Adaptive Capacity on Flexible Learning in the New Normal: The Case of Davao Del Norte State College

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Abstract: This study aims to investigate the adaptive capacity of the students and faculty members of Davao del Norte State College in the new teaching and learning modalities demanded by this new normal setting. With the CoViD-19 pandemic lurking into the academic grounds, posing new challenges, the researchers initiated to describe the academic profile of the 2547 students and 109 faculty members. Results revealed that utilizing television and transistor radio devices on blended learning may not be effective due to a huge number of learners who will not be able to access learning materials delivered through these media. Moreover, 1148 of 2290 students described not having Internet connection at home. Yet, on the status of Internet connectivity, only 67 learners have no Internet access in their area. Fourteen (14) faculty members revealed not having Internet Connection at home, but was able to gain access during the physical duty schedules. This result suggests that even without Internet Connection at home, students and faculty members are finding ways to cope with the learning and teaching challenges in these difficult times.

Keywords: COVID-19, New Teaching and Learning Modalities, Higher Education, Internet Connectivity, Blended Learning, Learning Management System

I. INTRODUCTION

As cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the Davao Region arise, more and more provinces and municipalities have adopted shelter-in-place orders to curtail the pandemic. The disruption to most daily lives has been drastic and sudden—and perhaps one of the most dramatic shifts was education system moving into the virtual settings (Vegas, 2020).

Because of the pandemic, the Philippine educational system experienced the herculean challenge of exploring other new learning modalities that will facilitate in the migration from traditional classes to flexible teaching and learning options (CHED CMO No. 04, 2020). In this new world of social distancing, higher education has become completely virtual, thus, poverty becomes stronger in most developing nations because many students cannot afford to buy the devices needed to attend to virtual classes. With all the financial limitations, both teachers and students experienced the barriers to access quality education. Each institution devised online learning models to serve as framework in this new way of delivering instruction, considering less experiences and fewer resources of all entities involved in the academic community.

Nevertheless, with the opening of the academic year 2020-

2021 of Davao del Norte State College with complete virtual operations of classes, different challenges were encountered by both teachers and students and digital divide was a concern that is pressing hard on the academic grounds (Cerenio & Borlio, 2021). Moreover, State Colleges cater students who are coming from provinces and municipalities with challenged status on Internet Connection. Although some of these spots already have mobile signals, the issue may arise in the description of the socioeconomic profiles of these students that are different from those who are enrolled in private schools. Thus, this inspired the researchers to assess the current status of the community on flexible learning with the hope of enhancing the adaptive capacity of the entire College in this new normal academic setting.

In addressing the gap in the conduct of this research, while the archives of the State College feature researches that focused on various academic concerns before the onset of this pandemic, this research endeavor is a novel case in employing blended teaching and learning setting adapted by faculty members and teachers in delivering instruction and complying with the academic requirements during health crisis. Thus, a compendium of literature related to the variables of interest was utilized for the methodologies and interpretations of the results.

Objectives of the Study

This study was conducted to describe the adaptive capacity of faculty members and students on blended teaching and learning. Specifically, the study sought to describe the academic profile of students in terms of institute, program and year level. Moreover, this study intends to describe the adaptive capacity of students in blended learning in terms of availability of electricity at home, availability of television at home, availability of transistor radio (AM/FM) at home, availability of Internet Connection at home, type of Internet connection used for virtual learning, devices available to use for learning, status of Internet connectivity, experienced learning modality, usage of DNSC LMS, features of DNSC LMS used, platforms utilized with teachers during synchronous sessions and platforms utilized with teachers during asynchronous sessions.

Meanwhile, this study also aimed to describe the academic profile of the faculty members in terms of institute, department, employment status and years in service. Finally,

the paper intended to describe the adaptive capacity of faculty members in blended learning in terms of availability of Internet Connection at home, available type of Internet connection used for teaching online, devices available to use for teaching, status of Internet connectivity, usage of DNSC LMS, attendance on trainings related to flexible learning and trainings needed related to flexible learning.

