

Evaluating Attitudes towards Metu-online: a Study of Undergraduate Students of FLE Department

Nazlı Ceren Cirit, Fatma Gümüşok

Middle East Technical University (Turkey)
cerencirit@gmail.com , fgumusok@metu.edu.tr

Abstract

Recent years have witnessed the rapid expansion of technology into the social branches of life and education is not an exception. From primary schools to universities, computer technologies are frequently employed not only during formal training or school time but also off-school time, enabling instructors to share the documents necessary for the courses, promoting communication between teachers and students, etc. (Lonn & Teasley, 2009). As a result, Learning Management Systems (LMS) which are "integrated computer systems" have ever-increasingly been employed and adapted for the purpose of teaching and learning at universities (Coates, James & Baldwin, 2005: pg 19). METU, one of the forerunners of higher education institutions in Turkey, established its own learning management system, METU-Online, about 17 years ago in order to address the e-learning needs of METU students and academicians. The fact that METU-Online has been frequently used since then requires researchers to seek out the challenges and benefits of using METU-Online, the degree it functions. Therefore, this paper reports on a study conducting qualitative and quantitative research methods to examine to what extent METU-Online is used in the Department of Foreign Language Education (FLE), and to investigate the attitudes of students toward it. One questionnaire was administered as a data collection tool to 198 undergraduate students. The findings gathered from the open ended questions of the survey reveal that students come up with twenty two suggestions on how to improve METU-Online for teaching and learning purposes in the FLE department. In addition, it is found out from the statistical analysis of the four point likert scale type questions that the students both believe in the necessity of METU-Online and the efficiency of using METU-Online actively. However, they believe that some progress should be made considering the responses they gave, for METU-Online to be more practical, user-friendly, applicable and interactive. The researchers believe the results obtained from this study to be beneficial in terms of seeing the needs of the students in the use of an LMS based upon their responses. Therefore, the current study can help METU and the other education institutions which have been using a learning management system or thinking of employing one to develop perspectives.

References

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