

E-learning Environments: Are our students e-ready?

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ABSTRACT

As technologies have advanced, modes of learning have evolved and educators now must be innovative and adaptable to new methods of teaching content. There are a variety of ways in which educational content is delivered and multiple tools and features to support learning activities, collaboration and communication. Students learning preferences, sense of preparedness, and knowledge of e-learning environments must be considered to ensure learning goals are supported by quality learning experiences. The proposed research study will explore first time e-learners perceptions of a one day introductory e-learning tutorial and subsequent weekly supplementary instructor-made-videos in an effort to bridge the distance gap between e-learners and lecturers. A mixed methods approach will also allow for a survey evaluation of student preferences and the influence course design elements in Moodle and Adobe Connect have on the educational experience of e-learners at Diploma level who are studying through the Eastern Institute of Technology.

Categories and Subject Descriptors

K.3.1 [Computers and Education]: Computer Uses in Education – *collaborative learning, computer-assisted instruction (CAI), computer-managed instruction (CMI), and distance learning.*

General Terms

Human Factors

Keywords

E-learning, readiness, asynchronous, synchronous, Moodle, Adobe Connect, instructor-made-video, environment

1. PROJECT SUMMARY

EIT have extended offerings at Tairāwhiti Campus to include Bachelor of Computing Systems (BCS) and Bachelor of Business (BBS) to the programme portfolio. E-learning, blended and/or face-to-face delivery are present from first year diploma through to final degree year. While, alternative modes of learning are necessary to overcome programme challenges, concerns have been raised in regards to students transitioning from diploma to degree as being uncertain of the knowledge and preparation skills necessary to make an easy adjustment from the familiar face-to-face classroom to an e-learning environment. This presents a need to orientate e-learners.

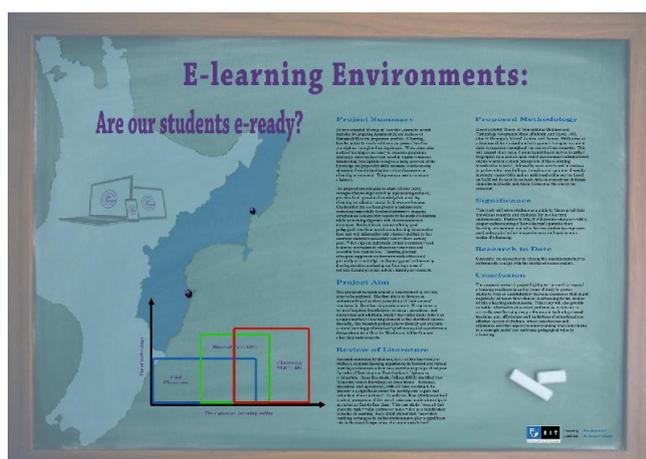
The proposed research plans to adapt Falloon's (2011) concepts of knowledge's model by implementing technical, procedural and operational knowledge's in a one day e-learning introduction tutorial for first-time e-learners. Consideration has also been given to a business course containing purposefully developed interactive, engaging asynchronous elements that respond to the needs of e-learners while maintaining alignment with classroom student's on-campus. Results indicate a course offering good pedagogical value from asynchronous learning elements that have been well balanced for both e-learners and face-to-face classroom students to successfully achieve their learning goals. Video clips and multimedia content is commonly used to convey information to enhance user experience and accessible from most devices. Therefore, proposed subsequent supplementary instructor-made-video could potentially serve to bridge the distance gap with e-learners by drawing attention, motivating and fostering a sense of real-time lecturer presence in their e-learning environment.

2. AIM OF RESEARCH PROJECT

This proposed research project is underpinned by two key aims to be explored. The first aim is to develop an understanding of student perceptions of their sense of readiness for the e-learning environment. E-readiness in terms of required knowledge's, technical, procedural, and operational and additional weekly instructor-made-video's as a supplementary e-learning element to the identified courses. Secondly, this research project aims to identify and evaluate student learning preferences of synchronous and asynchronous design elements within the Moodle and Adobe Connect e-learning environments.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research conducted by (Falloon, 2011) at the University of Waikato, explored learning experiences in blended and virtual learning environments from two participant groups, third year Bachelor of Teaching and Post Graduate Diploma in e-Education. From this study, Falloon (2011) identified



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that “students require knowledge on three fronts – technical, procedural and operational, with all three needing to be present to a significant extent for participants to gain real value from the experience”. In addition, Rose (2009) examined student perceptions of the use of instructor-made-video clips in an online and face-to-face class. This case study revealed that students highly value instructor-made-video as a modification to modes of learning. Rose (2009) stated “innovative teaching techniques in online environments play a significant role in the overall experience of student satisfaction”.

4. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

Moore’s (1993) Theory of Transactional Distance and Technology Acceptance Model (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975, cited in Ramayah, Ma’ruf, Jantan, and Osman, 2002) serve as a framework for a mixed method approach to capture student data in sequence throughout the course of one semester. This will consist of an initial 5 point Likert-based survey to gather biographic data and an open-ended questionnaire administered online to source student perceptions of the e-learning introduction tutorial, followed by semi-structured interviews to gather e-learners feelings, thoughts and opinions of weekly instructor-made-video and an additional online survey based on TAM will be used to evaluate data on student use of design elements in Moodle and Adobe Connect at the end of the semester.

5. SIGNIFICANCE

This study will serve students as a guide to future-proof their knowledge required and readiness for in e-learning environments. Further to this, it will provide educators with a deeper understanding of how e-learner’s perceive their learning environment and what learner preferences represent good pedagogical value in asynchronous and synchronous modes of e-learning.

6. RESEARCH TO DATE

Currently, the researcher is refining the questionnaire/survey instruments to align with the identified course content.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposed research project highlights the need to respond e-learning readiness in earlier years of study to protect students from an unsatisfactory learning experience that might negatively influence their choices in advancing future studies within e-learning environments. This study will also provide valuable information on student preferences in relation to currently used learning design elements in technology-based teaching, and, affordances and limitations of educational and affective factors of students, whose expectations and experience are vital aspects to understanding what contributes to a strategic model that embraces pedagogical value in e-learning.

8. REFERENCES

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