

Senior and Junior Academics' Challenges and Strategies in English Language Online Teaching during Covid-19 Pandemic: Implications for Workplace Training

Faizah Abd Majid, Nur Rasyidah Ibrahim, Siti Nabilah Mohd Tarmizi, Ima Farzana Abd Rahaman and Nurul Syuhada Mohd Rashid

Faculty of Education, Universiti Teknologi MARA UiTM Puncak Alam Campus, 42300 Puncak Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v12-i8/14437>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v12-i8/14437

Published Date: 27 August 2022

Abstract

Covid-19 has taken the world by storm. Inevitably, the higher education landscape has also witnessed tremendous overhaul in the way education is delivered as students and academics are restricted from having the traditional face-to-face (F2F) classes due to the Movement Control Order (MCO). Needless to say, most universities have resorted to online learning considering the advancement of the technology in facilitating the delivery of the teaching and learning process. While both students and academics are thrown into the deep end of the pool as they grapple with the situation, much is yet to be known about the new norm. This paper aims to identify the challenges faced by the senior and junior academics and their strategies in coping with the demand of conducting their online classes, as an approach to identify their potential workplace training needs. Employing a case study design, a total of six academics participated in a semi-structured interview. The participants for the interview were identified through a purposive sampling technique and were categorized as senior and junior academics based on their years of teaching. Based on a thematic analysis, several challenges and strategies were recorded. Several implications were derived from the salient findings, which include potential training areas and workshops on teaching and assessing Listening and Writing skills via online as well as future research.

Keywords: Challenges and Strategies, Covid-19 Pandemic, Online English Language Teaching, Senior and Junior Academics, Workplace Training

Introduction

The education landscape has seen a tremendous overhaul in terms of its delivery system over the last two years since the announcement of the Covid-19 pandemic. An American business magazine, 'Forbes' has reported that due to Covid-19 pandemic, online learning has shown a

rapid growth in less than a year's time (Ilker, 2020). The Covid-19 pandemic, which began in March, 2020 has indirectly required learning institutions to switch to online platforms in replacing the traditional classroom delivery as the Movement Control Order (MCO) restricts any face-to-face (F2F) classroom delivery. Numerous online learning platforms available nowadays such as Coursera and OpenLearning have used the opportunity arising from the Covid-19 pandemic by providing reliable platforms for university courses to be offered online. The spirit of democratizing education became even more obvious as more and more ivy league universities participated in providing their courses available online for the consumption of the public (ibid.).

Like any higher education institutions across the globe, Malaysian higher education also faces the consequences of Covid-19. Electronic and online platforms are used extensively and a much bigger scale following the Covid-19 pandemic. Sani (2020) states that universities are making full use of their online system in conducting classes and provide all the required learning resources. While some universities invest various efforts in transiting to online learning, there are also some universities which considered the need to concentrate on remote learning as there are university students who had difficulties in accessing the internet or own relevant resources and facilities to support online learning. University students in Malaysia are diversified in terms of their socioeconomic status and locality. While their socioeconomic status could influence their ability to own devices and gadgets, their locality suggests differences in the degree of accessibility to the internet which all in all support online learning during the pandemic. Indefinitely, teaching and learning activities gaps would affect students unevenly especially those of disadvantaged background (Hamid and Khalidi, 2020).

Besides the students, the university management also suffers financial pressure as student enrolment is delayed during the pandemic (Choong, 2020). Despite the financial pressure, the universities need to improve their existing student support system during the trying time of the pandemic. As the Covid-19 pandemic hit the higher education by storm, it is expected both students and university management are grappling to survive. However, a greater concern that should be considered by all academics is the students. According to Burgess and Sievertsen (2020), Covid-19 gives huge interruption on education. University students are severely affected as they face great challenges on following lessons and taking assessments. Hence, relevant initiatives are needed to confirm the quality of the students' online learning. One approach is to look into the academic factors such as their challenges and strategies in conducting online classes.

