Students' Awareness to Adapt with the Online Courses

by

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Abstract

Septy's preliminary study (2021) reported how students encounter some problems their online courses independently in order to meet the course objectives during the covid-19 pandemy happening from the first quarter of 2020 that suddenly removed the face-to-face traditional classroom to a purely online learning system, and anticipated some crucial strategies to overcome the problems in the learning activities to develop their understanding as well as competence to meet the objective of online courses. The students seemed to employ crucial ways of self-managed online learning along with the effects of (1) ICT availability in their residential areas, and (2) supporting learning cultures of social characteristics where they reside.

To compare, the current study identified how the students' efforts to establish their awareness and to adapt with the learning mode in continuing shocking moments. There are a number of awareness adaptations as the students establish to attain the learning objective, English Proficiency, in relation to the course characteristics.

A set of online questionnaires attached to the course semester review and evaluation was used to collect data. Data were collected from the students attending their online and some semi-online English related courses managed by the researcher at the Undergraduate Programs of Bung Hatta University English Education Department and IAIN Batusangkar Counseling Department, semester I of the 2021/2022 academic year (August 2021-Januari 2022). The collected data indicated how the students manage their learning indicating their awareness and adaptation to the learning situation to meet the objectives. Then, this study concluded aspects describing how the students manage their learning awareness to adapt with learning situations. The phenomena of students' learning awareness and adaptation has become of a special interest in the teaching-learning management in this continuing covid-19 pandemic era.

Key words: Online Learning System, Course Objectives, Self-Managed Learning, ICT, Covid-19 Pandemy, Learning Environment, Learning Awareness, Learning Adaptation, English Language Courses

I. Introduction

Quality human resources has become a pillar in Indonesia national development recently and the future. This is particularly important in encountering the 2045 golden time of 100 years of national independence since 1945. And, to attain this objective, education and training are of serious concern. Indonesia's human resources have to be managed to achieve a certain level of competence and performance to compete in the regional and global era.

The national system of education has prescribed the objectives of nation education. The national education aims at developing students' characters, intellectual, social, and spiritual competencies along with the attainment of various competitive skills needed in the current contexts. This attempt relates to developing better national welfare in this era (Decree number 20 of 2003, the National Education System). Therefore, various programs are managed to facilitate students as subjects of learning to develop their profile; developing competence and performance, building the national characters, while, on the other hand, teachers as the agents of changes should be capable to manage facilitating students to achieve the characters along with their competence and performance for the competition.

Mastering science and technology advancement are undeniable facts to enter the global competition. And, these have become serious concerns and issues in education and national development. Mastering science and technology become human capitals to attain better life and welfare in the current situation. Education, in particular, is a major need, so it has to be well managed by teachers and educational policy makers (government) in particular (Septy, 2014).

In spite of this, the covid-19 pandemy since the first quarter of 2020 has enforced changes in many aspects of human life including the education sector (Li & Lalani, 2020). In particular, the education sector has to reshape some adaptations on the teaching-learning methods and activities. The teaching-learning that was traditionally managed in face-to-face meetings must be then conducted in such online sessions using available technology devices. This is intended to prevent some direct contacts among teachers, students and other people that may harm their health and/or potentially spread the viruses from hand to hand. Consequently, this situation generates problems in the teaching-learning process (Abidah, et al 2020; Giatman, et al. 2020; Pokhrel. & Chhetri, 2021). Yet, this affects the learning achievement and the achievement of students' competence.

In such a sudden situation, there have been many learning turbulences, and this becomes a problem in education. The problem relates to how the learning objectives are achieved effectively, and how the teaching-learning is managed using technology that would develop students' competence as well as build characters according to the objectives of national education.

There are some indications showing hesitations on the technology advancement and development used in human life that may affect some learning cultures. Such hesitation is so-called technology disruption (UNESCO, 2021). The technology disruption could change human life styles that may contradict with cultural and norm values in the society. In spite of this, technological development may not be blamed; this is just because of the role of such technological advancement to improve the human quality of life. This is a very important issue that is how to manage technology for a better life. In this circumstance, although the technology is advanced, human beings have to be able to observe norms and culture reflecting the national characters that relate to the national economic, political, and social competition. This is then required in mastering science and knowledge as well as competitive skills. This covid-19 pandemy has seemed to teach Indonesians to manage the information and technology (IT) development to attain the national objectives of education, including competence standards setup in the subjects taught at schools. Therefore, this study relates to how the students indicate awareness to manage learning adaptation to achieve competence (English Proficiency) in their online course.

