

What Platform to Use? A Perspective on Pre-Service Teacher Education and In-Service Training

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic has required the integration of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) at a greater height in the delivery of instruction. Education has become more dependent on the use of technology, compelling educators to assimilate it in the pedagogical process and communication. The abrupt situation posted serious challenge to faculty members who were not adept in the use of ICT.

The said concern was not foreign to many educational institutions, including ours. We needed to strategize and immediately shift to online remote and distance learning. Thus, we set-up the Flexible Learning Systems in the university. Its framework featured an instructional model that followed an asynchronous online/offline approach in the delivery of remote education. It offered more flexibility for the students and the teaching personnel to attend to their classes during times of the day/days of the week when their internet connectivity was more stable.

Along with implementation of FLS, the strengths of some faculty members, as regards technology integration, were harnessed by capacitating others at the onset of the community quarantine. In the same manner, weaknesses identified from those who were not that inclined in the use of ICT, were addressed and supplemented with specific capability building sessions ranging from applications used to production and utilization of Open Educational Resources (OERs).

From the start, the use of social media and common messenger applications became instrumental in embarking on online distance learning. These served as the initial communication lines for both the faculty and students. After which, teachers were greatly encouraged and guided to immediately learn applications such as presentation, multimedia and office packages along with Zoom or Google meet and Learning Management Systems such as Google Classroom and others.

In consideration to the limitation of resources, the institutional decision to subscribe to the most practical online platform was duly noted; for example, Google Workspace. It had immediately set our phasing in delivering distance education considering faculty and students' familiarity with Google applications.

Pre-service teachers, to some extents, have been more prepared in the sudden shift of class undertakings. Their programs were actually designed to have adequate understanding, skills and values in the use of educational technologies in the teaching and learning process. Aside from being digital natives, a number of courses pertaining to educational technology were already incorporated in their programs. The same reason why their teaching internship has been conducted without much concerns.

The use of platform for teacher education pre-service and in-service training always depends on the need and availability of resources. It may be a combination of two or more, that mutually work and are available for both the faculty members and students.