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Section 1 AI-related Technology

1.1 AI Tools Introduction

1.1.1 Enhancing Students' Academic English Speaking in the

Light of Artificial Intelligence: The Case of EAP Talk

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Abstract:

The application of artificial intelligence (AI) has become pervasive across numerous domains in the current era of big data, and its contribution to the informatization of education is especially noteworthy. AI-assisted language education provides learners and teachers with diversified learning modes and resources. It not only enhances the personalised learning experience; but also fosters the development of independent learning skills while alleviating the burden on teachers. This paper mainly presents EAP Talk, a speech assessment system for spoken English based on AI and big data models, and concisely overviews its features and applicability in language education research.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly employed in English teaching and learning, along with the continuous improvement and deep integration of speech recognition and synthesis technologies. Mobile applications based on these advancements present extensive opportunities and avenues for enhancing English education. This software enriches the interaction and practice in the process of language acquisition, through which students can carry out diverse activities such as interesting word memorisation, oral output practice, simulated listening exercises, writing correction, grammar revision, etc. The technological evolution of English learning software has progressed from conventional neural network models to expansive AI-driven architectures. Simultaneously, there has been a persistent focus on innovating and enhancing the quality of user interaction. Within this domain, EAP Talk, an AI English-speaking assessment system based on big data, speech recognition, natural language processing and deep learning, can automatically grade students' speaking practice in real time, thus providing a new path for improving speaking proficiency. Unlike other applications, EAP Talk focuses on learning and practicing English for academic purposes (EAP), deriving its content from academic English textbooks and authentic EAP classroom materials. Students gain access to a range of customizable functions tailored to their individual learning requirements, and key functions of EAP Talk include Reading aloud, Presentation, Discussion Expression, AI Chat, Word, etc. Through these different modes of practice, students can benefit from targeted improvements in speaking skills and presentation abilities based on individual needs, which in turn enhances their academic competitiveness.

÷	B2 Businesses and individuals
	B2 Businesses and individuals
Although the problem is This is in no small part d shopping habits, they ha	disturbing one, there are signs that businesses and individuals are beginning to find innovative ways of treating it. to advances in technology. Accepting that the majority of people are not going to voluntarily change their opted instead to improve methods of waste disposal and to raise people's awareness of the issue in the process.
•	
	00:00 Start

Figure 1. Screenshot of EAP Talk Read Aloud Exercise

Each function of EAP Talk can provide diversified feedback based on students' recordings. Take Reading aloud as an example, as shown in (Figure 1); students have the option to initially access a standard reading demonstration by clicking on "Example". This demonstration guides word pronunciation, intonation, and serves as a model for imitation. Following this, students can begin their own recording by clicking "Start". EAP Talk will automatically generate feedback scores (Figure 2) based on the recorded audio. The transcription of the audio into text is color-coded, representing various performance levels, e.g., yellow for perfect, green for good, and purple for inaccurate. Meanwhile, EAP Talk also provides feedback on the corresponding scores, including the dimensions of "fluency" (the fluency of English speech), "pronunciation" (the accuracy of word pronunciation, sentence enunciation, and pauses), and "Integrity" (completeness of the passages read aloud).



Figure 2. Screenshot of feedback of EAP Talk Reading aloud exercise

In the Presentation, students can respond to the avatar teacher's questions and receive synchronous feedback. EAP Talk assigns the corresponding IELTS speaking scale scores and equivalent scores of other associated examinations. The transcribed text is then color-coded for clarity (as illustrated in Figure 3), with advanced vocabulary highlighted in yellow or green, while grammatical errors and pronunciation issues are marked in red. With this feedback mechanism, students can pinpoint their speaking strengths and weaknesses as well as formulate personalised learning strategies and examination preparation plans, thus enhancing the effectiveness of self-directed learning.



Figure 3. Screenshot of Feedback from EAP Talk Presentation Exercise

Academic Research Based on EAP Talk

The real-time and user-friendly nature of EAP Talk has generated substantial interest among English learners and educators, with a burgeoning application in academic research. English teachers can conduct both instruction and teaching-related practical research using EAP Talk. For example, Zou et al. (2023a) invited 70 college students to use several AI-supported English learning software, including EAP Talk, for English learning. They found that social network interactions can effectively improve learners' oral expression in the AI-supported learning environment through a comparative study of the control and experimental groups. Survey and interview findings also indicated a predominant preference among students for employing such software to practice spoken English. In another empirical study conducted by Zou et al. (2023b), feedback mechanisms like score feedback and text color-coding of transcribed audio recordings, provided by EAP Talk, were highly favored by users as these feedbacks could visually help users comprehend their speaking proficiency. Furthermore, in a subsequent study on students' acceptance of applying EAP Talk for speaking practice, a comprehensive analysis of questionnaires, interview data, and pre-and post-tests consistently demonstrated its efficiency in improving speaking performance. Additionally, the harmonious and real-time human-computer interaction environment facilitated by EAP Talk was found to be enjoyable (Zou et al., 2023c).

The aforementioned studies underscore the practical significance and academic value of EAP Talk in English education, revealing how AI contributes to the revolutionary development of personalised independent learning in intelligent English education. As AI technology continues to advance, the language learning process undergoes profound changes. The integration of AI not only diminishes language barriers in intercultural communication but also serves as a pivotal link that connects diverse backgrounds, fostering globalization through language as a unifying element.

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1.1.2 Conducting Effective Literature Search Using AI-assisted

Tools

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Introduction

Searching for relevant and high-quality literature has always been a crucial skill for college students. This proficiency not only allows students to keep abreast of the latest advancements in their respective fields but also to build a solid foundation for their future research projects. Traditionally, students have engaged in manual exploration of online databases, search engines, and specific academic journals to conduct literature searches and identify relevant books and journal articles. In addition, students may also receive instructions on more advanced search techniques, such as employing Boolean operators and citation chaining, to refine search results effectively. While conventional literature search skills remain important, the advent of AI-assisted tools provides a complementary and more efficient approach to the literature search process. These tools typically utilize machine learning algorithms and natural language processing to automate and improve the search process. Integrating these tools can significantly improve the efficiency and efficacy of literature searches. This is particularly helpful for students who are new to their academic fields without a comprehensive understanding of the existing literature.

Generally speaking, there are two categories of AI-assisted tools that students can employ for their literature searches: citation-based tools and text-based tools. Citationbased tools analyze citation patterns and relationships between academic papers, whereas text-based tools use natural language processing and machine learning to enable users to search and retrieve relevant research papers based on text-based queries. Within each of these two categories, a variety of tools are available for students to choose from. The current article will introduce two popular AI-assisted literature search tools: ConnectedPapers (citation-based) and Elicit (text-based). Our objective is to provide the best practices for teaching students to effectively use these tools, along with some useful tips on conducting AI-assisted literature searches in general.

Case Study 1: ConnectedPapers

As its name indicates, ConnectedPapers is a citation-based AI-assisted literature search tool that aims to assist users in exploring connections among various research papers. What distinguishes ConnectedPapers from its competitors is its ability to generate

visual graphs that illustrate the relationships between papers based on their citations. This tool is particularly effective when students have a specific research paper (referred to as the "seed paper") in mind and seek to explore other papers that cite similar works found in the seed paper. Once the seed paper is entered into the tool, ConnectedPapers initially confirms the correct paper based on its title and authors. Subsequently, the tool will generate a visual graph that displays the seed paper in the center, surrounded by other relevant papers and citation links. The size of the nodes in the graph represents the impact of each paper, and the color of the nodes conveys information about the publication year of each paper. This visual representation can help students quickly identify the most influential papers in a particular research area and understand the interconnections between different papers.



Figure 1: Sample graph generated by ConnectedPapers

In addition, ConnectedPapers also provides "Prior works" and "Derivative works" associated with each seed paper. The "Prior works" refer to publications preceding the seed paper that have influenced its development, while the "Derivative works" are those that have cited the seed paper and been influenced by it. Together with the visual graph, these supplementary features of ConnectedPapers empower students to swiftly discern the historical context and the impact of a research paper, as well as its influence on subsequent research.

Despite these impressive features, it is equally important to acknowledge the limitations of ConnectedPapers. Students seeking answers to a broader research question may find the information provided by ConnectedPapers disappointing, as the tool focuses primarily on exploring connections between research papers based on the citation network. Therefore, it is imperative to remind students that ConnectedPapers is not a comprehensive literature search tool and should be used in conjunction with other databases and resources.

Case Study 2: Elicit

Elicit is another popular AI-assisted literature search tool designed to help students find relevant research papers based on their specific queries. In contrast to ConnectedPapers, Elicit primarily focuses on text-based searching rather than exploring the interconnectedness of papers through citations. Consequently, students can simply enter keywords or phrases related to their research topic into Elicit without the necessity of preparing a seed paper in advance. Elicit will then generate a list of relevant research papers. Although this may sound similar to other search engines like Google Scholar, Elicit returns results in a table format that includes crucial information such as the title, author(s), abstract, and publication details of each paper. The incorporation of a table significantly facilitates the quick scanning and evaluation of the relevance of each paper for students, eliminating the need to click on individual search results. One of the most impressive features of Elicit is its ability to extract information from the full text of the papers, including research context, number of participants, and snippets of text that are requested by users. Such information can be added as extra columns of the table, which can be sorted and filtered based on specific criteria and exported in other formats for further analysis.

+ 2 columns added R Sort: Most relevant R Filte	Abstract summary	Outcome measured	Main findings	쇼 CSV PLUS 쇼 888 [PLUS]
Can a Free Wearable Activity Tracker Change Behavior's The Impact of Trackers on Adults in a Physician-Lew Wellness Group I Las Gastern - 27 ID and Research Protocols 2016 74 deterose DOT@	Trackers increased participant self-efficacy by providing a tangible wibbe reminder of a commitment to increasing activity and immediate feedback on step count and progress towards a daily step goal.	Weight loss: decrease in LDL levels. attitudes towards the trackers; and physical activity behaviors	Participants experienced improvements in clinical outcomes and increased well-being suggesting that adding structure to wellness: groups for older adults with chronic medical conditions can support education and behavior change. Takining and support are needed, and short-term dirog-off in participant use its be expected.	Search or create a column 0 Denote what livel of data you want to estract e.g. summary, counter-arguments cutation countries Outcome measured >
Acceptability of wristband activity trackers among community dwelling older adults. B: Tra Office +4 G: Generatic number 2013 Bi datative: DOI \mathcal{P}	Activity trackers could be useful for monitoring and promoting physical activity and improving older adults' health.	waist circumference	The main findings are: - 95% of participants experienced a decrease in wait circumference after completing the study. - The activity trackers were (build to be useful for monitoring and promoting physical activity and improving older adults' health.	Main truinning 2 Alto counnes 4 + Intervention effects + Linitations + Funding source + Study design
Consumer-Based Wearable Activity Trackers Increase Physical Activity Participation: Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis State and Biotexend 4-3 Construction and aviable 2019 S28 designs. DOI Ø	Consumer-based wearable activity trackers may offer an alternative method for assisting individuals to remain physically active.	physical activity participation including daily step count, moderate and vigorous physical activity, and energy expenditure	Utilizing a consumer-based wearable activity tracker can increase physical activity participation, expecially in the burnt term. Consumer-based wearable activity trackers may complement traditional intervention modalities such as group-based education and telephone courseling. These trackers have the potential to be an effective tool for	+ Study count Shew more

Figure 2: Sample table generated by Elicit

However, it is important to note that Elicit may not encompass all research databases and might not have access to certain paid journals. Therefore, it is advisable to crosscheck and supplement the results of an Elicit search with other database searches to ensure comprehensive coverage of relevant research. Moreover, students should also be reminded about the importance of critically evaluating the quality of the information returned by Elicit. Intensive reading is always crucial to properly understand the content of the research papers before citing them in students' work.

Tips for preparing students to conduct AI-assisted literature search

Over the past two years, as we have been instructing postgraduate students on how to utilize AI-assisted literature searches, we have gathered several essential tips to help students prepare for this process.

Firstly, it is vital to explain to students both the advantages and limitations of AIassisted literature search tools. The media hype and progress in AI technology may foster overly optimistic expectations in students regarding the capabilities of these tools. Therefore, it is important to emphasize that AI-assisted literature search tools like ConnectedPapers and Elicit are powerful aids in the research process, but they cannot completely replace the traditional literature search in its entirety. Meanwhile, students should also be reminded that critical thinking and human judgments are indispensable to ensure the quality and relevance of the information provided by the AI tools.

Secondly, students should receive systematic guidance on how to proficiently employ AI-assisted literature search tools. Students, especially those new to conducting literature searches in English, may feel overwhelmed or uncertain about how to navigate these tools. Therefore, carefully designed demo sessions or tutorials should be delivered to familiarize students with the interfaces and features of AI-assisted literature search tools. During these sessions, students should be taught how to formulate effective search queries, interpret the results generated by the AI tools, and refine their searches based on the initial results.

Conclusion

In summary, teaching students how to conduct AI-assisted literature searches is a valuable skill in today's research world. By providing students with a balanced understanding of the advantages and limitations of AI-assisted literature search tools and offering step-by-step guidance on their effective use, we can empower students to leverage the potential of AI technology in their current studies and prepare them better for the challenges and opportunities they may encounter in their future academic and professional lives.

1.1.3 Navigating AI Frontiers in English Language Teaching: A

Comparative Exploration of XIPU AI and Bard, with Practical

Insights and Recommendations for Educators and Developers

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Abstract:

This article explores the transformative impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on English language teachers (ELTs). Through two authentic classroom experiences, the author compares the capabilities of XIPU AI, built on OpenAI's GPT model, and Google's Bard, shedding light on the opportunities and challenges presented by AI in the realm of education. The first narrative illustrates the expeditious class preparation facilitated by AI, emphasizing the need for collaborative features. The second narrative details an epistemological journey using AI-generated content and AI chatbots, highlighting the importance of human validation and critical thinking. Practical recommendations are offered for the enhancement of XIPU AI. In conclusion, the author advocates for collaborative engagement among educators to navigate the evolving landscape of AI in language education.