This study collected the data from students attending their online and semi-online courses managed by the researcher during the covid-19 pandemy at the Undergraduate Programs of Bung Hatta University English Education Department and IAIN Batusangkar Counselling Department, semester I of the 2021/2022 academic year (August 2021-Januari 2022). The data reflects how the students manage their online courses indicating their learning awareness and adaptation to the learning situation in order to meet the course objectives. A set of online questionnaires attached to the course final semester examinations was used to collect the data.

II. Online Courses and Online Learning System

2.1 Online Learning System

Basically, all learning systems are similar whether they are online or offline (face-to-face) modes, they relate to similar principles of learning. The system may differ if the online learning uses a certain *E-Learning* application or e-program such as Moodle, Google, and the like in some virtual classroom. On the other hand, offline learning employs direct so-called face-to-face meeting sessions in a traditional and physical classroom. In this circumstance,

students generate their lesson materials from teacher/instructor/lecturer directly, and if the students want to study more about their lesson materials, then they may proceed to the library to find references. The interactions happen spontaneously and directly in face-to-face contacts. The students may actively ask questions, raise their hands directly in the classroom, do some exercises or quizzes instructed by the teacher. In terms of the exercise or quizzes, the students may get some delayed feedback after the teacher completes correcting their works. Moreover, the students may not necessarily access their lesson materials from the online/internet based resources.

In such direct communication, the students and teacher are involved in some direct face-to-face meetings. All these meetings of teaching-learning activities happen in the physical classroom. This is so-far recognized as a learning communication. Such learning communication could lead to students' personality formation, as well as their knowledge and competence (skills), that is so-called communicative competence (Richards, 2006).

Such direct learning communication is similar in social communication (Mulyana, 2010). In this situation, communication plays its main role as an important medium to form personality in the society (Septy 2011). Through communication, the students may learn and develop their personality, find out values and develop personal integrity, manage social friendships, interact or debate, love and to be loved, and the like.

Communication is derived from *communicatio*. The *communicatio* relates to the word *communis* that means similar or similar meaning. Simply, the communication may be formulated as a process to transfer messages by codes from communicator to communicant.

In the current contexts of online learning, using instructional media may become an important means of learning communication, and this is a pillar in facilitating the teaching-learning process. The information-technology (IT) based media becomes the main means to manage interaction and communication in so-called virtual classrooms or e-classroom (Nair, et al. 2012; Septy 2015d; 2021). Several studies concluded the importance of using such IT based media in the online learning system, and that using the media successfully facilitates teaching-learning activities. Using the IT based media also facilitates students to develop their knowledge and understanding on concepts delivered by the teachers. As well, using the media may also assist the students to build character, learn awareness, manage learning activities, develop skills, and these happen during the meaningful e-learning interactions.

The IT based or e-learning media may also be used to control the students' learning activities. It could be operated by the operators (teacher and student) easily to access any necessary information and references for their study needs. In particular, the media is very essential to access English lesson materials and to practice English language skills from huge English learning resources worldwide.

There are several advantages of using the IT based media in the online learning system (Erben, et al. 2009; Thouësny & Bradley, 2011), such as (a) develop intensive interaction for self-managed learning activities, (b) develop remembering power, (c) facilitate learning experiences using digital texts, audios, and videos, animations, role models, and the like important to deliver information and science, and (d) ease and simply manage to deliver messages or learning materials/content, update materials, download and upload materials, send messages or respond to others, comments in group discussion or talk in the chat rooms, and last but not least, link to the wide video conference to meet others directly.

However, despite the advantages, there are also some disadvantages of using IT based media. The disadvantages relate to the limitation of the internet network system. In addition, limitations can also occur in the limitations of available e-learning applications, such as limited control features, limited data storage space, and so on. Online learning can be carried out properly as long as these weaknesses can be overcome.