Considering the potential effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on higher education, the purpose of this study is to identify the differences in perceptions between senior and junior academics' teaching experiences during the Covid-19 Movement Control Order (MCO). In particular, this study seeks to investigate the academics' teaching challenges and strategies during the pandemic Covid-19 MCO as an attempt to imply their workplace training needs. Hence, the research objectives for this study are;

- To identify the challenges faced by senior and junior academics in conducting online classes.
- To explore the strategies used by senior and junior academics in conducting online classes.
- To identify relevant workplace training based on the academics' challenges and

strategies.

In the context of this study, senior and junior academics are determined through the number of years they have taught in the university. For the purpose of this study, junior academics are defined as those who have less than 5 years of teaching experiences and senior academics are those who have more than 5 years teaching experiences.

Challenges of Online Learning

One of the main challenges of online learning is the access to the internet and technology. Students with poor internet access struggle to participate in online learning. According to Li and Lalani (2020), this gap can be seen from the differences between countries in Europe and Indonesia in which 95% of students in the Europe countries possess computer for their schoolwork as compared to students in Indonesia in which only 34% possess computer as recorded in the OECD data. This indicates the variation of computer or laptop ownership is dependent on the socioeconomic status of the family or the country as a whole.

The same goes to the privileged and the underprivileged students. In the Malaysian context, 37% students do not possess appropriate devices needed for online learning (Hamid & Khalidi, 2020). This forces the academics to find other resources and alternatives in providing the materials and teaching contents to their students. Poor facilities or relevant devices is discouraging for both academics and students and it eventually leads to unnecessary anxiety in the teaching and learning process. Additionally, both academics and students alike could have high level of anxiety due to technology unfamiliarity and lack of resources supporting online learning (Aydin, 2007).

Another challenge is the effectiveness of the online learning across the diversified groups of students. As students of higher education need to be exposed to relevant skill sets such as teamwork, leadership, critical and creative thinking, the opportunities for collaboration and engagement is of prime importance in any lessons. Academics need to consider the use of collaboration tools and engagement methods that promote inclusion, personalization and engagement. However, as the pandemic Covid-19 took the academics by storm, many of them who were complacent with the traditional classroom strategies grapple their way in finding relevant online teaching strategies in promoting collaboration and engagement among their students. The sheer lack of awareness of the potential online tools and applications further worsen their agony (Ferralazzo, 2020). A new term 'panicgogy' was coined in describing teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic as academics needed to find alternatives to their teaching routine by considering the availability of their students' existing resources which are mostly limited.

Strategies in Online Teaching

In view of the term 'panicgogy', Kamenetz (2020) states the importance of understanding the students' practicalities and their physical readiness. He further states that there is also a need to consider the suitability and limitations in employing certain teaching strategies during the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, the first strategy that could be employed by academics is to be compassionate with their students' contexts; the resources available and what the students could do with the resources. Mokhtar (2020) concurs with this notion as claiming the importance of lecturers to offer moral support to the students and to check on their students' available resources.

Next, frequent feedback becomes the other most obvious strategy in online teaching especially during the pandemic. As feedback has always been seen as important, it has become even more important during the pandemic since students are following the lessons remotely and alone. The frequent feedback received from the lecturers could enable them to feel they are on track and progressing well along with the rest of the class (Kamenetz, 2020).

Cooper (2016) has listed several strategies in promoting effective online teaching. According to him, academics need to first engage with their students by making the students feel his or her virtual presence in the classroom. By being present, the academics are signaling visibility and availability to their students.

Next, academics need to create a supportive learning environment by encouraging interaction amongst their students and having academic-student engagement. Besides focusing on the importance of 'presence' and 'visibility' among them in the online classes, the interaction also maintains if not improves the students' morale and motivation.

