



Assessing Online Learning Challenges through Projective Techniques in Thai EFL University Students

Pasara Namsaeng

English Language, Faculty of Education, Chaiyaphum Rajabhat University, Thailand
Email: pasara.na@cpru.ac.th

Abstract

Projective techniques can be used to assess students' online learning during the challenging time of the Covid-19 pandemic. Projective techniques can help reduce stress and are used with the rubric to assess writing tasks. It is also comfortable for students to select ideas to be expressed freely. The purposes of the study are 1) to investigate to what extent projective techniques can be used for online learning assessment, and 2) to explore students' perceptions of online learning challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic. The content analysis was used to interpret the fifty-five students' paragraphs. The results showed that projective techniques can be used with a rubric to assess the students' writing skills, and there were several problems with grammatical mistakes (fragments, run-on sentences, and punctuation) and the inability to critique or make arguments. It was also found that negative perceptions overran positive perceptions, and only half of them mentioned both positive and negative sides. The occurrence of negative perceptions can be due to 1) the rising poverty rate in Thailand, leading to an inability to buy the internet or devices, 2) the familiarity with the collectivism culture makes isolated learning even harder, and 3) unreadiness for autonomous learning, a vital online learning skill, relying on the most authorized person underlying the hierarchical culture. Additionally, the participants also expressed concerns about the Covid-19 situation, such as the failure of how the government handles the Covid-19 situation, the lack of social skills development for children, and the lack of social accountability of citizens. Further studies should emphasize the longer period of classroom implementation and the use of projective techniques in promoting students' confidence and critical thinking skills.

Keywords: Online learning assessment, projective techniques, Thai EFL university students



1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic severely affected a number of industries around the world, such as transport, health care, entertainment, hospitality, manufacturing, and especially education. This outbreak has completely changed the educational system in several ways. Curriculum and assessment have been revised, teaching and learning activities have been shifted from synchronous to asynchronous, and digital learning has replaced the school setting, resulting in the loss of overseas students (Daniel, 2020; Schleicher, 2020). The Thai government, like other countries, responded to this critical problem in early 2020, as indicated by many declarations issued by MHESI (Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, 2020) by officially enforcing online teaching and learning in tertiary education.

During the epidemic, an online learning platform played a critical role in teaching and learning. In fact, online learning is barely a new concept. However, online teaching and learning strategies have already been explored almost 20 years ago by Oliver (1999), Goodyear et al. (2001), and Kim and Bonk (2006). They predicted that online learning would become a valuable tool for improving learning technology, pedagogy, and learning expectations in the future. In any case, it became feasible when the pandemic triggered it. In recent years, both teachers and students have needed to take on significant obstacles, as shown in a number of aspects of online education that have been extensively undertaken both internationally and domestically. Baloran (2020), for example, did a study in the Philippines on students' understanding, attitudes, anxiety, and personal coping methods on the Covid-19 by using Google Form. The results showed that even though the students had a strong command of the Covid-19 information, over 530 students disapproved of the Online-Blended Learning approach (59.25%), and over 72.29% expressed anxiety about the internet connection. More than half of the participants raised concern for their families and themselves, avoided social contact or parties with others, frequently thought about the Covid-19 issue, and were concerned about food and financial resources during the lockdown. Their coping strategies to lessen the anxiety include following the protective measures, avoiding going to public places, keeping themselves updated, and using social media (Facebook, Twitter, Tiktok, and YouTube). Interestingly, it also found that students were highly satisfied with how the government handled the Covid-19 pandemic. However, other scholars see things differently. Their focus weighs more on the instructional strategies that are mediated by teachers can make online teaching and learning successful. For example, the DLPCA approach to blended online teaching and learning proposed by Lapitan et al. (2021) shows that the approach of Discover, Learn, Practice, Collaborate, and Assess was successfully implemented with students' high satisfaction. Likewise, Mahmood (2021) suggested using slow speaking, sharing resources beforehand, and getting feedback from students can positively support online classes as well. Similarly, Putri and Sari (2021) suggested that an online teaching process, properly designed lesson plan and materials, online learning activities, a clear explanation and instruction, proper assessments, and oral and written feedback on the students' work can lead to successful online learning achievements. Anyhow, other factors need to be taken into consideration, such as teachers' readiness for online teaching due to the heterogeneous group of teachers in higher education (Howard et al., 2021),



online learning barriers in rural areas such as technology, educational policy made by the government, and the urgent transition of e-learning (Adarkwah, 2021), and extra expenses for keeping online (Baloran, 2020).