In terms of goals, the online learning system could be considered more effective in achieving learning objectives. It is realised that the learning objectives or learning outcomes can be achieved more effectively and efficiently by utilising current technological advances (Bates, 2019). In this relation, there are three main components included in the online learning system; (a) learning models, (b) instructional and learning strategies, (c) online learning media. These three components form an interactive integrated network, which contains a learning model that resembles a social process, describes the design of the learning environment, and leads to the specification of instructional and learning strategies that specifically allow that learning is easy especially through the use of learning technology.

The online learning media equipped with controller or navigation tools may make learning activities easier for users (students and teachers) especially to present materials sequentially (Septy 2015b). In this instance, the learning and activity presentation could be organised accordingly. Presentations using media like this could be effective for a large

audience. And the presentation of learning materials could also be saved on some Compact Disks (CD).

Furthermore, based on a number of field surveys, there are several advantages of online learning media, such as (1) learning materials integrating knowledge and attitude, (2) flexible learning time, (3) controlled by the teacher / instructor, (4) unidirectional / linear learning, (5) selected information sources (edited) and adapted to needs, (6) widely open sources of information, (7) known technology used. In short, the online learning system is assumed to be able to guide students to achieve learning objectives as stipulated in the course curriculum. However, this assumption requires an assessment including how students organise their learning independently to achieve the learning objectives, particularly reflecting their awareness to adapt with the learning situation in order to manage their competency profile, in this case the competence of English as an international means of communication. This problem becomes an important study if it is associated with some constraints of the availability of facilities, in addition to the limited technological constraints in various places of the country sites.

2.2 Online Courses

There are 4 English related courses that have been studied in this study. The data of the courses were studied to identify how the students' adapted awareness looks when managing their online courses to achieve the course objectives. The online courses were administered at Universitas Bung Hatta dan IAIN Batusangkar where the researcher is also the lecturer for the course. The course objectives are presented in table 1.

Tabel 1: The Online Course Objectives (Current Study)

No.	Courses	Learning Outcome	Objectives
1.	Instructional Design	Professional in designing English learning courses	Develop the students' competencies in organising and managing English lessons
2.	IT Based Media for ELT	Manage IT based media in organising English lessons/materials	Develop the students' competencies in organising English lessons/ materials using IT based applications

3.	Listening to Monologues	Active listening skills of various topics	Develop the students' listening and responding skills in various issues/ topics
4.	English Daily Conversation	Active conversation/speaking skill in various topics	Develop the students' competencies in managing English conversations and talks in various topics/issues

To compare, the course objectives of preliminary study (Septy, 2021) are presented in table 2.

Tabel 2: The Online Course Objective (Preliminary Study of Septy, 2021)

No.	Courses	Learning Outcome	Objectives
1.	E-Learning for ELT	Professional in IT based teaching-learning management	Develop the students' competencies in managing information technology-based teaching-learning
2.	Genre-Based Reading	Critical thinkings of Current Issues	Develop the students' competencies in analysing texts of various issues (topics) to develop their critical thinkings
3.	Trends in Language Teaching	Professional in innovative teaching-learning management	Develop the students' competencies in analysing and practising innovative teaching-learning modes
4.	Computer Assisted Language Learning	Professional in IT based teaching-learning management	Develop the students' competencies in managing technology-based (computer or mobile based) teaching-learning

The courses are objective based, outlining students' competence as the learning outcomes. The learning outcomes reflect expected profiles of students to perform by the end of semester or by the end of their learning program.

To attain these purposes, each course formulates the course objective. The course objective relates to the level of competence to achieve by the students. The competence includes their mastery of the lesson materials, habit formation, developing practical skills as well entrepreneurships. The course objectives have to be synchronised with the students expected profile or learning outcomes (Perpres nomor 08 tahun 2012, Undang-undang Perguruan Tinggi Nomor 12 tahun 2012). In relation to these objectives, the students have been coached to understand the learning outcomes and objectives at the beginning of semester. They are also advised to anticipate possible efforts to achieve the objectives during

their online semester program. This is then assumed that the students are aware of their learning situation and to adapt their strategies in managing their learning activities.

