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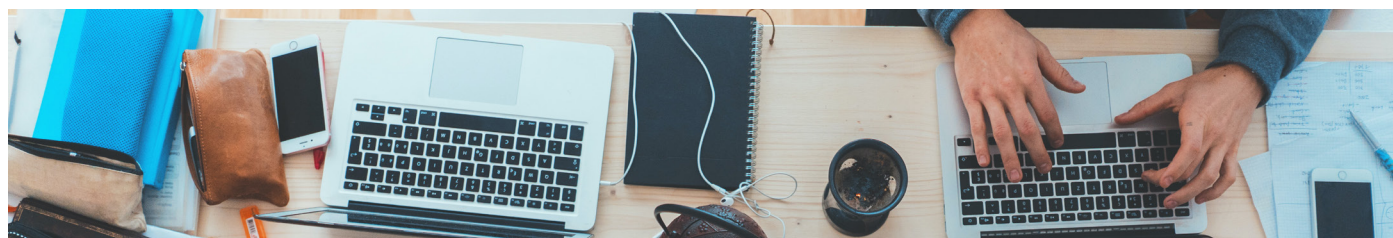
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Perceptions of emergency remote teaching tools used during Covid-19 online teaching by an Israeli English for Academic Purpose (EAP) department

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Abstract

The spring 2020 Covid-19 pandemic caused a rapid transition to emergency remote teaching (ERT) in higher education across the world. This study examined teacher and student perceptions on technological tools used for ERT in an Israeli English for Academic Purposes (EAP) department with the aim to reflect and improve the use of these tools in practice in future semesters. Surveys of EAP teachers and students were conducted to examine the perceived effectiveness of technological teaching and communication tools as well as the support the teachers received during ERT. Teachers and students agreed that learning management system (LMS) quizzes and emails were effective learning and communication tools, but differed on the effectiveness of videoconferencing, recorded videos, personal phone calls and text messaging. Teachers felt constant positive support from each other in the EAP department. To improve effectiveness of these technological tools, higher student buy-in of these tools is needed, especially for videoconferencing.

Keywords

emergency remote teaching;
online teaching; social practice;
EAP; EFL

Citation

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1. Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic swept the globe in the spring of 2020, forcing a rapid transition from face-to-face or blended teaching to emergency remote teaching (ERT) in higher education (HE) institutions across the world (Bao, 2020; Hodges et al., 2020; Skulmowski & Rey, 2020). At a local academic college in Israel, on March 13, 2020, the third day of the semester, all courses, including English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses, moved online for the rest of the semester. While the EAP department had previously developed two blended courses, this was the first time all courses needed to be fully online. The staff worked together to create emergency remote learning courses for all levels. Throughout the semester, together and individually, the English teachers incorporated old and new technological tools for teaching and communication practices in the fully online environment. The end of the semester provided an opportunity to examine teacher and student perceptions on the technological tools used during the Covid-19 emergency (Trust & Whalen, 2020). This study aimed to determine from the teachers' and students' perceptions which technological tools worked, which didn't, what can be incorporated into blended or face-to-face courses and what can be used again in future ERT situations. In addition, this study examined the departmental and institutional support the EAP staff received during this transition.

2. Literature Review

This literature review first outlines the research on the challenges of online teaching, including for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and EAP, to provide general background. Next, emergency remote teaching is defined and differentiated from online teaching to explain the context of the study. Finally, the social practice theoretical framework of this study is described.

2.1 Online teaching – general and EFL

Research on the best practices for online teaching has expanded rapidly over the last two decades. Research into online learning has shown that best practices depend on many factors, including course type (blended or fully online), instructor and student roles, and subject domain (Means et al., 2014). Successful online learning is not just transmitting content digitally, but also facilitating meaningful interaction between students, content and instructors to enrich the learning process and increase attainment of learning outcomes (Bernard et al., 2009). Research has

shown that high-quality online courses take six months to a year to develop and teachers need training and experience to successfully build and facilitate online learning (Hodges et al., 2020).