Keywords: English language teaching; Bard VS XIPU AI; collaborative features; AI-assisted research

Introduction: an attitudinal dichotomy and ongoing debate on AI among the English teaching community

Since the launch of XIPU AI in September 2023, ELTs at the English Language Center of Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU) have embarked on an exploratory journey of novel possibilities introduced by AI. Built on an OpenAI GPT model, this formidable chatbot holds a compelling allure, as testimonials from educators suggest heightened productivity and the facilitation of self-directed learning initiatives among students.

However, this tempting prospect is met with a sense of trepidation and ambiguity among educators, particularly ELTs, who confront a lack of training and hold reservations about the evolving nature of their professional roles in the era of AI. As indicated in the recent report "Artificial Intelligence and English Language Teaching: Preparing for the Future" by the British Council (hereafter referred to as the Report), sentiments among ETLs towards AI are divergent, with some expressing apprehension about the transformative impact of AI while others exhibiting composure and optimism. Nevertheless, the integration of AI into educational frameworks is an inevitable reality that necessitates proactive engagement.

This article aims to present two narratives that elucidate my navigation through the transformed landscape of language teaching engendered by AI, drawing a comparative analysis between XIPU AI and Google's Bard. Concurrently, practical recommendations will be proffered to the XJTLU Learning Mall developer teams, contributing to the ongoing debate on AI's role in education.

Story One: Class Preparation Expedited with AI

Listening Class Enhancement

According to the Report, the prevalent way ELTs have experimented with AI is in material creation, a theme central to my first narrative. Specifically, it was a listening class where the audio content surpassed the proficiency level of my pre-intermediate students, or A2 level according to the CEFR (for readers outside the ELT community, CEFR is an international standard for describing language ability, with a six-point scale from A1, A2 for beginners, to B1, B2 for independent language users, to C1, C2 for proficient users). To mitigate potential student demotivation during the listening experience, I conceptualized a word-definition-synonym matching activity. Cards featuring A2+ words, accompanied by their definitions and synonyms, were to be laminated and randomly distributed in the class for students to find matching pairs.

Productivity Turbocharged by AI

Traditionally, the compilation of a challenging word list demands painstaking manual effort, involving a meticulous examination of transcripts and dictionaries. With AI, however, the identification of these words was accomplished within seconds of submitting the transcript along with prompts such as "Identify words beyond A2 level" and "Provide definitions and synonyms in a table" Both XIPU AI and Bard responded effectively, as depicted in Picture 1 and Picture 2. Notably, the GPT3.5 version on XIPU AI requires more rigorous human review compared to the more advanced GPT 4.0 version or Bard (See Picture 3).







Picture 2



Picture 3

Bard Takes the Lead and Recommendations for XIPU AI Developers

Despite satisfactory performance, notable differences emerged between XIPU AI and Bard. While both platforms accurately identified words, Bard excelled in enabling users to export responses directly to Google Sheets (Refer to the comparison between Picture 4 and Picture 5, 6), offering a seamless experience for users. The convenience of instantly converting AI responses into shareable Google Docs is not only innovative but also aligns with the collaborative nature increasingly crucial for educators in the AI

era. This feature would not only enhance educators' efficiency but also empower students to easily share responses with their peers. This collaborative aspect becomes particularly relevant, given one of the key concerns highlighted by the Report—while AI enables personalized and self-paced learning, it poses a potential threat to students' collaborative abilities.

Therefore, I propose the incorporation of this functionality into XIPU AI, allowing responses to be downloadable and shareable in doc and excel formats, mirroring the capabilities of Bard. Potential platforms for sharing could include BOX, an online cloud space developed by XJTLU, or Google Docs. This enhancement would not only bridge the existing gap but also improve XIPU AI to the same level as its counterparts.

XJTLU RR	GPT 4	~				@ export
OK, let's assume that you have d		Involve	Have or include (something) as a necessary or integral part or result	Include. entail		
		Snacks	A small amount of food eaten between meals	Bite. nibble		
		Confidence	The feeling or belief that one can rely on someone or something	Trust, faith		
		Nibble	Take small bites out of	Gnaw, bite		
		Unfamiliar	Not known or recognized	Unknown, strange		
		Approaching	Come near or nearer to (someone or something) in distance	Nearing, coming		
		Frightened	Afraid or anxious	Scared, terrified		
		Clearly	In a way that is easy to see, hear, read, or understand	Obviously, evidently		
		Phase	A distinct period or stage in a process of change or forming part of something's development	Stage. period		
		Approach	Come near or nearer to (someone or something) in distance or time	Come closer, near		
		Consider	Think carefully about (something), typically before making a decision	Contemplate, think about		
		Discourage	Cause (someone) to lose confidence or enthusiasm	Deter, dissuade		
		Trust	Firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something	Confidence, faith		
		Eventually	In the end, especially after a long delay, dispute, or series of problems	Finally, ultimately		
		Comfortable	(Of clothes or furnishings) providing physical ease and relaxation	Cozy. snug		
		Gradually	In a gradual way: slowly: by degrees	Slowly, step by step		
1.1000		Relationship	The way in which two or more people or things are connected	Connection, band		
- Here Char		Agitated	Feeling or appearing troubled or nervous	Disturbed, upset		
Call for T&L Cases			Renaining name	ter of questions. ¹ .18		
Cearton anatom						-
	℃ Contr	ent Possh				
*55	Send a	message				>

Picture 4

gradually	slowly and in small steps	step by step, slowly, little by little
explore	to examine something carefully to learn about it	investigate, look around, discover
bite (verb)	to use your teeth to cut or grip something	chew, pinch, nibble
bond (noun)	a strong emotional connection between two people or things	connection, relationship, friendship
cup (verb)	to hold something gently in your hands	hold, cradle, scoop
firmly	in a strong and steady way	tightly, securely, safely
agitated	upset or anxious	restless, nervous, stressed
consistent	always doing something in the same way	reliable, constant, dependable
effort	the amount of work or energy that you put into something	work, trying, struggle
		Export to Sheets

Note: While some of these words might be seen in A2 textbooks, their usage in this context might be challenging for beginners. The synonyms provided are suggestions for simpler alternatives that might be easier to understand.

I hope this helps! Let me know if you have any other questions.

Picture 5

⊞	This is a tra File Edit	anscript of a View Insert F	listening prac Format Data	ctice i want to Tools Extensio	o do. Help m ons Help	ne identify the	words in th	e above text	that are bey	ond A2 level s	j ☆ to (
c	2 5 6	ት ት 100%	- \$ % .	0 .00 123	Defaul 🔻	- 10 + E	3 I ÷ /	<u>À</u> À. ⊞	53 - E - 1	• ₽ • <u>A</u> •	G) ₱ ₱, ₽
A1	▼ ∫fx \	Word									
	А	В	с	D	E	F	G	н	1	J	к
1	Word	Definition	Synonyms (A2 le	evel)							
2	adjust	to become accu	get used to, sett	le in, adapt							
3	frighten	to scare or make	scare, worry, ten	rify							
4	associate	to connect some	remember, link,	think of							
5	curiosity	a strong desire t	interest, eagerne	ess, inquisitivenes	s						
6	secure	safe and protect	safe, confident,	comfortable							
7	gradually	slowly and in sm	step by step, slo	wly, little by little							
8	explore	to examine som	investigate, look	around, discover							
9	bite (verb)	to use your teeth	chew, pinch, nib	ble							
10	bond (noun)	a strong emotion	connection, related	tionship, friendshi	p						
11	cup (verb)	to hold somethin	hold, cradle, sco	юр							
12	firmly	in a strong and s	tightly, securely,	safely							
13	agitated	upset or anxious	restless, nervou	s, stressed							
14	consistent	always doing so	reliable, constan	t, dependable							
15	effort	the amount of w	work, trying, stru	uggle							
16											
17											
18											

Picture 6

Story Two: Unhindered Epistemological Quest for Academic Excellence Finding Support for a Persuasive Argument

The perennial question in writing classes, *what constitutes a compelling argument*, revolves around two primary themes: effectiveness and persuasiveness. Both are contingent on critical elements such as evidence and support. In a writing class centered on the preservation debate of historical buildings, I introduced AI-generated articles from Bard to ignite discussions among students—an illustration of leveraging AI for

material creation.

As students engaged in constructing essays on the advantages and disadvantages of preserving historic structures, one student became captivated by a claim (See picture 7) suggesting that the preservation of such buildings could lead to economic disadvantages for urban village residents in Guangzhou, a southern city in China. However, this claim lacked explanation or support, creating a void that required filling for the argument to be effective and persuasive.

Urban villages are a unique phenomenon in China's urbanization process. They are the remnants of rural settlements that have been engulfed by the expanding cities, and have become densely populated and low-income enclaves within the urban fabric. They provide cheap housing and services for millions of migrant workers who flock to the cities in search of opportunities. However, they also pose serious challenges and problems for the urban development and management. This essay will argue that the government of Guangzhou should not preserve its urban villages, only for the reason of economic development.

Preserving urban villages is detrimental for the economic development of Guangzhou. Urban villages occupy valuable land resources that could be used for more productive and efficient purposes, such as commercial, industrial, or residential projects. According to a report by the Guangzhou Urban Planning Bureau¹, urban villages cover about 716 square kilometers, accounting for 28% of the city's built-up area, but only contribute 3.6% of the city's GDP. Moreover, urban villages hinder the development of the surrounding areas, by creating traffic congestion, environmental pollution, social disorder, and security risks. They also lack adequate infrastructure and public services, such as roads, water, electricity, sanitation, education, and health care, which increase the cost and difficulty of urban management.

Preserving urban villages is also unfavorable for the economic development of the residents. Urban villages trap the migrant workers in a cycle of poverty and marginalization, by offering them lowquality and low-income jobs, such as street vendors, cleaners, or construction workers. They also isolate them from the mainstream society, by denying them access to social welfare and public resources, such as health insurance, education, and social security. Furthermore, urban villages discourage the residents from upgrading their skills and qualifications, by providing them with limited opportunities and incentives for learning and innovation. They also prevent them from integrating into the urban community, by reinforcing their rural identity and culture.

Picture 7: source article generated by Bard with language appropriate for A2 students

Bard Wins by a Landslide

In the pre-ChatGPT era, the endeavor to seek evidential support was an arduous and sometimes frustrating process involving formulating precise questions, inputting them into a search bar, sifting through outcomes, and often ending up with uncertain responses. With the advent of AI assistants, the search process has transformed to resemble one-stop shopping. The screenshots in pictures 8 and 9 illustrate the conversation between the student, under my guidance, and AI chatbots following his captivation by a particular argument. While all these platforms began with regret for their inability to provide a definitive answer, Bard's recommendations, as shown in the provided screenshots, gave a more constructive and meaningful approach. This served

as a crucial first step in the ongoing quest for accuracy and specificity, which led to epistemological success.

XJTLU XIPU AI Bit	GPT 4 👒	@ export
# could you generate a	use reliable and medicine sources for your research.	
	could you give me specific statistical examples of the urban villagers being put at an economic disadvantage?	0
	I'm sorry, but I cannot provide specific statistical examples related to urban villagers being put at an economic disadvantage. My programming does not allow me to access or provide real-time statistical data. If you need specific statistical examples, I recommend consulting reliable sources such as government reports, academic studies, or reputable research institutions for accurate and up-to-date information.	-
	could you give me specific statistical examples of the urban villagers being put at an economic disadvantage?	0
de Alema Chart	I'm sorry for any misunderstanding, as an Al, I don't have the ability to access real-time or detailed statistical data. I can tell you that residents of urban villages often face economic disadvantages due to limited access to resources, education, and opportunities compared to those living in more developed urban areas, but I can't provide specific statistics. For such information, you could check relevant academic studies, government reports, or data from reputable research institutions.	an traff
Call for T&L Cases	The above connect is a generated and date on nanounce the davargang poster. Remaining number of questions, 30	
E Clear conversations	R select niunin	in Combust
● 中文		e Context
D Bin Fond C Los out	Send a message	>
Unfortunately urban villager data collectic Government	View other drafts v , finding easily accessible and specific statistical examples of the economic disadvantages faced by rs in Guangzhou remains challenging due to the informal nature of their settlements and limitations in in. However, here are some resources and approaches to gather relevant information: Sources:	D
Cuanar	hav Statistical Yaarbaak: While not availably focusing on when villagen the vershook might offer	
Guangzi insights compari	through breakdowns of income levels, employment rates, and housing conditions by district. Look for sons between districts containing urban villages and other districts.	
Reports Affairs m villages,	by relevant government agencies: The Guangzhou Housing Authority or Guangzhou Bureau of Civil night publish reports on housing affordability, living conditions, and employment patterns within urban potentially containing statistics on economic disadvantages.	
Academic Re	search:	
Peer-rev employn JSTOR, S	viewed studies on Guangzhou's urban villages: These studies often analyze income levels, nent patterns, and access to resources within these communities. Look for academic databases like ScienceDirect, or Springer Link for relevant research articles.	
 NGO rep on their and lack 	ports and surveys: Organizations working with urban villages may conduct surveys or studies focusing economic challenges. Their reports often include statistics on income inequality, underemployment, of access to social services.	
News Article	s and Case Studies:	
Local ne	ws articles sometimes document specific cases of economic hardship faced by urban villagers. While	

Picture 9

An Epistemological Success that Requires Constant Fine-Tuning of Questions and Meticulous Verification

Bard's contribution marked a commendable starting point for our inquiry. However, achieving a validated and citable answer was preceded by several failed attempts.

Initially, our questions were too broad, such as "Give me research articles where I could understand the disparity between urban villagers and those outside the urban village in Guangzhou" and "Could you find the differences between urban villagers in Guangzhou and Guangzhou residents outside those urban villages in terms of their income levels, employment rates, and housing conditions." These queries resulted either in apologies or articles that did not match further search results, indicating Bard's fabrication of articles, now popularly known as hallucination.

