

DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPUTER BASED LEARNING MATERIAL ON HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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Introduction

The utilization of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education has enabled e-learning, which is widely used in upgrading university education at present. Computer Based Learning Materials (CBLMs) are one of the key features in e-learning. As the new curriculum of the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya encourages student-centered learning, developing such materials has become very important. CBLMs developed in-house can be used to provide supplementary material needed for blended learning, to make it more relevant and also as available CBLM in the market are very expensive and thus not easily accessible.

Thus the main objective of this study was to develop a CBLM to use as a supplementary learning material, for the Human Resource Management course offered to the undergraduate students in the Faculty.

Methodology

In order to accomplish this objective, a methodology based on the Dick and Carey model was adopted (Morrison *et al.*, 2007). It included:

- (1) Identifying instructional goals,
- (2) Conducting instructional analysis,
- (3) Identifying entry behaviors and learner characteristics,
- (4) Writing performance objectives,

- (5) Developing a few criterion-referenced test items,
- (6) Developing & selecting instructional materials and,
- (7) Conducting formative evaluation.

Commonly available software were used in order to encourage development of CBLM in the Faculty. Microsoft Power Point was selected as the key tool in developing this product. Cyber Link Power Director, which is digital video editing software, was used to edit the video interviews. Microsoft Visual Basic was used to develop the quizzes. Microsoft Producer, which is an add-on tool for Microsoft Office PowerPoint 2003, was used to develop the introductory cases. Other software used include Microsoft Office FrontPage, Adobe Acrobat reader, and ArcSoft Photo studio.

Results and Discussions

a) The Product

The CBLM covers 10 sections of this course on Human Resource Management. They are:

- (1) Introduction on HRM,
- (2) Environment of HRM,
- (3) Introduction to Strategic HRM,
- (4) Recruitment and Placement,
- (5) Training and Development,
- (6) Performance Management,
- (7) Industrial Relations,
- (8) Grievance Redress,
- (9) Ethics in HRM, and
- (10) Enterprise Development.

The material consists of 52 PowerPoint slides. Nine video interviews on different HRM functions with 8 well known human resource professionals from reputed organizations in Sri Lanka. The video interviews which cover all the 10 sections, give knowledge specially related to the practical scenario in the local context. In addition, introductory cases, quizzes (consisting of 50 true/false questions), web resources, and a glossary (consisting of 580 HR terms) were also included in the CBLM.

The Introductory Case Studies were used to give an introduction to a particular section. Real life examples in the business world were used here. Quizzes were used to increase the interactivity of the CBLM. The handouts and the presentations of the particular sections of the course were also incorporated into the CBLM. The home page of the product, and a page from a lesson are shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2, respectively.



Figure 1. Home page of the product



Figure 2. Page from a lesson

b) Evaluation of the CBLM

After developing the CBLM, it was pre-tested with a sample of 30 students from the Faculty of Agriculture, who have followed the particular course. Responses were as follows: Quality of the information, excellent (67%) and good (33%); structure of the information too was excellent (67%) and good (33%); and interface design, excellent (67%), good (23%) and moderate (10%).

The product was not rated as 'poor' on any of the criteria. Eighty percent of the respondents said the material was extremely helpful in learning the subject, and a further 17% said it was helpful. Seventy three percent said that they would strongly recommend the learning material to be used by other students, while another 23% said that they would recommend it. As shown in Figure 3, the overall evaluation, 73% indicated that it was excellent, and 27% indicated that it was good. The product was further improved according to the comments made by the respondents of the pre-test.

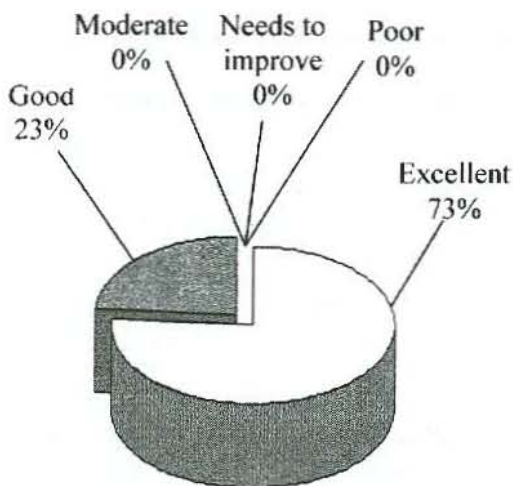


Figure 3: Overall evaluation of the product

Conclusion

This study was done in order to design an effective supplementary material for the course, Human Resource Management offered in the Faculty of Agriculture. By considering the results of the pre-test, it could be concluded that the students perceived the product as a very useful supplementary learning material. By following this material they will be able to get a better knowledge about the subject. The respondents recommended this learning material to be used by the other students of the Faculty of Agriculture.

Since user-friendly software have been used, the product could be updated periodically according to the improvements and modifications made to the particular course. Future developments will be carried out to enhance the interactivity features of the CBLM developed.

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