II. METHODOLOGY

Comprehensive data was the target of this research paper with proposed complete enumeration technique (Passmore & Baker, 2005) with all teaching personnel from all institutes. Students in all degree courses and all year levels were the target respondents. However, due to the short timeframe and the limited access to the Google Forms made accessible during the data collection phase, 2547 students and 109 faculty members were able to accomplish the survey questionnaires. Descriptive statistics was utilized for the data treatment in addressing the objectives set for this study.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The responses of the students and faculty members on their academic profile and adaptive capacity on blended teaching and learning are presented and discussed in this section.

Table 1

Academic Profile of Students in Terms of Institute			
Institute		Frequency	Percent
	Graduate School	39	1.5
	IAAS	242	9.5
	IED	573	22.5
	IIT	575	22.6
	IMAGOCs	1118	43.9
	Total	2547	100.0

Presented in Table 1 is the actual population of students who participated in the survey projecting each of the Institute of the College. Based on estimates, considering drop out with and without permission cases, this total number represents more than half of the total population of learners enrolled in the academic year of 2020-2021 during first semester. As much as the researchers wanted to collect all data from all students enrolled, sample representative has been an issue since online surveys can only cover a certain population (i.e., Internet users) (Callegaro, Manfreda, & Vehovar, 2015). The survey does not contain the responses from non-Internet users or people who are less familiar with technology (Park, Park, Heo, & Gustafson, 2019). Moreover, during the scheduled data collection phase, the possibilities that not all students were online are considered an important contributor to the final population sampled in this paper.

Table 2: Academic Profile of Students in Terms of Program

Programs	Frequency	Percent
Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management	347	13.6
Bachelor of Science in Information Technology	345	13.5
Bachelor of Science in Social Work	234	9.2
Bachelor of Science in Entrepreneurship	231	9.1
Bachelor of Science in Information Systems	231	9.1
Bachelor of Technology and Livelihood Education	203	8
Bachelor of Science in Disaster Resiliency and Management	155	6.1
Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English	145	5.7
Bachelor of Science in Marine Biology	111	4.4
Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Mathematics	94	3.7
Bachelor of Public Administration	88	3.5
Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Sciences	68	2.7
Bachelor of Science in Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences	65	2.6
Bachelor of Science in Food Technology	64	2.5
Bachelor of Arts in Communication	47	1.8
Master of Arts in Educational Management	43	1.7
PhD in Educational Management	37	1.5
Bachelor of Science in Agroforestry	17	0.7
Master in Science Teaching - Biology	10	0.4
Master in Science Teaching - Mathematics	9	0.4
Master of Arts in Basic Education - English Teaching	2	0.1
MS in Marine Biodiversity	1	0
Total	2547	100.0

Table 2 displays the actual count of students who were able to participate in the online survey, both from graduate and undergraduate groups projecting the 6 and 22 programs, respectively.

Table 3: Academic Profile of Students in Terms of Year Level

Year Level	Frequency	Percent
First Year	934	36.7
Third Year	836	32.8
Second Year	677	26.6
Fourth Year	86	3.4
Grad School	14	0.5
Total	2547	100.0

It can be gleaned in Table 3 that the sampled population is highly represented by first year, third year and second year students comprising 36.7%, 32.8% and 26.6%, respectively while the graduate level students only comprise the 0.5%. The 86 count of fourth year students participating in the online survey may be influenced by the transition of the educational system to K-12 Curriculum wherein after three years in transition, it decreased the number of students in higher years, most especially in the undergraduate programs. More to this are other factors such as no Internet connectivity and push-pull of daily life experienced by graduating students (Yarbrough, Haas, Northam, Duke, & Wieck, 2016).

Table 4: Adaptive Capacity of Students in Blended Learning

Category	Condition s	Year Level					Total
		1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Grad Scho ol	
Availability of electricity at home	No	16	9	18	2	0	45
	Solar	2	3	1	0		6
	Yes	916	665	817	84	14	2496
Availability of television at home	No	147	136	156	15	0	454
	Yes	787	541	680	71	14	2093
Availability of transistor radio (AM/FM) at home	No	508	343	462	47	5	1365
	Yes	426	334	374	39	9	1182
Availability of Internet connection at home	No	399	317	416	45	1	1148
	Yes	535	360	420	41	13	1369

