiveness around the philosophical boundaries provided by the conceptual framework. Overall, the study should be measured on its usefulness for the reader. The term 'usefulness' is used deliberately in the aims of the study to reflect this understanding. Hence, please do not expect world truths or a clear decision on the effectiveness of BORs, but a unique conversation between data–theory–researcher designed to perturb thinking and systems and therefore be of some practical use.

Figure 1. Interactive study design



1.2 Diffraction on Action

1.2.1 Introduction

The study employs a reasonably simple design; however, the elements may be more philosophically complex. As Barad (2007) notes:

If diffraction is to be a useful tool of analysis it is important to have a thorough understanding of its nature and how it works (p.72).

Therefore, this sub-section begins with a brief overview of a diffractive methodology and how it challenges current reflective thought in educational practice. Building on this foundation the sub-section then provides details of the method of analysis used in the study. This is dealt with in more depth as it is hoped to provide an example for those who may wish to try it for themselves.

1.2.2 A Diffractive Methodology

A diffractive methodology, as designed by Barad (2007),

...is a critical practice for making a difference in the world. It is a commitment to understanding which differences matter, how they matter, and for whom. It is a

critical practice of engagement, not a distance-learning practice of reflecting from afar (p.90).

To explain a little further, diffraction focuses on difference, rather than seeking sameness and reflection as current reflective traditions suggest. For example, when reflecting on practice teachers may consider their work, or their students, and often see these as separate. For a diffractive methodology thinking diffractively about a classroom suggests trying to understand the relations between students, classroom, teachers, and other actors (the learning agency), how the world is both linked but formed differently. This study adopts an AR philosophy (see sub-section 1.1.1) and a diffractive methodology to challenge traditional thought around online work with BORs. This challenge to reflective practice, in education and current published research on BORs, hopes to provide a different and deeper consideration of practice. To help understand the challenge better, this section briefly explains the notion of diffraction first as a physical phenomenon and then as a technique for understanding an entangled (highly connected, complex and dynamic) world.

Diffraction, as a physical phenomenon, is at the core of much thinking in quantum mechanics (Barad, 2007). If you have watched almost any documentary on quantum mechanics, you will have heard a description of the two-slit experiment. In this experiment, light is shone through two apertures (slits a diffractive grating), and, left unmeasured, produces a wave pattern like those found when two stones are dropped into water. However, attempting to measure the light passing through the apertures changes its behaviour, from a watery wave pattern to a distinct tennis ball-like particle pattern (see Veritasium, 2013). This is crucial to understanding that the act of measurement itself creates new conditions in an experiment, suggesting scientists are not independent of their observed objects. The world is not made up of independent objects linearly causally connected and knowable through simple reflection. Instead, they are entangled in highly complex, relational, and non-linear ways. Thus, in employing a diffractive methodology, the scientist is asked to think beyond simple reflection and linear causal links and acknowledge their role in the causal design and measured results. The purpose of the experiment also changes, looking beyond reflection, to differences and relationalities in the entanglements of real-world practice.

The critique of reflection and notion of diffraction as a tool, was originated by Haraway (1997) and built into a methodology by Barad (2007). The challenge suggests when using reflective practices, we are only ever observing reflected images, like that you may see in a mirror. These images, as seen by an independent observer, are distorted images of the real world, and thus may not truly divulge the world as it is. Using the mirror analogy, objects may be distorted by imperfections in the glass (methods) or reflective coating (instruments) and limited by the boundaries defined

by the frame itself (objectivity, humanism). For instance, take the typical warning on car wing mirrors: things may be closer than they appear! Diffraction, however, is attuned to the nuances of a more complex world and what Haraway notes as the "...really real..." (Haraway, 1997, p.16). Hence this study attempts to disclose more about the entangled relations of the real complex online classroom than is possible from simple reflection (see Barad, 2007, pp.89-90 for a comparison of reflection and diffraction). To aid in the disclosure of relationships for the study a diffractive grating theory approach has been applied.

1.2.3 A Diffractive Grating Theory Approach

A DGTA is an innovation from the researcher's dissertation (Barnard, 2021) and builds on thinking around work by Barad (2007), Bennett, (2010), Jackson & Mazzei, (2012), St. Pierre, (2018, 2020), and MacLure, (2010, 2013a, 2013b). As explained earlier, the approach is founded in an agential realist interpretation of the world as a complex, dynamic, relational mono-material construct. Working within a diffractive methodological understanding, a DGTA attempts to disclose relations between actors within the boundaries of the research context. The approach itself is very similar to the two-slit experiment mentioned above in that data is read with different theories in the same way that light is passed through different slits (see figure 2). It does this in a two-step process, first by reading data through several theories and second by bringing those ideas into conversation with each other. It is an emergent approach, meaning that it does not impose a structure but allows the data to speak for itself through points of wonder.

A point of wonder is an idea developed by MacLure (2010, 2013a, 2013b). They are points in the data where it "glows" (MacLure, 2010, p.282) where it is,

...seen, or rather felt, on occasions when one becomes especially 'interested' in a piece of data – such as a sarcastic comment in an interview, or a perplexing incident, or an observed event that makes you feel kind of peculiar (MacLure, 2013a, p.660).

If you have ever uttered 'hmm that does not look right' or 'I wonder why that has happened', then you have encountered a point of wonder. This is the data working agentially and speaking to you in its own way. Wonder often emerges where there is a large degree of similarity, difference, or a feeling that something is missing. It is these points that a DGTA relies on to create original insights into study data and allows it to break from more reflective transitions.

The approach is beneficial for exploratory research where conditions may be initially unknown. For the educational practitioner researcher this study suggests it is an excellent approach to building theoretically and evidence-informed judgments

about teaching practice through a close reading of data, research and theory. Also, uniquely, it offers a place in the research process for a teacher's thoughts and context, due to its diffractive methodological stance.

A DGTA is a two-step process described here:

1. Study data is read through a 'diffractive grating' to produce separate diffractive readings.

The diffractive grating refers to the range of ideas (theories, experiences, other data) the researcher wishes to use to investigate the data. Each idea is akin to a slit in the diffractive grating of the 2-slit experiment described above. The number and type of ideas is entirely up to the study design, offering a versatility that is a strength of the approach. For example, chosen ideas could range from different disciplines to theories in conflict and could include the addition of other human voices or language. Each change to the diffractive grating changes the parameters of the study and will provide new insights into data.

As defined in this study, a diffractive reading is an act of reading data through another idea or 'slit'. This study, for example, reads data from a literature search into BORs through a 2-slit diffractive grating. The grating is composed first of the researcher's own experience and second, the theory of intra-action. Thus, the literature was first read with the researcher's experience noting points of wonder and other reactions. Second, the same literature was read with the theory of intra-action in mind, and again any points of wonder were noted.

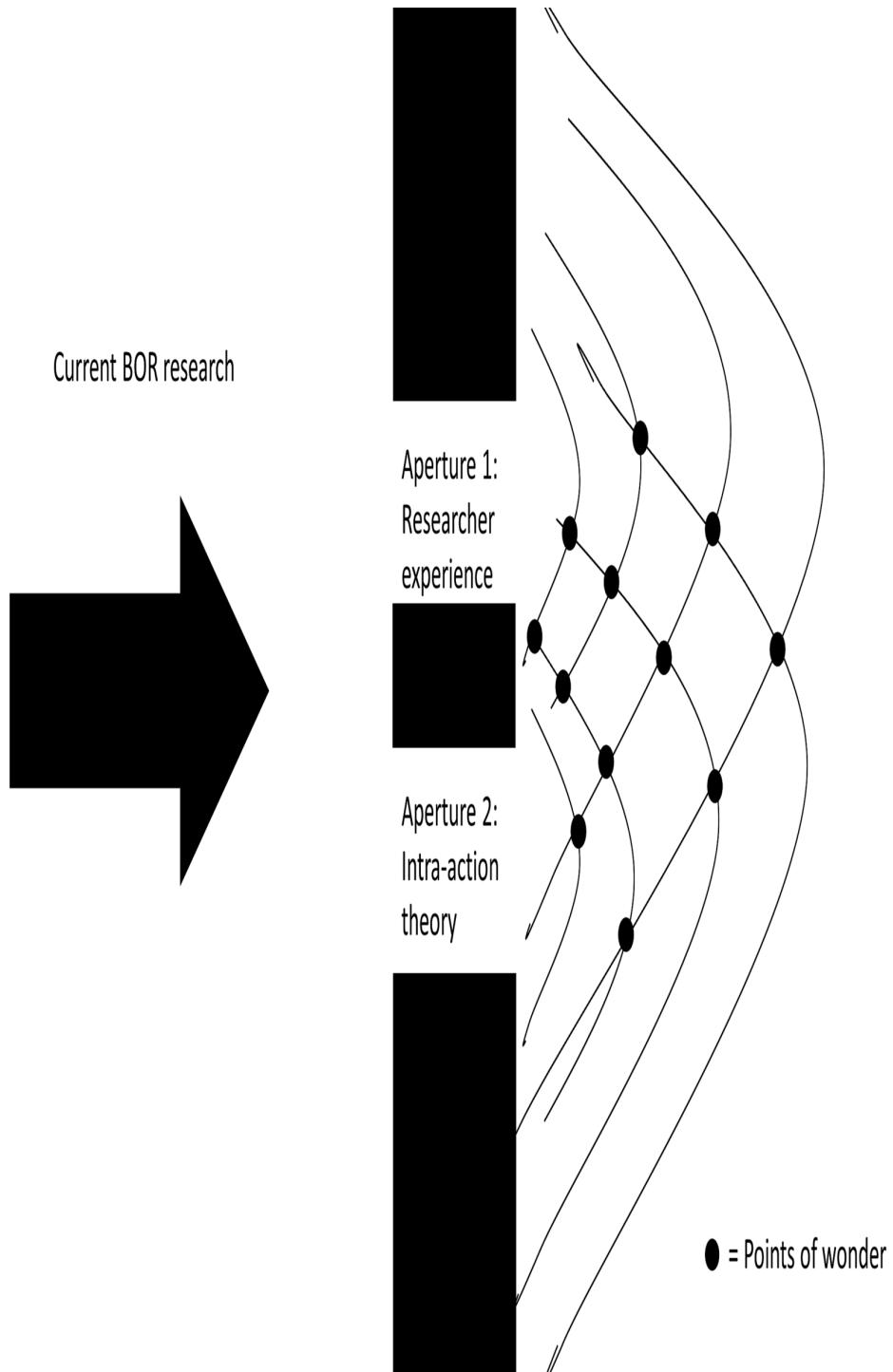
2. Diffractive readings and the data from the first step are brought into conversation with each other, producing reportable points of wonder.

In order to facilitate and track the conversation between data–theory–researcher, the researcher populates a matrix (see appendix 1) with the points of wonder from the diffractive readings of step 1. The matrix is then used to compare, contrast, and contemplate the original points of wonder from each reading. This interaction creates a conversation between data–theory–researcher that is productive of further points of wonder that should disclose original connections in the data. These disclosures offer the results of the process and depending on the quality of the conversation, provide new and insightful ideas about the study context and for future research and thought.

1.3 Study Conduct: Data–Theory–Researcher

This study employs a two-slit diffractive grating, reading data from a literature search through the theory of intra-action and the researcher's own experiences teaching

Figure 2. Diffractive grating theory approach



on EAP courses at U.K. universities during the pandemic. This section identifies how the data was collected and introduces the theory of intra-action before briefly touching on the researcher's own experience.

1.3.1 Gathering the Data: Literature Search

A literature search was conducted into the use of BORs before and during COVID-19. From database (EBSCO, and ResearchGate) and Google scholar keyword searches 105 articles of interest were identified. From these articles a further title and abstract search identified ten texts with strong links to the theme of the study (See appendix 2 for the list). Other attributes such as the type and length of article were also considered. A range of opinions was sought, so a variety of contexts was considered significant. The length was also a condition due to the intense nature of the study. Thus, ten articles were chosen as this seemed a manageable number for analysis by one person before the publication deadline. It should be iterated here that this is not a critique of these works but a conversation with the ideas proposed. Rather than produce another list of benefits and challenges of BORs, the researcher wanted to further engage with the ideas in the articles and produce new avenues of interest both for professional development and to ensure a level of originality to the study.

1.3.2 Theory of Intra-Action

In the earlier description of AR there was considerable mention of the relationality between matter and meaning. This relationality is identified by Barad (2007) as an intra-action. Intra-actions are the links between phenomena (matter) that bring meaning into the world. It is not a form of interaction requiring pre-existing independent objects. Intra-action is the dynamic, complex relationality that produces matter, co-producing meaning, and in so doing, creates the boundaries and structures we are aware of in our perceptions of the world. To summarise, without matter, there cannot be meaning, and without meaning, it cannot matter. To understand the 'why' or the meaning behind the boundaries of matter, we must understand its related intra-active connections. All matter is connected somehow, and so to try to map all such connections somewhat misses the point; however, it is possible through experimentation to disclose stronger and weaker connections that enact the agency of the boundaries under investigation.

As a part of the diffractive grating, a reading with intra-active theory, therefore, asks about the relations being disclosed between all actors, human and non-human. For example, in one BOR text a point of wonder mentioned a limited choice of platforms available to universities to conduct online classes. This suggests links between online business, education, universities, choice, and innovation which can

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provide further questions for the researcher. It causes questions about, for instance, the role of the international online business community in university education and if it is stifling innovation. There is no absolute right or wrong in interpreting the disclosed relations, but by changing the focus from objects to relations, further questions and inferences may present themselves for further investigation and thought.

1.3.3 My Case

2020 is a year that will likely stay with me for a long time. It was a hot summer; my son had recently been born, and the death toll from COVID-19 was being daily reported on television. My wife was on maternity leave, and we were staying with my mother. I had just begun work on an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) 5-week pre-session course with the local university. This aimed to support international students over the summer before they took up places on masters courses. Being the university of my hometown, I had been looking forward to meeting people, making connections, walking the halls, and chalking the boards. However, COVID-19 meant that the classes had moved online, and so I found myself sitting on an uncomfortable stool in my mother's poorly ventilated, and so excessively hot, front room, staring at my computer screen and trying to remember to look at the camera. Half my face was lit from the windows of the room and the other half slightly in shadow, giving me the look of a sweaty moon. However, the commute had been much easier, and so, such armed, I clicked into Microsoft Teams and began the first meeting.

Little known to me at the time this was not to be my only COVID-19 rodeo, and a year later I was working at another U.K. institution on a similar 10-week EAP course using Google. Thankfully, this time, away from meddling relatives. Also, the purchase of a fan and comfy chair had improved the atmosphere. The numbers of students, which before the pandemic had been high, had unsurprisingly reduced, but were still healthy, and so I was happy to have the work in between running my son to his first nursery sessions. We were both learning a lot about new environments, digital and real, along with the understanding that crying for mummy would not solve much.

More recently, I have received an email asking me to work online again this summer. This study, therefore, has been conducted at a fortuitous time, as it has reminded me of practice and helped sharpen my edge. Hopefully, it will provide a useful sounding board for you when considering your own experiences and practice.

SECTION 2: EXPERIENCE–INTRA–ACTION–RESEARCH: A CONVERSATION

2.1 Results and Discussion

The following are the results of the DGTA of the literature search data. It is hoped they will provide an interesting and original angle on using BORs for online EAP courses. This section has been written in a more conversational tone to match the nature of the study methodology. Additionally, an en-dash has been used to denote a disclosed connection throughout the work. Finally, I have consciously tried to orient this to the practitioner as the expected audience.

2.1.1 Definitions and Active Learning

From the work read for the study, little divergence was discovered between the definitions given for a ‘breakout room’; however, an interesting distinction is made between a ‘room’ and a ‘session’. Saltz & Heckman, (2020) offer the clearest distinction,

... a breakout room, [is] a form of peer collaborative learning where students synchronously work together in small groups (p.227).

They also note work by Lougheed, Kirkland and Newton (2012 as cited in Saltz & Heckman, 2020), which separately defines a ‘breakout session’ as,

... an active learning technique designed to engage a small group in solution of a problem outside of the larger class meeting (p.227).

This is important as it speaks to the objectives and assumptions being made when separating from the main group. Michel et al., (2009) identify active learning as “...a broadly inclusive term, used to describe several models of instruction that hold learners responsible for their own learning” (p.398), including activities such as small group discussions, debates and games.

Upon reflection, my own practice leans heavily on active learning techniques, and all the articles read for the study seemed biased towards active practice in BORs. However, other teaching approaches could also be employed in sessions. An example could be asking students to watch something later discussed in a main room session, flipping the traditional passive main session to an active breakout session that is often expected. Could experiential and problem-based learning approaches be successful within a breakout session? An interviewee in Mpungose (2021) offers: “I have been

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using case studies as well. And so the breakout groups really do work”. Teachers with similar active biases may have found themselves slipping into repetitive practices. A certain laziness may have set into my own practice, with main sessions clearly passive and possibly overly reliant on breakout sessions to disrupt learner fatigue.

2.1.2 Benefits and Challenges

A point of wonder expressed above is dissatisfaction with how much BORs research regurgitates similar benefits and challenges or technical advice lists. However, I felt it necessary to include a conversation with them here, as they speak powerfully through repetition in the literature. I expect these are not entirely new for practitioners and often tend to be highly context-dependent and orientated towards the active bias for sessions, as noted earlier. Therefore, rather than regurgitate lists, I have tried to focus on particular points of wonder that glowed in the reading about benefits and challenges.

The benefit that most resonated within the reading was the ability of BORs to provide a platform for collaborative learning. Activities that increased student to student interaction, like discussion and debate, were seen as particularly beneficial. Chandler (2016) notes:

... peer discussion and debate, articulation of ideas to peers and repeat practice. Breakout rooms seem ideal for this purpose (p.17).

