

Emergence of Innovative Curriculum and Use of Digital Paradigm for Teaching English: A Case Study of an Applied College in Jeddah, KSA

Assem Alqarni

King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah-Saudi Arabia
E-mail: amalqarni@kau.edu.sa

KEYWORDS Covid-19. Curriculum Reform. Online Learning. Paradigm Shift. Professional Development. Teaching Strategy

ABSTRACT COVID-19 has already influenced socio-economic and educational systems across the globe, especially affecting the elementary schools and professional/technical education. Many institutions implemented virtual teaching to deal with the emergency. This change affected many stakeholders, such as administrators, policymakers, teachers, students, and parents. Learning English has always been challenging in the EFL context for many linguistic, socio-cultural and pedagogic reasons. Applied colleges in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) have different purposes to serve. The objectives of the study are to explore the need for curricular changes, and paradigm shift, to investigate if the Augmented Reality (AR) environment is better than the traditional (face-to-face) learning method, and to find out if the concerned teachers are well equipped to yield better results. Qualitative method was adopted and interviews with 6 teachers were conducted to elicit the required data, which was later transcribed, coded and thematically analysed to arrive at conclusions.

INTRODUCTION

The pedagogical changes started occurring, primarily due to COVID-19, which affected socio-economic and educational systems across the globe. The post pandemic learning experiences forced a paradigm shift, and consequently institutions and pedagogues alternatively tried a method in the form of virtual learning or augmented technology. Online platforms were found available for running classes, interacting digitally, sharing materials, administering tests/quizzes (assessments) etc. (Haleem et al. 2022). This change affected many stakeholders, such as administrators, policymakers, teachers, students, and parents. Not only the change in teaching mode but the 'quality' of education has also been questioned quite frequently. Education for employment has become more demanding than education for life (Ali and Jalal 2018). Rapid changes in the business environment are taking place almost every day of life. The education industry is trying to meet the needs of different kinds.

Universities and higher/vocational institutions should create a favourable learning environment where students utilise a digital universe of knowledge to do self-study (Almusaed et al. 2023). Traditional classroom teaching has already lost its value and importance in today's digital

society. Students should be encouraged to develop skills rather than mere knowledge because developing actual skills for application requires professional education.

Need for Compatible English Education

Professional education at the Applied Colleges in Saudi Arabia is offering short-term vocational courses through English as the medium of instruction. Renowned global bodies accredit all the courses. The U.S. Council on Occupational Education (COE) is one of them. Therefore, quality English language learning is the prime target for students to pursue further education. The government of Saudi Arabia has been emphasising its needs from time to time (OECD 2020). The need of the hour required a considerable change in the English curriculum, which was completely changed and made digital and learner-friendly.

Objectives

This study aimed to achieve the following objectives:

1. To see if a paradigm shift was needed to meet the demand for education at an Applied College in Jeddah-KSA.

2. To ascertain the pedagogic significance of digital curriculum.
3. To find out if the teachers are ready to use digital learning mode.
4. To analyse the readiness of the institution for digital learning/teaching.
5. To assess the way teachers are supported by the administration to deliver digital learning, content in terms of I.T. infrastructure, equipment, and resources.
6. To evolve a compatible curriculum to meet the job market needs.

Literature Review

Learning English has always been challenging in the EFL context for many linguistic and socio-cultural reasons (Khan 2011, 2016, 2021). In this regard, many interventional and remedial measures have been taken to address issues related to curriculum design, textbook writing/selection, teaching methods, professional development, and assessment techniques. Nevertheless, the situation could be more encouraging if some measures are timely and suitably taken. Curriculum reform is needed to cope with existing ESL/EFL learning issues, the current COVID-19-induced situation, and a future strategy to utilise digital media (Oraif and Elyas 2021; Ghanbari and Nowroozi 2022). Pedagogy and curriculum are interrelated. However, a digital strategy needs to be developed and sufficiently supported in current pedagogic situations. Blended Learning (BL) is one of them. Apart from exploring teaching methods, e-resource evaluation is essential in addition to teacher's preparedness to use digital media for effective learning.

