


Chapter 12

AnimoSpace LMS Transcending Physical Learning Barriers

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ABSTRACT

This chapter employed qualitative and case study approaches to elicit valuable insights from De La Salle University tertiary teachers' use of digital educational technology and AnimoSpace in addressing the challenges posed by online learning environments and the issues of equity and inclusion. Analysis of interviews and AnimoSpace statistical data was conducted through the lens of the task-technology fit perspective outlining the tasks and roles teachers perform in the online environment and the characteristics of AnimoSpace. Findings revealed that similar tasks and roles were performed when teaching and learning were shifted online. AnimoSpace and other digital technology fostered equity and inclusion in the online learning environment. However, additional roles/role changes were uncovered, specifically Technologist, Basic Troubleshooter, Instructional Designer, and Alternative Assessor. In addition, the lack of cost-effective or free proctoring tools compelled teachers to seek alternative forms of assessment to measure learning outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

Education is one social sector that has benefited from technological disruption (Bai et al., 2019; Yu et al., 2017). It set the path for equity and inclusion in the education sector (CITL, n.d.; Fennelly-Atkinson, n.d.). Cloud computing, augmented reality, mobile devices, and learning management systems, among others, have paved the way for the future of teaching and learning. Access to education is no longer restricted to classroom settings (Çam & Kiyici, 2017; Hashim, 2018; Spante et al., 2018). Students' access to learning modules, submission of coursework, consultation with mentors, and collaboration with peers

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are made feasible online through Learning Management Systems (LMS), allowing for online teaching and learning to take place regardless of one's geographic location (Garcia, 2016; Rubach & Lazarides, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the significance of technology use in the education sector. Despite the absence of physical classrooms and access to printed learning materials, learning continued, with online education and virtual learning environments becoming popular options in the education sector. Teachers transitioned from the face-to-face learning environment to remote instruction through virtual learning platforms (Carrillo & Flores, 2020). This transition necessitated the creation of appropriate and relevant digital content, the design of self-paced learning activities that promote the self-discovery of knowledge, and the proper use of the various facilities provided by learning management systems to promote learning despite the lack of physical contact and interactions. Teachers became familiar with the many processes and features of the online learning environment in order to perform synchronous and asynchronous content delivery, share learning materials, conduct online assessments, communicate with students, and manage the whole teaching-learning process.

Several challenges have emerged as a result of the increased use of technology to deliver education. Firstly, the availability of technology infrastructure for educators and students. Secondly, in order for teachers to fulfill their roles and tasks in the online learning environment, teachers should have a good understanding of how to perform these roles and tasks online using digital technologies to enhance the student's learning experiences (Malik et al., 2019; Scherer et al., 2017; Tondeur, Scherer, et al., 2017). Thirdly, choosing suitable digital tools for designing and delivering their lessons and the corresponding activities and assessments to evaluate student learning. Teachers must also possess the knowledge and skills necessary to properly select and employ these technologies to create a rich learning environment for the students (Koehler et al., 2013). Finally, teachers need to be equipped with the essential pedagogical and technological skills to use educational technology effectively to communicate, share resources, provide course content, and administer assessments to their respective students. Every student, regardless of their physical and socioeconomic circumstances, must have equitable access to learning resources and receive the necessary support from instructors and peers in order to effectively address these issues.

The disruption in the delivery of learning altered the roles and tasks of educators. Traditional teaching and assessment methods, resource sharing, communication between teachers and students, social learning and collaboration between peers, and other teaching and learning activities that are typically conducted in the physical classroom and through face-to-face discussions have been migrated to online platforms with the use of various technology tools, predominantly learning management systems. With this, teaching professionals face new challenges as they adapt to the new way of doing things in the learning environment. While the use of technology may be intuitive for some educators and learners, this is not the case for everyone (Aldiab et al., 2019a; Casillano, 2019; Grand-Clement et al., 2017).

It would be interesting to investigate how technology assisted equitable and inclusive education, including how online learning was implemented and integrated into traditional classroom-based courses before and during the pandemic, as well as the various online learning components, preparations, and their effects on students, educators, and universities. *What measures have been taken to prepare educators for technology use? What infrastructure is available to support the effective use of digital technology and learning management systems in the education sector?* The aim of this chapter is to investigate and understand (1) the roles and tasks that tertiary educators have to play/fulfill in an online learning environment; (2) the characteristics of the available technology to support the varying tasks and roles that teachers play in online learning; and (3) the utilization of digital educational technology and LMS to foster equity and inclusion in the education sector.

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