Benefits noted included increased student motivation for attendance and participation, increased speaker confidence due to the group’s smaller nature, the ability to make friends; and, greater possibility for peer-peer support. For language teachers, Kohnke & Moorhouse (2020) were cited, suggesting that work in BORs could aid language use and increase meaning-focused output. Two points notably identified themselves as interesting: the ability of BORs to help the teacher have a break and to allow for teachers to purposefully arrange groups.

First, Chandler (2016) identifies that BORs offer the tutor a chance to have a break, reflect on the session and plan ahead. This fed into my own experience towards the end of the courses when I could trust students to work more independently; however, early on in courses, much of my time was taken up with bouncing in and out of groups checking student understanding and participation. Additionally, monitoring several groups working in shared files on word or PowerPoint took up much of the time. Thus, intra-active limitations to tutor agency through types of tasks and the related monitoring required emerged here as important regarding this benefit and lesson planning.

Second, Compton and Gilmour (2021) note an ability to ‘purposefully’ arrange groups so that students can work with a variety of partners. However, I do not consider this unique to the online environment. Offline classes can be randomly grouped through a variety of means, my personal favourite being to use playing cards, arranging groups by number, colour or suit depending on the task requirements. The greatest difficulty is remembering to collect the cards back in a suitable condition for the next class, something I find worth mentioning in instructions. However, the ability in Google to randomly arrange groups was helpful, although when I wanted to arrange groups, this took a long time as I had to drag each name into a separate box. Miller et al. (2021, p.2) note, “Random selection works well once, for the first round, but subsequent random allocations are likely to allocate participants to groups with people they have been in a group within a previous round”. Bamidele (2021, p.7) also reported students commenting that “...for shy students it’s better to group them together with those they know, than random selection”. This sentiment is something I can relate to, especially from my own time as a distance learning student, there are often hidden group social dynamics a teacher may not be aware of, which is why I tend to use a mix of random and student choice groupings in my own work. Overall, the benefits of BORs as connected to collaborative learning are clear but are usually connected to a preference for active techniques for both student and teacher, not to mention the skill of the teacher in setting up groups and the activities which is sometimes lost in the conversation.

Challenges of working with BORs are not as regularly discussed in the literature, possibly due to the nature of the work read, which often appears to have a tacit need to persuade the reader of the effectiveness of choices made by the author. Thus, there did appear to be some positive reporting bias within the work read for the study. Moreover, many of the survey-based papers read for this work seemed to equate good student perception with the effective use of BORs, rather than the teacher’s skills. Anything used well should produce student satisfaction, so this in itself does not necessarily entail that BORs usage creates this dynamic. Interesting links were thus disclosed between software, teacher, students, and research methods centered on effectiveness, especially as understood through oversimplistic student attitude surveys. At one point during my reading of several articles with research based on surveys, it occurred to me that whilst the majority of student opinion was often used as a basis to report a benefit, the, for instance, 16% that disagreed received little attention, merely a descriptive sentence and no further explanation (Bamidele, 2021, p.5). Several questions regarding the efficacy of BORs did often produce a hard-line minority who were not in favour; however, why was not discussed. This might be worth exploring further in future research, especially concerning technical reticence.

Other challenges spoke to the disclosed connections and responsibilities of human and non-human actors within the intra-active agency of the BORs. Computers break,

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internet connections are lost, and many other technical issues can occur in online teaching. Similarly, a human actant may not function with the highest bandwidth, possibly lacking in social and technical skills, reducing the effectiveness of sessions. Compton and Gilmour (2021) highlight,

... topics such as feeling apprehensive about who you may end up in a breakout room with, to what extent this space is 'private', and whether people will even talk once they get there, all reinforce our belief that this function should not be seen as a panacea for student engagement.

The material role of feelings within the agency of BOR sessions are particularly clearly articulated above. Although you give students the independence to speak, they may not actively grasp or want those opportunities. This strikes a chord with my own experiences in tutorials, asking students how they felt about their work in BORs, with many offering that they wanted to speak more but described themselves as 'shy'. Whilst some students were indeed shy, I felt this excuse was leant on a little too often by poorer students, so I attempted to tackle this by allowing those students to set their own speaking goals for future classes. Nisa et al., (2021) and Saltz & Heckman (2020) identify a range of literature indicating that BORs do not necessarily automatically mean that students will want to engage.

Regarding technical skills, in teacher meetings, I often hear the line "They're young so they will know how to do it. they can show me (haha)" about a technical issue. Whereas my own experience suggests that often students, whilst technically savvy on some platforms, for example, an app on their phone, the ecosystem of something like Microsoft Teams can offer new and different challenges, some possibly overwhelming for learners of a second language. This would be backed up by some of the reading where Saltz & Heckman (2020) cite work by Warden, Stanworth, Ren and Warden from 2013:

...nine years of research evaluating synchronous learning environments ...found that issues were typically not due to technology, but rather, from human behavior, and observed that "while students are familiar with virtual worlds and video meetings, they are inexperienced as virtual learners (cited in Saltz & Heckman, 2020, p.229).

Despite my best efforts, I remember several students on my last course were still struggling with techniques like shared screen or sending group links through Google. I also suspect that some teachers were struggling, especially at the beginning of the course.

2.1.3 Working with Groups in Breakout Rooms

Against the assumption that classes in the main room often employ more passive learning techniques, breakout rooms are often described as an active component that breaks the monotony of typical lessons. For example, Chandler (2016, p.20) suggests, “The diary recorded periods of boredom followed by the use of an activity in small groups, which enabled re-engagement with the session”. The article also identifies work from 2012 by Peacock et al. suggesting BORs can make classes more manageable for students. Tonsman’s 2014 article is also cited as suggesting BORs can help students develop, apply and further understand concepts from the main session. Similarly, Fitzgibbons et al. (2021, p.1) note “... students are given a few moments to break focus and relax”. Breakout sessions have also been described as a “cornerstone” of workshops, suggesting BORs are “...critical for the development of knowledge communication and relation communication, otherwise known as forming relationships” (Rahayu, 2020, as cited in Fitzgibbons et al., 2021, p.2). Additionally, Bamidele (2021, p.7) notes BORs “... have become an essential platform for collaborative learning”. Thus, putting students into BORs can become a break from the norm, should the teacher be using more passive techniques in the main session. Alternatively, Fitzgibbons et al. (2021) report “...the majority of students expressed preferring whole group work to breakout rooms” but do not further address this point. Whether this could have been poor usage of BORs or a general preference for a more passive style of learning is unknown. As majority opinion across the work read for the study reflects a positive attitude to the use of BORs, and reflects my own understanding, I will move the discussion to what matters when planning or working with your BORs. Some of the points arising from the reading included instruction giving, setting roles and monitoring.

There are many ways students can be moved from the main room session into BORs for more active sessions, but there are particular suggestions made in the reading that can ease the process. A balance of activities is considered necessary along with the need to set activities rather than just asking students to discuss (Chandler, 2016). Chandler (2016, p.17) identifies work by Yamagata-Lynch (2014), that to help her overcome difficulties she was having with BORs, paying attention to group allocation, assigning roles, and greater structure, were particularly useful. Compton and Gilmour (2021) go further and offer nine suggestions for giving instructions quoted here:

- why they are going into small groups;
- who they will be in breakout groups with or clarify that this is randomly allocated (if it is);
- how long they will be in the breakout activity;

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- clear instructions for the task;
- that what they say is between them unless you join their breakout but you can see meeting notes/ the chat;
- if you are likely to pop in;
- that they can message you (remind them how to do this);
- to look out for messages from you in the chat; and
- if you are allocating roles (e.g. note takers) to support the discussion upon returning to the main call.

I have quoted these points at length as they are in line with what I consider to be good practice and they add a couple of interesting discussion points about assigning roles and monitoring.

One of the clear points emerging from the reading was the importance of allocating roles to students. Compton and Gilmour (2021) suggest that "... providing more structure, particularly in the form of jobs (annotator, calculator/mathematician, and reporter), will be the extra push students need in this online world to help them collaborate successfully". In my language classes, I have found that appointing leaders, who can then appoint secretaries tasked with feeding back to the main group later, often has increased participation in the discussions. I also make sure leaders are aware of additional responsibilities, such as controlling time, making sure everyone speaks equally, and that other students speak in English as much as possible. This can take a couple of weeks and considerable prompting to develop, but I find that students are more aware of their roles towards the end of courses.

Regarding the secretary role and feeding back after discussions, Compton and Gilmour's (2021) work suggests that such plenaries are often the focus of complaints from students because they are perceived as dull. I have sympathy with this, especially after the third student has repeated the same points as the last two, having not listened to the instructions given: '... can you add anything new'. The chat function is suggested as offering a possible solution, both for secretarial use during the BORs session and for posting instead of a plenary, "Such approaches mean that plenary responses are captured in the written form for students and can be accessed after the class or shared on Moodle" (Compton & Gilmour, 2021), something I will consider in future.

Interestingly Saltz & Heckman (2020) identify research suggesting that different roles have different impacts on a student's learning. Unsurprisingly, the summariser, or in my practice the secretary role, has been suggested to have the most positive effect. However, other roles are available, and I have personally had a lot of success with 'academic discussions' in which many different roles are given out (for example, see Washington University Center for Teaching and Learning, 2022). Students are asked to prepare for 45-minute discussions, building skills for more extended

conversations, which many courses I have taught on ignore. However, including roles and building boundaries and new hierarchical connections between students in a BORs session comes with a simplification of the natural complex environment and may have issues around the production of more natural language. Therefore, it is important to note that roles could be considered constraining and demotivating (Saltz & Heckman, 2020, p.230), especially if students feel the job allocation is unfair.

Another emergent point from the reading surrounded issues with monitoring student activity, something considered more difficult in an online environment. Mpungose (2021, p.9) used a phrase that resonated with me, who, when reporting about existing online teaching strategies, quotes one participant talking about his "...side ears..." when monitoring in a face-to-face class. The participant explains, "I am looking at one group and listening to them, but my side ears are picking up other conversations". Premji (2021) similarly highlights "...a major hiccup was the inability to observe all breakout rooms simultaneously". I also found this problematic, although I could turn off the camera and lurk in the background, bouncing between groups. If I was working with six pairs on a fifteen-minute activity, however, I would constantly be clicking through, which I realised was disruptive for students and so after checking instructions and reminding students of the help/chat button to call for assistance, I would tend to check the chat instead.

Monitoring writing or task completion via PowerPoint slides, however, I found much easier. Premji (2021) identifies, "An additional benefit of the platform was the ability to monitor progress, if the Google Docs were appropriately labelled and assigned to specific groups". My own practice saw the use of PowerPoint or Google slides to encourage task completion. I could monitor group completion across all groups with the different group PowerPoint windows on my screen, allowing me to comment on progress. Once the groups had completed the task, I could copy and paste the answers for them to check their work and come back to me with any questions. However, this requires considerable trust in the learners to check their own work and the ability to multi-task, especially if several groups are working at once. Intra-actions were suggested between business, education and the software produced, as meeting software like Skype and Zoom has been in existence for a considerable amount of time. Saltz & Heckman (2020, p.228) suggest that such platforms have existed for around twenty years. Nevertheless, many of the platforms still seem overly orientated towards business.

2.1.4 Planning–Management–Time

One of the stronger intra-actions noted was between planning classes, time, and classroom management. Many articles read for this study suggested that working online had increased the time required to plan a class and conduct activities in BORs

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(Bamidele, 2021; Chandler, 2016; Mpungose, 2021). My own experience also suggests that planning took longer, requiring the need for multiple groups to be set up prior to the class or long lists of links to different material. In the classroom, activities from classes that used to require a simple piece of paper now needed word processor programs to be logged into and working. Delays whilst clicking in and out of groups for monitoring were also noticeable, although introducing longer activities helped alleviate this issue somewhat and reduce expectations around activity completion in-class. Overall, I would estimate that it was taking me twice as long to work with activities in BORs than it would have done in a face-to-face setting. An advantage was that all of the work was easily saved and available outside of the class time.

A second point of wonder produced by the reading was one of material and course design. It has been my experience that courses I have taught on have continued to use similar material to the offline work. Although the books were digitised, classes were still planned and expected to follow the contents. This often left a large amount of planning and material creation for each class. Slides created out of book tasks, through the photographing of online material, became one of the many chores. The ability to set photographs of book tasks as backgrounds on slides became invaluable, as it allowed students to work over the top collaboratively. This led to frustrations due to the requirement to constantly re-work offline material into online acceptable. Similar thoughts are expressed in the literature. Chandler (2016) observes that drag and drop activities can work better in an online setting than face to face and suggests, “This illustrates the importance of a tutor assessing the different possibilities afforded by the online environment, rather than just replicating what happens in a face-to-face session” (p.20). The point here that some activities work better online is a good one, and moving online has undoubtedly reduced the need for much photocopying, which can only be environmentally helpful.

I found myself returning to activities I had used in class and knew to work offline. Activities including Pictionary, run through whiteboards and private chat, or a story dictation, with sentences sent via private chat and re-worked by students into a word document, proved successful. Although both these activities required much more time to set up than would have been needed offline. A more online orientation may have saved me much time over the course. One online tool I found particularly useful was forms, both Google and Microsoft, allowing easy question setup and monitoring of answers. I used this in many classes for quizzes and to check student understanding of the course and language concepts, allowing me to target interventions in later tutorial classes that were part of the online offering. Being part of the Google/Microsoft package meant they much quicker to use than something like ‘Socrative’, an external program that would require further logging in.

Considering the use of breakout rooms more generally, this point by Chandler (2016) raised some interesting reflections and relations: “...this particular session was

full of other strange anomalies”. The phrase ‘strange anomalies’ I find particularly satisfying. Additionally, Compton and Gilmour (2021) suggest:

In this sense breakouts are no different from the guidance for any other tool or platform you are considering introducing to your teaching. Be prepared for glitches and having to think on your feet...

During one course on which I was teaching, bad weather conditions meant several students were without electricity, which links back to relations between the environment and how important it can be for learning agency. Other technical issues such as broken microphones, poor connections, missing files, and broken links seemed, upon reflection, to be an almost daily occurrence. I found BORs helpful in this respect as I could move people out of the main room onto an activity while I dealt with an issue in private chat. One activity used as a warmer on the most recent course I taught had some success. Asking students to write answers to a question in chat, which would lead to a whole class chain discussion (the first speaker nominates the next and so on), appeared to work well as a short opener or a backup 5-minute activity. Overall, online or offline, there will always be issues that require good backup planning.

2.1.5 Skills and Training

The technical skills required for moving teaching online, as we have been forced to because of the pandemic, has been noted as a challenge for many. Chandler (2016) notes that even before COVID-19, despite training, teachers can find it challenging to use BORs effectively, noting that:

When building online tutorials into module design, module teams should consider that tutors need more than basic training if they are to deliver interactive sessions. Their needs might include: advanced training; time built in to their workload to plan and try out activities; a certain amount of creativity; opportunities to share ideas; motivation; and courage (p.21).

As this was written before the pandemic, it produced thoughts around the amount of training teachers often receive before starting a pre-sessional course. Mohamed (2021, p.16) also notes teacher skill with technology as a constraint on the utilisation of BORs. Thankfully my own experience contains a range of online work from tutorials to classes, and so I expect I had an easier time adapting than many other colleagues when the pandemic hit. It is certainly the case that on several courses I worked on, one teacher is often identified quite early as having technical skills

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that others can lean on and learn from. Although whether this is seen as helpful or meddling by tech experts employed to help run the courses could be worth further research, along with levels of technical training given to EAP pre-sessional teachers.

Regarding student technical skills, one article read noted: “Even if students have collaborative skills from in-person learning in high school, those skills might not transfer to zoom” (Fitzgibbons et al., 2021, p.1), which suggests interesting issues with online/offline transference of skills. This struck a chord with my own experience as I have had to integrate a certain amount of lesson time into my work for teaching the use of the software. This includes setting up group links, creating shared documents, and using shared screens. Explicit teaching and reinforcement over several lessons did seem to help students better navigate the environment and allowed me to save planning time later in the course as I could reduce the amount of scaffolding needed. Intra-active links between perception, age, technology and skill were particularly noticeable.

2.1.6 Void–Distraction–Dishonesty–Surveillance–Rude!

The use of cameras in online classes has produced many wonders through reflection on my time teaching. During one of the courses I taught on during the first wave of the pandemic, I felt I was speaking into the void at times. In the main room with cameras off, students listened (supposedly) as I gave feedback or instruction. This was one of the more disconcerting episodes of my time teaching classes online, and BORs were a nice relief, as I have always argued it is incredibly impolite to be in a small group discussion with the camera off.

I have also found that students can at times be somewhat dishonest about working technology as this quote from Chandler (2016) suggests:

On one occasion, two students who had said that they did not have working microphones were spotted chatting away via their microphones in the breakout room (p.19).

‘Oh teacher, my camera is not working today’ or ‘Oh teacher, my line is poor today so I cannot have my camera on’, can be quite tricky to deal with, although they are probably only minor issues if done irregularly. Compton and Gilmour (2021) note:

... we shouldn’t assume that they [students] will be either willing or able to turn on microphones (let alone cameras).

I am reminded of Dr House from the TV series of the same name uttering ‘everybody lies’ (House M.D., 2018). However, there can be good reasons for limited

camera use, especially if students are in homes with family or genuinely have a poor connection. I have learned that camera use needs to be reinforced right from the start of a course to create a more positive culture towards their use. On the last course I taught, there was some conversation amongst teachers about making camera use mandatory, which was thankfully not implemented as it would have been difficult to police fairly. Especially at a university level there needs to be some respect for learner wishes, and if someone would rather take a more passive interest in the course, then that is their prerogative, as it is their money.

