

To Screen or Not to Screen: Exploring Shifts in University Students' Awareness of Self-Regulation for Language Learning Across Face-to-Face, Online and Hybrid Instruction

Ward Peeters^{1,*} and Alexander Ito Maitland²

¹Monash University, Australia

²Kanda University of International Studies, Japan

Abstract

This paper explores how undergraduate language majors of English adjust their self-regulation strategies across face-to-face, online, and hybrid modes of instruction. Data from 250 students at a Japanese university were analysed over three years, each representing a different mode of instruction. Student reflections and group discussions were annotated, categorising students' awareness of self-regulation into three areas: awareness of approaches to learning, awareness of facilities, roles and resources, and awareness of self. Findings show hybrid instruction enhances engagement with learning strategies, face-to-face settings encourage discussions on facilities, roles, and resources, and online learning boosts digital self-expression. The study highlights the importance of adapting instructional designs to support learner success in varied learning environments.

Keywords: Self-regulated learning, Learning strategies, Mode of instruction, Online teaching and learning

Introduction

The transition from traditional face-to-face teaching to online and hybrid instruction has prompted a fundamental re-evaluation of the ways our students learn and how we can adequately support them in their learning

*Corresponding Author E-mail: Ward.Peeters@monash.edu

trajectory (Peeters & Mynard, 2023). This study investigates the changes in undergraduate language majors' self-regulation strategies across these different instructional modalities when engaged in an effective learning module. In order to investigate these changes, this study addresses the question: which self-regulation strategies and meta-strategies do undergraduate students use in collaborative learning settings when enrolled in face-to-face, online, and hybrid instruction settings? Self-regulation, encompassing a range of cognitive, metacognitive, and motivational processes (Oxford, 2017), is a key determiner for academic success, and plays a pivotal role in life-long learning practices (Hadwin et al., 2018).

Methods and Data

This quantitative discourse study draws on collaborative learning data and student reflections from 250 undergraduate English majors, all enrolled in an effective learning module at a private Japanese university. Data was collected over three consecutive academic years. Year one featured traditional face-to-face instruction, which shifted to exclusively online teaching in year two, and finally, a hybrid model in year three. Every year, students had the opportunity to discuss their progress and the challenges they encountered with their peers on an online forum. Threaded group discussions, including text data, time stamps, and user IDs, were downloaded using an Application Programming Interface Scraper. 1088 posts and comments were annotated, coding self-regulation strategies and meta-strategies (for more information on the coding scheme, see Peeters & Mynard, 2023). These codes were then grouped into three awareness categories, in accordance with Kato and Mynard's (2015) structured awareness-raising approach to language learning: 1) awareness of approaches to language learning, as students discuss learning goals, planning, and learning strategies, 2) awareness of facilities, roles, and resources, as they discuss the content and use of several resources, and their experiences with teachers, learning advisors, and peers, and 3) awareness of self, as they discuss personal experiences, stories, and emotions. Shifts in these awareness phases form the basis for this paper, providing an overview of learners' self-regulation behaviour across teaching modes.

Results

Different modes of instruction prompted learners to focus on different strategies and meta-strategies in their interaction process. Grouping these observations together in the three awareness categories, Figure 1 presents the shifts

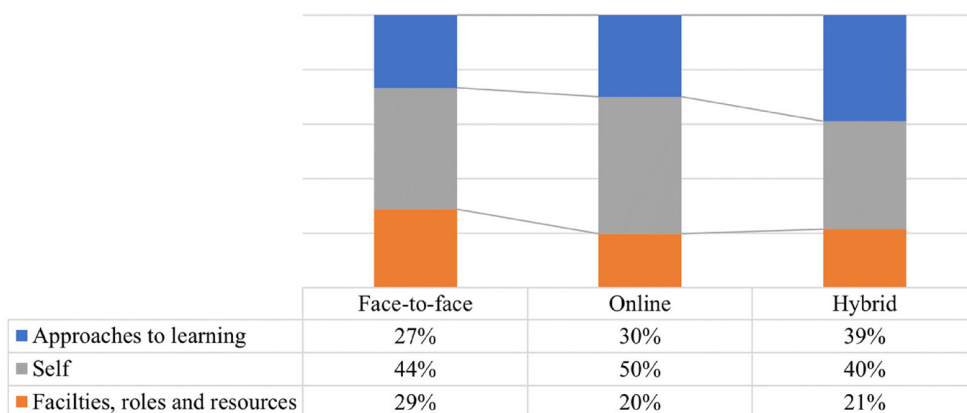


Figure 1. Percentage of student reflections featuring awareness of approaches to learning, Self, and Facilities, Roles and resources across three modes of instruction.

that could be observed as students were engaging in effective learning activities and reflections. When comparing the three modes of instruction, 27% of interactions between learners in a face-to-face learning setting featured discussions on approaches to learning. This percentage increased slightly to 30% for online instruction. The highest engagement with approaches to learning was seen in hybrid instruction, at 39%. This mode of instruction seems to allow students to integrate and reflect on diverse learning strategies, leveraging the access to both in-person and online environments.

