

Effectiveness of Online-based ESL Education in Catering to Diverse Learning Styles of a Mixed Ability Classroom

Charuni Hansika Lenadora

The Open University (Matale Study Centre)

<charunihansika@gmail.com>

Abstract - The requirement for social distancing and isolation brought on by the Covid 19 pandemic has forced ESL teachers to adopt eLearning or online learning as an appropriate crisis-response measure to provide a limit to the disruption of education. One of the pre-Covid conceptions of eLearning is that the unplanned and hurried move to online platforms with no training, insufficient preparation will result in an unproductive teaching-learning experience that is critical to sustained growth. Many questions whether this supports learners and their distinct learning styles, or whether it is more of a hindrance or diversion. This paper critically analyzes the effectiveness of online-based ESL education in catering to diverse learning styles of a mixed ability classroom. The study was conducted as qualitative research. Main data was gathered through an in-depth analysis of similar studies, and from personal experience and perspective as an ESL teacher. Through observations and reflections, students' opinions, and perspectives regarding eLearning were identified and used as secondary data to substantiate the findings. The findings indicated that online education creates a platform that is not restricted by place or time. It activates learner autonomy as it caters to different learning styles. It offers a major development in teaching and learning since it facilitates the exchange of knowledge and expertise while providing opportunities for all types of learners in distant or disadvantaged locations.

Keywords: Online education, Learning styles, English language teaching