2.3 English Language (Related) Courses

English Proficiency or English language skill, one of the compulsory subjects in the national education system and curriculum, cover integrated skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Uso'-Juan & Marti'nez-Flor, 2006; Richards, 2006; Arslan, 2008), aiming at attaining the objectives of national education. This English proficiency will determine the existence of Indonesia as an important nation in the global stage. As well, the English proficiency will consider that Indonesia has competitive human resources in the world community (Septy, 2015c). That is why, therefore, the English language is a very important lesson among other foreign languages. This English language should not only emphasise on the mastery of English linguistics, but most of which apply to acquisition and transferring of science and technology development. The English language mastery is also important to build national character, social sensitivity, national culture cares (multiculturalism), and the like that in turns develop a sense of nationalism (national development participation). In short, the English proficiency through the English language lesson at schools/campuses should lead students to cultivate social and cultural values, develop knowledge and mastery in science and technology. These issues, national character education in particular, recently became a trending topic in order to develop integrity, nationalism in students (Nieto, 2010; Kompas, 2011).

English language lessons should mean to infiltrate the influence of foreign culture to build value-based national characters. This subject is important to develop the national characters and integrity that cover the religious, social, and cultural values and norms (Septy, 2015a). By this way, the Indonesians are able to interact with the global community internationally. On the other hand, some cultural based English language lessons need to develop as a model of national development. In short, this shows some strategic attempts to develop better interactive and valuable English language teaching in Indonesia, following the advancement of science and technology.

2.4. Independent-Online Learning Adaptation

It is interesting to identify how students manage their online courses independently, including their awareness to adapt their learning situation to meet the course objectives. And this is the major concern in this study.

As reported in the preliminary study (Septy, 2021), there are two influential categories of which the students' efforts were identified to manage their online learning activities. First, their online learning activities relate to information Communication Technology (ICT) support. Second, there are also miscellaneous conditions including socio-cultural-environmental, economic, and personal motivational (interest) supports that contribute to their learning success. In short, there are a number of aspects that influenced the students' efforts that then reflect their awareness to adapt with online learning conditions, presented in table 3 and 4. Although there may be several more aspects to influence online learning, this study focuses on and limits to two interrelated components, and this paper discusses the two components as follows.

Tabel 3. The Problems Affecting Students on the Online Learning

No.	ICT	Other Supporting Condition
1.	Internet network,	Socio-Cultural Environment
2.	LMS apps/e-learning apps,	(Family) Financial Supports
3.	Design of Audio-Visual media/Materials	Personal Motivation

Tabel 4. Students' Awareness to Adopt with the Online Courses

Avai	lability of ICT (Based Media)	Awareness to Adopt with the Learning Situation
1.	Internet network,	 Optimize some fairly sufficient/available network Use family hotspot, if the connection is lost Find good spot somewhere around
2.	LMS apps/e-learning apps,	4) Use fairly sufficient apps, find/learn the easy use features of the apps5) Keep in the course orientation and the lesson material structure

3.	Design of Audio-Visual media/Materials	 6) Organize the learning materials fairly sufficiently in the mobile phone or laptop 7) Manage memory storage for assignments 8) Respond appropriately to the lesson materials that were arranged to ease learning and being satisfied 9) Watch related videos to understand the lessons
Other	Supporting Condition	
	Socio-Cultural Environment	 Generally seek support to learning (despite living in a densely populated area) Make comfortable environment to learning Manage online-offline group interactions and discussions
	(Family) Financial Supports	 4) Being significantly supported 5) Family support to learning by facilitating home wifi 6) Parents' support to buy internet quota 7) Make use of available scholarship resources
	Personal Motivation	 8) Strongly motivated to due family/parents understanding 9) Avoid boredom by reviewing objectives 10) Family quality time while doing online learning 11) Meet some friends living in the same residential area

2.4.1 The Independent ICT based Learning, Learning Adaptation and Awareness

ICT or information technology has been regarded as the main pillar supporting the implementation of online based learning in the university. The use of ICT is to mainly facilitate and optimise the achievement of learning goals. There are at least 3 components that are interrelated with the use of the information technology in education, namely (1) internet network, (2) LMS application, and (3) design (organisation of lecture material) audio-visual media (Septy, 2021). In this relation, some attempts have been identified to reflect the students' awareness of the online learning adaptation.

First, the availability of the internet network, especially students who live in remote rural areas with limited access, has been identified to encounter the main distractions in the online courses. Even though students tried to get the internet access in places where it is possible, the intermittent internet network seemed to be a complicated problem in their online learning participation. Moreover, the loads of assignments that could not only be completed

during the day, made students leave their house to access the internet network at night. This, among other things, causes delays in completing and submitting their assignments, which is a prerequisite for completing their courses.