The third strategy as proposed by Cooper (ibid.) is using a mix of learning tools for engagement. This could be done through the use of both synchronous and asynchronous activities. Academics need to ensure the e-learning contents are mobile that students could access from anywhere and anytime. Additionally, it is also proposed that the e-learning contents be presented in bite-sized pieces of information to ease the students' comprehension as well as working at their preferred pace.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative case study research design. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with senior and junior academics teaching English language in one of the Malaysian public universities. Semi-structured interviews are useful as they enable researchers to explore subjective views and opinions (Flick, 2009).

A purposive sampling method was conducted in determining the research participants. According to Etikan et al (2016), participants in a purposive sampling method are chosen deliberately due to the qualities that they possess. Therefore, since this study aims to investigate the differences in teaching English during Covid-19 pandemic between senior and junior academics in a public university, a set of criteria was established prior to the identification of the willing research participants. The criteria include; teaching same course codes at a Diploma level in the same university and that they would have at least one year of teaching experience. As willingness is also another criteria, a total of six academics were successfully identified upon their consent and agreement to participate in the study. Based on their years of teaching, a total of three academics each were identified as the senior (those with more than 5 years teaching experiences) and junior academics (those with less than 5 years teaching experiences) that formed the two groups of research for the study.

Due to the nature of the MCO during Covid-19 pandemic, the semi-structured interview sessions were conducted via WhatsApp and the participants were also allowed to respond via texting. According to Schoobar et al (2015), texting enables participants to be more thoughtful and specific as they can take as much time they need and answer when it is convenient for them. Three main interview questions formed the interview protocol; a) What do you think

of teaching English online? b) What are the challenges faced in teaching English during Covid-19 pandemic? and c) what are the strategies you employ to face the challenges? Further questions mainly for clarifications were asked upon the participants' responses to the main interview questions.

Data from the semi-structured interviews was analyzed thematically. Braun and Clarke (2006) claim that thematic analysis is a qualitative approach that is generally used in analyzing interviews. Thematic analysis is a process of identifying patterns and themes within the data (Evans, 2018). Braun and Clark (2006) state that a theme should portray important information in relation to the research questions. Therefore, the themes are derived according to the research questions which are 1) challenges faced in teaching English; and 2) teaching strategies used in teaching English during Covid-19 pandemic. To ensure trustworthiness, an inter-rater was conducted. Consistency of the themes and interpretations were confirmed from the inter-rater.

Findings

The following is the information on the research participants' teaching experience in terms of years.

Table 1

Participants' teaching experience

Participants and their Pseudonym	Teaching experience (Years)
Senior Academic 1 (SA1)	22
Senior Academic 2 (SA2)	11
Senior Academic 3 (SA3)	16
Junior Academic 1 (JA1)	2
Junior Academic 2 (JA2)	1
Junior Academic 3 (JA3)	1

Firstly, the two groups of participants were asked about their perceptions of the online classes. The following are their responses, categorized according to the identified themes from the analysis.

Table 2

Participants' perceptions of online class

Themes	Senior academics (SA)	Sample excerpts	Junior academics (JA)	Sample excerpts
Suitability for English lessons	Partially suitable	I think the quality of our students might be affected a bit... (SA1) I believe face-to-face is still the best.. (SA1) I would say that a traditional class is irreplaceable.	Suitable	This depends on the subject or field of study. Certain subjects such as language teaching can possibly continue with e-learning format to a certain

		Traditional classes are not necessarily boring given that teachers are willing to venture out a bit and be more creative. (SA2) It can go quite far, however it still cannot beat traditional classroom. (SA3)		extent... (JA1)
Effectiveness of English online classes	Not equally effective like the F2F	...lessons will not be effective like the face-to-face classroom because it is very important for students to meet with their classmate and complete group task together to really develop their language skill (SA3)	Effective when blended	To be honest, I personally do not agree with Online Learning replacing traditional learning. The reason why, they need to be mixed in getting the best result of well equipped students. (JA2)
Students development	SDL development	...but the good thing is students are becoming more independent in their learning process and how they plan their own learning path. (SA2)	ICT literacy development	It will develop students to become more ICT literate and equip them with advanced knowledge about technology. (JA3)
Achievement of Learning Outcomes (LOs)	Difficult to achieve	It does affect the learning outcomes especially for subjects that require calculations and technical explanations	Achievable Achievable through collaboration	...the learning outcomes of the students will not be jeopardized severely. (JA1) I do believe the effects on learning outcomes of the