In Thailand, there were studies of Thai university students about perceptions towards the forced online learning in the Covid-19 situation. It found that students prefer face-to-face classrooms rather than online classrooms. They perceived positive attitudes towards online learning because teachers provide some assistance and feedback willingly (Imsa-ard, 2020; Sukman & Mhunkongdee, 2021; Sioson, 2021). As like international circumstances, one of the most popular online teaching approaches in Thailand is blended learning. Thai scholars studied students' attitudes towards blended e-learning and found that it might not be the best teaching approach for Thai EFL learners since the need of extrinsic motivation through the authoritative teacher rather than an intrinsic motivation. The students tend to be interested in social media i.e. Facebook rather than proper online teaching and learning platform (Tananuraksakul, 2016). Another blended learning study has been done by Sanjaiprom (2021). It is interestingly found that during the pandemic there was some progress in the areas of teacher collaboration, exploratory lesson design, the use of active learning, and sensitivity to student learning styles. Thus, blended learning engagement can be implemented in areas of concrete experience, reflection, conceptualization, application (Buaraphan, 2015) through a processing, active experimentation, group learning style, and practical problem-solving methods (Supalak, 2016). Although lots of advantages can be found through online learning, there are some disadvantages. First, Thai lecturers seems to lack of online teaching techniques, comprehensible training, and suitable online teaching equipment despite of their willingness to teach (Tappoon, 2021). Second, online teaching affects students' physical and mental health, in which Choompunuch et al. (2021) indicated that university students stress's level is considerably high. Thus, teaching or intervention requires healthy adversity quotient. Third, it is important to give enough supports for anticipation and discussion in the classroom since the previous study showed lowest score of interaction among classmates (Sioson, 2021). Finally, the instability of internet connection. Though it is likely to be external factors, as developing country, it is something that takes into account. A stable Internet connection can stabilize the students' positive feelings as well (Sioson, 2021).

Projective techniques are defined as free and indirect approaches which are used to infer people' motives, urges, and intentions (Juneja, 2021). It was developed by psychologists in order to explore people's attitudes without making them uncomfortable. The Word Association Test, Completion Test, Construction Test, and Expression Techniques are essential example of projective techniques. An individual can use the Word Association Test to interpret a visual or a word, particularly the first thing that comes to mind. The Completion Text, on the other hand, asks the reader to finish the sentence or story. The Construction Test is similar to the Completion Test, but there is a predetermined criteria for narrowing ideas. Finally, there are Expression Techniques, in which people are urged to share their thoughts and feelings with others. Apart from the four mentioned techniques, there are also the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) or picture interpretation technique, and the Third Person Technique, in which individuals have opportunities



to talk about someone else, i.e., neighbors, relatives, or friends (Juneja, 2021; Kumar et al., 1999; Rotenberg, 1995; Zikmund, 1997).

Projective approaches, according to Parry (2018), allow researchers to tap into participants' deep motivations and attitudes, since the individuals themselves are not aware of the reasons behind their behaviors. Several methods (Words Association/Sentences and Story Completion, Photo/Picture Sorts, and Brand Personalities) were employed in order to increase participant satisfaction and engagement. Qualitative market research is frequently used to better understand how customers feel about companies, products, concepts, advertising, societal issues, and other key topics (Nunez, 2015; Parry, 2018). Undoubtedly, marketing research is likely to be beneficial from projective techniques at most. However, as like other qualitative research studies, the disadvantages of projective techniques are also found such as the requirement for highly skilled interpreters, the possibility of bias, time-consuming, and the difficulty of generalizing to the entire population (Juneja, 2021).

Apart from marketing research, projective techniques were found to study with the education research as well. According to Catterall and Ibbotson (2000), though projective techniques in education are difficult to access by direct and structured questioning, students can be fun and engaging, especially when they are required to analyze or interpret subject matters. Hence, recent studies about projective techniques and education (Fayzievna, 2021; Hackett, 2020; Spry & Pich, 2021) found that it is a very effective practices in communicating with students, especially it motivates them to start on the tests and assignments unreluctantly (Fayzievna, 2021). It also found that projective techniques are considered as a creative method since it generates unique data as well as provides healthy environment for research (Hackett, 2020). Moreover, Spry and Pich (2021) also emphasize that projective techniques can help students in planning, research, and analysis, as well. Anyhow, the projective techniques in schools were found to be declined, and only 32% was reported using projective techniques, in which 93% of them use it once a month (Benson et al., 2020). There are several reasons for reducing the use of projective techniques. First, projective techniques are not standard practices according to the administration. Second, it is way more like a self-report rather than the common assessment for the whole class. Third, it is limited to young learners rather than adolescent and adult learners. Lastly, it is hypothesized that the lack of faculty interest in projective techniques is a sharp decline, leading to limited research. As a result, most education programs currently pay little attention to projective tests. (Benson et al., 2020; Piotrowski, 2019). To the best of researcher' knowledge, the studies of projective techniques in Thailand are likely limited. Mostly, projective techniques were studied in stock trading (Katisart & Kitdamrongtam, 2019), tourism (Chodchuang et al., 2020), or historical temples and shrines (Virdee & Phakdee-auksorn, 2017). Therefore, projective techniques in education have received minimal research.

