

Online-supported learning, Case-study pedagogy and Connectivism

Introduction: Paper emanates from a PhD study titled “Students’ experiences of online-supported learning in Business Management Education”

- Using the LMS to extend epistemological access (Morrow, 2009) at the centre of this paper
- Online-supported learning integrates online communication into face-to-face learning and is mediated via the LMS (Chiu & Hsiao, 2010)
- This has the potential to improve pedagogy and learning outcomes (Alebaikani & Troudi, 2010)

Continued

- **CRITICAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS:**

- 1. What are students experiences of online-supported learning in BME?**
- 2. How do students' experiences of online-supported learning influence their learning in BME?**

PURPOSE OF THE PRESENTATION

The purpose of this presentation is to share the process of my research and findings emerging from my analysis chapters for review by colleagues

Literature Review

- Combining face-to-face and online learning has become popular today (Bradford & Wyatt, 2010)

Def: deploying technology in the service of on-campus T & L to supplement face-to-face T & L (Armatas et al., 2003) optimistic

- use a method of cognitive apprenticeship, and support self-efficacy beliefs and optimistic attributions among learners (Barnard et al., 2009).
- distinct personal qualities determine how learners communicate with the environment ([Mupinga, Nora, & Yaw, 2006](#)).

Design and Methodology

- Mixed method design with a significant qualitative component. Features a variation of 80% qualitative and 20% quantitative methods of collection as ff.

1. Personal reflective journals
2. Focus group-discussion
3. Interviews (by the researcher)
4. Independent interviews (by the SRC member)
5. Questionnaire

Purpose of deploying 4 & 5 was to seek justification of themes emerging from data collected through 1,2 & 3

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THE OUTCOME SPACE (FINDINGS)

Two findings will be the focus of this presentation

THE 'WHAT' ASPECT OF AN EXPERIENCE

What are students experiences of online-supported learning in BME?

1. Complexities of epistemological access: as a CoD that answers the above question

THE 'HOW' ASPECT OF AN EXPERIENCE

How do students experiences of online-supported learning influence their learning in BME ?

2. The cognitive effect on learning (thru case studies): as a CoD that answers the second question

Complexities of epistemological access

Emanates from participants' inadequate skills to access the various sources of knowledge located in the LMS and entails the following challenges.

a) challenges in comprehending **induction** procedures, due to inadequate expertise to log into the system or relevant spaces as the following extract suggests;

“This method of turning in assignments electronically is very complicated, until this day I don't know how to log into it, I always ask someone to do it for me” (J11)

Ind. Interview: Ok then how did you manage your way throughout the module?”

“O...h! I had a friend who was assisting me in order to use this online-supported learning and I was able to log-in as often as I wanted with his assistance” (M'ndeni)

continued

b) challenges in maneuvering within the graphical user interface, due to being unable to find relevant sites and online spaces from which resources could be retrieved as the extracts indicate;

“At first I found it very difficult to navigate through the site to find my notes and to find announcements which the lecturer had posted” (J11)

“Moodle has a facility for submission of assignments but I have never experienced using it because each time I tried to explore it, it reported an internal error” (J28)

“It took me a little while to find my way into the chat discussion before I was able to successfully contribute” (J9)

Ind. Interviews: “could you explain why were you not ready for online-supported learning as a person who had worked with computers before...?”
“E...h first you need to differentiate between e...h the online and the basics of computers ... I think online was more difficult since we had to know sites and how to go through to get your notes or your assignments. So it was very difficult for me since I did not find any notes... so it was a bit challenging for me” (Busi)

continued

c) challenges of coming to terms with the **LMS's jargon** due to inability to comprehend the operational differences among the various online spaces;

“I do experience problems getting into the chats ... and when I do enter them, there is no one to chat to” (J15)

“Sometimes the lecturer does not respond at all I remember the time I posted a question in the chat-room he did not reply I had to go to him in person” (J39)

“As for synchronous Chat Room, I never logged into it ... for the reason that, to me it was the same as the asynchronous discussion forum” (J9)

Ind. Interview: “which online spaces were made available to you via the online learning system in Business Management Education 310?

“Yes I think chats are one of these, receiving notes in our profiles and announcements” (Busi)

The cognitive effect on learning

Emanates from students' awareness that online activities in the CR and the DF allowed them space to see content in another context & to think about appropriate responses to questions /comments posted by others.

a) Conceptions of linking theory to practice

“The discussion forum taught me that the purpose of this module was not only to learn prescribed books, writing assignments and examinations but also to look at business issues around the world. For instance our first discussion was about why sales of Michael Jackson's music increased after his death” (J45)

Ind. Interviews: “Ok has this system influenced your thinking skills?”

“Ya I can say yes because there are questions which needs us to critically discuss or apply the content that we had already learned in the classroom and, and the real-life system, real situation”
(S'the)

continued

b) Conceptions of inspiring thinking through online activities:

“Discussion forum does not only help us learn but also helps us be responsible individuals and critical thinkers” (J31)

Ind. Interview: how has this OSL influenced your thinking skills?” *“Ya as I was talking about chatting, so as we are answering questions based on the case study, then we had to think creatively, we had to think of solutions that are differ from other peoples’ so it have an influence,... a positive influence”* (Shakes)

connectivism

- Learning in the CR and the DF becomes a connection of ideas flowing among learners as issues emanating from events described in the case-study are debated. (Downes, 2006)
- With each idea forming a node, the linking of these nodes together produces a connection. This connection constitutes people (student-student or lecturer-students), forming a network.
- Connectivism is the bringing together of principles of chaos, network, and complexity and self-organization theories (Siemens, 2005)

Case-study pedagogy

- Has predominantly been used in the disciplines of leadership, **business**, law, and recently psychology (Pena-Shaff and Altman, 2009)
- Mention of case-studies in the CR and the DF featured frequently in this study, indicating that these were used for T & L in BME
- Case studies, according to participants in this study, enabled them to link the BME course content to the real-world
- OSL is relevant for BME as it offer spaces that **strengthens** the collaborative discussion and analysis of case-studies