An interesting development on my last course was the backchannel use of WeChat, as I had predominantly Chinese students. WeChat is a Chinese chat application similar to Whatsapp. I became more aware of this as students would check absences for me. The negative side being I was unaware of the background chat and if answers to tasks and other activities were being shared. I was particularly worried about poorer students who might rely on flawed translations of instructions passed between students on the app and the distraction receiving messages can cause. Distraction, however, is not a new thing as is also noted by Chandler (2016):

The diary recorded how often the author was doing other things whilst the tutor was in 'lecture mode': reading emails, texting friends, interacting with family, reading some module material or even doing an online shop! (p.19).

Having been a distance student myself, I can relate to this, sitting in teacher training workshops and watching colleagues fire off emails throughout the entire course. One method I have adopted is the use of emojis to check people are listening, especially in the main room. For example, asking people to post in chat a specific emoji or raise a hand can be a quick technique to check people are still at the desk.

Rudeness became a link in the intra-active sub-title here as reflecting on etiquette reminded me of my own experiences in BORs as part of teacher training and conferences I have attended. Five-minute BORs do not work, even ten-minute ones. Being thrown randomly into a grouped room often meant saying hello and meeting people in the group for the first time. This often took five minutes itself, meaning that if we got to the set activity, only one person might offer an opinion. We were then whisked away without choice straight back into the main session and asked to round up ideas, the episode I am thinking of was using Blackboard. This often felt quite abrupt, even rude. It is also an experience that allowed me to adapt my own planning and use of BORs. Meaning that when I plan now, I will adapt short activities for the main room, relying on BORs for longer tasks of a minimum of fifteen minutes, which usually allows time for further discussion. Towards the end of a course, when I can trust students to take a more independent role, I have experimented with using multiple tasks set up using PowerPoint slides and allowing

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groups to work at their own pace. This often works well as I can both monitor progress on the slides and deal with issues as they arise.

2.1.7 Health–Well-Being

Reading through the texts, I had several reflections about health for online work. The strong intra-active connections stemming from the physical environment and how online teaching has been adopted. Not least, is the well-being of teachers being asked to sit for extended periods and the damage this can cause (Owen et al., 2008). There also seems to be little consideration from management that many teachers I have worked with are working entirely on laptops. How they manage this is beyond me, as I have a 27-inch screen and still struggle to monitor several BORs in the heat of class. Similarly, monitoring chat and conversation in the main room can be difficult on smaller devices. Thus, I would heartily recommend a good chair and a sizable monitor for anyone currently working in the online environment, as these will pay off in productivity and comfort.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, there were two aims of the article, both to engage with literature around BORs to disclose what matters and why, and to experiment with the idea of using a DGTA for professional development. Some of the main points from the articles that glowed and produced comments were: the active learning bias of many working with BORs; the benefits of collaborative learning; BORs giving teachers a break; randomised groupings; a skills deficit, social and technical; the need for activities, roles, and clear instructions; problems with monitoring; timing issues in class and for planning; the difference between online and offline work; strange anomalies and backup plans; tech training for teachers and students; cameras and lies; and, finally the importance of a comfy chair and sensibly sized monitor. Many more points glowed but have had to be left on the cutting room floor, and it could be commented that the intra-active connections have been watered down in favour of my own experience. I took this decision as I felt this would be more readable and appropriate for the intended audience. Regarding the study's primary aim, I have tried to relate the conversations between myself, the data and theory as thoroughly as possible, and I feel disclosures around working with groups, planning and monitoring are fascinating emerging ideas that could be built on in further research. Thus, I feel the DGTA has fulfilled its purpose as an emergent technique. Furthermore, I feel the process has been valuable as a developmental technique as it promoted a much closer reading of the research work than I may have done in a simple literature

review. This study has promoted deeper thinking around my practice and I hope that the resultant conversations have perturbed the way you consider your own BORs usage and thus been of use.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Agential Realism: Karen Barad’s (2007) Quantum Mechanical world interpretation.

Breakout Room: During an online class when teachers split the main class into smaller groups and assigns them a new online area to work in.

Breakout Session: The time during which the breakout room is engaged, especially when students have been asked to complete an activity.

Diffraction Grating Theory Approach: An analytical technique conceived around the notion of the 2-slit experiment, employing matrixes of diffractive readings to allow for a thematic analysis for points of wonder. An original contribution of the authors doctoral work (see Barnard, 2021).

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Diffraction Methodology: A methodology designed on the understanding of entanglement and diffraction, in opposition to typical reflective practice (See Barad, 2007, pp. 71-96).

Intra-Action: The relational connections between world phenomena that create meaning and matter in the world.

Mono-Materialism: An understanding of the world as a single matter-energy construct.

APPENDIX 1

Figure 3. Example of DGTA matrix

The screenshot shows a spreadsheet with columns labeled A through J and rows numbered 14 through 22. The content in the spreadsheet is as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
14	Quote + Wonder	Intra-Active relations: POW's	Personal Experience /Reaction	Follow up?	Questions	Notes				
15	It is crucial for English as a Second Language (ESL) students to communicate effectively within a classroom context.	classroom space - language - culture of communication	in-rails communication is often all the s/g get especially in some university contexts in foreign countries (i.e. Xiamen - no other human access- is there an over-reliance here?							
16	This pandemic changed the world through the implementation of social distancing, washing and sanitizing of hands, and wearing of face masks guidelines to the experience of full or partial lockdown in some countries. Saltz & Heckman (2020: 227), "breakout room is a form of peer collaborative learning where students synchronously work together in small groups" in	imposition- sanctions	Has it really changed the world? In some senses yes, no - why has washing of hands become a thing? Was it something we didn't do before? Face masks: not overly different in the work/fu etc.		Moorhouse, et al., 2021					
17	the use of online software like the use of Zoom and Microsoft Teams for breakout sessions to promote togetherness amongst students, and readily available to ESL teachers in their several online classrooms (Miller et al., 2021).	peer- human- computer- internet-camera-mic- range of machines allowing communication- r/s of the machines?	Definition - seems succinct		Saltz & Heckman (2020: 227)					
18	The significance of the study comes from the fact there is paucity of research on online breakout room within an ESL classroom context in Bahrain. More	online software- computer - togetherness - historically available?	role of access for teachers and students - dis/advantaged communities - need for electronics - mic/camera - not cheap - increased expense - reduction in equity - // subscription models? - equity and tier system in future? - free? // security of data?			What of the missing 16% who don't like BQRs				
19	The study depended mainly on the use of survey questionnaires due to time constraints. The	Culture - online BQR- lack of evidence - interest? Funding - teachers' time	Reality in Bahrainian context - why? What is different here in the context?							
20	Benish (2022) notes that the use of breakout room applied in the live virtual environment is as effective as in the physical classroom.	quant-qual - teacher time -effect on evidence collection - standards - policy	Hard working teachers - research issues- professional development and a conference submission- online							
21	Empirical Studies within the Arab world	Arab world reduction - context - difficulties finding work.	Good list of relevant material here.							
22	Kahnke & Moorhouse (2020) in their study highlighted the fact that in terms of student-centered interactions, Zoom's online breakout room platform, students can use language productively, produce meaning focused output and engage in student-student interaction within		note of difference - unsure how I can relate to this, one for Lucas - also seen for this research - they can but do they actually do it - how do you monitor the situation/multiple situations? Role plays and other traditional ideas being reworked - I played a number of warmers - pictorial/answer in chat - Couldn't get to work - conditioning of its early on - especially with use of camera - develop peer interaction? Trust, s/s need to turn off cameras- embarrassed/other people in the house - interesting different context to what is understood in the west.							

APPENDIX 2

Table 1. Literature chosen from key word search


	Author	Year	Type	Reason
1	Bamidele, A.	2021	Conference Submission	Quantitative, Bahrain Context. Key-word in title and abstract. Known relevant references. 9 pages.
2	Chandler, K.	2016	Journal Article	Qualitative, Older UK perspective – Open University. Highly relevant title. 7 pages.
3	Compton, M., & Gilmour, A.	2021	Online article	U.K. perspective – UCL, Short online article, highly relevant title, practical information. 4 pages.
4	Fitzgibbons, L. et al.	2021	Online article	Quantitative, U.K. based – Rochester. Highly relevant title. 7 pages.
5	Miller, A. et al.	2021	Journal Article	Scottish context, Longer concept paper. Novel approach, highly relevant title. 17 pages.
6	Mohamed, K.	2021	ResearchGate Publication	Quantitative, UAE context, highly relevant title 20 pages.
7	Mpungose, C. B.	2021	Journal Article	Qualitative, African context, Relevant title. 17 pages.
8	Nisa, L. Z., et al.	2021	Journal Article	Qualitative, Indonesian context, Highly relevant title. 8 pages.
9	Premji, Z.A.	2021	Journal Article	Canadian context, Highly relevant title, Short article on experience. 2 pages.
10	Saltz, J., & Heckman, R.	2020	Journal Article	Repeatedly referenced by other relevant work, highly relevant title. USA context. 17 pages.

Chapter 9

Transitioning to the New Normal: Experiences From a Sino– British Institution

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter considers EAP language teachers' perceptions of the working reality English educators are faced with during the 2021-2022 academic year. It draws on experiences at a specific case study institution, namely a Sino-British one based in China. Adopting a qualitative study design and interviewing eight practitioners, the results from semi-structured interviews suggest that for EAP teachers in a time of technology-enhanced learning that a transition has occurred from pre-pandemic to today, a time in which the challenges of the pre-COVID-19 era now reside alongside the difficulties that the pandemic has presented. Some of these are global issues, such as how to integrate technology best and deal with new teaching norms and disruptions, while others may be more localised on a national and institutional level and include working around growing student numbers and expatriate departures which taken together can stretch resources. That said, technology, increased autonomy, and enhanced staff motivation (in some cases) are also positives that have been derived in some instances.

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INTRODUCTION

Technology enhanced language learning has become increasingly popular (Li, 2017a), but a global pandemic necessitated the educational community to adapt to online education completely to tackle the challenges of school closure. Since early 2020, numerous studies have been carried out to investigate the effectiveness of online teaching in the COVID-19 context, as insights into educational values and pedagogies regarding online provision are important for stakeholders such as policymakers, material designers and teachers (Bernard et al., 2004). However, the majority of the studies were conducted to investigate students' perception of online learning (e.g., Hani & Saleh, 2020; Roy et al., 2020), whereas limited research was carried out to shed light on teachers' experiences (Wu et al., 2020). Zou et al. (2021) is one of the few studies that compare the experiences of students and teachers. They claim that teachers could deliver more effective online teaching and learning when they have more training, more skills, and more confidence.

This chapter adds to the limited studies by considering EAP (English for Academic Purposes) teachers' experience of shifting to online teaching at a Sino-British university in China. The significance of this study lies in two areas. First, educational communities have experienced challenges unlike anything before, and it is critical to understand teacher efficacy during the challenge. Teacher efficacy is defined as "judgment of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated" (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2001). Understanding how teachers tackle challenges and how their beliefs are influenced and developed would be critical to improve teaching effectiveness. Second, addressing teachers' experiences during the pandemic enables the field to understand teacher resilience, which is vital when encountering challenges. Newman (2005) defined resilience as "the human ability to adapt in the face of tragedy, trauma, adversity, hardship, and ongoing significant life stressors" (p. 227). Focusing on teachers' experiences thus provides us with first-hand evidence of how teachers empower themselves and support each other throughout the pandemic. It is hoped that this research will offer institutions some insights into issues around online delivery so that issues that are critical to effective online learning will be addressed. The outcome of this study also has strong implications on teacher learning. As various research suggests that teachers need to be equipped with both pedagogical and technological competences in order to engage in technology enhanced learning (Li, 2017a). In addition, the outcomes might facilitate further reflective teaching among teachers.

In what follows, we will consider the higher education context that the university operates within before moving on to discuss the delivery of evolving EAP provision and the impact that COVID-19 has had at this institutional provider. We then highlight

some of the transitional teaching demands and the subsequent opportunities presented by the pandemic to EAP provision at the institution and what considerations are important to be mindful of going forward. The impact on other related educational areas is also addressed. As a reflective study, the existing literature is considered as to how developments are perceived. Evaluating how effective and successful developments are deemed to be is important for any institution as it moves forward.

BACKGROUND

Situated in eastern China, this Sino-British university was established just over fifteen years ago. It is an autonomous entity which is independent of its parent institutions and currently enrolls over 18,000 students according to the institutional website. It is also an English Medium of Instruction (EMI) university meaning that its programmes and modules are delivered in English. In addition, most current undergraduate students enrolled at the institution are eligible to enroll on a 2+2 international study route. This means that undergraduate students can opt to study for two years in China and undertake two years of learning in Year 3 and 4 in the UK as part of their dual award degree. Within the university, one of the largest sub-entities is the School of Languages which was initially established as a Language Centre. This school employs over 200 staff (Morris, 2021a), and plays an important role in the university because one of the key functions that the school performs is to ensure that students are linguistically ready for their discipline-specific studies. As such, EAP plays an essential part in most students' study lives as the institutional EAP is designed to be progressive as students move through the first couple of years of their undergraduate studies (Morris et al., 2021). Traditionally, generic EAP courses in Year One lead into more of an ESAP discipline-specific focus as students progressed through their first couple of years of study (Morris et al., 2021). Prior to the emergence of COVID-19 the School of Languages had experienced a challenging transitional period due to frequent leadership and managerial changes in the preceding years, alongside the need to continue expanding provisional delivery for a growing student body as Morris (2021a) highlighted. This had resulted in constant EAP overhauls over a number of years and a degree of change fatigue (see Morris, 2021a). It also meant that certain EAP modules were perceived to lack continuity often resulting from staffing changes. Another reason was that the School of Languages was undergoing a period of internal restructuring as it transitioned into an academic school from a Language Centre when the pandemic struck. This was a move that required evolving management structures and operational systems.

Back in 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic took hold, it prompted educators to rethink their teaching approaches, student engagement, teacher identity (Kim and

Asbury, 2020), and, more generally, how to approach uncertainty and change. For EAP teaching specifically, according to a BALEAP-funded research project on the influence of COVID-19 on EAP in the UK, it has impacted upon EAP design and delivery, assessment and feedback, admissions and registration, staff recruitment and training, communication, and technology, all from where arise both challenges and opportunities (Bruce and Sakounis, 2021). When the pandemic struck in early 2020 the School of Languages initially struggled with the challenges that the pandemic presented (Morris et al., 2021). Part of the reason was because COVID-19 caught almost all academic providers off guard. The actual process of responding to the evolving and fluid global and domestic situation proved demanding. Another reason was due to the School of Languages within this institution undergoing a period of internal restructuring as it transitioned into an academic school from a Language Centre at the same point in time. As a result, the first area which required a rethink was EAP module delivery. To teach online, it is essential that a reliable delivery platform is in place. At the time when the pandemic struck, the university was operating on a Moodle based platform in terms of storing and distributing course materials, and this in the main remained unaffected. The Big Blue Button (BBB) feature however began to be utilised much more intensively as classes were streamed from the location of the practitioner and recorded so that viewers could playback the sessions in case of connectivity issues (see Morris et al., 2021). Although BBB is a reasonable delivery platform, several very decent alternatives also exist, such as Zoom, Zhumu and Teams, the latter of which Morris et al. (2021) draw attention to. Management of BBB was centrally coordinated from within the institution. This was far from straightforward because thousands of students had to be accommodated, alongside time differences for both staff and students who were based in a wide variety of global locations initially due to when COVID-19 began to lock down localities. These challenges are presented in greater detail by Li and Morris (2021). In addition to this, EAP assessments presented another significant problem as too many submissions within a specific time window had the potential to crash the existing operating system. This was a notable concern for assignments because there were thousands of students to examine and many staff and students were simply not experienced with, or accustomed to and prepared for, online delivery and assessments and the associated demands. That said, live testing presented a problem as test scheduling, security and connectivity had to be considered and accounted for. To achieve this, staff required training, upskilling and support leading to a steep and draining learning curve.

As the past semester of the academic year 2021/2022 has highlighted here in China, the pandemic is far from over. As large parts of the world try to resume more the new normalised approach to education, EAP has once again been delivered online. Although the pandemic impacts teaching, student engagement and teacher

identities (Kim and Asbury, 2020), alongside EAP design and delivery, assessment and feedback, staff recruitment and training, communication, and technology, presenting both challenges and opportunities (Bruce and Sakounis, 2021). Practitioners and students are now much better prepared for delivering online courses and administering remote assessments enmass, and not simply due to the massification of education (Jordan, Bai and Morris, 2017). This has not necessarily made workloads less busy, but it has avoided the reset scramble that resulted back in 2020. It is now more a case of refining and improving practice rather than reinventing it as EAP can now be delivered through blended courses (which feature synchronous, asynchronous, and flipped online and onsite delivery approaches). The emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for EAP is also presenting additional interesting possibilities going forward as Li and Zou (2022) draw attention to.

LITERATURE REVIEW

EAP: EAP can be delivered in a variety of ways ranging from pre-sessional short courses to longer-term in-sessional foundation year and/or embedded courses of study. Pre-sessional courses are typically directed more towards postgraduate students, whereas the in-sessional EAP provision can take a range of delivery combinations which may cover English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP), English for Specific Academic Purposes (EAP), as well as English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). Under normal circumstances EAP teaching can be challenging for a variety of differing reasons, and Hu and Morris (2021) consider some of the nuances of new course design to support students who are studying academic programmes which are geared towards syntegrative educational industry designs. Syntegrative education is an educational model that integrates disciplinary knowledge with work experience and cross cultural leadership and entrepreneurial skills (XJTLU, 2022).

