TRANSITIONS IN CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

Previous research finds that there are many advantages to enhance teaching effectiveness using Course Management System (CMS) despite the difficulty entailed for an instructor to begin using CMS. There are differences in perceptions between faculty and students. Students seem to adapt to classroom technology faster than instructors and perceive classroom management software to be easier to use, but some instructors hesitate to adopt CMS for their teaching. However, there is lack of investigation questioning why one use or not use CMS as an instructor. The purpose of this study is to investigate faculty perceptions when adopting and using a CMS in their teaching and how their perceptions impact on the effectiveness of using CMS. The findings will explain faculty perspectives in terms of CMS and provides suggestions for facilitating effective CMS usage.

A survey was conducted to investigate faculty perceptions toward CMS among higher education instructors. Among 75 participants, 8 respondents answered that they have never used a CMS. Sixty-seven respondents indicated that they have used a CMS. The non-user part of the survey questions included perceptions such as *appeal of CMS,* the *perceived difficulty of adopting CMS*, the degree of ambiguity, using CMS and overall tendency to procrastinate. For those who have used a CMS, several close-ended questions concerning *difficulty to use, usefulness, favorability,* and *perceived effectiveness of CMS* were asked.

The findings reveal that instructors who have never used a CMS express highly favorable attitudes toward CMS. However, they are not clear about how to use CMS and feel ~~as~~ it may be difficult or time-consuming to implement. They are interested in and see the benefits of using a CMS such as "management of paperwork," "Provides timely feedback and communication with students," "provides sense of satisfaction from mastering technology," and "helps integrate information technology."

People who use a CMS have a favorable attitude overall and their perceptions in terms of the usefulness of CMS are strongly related to the effectiveness of using CMS. These findings also suggest that the difficulty of CMS for an instructor is inversely related to its perceived effectiveness. Instructors who find CMS more difficult to use may not be benefitting from its more helpful features. Recently, various CMSs have been introduced and sometimes a faculty member will have to learn a new CMS system. Among CMSs, the transition to Moodle might be among the more challenging in terms of difficulty. Fewer participants found the more difficult features such as online exams/quizzes and interactive features helpful. This suggests that giving technical support in these areas to instructors who are already using CMS for their courses would be helpful.

The research implies that the usefulness of a CMS and a favorable attitude toward a CMS both correlate with benefits in terms of time and work management, teaching, and sense of satisfaction. Given that everyone finds CMS to be appealing to some degree, why are there differences in adoption and usage? More research needs to be done in this area to fully understand the reasons instructors procrastinate in using only part of or all of a CMS.

References available on request