




The Crucial Roles of E-Learning at Van Lang University During the Corona Virus Epidemic from 2020 to 2021

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Abstract. The paper attempted to investigate the roles E-learning plays in teaching and learning at Van Lang University during the Corona Virus epidemic from 2020 to 2021. This paper is conducted using quantitative methods with data drawn from published materials related to this study's subject. Besides, another source made up of personal interviews is investigated by the quantities approach. The interviewees are undergraduates whose major is English at the University mentioned. By using quantitative approaches, the study comes up with the crucial role of E-learning for lecturers and undergraduate students at the target university. Firstly, the paper gives a brief overview of the undergraduate curriculum of English majors. Secondly, the study elaborates on the opportunities and obstacles of E-learning at Van Lang University during the Corona Virus epidemic from 2020 to 2021. Finally, the study demonstrates the important roles of E-learning at mentioned University. Besides, the paper illustrates the chances of the online classroom for both teachers and learners. Also, the paper raises some solutions for mentioned challenges at Van Lang University.

Keywords: E-learning · Van Lang University · Corona Virus Epidemic · Role · Opportunity · Obstacle · Solution

1 Introduction

At the beginning of 2020, the respiratory disease (COVID-19) had a strong impact on all areas of social life. Especially, the education sector is one of the areas that are heavily affected. In Vietnam, many schools were forced to close to minimize the spread of the disease according to Directive No. 16/CT-TTG of the Government.

The replacement of traditional learning with online learning has produced many obstacles for lecturers and learners at higher education institutions in Vietnam. At the same time, this also creates many opportunities for E-learning to be developed, which has long been unfamiliar to some students in Vietnam. It cannot be denied that online learning is one of the most developed learning patterns in many countries around the world. However, there are many problems and barriers to this form. Thus, many researchers and educators have strived to investigate the negative factors to overcome the difficulties of this training model and improve the learning quality of this one.

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Therefore, this paper aims to use a quantitative research approach to identify the perspectives of undergraduate students and their future expectations of E-learning methods at Van Lang University. Furthermore, a better understanding of the pros and cons of E-learning can help designers of English curricula become more effective and English language learners become more successful.

2 Literature Review

Online training, also known as E-learning, is one of the most advanced educational methods that use modern information technology to connect learners and lecturers. Through E-learning, teachers can compile their textbooks in many forms, such as video lectures, images, and gamification. Transmit them and interact with learners via the Internet. Learners can choose courses with the most suitable learning method for themselves and, at the same time, discuss with lecturers through the online learning management system, which is a shortcut to LMS. E-learning online training is widely applied in colleges, universities, and businesses. Every individual and organization can set up a virtual school system (E-School) to manage and train staff and students only through the online training system.

Thus, it is understandable that E-Learning is generally a form of using the Internet to put technology into teaching and learning activities. However, Bates [1] found that almost educational scholars have refused to accept the synonymous use of the terms “E-learning” and “online learning” and encouraged the definitions of the development of more inclusive E-learning, such as “the use of new information and communication technologies in education”. E-Learning can be divided into many levels. The simplest is to upload assignments and lectures on a system that helps students access them. Consequently, E-learning uses the LMS (Learning Management System) online management system to help students and lecturers interact in two ways anywhere or to help students exchange ideas with each other at any time.

As for online training, which always emphasizes the ability to provide knowledge, teachers will directly build a lecture system and interact directly with their students to improve the quality of students. Hameed [3] also studied that E-learning is developing rapidly and favorably with the explosion of the Internet. It is a developing tool that uses advanced technology to teach higher education learning and teaching patterns.

Suresh Babu and Sridevi [2], E-learning is a formalized teaching and learning system with the help of electronic resources. It is also understood as knowledge transfer with support from the Internet. In this way, education is delivered simultaneously to a large number of recipients. Thus, the use of computers and the Internet is a key component of E-learning.

3 Methods

3.1 Research Questions

There are three research questions in this study as follows:

- a. What is the crucial role of E-learning for lecturers and undergraduate students at the target University, during the Corona Virus epidemic, from 2020 to 2021?
- b. What are the opportunities and obstacles of E-learning for lecturers and students at Van Lang University during the Corona Virus epidemic from 2020 to 2021?
- c. What are the chances of the online classroom for both teachers and learners at Van Lang University?

3.2 Participants

The study participants were 122 students who were freshmen during the 2020–2011 pandemic outbreak, meaning they are currently sophomores at the University. These students belong to the undergraduate program in the English language of the Faculty of Foreign Languages at Van Lang University.