In connection with the problem of the availability of the internet network, some students seemed to have to organise a strict schedule for their learning activities. The schedule aimed to regulate how they adapt the situation of online learning activities; 1) when they have to leave the house to access the network, either day or night, 2) when they have to read references and compile reports/summaries of lectures, 3) when they have to attend/attend face-to-face online lectures with lecturers, and 4) when they need time to rest. On the other hand, some problems also arise when they have to interact socially with fellow students in discussing/finishing group assignments. This then required a certain effort of adaptation which may sometimes be tiring. Collaboration of learning activities or so-called collaborative learning seems difficult to manage, even though collaborative learning is considered to be a successful learning model to attain the learning outcomes.

Second, using the LMS application is also important in achieving the students' online learning goals. There are many LMS applications available and used in teaching and learning, both paid and free LMS, including LMS provided by the campus. However, the use of LMS in online courses is very dependent on the habits of the lecturers towards the capacity of technology-based facilities/media to support the teaching needs. This means that not all learning application services can be used. This may be due to, among others, the limitations of the menu features and the available data storage space.

There are several disadvantages of LMS provided through the campus portal services or the e-campus system. Among the disadvantages are a) limited data storage space (tasks), b) inadequate audio or video features, or menu features that seemed to be complicated to operate. As a result, the use of such LMS must be combined with other social media such as whatsapps, line, and so on.

Besides, the use of LMS applications also depends much on the type of android-based gadget used by students. There are a number of devices ranging from mobile phones of 3G, 4G, and even 5G services, all of which affect the capacity of technology performance for online courses.

Third, the material design in the form of audio-visual presentation may also be an important component in the technology based media. The presentation of learning materials could attract students' interests in taking part in the online learning activities. The learning material design of an attractive presentation reflects a sense of art that can stimulate students' learning interest (Septy, 2015d).

While the lecturers present learning materials with audio-visual designs, the students are also required to explore references of more comprehensive explanations. Materials of attractive and comprehensive presentations and designs could be gathered from various online resources such as the YouTube channel.

Exploration of the lesson materials of this technology based media must also be under the control of the lecturer, so that students can be more focused in finding sources to complete their assignments. This is necessary to consider because not all of the online material meets the standard of the courses as specified in the curriculum. Therefore, the availability of comprehensive and appropriate learning materials has then limited the efforts to develop knowledge and skills according to the purpose of the courses. This then needs the students' awareness to adapt the ways they learn in such a pandemic situation.

2.4.2. Online-Independent Learning with Other Supporting Factors

There are some miscellaneous aspects that may relate to other supporting conditions in the online learning activities (Septy, 2021). These aspects seemed to affect the students' efforts to achieve the goals reflecting their awareness to adapt with pandemic learning situations. Among other aspects include (1) the socio-cultural environment, (2) the economic power of the family, (3) self-motivation. Although these three aspects appear to be separate from the technological factor as discussed in the previous section, these in fact are an inseparable part of the efforts for the students to manage their online learning. The current study identified how such factors have been managed to indicate the students' awareness to adapt in the online learning activities.

First, the socio-cultural environment where students live is an important aspect that also influences efforts to do online learning independently. Although this socio-cultural aspect may not be the main determinant of student success, the disruption and/or support of

this aspect could make a significant contribution to their achievement of learning/course objectives. Their social relations of friendship among groups, for example, become the impetus to make students learn. Group learning activities or discussions both online and offline, if fellow students are in the same area/city, become a motivating factor for them to carry out learning activities. Such a social interaction becomes a basic need even in online learning activities.

Moreover, the learning culture of the student's social environment is also a determining factor. Many students are in an unsupportive social environment, such as a) villages that are far from urban areas, b) excessively restrictive local customs and regulations which are considered irrelevant to their needs of the times and the implementation of online learning, and c) areas of lack infrastructure capacity such as underdeveloped areas. There are some students, for example, who are very active and smart in their offline/face-to-face learning activities like before this pandemic, but then in fact they are left behind and less active during online/independent learning activities in that semester. Therefore, such sociocultural conditions could be categorised as a critical factor in the students' success of learning.

