

# LEARNING STRATEGY AND SCENARIO OF READING FOR PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT ONLINE CLASS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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## Abstract

Online learning is considered as the right solution for education during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, in practice, there are still many obstacles faced by students and lecturers while carrying out this learning. Based on this urgency, learning strategies and scenarios are needed to be adjusted to implement more effective learning. This research aims to describe an effective learning strategy and scenario for Reading for Professional Context class of the English Department, Universitas Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa. This is descriptive qualitative research. Data were taken from questionnaires, interviews, and the syllabus of the course. The results of this study recommended the lecture process to use first -half second-half strategy. It used the Google Meet online meeting application for the learning process with the question-and-answer lecture method. Then it was proceeded using the WhatsApp application to reduce internet quota costs. Through this application, students and lecturers could continue discussions in written chat and small group discussions using WhatsApp video calls. Through small group discussions on the video call application, students got sufficient opportunities to convey their understanding of the reading material. The results of this study are expected to be a solution to the problems that arise in Reading for Professional Context during the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Keywords:** Learning Strategy, Learning Scenario, Reading, Covid-19 Pandemic

## Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the offline learning model to online learning. This conversion is based on the government's policy for every educational institution to minimize the spread of the coronavirus. Ministerial Letter Number 4 of 2020 concerning the Implementation of Educational Policies in the Emergency Period of the Covid-19 Virus said that the government had prohibited offline learning activities and implemented a distance learning system policy for all levels of education. This policy is one of the efforts to overcome the spread of the Covid-19 virus. Learning, especially in universities, is encouraged to carry out online learning with a proper scenario that is able to prevent physical crowd between students (Firman, F., and Rahayu, S. through Sadikin and Hamidah, 2020). The World Health Organization (WHO) also urges the public to maintain

a distance of more than 1 meter from other people to minimize the transmission of COVID-19.

Online learning has been implemented since March 2020. Although it has been implemented for approximately 1 year, in practice there are still many obstacles faced by students. There are several obstacles in the Reading for Professional Context class. Some of these obstacles are 1) time, 2) internet quotas cost, 3) the availability of internet networks, 4) gadget, 5) the ineffective discussion process, and 6) the lack of comprehension. Technically, the class schedule has been set at certain days and hours, but in practice, students are often late for online meeting forums for various reasons. Online learning certainly requires additional costs to provide facilities such as computers or smartphones and internet quota fees. The additional cost is also one of the obstacles to the online learning process. The implementation of direct discussions through online meeting forums is considered the best solution for carrying out the learning process but is also considered less effective than offline learning. Students do not get a good comprehension during the online discussion. Students feel that the offline learning process can provide a much better understanding than online. Many students do not actively engage during the discussion activities. They prefer to turn off the camera, turn off the microphone, and do not give any response when the lecturer asks questions. This tendency leads to a lack of understanding. Lecturers cannot be sure whether or not the students understand the learning material.

This study tends to describe learning strategies and scenarios that can minimize the obstacles, and maximize the understanding and discussion processes experienced by students in the online Reading for Professional Context class. These are about how students and lecturers set strategies and create learning scenarios that are mutually agreed upon in order to achieve an effective learning process. These strategies and scenarios relate to timing, class rules, and the use of several learning media such as WhatsApp Group, *Sipedar*, and Zoom or Google Meet.

## **Literature Review**

### **Online Learning During the Covid-19 Pandemic**

Since the emergence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes Covid-19 in November 2019 in Wuhan, China, governments in many countries have issued various policies such as washing hands, wearing masks, and avoiding crowds. In the field of education, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) advises the entire world community to conduct distance learning. Stefania (2020); UNESCO Assistant Director-General for education said that during times of crisis, we must support the consequences of learning systems and create long-term resilience of the education system. Educational activities must continue even in a pandemic. One of the efforts to maintain the continuity of learning activities and support the termination of the Covid-19 virus, the Indonesian government issued a policy for the public to conduct distance learning or online learning. Distance learning is seen as the best solution in education

because there is no direct meeting between students and teachers. Online learning is also more flexible because it can be done anytime, anywhere, and by anyone.

