

Comparison of web-enhanced learning environments in an e-learning age

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Abstract

According to an e-readiness ranking survey conducted by the Economist Intelligence Unit and IBM in 2003, Taiwan (20th), outstripped by Hong Kong (10th), Singapore (12th), and South Korea (16th), took 4th place in Asia. The report also points that “South Korea (16th) is making the largest strides, spurred by an ambitious government and heavy infrastructure spending.” Should we worry that we may lag behind even more if we do not make the best use of our e-readiness environment? The fully developed Internet-friendly environment in Taiwan shows that we have entered an era of e-learning age. This study is mainly comparing the five learning environments and styles of web-enhanced English lessons in a public university in northern Taiwan: (1) traditional classroom with LCD projector and Internet access, (2) computer lab, (3) cutting-edge digital language lab, (4) web-based asynchronous communication, and (5) computer-mediated synchronous interaction. More and more universities in Taiwan have offered e-learning platform for their students as a supplementary learning aid, but critics of web instruction have suggested that web-based courses at university are just counterfeit education (Noble, 1997). A survey will be given to find out students’ opinions about this web-enhanced English course mainly in terms of interaction, interest, and effectiveness. Suggestions about effective CMC learning environment with high levels of interactivity will also be provided.

Keyword : CALL, web-enhanced learning