		<p>(SA2) I think it will definitely affect the learning outcomes in some ways as some of the objectives cannot be met easily...(SA3)</p>	<p>Difficult to achieve</p> <p>Achievable if blended</p>	<p>students will be great. However, every role under the sun such as lecturers, students, parents, need to be together and give as much cooperation as they can to help everyone in learning. (JA2)</p> <p>Some students cannot cope with online classes with later affect their learning outcomes. (JA3)</p> <p>The outcomes won't be the same as the face-to-face class. I don't say e- learning only portrays negative effect on the students, but schools and universities cannot only have online learning. (JA3)</p>
--	--	--	--	--

It is interesting to note the obvious differences between the senior and junior academics' perceptions of online classes as a whole. While the senior academics were quite skeptical about the potential of online classes, the junior academics seemed to have some degree of confidence in the potentials of online classes. As signified in the table, it could be deduced that the junior academics saw the potentials of online learning in its suitability in teaching English language, effectiveness in teaching the language skills and achieving the relevant English language course learning outcomes. Both senior and junior academics concurred in the potential of online classes in promoting student development such as Self-directed Learning (SDL) and Information and Computer Technology (ICT) literacy. There are indications from the senior academics' interview excerpts that they were concerned about the suitability of online classes for English language teaching, its effectiveness as a platform to teach

language skills and finally in achieving the course learning outcomes. These findings concur with what Burgess and Sievertsen (2020) claim. Nonetheless, although one of the junior academics claimed that it could be difficult to achieve the English language course learning outcomes, she did comment on the need to blend the delivery approach in ensuring the achievement of the learning outcomes.

In responding to the questions on challenges they faced, the participants had given the following responses; categorized according to the identified themes from the analysis.

Table 3

Challenges of online teaching

Theme	Senior Academics (SA)	Junior Academics (JA)
Internet accessibility and facilities	<p>...connection problems can be very frustrating (SA1)</p> <p>It will hinder somehow their learning process. For example, a student needs to submit a first draft but he or she does not have a laptop and maybe good connection and thus it may frustrate them though many of them actually learned to deal with the problem. (SA2)</p> <p>Poor internet connection and technical issue. It is difficult to monitor task or activity that I have given to the students. (SA3)</p> <p>Some students live in the rural area where even finding cell reception can be difficult. (SA3)</p>	<p>The inability to communicate with my students during classes due to connection and hardware and software problems such as microphone or settings. (JA1)</p> <p>Poor internet connection and inability to reach students due to internet problems. (JA3)</p> <p>...they live in a rural area and to get a stable connection is the biggest problem. (JA3)</p> <p>...students who came from a poor family and do not well-equipped with the same access to the technology...(JA3)</p>
Self-efficacy	<p>I am comfortable even though there're a lot of things I have to learn (SA1)</p> <p>We have blended learning previously embedded in the syllabus but conducting an online class as in 100% online is quite a challenge. (SA2)</p>	<p>Whenever it is an issue with the server or performance from the platform itself; I am able to solve the problem. However, if the issue is external that is the student's microphone or camera or internet connection, then I need to refer to other solutions that require more time. (JA1)</p> <p>I do believe in my ability to solve technical problems and to be honest, I do not have any technical issues during my lesson. (JA2)</p> <p>But if I couldn't solve the technical problem, I will always have plan B to ensure the class</p>

