

# **Existential online language education: Addressing ubiquitous language learning in light of COVID-19**

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## Abstract

In the following inquiry, Inclusive Practitioner Research (IPR) was used to address ubiquitous language learning at a local Thai international college in light of COVID-19 restrictions. Using Exploratory Practice (EP) (Hanks, 2017) and Manen's Action Sensitive Pedagogy (ASP) (Manen, 2015), local students' online language learning experiences were explored through an existential lens. The purpose of the inquiry was to better understand local students' Ubiquitous Learning (UL) experiences through existential writing assignments as they used *English as a Medium of Instruction* (EMI). In addition, emerging technologies and emerging pedagogies were used to help students make sense of their learning experiences. Experiential data was collected during COVID-19 restrictions through observation, anecdotal narratives, interviews, and writing protocols. Using ASP (Manen, 2015) the data was analyzed in two phases, demonstrating that "local" students using EMI online can benefit from Ubiquitous Learning when assignments are personalized using existential themes. Using existential themes allows students opportunities to explore academic content in relation to their lives, by giving aspiring international students the time and space to explore academic content existentially. As a result, Thai international students were introduced to self-perpetuating forms of motivation through self-determined learning (SDL).

**Keywords:** emerging pedagogy, existentiality, exploratory practice, inclusive research, language education, ubiquitous learning

## 1. Introduction

Language Immersion (LI) appears to be here for good, but many have their doubts (Dearden, 2018). From total immersion to partial immersion, from early immersion to late immersion, there seems to be a fit for everyone, with late immersion being identified as after eleven years old (Cervantes-Soon, 2014), and late partial immersion which means 50% L1 and 50% L2, that usually begins in sixth or seventh grade (Dicks & Kristmanson, 2008). However, what about those who enter an international college using *English as the Medium of Instruction* (EMI), with no prior international experience. As you would imagine, this can be challenging and difficult. In normal conditions, this can be challenging and difficult, but it becomes especially difficult when learning is online and ubiquitous.

In a Ubiquitous Learning context, students are often required to engage materials and resources without the aid of ostension and embodiment which inevitably diminishes word learning. Consequently, local students struggle to make sense in a context-reduced setting that is cognitively demanding (Cummins, 2010). Without proper support, context-reduced language learning can negatively affect student agency, identity, autonomy, and motivation (Murray, 2011). Therefore, it became professionally important to explore and better understand local students' ubiquitous learning experiences during recent online instruction at a Thai international college. During online instruction, it becomes critical for local students to engage available emerging technologies and pedagogies that are designed to help students make sense of their learning experiences. Turning to existential themes helps local students make sense of ubiquitous learning experiences that lack context, ostension, and embodiment. To guide this research, three questions were asked:

- (i) To what extent can Ubiquitous Learning improve participants' quality of life?
- (ii) To what extent can Ubiquitous Learning improve participants' development?
- (iii) To what extent can research and pedagogy be integrated using Ubiquitous Learning?

Hence, the purpose of this research was to explore participants' ubiquitous learning experiences at a Thai international college using Inclusive Practitioner Research (IPR) (Hanks, 2017). IPR, is a practical actualization of Exploratory Practice (EP) that allows teachers and students the opportunity to co-construct meaning by integrating language pedagogy and research activities (Hanks, 2017). Using IPR, experiential data was collected during COVID-19 restrictions at a Thai international college where learning switched from classrooms to online. Although there were hundreds of students and copious amounts of data, for the purposes of this inquiry data was collected and analyzed through an existential lens that focused on EP's

3 key principles: (i) Understanding classroom *quality of life*; (ii) Purposeful mutual development; and (iii) Integrating research & emerging pedagogy.

## 2. Theoretical and Conceptual Foundation

In the following section, theoretical and conceptual foundations are established and reviewed in three key areas: (i) *Emerging Ubiquitous Learning*; (ii) *Existential Language Education*; and (iii) *Inclusive Practitioner Inquiry*. The purpose of this section is to explore the three key areas to better understand what emerging technologies and pedagogies can help local students overcome the existential dilemmas they face when learning online.

### 2.1 Emerging ubiquitous learning

In its simplicity, technology is either a *replacement* of something, or a *substitute* of something, but its impact within education depends entirely upon its integration with pedagogy (Gros et al., 2016). This is due to the nature of successful formal learning which takes place within the interactions of teachers, learners, and resources. According to Gros et al., as technology becomes ubiquitous, pedagogical practices must become more evident. This in turn is due to the nature of technology, which requires instructional design to be actualized. In this section we focus on ubiquitous learning and the importance of emerging pedagogies & technology, and how they can be used to help students make sense of their language learning experiences.

