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Mindfulness as Part of Continuing Support for English for Academic Purposes Teaching and More

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'Reality Check' — Boosting EMI Students' Engagement with Augmented Reality

Issue 4
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AS WE RELEASE the latest issue of LTiC it is noticeable how willing our contributors are to continuously strive for new ways to practice, from traditional concerns such as vocabulary retention and reading comprehension, to utilizing new learning technologies like artificial intelligence and augmented reality. Another common thread running between all of this issue's articles is student engagement. How can we engage our students to the fullest while enabling meaningful learning and communication experiences? Perhaps embedding mindfulness practices in class, or revisiting kinesthetic techniques, could help answer this question. As always, there is much to think about and enjoy in this latest issue, and I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I did!

— Kat

FEATUR


RE

Mindfulness as part of CS for EAP

Xinyi Chen is an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) lecturer at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University. With an educational background in biological engineering, she has always been drawn to discovery, exploring and understanding how life works. That same curiosity extends to her career in education, where she is constantly on the lookout for innovative ways to enhance learning experiences. Xinyi is passionate about learning and sharing all things creative to make education more enjoyable and beneficial for everyone. Her current research projects include mindfulness in language education, learner emotions and how Affective Computing may enhance learning outcomes.

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Before you read...

TO MAKE THE MOST of this article, I invite you to read after taking three deep breaths. If you are ready, please follow along: breathe in for one, two, three. Hold it tight for one, two, three, four. Now let it all go and breathe out for one, two, three, four, five. Perfect. Now, please allow the momentum to flow and take two more deep breaths in and out.

Wonderful! Thank you for engaging in this simple mindfulness breathing practice. Now, please join me on a mindful journey to explore how mindfulness practices can be integrated into English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teaching as well as various other learning activities.

Where it all started...

I first dabbled in mindfulness when I participated in an eight-week Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Life (MBCT-L) course with Oxford Mindfulness Foundation. At that time, I felt overwhelmed and rather perplexed by the relentless discussion of AI's role in teaching and learning, and it was not until an online seminar that I finally found clarity. During the seminar on AI in education, the speaker emphasised the unique role of teachers in the age of AI as "caring professionals" rather than merely passing on information and knowledge, a task that AI can easily perform. Reconsidering teacher's role had since then taken root within me, and being a caring professional became more deeply embedded in my teaching philosophy. It led me to contemplate on what aspects of teaching to care for and how to effectively demonstrate such care. With this in mind, mindfulness presented itself as a possible solution.

In teaching, my mindfulness practices have allowed me to be more aware of what is happening inside and outside the classroom, as well as more in tune with students' needs in the presence of AI. Such awareness compelled me to hold a mindfulness Continuing Support (CS) session for my students to address their urgent emotional and stress-related needs alongside their academic studies. Before I share with you the mindfulness CS session as a source of support beyond the language classroom, let us revisit what a CS session is at the School of Languages (SoL) at XJTLU and the role it plays in supporting our students.

A look inside CS sessions in EAP teaching...

Like many academic support programmes, SoL CS sessions provide valuable assistance to students beyond classroom teaching. They reflect a shared value among SoL teachers, featuring their commitment to supporting students in every possible way. CS sessions can come in a variety of approaches, from as private as a one-on-one consultation to a dynamic group session focusing on the practice of four language skills or vocabulary expansion and everything in between. They cater not only to struggling students but also those proactively seeking additional support to enhance their knowledge and skills in their academic studies.

As stand-alone, optional sessions, it is true that CS sessions focusing on exam preparations or those incorporating fun elements and opportunities for socialising tend to receive more attention, while the sign-up list for sessions dedicated to pure practice of practical skills, such as writing up a reference list, would gather dust faster than an old textbook in the university library. This trend has made it clear to teachers that although most students are exam-oriented, they value making time for enjoyment, perhaps for various reasons. In light of this, it becomes necessary to introduce practical materials-in-disguise, designed to help students develop essential skills for their academic studies beyond exam level while keeping them actively involved.

When mindfulness comes into play...

Common themes in CS sessions often revolve around cognitive skills, particularly the four language skills, reading and writing, as well as listening and speaking. However, personal development skills, such as managing stress, fostering resilience, and enhancing mental health, have received little attention. As first-year students proceed to their second-year studies, the importance of non-cognitive skills starts to grow significantly due to the increased workload compared to their life in Year One. With this increased pressure, students experience heightened levels of stress, and therefore, the seeking into effective stress management skills becomes more urgent than ever before. Given this, the need to support students in managing stress arises organically as a valuable theme in CS. Nonetheless, instead of offering just one or a series of sessions on

stress management, I believe it would be more insightful to provide students with sessions encouraging them to observe, notice, acknowledge, and release their stress. Mindfulness, therefore, becomes a powerful approach to achieve this.

As a relaxation technique rooted in Buddhism, mindfulness today as a practice draws on varied eastern and western traditions, sciences and wisdom. According to Jon Kabat-Zinn, one of the mindfulness pioneers who developed the eight-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) programme in 1979, "Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present, non-judgementally" (Kabat-Zinn, 2005, p.4). The focus on the present moment can awaken a deeper awareness within a person, which, in turn, leads to greater clarity of their current situation and further supports their acceptance of reality. This is echoed by a student comment, "I feel so sleepy now", after the Mindfulness CS session. Is feeling sleepy a sign of something more? While the student's remark may seem counterintuitive, it actually demonstrated that the student had grown an awareness of their bodily sensations. Such awareness reflected the key aspect of mindfulness, that is being present and in tune with one's internal state. In this particular scenario, the student recognised that their body was overloaded and needed rest, an awareness that laid the foundation for effective stress management. Now, if you are wondering what led to such a significant awareness? The mindfulness CS session allowed students to explore their inner experiences and become more aware of their body's signals. During the session, students were guided through a few rounds of breathing exercises and mindful movement activities, and were encouraged to reflect on their experiences as they engaged with those mindfulness practices. That said, please do not make the conclusion yet and assume that mindfulness can be a quick fix for stress-related problems. Recognising the presence of stress is only the first step, understanding the underlying causes of it and applying strategies to manage and reduce it remain an ongoing task and require a commitment to regular mindfulness practices.

Challenges and a mindful looking ahead...

Given how mindfulness can help reduce stress, it is natural for people to ask, how many mindful moments are there away from a high level of pressure to a healthy dose of stress and improved focus? Consistency is the key. Mindfulness itself is not difficult; the real challenge lies in constant engagement with mindfulness

practices, being as simple as a breathing exercise or mindful movements. Having said that, when introducing mindfulness practices into classroom teaching, should students understand what mindfulness is comprehensively and then engage with the practice? My answer would be no, especially at the initial stage. Besides, chances are, students should have already experienced mindful moments in class but may not recognise them as such: for example, when students are aware of their learning goals and can connect specific skills or knowledge to their field of study. As a teacher, if you have ever given instructions such as "close your eyes (or workbooks) and reflect" and the like, you are already guiding your students to engage mindfully with the lessons. Even though these moments do not involve traditional mindfulness practices like breathing or noticing, this type of mindful engagement can improve focus and lead to better academic performance over time.

Now, since you have read all the way to this point, I hope you will consider this little vignette as a friendly invitation to explore mindfulness, or, for some of you, to continue exploring it further. If you are wondering where to begin, here are instructions for three simple but likely the **B.E.S.T.** activities for you to purposefully bring mindfulness into your day, mindful Breathing, mindful Eating, and Single-Tasking.

Mindful Breathing at a time of your choice during the day

- Sit, or stand comfortably
- Take a big, deep breath in to the nose, notice how your body expands.
- And hold.
- Breathe out through the mouth, watch how the body softens.
- Continue to breathe normally (if you can, make your exhales slightly longer than inhales).
- Notice where you feel your breath in the body.
- Let your breath lead your mind.
- Allow your thoughts to come and go.
- You may close your eyes, and repeat the steps.
- Open your eyes when you are ready to return to the present moment.

I hope you will find the B.E.S.T mindfulness practices helpful. As you practice, do what feels right for you, be present in every moment and allow life to unfold one moment at a time.

May you be mindful.

Mindful Eating with some nuts, berries, or a piece of chocolate

- Observe your food, including its colour, shape, size, smell, temperature, texture, etc.
- Think about where the food came from in the world, and all the efforts that went into getting it delivered to you.
- Take your first bite, do not chew yet and bring full attention to this bite.
- Chew slowly and thoroughly, take at least 20 chews before you swallow.
- Savour the flavours, aromas, and the texture of the food.
- Take your time and focus on appreciating the food in your mouth.
- If your mind wanders, just gently bring it back to the sensations in your mouth.
- Repeat until you finish eating.
- You may try to eat with your non-dominant hand during the process.

Single-Tasking as a mindfulness practice, not a productivity rule

- As much as you may not wish to, attend to one task at a time.
- Set aside any distractions.
- Bring your full attention to the task at hand.
- If your mind wanders, just gently bring it to the task at hand.
- Take short breaks if needed, and return to your task with a quick mindful breathing exercise.
- At the end of the task, reflect on how it feels to single-task, notice any changes in your thoughts, feelings, and energy.
- Take your time with single-tasking, practice as much or as little as you like.

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TION

WHY SOME CLASS GROUP DISCUSSIONS FAIL – AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

Andrew Bailey worked as a Senior Language Lecturer at XJTLU. He has been teaching EFL since 1991, and before coming to China, worked in a number of countries, especially in the Middle East. His interests are teaching listening, facilitating speaking in class and the impact of the IELTS test, which was the subject of his Masters dissertation.

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SPEAKING MAY BE CONSIDERED THE most neglected of the four skills, especially in EAP. This is curious, as university insiders acknowledge the importance of speaking, especially being able to take part in a seminar discussion or similar (Furneaux, 2002). At the EMI university where I work, group discussions are rarely assessed; in Year One, speaking assessment consists of IELTS-type tasks and individual presentations, while in Year Two modules, an assessed group discussion is only a feature of one or two modules, with other modules requiring poster presentations. Year One classes do include some pair or group discussion work but subsequently students get relatively little practice in this area. While this may not matter much for students continuing their education in China, especially in STEM subjects, those students who choose to complete their degree in the UK will presumably be expected to take part in seminar discussions or similar. In any case, the kind of skills needed for successfully participating in a group discussion are also needed in real-life contexts.

Some attention has been given to setting up and starting group discussions. Suggested strategies include:

- allowing students to choose topics or questions
- "thinking time", including notetaking
- assigning roles, e.g. leader, timekeeper, etc.
- turn-taking protocols

These strategies are undoubtedly useful but, in my experience, even if we employ them, group discussions sometimes still fail. A common phenomenon is for the discussion to finish prematurely. We can set what we feel is a reasonable time limit, yet some discussions can grind to a halt before the end of the allotted time. In particular, one group can finish while other groups are still going strong. From my personal observations, this seems to be for one or more of the following reasons:

1. a perceived need to produce grammatically correct utterances hinders contributions
2. collective lack of motivation or interest in the topic
3. one student dominates, and the others are not willing to interrupt them
4. one or more students are not able (or willing) to participate and this is unresolved
5. one or more students appear disinterested and give short turns, discouraging others from making meaningful contributions themselves
6. turns are not connected – a student makes a contribution, but others fail to respond to it and instead make their pre-planned contribution
7. an opinion is put forward by one group member and some or all of the others agree with it, due to an unwillingness to challenge them
8. misunderstanding or miscommunication goes unresolved, i.e. nobody asks the participant to repeat or clarify their contribution

This list is probably not exhaustive and there are most likely additional reasons for breakdown. It could be argued that reason six from the above list is a result of giving students time to prepare their contribution and perhaps shows the shortfall of that strategy. Reasons seven and eight can be partly explained by the concept of "face". It is especially a problem with information gap or information exchange activities, e.g. when different students have read different parts of a longer text. In one lesson I noticed that part of a table the students were asked to fill in as part of such an activity was incomplete. When I asked the student why, he said that the student responsible for summarising this part of the text had "said something but I didn't understand her". When asked why he hadn't asked her to repeat or clarify her part, he just shrugged and smiled, suggesting it was a matter of face. It is also possible that he lacked the linguistic resources to do so.

Overall, I think it would be fair to say that all these scenarios arise from a lack of strategic competence, i.e. the ability to repair conversational breakdown and maintain conversations, as well as considerations of face. This is in contrast with Palmour & Doubleday's (2020) "six barriers" – unclear communication (on the part of the instructor), the "face-threatening nature of oral activities, "unacknowledged oral skills" (task requirements not made explicit), unclear expectations, lack of awareness of support on offer and "limited sharing of expertise among staff".

Relatively little seems to have been written about how this could be resolved, or at least relatively little that is not intensely theoretical, which could be said about Furneaux's (2002) suggestion that we help students to develop metacognitive strategies. Many studies focus on Anglophone teaching contexts. Other studies (Benson et al, 2013; Palmour & Doubleday, ibid) are based on the idea of teaching language explicitly. The former study admitted that this method had limited success. The latter paper focuses chiefly on "what to say when you don't understand someone or when someone doesn't understand you", which it seems to me does not cover all the bases, and suggests only putting expressions on a PowerPoint slide, which arguably does not foster retention. Alibakhshi & Padiz (2011) also advocate teaching "communicative strategies" but these strategies work on an individual basis, e.g. self-repair and circumlocution. What is needed is strategies that foster successful group interaction.

