Abstract

In a period of fast-paced technological transformations, the new global knowledge economy is witnessing the rise of corporate universities (or learning institutions established by big corporations for the training and development needs of their employees) and the corresponding corporatization of traditional universities (or learning institutions that streamline their human and material resources for efficient, economic and effective operations).

This development has led to the advent of virtual classrooms where students or employees undergo the learning process in the comfort of their homes or inside their offices. This mode of learning also challenges the traditional “chalk and talk” system of education where the teacher considers the student or trainee as receptacle of information. E-learning provides every opportunity for the learner to compress time and maximize the benefits of technology in education.

In the Philippines, only a few universities are engaged in e-learning: University of the Philippines (Open University), Philippine Women’s University, and Polytechnic University of the Philippines where courses can be taken in full through “distance education”; De La Salle University, Ateneo de Manila University, and the AMA Computer University, meanwhile, offer online content as part of “blended learning”.

This paper takes off from the AMA experience in e-learning as a corporate university and therefore discusses the online seminar as a component of e-learning for both students and employees.

While e-learning is meant for the academic community, e-training at AMAES focuses on the non-academic employees. As such, modules are customized to suit the needs of the employees at any given point in time. The HRD online can be accessed by any employee for updates or refreshers courses on company policies, attendance status, compensation benefits, etc. Meanwhile, e-training modules are uploaded as the need arises for e-training.

The online content of AMAES e-training is developed by each department. Modules can be accessed for internal training through the net while modules for external training are prepared based on materials gathered by management and employees. The ideal situation is that of collaborative learning where each trainee is made to recognize the spirit of teamwork no matter where they are geographically located.

Once fully developed, e-training can spell millions of pesos in terms of company savings per employee. Since the modules are developed by those whose hands are in their jobs, trainees can be sure that whatever they learn can be applied immediately to their jobs.
and the course credited to them for additional professional credentials. The online seminar breaks the traditional notion in education of “just in case” (where students are fed with tons of data which “might be used” later in life) and slowly supplants “just in time” (where students are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge that will help them survive in the dizzying developments in the global knowledge economy).

Jukes, McCain, and David Thornburg are predicting a paradigm shift in education from being content-based to process-based. As online learning proliferates and is mastered by educators, organized knowledge offered by the academic community can benefit more people in the future. As Philip Molebash says in Technology and Education: Current and Future Trends, “(t)he role of education is no longer to provide educational opportunities through early adulthood, but to provide the scaffolding necessary to support individuals and families from all walks of life, throughout their entire lives.”

If what Molitor (1998) says in Trends and Forecasts for the New Millennium is proven correct that as much as 97% of the world’s knowledge can be accumulated over one person’s lifetime, then education has a bigger role to play using information technology. The accumulation of such knowledge is not possible through traditional learning modes. The online seminar is one creative methodology that educators from both corporate universities and corporatized universities can maximize in the acquisition, transmission and generation of knowledge.