Distance learning has been started long ago before the Covid-19 pandemic, namely at the end of the 20th century. There are several different terms for distance learning such as online learning, and e-learning. The term online learning refers to learning carried out using internet facilities. Meanwhile, e-learning is short for electronic learning. E-learning is online learning using electronic facilities such as telephone, computer, and internet. In line with this, Cute (1999) says that e-learning is a learning experience delivered through electronic technology. E-learning has other advantages: flexible, fast interaction, and visualization resulting from technology (Thompson through Yuniawati, 2013). Teachers and students have the opportunity to get the widest possible information related to learning materials by using electronic technologies such as computers and the internet. Furthermore, Lenar (2014) said that distance learning is one system that is considered effective. This learning becomes effective because it is more flexible as long as there are the necessary facilities such as computers and the internet.

Regarding the government's policy on online learning, UST has launched the same policy before the Covid-19 pandemic. UST urges every lecturer to conduct online learning as many as 2 meetings in one semester. The aim is to improve the quality of educators and students so that they are accustomed to using internet technology. Since the pandemic period, UST has required every lecturer to convert all learning activities to online learning. This activity has been carried out for 1 year, namely since the beginning of March 2020. However, in practice, there are still some obstacles. Generally, the obstacles faced by students include: 1) time, 2) the cost of purchasing internet access, 3) the availability of internet networks, 4) gadgets, 5) ineffective discussion process, and 6) the lack of comprehension. This study seeks to describe learning strategies and scenarios in the Reading class so that these obstacles can be minimized.

### **Barriers to Online Learning in Reading for Professional Context**

The Reading for Professional Context course is an advanced course of Reading for General Communication and must be taken by 2nd semester students of the English Education Study Program. During this course, students are asked to read a text that around 5,500 vocabulary words. Students apply reading technique materials such as guessing words, previewing, predicting, scanning, skimming, making conclusions, stating topics, and main ideas in the pre- to post-reading process. In the offline learning process, students and lecturers read, analyze, and discuss the text together directly in the classroom. However, in online learning, the process of reading, analyzing, and reading together has not been able to take place optimally. Various obstacles in online learning often occur. Such obstacles cannot be allowed to continue for long because the reading ability is a very important skill for everyone. Burns (1984) says that reading is a complex behavior that must be learned because reading is a way to learn more about other things. In line with this statement, Mickulekey (1996) says that reading can be very helpful in knowing and

understanding many things from various kinds of reading materials. Therefore, the obstacles faced by students must be minimized. Teachers can develop and plan learning strategies and scenarios to create an effective learning process. Teachers or instructors can help the reading process of students (Harmer, 2007).

### **Learning Strategies**

Learning strategy is a learning activity that must be planned and carried out by teachers and students so that learning objectives are achieved effectively. According to Frelberg and Driscoll (1992), learning strategies are used to achieve various objectives of providing learning materials at different levels of students and in different contexts. Learning strategies include learning methods and techniques used by teachers to achieve learning objectives for students. Learning strategies are broader than learning methods and techniques. In other words, learning methods and techniques are part of the strategy. This strategy is not only in the form of steps that guide the learning process, but also a set of learning materials. Burden and Byrd (1999) suggested several strategies used in learning as follows:

- a. inductive deductive
- b. direct expository and thorough study
- c. cooperative learning
- d. problem solving learning
- e. inquiry and discovery approach
- f. how to learn active students

The determining factors in the selection of learning strategies according to Ulyafitri (2019) are as follows:

1. Learning objectives
2. Study materials
3. Student
4. Teacher
5. Media, Means, Time, Room
6. Characteristics of presentation techniques.

Meanwhile, according to Essef in Abdul Gafur (2012), what needs to be considered in choosing or determining a learning strategy are learning factors, learning environment, and the size of the study group.

