

Does Online Learning Work for International Students?

(A Case Study at a University in Thailand)

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Abstract—Online learning is a new global phenomenon during The Covid-19 Outbreak. Online knowledge, combined with the social media platform, can be useful in teaching-learning. Some countries are determining online learning, such as keeping social distances, keeping them healthy, and focusing on lessons and knowledge, not thinking about the Covid-19 virus, which is changing in many ways. This Research takes a sample of students studying abroad and stranded in their country who cannot return to university due to limitations on their borders. The participants come from six countries as international students. This method is class-based Research by interviewing students and analyzing their opinions on online learning. The researcher also uses the social media platform to explore how digital literacy practices can work on distance learning. Restrictions on distance, day-to-day interaction with a camera, and sometimes internet connections can be significant for online learning.

Keywords—online learning, international students, distance learning, digital literacy practices

I. INTRODUCTION

In the age of globalization, people cannot separate from online activity. They move into a comfortable zone in digitalization. Any action can be moving forward into a virtual moment where people can produce something online. There are sudden shifts in the education system's movement in 2020; because of the outbreak of Covid-19, the traditional method (FtF) should change into virtual action or online teaching-learning. That phenomenon can motivate some people worldwide to use the online application for many activities. The education system, which comes from traditional methods such as Face to Face (FtF) (Traditional method class), is now transformed into an online course. The new phenomenon defines the online system in many education systems to eliminate the spread quickly, so that's why online learning is suitable for all educational learners in many countries with the global pandemic. As higher educational institutions (HEI) 's priority and popularity continue to rise, researchers explore how to ensure online learning efficiency [1]. Motivation factors

are of great concern with the high degree of independence and self-management needed for online learning [2].

Online technology is being used by higher education institutions worldwide to enrich teaching and learning modalities and improve educational content access, both domestically and globally [3]. Every teacher can introduce online learning, especially during the Covid-19 outbreak, as anticipation of the virus spreading as human and local transmission. Online learning can have a benefit for students, especially while they are in the distance. It will be easier to keep in touch with people around the world. Online learning also has the disadvantage of internet connection; the signal cannot match the location. For some people to stay in the mountain or remote area with a problem with an internet connection, they need a more catching signal to stimulate the teaching-learning to make right in every condition.

Online learning can be useful for those with full supporting technologies, such as a desktop or laptop computer, internet access, and other device support. Online learning gives learners versatility in terms of where and when they learn. Students are granted greater discretion over when and how they complete course learning tasks, helping students who cannot attend conventional programs due to external factors (e.g., job obligations, family responsibilities, campus proximity) [1]. Self-efficacy in online learning is the awareness of a person's capacity to perform specific online learners' particular tasks [2]. A teacher's role in online learning cannot be underestimated in ensuring the quality of education [4]. The emergence of distance learning and online teaching has been heralded by many as the creator of new opportunities, particularly in higher and continuing education; option in a democracy is the world's coin [5].

The concept of online learning is education that occurs synchronously and asynchronously over the Internet and does not occur in a typical classroom. It can take the form of online videos, online learning materials, face-to-face meeting sessions, online interactive questions, quizzes, and practices [6]. It would be the opposite of students who have technical or

equipment limitations to facilitate teaching-learning. The essential role of running an online class could be the Internet access factor. The signal is affected by the position where they stay. It can be useful for people staying in the big city or capital city to run online classes. Still, it will differ from people staying in the mountain, remote area, or place without an internet signal. Information Communication and Technology (ICT) enables educators to monitor student rehearsal levels and knowledge in interactive learning experiences, promoting competent practice grounded in social work values [7]. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) significantly benefit online learning processes. As a common term, ICT refers to a wide variety of technologies, from online to offline, from hard to soft technologies [8].

Geography, finance, manner of thought, and actions can make a difference in the situation. More aspects of effective teaching-learning can be learned through online learning. Online learning is internet access and signal, but devices can be a significant problem if they do not own it. Successful online learning can be associated with economic issues. When students stay in the mountain or remote area, traditional methods or face-to-face still become effective. It is far from being linked to the Internet. The questions can be dragged out of this study:

- What factor can support online learning to be effective in teaching-learning?
- What digital literacy practices from distance learning ways do students get to enact online learning?
- How can students get successful teaching-learning with online learning?