Projective techniques can be used for online teaching, learning, and assessment. In particular, according to the principles of online learning assessment, there are common areas in which projective techniques can be embedded in online learning assessment. The following table expresses the principles and/or guidelines for how online learning should be assessed.

Table 1: Principles of online learning assessment

Nine guidelines of online assessment by Rahim (2020)	Five principles for meaningful online assessment by Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning (2021)	Ten principles of inclusive online assessment by University of Leeds (2020)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine prerequisites for online assessment 2. Ensure alignment of assessment activities and learning objectives 3. Address the diversity of students' situations 4. Keep a good balance between formative and summative assessments. 5. Encourage student learning with online assessment 6. Consider test format, scheduling and timing. 7. Give clear directions 8. Provide students with high quality feedback 9. Address risks to assessment validity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus on learning 2. Balance structure with flexibility 3. Provide clear instructions and quality feedback 4. When possible, replace timed exams with other types of assessments. 5. Emphasize academic integrity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inform the format of assessment in advance, i.e., software, a trial, etc. 2. Set assessment limitations with a clear rubric 3. Ensure that students follow inclusive assessment guidance as isolated 4. Clarify instructions within working hours 5. Use 48hr assessment to ensure the time allowance and rest breaks 6. Allow adjustments for submission 7. Allow adjustments to schedules <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure accessibility to the online assessment 9. Offer guidance on how to create a safe and comfortable environment 10. If the assessment is limited to 48 hours, allow them to have 25% more of the provided time.

According to Table 1, the common principles of online learning assessment are providing students with clear instruction and feedback, informing the format of the software, trials, or risks that may occur, being flexible and giving sufficient time during online assessment, etc. With the mentioned principles of online assessment and the characteristics of projective techniques, there are high possibilities that projective techniques can be used for online learning assessment effectively.



In Thai EFL setting, during the Covid-19 pandemic, online teaching and learning causes high stress in university students (Choompunuch et al., 2021), projective techniques can reduce stress and anxiety through free thoughts of expression. It can be fun, engaging, motivating, and effective (Catterall & Ibbotson, 2000; Fayzievna, 2021; Hackett, 2020; Spry & Pich, 2021). Also, projective techniques can help students with planning, research, and analysis of sophisticated matters (Spry & Pich, 2021). Anyhow, the decline of projective techniques has been reported. It stated that projective techniques are being understudied and tentatively declined due to lacking the faculty's interests and being considered as an old fashion since the shift to standardized assessments (Benson et al., 2020; Piotrowski, 2019), but during the pandemic, the standardized test somehow lacks the perfect tools for assessing students when being isolated, especially in rural areas with extra expenses (Adarkwah, 2021; Baloran, 2020). As a consequence, projective techniques can be an alternative solution to fulfilling online learning assessments during the pandemic. Thus, there is little knowledge about how to implement projective techniques in online learning assessment in a Thai EFL setting. As such, the current study examined the online learning challenges through projective techniques. Three research questions were formulated:

1. To what extent can online learning be assessed through projective techniques?
2. What are the students' perceptions of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic?

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Research design, participants, and setting

This was a qualitative research study conducted data from 55 English major students in Thai tertiary education during the 3rd wave of the highest Covid-19 cases in Thailand. All participants were directly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic because they were forced to study online. Hence, they were able to offer insightful ideas and easily relate to the current situation. The participants were determined by using a convenient sampling method via an online platform. The projective technique was used to stimulate the participants to explain their ideas by figuring them out from the photo. In the photo, it comprises two scenes of learning atmospheres: onsite and online teaching. They were required to write a paragraph of no more than 150 words within 1 hour. The analytic rubric score was given prior to the test to assure the desired level of vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, and critique.

2.2 Research instrument

The research instrument was a written paragraph produced by fifty-five English major students, in which students had sufficient time (1 hour) to crystallise a 150-word writing from the provided photo. The current study employed the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) or picture interpretation technique, together with the Third Person Technique, in which individuals have opportunities to talk about someone else. That was the people in the photo. The below figure shows the actual photo used in this study.

Figure 2 presents the four steps of the data collection procedure and analysis. The participants were required to perform a trial task before the actual task. Then the paragraphs were gathered and analyzed according to the obtained data.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Projective techniques and writing assessments can be effectively used to assess online learning.

