

UNIVERSITY LECTURERS' PERCEPTIONS OF AN INNOVATIVE INSTRUCTIONAL ELEMENT: TOWARDS SELF- SUFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY



Resources in higher education institutions, particularly the faculty members, need to keep up with the progress of modern society and its increasing demands. To be self-sufficient and sustainable in the changing world, higher education institutions should have their academic staff constantly upgrade themselves in the subjects they teach as well as in the instructional strategies. This project investigated how instructors in higher education institutions perceive the implementation of an innovative element in instruction, a web-based courseware called Moodle (Malaysia) and WebCT (New Zealand). A questionnaire was distributed to two sample groups of lecturers in Malaysia and New Zealand. The questionnaire responses showed that the lecturers used WebCT or Moodle mainly for posting course material (syllabus, handouts, readings), followed by sending emails to students and setting up online quizzes. The lecturers hardly ever utilised the system to promote active involvement and collaborative learning among their students, and getting feedback to assess their teaching. It could be inferred that lecturers involved in this study still conceptualised teaching as imparting knowledge to students. While thirteen out of twenty-two lecturers received training from IT department prior to using the system, the technical knowledge is clearly not a sufficient ingredient to change their perception. The prerequisites to changing pedagogical beliefs are dissatisfaction with the current practice, familiarity with literature on education research and institutional support. Without these, it is difficult to envisage evolution of the traditional style of instruction into an environment where students actively construct their knowledge and use it for their benefit in the future.

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