Chapter 13
Teaching Undergraduate Finance via a Digital Literacy Platform

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ABSTRACT

Teachers and professors are searching for the best academic strategy to support an educational process that could provide an effective digital learning experience. After the evaluation of Learning Management Systems (LMS’s), this chapter proposes the hypotheses that through the use of Microsoft OneNote Class Notebook (MONCN) as a teaching innovation in undergraduate Finance courses, the student’s learning process is enhanced, and the students themselves perceive this LMS as a tool that enriches their education and improves their academic experience. The smart way to implement intelligent technology such as the use of MONCN will be to create an evolution through innovation, not a revolution; but the impact of this digital notebook could prove to be revolutionary if applied wisely. MONCN will enable faculty and students to survive the current challenges of media literacy and to thrive in the years to come; it could be replicated with great success in any university.

This is an institution of learning… Discipline is not the enemy of enthusiasm. – Principal Joe Clark (Morgan Freeman) in the motion picture “Lean on Me”, 1989

INTRODUCTION

The world has experienced constant and challenging changes since the beginning of the 20th century as a result of technological advancements and innovations. The use of the Internet was not greatly accepted from the start, similar to the reaction to the use of airplanes for human transportation in the 20th century. Yet, just as airplanes became an indispensable tool for everyone around the world, the advancements in the use of the Internet for educational purposes is becoming an everyday challenge for educators.

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According to “NC State Industry Expansion Solutions” (2015) an online method of education can be a highly effective alternative for the students who are mature, self-disciplined and motivated, well organized and have a high degree of time management skills. This is especially applicable for students at the university level. Even though classes might not be completely online, the use of a Learning Management System (LMS) requires the students to organize themselves and perform collaborative activities with their classmates in a more efficient manner, regardless if they work inside or outside the physical classroom.

The Partnership for 21st Century Learning—P21 (2016) states that learning and innovation skills are what separate students who are prepared for increasingly complex life and work environments in today’s world and those who are not. Furthermore, in a technology and media-driven environment, they emphasize on finding the adequate technological tool to increase the professor’s ability to develop critical thinking skills, such as media literacy.

There is a vast selection of LMS’s to choose from: Adobe Captivate Prime, DoCeBo, TalentLMS, Google Classroom, Microsoft OneNote Class Notebook (MONCN), among others. The first three LMS’s of the list are sophisticated, provide no education discounts, are designed towards a more business-oriented learning environment, and need institutional approval for their use.

MONCN and Google Classroom are two types of LMS’s that are similar in their simplicity and are more suitable for university applications. Their purpose is not to increase learning, but to manage the learning experience more effective and efficiently. Professors can take advantage of these LMS’s to assess students’ acquisition of knowledge, and to provide students with feedback on their progress using both formative and summative assessment. Both LMS’s were tested before launching an innovation strategy in class with the following results: Using MONCN as a learning platform in class is more effective than Google Classroom because it provides a more effective way to manage the course content and organize students’ work. Google Classroom is more of a file repository, while MONCN is more like a digital notebook, classroom, discussion, and collaboration space all in one. Preparing and organizing all the material required for a specific class is easier with MONCN. Through the use of the MONCN Creator, the professor can easily create all the sections needed for all the students enrolled in a particular course simultaneously, while Google Classroom does not provide this capability. Google Classroom required the download of additional applications to complete certain tasks that MONCN includes without the use of any other applications. Thus, MONCN was the LMS chosen for testing an innovation strategy.

The use of MONCN could transform a traditional classroom into a paperless learning digital environment from which the students are encouraged to be creative, to feel free to navigate among all the available media sources and share this media with their classmates, and to submit their activities in a more effective manner. Similarly, students will be able to keep all their notes and activities in one same place to improve their learning and feedback experience in the classroom.

As John Adams wrote to his colleague Benjamin Rush in a letter dated November 11, 1806: “If we take a survey of the greatest actions which have been performed in the world … we shall find the authors of them all to have been persons whose brains had been shaken out of their natural position” (Adams, 1806). That is the objective of this chapter – to show how the application of MONCN, as a teaching innovation in some undergraduate Finance courses at Tecnologico de Monterrey in Monterrey, Mexico, has been successful in the transmission of knowledge, in the promotion of values through the observation and guidance of the students in a controlled digital environment where the uploaded media can be analyzed and discussed for suitability, and in the encouragement of learning in digital environments.
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