Chapter 1
Digital Literacy and Delivery Modalities:
Understanding Factors Influencing Modality Selection and Learner Outcomes in LINC

Mesay Andualem Tegegne
NorQuest College, Canada

ABSTRACT

This chapter examines factors influencing students' course delivery modality selection (fully online vs. blended) in the context of a LINC program and compares modalities with respect to digital skills acquisition, language learning progress, and participants' satisfaction, using data from assessments (pre and post) and end-of-term feedback surveys. While digital literacy was not a factor in modality selection or preference, given no statistical difference across modalities in digital skills test scores at the pretest, sociodemographic factors (e.g., gender, parental status, marital status, and time in Canada) were associated with being in the online modality, suggesting that selection of the online modality was more about flexibility and convenience. In addition, being in the fully online modality was negatively associated with the odds of improved test performance on writing tests (no difference for reading and digital literacy tests). On the other hand, end-of-term survey feedback from CLB 5 and above classes found higher satisfaction rates among students in the online modality.

INTRODUCTION

The increasing role of digitalization and remote service delivery in the settlement sector has had significant implications for LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) programs across the country. In particular, the transition to remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic and the adjustment to online and hybrid teaching and learning environments has increased the importance of understanding the role of delivery modalities and their implications for student outcomes and learner satisfaction. Research is needed to address this knowledge gap by identifying students' modality preferences and examining modality differences, if any, in students' experiences and outcomes so as to inform effective and student-centered programming decisions that help meet newcomers' needs.

This study was aimed at filling this knowledge gap by addressing three interrelated research questions. First, what is the role of digital literacy in modality selection and accessibility? Second, what other factors are associated with modality selection among newcomer language students? And third, are there differences across service delivery modalities in digital literacy skills, language learning progress, and student satisfaction? To answer these questions, the study used data collected in the LINC program at NorQuest College in Edmonton, Alberta. Data from assessments (pre-post design) over two terms and an end-of-term survey that provided feedback from participants was used. Instructors also completed a short survey, primarily aimed at collecting open-ended feedback to shed light on these questions. The study focused on two delivery modalities that were offered in the LINC program over the study period (i.e., January – December 2023): fully online and hybrid/blended courses. The assessments focused on Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) level 5 and 6 classes, whereas the end-of-term survey targeted all students in CLB 5 and above classes at NorQuest College.

BACKGROUND

The COVID-19 pandemic has had significant impacts on educational institutions, educators, and learners worldwide, and raised ongoing questions and debates among researchers and practitioners concerning its long-term implications for learner outcomes (Betthäuser, Bach-Mortensen, & Engzell, 2023). The pandemic brought about widespread interruptions to learning and instruction and subsequent adjustment to Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT), which is the "temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternative delivery mode due to crisis circumstances" (Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust, & Bond, 2020) and understood to be different from well-planned online or remote teaching. These changes in the education sector have

22 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/digital-literacy-and-delivery-modalities/351913

Related Content

The Need to Engage With Smartphones and Social Network Sites (SNSs) at Korean Universities
Thomas E. Webster (2020). *Recent Developments in Technology-Enhanced and Computer-Assisted Language Learning (pp. 122-143).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-need-to-engage-with-smartphones-and-social-network-sites-snss-at-korean-universities/242425

Emerging Feedback in Two Asynchronous ESL Writing Forums
Stella K. Hadjistassou (2008). *Handbook of Research on Computer-Enhanced Language Acquisition and Learning (pp. 342-360).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/emerging-feedback-two-asynchronous-esl/19820

Second Language Reading in Hypertext Environments
Robert Ariew, Gulcan Erçetinand Susan Cooledge (2008). *Handbook of Research on Computer-Enhanced Language Acquisition and Learning (pp. 48-63).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/second-language-reading-hypertext-environments/19804

Learners of Different Language Proficiency Levels and Incidental Focus on Form in Synchronous Text-based Discussion
Wan-Tsai Kungand Zohreh R. Eslami (2015). *International Journal of Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Teaching (pp. 42-59).*
www.irma-international.org/article/learners-of-different-language-proficiency-levels-and-incidental-focus-on-form-in-synchronous-text-based-discussion/135578

"You're a Winner": An Exploratory Study of the Influence of Exposure on Teachers' Awareness of Media Literacy
J. Egbertand Leslie Huff (2011). *International Journal of Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Teaching (pp. 33-48).*
www.irma-international.org/article/you-winner-exploratory-study-influence/61345