Our approach encountered persistent roadblocks until we refined the question to focus on income disparity, specifically salary. Sequential prompts, including "What is the average salary of people living in urban villages in Guangzhou," "Could you also give me the growth rate of those urban villagers' salary," "Where did you get this information? Could you also provide the source," and "can you find the authors behind those reports," led us to a consequential research article titled "Understanding Urban Villages in China with Three Case Studies in Guangzhou" (Refer Picture 10, 11, 12). The numerical data on salary disparity matched and verified in that article enabled my student to construct an effective and persuasive argument. The power of AI left an indelible impression on the student, sparking motivation to engage in endeavors once perceived as challenging and time-consuming. Concluding our investigative journey, I prompted my student to engage in a reflective dialogue on the impact of AI on our understanding of knowledge, i.e., taking him on board with me for epistemological quests in the age of AI. Despite our shared sense of awe at AI's remarkable capabilities, this epistemological journey with Bard, however, also underscored the reminder of blind reliance on AI-generated content, emphasizing the need for human validation, critical thinking, and skepticism.



M

Picture 10

could u also give me the growth rate of those urban villagers' salary?

Sure. The average annual salary growth rate for urban villagers in Guangzhou has been around 7%-10% in recent years. This is slower than the average salary growth rate for urban residents in China as a whole, which has been around 10%-12%.

There are a number of reasons for the slower salary growth rate for urban villagers in Guangzhou. One reason is that the city's economy has been slowing down in recent years. Another reason is that there has been an increase in the supply of labor, which has put downward pressure on wages.

Despite the slower salary growth rate, urban villagers in Guangzhou are still seeing their incomes rise. This is due in part to the government's efforts to boost the economy and create jobs. The government has also been implementing policies to improve the livelihoods of urban villagers, such as providing them with better a 字号 o education and healthcare.

Here are some of the government's policies to boost the economy and create jobs:

- Tax cuts and subsidies: The government has been providing tax cuts and subsidies to businesses in order to encourage them to invest and create jobs.
- Infrastructure investment: The government has been investing heavily in infrastructure projects, such as roads and bridges. This has created jobs in the construction industry and has also stimulated growth in other sectors of the economy.
- Support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs): The government has been providing support to SMEs, which are a major source of job creation in China. This support has included providing loans and training to SMEs.

The government has also been implementing a number of policies to improve the livelihoods of urban villagers:

• Affordable housing: The government has been building affordable housing for urban villagers. This has helped to reduce their housing costs and improve their quality of life.

Picture 11

M	can you find the authors behind those reports?	
+ ,	The authors of the report on urban villages in Guangzhou are Shiran Geng, Hing-Wah Chau, and Masa Noguchi.	•
	Websites reviewed 1. www.researchgate.net/publication/343651	
	௴ ⊊ ぺ ∶	
M	which information you gave me based on this report?	
	The information that I have you shout the average salary and salary growth of urban villagers in Guangzhou is based	•
+	on the report "Understanding Urban Villages in China with Three Case Studies in Guangzhou" by Shiran Geng, Hing- Wah Chau, and Masa Noguchi.	
	The report found that the average monthly salary of urban villagers in Guangzhou was 6,300 yuan (US\$900) in 2018 The report also found that the average annual salary growth rate for urban villagers in Guangzhou has been around 7%-10% in recent years.	3.
	I hope this information is helpful. Please let me know if you have any other questions.	
	Websites reviewed 1. www.researchgate.net/publication/343651	

Picture 12

Recommendations for XIPU AI Developers

To elevate the reliability and academic integrity of XIPU AI, it is recommended that the integration of a function allows the AI to access and extract information directly from authentic research papers. This enhancement would empower XIPU AI to provide more substantiated and academically sound responses, aligning with the rigorous standards expected within an academic institution such as XJTLU.

Furthermore, to foster transparency and facilitate thorough verification, it is advisable to incorporate a feature within XIPU AI that provides source links and, when applicable, original documents along with the responses. This inclusion not only empowers users to verify the information provided by the AI but also promotes a culture of academic rigor by encouraging users to engage with the primary materials directly. By implementing these enhancements, XIPU AI can emerge as a more reliable and transparent tool, catering to the research and academic needs of XJTLU students, faculty, and beyond.

Conclusion: Charting the Path Ahead Collaboratively

As English language teachers at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University and beyond are exploring this transformative journey shaped by AI, we must remain vigilant and informed about the evolving landscape of this technology. Working collaboratively with

stakeholders, whether it be school policymakers, fellow teachers, or our students, is crucial. We stand at a crossroads, with potential futures ranging from a balanced integration of AI, and collaborative human-AI endeavors, to scenarios of AI dominance. To navigate this path responsibly, it is paramount to prioritize the best interests of our human stakeholders. Actively sharing our experiences and practices becomes instrumental in fostering a collective dialogue among English language teachers. Through this exchange of insights, we can collectively envision and shape a future where technology enhances, rather than overshadows the landscape of language education.

Reference:

Edmett, A., Ichaporia, N., Crompton, H., & Crichton, R. (2023). Artificial intelligence and English language teaching: Preparing for the future. British Council. <u>https://doi.org/10.57884/78EA-3C69</u>

1.2 Attitudes towards AI

1.2.1 From Soldier to General: How Learners Navigate the

Opportunities and Challenges Presented by Large Language Models

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At the end of 2022, Large Language Models (LLMs) burst onto the scene. ChatGPT, along with its derivatives, such as the Junmou system, is gradually becoming an indispensable resource for every learner. Particularly within university campuses, a growing number of students have started utilizing these LLMs to assist in knowledge acquisition and assignment completion. The potency of this new tool lies in its capability to provide elaborate answers by simply posing a query. Moreover, their user-friendly design includes features like "regenerate" button, allowing users to easily request alternative responses if the initial answer doesn't fully meet their needs. This level of accessibility and adaptability positions LLMs as a formidable ally in the academic journey, and each learner seems to have acquired an abundance of resources overnight.

Napoleon Bonaparte once declared, "Every French soldier carries a marshal's baton in his knapsack." Now this sentiment finds a new form: every learner wields their own marshal's baton through their laptop, assuming the role of a general commanding LLMs. Despite the formidable capabilities of these AI-driven armies, they are not without a critical weakness — they cannot make confident judgments regarding their output or determine the accuracy of their responses. LLMs, at their core, are advanced natural language processing tools. Their answers are inherently confined by the extent and caliber of their training data, as well as the underlying algorithm. The mighty army of LLMs, while providing learners with significant services, also presents learners with great challenges: should learners use it? How can we ascertain the accuracy of its responses? And how to guide LLMs to provide better answers?

Change of Mindset: From Resistance to Engagement

The key for learners to move from their past role as "soldiers" to their current role as "generals" is whether they recognize this change as an inevitable trend and accept that the LLM is unavoidable for today's learners. The presence of LLMs is constant and independent of individual usage; they don't cease to exist simply because someone chooses not to use them, and they are not exclusively operational for those who do. Consequently, several renowned international universities have shifted their stance toward LLMs, transitioning from initial resistance to embracing acceptance. Learners need to embrace their role as "generals", adopting a mindset of positive engagement

rather than negative resistance.

Core Competencies Highlighted: Critical Thinking

The transformation in the role of learners has brought about a shift in the essential skills they must acquire. For the "soldier," tactical prowess and the ability to independently grasp every detail of knowledge are paramount. However, for the "general," the key skill lies in strategic learning — the ability to oversee the entire situation and evaluate the accuracy of answers provided by the "soldiers." This entails a new challenge for learners: independently assessing and verifying the outputs generated by LLMs from their extensive databases. Consequently, critical thinking skills have gained prominence, becoming a fundamental requirement for learners. This involves distinguishing between opinions and facts, assessing the logical coherence of viewpoints, scrutinizing the sufficiency of the evidence supporting an opinion, and identifying and reflecting upon the underlying assumptions of opinions and arguments. All these elements form the essence of critical thinking.

New Knowledge Structure: Broad but Precise

To command better answers from large language models, mere critical thinking to judge the accuracy of knowledge is not sufficient; a robust knowledge base is also essential. Traditional education emphasizes a "narrow and deep" approach to knowledge acquisition, where learners are expected to gain extensive and detailed expertise in a specific domain, ultimately becoming specialists in particular fields. However, LLMs necessitate learners to grasp core principles and fundamental aspects across a wide spectrum of knowledge domains, constructing a comprehensive and interconnected knowledge network. This represents a "broad but precise" knowledge structure. While the "narrow and deep" knowledge can be substituted by the LLMs to a certain extent, the "broad but precise" knowledge exceeds the current capabilities of such models. Moreover, the learner, as "general", can use this "broad but precise" knowledge to command the LLMs to produce better answers.

In summary, while LLMs significantly empower learners, they also present new challenges. First and foremost, learners must adjust their mindset, actively embracing and adapting to this novel paradigm. Secondly, learners must place greater emphasis on cultivating critical thinking to accurately discern the validity of knowledge. Furthermore, learners' knowledge structures must transition from being "deep and narrow" to "broad but precise", enabling effective guidance of LLMs to produce higher-quality responses, ultimately achieving the transformation from being a "soldier" to becoming a "general."

Section 2 Beyond AI

2.1 Technological Tools Application

2.1.1 Using Quizlet and Wordwall for Lexis Practice in Speaking

Lessons Onsite and Online

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Author Bio

Liu Cao (Cara) is an associate language lecturer at the School of Languages (SoL). She also serves as the IT officer at the SoLIT team, aiming to support all SoL colleagues on academic technological issues. Her teaching experience includes 2 years at Continuing Support division, where students are welcome to sign up freely for extra language learning and practice.

What is Quizlet and how it is commonly used for lexis teaching?

As a quick tool for creating quizzes, Quizlet is a user-friendly online platform that gives teachers access to a wealth of free content and drastically cuts down on the time needed to prepare materials for the lesson. Rooted in the traditional flashcard approach of matching terms and definitions, Quizlet's simplicity belies its potency, particularly for memory-intensive learning. Quizlet's potential for lexis instruction has been welcomed by language lecturers, as is shown at the School of Languages (SoL), where nearly every module group maintains a shared Quizlet account. We actively encourage teachers to create specialized lexical study sets that complement the content of EAP sessions. Acknowledging lexis acquisition as an ongoing endeavor, students invest additional self-learning time to scale the proficiency curve.

Quizlet Study Sets can transfer the lexis list and definition into multiple styles of quizzes, such as spelling tests, gravity games, and multiple choices, which is obviously more engaging and fun than the traditional glossary and paper-based flashcards. Teachers can demonstrate these study sets during classes online or onsite, and then ask students to recall the words based on definitions, or vice versa. After class, a student with a Quizlet account can join the teacher's Quizlet class and have quick access to all the study sets to review and track the learning progress. Teachers can easily check students' learning records and modify their speed of instruction to meet the needs of their students.

Quizlet Live, exclusive to teachers' accounts, is an engaging activity I frequently

employ both online and onsite. Students can participate in the activity through an access code, establishing random teams to get started. Questions are drawn from selected study sets, displaying multiple options on the teammates' screens; only one holds the correct answer. Students must work together to determine the correct one (as Picture 1 shows). During onsite sessions, my students must hold their phones to look for their team members around the classroom. Even the least inactive students have to communicate and contribute. For online sessions, teachers can turn Quizlet Live into an individual competition. The game ends when the first winner finishes all the questions correctly at a time, and everyone can immediately see who the top gamers are. If a participant gets an error, he must start from the beginning. Usually, playing multiple rounds fuels their competitive spirit, fostering post-class review and a desire to succeed in subsequent games.



Picture 1 How to use Quizlet Live https://youtu.be/q64qTBfK0iE

What is Wordwall and how it is commonly used for online lexis teaching?

Unlike Quizlet's one-question-one-answer format, Wordwall has a wider variety of lexis-based quizzes, such as crosswords, fill-in-the-blanks, matching, group sorting, and random wheels(as Picture 2 shows). Wordwall also accommodates breakout rooms for collaborative screen sharing via URL links. Additionally, compared to Quizlet Live, it benefits "slower" students who might feel too much pressure during Quizlet Live by allowing more reflection and discussion time. Therefore, Wordwall becomes a substitute for Quizlet Live during online lexis teaching.



Picture 2 W ordwall activity gallery https://wordwall.net/

The practices of using Quizlet and Wordwall for lexis learning and practice in speaking lessons

Here I would like to introduce how I use Quizlet and Wordwall to facilitate one of my EAP lexis lessons through speaking activities both onsite and online, aiming to facilitate students' use of functional phrases in academic discussions.

1. Background:

Teaching academic discussion lexis involves providing a list of fixed phrases that serve various functions within discussions, such as expressing agreement or disagreement, interrupting, taking turns, and inviting contributions. This is an important goal for EAP learning. To accomplish this goal, the lesson typically comprises two stages: teambased categorization to identify the functions of these phrases, and speaking practice using these functional phrases.

However, based on my experience, I've encountered some common issues during these stages. Firstly, students tended to work on their individual workbooks with minimal discussion to verify answers. This resulted in a rather quiet and unengaging period, where some students may simply await the correct answers. This lack of collaboration and communication hindered students' meaningful engagement with these new phrases. Secondly, during the practice sessions, I struggled to effectively assess whether all of my students were genuinely incorporating these phrases into their group discussions in a face-to-face setting. This challenge became even more pronounced in online scenarios,

where students frequently relied on a limited set of phrases they were already familiar with, thus limiting their exposure to new language acquisition.

Fortunately, I've discovered that Quizlet and Wordwall offer viable solutions to the aforementioned issues. In addition to its flashcard features, Quizlet provides convenient tools that assist teachers in preparing materials, such as cut-ups for matching and grouping lexis during in-person sessions. Meanwhile, Wordwall's group sorting quizzes enable collaborative categorization activities in online environments. Both tools contribute to facilitating the subsequent discussion stages. Please allow me to introduce each tool individually.

2. Using Quizlet to prepare cutting-up strips for onsite lessons

With Quizlet, I found that "cutting up" is no longer a burden and I can significantly reduce the time I spend on constant formatting adjustments in Word documents.

