

Lessons Learned from Emergency Remote Teaching



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Abstract

Emergency remote teaching (ERT) is defined as a temporary educational response implemented during crises, such as pandemics, wars, or natural disasters, before returning to traditional modes like face-to-face, blended, or hybrid teaching (Bozkurt & Sharma, *Asian J Dist Educ* 15(1):1–6, 2020). Unlike traditional online teaching, ERT is characterized by its suddenness, often catching educators unprepared in terms of materials, technology, and pedagogy. The term “emergency remote” emphasizes the unprecedented nature of this teaching approach, necessitated by unforeseen circumstances that require instruction to be delivered remotely.

This entry explores key lessons learned from ERT, with a particular focus on the implications for computer-assisted language learning (CALL) teacher education and professional

development. Key insights include the necessity of digital literacy in language teaching, the importance of flexible and adaptable methodologies, and the essential role of continuous professional development (CPD) in equipping educators for future challenges. The experience highlights the value of online communities in fostering collaboration among teachers and learners while also stressing the emotional vulnerability of language educators. Additionally, the pandemic revealed significant disparities in learners’ access to technology and infrastructure, raising concerns about equity in online education. This entry concludes by discussing the implications of these lessons for the future of CALL and emphasizing the need for institutional support, equitable access, and fair online assessment practices.

By addressing the above-mentioned lessons learned from ERT, this entry contributes to the broader discussion on enhancing CALL teacher education and professional development, preparing educators for future challenges in an increasingly digitalized educational prospects.

Keywords

Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) · Computer-assisted Language Learning (CALL) · Digital literacy

Introduction

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 obliged an unprecedented shift from traditional face-to-face teaching to various forms of online instruction, leading to what is now termed as emergency remote teaching (ERT) (Hodges et al., 2020). This abrupt transition presented unique challenges, particularly in the domain of language education, where the interaction-rich nature of teaching and learning was suddenly constrained by the limitations of remote online platforms. The rapid adoption of digital tools and platforms, often with minimal preparation, highlighted significant gaps in teachers' readiness, particularly in the domain of CALL. While CALL has long been a growing field, the sudden and involuntary reliance on digital technologies during the pandemic exposed both the potential and the shortcomings of existing CALL frameworks, especially in teacher education and professional development.

Lessons Learned from ERT

The experience of ERT has provided a valuable opportunity to critically evaluate and reflect on the preparation of language educators to adapt to such abrupt changes. This reflection is particularly crucial for CALL, where the integration of technology in teaching practices is essential. Referring Martin et al.'s (2020) framework, this entry examines the lessons learned from ERT, focusing on its impact on course and instructor domain, learner domain, and organization domain.

Lessons Learned from Teachers and Course Perspectives

To begin with, the necessity of digital literacy in language teaching is a prominent lesson learned from ERT because there were critical needs for digital literacy among language educators. As classrooms moved online, the ability to navigate various digital tools became essential. Teachers were required to rapidly acquire and apply skills in using learning management systems (LMS),

video conferencing platforms, and a myriad of online resources (Moorhouse, 2020). This highlighted a pre-existing gap in digital literacy within teacher education programs, suggesting that such skills should be integral to teacher training and ongoing professional development.

Secondly, ERT also emphasized the importance of flexible and adaptable teaching methods. Traditional pedagogical approaches were often insufficient in the online context, where synchronous and asynchronous methods needed to be balanced to maintain student engagement and learning outcomes (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). Teachers who were able to adapt their instructional strategies to the online environment were more successful in facilitating language learning. This adaptability is now recognized as a crucial skill in teacher education, particularly in preparing educators for future disruptions.

Additionally, the rapid adoption of ERT also emphasized the necessity of continuous professional development (CPD) for language educators. The pandemic exposed gaps in teacher preparedness, particularly in the effective use of digital tools for language teaching. CPD programs that focus on digital pedagogy, online assessment, and the integration of CALL tools are vital for equipping teachers with the skills needed to navigate the evolving educational landscape (Philipsen et al., 2019). Institutions are suggested to put more resources in ongoing training to ensure that educators remain competent and confident in their teaching practices.

Moreover, the transition to ERT brought to light the emotional challenges faced by language teachers, who were often working in isolation, under increased pressure, and without adequate support. Addressing the emotional vulnerability of language teachers is another lesson that cannot be neglected. The sudden shift to online teaching, coupled with the demands of maintaining student engagement and managing technological issues, contributed to heightened stress and burnout (MacIntyre et al., 2020). Recognizing and addressing the emotional vulnerability of teachers is crucial for their well-being and effectiveness of language teaching. This requires a more holistic approach to teacher support, encompassing

mental health resources and opportunities for peer connection.