While the literature has shown that high-quality online learning can be as effective as face-to-face instruction (Hodges et al., 2020), there are several challenges to moving online for teachers. A meta-analysis of online teaching issues found numerous challenges for instructors. The ones relevant for this study included the role transition from lecturer to facilitator, the transition of course content to online delivery, and communication barriers (Kebritchi et al., 2017). To overcome these challenges, HE institutions need to “provide professional development for online instruction, training for students and adequate support for technical issues” (Kebritchi et al., 2017, p. 22).

2.2 Online teaching – EFL and EAP

EAP is a less researched subset of the EFL field, especially in the online domain. Therefore, this literature review will examine research on online and blended EFL research in general and then focus on EAP research. Research on online and blended EFL learning has produced similar findings as described in the above paragraphs. The literature has established that teachers and students have positive perspectives of blended and online EFL courses, and these courses produce comparable results to face-to-face courses (Altay & Altay, 2019; Harker & Koutsantoni, 2005; Stanchevici & Siczek, 2019; Vorobel & Kim, 2012; Wang et al., 2019). Studies have shown that although many students prefer face-to-face courses, believing that in-person contact with the teacher leads to better understanding, other students prefer the flexibility and convenience of online courses (Stanchevici & Siczek, 2019; Wright, 2017). Quality language distance learning requires teacher preparation, student-centered instruction and support, collaboration between teacher and students, and clear workload expectations (Vorobel & Kim, 2012). Scholars cite the lack of preparation and training for EFL online teaching as barriers to online implementation (Altay & Altay, 2019; Dashtestani, 2014).

Two studies found that fully online EAP courses that were planned in advanced produced comparable achievement and satisfaction results as blended or face-to-face models but had contrasting retention rates (Harker & Koutsantoni, 2005; Stanchevici & Siczek, 2019). The low retention rate in one course was attributed to the non-credit status of the course, while the high retention rate of the other course was attributed to a diverse number of

thoughtfully embedded interactive elements and multiple lines of communication.

Overall, the literature demonstrates that online learning, in general and for EFL, can produce similar results to face-to-face courses with proper preparation and clear prior expectations for staff and students.

2.3 Emergency remote teaching

The rapid movement to online teaching due to Covid-19 cannot be compared to well-planned, high-quality online teaching (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020; Hodges et al., 2020). While several terms have been used in the literature to describe this swift transition to online teaching because of emergency external circumstances, the term popular in the educational technology field has been “emergency remote teaching” (ERT) (Bond et al., 2021; Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020; Hodges et al., 2020). While the Covid-19 pandemic may be the first time in modern history to witness a global shift to ERT, natural disasters, war, and civil unrest and protests have forced educational institutions to utilize ERT at a local or regional level before the Covid-19 pandemic, highlighting the determination of educators to continue to teach despite the complex and challenging task of transition to remote teaching with no preparation time, a lack of resources, and conflicting political and civil pressures (Czerniewicz et al., 2019; Davies & Bentrovato, 2011).

Early in the Covid-19 pandemic, recommendations arose in the literature suggesting that ERT should focus on communication with and support of students and less on learning outcomes because it lacks the planning and design of online learning (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020; Gacs et al., 2020). Additionally, ERT research should reflect on what practices and technological tools worked in communicating, supporting and teaching students in the local context, what can be integrated into face-to-face or blended courses and how to prepare faculty for future ERT situations (Hodges et al., 2020; Trust & Whalen, 2020).

A growing literature on the first months of ERT (from March 2020–September 2020) highlights the diversity of experience based on local context due to inequality in resources, especially access to internet and appropriate devices, albeit primarily focusing on student perspectives (Bond et al., 2021). Two literature reviews covering empirical research from the first months of ERT (Bond et al., 2021; Stewart, 2021) show that while there were some positive experiences, most teachers and students reported negative perceptions of ERT due to technical obstacles (internet and device access), lack of preparation and digital skills of both

teachers and students, and the mental stress of the pandemic. According to Bond et al. (2021), the most frequently used technology tools were “synchronous collaboration tools” (i.e. videoconferencing tools) (Bower, 2016), learning management systems (LMS), and text based tools (i.e. emails and text messaging). Much of the adoption of technology tools seemed to be an attempt to replicate the face-to-face classroom, with an emphasis on maintaining the personal connection between teachers and students.

