SMCC Higher Education Research Journal
ISSN Print: 2449-4402 · ISSN Online: 2467-6322
Volume 8 · January 2021 · H Index = 3 from Publish or Perish

Readiness to Teach Online Among Faculty of Eastern Visayas State University Ormoc City Campus, Philippines

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Gunning Fog Index: 12.35 • Originality: 99% • Grammar Check 99%
Flesch Reading Ease: 42.40 • Plagiarism: 1%

ABSTRACT

Measuring the readiness of the faculty to teach online is a condition of faculty preparedness for the online teaching environment. This study aimed to evaluate the readiness among faculty in Eastern Visayas State University Ormoc City Campus during the academic year 2020-2021. The researchers used a descriptive research design in conducting the study. The survey was conducted among 130 faculty using a google form, and the data were gathered through survey questionnaires and tested using average weighted mean through SPSS software. Based on the findings for course design, course communication, time management, and technical competencies, the teachers rated these areas higher than expected. In terms of attitude towards teaching online, the result was also beyond expectation. Therefore, the faculty of Eastern Visayas State University Ormoc City Campus, Philippines, are ready to teach online. Assessing the readiness of the faculty to teach online makes a significant difference in the overall performance of online courses and programs. It was recommended that the faculty teaching online classes should attend trainings and seminars. In addition, the instructional designers should assist the faculty in their preparation in the four areas before the actual teaching. Moreover, the administrators must provide full support for the faculty to teach online.

KEYWORDS

Course design, course communication, time management, technical competence, attitude, descriptive, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented disruptions in the lives of people all over the world. It came unexpectedly where no one was ready enough to brace its impact on society (Muhammad, Arcilla, & Sattar, 2020). With an increasing number of cases spreading to various territories and confirmed human-to-human transmission, the World Health Organization declared the outbreak as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) (Chen & Huang, 2020). The Philippines faced a critical situation due to the rise of a said health crisis (Barrera, Jaminal, & Arcilla). For higher education institutions, avoiding and limiting the risks of infection of the academic community has become a primordial concern (Dianito et al., 2021). Hence, with the implementation of community quarantine, the conduct of face-to-face classes needed to be immediately suspended (Cuaton, 2020). The herculean challenge then was how to continue teaching and learning beyond the usual face-to-face instruction.

The COVID-19 has resulted in schools shut across the world. Globally, over 1.2 billion children are out of the classroom. As a result, education has changed dramatically,

with the distinctive rise of e-learning, whereby teaching is undertaken remotely and on digital platforms. According to some research, online learning has been shown to increase retention of information and take less time, meaning the changes coronavirus has caused might be here to stay. In response to significant demand, many online learning platforms are offering free access to their services, including platforms like BYJU's, a Bangalore-based educational technology and online tutoring firm founded in 2011, which is now the world's most highly valued educational technology company (Reddy & Rajpur, 2020). Faculty members are suddenly required to move their courses to a completely online environment. It is important to take stock of the devices they have access to and how they have access.

It has become an urgent need to explore other innovative learning modalities that will facilitate migration from traditional to flexible learning and teaching options. Therefore, the paradigm shifts in the teaching and learning process in Philippine higher education necessitate collaboration among stakeholders and strengthening knowledge, resources, and best practices. Everyone is called to be part of this transition and transformation toward the new normal. To achieve this, the unity and solidarity of leadership need to beat the coronavirus (Benziman, 2020).

Although there are some concerns about distance learning that need to be considered caused by the pandemic, the other concerns have already been noted by experts in distance education. First, there is social integration and peer culture and the possibility of transmission of values in a "virtual" classroom. Since there is a lack of human interaction in the learning process, students may learn less in such a set-up than those in the traditional classroom (Edge & Loegering, 2000; Gamage et al., 2020). Second, there is also an issue on the unnaturalness and the results of online learning since it goes against how natural teaching and learning supposedly take place (Larreamendy-Joerns & Leinhardt, 2006; Adnan and Anwar, 2020). The lack of face-to-face human interaction in the online learning space and process appears disconcerting to educators and learners alike.