### **Learning Scenario**

The learning scenario is one part of a series of preparations made by a teacher before starting learning activities. According to Hendrowati and Suningsih (2018), a learning scenario is a sequence of stories compiled by a teacher so that a learning activity is carried out as they desired. This scenario will then become a reference for the learning process to

run according to the plan and get the results. The design plan in the scenario usually contains a plan of learning steps, namely preliminary, core, and closing activities.

Matos through Piedade (2018) said that the learning scenario must assume a series of characteristics, namely as follows:

1. Innovation : must demonstrate innovative activities
2. Transformation : should encourage students to experiment
3. Foresight : prepare something to innovate in the future and be prepared for uncertain conditions
4. Imagination : must be a source of inspiration
5. Flexibility : provides learning options with different styles
6. Amplitude : must be built to have a larger and smaller scope
7. Collaboration : must contain elements to complete joint activities

To minimize the obstacles faced by students in online Reading for Professional Context classes during the pandemic, lecturers must create learning scenarios that are mutually agreed upon with students. Learning scenarios starting from the opening, the core, to the closing must be adjusted to a mutual agreement by considering various things such as: time, internet network, and student readiness. The use of media and materials to be discussed at each meeting must also be adapted to conditions during the pandemic.

## **Method**

The method used in this research was qualitative. Mc. Kernan (1996) states that qualitative research is research that develops concepts to help researchers understand social phenomena that occur in natural situations. It means, experience, and perception of research subjects are an emphasis on qualitative research. The dimensions of qualitative research include understanding the context, people, and all interactions that occur. Cresswell (2014) says that qualitative research usually collects various forms of data, such as interviews, observations, documents, and audiovisual information rather than relying on a single data source. The data collection of this study used an online questionnaire from the Google Forms application. Data also referred to the course descriptions and course materials. Then, an analysis of these data was carried out descriptively and qualitatively to determine the learning method, and then developed learning strategies and scenarios that were in accordance with the students' condition, learning material, and learning achievement of the Reading for Professional Context course during the online learning period.

## **Discussion**

### **Learning Strategy**

The Reading for Professional Context Course is a pre-requisite course. In this course, students learn advanced competencies from the Reading for General Communication. Students learn to determine specifics information, main sentences and supporting sentences, deduce the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences based on context, explain

the relationship of parts of the text through grammar, develop skills, analyze, and reading fast materials up to 5500 words.

Before the pandemic, the learning process used several methods including lectures, discussions, debates, and mind mapping. The lecture method was used when the lecturer was explaining reading theory such as scanning, skimming, previewing predicting, inference, and deducing meaning. The explanation used the lecture method because it explained the basics of the reading strategies so that students get clear explanation directly from the lecturer. This lecture method is usually followed by a Q&A session. The question-and-answer session allowed students to ask questions and convey ideas related to the material. After the students got the understanding of the reading theory concept, the next activity was the practice to apply the theory to readings materials. The active learning method through discussion activities was carried out in some small groups, so that the discussions could run effectively. In these small groups, students discussed and shared their understanding of the contents of the reading. Through these small group discussions, students had more opportunities to express their opinions freely. They could do several ways to synchronize their understanding, for example by making sequences, mind mapping, or debating. During the small group discussion, the lecturer could go around the class visiting each group to monitor the discussion and could even participate in the discussion. If in each of these small groups they had reached proper understanding, then it was proceeded with class discussion. In the class discussion, each group presented their understanding by paraphrasing the reading material. During this activity, each group had the right to argue with the other groups' statement if the statement was different from their group's understanding. This method was one of the effective methods in the Reading class to reach comprehension because it was done together so that there was exchanging information process. This method was also one of the methods preferred by students because they had comfort space and opportunity to convey their understanding freely since it was carried out in small groups. If direct discussions were carried out in large groups, namely class discussions (not through small groups), not all students had the opportunity to convey their understanding directly due to the time limit and some students tend to be reluctant to speak in larger forums.