There follows a series of suggested strategies for addressing the issue of failed or truncated discussions.

1. Sample discussion video

Based on the principle of "noticing" (Schmidt, 1990), the teacher plays a video of a sample group discussion, examples of which can be found on popular video sharing websites, although I would recommend making your own recording with the help of colleagues. Students listen and note down examples of different discussion language categories, as in Table 1 below, if the teacher chooses to make them explicit, or the expressions could be noted and categorised after watching the video. Further examples can be brainstormed. The underlying principle is that the language should be more memorable and more meaningful if it is heard used in context than if seen on a PowerPoint slide. Perhaps most important here are the examples of responding to the contributions of others and disagreeing politely, both things our students often seem to struggle with.

Asking for opinions/encouraging others to participate	**Interrupting**
Continuing to speak/to make your point	**Responding positively to others' opinions**
Asking for clarification/repetition	**Checking understanding**
Polite disagreement	**Coming to an agreement/ending the discussion**

Table 1. Function categories

2. Role-play

Students take part in brief discussions of everyday topics according to a role on a card, i.e. dominant participant, shy/reluctant participant, etc. – see Table 3 below. The topics themselves are unimportant – the key is for students to assume a different role ("stepping outside themselves") and understand the negative impact on the dynamic of the group of lack of participation or lack of strategic competence. Some participants, depending on their role, can use language from ex.1 to get around the obstacle to communication.

Topic no.	Role
1	Another person in your group will talk non-stop and not allow anyone else to say anything, but you don't want to interrupt them as you think it would be rude.
2	When it's your turn to speak, tell the others that you went "spelunking" (exploring a cave), but don't explain this word (until they ask you to). When you do, you should explain in English - you can show them a picture if you need to.
3	You feel shy and don't feel you can talk about this topic, so say nothing and look down. Don't speak until someone encourages you to.
4	Another person in your group looks bored and only speaks for a short time. You don't think it's your problem though, so don't do anything about it.

Topic no.	Role
1	Another person in non-stop and not say anything. Afte politely.
2	Another person in you don't underst nothing because y
3	Another person in anything, but you problem, so just s
4	You think this top your turn to speak stop.

Table 3 Example role cards

Topic 1	something you enjoy doing in your free time
Topic 2	what you did last weekend
Topic 3	your plans for the near future
Topic 4	your last holiday

Table 2 Conversation topics

n your group will talk
allow anyone else to
r a while, interrupt them

n your group will use a word
tand, but you should say
you don't want to admit it.

n your group isn't saying
don't think this is your
ay what you want to say.

ic is boring, so when it's
k, say very little and then

Topic no.	Role
1	Start talking first and talk as much as you can without stopping. Don't give the others a chance to speak.
2	Another person in your group will use a word you don't understand. The other member of your group seems to understand this word, but you don't. After a while, ask the speaker to explain what this word means.
3	Another person in your group isn't saying anything. They look shy. Encourage them to speak about this topic.
4	Another person in your group looks bored and only speaks for a short time. You think they should try harder, so try to encourage them to say more.

3. Discussion / brainstorming

This is an alternative approach to the scenarios explored in section two, based on Palmour & Doubleday (ibid). Students are given a list of scenarios (see table 4 below) where there is an obstacle to an effective group discussion. In groups, they could discuss all of them, choose the ones they want to discuss, or alternatively be allocated some of them while other groups deal with the rest. Ideas for resolving the issue can be shared with the class after some time.

1. One student is speaking a lot and not giving the others a chance to take part in the discussion.
2. One student is not participating.
3. One student (or more) looks unmotivated and is only making short contributions.
4. Group members are making their prepared contributions and not connecting them to what others have already said.
5. A student says 'I completely agree with you" and then says something completely different to the previous speaker.
6. A student says something that the others don't understand.
7. A student is reading from a script or notes.
8. A student speaks too fast and the others can't catch what they said.
9. The discussion ends too early, i.e. before the end of the time the teacher has given.
10. A student says something. Everybody immediately agrees and the discussion ends early.

Table 4. Example scenarios. Discuss what you would do to solve the issue in each of these situations. Would you take action during the discussion or mention it afterwards?

4. Information exchange

As I mentioned previously, some group discussions entail students looking at different pieces of information or a different part of the text to each other beforehand, and then sharing that information with each other. Miscommunication is quite common in my personal experience and often goes unresolved. To instill the habit of asking others for repetition or clarification, it might be worth doing some information exchange practice. This could take the form of giving simple instructions – an example can be

found in Pair Work 1 (Watcyn-Jones & Howard-Williams, pp. 59-60 & 67-68, 2002). More challenging activities, where students play a role, can be found in Business English resource books – examples are placing an order in Telephone English (Hughes, 2006, p. 71 & 73) and correcting print errors in Business Opportunities (Hollett, 1994, p. 69 & 151). These activities may require students to use checking language, e.g. "Can I read that back to you?", as well as asking for repetition and clarification. This may need to be pre-taught, preferably using an audio or video sample. The hope is that students learn to overcome their reluctance to ask others to repeat, reword or clarify the message.

I am of course not suggesting that adopting these strategies will magically solve the problem! In particular, in some parts of the world, it is very difficult to encourage students to overlook considerations of face. I have found it difficult to assess how much difference activities such as these make, as improvement in this area is hard to quantify. Most certainly they will not result in immediate change, but I suspect they contribute to a gradual learning process. This would undoubtedly be an area that would benefit from further research.

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AI-Assisted Peer Review in Writing Classes

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Introduction

FEEDBACK IS A CRITICAL component of academic writing lessons, enabling teachers to monitor students' progress and identify areas for improvement (Hyland, 2003). It also provides insights into learners' development and helps them track progress over time (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). However, given limited instructional time during a writing lesson, fostering learner autonomy in self-editing is essential, as self-editing is a key stage for a successful writer. Nevertheless, many students value teacher feedback more highly than peer feedback, believing it to be more constructive, meaning that peer feedback seems ineffective in practice.

With the emergence of various AI tools and platforms, students are now able to use them to aid or polish their writing. This feedback process can be seen as a part of self-editing. Through my observations and conversations with students, I noticed that many accept AI-generated suggestions uncritically. This approach prioritizes a product-oriented focus on achieving higher scores. When I asked further questions on what they learned from their mistakes, the answers were unsatisfactory, either obscure or unconstructive. This raised the question: how can I embed the metacognitive strategies and better facilitate feedback uptake with the assistance of AI tools? How can I train my students to be smarter and transfer these skills to other fields or professions? After all, a combination of process and product-oriented approach ensures learners get the most out of the writing practice, enabling them to achieve good grades and develop autonomy simultaneously.

Keeping this in consideration, Kolb's experiential learning cycle (1984) provides a solid framework for the classroom practice proposed in this article. Kolb's Learning Cycle provides a foundation for designing effective classroom practices, such as the AI-assisted peer feedback procedure outlined below.

There are four stages for learners to have a full learning experience:

Stage 1: Active experimentation: learners try out what they have learned.

Stage 2: Concrete experience: transferring and applying in actions so concepts are no longer abstract.

Stage 3: Reflective observation: reviewing or reflecting on their learning experiences, which could involve the development of metacognitive strategies and self-reflection, focusing more on the learning process instead of the product.

Stage 4: Abstract conceptualization: summarizing what they have learned during the learning experience, which could include mistakes learned, progress made, or obstacles overcome.

Procedure

Building on the learning cycle, the AI-assisted peer feedback procedure can be implemented with the following steps (see Table 1). I have added an additional step (Active Experimentation) because the learning cycle is continuous. With the fifth stage added, students can start a new learning cycle with accumulated knowledge. Students can also test if the first learning cycle is successful or not since active experimentation is for learners to try out what they have learned. It can also be seen as a concrete experience for students as they transfer and apply actions through oral summaries. The detailed classoom procesuew is as follows:

Stage 1: Independent feedb focus

Procedure:

- Ask students to bring an e-copy of their w previous lesson;
- Ask students to swap their writing with a
- Teachers can break the feedback features a low cognitive load for students.
    - E.g. In one writing lesson, focus on v in another writing lesson, focus on p structure. Students are encouraged the writing without providing revisio make this clear to students.

Extended activity:

- With the accumulation of the lessons, wh ready, or with advanced students, teacher to provide different foci for students to fo organization, source integration, vocabula

Stage 3: Feedback comparison

Procedure:

- Encourage students to compare self-generated and AI-assisted feedback. Teachers can ask metacognitive questions to scaffold this process better. For example:
    - Content Comparison: Did the AI identify any issues you missed in your feedback?
    - Clarity: Are there areas where your feedback provides clearer or more actionable suggestions than the AI's? Did the AI feedback include any suggestions you feel are unnecessary or overly critical?

Rationale:

- This step allows learners to critically reflect on their feedback-giving skills and understand the role of AI during the learning process.

Stage 4: Pe revision

Procedure:

- Allow enough work on the re feedback giver identified the i at ease in prov peers' writing.
- Teachers can p source bank fo if the focus is c list of key elem language used or a sample es reference.

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nents and formulaic
to structure an essay
say can be used as a

Stage 2: AI-assisted feedback without revision on the same focus in the previous round

Procedure:

- Teachers provide prompts.
    - E.g. Point out issues with cohesion, specifically the use of cohesive devices. Do NOT give a revised version. (see Image 1)

Rationale:

- The purpose of not providing revised versions is to ensure that students engage actively in the revision process. This approach discourages passive acceptance of AI suggestions and fosters critical analysis. AI tools highlight general issues and provide one example while students independently identify additional errors.

Stage 5: Feedback summary

Procedure:

- Ask students to orally summarize the main issues to their partner, and explain the rationale for the provided revision. Encourage discussion for any disagreements. This step bridges active experimentation and concrete experience as students explain and discuss revisions while also trying out the revisions they have made.
- Teachers can ask questions to prepare students for oral summary by asking (allowing some time for students to organize their thoughts) focused questions such as: what were the main issues identified? What are the top two areas you plan to revise? Why? Teachers can also provide sentence starters to scaffold discussion: the main issue highlighted was …; I agree with the AI feedback on … because …; I plan to address this issue by … etc.

Rationale:

- This step encourages critical thinking and peer collaboration skills. It also deepens students' understanding of the feedback process and the importance of editing skills.

To summarize the procedure and correspond to Kolb's learning cycle, see below in Table 1.

With explicit instructions, AI-assisted feedback allows students to engage more confidently in peer review by reducing the discomfort often associated with critiquing a peer's work. By breaking feedback into specific aspects, such as organization, source integration, vocabulary, or grammar, the process becomes more structured and tailored to individual needs. This approach enhances feedback clarity and fosters an interactive and engaging learning environment (Tseng & Lin, 2024). Moreover, the procedure allows learners to focus more on the writing process while meeting their high academic performance needs (e.g. high score).

Limitations

However, there are still some drawbacks to the procedure. First of all, the procedure can demand significant time to implement in class, especially when students are novice writers. Therefore, it would be better if teachers could gradually scaffold the feedback process in early-stage lessons to prepare students mentally. For example, teachers can provide specific and structured instructions with potential feedback foci, such as including mini-editing practice in each writing lesson, where AI-assisted feedback can be omitted if only one focus is given per writing lesson. When students are accustomed to the procedure, giving feedback on a complete piece of writing can be more easily managed. Another concern with the procedure is ethical

Kolb's Stage	AI-assisted Feedback Stage	Key Activity
Active experimentation	Independent feedback with focus	Students identify issues in writing without revisions, practicing their analytical skills.
Concrete experience	AI-assisted feedback without revision	Students experience AI feedback without providing solutions.
Reflective observation	Feedback comparison	Students compare self-generated and AI feedback, reflecting on strengths and weaknesses.
Abstract conceptualization	Peer-editing and revision	Students apply feedback to revise their writing, synthesizing learning into actionable changes.
Active experimentation/ Concrete experience	Feedback summary	Students summarize their feedback and discuss revisions with peers, deepening understanding on feedback and editing skills.

Table 1. AI-assisted feedback integrated with Kolb's experiential learning cycle.