Research concerning EFL courses during the shift to ERT echoes the findings on ERT in higher education in general as described above. The literature shows that students preferred technology tools and devices that were familiar for communication, such as messaging tools and smartphones, and LMS for accessing language learning material (Amin & Sundari, 2020; Huang et al., 2020). Additionally, teachers seemed to struggle in choosing which technology tools or apps to use in teaching, especially when there was a lack of guidance from their institutions, leading to switching between platforms over the semester (Amin & Sundari, 2020; Huang et al., 2020; Ulla & Perales, 2021). Like the general ERT literature reviews mentioned in the paragraph above, EFL students and teachers saw some benefits in ERT but the majority missed face-to-face learning and confronted multitudes of challenges. Teachers in Ulla and Perales’s (2021) study overcame the challenges of ERT through participating in an online community of practice (CoP) which provided a place to receive guidance about and solutions for pedagogical issues that arose during the shift to ERT.

To prepare for the implementation of ERT in future uncertainties, both teacher and student perceptions on technology tools used in ERT must be understood within local contexts, it is not enough to research just student perceptions. Additionally, understanding how best to support teachers during a shift to ERT, such as through a CoP can contribute to successful ERT implementation in the future.

2.4 Theoretical framework

This study employs a social practice perspective of HE institutions where practice is the unit of social analysis (Reckwitz, 2002; Saunders et al., 2011). A practice is a “routinized type of behavior” performed by an individual who becomes a “carrier” of practice (Consalvo et al., 2015, p. 3; Reckwitz, 2002, p. 250). An essential component of many practices are tools. Some practices demand using tools in a particular way, such as using videoconferencing to teach, or a tool can shape practice, such as a LMS quiz limiting the type of questions given (Bamber et al., 2009; Reckwitz, 2002, p. 252). Due to the limited time and space

of this study, the unit of social analysis will be the technological tools used in ERT.

Social groups can be delineated by clusters of practices, including tool use, that are shared and developed among group members. Wenger-Trayner (2015) refer to these social groups as communities of practice (CoP). CoPs can contribute to teacher professional development through reflective interactions over teaching tools and practices, however professional guidance, institutional support and time enhance the effectiveness of CoPs (Chien, 2018; Goodyear, 2017; Jiang et al., 2013; Karen, 2019). Despite recognizing the benefits of CoPs, lack of time, schedule conflicts, and power dynamics limit teachers' abilities to form and utilize CoPs (Jiang et al., 2013; Rahman, 2019).

A major critique of CoPs is the lack of contextual considerations, such as power relationships or institutional pressures (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2004). Trowler (2019) addresses these criticisms of CoPs in his teaching and learning regime (TLR) framework for HE institutions. TLRs "consist of a family of social practices performed by workgroups over an extended period of time" in a local context that are nestled within a larger system of social practices of the HE institution (pg. 157). The TLR framework allows for an examination of social practices within a department or workgroup, e.g. an EAP department, while still considering the local cultural and institutional context. Based on the importance of context in this study, the use of "workgroup" will be used throughout the study instead of "CoP" when referring to the social group of EAP teachers who shared and developed teaching practices in an Israeli academic college.

This study follows a self-evaluation model where practitioners reflect and improve on tools and practices for themselves or their specific workgroup. This author of this research teaches in the EAP department under study and undertook this study with the aim to reflect on the technological tools used during ERT to improve practice in the future for this specific workgroup. Self-evaluations are self-driven where practitioners choose what to evaluate and how to do so (Saunders et al., 2011). Since the self-evaluation comes from within a workgroup, the outcomes are more likely to be taken seriously and lead to changes in practice within the workgroup (Saunders et al., 2011). The social practice perspective of this self-evaluation guided the development of the research questions and methodology.

