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Web-based training in Public Administration in South Africa: principles and considerations.

By

Liza Ceciel van Jaarsveldt

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree MAGISTER ARTIUM: Public Administration in the Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. N.L. Roux
Co-Supervisor: Prof. Dr. P.A. Brynard

May 2003

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am sincerely thankful to my family, especially my mother, father and sister for their continuous love and encouragement in writing this dissertation. Thank you for the sacrifices you made through the years in helping me to study, learn and gain more knowledge and wisdom. Thank you for always believing in me.

A huge thanks to my supervisor and mentor, Professor N.L. Roux for his help, guidance and assistance and for his continues encouragement. I want to thank Professor Roux for his patience, especially in times when I had none. My thanks also goes to my co-supervisor, Professor P.A. Brynard for all his assistance.

I would also like to thank Me. Yolanda McCabe for all her continuous support, help and friendship. Thank you for the computer assistance and grammar tips; it made a big difference to my research.

Thank you to all my friends, especially the ones I neglected.

And last but not least, thank you to Professor J.O. Kuye and the School of Public Management and Administration (SPMA) for all the help, guidance and support I receive. I am eternally grateful for the opportunity to work, study, learn and grow at SPMA.

ABSTRACT

The use of information technology for the delivery for educational programs is growing rapidly worldwide. In the United States of America and Australia the number of higher education institutions which are making use of online education to teach Public Administration is constantly increasing. Surveys done by the National Association of Schools for Public Administration and Affairs (NASPAA) in the United States of America found heightened interest in distance education. In 1995 it was found by NASPAA that Public Administration was offered by 12% of higher educational institutions to students online. One year later the number had increased to 24%. The last NASPAA survey in 2000 showed an increase of 39%. It is possible for students in the United States of America and Australia to complete a Public Administration degree online. However, in South Africa the use of web-based training for the delivery of Public Administration as a science discipline is still under utilised. It was found that only six, or 20% of the higher educational institutions offering Public Administration to students in South Africa, made use of web-based training in 2002. This compares poorly with the United States of America and Australia.

Due to distance, time and financial constraints it therefore becomes difficult forss officials or students interested in government related studies, to travel to a university or even to take the necessary three years to study for a Public Administration degree. Web-based training programmes should provide the opportunity to address these problems. By redesigning the content of Public Administration courses to be completed on the World Wide Web, higher educational institutions in South Africa should be able to reach more students, than would normally be the case.

Although South Africa is the best developed of all the African countries with regard to the use of information and communication technology (ICT), South Africa still experience some limitations. These limitations include access to computers, infrastructural development, telephone line connectivity, and in may cases access to electricity.

Key terms:

Web-based training

Information and communication technology

World Wide Web

Internet

Infrastructure

Development

Online education

Computer

Computer literacy

Computer access

Telematic teaching

Public Administration

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SAMEVATTING

Die Internet en die Wêreld Wye Web word vir geruime tyd al gebruik vir die voorsiening van aanlyn onderwys aan die gemeenskap. In lande soos die Verenigde State van Amerika en Australië word nuwe Internet tegnologie al vir die afgelope paar jaar met groot sukses gebruik. Die getal hoër onderwys instellings wat van aanlyn studie gebruik maak in Publieke Adminisrasie, het vanaf 12% in 1995 gegroei na 39% in 2000. Dit is moontlik vir studente in die Verenigde State van Amerika en Australië om 'n volledige graad in Publieke Administrasie aanlyn te voltooi. In Suid-Afrika is die gebruik van aanlyn studie in Publieke Administrasie egter nie op dieselfde vlak van ontwikkeling nie. Slegs ses, of 20%, van die hoër onderwys instellings in Suid-Afrika het in 2002 van aanlyn studie gebruik gemaak om studente van inligting te voorsien in Publieke Administrasie. Die bogenoemde getal vergelyk swak met die Verenigde State van Amerika en Australië, waar aanlyn studie aan die toeneem is.

Vir staatsamptenare in Suid-Afrika is dit toenemend noodsaaklik om Publieke Administrasie te bestudeer, aangesien dit bydraend kan wees tot meer effektiewe en professionele werksverrigting in die openbare sektor. As gevolg van geografiese redes en die groot afstand tussen plattelandse gebiede en sommige universiteite is dit egter moeilik vir staatsamptenare om die gemiddelde drie jaar studieprogram vir 'n graad in Publieke Administrasie te volg. Deur Publieke Administrasie aanlyn te studeer kan 'n staatsamptenaar met gemak sy werk voltooi en studeer op tye wat hom/haar pas.

Deur die inhoud van kursusse in Publieke Administrasie te herontwerp vir doeleindes van Wêreld Wye Web studie behoort hoër tersiêre opvoedkundige instellings van Suid-Afrika meer studente te bereik as wat normaalweg die geval is.

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KERN WOORDE

Internet

Wêreld Wye Web

Onderrig

Aanlyn studie

Inligtingstegnologie

Infrastruktuur

Ontwikkeling

Rekenaar geletterdheid

Publieke Administrasie

Internet toegang

Internet kennis

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