In order to answer the research question 1) To what extent can online learning be assessed through projective techniques?, the obtained data from the paragraph writing was analyzed. Prior to the assessment, the students were given an analytical rubric in order to ensure their direction on how to perform their writing tasks. The following table presents the aspects of online learning that can be assessed through projective techniques.

Table 2 Students' score assessed by rubric

Assessing aspects	Full score	Mean score	Percentage
1. Vocabulary	5	4.89	97.82%
2. Grammar structure	5	3.73	74.55
3. Critique	5	3.38	67.64
Total	15	12	80%

Table 2, as like other writing assessments, the paragraph writing was assessed according to the rubric. It consisted of three parts (vocabulary, grammar structure, and critique), in which each part had the full score of five; thus, the total score was fifteen.

1) Vocabulary: since the students were advised on how to use B1 level of CEFR vocabulary, they were equipped with the Extensive Reading Central website (2021), on which they can crosscheck by themselves. The average score of vocabulary level was 4.89 (accounted for 97%) out of 5, which is considerably high. Thus, with the ability to double-check the level of vocabulary before handing in the assessment, the right level of vocabulary was employed.

2) Grammar knowledge: out of five, the mean score of grammatical knowledge was only 3.73, accounting for 74.55%. There were grammatical mistakes found in the paragraph writing, as shown in the following figure.

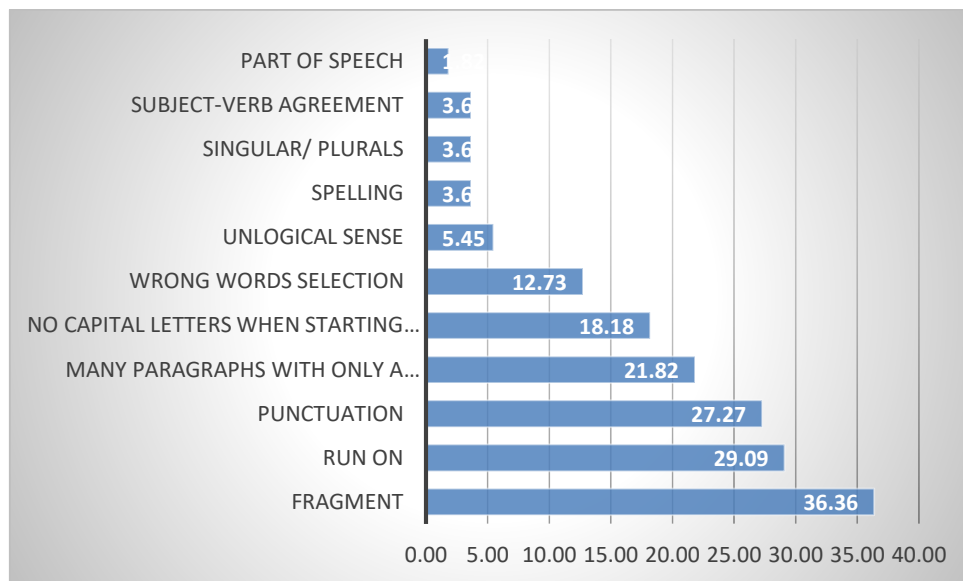


Figure 2 Grammatical mistakes from the paragraph writings

It shows that most of the participants made mistakes regarding incomplete sentences (fragments) the most, at 36.36%, followed by run-on sentences and punctuation at 29.09% and 27.27% respectively. The reason that lots of mistakes weighed more on fragments and run-on sentences could be due to the rubric mentioning the use of complex sentences in paragraph writing, in which students tried to fulfill the requirement and failed to achieve the correct structure of complex sentences. While little mistakes were made on the part of speech, subject-verb agreement, singular/plurals, and spelling. It may be the auto-correct function embedded in computer software such as Microsoft Word and Google Docs (University of Reading, 2015). 3) Critiques: out of five, the mean score of students' critiques was only 3.38, accounting for 67.64%. The result showed that participants had the lowest ability to critique or insist on their standing according to the rubric set earlier. The mode was only 3, meaning that the writing was understandable and made logical sense. However, to reach the higher score, the writing should be very well critiqued and end in the last sentence with final thoughts. The reason that students show a middle range of critique ability may be due to the lack of critical thinking skills as studied by (Ploysangwal, 2018) and the low confidence of Thai students in expressing their thoughts (Tipmontree, 2020). Thus, there is an urgent need to develop these skills in Thai university students.

Thus, the results showed that projective techniques with the implementation of writing assessment and a very well-structured rubric can be used together to assess students' writing in three aspects: vocabulary, grammar structure, and ability to critique.

