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Technological and Pedagogical Considerations in Supporting Electronic Self-Access Language Learning (e-SALL): In-Person Learning Practice in the Time of Crisis

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The COVID-19 pandemic outbreak has brought a significant impact on the in-person learning access to the on-campus Self-Access Center (SAC). Therefore, there is a need for an electronic Self-Access Language Learning (e-SALL) innovation to address the newly emerging issues in the field. This *perspectives* article suggests several ways of facilitating self-access learning using web-based technologies. It also includes some key technological and pedagogical considerations in providing in-person learning access beyond the school. We argue that the integration between a Learning Management System (LMS) as a web-based learning platform and the internet-based materials and resources will sustain the in-person learning practice from a lens of technology and the pedagogy of learner autonomy.

Review of Related Literature

Self-access (in-person) learning is defined as how individual learners interact "within controlled and/or uncontrolled learning" (Gardner & Miller, 2011 p. 78). Learner autonomy is closely related to self-regulated learning and emphasizes learner control and metacognition (Murray, 2014). The idea of proposing e-SALL is mainly due to the social distancing policy of learning and working from home in all levels of education in Indonesia and other countries worldwide. The notion of e-SALL is in line with the electronic learning environment system that helps the students regulate their learning through the implementation of an extensive monitoring system (Reinders, 2007). One practical electronic self-access project at the National University of Singapore (NUS) is called *e-daf (a virtual Self-Access Center)* and it introduces five essential design principles in enabling learner individualization (Chan & Kim, 2004). For instance, the application of *e-daf* for German as a foreign language can be found at the Centre for Language Studies at the National University of Singapore (NUS; http://akimisites.com/nusedaf/home.php). The system of *e-daf* comprises three

methodological principles, which are (1) learner centeredness, (2) task-based learning, and (3) process-orientation. The courses in *e-daf* include the lesson goals and objectives, podcasts, audio-video files for textbooks, and e-books. However, the construction of the e-SALL system must be guided by a technological and pedagogical framework in shaping the students' cognition (Lázaro & Reinders, 2006). The effective pedagogical uses of web-based technologies will allow the e-SALL managers to introduce an intervention to support the students' learning.

Practical Applications to e-SALL in a Vocational Higher Education (VHE) Context

Application 1: Learning Management System (LMS) to Facilitate e-SALL

Referring to the *e-daf* at NUS where the virtual SALL is hosted in its Learning Management System (LMS), a newly developed Moodle-based e-SALL was constructed to facilitate student self-directed learning (SDL) due to their limited access to on-campus facilities. Under the coordination of the language center, the authors initiated an e-SALL construction in early April 2020 just after the announcement of the pandemic outbreak. In this section, we would like to share some meaning-making processes related to the e-SALL project we are developing. Meaning-making processes can be defined as meaningful experiences in that it fosters the lesson-learned from the practice (Anas, 2019). It includes best practices, obstacles, and needs for the future development of the e-SALL. Yet, we developed a project called "e-Talk" based on Lázaro and Reinders's (2006) pedagogical intervention of learning support.

Table 1

Pedagogical Intervention Design of e-Talk

Pedagogical Intervention	Productive skills		Receptive skills	
	Writing	**Speaking**	**Reading**	**Listening**
Language learning materials	Authentic materials: resume, job application, business plan, business report, and relevant business communication documents	Non-authentic materials: Guided questions (iteslj.org), ESL conversation question, ESL discussion, and printdiscuss.com	Authentic reading materials: resume, job application, business plan, business report, and relevant business communication documents	Both authentic and non-authentic materials: Podcasts, TED Talks, YouTube
Language learning activities	Writing a resume, job application, a business announcement, business plan/idea using web apps.	Online Community of Practice (OCoP) via LMS-Google meet integration	Reading comprehension practice online	Listening comprehension practice online

Online language counseling	Online corrective feedback	Online interview, video conference	Online reading tutorials	Online listening tutorials
Need analysis tool	Online writing practice tools	Peer-analysis	Online reading practice/ applications	Online listening practice sites/ applications
Learner virtual training	Business English correspondence, e-mail writing, writing resume and job application	Business presentation, product description, describing trends	Business report, understanding business documents	Understanding business talks and presentations
Learning process monitoring tools	LMS activity monitoring	LMS activity monitoring	LMS activity monitoring	LMS activity monitoring
Assessment	Writing test	Speaking test	Reading test	Listening test

Table 1 illustrates the pedagogical intervention design of *e-Talk* that accommodates the pedagogical uses of web-based technology of both productive and receptive skills in English language learning. The language learning materials are similar to internet-based materials in that they include both authentic and non-authentic materials (Erbaggio et al., 2012). Authentic materials are sources on the internet that are not designed for teaching such as texts, poems, songs, movies, advertisements, and images. Non-authentic materials are the materials that are purposively designed for teaching such as ESL printable sheets, business podcasts, e-book, listening audios, and language testing. The sources are both free and paid versions depending on the owners of the materials. e-SALL managers should be very careful in selecting and using the materials in terms of copyright violation issues. The copyright infringement can be avoided by obtaining permission from the copyright owners or their agents if the materials require payment of licensing. If the sources are printable and free, the e-SALL managers should put a disclaimer regarding the selected materials.