The import function in Quizlet offers a remarkably swift and convenient method for generating various study sets. By employing simple copy-paste techniques and making slight adjustments, such as adding commas or tabs, you can effortlessly import target languages along with their corresponding functions (as Picture 3 shows). Additionally, Word and Excel files containing languages can be uploaded to Quizlet.

An Are Car Cou	t your data Copy and Paste your data here (from Word, Excel, Google Docs, e example might help me understand your point more fully, Ask for Clar you saying that?, Ask for Clarification you give me an example?, Ask for Clarification Id you explain that idea in more detail?, Ask for Clarification	tc.) ification	
etwe	en Term and Definition Between cards		© S
	CUSTOM	CUSTOM	
rev	CUSTOM	CUSTOM	
rev	iew 4 cards An example might help me understand your point more fully.	Ask for Clarification	
rev 1	CUSTOM iew 4 cards An example might help me understand your point more fully. TERM Are you saying that?	Ask for Clarification DEFINITION Ask for Clarification DEFINITION	

Picture 3 Quizlet importing study set

After creating the study sets, selecting "Print" from the menu which presents a range of choices for formatting the study materials on paper (as Picture 4 shows). These options allow for customization based on your preferences and cover a variety of layouts,

including a table and glossary. I typically choose the table layout below:

• ×		← 2/133 →	© []
Created EAPC	ORE Teacher		× 1.1 …
added to Prep	aration Pool (Summe) CS	Add to a class or folder
Terms in th	nis set (133)		Print Combine
Not studie	d (133)		Export
You haven't s	tudied these terms	yet.	<> Embed
I really like	your idea	Acknowledge speaker	Delete
l take your	point that	Acknowledge speaker	* 4) /
I think your	point is	Acknowledge speaker	★ d) 🗡

Picture 4 Go to study set printing page

1. Choose a layout		
table table	Expressing Ideas in discussion Study online at https://quiziet.com/_c4zv3v	
glossary	1. I really like your idea	Acknowledge speaker
o small	2. I take your point that	Acknowledge speaker
	3. I think your point is important	Acknowledge
2. Customise your options	4. That is a great way to explain	Acknowledge speaker
Flip terms and definitions	5. That's a good point	Acknowledge speaker
3. Click the printer icon to print the PDF	6. Yes, that's true	Acknowledge speaker
Want to print a test? Click here.	7. You have shown clearly and	Acknowledge speaker
	8. An example might help me understand your point more fully.	Ask for Clarifica- tion
	9. Are you saying that?	Ask for Clarifica- tion
	10. Can you give me an example?	Ask for Clarifica- tion
	11. Could you explain that idea in more detail?	Ask for Clarifica- tion
	12. Excuse me, I want to ask a question	Ask for Clarifica- tion
	13. I'm not following you can you go over your idea	Ask for Clarifica-

Picture 5 Quizlet study set printing options

Subsequently, the preview panel on the right conveniently enables the creation of physical copies by means of printing or generating downloadable PDF files (as Picture 5 shows). I typically share these PDFs with my students as answer sheets. Following this, I cut the language phrases into individual paper strips, devoid of their associated functions.

Throughout the categorization phase, students are compelled to collaborate, as each of them holds several strips containing different language phrases. During the practice stage, I often give each student five or more phrase strips, instructing them to thoughtfully use these phrases in their discussions. If this isn't done, there will be some sort of "punishment", the severity of which depends on how many strips were not used. With this method, their language use becomes obvious, allowing me to easily track development by looking at the remaining paper strips.

Through the utilization of Quizlet, the task of creating cut-up materials is no longer a burden, and I can allocate more time towards teaching instead of grappling with endless formatting adjustments in Word documents.

3. Using Wordwall for online lessons

There are almost no other online tools that can enable online categorizing or sorting activities like Wordwall. Previously, the only way to do this was to code the target languages with numbers or letters bound with each function demonstrated on one page of the slide, and ask students to match through the whiteboard or write down answers with the codes. It usually took a long time to stimulate peer communication and full engagement. There are more than ten target languages and it is very difficult to read and make changes during online discussions.

However, the online categorizing activity can be very engaging and it can facilitate the later speaking practice by the following steps:

Preparation stage: create activities by copying and pasting the lists of target languages in the correct function categories (as Picture 6 shows). Then share the link with students during online classes.



Picture 6 Preparing and edit the group sort activity in Wordwall

Categorizing stage: students can work in groups, with one of the group members sharing a screen to "do" the categorizing while other team members can provide support and discuss with each other. This can also be an individual task by each student clicking the link on their own. Students can just categorize the languages by dragging and dropping (as Picture 7 shows). When the task is submitted, their answers will be checked automatically, and they can see the correct answer immediately. Teachers can also see the groups' performance through the leaderboard as long as each group fills in their group name after the task (as Picture 8 shows). So teachers can easily gamify the task into an online competition.

Excuse me, could I just make a point here?"	Could you give an example that might help me understand your point more fully?	No nona, that's not what I mean I was saying that	Yeah, exactly. That is what I was trying to say	we have talked a lot about how about moving on to	Sorry that I didn't make it clear. Let me explain again	Could you explain that idea in more detail?	Perhaps we could reach some agreement
So, if I understand you clearly, you are saying that _	We just had a nice discussion, I would like to make a brief summary here. Essentially what we were saying is	what I am trying to say is _	I think you are right about I would like to add another example.	Is it okay if I jump in for a second?	I'am glad you ask that. What I mean is _	well, we're running out of time, so let's move on to the second issue	Excuse me, what do you mean by saying_?
Hmmm, LwellI think that really depend	Does anyone have a different idea?	Sorry to interrupt, but I don't think (sb.) has had a chance to make his point.	Sorry, but would you mind repeating that?	Let's start by talking about	Would you mind if I added something?	Perhaps you could tell us what you think about	
Signposting st of discussio	ages on	Take turns others in dis	: / invite scussions	Check fo	or meaning	Give	clarification
	1 - 1	and states 1	and a state	19 4 C 18 19	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	1	AND DESCRIPTION OF
1973 198 2	に行た				15		
		1972					

Picture 7 Students' view of the group sort acitivty

Le	aderboar	ď		Options -
	Rank	Name	Score	Time
	1st	GGbond	23	11:07
	2nd	Group4	22	16:40
	3rd	Group 5	21	12:45
	4th	Group 2	16	7:53
	5th	Group 1	3	7:06

Picture 8 Wordwall leaderboard to show students' performance

Practice Stage: students can restart the activity and start practicing using these target languages while discussing a given a topic. They can drag and drop it to the right categories at once when they have used one phrase. When the time is up, the teacher can easily check how many pieces of target languages each student has used through the leaderboard.

Conclusion

Teaching lexis in speaking lessons using Quizlet onsite and Wordwall online can offer engaging activities. Quizlet makes it easier to create educational content with interactive tests, while Wordwall adds variety with different word-based activities, especially categorizing tools. Both of the tools can support collaborative and engaging learning. By using these tools, teachers help students actively use new lexis in discussions, cultivating not only effective communication but also a deep-seated appreciation for lexical learning.

2.1.2 Deeper Instruction in Student-centered Online Classes

through Collaborative Wiki in LM to Enhance Critical Thinking

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Keywords: Deeper Instruction, Student-centered class, Wiki, Critical Thinking

Author Bio

Chengcheng Li works as a Language instructor at the School of Languages for over 10 years. Her major research interest is Critical Thinking and Mind.

What is a Wiki?

The Wiki is a web tool that allows users to create content on a webpage. To create a Wiki, you need to use a Wiki hosting site or Wiki platform. There are many free Wiki hosting services with different features like the number of users, storage, and different ways to organize pages. Learning Mall (LM), XJTLU online learning and teaching platform, also hosts a Wiki site in which we can create Wikis to manage information for classroom purposes.

How does Wiki work?

In Wiki, you create various HTML pages to organize, categorize, share, publish information in different Wiki hosting sites like MediaWiki, Google Docs, Office and etc., which do not require technical knowledge of coding, like HTML, Java, etc. These sites are designed intuitively for easy navigation and usage. In LM, the Wiki creating page is also straightforward, although it does not allow many fancy designs of pages, which certainly can be modified in the future version.

The practices of using Wiki for teaching

In general, the Wiki is a site where users create different HTML pages connected through hyperlinks. It is a great way to organize the course content for easy navigation for students, convenient modifications of information without unnecessarily sending emails or messages, and encourage students' contribution and collaboration. I will share some experiences for building Wikis in LM to enhance students' learning experience.

1. Wikis allow easy navigation of information for a module

When all course-relevant information is organized in these simple and clear four categories, it allows flexibility for students to plan and navigate their learning without worrying about missing information from tutor emails or newly added LM activities.

Students can click these four Wikis for information whenever they are free.

2. Wikis enhance student-centered learning

In Wiki, the content of classroom materials can be beautifully organized into visually appealing HTML pages with multimedia, colors, and illustrations which is much more stimulating compared to Word Documents. With all class topics listed neatly in one place, naturally, students would want to try to click on the link to see what is inside, which could greatly help stimulate their curiosity. If each of the pages is designed with careful instructions, students would want to study the content well before the classes. That would truly help turn the class time into a sharing, exchanging, and interactive space for both teachers and students, which can transform the traditional information dissemination style of teaching. In addition, each week's page is organized in the same pattern intentionally to save time and energy from looking for information, instead, to help learners concentrate on digesting information when they expect where to find what kinds of information with certainty.

3. Wikis promote deeper instruction for genuine understanding and critical thinking

One of the advantages of Wiki is allowing teachers to organize and share multimedia content in one place with students. Students could fully and easily grasp key information and deeper instructions before interacting with peers or teachers. The most important job for teachers is not simply piling information on one page but designing a way to organize meaningful, effective, intriguing instructions to direct students to appropriately use content with a goal or purpose. The instructions must clearly demonstrate what students are expected to do, and how they should do it. For example, for a critical thinking activity, such instruction and resources are given to help students complete the task:

Critical Thinking activity:

If you were a professional communication coach, how would you write a great Crowdfunding Story for 3Doodler?

Instruction:

a. Watch the video "Motivated Sequence" to understand the 5 steps to create a speech that could motivate people to take action.

Monroe Motivate Sequence--Presentation Skills (Video Link)

b. Write 5 short sections of each of the 5 steps of the motivate sequence for 3Doodler.

- o Attention
- o Need
- Satisfaction
- Visualization
- o Action

c. Post your answers to your personal page.

4. Wikis help enhance independence and collaboration with peers

Wikis provide a platform for students to share information and contribute to group knowledge, which makes them feel connected and builds rapport. In the Wiki for Homework page, clear instructions are given with resources, which saves students time and energy to remember tasks when all information is organized and well-categorized for them to be collaborative and creative.

When students post homework to their own Wiki page, it helps create a great sense of contribution and achievement because everyone can view everyone else's homework. For weaker students, their imagination can be stretched when they see models, while the strong, they could freely demonstrate their capacities. For teachers, they can assess students' performance and adjust lesson plans readily and accordingly. Students can also get feedback from teachers on the same Wiki page. The individual comments enhance customized student-teacher communication and are much more effective than general feedback. Students could also enhance their understanding of teachers' comments on peers' homework.

The creation of Wiki in LM

The creation of Wikis is very simple with different buttons for writing and multimedia, which are very intuitive for students. One of the most useful functions is the hyperlink which allows students to include links to other Wiki pages or websites or files. Users can also reorganize information easily by inserting new pages, links, answers, or any other types of information. All the information allows students to view and review without worrying about storing or losing them on their computers.

Conclusion

Wikis can be used to effectively create, and organize content for teaching by allowing students to preview information with clear deeper instructions. Wikis could also allow contributions from students for peer reviewing, collaborative tasks, student-teacher interaction, and effective feedback. In addition, with clear instruction, easy navigation, and multimedia content in an organized central place for convenient accessibility, students are well-facilitated for genuine understanding, critical and creative thinking, as well as better participation in class.

2.1.3 From Classroom to Cloud: Leveraging Microsoft 365 for

Enhanced Collaboration and Communication in Online Courses

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Introduction

A collaborative and communicative environment is essential for any educational setting. In an increasingly digitalized world, it becomes crucial for educators and students to have access to tools that can facilitate effective collaboration and communication while also being user-friendly and easily accessible. Microsoft 365 (MS365) is one such platform that provides a comprehensive set of tools to improve teaching and learning. Since all XJTLU staff and students now have access to MS 365, we have begun exploring the possibilities of integrating it into our teaching practice. In the summer of 2023, we tested using MS 365 to facilitate the learning process and communication between students and teachers in the Pre-sessional (PSE) course. In this article, we will explore four scenarios in which MS 365 can be used in teaching, highlighting the advantages and potential disadvantages. As a whole, we believe that MS 365 can be a valuable addition to the Learning Mall (LM) platform for enhancing teaching and learning.

Introduction to the PSE Course

The PSE course is designed for postgraduate students who have received conditional offers from XJTLU and need to improve their English language skills before starting their degree programs. When students take the PSE course, they can be in any city in China, as the course is totally delivered online. Each student in the course was granted access to LM and the relevant LM training materials. In the summer of 2023, while the LM platform served as the main online learning environment for the PSE course, we tried to integrate MS 365 to enhance certain aspects of the course delivery and student engagement.

Scenarios of Using MS 365

Scenario 1: Monitor Student Engagement in Real Time with OneNote (Using MS 365 OneNote Class Notebook to check students' in-class activities)

The Big Blue Button (BBB) platform on the LM, a video conferencing solution at XJTLU, offers several features for real-time interaction between teachers and students, such as shared notes, multi-user whiteboards, and chat boxes. However, these features are not sufficient for effectively tracking students' in-class activities. For instance, when
students are instructed to highlight text with different colors, it becomes challenging for the teacher to monitor every student's work in real-time.

