

DIGITAL MEDIA AS A CASE STUDY TOOL

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ABSTRACT

Education in digital age is changing. We are moving from face-to-face to hybrid to eLearning environment. This evolution is blending millennium students with returning students creating a mix of the old and the new. Many students taking on-line classes, typically, are part of the millennium or X-generation and are computer savvy. Many of them are well versed in social media such as iPod, blackberry and youtube to name a few and social networking concepts like facebook, twitter and blogs. On the other hand there are students who are returning after a long pause for various reasons. Teaching these two diverse groups is quite challenging. Based on our many years of teaching experience, we find many students using laptops and twittering in face-to-face classes. This raises interesting question, can we use digital media as a learning tool? This paper presents a case study that enhances learning using digital media in case studies. The final paper will present results of this study.

INTRODUCTION

Digital media is growing rapidly. Digital media is defined as any resource which is in digital form including video streaming, videos, internet resources and social media. Many authors have advocated use of digital media to enhance learning. Commenting on social media, McAurthur Foundation of learning, suggested “..What would it mean to really exploit the potential of the learning opportunities available through online resources and networks?” This is becoming especially true as we move to the e-learning which is growing exponentially and it is expected to continue to do so. Since e-Learning provides time and space independent education, it is attracting students from different disciplines, nationalities, age groups etc. However, e-Learning is self-driven in that students become the driver and faculty becomes the mentor. This paper presents a case study that involved using digital media and social networking to enhance Learning in a face-to-face class which uses course management system extensively. The final paper will present results of our study. The sections are organized as follows. The next section describes the research design, and the following sections discuss the experiment, preliminary research results, their implications and finally the conclusions.

RESEARCH DESIGN

We used introductory graduate information systems class for experiment. This is a challenging class to teach due to the nature of the students. It is a required course of all business students. Contents are introductory and fairly broad that relate to IT components and its applications to business. Some students are well versed in these while others are naïve (students returning after a pause). The class can be quite boring for savvy students while difficult for others.

Digital medias are proliferating [8][9] and they would be good candidate as a learning tool [6]. Jenkins, et al (2012) also presented a comprehensive view of how digital media can impact learning.

The class was divided in groups and each group was given a case to analyze. All cases were taken from the text book but students were instructed to use whatever digital media resources they wanted to use. This allowed student to create a 1) blog site, 2) develop/use clips from youtube or 3) develop a facebook page (if they did not have). Groups were also asked to rate group members on their contribution to the case. The next section discusses various steps of this experiment.

Selection of learning objectives

IT related learning objectives (LO) of the course were used for assessment purposes.

Selection of assessment approaches

We used the following measures for the above LO.

- Questionnaires at the beginning and end of the course to measure student's perception of their IT skills.
- Group's usage of digital media in case study
- Student's performance in the case study.

The Experiment

The present study was conducted at an urban public university in the Mid-Atlantic area. In hybrid classes internet based skills are important since students have to occasionally communicate with peers and the professor through the course management systems. Skills may require downloading articles, streaming videos, posting files and/or using the chat area for group work [1]. As already mentioned, we wanted to study the impact of digital media on student learning as measured through a case study. The following hypothesis was developed:

H1: Groups that used digital media performed better on the final exam.

A t-test of mean was used to study this hypothesis.

Collect data

Students' Backgrounds

Several items related to skill levels were collected at the beginning of the semester. Students were given 1% of the final grade for completing the questionnaire at the beginning and will be given 1% at the end of the semester. We also measure student's perception of their competencies in internet related skills. Survey revealed that almost 73% of the students consider themselves to be competent in surfing the web as measured by their browsing skills. This would imply student's feel they have excellent browsing capability and they should be able to search a document or a concept on the internet quite easily.

In addition, we also measured student's familiarity (1 being yes and 2 being no) with emerging technologies (ipod, blackberry) and social networking concepts like (facebook, youtube, blogs). Survey revealed that – 93% have iPod and 100% have smartphones (other than iPod) and 73% have Facebook page. However only 20% blog or twitter or have a youtube video. This would imply students may not using digital media to fullest extent and would be interested in learning and possibly using social networking concepts of blogs, facebook and youtube in their case analysis.

Discussions and Future Experiments

SPSS was used to study differences in group performance. Our results did not indicate students who used social media performed any better than students who did not. However we did find students who used social media (youtube, google docs, Skydrive, skype) did score more than the groups who did not.

Advances in digital media (DM) are creating an exciting environment and it is becoming a necessity to use DM to enhance learning of millennium generation. We plan to mandate social media usage in future assignments and study its impact on student performance. This paper is an attempt in that direction.

REFERENCE

Provided on request