Technology Enhanced Learning: Also referred to as e-learning, is defined as ‘a set of technology-mediated methods that can be applied to support student learning and can include elements of assessment, tutoring and instruction’ (Seel, 2012). More specifically, it includes a range of applications and processes such as web-based learning, computer-based learning, virtual classrooms and learning environments, and digital collaboration (Seel, 2012). E-learning in language teaching may also include computer-assisted language learning (CALL), technology enhanced language learning (TELL) and mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) (Dhillon and Murray, 2021). As for e-learning in the EAP context, research primarily focuses on computerized corpora, which presents the actual use of oral and written language in a range of contexts and is thus adopted to develop students’ academic writing skills (Li, 2018). In discussing theoretical and pedagogical considerations of using

technology in support of ESP (English for Specific Purposes), Li (2018) proposed five principles in the areas of benefits and roles of technology, learners' needs, the role of the teacher, authenticity and the need to integrate technology. Besides corpora, e-learning in EAP also uses Web 2.0 tools such as social media sites, wikis and blogs to encourage immediate collaboration, sharing, and responding to others (Dhillon and Murray, 2021; Li, 2018). While technology was considered more as an “add-on” tool to enhance learning a decade ago, it is now shifted to be a focus in teaching (Gruba and Hinkelman, 2012, cited in Chau and Lee, 2014). In fact, teachers should further consider and recognise the tripartite partnership of technology, pedagogy and human in learning (Gruba and Hinkelman, 2012, cited in Chau and Lee, 2014). This view was earlier explored by Koelher and Mishra (2009) in their proposed concept of ‘technological pedagogical content knowledge’. Specifically, teachers should not just develop fluency and cognitive flexibility in technological knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and content knowledge respectively, but also should they further understand how the three areas of knowledge interrelate, and more precisely how one relates to the other as well as how all three knowledge interrelates, in order to offer more effective teaching solutions (Koelher and Mishra, 2009).

EAP, COVID-19 and Technology Enhanced Learning: When COVID-19 emerged and resulted in an immediate switch to remote delivery, 90% of teacher participants in a BALEAP-funded research project in the UK reported that although they received some form of technology-related training, such as the use of the VLE or communication tools, they needed more training on online pedagogy, and specifically learning how to adapt materials for online use and how to encourage students' online engagement and collaboration (Bruce and Stakounis, 2021). The same BALEAP research also found it a salient challenge of student engagement during online teaching (Bruce and Stakounis, 2021). This finding was corroborated by a study conducted by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) (2020) which reported that 60% of faculty identify a drop in student engagement because they struggle to stay focused (Bruce and Stakounis, 2021). A strong sense of community is crucial in engaging students in learning. This is because it provides a sense of belonging in the learning experience. The loss of the human element in an online setting can reduce student involvement in the community and affect participation (Aldonate and Gonzalez-Ibanez's, 2017, cited in Bruce and Stakounis, 2021). Accordingly, rapport building via activities such as peer learning, collaborative learning, synchronous and asynchronous sessions is important to compensate the loss of the human element and maintain a strong and welcoming community for students. Another finding is that although requisite technology and internet connection are the basis to make e-learning possible, both the BALEAP research and a study carried out in Turkey suggest that over 40% of teacher participants have problems with internet connectivity and speed that directly affects delivery (Bruce and Stakounis, 2021). Some teachers

also have problems sharing materials on VLEs, and have to send them in emails (Bruce and Stakounis, 2021). In addition, trying to redesign courses and blend delivery approaches can noticeably increase workloads (Bruce and Stakounis, 2021). That said, positives include three quarters of participants reporting adopting flipped classes and more student-centered learning, which increased student autonomy, interactions in synchronous and asynchronous sessions, provided more feedback options, and enhanced the visibility of students' learning process and increased sharing (Bruce and Stakounis, 2021).

EAP, COVID-19 and Technology Enhanced Learning at the School of Languages: Li and Morris (2021) consider the challenges that the pandemic has presented to EAP design and delivery at the selected Sino-British institution, as perceived by close to a hundred active educators, with the findings suggesting that technology enhanced language teaching and assessments posed two significant challenges. Possible reasons why technology enhanced language teaching presented challenges for these teachers was because with everything moving online, and a wide range of technological devices in use with varying degrees of software accessibility uptake was simply moving too quickly for many given that many of these staff had not experienced teaching online, at least not to this extent (Li and Morris, 2021). That said, the growing importance of technology enhanced learning for language learning in higher education has only become increasingly important as Harris and Perrin (2020) highlight. At the same time there was also a perceived sense that there was a lessening of pedagogic control, and that evolving assessments from the onsite format they had been prepared for to an online necessitated format meant that not only was teaching EAP now more difficult, but so too was assessing subsequent progress as Li and Morris (2021) allude to. Accordingly, more focused, and systematic technology training and guidance for teachers was needed (Dhillon and Murray, 2021; Schmid, 2017), alongside reliable IT support and communication (Bruce and Sakounis, 2021). It is also for considerations such as these that Morris (2021b) advocates placing an emphasis on people, or the human resource element of an educational entity, because it is the individuals that make a place as he draws attention to (Morris, 2019). This is why humanistic management and leadership practices in EMI EAP settings are so important. That said, mid-level managers also often have the very same needs as staff in terms of mentoring and emotional support, and Morris (2021a) raises awareness of concerns in this area. Communities of practice can play a role in sharing good practices, helping peers with technological issues, and enhancing a sense of belonging (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, 2002), but focusing on staff (and student) wellbeing also extends beyond this to encompass formal training, management approaches and human resource policies and practices. This is because pedagogy, context, professional development, quality assurance

and future trends, such as transnational education and the massification and use of technologies, are all areas that BALEAP (2021) identify as important.

METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative research study that adopts a relativist ontological position (Grix, 2010). It also utilises an exploratory research methodology (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). There are limitations to this approach, such as an inability to generalise (Dörnyei, 2007), and concerns about misinterpreting findings as Silverman (2001) and Yates (2003) note, but systematically and rigorously analysed concerns such as these can be offset. This work also has the capability to make better sense of complex situations enhancing understanding (Dörnyei, 2007). On that note, this study is an analysis that supplements earlier studies into COVID19 EAP teaching. One such study was Morris et al., (2021) who drew on personal onsite experiences to reflect on developments. Another was Li and Morris (2021) who analysed survey questionnaire results from 215 invited participants within the School of Languages at this same institution.

In this instance, a semi-structured interview approach was adopted to consider more recent developments and the perception of the evolving developments. The interview guidelines were devised based on the existing literature in relation to the purpose of this study (e.g., Li, 2014). The questions (See Appendix) were piloted and refined based on feedback. A convenience sampling approach was subsequently adopted for this study due to practical time constraints and demands, and anonymised participant data can be seen in Table 1 below. That said, ethical considerations were ensured with the guiding principles aligned to BERA (2021). This included principles such as informed consent, transparency, right to withdraw, and participant safeguarding (through ensuring anonymity, confidentiality, storing data safely and privacy). In order to best make sense of the information presented a process of data familiarization and inductive coding was employed.

Beyond the number of years spent teaching EAP as outlined in Table 1 above, what the interview data revealed was that the practitioners who participated in this study had a vast array of teaching experiences in EAP, and variations of this including EGAP and ESAP, which had been delivered to a range of student year group from the first two years to academic years, across a wide range of subject disciplines, up to postgraduate support. These teaching experiences included supporting a range of proficiency levels, and extended to coverage of academic and study skills, alongside the actual academic English. Practitioners had also taught at a number of different institutions in China, and also, in some cases, taught on similar courses with Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), IELTS and TOEFL explicitly mentioned.

Table 1. Participant data

Participant #	Gender	Nationality	English L1/2	Experience	Age
Participant 1	Male	British	English L1	EAP 10Y	40-50
Participant 2	Female	Chinese	English L2	EAP 8Y	30-40
Participant 3	Female	Chinese	English L2	EAP 10-15Y	30-40
Participant 4	Female	Chinese	English L2	EAP 5-10Y	30-40
Participant 5	Male	British	English L1	EAP 12Y	50-60
Participant 6	Female	Chinese	English L2	EAP 3-5Y	30-40
Participant 7	Male	American	English L1	EAP 10Y	40-50

RESULTS

EAP Teaching Pre-Pandemic

Prior to COVID-19 teaching followed the traditional onsite face-to-face format in most cases, with a mix between classes of between 16 to 26 students on average alongside the occasional larger class size of 40 up to a large lecture hall. Typically, the pedagogic direction was set by those in charge at a given point in time, while materials were shared between smaller module teams which also utilised an online classroom management system to distribute resources and collect assessments which were submitted to online drop boxes. There also tended to be a variety of scaffolded classroom activities being utilised for mixed nationality classes. The benefits of this were that it was easier to build rapport with students and address difficulties in real-time. Students were also perceived to concentrate and interact better in class, in what was a more socially comfortable environment.

Teaching EAP onsite enabled direct interaction between teachers and students, which helped facilitate good classroom communication and it helped students understand the concepts easier (Participant 3).

For practitioners, classes were also believed to be easier to organise, with assessments more straightforward to administer with increased evidence. In addition, practitioners had frequent opportunities to change modules, support learning with additional extra-curricular activities and use technology to enhance learning. The flip side at the time was that attendance and engagement was declining, and it was proving increasingly difficult to motivate learners as classes were deemed to have become less interesting. Practitioners also noted how teaching innovation seemed to have stagnated, repetition (despite a degree of inevitability) was apparent, and the

pitch of the material was not always well suited to the varied language proficiencies and maturity of the learners. It was also becoming increasingly challenging to support different discipline-specific needs in what was at times perceived as repeating the same old materials that were not insightful for either the teachers or students.

In terms of delivery and classes ... it could wear and begin to feel a bit like a directionless never-ending treadmill, especially as nothing seemed to stand the test of time (Participant 1).

Pandemic EAP Teaching

Teaching during the pandemic was described as frustrating by the teachers. Words like ‘stressful’, ‘last minute’, ‘messy’, ‘chaotic’, isolated and cut off’ featured. It was also felt that more was having to be covered in less time which was understandable given national lockdowns and the teaching background and norm of the time for many practitioners.

During the pandemic things are mostly sticking to the old plan but adapted significantly for the online teaching context. Delivery experienced the biggest change (Participant 2).

For some practitioners, this meant asynchronous teaching now dominated as Participant 5 noted, but others highlighted the importance of live classes which utilised breakout rooms through platforms such as Big Blue Button and Zoom. These same teachers also noted how coursework assignments were typically already processed online, but final assessments also had to be transitioned in this respect. One essential feature influencing everything was technology.

Smooth delivery and quality of classes were largely dependent on the technical support available and its stability (Participant 3).

The trouble was that many teachers were not prepared or trained in this respect as Participant 4 noted. This meant that teachers did not know how to use some of the embedded tools impacting pedagogic quality and effectiveness. Indeed, the list of challenges during this period was extensive. Teachers noted the detrimental impact on interactions, student engagement and attendance, learning support during sessions, effectiveness and productivity, rapport, academic integrity assurances, time demands (working into the night and early hours) and workload, teacher motivation and delivery. It was also suggested that teaching was increasing boring, unnatural and a steep learning curve as far as adapting to the new normal went. Participant 7 added:

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It was very difficult to teach, and it felt like the students learned little and participated even less (Participant 7).

Others noted the disruptive impact that the network connections could have on both teaching, but especially assessments. It was noted by participant 3 that adapting to the online platforms could be a painful experience for teachers, but participant 6 summed up arguably the greatest challenge:

The biggest challenge is the uncertainty of the pandemic ... there's always a need for a plan B (Participant 6).

That said, there were also positives to be derived. Some included learning new IT skills, enhancing resilience, developing a sense of self-motivation and enhanced creativity born out of circumstances, the flexibility of location and being able to work remotely, which also saved on travel expenses, time and cut the carbon footprint. This time saving meant more time for research, family, and a degree of comfort and sense of greater safety in some cases. The fact that new technology skills were acquired, and students could access material at any time with it being recorded, and educators could work at the times that suited them rather than to a set schedule also appealed to some. As time progressed and a need to tolerate silence changed as blended onsite and online learning became more common as hyflex learning took centre stage with classes being taught live in the classroom but also streamed and recorded for those unable to attend the dynamic began to shift once more. This though only occurred after social distancing protocols and physical space constraints, along with increasingly complex timetabling demands were resolved.

EAP Teaching Today

The general feeling was that teaching today is now a hybrid affair, which is blended between onsite and online delivery with flipped classrooms now more common as online sessions for onsite students then feed into onsite review classes for these same students. This enables a greater degree of flexibility but is also partially the result of a needs must approach to dealing with delivery challenges. Part of the reason resides in needing to support large and still growing student numbers, another factor is retention related to expatriate staff especially prone to departures. Limited space is another contributory factor. That said, some participants felt that generally many pedagogic aspects felt unchanged, albeit staff shortages were felt, and that a paperless environment is now a more natural element of the work alongside higher technology expectations.

The pandemic has somehow forced a revolution in EAP teaching which has been driven by a more technology enhanced context (Participant 3).

Certainly, Hyflex learning expectations have played a part, but equally important is a sense that students need more support with digital literacies even in a more IT savvy age. Certainly, blended teaching was regarded as a teaching benefit, and staff were perceived to be better prepared for the now normal working realities, with all hours all locations access to material a plus, alongside the reinvigorating effect a change had on some staff through upskilling staff to be able to work both in a face to face and online capacity more effectively, but numerous drawbacks were also mooted.

Some of these challenges were the same as prior to the start of the pandemic. For example, experienced staff leaving, the quality and rationale behind some courses and their associated materials. Meanwhile, some new challenges have also emerged. Student engagement, participation, attendance, and motivation were questioned because the declines in these areas continue despite changing delivery approaches which draw on consumer IT familiarities and conveniences. The reliability of online systems was another obvious concern, along with student experience quality worries. It was also noted that trying to teach students who are in a classroom physically as well as remotely was questionable:

It is difficult for teachers to attend to students in both worlds (Participant 4).

I think Hyflex is difficult to do well. It distracts the teachers from their onsite students and inadequately serves remote students (Participant 5).

This is because online learning will likely be passive without contact checks which can be challenging. One suggestion was to split the learners and contract specialist staff to teach online, who might do so remotely themselves, meaning expatriate staff could take extended breaks and visit family and friends without unduly long hiatuses. A switch to CLIL rather than EAP was also suggested as a potential way in which to balance staffing demands with increased student numbers and academic necessities.

Considering these points these practitioners suggested that in terms of support empathetic forward-thinking managers and leaders would be appreciated, along with smaller class sizes and more technology options. Additional e-learning tools, techniques and guidance could also be useful, and potentially enhance participation and engagement, as would better support for students in the physical and virtual worlds. The chance for expatriate staff to work for finite periods overseas was also mentioned to enhance retention, and stable IT along with better course syllabi clarity and materials were touted.

EAP Teaching Tips

The advice to teachers from the educators involved with this study was diverse. The first tip from the first participant considered general well-being and stressed the importance of taking care of oneself, others and striking a decent work-life balance. Participants two and three emphasised the need to embrace technology and make learning online as engaging as possible. This meant having interesting interactive sessions where students are active learners and motivated by the materials. Participant six emphasised the need to also build a good rapport with learners and these initiatives would likely help in this respect. Additional language learning support was also advocated. Participant five considered syllabus considerations and suggested replacing EGAP with more discipline-specific learning such as ESAP and CLIL.

DISCUSSION

Challenge 1 Technology Enhanced Learning

In terms of the challenges for technology enhanced learning, the first issue is the training of online tools for students. Participants in the interview suggest more digital literacy training for students, and similarly, Windsor and Park (2014) advocate that while the collaborated online wiki tools facilitate students' drafting and writing of essays, it is essential to give students explicit instruction and technical support of using wikis to ensure the effective application of the tool. Also, when using online tools to facilitate students' oral presentation skills, Barret and Liu (20) also highlight teachers' 'responsibility to learn how to use and teach students to use the tools and courseware for oral monologues'. One drawback that relates to providing training support for students is that it is a very time-consuming endeavor, and thus requires the institutions' more efficient planning and allocation of resources to help students as Bruce and Stakounis (2021) highlight.

Besides the demand to train students with online tools, teacher training is equally important. As mentioned in the results section the pandemic drives a more technology enhanced context, more programs of e-tools training and online pedagogy for teachers are needed. Hubbard and Levy (2006) consider basic technical skills, namely computer software and hardware skills as the prerequisites for obtaining CALL competencies. Furthermore, as aforementioned in the literature section, teachers should be trained with theories of online pedagogy and develop "technological pedagogical content knowledge" to best facilitate learning (Koelher and Mishra (2009). Moreover, teachers need to reconsider their role in teaching and redefine students' role in learning when transferring from a traditional classroom setting to an online setting. The internet

provides students with abundant information and resources that students use to develop information networks to learn, which is beyond the traditional classroom and thus changes the expectation of the teacher's role as well (Dunaway, 2011). In addition, the need of a hybrid delivery of both online and onsite teaching may also be the future trend to cope with the constant changes of onsite lesson restrictions due to pandemic control. Thus, training on hybrid teaching, blended learning and flipped classroom are also needed to supplement teachers' online pedagogical skill sets, which in a way also increase teacher resilience that is crucial to handle stressful teaching situations.

Student engagement is the last salient issue of technology enhanced learning from the survey results. Specifically, the survey results show that it is an issue even before the pandemic, and online teaching exacerbates this problem due to the large size of students in one online class along with the unreliability of online systems and internet connections. Meanwhile, missing the human element in the learning experience reduces students' involvement in the learning community and affects participation (Aldonate and Gonzalez-Ibanez's, 2017, cited in Bruce and Stakounis, 2021), so various supplements or solutions could be implemented to enhance rapport with students and to cope with the problems of 'a boring unnatural steep learning curve' raised by teachers in the research. Some specific engaging activities introduced by Davies et al. (2020) include: creating asynchronous discussion forums to increase student-tutor and student-student interaction; adding clear instructions and having tutors involved in commenting on students' posts to increase learning motivation, creating collaborative student writing groups of three or four students help create peer learning and sense of learning community, and even an informal synchronous tutor-student discussion on media used in course topics reduce students' negative feelings that hinder learning.

