

Innovating Education across Continents: A Case Study of Virtual English Instructional Programs

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Abstract

With the exponential advancement of information and communication technology, humanity today lives in a world where simply pressing a computer button connects individuals globally. While there may be variations in degree, almost every country in the world can now address virtually everything from purchasing goods to social gatherings, businesses, and religious congregations. Education is an integral part of this paradigm shift. Traditionally, education has taken the form of students and teachers gathering in physical buildings called schools, engaging in face-to-face interactions to learn academic knowledge and social skills. However, recent events such as the COVID-19 pandemic have led schools to close and offer virtual education, allowing for the exploration of the infinite possibilities of educational content utilizing virtual reality. While virtual education has its drawbacks compared to traditional face-to-face methods, discussing its potential and development avenues concerning providing students with the necessary academic content transcending time and space is undeniably crucial from an educational standpoint. As part of this exploration, I conducted a 10-week virtual English education program connecting 10 education major students from a city in the western United States with 50 middle and high school students in Haiti, from January to April 2024. This paper presents a case study examining the advantages and disadvantages of internationally connected virtual classes and suggests future improvements.

Keywords: Case Study; English Language Learners; English as a Foreign Language; International Education; Virtual Reality