To address this limitation, the integration of MS 365 OneNote Class Notebook offers a robust solution. By setting up personalized notebooks for each student through this platform, teachers can monitor students' in-class activities in real-time. During the class, students can take notes, highlight text, and draw diagrams in their respective notebooks. For example, teachers can distribute a text that needs to be highlighted to each student as an individual handout within the MS 365 OneNote Class Notebook. This allows them to easily track each student's progress as the students annotate the text. At the end of the activity, teachers can share their screens to showcase exemplary work and provide collective feedback to the entire class (see the screenshots below).



(After students complete an annotation task in a PSE class, the teacher can check their real-time performance by clicking on the student's name.)

Tracking students' in-class activities presents a significant challenge in online teaching environments. This difficulty largely stems from the technological limitations of realtime data collection and monitoring. Consequently, some students may not fully engage in class activities, knowing that they won't be held accountable immediately even if they do so. We believe that integrating MS 365 OneNote Class Notebook offers an effective solution to this common issue.

Scenario 2: Facilitate Asynchronous Collaboration with OneNote (Using MS 365 OneNote Class Notebook to check group assignments)

In an asynchronous learning environment, the MS 365 OneNote Class Notebook is also highly effective for assessing group assignments. Its "Collaboration Space" section is accessible to all class members, facilitating group work on a shared document. Teachers can create separate pages for different groups and assign these pages to students. This facilitates smooth collaboration among students in each group to complete their tasks at their own pace and in real-time.

This feature is particularly useful for projects requiring cooperation and coordination, as is often the case in our PSE course. We occasionally assign group homework, such as article reviews that require gathering key points into a table before the next class. Utilizing the MS 365 OneNote Class Notebook feature in such scenarios enables efficient and effective monitoring of group assignments in an asynchronous setting (see screenshot below). Students can conveniently keep track of and contribute to their group assignments. Teachers can easily review and assess the group work. Additionally, the OneNote Class Notebook records each student's contributions, giving teachers insightful information about group dynamics and student engagement with the assignments.

Untitled Page	Room 2: 4.	6 Discussion			
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Room 2: 4.6 Discussion			0		
Room 3: 4.6 Discussion	Slide	Ranking	Reason	Kia	
Room 4: 4.6 Discussion	A1	1	Color and word type is both classical.we can see the key point di Word types and	Wu23; ang23; ?hou23	
Room 5: 4.6 Discussion	B2	2	The font is cursive and bright-coloured, which is not convenient to see.	Wu23; ang23; Li23	
Room 1	C3	3	The picture overlaps with the table		
Room 2	D4	4	The background is too coulorful, and cannot see the words clearly . The picture overlaps with the table.	wu23; iang23	

(Students in different groups ("Rooms") have completed their group homework of evaluating the quality of PPT slides. The names of the group members/contributors are shown on the right.)

Scenario 3: Enhance Real-Time Collaboration on Text-Based Tasks (Using MS 365 Word for group real-time collaborative annotation activities)

Compared to other collaboration platforms such as Padlet, MS 365 Word offers a more user-friendly interface along with a robust set of collaboration tools designed for textediting activities. A standout feature is its capacity for real-time online collaboration. Once students log in via a shared link, teachers can closely monitor and engage with their work in real-time. This capability is particularly beneficial for enhancing both the quality and engagement level of text-based online teamwork.

Analyzing and annotating sample texts are common text-based activities in PSE courses, and MS 365 Word's features are particularly well-suited for these tasks. In the past, teachers often relied on the Shared Whiteboard function available in the BBB platform. However, there are restrictions on the drawing tools and text length of this function, which makes it difficult to collect students' work in breakout rooms.

MS 365 Word, on the other hand, facilitates smooth real-time collaboration. Students can use a variety of annotation tools, such as color-coding to highlight an essay's structure, and collaborate on the same document without using screen sharing. This

fosters an environment for idea sharing and group improvement of analytical abilities. Texts can be divided into sections and assigned to different groups, allowing teachers to efficiently monitor each student's contributions. Essentially, this enables targeted, timely feedback and guidance, saving teachers considerable time compared to visiting each breakout room to identify issues.

In addition to paragraph analysis, MS 365 offers an extensive range of collaborative activities for online lessons. Within a single document, teachers can arrange group discussions, peer reviews, and collaborative projects. Easy tracking of changes and feedback is made possible by features like version history and comments, which further improve the learning process. This ensures that the collaborative learning process remains both organized and productive.

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Scenario 4: Boost Engagement with Collaborative Presentations (Using MS 365 PowerPoint for group presentations in speaking classes)

MS 365 PowerPoint provides a comprehensive set of powerful collaboration features, making it an excellent tool for group projects and presentations. Although it shares realtime collaboration capabilities with MS Word, PowerPoint adds a variety of visual and multimedia tools, making it particularly suitable for collaborative group presentations, which are often assigned during PSE classes. Before there was a specific PowerPoint for idea capture and brainstorming, students frequently found it difficult to internalize the target skills and apply them to their academic presentations. With the collaboration features provided by MS 365 PowerPoint, each group member can take responsibility for a single slide, and the platform's collaborative features enable brainstorming, insertion of images and multimedia, and linking—just as one would do with an offline PowerPoint. After class, students can record their presentations independently and incorporate these recordings into their slides to receive feedback from peers and teachers. For individual presentation tasks, students can easily upload their self-made PowerPoint slides to cloud storage, allowing for peer reviews or tutorials. The platform's capability to add text or audio comments directly to slides offers feedback that is much more precise and targeted compared to generic commentary.

Beyond group presentations, MS 365 PowerPoint can be employed for various collaborative activities in online lessons. Teachers can foster group discussions by asking students to document their brainstorming sessions, create joint mind maps, diagrams, and tables, or complete fill-in-the-blank activities sourced from the teacher's PowerPoint presentation or workbook.

Conclusion

In conclusion, our experience showed that MS 365 has emerged as an indispensable platform for enhancing collaboration and communication in the PSE course. This paper has highlighted four key scenarios where MS 365's diverse capabilities have enriched our teaching and learning experience. These range from real-time tracking of in-class activities using OneNote Class Notebook to the facilitation of asynchronous group assignments, as well as enabling text-based group tasks with MS 365 Word and collaborative group presentations with MS 365 PowerPoint. Collectively, these implementations underscore MS 365's ability to boost student engagement, increase productivity, and foster effective collaboration and communication between teachers and students. Having said that, we are also fully aware of the necessity of taking into account any potential negatives when utilizing MS 365 in the classroom. For example, issues such as data privacy concerns, and the learning curve associated with mastering new technological tools for both teachers and students should never be overlooked. Looking forward, further experiments and trials can be conducted to assess how MS 365 products can be used in more disciplines and teaching environments to maximize their benefits and address any potential challenges.

2.1.4 Enhancing Academic Assessment: Leveraging Gradescope

for Efficient Marking and Personalized Feedback

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Introduction

Assessment in education is a critical component that necessitates efficiency, accuracy, and prompt feedback for students. However, the conventional manual marking approach proves to be time-consuming and labor-intensive, often leading to examiner burnout, especially when confronted with tight marking deadlines. The challenges are further compounded by the need to ensure error-free score calculation and maintain consistent marking standards. Moreover, personalized feedback delivery in a timely manner presents an additional layer of complexity. These challenges are particularly pronounced within large modules.

Recognizing these challenges, educators are increasingly turning to innovative tools to streamline the assessment process. This article explores my experience with Gradescope, elucidating its role in improving marking efficiency, quality and providing timely individualised feedback.

Implementation Process

The implementation of Gradescope within the assessment framework encompasses a systematic process aimed at optimizing the evaluation procedure. Initially, this entails integrating the Learning Management (LM) module with Gradescope and synchronizing the module roster that establishes a seamless transition of data to ensure accurate identification and management of student submissions. Subsequently, examiners create assessments within Gradescope.

Once student scripts are submitted, Gradescope facilitates the efficient grouping of answers, streamlining the assessment process, particularly when collective evaluation of student responses is warranted. Leveraging the platform's flexible rubric system, examiners mark the submissions, thereby ensuring a standardized and equitable evaluation approach. This is followed by a comprehensive review of grades, enabling meticulous validation and the timely publication of grades, accompanied by detailed marking insights. This process facilitates the provision of timely and personalized feedback to students.

Benefits

a. Enhancing Marking Efficiency and Workload Management

Once configured, examiners can proceed to mark assessments question by question,

enhancing overall marking efficiency. This process involves evaluating answers for a specific question across all student submissions before transitioning to the next question, therefore streamlining the marking process significantly. In cases involving fill-in-theblank questions, Gradescope employs AI (Artificial Intelligence) technology to recognize students' handwriting, facilitating the segregation of answers into distinct groups. Examiners only need to mark one script in each group, and then all scripts in the same group will receive an identical mark for this question.

b. Marking consistency

Ensuring fair treatment for every student underscores the significance of marking consistency, demanding careful attention from examiners. Sequential evaluation, as facilitated by Gradescope, enhances marking uniformity, allowing examiners to effortlessly navigate between scripts on the same question.

In scenarios involving multiple markers, Gradescope promotes a cohesive approach by enabling each marker to simultaneously assess their designated questions, sharing rubrics set by one another, and bolstering the integrity of the evaluation process. Additionally, Gradescope's comprehensive tracking system maintains a detailed log of rubrics and the associated marks for each question, promoting standardized grading practices. For instance, if an examiner deducts two marks for a particular error in the script of the first student, and the same error reoccurs in the 388th student's script, Gradescope's systematic approach ensures two marks deduction in both scripts, enabling consistent application of the evaluation criteria. In cases where examiners reassess the appropriateness of deductions, changing the deducted marks from 2 to 1 mark for scripts with the same mistake is extremely easy: just change the mark for the specific rubric with one click.

c. Free from Add-up Errors

Gradescope's automated summation of marks for each student ensures a meticulous tallying process, thereby eliminating the possibility of any add-up errors during the assessment.

d. Flexible rubric

In contrast to alternative marking tools that mandate the preliminary setup of all rubrics, Gradescope offers the flexibility to incorporate rubrics dynamically during the assessment process. This feature proves particularly advantageous, as it enables examiners to address unforeseen errors or variations not initially accounted for in the rubric setup.

e. Provision of Personalized Feedback

Gradescope facilitates the seamless dissemination of comprehensive feedback to individual students, encompassing the total marks, marking specifics for each question, rubrics, and comments tailored to each student's performance. After grades are released, students can request regrading when necessary. Notably, Gradescope simplifies the process for instructors, enabling swift grade modifications and timely responses to students' requests, thus fostering a responsive and transparent feedback mechanism.

f. Student performance analytics

The platform provides examiners with robust performance analytics, offering comprehensive statistical insights. Examiners can access performance statistics at the overall, question-specific, and rubric item levels. Additionally, questions can be categorized using tags related to concepts, learning objectives, or specific book chapters, enabling a holistic analysis of student performance based on these categories.

Student responses

Timely personalized feedback empowers students to identify their strengths and areas for improvement, facilitating their academic development. Furthermore, the integration of advanced marking technology to ensure assessment accuracy and consistency cultivates a sense of trust among students, underscoring the transparency and equity embedded within the evaluation process.

Conclusion

In the ever-evolving landscape of education, the precise, efficient and equitable assessment of student learning is of paramount importance. However, traditional manual marking processes often fall short of meeting these rigorous demands, leading educators to seek innovative solutions. In this context, Gradescope emerges as a transformative tool, revolutionizing the assessment paradigm.

Gradescope offers a comprehensive solution to the challenges faced by examiners, enhancing marking efficiency, fostering consistency, ensuring fairness and providing a mechanism for personalized feedback to students. The platform's robust performance analytics provide educators with valuable insights into student progress, facilitating a data-driven approach to academic intervention. By adopting this technology, educators can transcend the limitations of traditional assessment methodologies, ultimately enhancing the quality of education and fostering a more dynamic and responsive learning environment.

2.2 Teaching Method Reflection

2.2.1 Using VR Technology to Enhance Students' Speaking

Practices

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Keywords: VR technology, immersive environment, speaking practices

Introduction

As the use of technology prevails, language learning in virtual learning environments has been receiving considerable attention, especially during the pandemic, when distance learning is unavoidable and technology-enhanced learning stretches from gamification to more pedagogical involvements. It is specifically the ability to deliver engaging and focused learning that makes Virtual Reality (VR) an effective tool for language educators. However, pedagogical concerns over VR tools' effectiveness in education field are rising, such as the replacement of human instructors by virtual pedagogical agents, in virtual learning environments (Sinatra et al., 2021). Studies examining VR tools' effectiveness indicate that gender, gesture and feedback that are essential in language learning can be achieved in VR environments as well (Sinatra et al., 2021).

During Academic Year 2022 semester 1, at the Continuing Support (CS) workshops of School of Languages, Mengqi Hu and Rui Xu intended to take the research-led teaching approach, like VR tool called Immerse Me (Figure 1) to evaluate the impacts of the presence and social fidelity of virtual agents on students' speaking experience in contextual immersion environment. It is a tool for people to practice and improve on language fluency and accuracy in real-life scenarios, while removing classroom walls and connecting with the outside world.



Figure 1. Immerse Me webpage layout

Research-led Teaching

These speaking practice workshops are based upon a Teaching Development Fund (TDF) project, which is part of the university's strategy to build a technology-enhanced learning. The virtual human fidelity to social interaction in virtual environments has been identified as an essential factor in improving the quality of social interaction (Garau, 2003). Sinatre et al. (2021) also demonstrated that even though social components of fidelity have been frequently discussed, the social fidelity of virtual agents in learning effectiveness remains a gap, which drives further investigation into students' presence in immersive real-life scenarios in this project.

Currently, there are three kinds of VR tools in the market based on different original design purposes: open social virtuality, massively multiplayer online games and synthetic immersive environments (SIEs) (Lin and Lan, 2015). Immersive Me belongs to SIEs, which is also the only category designed with an emphasis on educational objectives by carefully incorporating pedagogy into immersive spaces (Lin and Lan, 2015). It offers virtual field trips as authentic scenarios for students to practice English

conversations (Figure 2). Other factors such as different levels of interaction with virtual agents should be researched, so that the influence of virtual field trips on the presence and perceived learning can be enhanced (Han, 2020). Another feature, as shown in figure 2, contextual immersion is identified in this platform, which can fill the gap between general textbook-based dialogues and field trip conversation in real life.



