

Gender and Perceived Usefulness of Web-Based Teaching in Institutions of Higher Learning: The Case of Makerere University.

A Paper to be Presented at the Web for Development
Conference in Nairobi

Consolata Kabonesa, Ph.D.,
Women and Gender Studies,
Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda



Introduction

- ❑ Challenges of higher learning institutions
- ❑ Integrating information communication technologies (ICTs) in higher institutions of learning
- ❑ Makerere University
- ❑ The Department of Women and Gender Studies



Introduction

- The gender and technology project (2002-2007)
- This study aims and methodology
- 2006 Research method two sets of questionnaires.
- 2006-07 - Followed up with face to face interviews

Results

- More females (44.4%) than males (38.9%) found training in ICTs relevant
- 33.3% female and 38.9% male staff said they had applied the skills generally.
- 27.8% females and 16.7% males had applied the skills specifically to teaching.
- Reasons for limited application



Results

- ❑ 90% uploaded courses on Blackboard
- ❑ No gender differences
- ❑ 40% engaged in discussions with their students via Internet.
- ❑ Perceptions on use of web-based were positive

Results

- *Using Black Board for teaching was reported useful* by 42.8% males and 37.6% females
- half of the respondents said they require assistance to use Blackboard 25% females and 30% males can easily upload courses
- 12/21 acknowledged easy use of discussion boards and tracking students' level of conceptualization of gender issues



Benefits: Voices of staff members

- Am internationally connected with and co-teaching a course with University of Maryland, Cape Town and Israel.
- I have enrolled in an international course on Gender mainstreaming in management process on the Global Campus 21.
 - Grace Bantebya Kyomuhendo

Benefits – Voices Cont.

- ... I have completed two on line courses on Macro-economic Policy Analysis and Governance and Decentralisation offered by the World Bank Institute.
 - Aramanzan Madanda

Voices Cont.

- **I have a computer here, am permanently on the internet accessing e-resources and I do not need to go physically go to the library. It has transformed by life.**
 - **Henry Manyire**

- **Am able to design and prepare on line class lectures. I t has enhanced access to e-books, journals and hence better knowledge to enrich notes and lectures.**
 - **Catherine Aneena**



Student voices

- ❑ Am able to send mails to friends and am in contact with the lecturer through blackboard discussions (3 Males, 4 Females, 1st year)
- ❑ I have learned to articulate gender issues and apply the discourse to the Ugandan situation (2Males and 3 females 3rd year)
- ❑ Engaged in self-directed learning
- ❑ Learning differently now

Student voices

- Some male students liked the fact that the notes and coursework for the course were easily available and accessible on the electronic notice board on-line unlike for other course units where one either has to write down notes or have them photocopied
- Web-based learning has taught me the unknown (Male 1st year).

Student voices

- I have acquired new methods of learning. Discussion charts have improved my confidence in asking and responding to questions, previously I felt shy and intimidated to respond to questions in class. However, the e-learning environment has helped to contribute to the discussions.
- Asked why? The student said because of the privacy involved in answering the questions, on the web you do not have three hundred eyes on you. You send the answer and there is delayed response and by that time you are ready for the other people's response. (Female 2nd year)



Student voices

- We can access information and obtain research materials on the web. As a result we were able to learn more about Makerere University from the Makerere website regarding the different faculties and information on courses they offer.
- Cultivated interested in chatting with other people on-line.
- We used this knowledge to access information online for other courses.



Challenges

- ❑ Limited number of computers
- ❑ Students have limited skills in using the computers
- ❑ High demand for training in computer basics and e-learning
- ❑ Power shortages
- ❑ Integration of ICT in courses is still a challenge



Lessons Learnt

- ❑ Transforming peoples attitudes towards ICTs takes time.
- ❑ Individual characteristics play a role
- ❑ U web-based instruction is a good tool
- ❑ Be aware of the constraints of easy access
- ❑ Time involved in curricular development and support of students



Lessons learnt

- ❑ Develop a mentoring program
- ❑ Feedback to students important
- ❑ The success has not come easy
- ❑ The success has depended heavily on leadership that brings every one together



Conclusion

- ❑ ICTs in education will promote achievement MDGs
- ❑ University has initiated e-learning
- ❑ Create an ICT friendly environment when training



Thank you