

STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON SYNCHRONOUS VS. ASYNCHRONOUS DISTANCE LEARNING IN SECONDARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

We are living in a time of rapid technological advancement, and language learning is not immune to these changes. Educational systems must transform to keep pace with the evolving world, as physical classrooms are becoming less essential while virtual environments provide a wide variety of options. Distance education is expanding rapidly, and a key topic of academic debate is the distinction between synchronous learning, which is limited by time but can take place anywhere, and asynchronous learning, which offers complete flexibility in terms of time, place, and pace. This study examines the performance of English language learners in both types of distance education through the Online Self-Regulated Learning Questionnaire (OSLQ), which was modified into two separate questionnaires based on a 5-point Likert scale. The instrument examines the strategies students use across six sub-fields of self-regulated learning: environment structuring, goal setting, help-seeking, self-evaluation, task strategies, and time management. The sample included approximately 100 participants from both secondary and higher education. The findings reveal that both groups are moderate users of distance learning strategies, while also highlighting differences between secondary and university students regarding preferred learning modes, common challenges, and areas for improvement, thus contributing to the development of effective, learner-centered distance education practice.

Keywords: virtual classrooms, learning questionnaire, learners' opinions, learners' preferences

INTRODUCTION

The digital world around us has transformed every aspect of human life, including education. Although distance education is not a new concept—it first appeared at the beginning of the 20th century through mailed study materials—it is the expansion of the Internet that has enabled educational institutions worldwide to offer both traditional and distance education. However, the global shift to distance learning became inevitable during the COVID pandemic, when it was the only option to complete the ongoing school and academic years. Teachers and students around the world had to adopt technological tools to prevent disruptions in the educational process, ensuring its continuity despite numerous challenges. From today's perspective, we can conclude that the transition was largely successful; however, further studies are needed to assess its long-term effectiveness.