Figure 2. Contextual Immersion Feature

VR Speaking Experiment

All together around 60 students participated in these CS speaking practice workshops, among whom many choose to apply for overseas study. Therefore, the motivation of enhancing their speaking proficiency of foreign language is quite high. However, speaking and understanding other speakers in local scenarios tend to be challenging for students. Even though SoL is a diversified intercultural community, not many students utilize their opportunities to interact with each other in English dialogue, for the reasons of shyness and lack of confidence.

Before the workshop, in order to familiarize participants with VR head-mounted device and Immerse Me platform, prior to the hands-on practice, we prepared an 8-minute presentation on how to navigate through the Immerse Me platform to choose the level and topic, check key grammar and vocabulary, and set up VR mode for practice. During the set-up practice, some students with glasses may find it a little bit uncomfortable to wear the VR head-mounted devices and glasses at the same time. This is one of the typical difficulties of using VR head-mounted devices. Eventually they decided to wear contact lenses for the latter attempts. During the speaking practices, students can manage the whole practice on their own with some feedback automatically generated through the Immerse Me platform (Figure 3). They also commented on the word caption function, which allows them to see their pronounced words to easily note the wrong spells that could be resulted from their mispronunciation.



Figure 3. Student Practice in VR Lab

Feedback and Implications

SoL Modern Language Centre currently offers Mandarin, Spanish and Japanese to thousands of students. This VR experiment and Immerse Me platform could potentially be applied across all the language programmes for both students and faculty. Although some constraints such as the limit of device and venue space, participants' digital literacy level, dizziness and discomfort after a long time of wearing a VR head-mounted device exist, the application of VR significantly boosts learner confidence and motivation based on previous investigation and students' feedback. It is still worthwhile to embedding VR application with the study programme to overcome the distance and time limits.

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2.2.2 Developing and Exploring the Effectiveness of an E-

Tandem Programme with VR in Foreign Language Learning at

XJTLU

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Keywords: E-tandem, VR Technology, Chinese Language Learning

Introduction

Travel constraints during the pandemic have necessitated the delivery of Chinese language modules at XJTLU in an online format, limiting opportunities for international students to engage with native speakers and immerse themselves in Chinese culture. To address this issue, we have envisioned a proactive solution - pairing international students with their Chinese counterparts and tasking them with collaborative activities within a Virtual Reality (VR) environment, specifically Mozilla Hub. The statistics show that international students are very interested in practicing Chinese with native speakers and are willing to know more about Chinese local culture.

Inspired by the paper 'Designing and Supporting Virtual Exchange: The Case of Chinese–English e-Tandem' (Tim Lewis & Kan Qian, 2021), this E-tandem programme aims to provide international students at XJTLU with an enriched avenue to practice Chinese and gain profound insights into Chinese culture through meaningful interactions with their language partners. VR technology is incorporated to create new immersive learning experiences that transcend the confines of traditional online education. This incorporation of VR is expected to imbue our programme with an unparalleled sense of presence, ultimately enhancing performance and elevating engagement levels to new heights.

Collaborative VR E-tandem experiments with Learning Mall XR Lab

Our project was supported and hosted by Virtual Reality Language Learning Lab (SoL VRLLL) at XJTLU. This community comprises educators, researchers, students, and XR (VR/AR/MR) enthusiasts who are passionate about enabling, enhancing, and enriching the experience of language learning at XTJLU through innovative uses of XR technologies.

To assess the effectiveness of VR intervention and provide students with a highly immersive VR experience, we were honored to collaborate with the LMO XR lab which generously supplied cutting-edge VR headsets and VR-ready computers for our pilot research.

During the experiments, international participants and their language partners were equipped with HP Reverb G2, one of the mainstream VR headsets, and Alienware computers. The virtual reality Chinese teaching environment was constructed with Mozilla Hub, an open-source VR online tool. This platform was chosen for its capacity to replicate various real-life scenarios, catering to our teaching and research goals.

Participants and Experiment Information

We recruited 8 pairs of students in total and provided them with VR rooms to conduct language tasks and cultural communication every two weeks.

Participants	Onsite students in the VR lab: 5 pairs	Online students using personal computer: 3 pairs
Time	Week 5-week 12, S2 AY 22	-23
Themes	Explore session;	
	Order food in a restaurant;	
	Rent an apartment;	
	Find a book in the library;	
	Decorate a birthday party;	

The experiment successfully completed in May 2023, thanks to the collaborative efforts of the research team, two research assistants, participants, and the invaluable support of the VR lab.

Feedback and Implications

1. Participants' feedback

Participants enrolled in the E-Tandem programme with specific expectations, aiming to improve their language proficiency in either Chinese or English, forge friendships, and bolster their communication self-assurance. Among the respondents, 3 out of 10 students indicated that the programme has "exceeded" their expectations, while the majority, 7 out of 10, felt that it met their expectations. Notably, one participant emphasized the need for additional practice but expressed increased confidence in speaking Chinese, acknowledging the patience and support provided by their language partner. Across the board, international students relished engaging in discussions on diverse and enjoyable topics with their Chinese counterparts, facilitating cultural exchange. Despite all the enjoyable moments, participants had certain levels of difficulties in maintaining smooth communication due to their limited language proficiency.

Regarding the VR equipment, participants exhibited varying preferences across different topics. A majority of students enjoyed the facilitation of the VR equipment, with one participant expressing relief when navigating the immersive, game-like environment. However, a few participants cited prolonged software response times as a concern. Despite these technical challenges, many participants actively explored the contexts for certain expressions, and gained deeper insights into cultural elements, benefiting from the enhanced visualization support.

As programme investigators, we are encouraged by the positive feedback from weekly

interactions and feedback reports. Chinese student partners have proven to be supportive and encouraging, emphasizing the importance of international students speaking with confidence and not being overly critical of themselves. Despite scheduling conflicts faced by some participants, most international students valued the opportunity to practice speaking in Chinese with their language partners.

2. Challenges and Issues in VR intervention

While the majority of students acknowledged the potential benefits of VR technology in enhancing language learning, facilitating specific scenarios with visualizations, and augmenting interactivity and engagement, challenges and issues arose during the study.

Several students provided quotations affirming the positive aspects of VR technology, such as "Added fun and interactivity," "Visualize objects and behaviors," and "The visual aid helped me understand better." For those who had not previously experienced VR technology, the programme served as an educational introduction to this novel medium.

However, it is imperative to address the adverse effects experienced by a subset of participants. Specifically, 1-2 students reported experiencing nausea when putting on the VR headset, necessitating their switch to 2D VR technology for communication. This highlights a limitation associated with VR technology.

Quotation from a student:

"Most of the time we communicated smoothly face-to-face, without VR technology."

Another issue pertained to the time required for setup, ranging from 3-10 minutes, including configuring Mozilla Hub and preparing the VR headsets. This challenge underscores the need for enhanced technical support to streamline the setup process and optimize the VR experience. A student aptly summarized this concern, stating,

"We wasted much time waiting for the devices to be fixed. The website also needs to be improved. If the VR technology can be better perfected, I think the result will be more satisfactory."

Additionally, overcrowding in VR classrooms, with more than four students, led to overlapping voices and decreased conversational clarity, impairing effective communication.

3. Further research plan

Following the distribution of our post-project survey in August, we have received thirteen responses to date. Most of the responses are quite positive which serves as a big encouragement for the research team. In pursuit of a more comprehensive understanding of the students' experience, our next step involves conducting individual interviews with the students. This qualitative approach will complement the survey responses and enable us to gain deeper insights into their perspectives. Hopefully, we could leverage these insights in a quest for solutions and refine our experiment for future iterations of the programme.

4. Future implication

Despite the return to on-site classes for most students, the VR-equipped E-Tandem programme is still meaningful in providing visualization and language context. VR technology can create scenarios that are otherwise challenging to replicate in traditional classrooms, fostering interest and engagement. For example, it is hard to actually lead language learners to climb a mountain and learn the corresponding language structures, but the VR Lab can easily create such a scenario for language learners.

Language partners are supportive and encouraging. With a native language speaker partner, international participants find it easier and more relaxing to pick up a new language with a booming interest in learning about a new culture. In future language classes, ongoing facilitation of language partnerships is anticipated.

While present technical challenges persist, the integration of VR technology into students' language pair learning holds substantial promise. This integration not only enhances interest and builds specific scenarios for students to engage in, but also stimulates their visualization and interactive sense of particular language topics. Furthermore, the broader applicability of this E-Tandem programme across various language teaching domains is noteworthy. Beyond its immediate benefits, this E-tandem programme can be also considered widely applicable in other areas of language teaching as it fosters friendship among students and cultivates a secure and supportive learning environment that encourages risk-taking and, subsequently, the development of learner autonomy.

2.2.3 Creative and Effective Online Teaching Strategies

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The online meeting and teaching experiences have taught three important lessons that are crucial for designing, integrating, and delivering online learning. Firstly, collaboration. While teachers can design courses independently, involving colleagues, students and learners in this process can greatly enhance the quality of online learning. For example, the needs assessment project in the Summer PSE (Pre-sessional English) involves collecting survey data from students and lecturers, as well as conducting interviews with module leaders and programme directors, so that the curriculum can be refined. This collaborative effort has reduced teaching weeks from eight to seven, and ensured consistency by having the same instructor for each class.

The second key message is engaging everyone. The process of engagement starts from the very beginning of the course, which involves acknowledging people, allowing them to engage with technology, fostering an effective learning community, and ensuring everyone can interact comfortably. Take the 7-week PSE training as an example, a flipped classroom approach is adopted by utilizing BBB (Big Blue Button) to facilitate synchronous sessions, coupled with asynchronous quizzes, lecture videos, and other online activities to enhance student engagement beyond the class. These asynchronous materials are available on the Learning Mall (LM), which students are required to complete before attending the synchronous sessions. Students are motivated to engage with these materials because they are aware that completing the asynchronous tasks can better prepare them for the online sessions.

The third key message is reflection and learning. Our module places great importance on and requires students to engage in reflective exercises after each lesson. For teachers, engaging in dialogue and discussions centred around reflection has proven to be an invaluable method for enhancing their teaching practices. A prime example of this is the establishment of the divisional Community of Practice (CoP) in various EAP (English for Academic Purposes) modules, which serves to encourage reflection and idea sharing.

Overstressing learning and cultivating a productive learning environment are two of the largest obstacles to online learning. Here are some observations after doing a thorough, if not exhaustive, investigation into instructors' experiences with online teaching. Teachers could certainly add more to this.

Challenge: Demanding environment



Here are some suggestions: first, link back to the key point that is brought up at the beginning, namely the notion of collaboration. Working with other people can assist you in designing, planning, preparing, and facilitating your sessions. Consider the peer observation approach, where teachers can play a variety of roles in class and offer feedback at the end from different perspectives of how the experience went. One thing I learned while watching another colleague's class is that she modified a role-play exercise by bringing up cultural references specific to Chinese contexts, and the online students found it more natural and comfortable to engage in the discussion.

The second suggestion again is to collaborate with your learners. Working with learners is a great approach to reduce any stress you might be experiencing as a facilitator. Students tend to have a wealth of specialized knowledge, particularly in the area of technology. When designing the sessions, some excellent suggestions from their own learning experiences can be quite beneficial.

The third point is to build community. Encourage students to get to know one another, including teachers, and to find different ways to contribute themselves. If students start to believe they can support each other, they will not be too dependent on you. You will find people bringing up and resolving problems in the LM (Learning Mall) forum; all you need to do is to encourage them. It is critical to recognize the contribution that learners made.

Giving learners responsibility is one of the important things teachers can do. Overmonitoring can occasionally be detrimental. As soon as you enter one of the breakout rooms, the learners' conversation may stop since they might feel like they need to listen to the teacher's ideas right now. Sometimes, giving learners some responsibility and letting them handle it themselves can be more helpful than close supervision. When their job has been successfully completed, monitoring can come to the stage. This calls for some reflective conversations with students.

Additionally, when working in this environment, reflection is tremendously useful. Reflection, whether done alone or as a team, is a truly beneficial method. Watching the recording of our own sessions is incredibly helpful. Although it can be excruciating, it does give you the chance to reflect on what you were doing and whether you completed the tasks as intended. When you are talking on the virtual learning platform, people are in a variety of stages of engagement with what you are saying. The only way to ensure their involvement is to have them design something for themselves, which is why I try to design activities rather than merely talking.

2.2.4 Exploration and Application of Novel Techniques and

Tools for Teaching Content Development -- Taking Nibiru Creator

Training Camp of XJTLU Learning Mall as an Example

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(i) Interactive Teaching Interpretation

This paper will explore the application of experiential and interactive teaching, particularly in special education scenarios such as skills training and distance learning. From the perspective of education and teaching methods, we will explore how these novel techniques contribute to the development of new lecture content and modes, as well as examine the integration of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technologies to create immersive three-dimensional teaching scenarios.

Traditionally, classrooms have centered around the teacher, with knowledge being imparted in a unidirectional manner, fostering a passive learning approach often characterized as "indoctrination." This conventional method tends to result in disengaged students who resort to distractions, such as playing with their phones, to endure uninspiring lectures. Active exploration of intellectual curiosity is lacking, let alone enthusiastic participation. In contrast to the traditional way, interactive teaching environments foster many kinds of interactions, including strong teacher-student and student-student interactions, which motivate students to adopt proactive learning attitudes. Through diverse forms of engagement, students exercise higher-order thinking skills, significantly enhancing their learning efficiency and effectiveness. Interaction is the core of interactive pedagogy, the essence of which is to create a transformative teacher-student relationship, where students evolve into knowledge explorers. Students select, process, handle, assimilate, and internalize the information they collect, combining it with their own experiences, abilities, and backgrounds. During the process, students construct knowledge systems on their own, exercising initiative and creativity in learning.

