

E-learning technology

[Technology](#)



The aim of the current study is to explain patterns of use associated with different CMS tools as well as factors that enhance or limit its usage. By understanding the drivers and barriers to technology integration, university administrators and IT professionals could provide guidance on ways to enhance the use of technology to augment face-to-face instruction. Ertmer (1999) emphasizes that “ teachers with knowledge of barriers, as well as effective strategies to overcome them. It is expected that they will be prepared to both initiate and sustain effective technology integration practices.”

E-learning Technologies

According to Bradwell (2009), universities need to redefine their missions and restate their goals to respond to the technological advances in the society. The institutions of higher learning also need to attend to the more varied and advanced needs of the students that are considered as “ digital natives”. Therefore, faculty leadership can help students and foster effective teaching and learning experiences by using a wide range of technologies in their teaching and learning. Faculty members, according to Bradwell (2009, p. 19), have to “ deal with a much greater range of information processing styles, cultural backgrounds, and styles of learning. As a result, the ideal way for teaching in higher education is now recognized as involving much more than lectures as the means of information provision.”

Several researchers explored the use of CMS with face-to-face instructions and the potentials of enhancing teaching and learning through this mixed delivery model (Georgina & Olsen, 2008). Allen and Seaman (2013) state that since technology is growing and expanding within higher education, <https://assignbuster.com/e-learning-technology/>

faculty members need to feel empowered to use these technologies as well as reflect on their usage. Etmer (2005) states that since faculty leadership decide when and how to integrate technology, and since its availability does not guarantee effective use, their perceptions and experiences can provide valuable information on the motivations and barriers to technology implementation. Osika, Johnson, and Buteau (2009) argue that while many instructors take advantage of the new technologies and make use of them in their teaching, other faculty members tend to rely more on traditional methods of delivery. Therefore, higher institutions need to address faculty knowledge, skills, and perceptions to promote meaningful and effective use of e-learning technologies in the classroom experiences.

Web-enhanced learning has gained popularity as it is believed to be the best way to combine face -to-face instruction with different e-learning technologies. Studies support this by showing that student satisfaction with web-enhanced learning course delivery tends to appear to be greater than in online or face-to-face learning (Wingard, 2004; Vrazalic, MacGregor, & Behl, 2010). Therefore, positive experiences may motivate instructors to implement technology, while negative experiences may deter faculty members from adopting technology in their teaching. (Schoepp, 2005).

Online Learning Technology

Understanding instructors' experiences with technology as an instructional tool is essential because instructors may continue to integrate or stop using technology in their courses if they find that integrating technology is challenging (Cooner, 2010; Donnelly, 2010). Administrators at higher education need to recognize the importance of professional development, <https://assignbuster.com/e-learning-technology/>

training, technical support as well as incentives for faculty to facilitate the process of effectively implementing technology in traditional instruction (Rogers, 2002, Morgan, 2003, Murdock, 2006, Donnelly, 2010). Therefore, understanding faculty use and perceptions of technology integration in traditional instruction may benefit administrators when creating professional development programs.

Course management systems are reported to be beneficial for communication with students inside and outside the classroom. However, some faculty members at a university in the United Arab Emirates do not use Blackboard to its full potential. Although the university does not mandate the use of Blackboard in instruction, it highly encourages faculty to explore and use different tools to enhance quality the teaching and learning experience. As a result, faculty members are not consistent in the use of Blackboard and mainly used to post course content.

Although the interactive features of many courses management systems maximize students' learning opportunities, they are not used appropriately, if used at all. Caruso (2004) and Nelson (2003) cited that several research studies on the use of technology concluded that the interactive features are the ones least used by faculty members in higher education. If higher education administrations recognize the importance to technology integration, how could faculty members be encouraged to use not only the administrative features of a course management system, but also the interactive and assessment features to ensure they are attending to different learning levels and styles (Naidu, 2003). Although literature emphasizes the importance of employing learner-centered teaching in traditional instruction, <https://assignbuster.com/e-learning-technology/>

faculty members still do not use the collaborative and interactive tools of a course management system to augment their face-to-face instructions. Many studies concluded that course management systems are mainly administrative purposes such as posting course syllabus, materials and teachers' notes (Morgan, 2003; Nelson, 2003; Silverstein, 2006).

Future of E-learning Technology

Research, however, revealed interesting findings with regard to the use of the administrative features of a course management system. First, course content organization has been improved in terms of content and organization. This led instructors to introduce clear goals, activities and expectations to students. On the other hand, using the administrative feature of a course management system poses a challenge to faculty pertaining students' absenteeism. That is to say, if the course materials are post and available for students, students might feel that they do not need the face-to-face class session (Jones, Harmon & Lowther, 2002). Thus, the faculty members might feel that they are losing control and might consider doing away with this administrative feature.

Several studies have reported different reasons for the lack of proper use of course management systems such as lack of financial or administrative incentive, training, negative attitudes and perceptions, user characteristics, course characteristics, technological and organizational considerations. These are determining factors for the underutilization of a course management system tools (Jackowski & Akroyd, 2010; Lee, Cerreto & Lee, 2010). Therefore, technological, individual, and institutional factors should

be considered when examining the adopting of technology in traditional instructions (Neyland, 2011).

To this end, the aim of the study is to examine the faculty use of Blackboard- a course management system (CMS) in their face-to-face instruction. The study aims to identify patterns of use and which tools are used more frequently. Faculty perceptions and beliefs are also important as they drive and motivate faculty to adopt technology in their teaching. As a result, faculty perceptions towards the use of technology to enhance traditional teaching will be explored. Factors that encourage or limit faculty use will also be viewed to help administrators cater for different attitudes, perceptions, and obstacles when they develop training sessions for their faculty.

The use of technology in higher education is debatable as several studies cited different findings. The controversies that appeared in the literature are related to how, when, why, and who uses technology (Paloff & Pratt, 2003; Maeroff, 2003, Ko & Rossen, 2001). There is no enough research especially in the Gulf region on how and why faculty use of technology in higher education. Since faculty members in higher education are considered scholars in their field, they make informed decisions to adopt or reject technology in their teaching. The study is, therefore, interested in seeking more insights pertaining to faculty perceptions and actual use of technology as well as the factors that determine their level of adoption.