Modern teaching includes the integration of approaches and modes to achieve learning outcomes. BL can be a mix of two approaches. It can also be referred to some other types of blending, for example, instructional methods/techniques, pedagogies, and technologies (Hrastinski 2019). For example, 'blending' can be done in two ways, that is, by blending the technology and contexts, and by integrating the native language culture or the local culture (Khan 2021). Traditionally, it has been a belief that the target language (English) should be taught in the same cultural environment, that is, the British or American culture (Khan 2016). However,

many studies have recently advocated incorporating local culture in a foreign language classroom to motivate learners and reduce the burden of learning a language and a foreign culture (Khan 2016).

Global researchers successfully attempted to explore the efficiency and importance of BL strategies, and concluded that BL improved performance, increased motivation, and enhanced learners' attitude (Khalil et al. 2018). The COVID-19 pandemic revolutionised the entire world especially in the context of business, technology, economy, health, and education (Khoshaim et al. 2020). Due to the urgent need in a given situation, blended learning became a default model (Singh et al. 2021). BL required effective planning and implementation, but an understanding of theories and hypotheses is essential (Rafi et al. 2022). There are multiple teaching styles depending on the need and situations. Therefore, the teacher is free to choose an appropriate method. However, they should prefer those pedagogies that necessarily engage the learners more thoroughly by blending than teaching through traditional methods. In other words, it is better that the target content and material is delivered in a blended environment. Teachers and learners must be aware of the challenges of online mode to keep pace with. Therefore, students and teachers need to be familiar with all the features of the related tools to cope with expected challenges, as reported by Khan (2011, 2016, 2020) and Mahyoob (2020) in the context of Saudi Arabia.

Hence, digital teaching requires institutional preparedness. In her doctoral work, Zheng (2006) carried out studies about 'Affordances of 3D Virtual Environments', and found that there was a difference between the two groups of experimental and controlled, reporting that the former group had a more positive attitude and higher self-efficacy than the controlled one. Again, Zheng et al. (2017) emphasised on the unique learning opportunities that can be availed in a socio-culturally bounded place. Plonsky and Ziegler (2016) researched about the importance of the CALL-SLA interface, while Ziegler (2016a) found out the relevance of technology-mediated TBLT, performance, and production. Further, Ziegler (2016b) researched the positive relationship between computer-mediated communica-

tion and interaction. These related studies support technology-mediated instruction in general, and the same apply to the proposed study. A few studies related to e-learning, technology integration, learning online, virtual policy perspectives, active learning strategies, and distance learning were explored as well (Irvine and Baylen 1998; Irvine 2000; Irvine 2003; Irvine and Baylen 2004; Irvine 2006; Downey and Irvine 2008; Irvine et al. 2008).

Research Gap

The COVID-19 pandemic forced educational researchers and pedagogues to explore possibilities of alternative teaching approaches that can combat the existing crisis and a possible solution. English language institutes have been working hard to improve the English proficiency of foundation-year students. There are a lot of students enrolled. The English language plays an important role, and institutions teaching English in the entire Gulf, or in particular, Saudi Arabia are no exceptions. Like many challenges the institutions have been facing due to the closure of onsite teaching and shifts to online/virtual environments during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, which continues even in the post-COVID era. However, physical teaching remains the primary mode of instruction.

Present Study

The present research focuses on the need to make a paradigm shift by creating a new learning environment that caters to the need for present day teaching-learning in general and English language learning especially at the newly conceived Applied Colleges in Saudi Arabia. The research approach uses qualitative methods. First, the study research focused on a critical literature review of those studies that are closely related to the present research problem. Next, it depended on the participants' responses to the interview questions.

Research Questions

This study aimed to answer following:

- RQ1. To what extent is a paradigm shift important to meet the demand for education at Applied College in Jeddah-KSA?

- RQ2. How effective is a digital curriculum to meet the learners' needs?
- RQ3. To what extent is the institution ready and equipped to facilitate digital learning at Applied College, Jeddah?
- RQ4. How are teachers supported to implement digital learning regarding I.T. infrastructure, equipment, and resources?
- RQ5. How can curriculum change contribute to achieving teaching objectives at the applied colleges in the kingdom?
- RQ6. To what extent are teachers ready to use digital learning modes in English classrooms?

