The Effectiveness of "Learn Social" Platform for Students' Writing Skill at Universitas Sumatera Utara

M. Rizky Unedo Situmorang[1], Rudy Sofyan[2], Desri Maria Sumbayak[3]

[1]*Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Sumatera Utara, Indonesia*
rizkyunedo@gmail.com
[2]*Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Sumatera Utara, Indonesia*
rudy@usu.ac.id
[3]*Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Sumatera Utara, Indonesia*
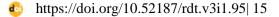desrisumbayak@gmail.com

Abstract

The study attempts to find out the effectiveness of an online learning platform provided by the English Department language center at Universitas Sumatera Utara regarding to the English Literature class of 2018 students' writing skill. The thesis was conducted by analyzing the result of the questionnaire given to the students via google form. The research used the qualitative descriptive method and the indicators proposed by Slavin. Based on the questionnaire result, it showed that Learn Social online platform is effective for students' writing skill. It is shown through the students' feedback by answering the questionnaire where the result is positive. The indicators used in order to measure the effectiveness of the online platform are instruction, the appropriate level of instruction, incentive, and time where all four of the indicators get a positive result.

Keywords: language use, Learn Social, online platform, vocabulary, writing skill

Efektifitas Platform *Learn Social* bagi Keterampilan Menulis Mahasiswa di Universitas Sumatera Utara

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mencari tahu keefektifan dari sebuah media belajar daring yang disediakan oleh Pusat Bahasa di Universitas Sumatera Utara untuk mahasiswa Sastra Inggris angkatan 2018 mengenai keterampilan menulis mereka dalam bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan cara menganalisis hasil dari kuesioner yang telah diberikan kepada mahasiswa Sastra Inggris 2018 melalui google form. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dan juga indikator yang diusulkan oleh Slavin. Berdasarkan hasil dari kuesioner, dapat disimpulkan bahwa Learn Social efektif untuk kemampuan menulis mahasiswa. Hal ini dapat dilihat dari masukan yang telah diberikan oleh mahasiswa dengan menjawab pertanyaan-pertanyaan yang telah diberikan kepada mereka melalui bentuk kuesioner dimana hasil yang diberikan positif. Indikator yang digunakan dalam menentukan keefektifan dari media belajar daring ada empat yaitu instruction, appropriate level of instruction, incentive, dan time dimana hasil dari keempat indikator tersebut positif menyatakan bahwa Learn Social efektif.

Kata kunci: keterampilan menulis, kosa kata, Learn Social, penggunaan bahasa, platform daring

INTRODUCTION

According to Rivers (1981: 294, in Sari, 2017), writing was conveying information or expression of original ideas in a consecutive way in the new language. Writing is an important part when it comes to communication. Having a good writing skill allows us to deliver our message clearly for a bigger audience because a written form of communication can be read anywhere and anytime. We can transmit and explore ideas, thoughts, and feelings in a written form. It demands us to conduct a number of processes especially in revising to make a grammatically correct text because the writing must be in the form of a readable text that has meaning to whoever reads the writing.

One of the study forms of writing used in Universitas Sumatera Utara is through an application of technology that is used to teach and study English which is an online platform called Learn Social. Learn social is one of the online learning platform media. It is provided by Social Learning and organized by the Language Center at the University of Sumatera Utara. This platform can be accessed on https://speakingclass.learnsocial.online/platform. The platform incorporates common networking methods as well as peer review into English classes. Students

email their work to their Study Group for review if they have to complete a speaking or writing exercise.

As a student from the English Department of Universitas Sumatera Utara, the writer is eager to find out how effective the platform is especially during this pandemic that requires everyone to do activities remotely. However, when using online platforms, students are expected for their own ability to learn and develop their skills from the platform because not all students have the same level or skill to learn all by themselves especially in an indirect method of learning such as using online learning platforms. The research aims to find out the effectiveness and accuracy of using the Learn Social online platform to study English, especially in writing.

METHOD

This study used the result of the questionnaires that were given to the respondents as the source of data, which was acquired from the students of English Literature class of 2018 at Universitas Sumatera Utara. The participants were the students from English Literature class of 2018. The data were taken from 75% of the total population of the students from English Literature class of 2018.

