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Challenges Facing the Communication Process when Using The Moodle Platform for Distance Learning at the University of Bordj Bou Arreridj

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Abstract:

This study aims to identify the most significant challenges and obstacles facing the communication process between professors and students when using the Moodle platform for distance learning.

The study reached several conclusions, most notably that Mohamed El Bachir El Ibrahimi University of Bordj Bou Arreridj has proven its ability to overcome these challenges, both technically and in terms of skills. The university's technical team keeps pace with new Moodle releases; in 2025, the university transitioned from version 4.5 to version 5. Furthermore, all professors have received training in using the Moodle platform's technologies, while training for newly hired professors continues through the University of Constantine platform.

Keywords: Communication process; Distance learning; Moodle platform.

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I- Introduction :

Communication is a fundamental aspect of human life today, and its success depends on the integrity and effectiveness of the communication process. The university is one of the most important institutions of human life, where various groups (professors, students, and administrators) communicate with one another. However, after the COVID-19 pandemic, a new type of communication emerged: the use of the Moodle platform for distance learning. The University of Bordj Bou Arreridj responded to the ministerial directive (February 29, 2020) mandating the use of distance learning platforms to avoid a lost academic year. However, this process encountered several challenges and obstacles that hindered effective communication between professors and students.

This study aims to address the central question:

- What challenges does the communication process face when using the Moodle platform for distance learning at the University of Bordj Bou Arreridj?

Sub-questions include:

- What is meant by the educational communication process?
- What is distance learning, and what is the Moodle platform?
- What arrangements are in place at the University of Bordj Bou Arreridj to overcome the challenges facing the communication process?

1. The communication process

1. 1. The concept of educational communication:

The word "communication" originates from the Latin word "communi," meaning "common" or "public." Therefore, communication as a process involves sharing or understanding something, an idea, a feeling, a behavior, or an action (Hassan, 2006, p. 23).

Communication is also the process of transferring and exchanging ideas, information, and other things between individuals (Natalia & Tawfiq, 1992, p. 242).

In light of the above, we define educational communication via the Moodle platform as the process of exchanging ideas and information between the instructor and the student using platform technologies such as online lectures, chat, and forums to reshape or modify the perceptions and concepts of both the instructor and the student related to education, training, and scientific research.

1. 2. The Importance of Communication:

Numerous studies have demonstrated that a person's success in their work depends on their communication skills and specialized scientific expertise.

The importance of communication within the university can be summarized as follows:

- Connecting individuals involved in the communication process with each other and with the external environment they interact with.
- Education, scientific research, and training.

- Disseminating information and news about the latest scientific research findings.
- Correcting misinformation and acquiring new experiences.

1. 3. Elements of Communication: Sender - Receiver - Message - Communication Channel.

2. Distance Education:

2. 1. Definition of distance education

Definitions of distance education are numerous and overlapping, all of which focus on the distance between the student and the teacher and the variety of methods used in distance education (Amer, 2007, p. 18).

Distance education is defined as an educational model in which the teaching and learning process takes place through the use of technological materials. The relationship between teacher and learner relies on the assistance of technological tools based on modern communication methods, most importantly the internet. These lessons do not require a fixed location.

Distance education helps thousands of individuals access and view content and information in a much simpler, more dynamic, economical, and faster way. With the absence of fixed geographical barriers, anyone can follow the educational course available online. Thus, knowledge can reach farther and become more attractive to people, given the facilities offered within the distance education or training program (Badi, 2005, p. 54).

2. 2. Obstacles to distance learning in Algerian universities:

There are many obstacles that prevent the success of distance learning in Algerian universities, including: (Lazhar & Karima, 2023, p. 204).