METHODOLOGY

Using qualitative research has many advantages, as it finds out the quality of practice and relationships between activities or practices, situations, or content/materials (Fraenkel et al. 2012). In qualitative research, a researcher can use a flexible writing style to describe the theme of the study (Creswell and Poth 2018). The present study utilised a qualitative descriptive design, keeping the subjective nature of a research problem. The 'interview' participants are expected to share their experience-based input related to research questions (Bradshaw et al. 2017). This method is appropriate for the current study, as it can brainstorm and generate data related to the wh-questions of who, what, and where (Kim et al. 2017). Doyle et al. (2020) contend, however, in a different research context, that such research enables the researcher to understand an individual's perception and experience uniquely.

Sampling and Data Collection

Keeping the objectives and design of the study in mind, the researcher decided to utilise purposive sampling for data collection because this study aimed to deal with specific information about the curriculum used at Applied College, Jeddah-KSA. Palinkas et al. (2015) contend that researchers can utilise purposive sampling in descriptive research. Hence, it is essential to keep in view that data has been sufficiently gathered (Ritchie et al. 2014).

For this study, six (6) experienced teachers from the applied college in Jeddah constitute the sample.

Research Instrument

A qualitative interview is the most commonly used data collection method, which researchers utilise in most qualitative studies. It allows researchers to collect detailed data about participants' feelings and opinions, among other things (Mwita 2022). It has been contended that there are many ways of data collection in qualitative descriptive research that initially discover the phenomena of who, what, and where (Sandelowski 2010). In such research settings, mostly a semi-structured face-to-face interview is conducted for data gathering (Kim et al. 2017). According to Hijmans and Kuyper (2007), qualitative interviews are the means of interactions and exchanges of ideas between people. In other words, interviews are a kind of conversation with a specific goal such as collection of required data for the present study.

Procedure and Participants

While attempting to answer the study's research questions, the researcher identified important themes or areas to focus on during the design of the interview questions (Appendix A). Responses were recorded, coded, and analysed thematically using the qualitative analysis method. The researcher (interviewer) carried out an interview with only six (6) concerned and experienced teachers of the Applied College of King Abdulaziz University, located in the city of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Data Analysis

As mentioned above, the researcher's responses first gathered data through the interviews, wrote, coded, and then analysed thematically. Researchers stated that the nature and type of data determine how data is analysed. Therefore, it needs to follow a more flexible approach (Kim et al. 2017; Lambert and Lambert 2012; Mackey and Gass 2021). In the words of Chafe (2017), a qualitative descriptive research offers to match the type and scope of analysis

with the level and type of the research. Some research requires in-depth analysis of data, and therefore, interviews are needed to be utilised. Research interviews, like other qualitative techniques, have many advantages over other techniques. However, these can be found better in given research settings. (Hobson and Townsend 2010; Hobson 2013).

The present study involved the usual approach for analysing the gathered interview responses, that is, recording, writing on paper, coding for thematic analysis, and possible interpretation.

Thematic Analysis of Interview

Theme1: Need for innovative curriculum and paradigm shift at the Applied College in Jeddah

Since the applied colleges follow a different and innovative curriculum under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education, KSA, there was a need to restructure, design a novel curriculum, and integrate/implement it to achieve the learning objectives. Furthermore, the applied college teachers are well aware of it.

Theme2: Appropriateness of the current English curriculum

Through interviews, it was revealed that the current curriculum is appropriate, keeping the vision and mission of the college and the objectives of teaching English.

Theme 3: Paradigm shift: from traditional to digital

The teachers have confirmed that the current English curriculum is fruitful and effective because it is mostly digital, learner-friendly, and integrated into the physical classes and the assignment digitally through password-protected access for the group of students who can register themselves and log in.