The population of this study is all English Literature 2018 students, which is estimated to total 132 students. A random sampling method was used in this study in order to obtain samples. Therefore, the writer intended to take a sample of around 75% of the 132 students from English Literature class of 2018 which leads to around 90 students that were involved in acquiring this sample considering some students were no longer active and some other did not respond at all.

The information regarding to this study was collected in a form of questionnaires via google forms. A closed questionnaire was used by the writer in this research. For this type of questionnaire, the answers had already been provided and the respondents just needed to choose. The writer elaborated the questions based on the indicators and parameters that were used in this study. Self-efficacy theory is applied to the questionnaire to find out the effectiveness of using the learn social platform according to the students who have accessed and used it. The General Self-Efficacy Scale was the source and the role model of the questionnaire in measuring the self-efficacy of the students. This theory was proposed by Bandura (1997, in Efendi, 2013) which is the self-efficacy theory, which the writer will modify.

This questionnaire consisted of four statements, each of which has four possible responses: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. There is no need to use a neutral response in this case in order to avoid perception bias which can be very difficult to make an objective judgement about members of diverse groups. The outcomes of these questionnaires were then used to consider how effective the use of Learn Social is based on the indicators or criteria.

The first step in the data collection process is to distribute questionnaires to the respondents. The respondents were the students of Universitas of Sumatera Utara from English Literature class of 2018. Next, the data collected by the researcher by circulating questionnaires and then summarizing, selecting, and concentrating information on the topics that are relevant to the study goals was reduced. This process is also known as data condensation and it was done to achieve the result or outcome of the questionnaires by choosing the dominant answer from the questionnaire's result. The researcher conducted information discounting at this point by filtering, categorizing, and summarizing the questionnaire's results. After the information was reduced or summarized, the data display was presented. The information gathered from the questionnaire responses was evaluated and presented in a table. Data is presented in a table format so that researchers can quickly and easily to interpret it.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data which has been obtained based on the result of the questionnaire will be presented in this chapter. The questions to the research have clearly stated the objective of the study by using the four indicators of the effectiveness of learning by Slavin (2000, in Azizah, et. al, 2018) which are instruction, the appropriate level of instruction, incentive, and time.

Table 1. Instruction of Learn Social Online Platform

Indicators	Questionnaires	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Instruction	The instruction provided by *Learn Social* has effectively improved my knowledge.	0	15.5%	49.5%	35.1%
	The instruction provided by *Learn Social* has been able to help improve my writing fluency.	1%	20.6%	49.5%	28.9%
	The instruction given on *Learn Social* is clear to me.	3.1%	14.4%	49.5%	33%
	The information given on *Learn Social* is easy for me to understand.	2.1%	19.6%	43.3%	35.1%

Instruction is an indicator that offers info or abilities for students so students can simply study the material. Table 1 shown that the indicator of instruction from Learn Social online learning platform is quite effective for improving students' knowledge. The table has shown that 49.5% of the respondents agree and even 35.1% of the respondents strongly agree. The second indicator shows similarity with the previous indicator where 49.5% of the respondents agree. The third indicator also shows that 49.5% of the respondents chose to agree and it is still the same result from the previous indicator part. 33% of the respondents chose to strongly agree. The last indicator shows 43.3% of the respondents chose to agree, 35.1% of the respondents chose to strongly agree.

From the analysis above, we can conclude that the instruction of Learn Social online platform is effective to improve the students' knowledge especially in writing. It has effectively helped the students improve their writing fluency. Based on the result of the questionnaire, the majority chose to agree and some even chose to strongly agree that the instruction is clear and the information give is also easy to understand.