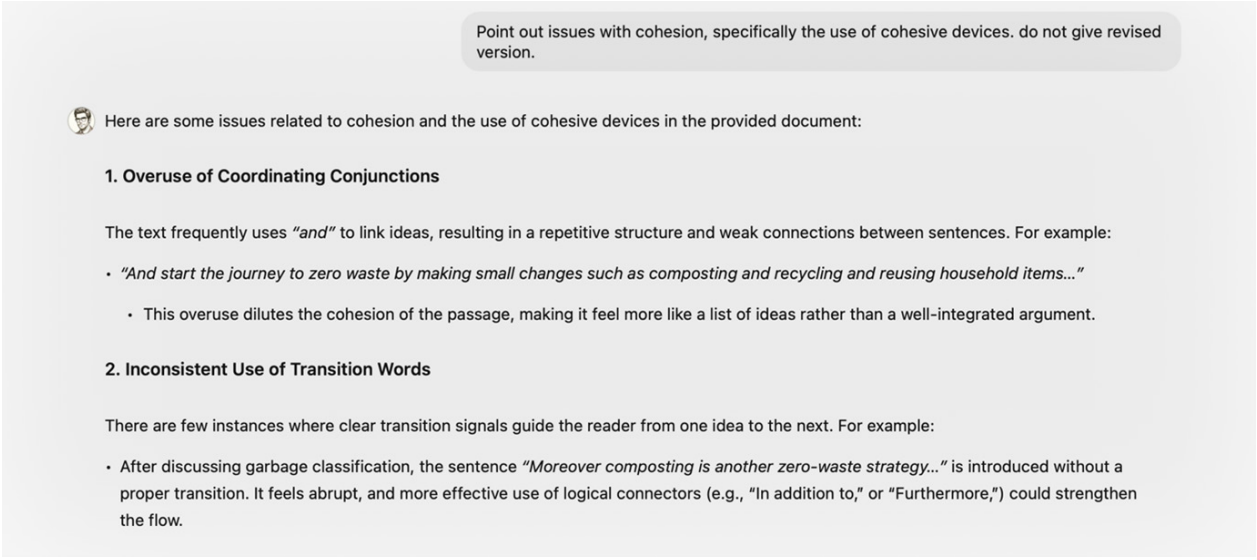

Image 1.

consideration. Since students need to upload their writing to AI, their intellectual property can be at risk. Therefore, teachers should be careful not to upload students' writing to AI platforms without their consent. Students should also be informed that they have a choice not to upload their writing to AI platforms. Instead, they can choose to use offline platforms or tools, such as Grammarly, Hemingway Editor Desktop App, or Scrivener with Grammar Add-Ons. I do not plan to go into detail with these apps as it is not the focus of this article. It is the teacher's choice which AI platforms to use. I used an embedded AI tool in ChatGPT called Academic Assistant Pro. This tool is free but with limited generations over a period of time. I think this tool is useful because it prevents students from becoming fixated on experimenting with AI tools and distracted from the goals of the procedure.

Conclusion

In summary, this article showcased a classroom practice incorporating AI-assisted peer feedback, guided by Kolb's experiential learning cycle (1984). Although self-editing sometimes sounds daunting and ineffective from students' perspectives, the step-by-step and hands-on practice will enable students to reflect, revise, and refine their writing with increased autonomy and confidence (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996).

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Using VOCABULARY GAMES! to Stimulate Vocabulary Learning Motivation & Retention

Contributed by **Jingfei Zhang**

Hello!

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Introduction

A SIZABLE VOCABULARY volume plays an indispensable role in students' daily learning activities and assessment tasks, especially in EMI institutions. According to O'Mahony (2014), students need to achieve approximately CEFR B2 when studying in EMI universities where all the lessons are delivered in English. However, many students in EAP classes are still observed to have insufficient vocabulary size for the following three reasons:

1. Students' initial English level is relatively low when they enter the university.
2. Students from some educational cultures may be accustomed to rote learning and have had limited exposure to vocabulary in meaningful contexts, and lack motivation to memorize new vocabulary (Ellis, 2015; Fu, 2021; Li & Cutting, 2011).
3. Students tend to lack self-discipline and time management skills.

Furthermore, vocabulary teaching is easily neglected in EAP courses due to its intensive, time-constrained and assessment-based nature. A possible solution to this is to incorporate a variety of vocabulary games into EAP teaching. Hence, this research intends to investigate the following two research questions:

1. How does gamifying vocabulary learning influence students' motivation in learning vocabulary?
2. What is the impact of vocabulary games on students' vocabulary retention?

Methodology

This research involved approximately 70 students from advanced-level Year One EAP classes at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU). The combination of tests and surveys were used in a mixed-method approach to evaluate the effect of vocabulary games on students' motivation and vocabulary retention. Before taking a pre-test to examine their vocabulary level, students first completed a questionnaire about how they felt about learning new words. Gamified vocabulary activities such as "Quizlet," "Kahoot," and "Tic Tac Toe" were integrated into classes throughout the research to improve retention and encourage participation. After that, a post-test was used to measure vocabulary improvement, together with a final survey collecting students' self-reported opinions about how the games influenced their desire to acquire new words.

In terms of data analysis, descriptive statistics, which includes means, percentages, and standard deviations, were calculated and analyzed. Box-and-whisker plots were created using R Studio, and a one-sample t-test was performed to compare the findings of the pre-test and post-test.

Vocabulary games used in this research

Tic Tac Toe

I normally design this activity by choosing nine vocabulary that are frequently covered in a teaching week. After dividing students into two teams—one representing Naughts, and another representing Crosses. Each team takes turn picking a colored number [Figure 1]. After a student from a team chooses a number, I would remove the numbered box to reveal the hidden word. The student then needs to provide a definition or create a sentence by using the target word. If the student gets the correct answer, I will draw the symbol in the corresponding box. If not, no symbol will be drawn, and this team needs to wait for the next turn. The winner is the first team to connect three of the symbols in a row (up or down or across or diagonally).

In order to involve more students in this activity, I would select a group leader in each group, and they would be given a whiteboard, a pen and nine targeted words. The group leader would repeat the same procedure as above by dividing the team into two groups and inviting each team members to choose a number and provide definition or sentences of the vocabulary.

Technology-based games

Kahoot! and Quizlet are popular tools for vocabulary revision. For Kahoot, I would design vocabulary quizzes before class, and students would log in Kahoot! via the QR code or the link, after which students can answer the questions and the winner is the student who obtains the highest score. As for Quizlet, I use the "Classic Live" mode – which is similar to the games on Kahoot! – and "Checkpoint", to quickly check the vocabulary covered in that class [Figure 2].

Another online platform is Wordwall, which provides a variety of vocabulary games such as flash cards, matching games and quizzes[Figure 3]. Though technology-based games are popular among students, teachers need to consider the possibility of slow internet connection and students' unfamiliarity with the technology, which may demotivate students (Waluyo & Bakoko, 2021).

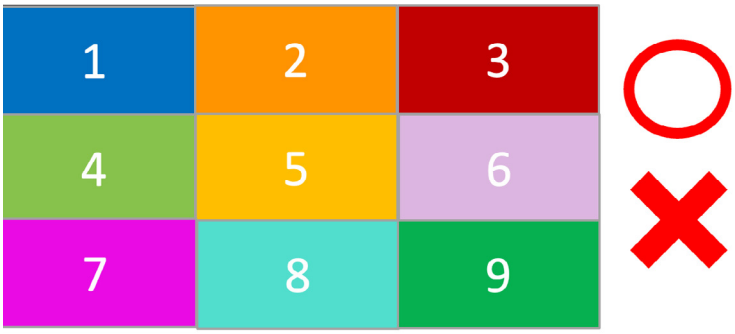


Figure 1 Tic tac toe

Using pictures and contexts

Instead of using activities such as definition matching, I prefer to find the corresponding pictures and contexts to facilitate the memorization of vocabulary. By looking at the images, students can easily associate the pictures with the corresponding vocabulary (Cárcamo et al., 2016). Contexts can also facilitate students' comprehension about how to use the vocabulary in an appropriate context.

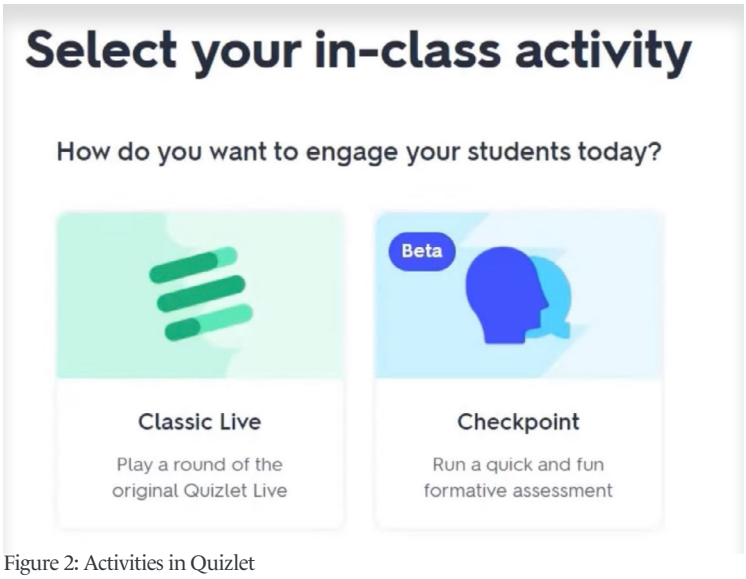


Figure 2: Activities in Quizlet

Sentence-making games

I also create activities for students to use the acquired vocabulary in meaningful

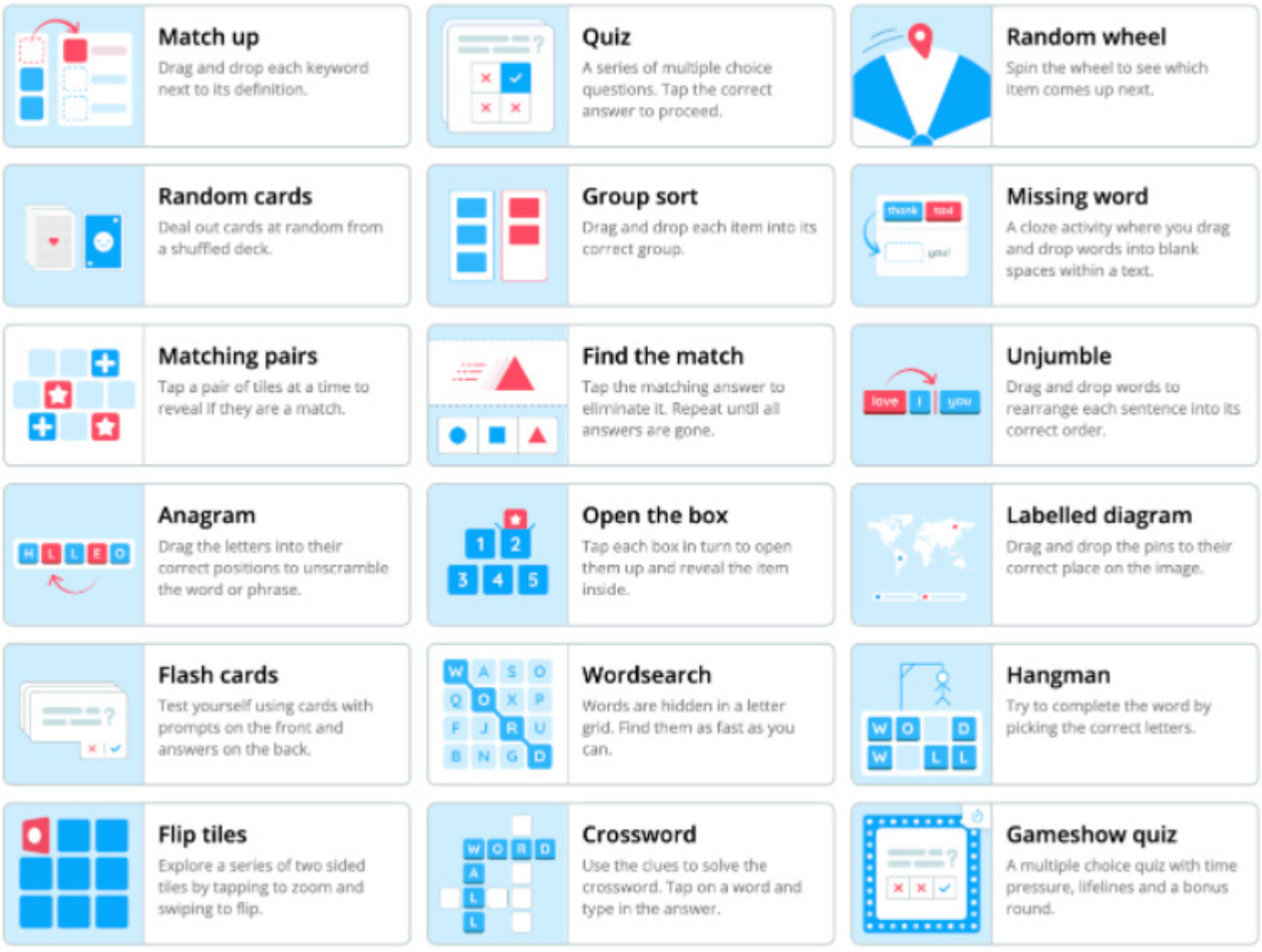


Figure 3 Wordwall activities

Figure 4: Wheel decide

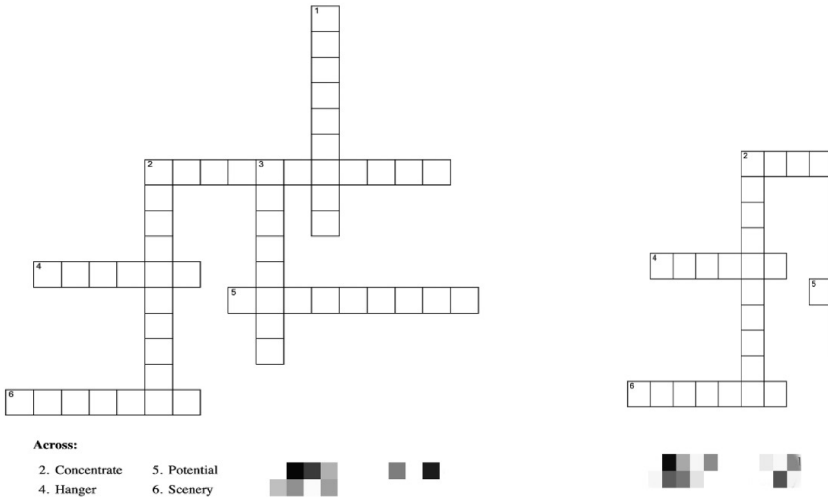


Figure 5: Crossword Puzzle

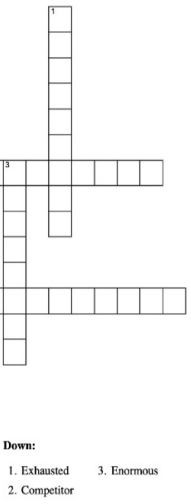
contexts. I divide students into several groups. Each group would be given 2-3 words and asked to create the logical sentences using the given words. Another game I frequently use is called "Wheel decide" [Figure 4]. There are two different wheels—one is the vocabulary wheel which contains the vocabulary I have covered in the class, and another one is the linking word wheel which includes words such as "however", "as a result", "similarly", and "in addition". I would spin the vocabulary wheel twice and the linking wheel once. Each team writes down the three words and are asked to construct one or two sentences that are logically connected and bring the answer to me. A scoring system is used:

- 2 points – both words correctly used
- 1 point – no grammar error
- 1 point – fastest team
- 1 point – logically connected

The use of scoring system is supported by Kapp (2012) who demonstrates that vocabulary games which foster competition and collaboration among students can motivate students to memorize targeted words.

Crossword puzzle

In this game, students need to spell the words based on the clues given by either definitions or contexts horizontally and vertically. Once students figure out the word, they need to spell the words and fill in the diagram. An alternative game I play with the crossword puzzle is asking students to work in pairs and solve the puzzle together [figure 5]. Student 1 would describe all the words vertically, and their partner would guess the words and fill in the crossword puzzle. They would then exchange the role – student 2 would describe all the words horizontally and student 1 will guess.



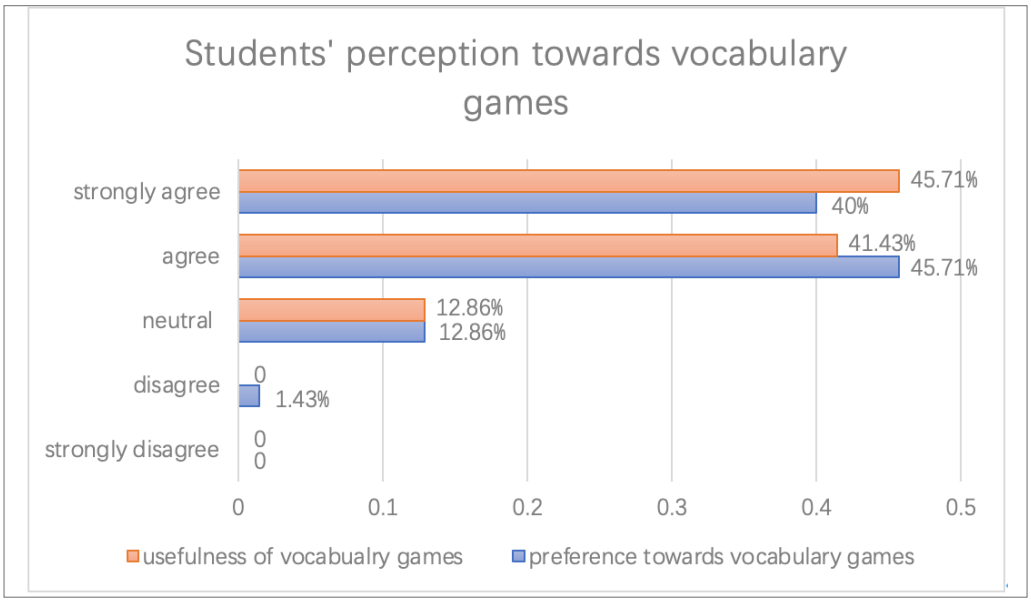


Figure 6: Students' perception towards vocabulary games

Research results

The efficacy of vocabulary games can be proven by the research results [Figure 6 and Table 1]. As is shown in Figure 6, approximately 85% of students chose either "agree" or "strongly agree" when being asked about whether they thought the gamified vocabulary activities were useful and motivating. This indicates that incorporating games into vocabulary learning can significantly strengthen students' motivation.

As is illustrated in Table 1, students' grades in vocabulary tests increased from the pre-test (M=62.43) to the post-test (M=71.2). The high t-value and the low p-value ($p<0.01$) further indicated the difference was statistically significant. According to Cohen (1988), the effect size 0.64 is regarded as moderate, which therefore suggests that there exists a noticeable magnitude of differences. The finding indicates that gamified activities can significantly facilitate vocabulary retention. This may be because vocabulary games encourage students to actively explore new words rather than just translating them into Chinese, and motivate the usage of vocabulary in circumstances that are relevant to their learning. Another possible reason is that vocabulary games allow students to be exposed to the learned vocabulary

Mean (pre-test)	Mean (post-test)	t	df	P-value	Cohen d
62.43	71.2	54.926	139	<0.01	0.64

Table 1: One-sample t-test

more frequently, as mentioned by Nation (1990), and the frequent repetition of context-based vocabulary can facilitate the efficacy of vocabulary learning.

Implications and conclusion

In conclusion, the integration of vocabulary games in EAP classes has proven to stimulate students' motivation in vocabulary learning and facilitate memorization of new vocabulary. In addition, according to Webb & Nation (2017), four strands of vocabulary learning involve learning vocabulary with drilling practices, noticing the vocabulary in listening and reading, producing the vocabulary in meaningful contexts and strengthening vocabulary use through practice. By combining my research finding and Webb & Nation's (2017) four strands of vocabulary learning, here are some implications for vocabulary teaching:

(1) Teachers need to incorporate games in vocabulary teaching, but this needs to be combined with traditional vocabulary teaching methods such as matching words with definitions. This is echoed by my research finding that students preferred a mixed approach with vocabulary teaching. The reasons given by students are that matching words with definitions is straight-forward, so the meanings of words are directly comprehensible, while vocabulary games bring vigor into the classroom.

(2) Meaningful repetition is crucial for vocabulary learning. Vocabulary games, as suggested by Nation (1990), encourage meaningful repetition by guaranteeing that students come across new vocabulary at least five times in various settings, which is essential for efficient retention and memory consolidation. Additionally, to improve learning and retention, controlled engagement is helping students actively employ new vocabulary in planned, intentional activities such as creating sentences instead of just repeating it passively.

(3) Apart from learning vocabulary from listening and reading, we also need to integrate vocabulary teaching in speaking and writing activities to allow students to use the vocabulary in meaningful contexts, which can help them remember the vocabulary for future use.

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Why is Kinesthetic Learning Important?

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HAVING TAUGHT YEAR Two EAP for over four years, I have come to realize the importance of maximizing the limited class time, which includes only two seminars per week. This presents a constant challenge: balancing teacher input with student engagement. On one hand, the structure of Year Two EAP requires teachers to cover a substantial amount of material; on the other, the class must remain student-centered. My cohort consists of maths students, many of whom are quite reserved and hesitant to participate in class activities. In this context, finding ways to actively engage students becomes a crucial issue. Over the past year, I have started incorporating more kinesthetic elements into my lessons. Based on my observations, students have shown greater willingness to participate, and teaching efficiency has noticeably improved. Therefore, I would like to share my experiences with incorporating kinesthetic activities in class and reflect on their advantages and limitations.

What is kinesthetic learning?

A common approach to categorizing different learning styles is the VARK model, which includes visual (V), auditory (A), reading/writing (R), and kinesthetic (K) modalities (Fleming & Mills, 1992). From a teacher's perspective, the kinesthetic modality involves using diverse perceptual methods, such as hands-on experiences, demonstrations, practice, or simulations, to actively engage students (Fleming & Mills, 1992). Simply put, kinesthetic learning refers to a learning style that emphasizes movement or physical activity (Harmer, 2015).

Numerous studies across various disciplines have shown that a kinesthetic learning style positively impacts students' success and is well received. For example, in one practice, a physical adventure game called "escape room" was implemented in engineering programs to help students review exam materials (Leung, 2019). Feedback from students and faculty indicated that this activity improved student engagement, enhanced understanding of the materials, and introduced students to a novel learning experience (Leung, 2019). In another study among medical students, kinesthetic learners gained broader visuospatial comprehension of an organ by engaging in activities such as crochet and clay modeling (Hernandez et al., 2020).

A crucial feature shared by these examples is that kinesthetic learning is rarely a stand-alone element. Instead, it often involves a multimodal approach. As Fleming & Mills (1992) point out, providing a kinesthetic experience typically requires

presenting information through visual (V), auditory (A), or reading/writing (R) methods; however, the experience remains kinesthetic due to the interactive and physical nature of the content. In other words, the experience involves students actively engaging with the material through physical activities or hands-on tasks. Similarly, Leung (2019) observes that kinesthetic learning enables individuals to engage with information using all five senses—touch, sight, sound, smell, and hearing—by actively participating in activities rather than just listening or watching passively.

These features make kinesthetic learning a valuable addition to an EAP class, which often incorporates visual, auditory, and reading/writing methods. The following section will introduce several activities that incorporate kinesthetic learning, all of which have been successfully used in my class.

Kinesthetic learning in my class

Adapted 3-2-1

The 3-2-1 activity is a popular speaking exercise designed to help students improve their language fluency. Students speak on the same topic for three rounds, with each round lasting three minutes, two minutes and one minute, respectively (Thai & Boers, 2016). In practice, there can be many variations of this format based on teachers' preference. For example, the topic might change for each round, and the task can be either a presentation or a conversation. Students may switch partners between rounds or stay with the same partner. In short, this exercise offers a great deal of flexibility.

In my adaptation, I ask students to stand throughout the entire exercise and move around to switch partners. Sometimes, I play background music to create a relaxed atmosphere, especially when the exercise serves as a casual warm-up. When students remain seated around a table, they often appear less engaged - some stare at their phone screens or stay silent. However, when they stand, they seem more relaxed and willing to participate.

Before starting the speaking task, I encourage students to smile and greet each other to help ease any tension. They are free to choose a spot they like in the classroom, take a short walk, move around, or even sit on the tables. Standing seems to foster more conversation, as students smile more, use more body language, and speak more freely. On one occasion, a student even performed a little dance move to his classmates! These added kinesthetic

elements have significantly improved the mood of the classroom and increased students' willingness to communicate.

An old-school gamification

Gamification in English Language Teaching (ELT) uses game elements to boost learner engagement, motivation, and interactivity (Smith, 2024). Evolving from traditional board games and early computer-assisted learning in the 1980s to modern digital platforms and mobile apps, gamification aims to enhance motivation, skill development, and effective communication in ELT (Smith, 2024).

In my class, aside from commonly used mobile games such as Kahoot, I also enjoy incorporating traditional, technology-free games. One such game is "Hot Potato", which I frequently use for warm-ups or inviting answers from students. All the materials it requires is a small object. My personal preference is a soft toy. It should be easy for students to pass around, big enough for everyone to see, and safe to use, especially when students get too excited and start throwing it. I begin by handing the toy to a student, and then I turn around to face away from the class. Once I say "start," students begin passing the toy from one to another. While they pass it, I call out numbers, and when I say "stop," the student holding the toy must answer the question.

The kinesthetic features make this game particularly effective. The physical act of passing the toy involves hand-eye coordination, movement, and touch, which activates the students' motor skills and keeps their attention focused on the task. Movement also reduces restlessness, as it allows students to physically engage instead of sitting still. Additionally, adding kinesthetic elements to games can help eliminate distractions from digital devices. When students play games on their phones or laptops, they are often interrupted by WeChat messages or news notifications. However, this game allows students to remain fully immersed. The kinesthetic act of passing the toy not only adds excitement but also makes learning a multi-sensory experience and reinforces their focus on the activity.

Rotating groups

In my class, students often work in fixed groups of three to four, seated at designated tables. While this setup supports consistent collaboration, it may prevent students from experiencing varied perspectives and language interactions (Rance-Roney, 2010). It is thus necessary to have flexible grouping sometimes

(Rance-Roney, 2010). To incorporate this approach, I decided to rotate groups for teaching the "solution" section of a Problem-Solution essay.

First, I reviewed the model "problem" section that was already covered to ensure students understood the issue. Then, each group received a handout with one possible solution to the problem. They discussed the solution as a group, clarified any questions, and memorized the key points for later use. This step ensured that all group members had a shared understanding of their assigned solution.