Theme4: Learner friendly curriculum

The curriculum (the textbook, workbook, and other digital resources) are learner-friendly. Stu-

dents keep their books open while the teachers use digital material to teach, explain, and even practise with extra activities. In case any student faces any minor issues, the teachers facilitate in overcoming those.

Theme5: Teachers' preparedness

English teachers are experienced and technologically equipped to teach the prescribed digital/blended curriculum. In fact, they were provided orientation sessions by the book's publisher(s).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data were analysed sequentially according to the order of research questions, leading to findings and conclusions.

Research Question1

To what extent is a paradigm shift essential to meet the demand for education at an Applied college in Jeddah-KSA?

With the inception of current Applied Colleges in the Kingdom, the curriculum needed to be modified by redefining the Applied Colleges' objectives. Therefore, textbooks, digital resources, and teaching strategies were also altered as per the need. Long ago, curriculum change and paradigm shift were suggested by Keegan (2002) to meet the demand for education. Quite recently, Maqsood et al. (2021) contended for a paradigm shift, especially in post COVID-19 settings. Paradigm shift is a natural process which occurs quite frequently due to changing needs of education in given time and perspective. However, it was noticed that the inception of Applied colleges in Saudi Arabia demanded a digital curriculum and online content/materials along with printed texts.

Research Question2

How effective is the digital curriculum to meet the learners' needs?

Teachers' perceptions and the researcher's own experience indicated that the curriculum

could fulfil the needs of the learners who pursue the Applied College courses in general and foundation year English in particular. The findings are quite in line with the study conducted by Haleem et al. (2022), who state that technological development in the educational sector has made students' lives easier for socialising and even learning. Instead of looking for information in printed books or libraries and using pen and paper, learners can utilise available software and downloadable (for free) tools to prepare assignments, write projects, and create different presentations as per their needs. One of the findings of the study matches with Howe et al. (2021), who attributed such changes and paradigm shifts to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, digital education has been integral to most modern institutions.

Research Question 3

To what extent is the institution ready and equipped to facilitate digital learning at Applied College, Jeddah?

The institution (Applied College, Jeddah) utilises all teaching and digital facilities and resources to teach/learn effectively. Blended learning has been followed at King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, for at least 14-15 years. Therefore, a teaching shift from physical to digital/virtual was not at all problematic. Alsaywid et al. (2021) explored the effectiveness and preparedness of e-learning methods during COVID-19. However, the context was related to medical training in different cities in Saudi Arabia and was satisfactory.

Research Question 4

How are teachers supported to implement digital learning regarding I.T. infrastructure, equipment, and resources?

All the classrooms are managed well, with I.T. facilities maintained by professionals who have maintained the infrastructure for not less than a decade of blended learning at King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah.

Research Question 5

How can the curriculum change contribute to the achievement of teaching objectives at the Applied Colleges in the Kingdom?

The proposed curriculum, which is in practice, can achieve the goals of English language teaching/learning in far better ways than in the past. In this regard, Gouédard et al. (2020) supported through literature review to assist in the effective implementation of digital/online learning. In addition, Mondal and Das (2021) conducted an overview of curriculum change. This supported the study's objectives.

Research Question 6

To what extent are teachers ready to use digital learning modes in English classrooms?

Teachers are fully equipped with technology integration and ready to utilise learning material in the best possible ways to accomplish the learning goals, which goes hand in hand with the ultimate aims of the applied colleges in the kingdom. This study's findings align with many researchers, including Nguyen et al. (2022), who reflected on the need for preparedness and training to manage online teaching-learning.

CONCLUSION

The prime aim of this study was to explore the usefulness of innovative curricula and the use of digital paradigms for teaching English at Jeddah Applied College. The interview responses provided evidence and support that digital resources, textbooks, and technological support can be proven to be effective in the learning process of English. It was noted that almost all the teachers are equipped with training and awareness to utilise such resources.

English teachers participated in the data gathering process through 'interviews' and revealed that using modern curriculum and digital resources multimedia makes English learning more lively, interactive, and effective. English teachers perceived that a good digitally induced curriculum delivers target content to concerned learners in far better and more effective ways,

offering them opportunities to accomplish aims in an appropriate learner-friendly environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The digital curriculum should be utilised appropriately to teach the target students studying at the Applied College, Jeddah. Digital resources can further motivate learners if the teachers properly integrate them, utilise and achieve the learning objectives.