Ogata & Uosaki define Ubiquitous Learning as “an everyday learning environment that is supported by mobile and embedded computers and wireless networks in our everyday life” (Ogata & Uosaki, 2012). While there are different levels of Ubiquitous Learning, in its simplest form, UL allows students to engage online materials at any time, from anywhere, as long as a student has access to the internet, or direct access to the Learning Management System (LMS) where resources and materials are stored. However, for this research, we are not concerned with UL in its complex form which can involve Artificial Intelligence and other cutting-edge technologies. UL is the next step in e-learning challenges which require flexible learning systems to meet the demands of individual learners. In traditional classrooms, teachers were the primary source of information, but with emerging technologies, new sources of information are available that require new and emerging pedagogies. Notable emerging technologies include: *mobile technologies, learning analytics, gamification, hybridization, and natural interaction with devices* (Gros et al., 2016). With proper use, in contexts using UL, emerging pedagogies will not only allow student to learn from teachers, but teachers will learn from students, as learning takes place within the natural interactions of classroom life. Afterall, “Learning is

fundamentally personal, social, distributed, ubiquitous, flexible, dynamic and complex in nature" (Gros et al., 2016, p. 8). Hence, Gros et al., identify 3 different types of theoretical foundations for emerging pedagogies: (i) Theories focused on network connections; (ii) Theories focused on social-personal interaction; and (iii) Theories focused on affordances (Ibid, 2016). For our purposes we will focus on social-personal interaction and affordances. However, instructors should not only have pedagogical knowledge and content expertise, they should have basic technological knowledge, and understand how these components interact.

To meet instructors' needs, Gros et al., suggest teachers becoming familiar with *heutagogy*, a teaching approach that promotes self-determined learning (Ibid, 2016). "Heutagogy is form of self-determined learning, it is a holistic, learner-centred approach to learning and teaching in formal and informal situations. The theory is grounded in humanistic and constructivist principles and brings together numerous threads of early learning theories into a composite picture of learning that is suitable for and much needed in today's educational systems" (Gros et al., 2016, p. viii). Hase & Kenyon explain heutagogy as part of a continuum, the pedagogy-- andragogy-- heutagogy (PAH) continuum. This "continuum assumes that the learner moves from pedagogy to heutagogy depending on their level of sophistication" (Hase & Kenyon, 2013, p. 25). They further explain, the term heutagogy comes from the Greek *ηαυτος*, which means *self*, and focuses on *how to learn*, not on *what is being learned* (Ibid, 2013). However, they point out, that while self-determined learning has similarities to self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2017) and self-directed learning, it is neither, and essentially describes how people learn naturally, on their own.

According to Hase & Kenyon, the original proponents of Self-determined Learning (SDL), there are two simplified levels of learning, "the acquisition of knowledge and skills on the one hand and, on the other, [a] more complex neuronal activity" (Hase & Kenyon, 2013, p. 25). What Hase & Kenyon recommend, is that all students, at one time or another, require a pedagogical approach or an andragogical approach, suggesting students be equipped with self-determination. Therefore, curricula should be centered on students becoming self-determined with four essential characteristics: (i) The student acts autonomously; (ii) their behavior(s) are self-regulated; (iii) the student initiates a response to an event(s) in a psychologically empowered manner; and (4) the student acts in a self-realizing manner (Wehmeyer & Field, 2007). Wehmeyer & Field suggest a five-step model to Self-determination first designed by Hoffman & Field: (i) Know yourself & your environment; (ii) Value yourself; (iii) Plan; (iv) Act; (v) Experience Outcomes & Learn (Ibid, 2007).

Furthermore, self-determined learning can be easily integrated with Thailand's National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, especially the learning domain that asks "students to accept personal and social responsibility, and to plan and take responsibility for their own learning" (TQF). In this sense, Heutagogy and self-determined learning transforms the 3 C's of Education 2.0 (communication, collaboration, critical thinking), into Education 3.0 (connectors, creators, and constructivists) (Blaschke et al., 2014). Moreover, to assist in higher education, the Self-determined Model of Instruction (SDMI) was developed by the Kansas University Center to help students (i) set goals; (ii) make choices and decisions; (iii) develop plans to reach goals; and (iv) track progress toward goals (Self-determination, 2020). Notably, through the Self-determination website, instructors can find lesson plans for: Choice-Making Skills; Decision-Making Skills; Problem-Solving Skills; Goal-Setting and Attainment Skills; Self-Regulation/ Self- Management Skills; Self-Advocacy and Leadership Skills; Positive Perceptions of Control, Efficacy, and Outcome Expectations; Self- Awareness; and Self-Knowledge (Wehmeyer & Field, 2007: Self-determination, 2020).

## 2.2 Existential language education

In this section, an existential perspective is explored as language exists and develops through the interactions that take place in everyday living which is existentially different than the academic language in a language classroom. Of the three domains of learning: Cognitive, Psychomotor, and Affective, with the latter often overlooked in local language curriculums which are typically based on generic language course books. However, according to Holliday, language is more than a set of skills, and students not only *learn about a language*, they *learn language*, and they *learn through language*, which demonstrates the functionality of academic registers (Schleppegrell, 2007: Cummins, 2010). Nonetheless, strictly learning about language, as generic course books tend to do, is a sure path to stagnation and demotivation. As research indicates that *scientific* concepts are better *learned through the language* rather than *about language*. The idea is to make learning take place subconsciously which is similar to *everyday* concepts that are learned through daily life (Schleppegrell, 2007: Cummins, 2010).

According to Holliday, "language is a 'theory of human experience' that children learn as they enact their culture, and that understanding language better can help us understand how this learning happens" (Schleppegrell, 2007, p. 17). Nonetheless, campus cultures are vastly different from one educational institute to the next, which inherently makes context increasingly significant. As both Holliday and Vygotsky point out, language and literacy are the direct result of culture, and have the ability to either ratchet or reduce learning (Cummins, 2010). However, the importance of context and culture appear to be theoretical notions which lack a presence in

language education. Therefore, it is imperative that language education maintain an affective element by focusing on students' *identity, motivation, and autonomy* (Murray, 2011).

