EDUCAPLAY AS TEACHING MEDIA IN VIRTUAL CLASSES

Sri Surachmi W[1] & Karl Jahniel S. Sison[2]

Universitas Muria Kudus, Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology Philippines
amirachmi.w@gmail.com, sisonkarljahniel@gmail.com

ABSTRAK

Pembahasan seputar model pembelajaran dan media pengajaran di era digital, lebih-lebih di era pandemic covid-19, merupakan hal yang sangat penting dan mendesak dalam dunia pendidikan. Model pembelajaran online merupakan salah satu model yang dipilih karena model tersebut merupakan model masa depan yang efektif sesuai dengan tuntutan perkembangan ilmu pengetahuan dan teknologi. Sistem pembelajaran online ini pun tentunya menuntut adanya media pengajaran yang relevan dengan pembelajaran tersebut. Berkaitan dengan hal tersebut, kajian ilmiah ini bertujuan untuk memberikan solusi kepada guru dalam menciptakan media pengajaran dalam pembelajaran online melalui kelas virtual yang dapat menumbuhkan interaksi belajar dan mengajar secara virtual terutama dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris. Educaplay dihadirkan sebagai bentuk media pengajaran berbasis platform yang menarik, interaktif, dan atraktif. Sebagai sebuah platform yang menarik, educaplay setidaknya dapat mengurangi kesulitan guru dalam mempersiapkan materi ajar dan media pengajarannya dalam melaksanakan kelas virtual. Tentunya hal yang menarik dari platform tersebut adalah banyak potensi yang dimiliki dari beberapa fungsinya. Selain itu, platform tersebut dapat memacu siswa untuk belajar lebih baik dan menyenangkan walau mereka harus belajar dalam kondisi kelas virtual. Dengan demikian, educaplay bernilai untuk merangsang rasa percaya diri, pencapaian keterampilan, pemahaman pengetahuan, refleksi dan argumentasi dalam proses belajar serta interaksi komunikasi antara pengajar dan pembelajar.

Kata Kunci: Educaplay, Media Pengajaran, Kelas Virtual

ABSTRACT

Discussions about learning models and teaching media in the digital era, especially in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic, are very important and urgent in the world of education. The online learning model is one of the models chosen because it is an effective future model in accordance with the demands of the development of science and technology. This online learning system also requires teaching media that are relevant to the learning process. In this regard, this scientific study aims to provide solutions for teachers in creating teaching media in online learning through virtual classes that can foster virtual learning and teaching interactions, especially in learning English. Educaplay is presented as an attractive, interactive, and attractive form of platform-based teaching media. As an attractive platform, educaplay can at least reduce the difficulty of teachers in preparing teaching materials and teaching media in carrying out virtual classes. Of course, the interesting thing about this platform is that it has a lot of potential from several functions. In addition, the platform can encourage students to learn better and have fun even though they have to study in virtual classroom conditions. Thus, educaplay is valuable for stimulating self-confidence, skill achievement, understanding knowledge, reflection and argumentation in the learning process as well as communication interactions between teachers and learner.

Keyword: Educaplay, Teaching Media, Virtual Classes

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the covid-19 pandemic we were all overwhelmed by circumstances that suddenly forced us to stay at home, work at home, everything was done at home for an indefinite period of time. Of course, at first we were very clumsy because suddenly things became abnormal. Students had to study at home; teachers and lecturers taught from home; office workers also had to work at home only by relying on the internet. The need of internet became very high.

Responding to the situation, education sector inevitably had to change the pattern of teaching and learning so that teaching and learning continued. Students could learn

comfortably and teachers could continue to teach, work, and innovate as well for the sake of their responsibility for the progress and success of students in the pandemic era.

Thus, in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic, teaching media similarly turns out to be very important. The most appropriate teaching media at that time was computer-based media with an online learning system. Kitao (1998, in Munir:2009) says that there are three online learning functions that we can use on a daily activity, namely as communication tools, information access tools, and educational or learning tools. Furthermore, Munir (2009) explained that the online learning system requires the existence of supporting infrastructure and technology support, such as computers, television, satellite, interactive video, CD ROM, and so on.