LIMITATIONS

The study is qualitative, which is based on the interviews of a few teachers. Therefore, it is better and more useful if an in-depth quantitative or mixed incorporating a larger sample is undertaken to generalise the findings.

IMPLICATIONS

Results and findings lead to further improvement in the dimensions of practice to enhance the utilisation of technological resources (physical and digital) and electronic management support systems. Teachers can further be trained and developed to utilise technology and digital resources available for utilisation.

REFERENCES

- Ali MS, Jalal H 2018. Higher education as a predictor of employment: The world of work perspective. *Bulletin of Education and Research*, 40(2): 79-90.
- Almusaed A, Almssad A, Yitmen I, Homod RZ 2023. Enhancing Student Engagement: Harnessing "AIED"'s Power in Hybrid Education-A Review Analysis. *Education Sciences*, 13(7): 632. MDPI AG From <<http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/educsci13070632>> (Retrieved on 1 November 2023).
- Alsaywid B, Lytras MD, Abuzenada M, Lytra H et al. 2021. Effectiveness and preparedness of institutions' e-learning methods during the COVID-19 pandemic for residents' medical training in Saudi Arabia: A pilot study. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 9: 707833. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2021.707833>
- Bradshaw C, Atkinson S, Doody O 2017. Employing a qualitative description approach in health care research. *Global Qualitative Nursing Research*, 4. doi:10.1177/2333393617742282
- Chafe R 2017. The value of qualitative description in health services and policy research. *Healthcare Policy* 12: 12-18.
- Creswell JW, Poth CN 2018. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. 4th Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Downey PM, Irvine CKS 2008. E-Learning modules for teacher development: Project REAL. *TechTrends*, 52: 59-62.
- Doyle L, McCabe C, Keogh B, Brady A, McCann M 2020. An overview of the qualitative descriptive design within nursing research. *J Res Nurs*, 25(5): 443-455. doi: 10.1177/1744987119880234.
- Fraenkel JR, Wallen NE, Hyun HH 2012. *How To Design And Evaluate Research In Education*. 9th Edition. Singapore: McGraw Hill.
- Ghanbari N, Nowroozi S 2022. Iranian EFL teachers' challenges and coping strategies during COVID-19 Pandemic: A case study. *The Qualitative Report*, 27(3): 605-625. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5066>
- Gouëdard P, Pont B, Hyttinen S, Huang Pet et al. 2020. Curriculum Reform: A Literature Review To Support Effective Implementation. *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 239, OECD Publishing, Paris. <https://doi.org/10.1787/efe8a48c-en>.
- Haleem A, Javaid M, Qadri MA, Suman R 2022. Understanding the role of digital technologies in education: A review. *Sustainable Operations and Computers*, 3: 275-285. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.susoc.2022.05.004>
- Hijmans E, Kuyper M 2007. Het halfopen interview alsonderzoeksmethode. In: PLBJ Lucassen, TC Olde Hartman (Eds.): *Kwalitatiefonderzoek: Praktischemethoden voor de medischepraktijk. (The Half-Open Interview As Research Method)*. Houten: Bohn Stafleu van Loghum, pp. 43-51.
- Hobson AJ, Townsend AJ 2010. Interviewing as educational research method(s). In: D Hartas (Ed.): *Educational Research and Inquiry: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. London, UK: Continuum, pp. 223-238.
- Hobson A 2013. Teacher fabrication as an impediment to professional learning and development: the external mentor antidote. *Oxford Review of Education*, 39(3): 345-365.
- Howe DC, Chauhan RS, Soderberg AT, Buckley MR 2021. Paradigm shifts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. *Organizational Dynamics*, 50(4): 100804. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2020.100804>
- Hrastinski S 2019. What do we mean by blended learning? *TechTrends*, 63(5): 564-569.
- Irvine CKS, Baylen D 1998. Interacting, learning, teaching at a distance: A case study of a graduate research class. *IAECT Journal*, 4: 11-23.
