

Outcomes of Learning Online: The Case of Farmers and Extension Workers in the Philippines

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ABSTRACT

The Philippines is now adopting information and communication technology (ICT) to promote agricultural sustainability and rural development. Among the development programs that apply ICT is the Open Academy for Philippine Agriculture (OPAPA) E-Learning Project by the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), the agency mandated to spearhead research and development programs on rice. Following the most significant change (MSC) technique, this study was conducted to identify the most significant changes experienced by OPAPA E-Learning graduates composed of farmers, extension workers and agricultural science students. Results showed that respondents enrolled in the program to acquire knowledge of rice technologies, gain skills in operating a computer, update themselves about new farm technologies, and comply with academic and work requirements. Based on 20 MSC stories collected, the OPAPA E-Learning Project has led to the increase in knowledge of rice technologies and awareness of the program, improvement in school, farm and extension practices, and enhancement of computer skills. The Bennett Hierarchy of Program Outcomes revealed that the most significant change stories reported by the respondents correspond to higher levels of outcomes, indicating that the OPAPA E-learning Project has already made an impact in terms of improving its clientele's knowledge and capability.

Key Words: distance learning, most significant changes, capability development, agricultural technologists, rice production