During the online learning period, such strategies could not be applied properly. There were several obstacles. There were small discussions could not be held because the meeting was held virtually through Zoom or Google meet application. The learning method could work well, but it was ineffective. After the lecturer explained the material, the students did not look enthusiastic to ask questions during discuss. Students tended to avoid, remain silent, do not ask questions, and even turned off the camera. Small group discussions as an opportunity for students to convey their understanding could not be carried out. As a result, the lecturer could not know whether or not students understood the reading material. Moreover, there are many students complained about the high cost of using the internet if they used the Google Meet application or zoom in every meeting. Seeing such learning conditions, it was necessary to adjust the learning strategies.

The questionnaire data stated that there are numbers of students who avoid the online learning to reduce the use of internet quota. For example, some data proposed that the class should be divided into small groups and use WhatsApp to be more effective because it did not use a lot of internet quota. Students proposed to do an online meeting once in two weeks, and the discussion process should be moved to WhatsApp. However, in the discussion process there were many considerations. One of them is, when the intensity of online meetings through Google Meet or Zoom was reduced, the interaction between lecturers and students would decrease. As stated by Garrison & Cleveland-Innes (2005) and Swan (2002) that the class will be better if the lecturer is often present in the class, provides explanations, and provides learning. Reducing online meetings means reducing the interactive discussion process between lecturers and students. Thus, the process of discussing and exchanging information were less effective. Based on these considerations, the online meeting process was still carried out, but the time was reduced to anticipate taking a lot of internet cost. First-half second-half method was applied to reduce the internet cost. During the first half period, the lecture method was used to explain the material in online class via Google Meet or Zoom application. The next method was a short question and answer about the theory that has been explained. This activity was recorded so that it could be re-played by students who had bad signal problems. While the second-half period was used for written discussions through the WhatsApp Group application. This application could accommodate lecturers and students in one group together. Lecturers and students could ask one each other through written messages. Long explanations could be done via voicemail. The advantage of this application was it did not require high internet quota fees, so it could reduce students' internet costs. While the small group discussion method could be shifted via WhatsApp video call. Small group discussions could also be done via breakout room on the Zoom application. However, if the WhatsApp and Zoom applications were compared, WhatsApp used less internet cost.

### **Learning Scenarios**

The learning scenario is a sequence of activity plans prepared by the lecturer before carrying out the learning activity in class. As stated by Hendrowati and Suningsih (2018) that the learning scenario is a sequence of stories compiled by a teacher as a plan to arrange the learning activity, the learning scenario in the Reading for Professional Context should be prepared by considering the constraints faced by students during the online learning so that learning could be carried out properly. This scenario was a reference for carrying out the actual learning. This scenario should maximize the active learning method even though it was carried out online. This scenario should be able to stimulate students' activity so that they communicated interactively. As the result, it could also stimulate students' creativity. In this scenario, students were asked to play an active role in observing, conveying, and providing critical thinking about the reading material. The following is a scenario design for the Reading for Professional Context course.

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Course Name : Reading for Professional Context

Duration : 100 minutes

Course Description: While further developing competencies dealt with in Reading I (getting general and specific information from the text, getting the main ideas and detailed information from the text, deducing the meaning of words, phrases and sentences based on the context, and explaining relations between parts of the text through grammatical cohesive devices, and developing the skills of inferencing, analyzing, synthesizing, and speed reading), the course also aims at expanding the vocabulary mastery up to 5500 words and relevant grammatical structures used. During the course students have to identify/recognize (*Niteni*), imitate (*Nirokke*) and modify (*Nambahi*). While individual performances are noted, pair and group work should be encouraged. Assessment of success is based on portfolios and as well as examinations.