- The lack of equipment and videoconference rooms and even personnel responsible for handling them.
- Poor internet speed and disconnection problems which interrupt online classes.
- The lack of computer equipment among a large part of the students, many of them do not have a personal computer or even an internet connection.
- The absence of a technical pedagogical culture, and the lack of training of teachers in the management and leadership of project and at the level of the preparation of courses and distance conferences and framing.
- The weak mastery of E-learning from the students and lack of direct contact with teachers.
- Problems related to lack of motivation and commitment from students and even some teachers.

3. Moodle platform:

It is a free platform, the second most widely used system, founded by a PhD student in 1999. This system was adopted by the Open University in Britain, where it is used by hundreds of students. It has also been translated into more than 100 different languages, which has led to its wider spread. It responds to the needs of learners and is headquartered in Australia, while it is financially supported by many business companies.

3. 1. Definition of the Moodle platform:

Moodle is an open-source learning management system (LMS) designed on educational principles to help instructors provide an online learning environment. It can be used at both the individual and institutional levels. The software can be obtained from the following website: www.Moodle.org

Moodle is an open-source software system designed on electronic principles and distributed under the GNU General Public License. This means that anyone can download, install, use, modify, and distribute it for free. It is easy to use and develop, and can be used personally by individuals. Technically, the system was designed using the PHP language and databases (Radwan, 2016, p. 159).

Moodle is a software package that allows teachers to upload their teaching materials to the website and enables learners to continue learning. It facilitates communication and interaction among learners and with their teachers, allowing them to collaborate on work in new and engaging ways (Khader, 2008, p. 238).

Moodle is a software package that allows teachers to upload their teaching materials to the website and enables learners to continue their learning process. It also allows learners to communicate and interact with each other and with their teachers to collaborate in new and engaging ways (Khader, 2008, p. 238). The Moodle platform at Bordj Bou Arreridj University is designed to enhance the educational process through various technologies:

- Remote conferencing technologies (Google Meet, Jitsi, BBB)
- Activity technologies (exams, assignments, chat, forums, surveys, etc.)
- Resource technologies (files, books, posters, web links, etc.)
- All these technologies serve as a communication channel between professors and students.

3. 2. Features and Capabilities of the Moodle Platform:

- Provides services for the university with 40,000 students.
- Offers 45 languages, including Arabic.
- Currently used in more than 38 countries.
- Allows the creation of a personalized student profile.
- Provides instructors with strategies for various lessons.
- Includes academic references for each course.
- Features a forum for faculty members to discuss topics.
- Includes chat rooms for faculty members.
- Allows instructors to manage student registration and withdrawal processes.

4. The most significant challenges facing the communication process when using the Moodle platform:

In fact, as Lazhar & Karima (2023) pointed out, implementing e-learning is extremely difficult in Algerian higher education institutions due to the absence of certain factors. However, this should be a challenge for Algerian universities to ensure the success and development of this

system, as e-learning is a priority and a fundamental requirement for Algerian universities in the future.

Through an analysis of data published by the Distance Education Monitoring Unit at the University of Bordj Bou Arreridj, regarding both the number of lessons and lectures published according to the required standards and the rates of student interaction with the teaching and learning process when using the Moodle platform, and through field visits to various faculties, the challenges facing professors and students in the communication process were identified, which can be summarized as follows:

4. 1. Technical Challenges:

- Weak internet connectivity, especially for students living in remote areas, may prevent them from accessing Moodle content, downloading materials, and participating in interactive sessions such as Google Meet.
- Insufficient server capacity may hinder the ability to handle a large number of users simultaneously during exams.
- Students' reliance on mobile phones for learning, rather than computers, negatively impacts downloading materials due to the different operating systems of Windows and Android.
- Hacking of user documents and personal data.
- Periodic platform outages.

These challenges are not only technical but also, from a sociological perspective, obstacles to the educational communication process. The University of Bordj Bou Arreridj has adopted several solutions to overcome these obstacles:

- Upgrading the hosting server from version 4.5 to version 5 by 2025 to facilitate access for a large number of users and ensure smooth interaction with the platform's tools.
- Regular maintenance and updates of the Moodle platform to ensure the security of platform data (personal data, user documents) and protect it from hacking.
- Provision of dedicated internet access points on campus to ensure the platform is available to all users.
- A specialized technical team to monitor and maintain Moodle updates and maintenance.