Last but not least, the shift to online learning also brought challenges in ensuring equality and fairness in online assessment. Traditional assessment methods often did not translate well to the online environment, leading to concerns about academic integrity and the validity of assessments (Sevnarayan & Maphoto, 2024). Educators were forced to rethink their assessment strategies, incorporating more formative assessments, alternative assessment methods, and technology-enhanced tools that could provide a fairer evaluation of student performance in online environment. These experiences call for a need for ongoing research and innovation in online assessment practices.

Lessons Learned from Learners Perspective

Gardner and Lambert (1972) proposed that learners' motivation is one of the key factors in the success of language learning, and many further research support this idea recently (e.g. Deci & Ryan, 1985; Dörnyei, 2005). Nevertheless, the online environment presented new challenges in maintaining the learning motivation. Research showed that lots of students felt bored when they were learning online. The lack of physical classroom interaction, coupled with distractions at home, led to decreased engagement for some students. Educators had to find innovative ways to keep students motivated, such as incorporating interactive CALL tools, offering personalized feedback, and creating opportunities for meaningful communication. Understanding the factors that influence online learning motivation is essential for designing effective online language courses.

Another lesson learned from ERT is to emphasize the value of communities for language teachers and learners. Online communities emerged as a significant support system during ERT, providing a platform for collaboration, resource sharing, and emotional support among language teachers. These communities, mostly online, often facilitated through social media or professional networks, enabled teachers to exchange ideas, troubleshoot challenges, and

develop new teaching strategies (Trust et al., 2020). For learners, online communities offered opportunities for peer interaction and collaborative learning, which are essential components of language acquisition. The pandemic highlighted the importance of fostering and maintaining these communities as part of teacher professional development and student engagement strategies.

Lessons Learned from Organizational Perspectives

As a starting point, it is widely accepted that high-quality online instruction can only be achieved with ongoing support from the community, educational institutions, and technology experts. Teachers who received timely technical support, access to resources, and clear communication from their institutions were better equipped to handle the transition (Trust & Whalen, 2020). Institutional support also extended to ensuring that students had access to the necessary technology and resources for online learning. The pandemic highlighted the importance of proactive and responsive leadership in managing educational crises and supporting both teachers and students.

Next, one of the most pressing issues during ERT was the inequitable access to infrastructure and resources. Students and teachers in some under-resourced areas faced significant barriers, including unreliable Internet connections, lack of access to digital devices, and limited digital literacy (Czerniewicz et al., 2020). These disparities deteriorated existing inequalities in education and raised important questions about equity in online learning. Addressing these issues requires a concerted effort from policymakers, educational institutions, and technology providers to ensure that all learners have equitable access to the tools and resources needed for success.

Conclusion

The experience of ERT during the COVID-19 pandemic has illuminated several critical lessons that are essential for the future of CALL teacher education and professional development. The

sudden shift to online instruction exposed the strengths and weaknesses of existing educational frameworks, particularly in the context of language teaching. The necessity of digital literacy, flexible teaching methods, CPD, the emotional vulnerability of language teachers, and fairness in online assessment were all highlighted during this period. Additionally, the challenges of maintaining learner motivation, the role of online communities, the institutional and administrative support, and equitable access to resources were brought to the forefront.

Moving forward, these lessons should inform the ongoing evolution of CALL and the preparation of language educators for future challenges. First, institutions must prioritize the provision of robust and equitable infrastructure, ensuring that both teachers and learners have access to the necessary technological tools and support. Second, digital literacy should be an integral part of teacher education programs, with CPD initiatives focusing on the continuous development of teachers' skills in using digital tools and adapting to new teaching environments. Third, fostering online communities for both teachers and learners should be recognized as a key strategy for enhancing collaboration, resource sharing, and emotional support.

Moreover, it is crucial to address the emotional well-being of educators by providing mental health resources and creating opportunities for peer connection and support. Finally, innovative approaches to online assessment should be developed to ensure fairness and validity, with an emphasis on formative assessments and the integration of technology-enhanced evaluation methods.

In conclusion, the lessons learned from ERT provide valuable insights into the future of CALL and language education. By applying these lessons, educational institutions can better prepare educators to navigate the complexities of digital learning environments and ensure that language teaching remains effective, equitable, and resilient in the face of future disruptions.

Cross-References

- [Assessment of Writing Through Online Collaborative Tools](#)
- [Online Platforms for Assessing Writing Skills in LSP](#)
- [Self-assessment in Technology-Mediated Language Learning](#)
- [Social Media as an e-portfolio platform](#)
- [Student Engagement in Online Assessment](#)

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