3. Research questions

New technology tools were adopted by an EAP department at an Israeli academic college during the shift to ERT because of Covid-19. This study examined the perceived effectiveness of these tools by teachers and students with the aim to provide guidance in how to best integrate these technological tools into future practice. The study aimed to answer the following questions:

- Which technological tools did teachers and students in an Israeli academic college perceive as effective for teaching/learning and communication purposes in EAP courses?
- Which technological tools do EAP teachers in an Israeli academic college think they will continue using in regular face-to-face or blended EAP courses?
- To what extent did this EAP workgroup perceive support from each other and the administration in integrating new technology tools into their practice during the spring 2020 semester?

4. Methodology

This section describes the research paradigm, the research context, data collection methods, the participants, and data analysis methods.

4.1 Research paradigm

This study employed a pragmatic approach within a small-scale exploratory research design. Pragmatism emphasizes action in the always changing world. The flexibility of this approach allows the researcher to ask research questions that focus on informing practice by utilizing research methods that "work", without being bound by a specific methodology or methods (Cohen et al., 2013; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Pragmatism is an appropriate choice for this study since the aims are to examine teacher and student perception of technological tools use during the chaos of ERT and the impact of these tools on the teachers' workgroup within a limited time frame.

4.2 Research context

The Israeli Higher Education Council (CHE), the authority body of higher education in Israel which creates nationwide HE policy, mandates that all undergraduate students reach a specific level (CEFR B2 equivalent) by graduation to earn a diploma. For students who do not meet this

requirement upon entry into higher education must take up to four compulsory non-credit EAP courses, depending on their level. The four levels of EAP courses mainly focus on reading comprehension. This study focused on an EAP department at a small rural academic college in Israel (3000 undergraduate students) which attracts a diverse student body (Jews, Arabs, Druze, secular, religious and other minorities) from across the country. Each year, about 35% of undergraduate students at this college take EAP courses to fulfil their English graduation requirement. At the time of this study, the EAP department consisted of 15 teachers, including the author, who worked together formally and informally to develop new materials and teaching practices, forming a departmental workgroup. In the spring 2020 semester, there were 29 EAP courses, 28 of which are the focus of this study.

On March 11, 2020, the second semester at the college began. On March 13, 2020, the Israeli government ordered the closure of all higher education institutions in Israel (Weisblat, 2020). Immediately, the college sent a formal letter to all faculty by email announcing the immediate transition of all courses to an online format using the college's LMS (Moodle) and a videoconferencing program (Zoom) (13 March 2020). Throughout the first months of ERT, the college provided support to faculty through the purchasing of videoconferencing licenses and training for online tools in Hebrew. In the EAP department, training for online tools was provided in English at the beginning of the semester and support in English throughout the semester. Additionally, technical support was arranged for students in need, such as creating internet hotspots in villages with poor internet access. In the EAP department, lessons were moved completely to an asynchronous format on the LMS, comprising of reading comprehension texts, online quizzes, teacher-recorded videos and YouTube videos. As the semester progressed, EAP lecturers added weekly optional videoconferencing lessons.

4.3 Data collection

This study uses a non-experimental, cross sectional survey design to capture teacher and student perceptions at a specific point in time (Creswell, 2013; Denscombe, 2010). Since this study was conducted as part of a PhD program at Lancaster University, ethical approval was received from Lancaster University and the local Israeli academic college. Qualtrics software was used to create separate anonymous teacher and student online survey (see Appendix A and B). The teacher survey assessed the perceived effectiveness of technological teaching and communication tools and teachers' experience with ERT. The student survey measured

the perceived effectiveness of technological teaching and communication tools to validate and triangulate the teacher survey results.

The teacher survey contained closed and open-ended questions to gain a holistic understanding of the teachers' experiences, since closed-ended questions allow for ease in comparing and analysing responses while open-ended questions allow a wider range of responses, including expression of social experiences (Creswell, 2013; Neuman, 2007). The student survey contained only closed-ended questions. The closed-ended questions used a 5-point Likert scale.

No previously developed surveys were located within the research literature that fit the pragmatic needs of this study. Thus, using a social practice perspective, the author wrote the survey items based on online course evaluation surveys and online quality assessment rubrics found in the research literature, with adjustments made for EAP, the local Israeli context and the time of ERT (Li et al., 2016; "Quality Course Teaching & Instructional Practice," 2016; Ustunel & Kaplan, 2015). Before distribution, the surveys were reviewed by the author's colleague before use.