Next comes the rotation. Initially, all four students in one group represented the same solution. To rotate, each student from one table moved to form new groups. In these new groups, each member represented a different solution, creating a diverse group composition. Again, I had everybody stand up and discuss. Each member took turns introducing their solution, and then the group debated which one best addressed the issue. Since only one solution met all the criteria, the discussions encouraged critical thinking and negotiation.

At the final stage, the four students representing the four selected solutions stood in front of the class and presented their reasoning. Often, groups made different choices, which added a layer of engagement and humor. I followed this with an explanation to clarify why one solution was more appropriate than others.

This activity introduced novelty through movement, discussion with new peers, and presentations. It engaged students on multiple levels which aligns with the VARK model. For example, reading and paraphrasing solutions represent reading/writing (R), listening to peers is related to aural sense (A) , and actively participating through discussion and physical movement is kinesthetic (K). In particular, the kinesthetic features like standing, rotating groups, and presenting played a key role in fostering engagement and collaboration.

Strengths of kinesthetic learning

The benefits of kinesthetic learning become evident when examining its applications in the classroom. Activities such as the adapted 3-2-1 and "Hot Potato" significantly contribute to creating a relaxed and comfortable learning environment. By alleviating tension, these activities encourage students to participate actively, share their views, and engage in meaningful interactions.

Consequently, kinesthetic learning fosters active class engagement and facilitates a collaborative atmosphere.

Rotating groups highlights another key strength of kinesthetic learning: the development of problem-solving and critical thinking skills through active engagement. In this activity, students do more than moving between tables and interacting with different peers; they physically engage with their environment, which enhances their cognitive processing. The movement not only fosters collaboration, but also allows students to experience the knowledge in a tangible way. As Ying (2024) emphasizes, participating and doing tasks helps learners understand concepts more effectively, enhancing the overall learning experience. By assessing the strength and weakness of each solution, justifying their choices, and working toward a consensus as a team, students also sharpen their critical thinking skills.

Weaknesses of kinesthetic learning and coping strategies

Despite its strengths, applying kinesthetic learning in an EAP class presents certain challenges, particularly in classroom management. Since kinesthetic activities often involve substantial movement and demand a high level of autonomy, they can lead to classroom disruptions or confusion if not carefully managed. To address this, teachers must provide clear instructions. Checking students' understanding of the instructions and displaying them on a board or screen can further ensure smooth execution. Additionally, while students should be granted autonomy during group activities, teachers should adopt the role of a facilitator, offering guidance without over-interference to encourage independent problem-solving.

The next challenge relates to inclusion. Some students may not feel comfortable with kinesthetic learning or group activities due to personality or psychological preferences. For example, some learners may prefer traditional lectures or working independently. To address this, it is essential

to explain the rationale behind kinesthetic activities and highlight their benefits. When students understand the purpose, they may be more willing to participate. Conducting a learning style preference survey can also help teachers identify students' needs and adapt activities accordingly. For instance, a student who prefers working independently could take on roles like record keeper during group tasks. This ensures their comfort while contributing to the activity.

Another concern is the potential for monotony if activities like 3-2-1 or "Hot Potato" are overused. Maintaining novelty is key to sustaining students' interest. Teachers should avoid having these activities too frequently. Instead, teachers can explore variations. For instance, the 3-2-1 structure can be adapted to different formats or integrated with visual or aural components like music to keep it engaging.

Conclusion

While kinesthetic learning is often associated with disciplines like science, art, or vocational training, it holds significant potential in language education. Beyond the activities discussed here, kinesthetic elements are present in other classroom practices, such as role-plays and poster presentations. These activities function as small-scale projects that not only enhance language skills but also develop students' transferable skills like collaboration and communication. Looking ahead, EAP teachers could consider implementing larger-scale activities like the "escape room" mentioned earlier. Although such activities may require more planning and resources, they offer an opportunity to integrate kinesthetic learning into the curriculum in an innovative and impactful way.

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RES

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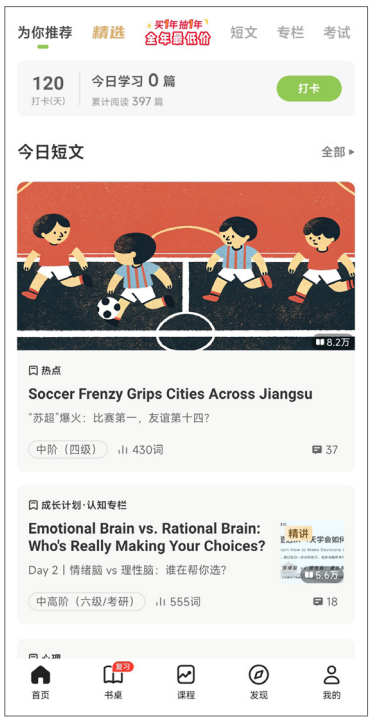
Action research:

Exploring the Effectiveness of Using A Mobile Reading App (Shanbay Reading)



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Introduction

I'VE BEEN TEACHING ENGLISH for Academic Purposes (EAP) for over three years now, and I've noticed that many of my students fall between the CEFR A2 and B1 levels. Some of them really struggle in class—like when they can't keep up with discussions or follow my instructions. I think a big part of this is their limited vocabulary. Therefore, I have spent some time during my lessons to encourage student-centered review and active use of new words. Nevertheless, relying solely on in-class time for vocabulary accumulation is not realistic. Each semester only lasts thirteen weeks and students attended my EAP lessons four times a week, but in each lesson, I can allocate fewer than 20 minutes on vocabulary because I need to cover other activities according to the syllabus. It is therefore vital to encourage students to expand their vocabulary during their free time. Since vocabulary learning mobile applications are convenient and accessible, using a suitable platform might improve students' English learning. I have chosen Shanbay Reading because it allows users to add new words in the reading to their personal vocabulary bank; later, users can review them on the phone. I was not sure about the effectiveness of this app on students' reading and vocabulary learning – therefore, I conducted this action research.

Literature review

The urgency for my students to improve their vocabulary size

The purpose of our EAP lessons is to prepare students for their academic life in our English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) university. As mentioned above, most of my students are at CEFR A2 or B1 level. Milton (2009) estimates that the vocabulary range for CEFR B1 is between 2,500 and 3,250 words, while Laufer (2020) asserts that CEFR B1 level English learners might be able to use 4,000 words. However, Hirsh and Nation (1992) propose that a minimum of 5,000 words is required for language learners if they want to understand authentic academic reading materials. Consequently, it's clear that B1 learners need to learn at least 1,000 new words to thrive in academic life. For A2 students, this number is even greater.

The potential positive influences of reading on vocabulary learning

Reading is valuable for incidental second language (L2) vocabulary learning (Pellicer-Sánchez, 2017; Waring & Takaki, 2003). Incidental learning occurs when learners come across unfamiliar words while reading for understanding, instead of just memorizing them (Feng & Webb, 2020). As learners read, the context provides opportunities to guess an unfamiliar word's meaning, part of speech, written form, and collocation (Feng & Webb, 2020). Moreover, many experts agree that extensive reading—where learners dive into lots of enjoyable material—really helps boost vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, Shanbay Reading is a fantastic platform for students. It offers a wide variety of articles on all sorts of topics, making it easy to find something that sparks their interest.

Mobile-assisted vocabulary learning

Although some mobile vocabulary learning applications (e.g. Baicizan, Duolingo, and Kahoot) can definitely improve vocabulary learning (Ahmed, 2016; Kazemi & Zenouzagh, 2023; Song & Xiong, 2023), they do have some problems. For example, some of them don't classify words by difficulty levels (Wang et al., 2020). Here, Shanbay Reading is better. It lets students choose from different language levels: Beginner, Intermediate, Intermediate to Advanced, Advanced, and Proficient. Another common problem of some vocabulary applications is that they teach words in isolation (Heil, et al., 2016). Shanbay Reading can deal with this issue, too. It provides 13 article categories (e.g. popular science, business, psychology, etc.), so my students can learn vocabulary in context.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

TAM, created by Davis et al. (1989), has been widely used to understand how people react to new technology (Fathema et al., 2015). The main factors influencing users' acceptance of computer technology are Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) and Perceived Usefulness (PU) (Davis et al., 1989). These two core concepts work alongside three other main factors: Attitude Toward Using (ATT), Behavioral Intention to Use (BI), and Actual System Use (AU) (Davis et al., 1989). Basically, if people find a technology easy to use and useful, they're more likely to have a positive attitude towards it. This positive

attitude, together with the perception of usefulness, often leads to an intention to use the technology (Davis et al., 1989). Finally, that intention leads to actual usage (Davis et al., 1989). In this action research, I designed both the questionnaire and interview question based on TAM.

Ebbinghaus forgetting curve

The Ebbinghaus forgetting curve (Figure 1) shows how our memory fades over time (Zhu, 2020). In 1885, Hermann Ebbinghaus discovered the 'spacing effect', which explains how reviewing the same study material after a specific period of time can help remember it (Schimanke et al., 2014). To assist users in memorizing new vocabulary from their readings, Shanbay Reading incorporates review activities based on the Ebbinghaus forgetting curve principles.

Based on the literature review, it appears that using Shanbay Reading can be an effective method for vocabulary development. However, the effectiveness of this application requires real-world evidence. Therefore, I will answer the following research questions in my action research:

- What is the effectiveness of Shanbay Reading in improving students' vocabulary size?
- What are students' perceptions of using Shanbay Reading to support their language learning process?

Figure 1: The Ebbinghaus forgetting curve (Zhu, 2020)

Methodology

Participants

Nine Year 1 Foundation students, who are all females with English language proficiency levels ranging from A2 to B1, were voluntarily recruited in March, 2024. None of them had used this app before.

Intervention

During the first week, everyone took an online vocabulary pretest. From Weeks 2 to 12, the students had the freedom to use Shanbay Reading as they saw fit. To encourage my students to use this app, I set up a WeChat group and shared interesting articles several times a week. In Week 12, participants completed the same online vocabulary test as a post-test, and I received six students' pre- and post-test results. Unfortunately, three students were not willing to share their vocabulary test results, and I respected their decision to keep that information private. In Week 12, I sent a questionnaire to our WeChat group, and all nine students completed it. In the same week, three students also participated in a semi-structured interview.

Instruments

The online vocabulary test was conducted via the website https://preply.com/en/learn/english/test-your-vocab. I choose this tool because it's free and easy to use. The test consists of two simple steps (see Figures 2 & 3), where students just need to select the words they know the exact meanings of.

