Attitudes of Teachers in an Academic College towards Information Technologies and their Contribution to Improving Teaching Process/

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to examine the attitudes of teachers in an academic college towards the effectiveness of information technologies and computer use in improving the teaching process. The study also examines the level of computer anxiety amongst the teaching staff and its influence on their attitudes to computers and use of computerized technologies in teaching.

Premises: Teachers in the fields of science and technology will exhibit more positive attitudes to use of information technologies in teaching, and will make more frequent use of it, than teachers in the social sciences and the humanities.

The study also assumes that al ink will be found between a high level of computer anxiety and the frequency of information technologies use in academic teaching, and that a link will be found a high level of computer anxiety and the rating assigned to the contribution of information technologies to teaching.

The study assumes a link between age, gender and seniority, and teachers' attitudes to incorporating information technologies into their teaching, and also a link between frequency of information technologies use and the rating assigned to its effectiveness in improving the teaching process.

The questionnaires were sent to all the teachers (210) employed at the academic college in the academic year 2003-4. In the college's three schools: the school of Social Sciences and Humanities, the School of Biotechnology, Nutrition Science and Environmental Science and the School of Computer Science.

Findings indicate positive attitudes to the use of information technologies in teaching. These are reflected in the high proportion of teachers that use information technologies, in the high frequency of use, and in the positive attitude expressed by the teachers to the efficacy of information technologies as a teaching tool. Findings indicate a low level of computer anxiety amongst the teaching staff.

They also show that level of computer anxiety affects and is linked to teaachers' attitudes to use of computers and information technologies in teaching. The lower the level of computer anxiety, the more frequent is the use of the technology and the higher the teachers' rating of information technologies as a tool for improving the quality of academic instruction. The study also shows that there is a positive link between high frequency of information technologies use and a positive opinion of its contribution to the teaching process. Frequent use is linked to high rating of its usefulness.

The independent variables (age, gender, teacher seniority, and study field) were found to have no influence on the level of computer fear or on teachers' attitudes to the use of I.T. in academic teaching.

System No. **1072442**