On top of these concerns, however, there are deep socio-economic concerns for online learning at the EVSU-OCC. Students in far-flung areas in the country do not even have roads or electricity, let alone access to computers and the internet. Moreover, given the current internet infrastructure, even students in urban areas may have limited internet access. This then results in a "digital divide" between those who have access and those who do not.

New skills come into play as teachers assume the role of distance educator (Dacanay et al., 2019). Some of those additional skills include understanding the nature and psychology of distance education; identifying characteristics of successful distance learners; designing technology-based courseware; adapting teaching strategies to deliver instruction at a distance; evaluating student achievement in an online environment; and, recognizing the incremental demands of teaching (e.g., faculty load, online assessment, out of class interaction, etc.) under these new set of circumstances (Chavda & Parmar, 2020).

In this study, the researchers examined the four areas of online teaching competencies: course design, course communication, time management, and technical competency. Additionally, this study focused on the faculty's attitude towards online teaching. This study was very timely. By measuring the readiness of faculty to teach, online we can analyze what and where we should focus on referring to the four areas of online teaching competencies so that we can draw and construct possible ways to cope up.

FRAMEWORK

The faculty readiness to teach online was anchored on the four online teaching competencies: course design, course communication, time management, and technical by Martin, Budhrani, & Wang (2019).

Course design

Course design is identified as a pedagogical competency, alongside course implementation, facilitation, and assessment. The course design process involves planning instruction with course objectives, instructional strategies, activities, and assessments that align to objectives. A major consideration when designing courses is defining appropriate activities and workloads for students. Courses need to be organized into a structure, a course syllabus, and course guidelines to define requirements. Chunking information into modules enhances student learning (Napier, Dekhane, & Smith, 2011).

Course communication

The importance of interpersonal communication and interaction between the teacher and students in online courses must be highlighted. Faculty must communicate through writing and audio to the students within the given learning modality. Feedback needs to be adequate, timely, and prompt. Communication on rules and regulations, due dates, netiquette, course expectations, ethical practices, the code of conduct, and policies for the course, as well as information about accessibility, privacy, and copyright, are necessary (Martin et al., 2019).

Time management

Competent faculty has effective time-management skills so that lifestyle commitments do not interfere with instructing the course. Online course design and planning are time-consuming and take significantly longer for a first timer. All the course objectives, content, activities, and assessments must be redesigned for an online format. The second time the online course is taught is less time-consuming than the first time (Martin et al., 2019).

Technical Competency

Technical competencies are specific to the use of technology, independent of pedagogy. They include technical knowledge (e.g., knowledge about how to use software, synchronous and asynchronous tools, operating systems, learning systems and tools, and Web browsers, and how to implement security updates) and proficiency in the use of current technology, the ability to troubleshoot technology issues, and the ability to assist learners effectively. Faculty must learn to access technical assistance to seek help for their issues and ensure learners are aided when required, especially students using adaptive/assistive technologies (Alharbi, 2016).

Attitude

Andronache et al. (2014) believed that attitudes are formed and manifested at the level of three fundamental dimensions: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. The cognitive component of attitudes includes perceptions, beliefs, and assumptions of individual facts and events. The affective component describes emotional experiences and emotional responses to various facts and events. The behavioral component shows intentions and predictions of how a person can act concerning a fact or event based on his assumptions and beliefs. It is essential to point out that if faculty have a positive attitude towards their profession, they may more easily develop their students' intrinsic motivation for learning. They will be able to establish more efficient communication with them. They will be more involved in the diversification and personalization of learning situations.

