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WHATSAPP UTILISATION AT AN INITIAL TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMME AT A UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Abstract:

All universities in South Africa are encouraged to use a Learning Management System such as Blackboard to facilitate blended learning. Despite, the availability of Blackboard at one university of technology in the country, some lecturers and students prefer utilising WhatsApp for teaching and learning. The purpose of this study is to investigate students and lecturers' perspectives about learning and teaching using WhatsApp at a university in South Africa. The study was done using a qualitative case study within an interpretivist paradigm. It was guided by Garrison, Anderson and Archer's Community of Inquiry as a theoretical framework. Sixteen students and two lecturers who heavily use WhatsApp were purposively selected to participate in semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The study found that lecturers use WhatsApp not only for communication purposes, but to foster collaborative learning among students. Although students noted some limitations which they experience when using WhatsApp, they preferred the social media to blackboard. The study concludes that although WhatsApp is response to students' needs, it does not adequately prepare students to graduate with digital literacy skills expected by the Department of Education in the country.

Keywords:

LMS; Utilisation; WhatsApp; Curriculum; Teacher

JEL Classification: I20