The specific forms of interaction can be divided into the following categories:

- 1. Question stimulation: The teacher raises key issues, guiding students to think and facilitating the progress of the course.
- 2. Discussion on themes: Starting from a certain teaching theme, the teacher guides students to discuss in depth several issues.

- 3. Case study: Students engage in discussions and problem-solving based on the given case.
- 4. Practice: Conditions are created for students to apply theoretical knowledge and solve real-world problems.
- 5. Scenario simulation: The teacher recreates specific situations from the textbook, allowing students to simulate and apply skills or gain situational experience. These interactions embody three key characteristics: equal roles for teachers and students, emphasis on scenarios and practices, and enhanced integration and cooperation with the real world.

The significance of interactive teaching lies in building a good teacher-student relationship and helping students realize the meaning and value of learning. At the same time, students are motivated to learn, and cultivated with a sense of lifelong learning and innovative learning habits. Ultimately, the shift to interactive learning would elicit reforms and innovations in assessment and evaluation systems, as well as other educational and teaching institutions and mechanisms.

Currently, interactive teaching still has certain limitations, which is palpably evident in large class settings. Managing a substantial number of students poses challenges for teachers, making it challenging to ensure full interaction without technological assistance. Additionally, different subjects demand varied forms of interactivity, requiring tailored designs based on subject characteristics. SMART classrooms become imperative to realize interactive teaching, facilitating the deep integration of educational technology with traditional classroom settings.

(ii) Our Practical Exploration

In response to the limitations of interactive teaching, and to realize the deep integration of technology and the classroom, XJTLU Learning Mall has explored and applied Nibiru Creator, a new content development technology and tool, in the hope of realizing deeper teacher-student interactions and providing personalized classroom design, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of teaching and learning experiences. Nibiru Creator is a code-free interactive content creation and operation tool that allows teachers to quickly grasp its usage without a programming background. It also empowers teaching scenarios with a rich library of templates, intelligent data analysis, and logic programming, which enables teachers to develop 3D interactive content efficiently and cost-effectively.

With the help of Nibiru Creator, teachers can master the skills of creating interactive courseware in a short period, and efficiently complete the construction of interactive virtual teaching content. On one hand, employing virtual simulation breaks through the limitations associated with high costs, difficulty in reproduction, limitations on physical resources, and strict security requirements for the creation of certain teaching scenarios. On the other, every student can fully participate in and immerse themselves in virtual teaching scenarios, and engage in a wide range of learning practices and explorations,

thus enhancing their learning concentration and interests, ultimately leading to improved learning outcomes.

To help more teachers understand and master Nibiru Creator, this new type of teaching content development tool, XJTLU Learning Mall has organized a training camp. Teachers can master the skills of building interactive courseware with Nibiru Creator through a period of training, and obtain the teacher certification awarded by Nibiru. To further promote interactive teaching with subject-specific characteristics, XJTLU Learning Mall also held several lectures on meta-universe, imparting metaverse visions and skills to teachers and students majoring in film and TV arts and digital education. Through a combination of knowledge transfer and hands-on practice, the lectures enabled more people to recognize, experience, and master the method of using Nibiru Creator to create interactive courseware. Last but not least, to achieve the effect of technology demonstration, XJTLU Learning Mall engages in peer-to-peer cooperation with teachers to produce interactive courseware. This collaborative approach not only completes the production process but also addresses any challenges encountered by teachers during courseware development, ensuring a comprehensive and supportive implementation of Nibiru Creator in the educational setting.









Through the collaborative projects outlined above, both teachers and students have provided positive feedback. Students and faculty not only acquired the skills to create basic interactive courseware using Nibiru Creator but also exhibited a strong interest in delving deeper into this innovative tool. Following these successful engagements, numerous students enthusiastically enrolled in the Nibiru Creator boot camp program at XJTLU Learning Mall. Actively participating in the creation of interactive courseware, they sought to enhance their learning experience and elevate their teaching skills.

(iii) Showcase of practical programs

1. Film and television technology scenic simulation

Description:

XJTLU Learning Mall is actively involved in training and assisting teachers and students specializing in Filmmaking within the School of Film and TV Arts. The focus is on producing 3D interactive teaching scenes. This initiative serves a dual purpose. Firstly, it utilizes virtual simulation technology to conduct pre-studies and preparations, allowing students to engage in insightful discussions with teachers and classmates during class sessions. Additionally, post-class, students can review and practice within the virtual simulation environment, ensuring a profound understanding and mastery of the key points in their professional knowledge. This approach not only enriches the learning experience but also facilitates a comprehensive understanding and application of critical professional concepts.

Access link: https://preview.inibiru.com/creator/custom/index.html?id=18277 Please use a computer browser to open the above link.

Instructions for use: Click the Demo button to view the video guide.

Click the Start button to enter the character selection screen. Select different characters to enter the corresponding scene and find the relevant tech scout elements.

2. Innovative testing of 3D immersive escape room breakouts

Description:

Through the design of classroom activities, a three-dimensional immersive escape room environment is established. Within this engaging setting, students are tasked with answering questions that serve as assessments of their knowledge mastery. This is an innovation of assessment method that is based on student interest and subject characteristics. Throughout this process, teachers have the opportunity to navigate through the data-gathering points within the activity. They can gather valuable insights into the learning situation, such as learning time and the correction of answers. Armed with this feedback, teachers can make informed adjustments to the curriculum focus and refine teaching methods for subsequent courses.

Access link: https://preview.inibiru.com/creator/custom/index.html?id=16632 Please use a computer browser to open the above link.

Instructions for use:

View the rules of the chamber and learning objectives, and complete the learning tasks. Each task is the condition for breaking through.

If the answer is correct, the system will jump automatically. Otherwise, you will need to further study and check the answer.

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2.2.5 Palest Ink Is Better Than the Best Memory Live Online

Lectures with Guided Notes

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Keywords: Live Online Lectures, Guided Notes, Student Engagement, Students' Note Taking

Introduction

The pandemic situation in Suzhou forced all lectures to be delivered online in Semester 2, AY2021-22 at XJTLU, during which I was responsible for teaching the second half of ECO 118. All instructors at XJTLU had two options to deliver lectures, online recorded lectures or live lectures. To make the online teaching environment consistent with that on-site and give students a better online learning experience, I've decided to host live online lectures via Zhumu. Unlike recorded lectures, live online lectures give students a better online learning experience as the live online lectures are only available for a fixed schedule, and it has similarities with the on-site teaching and learning environment by allowing real-time interactions between instructors and students. As for instructors, I also find live online teaching is more efficient and time-saving compared to recorded lectures. All my live online lectures were recorded and can be easily shared with students via Mediasite in case they missed a certain live lecture.

As a mathematics course, ECO 118 requires a massive amount of derivation steps while demonstrating how to prove theorems or solve mathematic problems. In an onsite inperson teaching environment, it is typical that we use lecture slides and display the derivation steps one by one using multiple slides and carefully go through each of the slides/steps with students. However, I have concern that this method may be inefficient given that we were in an online teaching mode and students' attention can be lost easily during a live online lecture. Another obvious inferior option is to show all the steps at once in one sum-up slide, which have been abandoned by many instructors long ago.

Challenges of Live Online Teaching and Guided Notes

When designing the ECO 118 live online teaching materials, the first thing that showed up in my mind was to use the fill-in-blanks guided lecture notes and ask my students to write down their notes along with me during the lectures. Note-taking is the key step for memorizing and learning, and it has been proven to be effective by both anecdotal evidence and previous studies. As an old Chinese proverb goes, the palest ink is better

than the best memory (广记不如淡墨). I find note-taking is quite powerful in learning

from my experience when I was a student. Back when I was in my undergraduate studies, Prof. James Ealse from Purdue University was using guided notes in his lectures. In the later years of my studies, I also met other professors using guided notes in teaching at the University of California, Davis, and Cornell University. Whenever I open the guided lecture notes from these courses with my handwritten notes, those handwritten notes are still fresh to me for all the key points and derivation steps were all written by me rather than given to me in a typed full-text lecture slide.

The guided notes are 'incomplete' lecture handouts. They contain only the essential background information and key bullet points with spaces and blanks that need to be filled in to obtain the full lecture notes. The examples below are the same lecture slides in the second part of ECO 118 (Lecture 9, Point of Inflection and Marginal Product of Labor). One of them is the Full-text Lecture Slide version (Example 1) and the other is the Guided Lecture Notes version with blanks (Example 2). As demonstrated by the examples, the guided notes version of the slide includes the setup of the problems & key bullet points but excludes the derivation & problem-solving steps. The guided notes are designed to (1) help students prepare for lectures by guiding them through the related reading materials & textbook chapters and (2) to grasp students' attention during the lectures. This delivery method goes far beyond the fast-food-style slide reading teaching. It mimics and optimizes the traditional note-taking learning mode, as it reduces students' time spent on note-taking by providing the basic structure of the lecture notes and in turn allows students to better focus on the lecture materials. It has been proven to be more effective than 100% full-text lecture slides (Neef, McCord & Ferreri, 2006), more effective than 100% handwritten notes with no lecture slides teaching style (Feudel & Panse, 2022), etc.



- Solve for the equation f''(L) = 6 0.6L = 0 we could find this possible inflection point, $f''(L) = 0 \stackrel{or}{\Leftrightarrow} 6 + 0.6L \stackrel{yields}{\longrightarrow} \tilde{L} = 10$
- The production level associated with $\tilde{L} = 10$ is

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 $\tilde{Q} = f(\tilde{L}) = 3(10)^2 - 0.1(10)^3 = 200$

It can be varified that MP_L reaches its maximum value when L
 = 10 units of labor is hired.
 [How? Think about this quesetion.]



Point of I	nflection and Ma	rginal Product of	Labor
Solve for the equilation	uation $f''(L) = 6 + 0.6L = 0$	we could find this possible inflet	tion point,
 The production 	level associated with	is	
 It can be varifie [How? Think at 	d that MP_L reaches its maximu pout this quesetion.]	m value when $\tilde{L} = 10$ units of la	bor is hired.

Example 2. Guided Lecture Notes

To successfully deliver the online lectures using guided notes, I've used Notability for teaching. Notability is a virtual notepad application for IOS devices, which allows users to share PDF files and writings in real-time via online broadcasting platforms, such as Zhumu (or other virtual meeting software), and write directly on the documents they share. For non-iOS devices, similar virtual notepad Apps should exist. With the help of these virtual notepad Apps, instructors can write their notes with different colors and line styles, and easily draw straight lines, etc., just like writing on a blackboard with chalk.

The guided notes were given to students at least 2 days in advance of the scheduled live online lecture. Students were expected to read and understand the guided notes and the structure of the upcoming lecture. Students were also expected to read the related textbook chapters with the help of guided notes. The design of the 'blanks' used in the guided notes was done by removing the key points or key derivation steps from the fulltext lecture notes, therefore the students receive just the right amount of information to understand the structure of the upcoming lecture and can guide themselves through the textbook chapters through self-learning (if they are willing to) before the lectures.

During the live lectures hosted via Zhumu, I'll share my iPad screen and write on the guided notes with Notability instead of displaying the full-text lecture notes. While I do have a hard copy of the full-text lecture notes next to me as my teaching notes during the live online lectures. All blanks were filled in during the live online lectures, and students can write down their notes and fill in the blanks along with me when I'm proving a theorem or solving a mathematic problem in real-time.



Example 3. My Handwritten Notes on Guided Notes during Live Lectures

Anecdotal evidence and previous studies suggest that students' participation rate and student engagement are hard to maintain during online teaching.

To resolve the participation rate issue and to prevent students from rote learning by memorizing slides, I never publish the complete full-text lecture notes or my handwritten lecture notes on the course page of ECO 118 on Learning Mall. As a result of the above measures, approximately 300 out of 550 students regularly attend the weekly live lectures. Students who missed the live lectures or those who decided not to participate in the live lectures do have a chance to watch the live lecture recording

through the Mediasite to learn from recorded lectures and make up their notes.

To resolve the student engagement issue, all students were encouraged to meet with me during my weekly office hours, or meet with my two excellent teaching assistants during their TA Engagement times (which are the originally scheduled tutorial times covered by TAs). As most students enrolled in this module were Year 2 students, some of them still have difficulties following full-English lectures in real-time. I have been carefully communicating with students to hear their feedback both after the live lectures and during my office hours. Students expressed their concerns such that they cannot fully follow my writing speed on Notability during the live lectures. The same issue has been identified in previous studies that inappropriate blank choices may negatively impact students' learning (Feudel & Panse, 2022). Consequently, the number of blanks in later lectures was reduced significantly to allow the students to better focus on learning the lecture materials instead of being fully devoted to note-taking.

Conclusion

The pandemic and online/hybrid teaching have changed many things, especially those related to our educators. Teaching has become a relatively more challenging task when it comes to achieving teaching outcomes, maintaining students' participation rate, and engaging with students during the online/hybrid teaching period. I do believe there are many innovative ways we can use to facilitate students' learning and better achieve teaching outcomes, including but not limited to the live online lecture with guided notes mentioned in this article. As a young professional, I'm still in the early stage of my teaching career, and I'll keep exploring other opportunities and seeking help from experienced educators to improve my teaching and teaching skills.

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2.2.6 Can't take my eyes off you- How to better engage with

students

Author:

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Have you ever seen students fail to pay attention in class? Have you ever seen students who were physically present but immersed in something else? Have you ever seen students nodding off in class?

It's in our nature to become easily sidetracked. Even the most experienced teachers occasionally have trouble keeping their students engaged in their classes. It has become more difficult to grab students' attention with the advent of hybrid and remote learning approaches.

According to research, engaging students in the learning process increases their focus and concentration as well as inspires them to develop higher-level critical thinking. Within the first few minutes of a class, students start establishing opinions on their classes and instructors. If instructors are unable to capture their attention immediately, engagement will suffer for the rest of the semester.