3.2 Online learning challenges through projective techniques

In order to answer the research question 2) What are the students' perceptions of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic?, the obtained data from the paragraph writing was interpreted. The results showed that the participants revealed both negative and positive

perceptions towards online learning during Covid-19. Then the obtained data was divided into positive and negative perceptions according to the Venn diagram as follows.

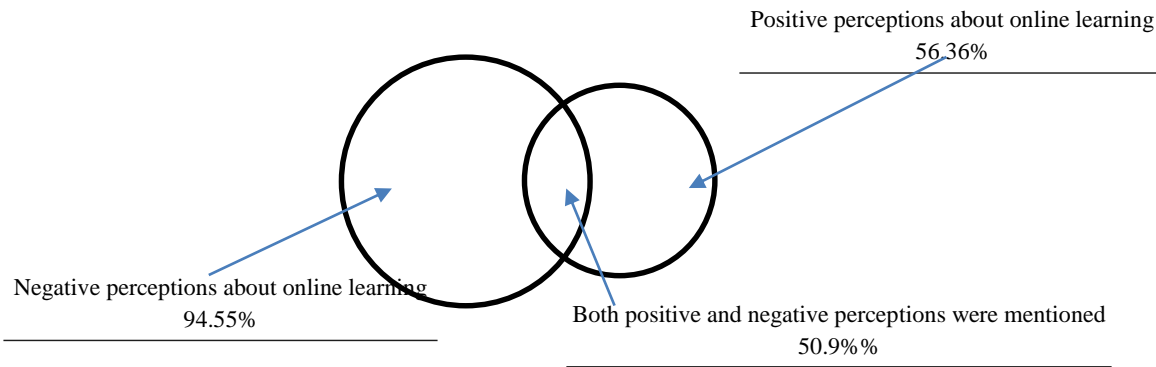


Figure 3: The concurrent positive and negative perceptions towards online teaching and learning during the Covid-19

Figure 3 illustrates that, out of 55 participants, over 94.55% expressed negative perceptions about online learning, while over 56.36% indicated positive perceptions towards online learning. Over 50.9% of the participants mentioned both the pros and cons of online learning. However, over 43.64% of participants did not mention the positive perceptions of online learning at all. Lastly, only 5.45% of participants did not show their negative perception towards online learning at all. Tables 3) and 4) explained the participants’ perceptions in detail.

Table 3: Positive perceptions towards online learning during the covid-19

<p>Flexible and convenient learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Online is good because it this convenient to learn, you can learn everywhere when you want,” Student 24. - “Flexible time – for some children and in some schools may provide independent at home can review lessons or learn in their free time,” Student 25. - “You have the freedom to learn from a location that suits you as long as you have access to WIFI,” Student 50.
<p>More opportunities to use modern technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “This makes online learning to become a modern educational phenomenon,” Student 8. - “There has been a change in learning styles and the use of technology,” Student 29. - “...but it make them can use technology better,” Student 47.



Having a chance to review the lesson repeatedly

- *“For some children, they may be free to go home. Can **review** lessons or learn in their free time,”* Student 4.
- *“...but there are advantages such as the student can **always review the content**,”* Student 49.

The best way to prevent Covid-19

- *“The advantage of teaching online is that it can **prevent the spread of COVID-19**,”* Student 11.
- *“not at **risk of contracting Covid-19**,”* Student 22.
- *“It’s a good idea to have a substitute that **doesn’t risk the infection**,”* Student 31.

Variety of teaching techniques/up-to-date lesson plans

- *“Teachers need to change their **teaching techniques** so that students can learn,”* Student 19.
- *“Online learning has **many tools** such as **videos, PDFs, podcasts and games of education**,”* Student 27.
- *“...teachers can create **up-to-date lesson plans** and **reduce travel time** for both teachers and students,”* Student 37.

More concentration when learning alone

- *“The online class is studying alone, and children have more **concentrate**,”* Student 1.

The results showed that the participants expressed positive perceptions towards online learning during the Covid-19, which included flexible and convenient learning, more opportunities to use technology, an ability to review the lessons repeatedly, the most suitable way of learning during the Covid-19, exposure to new teaching techniques and up-to-date lesson plans, and an increase in concentration when learning alone. These positive perceptions were in line with previous studies mentioning that students feel more confidence with online learning because it is practical and flexible (Yusnilita,2020). Also, as an aspect of students’ concentration increase, conforms with the preceding study mentioning that concentration is reduced when employing asynchronous learning (Fatonina et al., 2020). This possibly implies that synchronous learning, as found in the current study, can increase students’ concentration.