In terms of meaning-making practices of e-SALL, we experienced two best practices, which are (1) student rate of participation monitoring, and (2) the affordability and accessibility of e-SALL. The student rate of participation can be monitored within the LMS system so the manager of e-SALL will be able to track user participation. Regarding the affordability and accessibility, the users can access the e-SALL course from home and with a low-cost internet service. On the other hands, we also experienced some obstacles that hamper the students from the actual use of e-SALL such as the absence of *Virtual Reality (VR)* software, the use of *Augmented Reality (AR)* for in-person learning, and the lack of financial support for online materials and resources. For instance, the use of VR in language learning is highly desirable because it can support learners' interaction and simulate real-life scenarios the learners are likely to encounter. There are several VR applications that e-SALL

managers can utilize such as Mondly, ImmerseMe, Crystallize, and Avakin Life. The example use of AR in language learning is Pokemon Go that allows the users to interact with the physical world around them (Kessler, 2019). The use of VR and AR in e-SALL will support the individualization of learners and provide interactive experiences among the learners.

Application 2: Online Community of Practice (OCoP) and Its Role in the e-SALL Practice

Online Community of Practice (OCoP) is a social learning process shaped by a group of people who have a common interest in a particular subject and they are willing to collaborate online using a virtual learning environment as the pedagogical tool and space (Kirschner & Lai, 2007). OCoP aims to support the students' individualization with online access to language learning practice (speaking practice) using a web-based application. One of the alternatives to in-group virtual learning practice is the use of *Google meet* to facilitate virtual learning interaction. The use of Google classroom as a pedagogical tool to support the student agency in an online community of practice is a strategy to promote the student online peer interaction (Mynard et al., 2020). To support the formation of an OCoP, several considerations fall within this scope, they are: (1) the selection of web-based technologies as pedagogical tools *(Google Meet, Zoom, Jitsi, and Skype)*, (2) the availability of online tutor or language advisor to facilitate the community learning, (3) the availability of digital learning modules and activity plan for online practice, and (4) institutional support for sustainable e-SALL. The following steps are the procedures for supporting OCoPs by integrating LMS (Moodle) with Google meet:

1. Create an e-SALL course within the LMS (*Google Meet* link)
2. The LMS administrator enrolls all active students to e-SALL
3. The e-SALL manager uploads the OCoP module and creates a weekly schedule. The idea of "one topic per meeting" will help the student focus on the gist.
4. The e-SALL manager assigns an online language tutor/advisor to handle (observation and counseling) the OCoP. We also involved the students in regularly organizing their OCoP
5. Students take part in an OCoP of their own accord (based on the directions in the module)

The language advisor provides a progress evaluation and feedback at the end of the activity.

The students' participation and motivation are pivotal in promoting their autonomy in language learning. At first, this OCoP intervention strategy was less attractive to students so an alternative pedagogical approach was needed. It was hard to increase student participation

without a "push" strategy design (Parsons & Warrington, 2020). It must be differentiated from an assignment because it has nothing to do with the enrolled subjects. However, participation in e-SALL is compulsory and automatically recorded in the LMS database. The function of the LMS is a student monitoring system that allows the e-SALL manager to track the activity logs of the participating students. The student can participate in the OCoP outside the LMS but it is difficult to observe the students' activities. The students who visit the e-SALL course must fulfill the digital attendance to claim their participation in the course. The LMS system will automatically record the activity log which can be used as a reference to monitor the progress of the participating students. The students who are not registered in the LMS will not be able to access the e-SALL course attached to it.

Institutional Support for Building the e-SALL Infrastructure

Institutional leaders or school managers are playing a central role in providing support for e-SALL developers through legal policy and financial aid. In terms of the policy, the school as an access provider to education must provide accessible educational services both offline and online. In times of crisis, policy-makers should take immediate action to continue serving the stakeholders by providing access to learning. For instance, encouraging the utilization of e-SALL to provide access to an e-library, a language resources repository, an online community of practice, and internet-based materials and resources is urgent and necessary.

In terms of financial support, the institution must provide support to build the e-SALL system such as providing hosting servers, and covering the costs of hosting fees, domain subscriptions, and the e-SALL managers. Besides this, the school must provide a budget for content, language testing, and academic tools/software subscription to allow the students to develop their autonomous learning skills. For instance, the e-SALL manager will need to subscribe to online content materials such as language learning e-books, printable materials, podcast videos, journals, and online language testing services to provide the student with online self-access resources.

Conclusion

The idea of e-SALL is to continue providing the students with self-access to online learning resources in this very urgent situation. The integration between an LMS and internet-based materials and resources is a practical way for e-SALL managers worldwide, although there are still many deficiencies in its implementation such as the low participation learners,

the lack of VR and AR technologies, and limited access to online materials and resources. The implication for further research and practice is to review the extensive studies on *Virtual Reality (VR)* for upcoming e-SALL projects using VR technologies. An OCoP is a type of a non-immersive VR that only involves a desktop computer allowing the users to go through the *Virtual Environment (VE)* with the use of a keyboard, a mouse, and a small computer screen (Parmaxi, 2020). Furthermore, we suggest further extensive study in the area of fully immersive VR for e-SALL development. To add, the use of *Augmented Reality (AR)* for e-SALL will contribute to the trajectory of self-access learning (Yang & Mei, 2018).

Notes on the Contributors

Ismail Anas is a researcher in the area of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), web-based technology in language learning, MALL, e-learning for language learning, EFL teacher identity, and digital literacy.

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Irmawati is a lecturer of English and a researcher in the area of authentic materials, online ELT resources, and gamification in ELT.

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