

Soft Skills and engineering: a comparative analysis between on-line and classroom teaching

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Summary

Currently the Spanish universities are making a great effort to effectively incorporate the development and assessment of generic skills in their training programs. Information and communications technologies (ICT) offer a wide range of possibilities but create uncertainty among teachers about the process and results. It is considered of interest to conduct a study to analyze the extent to which social skills like commitment, communication and teamwork are acquired by students and teachers. It seeks to ascertain the influence of the learning context (Online or classroom training) in the development of these personal skills among the participants in the sample.

For this study two universities have been chosen, the Universidad a Distancia de Madrid (Udima) offering online training environment, and the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM) with classroom training modality. Both are universities of reference in Spain. UDIMA being the first private university offering undergraduate and master's degree programs completely online; UPM have a long career in technology programs.

A total of 257 individuals, 230 students and 27 teachers, members of various degree and master programs, has been answered the survey called Evalsoft. This instrument was designed in the project at the same name by a research team from the Universidad Complutense of Madrid (UCM).

Some interesting conclusions can be highlighted: it is in the online context where there are higher levels of commitment and teamwork that in the classroom modality; teachers have higher social skills than students and these improve with age. Sex and the training program appear to influence these social skills.