Table 4: Negative perceptions towards online learning during the covid-19

Physical Readiness	<p>Lack of online learning tools and internet connection (smartphone, iPad, tablet, computer, laptop, etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “<i>Everyone doesn’t have a internet to learn on laptop or smartphone,</i>” Student 4. - “<i>Some students lack teaching equipment, such as mobile phones, tablets, and televisions,</i>” Student 5. - “<i>Some people don’t have amenities. Such as, phone, tablet, iPad or Internet,</i>” Student 6. - “<i>Some people are poor so, they don’t have a smartphone,</i>” Student 15. - “<i>...some people don’t have computers or phones used to study, causing problems and stress with studying a lot,</i>” Student 21.
	<p>No interaction between teachers and students or students and students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “<i>Onsite learning makes interactive communication allows us to ask questions,</i>” Student 38. - “<i>Learning on-site has made teachers and students interact better than online,</i>” Student 49. - “<i>...interaction between teacher and student (We cannot communicate with student for free),</i>” Student 51.
	<p>Inability to ask questions with the teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “<i>..in classroomif the student has question, they have asked for question with teacher soon.,</i>” Student 1. - “<i>in the classroom will make it easier to understand because we study closely with the teacher and can ask and answer all the time,</i>” Student 27. - “<i>...in the classroom with teacher and friends. When they don’t understand they can ask,</i>” Student 47.
	<p>Cannot fully learn and hard to understand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “<i>Online learning doesn’t benefit students because learners can’t learn fully,</i>” Student 2. - “<i>...the downside is not being fully experienced,</i>” Student 29.
	<p>Cannot perform a variety of activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “<i>...lack opportunities for various activities that he should have received,</i>” Student 10. - “<i>...because you can meet friends and do various activities together,</i>” Student 21. - “<i>On-site it has a good effect, which is full of activities and teaching and learning,</i>” Student 41.
Mental Readiness	<p>Being stressful</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “<i>Online learning is stressful and uninteresting,</i>” Student 17. - “<i>Students doesn’t like to learn online because it make them more stress, doesn’t pay attention,</i>” Student 18. - “<i>The disadvantage is that children are stressed out,</i>” Student 42.
	<p>Less interesting/ boring/ demotivation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “<i>...the disadvantage of teaching online is that students won’t understand and are not interested in studying ,</i>” Student 11. - “<i>Online learning is stressful and uninteresting,</i>” Student 17.



	<p>- "...<i>at school</i> will be more effective. because it will make students <i>interested</i> in learning ,” Student 52.</p>
	<p>Being isolated / no socialization</p> <p>- “<i>Covid-19 is better. They will meet their friends and so much fun to study ,</i>” Student 18.</p> <p>- “<i>Studying in the classroom allows us to socialize with friends and teachers,</i>” Student 27.</p> <p>- “<i>They didn’t meet their friends and teachers,</i>” Student 28.</p>
External Readiness	<p>No financial supports for internet connection and/or devices</p> <p>- “<i>Online learning is difficult for some people because of the internet or financial problems,</i>” Student 14.</p> <p>- “<i>Some people are poor so, they don’t have a smartphone. Rich people have an advantage over poor people. Some parents are unable to support their children financially,</i>” Student 15.</p> <p>- “<i>...inequality problem (In the countryside some families who are not financially, so some families will not have the good equipment.),</i>” Student 51.</p>
	<p>Additional supports from parents</p> <p>- “<i>...parents who may not have a lot of free time each day (to tutor their kids),</i>” Student 4.</p> <p>- “<i>Parents of students must be responsible for controlling their children to sit and study online,</i>” Student 5.</p> <p>- “<i>Online learning in elementary school children may require parents at home to supervise their studies because the children are young, causing the child to not concentrate on staring at the computer for a long time,</i>” Student 35.</p>

Table 4 shows the results that participants expressed strong negative perceptions towards online learning during the covid-19, which included physical readiness, mental readiness, and external readiness. Physical readiness includes lacking online learning tools and internet connection (smartphone, iPad, tablet, computer, laptop, etc.), no interaction between teachers and students, being unable to ask questions, not fully learning and hard to understand, and the disappearance of a variety of activities. Mental readiness includes being stressed, less interesting/boring/demotivating, and being isolated/no socialization. External readiness includes no financial support for internet connection and/or devices, lacking additional extra support from parents.