The teacher survey was distributed in the last week of the semester on June 28, 2020, with a follow-up reminder after a week on July 5, 2020. The student survey was distributed after the end of the semester on July 20, 2020, with a follow-up reminder a week later.

4.4 Participants

14 out of 15 EAP teachers completed the teacher survey (the author did not participate). 80 students out of 1200 students from the three highest levels completed the student survey, a 7% response rate. While the student response rate is low, it is only slightly lower than an expected 10% response rate for a large-scale Internet-based questionnaire (Denscombe, 2010). A delay in sending the student survey due to ethical approval from the local Israeli academic college may have impacted student participation.

4.5 Data analysis

Data analysis was completed in two stages, descriptive statistics for the quantitative items and thematic analysis for qualitative items (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The answers to the open-ended questions were compiled in a single document and then reviewed and annotated with first impressions. After an initial reading, emergent coding was developed. The codes were merged into themes during additional readings

Table 1. Perceived effectiveness of technological tools (percentages)

	Video Conferencing Classes		Teacher Pre-recorded Videos		LMS Quizzes		YouTube Video	
	Teacher	Student	Teacher	Student	Teacher	Student	Teacher	Student
not effective	0	27.5	0	16.3	0	13.8	14.3	11.3
slightly effective	0	30	7.1	20	0	17.5	21.4	27.5
somewhat effective	0	16.3	28.6	21.3	28.6	16.3	42.9	21.3
moderately effective	78.6	7.5	42.9	18.8	35.7	23.8	21.4	13.8
very effective	21.4	12.5	14.3	13.8	35.7	27.5	0	13.8
not relevant	0	6.3	0	10	0	0	0	12.5

and then compared to the descriptive statistics. The students' responses were compared to the teachers' responses for validation and triangulation

5. Results

This section presents the results in three subsections. The first two subsections, teaching and communication tools, address the first two research questions about the perceived effectiveness of technological tools for teaching/learning and communication purposes and possible use in future courses. The teachers' perceptions from the closed questions will be reported first, then examined in contrast with students' responses. The last subsection on teacher support answers the third research question about the support teachers received from the EAP workgroup and administration.

5.1 Teaching tools

The results from the closed-ended questions on the teacher survey (Table 1) showed that the two most perceived effective teaching tools during ERT were videoconferencing lessons and LMS quizzes, with 100% of the teachers viewing videoconferencing lessons as moderately or very effective, and 71% for LMS quizzes. The least effective were YouTube videos. Teachers were most divided about the effectiveness of recorded videos, with 57% considering these videos as moderately or very effective, and 36% viewing them as only slightly or somewhat effective.

The teacher survey open-ended questions and the student survey provided a more nuanced understanding of the above results. Videoconferencing as a teaching and communication tool received the most mentions in the open-ended questions (23 mentions, 16 positive, 7 negative). Most teachers felt videoconferencing lessons were the most effective ERT tool for students who participated and a tool that they would continue to use in the future. As one teacher wrote, "videoconferencing worked for students who wanted to take part in the lesson". Another teacher wrote that they "enjoyed the rapport with students in the videoconferencing class even though they were blacked out [videos turned off]...". However, the teachers expressed frustration about how few students took advantage of the non-mandatory videoconferencing lessons and the difficulty of interacting with "students when they didn't turn on their cameras. As one teacher wrote, "... very few students attended, even fewer participated and they did not open their cameras, which made me feel like I was teaching in the dark...".

Contrary to the teachers, students gave class videoconferencing the lowest effectiveness rating of all the technological tools for both teaching and communication, with 57% and 62% respectively rating videoconferencing as not to slightly effective. Perhaps this student dislike of videoconferencing validates the teachers' feelings of frustration at the lack of student participation. It is also important to note that videoconferencing lessons were not mandatory during ERT for EAP courses, which may have affected students' perception of this tool.