Navigating *identity, motivation, and autonomy* can be particularly difficult for local international students, who have yet to transition or transform their perspective. On one level, local international students are tasked with learning through English while they use EMI, but their ability to use English, and make sense of English is limited. Stress and anxiety mount, demotivating local students, who cling to their national identity for comfort. Nonetheless, without opportunities to gain fluency, they focus on their academics to assure good grades, and have little time to socialize and gain everyday fluency. According to Gibbon, there is a wide gap between *playground language* and *classroom language*, as Cummins points out; "This playground language includes the language which enables children to make friends, join in games and take part in a variety of day-to-day activities that develop and maintain social contacts. It usually occurs in face-to-face contact, and is thus highly dependent on the physical and visual context, and on gesture and body language. Fluency with this kind of language is an important part of language development; without it a child is isolated from the normal social life of the playground" (Cummins, 2010, p. 69). Of course, this makes online learning so much more difficult as it lacks ostension and embodied language, making language development not so much about language, but about life.

Gibbons continues, "But playground language is very different from the language that teachers use in the classroom, and from the language that we expect children to learn to use. The language of the playground is not the language associated with learning in mathematics, or social studies, or science... parts. Nor does it normally require the language associated with the higher order thinking skills, such as hypothesizing, evaluating, inferring, generalizing, predicting or classifying. Yet these are the language functions which are related to learning and the development of cognition; they occur in all areas of the curriculum, and without them a child's potential in academic areas cannot be realized" (Cummins, 2010, p. 69). Cummins conceptualized these differences as Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) model (Cummins, 2010).

Using the BICS/CALP model, Cummins explains the difficulties language learners experience when trying to navigate contextual language and decontextualized language. His solution is suggested in his Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis in which he argues that certain first language (L1) knowledge can be positively transferred during the process of second language (L2) learning. However, many international colleges discourage the use of students' first language, suggesting the practice hinders target language acquisition. Nevertheless, by

better understanding the BICS/CALP dichotomy, language education can be designed to overcome stagnating curricula.

As Schleppegrell points out, “a more nuanced understanding of the role of language in schooling recognizes that students' difficulties may be related to inexperience with the linguistic demands of the tasks of schooling and unfamiliarity with ways of structuring discourse that are expected in school. Such an understanding may lead to more effective ways of addressing language-related issues in education. The real curriculum demands can be made explicit so that language can be taught in schools in ways that help students understand how they can draw on a broader range of linguistic choices to make different kinds of meanings in different subject areas” (Schleppegrell, 2007, p. 16). Therefore, for Halliday, language development is predominantly about life experiences, and how classrooms concern the sharing of ideas, while life outside the classroom is about personal relationships (Ibid, 2010). In addition, language development concerns prior experiences, making it essential to consider students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Nonetheless, language education fluctuates and varies from region to region, constantly evolving as approaches and methods change in response to the fields associated with Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Johnson identifies three major scientific research traditions that have greatly influenced SLA and Language Education (LE) (Johnson, 2004). These include (i) Behaviorist (ii) Cognitive-Computational (iii) and Dialogical, with the field of SLA typically aligned with the Cognitive-Computational approach based on Chomsky's formal approach to language (Ibid, 2004). However, as we venture into the 21st century, the Dialogical approach, formulated from an “existential” perspective, is most associated with Vygotsky, and is more easily integrated with pedagogy (Cummins, 2010).

According to Vygotsky: “At any age, a concept embodied in a word represents an act of generalization. But word meanings evolve. When a new word has been learned by the child, its development is barely starting; the word at first is a generalization of the most primitive type as the child's intellect develops, it is replaced by generalizations of a higher and higher type — a process that leads in the end to the formation of true concepts” (Vygotsky, 2012, p. 159). Suggesting a process that encompasses an individual's experiences.

lived space (spatiality), lived body (corporeality), lived time (temporality), and lived human

pedagogy (ASP). As Freire claimed in the Pedagogy of the Oppressed, “The teacher talks about reality as if it were motionless, static, compartmentalized, and predictable. Or else he expounds on a topic completely alien to the existential experience of the students.” (Freire,

2014, p. 45). Freire spent a lifetime encouraging learners to take control of their learning, mainly through literacy, and now, more than ever, students can. Freire continued, “They may discover through existential experience that their present way of life is irreconcilable with their vocation to become fully human. They may perceive through their relations with reality that reality is really a process, undergoing constant transformation” (Freire, 2014, p. 46).

### 2.3 Inclusive practitioner inquiry

In this section the focus is on teacher-practitioner research, in the form of Exploratory Practice, and how pedagogy can be integrated with research through relevancy. As Hanks posits, that if “teachers and learners set the research agenda by asking puzzled questions about their own experiences, and if the learning (of language) is prioritized, then the work must, by definition, be relevant to the practitioners” (Hanks, 2017). Hanks further explains, “In a subtly radical move, Exploratory Practice positions learners as co-researchers alongside teachers investigating language learning and teaching, in other words as active researchers” (Ibid, 2017).