Second, the family economy is an aspect that also affects the students' efforts to achieve learning objectives in the pandemic context of the online courses. In general, the economic level of the families of students could be categorised in the middle to lower position. Most of the students' tuition fees are fully supported by their respective parents. Although there are a small number of students who receive scholarship funds from various sources, they generally come from the middle to lower economic category. Some of the students get the scholarships due to their previous academic achievement because they are limited from adequate economic support from their parents.

There seem several indications of the influence of the family's economic capacity, and this may affect to the students' efforts to achieve optimal learning outcomes in the context of this study. The first indication could be seen from their purchasing power or ownership of facilities such as android mobile phone or gadgets to carry out the independent online learning activities. There were found that the students had to share such facilities with their younger siblings or parents in using the device when taking part in the online courses. The second indication could be seen from the limited internet quota or internet network access that they have to pay for, in addition to the ownership of these facilities. The students and/or

their families had to subscribe to wifi, aiming to make it easier to access whatever learning materials are, so that they had to struggle to fulfil the needs and to carry out their online learning activities. On the other hand, some of the students had to buy internet quota at all times due to the absence of wifi facility and/or financial constraints to purchase a long range internet access. In short, all of these things are related to the level of parental economic support, which in turn could affect the students' achievement of learning objectives. Despite the students' awareness of the learning situation, their efforts seem to adapt with such situational learning conditions in order to achieve optimal results as their learning objectives set up in the courses.

Third, self-motivation also appears to play an important role in achieving these independent online learning goals. The motivation contains an element of energy that provides impetus to learning activities carried out by students. This motivation is based on personal awareness of the ideals to be perfectly realised through available learning mechanisms, both online and offline, in addition to technology-based media.

The students' motivation is also indicated by their understanding of the objectives of each course they are taking. Some students did not seem to understand the purpose and objectives of the courses, even though the objectives for each course had been explained at the beginning of the semester course. Each course must be explained by the lecturer, including the learning contract, at the beginning of the semester. However, due to various obstacles, i.e. absence and internet access, some students did not seem to take this introductory session at the beginning of the semester, thus causing them not to understand the purpose and objectives of the course properly. This is then like a devil circle in that some students did not submit their assignments according to the specified time/schedule. This, then, indicates the students' motivation in attending the online course so that they fail to achieve the specified learning goals.

Motivation containing potential energy has the driving force in every human being. Many studies have explained the relationship between motivation and learning achievement (Hariri et al., 2021). This motivation can be distinguished into internal and external motivation. Internal motivation is self-awareness of the goals to be achieved based on an understanding of the online learning system. Meanwhile, external motivation is an external influence that becomes the driving element of enthusiasm in learning activities such as the influence of friends or other people, and stimulation of infrastructure facilities. In short, the

role of motivation becomes an inseparable part of the students to drive their potential energy that then encourages the students to carry out their learning activities toward the goals to be achieved.

III. Conclusion

This paper has discussed some further investigation of comparing the preliminary study identifying the students' problems in doing their online learning since the beginning of shocking covid-19 pandemy in order to achieve the course objectives, and how the students become aware of to adapt with the online learning in the continuing situation. In this context, they had to manage their efforts to make their learning possible. This is of the research interest how such Covid-19 pandemic situation had made the students adapt and learn to manage learning and to achieve the course goals, while they were limited by the sudden access to the normal learning rooms. The learning activities with the face-to-face (offline) system they used to participate in have turned into sudden online courses of the IT based media using various media devices and applications. In such conditions, educational problems arise, while this study reflects the students' awareness to adapt and to manage their online learning activities. In short, this study is closely related to some influential aspects in the students' efforts to develop their competence of the respective course and to internalise characters according to the objective of national education.

This study identified how students adapt to reflect their learning awareness in their online courses to achieve the objectives. The online courses were administered at Universitas Bung Hatta dan IAIN Batusangkar where the researcher is also the lecturer for the course. The data of this study were based on a set of questionnaires attached to their final assignments/examination at the end of semester. There are 4 English related courses that the data have been collected and analysed in this current study. To compare, a preliminary study (Septy, 2021) identified problems of students' online learning activities from the beginning of 2002 pandemy to the mid of 2021 in connection with (1) the use of information technology, and (2) the support of the cultural environment/learning constraints in various places, and the current study describes how the students adapt with online learning situations to achieve the goals in the two perspectives.

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