There are three potential reasons why students express such a great deal of negativity towards online learning. First, financial difficulties have a massive impact all over the globe, including Thailand. In 2019, studies showed that over 6.2% of the Thai population was below the poverty line. However, the poverty rate has been increasing during the past year amid slowing economic growth (Asian Development Bank, 2021; The World Bank, 2020). Undoubtedly, employment has decreased; consequently, poor people cannot afford to buy extra electronic devices or internet connections. Second, isolation seems problematic for collectivism culture in countries like Thailand (Thongprasert, 2009). Students expressed negative feelings towards loneliness and the inability to socialize with teachers and friends. When facing a sudden change, they seem

unwillingly or not ready to be isolated. Lastly, the embedment of hierarchy in Thailand (Tunwattanapong & Dimmitt, 2010). Though a number of teaching and learning approaches try to shift from teacher-centred to student-centred, it is rarely possible due to the hierarchical culture in Thailand. Students are more comfortable receiving confirmation or permission from the highest authorised person in the class before initiating some tasks. Thus, the financial crisis, collectivism, and hierarchical cultures are likely to influence students’ negative perceptions. Consequently, when the pandemic came, teaching and learning have entirely changed, such as how to study, how to socialize with friends, how to perform tests, how to submit assignments, how to deal with digital assignments, etc. Students did not prepare for the shift from a teacher-centred approach to a student-centred approach. These negative perceptions are all due to the shock of sudden adaptations. With these pessimistic points of view found in online learning, maybe practitioners should strongly remain scaffolding students during the difficult time before gradually adding autonomous learning little by little. Also, apart from instructing the subject matters, practitioners may be required to teach "how-tos" that relate to the subject matters online.

Apart from negative perceptions of online learning during Covid-19, the participants surprisingly expressed their concerns over related issues such as government management, inequality between rich and poor people in society, the lack of social skills for growing children, and the lack of social accountability of the population in society. The below table identifies their concerns about current situations.

Table 5: Students’ concerns towards the Covid-19 situation

Governmental management concerns	An inequality between rich and poor people in society	Lack of social skills for growing children	Lack of social accountability of the population in society
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“While the Thai government only have the bad things to give back to the people making the country can’t move forward. This shows the lack of conscience of the leader,” Student 2.</i> • <i>“Why the government doesn't lead the vaccine to the country? They give money to us but it's like a lotto, you will be lucky or not I can't</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Rich people have an advantage over poor people. Some parents are unable to support their children financially,” Student 15</i> • <i>“Online learning is suitable for children who are financially sound or very good, but poor children are</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Maybe it won’t be a good thing in the future if he doesn’t know how to socialize with others as he grows up may make things more difficult when meeting someone or talking to someone,” Student 4.</i> • <i>“So, how about the kindergarten and elementary</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“In addition, some people still have no social responsibility: meeting, socializing, and doing group activities have led to the daily number of infections reaching as high as 20,000 cases per day. It affects all aspects such as lifestyle,</i>

<p><i>say that too,” Student 9.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“The quality of life and the good they deserve should not be postponed solely on the selfishness and failed management of the country’s leaders,” Student 10.</i> • <i>“If the government bring the vaccine mRNA in, we will have vaccinated quality. And the students will have learned in the classroom,” Student 28.</i> • <i>“And the government should have to solve this problem for the population not just for the certain people, and not allowing the people to solve problems on their own,” Student 33.</i> 	<p><i>a big problem,”</i> Student 17.</p>	<p><i>school children, they must into social, meet a friend, and do the work in a group for social adaptation,”</i> Student 9.</p>	<p><i>public health, education, economy, society and others,”</i> Student 54</p>
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The obtained data expressed unsatisfactory about the Thai government’s management. Unlike in the Philippines, students seemed satisfied with how the government handled the covid-19 situation (Baloran, 2020). The reason participants expressed their concerns regarding the Thai government’s management may be due to the news, such as the mixed jabs of non-mRNA covid vaccines (BBC, 2021), the raising of the public debt ceiling (Bangkok Post, 2021), the delay in vaccination (Bangkok Post, 2021), etc.

As regard to projective techniques used for collecting the data, it is surprisingly found that with only one photo provided, students can express a variety of thoughts and notions freely. No prepared set of questions are being triggered at all. All expressions were not framed or set by particular questions. This is all considered authentic data, and the students were comfortable distributing ideas in an emotional support way. As also known, assessment of learning must be performed concurrently with assessment of learning. Therefore, practitioners understand to what extent the students learn the content as well as their challenges and needs (Bennett, 2017). With

online learning and assessment, projective techniques can fulfil the notions of assessment of learning and assessment for learning as implemented in objectives 1) and 2), respectively.