3.3 Research Instrument

The instrument for this study is a questionnaire designed by Google Forms with 20 different items. The main items of the questionnaire were designed using a 5-point Likert scale which ranged from ‘Strongly disagree’ to ‘Strongly agree’.

The first 9 items passively expressed their views on online learning (items 1–9), and the next 5 (items 10–15) actively expressed their views. Other items are their feelings about online learning during the Covid-19 epidemic, such as their difficulties, their opportunities, and their future expectations about online learning for their major.

3.4 Data Collections and Analysis

The students answered the questionnaire during their English classes. They were guided by their English teacher, who explained clearly to answer the questionnaire as fully as possible. Then, the data and information collected from the questionnaire were synthesized and analyzed based on a 5-point Likert scale. This Likert scale is used to measure student satisfaction with online learning during the epidemic.

4 Result and Findings

4.1 The Crucial Role of E-learning for Lecturers and Undergraduate Students at the Target University, During the Corona Virus Epidemic, From 2020 to 2021

According to Suresh Babu and Sridevi [2], E-learning plays an important role in education because it can improve the quality of the learning experience and extend the reach of every lecturer and tutor. It can help remove barriers to learning and teaching achievement by providing new and creative ways of motivating and engaging pupils and learners of all abilities, enabling and inspiring everyone to attain their education potential.

Obviously, when the whole country faces the COVID-19 pandemic, we are almost completely paralyzed in terms of educational conditions. This is an unprecedented situation that has affected learners’ work. Learning at all levels stopped at that time. Online

training programs and courses were unavailable, teaching and learning were disrupted, and exams and assessments were pressured. This led to very difficult course completion. It goes without saying that when qualifications are delayed, it affects millions of learners' immediate and future careers. Hence, it can be seen that E-learning plays an important role in maintaining higher education, specifically in this study at Van Lang University.

4.2 The Opportunities and Obstacles of E-learning for Lecturers and Students at Van Lang University During the Corona Virus Epidemic From 2020 to 2021

The following tables are conducted in this research to investigate the opportunities and obstacles of E-learning at Van Lang University (Table 1).

There are several opportunities for E-learning for lecturers and students at Van Lang University during the Corona Virus epidemic, from 2020 to 2021. Firstly, when the epidemic was complicated, it was also the time when training centers and institutions had to be closed. Hundreds of thousands of students' learning, especially English learning, were affected and disturbed. During the current Covid-19 outbreak, it was almost impossible to go to offline classes. However, with online courses, you can rest assured that you can avoid traveling outside your home and still improve your English daily at home. Learners can interact and exchange directly with teachers during lectures like in traditional lessons through high-quality images and sounds without having to worry about disease infection. Above all, learning English online is the optimal solution, avoiding contact and causing cross-infection (Table 2).

Secondly, students no longer have to work hard in the sun or under the rain and rush to travel long distances to an English learning institution, but just sit at home or anywhere with a connected device. Especially, since traffic is often congested and difficult to travel like in Vietnam, online learning has another plus point that makes many people choose it. Besides, learning English online also helps students to be flexible in their time and actively adjust and arrange their study schedules to suit their work and other subjects. Learners are not afraid of being late to class or having unexpected work because when students study online, students can catch up with the lecture quickly.

Thirdly, to be able to learn English in the best way, storing study materials is essential. However, too many books and study materials are also annoying as searching takes time. When learning English online, all learning materials and lecture content will be stored and resolved on the Internet and technology platforms. We can search for documents and download lectures and lessons to our computer or personal phone to search and review without fear of losing. Even if you have important work during class time, you don't have to worry about missing the class because you can review the lecture content.

Regarding the obstacles of E-learning for lecturers and students at Van Lang University during the Corona Virus epidemic from 2020 to 2021, there are some points as follows. Students do not have the opportunity to exchange or interact directly with lecturers and classmates. Conversations through websites and software are often less lively and complete than face-to-face meetings. This will make learners and teachers not understand each other in the context of conveying the lesson's content. This may be better for a class with a small number of students. Instructors can have enough time