Exploratory Practice (EP) is a form of teacher-practitioner research which was established in the 90’s as a response to the global need for quality language education (Hanks, 2017). Not only was EP developed to improve language pedagogy, it was intended as professional development, and to reduce teacher “burnout”, as it was becoming evident that teaching a second language, especially as a non-native speaker was a difficult proposition (Hanks, 2017). Subsequently, EP in the form of Inclusive Practitioner Research (IPR) identifies seven guiding principles: (i) Focus on quality of life as the fundamental issue; (ii) seek mutual development through *quality of life*; (iii) involve everybody as practitioners developing their own understandings; (iv) work to bring people together in a common enterprise; (v) work cooperatively for mutual development; (vi) make it a continuous enterprise; and (vii) minimize the burden by integrating the work for understanding into normal pedagogic practice. (Hanks, 2017).

First, EP positions learners as co-researchers, this being a unique proposition that is tied to emerging pedagogies and self-determination. In addition, EP has an interdependent framework, based on both Freire and Bakhtin, that allows participants to connect, by establishing links (Ibid, 2017). Integrating these components through inquiry and emerging pedagogies becomes increasingly important for 21st century workplaces. In addition, as many in the field of language education have pointed out, there exists a “rift” between academic researchers and practicing teachers, and it was towards eliminating this division that EP became concerned with the “quality of life” (Hanks, 2017). Subsequently, Allwright & Hanks, recognized the division between academics and practitioners, and sought to bring them together

through “exploratory teaching”, by integrating research and pedagogy (Allwright & Hanks, 2009).

In regards to EP principle 2, working to understand the “quality of life” in a language classroom before problem solving concerns both teachers and students. Understanding, or “making sense” of our world is a distinct human quality which characterizes our existence, and is crucial for student learning and development. This helps students gain perspective, specifically an existential perspective which is crucial for life-long learning. Moreover, having a better understanding of the language classroom is a basic step in both Exploratory Practice and Continuing Professional Development (CPD), and a requirement for advancement in higher education. Nonetheless, few teachers actually research their classrooms, and it is often overlooked for its lack of sophistication (Manen, 2015). However, Hanks suggests overcoming this dilemma by focusing “on working for understanding in EP [which] also connects with van Manen [2015], writing about phenomenology, when he argues that research is an ongoing process of questioning and beginning to know the world. This places an emphasis on curiosity as the driving force for research” (Hanks, 2017, p. 6).

According to Manen, gaining action sensitive knowledge, or knowledge gained through phenomenology, leads to pedagogic competence in that “phenomenological research gives us tactful thoughtfulness: situational perceptiveness, discernment, and depthful understanding” which are essential elements of pedagogic competence (Manen, 2015, p. 155). In addition, he states, “From a phenomenological point of view, to do research is always to question the way we experience the world” (Manen, 2015, p. 5). As Manen points out, Action Sensitive Pedagogy includes various forms of protocol writing that focuses on lived- experience descriptions: (i) You need to describe the experience as you live through it. (ii) Describe the experience from the inside, as it were; almost like a state of mind: the feelings, the mood, the emotions. (iii) Focus on a particular example or incident of the object of experience: describe specific events, an adventure, a happening, a particular experience.

### **3. Research methodology**

In an effort to explore Ubiquitous Language learning at a Thai international college, data was collected during recent COVID-19 protocols. Using EP’s 3 key principles, Ubiquitous Learning was explored through an existential lens that focused on:

- (i) Understanding classroom “quality of life”;
- (ii) Mutual development; and
- (iii) Integrating research & emerging pedagogy.

In addition to EP, Manen's Action Sensitive Pedagogy (ASP) was used to structure the data collection and analysis Ubiquitous Learning through six research activities: (Manen, 2015).

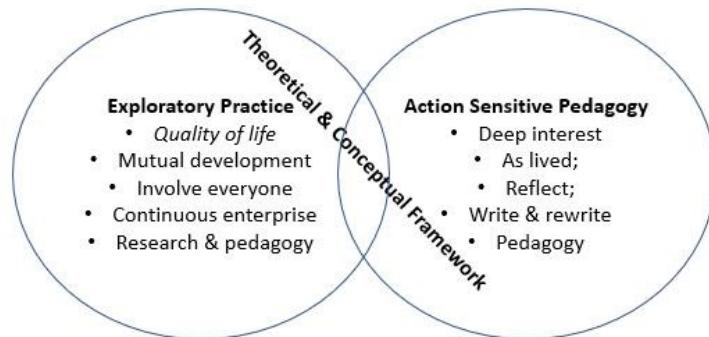


Figure 1 Theoretical & Conceptual Framework

Thus, a theoretical and conceptual framework were established that supported Inclusive Practitioner Research (IPR), in which both teacher and student conduct their own investigations (Figure 1). While students focused on their own experiences, the teacher investigated students' experiences. Using protocol writing assignments, students were tasked with writing assignments each week, and from those writings, observations were made, and interviews conducted for data collection and analysis.

#### 4. Data collection & analysis

Throughout the research process, it became evidently clear that Wehmeyer & Field's definition of self-determination could be used to actualize the data collection & analysis. Thus, "acting as the primary causal agent in one's life and making choices and decisions regarding one's quality of life free from undue external influence or interference" was an emerging factor for EP's three key principles (Wehmeyer & Field, 2007, p. 3). By combining self-determination with *quality of life*, we were comfortable merging the theoretical and conceptual foundations, including EP's three key principles. As a result, *quality of life* was analyzed in relation to: student attendance and participation; weekly classroom assignments; and examination scores. While self-determination was analyzed in relation to: did the student act autonomously; was their behavior self-regulated; did the student respond psychologically empowered; and did the student act in a self-realizing manner, as in Figure 2.