		won't be affected by that. [17] SEP:(JA3)
Entrusting/em powering the students	Students sometimes are not responsible learners - they don't do work assigned by the lecturer or read announcements posted in the group chat or Google Classroom... In online learning, students need to be responsible or else it will not work. (SA1) The main challenge is to ensure that students understand whatever being taught by you since online classes do limit the teaching itself. If somehow for F2F classes you could finish a chapter in 30 minutes, for online classes, it may take up to one and a half hours. (SA2)	
Getting students' feedback/resp ponses	Not being able to get immediate feedback from students. (SA1)	The inability to communicate with my students during classes due to connection and hardware and software problems such as the microphone or settings. (JA1)
Language skills assessment	...grading students' written work - to indicate what's wrong and how to correct it [17] SEP:(SA1) Listening is quite challenging though. (SA2) The main challenge is to ensure that students understand the tasks (SA2)	...the ease in marking since quizzes can be automated or conducted online... For speaking; a video call where the students are to be put for a conversation; no need for a time to prepare, no need for a duration to discuss, no need for a fixed type of question. Purely conversation- based assessment...but students may not have stable internet for this online assessment...(JA1) Whenever I asked them questions, they had other things that they were doing. (JA2)

All the participants did agree on the greatest challenge relating to their students' internet accessibility and resources or facilities for successful online classes. Teaching in a university, which hosted students from various socioeconomic statuses, the participants agreed that they had to empathize their students' context. These findings support earlier findings from (Hamid and Khalidi, 2020; Aydin, 2007).

Besides the internet accessibility and facilities, the above table has summarized other challenges faced by the senior and junior academics. First, it is noted that the senior academics seemed to share more challenges than the junior academics. Most of the challenges the senior academics specified are related to their ability to trust and empower their students during online classes. The junior academics on the other hand, were seen as more capable in dealing with the technical challenges as they were more ready to explore and try out new platforms and applications. Interestingly enough, both academics agreed they faced challenges in getting their students' feedback or responses. However, while the senior academic claimed the lack of feedback from his students, the junior academic related this challenge with technical issue often faced by her students resulting in the poor communication between her and the students. This finding could be related with relevant finding from past research conducted by Kamenetz (2020) who claims that constant teacher feedback could be one of the aspects worthy to emphasize on in conducting online teaching.

With regard to assessment, the academics found difficulties in implementing assessment that were normally conducted in the traditional classroom setting. This finding resonates well with earlier finding by (Burgess and Sievertsen, 2020). The senior academics found assessing listening skill to be the most difficult. One of the factors mentioned was their inability to monitor students' progress and to ensure that their students had properly understood the listening task. One of the senior academics admitted having difficulty in grading writing assessments due to the change of medium, which is from paper to paperless/online submission. The junior academics on the other hand, commented on the difficulty to assess their students' work due to their students' poor connection and difficulty in getting their students to focus on the assessment.

Teaching English language required the academics to focus on the four skills. Out of the four skills, teaching listening via online platforms was seen as the most difficult. Whereas teaching writing skills online was also seen as challenging as it required a lot of reading the students' drafts sent online. In other words, instead of the normal paper writing assignments, the academics had to face the challenge of assessing online writing assignments.

Finally, the participants were asked about the strategies they employed in conducting online classes. The table below summarizes their responses according the themes identified.

Table 4
Strategies employed by the participants

Theme	Senior Academic (SA)	Junior Academics (JA)
Learning	I think I am a fast learner myself I learn mostly through YouTube or online. Other than that, I also attend online seminars on online teaching tools conducted by the university. There are a lot of articles/videos online to get help from. (SA1) ...but that's where the learning process took place for teachers	