As a form of teaching media in online learning through virtual classes, the author will present an interesting, interactive, and attractive online-based media, namely Educaplay as a solution to foster virtual learning and teaching interactions, especially in learning English.

As we all know, learning a foreign language especially English for most students in Indonesia is not easy. In fact, it is necessary for them to provide motivation and support by giving interesting media so that students will be moved to learn English with fun, especially if the learning is carried out in the form of virtual classes. Therefore, Educaplay is expected to encourage students to learn English without being forced. Furthermore, by presenting the illustration of Educaplay, teachers will be inspired to apply it so their teaching will be more fun.

Teaching Media in Virtual Class
Teaching Media
Before we learn more about media, Bertram et al. (2017) defines it as those resources that are deliberately used to communicate with us. They explained further that to entertain, to inform, to educate or to is the point of the communication. They add other outlooks related to media.

In line with them, popular media refers to media that are behaved by large numbers of people, and include television, radio, films, newspapers, magazines, advertising leaflets, billboards, and internet. Their major intents are to entertain, inform, and persuade.

Moreover, educational media refers to media developed explicitly for the benefits of educating. The variety of matter distinguishes all educational media.

In his paper, Ritakumari (2019) classified the educational media into:
1. Print media: books, journals, magazines, newspapers, workbooks, and textbooks.
2. Non-Print media: projected and non-projected media.
3. Electronic media: audio media, visual media and audio-visual media, projected media and non-projected media.
4. Audio media: audio tapes, record player, radio.
5. Visual media: television, computer, white board.
6. Audio-visual: television, video tapes, and closed circuit television (CCTV).
7. Projected media: film projector slides, and so on.
8. Non-Projected media: 3 dimensional objects, 2 dimensional objects, prints, charts, models, and so on.

Moreover, Bretz (in Sukiman, 2012:45) categorized the taxonomy of media into 8 classes:
a) motion audio visual media,
b) silent audio-visual media,
c) semi-motion audio media,
d) motion visual media,
e) silent visual media
f) semi-moving media,
g) audio media, and
h) print media.

As reported that teaching media can improve student learning processes and its existence is expected to improve student learning outcomes. From the explanation above, we learn there are many and varied teaching media. However, we have to prefer them wisely in order not to be wrongful. Furthermore, the media we decide will be able to encourage learners learn well and teaching becomes more interesting.

Online Distance Learning
As we know, distance learning is present as a learning system which does not run in a classroom so there is no direct interaction between teachers and learners. Garrison and Shale (1987, in Holden and Westfall:2010) reveals that "as defined by American Journal of Distance Education (1987), distance education is institutionally based formal education where the learning group is

separated and where interactive communications systems are used to connect instructors, learners, and resources. Alternatively, the United States Distance Learning Association, has adopted the term distance learning, and defines it as the acquisition of knowledge and skills through mediated information and instruction".

As time develops and science and technology advances, distance learning can be engaged by online one. Holden and Westfall (2010) enlightens a new set of terms born out of the internet as a result of development internet to online learning: Web-based instruction, Web-based learning, Web-based training, online learning, distributed learning, and the most prominent new term, e-learning. They add more that distance learning or distance education, however, the term e-learning includes the use of instructional media technologies in its definition, hence the "e" for electronic. Predictably, the term e-learning advanced not from an application, but from the occurrence of the business terms e-commerce and e-mail.

Talking about online learning, Williams (1999, in Holden and Westfall:2010) formulates it as "a large collection of computers in networks that are tied together so that many users can share their vast resources". Stern (2018) gave the definition of online learning by way of education that happens over the Internet. People frequently signify it as "e-learning" among other terms. Nevertheless, online learning is lately one kind of "distance learning" – "the umbrella term for any learning that takes place across distance and not in a traditional classroom."