- Irvine CKS 2000. Active learning strategies A to Z: Adapting technology-based learning environments. *The Journal on the Art of Teaching*, 7: 123-138.
- Irvine CKS 2003. Policy perspectives on selected virtual universities in the United States. *Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, 4: 89-107.
- Irvine CKS, Baylen D 2004. Learning Online: Adapting the seven principals of good practice to a web-based instructional environment. *Distance Learning*, 1: 7-18.
- Irvine CKS 2006. Integrating technology in schools, colleges, and departments of education: A primer for Deans. *Change*, 38: 44-49.
- Irvine CKS, Smaldino SE, Downey PM 2008. A model for a professional development school intervention: REAL findings. *School-University Partnerships*, 2: 2-26.
- Keegan S 2002. The Embedded Curriculum. San Clemente, CA: Kagan Online Magazine. From <<http://www.KaganOnline.com/Newsletter>> (Retrieved on 5 February 2023).
- Khalil MK, Abdel Meguid EM, Elkhider IA 2018. Teaching of anatomical sciences: A blended learning approach. *ClinAnat*, 31(3): 323-329.
- Khoshaim HB, Al-Sukayt A, Chinna K et al. 2020. Anxiety level of university students during COVID-19 in Saudi Arabia. *Front Psychiatry*, 11: 1-7.
- Khan IA 2011. Challenges of teaching/learning English and management. *Global Journal of Human Social Science*, 11(8): 69-80.
- Khan I 2016. Barriers in the learning of English: An exploratory study. *British Journal of Education, Society and Behavioural Science*, 15(2): 1-10.
- Khan IA 2020. Learners' perception of virtual learning amidst COVID-19. *International Journal of Computer Engineering In Research Trends*, 7(6): 19-28.
- Khan IA 2021. Psychology of color, integration of local culture and effect of infographics on English language learning. *PSU Research Review*, ahead-of-print. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PRR-02-2021-0013>
- Kim B, Malioutov, DM, Varshney, KR, Weller A 2017. Proceedings of the 2017 ICML Workshop on Human Interpretability in Machine Learning (WHI 2017). *ArXiv*, arXiv:1708.02666
- Lambert VA, Lambert CE 2012. Qualitative descriptive research: An acceptable design. *Pacific Rim International Journal of Nursing Research*, 16: 255-256.
- Mackey A, Gass SM 2021. *Second Language Research: Methodology and Design*. 3rd Edition. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003188414>
- Mahyoub M 2020. Challenges of e-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic experienced by EFL learners. *Arab World English Journal*, 11(4): 351-362. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol11no4.23>
- Maqsood A, Abbas J, Rehman G, Mubeen R 2021. The paradigm shift for educational system continuance in the advent of COVID-19 pandemic: Mental health challenges and reflections. *Current Research in Behavioral Sciences*, 2: 100011. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.crbeha.2020.100011>
- Mondal N, Das AC 2021. Overview of curriculum change: A brief discussion. *EPRA International Journal of Multi-disciplinary Research (IJMR)*, 7(3). DOI: 10.36713/epra2013
- Mwita KM 2022. Factors to consider when using qualitative interviews in data collection. *Social Sciences, Humanities and Education Journal (SHE Journal)*, 3(3): 313- 323. <http://e-journal.unipma.ac.id/index.php/SHE>
- Nguyen LT, Kanjug I, Lowatcharin G, Manakul T et al. 2022. How teachers manage their classroom in the digital learning environment - experiences from the University Smart Learning Project. *Heliyon*, 8(10): e10817
- OECD 2020. *Education in Saudi Arabia, Reviews of National Policies for Education*, OECD Publishing, Paris. <https://doi.org/10.1787/76df15a2-en>
- Oraif I, Elyas T 2021. The impact of COVID-19 on learning: Investigating EFL learners' engagement in online courses in Saudi Arabia. *Education Sciences*, 11(3): 1-19. [99]. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci11030099>
- Palinkas LA, Horwitz SM, Green CA et al. 2015. Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Adminis-*

