

A MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF SECONDARY STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE OF WEB-BASED LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract

This paper reports on a large-scale project designed to replicate an earlier investigation of tertiary students (Felix 2001) in a secondary school environment. The new project was carried out in five settings, again investigating the potential of the Web as a medium of language instruction. Data was collected by questionnaires and observational procedures to ascertain student perceptions of the usefulness of Web-based learning, their views on its advantages and disadvantages, their personal comfort and enjoyment when working with the Web, their preferred mode of delivery, their evaluation of the quality of resources used, and their learning styles and study preferences.

Results of both studies showed that students were on the whole positively inclined to working with the Web and found it useful, with the majority preferring to use the Web as an add-on to face-to-face teaching. Reported advantages in both studies outweighed disadvantages. The secondary students felt significantly more comfortable on the Web, worked longer hours and reported more evenly distributed study preferences. Most favoured a kinesthetic learning style and significant relationships between learning style and mode preference were found. Differential findings related to gender emerged in the two studies.

Published in ReCALL 16 (1), 129-141.