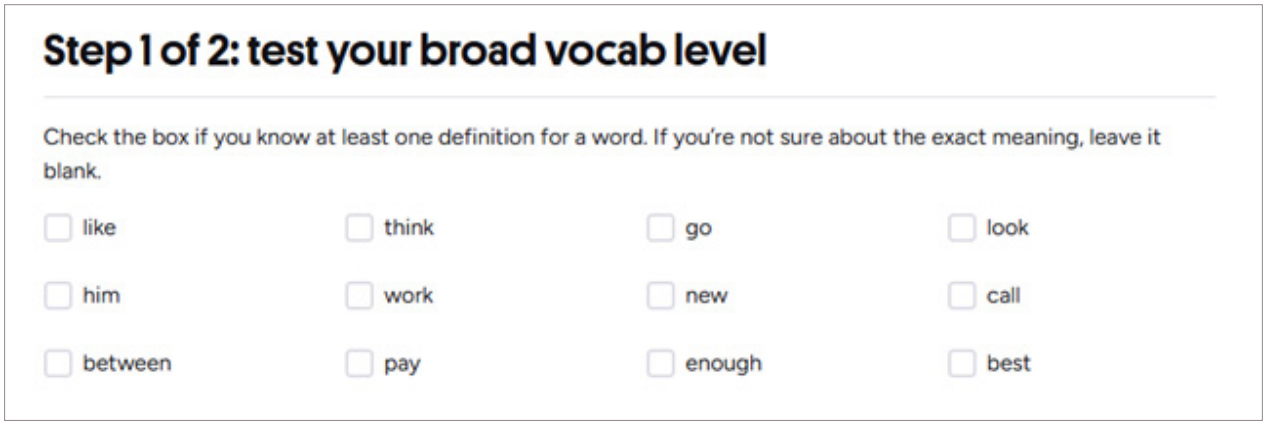

Figure 2: Step 1 of the vocabulary size test

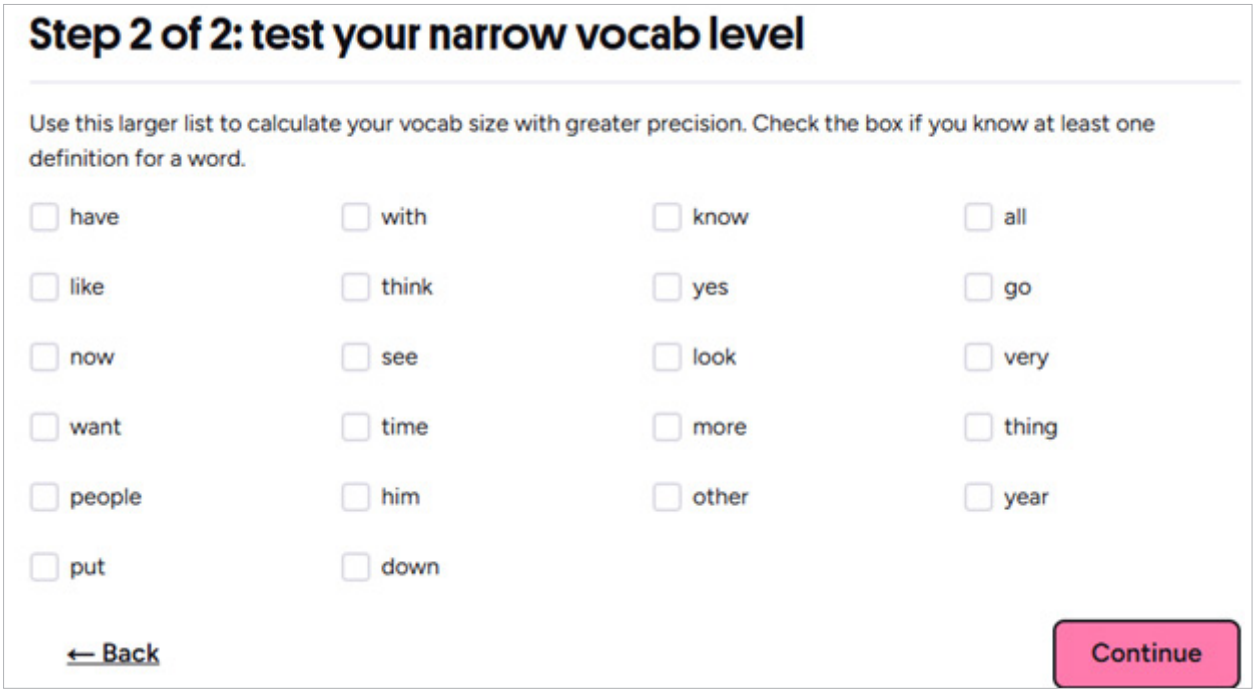

Figure 3: Step 2 of the vocabulary size test

The questionnaire is a 14-question 5-point Likert scale survey, and I designed it based on TAM. The first question asks about the amount of time spent using the app, and the second is about their preferred reading categories. Questions 3 to 14 primarily assess PEOU, PU, ATT, and BI.

The semi-structured interview includes eight questions that also draw from the TAM framework. Some of these questions mirror those in the questionnaire, but students are encouraged to provide reasons for their responses, providing me with more in-depth insights.

Results and discussion

Vocabulary size tests

Check out Table 1 for the results of our vocabulary tests. It's clear that every student's vocabulary grew, though the amount varied quite a bit. However, the results for S1, S2, S4, and S5 appear to be extraordinarily high. Surprisingly, the vocabulary increases for S1, S4, and S5 are more than 5,000 words. Based on my teaching experience, it's quite unlikely for learners to acquire such a huge number of words within 10 weeks.

Name	Pretest	Post-test	Increase
S1	7986	13236	5250
S2	7070	10734	3664
S3	3284	3804	520
S4	4070	11786	7716
S5	3652	8832	5180
S6	4005	4302	297

Table 1: Vocabulary pre- and posttest results

The reason for these unexpected results could be inherent limitations of the testing tool. As is shown in Figures 2 and 3, students merely need to click words they think they know. This might have led students to select more words in the posttest, eager to showcase their progress. If given another chance, I would opt for a different vocabulary assessment tool which requires students to identify the correct meaning of a word, rather than relying on self-reporting.

Questionnaire and interview

As shown in Table 2, each student spent between 5 to 15 minutes per day on the platform, either reading or reviewing vocabulary. Because it usually takes me around 15 minutes to read two articles and review the vocabulary, the amount of time my students spent on this app is relatively satisfactory and not too short.

Q1. How much time do you spend on this app every day (including reading and reviewing vocabulary)?	number of respondents
a. less than 5 minutes	0
b. 5 – 15 minutes	9
c. 16 – 30 minutes	0
d. more than 30 minutes	0

Table 2: Average daily time spent on Shanbay Reading

Table 3 displays students' preferences for the articles available on Shanbay Reading. Interestingly, out of the eleven categories, 'science' and 'technology' were not selected by any of the students. One interviewee explained their preference for articles on daily life, noting that the vocabulary and expressions found in these pieces can be immediately applied to everyday situations. In contrast, they felt that the jargon in 'science' and 'technology' articles was less relevant to their daily life. This insight helps explain why articles related to daily life emerged as the most popular choice. Notably, at least one student selected each of the other categories, indicating that the app's diverse range of articles effectively meets users' varied interests.

Q2. What type (s) of articles do you like most on this app? (you can choose more than one option)	number of respondents
a. humanity	3
b. daily life	7
c. popular science	4
d. anecdote	1
e. personal growth	3
f. nature	3
g. science	0
h. technology	0
i. hot topic	4
j. business	1
k. psychology	2

Table 3: Categories of participants' reading preference

Table 4 presents the students' perceptions of various aspects of Shanbay Reading. Overall, students had a mainly positive experience using the app. The mean scores for Questions 3 and 4, slightly below 4, suggest that most students find the platform's reading materials both sufficient and engaging. Questions 5, 6, and 7 were designed to measure the platform's ease of use. The mean scores above a value of 4 for all these questions indicate that students find the app straightforward, particularly when searching for articles and reviewing vocabulary.

Of specific interest is Question 8, which reveals that students appreciate the vocabulary review method on the platform. The application enables students to add new words to their personal vocabulary notebook, and reviews are scheduled based on the patterns of the Ebbinghaus forgetting curve. One student even noted this platform's use of this underlying theory in daily vocabulary revision. More importantly, Question 9, with a mean score of 4.56, shows that the overwhelming majority of participants believe that the app can effectively promote vocabulary expansion.

Questions 10-13 were designed around the concept of Perceived Usefulness. With mean scores around 4, it is apparent that the majority of students find the platform effective for enhancing their reading speed, motivation, interests, and pronunciation. Question 14, despite receiving the lowest mean score, still shows positive results because seven students indicate their intention to continue using the platform. Encouragingly, one student mentioned that seeing seniors posting their usage of this application on WeChat Moments has inspired her confidence to continue using it in the future.

Question
3. I think this app can provide enough reading materials for me.
4. I think this app can provide interesting reading materials for me.
5. I think this app is easy to use.
6. I think it is easy to select the type of articles that I'm interested in on this app.
7. I think it is easy to review vocabulary on this app.
8. I like the way to review vocabulary on this app.
9. I think this app is useful to enlarge my vocabulary.
10. I think this app is useful to increase my motivation to reading.
11. I think this app is useful to improve my reading speed.
12. I think this app is useful to improve my pronunciation.
13. I think this app is useful to increase my enjoyment while reading.
14. I will use this reading app in the future.

Table 4: Results of participants' perception towards the use of Shanbay Reading

Conclusion

This action research successfully addresses the two research questions. The collected data suggests an overall improvement in students' vocabulary size after ten weeks of using Shanbay Reading. Students also recognize the platform's value in enhancing their language learning, particularly in vocabulary and reading.
This research is not without limitations, however. The chosen vocabulary test tool resulted in potentially unrealistic data, creating some confusion. Future research should place more emphasis on selecting appropriate instruments. The absence of a control group is another limitation, as it reduces the reliability of my intervention's impact. If possible, I will include a control group in future research.

Moving forward, I will certainly advocate for the use of Shanbay Reading to all my students, encouraging continuous language proficiency improvement.

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‘Reality Check’ - Boosting EMI Students’ Engagement with Augmented Reality

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Introduction

IMAGINE WALKING INTO AN English classroom where students' eyes light up as they interact with augmented reality (AR) displays that create virtual worlds and bring learning to life. This was the scene envisioned for a series of EAP workshops where AR was incorporated with the intention of enhancing postgraduate students' learning. Grounded in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the research examined how AR could improve student foreign language enjoyment (FLE) and intrinsic motivation. This research article will firstly provide a review of the relevant literature. Next, the methodology section will describe the context, participants and research instruments. Following this, the data will be reported and analysed. Finally, the significant findings will be discussed, with conclusions drawn and recommendations made for effectively incorporating AR into EAP lessons.

Literature review

Student motivation and enjoyment are cornerstones of effective learning. The use of gamification and technological tools to boost motivation and enjoyment in language education has received much attention in recent years. Systematic reviews of gamification in EFL settings have revealed positive effects on achieving learning outcomes and enhancing motivation, engagement, and foreign language enjoyment (FLE) (Wulantari et al., 2024). The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), a framework to study learners' attitudes towards educational technology, posits that the greater the perceived usefulness and ease-of-use, the more likely students are to accept a particular digital tool. Studies using TAM have shown gamification approaches with high perceived usefulness and ease-of-use lead to greater student satisfaction (Lukita et al., 2023), engagement (Arava et al., 2024), achievement (Ma et al., 2024), motivation and enjoyment (Li et al., 2024; Lashari et al., 2024).

As one type of emerging technology, augmented reality and virtual reality (AR/VR) can create immersive, multisensory experiences that blend physical and digital environments (Kapp, 2012). AR/VR tools have been combined with gamification in the language classroom to enhance student motivation, engagement, and enjoyment through curiosity

(Nilubol & Sitthitikul, 2023). Research into AR/VR in the Chinese classroom has revealed positive outcomes in vocabulary learning (Wen, 2021; Chen, 2024). Among English language learners, the incorporation of AR/VR has been shown to increase proficiency (Wedyan et al., 2022), boost FLE and reduce anxiety (Dodi, 2023), enhance grammar learning (Marrahi-Gomez, & Belda-Medina, 2024), and improve lower-level reading comprehension (Wang et al., 2021). Looking to the future, Hustanto et al. (2024) predict that the benefits of AR/VR will revolutionise language education by catering to the learning preferences of the digital age's Generation Alpha. However, while the above studies show the positive effects of AR/VR gamification on motivation, engagement, and enjoyment in language learning, few studies address the combined effects of intrinsic motivation and extrinsic enjoyment.

Despite its benefits, implementing AR/VR in classrooms is not without challenges. Accessibility issues, such as disparities in technological resources, can limit its widespread adoption. Furthermore, AR/VR's effectiveness often hinges on how well it is integrated into coherent pedagogical design. Rather than simply adding an AR/VR activity here or there, Akçayır and Akçayır (2017) and Lim and Harbig (2020) found that these technological tools were most effective when combined with language teaching methods that encourage interactions between students, using constructivist approaches like situational and task-based teaching. Cheng et al. (2019) demonstrated that AR's role in knowledge co-construction is influenced by task types, modalities, and learning objectives, emphasising the need for interactive, well-designed AR interventions. However, the combined role of AR/VR and pedagogical approaches is relatively limited.

While there is a great deal of literature regarding the affordances of AR/VR tools in the EFL classroom, especially with young learners, there is a comparative scarcity of studies into the use of such technology in tertiary education. However, research has indicated the potential benefits of universities integrating AR/VR tools into EAP (English for Academic Purposes) classrooms. In one study in an EMI college in Taiwan, using AR/VR helped L2 English students enhance their understanding of and interest in content knowledge while improving their English listening and speaking skills (Tsai, 2023). As a rapidly growing sector within higher education, the emergence of transnational and EMI contexts presents a significant setting for further investigation into the effectiveness of AR/VR technology.

Overall, the present study addresses three significant research gaps. Firstly, the study seeks to investigate the combined effects of AR tools on students' intrinsic motivation and extrinsic enjoyment. Secondly, the study highlights the significant role of instructional design and pedagogical approaches in the effective integration of AR. Thirdly, the study locates the implementation of AR in a Sino-foreign transnational university, where relatively few prior studies have been conducted.

Methodology

Research questions

1. To what extent is AR technology accepted by students in EMI classes?
2. How does AR technology affect the motivation and enjoyment of students in EMI classes?
3. How do pre-service TESOL teachers perceive the potential benefits of AR technology in EFL/ EMI classes?

Participants

This research was conducted at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU), a transnational EMI university in China. The setting was a series of five PGT in-sessional EAP workshops from 'Academic Presentation and Discussion Skills', an optional module designed to enhance students' oral communication skills in different academic contexts such as seminars, poster presentations, debates, etc. The participants were master's students from different disciplines enrolled on the 'Academic Presentation and Discussion Skills' module. However, due to the optional week-by-week nature of the workshops, the number of regular attendees fell throughout the module. While 35 participants answered the pre-test survey, only 10 attended all five AR intervention workshops and answered the post-test survey, and only five participated in the focus group, all of whom were from the MA TESOL programme and planned to teach language in the future. While not representative of the average student, these five focus group participants had the benefit of being able to convey specific insights from an educational perspective without ambiguity.

Research design

This research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection. A quasi-experimental design was used, encompassing a pre-test survey, classroom intervention, post-test survey and focus group. Pre- and post-test surveys assessed students' motivation, enjoyment, and technology acceptance both before and after the intervention (RQs 1&2). Following the post-test survey, a focus group with pre-service language teachers provided further qualitative insights (RQ3).