In the literature review, the researchers found that the discourse among various scholars on the competency frameworks, roles, requirements, and tasks to teach online were adequate. There is, however, limited research on the readiness of faculty to perform these online teaching competencies, namely course design, course communication, time management, and technical, including attitude. More importantly, such competencies and attitudes differ for faculty by culture, contexts, organizations, and countries (Bawane & Spector, 2009; Aydin, 2005), which implies that readiness will vary by these same factors. Thus, there is a need for further research.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to evaluate the readiness to teach online among faculty at Eastern Visayas State University Ormoc City Campus (EVSU-OCC) during the academic year 2020-2021.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used a descriptive research design to examine the perception of the readiness to teach online among faculty in Eastern Visayas State University Ormoc City Campus (EVSU-OCC) during the Academic Year 2020-2021.

Research Locale

The study was conducted at Eastern Visayas State University. The university had its humble beginnings in 1907 as part of the provincial school.

Research Respondents

The survey was conducted among 130 faculties at Eastern Visayas State University Ormoc City Campus (EVSU-OCC) via online survey questionnaires. The researchers used universal sampling to select the respondents. The data were gathered and tested using average weighted mean through SPSS software.

Research Instrument

The researchers used a standardized questionnaire on the four areas of competencies adopted from Florence Martin et al. (2019) in their study titled "Examining Faculty Perception of Their Readiness to Teach Online." The questionnaire on the attitude was adapted from Mercado (2008) in her study titled "Readiness Assessment Tool for an eLearning Environment Implementation."

Data gathering Procedure and Ethical Considerations

As part of ethical standards, the researchers sent a consent letter to the Campus Director at Eastern Visayas State University Ormoc City Campus (EVSU-OCC) before conducting the research. Once the consent letter was approved, the researchers used an online google form to disseminate and explain the questionnaires' procedures and details to the respondents and told them that the questionnaire was a standardized one. It was stated that they would be given enough time to answer the questionnaire. If they could not make it in ten or fifteen minutes, they could answer it during their free and most convenient time. If the respondents do not return the questionnaire, the researchers called upon them and even went to their respective offices to retrieve the questionnaire. After collecting all the questionnaires, the researchers tabulated and tallied the data. The results of the Statistical analysis were the basis of inferences, conclusions, and recommendations.

Statistical treatment

The researchers used the average weighted mean to determine the readiness to teach online among faculty in Eastern Visayas State University Ormoc City Campus, Philippines.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Engineering Department Faculty Readiness Competencies/Abilities

Table 1. Course Design

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Create an online course orientation (e.g., introduction, getting started)	4.02	0.154	I Do It Sometimes
2. Write measurable learning objectives	4.50	0.829	I Do It Always
3. Design learning activities that provide students opportunities for interaction (e.g., discussion forums, wikis)	4.21	0.973	I Do It Always
4. Organize instructional materials into modules or units	4.38	0.886	I Do It Always
5. Create instructional videos (e.g., lecture video, demonstrations, video tutorials)	3.84	1.095	I Do It Sometimes
6 Use different teaching methods in the online environment (e.g., brainstorming, collaborative activities, discussions, presentations)	4.21	0.944	I Do It Always
7. Create online quizzes and tests	4.18	1.136	I Do It Sometimes
8. Create online assignments	4.37	0.972	I Do It Always
9. Manage grades online	4.12	1.235	I Do It Sometimes
Overall Mean/ Overall Standard Deviation	4.20	0.913	I Do It Sometimes

Table 1 shows the course design. "Write measurable learning objectives" got the highest Average Weighted Mean (AWM) of 4.50. Therefore, it can be inferred that faculties are assessing the students with the articulation of their outcomes since course objective determines conduct, ability, or activity that an understudy can decide if they have accomplished authority of the goal. Accordingly, goals should be written so that they are quantifiable by appraisal. Course targets structure the establishment of the class. Everything in the course should cooperate to guarantee students achieved the course goals. Excellent learning objectives provide a guide for students when reviewing materials and preparing for assessments. Learning objectives are the most powerful if they are actionable and measurable (Zhou, 2017).