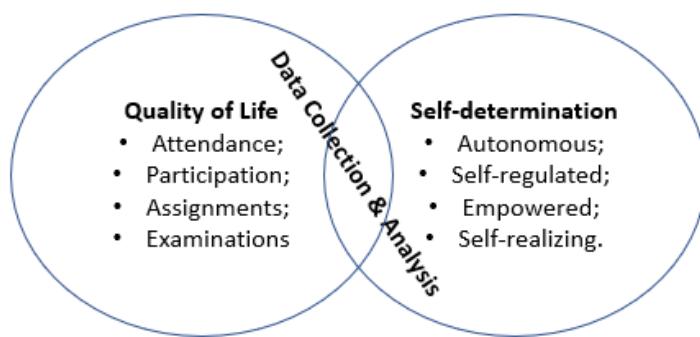


Figure 2 Data Collection & Analysis

To accomplish this, the Self-determined Model of Instruction (SDMI) was used in tandem with the Self-Determined Action Framework (SDAF). Therefore, many of the activities were designed for students to explore their existentiality in regard to their ubiquitous language learning experiences. Data was collected during online classroom instruction through Google Classroom, and congruent with qualitative research, analysis was conducted concurrently. Although many technically savvy educators may not consider Google Classroom to be a state-of-the-art Learning Management System (LMS), for the purposes of this research, it was more than suitable.

As a Ubiquitous Learning Management System, Google Classroom allowed students to engage the classroom materials from anywhere, at any time. This also allowed students to design their own Personal Learning Network which they could also access anywhere at any time. In addition to compulsory online classroom attendance, Ubiquitous Learning became their method of learning as they too became inclusive practitioners and participants in the data collection and analysis. Each instrument was meant to be interrelated as students began class with instruction, writing protocols, and interviews. Two main writing protocols allowed students to reflect on their Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), and one that allowed them to reflect on their Basic Interpersonal Language Skills (BICS). Although this resulted in copious amounts of experiential data, from hundreds of students, during the weekly classroom assignments, for this research data will exhibit 5 students.

#### 4.1 Writing protocols

Writing protocols were designed each week in accordance with the academic content and self-determined action. In addition, online observations and interviews were designed with self-determined action in mind. Although there was no set chronological pattern to the instruments, it became clear that the writing assignments were the basis for both observations

and interviews. Subsequently, most observations and interviews were conducted after reading students' writing assignments.

Writing protocols made up the bulk of data, and students were given 6-10 questions each week designed to evaluate students' self-determined actions. Activities were divided into academic activities using CALP and everyday activities using BICS. Thus, after lectures, readings, and classroom activities, students were typically asked questions about the content, and their perspective from their own values, thoughts, and beliefs. Cognitive questions kept students focused on the academic content, while Affective questions focused students on social and emotional learning. were asked to write about their learning experiences from a first-person perspective.

As a note: Although Google Translate is a useful tool that expedites translation, it does not render authentic individual voice which is the key to language development. Therefore, students were instructed not to translate full paragraphs from Thai to English using Google Translate. However, a majority of students used Google Translate to complete the individual weekly writing assignments, and continued to use the technology throughout the term. These entries were not used as data for the research.

Writing assignments were collected through Google Classroom, and Analysis was typically completed immediately after data collection. For analysis, in addition, questions were centered on the Self-determined Action Framework Volition, agentic, and action-control beliefs (Self-determination, 2020). Volition includes choice and decision making, goal setting, and problem solving, while agentic actions include self-management, goal attainment and self-advocacy. Action-Control beliefs being identified with self-awareness and self-knowledge.

#### **4.2 Observations & anecdotal narratives**

In Inclusive Practitioner Research (IPR), the roles of both practitioner and student are threefold; as practicing teacher and practicing student, researcher, and as participants. While this may complicate observations, it resulted in richer and deeper data. As a researcher it was important to clarify some basic principles concerning observations: first, what observations would be used; second, what would be observed; third, the relationship between observer and observed, and fourth, the means for recording observations. As a teacher it required integrating these decisions with pedagogy. Nonetheless, the dilemma was overcome by following the 3 key Exploratory Practice guidelines.

Using Exploratory Practice, the relationship between observer and observed was simplified by observational criteria based on the *quality of life* in the classroom; mutual development for all involved; and the integration of research and pedagogy. This was

accomplished by observing: (i) student attendance and participation; (ii) weekly classroom assignments; and (iii) examination scores. Observing these three areas simplified the observation process. For example, good attendance and participation suggested quality of life; completed classroom assignments and above average exam scores suggested mutual development; demonstrating the integration of research and pedagogy.

Subsequently, attendance, participation, completed classroom assignments, and above average exam scores, acted as observation *notes* that were later transformed into anecdotal narratives completed by all participants. The process drew and grabbed participants' attention, causing sense-making, self-reflection, and a personal search for meaning for all participants; teacher and students. (Manen, 2015).

In addition, an effort was made to implement the SDLMI Coaching Framework and SDLMI Coaching Stages with the research. Although the coaching framework and stages were designed for SDLMI facilitators, they to integrate the writing protocols, observations, and interviews. Therefore, the six SDLMI coaching principles were used to guide the four Coaching Stages. The first stage took place after writing protocols, but before an observation, while the second stage took part during the observation, and the last two stages (Reflect and Share) took place during the Coaching Session (interview).