Challenge 2 Student Numbers

The second challenge which was noted from the interview data was the concern based on increased student numbers. With the massification of higher education and the growth in numbers of non-first-language English speakers studying in English, the number of new student enrollment in the researched Sino-British university has been constantly increasing (Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley, 2009). One result in this instance is the increased number of students per class being 27 for a Year 1 EAP course with classroom numbers increasing year on year despite physical classroom space constraints. Larger classes do affect learning and teaching effectiveness due to issues such as lower teacher-student interaction, difficulties in organizing class activities, and a heavier teacher workload (Li and Lu, 2012). One solution that the institution currently adopts is blended learning, changing from the past all five live

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classes to having students learn two online independent learning classes and then three live onsite seminar classes with one EAP teacher, and this allows the teacher to take three groups of students instead of two in the past, and students can also access the recorded live classes. This solution is also resonating with the proposed delivery mode of ‘hybrid teaching’ in the earlier result section. In addition, this blended delivery mode occurred after social distancing protocols and physical space constraints, along with increasingly complex timetabling demands were resolved. Another solution, proposed by Morris et al. (2021) is to adopt a CLIL where EAP teachers collaborate with departmental staff on students’ major courses, and instead of teaching EAP as a separate module, the EAP teachers assists the delivery of the content module and tailors EAP lessons for the content course and its assessments, aiming to improve students’ language skills in a more targeted discipline-specific way. Such collaborated teaching between the EAP teacher and departmental staff to replace an entire EAP module is also a way to help alleviate the low EAP teacher headcount issue.

Challenge 3 Staff Departures

Staff departures, and specifically expatriate staff departures, is the third challenge discovered in the research. The increased number of new students results in a greater demand for more teachers, but staff departures is exacerbating the issue of low teacher headcounts. Also, with more expatriate staff departing, in part as a result of COVID-19, the ratio of international staff to home staff will continue to shrink and result in a low relative number of international faculty and a less internationalized learning context that this Sino-British university is well regarded for. Possible reasons of expatriate staff’s departure include an increasingly heavy workload of over 70 hours per week at times, mid-career professionals requiring greater financial support for children’s education in international schools as they cannot access the home system, and a lack of viable and systematic career development options on occasion (Morris, 2021a). The pandemic also results in expatriate staff leaving because some of the overseas staff have encountered difficulties with the official procedures to come to China or apply to work in China, while some staff located overseas who work in a different time zone find teaching during the pandemic stressful. Personal experiences and dialogues also suggest that they also feel a lack of support at times, and some have returned to their home country to visit family and friends and decided to stay. These issues prompt more effective measures and solutions from management teams to address staff concerns and needs, and those measures will be further discussed in the later recommendation section.

Benefit 1 Technology Enhanced Learning

While it poses challenges applying technology enhanced learning, it also prompts opportunities and benefits. Besides the benefits of convenience, flexibility of location, and savings on travel expenses for teachers, which were earlier mentioned in the result section, online learning also facilitates monitoring student progress, providing feedback, and increasing student interaction. Specifically, teachers can track students' participation in out-of-class activities to have a better understanding of students' learning results and needs (Bruce and Stakounis, 2021). Teachers can also follow up with more customized support based on students' online activity performance records. As for feedback, 'enhanced creativity from online delivery' mentioned in the result section can also be found when teachers can adopt various forms such as audio feedback, interactive feedback, or giving online mark up (through Turnitin) with multimodal annotations, and compared to the traditional classroom teaching, students usually receive the feedback in a more timely manner (Bruce and Stakounis, 2021). In fact, the BALEAP study reports that just under 90% of participants report their confidence with the employed online feedback method being adequate for student learning and progression (Bruce and Stakounis, 2021). Moreover, Padlet, Kahoot, and Quizlet are also engaging interactive tools that teachers use to motivate students' participation and peer learning. Other online tools found by CALL researches include using AI-assisted mobile applications to improve students' speaking skills in EAP, or adopting multi-user virtual environments where the computer allows the use of an avatar which is an online personality that resembles a person or anything, who can interact with the online virtual environment and with other participants' avatars, and through their interaction in the virtual world could the participants practice using a foreign language to communicate with others (Zou et al. 2020; Beatty, 2003).

Benefit 2 Autonomous Learners and Motivated Learning

Another benefit of online learning is increased learning autonomy. The result also shows that respondents are favoring the 24/7 material access by students in the virtual learning space which is different from traditional classroom teaching and improves learning motivation. Dhillon and Murray's (2021) survey also finds that notably 42% of respondents strongly agreed that "*e-learning technology is an effective tool for setting activities for completion outside of the EAP classroom*", while respondents' comments include that such a way of learning gives freedom to continue students' learning at home and encourage students' curiosity to develop their EAP skills independently. More asynchronous discussion forums also result in students' interaction with peers and the teacher outside the live class actively. Furthermore, when teachers adopt Web 2.0 tools such as social media sites, wikis

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and blogs that promote user-generated content and participatory culture in learning, it helps students to collaborate in the learning process with peers and helps them to establish a stronger sense of learning community in which they feel more engaged in learning and participate more willingly. Also, in order to ensure that autonomous learning is conducted more smoothly, Davies et al. (2020) shared more specific support that teachers can provide for students: *“using consistent deadlines and task patterns; creating familiarity with learning tools and online LMS system through, for example, step by step written instructions or video guides; ensure contingency submission mechanisms are available and clearly explained; and provide clear guidelines in terms of deadlines, weekly tasks workloads and expected time commitments; using specific weekly checklists that double up as reflective self-evaluation tasks to increase learner agency”* (p. 45). This series of support ensures clear instructions for students, facilitates autonomous learners’ needs of being self-monitoring and self-reflecting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continuing Professional Development

As mentioned earlier in the discussion section, e-tool and online pedagogy training for teachers is considered a challenge for technology enhanced learning. In terms of e-tools, the Sino-British university has already provided various support for teachers, and it is further recommended that more support such as university-wide sharing of research-informed guidelines for online teaching practices, university-wide conference sharing good practices, and also having tutors participate in online courses by the foreign partner university’s e-tool training workshops would further benefit teachers (Davies et al., 2020). Besides e-tool training, online pedagogy training via communities of practice and peer sharing would benefit teachers. Schmid (2017) has further explored the practice of CALL teacher education from a sociocultural perspective and suggested the design and implementation of the training program within the social and educational contexts of teachers. Schmid (2017) proposed the model of CALL teacher education that involved ‘situated learning’, peer-assisted collaboration and reflective practice, which encouraged teachers to apply learned knowledge to the immediate teaching context. This rationale was also shared by Hubbard and Levy (2006) who suggested the necessity to connect CALL education to authentic teaching settings as well as by Whyte et al. (2014) who argued to design a contextually embedded training program to respond to teachers’ pedagogical needs in their teaching contexts. Similarly, Li (2017b) proposed a collaborative dialogic approach when new ideas or innovation is introduced because teachers’ interaction and collaboration with each other can help them make links between

the content of learning and their everyday practice. Moreover, the crucial role of genuine collaboration between novice and expert language teachers and their correct understanding of their roles in the training program was emphasized by Schmid (2017). Accordingly, a community of practice and mentor-mentee style professional development training, reflection and discussion would improve teachers' pedagogical knowledgebase while this community would also provide teachers with emotional support during difficult times, reducing their feeling of stress and chaos that was mentioned in the earlier result section.

Leadership

As for leadership, empathetic and forward-thinking managers mentioned in the earlier result section is again crucial. Specifically, it is recommended that the value of shared responsibilities for working together towards institutional goals should be adopted and communicated. An inclusive culture where voices were heard and respected promotes the collaborative efforts across the institution for long-term development (Li and Morris, 2021). With that said, clear and early communication of plans of actions to tutors and students is also essential during the pandemic to reduce anxieties and to ensure all stakeholders are aligned together (Davies et al., 2020). Counseling services to provide emotional support for students, faculty and staff can also be added during the pandemic period: services ranging from anonymous formal online services to live one-to-one counselling sessions via video calls, and one-on-one or group meetings with senior university leadership and departmental directors help teachers to be more aware of the institutional activities, and thus increase certainties and reduce negative emotions (Davies et al., 2020). As for continuous professional developments, the institution could enable staff with specific skills sets to lead training in a continued training series (Li and Morris, 2021). Specifically, professional development programs could offer training for online learning, management skills, research skills, or curriculum development skills. As earlier mentioned, a sociocultural approach that highlights collaborative learning and applying knowledge in the immediate teaching context can be adopted in professional development programs (Schmid, 2007). For the issue of increased student numbers due to the massification of higher education, the institution could proactively approach and collaborate with department staff who demand more English for Specific Academic Purpose (ESAP) skills taught in their discipline-specific modules, and such adoption of the Content and Language Integrated Learning approach not only benefits students' learning but also reduces the institution's pressure from low EAP teacher headcounts. As for staff departure and its related issues mentioned in the previous section on challenges, the institution could approach local elementary or secondary schools to negotiate discounts or

benefit packages for mid-professional staff's children, and in fact, the institution has already collaborated with a few schools, and more could be aimed. The human resources department in the university can also improve work effectiveness to help overseas expatriate staff to come or return to work in China more speedily and more smoothly. Understanding that expatriate colleagues who have not returned home to visit for a long period of time, as mentioned earlier, the institution could also offer them to work as online teachers for finite periods overseas to ensure they have personal needs met while also keeping remaining in the institution. Specifically, as raised in the result section, Hyflex teaching that requires teachers' contact checks for both online and onsite simultaneously is challenging, so one solution was to split the learners and contract specialist staff to teach online, who might do so remotely themselves, meaning expatriate staff could take extended breaks and visit family and friends without unduly long hiatuses.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has considered staff perceptions of the working reality English educators are faced with during the 2021-2022 academic year. It has drawn on the experiences of educators at a specific case study institution, namely a Sino-British one based in China. Adopting a qualitative study design and interviewing eight practitioners, the results from semi-structured interviews suggest that for EAP teachers in a time of technology enhanced learning a transition has occurred from pre-pandemic to today, a time in which the challenges of the pre-COVID-19 era now reside alongside the challenges that the pandemic has presented. Some of these are global issues, such as how to best integrate technology and deal with new teaching norms and disruptions, while others may be more localised on a national and institutional level and include working around growing student numbers and expatriate departures, which taken together can stretch resources. The findings also suggest that while technology enhanced learning requires training for students and teachers, and although technology is tied with uncertainties such as internet connectivity failures, it creates the benefit of increased learning autonomy for students and enhanced creativity for teachers to better design materials. The research also provides recommendations regarding technology enhanced learning, large student numbers and expatriate staff departing: Firstly, to create communities of practice or mentor-mentee training programs to help teachers learn, reflect and apply learned skills in their immediate teaching context; Secondly, for large student numbers, adopting a blended onsite and online approach to reduce the need of high head count, and possibly adopting a CLIL approach when EAP teachers collaborate with departmental staff for students' major courses, and thus reduce the number of EAP teachers demanded for a separate

EAP module; Thirdly, additional leadership training is needed to ensure that the institution is open to opinions and communication, and human resources management can further improve or expand its work to ensure a smoother visa application process for expatriate staff, better compensation package for staff's children. Meanwhile, management can help create more tailored work responsibilities for expatriate staff who are in need to return to their home country while can also perform teaching online; this would help to retain staff instead of having them leave definitely. With that said, more research is surely needed to explore further about online teaching and management during the pandemic.

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APPENDIX

Interview Guide

[01] What experience have you had teaching EAP?

[02a] What was teaching EAP like before the pandemic?

Prompt example: curriculum, materials, delivery and assessments

[02b] What benefits and challenges did EAP teaching at this time present to you?

[03a] What was teaching EAP like during the pandemic?

Prompt example: curriculum, materials, delivery and assessments

[03b] What benefits and challenges did EAP teaching at this time present to you?

[04a] What is teaching EAP like now?

Prompt example: curriculum, materials, delivery and assessments

[04b] What benefits and challenges did EAP teaching at this time present to you?

[04c] What support, if any, would you like to cope with the new teaching norm?

[05] Are there any tips you could share with other practitioners concerning how to successfully teach EAP today?

Chapter 10

Writing Instruction in English for Academic Purposes Classrooms During the COVID–19 Pandemic: A Review of Current Evidence

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The shift from face-to-face to online/blended teaching forced by the COVID-19 pandemic has given rise to studies of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) instruction during the pandemic, but few have explored EAP writing instruction. This chapter aims to synthesize the current evidence on EAP writing instruction in higher education during the pandemic and to identify the challenges and opportunities presented by such instruction. A total of 189 papers were identified in the literature search. After screening, 13 studies were included in the review. Their results indicated that, in general, writing instruction was conducted satisfactorily during the pandemic, and writing instruction was delivered more effectively than speaking and listening instruction in EAP classes. The opportunities and challenges of writing instruction were similar to those experienced before the pandemic. Planning, activity design, and the provision of feedback will remain key factors in EAP instruction after the pandemic and require continual improvement.

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INTRODUCTION

Writing is a major part of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and an important skill that students need to develop for success in higher education. A language teacher must be able to teach writing effectively (Hyland, 2021). EAP teachers and scholars have worked on various aspects of writing pedagogy to satisfy students' needs and enhance their academic writing skills. Some have investigated different approaches to teaching writing, such as genre-based writing (Hsu & Liu, 2019; Nagao, 2018; Worden, 2018) and source-based writing (Ansas & Sukyadi, 2019; Doolan, 2021; Phillips Galloway et al., 2020; Wette, 2019 & 2020). Others have studied the integration of corpora and data-driven learning in writing instruction (Ådel, 2010; Anthony, 2019; Charles & Frankenberg-Garcia, 2021; Flowerdew, 2010).

Universities worldwide were forced to shift their usual teaching and learning practices from face-to-face to remote and online, or blended, delivery amid the COVID-19 crisis that began in 2019. This abrupt change complicated pedagogical processes and posed challenges to EAP writing teachers, as previous writing instruction mainly involved engaging students in intensive disciplinary literacy practices (Fang, 2020; Schleppegrell, 2013) and providing prompt in-class and continuous feedback (Koh, 2017). While research studies of EAP writing instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic are emerging—such as those of Sheppard (2021) and Xu (2021)—they lack review and evaluation components. This chapter aims to synthesize existing evidence to systematically explore the challenges and opportunities presented by EAP writing instruction during the ongoing pandemic. Two research questions were formulated as data-collection guidelines to ensure the relevance of the studies to this review.

The research questions are:

- (1) What types of data were gathered about EAP writing instruction in higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- (2) What challenges and opportunities in EAP writing instruction in higher education were brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic?

This study significantly contributes to the field as there is a real need to consolidate lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic to improve writing instruction. A review is an effective method of consolidating previous study results. This study could facilitate a discussion beyond the topic of computer-assisted learning and help university administrators, course designers, and teachers determine how EAP writing courses can be offered after the pandemic ends.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Challenges in EAP Writing Instruction Before the Pandemic

Writing in English has been considered a benchmark for success, competence, and progression in academia (Hyland, 2021). To increase students' and teachers' mobility (Lek, 2014) and global institutional status (Jenkins, 2011), universities that adopted English as a medium of instruction (EMI) have ensured the provision of effective EAP courses and support (Davies et al., 2020). In the EAP sector, writing has been recognized as an "extremely challenging" task for English as a second language (ESL) writers (De Silva, 2015, p. 301). Previous studies, to be discussed in the following paragraphs, thus placed much emphasis on the effectiveness of utilizing varied journal approaches and strategies to improve writing. However, it would be beneficial to focus more on the challenges involved in the instructional process to increase the effectiveness of writing instruction.

According to Graham and Macaro (2007), the most common difficulties that EAP researchers (mostly teachers) face in learning teaching strategies are the time needed for the training, teachers' and students' perceptions of the training, and teachers' lack of familiarity with the training instructions, strategies, and material. De Silva (2015) described a 24-week instructional cycle for training students to use writing strategies that employed writing goals set by student writers at the beginning of the training. After the training, the students had significantly improved their use of writing strategies and performed better in their writing. Hsu and Liu (2019) designed a 13-week workshop that blended English genre-based writing instruction (GBWI) with an online writing tutorial system—namely, EJP-Write (p. 100)—and combined peer review with discovery-based learning approaches (Flowerdew, 2015). Graduate students from nine humanities and social-sciences fields attended the workshop to improve their use of genre and language in the Introduction and Method sections of their theses and the structure of the sections. Their performance did not improve significantly, and they reported that the EJP-Write system did not meet their needs and expectations for peer review and discovery-based learning, although they agreed that GBWI had some benefits. The comparison between the success of De Silva's (2015) training of writing instructional strategies and the failure of Hsu and Liu's (2019) workshop on writing strategies for students suggests that the quality of instructional planning and activity design affects EAP writing instruction effectiveness.

Koh (2017) studied how two different automated writing evaluation (AWE) system application types—noncontinuous and continuous feedback—affect the improvement of writing performance to determine suitable methods (in terms of frequency and timing/writing stages) to provide instant AWE in process-based

writing pedagogy (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). Her findings show that students who received continuous AWE feedback did not find it a distraction as they wrote. Their final written works were significantly better than those of the students who received noncontinuous feedback, particularly in grammar and content. Students welcomed the immediate language-related feedback offered by the AWE system. For instant writing feedback to function effectively within the framework of process-based writing pedagogy, Koh (2017) suggested that EAP teachers make AWE feedback available at appropriate frequency at suitable writing stages.

Nagao (2018) used a genre-based approach to teaching and learning cycles of text-based writing (with a focus on argumentative essays) to raise genre awareness and knowledge of English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) students. She found that this method was potentially successful in enhancing students' awareness of the structure and interpersonal meaning in writing the genre. However, Worden (2018) found that novice EAP teachers needed to develop a certain level of genre-content knowledge to capably apply genre-based pedagogies in writing instruction and familiarize with the writing strategies and materials for an effective interpretation in classrooms (Graham & Macaro, 2007).

