

Education in emergencies: how does game-based learning affect South Korean students taking EFL lessons?

Abstract

Emergency education brings into focus assumptions about the role of digital technology in facilitating communication. During a disaster, redundant communication technology may be more reliable and widely accessible to different communities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, South Korean schools used various media to educate and connect with students. Students suffered from stress (Im & Jeong, 2021), loneliness (Han & Lee, 2021; Lee, 2023), and decreased motivation and engagement (Choi et al., 2024; Kim, 2021). Teachers felt unprepared for distance education and wanted methods to stimulate interaction and learning (Kwon, 2021; Lee, 2023). Researchers (Han & Lee, 2021; Kim, 2021) have explored the challenges of using different media during the pandemic and offered recommendations for online learning (Choi et al., 2024). However, research is needed to explore methods for improving student well-being across a range of media. This research will investigate whether game-based learning (GBL) can mitigate the problems of motivation, engagement and learning achievement for primary school students taking paper, TV broadcast and online lessons. The research will be conducted in South Korea with sixty-four primary school students taking a two-week EFL course. GBL theories will be used to create original GBL activities. Quantitative data will be gained from questionnaires and achievement tests. A case study will use interviews with eight students to develop new themes. Together, this data will give a broad understanding of how GBL affects students. Ultimately, the research will offer policymakers and educators insight into whether GBL can benefit all children, regardless of how they access emergency education.