#### **4.3 Classroom interviews**

Interviewing took place in Google Meet breakout rooms during regularly scheduled online classrooms. Typically, breakout rooms were opened in an effort to encourage language use. Students joined Google Meet Breakout rooms on a voluntary basis. When first administered, students volunteered in groups, but after students became comfortable they joined breakout rooms individually. While the sessions were intended to support the SDLMI, students were free to bring up any subject they wanted to discuss. Subsequently, at times, interviews were initiated concerning EP's 3 guiding principles.

Once students became comfortable in breakout rooms, the SDLMI Coaching Framework and SDLMI Coaching Stages were implemented. However, this was difficult for many students because of their limited English proficiency. Nonetheless, all students participated in the Coaching Stages, regardless of their English proficiency. These sessions were recorded in Google Meet, and automatically saved in Google Drive.

#### **4.4 Balancing**

The data analysis was based on EP's three guiding principles: *quality of life* comes first; mutual development is connected to *quality of life*; as is the integration of research with pedagogy (Hanks, 2017). Therefore, data analysis focused on *quality of life* in the online

classroom that developed from both inquiry and self-determined based emerging pedagogies. In the first phase, analysis was conducted concurrently with the data collection, and was further explored during online classroom observations and interviews (coaching).

The five students exhibited in this study made noticeable improvements as they engaged the emerging technologies and pedagogies. As student feedback early in the term indicated, the students were struggling with the reading and writing assignments, and they did not feel comfortable discussing the academic content and asking questions online. For those students who were inclined, office hours via Google Meet were published, but students did not schedule an appointment.

The second phase of analysis concerned descriptive and interpretive writing as a comprehensive synthesis of what was taking place following Manen's six research activities: in which there was a focus on Ubiquitous Learning, and it related to students' experiences. Continual effort was made to collect writings that were from the students' first-person perspective, and what it was "like" to experience online learning. Next, after reading, and rereading again, essential themes were identified that characterized their experiences. This was followed by more writing, but without losing sight of classroom instruction. Finally, after reviewing the various parts (writing protocols, observations, and interviews), it was crucial to sense the whole. (Manen, 2015). Analyzing both individual and general descriptions, it was noted that many of the students were describing the same experiences, and while they were not satisfied with online learning, they were improving. The experiential data demonstrated that local students benefited existentially from intentional teaching that allowed them to explore their language learning experiences. Towards the end of the online learning, the speech students were asked to consider their experiences online, as noted in Table 3 which reflects the students' writing without editing.

This general attitude appeared to affect their outlook, causing trepidation, lacking confidence, and being disappointed. This was especially true for students who lacked English language independence. Classroom observations were used to establish a benchmark. During online instruction students' knowledge, skills, and attitude were evaluated during class interactions. These observations were turned into anecdotal narratives through continual writing (Manen, 2015).

Table 1 Year 1 - *Business English*

	<i>What is it like to learn using Business English?</i>
1	Learning in English is a crazy experience for me. Learning in English is difficult, but I see it more as a plan and an opportunity to master English. Through the all-English teaching, I can exercise my English ability and know more words. Through the all-English teaching during this period, I can communicate with others in English more calmly. Although I still feel nervous, I have made great progress compared with the blank mind at the beginning of the conversation. I could feel that I was really improving, and it was exciting for me.
2	I think it's a challenging for me to learn English language that it's not my native language but i think it's so useful when you grow up and must to contact with foreigner. For listening part, i think i still have mistake about accent from UK that it is British accent that hard to understand. For my speaking skill, i think i can speak with foreigner but sometimes i still forget some vocab but i try to explain what i mean. I love to learn English, i feel enjoy with this.
3	What is like to learn English, in many time i learn English want to communication better with other people, my speak English is bad, so in many time i must listen. i want have a good grade, but i dare not to say. But at this semester i have FSC class this class have many speech .exercise my speech .i am very happy , i am satisfaction this semester. But i still need to continue to study hard.
4	My biggest problems with learning English are listening and writing because sometimes when I communicate people who use very difficult accent to me I can't understand what they try to communicate with me. Next, in my opinion grammar is difficult to learn because I am not a native English speaker. I hope BUUIC teachers will find the way to teach grammar for students to understand easier.
5	For me I satisfaction with listening writing and reading English. But I am dissatisfaction with my speaking English because I am not self confidence and I feel shy and scary about I use the wrong words. I have to improve speaking and try my best for get a good grade too. the motivation of me is the job in the future like Flight Attendant and my own dream business.
6	In my English skills, I think I can use English better in this course, whether it's listening and speaking, I have more confidence to practice speaking English through job interview. My reading has improved as well. As my writing skills as I have

	learned how to write appropriately. So I'm very satisfied to improve my English better.
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Table 2 Year 1 - principles of speech communication