The second highest AWM was "organize instructional videos," with an AWM of 4.38. Faculties are entitled to do a creative or innovative way to convey quality learning to their students, organizing videos for instructional or learning materials. Based on the study, nowadays, learners rely more on what they see instead of what they read. The influence of digital videos on our everyday culture is undeniable. Online video sharing sites such as YouTube, Vimeo, and Metacafe boast monthly audience numbers in the millions. With digital videos continuing to gain popularity, it seems only natural that

this familiar and widespread platform should extend into the education system (Bevan, 2020; Taculod & Arcilla, 2020).

The third was "use different teaching methods in the online environment," with an AWM of 4.21, showing that faculties find agreeable ways to make their online teaching more creative and enjoyable because they use different teaching methods in online environments. Through these strategic teaching methods, the faculty can get a better feel for what works with their learners. However, based on the study of Carol and Burke (2010), neither modality is more effective than the other concerning student achievement or their perceptions of course effectiveness.

An indicator that got the least AWM was "Create instructional videos," one of the main reasons why faculties will not usually create instructional videos is the availability of instructional videos online. It is very easy and fast for a student to search instructional videos online. Another thing, creating instructional videos usually takes time. Faculties do not have enough technical materials and do not have enough skills to make quality videos. One of the reasons also why faculties will not usually create instructional videos was gleaned from the Oxford University Press (2017). Although your students memorize information well, they have not necessarily become independent learners. They still expect the instructor to be the conveyor of all new information while they sit and passively receive it. While this is a very relaxing view of learning, it is simply not how language is acquired. Students must assume responsibility for their linguistic development and seek out learning opportunities beyond the classroom walls.

The center of attention of the course design is on learning exercises that give students occasions to collaborate, as connection turns out to be more significant in internet learning because of the distance among students and time they spend on the web. Notwithstanding learning exercises, beginning a course with a compelling direction gives students fantastic course insight. All planned and successful directions prepare the learners to do well in the course (Napier, Dekhane, & Smith, 2011). The estimation of direction in web-based learning settings where the maintenance of the students is lower than eye to eye courses or face-to-face learning approaches.

Table 2. Course Communication

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Send announcements/email reminders to course participants	4.61	0.739	I Do It Always
2. Create and moderate discussion forums	4.25	0.886	I Do It Always
3. Use email to communicate with the learners	4.28	0.903	I Do It Always
4. Respond to student questions promptly (e.g., 24 to 48 hours)	4.48	0.841	I Do It Always

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
5. Provide feedback on assignments (e.g., 7 days from submission)	4.18	0.899	I Do It Sometimes
6. Use synchronous web-conferencing tools (e.g., zoom , Webex, Blackboard Collaborate, google meet)	4.43	0.906	I Do It Always
7. Communicate expectations about student behavior (e.g., netiquette)	4.21	0.845	I Do It Always
8. Communicate compliance regarding academic integrity Policies	4.34	0.793	I Do It Always
9. Apply copyright law and fair use guidelines when using copyrighted materials	4.18	1.024	I Do It Sometimes
10. Apply accessibility policies to accommodate student needs	4.44	0.928	I Do It Always
Overall Mean/ Overall Standard Deviation	4.34	0.876	I Do It Always

Table 2 shows the course communication with the highest AWM of 4.61, which was the "Send announcement/email reminders to course participants" it can be said that the faculty keep informing their students about their topics and subjects. Additionally, Communication in online classes takes place in different ways, and email and sending announcements through the learning management system are common ways that faculty communicate with their online students. Regular announcements can get students' attention, encourage them, remind them, and update their course in general. They also let students know that they are not alone in the learning process and that the faculty member is there to support them. Emails provide an opportunity to keep a record of the communication during the course and serve as a communication tool in online courses that enables faculty to reach all students. Learner-to-instructor interaction leads to higher student engagement in online courses. The use of multiple student-instructor communication channels may be highly related to student engagement. It is recommended that online instructors pay special attention to student-instructor interactions because they may affect learning outcomes (Dixson, 2010).