The research analyzes how students act and behave during online learning. Successful teaching-learning can be from the teacher or the students themselves. Activeness will be the possibility of running online learning from a distance.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A. *International Students*

Teaching benefits from considering the types of students who are likely to participate, including their reasons for taking the course and demographics [9]. Students who study abroad, especially while learning International Business Management at an International College in Thailand. They are from several countries. But during global pandemics like this, they should study via online learning. International students stay in their country and learn from a distance. Mobility building is a flexible and provisional process that calls for a more thoughtful and essential post-human analysis of human technology experiences in learning activities and spaces [10]. In online learning environments, interpersonal skills and relationships cannot be wholly established [11]. Learning management systems allow the organizing of course materials by instructors [12].

B. *Digital Literacy Practices*

Online learning needs different skills and abilities than the classroom environment, from new communication styles to more sophisticated time management skills [13]. Students worldwide are hoped to run the digital literacy practices via social media supported such as WhatsApps, LINE, DingTalks apps, ZOOM meeting, Google Meet, Google Classroom, Wechat, and other platform supported. Those are essential to support students in Learning online. In utilizing asynchronous and synchronous capabilities, online platforms differ, implemented exclusively, or in combination (blended format) [14]. In synchronous (i.e., taking place simultaneously via a videoconferencing platform) classes, some connection elements carry over from face-to-face instruction. In an asynchronous course, educators might consider providing optional synchronous class meetings to allow students the opportunity to interact. If attendance is optional, the teacher can post a recording of the session for those who cannot attend [15]. Technological innovation has given multimedia support to the teaching faculty, changing how they interact with students, particularly with students who work, who are engaged in family needs, who live in rural areas or are far from an educational institution [16].

C. *Behavior in Digital Learning*

Teachers are actively learning the technology of the Internet. The quest for new approaches to matching technology's possible enhancement, while many studies have been done before, is not enough in this area [17]. Researchers have examined many facets of gifted education. Online learning utilizing reviews of literature and empirical research [18]; in both the FtF and the online classes, connectivity is a central component of the learning process. In FtF courses, teachers benefit from simultaneously getting students in the same room, providing a wealth of resources and opportunities for instructor-student and peer interaction [13]. Student involvement can be divided into cognitive, emotional, and behavioral business [19]. The faculty needs to be equipped with the expertise, skills, and tools to provide instruction in the online environment to teach online [20]. The faculty member should use the approach of getting students by encouraging them to respond to each story presented by their colleagues, share a description of their loss, and use discussion [12].

III. METHODS

In this research, I use some respondents from students in a university who participate in my class. There are six nations or countries to study at a public university in Thailand. They are from Mainland China, Cambodian, Vietnam, the Philippines, South Korea, and Thailand. They learn online by using Ding Talks Apps as conveniently. They start studying in July 2020 and finish in November 2020. There are 129 students in my class, but in this research, I take ten students who concern and have feedback about how effective online learning while they are stranded in their country. All students give some comments

and ideas related to online education that they have faced during the one-semester study.

IV. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Based on online learning research, I can learn how effective and work for students in a university, especially students who are still stranded in their countries, such as students in Mainland China, Cambodia, and Vietnam. They keep joining the class with the teachers in Thailand. First, we need to explore DingTalks App to support how online learning can work well for university students in Thailand.

A. What Factor Can Support Online Learning to be Effective in Teaching-Learning?

TABLE I. INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

No.	Name (Initial)	Gender	Age	Origin	Effective or not
1.	GY	Female	20	Mainland China	Both practical and ineffective depend on students and teachers' perspective
2.	HHD	Male	20	Mainland China	A little difficult to understand online class
3.	LH	Male	21	Philippines	It should be effective
4.	LP	Female	20	Cambodia	Sometimes boring and maybe not effective
5.	NNTD	Female	20	Vietnam	Motivated for learning
6.	RS	Female	20	Cambodia	Sometimes it is hard to understand
7.	RJY	Female	20	Mainland China	ineffective
8.	KK	Female	20	Thailand	Give some example of the effectiveness
9.	WYS	Male	21	South Korea	Convenient to learn from a distance
10.	JH	Male	24	South Korea	Enjoy online learning