Table 2. Appropriate Level of Instruction of Learn Social Online Platform

Indicators	Questionnaires	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Appropriate level of instruction	New material provided by *Learn Social* is easy and effective to access.	1%	15.5%	46.4%	37.1%
	Learn Social has improved my level of knowledge on new material.	0%	13.4%	57.7%	28.9%
	I am always ready for the new writing material given on *Learn Social.*	0%	19.6%	46.4%	34%
	Every new material given by *Learn Social* has effectively helped me expand my vocabulary.	0%	15.5%	48.5%	36.1%

This is the level in which the lecturers ensure that students are prepared to learn new materials.Table 2 shows that new materials which are provided by Learn Social is effective and interestingly three parts of this indicator have 0% of respondents that chose to strongly disagree. 46.4% of the respondents chose to agree and 37.1% of the respondents even chose to strongly agree. The second indicator shows 57.7% chose to agree and 28.9% chose to strongly agree. Also, the majority of the respondents chose to agree that they are always ready for the new writing material given on Learn Social. We can see that the table shows 46.4% of

the respondents chose to agree and 34% of the respondents chose to strongly agree. The last part shows that this part is effective based on the result shown in the table where the respondents that agree is 48.5% and even 36.1% chose to strongly agree.

Based on the analysis of the data above, it can be concluded that the appropriate level of instruction of Learn Social online learning platform is effective especially in accessing new materials and improving their knowledge in new materials and it is also easy to access. The result also shows that the platform is effective to expand the students' vocabulary. The students also agree that they are always ready for the new writing material given on the platform. However, interestingly, 19.6% chose to disagree that they are always ready for it.

Table 3. Incentive of Learn Social Online Platform

Indicators	Questionnaires	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Incentive	Lecturers' feedbacks or suggestions on any material given through *Learn Social* are very motivating.	1%	17.5%	42.3%	39.2%
	My writing ability has significantly improved as a result of the motivation and suggestions given by the lecturers on *Learn Social*.	0%	20.6%	49.5%	29.9%
	My vocabulary has been effectively improved thanks to motivation and feedback from lecturers on *Learn Social*.	1%	15.5%	52.6%	30.9%
	My language use has been effectively improved thanks to motivation and feedback from lecturers on *Learn Social*.	1%	15.5%	48.5%	35.1%

This indicator refers to the proportion of effort the teacher has put forth and created to encourage students to complete assignments and learn the material that has been provided. The more motivation is given, the better the student activity becomes. Table 3 shows that the majority of the respondents chose to agree and thus, we can conclude that the incentive indicator of Learn Social online platform is effective and also motivating. The encouragement, motivation, and suggestion from the lecturers are able to improve the knowledge and skill of the students especially regarding to their writing skill. This is made possible because the platform provides a comment section where the students can see the feedback from the lecturers such as criticism, motivation, and recommendation when the students submit or send

their assignments to the platform. We can see from the table 42.3% of the respondents chose to agree and 39.2% of them chose to strongly agree.

The next section discusses about whether or not the students' writing ability has significantly improved as a result of the motivation and suggestions given by the lecturers on Learn Social. The table shows that 49.5% of the respondents chose to agree and 29.9% of the respondents chose to strongly agree. Motivation and feedback from lecturers that are given on Learn Social have also been able to help students improve their vocabulary. The table shows that 52.6% of the respondents chose to agree that lecturers' motivation and feedback has helped them improve their vocabulary and even better, 30.9% of the respondents chose to strongly agree. Language use is similar to the previous part of the indicator where the lecturers give their feedback and motivation on Learn Social online platform. Students can see the difference between writing formally and informally on the platform so they can improve and boost for better language use. Based on the result shown in the table, 48.5% of the respondents chose to agree and 35.1% of the respondents chose to strongly agree.

Based on the analysis which has been done above, we can draw a conclusion that in this indicator of incentive of the online learning platform Learn Social is effective. The encouragement, feedback, motivation, and suggestion that the lecturers give through the online platform are very motivating and take effect in improving their writing ability and vocabulary.

Table 4. Time Use of Learn Social Online Platform

Indicators	Questionnaires	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Time	The use of time in learning writing via *Learn Social* has been very effective.	2.1%	19.6%	51.5%	26.8%
	I have been able to develop my writing skill by taking a weekly writing course via *Learn Social.*	1%	21.6%	53.6%	23.7%
	I have been able to develop my writing vocabulary by taking a weekly writing course via *Learn Social.*	2.1%	17.5%	57.7%	22.7%
	The deadline given for the assignments on *Learn Social* has been very effective.	4.1%	13.4%	47.4%	35.1%

This indicator is called time and it refers to the amount of time that has been given to students to learn the content. When students are able to complete their

work according to the schedule that has been given and also enhance their skill and knowledge level in the limited given time, then the study can be considered successful.

