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Experiences of Sri Lankan teacher educators as they developed internet-based study materials as novice web designers

The recognition of the importance of educating the teachers in using new technologies in their teaching and learning process has influenced teacher education institutions in Sri Lanka to focus upon integrating Internet-based teaching and learning into teacher education programmes. Supporting this emphasis, the World Bank funded Teacher Education and Teacher Deployment project permitted a number of teacher educators from different teacher education institutions in the country to undertake staff development training in overseas Universities.

This paper focuses on the experiences of twelve Sri Lankan teacher educators as they developed Internet-based study materials while undergoing postgraduate training at the University of Wollongong, Australia. As experienced teacher educators, yet novices to the Internet, each of them developed a Web Study Guide (WSG). The study explored the design patterns adopted by these educators while they developed WSGs.

This research was designed as a naturalistic investigation and employed a case study inquiry. Questionnaire survey, observations, in depth interviews, analysis of WSGs and participants' reflective reports were the main data gathering strategies used. The study analyzed the ways in which the educators transformed information, the design patterns adopted by them, and the issues they faced.

Initially, the effects of limited knowledge and skills resulted in a limited focus on instructional strategies. As the experience levels increased, the participants' approaches to design become more inventive. The results stress the need of time, support and repeated experiences for educators to modify their conventional pedagogical beliefs and instructional approaches when adopting technological innovations in teaching and learning processes.