Status of Internet connectivity	Good	202	157	165	18	8	550
	Intermittent	709	501	647	67	6	1930
	No internet	23	19	24	1	0	67
Learning modalities	Combination of modular online and online learning	492	364	426	57	4	1343
	Modular (online)	332	257	348	23	0	960
	Modular (printed)	35	22	28	2	1	88
	Online learning	75	34	34	4	9	156
Usage of DNSC LMS	No	52	65	117	11	12	257
	Yes	882	612	719	75	2	2290

Table 4 presents the adaptive capacity of students in the College in terms of availability of electricity, television, and transistor radio and Internet connection at home, status of the

Internet connectivity, the experienced learning modalities and the usage of the College's Learning Management System (LMS). The table shows the status of each category per year level, divided into different conditions. It can be apprehended that majority of the students are no longer living in remote areas where electricity is not available. Out of the total sampled population, only 1.8% live without electricity at home, which explains the instances that these students inform their teachers that they still need to ask their neighbors the favor of charging their mobile phones.

On the availability of television and transistor radio at home, those who answered *No* comprised 18% and 54%, respectively, which suggest that utilizing these devices on blended learning may not be effective due to a huge number on learners who will not be able to access learning materials delivered through these modes. Interestingly, this resonates the result in one study conducted by Feruzi and Li (2020) in China, wherein the results revealed that the transition from classroom teaching and learning to teaching and learning through radio and television stations platform was not effective. The cited reason was on the demonstrated incompetence of the government in running and monitoring the program mostly in terms of preparation and implementation.

Moreover, while 45% of the students described not having Internet connection at home, on the status of Internet connectivity, only 67 learners have no Internet in their area. After closer examination of the data, it was found out that most of those who ticked *No* have altered their answers to intermittent or poor Internet connection status. Literature revealed that even before the onset of the pandemic, digital divide is pressing hard on developing nations like Philippines (Vishkaie, 2020). As pointed out, there are a number of factors that make it difficult for people to obtain access to the Internet. These include things such as poverty; high device, data, and telecommunications charges; infrastructure barriers; digital literacy challenges; and policy and operational barriers. These challenges represent significant barriers for millions of people in the developing world (Niyigena, Jiang, Ziou, Shaw, & Hasan, 2020).

Furthermore, Bryan and Volchenkova (2016) posited that blended learning has many definitions from various proponents. Accordingly, definitions might cover any instructional technology at all, or restrict themselves to web-based technology; they might not mention technology specifically, but instead focus on blending different theoretical approaches. The results revealed in Table 4 that the College generated its own definition of the term based on learning modalities used by learners, which is the combination of modular online, modular printed and online learning with the usage of College's learning management system. The non-usage of the LMS was due to other preferred platforms of teachers and the preferred pure modular printed learning modality brought by poor to no Internet connectivity of some learners.

Figure 1. Features of LMS commonly used by students in blending learning.

Among those who utilized the LMS, a combination of features of the platform were explored by students shown in Figure 1, which in summary comprised of assessments, assignments and quizzes, class announcements, enrollment, online forums and surveys, and topics and lessons. The initiative of the College to provide the teachers and learners with its own

LMS goes with the statement of Kabassi et al. (2016) that Learning Management Systems (LMSs) seem to offer a very good solution in choosing the best e-Learning platform, as they provide the instructors the capability of designing and administrate their courses as they want. In this way the blended learning is better supported.

Figure 2. Type of Internet connection used for virtual learning and devices available to use

As presented in Figure 2, there are students who answered no devices used in online learning, yet some of them answered Internet Café and Pisonet on the type of Internet connection

used. This somehow implies that the students took the initiative of going to these places, where they can access files posted online even without owning any device at home.

especially when the lockdown protocols in their respective municipalities were lifted. While many Filipino students were using Internet cafes before as place to play online games (Reyes, 2020), now they are using it for online learning, which is actually also the case in Indonesia wherein minors

are already allowed to enter the Internet café's during class hours because students with no devices at home opt to use the cafés to do research in answering their supplemental materials or learning modules (Wibowo, Udasmoro, & Noviani, 2020).

Figure 3: Platforms utilized with teachers during synchronous sessions.

With the announced free features of Google Meet, shown in Figure 3, this platform ranked as the top preferred by teachers to use in conducting synchronous teaching. Ranked the second and third are the combinations of various free platforms.

Figure 4: Platforms utilized with teachers during asynchronous sessions.