Overall, these studies of writing instruction in EAP highlight the importance of careful instructional planning (De Silva, 2015), suitably designed materials and activities (De Silva, 2015), appropriate and prompt feedback (Koh, 2017), student perceptions and engagement (De Silva, 2015; Koh 2017), and teachers' familiarity with teaching materials and genres (Worden, 2018). These studies also reflected a trend toward using language-assistance applications to facilitate EAP writing instruction (Hsu & Liu, 2019; Koh, 2017).

Challenges in Teaching EAP During the COVID-19 Pandemic

In coping with the unprecedented spikes of COVID-19 cases, higher-education stakeholders faced challenges while also discovering opportunities. Universities globally took emergency actions to prevent the spread of the coronavirus on campuses while maintaining the continuity of students' learning. Transitioning all teaching and learning activities from face-to-face to remote and online or blended modes of delivery was the biggest challenge for universities and EAP practitioners. Institutional support and guidelines are essential, especially in times of crisis (Davies et al., 2020; Turnbull et al., 2021). However, given the emergent nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and the lack of a guiding model, it is understandable that the guidelines provided by universities changed rapidly and communication regarding coronavirus information and corresponding teaching and learning arrangements was sometimes ambiguous (Davies et al., 2020). Additionally, EAP teachers were unfamiliar with online teaching and generally not very technologically literate; their workload—due

to the need to modify course plans, materials, teaching preparation, and outcomes assessments—increased; and they felt distressed about the interruptions to their relationships with students (Lo & Yunus, 2021; Sultana, 2021). These difficulties accumulated, causing stress, anxiety, and confusion, which may have affected their focus on teaching (Davies et al., 2020; Sultana, 2021).

To replicate physical classroom delivery in virtual space, many universities deployed existing learning management systems (LMSs), such as Blackboard, Moodle, and Canvas, and adopted video-conferencing tools with collaborative functions, such as Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom (Kohnke & Jarvis, 2021; Lo & Yunus, 2021). LMSs, designed mainly for asynchronous use (Ngom et al., 2012), have served as auxiliary online-learning platforms to share course material, provide feedback, and coordinate assessments and forum discussions. They have been used to facilitate blended learning and instruction, supplemented with synchronous video-conferencing tools in contexts not limited to EAP (Davies et al., 2020; Turnbull et al., 2021). Zoom has become one of the most in-demand online synchronous learning and conferencing tools due to its user-friendly and immersive features. Its collaborative functions—namely, annotation tools, polls, breakout rooms, and video and screen sharing—have been useful in facilitating second-language learning and instruction through real-time interaction (Davies et al., 2020; Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2020; Turnbull et al., 2021). Other collaborative tools used in EAP writing during the pandemic, such as Google Docs, have been effective in enhancing English writing quality and skills during online peer discussion (Lo & Yunus, 2021).

Nonetheless, there were challenges in using online teaching and collaborative tools. Some EAP teachers were poorly prepared for online instruction and had low technical literacy, and some students had limited access to online learning tools because of constraints in internet connectivity, mobile data packages, technology facilities, and home learning environments (Davies et al., 2020; Lo & Yunus, 2021; Sultana, 2021; Turnbull et al., 2021). These obstacles affected the communication between teachers and students and among student peers, and they eventually reduced students' engagement and motivation in online learning of EAP writing (Kohnke & Jarvis, 2021; Lo & Yunus, 2021; Sultana, 2021). Students who managed to cope with the increased autonomy of online learning and were highly motivated to maintain their progress outperformed those who lacked motivation and needed teachers' monitoring. This led to a widening of the student achievement gap in English writing, which is a problem that teachers have to resolve (Davies et al., 2020; Kohnke & Jarvis, 2021; Lo & Yunus, 2021).

Pandemic online EAP instruction also presented opportunities. Davies et al. (2020) suggested that increasing departmental meetings could strengthen EAP-specific cooperation and support, and tutoring groups and online discussion forums

could be formed in more than one time zone to avoid isolating teachers who are in different time zones than the majority. Groups and forums enable EAP teachers to exchange experience and seek timely advice, which could reduce stress and help them maintain instructional quality in online teaching environments. Davies et al. also called for institutions to support EAP by providing clear and detailed guidelines of best practices in online teaching and educational-technology services, forming large EAP teams comprised of management teams liaising with all instructors (p. 42–43), and inviting material designers to prepare LMS-hosted resources for students (p. 43). Lo and Yunus (2021) recommended the continual integration of collaborative tools into online English writing instruction to produce effective English writers. Teachers agree that the shift to online learning offers opportunities to innovate and develop teaching practices to assist learning (Kohnke and Jarvis, 2021). In an echo of Lo and Yunus (2021), they reported that the use of collaborative tools, especially Google Docs, encourages collaborative learning among students and helps teachers to give instant feedback in EAP writing classes (Kohnke and Jarvis, 2021).

Most of the earlier pandemic studies focused on the challenges of emergency remote teaching (ERT) or online teaching in general EAP contexts. They offered few details on EAP writing instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic. This chapter reviews the challenges in EAP writing instruction during the pandemic and searches for ways to improve EAP writing courses and prepare EAP teachers and students for the post-pandemic future. The next section of this chapter describes how the authors/researchers conducted the literature search, extracted data, and analyzed the data.

METHODOLOGY

Overview

The researchers collaborated on the literature search and data extraction. The team first searched for the studies and then extracted their details (demographic information, research questions, methodology, and major findings). Next, the major findings extracted were coded using a qualitative content-analysis approach to identify the opportunities and challenges presented by writing instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic. Discrepancies in the literature search, data extraction, and theme identification were discussed and resolved.

Search Strategies

Between February 1 and 4, 2022, the researchers conducted a literature search with Google Scholar, followed by a journal-specific search of 26 major journals devoted

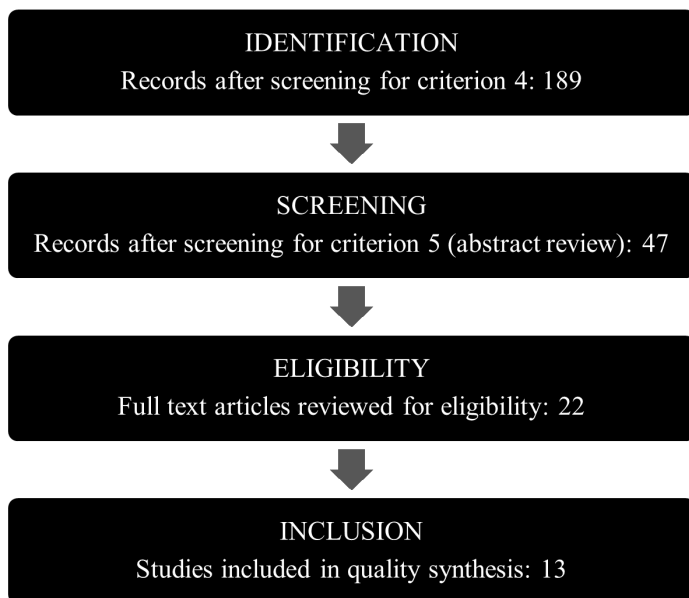
to the teaching of writing journals. These journals were identified by conducting a search in Scimago using the keyword “writing.” Within Google Scholar and the 26 journals, a set of keywords was used to identify relevant studies: [“writing instruction” and “higher education”] and [“COVID” or “pandemic” or “coronavirus”]. This initial search yielded a total of 189 papers.

The following inclusion criteria were applied to the papers that were identified: (1) studies conducted in classrooms affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, as stated by their authors; (2) EAP studies conducted in a tertiary education setting (including undergraduates and postgraduates); (3) studies that described writing instruction in some detail; (4) studies published in reliable sources, such as peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, authored books, dissertations, and conference papers; and (5) empirical studies. Articles were examined to identify more related studies, but the studies identified in that way were not included in this review. After applying these inclusion criteria, 14 studies were identified. One of the 14 (Xu, 2022) was removed, as Xu’s (2021) and Xu’s (2022) studies were conducted in comparable contexts and had similar themes, but the former included a qualitative perspective, and the latter did not. (See Figure 1 for the flow diagram.)

Data Analysis

After the studies were identified, data analysis was conducted. The researchers extracted details of all of the studies and compiled a table for further assessment (see Tables 1a and b in Appendix 1.) The researchers agreed on the table’s contents before proceeding to the next stage. If they disagreed on the table’s content, they discussed and resolved the disputes based on the evidence in the articles being reviewed. Then, both researchers analyzed the data with the agreed-upon table. This paper adopted a five-step qualitative content-analysis approach that has been widely used in analyzing qualitative data (see Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). The five steps are as follows: the research team (1) reads and rereads the paper to better understand it; (2) the team identifies key themes concerning (a) the types of studies that were conducted and (b) the key strengths/weaknesses/opportunities/challenges identified in these studies; (3) the team codes and labels these themes as “strengths,” “weaknesses,” “opportunities,” and “challenges”; (4) the team further classifies these themes into subgroups; and (5) the team assesses and regroups these subgroups. This study did not utilize any professional coding software. Only Microsoft Word and Excel were used because the researchers considered them convenient and effective for online collaboration (due to COVID restrictions) that involved coding text in an online document. The researchers believe that the use of typical office software rather than professional coding software did not affect the validity or reliability of the results. The results are reported and discussed in the next section.

Figure 1. Flow diagram for study identification



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

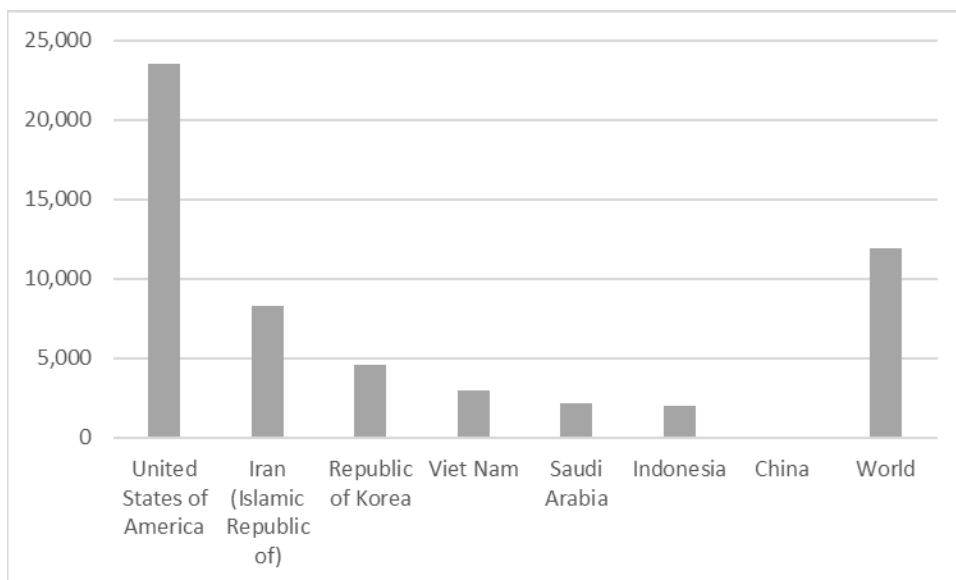
Overview: Demographic Information

The researchers identified 13 papers in this review and gave an identification number (i.e., 1 to 13) to each paper as listed in Tables 1a and b in the Appendix. Four studies were conducted in the US (4, 5, 7, and 10), and two each were from South Korea (1, 2), Vietnam (6, 12) and Indonesia (8, 11). The remaining studies were conducted in Iran (3), Saudi Arabia (9), and China (13). Other than the US, most of these countries did not have high numbers of cumulative COVID-19 cases (per 100,000 people), according to the World Health Organization COVID-19 Dashboard (Figure 2). It also is interesting to note that the researchers did not find any studies conducted in some developed countries, such as Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom. It is possible that studies of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on writing instruction are still in progress and will be available soon from a wider range of contexts.

Overview: Research Context, Design, and Methods

Among the 13 studies, 61.5% took a student-only perspective, 23.1% a teacher-only perspective, and 15.4% considered both teacher and student perspectives. Seven

Figure 2. COVID-19 cases: Cumulative total per 100,000 population (World Health Organization, 2022)



studies (approximately half) focused on complete online delivery and five involved an emergency shift to online delivery. The remaining studies examined blended learning courses. Three studies evaluated university teachers (1, 4, and 10). The other studies examined undergraduate EFL courses (2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12, and 13), postgraduate students (11), or both undergraduates and postgraduates (8).

Most of the studies, whether of students or teachers, adopted a cross-sectional approach to writing, but one study employed a longitudinal approach (4). Surveys were supplemented with interviews (3, 7, 8 and 9), writing tests (6), reflective journals (6), and observations (7). Most of the studies (1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12) were relatively small ($n < 100$). The study with the largest sample was study 4, which included 438 English teachers.

Although undergraduate English classes could be large, the smaller-scale studies identified in the current study were not a surprise. It is possible that many research activities—for instance, recruiting participants—were affected by social-isolation measures or the extraordinary workload necessitated by the emergency shift to online teaching. Additional studies, such as Kohnke and Har (2021), that treat the first year of the pandemic may be published in the future, research conducted during a later stage of the COVID-19 pandemic may capture different lessons to be learned. For example, the earliest studies may best capture the initial stages of the pandemic, shortly after universities had transformed their teaching and learning activities to

meet regional challenges, whereas later studies could deal with the experiences of students and faculty who have become acclimated to online learning and social distancing. Studies from both stages will offer important evidence, but the earlier studies could better prepare teachers and universities for future unexpected shifts to online teaching.

Overview: Studies' Foci

Although all of the studies reviewed were related to writing instruction, some discussed writing instruction in language courses (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 13), and others examined writing instruction in writing courses (2, 7, 9, 10, 11, and 12). Among the studies that addressed writing instruction in language courses, two were conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic but with a more specific focus: critical-thinking skills (6) and written corrective feedback (13).

Among the teacher-based studies, two were concerned with the workload (4) and stress (10) experienced by teachers due to online teaching, and the remaining study emphasized online teaching strategies (1). The student-based studies examined various aspects of emergency online teaching: students' attitudes (9), learning needs (11), impact on writing performance (3, 12), and stress (5). Some studies specifically examined online teaching with virtual learning environments (2), students' interactions (7), and synchronous online discussion (8) in writing courses.

Conversely, many studies concerned generic aspects of emergency online teaching and learning, including attitudes, impact, and features of learning environments (e.g., virtual learning environments; online discussions). Almost all of the studies were published in 2020 and 2021, which suggests that the research they document might have been conducted in early 2020 at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The exceptions were studies 4 and 9. Indeed, the authors of five of the studies reported that they had recently experienced emergency transitions to online teaching (3, 4, 5, 9, and 12). A majority of scholars (e.g., the author of study 3) were interested in emergency teaching due to this transition, and they might only have had the capacity to explore key aspects of teaching and learning (e.g., attitudes and impact) and collect readily available data. Future studies could investigate more specifically certain aspects of emergency teaching, such as innovative practices in emergency teaching.

Having analyzed the demography, context, design, methods, and foci of the reviewed studies, the authors discuss the opportunities and challenges of writing instruction in language courses and writing courses in the following subsections.

Opportunities and Challenges of Writing Instruction in Language

Though some of the studies (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 13) concerned language development in general, some insights on writing instruction may be gained from them. Most COVID-19 pandemic studies call for more support for teachers (Davies et al., 2020), but study 4 calls specifically for more disciplinary support for literacy courses as typical ERT teaching methods, such as video lectures and readings, are difficult to employ successfully in writing courses. Studies 1 and 5 found that students developed better writing than speaking skills during online teaching because they typed more than they spoke during synchronous classes, and they actually ‘wrote’ more during synchronous classes than in face-to-face classes. Study 8 suggests that synchronous online discussion is effective in facilitating writing skill development, including spelling and grammar. Study 1 suggests that the enhancement of typing skills encourages the use of technological tools, such as Google Translate and Grammarly.

Numerous studies suggest ways to plan writing skills development. Study 13 reminds practitioners that online interactions and collaboration can be limited by students’ writing proficiency and that teachers have to be mindful of this in choosing the strategies used to facilitate writing development. Study 1 also argues that carefully planned activities are keys to effective instruction, including paragraph/essay writing activities. Study 3 suggests that the challenges of effective writing instruction include not only lessons on planning but also giving students adequate feedback and assistance and immediate answers to their questions.

Opportunities and Challenges in Writing Courses

Online communication during the pandemic required that writing be used for a wide variety of purposes, from helping other students to resolving problems (12). Students may be more willing to voice their opinions during an online writing class than in a physical writing class (9). Study 11 found that the genre and process approaches, which were popular in writing classes before the pandemic, worked well in an online classroom. In two studies, students reported improvements in their writing (9, 12), especially in spelling, grammar, and other metacognitive writing strategies (12).

Study 10 offers an extensive list of strategies designing better writing courses but many of the strategies, although effective, are not exclusive to writing courses (for example, focusing on pedagogy instead of technology, building community, and handling logistics). Study 12 suggests that teachers should help students to be more conscious of their target writing tasks when completing assignments online. Study 7 proposes that writing teachers design in-class writing or free-writing tasks for students to do as a preparation before class discussions, which offer flexibility that

accounts for different students' interaction preference. For instance, a flip approach that allows students to utilize both preparation time at home and synchronous class time. Study 2 echoes what other language teachers, such as those in study 3, suggest: that feedback is the key to success in online writing tasks. Students will find the task (and the means through which it is delivered, such as the LMS) useful if they are given thorough feedback. The implications of the current review and the authors' recommendations are discussed in the next section.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The studies reviewed paint a more promising picture of writing instruction than EAP teaching in general. Writing instruction became more effective during the pandemic because students were required to write (or type) more during classes—especially students who were shy of speaking out loud. Students now have more opportunities to achieve a wide range of learning and teaching outcomes through writing. Because students must write frequently during online classes, they become accustomed to using applications that assist them in the writing process (such as Grammarly or Google Translate). While the use of these applications in writing development is controversial (e.g., Parra G. & Calero S., 2019; Stapleton & Leung, 2019; Tsai, 2019), their use can foster student engagement during classes, which in turn enhances writing instruction.