	<p>to discover and utilize other [L1][SEP] alternative platforms in their learning and teaching processes. [L1][SEP](SA2)</p> <p>Sometimes I will get some help from the students or fellow colleagues if I faced such technical issues. [L1][SEP](SA2)</p>	
<p>Vary the platforms/ applications</p>		<p>I believe that there are students that are focused/motivated during online classes, however I always try to use the medium to its fullest potential to make my classes feel fun or interesting, that is make my own personalized teaching videos for my students per class, playing music/audio in the chat room or slides, use online apps or games such as Kahoot and Drawize. (JA1)</p> <p>I try to motivate them every meeting of the class, always be open to help them and try to create something fun so that students will be more interested and excited to complete the task or assignment. (JA3)</p>
<p>Practicality of teaching activities and medium</p>	<p>But as for speaking test, WhatsApp so far makes it possible for me to assess my students only using the video call. (SA2)</p> <p>A lot more preparations are clearly needed for an online class to succeed but we also have an array of materials online that could be used and shared with our students. Teachers just need to be a bit more creative. (SA2)</p>	<p>It (Discord) is quite stable, provides many functions such as creating specified chatrooms (voice and or text) and music players and video or screen sharing and file sharing, is flexible in use as in I can create a dedicated server for each of my classes and in each server can have specified rooms for groups of that class, troubleshooting any problems with the platform is easy and quick, and most importantly it is free. (JA1)</p> <p>For speaking [L1][SEP] skills, I will let my students speak during the online session by asking them to answer questions, to do presentation spontaneously. Many websites</p>

		have been created to help students to improve their skills such as listening and speaking. (JA3)
Monitoring the students	Always monitor their active participation in the classroom by asking question every now and then because it is so easy for students to lose focus. (SA3)	
Empowering the students	Listening is quite challenging though. We can only give them online materials and hope that they will do it in their own time. (SA2) For speaking skills, I will set a video conference of that particular group during assessment, I usually give a bit of liberty for the students to decide the most suitable time for them so they aren't disturbed during the assessment. For other skills, it's usually the same as normal classroom; I just have to trust the students a little more that they understand what to do based on the instruction I have given. (SA3)	
Assessing the students	WhatsApp is quite useful since all students are using it and for speaking test, it allows me to have a video call with my students for the assessment. (SA2)	For speaking; a video call where the students are to be put for a conversation; no need for a time to prepare, no need for a duration to discuss, no need for a fixed type of question. Purely conversation- based assessment; similar to the Trinity College's speaking tests. For listening; it has to be automated and can only be accessed; listened to and answered in a specific time, or adapted into or from conversation- based assessment. (JA1) I do believe that if it is speaking (Online Speaking Test) it would be no problem cause we can use WhatsApp Group both voice and

		video call. However, for listening, it would be troublesome to find the common ground. I chose to give the audio through Whatsapp and the question sheet through Google Forms. (JA2)
--	--	--

First, it is noted that the senior academics are life-long learners as they claimed to be open for learning through various channels such as YouTube besides the university's own in-house training related to online learning or from their students and colleagues. The junior academics on the other hand, were more prone towards experimenting with various platforms and applications in conducting their online classes in order to create fun and motivating lessons for their students. It is interesting to note these findings confirm relevant online teaching strategies as proposed by (Cooper, 2016).

The findings from the table indicate that senior academics prefer a more traditional and familiar platform in order to conduct online classroom. The junior academics on the other hand, were more inclined towards exploring other platforms that they were more comfortable with in order to make learning more flexible and interesting to their students. The junior academics tended to make use of online resources by recording class session and conducting online quizzes using 'Kahoot' and 'Quizziz'. One junior academic pointed out her preference in using 'Discord', a chat application that was originally intended for the gaming communities in teaching English language to her students.

While the senior academics commented on the need to monitor and empower their students through various strategies, the junior academics preferred to focus on their students' assessment, which were conducted through platforms that would require the students' initiatives too. This could be deduced as a strategy in empowering their students especially when the junior academics' concern was to provide a platform or assessment activities, which were practical and easy for the students to participate in. The response given by the senior academic seems to suggest their use of a medium easiest and most familiar to their students and most importantly, themselves such as the WhatsApp. At this juncture, the respondents seem to suggest similar concern for teachers' moral support as stated by (Mokhtar, 2020).