When comparing learners' awareness of self, 44% of learner reflections and discussions in the face-to-face cohort featured examples of acknowledgement, positive reinforcement, as well as identity construction and personal story telling. For the online cohort, this increased to 50%, and decreased to 40% in hybrid instruction. Students involved in online instruction seem to be more reliant on the online space for self-expression and social bonding, which is something the student groups in the other modes, in addition, can do in-person.

When comparing learners' awareness of facilities, roles, and resources, 29% of learner interactions showcased reflections of their engagement with teachers, learning advisors and peers, their use and assessment of resources, and the roles that they take up in their learning trajectory. This was less the case in online instruction settings, where 20% of learner interactions featured such awareness. In hybrid mode, there was a slight increase to 21%. Face-to-face instruction seems to provide more opportunities to discuss facilities, roles, and resources, which might be due to the immediate availability of physical resources and direct interactions with facilitators.

Discussion

This study shows some notable shifts in students' self-regulation strategies across the different instructional modalities. Hybrid instruction encouraged the highest engagement among learners when it comes to approaches to learning, with both in-person and online environments used to develop and try effective learning strategies (Lai et al., 2022). Face-to-face instruction, on the other hand, allowed learners to engage more with facilities, roles and resources, indicating the importance of physical presence and access to materials and people. Online instruction fostered online self-representation, showing the need for students to build their learner identity and socialise in the online setting as they lacked such opportunities in-person (Peeters & Pretorius, 2020). It can be argued that face-to-face instruction fostered a sense of immediacy and interpersonal interaction, as learners could discuss their learning journey as it was unfolding in real time. Online teaching prompted students to adapt their self-regulation strategies to develop more autonomously and navigate the digital learning environments while constructing a learner identity through online text. Students invested more time in negotiating their roles in the learning environment. The hybrid mode presented unique challenges and opportunities as students navigated two learning contexts simultaneously. Their high engagement with approaches to learning shows that this mode might provide more opportunities for reflection on learning.

This study has shown the dynamic interplay between instructional modalities and students' self-regulation, emphasising the need for educators to tailor instructional designs and support mechanisms to enhance students' self-regulatory skills, thereby fostering resilience and success in diverse learning contexts. These transitions between instruction modes in Computer Assisted Language Learning prompt us to rethink the relevance of tasks in different settings, the options students have to personalise the learning environment, how scaffolding and interaction can be facilitated, and what kind of prompts for reflection can be integrated (Van Laer & Elen, 2023). The findings of this study can enable us to re-evaluate the roles of students and teachers in this regard, looking at how the self-regulatory needs of students shift as modality changes.

References

- Hadwin, A. F., Järvelä, S., & Miller, M. (2018). Self-regulation, co-regulation and shared regulation in collaborative learning environments. In D. Schunk, & J. Greene, (Eds.). *Handbook of self-regulation of learning and*

- performance* (pp. 83–106), London: Routledge. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.4324/9781315697048-6>
- Kato, S., & Mynard, J. (2015). *Reflective dialogue: Advising in language learning*. London: Routledge.
- Lai, Y., Saab, N., & Admiraal, W. (2022). Learning strategies in self-directed language learning using mobile technology in higher education: A systematic scoping review. *Education and Information Technologies*, 27(6), 7749–7780. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-022-10945-5>
- Oxford, R. (2017). *Teaching and researching language learning strategies: Self-regulation in context (2nd ed)*. London: Routledge.
- Peeters, W., & Mynard, J. (2023). Supporting self-regulated language learning skills online: awareness raising approaches for computer-supported collaboration. *Language Awareness*, 32(1), 132–152. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09658416.2021.2018447>
- Peeters, W., & Pretorius, M. (2020). Facebook or fail-book: Exploring “community” in a virtual community of practice. *ReCALL*, 32(3), 291–306. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0958344020000099>
- Van Laer, S., & Elen, J. (2023). An instrumentalized framework for supporting learners’ self-regulation in blended learning environments. In *Learning, Design, and Technology: An International Compendium of Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy* (pp. 575–612). Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-17727-4_121-1