

The Use of Videoconferencing in a Task-Based Beginners' Chinese Class

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Abstract : The development of new technologies and the falling cost of high-speed Internet access have made it easier for institutes and language teachers to opt different ways to communicate with students at distance. The emergence of web-conferencing applications, which integrate text, chat, audio / video and graphic facilities, offers great opportunities for language learning to through the multimodal environment. This paper reports on data elicited from a Ph.D. study of using web-conferencing in the teaching of first-year Chinese class in order to promote learners' collaborative learning. Firstly, a comparison of four desktop videoconferencing (DVC) tools was conducted to determine the pedagogical value of the videoconferencing tool-Blackboard Collaborate. Secondly, the evaluation of 14 campus-based Chinese learners who conducted five one-hour online sessions via the multimodal environment reveals the users' choice of modes and their learning preference. The findings show that the tasks designed for the web-conferencing environment contributed to the learners' collaborative learning and second language acquisition.

Keywords : computer-mediated communication (CMC), CALL evaluation, TBLT, web-conferencing, online Chinese teaching

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