Table 1. Content, outline, and methods of teaching English courses online

Content of Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. The detailed course outline, textbooks/lectures/videos, and course materials are fully provided on the E-learning system.	4.1	0	9.8	52.5	33.6
2. The lecture content is updated and has practical relevance.	0.8	3.3	22.1	54.9	18.9
3. The content of the lecture creates interest for learners.	1.6	3.3.	27	49.2	18.9
4. Scientific and appropriate teaching methods make it easy for learners to absorb	1.6	0.8	34.4	18.9	44.3
5. Learners can be tested and assessed for their understanding of the lesson weekly	2.5	4.1	23	21.3	49.2
6. Learners are always supported and answered directly during and after school hours through forums, social networks, and email.	3.3	0.8	18	49.2	28.7
7. Instructors use applications proficiently to meet online teaching and exchange requirements.	2.5	1.6	13.1	58.2	24.6
8. Teaching-learning progress and assigned assignments are suitable for learners	1.6	3.3	28.7	46.7	28.7

to interact with students. However, this is quite a big drawback for a class with a large number of students. Some students do not interact with other students or the lecturer; instead, they just sit and listen passively from one side. Moreover, when students do not understand the lesson or grasp the content of the lesson, interacting directly with the teacher for answers will help them grasp the problem more deeply. This is especially true for English, a subject that requires a lot of guidance, correction, and instruction from

Table 2. The opportunities and obstacles of E-learning at Van Lang University

Content of items	Disagree	Agree
9. Do you lack personal devices or old devices that do not meet your learning needs?	79.5	20.5
10. When studying online, is your internet connection stable?	77	23
11. Does online learning make you lack / lose motivation to study?	63.9	36.1
12. Does online learning affect physical and mental health?	73.8	26.2
13. When studying online, do you encounter environmental noise/distraction?	45.1	54.9

experienced teachers. When learning English in class, different topics will be considered and evaluated from each student's point of view. Such direct communication with teachers and classmates allows each student to express his or her ideas clearly and then receive feedback from the teacher for improvement. Since they are familiar with talking and presenting their views directly in front of many people, students will be trained and gradually form the most natural English-speaking reflex, confidently handling common real-life communication situations. It can be seen that, although learning English online is easy to arrange, the outstanding effectiveness of face-to-face communication in class with teachers and friends in class is undeniable.

When studying online, students easily encounter the influence of many other factors such as games, movies, music, and Facebook that factors distract their focus on learning. Also, online learning is not suitable for those who are not proficient in computers or technology devices such as tablets. In addition, if students do not have self-discipline, which always needs a "push" from teachers and schools, the online English learning method is not the right choice for them. Last but not least, some limitations in the Internet connection quality are challenging for students, which is sometimes unstable. The limited online classroom space can disrupt the online learning session, making students easily bored and lost. Learning English online almost exclusively provides knowledge related to lectures, focusing on grammar, vocabulary, or English test tips. However, the content of the lesson has not created interest for learners. This issue is very important to affect the absorption of students. Many people easily give up because of the boring way of learning and the long learning path without direction.

Undoubtedly, learning theory but lacking a practical environment it is difficult to achieve the expected effect. Many people choose to learn English online and focus a lot on memorizing the theory of grammar principles. However, there are many students who, even though they know the rules of grammar, still cannot confidently fluently say sentences using those principles even though their vocabulary is not limited at all. You can hardly speak English naturally by just learning the principles without practicing using them fluently in practice. Online learning will limit opportunities and spaces for direct contact with teachers and other students and prevent reflexes from being maximized.

Not only students but also many lecturers face difficulties in the early stages of implementing online teaching, not only in terms of technology but also in the capacity

and teaching methods of the lecturers. Teachers are especially familiar with the teaching method with teacher-student interaction in class, so this change will confuse them when implemented.

4.3 The Chances of the Online Classroom for Both Teachers and Learners at Van Lang University

In the context of increasingly developing technology, online learning at Van Lang University can help students learn more. Like in traditional classrooms, students interact and exchange with teachers easily and conveniently.

Studying online at the same time gradually closes the English proficiency gap between big cities and provinces. This is also a chance for the target university to develop its institutions. If in the past, in rural and mountainous areas, there were not many English training institutions, especially international certificates such as TOEIC and IELTS. Then online learning can solve this problem. Currently, English learners across the country have equal access to quality knowledge and materials. As long as there are devices connected to the Internet, with online classes, learners can completely “bring the class home” and study anytime, anywhere, to improve their English level.

5 Conclusion

Govindasamy [4] studied that Higher Education institutions have been using e-Learning as a vehicle to solve authentic learning and performance problems. Other educational institutions are also jumping into the online teaching race simply because they want to keep up with the rhythms of other educational institutions. However, one of the most important prerequisites for the successful implementation of e-Learning is the need to carefully consider the underlying pedagogy of online teaching or how learning takes place online to ensure the highest teaching and learning efficiency.

In general, not much research has been done to investigate the difficulties and barriers of online learning in Vietnam. Meanwhile, online learning may have to continue to be maintained to ensure disease prevention or for other reasons in the future. Therefore, there is a need for more studies related to online teaching and learning to make suggestions to respond to the pros and cons of this online learning. Doing this will certainly ensure the effectiveness of online teaching and learning in schools.

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