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Coping Strategies towards Online Learning of Selected Students in the College of Arts and Communication University of Eastern Philippines

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Abstract

This study aimed at exploring the coping strategies towards online learning of selected students in the College of Arts and Communication University of Eastern Philippines. Specifically, the study aimed to: identify the online learning platforms used by the respondents, find out the coping strategies of the respondents towards online learning and draw out recommendations from the respondents for respondents for effective blended mode of learning.

These objectives were achieved through descriptive-survey research design and used survey questionnaire.

The salient findings of the study were:

There were seven (7) online platforms identified which include: FB Messenger, Google Classroom, Google Meet, Zoom, Google Form, Moodle and Meet Up. This conclude that there are various online platforms used by the teachers in delivering their lessons.

There were eleven (11) coping strategies of the respondents towards online learning. To wit: taking breaks, managing time wisely, practicing time management, staying healthy, taking notes, asking questions, resisting social media, exercising, getting help if you need it, getting organized and eating well.

There were six (6) recommendations from the respondents for respondents for effective blended mode of learning which include: strengthen relationships between students-teachers, understanding to the situation of students, choose Learning Management System or LMS where everyone can access, alternative requirements, set classrooms rules before the start of class and long due date of submission of requirements. This concludes that their students' consultation must be done to address the problems and needs of the students.

Keywords: Coping Strategies, Blended Mode of Learning and Learning Management System.

Introduction

Many educational institutions adopted alternative educational systems such as online learning, blended learning and home schooling. The education system has clearly been transformed and pushed to its limits because of this pandemic and blended learning is becoming a new normal. Blended learning has been around for a while and is the combination of traditional face-to-face instruction with aspects of online instruction all while students are in the classroom with the teacher. Blended learning strives to provide students the best of both face-to-face and online learning experiences. Blended classrooms include face-to-face instruction techniques such as direct instruction or lecture, group discussions and small-group work while also using technology to provide in-class online learning that students can do at home provided they have access to necessary technology.

Moreover, online instruction is often facilitated by a Learning Management System or LMS. An LMS is where the instructor puts all the lessons and activities that students must work through to successfully complete the course. Typical LMS's that schools use includes Canvas, Schoology, Blackboard and

even Google Classroom. Just as whole-class discussion and small-group work are staples of face-to-face instruction, discussion forums and asynchronous learning are staples of online learning. Blended classrooms can empower students who are introverted or shy to share their ideas and learn from others using discussion forums where conversations that were started in class can continue well after the class ends.

In the Philippine context, education has been a challenge due to this pandemic. According to Commission on Higher Education – Department of Health (CHED-DOH) Joint Memorandum Circular No. 2021-001, during the pandemic, flexible learning remains the best and safest pedagogical strategy; although it can be said that limited face-to-face classes including clinical internships and clerkships are not mandatory in all higher education institutions unless they are permitted by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) to conduct this kind of learning. (De Vera & Duque, 2021).

To respond to the needs of learners, especially of the 3.5 million tertiary-level students enrolled in approximately 2,400 HEIs, certain HEIs in the country have implemented proactive policies for the continuance of education despite the closure.

These policies include modified forms of online learning that aim to facilitate student learning activities. Online learning might be in terms of synchronous, real-time lectures and time-based outcomes assessments or asynchronous, delayed-time activities, like pre-recorded video lectures and time-independent assessments. (Oztok, *et al.*, 2013)

However, the Philippines needs a clear set of policies and guidelines based on an innovative educational framework. This requires a careful and sincere assessment of the country's readiness to offer learning programs that demand more than the traditional requirements. As the Philippines ventures into a new mode of learning, several factors need to be considered. This includes teacher capacity, situation and context of the learner and efficiency of the learning environment. These are, of course, on top of the more obvious issues of internet speed, cost of materials and mode of delivery. The best way to move forward is to take a step back and design a strategy that engages teachers, students, parents, school administrators and technology-based companies. This collaborative response based on a collective vision is the kind of creative solution this novel problem warrants.

It is challenging for students and teachers to create a safe, healthy and conducive environment for learning because they are the ones who would know what ways they can get to interact with one another virtually.

Hence, the current issues and problems encountered by the CHED in adopting the blended modes of learning prompted the researchers to pursue this study in order assess the coping strategies towards online learning coping strategies towards online learning of selected students in the College of Arts and Communication University of Eastern Philippines.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to investigate the coping strategies towards online learning coping strategies towards online learning of selected students in the College of Arts and Communication University of Eastern Philippines.

Specifically, the study aimed to attain the following objectives:

- i). Identify the online learning platforms used by the respondents
- ii). Find out the coping strategies of the respondents towards online learning and
- iii). Draw out recommendations from the respondents for respondents for effective blended mode of learning.

Methodology

This study was conducted in the University of Eastern Philippines (UEP), more specifically in the College of Arts and Communication. The study used descriptive-survey research design. The respondents of this study were the officially enrolled freshman students in the college. Purposive-quota sampling technique was employed. A total of one-hundred forty (140) respondents were included in the study.

Different kinds of statistical methods were used in this study according to its appropriateness. The statistical tools applied were tally, frequency, percentage computation and ranking.

Results and Discussions

Online Learning Platforms

Table 1 exhibits the online learning platforms used during pandemic. There were seven (7) online platforms identified which include: FB Messenger, Google Classroom, Google Meet, Zoom, Google Form, Moodle and Meet Up.