Learning Outcomes :

1. Students are able to study, comprehend, and analyze various topics of English text (up to 5500 words length) such as education and academic text.
2. Students are able to apply reading techniques (previewing and predicting, scanning, skimming, inferences), summaries, synthesis, and deduce meaning.
3. Students are able to apply frequently the vocabulary knowledge, the reading techniques (previewing and predicting, scanning, skimming, inferences) and deduce meaning of different texts in different situations.
4. Students are able to respond and give critical thinking to various English texts such as description, narrative, explanation, and article.

Learning Scenario :

1. Preparation:

- Prepare the soft files materials
- Share the reading materials to students a week before the class schedule
- Setting up the Google Meet web
- Share the online meeting web via WhatsApp group 15 minutes before class starts

2. Setting up the class (5 minutes)

- Open the Google Meet application 15 minutes before the class time so that the students can join earlier
- Ask the students to change their account name with their full name
- Make sure that students are ready to learn by asking students to open the camera and activate the microphone only if they want to answer a question.

3. Introduction (5 minutes)

- Start to record the meeting

- Do the apperception related to lecture material
  - 4. Core:
    - First-Half Session Via Google Meet/Zoom (40 minutes)
      - Explain the class material with the lecture method
      - Provide examples of the application of reading theory to short reading materials
      - Questions and answers related to the materials that has been presented
      - End the lecture session on Google Meet/Zoom
      - Turn off the recording
    - Second-Half Session Via WhatsApp Group or WhatsApp Video Call (40 minutes)
      - The discussion is continued through the WhatsApp message application
      - Lecturers provoke student activities by asking first questions so that students feel challenged to answer
      - Students are asked to prepare group video calls and prepare reading materials
      - Students break into small groups of 3-5 students
      - Question and answer discussion activities are carried out through the WhatsApp group video call application for each group
      - The lecturer joins the video call of each group in turn with a sufficient proportion of time
      - Lecturer pays attention to the discussion
      - Lecturers give stimulant questions to provoke students to be active during the discussions
      - The lecturer directs the discussion if there are incorrect statements related to the content of the reading
      - The lecturer assesses the performance of each student through small group discussions
      - At the end of this session, the lecturer gives several questions as part of the assessment form
  - 5. Reflection and Closing (10 minutes)
    - Do the final discussion to sum up important things of the reading material that day
    - Do reflection and conclusion of the day
    - Lecturer shares the video of the discussion of that day
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The learning scenario above is a learning scenario that has been adapted to the students' situation and condition during the pandemic. In this scenario, the lecture process is divided into two parts. The first part is the first-half. It is the time for the lecture and question-answer activity, while the second-half is provided for discussions and exercises to apply the lecture material. The learning process starts with preparation. This step begins with material preparation. The material must be in the form of a soft file so that it can be uploaded on the learning page belonging to the Universitas Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa namely Sipedar. The material should be uploaded or distributed to students

around one week before the class schedule so that students can read the reading material before the class. In this course, students are required to read reading material that reaches 5500 words. The activity is continued by preparing an online meeting web via Google Meet/Zoom. This web is then distributed to students 15 minutes before class time begins so that students have time to prepare themselves.

The second step is setting up the class. At this step, the lecturer begins to open the Google Meet link so that students can immediately enter the forum. When the students are in the forum, the lecturer reminds students to replace their Google account names with their real names so that lecturers can identify each student easily. Then the lecturer ensures that the students are ready to learn by asking students to turn on the camera during the class so that the lecturer knows whether or not the students are present physically, and activate the microphone when they want to speak.

The next step is the introduction. At this step, the lecturer activates the record button on the Google Meet application so that the learning process can be replayed by students who experience bad signal problems during the class. Then, the lecturer opens the lecture by building knowledge of the field to lead students into the learning theme. At this step, the initial knowledge is formed.

The fourth step is the core. The lecturer explains the materials orally. During this step, the lecturer can see students' expressions. Students' reception can also be seen from their expressions. So, it will help the teacher to maintain the class. Then followed by a question-and-answer discussion. Students must participate actively in the learning process.