<i>What is it like to deliver a speech in English?</i>	
1	For me, preparing and delivering speeches in a second language is quite difficult for me because first, I want to think more about what I want to speech and how to design my speech to more interest. When I can collect information and can compile information in step by step. Then I will bring information to translate in English form word by word and then go to check the correct word again. I will bring the last information that I get, to compile again to make my speech look interesting and make the audience easy to understand. And before a speech, I will practice more like try to remember all information, try to be good accent and practice to have good movement and can use body languages to be helpful.
2	For preparing and delivering speeches in second language, I should know the purpose of speaking, such as speaking to educate inspire entertain knowing who your audience is will help you choose issues that are most relevant to your audience in order to get the most out of what we're talking about. Know how long to speak and write a point to speak and correct a speech defect. Should pay attention to matter of language There are should be no errors Use the correct vocabulary and grammar.
3	For me, the preparation of the speech in English is challenging and I like it. I like to speak English even though, I may not be able to speak very well. Speeches in class is a good practice to upgrade speaking skill. My speeches was nothing complicated. I found the topics that interest me and I try to understand the content and remember it quickly. If it's something that I like or interest, I can remember and speaking well without reading it.
4	Use English preparing and delivering speeches, at the beginning meet some difficulties. don't know what is audience like, dare not speak, wont interact with people . at the speaking, i often forget words how to speak.so i thought of way to read many time preparing for the speech, listen our self-speech. so i think prepare in advance speech can be good .

5	So, when I have to speech about English language, I will prepare myself to the Thai word first for understanding and translation to English and write the script for remind me about something I forget, and try to speaking with myself or other it make me have confidence and help to try be good accent or good word it avoid to mistake the word.
6	It's quite fun and exotic because speaking a second language is a language we don't use every day. It's a language we learn every day. But for me that is so fun and a new experience. If you practice speaking every day, this will make this a comfortable. Before I speech, I'll first determine the topic of speech. After that I'll search the information for speaking. And I'll practice speaking to myself again and again to review what I have to say in speech, and practice pronunciation for clearly.

Table 3 Year 1 - language awareness and development

	Explain what it was like to learn online using English.
1	Learning English online is something new for me, I actually find it challenging and fun. But I personally prefer to learning English on site or face-to-face because it could activate me better and have a better chance to communicate with the classmates.
2	It's fun to learn using English online because I'm lazy to go to university(jk). I think learning English online is maybe better than the offline because in online we have internet and we can also search what I want to learn in online and when there is an accident like my leg is hurt I can still learn from online.
3	Learning by using English online is like the normal form of learning English, but I have to pay more attention for it. The process of learning English from writing, speaking, listening and reading online. I can find which lesson I wished to learn, it might be from the basic beginner to advanced English. It was not like face to face communication learning English as I cannot interact well enough like meeting in real life face to face.
4	In my opinion, learning online is not bad but I prefer learning onsite because I can more focus on the lesson. I love to listen when the speaker use their body

	language, but learning online we can just sit and learn with computer. And sometimes just learning and not going out it be a cause of my stress.
5	Well, learning using English I had a good experience I have got so many opportunities take control and learn the English. We were learning online but it really felt quite good doing things in groups and so on. I had a really great experience learning online because it has not felt I was learning online because we used to talk, had activities and so on together.

## 5. Discussion

The findings from this research came from five year one, local students over a 16-week term that was completely conducted online during COVID-19 protocols and restrictions. The five students were chosen out of necessity based on their ability to use English academically and interpersonally. This is not to suggest that the other students weren't capable of this, but there was suspicion that some data was inaccurate due to inauthentic translations.

As the purpose of this research was to explore Ubiquitous Learning (UL) during COVID-19 restrictions, the data collection, analysis, and findings are in relation to the following questions:

- (i) To what extent can Ubiquitous Learning improve participants' quality of life?
- (ii) To what extent can Ubiquitous Learning improve participants' development?
- (iii) To what extent can research and pedagogy be integrated using Ubiquitous Learning?

### 5.1 UL and participants quality of life

The findings concerning Ubiquitous Learning and *quality of life*, indicate that UL is particularly positioned to help participants identify *quality of life* during online classroom instruction. The findings demonstrate that students' engagement with *quality of life* writing protocols or related themes, helped students reflect on their existentiality, and make sense of their learning experiences. *Quality of life* had two criteria, one based on classroom evaluation and the other on self-determination. It was determined that *quality of life* was directly related to: (i) good student attendance and participation; (ii) proficient weekly writing assignments; and (iii) good examination scores. For self-determination, the criteria were directly related to their *quality of life* and was identified when students: (i) demonstrated autonomy regarding their *quality of life*; (ii) through self-regulation regarding *quality of life*; (iii) psychologically empowered regarding *quality of life*; and (iv) self-realizing regarding *quality of life*.

As illustration, Table 1 demonstrates students' attention to *quality of life* for first year students in Business English who were asked: *What is it like to learn using Business English?* While this is a relatively benign question, students are seldom given the time and space to consider "what it's like" to do something. In order to answer this question students had to consider their attendance & participation, the classroom activities & assignments, and examination score. This particular writing assignment was given in week 9 in a 16 week term, after having just completed the midterm exam. And while writing about experience can be very difficult for some students, it was followed by coaching interviews which allowed follow up for the two main criteria.

Nonetheless, the question of what *something is like*, is directly related to existentiality and the *quality of life*. Students must consider their thoughts and feelings, and express them in a way that is true to their authentic selves. This takes time and trust. In addition, students were given writing protocols based on the Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction (SDLMI) that engaged students with: Phase 1: What is my goal? Phase 2: What is my plan? Phase 3: What have I learned? (Hagiwara et al., 2020).