- tration and Policy in Mental Health*, 42(5): 533-544. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>
- Plonsky L, Ziegler N 2016. The CALL-SLA interface: Insights from a second order synthesis. *Language Learning and Technology*, 20: 17-37.
- Rafi A, Anwar MI, Younas A, Manzoor S 2002. Paradigm shift in medical education due to the COVID-19 pandemic: guidelines for developing a blended learning curriculum in medical education [version 1; peer review: 1 approved]. *F1000 Research*, 11: 37. <https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.74779.1>
- Ritchie J, Lewis J, Elam G et al. 2014. Designing and selecting samples. In: J Ritchie, J Lewis, Nicholls C McNaughton, R Ormston (Eds.); *Qualitative Research Practice. A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*. London: Sage, pp. 111-145.
- Sandelowski M 2010. What's in a name? Qualitative description revisited. *Research in Nursing and Health*, 33: 77-84.
- Singh J, Steele K, Singh L 2021. Combining the best of online and face-to-face learning: Hybrid and blended learning approach for COVID-19, post vaccine, and post-pandemic world. *Journal of Educational Technology Systems*, 50: 140-171.
- Zheng D 2006. *Affordances of 3D Virtual Environments for English Language Learning: An Ecological Psychological Analysis*. PhD Thesis. Connecticut: University of Connecticut.
- Zheng D, Schmidt M, HuY, Liu M, Hsu J 2017. Eco-dialogical learning and translanguaging in open-ended 3D virtual learning environments: Where place, time, and objects matter. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 33(5): 107-122. <https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.2909>
- Ziegler N 2016a. Taking technology to task: Technology-mediated TBLT, performance, and production. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 36: 136-163.
- Ziegler N 2016b. Synchronous computer-mediated communication and interaction: A meta-analysis. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 38: 553-586.

Paper received for publication in January, 2024
Paper accepted for publication in June, 2024

Appendices

Appendix A

Teachers' Interview

- Q.1- What do you think of the purpose of education at the Applied colleges in the kingdom?
 Q.2- Do you think Applied colleges are fulfilling the job market needs?
 Q.3- Is the current English language curriculum appropriate? If yes, how?
 Q.4- Was the English curriculum/learning materials recently changed?
 Q.5- Is current curriculum in accordance with the job markets?
 Q.6- Is the English courses are digital?
 Q.7- Do the students have easy access to digital material which is being taught?
 Q.8- Do students submit online assignment?
 Q.9- Do teachers conduct online quizzes and exams? If yes, any challenges in doing so?
 Q.10- Are teachers fully prepared to teach the students online?
 Q.11- Does the English curriculum suit the principles of the Saudi Vision 2030?

Appendix B

Teachers' Responses

Participant-1

- R/Q.1. To offer short term diploma courses which offer faster recruitment as per the community needs.
 R/Q.2. Yes, the applied colleges are fulfilling the need of job markets by teaching required English proficiency for specialty and job markets.
 R/Q.3. Yes, very much.
 R/Q.4. Yes, the curriculum, textbooks were changed recently to meet the demand of the courses being taught at the applied college, Jeddah-KSA.
 R/Q.5. Yes, it is designed according to the current needs.
 R/Q.6. Not 100%, but digital material is used by the teachers in the classrooms and students utilize them mostly for assignment and extra activities. Some students use pdf (accessed by themselves from other sources or by the publisher by registering and logging in) for accessing through mobiles. Officially, they use printed textbooks in the classrooms.
 R/Q.7. Yes, very much.
 R/Q.8. That's mandatory.
 R/Q.9. Yes, they do.
 R/Q.10. Yes, they are. Its imperative.
 R/Q.11. Vision 2030 envisages technology-enhanced teaching-learning, which is implemented at the Applied College.

Participant-2

- R/Q.1. The Applied college diploma is a vocational course that ensures quicker job opportunities.
 R/Q.2. Yes, the applied colleges are fulfilling the need of job markets.