The fifth step is the second-half period. The discussion process is shifted to the WhatsApp application to reduce the internet quota costs. The question-and-answer discussion activity is carried out through the WhatsApp written message. This activity is initiated by the lecturer by provoking student activity by giving initial questions so that students get a challenge to answer. If the discussion has been completed, it is followed by a small group discussion to discuss the reading materials. Students are asked to prepare group video calls and prepare the reading materials. Then, the class is divided into small groups of 3-5 students. Question-and-answer discussion activities are carried out through the WhatsApp group video call application for each group. The lecturer joins the video call of each group in turn with a sufficient proportion of the time. The lecturer pays attention to the course of the discussion. Students take turns to discuss the sequence of their understanding of the reading material. If there is a different perception, then the group members should argue or correct the comprehension. Lecturers give stimulant questions to provoke students to stay active in discussions. Then the lecturer directs the discussion if there are incorrect statements related to the content of the reading. Students must answer each question and provide critical thinking related to the reading material. At the end of the discussion, the lecturer assesses the performance of each student through the small group discussion. At the end of this session, the lecturer gives several questions as part of the assessment form. Here is the discussion transcription on the WhatsApp Group application:

### Discussion Transcription

L: Alright students, we will continue our discussion here. We have talked about getting meaning of words from context. Is there any other question?

S1: No, Miss.

S2: No, Miss.

S3: Maybe later Miss

L: Now, could you please take a look at page 101, number 1.

“Last week he tried to commit suicide,” one waiter said.”

“Why?”

“He was in *despair*?”

“What about?”

“Nothing.”

“How do you know it was nothing?”

“He has plenty of money.”

What meaning correspond best to the italicized word? Is it poor health, a sad state of mind, or financial trouble?

S3: a sad state of mind

S4: a sad state of mind

S2: state of mind.

L: Why do you think so?

S3: not financial trouble

S1: Because he has money, so maybe there is no other reason for suicide.

S2: Like stress Miss.

L: Correct. Why don't you choose “poor health”?

S4: Poor health can be cured by money Miss.

S1: No Miss.

S3: If the man were in poor health, it is not about nothing Miss.

L: That's the point. It is written that the man has plenty of money. If the man were poor in health, it would not have been said he was in despair about “nothing”. So, the correct answer is “a sad state of mind”. Is it clear?

S2: Yes Miss.

S1: Clear Miss.

L: Lecturer

S1: Student 1

S2: Student 2

S3: Student 3

S4: Student 4

The last step is reflection and closing. At this step, students with the lecturer sum up, reflect and conclude that day material in the WhatsApp group to convey the important things of the lesson. The video recording of the class activity is shared through groups so that students can replay the explanations given by the lecturer during the class.

### Conclusion

The Reading for Professional Context online class experienced numbers of obstacles in the implementation process. One of them was the internet cost. On the one hand, the internet cost was too high for some students when they had to do online class for long time, but on the other hands, this course required students to discuss on some reading materials that reached 5500 words. Small group discussion was needed. If the discussion could not be carried out, the learning outcomes could not be achieved optimally. To

overcome these problems, strategies and learning scenarios that were more flexible were developed by considering the constraints faced by students yet still in accordance with the course description and learning outcomes.

Suitable learning strategies and scenarios were prepared in accordance with the results of the discussions between lecturers and students by considering the obstacles faced by students, the learning outcomes, and the subject materials. The results of the study decided to use first-half second-half strategy. The learning scenario started from the process of sharing the meeting web of the online meetings via the WhatsApp application 15 minutes before the learning process so that students could prepare themselves. The core of the learning process was divided into 2 namely first-half and second-half period. The first step was the first-half period. It was a question-and-answer lecturing method through the Google Meet application. The next was the second-half period. During this period, the discussion process was continued through the WhatsApp group application to minimize internet costs. The small group discussion process was carried out via WhatsApp video calls for each group. Students took turns conveying their understanding in front of their group mates. Lecturer could join each group in turn. This strategy was effective enough to provide opportunities for students to be able to discuss and convey their understanding of the specified materials.

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