eLearning and English-Medium Instruction: Inbound Exchange Student Perspectives

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Abstract

This poster reports on the perceptions and experiences of 92 inbound international exchange students (L2 speakers of English) at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK).

Research Questions

1. What are the students' perceptions of and experiences with eLearning and English-medium courses?
2. What are the pedagogical implications of the findings?

Instrumentation

- Pre- and Post-sojourn international exchange questionnaire surveys
- Protocol for in-depth, semi-structured interviews (15 case participants)

Profile of Cohort (N = 92)

Sex: 62 F; 30 M

Average age:

21.5 years

Year of study:

3rd year (50)

4th year (19)

2nd year (14)

PG (4)

1st year (1)

Undisclosed (4)

Discipline:

Business Admin (38)

Social Science (21)

Engineering (11)

Arts (9)

Medicine (5)

Science (5)

Law (3)

First language:

Mandarin (20); French (12); Dutch (8); Korean (7); Swedish (7); Finnish (4); Italian (4); Others (26)

Home country:

Mainland China (20); France (11); the Netherlands (9); Korea (6); Sweden (5); Switzerland (5); Finland (4); Italy (4); Others (26)

Challenges in English-medium courses

- Language barrier (66.7%)
- Adjusting to unfamiliar modes of teaching and learning (33.4%)
- Difficult courses (26.7%)
- Heavy workload (20.0%)
- Interacting with people who have a different cultural bkgd (13.3%)
- Participating in class (13.3%)

Perceptions of eLearning

Positive aspects:

- Useful to share ideas with peers & gain socio-emotional support online
- Beneficial to have exposure to divergent viewpoints in discussion boards

Negative aspects:

- Very time-consuming
- Increases the work-load
- Uploading photos is troublesome
- Difficult to convey ideas and feelings online in an L2

Pedagogical implications

- Arrange eLearning workshops for inbound international (L2) exchange students;
- Encourage Faculty to better integrate local and non-local students (e.g., group work, discussions, projects);
- Promote the use of tasks/activities that cater to diverse learning styles;
- Recognize inbound students as a valuable resource (e.g., foster the sharing of ideas and examples from diverse contexts and situations).

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