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Title	Technical Challenges With E-Learning Tools: A Bachelor Of Arts In Multimedia Studies Case Study
Year	2012
Program	Bachelor of Arts in Multimedia Studies

ABSTRACT

JOANNA CAMILA T. LEONGSON, University of the Philippines Open University, Los Baños, Laguna. May 2012. Technical Challenges With E-learning Tools: A Bachelor of Arts in Multimedia Studies Case Study

Key words: e-learning, distance learning tools, technical challenges, Bachelor of Arts in Multimedia Studies

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Technology is a key instrument in distance learning. The University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU) has been utilizing distance learning tools to facilitate the learning process. The first batch of Bachelor of Arts in Multimedia Studies (BAMS) students, as well as the faculty, has been exploring these tools. Distance learning tools were used for effective communication, access to information, and different ways of fulfilling course requirements. However, both the students and faculty may have also experienced technical challenges.

This study aimed to assess the usage of the different distance learning tools (Moodle, Email, Yahoo! Messenger, Skype, Google Groups, WiziQ, Academics, and Facebook) by the senior students and faculty of the Bachelor of Arts in Multimedia Studies (BAMS) through Web surveys. From their usage of the distance learning tools, the technological challenges were determined.

The distance learning tools have been grouped according to the type of teaching and learning, and interaction. Type I refers to distance learning tools used for teaching and receiving (student-teacher interaction); Type II refers to facilitating and sharing (student-student interaction), and Type III refers to collaborative teaching and learning (collaborative interaction or student-teacher and student interaction).

The usage and technical challenges were classified into the access to distance learning online tools, functionality of the tools, interaction with the tools or effects of tools in the interaction of students and instructors, and attitude towards the tools.

Findings show that the senior BAMS students, FIC's, and tutors generally find that they have easy access to all the distance learning tools, hardware resources, and adequate Internet connection.

The study also found out that interaction has been the challenging issue for both the student and faculty respondents. Among all the three types of distance learning tools, Type III tools have the lowest figures in all the categories (access, functionality, interaction, and attitude). The senior BAMS students have experienced problems in interacting with the class through the Type III tools. The students find that their failure to use the tools in communicating with the class has affected their academic performance.