From the data it can be deduced that the topmost online learning platform used is Facebook Messenger. Facebook Messenger can be a useful tool for online learning, particularly for communication and collaboration. It allows for direct interaction between teachers and students, facilitating quick questions, discussions and sharing of materials. While not a full-fledged Learning Management System (LMS), it can supplement traditional LMS platforms by providing a more informal and accessible avenue for learning activities. Teachers can create group chats for classes or specific projects, fostering discussions and peer-to-peer learning and students can directly message teachers for clarifications, feedback or to ask questions about assignments. The second topmost online platform is Google Classroom is a suite of online tools that allows teachers to set assignments, have work submitted by students, to mark and to return graded papers. It was created as a way to get eliminate paper in classes and to make digital learning possible. It was initially planned for use with laptops in schools, such as Chromebooks, in order to allow the teacher and students to more efficiently share information and assignments. As more schools have transitioned to online learning, Google Classroom has gotten far wider use as teachers quickly implement paperless instruction. Classrooms works with Google Docs, Sheets, Slides, Sites, Earth, Calendar and Gmail and can be supplemented by Google Hangouts or Meet for face-to-face live teaching or questions.

These topmost online platforms are commonly used by the teachers because it is user friendly, accessible for free and provide prompt feedback between teacher and students. Hence, this is supported by Martyn and Lin found that good hybrid instruction can incorporate the "Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education" developed by Chickering and Ehrmann in 1987 and updated for the digital age in 1996. These seven principles are promoting interaction between students and faculty, enhancing reciprocity and cooperation among students, promoting active learning, providing prompt feedback, increasing time on task, setting high expectations and recognizing diversity in learning.

Table 1: Online Learning Platforms

Online Learning Platforms	Frequency	Rank
FB Messenger	132	1
Google Classroom	97	2
Google Meet	65	3
Zoom	54	4
Google Form	50	5
Moodle	33	6
Meet Up	12	7

*Multiple response

Coping Strategies

Table 2 exhibits the coping strategies of the respondents towards online learning. The data revealed that there were eleven (11) coping strategies. To wit: taking breaks, managing time wisely, practicing time management, staying healthy, taking notes, asking questions, resisting social media, exercising, getting help if you need it, getting organized and eating well.

From the data, it can be observed that the topmost coping strategies is taking breaks which means that the respondents are more concerns to their health particularly mental health that will maintain the orderliness of their learning. Taking

regular breaks during online learning is crucial for maintaining focus, improving information retention and preventing burnout. Breaks allow the brain to process and consolidate information, reduce stress and enhance overall well-being. Hence, incorporating purposeful breaks into online learning is essential for optimizing focus, memory and overall well-being. By prioritizing breaks, students can create a more sustainable and effective learning experience. Taking breaks also while having online class makes the students more motivated to learn more. This result is confirmed by Sankaran and Bui indicated that less motivated learners performed poorly in knowledge tests while those with high learning motivation demonstrate high performance in academics.

Table 2: Coping Strategies

Coping Strategies	Frequency	Rank
Taking breaks	134	1
Managing time wisely	129	2.5
Practicing time management	129	2.5
Staying healthy	115	4
Taking notes	108	5
Asking questions	98	6
Resisting social media	96	7
Exercising	83	8
Getting help if you need it	77	9
Getting organized	83	10
Eating well	28	11

*Multiple response

Recommendations for Effective Blended Mode of Learning

Table 3 exhibits the recommendations from the respondents for respondents for effective mode of learning in the new normal situation. There were six (6) recommendations which include: strengthen relationships between students-teachers, understanding to the situation of students, choose Learning Management System or LMS where everyone can access, alternative requirements, long due date of submission of requirements and set classrooms rules before the start of class. From the data it can be gleaned that the topmost recommendation of effective blended mode of learning is strengthen relationships between students-teachers because there was instance that the teachers are not giving chance to other students in complying missed requirements. This recommendation is in consonance to CHED Chairperson, Prospero De Vera statement that faculty should focuses on the design and delivery of programs, courses and learning interventions that address the learners' unique needs in terms of pace, place, process and products of learning.

Table 3: Recommendations

Recommendations	Frequency	Rank
Strengthen relationships between students-teachers	138	1
Understanding to the situation of students	123	2
Choose Learning Management System or LMS where everyone can access	118	3
Alternative requirements	98	4
Long due date of submission of requirements	82	5
Set classrooms rules before the start of class	73	6

*Multiple response

Conclusion

There various online platforms identified. This conclude that there are various online platforms used by the teachers in delivering their lessons. Teachers utilize a variety of online platforms to deliver lessons. These platforms play a crucial role in modern education, offering tools for communication, content delivery, assessment and classroom management.

The several coping strategies of the students in online learning means that students were able to cope-up the new normal teaching strategies. Students were able to developed or improved their technical skills to navigate online platforms and tools.

To foster stronger student-teacher relationships in online learning, educators should focus on frequent, personalized communication, create a sense of belonging and utilize technology to enhance engagement and interaction. Building trust, demonstrating respect and providing constructive feedback are also crucial elements.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are forwarded:

- i). The faculty members are encouraged to used other learning platforms that can discuss and present audio, video and text.
- ii). There are various online platforms used by the teachers. Hence, the University of Eastern Philippines administration should come-up with policy for uniform usage of online platform that will help other faculty of different colleges in UEP to have high level of acceptability of online platforms.
- iii). The recommendations of the respondents should be given attention by the College and University of Eastern Philippines.

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