LMS quizzes received the second highest mentioned among the teaching tools in the open-ended questions (12 mentions, 10 positive, 2 negative). Seven teachers indicated that LMS quizzes are a tool they would continue in future semesters. One teacher liked the LMS quizzes because “the students got immediate feedback”. However, one teacher critiqued LMS quizzes because “it was clear that LMS quizzes were done with help - either another person or copying from another student...”. The ease of cheating could be why four teachers chose “somewhat effective” instead of a higher rating. Similarly, students rated LMS quizzes as the most effective learning tool of the survey, with 60% rating LMS quizzes as moderately to very effective.

Both teachers and students were divided on the effectiveness of teacher-recorded videos. Four teachers wrote that teacher-recorded videos were good resources for students who couldn’t make it to the videoconferencing lessons and ten cited teacher-recorded videos as a tool they wanted to continue. Interestingly, one teacher mentioned that only a small number of students viewed these videos. 33% of students rated recorded videos as moderately to very effective while another 36% rated them as not to slightly effective.

Table 2. Perceived effectiveness of communication tools (means)

Communication Tool		Mean
Phone Calls	Teacher	4.29
	Student	2.6
Private Video Conference	Teacher	4.00
	Student	3.18
Class Video Conference	Teacher	3.21
	Student	2.55
Emails	Teacher	3.93
	Student	3.55
LMS	Teacher	3.86
	Student	2.74
Personal Text Messaging	Teacher	3.71
	Student	3.15

5.2 Communications

Phone calls and private videoconferencing calls were perceived by teachers as the most effective tools for communication with students (mean 4.29 and 4.00 on a 5-point Likert scale respectively), both one-on-one, synchronous methods (Table 2). Many teachers in the open-ended responses mentioned using phone calls to contact only a few students in “special situations”, or as one teacher wrote, “phone to them they’re about to fail”. One teacher expressed discomfort at calling students directly since it “nudges into my (the teacher’s) privacy”. The student data reflects the selectiveness but not the effectiveness of these synchronous, one-on-one communication tools. Large numbers of students (44% and 31%) indicated that phone calls and private videoconferencing calls were not relevant to them, perhaps signalling they never received a phone call since teachers only called in specific circumstances. The remaining students on average viewed phone calls as slightly effective (mean 2.6) and private videoconferencing calls as somewhat effective (mean 3.18).

Both teachers and students rated emails as the most effective tool for mass communication. However, one teacher wrote that “students did not always see the emails because they had so many from all their other courses.” This concern may explain why emails had a lower mean than phone calls and private videoconferencing calls among the teachers.

Text messaging had the most diverse responses, ranging from not effective to very effective, with most teachers (64%) viewing them as somewhat to moderately effective. One teacher mentioned in the open-ended responses that she never initiated texts but would respond to them.

5.3 Teacher support

According to the teacher survey (Table 3), 93% of the teachers felt extremely satisfied from the support they received from other teachers in the EAP workgroup. This is validated by the open-ended responses, with many teachers describing the positive support they received from other teachers through phone calls and text messaging. As one teacher wrote, “Everyone was very helpful! Email, phone calls and text messaging group and private messages all worked”. New staff communication tools mentioned in the open-ended responses included departmental text messaging groups and videoconferencing staff meetings. Both these communication tools were mentioned by multiple teachers as a tool they want to continue in the future.

Table 3. Teacher Support

	Teacher Workgroup Support	Administration Support	Online Training
neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	0	3	2
somewhat satisfied	1	5	4
extremely satisfied	13	6	8
total	14	14	14

79% of teachers were somewhat to extremely satisfied with the support they received from the college administration, while the remaining were neutral. 86% of the teachers were somewhat to extremely satisfied with the training they received for online teaching, which could reflect the satisfaction with teacher support, since all the online training was conducted by fellow EAP teachers.

6. Discussion

This study focused on the perceived effectiveness of technological tools used during ERT in an Israeli EAP department. This discussion presents three major themes that emerged from the results, two that answer the first two research questions on perceived effectiveness and continued use of technological tools and the third theme which answers the third research question on support experienced by the EAP workgroup.