To prepare the intervention, the researcher collaborated with the designer of the module, who was also the class teacher, to jointly plan each lesson, carefully aligning the use of AR with learning objectives and pedagogical methods. Each AR activity used the AR tool Kivicube, a free open-source mobile application that is activated by scanning a QR code and then hovering the phone over images in order to create the AR effect. The use of Kivicube was integrated into the workshops in various ways to create diverse effects, falling into two main categories:

1. Image-enhancing AR: Participants brought visuals to life through augmented overlays, such as roleplay characters and diagrams.
2. Immersive VR scenarios: Participants were transported into virtual environments to practice language skills in authentic contexts.

For instance, in one session in which students shared ideas from different perspectives on the topic of Covid-19, augmented overlays were used to bring to life different characters including virologists, shop owners, parents working from home etc., encouraging students to put themselves in different shoes when discussing the topic (Figure 1). In another session on poster presentations, students were transported to the virtual world of an academic conference where they could 'walk around' from poster to poster, practising the target language in a realistic scenario (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Augmented overlays

Figure 2. Virtual academic conference.

Results

Survey Data

Findings from the pre-test (Table 1) survey and post-test (Table 2) surveys demonstrate the changes in participants' motivation, foreign language enjoyment, and technology acceptance, as indicated on a 7-point scale, before and after the intervention.

In the pre-test survey (Table 1), answered by the original 35 students enrolled on the module, motivation was the highest variable, with a mean score of 4.1496 and standard deviation of 1.16441. This shows generally strong but highly varied motivation among the original cohort, with many students very driven to attend English lessons and others less so. Regarding foreign language enjoyment, the pre-test mean of 3.5206 indicates a moderate level of enjoyment of their English lessons. Meanwhile, a similar mean of 3.3571 indicates a moderate level of acceptance of technology in the classroom.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Motivation	35	2.59	6.29	4.1496	1.16441
FLE	35	2.33	5.00	3.5206	.86771
Technology Acceptance	35	1.75	5.00	3.3571	.97446

Table 1. Pre-test survey

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Motivation	10	4.29	7.00	5.4941	.84528
FLE	10	3.89	5.00	4.6000	.45722
Technology Acceptance	10	3.00	5.00	4.2500	.60093

Table 2. Post-test survey

Comparing this data with the post-test survey results (Table 2) shows a marked rise in all three variables over the course of the intervention. While the second survey was only taken by the 10 students who had participated in the five workshops, the increased levels of motivation (by 1.34), enjoyment (by 1.08) and technology acceptance (by 0.89) following the AR intervention is still notable.

Focus Group Data

Thematic analysis of focus group data provides key insights into pre-service language teachers' perceptions of the benefits of AR in the EMI classroom. The data were categorised into four themes: enjoyment/motivation, technology acceptance, contextual alignment, and future usage.

Enjoyment/Motivation

References to foreign language enjoyment represented the most prevalent topic in the focus group data. Most participants strongly agreed that AR significantly enhanced classroom enjoyment, fostering enthusiasm and engagement. Participants described AR as "immersive", "innovative", and "intuitive", appreciating its ability to create an interactive classroom environment. However, participants also stressed that AR's effectiveness, and students' enjoyment, depended on meaningful integration with lesson content.

Technology Acceptance

Participants highlighted challenges with AR equipment, such as the need for multiple devices with Kivicube and the risk of classroom disruption due to unstable or inadequate tools. Participants also mentioned the high demand on teachers' lesson preparation, requiring adjustments to angles and spare equipment. However,

one participant noted mobile-based AR's user-friendliness compared to clunky VR equipment, suggesting improvements could streamline its classroom application.

Contextual Alignment

Some participants with language teaching experience identified a lack of alignment between AR applications and classroom objectives as a critical issue. They emphasised the importance of ensuring AR contributes meaningfully to lesson goals, rather than serving as a superficial addition "just for the sake of using it", otherwise a lot of time and effort may be wasted.

Future Usage

Considering AR from their perspective as pre-service language teachers, participants expressed mixed feelings about the likelihood of using the technology in their future teaching. All participants expressed enthusiasm for engaging their students through the immersive quality of AR. However, limited budgets, digital illiteracy, lack of technical training, and regional disparities in technology acceptance were all mentioned as potential challenges to adopting AR in their own classes. Participants also suggested they would prefer to limit the frequency of AR use to maintain its novelty and prevent overexposure.

Overall, the findings underscore AR's potential to enhance learning experiences but highlight the need for thoughtful implementation, technical support, and teacher training.

Discussion and conclusion

This study examined the use of AR tools in the EMI classroom, focusing on enhancing student motivation and enjoyment and addressing challenges related to technology acceptance. The findings from this research shed new light on AR's potential and limitations, especially for language teaching in tertiary educational settings.

The findings of this study correspond with much of the previous literature regarding the potential of AR to enhance student motivation, enjoyment and engagement in the English language classroom (Kittichai & Pragasit, 2023; Dodi, 2023). Comparing before and after the AR intervention, participants reported higher levels of enjoyment and motivation in surveys, particularly during innovative and immersive activities that created opportunities for interaction. However, it should be taken into account that the number of students regularly attending these workshops dropped significantly over the course of the intervention. While 35 participants answered the pre-test survey, only 10 remained by the end of the workshop series. As these were optional non-credit-bearing workshops, it is reasonable to assume that all students who chose to participate throughout the intervention already had high levels of intrinsic motivation and were enjoying their experience in the lessons. As the majority of students remaining at the end were pre-service teachers from the MA TESOL programme, it can also be assumed that they had a pre-existing interest in language education and were eager to experience more AR activities out of pedagogical curiosity. That is to say that the high levels of motivation and enjoyment in the post-test survey should not be unexpected.

Successful integration of AR tools and the effect on technology acceptance emerged as key themes in the present study. Survey results show that participants' technology acceptance increased over the course of the intervention, and the relative convenience of open-source mobile applications like Kivicube was highlighted. However, some technical issues emerged during the intervention, and participants emphasised how unstable tools and the need for multiple devices could interrupt the flow of lessons.

A further significant theme that echoed the previous literature was the importance of aligning AR activities with learning outcomes and integrating the technology within a coherent pedagogical design. Focus group participants emphasised that in order to be used effectively in the language classroom, AR should be incorporated meaningfully into lesson content, rather than being used as a superficial addition for the sake of novelty. This is consistent with previous research which found that AR tools were most effective when integrated within language teaching approaches

encouraging student interaction (Akçayır & Akçayır, 2017; Lim & Habig, 2020; Cheng et al., 2019).

While the decrease in student numbers may have led to an unrepresentative post-test sample, it also meant that the students remaining at the end of the intervention were able to give insights into the perceived effectiveness of the use of AR, not only from the perspective of a student but also as pre-service teachers. This led to some interesting thoughts on pedagogical implications and potential future usage of AR technology. In the focus group, all pre-service teachers expressed a willingness to incorporate AR into their own future lessons despite concerns over funding and technical readiness and stressing the need for accessible resources and training to support effective AR implementation. However, these pre-service teachers emphasised the importance of selective and principled AR use which serves a particular pedagogical purpose in order to avoid overexposure and maximise impact.

The two main limitations of this study lie in its small sample size and unrepresentative makeup of the post-test sample, which constrain its generalisability. Future research should be conducted on larger, more varied populations, and more effort should be made to ensure student retention, such as conducting the intervention on compulsory courses or providing incentives for completing all workshops. When designing the intervention itself, attention should be paid to integrating the AR tools in a way that aligns with learning outcomes and pedagogical approaches. To this end, comprehensive training and access to resources should be provided, enabling teachers to design effective, contextually relevant AR interventions.

In conclusion, AR shows considerable promise in fostering motivation and enjoyment in EMI classrooms. While technical and pedagogical challenges remain, thoughtful design and strategic integration can promote greater technology acceptance and unlock the potential of AR, transforming the language learning experience for future generations.

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IN PRAC

CTICE

Perusall® inPractice

Figure 1: Perusall Logo

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IN ANY SINO-FOREIGN UNIVERSITY with English as the Medium of instruction (EMI), one of the core concerns for teachers of the Foundation program will undoubtedly be students' reading competency. There are a myriad of challenges involved in supporting the development of this crucial skill, not the least of which is its relative invisibility. Wilson (2009) puts it most succinctly:

While reading is undoubtedly a major factor affecting students' success at University, it is by no means easy to teach. Reading is essentially a private, internal, cognitive activity happening inside students' heads, and it is almost impossible for teachers to get direct evidence of how their students are reading and what their stumbling blocks may be (p.14).

Indeed, many English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Foundational programs fall victim to the classic approach that Nuttal (1982) noted over 3 decades ago; that reading techniques are traditionally centered only around comprehension, or the testing of discrete items such as vocabulary. More recent scholarship has noted that "…first-year foundation programme[s] should equip Chinese students with the EAP skills and high-level reading competencies for subsequent EMI studies"

(Shi & Lin, 2024, p.2). These EAP skills that Shi & Lin highlight should arguably cover critical approaches to engaging with text and moving comprehension into knowledge building. Using engaged annotation can help do just that.

Figure 2: Perusall Motto

Background

Perusall is an app (see figure 2) originally developed at Harvard in 2015 in response to a research project at that institution that focused on the student experience. It claims to be "created by educators for educators" (Perusall, n.d.). It is described as a "social reading app" by Humanities Commons (Koppy, 2020, para.1) and an "annotation tool that helps your students engage collectively with texts" by Yale University (2022, para.1). Simply put, Perusall offers teachers a free use platform to upload PDFs or texts where students can collaboratively annotate them.

How to use:

Step 1:

In a class of 20-30 students, it is recommended to make annotation groups of 5-6 students each. These groupings could be static throughout the semester, or the teacher could decide to change for larger student exposure.

Step 2:

The teacher will upload a chosen text to the Library (see figure 3). This text can be renamed to reflect a group member designation (for example: Text 2, Red Group). Note: The Teacher's "library" can hold multiple copies of the same text (one for each group) and can be collapsed down with folders and arrows to focus on the current text.

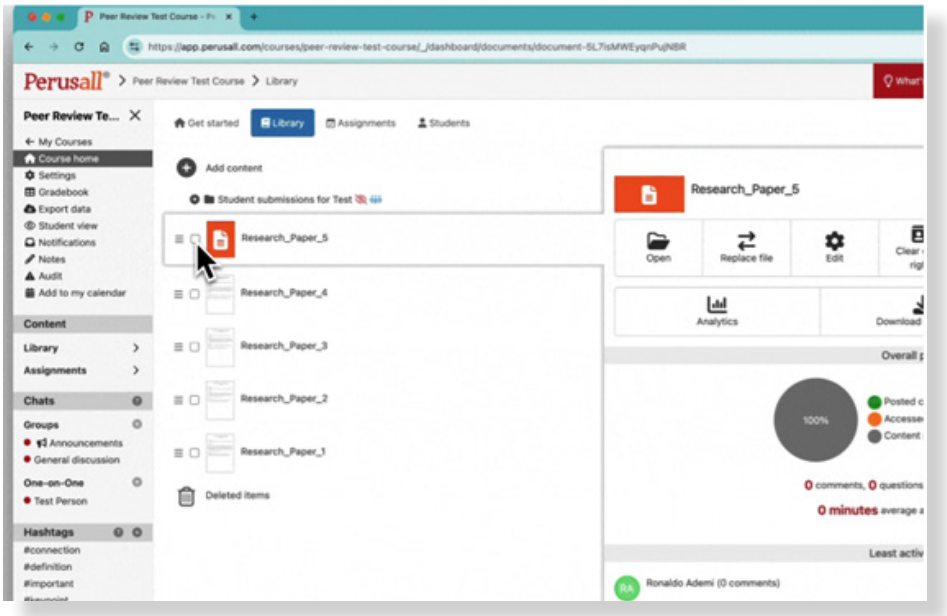

Fig 3: Adding documents to the Library

Step 3:

Clear annotation guidelines and expectations should be set with and for the students. For an Intermediate or above level (which generally matches IELTS 4-5/CEFR B1-B2), these might include the following:

- Vocabulary: identification and explanation of new vocabulary (a student will find an unknown word, provide a synonym and a definition with a dictionary link).
- Question: ask a real question about an idea or claim for comprehension of text ideas (Eg: "I don't understand why the author uses this word to describe X" or "Does the author like or dislike X here?").
- Summary clues: the students will highlight key terms, underline supporting evidence, draw arrows connecting two sections, etc.
- Like/Dislike: students make a comment using their personal opinion to dis/agree with something in the text, where the student provides a reason that they like or don't like the idea.
- Critique: students will critically engage with claims that are either poorly supported, not well cited or are over-statements.
- Connection: does the current text conflict or overlap with anything the student has read about the topic? (This could be from other topically similar readings set in class, or from student source identification, or even from outside texts/media with which the student is familiar.)

Expectations may include an amount required from each student in the group for each type, or a frequency of interaction (eg: 4 vocab, 1 question, 1 summary, 2 like/dislike; must respond to 2 other students' ideas). See figures 4-6 for exaample comments.