Here are several tactics that can be used by instructors to increase student involvement.

1. Build connections with students.



Studies show that building relationships with students and letting them get to know you will help them learn more. If you are familiar with students' backgrounds and interests, you will be better able to connect the concepts taught in class to their daily lives. Additionally, you will enjoy teaching more.

• Index cards. Suitable for onsite, small-size classes. You may make a list of each student's information on an index card before the first day of class, including their hometown, interests, field of study, previous internships, hobbies, future plans, and any other information they would like to share. In the first place, it makes it easier

for you to get to know each student quickly. Secondly, you can use some of that knowledge in the classroom by combining the students' gathered interests into the discussions and activities. Thirdly, it's more convenient for you to recall and manage the whole class. The cards can be stored in small file boxes for all time. It helps you remember them and your connection with them when former students seek you for recommendations years after they graduate, either in person or via email.

• Online shared forms. Suitable for online classes or large-size classes. The same

data can be acquired using an online information gathering form, such as "问卷星

" in mainland China or Google forms abroad. This strategy has the benefit of allowing us to send the document to the students and get a large amount of feedback before our first class.

Informal group meetings. During the first several weeks of class, you can publish times when students and you can meet outside of office hours. These discussions are completely voluntary and are held in small groups of six to eight students. According to the guideline, you refrain from discussing the class during these times. Instead, you would get together for meetings with coffee and snacks. It's a terrific method to learn about students' interests, career goals, and graduate school plans. Although you don't discuss your specific course, you can get broad information about what they think makes an ideal class as well as their preferred teaching and learning approaches.

2. Cold call and warm call in the class.



Engage students, but pay attention when additional assistance is needed. If the same group of students is always answering each time and the other students do not participate, collective learning cannot take place. To encourage greater participation, teachers could make cold calls to students. Then they are all aware that you may contact them at any time. Teachers might make a warm call to students who are particularly wary or worried about that possibility so that they can prepare for it. Furthermore, you can emphasize that providing inaccurate answers has no negative effects on a student's grade. Based on my own experience, if I call on a student and he/she gets stuck, I'll ask other students to assist him/her. I frequently use the phrase "help them out," and students appreciate it. So long as students do the work before class, there is no disadvantage to giving incorrect answers.

3. Be meaningful



Engagement also occurs when we assign students tasks that are meaningful to them. Why is what we're discussing important? What effects will this have on students' lives? How does the subject relate to the student's future studies, occupations, or other extracurricular interests based on what you know about them?

When the "So what?" question is addressed before the assignment is delivered and compelling examples are provided for the subject's relevance, students are driven to complete the task effectively—not only for the grade.

If the classroom has productive prework activities, students may come to class more prepared to participate. Grades and reading assignments alone are insufficient to inspire students. We must widen our horizons and think creatively when designing prework activities. It's crucial to have them ready to interact. The assignments we provide students should answer the "So what?" question and require them to engage with the subject in some way so that they do not begin fresh in class.

4. Pace your lessons well.



According to studies, it's best to switch up the class's activities every 7 to 10 minutes to keep students' attention. Additionally, it's a good idea to choose class activities that involve the students rather than giving lengthy lectures, which is a fairly passive approach. Verbal discussions and Q&As don't fully count as involvement, even though they offer some interactions and breaks from lectures. Here are some examples of how to break up lectures by changing the subject or delivery method:

• Set an agenda. When students know about the plan beforehand, they are more likely to remain attentive. Students will benefit from seeing the class schedule written on the board or shared online. This is especially useful for lengthier classes,

in which concentration is easier to waver. As students finish each component of the class agenda, they feel a sense of success, which improves their engagement.

- Short videos. Play relevant and interesting video clips, then ask the class to comment on them. YouTube and Bilibili are undoubtedly excellent sources.
- Polling apps. Poll the class sometimes to elicit quick responses from the students on a certain question or topic. Teachers can select the polling app that best fits their class settings. Students can vote or answer using their smartphones directly. Some online meeting platforms also offer polling tools for online classes, for example, LM Core offers Choice, JazzQuiz and H5P, which could be used for polling.
- Group works. Encourage collaboration among students. Give them an assignment to accomplish in groups, and then let them present their work to the class as a whole. When doing this in person, building teams together and asking students to stand up to write on the board, give them a chance to move around throughout class. This may also be done in breakout rooms when doing it online by using the tools like Fair Allocation and Group Choice.
- Leading dynamic discussions. Successful discussions seldom happen automatically. Teachers may establish specific guidelines and a clear focus for the discussion by preparing in advance. This will make it possible for the class to discuss major problems from various angles, which will spark students' interest in and involvement with the course materials.

5. Yes, we care.



Celebrate students' accomplishments, especially those that occur outside of class, as a way to maintain the connection and level of engagement you have built up with students since the beginning. For example, I keep up with news and happenings on campus and interact with students on various social media platforms. When I learn of their accomplishments, such as landing a new job or an internship, I'll send a brief note of congratulations. And they are constantly appreciative of it. To me, engagement means showing your care to students.

Engaged students, lifelong learners.

"Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."

I want to be a teacher who does much more than simply convey a narrow body of knowledge to students over the course of a semester. I aim to arouse the intellectual curiosity of my students, encourage them to ask probing questions, and inspire them to take on challenging tasks. If we, as teachers, engage them, we can motivate them to perform well in our classes and to be useful lifelong learners.

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2.2.7 Learning By Gaming: Enhancing Research-Led Learning

and Teaching in International Political Economy by

Gamification

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Abstract

This study introduces an innovative game-based teaching methodology aimed at enriching the research-led learning and educational experience within the context of an International Political Economy (IPE) module. The core of this pedagogical strategy lies in the facilitation of an experiential learning process where students transition from passive participants to active creators, tasked with the formulation of game rules and scenarios grounded in international relations (IR) concepts, theories, and topics. Termed "learning and creating by gaming," this approach allows students to deepen their understanding of IPE by synthesizing their knowledge into interactive and educational game designs. Developed from a foundation of comprehensive teaching expertise in IPE, this method seeks to place students at the forefront, promoting a learner-centered environment that not only achieves superior learning outcomes but also fosters a sense of autonomy and leadership. The paper discusses the implementation of this pedagogical method, expounds on the observed pedagogical benefits, and contemplates the potential integration of the most effective game designs into future curriculum development.

Keywords: International Political Economy; Game-Based Learning; Interactive Pedagogy

Introduction

Simulations and games are effective teaching techniques that improve students' comprehension of complex topics and theories in political economy studies (McCarthy, 2014; Frank and Genauer, 2019). These pedagogical methods are invaluable for demonstrating the decision-making process and the operation of theories in real-world contexts, particularly within specific political frameworks. It is essential to employ game rules and simulation principles that accurately reflect the theories we wish students to focus on. This raises a question: What if students were tasked not only with playing games but also with the creation of games based on political science and international relations (IR) theories? Game-creation activities possess educational

benefits analogous to those derived from game-playing. This approach not only fosters a deeper understanding of political science theories and concepts but increases student engagement, motivation, and enthusiasm in the study of political science. Moreover, the creation of games promotes peer-to-peer and self-directed learning (Deliyannis and Kordaki, 2018; Kiraz and Koseoglu, 2019), compelling students to share and discuss their knowledge while researching to enhance their understanding. Additionally, the act of game design is a creative brainstorming exercise that aids in developing students' creativity (Mendenhall et al., 2018). Notably, teaching IR in China presents unique challenges. Game design emerges as a relevant platform for students to engage with concepts such as equality and human rights from diverse cultural perspectives within a fictional framework.

Methodology

The incorporation of a game-based pedagogy into the ECO303 module (International Political Economy) was an innovative step to address the challenges posed by the lack of a designated textbook and the intensive reading required by the IPE syllabus. The involved integrating the online simulation initial phase game 'NationStates'(https://www.nationstates.net/). This platform provided students with a virtual environment to apply IPE concepts in real time over two months, thereby promoting a hands-on approach to learning. As the methodology evolved, I introduced physical board games, selecting them for their alignment with specific IR theories and their capacity to facilitate active learning. 'Risk' was used to exemplify the complexities of strategy and diplomacy, while 'Settlers of Catan' demonstrated resource management and economic interdependence. The methodology extended beyond the act of playing these games; it was about embarking on a transformative journey from passive learning to active exploration and application of complex theories.

This transformative aspect was further enriched by encouraging students to become game designers themselves. Through this process, they delved into the mechanics of 'NationStates', drawing on my experience with 'La Conquête du Monde: Fantaisie', which served as a prototype to illustrate the integration of economic and historical strategies into game design. This multifaceted pedagogical approach aimed to deepen students' analytical skills and encourage a creative exploration of IPE.

Moreover, when designing the module, the following perspectives were carefully considered to provide a comprehensive and robust learning experience for the students:

• Enhancing Engagement and Learning Outcomes: The core goal was to elevate student engagement and learning outcomes. By immersing students in the interactive realm of gaming, the intention was to enhance their critical thinking, foster collaboration, and instill a sense of ownership over their educational journey. This engagement was facilitated by a structured guidance system that supported students in understanding game mechanics and the principles of game design, tailored to echo the complexities of international political dynamics.

- Addressing Practicality and Game Design: Practical concerns of game design were addressed by providing students with a solid foundation during the initial stages of the module. Exposure to 'NationStates' was pivotal in familiarizing them with game rules and mechanics, which served as a precursor to their engagement in game development. The guidance and illustrative examples offered proved instrumental in enabling students to create games that were not only aligned with our curriculum but also reflective of real-world IR scenarios.
- **Implementation:** The implementation of the game-based learning methodology in ECO303 followed a structured yet dynamic process. Students embarked on a progressive journey from theoretical understanding to creative application, divided into several phases:
 - i. **Game Mechanics Understanding:** Students initiated the process by dissecting the mechanics of existing strategy games, gaining insights into the foundational elements that render a game both engaging and educationally valuable.
 - ii. **Historical Research Integration:** Each game-creation group was assigned the responsibility of researching the Warring States period, integrating their findings into the game narrative and mechanics. This approach ensured that their games were not only enjoyable but also historically resonant and informative.
 - iii. **Principles of Game Design:** Leveraging game design principles, students crafted games that required strategic thinking, resource management, and diplomatic acumen, mirroring real-world IR complexities.
 - iv. **Testing and Refinement:** The designed games underwent rigorous testing and refinement by the student groups, incorporating feedback to fine-tune gameplay and alignment with IR theories. The iterative nature of this phase promoted a mindset of continuous improvement and adaptability among the students.
 - v. **Reflective Learning:** Upon completion, students reflected on the entire process, from game design to playtesting. This reflection allowed them to articulate their learning outcomes, comprehend the relevance of IPE concepts, and identify potential enhancements for future iterations.

Throughout the semester, students' engagement with game creation comprised three project assignments: the extension of a board game using IR approaches, the development of IR strategies through gamification, and the presentation of their game design. A specific emphasis was placed on ensuring alignment with IR theories and the excitement of gameplay, which accounted for a significant portion of their project evaluation.

Impact on Student Engagement and Learning

This innovative pedagogical approach significantly heightened student interest and active participation in the subject matter. Students became more active in discussions, shifting their focus from grade-oriented learning to an intrinsic interest in knowledge.

This transformation was palpable in the classroom dynamics, marked by increased enthusiasm and engagement in learning processes:



Student Feedback and Module Questionnaire Scores

The teaching innovation's effectiveness is further supported by student feedback and module questionnaire scores. For instance, comments from students included praise for the course design and the use of interactive games to enhance understanding.: "The professor's use of cases and interactive games greatly enhanced our understanding of the theories."; "Impressive course design and materials, including the games."; "The course fostered critical thinking through its design and assessments."; "The materials provided were excellent."; "it is well designed, game design part is really interesting";" I really like the board game design as part of our coursework because it's the first time I had contact with strategic board games. I feel it's a very practical way for students to have a taste of what different schools of IRs in real world would act like".

This academic year, I conducted a survey to assess student reactions to the 'Learning by Gaming' approach implemented in the ECO303 course. The survey results (presented in Table 1) reveal a high level of student satisfaction and engagement. Notably, 38% of respondents "Strongly Agree" and 46% "Agree" that their interest in International Relations (IR) increased as a result of this teaching methodology. Similarly, 42% "Strongly Agree" and 46% "Agree" on realizing the importance and usefulness of IR theories through this teaching approach. These findings provide substantive evidence that the 'Learning by Gaming' methodology has been well-received and is effectively enhancing the educational experience in my classes.

Conclusion

This innovative teaching method has demonstrated remarkable results in terms of student engagement and understanding of intricate international relations concepts. Through active participation and the creation of games, students have effectively applied their knowledge within a collaborative setting, thereby fostering a profound

understanding of political science theories and concepts. The 'Learning by Gaming' approach has proven to be a successful enhancement to the educational experience and engagement of students in International Political Economy.

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Gender	Male (29%)	Female (71%)			
Question 1. Class activities have heightened my enthusiasm for International Relations.					
Answer	Strongly Agree (38%)	Agree (46%)	Neutral (17%)	Disagree (0%)	Strongly Disagree (0%)
Question 2. The class activities have helped me recognize the significance and practicality of International Relations.					
Answer	Strongly Agree (42%)	Agree (46%)	Neutral (13%)	Disagree (0%)	Strongly Disagree (0%)
Question 3. The game-design activities in the lecture sessions enabled me to choose and reorganize the information and knowledge pertaining to International Relations					
Answer	Strongly Agree (38%)	Agree (29%)	Neutral (25%)	Disagree (8%)	Strongly Disagree (0%)
Question 4. This class has provided me with a more profound comprehension of International Relations theories and concepts compared to other					
courses.					
Answer	Strongly Agree (25%)	Agree (54%)	Neutral (21%)	Disagree (0%)	Strongly Disagree (0%)
Question 5. I will recommend this course to my friends.					
Answer	Strongly Agree (54%)	Agree (42%)	Neutral (1%)	Disagree (0%)	Strongly Disagree (0%)

Table 1: Survey Results