Meanwhile, on the platforms used by teachers for students during asynchronous sessions, the combination of the LMS, Google Classroom, Facebook Messenger (Chat/Call), Facebook Group/Page and emails ranked the most utilized, which was also the case in the study conducted by Cereno and Borlio (2021), when they described the condition of teacher education, major in Sciences students, in their plight to this

online learning set-up. As opined by Zayapragassarazan (2020), the pandemic forced the teaching community to think of new avenues and alternate strategies for engaging students, thus students are provided with a variety of choices for their learning and allows them to take more responsibility for their own learning.

Tables 5: Academic Profile of the Faculty Members

Category		IEd	IIT	IMAGoCS	IAAS	Total
Department	Tourism Management	0	0	9	0	9
	TLE	4	0	0	0	4
	Social Work	0	0	4	0	4
	Social Sciences	0	0	9	0	9
	Public Administration	0	0	3	0	3
	Physical Education	3	0	0	0	3
	Mathematics	5	0	0	0	5
	Language	11	0	0	0	11
	Information Technology	0	12	0	0	12
	Information Systems	0	7	0	0	7
	Fisheries	0	0	0	2	2
	Entrepreneurship	0	0	9	0	9
	DRM	0	0	8	0	8
	Agroforestry	0	0	2	0	2
	Science	9	2	0	0	11
	Professional Education	5	0	0	0	5
	Marine Biology	0	0	0	1	1
	Food Technology	0	0	0	4	4
Employment Status	Permanent	18	11	16	7	52
	Temporary	9	3	7	0	19
	Contract of Service	5	6	15	0	26
	Part Time	5	1	6	0	12
Year of Service	0-10 years	27	13	42	3	85
	11-20 years	1	3	1	1	6
	21-30 years	7	5	0	1	5
	31-40 years	2	0	1	2	5

After the data collection phase, 109 faculty members from Institutes of Education, Information Technology, Management Governance and Continuing Studies, and Aquatic and Applied Sciences were able to respond to the Google form. These teachers also represented the 18 departments with almost half of them having permanent employment status. On the length of service, these pool of faculty members are crowded by 79% of the population who rendered 0-10 years with the longest year of 39 years by one

of the senior faculty.

With varied field of specialty and interest, educational expertise, employment status and length of years of service, it is interesting to explore the adaptive capacity of these mentors maneuvering the delivery of instruction in the college's new academic setting. Thus, Table 6 presents the assessment on how equipped these teachers in the new blended teaching set-up.

Table 6; Adaptive Capacity of Faculty Members on Blended Teaching

Category		IEd	IIT	IMAGoCS	IAAS	Total
Internet Connection	Yes	31	19	38	7	95
	No	6	2	6	0	14
Status of Internet Connection	Good	15	14	20	3	52
	Poor or Intermittent	22	7	24	4	57
Usage of LMS	Yes	34	20	41	6	101
	No	3	1	3	1	8
Type of Internet Connection	Prepaid/Postpaid Mobile Data	10	4	16	3	32
	Home Fiber (PLDT, Globe, etc)	13	7	10	3	33
	Home DSL (PLDT, Globe, etc)	7	1	2	0	10
Devices Used	Smartphone, Laptop	22	13	32	3	70
Attendance on Seminars Related to Blended Teaching	Yes	28	17	27	7	79
	No	9	4	17	0	30

Based on the generated results, it is evident that even faculty members have no access to Internet Connection and experienced poor or intermittent Internet connectivity as presented in Table 6. While these teachers are expected to have the financial capability to buy their own Internet modem or devices to acquire Internet access, it is their location that has slow to no signal coverage. In the study conducted by Salac and Kim (2016), in terms of Internet connection speed, the Philippines is among the countries with the slowest. The authors added that in 2015, with the National Electric Grid as source of Internet connection of the country, it is distributed in the three large islands, yet, not all the islands are connected to this grid such as the Island of Mindanao.

In addition, ranking the most used type of Internet Connection, the combination of using Prepaid/Postpaid Mobile Data, Home Fiber (PLDT, Globe, etc), and Home DSL (PLDT, Globe, etc) ranked the highest, while 64% of the sampled population of faculty members resort to use smartphone and laptop in blended teaching.

