

Serving Ells in Global University Contexts: Post-Method Strategies for Online Education Platforms

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Abstract

The expansion of university borders into the virtual space of students within their own national context requires a move beyond simple remediation of ELL's (English Language Learners) linguistic proficiency towards pragmatic and adaptable teaching approaches. This study analyzed self-reported narratives collected from TAs (Teaching Assistants) who teach online tutorials with ELL students as they enter their first-year university courses. The current research builds and contrasts with our previous work where TAs' narratives were analyzed in relation to their in-class experiences with their students. As was found in the previous research, TAs who openly experimented with multiple methods to suit the individual needs of their students achieved significant improvements. In contrast, TAs who viewed their students to have intractable linguistic limitations described the students as unable to accomplish tasks or stay motivated. These TAs also equated these limitations with students' lack of competency with virtual communication platforms. In distinct contrast, the TAs who utilized multiple methods were able to draw on their students' competence with online communication platforms. This allowed them to encourage students to take a leadership role in the virtual classroom which increased their learning engagement and focus on prescribed tasks. This research suggests that an increase in the degree of training in the use of online teleconferencing platforms for TAs is crucial to help them approach teaching pragmatically by adapting multiple online post-method approaches in correlation to the particular and changing needs of students throughout a course, as well as the pedagogical constraints of new teaching platforms.

Keywords: experimentation; motivation; narrative; post-method; teleconferencing