Discussions

Both groups of academics found themselves comfortable with switching to online-based classroom due to their prior experience with online classrooms. While the senior academics would have gained their technology competence from experiencing blended classroom and online seminars prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the junior academics were already familiar with the relevant technology from their own experiences as students. These differences affected their choices of platform used in their online classes. While the senior academics preferred the university' online platform, the junior academics were inclined towards exploring other platforms and applications besides the university's online platform.

It can be deduced from the findings that the junior academics had wider access to online resources that might not be familiar to the senior academics. One possible factor that could

be further explored is the age difference between the two groups of academics. The junior academics were the millennials. As millennials, they would have grown up as digital natives who were tech literate and tech-savvy (Faizah, Sharifah, Wan and Kaarthiyainy, 2019). This is in line with the common conceptions of millennials' familiarity with internet technology.

In terms of challenges, the participants were concerned with their students having no access to stable internet connection that hindered a smooth online classroom experience. Similar findings were reported by (Burgess and Sievertsen, 2020; Hamid and Khalidi, 2020). According to Adams et al (2018), it has been discussed that students require improvement in the areas of technology availability as well as computer and internet efficacy in establishing effective online learning experiences. In terms of assessment, the participants found listening skills as the most challenging as it was quite difficult to monitor their students' progress or to assess their understanding of the instructed task. Whereas in terms of marking, the participants concurred that it was difficult to mark their students' writing as they needed to move from the usual paper writing assignments to digital writing assignments. Challenges related to online assessment were also reported by (Burgess and Sievertsen, 2020).

The strategies that senior and junior academics in the study employed in conducting an online classroom differ in that the former preferred traditional application available in the university's online platform while the later preferred more conventional application. Unlike the senior academics, the junior academics explored a variety of online resources and applied them in their online classes in order to provide flexible and interesting learning experiences for their students.

It could be deduced that both strategies by the senior and junior academics have their own strengths. While senior academics tried to reduce their students' anxiety from the transition of traditional classroom to online classroom, the junior academics tried to make learning more interesting so that students would not be demotivated due to classes, which were not interactive and engaging in nature. This finding supports the online teaching strategies as proposed by (Cooper, 2016). It is important to note that both strategies seem to take into account the learners' learning needs. The participants' consideration of their students seems vital especially in transiting to online classrooms. This finding supports Mokhtar's (2020) earlier finding as stating teacher providing moral support is crucial in online learning. According to Danker (2015), technology in education can be used as an approach that focuses on student-centered education and is a step in the right direction as we move forward in the 21st century.

Implications for Workplace Training and Conclusion

Based on the findings in this study, it is evident that academics are still adjusting to the new norm in conducting online classes. Those who teach English language have greater concern on the teaching of the language skills with listening skills and its assessment being the most difficult to conduct via online during the Covid-19 pandemic. Likewise, teaching writing skills seems to be equally challenging, as it requires assessing students' drafts via online medium. What could be implied from these findings is that future training on strategies in teaching Listening skills via online delivery could be offered to the academics. Additionally, series of hands-on workshop on the strategies in marking and assessing writing drafts and skills could also be provided. As the academics are professionally trained in teaching English, what they

need further at workplace is how to teach and assess the language skills using the online platforms and applications.

Not much difference could be traced from the senior and junior academics in terms of transiting from a traditional classroom to online classroom. As their difference mainly lies in their age difference, the familiarity to existing online platforms and digital applications suitable for their English classes remain as the most obvious difference between the two groups of academics. In this instance, further research and suggestions on the training needs related to online teaching could be pursued. As universities have invested quite heavily on internet and technology, it is timely that the academics are exposed to active in-house training related to the online T&L and assessments.

