Offering Students Multiple Modalities to Participate in Discussions: Lessons Learned from Emergency Lockdown Teaching During Covid 19

Monica Anne Festa[1,2]
[1]University of Salento
[2]Al Akhawayn University

Abstract

Covid 19 mandatory online teaching brought about insights and paradigm shifts experienced on a global level by educators and learners alike. One example of such a paradigm shift was explored at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco, in the English composition course. The findings of this doctoral research examine the differences between participation rates and performances of students whilst online during Covid 19 in three response modes: audio, text and camera. Findings suggest learners experience fewer inhibitions and more accurate English when responding through text compared with audio and camera. Their attitudes towards cameras also reveal inhibitions mostly stemming from concerns over judgments on appearances, especially by female students. Findings support Krashen's theory on the affective filter as well as Plato's theories on the physical senses as an impediment to the acquisition of knowledge. Specific cultural and religious beliefs, namely belief in the evil eye and guarding one's gaze, may also have played a part in explaining students' apprehension for using cameras Recommendations for applications include allowing students multiple modes of participation in a blended learning approach, collecting data using automatic transcription through teleconferencing platforms such as MS Teams for language output analysis, and also for educators to use this data to investigate their own implicit biases which may impede instructor performance.

Keywords: multiple modalities, discussion, affective filter, implicit bias, ancient Greek philosophy, evil eye, guarding one's gaze