The online learning model is an effective future model because it is in accordance with the demands of the development of science and technology. The management of the online learning system is different from the conventional one. (Munir, 2009) He explained that online learning has variations according to the mode it uses, namely fully online or in combination with face to face which can also be done by involving technology, such as video conferencing or tele conferencing.

From the idea above, we can learn that online distance learning applies a web-based online learning system. The online distance learning model starts with beneficial planning, then the way the learning material is delivered (delivery content) to the learner that have a concern to the design. Basically, there are differences between conventional face-to-face learning designs and online distance learning. It means that teachers and learners have to comprehend it include the rules and procedures for the design in order to run well.

Teaching Media for Online Distance Learning

In distance learning, Munir (2009) stated that the interaction between the teacher and the learner are able to be the form of synchronous or asynchronous. Synchronous interaction is carried out by means of direct interaction or online meetings (online meetings), real audio or real video, Facebook and chatrooms. Meanwhile, asynchronous interaction can be done with mailing lists, discussion groups, newsgroups, and bulletin boards.

Holden and Westfall (2010) defined further a synchronous learning environment. It maintains live, two-way oral or visual communications between the instructors and the students. The instructors can transfer their knowledge to the students by
1) the use of audio response systems that support oral communications only;
2) the use of interactive keypad devices that support both the exchange of data and voice; or
3) the use of video-conferencing technologies.

Meanwhile, they also elucidate the existence of an asynchronous learning environment. It will happen when communication between the instructors and the students is not real-time. They set examples such as the use of text materials (print or electronic), and online discussion boards where students respond to questions from the instructor or other students.

Furthermore, to support in establishing the most applicable form for a certain distance learning application, the Taxonomy of Distance Learning Instructional Media is created as the table below.

Table 1: Taxonomy of Distance Learning Media

	Synchronous	Asynchronous
VISUAL ONLY (include graphics)		➢ Correspondence ➢ Pre-recorded video
AURAL ONLY	Audio Conferencing	Pre-recorded Audio
VISUAL	➢ Instructional	➢ Pre-recorded

& AURAL	Television/Satellite e-Learning ➤Video Teleconferencing ➤Web Conferencing ➤Audiographics ➤Virtual Worlds	Video ➤Computer Based Instruction ➤Asynchronous Web Based Instruction (WBI) ➤Instructional Television ➤Virtual Worlds

Source: Holden and Westfall, 2010

Virtual Classes

Marshall (2019) showed that "a virtual classroom is the use of a video conferencing system to bring together a group of people, usually a trainer and learners, who can see each other, share documents and visual displays, talk via audio or chat and undertake interactive activities individually or in groups." He described a virtual classroom such as an outside, synchronous activity. It is different from e-learning (which is outside and asynchronous) or traditional classroom-based training (which is face to face and synchronous).

Bell (2008) confirmed it related to a virtual world – "a synchronous, persistent network of people, represented as avatars, facilitated by networked computers." EDUCAUSE also characterized it as "online environment whose 'residents' are avatars representing individuals participating online."

There are some interesting things to be comprehended regarding to virtual class. Biswas and Nandi (2020) found that the difficulty in preparing the study material with respect to the medium of instruction is one of the obstacles in virtual classroom. They also exposed the inability to motivate the students to use virtual learning mode became a challenge in virtual class. Falloon (2012) in his research also learned inside the virtual classroom that "a number of students felt disadvantaged by a lack of technical knowledge about how the classrooms worked—specifically, how to make best use of their multimedia support capability for their seminars." He also informed the utility as well included video and audio streaming, annotation of charts and diagrams, using the drawing tools palette, and hyperlinking to external websites. Xenos (2017) suggested the application of virtual classrooms hasn't achieved its full potential yet and to support on progressing virtual classrooms exists beyond lately duplicating traditional one.

EDUCAPLAY AS TEACHING MEDIA
Educaplay

Graça, et.al (2021) concluded in their research that "through the didactic paths of vertical articulation and horizontal articulation using the Educaplay platform, it was possible to see some of the many potentialities of some of its functionalities." The Educaplay platform conceded both the enlargement of curricular knowledge, encouraging the chief real concepts of each globalizing theme, and the promotion of skills, values and attitudes helpful to the profile of the XXI century student.