Table 4 shows that the use of time in learning writing via Learn Social has been very effective. 51.5% chose to agree and 26.8% chose to strongly agree. Time use is one of the essential things in study activity especially when it is done via an online platform but based on the result shown above, it can be concluded that the time use in learning via Learn Social is effective. The next section of this indicator is the time for the writing course that is done weekly via Learn Social online platform in developing and improving the students' writing skill. The amount number of respondents that chose to agree is 53.6%.

The students have also been able to develop their vocabulary by taking the course once a week. It is based on the fact that has been served in the table above where the majority of the respondents chose to agree where 57.7% of the respondents chose to agree. New vocabularies can be earned in a writing course via the online platform. This is made possible by the lecturers for the lecturers use new words to explain new things based on the material that is currently being taught. These new words can then add up the students' new vocabulary. Having a rich vocabulary will also improve the writing skill.

The deadline given for the assignments on Learn Social can also be said effective. Deadline is important for students because Learn Social gave a time limit in order to collect their assignments and students cannot just submit their assignments whenever they want at their will. Based on the table above, we can literally see that 47.4% of the respondents chose to agree and 35.1% of them chose to strongly agree.

As we can see from the analysis above, we can draw a conclusion that the time use of Learn Social is effective. The majority of the respondents agree that the use of time in learning writing via Learn Social by taking it weekly is effective and they have been able to improve their vocabulary writing skill. The deadline for the tasks that is given on the platform is also effective and they can improve their knowledge in writing.

CONCLUSION

Upon the completion of the analysis, the writer discovered that Learn Social online platform is effective for English Literature students class of 2018 in all

indicators that were proposed by Slavin (2000) which are the instruction, appropriate level of instruction, incentive, and time.

The instruction indicator of the effectiveness of learning is effective to improve the students' writing skill as well as their knowledge. The majority of the students also chose to either agree or strongly agree which strengthens the evidence that in this indicator, the platform is proven to be effective including the information and the instruction.

The appropriate level of instruction indicator has also shown a positive result. New material provided by Learn Social is also proven to be easy and effective to access as well as in improving their knowledge on the new materials. The students also gave a positive result where they are always ready for the new writing material given on Learn Social. Every new material given on the platform also helped them expand their vocabulary.

The incentive indicator of the platform also shows a positive result. Students agree that lecturers' feedbacks or suggestions are motivating. Not only is it motivating, but it also improved their writing ability. It is also effective for the students in order for them to expand their vocabulary and language use. It means that the incentive indicator of Learn Social is indeed effective.

Time is the fourth indicator of the effectiveness of learning. The use of time of the platform is proven to be effective. The result shows that the students have been able to develop their writing skills and vocabulary by taking a weekly course on Learn Social. The result shows that the students agree that the use of time once a week for the course is effective for their writing skill. The deadline given for the assignment on Learn Social is also proven to be effective. With that being said, the time indicator of Learn Social is proven to be effective.

REFERENCES

Azizah, L., Mannahali, M., & Asri, W. K. (2018). The Effectiveness of "Sprachlabor" to Media Skills (Hörvestehen) German Language Students of German Language Education. *The 65th TEFLIN International Conference*.

Efendi, R. (2013). Self Efficacy: Studi Indigenous pada Guru Bersuku Jawa. *Journal of Social and Industrial Psychology*.

Psychodynamic Perspectives on Personality. (n.d.). Retrieved January 2021, from Lumen Boundless Psychology: https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-psychology/chapter/psychodynamic-perspectives-on-

personality/#:~:text=Sigmund%20Freud%3A%20Freud%20developed%20the, id%2C%20ego%2C%20and%20superego.

Sari, M. A. (2017). Students' Response of Teacher's Written Feedback on. *English Education: Jurnal Tadris Bahasa Inggris*.

Writing Skills. (n.d.). Retrieved December 2020, from Skills You Need: https://www.skillsyouneed.com/writing-skills.html