6.1 Student-teacher interaction

The first two themes that emerged from the results can be defined by two types of interactions in distance education, student-instructor and student-content (Bernard et al., 2009). The first theme highlights how technological tools were used to encourage student-instructor interactions. The first research question asked which technological tools were perceived as the most effective. Teachers perceived videoconferencing and phone calls/text messages as the most effective tools for teaching and communication. These tools encouraged the most personal interaction between students and instructors. Gacs et al. (2020) stressed the importance of student-instructor interaction in ERT by advocating for “effective and efficient communication, connection and engagement, teacher presence and a compassionate learning environment” when planning ERT courses (pg.383). Especially for communication, teachers considered personal one-on-one methods (phones calls and text messages)

the most effective, which echoes Vorobel and Kim (2012) findings that individualized student support is a necessity for success. Avgousti and Hadjistassou (2019) found that students thought personalized communication methods (texts and voice chat) facilitated interactions with instructors and helped maintain their focus on the course. The need to maintain the practice of personalized student-instructor interaction seems to contribute to the perceived effectiveness of these technology tools among the EAP teachers.

However, teachers noted that a limited number of students participated in videoconferencing and teachers only contacted a small number of students using one-on-one communication tools. Additionally, students viewed the personal methods of teaching and communication as less effective, perhaps indicating a lack of student engagement, which will be discussed further on. Therefore, while these technology tools helped maintain the social practice of student-instructor interactions, it could not replicate these interactions during ERT on a larger scale like face-to-face teaching.

6.2 Student-content interaction

The second theme underscores the use of technological tools to promote student-content interaction. Both teachers and students considered LMS quizzes as an effective tool to learn and practice course material. Teachers considered videoconferencing the most effective teaching tool, both for the personal interaction as discussed above and the ability to teach material. However, students did not consider videoconferencing an effective teaching tool. Additionally, teachers viewed teacher-recorded videos as a useful reference resource for students. Two recent studies on Covid-19 ERT practices revealed a reliance on videos and videoconferencing to teach material to students. A survey of spring 2020 ERT syllabuses at a German institution showed a heavy use of video instruction to teach content (Skulmowski & Rey, 2020). Filipino teachers teaching English in China also used

videoconferencing as the main tool for teaching content during spring 2020 ERT (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020).

A big caveat for the perceived effectiveness of technological tools for student-instructor and student-content interaction was the low student engagement during videoconferencing and the possibility of cheating on LMS quizzes. Successful online courses need buy-in from stakeholders, including instructors and students, from the beginning (Madyarov, 2009). The difficulty of ERT was the lack of buy-in from students, who were expecting face-to-face lessons, which may have led to low motivation and engagement. This may explain the low student effectiveness rating for videoconferencing. Moreover, the videoconferencing lessons were not mandatory, which may have influenced the perceived effectiveness. Bao (2020) wrote that the biggest challenges of online learning for students were not technical but study skills obstacles, such as a lack of self-discipline. Harker and Koutsantoni (2005) found that distance learners did not take advantage of personalized help offered. The lack of student participation experienced by the EAP teachers in this study is not uncommon but highlights a need to include student considerations in the design process to increase student buy-in in future online courses (Binns, 2015). While the teachers indicated they want to continue using videoconferencing and LMS quizzes in their future practice, they need to consider how to achieve higher student buy-in to successfully integrate these technological tools into their teaching practice.

6.3 Supportive workgroup

The last theme is the positive support the EAP workgroup experienced from each other and the administration. Dohaney et al. (2020) examined academics' perceptions of resilience in times of disruption and found that community, communication and digital literacy are among the most important resilience characteristics in individual academics, departments and institutions. The EAP workgroup in this study demonstrated these resilience characteristics by their mutual support of each other through constant communication using old (phone calls) and new (videoconferencing and messaging app) technological tools. This constant communication within their workgroup seemed to allow the EAP teachers to overcome their lack of digital literacy at the beginning of ERT and develop professionally. An evaluation of K-12 teachers practices during the Covid-19 pandemic showed that the most popular support for teachers were colleagues, which reflects the teachers' experiences in this study (Trust & Whalen, 2020). The move to technological tools for individual and staff communication may have allowed for a stronger, more supportive community since it

eliminated a commonly cited barrier to forming supportive workgroups, a lack of time to meet and interact during the workday (Rahman, 2019). The use of the new technological tools for communication and community support may constitute an emerging practice that strengthened the EAP workgroup.