Based on Table 1 above, I can collect some students' opinions about Online learning and find some online class clues. They were teaching from Thailand to their country. From the students' explanation, to answer the question about "what factor can support online learning to be effective in teaching-learning?", Some factors can be supported are the way how students learn from a distance, students need to follow good instruction from the teacher, teachers should give the excellent way to make happy in online learning, teaching and learning from a distance need trust, and innovation, between teachers and students, need to have good cooperation and no gap, teachers should no have high idealism for students, the teacher should give an excellent example for students to make a good discussion. Here are the students who will provide an opinion related to online learning:

1) *Students 1:* Online classes have both advantages and disadvantages. I think online courses' benefits are: first of all, students can freely arrange their time when there is no class, and they can have more time to study. Because if you go to school, you need to spend time dressing, and the round trip to school also takes time. But if you take online classes, you can save time to do other things. Besides, students can read the courseware in advance and study by themselves. Because the teacher will send the courseware to the group in advance, they can preview the knowledge to be told in the next class. In this way, it will be easier to understand what the teacher said and learn more solidly.

2) *Students 2:* In my opinion, although I encountered some difficulties in the initial learning process, the epidemic led to a new living and learning environment for me. Facing this new way, I think its opportunities are vast and valuable for me.

3) *Students 3:* I think online classes and physical classes can be effectively integrated. Teachers can innovate online courses by integrating lively discussions, games and ensuring something new every day. This way, we can always anticipate something different. And online studying does.

4) *Students 4:* Though studying from home feels a little troublesome to me, and there are still some advantages. For instance, I can stay home more with my parents, get to do some other work that I couldn't do when I was in Thailand, and mostly eat while having class. Not so many people have the same opinion as me; some may enjoy learning from home more than I do. That's why I think my opinion is just a general idea.

5) *Students 5:* During a global pandemic, Covid-19, not only me but also my friends, have to study online is very long. So, I have many ways to motivate, vision, spirit, and ambition in learning online like I have to make the schedule: start by sitting down with a planner and carve out study time. Make a weekly schedule and stick to it. Socialize: socializing with other students is a part of university life that distance learners can find difficult to access but should take the time for.

6) *Students 6:* As for my opinion, studying online is a bit hard for me, not the same as studying in class, especially with the internet connection. In my home country, the internet connection always got lost and slow; the electricity was often cut off, which disappointed me. Moreover, it is tough for me to study without going to a physical class and interacting with the professor or students. Especially when doing the classwork or the group work that teacher has set for us. Besides these problems, I also find that it's tough for me to ask or discuss the lesson with teachers; even the teachers provide many sources for us, but I still found it not that convince compare to study in the physical class. Also, I miss seeing my classmate at school.

7) *Students 7:* The classroom becomes online, so teachers have less control over you, and learning depends on your initiative. I know clearly that if I want to graduate as soon as

possible and get good grades, I must spend a lot of time studying, especially in such an environment that will make me slack off. I must learn to control myself more and overcome laziness.

8) *Students 8:* On the part of the teacher, there should be an instruction that draws the students' attention. There may be a discussion and exchange of knowledge during the study, such as having a game to answer questions to support learning and Teaching. Besides, it may be the introduction of experience that can be further developed in each subject or presentation, what students should know in a particular topic, etc.

9) *Students 9:* There are many disadvantages but also advantages. Because I can take classes in Korea, I can spend time with my family and friends and eat Korean food to my heart's content. You can also get up early in the morning, have a meal, sit in front of your desk, turn on your laptop, and prepare for class without having to go to school. But if it's too convenient, I become lazy. So, I hope that the time when covid-19 is over, and I go back to school and study with my friends will come again. And We have to make a small goal plan.

10) *Students 10:* Due to the pandemic of the COVID-19 virus, many schools offer online lectures instead of face-to-face classes. For a student who is about to graduate, I think it is an excellent opportunity to use his or her own time more freely in preparing for looking for jobs. I can't conclude that such pandemics are necessarily destructive because I can fully invest my spare time in the field I want to concentrate on after online classes. But it is indeed hard to focus in class.

B. What Digital Literacy Practices from Distance Learning Ways Do Students Get to Enact Online Learning?

From online learning, students also learn how they practice digital literacy. They are forced to use Ding Talks Apps for daily communication. Teachers teach them from Thailand, and they are staying in their country. DingTalk apps can help them in E-Learning, interaction, and communication with the teachers in Thailand. The students are feeling free to have good contact with the teacher. As digital literacy practices, students can read and write in English in digitalization. Teachers are comfortable sending some files and editing online quickly, if possible, below the DingTalks Apps (Figure 1).