References

- Adams, D., Sumitono, B., Mohammad Noor, N., & Mohamed, A. (2018). E-Learning Readiness Among Students of Diverse Background in a Leading Malaysia Higher Education Institution. *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction*, 15, 227-256.
- Aydin, S. (2007). The Use of the Internet in ESL learning: Problems, Advantages and Disadvantages. *Humanising Language Teaching*.
- Braun, V., and Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101.
- Burgess, S., & Sievertsen, H. H. (2020, April 1). *Schools, skills, and learning: The impact of COVID-19 on education*. Retrieved from VOX CEPR Policy Portal: <https://voxeu.org/article/impact-covid-19-education>
- Challenges and Strategies for Teaching Online Language Classes - The Research*. (n.d.). Retrieved from LearnCube: <https://www.learncube.com/challenges-and-strategies-for-teaching-online-language-classes.html>
- Choong, P. (2020). Covid-19: Impact on the Tertiary Education Sector in Malaysia. Retrieved from Penang Institute: <https://penanginstitute.org/publications/covid-19-crisis-assessments/covid-19-impact-on-the-tertiary-education-sector-in-malaysia/>
- Cooper, S. (2016). 5 strategies to improve online teaching. Retrieved on 28 June, 2021 from <https://elearningindustry.com/5-strategies-improve-your-online-teaching>
- Danker, B. (2015). Using Flipped Classroom Approach to Explore Deep Learning in Large Classrooms. *The IAFOR Journal of Education*, III(1), 171-186.
- Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of Convenience Sampling and Purposive Sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), 1- 4. 10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11
- Evans, C. (2018). Analysing Semi-Structured Interview using Thematic Analysis: Exploring Voluntary Civic Participation Among Adults. SAGE Research Methods Dataset. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526439284>
- Faizah, A. M., Sharifah, M. S. M., Wan, N. E. H. S., & Kaarthiyainy, S. (2019). An investigation on the millennials' use of web technologies in higher education. In *Environment-Behaviour Proceedings Journal*. Vol 4 (12). pp. 55-60.
- Ferlazzo, L. (2020). *Ten Strategies for Teaching English-Language Learners Online*. Retrieved from Education Week Teacher: https://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/classroom_qa_with_larry_ferlazzo/2020/03/ten_strategies_for_teaching_english_language_learners_online.html
- Flick, U. W. E. (2009). An Introduction to Qualitative Research. London: SAGE Publishing.
- From Texting to Tweeting: Tech-Savvy Millennials Changing the Way We Work*. (2020,

- March 5). Retrieved from business.com: <https://www.business.com/articles/tech-savvy-millennials-at-work/>
- Hamid, H. A., & Khalidi, J. R. (2020). Covid-19 and Unequal Learning. Khazanah Research Institute.
- Ilker, K. (2020). The Rise of Online Learning. Retrieved from Forbes: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ilkerkoksal/2020/05/02/the-rise-of-online-learning/#3968b19272f3>
- amenetz, A. (2020). Teaching Online Classes During The COVID-19 Pandemic : NPR. Retrieved May 19, 2020, from <https://www.npr.org/2020/03/19/817885991/panic-gogy-teaching-online-classes-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic>
- Li, C., & Lalani, F. (2020). *The COVID-19 pandemic has changed education forever. This is how.* Retrieved from WeForum: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/04/coronavirus-education-global-covid19-online-digital-learning/>
- Mokhtar, H. S. (2020). *Teachers explore online teaching methods during MCO.* Retrieved from New Straits Time: <https://www.nst.com.my/education/2020/03/579992/teachers-explore-online-teaching-methods-during-mco>
- Sani, R. (2020). *Making the Switch to Online Learning.* Retrieved from New Straits Times: <https://www.nst.com.my/education/2020/03/578431/making-switch-online-learning>
- Schober, M. F., Conrad, F. G., Antoun, C., Ehlen, P., Fail, S., Hupp, A. L. (2015). Precision and Disclosure in Text Interviews on Smartphones. *PLoS One*, 10(6). 10.1371/journal.pone.0128337