- R/Q.3. Yes, very much.
 R/Q.4. Yes, they were changed recently to meet the demand of the prescribed courses.
 R/Q.5. Yes, it is designed according to the job market needs.
 R/Q.6. Not 100%, but digital material is used by the teachers in the classrooms and students utilize them mostly for assignment and extra activities. Officially, they use their printed textbooks, which they need to purchase from an assigned bookstore that sells the publisher's books (different series/levels).
 R/Q.7. Yes, they have easy access. Basically they access digital material for assignment. And the teachers teach in classrooms with digital materials provided by the publisher of the prescribed books.
 R/Q.8. They have to.
 R/Q.9. In fact, all the quizzes are already uploaded on the blackboard.
 R/Q.10. Yes, all of them.
 R/Q.11. Yes, very much.

Participant-3

- R/Q.1. To offer short term diploma courses which offer faster recruitment as per the community needs.
 R/Q.2. Yes, the applied colleges are fulfilling the need of job markets by teaching required English proficiency for specialty and job markets.
 R/Q.3. Yes, very much.
 R/Q.4. Yes, the curriculum, textbooks were changed recently to meet the demand of the courses being taught at the applied college, Jeddah-KSA.
 R/Q.5. Yes, it is designed according to the current needs.
 R/Q.6. Not 100%, but digital material is used by the teachers in the classrooms and students utilize them mostly for assignment and extra activities.
 R/Q.7. Yes, they do as per the need.
 R/Q.8. Online assignment carries grades so no students want to miss.
 R/Q.9. Yes, they do in collaboration with the assessment unit and headship.
 R/Q.10. Yes
 R/Q.11. Yes, it is in accordance with the Saudi Vision 2030.

Participant-4

- R/Q.1. Short term professional courses for jobs.
 R/Q.2. Yes, the applied colleges are fulfilling the need of job markets by teaching required English proficiency for specialty and job markets.
 R/Q.3. Yes, very much.
 R/Q.4. Yes, the curriculum, textbooks were changed recently to meet the demand of the courses being taught at the applied college, Jeddah-KSA.
 R/Q.5. Yes, it is designed according to the current needs.
 R/Q.6. Not 100%, but digital material is used by the teachers in the classrooms and students utilize

them mostly for assignment and extra activities.
R/Q.7. Yes, there is issues with the resource access.

R/Q.8. Yes, they normally do.

R/Q.9. yes, very much.

R/Q.10. yes.

R/Q.11. yes, applied college curriculum and teaching is following the principles of the Saudi vision-2030.

Participant-5

R/Q.1. To offer job oriented courses.

R/Q.2. Yes, the applied colleges are fulfilling the need of job markets by teaching required English proficiency for specialty and job markets.

R/Q.3. yes, very much.

R/Q.4. Yes, the curriculum, textbooks were changed recently to meet the demand of the courses being taught at the applied college, Jeddah-KSA.

R/Q.5. Yes, it is designed according to the current needs.

R/Q.6. Not 100%, but digital material is used by the teachers in the classrooms and students utilize them mostly for assignment and extra activities.

R/Q.7. Yes.

R/Q.8. Nearly all of them submit.

R/Q.9. Yes, they have to conduct according to the schedule already fixed.

R/Q.10. yes, they do.

R/Q.11. yes, very much

Participant-6

R/Q.1. To offer short term diploma courses which offer faster recruitment as per the community needs.

R/Q.2. Yes, the applied colleges are fulfilling the need of job markets by teaching required English proficiency for specialty and job markets.

R/Q.3. yes, very much.

R/Q.4. Yes, the curriculum, textbooks were changed recently to meet the demand of the courses being taught at the applied college, Jeddah-KSA.

R/Q.5. Yes, it is designed according to the current needs.

R/Q.6. Not 100%, but digital material is used by the teachers in the classrooms and students utilize them mostly for assignment and extra activities.

R/Q.7. Yes, they access whenever required with username and codes.

R/Q.8. Yes, they do, except for a few who are not equipped with technology or lose their book passwords.

R/Q.9. It's a rule that one has to abide by.

R/Q.10. of course, yes

R/Q.11. yes, very much