The faculty also respond to students' questions promptly, which got the second highest AWM of 4.48. Moreover, providing timely responses is critical in online learning, as it facilitates the learning process. One recommendation is that faculty responded to questions in time to enable strategy and recommended responding to questions within 24 to 48 hours as a best practice. Students value the attribute of timely feedback on their inquiries and problems. The faculty teaching presence and timely feedback enable the students to clarify misunderstandings about content and progress towards learning goals. Thus, instructor feedback is a vital part of online learning, facilitates the learning

process, and enhances student learning. Students who received feedback on their assignments had better performance than those who did not receive feedback (Martin et al.,2019).

The third rank was the "apply accessibility policies to accommodate student need," with an AWM of 4.44. From this, applying an accessible, convenient, approachable, and attainable approach can accommodate students' needs, which the faculty always did. Research findings have suggested that faculty members' positive attitudes, active engagement, and receptiveness to inclusive instructional practices may contribute to the retention and success of students (Park et al., 2012; Arcilla et al., 2020).

Table 3. Time Management

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Schedule time to design the course prior to delivery (e.g., a semester before delivery)	4.38	0.869	I Do It Always
2. Schedule weekly hours to facilitate the online course	4.52	0.725	I Do It Always
3. Use features in the learning management system in order to manage time (e.g., online grading, rubrics, Speed Grader, calendar)	4.40	3.692	I Do It Always
4. Use facilitation strategies to manage time spent on course (e.g., discussion board moderators, collective feedback, grading scales)	4.38	3.693	I Do It Always
5. Spend weekly hours to grade assignments	4.22	0.912	I Do It Always
6. Allocate time to learn about new strategies or tools	4.23	0.970	I Do It Always
Overall Mean/ Overall Standard Deviation	4.36	1.81	I Do It Always

Table 3 displays time management. Schedule weekly hours to facilitate the online course ranked first. Unlike face-to-face teaching, where faculty can design instructional material week by week, in an online course, the online faculty member is expected to have the course designed before the start of the semester. Hence, it is essential for faculty to realize the time to design the course and have some time available before the course is offered. In addition, spending weekly hours to grade assignments was also rated as very important by faculty. An online faculty member spends more time grading, especially since all the discussions occur online. It is important that weekly hours are set aside for grading and that assignments be graded so that students receive timely feedback. Studies show that weekly scheduling hours can minimize the commitments of students with their other activities, such as carrying young children or being called into work that can affect their attendance and participation in classes (Stoessel et al., 2015).

Table 4. Technical Competence

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Complete basic computer operations (e.g., creating and editing documents, managing files and folders)	4.50	0.809	I Do It Always
2. Navigate within the course in the learning management system (e.g., Moodle, Canvas, Blackboard, etc.)	4.02	1.032	I Do It Sometimes
3. Use course roster in the learning management system to set up teams/groups	3.42	1.333	I Do It Sometimes
4. Use online collaborative tools (e.g., Google Drive, Dropbox)	4.15	0.934	I Do It Always
5. Create and edit videos (e.g., iMovie, Movie Maker, Filmora)	3.23	1.487	I Do It Every Once in A While
6. Share open educational resources (e.g., learning websites, Web resources, games and simulations)	4.06	1.050	I Do It Sometimes
7. Access online help desk/resources for assistance	3.87	1.107	I Do It Sometimes
Overall Mean/ Overall Standard Deviation	3.89	1.107	I Do It Sometimes

Table 4 shows the technical competence of the respondents. Complete basic computer operations got the highest. Knowing about PC innovation implies that you see how PC equipment and essential programming functions can adjust to any change. This information can give the faculty the advantage when managing new projects, new applications or versions of windows, and new trends to be more productive in the online learning environment.

The use of computers is increasing in society, implying that educators also need to prepare to use computers in the classroom. In all levels of education and all ages, computers are applicable (McCannon & Crews 2000).

