Using Grounded Theory to Redefine the Role of Teacher and Student in the E-learning Environment

Chia-Ping Yu, Chia-Yu Chang

Department of Information Management, Tamkang University

ABSTRACT: *The popularity of the E-learning environment is increasing. The focus of this study is on the roles of teacher and student and the interaction between them in the learning environment. Eight teachers and twenty-nine students with experience of using the E-learning system were interviewed. Based on the interview results and grounded theory, the study presented the role of teacher and student and constructed an interactive model. Utilizing a technological frame model, also examined were the discrepancies in the roles of teacher and student between the E-learning environment and the traditional learning environment.*

The results of the study were: first, in contrast to the traditional learning environment, the roles of teacher are not only instructor, manager and mentor, but also learner and technologist. Second, students in the E-learning environment learn through two-way interaction, as an instructor, a manager, a mentor and a technologist. Although teacher and student each have five roles, their behavior is not the same. In terms of their roles as instructor, mentor and learner, their behavior is the same; however, their respective behavior as manager and technologist is not the same due to the differences between the position of teacher and that of student.

The contribution of this study is to help teachers and students who wish to play a part in the E-learning environment to become aware of the different expectations of each party. Moreover, the study assists both teachers and students in recognizing what they can do in the E-learning environment to minimize the risk of role conflict and role ambiguity.

KEYWORDS: *E-learning, Role, Technological Frame, Grounded Theory.*

1. Introduction

E-learning is defined by American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) as E-learning is a sub-set of distant education, which refers to learning methods that transmits content in electronic media in a broad sense. Transmission ways include network, satellite, video tape, sound recording strip, interactive television and disk. E-learning doesn't impose limitations to teaching activities in geography and time, and doesn't require tangible teaching place and cost resources in face-to-face teaching (Jarvis, Holford, and Griffin, 2003). Alaxander and Potter (2005) presented that through