In fact, the projective techniques are able to be used with any online learning approach and assessments as long as they do not prevent or interfere with their significant characteristics or principles, for example, free expression of thought (Juneja, 2021), fun and engaging (Catterall & Ibbotson, 2020), motive (Fayzievna, 2021), and circulating in a healthy environment (Hackett, 2020). Projective techniques are highly suitable for online learning, whereas stress and mental issues are extensively found. Hence, projective techniques can be new alternative ways of online learning and assessment and a starting point for promoting students' confidence and critical thinking. To implement successful projective techniques, the following figure shows the proposed projective techniques principles.

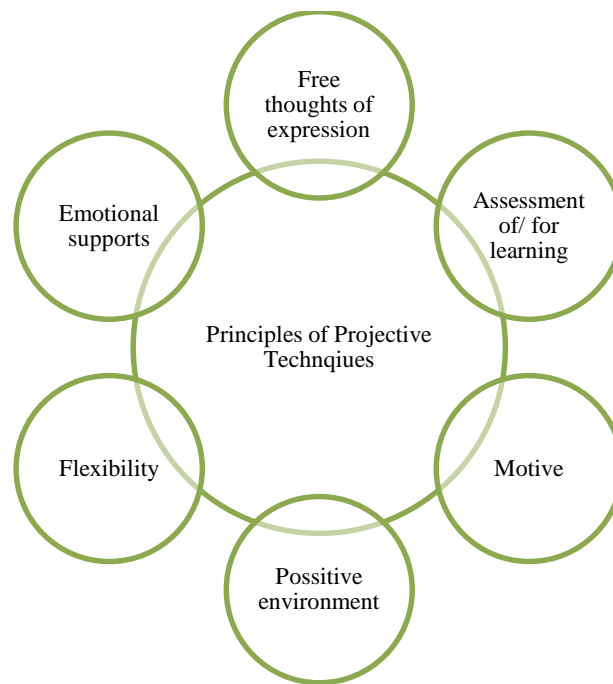


Figure 4: Principles of Projective Techniques

Figure 4 illustrates the principles of projective techniques that can be used for online learning and assessment, which are 1) free thoughts of expression, 2) assessment of/for learning, 3) motive, 4) positive environment, 5) flexibility, and 6) emotional support.



4. Conclusion

To conclude, online learning can be assessed by projective techniques (the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) and Third Person Technique) through the writing rubric, which consists of three agreed-upon criteria: vocabulary, grammar structure, and critique. The findings showed that the students' writing expressed the appropriate level of vocabulary due to the provided source of vocabulary before writing took place. Since the free writing according to the picture interpretation, several grammatical mistakes have been found, such as fragments, run-on sentences, and punctuation, respectively. The ability to critique, however, was considerably lower (67.64%). This may be due to the lack of critical thinking skills and low confidence in making an argument in university students (Ploysangwal, 2018; Tipmontree, 2020).

In an aspect of the students' perceptions of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, the findings also showed that negative perceptions overran the positive perceptions by 94.55% and 56.46%, respectively. Only 50.9% of participants expressed both positive and negative perceptions. Their positive perceptions consist of flexible and convenient learning, more opportunities to use technology, an ability to review the lessons repeatedly, the most suitable way of learning during Covid-19, exposure to new teaching techniques and up-to-date lesson plans, and an increase in concentration when learning alone. The results help confirm the previous findings (Fatonina et al., 2020; Yusnilita, 2020). Unlike, negative feelings were extensively found, such as physical readiness, mental readiness, and external readiness. Physical readiness includes lacking online learning tools and internet connection (smartphone, iPad, tablet, computer, laptop, etc.), no interaction between teachers and students, being unable to ask questions, not fully learning and hard to understand, and the disappearance of a variety of activities. Mental readiness includes being stressed, less interesting/boring/demotivating, and being isolated/no socialization. External readiness includes no financial support for internet connection and/or devices, lacking additional extra support from parents. This may be because 1) the poverty rate in Thailand has been growing and the living quality has changed due to the unemployment and economic recession, 2) the familiarity with the collectivism culture makes the isolation even harder, and 3) the embedment of a hierarchical system where the teacher is still the highest authorised person, which makes it impossible to implement autonomous learning, one of the most critical skills, into online learning classes. Moreover, students also expressed concerns about the Covid-19 situation, such as the failure of how government handles the Covid-19 situation, the lack of social skills development for children, and the social accountability of citizens for breaking COVID-19 control measures. Lastly, to implement projective techniques into online learning classrooms (both learning and assessment), six principles were proposed.



5. Limitation and Recommendation

Projective techniques through the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) and the Third Person Technique in this current study can be implemented into other online learning approaches and assessments, linked with other current social issues, and designed into in-house materials to gain new perspectives and insightful thoughts from students under positive environment and emotional support. Further studies should emphasize on the longer period of classroom implementation and the use of projective techniques in promoting students' confidence and critical thinking skills.

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