4. 2. Skills Challenges:

Following the COVID-19 pandemic and the university community's adherence to the ministerial directive (February 29, 2020) mandating the use of distance learning platforms to avoid academic losses, we found ourselves facing a direct shift from face-to-face communication to digital communication. This requires strong written and symbolic communication skills, as well as the ability to convey and express ideas.

Among the most significant challenges are:

- Effective written communication: This involves using chat, forums, and responding to students' questions and concerns.
- Discussion skills: This includes participating in discussions through online lectures and replying to messages.

- File management skills within the platform, such as uploading and organizing videos and documents.
- Various types of chat, both direct and indirect.
- Technical problem-solving skills.
- The ability to collaborate virtually on group tasks within the Moodle platform.

To overcome the skills challenges encountered in the communication process on the Moodle platform, the University of Bordj Bou Arreridj implemented a training program specifically for both veteran and newly hired faculty members.

For veteran faculty members, the course took place during the 2022/2023 academic year. The targeted skills included:

- Creating personal faculty accounts.
- Preparing courses and attaching various files.
- Mastering communication skills such as chat and forums.
- Designing and administering various types of exams.
- Monitoring the progress of activities.

This course was facilitated by: Dr. Khalifi Hakima.

- Course duration: 14 weeks
- 3 hours per week. - The follow-up method is a test + homework.

There was also a training day on effective distance teaching skills (Zoom, Moodle) organized by the university's Central Support Center in collaboration with the Laboratory for Studies and Research in Rural Development, facilitated by Professor Dr. Attia Safaa, on February 25, 2021, in the university's main lecture hall, for the benefit of university professors from various faculties.

In addition, several training sessions were held for faculty members at the faculty level, as well as for students.

Furthermore, training was provided for newly recruited professors locally and remotely (Constantine) starting in the 2021/2022 academic year.

II– Methods and Materials:

In order to be able to understand this topic and address the problem raised, we adopted in this study the descriptive analytical approach, by describing the educational communication process, and analyzing the experience of Bordj Bou Arreridj University in adopting the Moodle platform as a mechanism for the communication process, by analyzing the quality of the educational process and the percentage of student interaction with the lectures and lessons published through the Moodle platform and conforming to internationally recognized standards.

In order to answer the problem raised in this research paper, "Challenges facing the communication process when using the Moodle platform for distance education at the University of Bordj Bou Arreridj," several previous studies related to the topic were relied upon through a desk survey and a field visit to the University of Bordj Bou Arreridj.

III- Results and discussion :

Based on this study and the findings of previous research, we have concluded the following:

- Distance learning via the Moodle platform is an educational structure that can enhance the quality of communication between professors and students if we overcome the technical and skill-based challenges.
- To overcome the challenges facing the communication process via the Moodle platform, it is essential to have a specialized technical team that monitors the platform's developments daily.
- Clear regulations must be established to govern the distance learning process and ensure effective communication.
- The University of Bordj Bou Arreridj is among the universities committed to utilizing all logistical resources and adhering to the Ministry's directives regarding faculty training and providing a suitable environment for the success of distance learning.
- For the communication process within the Moodle platform to succeed, it is crucial to integrate and raise awareness among students, especially after the digitization of the higher education sector and the prioritization of distance learning through various platforms.

IV- Conclusion:

Distance education in Algeria has become a necessity, not an option, especially after the reforms of the supervising ministry and the adoption of several platforms, most notably the Moodle platform, which is adopted by the University of Bordj Bou Arreridj as an effective communication process between the professor and the student. For the educational communication process to succeed, there must be a great deal of interaction between the student and the professor and mastery of various communication and technical skills.

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