On the usage of the College's learning management system, while 7.3% are not using the platform, the rest are taking advantage of the features of the said LMS. Other LMS platforms are also utilized by these faculty members, depending on the tasks they give and preferred platform by their students. Moreover, 72% are in attendance in joining blended teaching related seminars.

Figure 5: Training related to blended teaching.

Finally, on asking the faculty members on their preferred seminars and training related to blended teaching, more than half of the teachers picked digital tools for asynchronous/synchronous learning, pedagogy and androgyny for flexible learning, and assessment and evaluation. Moreover, half of the sampled population as projected in Figure 5 showed interest in exploring more the College's LMS. As emphasized by Lockee (2020), teachers are experiencing appreciably different learning and performance contexts related to the mandated shift in professional practice to address continuity of instruction, thus relevant training should be provided in targeting skills and knowledge related to teaching in online and blended environments.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the adaptive capacity of the students on the blended learning set-up with the College, results imply that there are still students who enrolled in this academic year without the basic requirements needed in this new set-up. Although the count is low, yet, no academic journey of any individual learner should be discarded. Thus, it is strongly recommended that before admitting the students in the College, a comprehensive orientation should be provided, along with Parent's Orientation and Consultation on Flexible Learning to prepare the students and parents of the expected teaching and learning set-up, giving them the overview of the learning materials to prepare to avoid any unnecessary burden for the entire duration of the semester. Additionally, literature supports that utilizing television and radio is ineffective in delivering instruction during a pandemic, thus, any approach related to this is not encouraged.

For the blended teaching of the faculty members, it is evident that teachers in the College are adaptive to digital teaching as they showed interest in requesting more training on the platforms and digital tools, which they can utilize in improving teaching performance. In the case of the faculty members with low to no Internet connection, this should be further investigated to check whether the contributing factor still falls in the geographical location of the home address because some programs for the faculty affected by this situation can be initiated.

For further researches in this field of interest, extensive exploration should be undergone to extract the realities of these blended teaching and learning experiences of this academic community. It is strongly suggested that further studies will be conducted on the initiatives done by the administrative body of the College in providing support to the entire academic community in this paradigm shift of delivering instruction. It is hoped that with the results generated in this study, the College will be able to produce

resilient learners and teachers to deal with the ever-changing algorithm of teaching and learning in these changing times.

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SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FLEXIBLE LEARNING (STUDENTS)

Madayaw! This survey is about your learning capacity during this new normal. Please answer each question with all honesty. For short responses item, please follow the format and write in CAPITAL LETTERS. Your response for this survey would be a great help for us to make adjustments on how can we meet both ends. Thank you for sharing your time.

Data Privacy Consent

In accordance with RA 10173 or Data Privacy Act of 2012, I consent to the following terms and conditions on the collection, use, processing and disclosure of my personal data:

I am aware that the Davao del Norte State College has collected and stored my personal data upon accomplishment of this form.

I express my consent for the Davao del Norte State College to collect, store my personal information.

I hereby affirm my right to be informed, object to processing, access, and rectify and to suspend or withdraw my personal data pursuant to the provisions of the RA 10173 and its implementing rules and regulations.

By clicking the Next button below, I warrant that I have read, understood all of the above provisions, and agreed with its full implementation.

FULL NAME (LAST NAME, FIRST NAME, MIDDLE INITIAL.) *

Your answer

Contact Number *

Your answer

Functional Email Address *

Your answer

City/Municipality *

Choose

Complete Address (CITY/MUNICIPALITY, BARANGAY eg. PANABO CITY, NEW VISAYAS) *

Your answer

Institute *

Choose

Course *

Choose

Year Level *

Choose

Do you have electricity at home? *

Yes

None

Other:

Do you have Television at home? *

Yes

None

Other:

Do you have transistor radio (AM/FM) at home? *

Yes

No

Do you have internet connection at home? *

Yes

No

Other:

What type of internet connection do you use for online/virtual learning? (Choose all that applies) *

Prepaid/Postpaid Mobile Data

Home DSL (PLDT, Globe, etc)

Home Fiber (PLDT, Globe, etc)

Wireless Home Broadband (PLDT, Globe, etc)

Internet Cafe/ PisoNet

None

Other:

What devices are available at home that you can use for learning? (Choose all that applies) *

Smartphone

Laptop

Personal computer

Tablet

None

Other:

What is the status of your internet connectivity? *

Good

Poor or intermittent

No internet connectivity

What learning modality did you experience in your classes for this 1st Semester S.Y. 2020-2021? *

Choose

Have you already used the DNSC Learning Management System (LMS)? *

Yes

No

What features of DNSC LMS have you already used? (Choose all that applies) *

Topics and Lessons

Assessments (Assignments and Quizzes)

Class Announcement

Enrollment of Students

Online Forums and Surveys

None

Other:

What other LMS have you used? *

Google Classroom

Schoology

Edmodo

Other:

What digital technologies that your teachers used in the conduct of synchronous/live/real-time virtual sessions? (Choose all that applies) *

Zoom Cloud Meeting Application

Google Meet

Google Classroom

Edmodo

Schoology

Discord Server

Facebook Messenger (Chat/Call)

Telephone call

SMS or Text Messages

None

Other:

What digital technologies your teachers used in the conduct of asynchronous/not live/not real time virtual sessions? (Choose all that applies) *

DNSC-Learning Management System (DNSC-LMS)

Google Classroom

Edmodo

Schoolology
Discord Server
Facebook Messenger (Chat/Call)
Facebook Group/Page
Email
SMS or Text Messages
Telephone call
None
Other:

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE ON FLEXIBLE LEARNING FOR DNSC FACULTY

Madayaw! This survey is about your teaching capacity during this new normal. Please answer each question with all honesty. For short responses item, please follow the format and write in CAPITAL LETTERS. Your response for this survey would be a great help for us to make adjustments on how can we meet both ends. Thank you for sharing your time.

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By clicking the Next button below, I warrant that I have read, understood all of the above provisions, and agreed with its full implementation.

FULL NAME (LAST NAME, FIRST NAME, MIDDLE INITIAL) *

Institute *

IAAS (Institute of Aquatic and Applied Sciences)

Department *

Disaster, Resiliency Management

Employment Status *

Temporary

Permanent

Contract of Service

Part Time

Other:

How many years have you been in the service? *

Do you have internet connection at home? *

Yes

No

Other:

What type of internet connection do you use for online teaching/virtual classes? (Choose all that applies) *

Prepaid/Postpaid Mobile Data

Home DSL (PLDT, Globe, etc)

Home Fiber (PLDT, Globe, etc)

Wireless Home Broadband (PLDT, Globe, etc)

Internet Cafe/ PisoNet

None

Other:

What devices are available at home that you can use for teaching? (Choose all that applies) *

Smartphone

Laptop

Personal computer

Tablet

None

Other:

What is the status of your internet connectivity? *

Good

Poor or intermittent

No internet connectivity

Other:

Have you already used DNSC Learning Management System (LMS)? *

Yes

No

Other:

What features of DNSC LMS have you already used? (Choose all that applies) *

Topics and Lessons

Assessments (Assignments and Quizzes)

Class Announcement

Enrollment of Students

Question Bank

Online Forums and Surveys

None

Other:

What other LMS have you used?

Google Classroom

Schoology

Edmodo

Other:

What digital technologies that you used to conduct synchronous/live/real-time virtual sessions? (Choose all that applies) *

Zoom Cloud Meeting Application

Google Meet

Facebook Video Call

Google Classroom

Edmodo

Schoology

Discord Server

Facebook Messenger (Chat/Call)

Telephone call

SMS or Text Messages

None

Other:

What digital technologies that you used to conduct asynchronous/not live virtual sessions? (Choose all that applies) *

DNSC-Learning Management System (DNSC-LMS)

Google Classroom

Edmodo

Schoology

Discord Server

Facebook Messenger (Chat/Call)

Facebook Group/Page

Email

SMS or Text Messages

Telephone call

None

Other:

Have you attended seminar/workshop/webinar related to flexible Learning? *

Yes

No

Other:

If yes, list down the title of seminar/workshop/webinar attended. *

Your answer

What other trainings do you need related to flexible learning? *

Pedagogy and andragogy for flexible learning

Digital tools for asynchronous/synchronous learning

Assessment and Evaluation

DNSC LMS

Other: