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The Reference and Enlightenment of E-Learning Course Evaluation Criterion in Taiwan Open University

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Abstract

Teaching quality is on the basis of the survival and development of colleges and universities, under the background of economic globalization, the internationalization of education and information technology, network education, remote teaching strongly promote the exchanges and cooperation between mainland and Taiwan higher education, promoting the ascension of education quality of teaching in colleges and universities worldwide, as well as to the college teaching quality management poses challenges, comprehensively improving the quality of higher education has become the governments at all levels, the focus of the whole society and the higher, the quality of teaching management in colleges and universities is a systems engineering, and exercise all-round monitoring the quality of talent training, needs the government, school, society, teachers and students participating and corresponding technical support to complete. This paper discusses the evaluation criteria of digital learning course, through the knowledge diffusion, communication and sharing, to find knowledge acquisition method and the information science and technology elements to rapidly change on course. By comparing Taiwan open university with Zhejiang Open University, try to find a reference to the digital education quality monitoring, and inspiration for the creation to Zhejiang Open University.

Key words: Open university; Evaluation criteria; Digital learning

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1. OVERVIEW OF TAIWAN OPEN UNIVERSITY

Taiwan Open University is the first and biggest public open university in Taiwan which applies audiovisual media to teach. Adhering to the motto “Morality-tempering Enrollment, dedicated gregarious”, it is positioned as the leader of Chinese e-education and the most important town for lifelong learning and becomes the “eternal university” of Taiwan. It owns a large school network and has a wide range of coverage.

Taiwan Open University owns a rigorous scholarship and quality assurance measures not only because it is set up according to Regulations on Setting Open University and Rules of Organizing Open University, issued by Taiwan, but also firmly holds on integrating the attitude of keep improving in founding and running school into the teaching process. Acting on the running principle of “leniency for entrance, solidity for examination, and severity for graduation”, Taiwan Open University, established for more than 20 years, has the largest number of students comparing with all of universities in Taiwan, amounting to 300 thousand. However, the total number of graduates has just reached 40 thousand. Only after rigorous examinations can the students in Taiwan Open University receive the bachelor’s degree. The number of graduates comes to 2 thousand or so each year.

2. BACKGROUND OF E-LEARNING COURSE DEVELOPMENT

E-learning refers to the learners get digital materials by wired or wireless networks and learn in the way of conducting online or offline learning activities. The learners create learning experience according to the digital materials and the provided teaching methods to achieve the purpose of learning. E-learning in the literature of China Mainland is translated as online learning, mobile learning and ubiquitous learning. In brief, e-learning is learning way which intensifies teaching effects through information technology. E-learning is the outcome of the information age that knowledge expanding, spreading and sharing has become global activities. Moreover, way of getting

knowledge changes quickly for the injection of information technology. In the new learning environment, a new knowledge acquiring way which is different from the way that only can get knowledge from books and face-to-face classes in the past and a presenting way which is fantasy and attractive, named e-learning in Taiwan, has flourished in recent years. E-learning makes teaching more freely in time and space and provides better learning services for learners. The core method, technologies, attracts learners' attention, activates their learning motivation and loved by most of learners. However, after a period of learning it comes up the problem confused the teachers that how to monitor e-learning effectively or in other words, how to cause learners to shift their learning focus from the vivid and colorful ways to the content of learning.

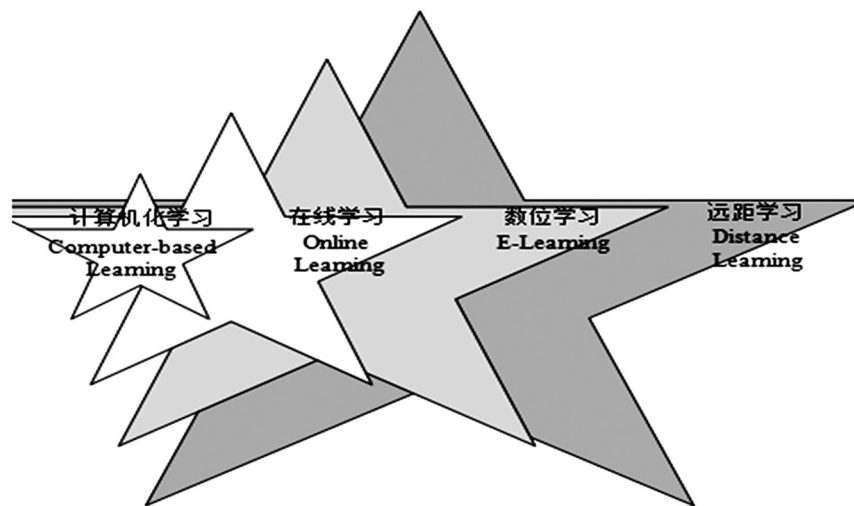


Figure 1
The Scope Diagram of Digital Learning Definition

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF E-LEARNING COURSE

The e-learning course means the learners using the digital instruments to get digital material either through wire or wireless network to conduct online or off-line learning activities. The effects of assisting learning and the learning goal can be achieved on the condition that the learners take advantages of the learning platform and the technical tools afforded by the executor of e-learning to communicate with other learners and teachers as well as the activities in instructional designs.

The e-learning course has the following characteristics, (a) with no limits of time or space; (b) low the teaching cost; (c) afford individualized study, achieve the teaching goal of each one takes what he or she needs; (d) record the whole teaching and learning process; (e) have the function of instant online exchange; (f) the teachers can use multimedia to record the course and explain the hard problems which avoid repeat process to make the record as a result that the teacher has much saved time to do instructional research to improve teaching quality.

The president of Harvard, Neil L. Rudeenstine (1997), once pointed out that online teaching has several things that can't be surpassed by traditional teaching:

- The internet can offer inexhaustible information which traditional teaching can't.
- The internet creates abundant course materials.
- The learners can exchange their arguments and ideas in daily life which is an important step in learning and the conversation on the internet can be more lively and vivid.
- The learners of online learning can take in the opinions initiatively rather than passively in the process of interaction.

4. PROBLEMS OF E-LEARNING

When there is no such a criterion for teaching institutions to evaluate the quality of e-learning and the learning results can't be monitored effectively; when the teachers can't be aware of the key points that should be emphasized in e-learning, can't make use of the new teaching characteristics to construct a high quality

teaching contents and the learners without concepts of judging teaching quality, whether such a rapid change can improve the quality of learning? Or was it just a loss of another Internet surfing?

Quality is the key to success in e-learning (Chen, 2005). The assessment of e-learning can be the notes for judging whether it is worthy or not (Baker, 2000). In other words, the quality of learning equals to money (Nightingale & O’Neill, 1994). Thus if there is a set of indicators for detecting good quality in the designing and developing the process of e-learning, the teaching effects and the achievement of learner’s goals can be assured.

5. QUALITY EVALUATION CRITERION OF E-LEARNING QUALITY

Evaluation refers to the assessment of the value or the importance of one thing. The Joint Committee on Standard for Education Evaluation (JCSEE) defined evaluation as obtaining unbiased information on objective procedures and determining the value and merits of the evaluated object (Huangg, 1989). Quality in this study refers to the degree to which e-learning achieves the goals set before. Consequently, quality evaluation criterion of e-learning quality is a series of project evaluation rules to judge whether e-learning can achieve the goals set before in different ways and whether the institution, teachers and learners can achieve the quality of study.

The purpose of evaluating the quality of e-learning is not just to judge the merits of it but to better use the information and data gained in the evaluation process (Li, 2002; Jones, 1998). Quality evaluation criterion of e-learning can perfect the e-learning course if we take good advantages of the information got from the evaluation criterion, preserve the advantages and improve the deficiency for the reasons that it can afford the arbitration of value judgment and the outcome of it serves as a channel to learn about the demand in different ways.

The quality of e-learning refers to the degree to which the learners of e-learning achieves the goals set before. The quality of learning need be tested by concordant and objective evaluation criterions and ways. Whether e-learning achieve the goal of morality-tempering can be examined by the criterion of quality and quantity. Vail (1999) once maintained that there were six key points that would influence the quality in the e-learning of K-12:

(a) Instructional design

Instructional design is a way that facilitates the learning in e-learning which adopts interaction, participation and cooperation to encourage learners to search for resources on the internet, create more chances for learners to get in touch with society and broaden their horizon. It affords learners the chance to share their opinions and experience in learning, to accomplish the task of team work and improve their ability of studying independently.

(b) Criterion and concordance of the course

The criterion need afford object learners devices and contents which have a high relationship with cultures and backgrounds in other areas. The learners are encouraged to learn interdisciplinary knowledge. The learning goal should be explained clearly and explicitly on the purpose of understood by the learners easily.

(c) Teaching content

E-learning has more deep and broad opinions, conceptions and theories instantly offered by the internet in teaching methods or in others words, in resources. It also has the teaching content, including videos as well as novel and creative ways, which are attractive for learners and enhance the value of teaching.

(d) Supporting resources for learners

It provides all learning resources that are appropriate to the needs of learners, such as text, tables, maps, pictures and so on.

(e) Supporting resources for teachers

Provide the teachers with appropriate supporting materials, including recommendations for learner activities, specific goals, management strategies, course descriptions, planed schedules and other online supporting channels

(f) Design of the website

Conform to the imagine designing principle and interaction principle. The page needs to be neat, the word to be legible without the unrelated imagines that can distract the learners or words and backgrounds, the button to be simple, accordance and can be operated easily. Most importantly, the background, the words and the imagines need to be harmonious and uniformity.

E-Learning Quality Certification Center (ELQCC) was founded in 2002, which is responsible for the learning service and the quality of teaching materials supplied by e-learning with the purpose of improving users’ satisfaction and learning effects.

The provisions in the third version of e-learning service authentication of ELQCC (2008) contain the following eight ways, learners supporting, teachers supporting, curriculum development, curriculum designs, teaching processes, institution supporting, technologies and tests which relates all the people in e-learning, curriculums, system design and aims to evaluate the institutions which perform e-learning.

6. THE REFERENCE AND ENLIGHTENMENT OF TAIWAN E-LEARNING QUALITY MONITORING FOR SETTING UP ZHEJIANG OPEN UNIVERSITY

A comparatively perfect internal teaching quality monitoring system has been established in the process

of setting up Zhejiang Open University. The teaching management has basically realized informatization, for example, the application of educational management system, credit bank constructive system, micro-class resource construction system, open teaching system and data management platform of specialty construction for adult education have realized the functions of managing students' scores, evaluations of undergraduate teaching quality and basic data of specialty construction, etc. Some shining points can be learned from the e-learning in Taiwan.

6.1 Launch Specialty Evaluations Regularly in College

Our school has 54 majors recorded, enrolls students for 49 majors in practical. There were 2 majors didn't enroll students in the last three years. We need to think over the following questions from these data: Does the major set up to meet the needs of industry, enterprises and the development of social economy? Does the curriculum system and curriculum content set up to meet the needs of industry, enterprises and the development of social economy? Launching specialty evaluations regularly in colleges and inviting enterprises' consultants, graduates, alumni, professional teachers and students to participate in specialty evaluation and curriculum evaluations to provide guidance for revising training plans of professionals and adjusting curriculum contents are the ways to ensure the specialty constructions and curriculum development well aligned with service industries, enterprises and local economic development.

6.2 Strengthen Teaching Support Services

Teacher's teaching ability has a direct influence on teaching quality. Most of the teachers in our school work in our school as soon as they graduated which lead to the lack of teaching experiences in practical. Thus training for curriculum development, classroom teaching design, classroom teaching organization, teaching plan preparation, language expression and other basic teaching ability are in need for some teachers. The development of educational technology requires teachers to master new teaching tools such as online course development tools, animation making tools, online video communicating tools, online examining tools and so on. It is necessary to strengthen teaching support services. Afford trainings of basic teaching ability for teachers and new teaching concepts in modern pedagogy, new tools and new skills will provide a sustainable development of teachers' teaching ability.

6.3 Cultivate Good Habits of Students

Teachers should teach knowledge to students, but the more important thing is cultivating good learning and living habits of students in the process of teaching. Therefore, in the starting step, making syllabus, it is important to make the curriculum teaching objectives, teaching content,

teaching arrangements, teaching methods, assessment standards and ways of each unit (phase) clearly. Apart from this, it is vital to demonstrate the demands for students in learning these curriculums, like demands for classroom discipline, classroom performance, time management, punishments for cheating, etc. All these make contributions to cultivate good learning habits and honest professional quality for students.

6.4 Guide and Encourage Teachers to Make Teaching Reform and Innovation

Actively guide and encourage teachers to innovative teaching mode and reform teaching methods and ways, establish a reward fund for teaching reform and innovation, act on the reform of talented cultivation model for social work education major of "emphasize professional value, strengthen practical ability" and the reform of teaching model of "occupation behavior orientation", "modular", "learning in service", "project studio", "course group participation", try the new systems like reservation system to improve the teaching effects.

6.5 Establish the Conception of Student-Oriented Education Service

The quality of talent training is the lifeline of the existence and development of schools. In the management of teaching quality, the center of students should be stressed, the concept of student-centered should be established, the idea of education service should be strengthened. The university needs to actively create a good learning environment and teaching environment for students, take good advantage of platforms like the Credit Bank to afford good learning resources to achieve the teaching service level of an open university.

6.6 Advance Credit Bank Actively

National education reform and development of long-term planning programs (2010-2020) and the key tasks of pilot reform of the national education system have a requirement and position for continuing educations, the Open University and Credit Bank, confirming that the transform of TV universities have a close relationship with the Open University and Credit Bank. Therefore, in the process of setting up the Open University, the content of Credit Bank should be introduced in time or even in advance so as to better open the prospects. In addition, enhancing the status of Credit Bank and putting more attention and input to them make the strategic vision of constructing Open Universities farther.

There is a big difference between the current school year credit system and the full credit system in TV universities. The former focuses on systematic and standardization, while the latter advocates freedom and flexibility. Open University should better realize the cohesion in vertical and the communication in lateral with various kinds of education. To better achieve credit

storage, exchange, certification, the credit banks can only rely on more “free” and “flexible” credits.

Under the existing conditions of TV university, it's necessary to analyze the feasibility of implementing complete credit system, on the base of school year credit system, reform the systems such as school year teaching, class management, examinations and so on, promote the opening education can better communicate and connect with self-taught universities, common universities, adult colleges and community colleges, afford more chances for choosing and satisfy the diverse needs of individual learning and development. On this basis, we should gradually learn to absorb practical using experience about the three most basic and core functions of the Open University (namely credit storage, credit exchange and learning achievement certification) so as to achieve the goal of constructing Credit Bank more quickly.

6.7 Draw Lessons From Curriculum System Teaching Mode

Open University holds the open spirit of education, respect students' learning progress and rules. Compared with 8 years of validity period of student registration of TV universities, it has no restrictions for attending school. Students can choose their subjects according to their own needs, decide the process of study and their study time is more flexible and free. Students who attend school do not divide into different majors but they take part in the graduating examinations which embodies the characteristics of individuality and adaptability, and also demonstrates the concept of Open University, free learning.

The TV universities should draw lessons from the curriculum system on the basis of specialized system, cover a wider range of “quality needs” students on the basis of meeting the needs of the ‘academic qualifications’ students, lead the free learning, active learning social tendency, promote the social development of all people learning and lifelong learning. More importantly, it can also expand the non-academic training which is based on curriculum system, and promote the integration and promotion of academic education and non-academic education. By studying, making reference, comparing and absorbing the several years' course teaching experience from the Open University, it can provide a good help for the related exploration of TV universities.

6.8 Continuously Strengthen the Development of Soft Power

To judge a founding university, in addition to measuring the running conditions and regional distribution, the state will also measure its functional orientation, characteristic features as well as the needs of society. The construction and development of the Open University requires not only the protection of the hard power like the buildings of schools, teachers, resources, platforms, but also the

supporting of soft power like government recognition, social identity, and social commitment of the people as well as the spiritual home shared by teachers and students.

There is such an advanced role for students in the spiritual level: First of all, care for the “loneliness” of students, especially focusing on encouraging and supporting students in psychological in order to make it easier for students to establish a deeper relationship with schools, achieve effective transfer of learning information between teachers and students and manage student affairs effectively. In this way, it will be easier for students to solve problems in the study. Second, actively support the students “interaction and cooperation”. Through the encouragements between the students, invoke more lasting learning motivation, help individuals to eliminate or reduce the psychological pressure caused by learning which lead to a better learning result and improvement of frustration tolerance. The last but not the least is that the establishment of students' sense of belonging. Students can actively participate in activities on the basis of eliminating loneliness thereby those who are exposed to the campus culture, network media culture, curriculum culture, learner culture, institutional culture and community culture can realize an overall improvement of comprehensive quality. In turn, it will unite together to promote the prosperity and development of the school.

6.9 Further Promoting Community Education

Community education is an inevitable trend when social economy and culture develop to a certain extent. Community Colleges in Taiwan, sponsored by local governments, are not general universities in the sense of Taiwan University Law, but similar to community colleges in the mainland. The Open University has actively promoted the learning guidance centers around the world to bid for community colleges and set up a network system, which is similar to the construction of the community education network based on the TV system in the Yangtze River Delta region. However, there is a difference between community Colleges in Taiwan and mainland. The former, undertaking community education functions, implement the bidding system and the withdrawal system and all kinds of educational institutions can bid for. The competition is fiercer than that of the mainland as well.

Community education plays a very good supporting role in running TV universities. At the same time, it benefits to the construction of the Open University. TV universities include the educational type which is difficult to communicate and integrate in the Open University, like self-teaching examination, adult examination, qualification training. All these can look for a break though community education. When community education in mainland China is at the situation of setting, the Open University has

gone into the stage of “biding”. Substantive projects for community education have been vigorously developed. Community education has difficulties in identifying, popularizing and achieving. All of them can find the answers in the practice of the Open University.

CONCLUSION

In the process of construction of the Zhejiang Open University, our university should gradually establish relatively perfect internal teaching quality monitoring system, including the teaching management informationization. Educational administration management system, credit bank construction system, small class education resources construction system and openness system and specialty construction of adult education of applications should be better to improve. Meanwhile, we should realize the management of student achievement, the teachers’ classroom teaching quality evaluation management, professional construction basic data management, and other functions.

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