## 5.2 UL and participants' development

The findings concerning Ubiquitous Learning and mutual development indicate that UL is particularly positioned to help participants develop towards quality of life in the online classroom. Early in the research, due to the nature of online learning, it was decided the analysis would be based entirely on the writing protocols, but many of the students had limited writing skills, and as mentioned, relied on Google Translate. Since Google Translate is an inauthentic translation, it was decided not to use Google Translation in the research. Nonetheless, with the administration of Google Meet breakout rooms, the problem was solved. Of the five students, their engagement with the observations and coaching interviews demonstrated a clear understanding of *quality of life*, and what that entailed regarding their language education.

Once the writing protocols were collected and analyzed, students were interviewed in Google Breakout rooms to discuss their Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) and their Basic Interpersonal Language Skills (BICS). In addition, the SDLMI Coaching Framework and SDLMI Coaching Stages were implemented to give students opportunities to discuss their development. The framework consists of six coaching principles that are intended to support the students in applying both *quality of life* and self-determination, (ii) be empowered through *quality of life* and self-determination, (iii) experience *quality of life* and self-determination, (iv) reflect and discuss *quality of life* and self-determination, (v) share their vision *quality of life* and self-determination, and (vi) trust others through *quality of life* and self-

determination. Coaching principles were then actualized in practice through coaching tasks in four stages. The first occurred prior to an observation, the second stage took place during the observation, and the last two stages (Reflect and Share) occurred during the Coaching Session (interview) (Hagiwara et al., 2020).

### 5.3 UL, research & pedagogy

The findings concerning Ubiquitous Learning and the integration of research and pedagogy indicate that UL is particularly positioned to integrate research and pedagogy. After reviewing the writing protocols, observations, and Google Meet interviews, that data demonstrates that UL functions as a suitable means for conduction classroom research. From a personal stance, integrating research and pedagogy was professionally satisfying, and comfortable to maintain. It was particularly convenient using Google Classroom that allowed all classroom materials and resources readily available throughout the course. Google Meet via Breakout rooms allowed easy recording and storing on Google Drive. In addition, through simple procedures, all writings were available in one location; no paper! Moreover, writings were easy to amend with notes, other referencing sequences, and coding. However, the best part of integrating research and pedagogy was that it worked! Professionally speaking, integrating research and pedagogy is motivating and enjoyable.

## 6. Conclusion

The purpose of this research came from an authentic concern for local students who found themselves in a precarious position obliged to engage Ubiquitous Learning. Not only were these students required to engage academic content online, but they were required to develop language skills in a context-reduced setting that was cognitively demanding. For those who had either international experience or higher levels of English proficiency, they were capable of seeing possibilities and opportunities, but for those local students who lacked prior experience or needed levels of English proficiency, obviously struggled. Nonetheless, when confronting existential dilemmas, no two students act the same, but if they are given the time and space to explore the academic content through an existential lens, then it becomes more authentic. Three questions were asked at the beginning of this inquiry: (i) To what extent can Ubiquitous Learning improve participants' quality of life? (ii) To what extent can Ubiquitous Learning improve participants' development? And (iii) To what extent can research and pedagogy be integrated using Ubiquitous Learning?

***Concerning the first question:*** Students' quality of life was directly related to their ability to be self-determined. For those students who could developed volitionally and

agentically were autonomous and successful, capable of maintaining consistent attendance, participating in class, completing weekly assignments, and understanding the content on exams. The Google Meet Breakout rooms became enjoyable and lively, and enabled students to engage when one-on-one. At first, students only volunteered to enter breakout rooms with their friends, but then realized they preferred to join on their own. While the focus in breakout rooms was directed by the SDLMI coaching framework and stages, students were free to discuss whatever was on their minds. For many students, this was their first opportunity to engage a fluent speaker in English without anyone else present. For many of the students, these experiences were highlights to otherwise demotivating online experiences. However, students also discovered that regardless of the topics being discussed, one-on-one conversation in English can be difficult, and many students discovered they lacked the necessary BICS, and resisted opportunities to enter the breakout rooms.

***Concerning the second question:*** While UL can only do so much, it became clearly apparent that if online instruction is here to stay, students must become self-determined. crucial that students develop self-determined learning and language autonomy. In an academic context, tasks are typically cognitively demanding and context-reduced, while in everyday English the tasks are typically undemanding and context-embedded (Cummins, 2010). This suggests that students should be self-determined in order to fill-in personal gaps whether they be *academic* or *everyday*. While local classroom language education attempts to be one-size-fits-all, the reality is not that simple. Subsequently, personal success requires self-determination which is often lacking in normal college students whose focus is on “friends and fun”.

In the online language classrooms there were two distinct entities, each required their own particular development: the teacher and the student. Each was on their own particular learning path, requiring their own path of development. Nonetheless, using UL was comfortable and attainable, and allowed development in many areas. Not only did students learn the basics of self-determination, but the teacher developed coaching skills which are necessary for success in 21<sup>st</sup> century language learning. Professional development can be difficult and lonely, but when using Ubiquitous Learning, professionals can access their own Personal Learning Network (PLN) which makes development enjoyable

***Concerning the third question:*** Now that Ubiquitous Learning is becoming more common, it is only natural that research be integrated with pedagogy. Using simple tools like Google Classroom allow research to be comfortable and attainable. Prior to UL, I was tasked with integrating research and pedagogy, and in each instance, it was a struggle. However, using UL makes integrating research and pedagogy enjoyable. Moreover, using Exploratory Practice,

the focus is on quality of life, and with that perspective, it changes how I view the classroom. I hope Ubiquitous Learning is here to stay.

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