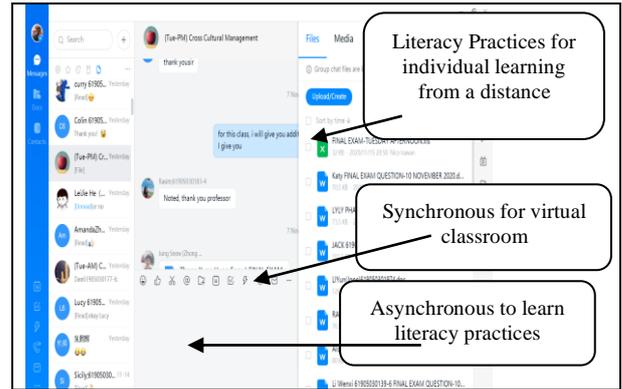


Fig. 1. Ding Talks apps.

Using the Ding Talks app, students can have good interaction with the teachers and friends. E-learning can be put inside the apps. Students can quickly assess some material from students directly, and the old chatting can be saved automatically. For students cannot join the class today, they can review by themselves.

C. How Can Students Get Successful Teaching-Learning with Online Learning?

Students can be active in studying even if they are in a distance; if the teachers give direct meeting, it means synchronous. Some students have opinions related to how effective online learning for students; some give clues that virtual meeting can be useful and positively impact every student. They can directly interact with the teachers; they can hold some discussion, among others. A virtual appointment can help students and teachers to make pleasing cooperation and participation. Students can ask directly to teachers if they think this subject is too complicated for them. Students are hoped to be active asking and question in the direct meeting (Online face to face). Ding Talks provide the virtual system for students as an online class meeting below (Figure 2).

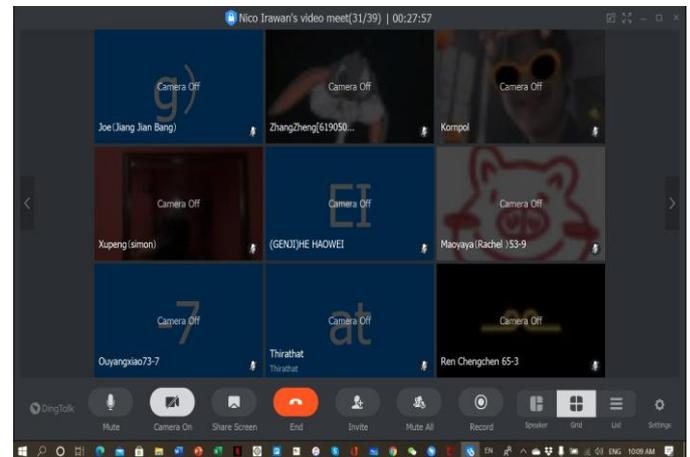


Fig. 2. Ding Talks for virtual.

Ding Talks Virtual can bring students to come closer to the teacher in teaching-learning. Virtual communication motivates students to interact with the teacher in any condition, they can communicate with the teachers while lessons are still running. A virtual way is similar to a regular meeting, but the situation can be different. The online discussion has similar action while students need to discuss with the teacher. Students can succeed in learning with the teaching as long as they give suitable teaching lessons well, innovative learning, and attractive.

V. CONCLUSION

Teaching and learning can be successful while teachers give more innovative, attractive, convenient, and easy-to-understand modules for students. Technology is just the media to bridge how students can be successful in learning. Technology cannot make students successful instantly. Teachers are the only motivator that can bring students to the right place. During the Covid-19 Outbreak, online learning is a new way and comfortable to use by everyone to keep teaching and learning. Some advantages and disadvantages create in online learning. The internet connection can be a problem while the signal is not running so well in teaching and learning; students feel bored while watching the computer screen; teachers are innovative. There is no discussion between teachers and students. Teachers only give assignments, but no give feedback from the result of the project. Those disadvantages can make online learning fail for students and not practical. It will be an opposite idea with advantages in online education while we are a teacher who creates some good innovation to students so that teaching-learning will feel fun and not dull.

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