7. Conclusion

This study used online surveys of teachers and students to determine the perceived effectiveness of technological tool used for ERT during the Covid-19 pandemic at a local Israeli college with the aim to help prepare for a future of continued uncertainty. The results of this study contribute to the growing body of research on ERT in HE during Covid-19, providing evidence of the perceived effectiveness of videoconferencing, LMS quizzes and email as teaching and communication tools, especially in online language learning.

The analysis of the results offers implications for policy and practice concerning online teaching and learning. First, videoconferencing showed promise as a tool for teaching/learning. However, departmental and institutional level policies are needed to encourage higher student buy-in of videoconferencing and more student input on developing effective videoconferencing practices. In terms of practice, due to the perceived effectiveness of LMS quizzes as content practice, this use of LMS quizzes should be continued and improved within the local EAP workgroup and can be adapted by other workgroups. Finally, group text messages and videoconferencing, technological tools for communication, can be harnessed to create and maintain supportive workgroups during normal times and times of crisis.

There are two principal limitations to this study. This study was local in nature, examining one small EAP department in a specific location at a specific time. While the results may not be easily generalized, the methods and surveys developed can be a template for conducting self-evaluations in other HE departments, especially EAP departments. The implications of this study can also be considered in other contexts while taking local concerns into consideration.

Moreover, the short time duration of the study limited the type, amount and timing of data collection. If time had allowed, perhaps more students would have completed the survey and interviews with teachers would have given a fuller picture of the newly developed practices.

The results of this small-scale study invite further research, such as repeating the teacher and student surveys

after future online semesters to evaluate changes in perceived effectiveness of the technological tools. A large-scale study could include other departments in the HE institution. Lastly, further research could explore the factors that led to the formation of a resilient workgroup in the EAP department.

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Appendix A. Teacher survey

1. How do you rate the effectiveness of the following digital tools in achieving learning outcomes?

	Extremely effective (1)	Very effective (2)	Moderately effective (3)	Slightly effective (4)	Not effective at all (5)
Videoconferencing Lessons					
Teacher recorded videos					
YouTube videos					
LMS Quizzes					

2. In your opinion, what online teaching practices work and what didn't for you? Why or why not?

3. What practices developed this semester will you continue to use in future courses?

	Not effective at all (1)	Slightly effective (2)	Somewhat effective (3)	Very effective (4)	Extremely effective (5)
Email					
LMS Tools					
Text Messages					
Phone Calls					
Private Videoconferencing					
Class Videoconferencing					

	Extremely satisfied (1)	Somewhat satisfied (2)	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (3)	Somewhat dissatisfied (4)	Extremely dissatisfied (5)
To what extent are you satisfied with the supported provided by the administration?					
To what extent are you satisfied with the supported provided by other English teachers?					

	Extremely satisfied (1)	Somewhat satisfied (2)	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (3)	Somewhat dissatisfied (4)	Extremely dissatisfied (5)
To what extent are you satisfied with the training provided on new technology and practices for online teaching?					

- What was your experience in communicating with the staff this semester? What worked and what didn't?
- Are there any new methods/practices of communication that should be continued after the pandemic?

Appendix B. Student survey

- How do you rate the effectiveness of the following digital tools for learning?

	Extremely effective (1)	Very effective (2)	Moderately effective (3)	Slightly effective (4)	Not effective at all (5)	Not relevant (6)
Videoconferencing Lessons						
Teacher recorded videos						
YouTube videos						
LMS Quizzes						

- How do you rate the effectiveness of the following digital tools for communication?

	Not effective at all (1)	Slightly effective (2)	Somewhat effective (3)	Very effective (4)	Extremely effective (5)	Not relevant (6)
Email						
LMS Tools						
Text Messages						
Phone Calls						
Private Videoconferencing						
Class Videoconferencing						