*Note: For lower levels (beginner/pre-intermediate), focus on Vocabulary, Question and

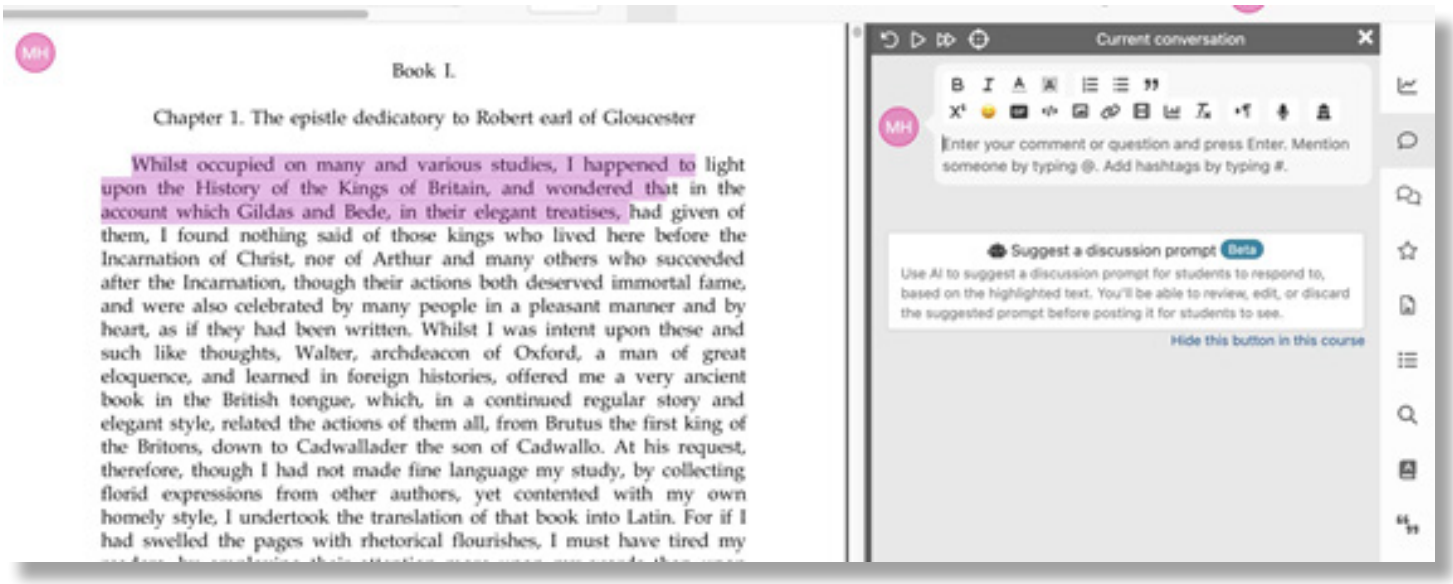

Figure 4: Commenting on a document

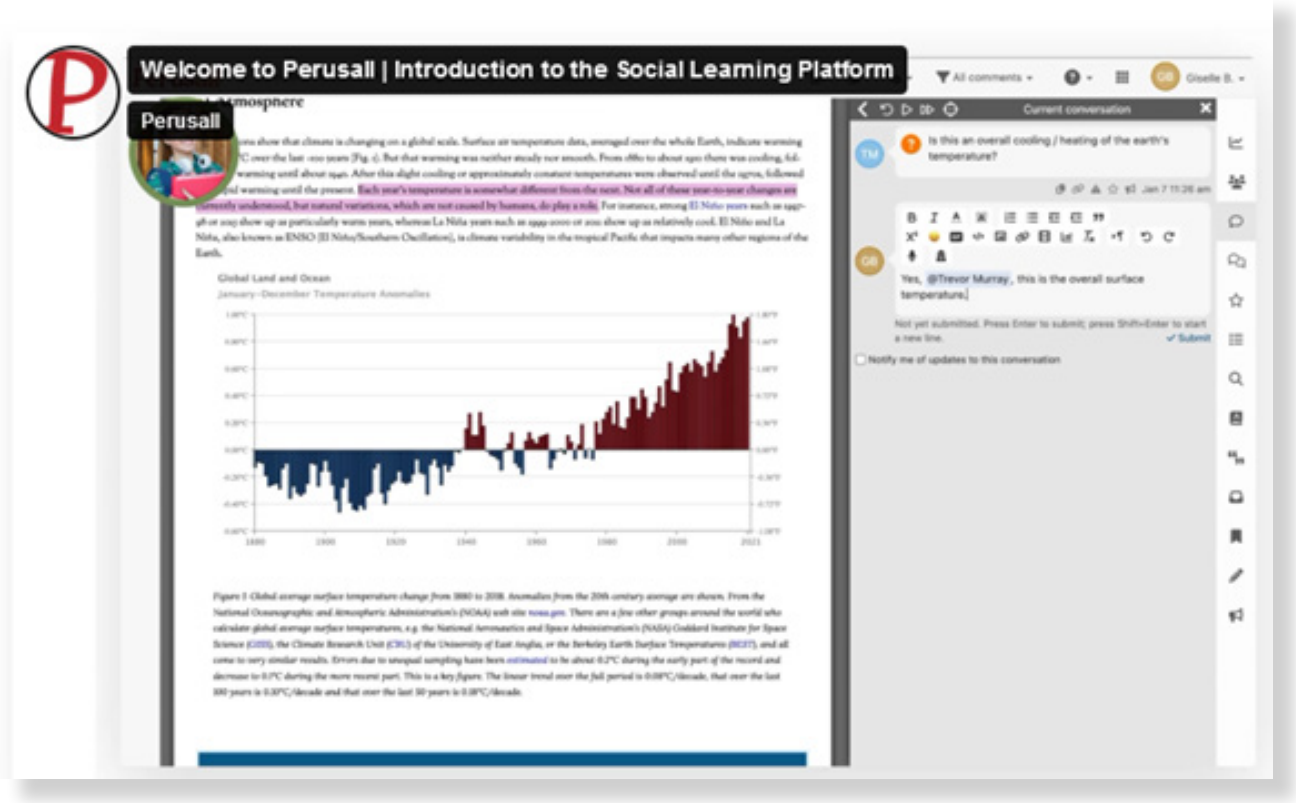

Figure 5: Commenting on a comment

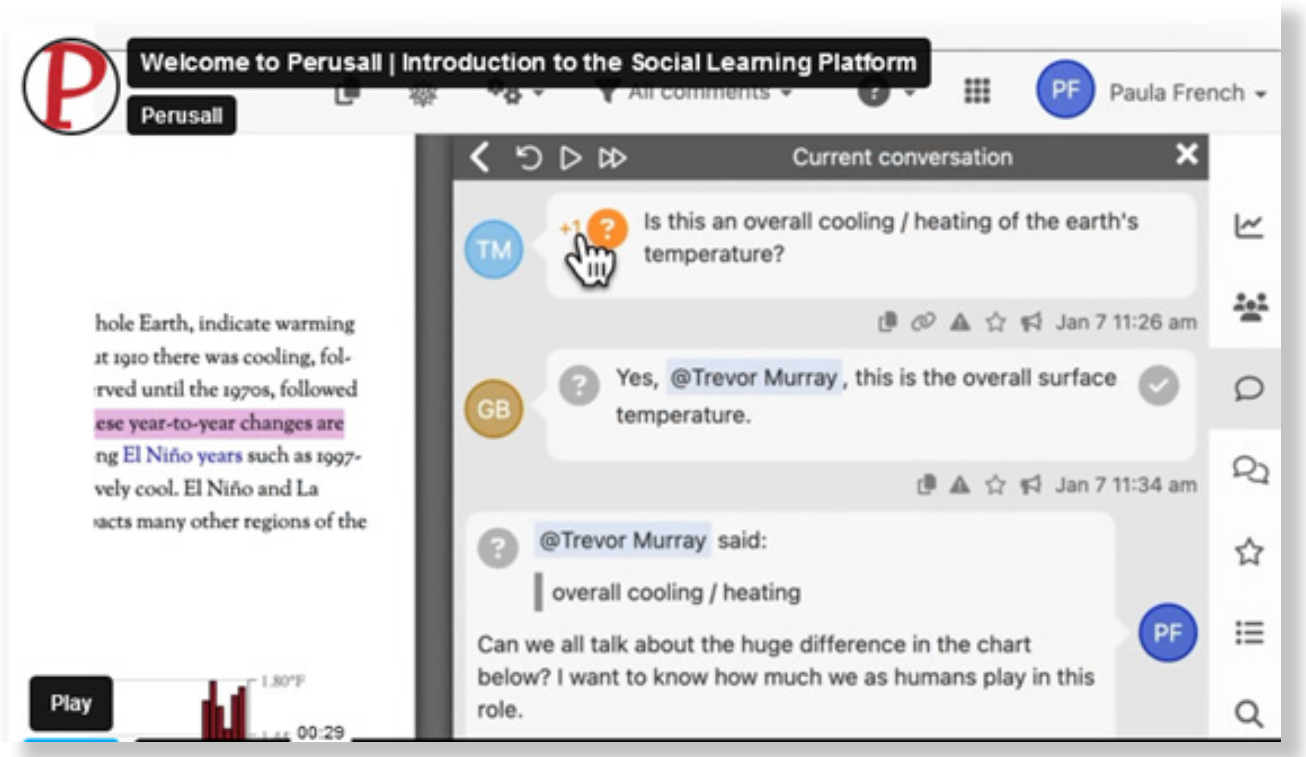

Figure 6: Interacting with comments

Step 4:

The teacher needs to monitor progress, which will include looking at each group's activities, and/or perhaps creating requirement checklists. This can involve as much or as little admin as the teacher is comfortable with; i.e., a teacher could provide twice weekly completion charts with comments on the quality of each student's engagement; or the teacher could simply make an overall group comment for each text ('good amount of interaction' or 'more critical responses needed') (see figure 7). The clearer that the teacher is in what they are using the tool for, the more transparent the process is for all involved.

Any other requirements or guidelines the teacher decides upon can be implemented. The app itself can hold multiple dozens of texts, certainly enough to offer 2 readings a week over the standard 14-week semester, and with multiple copies for each internal annotation group in each class. Both the students and the teacher can look back and see the progress made in annotation, comprehension and criticality.

Figure 7: Tagging in comments

Strengths & limitations

One of the key strengths of using an online collaborative tool such as Perusall is that it allows for oversight from a teacher with independent interaction amongst students. This can foster skill development as well as language development. The teacher does not have to agree or approve of the students' ideas (therefore taking away from the idea that there is one right answer, or that the teacher holds all the knowledge), yet teachers are able to see that ideas, understanding and criticality are present.

No tool is perfect, obviously, and just as with any tool used in the classroom, teachers may experience some resistance with student engagement. There is always a certain level of buy-in needed from students with any new technology introduced. However, the trade-off is that at least while using the tool, student engagement can be seen and tracked, whether in real time or at certain due dates along the semester.

Some teachers may feel that the tracking/commenting/checking aspect of the tool will be an administrative time burden. Again, this will depend on how the individual sets up their systems. If the readings are set & released in class time, the teacher can always use that working time or discussion time to briefly check student progress. Alternatively, the teacher can choose different groups or even individuals to keep a closer eye on for some weeks rather than others. As with any kind of monitoring, it can be up to teacher preference.

Rating

Accessibility: 5/5

Perusall can be accessed in China. It is a web based platform, not an app for downloading so it usable on both Apple & Android products.

Functionality: 4.5/5

If used as described above, it is relatively straightforward, as it only entails uploading documents then interacting with them by highlighting & commenting.

Perusall does offer much more functionality, which includes setting assignments and grading, as well as integrating with VLEs; but these options are limited to the institutional license price point.

Team Orientation: 5/5

As described above, the entirety of Perusall is team oriented, especially when the teacher has set an expectation of commenting on other student's comments. As the platform allows comments to be word form, picture form, GIF form or even video form with emojis to show reactions, it is aimed at social media savvy students. It can be seen as a place to interact outside of the formal, somewhat 'old fashioned' physical classroom setting.

Cost: 4.5/5

The free versions are sufficient for the uses described above. Institutional license fees are not advertised, instead Perusall asks to be contacted directly for quotes.

Overall: 5/5

Aside from the above pros & cons, a very positive aspect of this app is that for basic use, for both students and teachers, it is free. Institutional licenses are available, and will offer more functionality if a teacher wants to embed this into their University LMO (such as Moodle or Blackboard). The Perusall website itself has many overview videos and instructional support for teachers thinking of starting to explore.

Further support:

- Perusall's website: https://perusall.com
- Instructor support: https://support.perusall.com/hc/en-us/categories/360002157414-Instructors
- Perusall's annotation quality metrics: https://support.perusall.com/hc/en-us/articles/360034824694-How-is-annotation-quality-defined-in-Perusall

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Fig 1:
University of Melbourne (n.d.) Perusall. Ac
Fig 2, 5 & 6:
Perusall (n.d.) Welcome to Perusall: Introdu
Fig 3:
Perusall (2025) How do I manage my
cles/360033997474-How-do-I-manage-my
Fig 4:
Bates College (n.d.) Adding Annotations, P
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Fig 7:
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