Using some of the writing instructional strategies that worked well during the pandemic can help novice writers succeed, though they are not, of course, a guarantee of success. Although these approaches were challenged by previous studies on a variety of grounds (such as Jwa's (2019) study on learning transfer), these approaches (viz., tailormade LMS-based materials, process writing approach, genre-based approach, real-time teacher-feedback, and individual project-based assessment) seem to fit well with the online LMS-based academic writing classes reported in study 11. The results in the current review may imply that these formerly controversial approaches to the teaching of writing were revisited during the pandemic and now are considered innovative.

The opportunities and challenges reported in the reviewed studies are generally similar to those identified in past studies on EAP classrooms before the pandemic. This introduces opportunities for EAP writing teachers to enhance their teaching in the post-COVID era. Careful planning and design of activities and feedback were found to be important to the success of writing instruction during the pandemic; these skills can be further improved. First, planning can be completed at two levels. At the instructional level, teachers should be better equipped technologically and pedagogically. They should have a contingency plan to transform face-to-face

teaching into online teaching in emergencies. This could mitigate the stress reported by teachers and students in studies such as 5 and 10. At the institutional level, university administrators should prepare teachers and students both technologically and pedagogically to teach and learn in an online context. Second, the careful design of activities is vital. Teachers can learn from the pandemic to determine how assignments can be scaffolded in online and offline contexts to facilitate better learning outcomes. Before the pandemic, face-to-face teaching prevailed. The pandemic offered opportunities for teachers to consider other options for activity design, including online synchronous or asynchronous sessions that could allow teachers to deliver activities with better outcomes. Third, feedback was important before the pandemic and was critical during it; thus, feedback should continue to play an important role in writing instruction in the post-COVID era. While giving thorough feedback is essential (2), teachers can use various feedback methods to achieve this purpose. These can include not only face-to-face discussions but also online tools such as rubrics and media comments. Multidimensional feedback can enhance the quality of writing instruction.

CONCLUSION

This chapter aims to evaluate the current evidence related to writing instruction in English during the COVID-19 pandemic and identify the opportunities and challenges it presents. The thematic analysis will provide insights into the development of writing instruction beyond the pandemic. Writing instruction, in general, was conducted satisfactorily during the pandemic, and writing classes were delivered more effectively than other types of English classes, such as those involving speaking and listening. Many opportunities (e.g., the genre approach to writing instruction) and challenges (e.g., giving effective feedback) are similar to those presented before the pandemic.

This study suggests that careful planning of courses and activities and adequate provision of feedback will continue to be key aspects of post-pandemic EAP instruction. EAP writing teachers should strive to improve their performance in these areas.

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APPENDIX 1

Table 1. Extracted details of research studies on EAP writing instruction during COVID-19

Paper identification number	Paper	Journal	Country	Objectives	Key focus
1	Bailey & Lee (2020)	<i>Computer-Assisted Language Learning Electronic Journal</i>	South Korea	"To help newcomers overcome the steep learning curve associated with computer-assisted language learning (CALL)" (p. 176) To map "expected benefits, challenges, and strategies of implementing an online EFL course among teachers with different levels of online teaching experience" (p. 176)	online teaching experience
2	Copeland & Franzese (2021)	<i>Korean Journal of General Education</i>	South Korea	To "understand EFL student attitudes towards using a virtual learning environment (VLE)" (p.215)	student attitudes, technology use and acceptance, virtual learning environments, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)
3	Derakhshan (2021)	<i>Journal of Teaching Language Skills (JTLS)</i>	Iran	To "probe the effect of emergency distance education (EDE) on the language skills of Iranian EFL students" (p.41)	Emergence Distance Education (EDE), English language skills
4	Griffiths et al. (2022)	<i>Community College Journal of Research and Practice</i>	USA	To "examines [the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the workload], and the working conditions and practices of English faculty at two-year colleges" (p. 60)	faculty workload, pandemic teaching
5	Hartshorn & McMurry (2020)	<i>International Journal of TESOL Studies</i>	USA	To "better [understand] the effects of the pandemic on [ESL] students and [TESOL] teachers [in terms of] stress levels, learning and teaching English, and remote instruction" (p. 140)	online teaching and learning, Intensive English Program (IEP), stressors
6	Nguyen & Nguyen (2020)	<i>Universal Journal of Educational Research</i>	Vietnam	To "the critical thinking ability of Vietnamese EFL university students and its relationship with their writing argumentative essays" (p. 5972)	critical thinking, argumentative writing
7	Peck (2021)	<i>Computers and Composition</i>	USA	To "[examine the] tensions between affordance and practice in synchronous video courses, exploring how and why students participated and interacted in certain ways in these courses" (p. 1)	online writing instruction, synchronous video, discourse analysis
8	Rinekso & Muslim (2020)	<i>Journal of English Educators Society</i>	Indonesia	To "investigat[e] EFL university students' perceptions and challenges on the use of synchronous online discussions" (p. 155)	synchronous online learning, EFL
9	Sheerah et al. (2022)	<i>Arab World English Journal (AWEJ)</i>	Saudi Arabia	To "investigate the teachers and students' perceptions of the emergency online learning process, especially for intensive English writing Courses" (p. 64)	online learning, intensive English writing course, Intensive English Program (IEP), student perception, teacher perception
10	Sheppard (2021)	<i>Composition Studies</i>	USA	To understand "writing instructors' experiences [in terms of] 'workload increase' and 'professional development' in moving teaching online during the coronavirus pandemic" (p. 60-61)	online writing instruction
11	Sundari & Leonard (2021)	<i>Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan</i>	Indonesia	To explore the students' learning needs for the development of "Moodle LMS-based EFL materials for [a university] academic writing course" (p. 140).	EFL academic writing, LMS, material development
12	Tran & Nguyen (2021)	<i>AsiaCALL Online Journal</i>	Vietnam	To "explore the influences of technology-based communication on either students' writing performances or their perceptions towards the new teaching method application" (p. 54)	technology-based communication, LMS, EFL writing
13	Xu (2021)	<i>The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher</i>	China	To "explor[e] Chinese university students' orientations towards written corrective feedback (WCF) and their use of self-regulated learning (SRL) writing strategies in online English writing courses during COVID-19" (p. 563)	written corrective feedback, self-regulated learning, EFL writing

Chapter 11

Why Professional Development Is the Key to High Quality Provision in EMI Higher Education EAP in the Age of COVID-19

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce readers to some of the ideas behind why professional development is essential for best quality provision in EMI higher education EAP courses. The chapter begins by discussing higher education, EAP, and professional development before focusing on the role professional development plays in ensuring EAP courses are as well designed and delivered as possible. It also goes on to consider some of the challenges education providers face in ensuring that high quality PD is available to EAP teachers before considering ways in which it can be provided even when circumstances are taxing.

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INTRODUCTION

The English for Academic Purposes (EAP) profession of a decade ago was a very different proposition from the one of today. One reason is due to technological advances which have supported a general move towards increased distance learning opportunities and online teaching norms. Another reason relates to the upheaval the COVID-19 pandemic created which necessitated an almost immediate and very painful shift to Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT). Then, EAP was still primarily delivered in a traditional classroom setting with technology used as a teaching aid for projecting PowerPoint slides in a manner not too dissimilar to the way in which overhead projectors had displayed handwritten notes a decade beforehand. However, in 2022 teaching now takes place, through necessity, by a combination of online and onsite delivery methods. Staff now deliver courses from any number of locations around the world as time zones, once a serious constraint, now prove little more than an occupational inconvenience on a professional scale. The COVID-19 pandemic has also led to other industry changes, such as greater refinement and additions in the area of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Given that the potential developments of emerging industries, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), may be a disruptive force to traditional teaching approaches and employment, and with global uncertainties only increasing the complexity surrounding the working reality of an EAP teacher, many tied to COVID-19, it is evident that greater support is required. What has not changed greatly in recent years is that the early career training that many practitioners engage with often still does little to prepare future EAP teachers with the skillsets and knowledge that they need when entering the job market (See Morris, 2015). It is for reasons such as these, alongside the pivotal role that EAP can play in many educational settings, that Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is so important. This is not only for practitioners, but also for ensuring that high quality pedagogic provision features in transnational and English Medium of Instruction (EMI) institutions. On that note, this paper draws on experiences and insights over the past decade from a case study Sino-Foreign institution in the east of mainland China to consider EAP, professional development and the impact of COVID-19. It assesses some of the challenges that the pandemic has presented in terms of EAP CPD, drawing on personal experiences against the backdrop of an evolving field, and also provides some suggestions for the future which should be of interest to educators, managers and policy makers.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education is widely regarded as a broad term for learning that takes place after secondary school (Britannica, 2021). Some of the deliberations that higher education customers may encounter include deciding on whether a more academic or technical orientation is desired or preferable for them, and the exact form this then takes. This is because different institutions, university schools and departments provide this delineation to differing degrees. This is additionally complicated because the choices are more extensive than they once were when clear distinctions existed between a university education and a polytechnic college training experience. Today, universities of technology are among the best in the world, and their focus on innovation, problem solving, and career directed programmes of study further blur the distinctions and are hard to argue against in an increasingly competitive global marketplace, albeit one that appears to be retrenching in some national contexts. It is also why new providers, such as some Sino-Foreign ones, have flourished in increasingly competitive markets (see Bothwell, 2021). Another consideration a potential higher education student faces when deciding what and where to study comes in the form of academic literacies and the barriers posed by subject specific terminology and vocabulary which many professions subsequently require to access them. This can be made more challenging when a learner must navigate this in a language which is not their first. Because of reasons like these, which take place in an increasingly interconnected (albeit more online at present) global environment, many students aspire to enroll on programmes that are international in orientation, and transnational providers can be very appealing as a result. Transnational Education (TNE) is defined as educational provision delivered by educational providers who operate in different national contexts (Hussain, 2007). The interest in this form of higher education stems from the demand for high quality international provision exceeding the available supply of offerings in many cases. TNE's ability to be delivered through an extensive range of programmes and platforms, such as distance learning courses, teaching partnerships, branch or offshore campuses, as well as MOOCs, adds to its appeal, as the British Council (2021) stresses.

In China, higher education is an important market sector as it helps to enhance global market competitiveness, as Du, Lai and Lo (2010) noted. This has meant that a variety of educational forms have opened nationally (La Rocque, 2007), with one such type being TNE providers. These international boundary crossing institutional entities supplement the domestic university provision. They also play an important role in modernising higher education more generally. In a reciprocal manner, saturated domestic markets, and potential overseas profitability, act as strong motivational forces for TNE institutions, as Vladi (2008) draws attention to. Demand for an increasingly international education has been driven on a macro level by a desire to

support national economic development (Cai and Hall, 2016), as well as increased global competitiveness (Trembath, 2016). On a personal level, it can be fueled by a domestic supply shortage, alongside a misalignment between provision orientation and individual family aspirations. This potentially, at least partially, explains why over a half a million students undertook overseas study annually, pre pandemic, as Morris (2021a) highlights. As a result, numerous countries and higher education institutions have found China receptive to importing high quality educational models, and many providers have subsequently embraced this opportunity, as Cai and Hall (2016) highlight, through strategic partnerships which facilitated market entry. This (partial, time bound) marketisation of higher education also led to numerous international institutions starting operations within the country, as Trembath (2016) notes, and running their institutions in a capacity not too dissimilar to multinational subsidiaries. It also led to over a thousand strategic alliances being in effect as far back as two decades ago, and these alliances encompassed various degrees of commitment (Morris, 2021a). Somewhat predictably, especially because of developments and COVID-19, higher education provision and market entry forms have been revisited more recently and, understandably, there has been a scaling back in terms of market entry ease as education more widely is revisited and reviewed.

The appeal of English Medium of Instruction (EMI) institutions, a potential feature of TNE, is understandable given how important the English language is globally for many in the employment market. In addition, domestically having some EMI providers is advantageous as many students have a desire to study overseas as Tan and Simpson (2008) note, but this may not always be possible, or in the best interests of all. The COVID-19 pandemic has only further accentuated the importance of having higher educational market variety domestically. Some well-regarded EMI providers in Eastern China include Duke Kunshan University, The University of Nottingham Ningbo (UNNC), New York University (NYU) Shanghai, and Xi'an Jiao Tong-Liverpool University (XJTU). Another benefit of facilitating the establishment of high-quality EMI providers is to support national development ambitions, which universities help to achieve as engines for development, a point to which Etkowitz (2008) draws attention. Pre COVID-19 academic mobility was also reasonably straightforward, meaning that staffing these universities could be done competitively from an international talent pool (Kissau et al., 2019), although maintaining the international to domestic staff ratio appears increasingly challenging given global travel restrictions and volatility at present. Even for staff who can and do make the move overseas, integration into the transnational EMI providers host locality is far from certain, and ultimately dependent on a range of factors as Johnson et al. (2016) illustrate, with Morris (2021a) stressing that a range of features will ultimately determine employment duration longevity.

ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES (EAP)

The EAP Foundation (2021) define EAP as English which is required to study or conduct research using the language. The EAP Foundation (2021) also highlights that it is often taught in the form of short pre-sessional courses, namely those that are designed to support longer term studies (such as at postgraduate level) but may also be taught as longer-term foundation year programmes and/or courses that run in parallel to programmes of study (in-sessional courses). According to the EAP Foundation (2021), EAP evolved in 1974 as a minor branch of a broader English Language Teaching (ELT) occupation and has grown significantly over the past half century as education became increasingly internationalised. EAP has also become more widely advocated at the tertiary level in China in the past decade as it is suggested that this will better prepare students for EMI study and professional communication as Cheng (2016) notes. In this work the case of a Sino-British institution in eastern China is considered. This is a relatively new institution which is already placing well in Times Higher Educational young world university rankings after just over fifteen years of operation. This period has also seen the provider offer over a hundred programmes to twenty-one thousand students who are being supported by approximately one thousand six hundred academic staff according to the institutional website in 2022. Because English is so fundamental to this EMI provider over two hundred staff support language learning endeavors as Morris and Li (2021) highlight. Considering some of the operational specifics, Hu and Morris (2021) considered the challenges of creating and running an embedded in-sessional EAP course during the COVID-19 pandemic. Morris et al. (2021) also discussed how EAP pathways in the same institution, along with English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses, were designed to support the syntegrative educational designs of a recently established institutional college. Syntegrative education is defined as an educational model which provides graduates with advanced disciplinary knowledge, relevant work experience and cross-cultural management, leadership and entrepreneurial skillsets for advanced employability competitiveness (XJTLU, 2022a). The fact that the latter situation noted by Hu and Morris (2021) also made more challenging by its inaugural year taking place during the global pandemic.

Morris et al. (2021) consider the difficulties that the pandemic has presented for higher education EMI staff from a range of job orientation perspectives including syllabus and materials designer, assessor, coordinator, administrator, manager and leader by discussing the various academic facets that had to be coordinated, managed, and delivered to the students. While academic and student mobility became increasingly difficult, student provision had to evolve through necessity, and the financial health of many institutions has been tested. The significant additional pressure on practitioners, as a new working norm derived from increased

uncertainties, has led Morris (2021b) to advocate a humanistic approach to leadership and management. It also complicates the challenges that were apparent as far back as almost a decade and a half ago when Puttnam (2009) drew attention to the need to change and reiterated this in 2012 with a vision for what was required to be competitive as a nation going forward (See Puttnam, 2022). Indeed, one of the features that Puttnam (2022) advocated back in 2012 was to have access to the best global talent. Today this best global talent is often also multilingual, multi skilled and high flexible. In countries such as China where English has been a pivotal aspect of the education system for decades to support economic initiatives (See Morris, 2021a) it is unsurprising that transnational EMI providers seek to ensure that students are as well prepared as possible to perform to the best of their abilities in subject disciplines in which academic literacies can be highly demanding and essential for success. This means equipping students with the language, academic, study and life skills that they will need in the future. That said, many of the educators who teach on EAP programmes face universal challenges, as well as some more unique ones as Li and Morris (2021) note. It is also why leadership often needs to be situational and flexible to circumstances, as Morris (2021c) highlights the importance of, and Li and Morris (2021) draw attention to when investigating language teacher needs at a Sino-British institution in China. In their research study, which considered 215 academic school staff, teaching, assessment, research, management and leadership were areas where additional professional development support was advocated.

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is the act by which individuals to learn and grow during their careers. It is achieved through a combination of approaches and techniques and there are a wide variety of ways in which this can be achieved. That said, it is a personal journey and as a result it is important for CPD to be tailored to individuals, because needs and circumstances evolve over time. Professional development is often not linear in nature or formal in delivery approach. Formal CPD activities can include initiatives like instructor led training, whereas informal professional development might include work-based learning which is undertaken either consciously or subconsciously. Self-directed initiatives can also form part of a CPD suite whether these are undertaken formally or not. To be successful CPD is also likely to involve changing perceptions as much as learning new techniques (Teräs, 2016).