The second highest is the "use online collaborative tools." faculty are finding ways for better learning for the learners. Using collaborative tools is necessary for interaction, and interaction is a vital part of learning. This implies having the option to speak with others through various modes and means. As instructors move to online teaching techniques, it tends to be challenging to keep a similar degree of collaboration similar to an actual classroom. That is why it's essential to discover methods of permitting your understudies to keep communicating with one another and even with those past the virtual classroom. One method of doing this is through online cooperation apparatuses (Alharbi, 2016).

Table 5. Faculty's Attitude towards Online Teaching

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. I use discussion as a teaching strategy for the subject that I teach	4.50	0.809	Always
2. I encourage independence and creativity from my students	4.15	0.934	Usually
3. I facilitate and monitor appropriate interaction among students;	4.06	1.050	Usually
4. As a teacher, I support student-centered learning	4.61	0.739	Always
5. I am flexible in dealing with students' needs (due dates, absences, and make-up exams)	4.25	0.886	Always
6. Critical thinking and problem solving are important skills for my students	4.25	0.886	Always
7. I use strategies to encourage active learning, interaction, participation and collaboration among students	4.48	0.841	Always
8. I use effective strategies and techniques that actively engage students in the learning process (e.g., team problem-solving, in-class writing, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation instead of passive lectures)	4.43	0.906	Always
9. I encourage learning through group interaction	4.18	1.024	Usually
10. I provide timely, constructive feedback to students about assignments and questions	4.34	0.793	Always
11. I use appropriate strategies designed to accommodate the varied talents and skills of my students	4.21	0.845	Always
12. I provide student-centered lessons and activities that are based on concepts of active learning and that are connected to real-world applications	4.43	0.906	Always
13. My teaching goals and methods address a variety of student learning styles.	4.18	0.899	Usually
14. As a teacher, I view myself a facilitator	4.28	0.903	Always
15. I immediately consult with students to correct problems and keep them on task	4.18	1.024	Usually
Overall Mean/ Overall Standard Deviation	4.30	0.896	Always

Table 5 shows the attitude of teachers towards online teaching. The attitude of teachers towards online teaching with the highest AWM is "as a teacher, and I support student-centered learning, it implies that the faculty empowers students focused learning by permitting understudies to partake in choices, putting stock in their ability to lead, and recalling how it feels to learn. One of the activities supporting student-centered learning is changing the learning environment. Based on Keiler's (2018) study, radically changing the learning environment can affect teachers' identities and their approaches to teaching in predictable ways that can inform teacher education and

professional development programs for teachers, maximizing the success of teachers as they implement student-centered pedagogy.

The second highest with an AWM of 4.50 is the "I use discussion as a teaching strategy for the subject that I teach," utilized all alone or joined with addresses. A conversation is a compelling method to encourage learning. Conversation can furnish the faculty with an occasion to survey learners' comprehension material. Also, students can investigate their thoughts about the assigned topics by presenting their perceptions and questions. The strategy training is beneficial for increasing reading and learning in a large body of research. Some academics have also investigated the practicality of learning strategy training in adult education settings to improve the instructor–learner interaction and potentially helpless successful learners perform better (Hock & Mellard, 2011).

The third attitude, "I use strategies to encourage active learning, interaction, participation and collaboration among students," implies that the faculty always encourages active learning and interaction. Because of this, it increases the student's participation, creating an online environment where all learners can learn and in which the online class explores issues and ideas in-depth, from a variety of viewpoints (Andronache et al., 2014).

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the faculties rated these areas: course design, course communication, time management, and technical competencies higher than expected. In terms of attitude towards teaching online, the result was also beyond expectation. Therefore, the faculty of Eastern Visayas State University Ormoc City Campus, Philippines, are ready to teach online. Assessing the teacher's readiness to teach online makes a significant difference in the overall performance of online courses and programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study have implications for (1) faculty who are teaching online or getting prepared to teach online, (2) instructional designers who assist faculty in their preparation to teach online, and (3) administrators who can provide support for the faculty to prepare for online teaching. The faculty need to be prepared in all four areas of online teaching: course design, course communication, time management, and technical competency, including the attitude towards teaching online.

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