Hence, what is Educaplay? It is a kind of an online tool or platform which permits teachers to design free educational games or aids with creative and professional result. The site is free to manage and removes the need for applying different software. (technologyedu.com:2021, Prezi:2021) Educaplay was created by Juan Diego Polo. He studied telecommunications Engineering at the UPC (Barcelona), working as an engineer, professor, and analyst from 1998-2005 when he decided to start creating wwwhatsnew.com.

To create free educational games of different types (Quiz, Matching, Crosswords, etc.) on Educaplay, teachers just register once. Then, they share them with their students, and receive the results. Since Educaplay is a form of educational platform, it effectively integrates tools that utilize a lot of features, such as crucigrams, multiple choice, questions, letter soup and others. The users can perform from same virtual environment. The table below demonstrates some activities on Educaplay and its function of each activity.

Table 2. Educaplay Platform Functionalities

Activity	Functionality(s)
1) Riddles	Find a word from a series of clues.
2) Crucigram	Complete a word, through clues that can be: written, sound or image.
3) Letter Soup	Find words in the soup of letters the words requested

4) Complete texts	Add the missing words in a paragraph or sentence.
5) Dialogue	Cancel the audio of one or more characters so that the user can assume the role of that character. There are two playback modes: continuous playback and phrase by phrase playback.
6) Dictations	Write on the platform the text to be heard in the dictation.
7) Sort letters	Sort letters to form a word or phrase.
8) Linking elements	Review concepts by associating several words or images
9) Create test questionnaire	Build questions adapted to the concepts you want to evaluate.
10) Vídeoquiz	Put questions on the video, you can resort to Youtube

Source: Own authorship, based on Salazar (2014, in Graça, et.al., 2021)

Salazar (2014, Graça, et.al.) enhances without an Internet connection, the platform gives a permission to students to download activities in flash format to be improved and to be designed by their own activities. Nevertheless, Quadros-Flores & Raposo-Rivas, 2017 in Graça, et.al) emphasizes to recreate and renew educational practices with new methodologies to give meaning to educational change is compulsory to have valuable impacts on student learning and skills.

Applying Educaplay to Teach English
Paying attention to the explanation and the analysis above, to teach English fun and foster students' creativity, Educaplay can be chosen as a media in the virtual classes. To apply it, teachers just sign the platform once in https://www.educaplay.com/. It is free. After that, teacher can create activities, play, and learn more educational games. Davis (2021) described in addition to easy game design,

sending the games to Google Classroom is simple, too such as student work, automatic grading, and engagement. She detailed more many of us who have been teaching online require some variety. Currently, the site has many different types of activities and games: memory games, video quizzes, crossword puzzles, word search, fill in the blanks, diagram completion (they call these map quizzes), quizzes, word search, and more.

The picture below shows the form of Educaplay platform. The first picture illustrates the types of activities on Educaplay which we can show the original one in website of Educaplay. The second one confirms the types of game on Educaplay which displays several activities outstandingly modified for English teacher such as dialogue games and dictation games. The second one had been shared by Vicki Davis. She is a full-time teacher and IT Director at a small school in Albany, Georgia.

Source: Educaplay. 2021
Gambar 1. Types of Activities on Educaplay

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Source: Davis, V. 2021
Gambar 2. Types of Games on Educaplay

CONCLUSION

As an attractive platform, Educaplay can at least reduce the difficulty of teachers in preparing teaching materials and teaching media in carrying out virtual classes. Of course, the interesting thing about this platform is that it has a lot of potential from several functions. In addition, the platform can encourage students to learn better and have fun even though they have to study in virtual classroom conditions. Thus, Educaplay is valuable for stimulating self-confidence, skill achievement, understanding knowledge, reflection and argumentation in the learning process as well as communication interactions between teachers and learners.

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