Drawing on experience at a Sino-British institution before the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a multi staged approach which was utilised to support EAP teachers. This is important considering where many EAP and language teachers start

(see Morris, 2015), and it included, amongst other features, pre arrival preparation and familiarisation initiatives. It also encompassed an induction programme which utilised goal setting, reflective practice, lesson observations and peer support. In service CPD also was multi-faceted and included, amongst other aspects, SMART goals and target setting as part of annual PD review cycles, opportunities for engagement with Communities of Practice (CoP), mentoring, observations, student feedback and reflective practice, as well as leadership training. These were some of the in-house CPD activities staff had opportunities to engage with. Some of these were mandatory, others optional. External opportunities (both formal and informal) included conference attendance and participation, publication involvement, as well as enrolment on postgraduate courses of study. What stood out was the wide range of options available for educators from within the EAP division, the wider School of Languages and the institution, if not through direct provision, then endorsement. That said, uptake and engagement with the available opportunities, beyond the required, was sometimes limited. In addition, the way in which some potentially useful forms were used for evaluative purposes, rather than developmental ones (for example, considering student feedback), could be as inhibiting as it might have been beneficial for improving practice and enhancing job satisfaction and motivation, a point to which Morris (2021a) draws attention. Put simply, the options appeared reasonable, but the derived outcomes were seemingly more mixed.

Indeed, taking the same institution as a case study example in terms of CPD initiatives for EAP staff during the early stages of COVID-19 Li and Morris (2021) highlighted how the emergence of pandemic meant that one of the largest EAP providers in Asia was faced with unprecedented challenges. Practitioners at the time of writing in 2021 highlighted that professional development in certain areas was pressing, with technology enhanced language teaching, (online) assessment, research, and leadership and management areas of concern and interest. Li and Morris (2021) went on to discuss the PD initiatives that these same EAP practitioners had been involved in and with over the past half year, highlighting that informal activities, such as peer dialogues and reading, proved helpful alongside formal offerings which included short courses, organised mentoring, peer observations and PD events. Li and Morris (2021) also drew attention to the impact COVID-19 had on language teachers' changing needs when an immediate transition from on-campus to online teaching was necessitated. This also transpired during a period of institutional evolutionary development as Morris (2021a) drew attention to which accentuated the challenges.

EAP, CPD AND COVID-19

Challenge 1 Onboarding: The first set of challenges an EAP teacher or provider may face can exist when an EAP practitioner joins a provider with little or no EAP CPD provision which is more likely to be the case in an institutions formative years. This is likely to be more of an issue in newer institutions which are preoccupied in other operational areas and prioritising what to focus on and when, but COVID-19 is also highly disruptive in this respect as well. One difficulty is that newly employed EAP teachers join with very different backgrounds, experiences and needs. A relatively recent postgraduate, assuming that a masters level qualification is an employment entry requirement as it is for many at the case study institution, may only have a couple of very basic years teaching experience behind them, and limited academic knowledge in many areas. As a result, what they will need is a lot of pedagogic support and guidance on arrival. This is if they are to subsequently thrive rather than survive as Cowley (2013) draws attention to with early years professionals. In contrast, an experienced practitioner transitioning from a different educational context may well have simply taught the same course for years on end. They too are going to need support in adapting to the new context and teaching and learning environment. This can happen when practitioners move between Sino-Foreign or domestically situated institutions. Even if their background is more diverse and richer in some respects than their recently graduated counterparts, adapting to a new context takes time, as Morris (2021a) draws attention to, since EAP provision at one institution may be very different to that delivered at another. Revisiting the institutions mentioned earlier as illustrative examples, XJTLU and UNNC will no doubt teach their courses in very different ways even if both operate in a Sino-British educational environment. Taking XJTLU as an example on its own, the point in time at which a new member of staff also joins an institution can be telling in terms of what EAP provision looks like and what the underpinning rationale for this may be, as Morris (2021c) highlights when considering leadership styles and institutional development periods. On that note, joining an institution with little or no CPD systematic support can leave new staff feeling very isolated, and directionless unless they have given clear thought to their future career aspirations and have a plan in place to maximise their chances of success in this respect.

Induction Solutions: The first challenge considered a situation in which an EAP practitioner joins an institution with limited CPD opportunities. Perhaps the most obvious solution here is also arguably the most difficult to implement. To redress a deficiency an institution must provide what is lacking. Hiring an external CPD provider may not be an option in an educational context because, even with enhanced technology enhanced learning opportunities (See Morris, Xu and Li, In Print), as with learning initiatives, the training ought to be a bespoke package designed to meet

the actual needs of a given EAP provider based on their context and situation at a given point in time. The costs of such an approach might also be prohibitive if such an option exists and is accessible in the first place. This means that what is needed is either to entrust someone internally to build and run the CPD provision, perhaps in liaison with a Human Resource department or, alternatively to hire an external applicant to come in with the skillsets and expertise to devise the CPD programme. There are pros and cons to both approaches and what is the optimal approach will depend on who is already at the EAP provider, and what external hires can be brought in and whether this would be a primary job role remit, or an extension of an additional position, such as EAP tutor. Hybrid roles provide both possible advantages and disadvantages (see Remijan, 2014; Sahlberg, 2011a and 2011b). Building or developing a CPD programme is also a time intensive endeavour and requires a significant time investment for both the individual tasked with running this project and the institution which cannot expect immediate results if time is also being utilised in other operational areas by the same individual. Another option available, once a basic pre arrival routine and induction programme are established is to prioritise what are the optimal areas that staff need developing. Peltokorpi (2008) highlights the importance of pre-arrival preparation, while Wilkins and Neri (2019) stress the importance of support and Shoaib (2004) training. For example, if up skilling is essential, as it has been in the COVID-19 era with technology enhanced learning essential, as Harris and Perrin (2020) and Li and Morris (2021) allude to, then needs must and this ought to be a priority so that high quality provision is delivered to students and their experience is a positive financially valuable one. That said, once a situation settles, it is still essential to have a longer term CPD plan in place which aims to enhance the teaching and learning, quality assurance, student experience and staff job satisfaction.

Challenge 2 Bespoke Needs: A second set of challenges exists when an EAP practitioner joins a provider with CPD provision which does not really address their own individual needs. For example, an experience EAP practitioner with research ambitions may not have the support to engage with this. An aspiring EAP manager may not have the opportunities to take on leadership positions and learn. Alternatively, a creative materials designer may not be constrained by a prescriptive curriculum or pedagogic approach. This may seem like less of a problem than the first scenario in the sense that at least upon arrival staff have some support, which may be in the form of pre arrival preparation and induction training, alongside probationary observations. But EAP teachers when they begin a new posting will also need and benefit from additional training and support as they advance their professional careers at a given institution. It may be as simple as annual professional development targets that staff conceptualise and track their progress in. Irrespective of how this is established, it is important that a degree of personalised selection is

considered alongside institutional preferences. Take the case of an EAP provider which is prioritising research areas. Now consider that an annual performance review assesses performance in various job components, for example, teaching, research, and professional development and/or institutional service. It is clearly important that an EAP provider, if it aspires to be a market leader in certain areas, directs activities and resources towards this, such as AI and language learning if technology enhanced language learning has been identified as a target area. That said, if this does not align with existing staff strengths or interests a clear mismatch exists which can potentially lead to outcomes which may not be in the best or desired interests of both parties. Taking another step back momentarily and revisiting the first challenge examples in which practitioners at different career stages have different needs (Mak, 2010; Morris, 2021a), and considering the case of the experienced practitioner once more, they may not need or want the same type of support that a more junior staff member may prefer and require (See Cowley, 2013). For example, mentoring which may be highly beneficial in educational contexts, as Allan (2007) notes, for the younger educator may undesirably lead to conflict with the older teacher if personality types and compatibilities are not considered. Job shadowing might be highly valued by the younger staff member but frowned upon by the older employee despite having significant potential benefits to both. Leaders and managers will need to consider institutional goals (Banerjee et al., 2017) and have good interpersonal skills (Chaaban and Du, 2017).

Goal Setting Solutions: The next step comes once a CPD programme is effectively in place and functioning reasonably well. This is designed not only to support staff as they transition from one institution to another, but also ensure that the EAP provider is delivering to the level it expects to and paying customers' demand. At this point providers needs to enhance the offerings and consider individual needs and aspirations as Morris (2021a) suggests is essential as an element which will impact upon employee retention. For example, clearly all EAP teachers need to be reasonably IT savvy in the post COVID-19 teaching period when that finally arrives because technology is now fully embedded in Higher Education teaching and learning, and COVID-19 outbreaks may necessitated returns to fully remote provision. EAP teachers will also need to be trained to use whatever software and online delivery platform a given institution is using as Morris et al. (2021) draw attention to when discussing EAP delivery in support of syntegrative educational designs, or Morris et al., (2022) highlight. Furthermore, needs do not stop simply when immediate pressing concerns have been dealt with. In fact, once immediate generic, or group level, needs have been considered the next step is to consider how to support EAP teachers improve rather than simply survive as, again, Cowley (2013) advocates is important for teachers transitioning. Some institutions will consider mean average data derived from student feedback alongside qualitative insights

which might have been collected through a series of open-ended questions. They might then consider this in tandem with peer lesson observations and individual SMART goals targets which have been set after agreement with a line manager. This is reasonably comprehensive, and at face value does appear to blend institutional needs with individual aspirations when implemented effectively. The catch is how the data is subsequently interpreted and used and, in some cases, whether the exercise is useful at all. For example, goal setting is only beneficial if the goals are pitched appropriately and enable practice to refine and enhance undertakings, and for this to happen it needs to be more frequent than annually, as the work of Ericsson and Pool (2016) would suggest. This also means that time and trust are important, as Sinek (2017) advocates, in any manager employee dialogues which can be a challenge given power differences and personality considerations (see Morris, 2021a). Another consideration is EAP teacher aspirations. It is important to challenge and reward driven productive staff, and provide opportunities for them, but also not to punish or overlook EAP educators who may be brilliant in the classroom but have little research interest outside of it. Career track routes (see Pennington, 1995) and training ought to be possible for all, and CoPs can be very useful in bringing staff together in relatively safe learning and dialogue spaces with less pressure attached to them. Indeed, technology and video archiving has made all of this both easier and more challenging in some respects.

Challenge 3 Entrenched Practice: The third set of challenges exists when an EAP practitioner joins a provider in which established CPD offerings are either outdated or not functioning the way that they should to get the best out of staff. This may be because practice has become embedded and entrenched or, alternatively, that macro contextual developments have evolved to a point that practitioners are out of touch with the working reality. It used to be mooted that technology enhanced learning alone was going to be the educational game changer as industry entered the fourth industrial revolution as Harris and Perrin (2020) noted when discussing language learning in a higher education EMI setting. COVID-19 ushered this era in at a speed and on a scale which was unprecedented, and for which many institutions simply were not ready because the infrastructure demands, such as mass upload capacity, were too great. Consequently, providers then struggled, as Li and Morris (2021) have drawn attention to. Indeed, in both the work of Harris and Perrin (2020) and Li and Morris (2021) one area that language teachers, and EAP practitioners, struggle with is the fact that many practitioners are not ready for the technological requirements of teaching today, and Kessler (2012) notes how many training programmes do not fully embed this pedagogic feature and working reality necessity in their provision. An associated challenge can also be when technology training is not geared to actual situational demands, which can vary between institutions and areas within a specific institution. It is for reasons such as this that Harris and Perrin

(2020) advocate that CPD programmes provide opportunities for equipping staff with industry 4.0 skillsets. That said, they also need to be bespoke in nature. It is also why preparing EAP teachers to be ready for (technological) change is important as Kessler and Hubbard (2017) draw attention to. EAP teachers in this COVID era need to be equipped with the skillsets for mixed reality interactive teaching in an era of disruptive technologies, as Harris and Perrin (2020) note. This preparation better ensures that EAP practitioners are more likely to be future ready, with technology a means to an end (Jensen, 2019). Indeed, the current period of online remote learning in China in 2022 is evidence of this need.

CPD Reflective Practice: Over time it is very easy for provision to normalise and become standard practice, and continuity is certainly important. For example, if an EAP teacher knows what is expected of them, especially following a period of upheaval, as occurred with COVID-19, this can be very reassuring. It might be as simple as knowing that each academic year or cycle, CPD SMART goals need to be set and (hopefully and barring extenuating circumstances which should be considered and acceptable) completed, lesson observations conducted and student feedback on taught courses collected. If annual or semesterly PD days or half days also feature, and CoPs exist, this can all be very empowering if the information which is derived and the learning which takes place is meaningful and reflected upon. Albeit with a degree of critical thinking and common sense applied, as students are often taught. Where issues can arise, and then need to be addressed is when practice becomes stagnant or takes a turn which perhaps was not intended. It is not difficult to foresee a situation in which sight is lost concerning what mean averages represent when comparisons between individuals and/or educational divisions takes place, but this can be very detrimental to CPD and teaching practice if test results are not being considered, and arguably this may not be desirable as it can lead to teaching to the test. On that note, it is essential that what is being provided CPD wise is re-evaluated reasonably frequently and there is reconsideration of how any initiatives in place are conducted. Staff feedback is helpful in this respect in much the same way that 360-degree evaluations can be insightful for EAP management. If staff are being assessed by students, peers and managers, EAP leadership can also consider adopting such a holistic approach to reviewing what is being done and why, because the impact of leadership, especially in times of crisis (such as COVID-19), can be significant. Another consideration for educators who find themselves in EAP leadership positions is mentorship, which can be beneficial both ways as the University of Southampton (2022) notes, alongside job shadowing. These are also positive CPD initiatives when entered into in a positive enquiry learning based spirit.

Challenge 4 Accessibility: A fourth set of challenges can exist when an EAP practitioner joins an EAP provider with extensive CPD provision but is hard pressed for time to make use of it, and/or it is unclear what CPD provision is best suited

to them. This has arguably become an even greater issue in an era of mixed reality teaching as Harris and Perrin (2020) draw attention to, which may also have to address what Jordan, Bai and Morris (2017) term the massification of education in certain national contexts. The time pressures upskilling requires, in a period of increased COVID-19 uncertainty, and at a point when student recruitment in contexts such as China is out growing staff recruitment, means that many EAP teachers may be facing time pressures with which previously they have not had to contend. In an era of ever great choice, which has been facilitated by more online educational opportunities and selections, this can present educators with such a daunting set of uncertainties that doing little beyond the required can seem like a wise survival choice. The problem with this option is that in a similar manner to how masters degrees are now almost replacing bachelors qualifications as the go to requirement for some desired entry level jobs (credential inflation), masters qualifications are now the norm for many EAP teachers. In a marketplace that is only going to become increasingly competitive as job applicants increase and technology replaces some educational aspects standing out from the crowd becomes increasingly essential. It is reasons such as these that the importance of CPD and mapped CPD aligned to longer term career goals, albeit potentially flexible and adaptive ones, take on an added degree of importance.

Systematic Hybrid CPD Provision: One of the significant benefits of enhanced access to new technology is that it has enabled CPD to be delivered in more diverse and extended ways than was ever possible in the past. For example, to learn previously and study for a masters or doctorate, or even a Cambridge Assessment Professional Development Qualification (PDQ), required a part time student to opt on to a distance or partially (time based) distance learning study pathway, at least in some cases. In others onsite attendance was still expected. Today learning can be attended in person, live online or at a later more convenient period with attendance and activity tracked and logged. It has become increasingly flexible, despite still being reasonably expensive in many cases. It is not a completely fool proof system for ensuring participant engagement, but it opens learning opportunities which simply did not exist previously which is why some higher education providers are now opening virtual, life long, learning malls (See XJTLU, 2022b). Another notable CPD opportunity that educators can consider, and institutions support when their own provision is limited or not comprehensive enough, is to support with financing and time opportunities to enroll on PDQs, such as those run by Cambridge Assessment, and Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (DELTA) courses. These are not the only externally accredited courses, but they are preferential ones for some practitioners and can blend both in house support and provision deftly with external assessment of learning, meaning that internal support can be more supportive rather than potentially judgmental and evaluative. As was noted earlier,

no two sets of individual needs or preferences are exactly alike. Systematic and standardised CPD provision is obviously important for quality assurance purposes in a range of teaching and learning areas. The fact that all CPD can now be archived and stored the same way a traditional library houses knowledge means that over time a through CPD repository can be established by almost all EAP providers which is important during COVID-19 remote learning periods like as is presently being experienced in China in 2022. It simply requires maintenance, development and refinement. Of course, data management and security are also important. This is especially true if personal records are going to be stored, perhaps in folders or files with limited accessibility. That said, access to any time anywhere CPD material could be a source of significant future market competitive advantage if the amount of information available is streamlined for ease of staff accessibility. Because many staff want to take up CPD opportunities for their own personal and professional growth it is also important that staff know what is well regarded by their institutions. It is also beneficial for all that within this preferential scope room also exists for personal interests to drive CPD initiatives. There is likely no compelling reason why this should not be the case in most instances, even in a more complex, fluid and uncertain working environment.

SUMMARY

Clearly EAP teaching is considerably different today than it was only a few years ago. Arguably, for decades technology played only a limited role in EAP provision as delivery modes for example were upgraded from OHP projectors to PowerPoint displays on projector screens. However, COVID-19 ushered in changes at a speed which was unprecedented and almost all educational providers and educators were unprepared for as the work of Li and Morris (2021) illustrates through considering a specific case study institution and academic school. It also did so in challenging global circumstances which are only just beginning to settle. If professional development was not already essential before COVID-19 it is now even more important because in an era of advanced disruptive technology in which practitioners can now work from anywhere at any time, and EAP provision is now far removed from the confines of the traditional classroom walls, practitioners need CPD to not only survive in today's new working world, but to stand any chance whatsoever of thriving in it. In higher education EMI institutions high quality international CPD for EAP practitioners is even more essential because shifting demographic expatriate/home national staffing ratios are also redefining workplace dynamics and practices as the impact of macro national immigration policies is now felt in education markets and by providers, and noticed by employees, students and their parents. Noting this and given the

challenges COVID-19 has brought to Higher Education EMI institutions and EAP providers and practitioners, this chapter has argued for the increased importance of providing high quality and systematic CPD programmes which are also tailored to individuals, because of the impact this ultimately has on educational provision across the board.

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About the Contributors

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