From Classroom to Cloud: The Impact of Hybrid Distance Instruction on Learner Engagement and Oral Confidence in a University English Course in Taiwan

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Abstract:

This action research investigates how hybrid distance instruction influences learner engagement and speaking confidence in a university English course in Taiwan. The course combined in-person sessions, live online instruction via Microsoft Teams, and asynchronous learning using the TronClass platform. Supplementary tools such as ORID-based reflections, group presentations, Padlet discussions, and interactive tasks were also implemented to enhance engagement.

Data were collected from student surveys (N = 28) and classroom observations. The findings reveal high levels of student satisfaction, with mean scores ranging from 4.2 to 4.6 out of 5 for course structure, asynchronous support, and increased speaking confidence. Notably, asynchronous components provided a low-pressure environment that particularly benefited introverted or anxious learners. Students also highlighted flexibility and interactivity as key strengths, though technical difficulties and time management emerged as challenges.

The results suggest that well-designed hybrid distance learning can support diverse learner needs and promote active language use in higher education. Practical recommendations include structuring asynchronous speaking tasks, ensuring prompt instructor feedback, and balancing synchronous and asynchronous modes to sustain learner engagement.

Keywords:

Hybrid Learning, Distance Education, Learner Engagement, Speaking Confidence, University English.