

TECH TALKS

ISSUE #2 JULY 2020

News & Updates from FEU Tech, Diliman & Alabang



FEU ALABANG: WHY TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION GO HAND IN HAND

Between the rapid rise of online learning tools such as virtual classrooms and digital platforms tailored for lesson-planning, grading and the like, it's safe to say that technology has definitely made the way our students learn. In fact, with the COVID-19 pandemic rendering in-person classroom learning all but impossible, technology-based learning may be the only feasible option for quite some time.

Yet it's also worth noting that the education tech (or edtech) had been thriving even before the pandemic. It was projected that the global market share for the edtech industry had risen to \$17.7 billion in revenue in 2017, while being projected to rise all the way to \$40.3 billion by 2022. With these figures in mind, it's then become increasingly clear that edtech is here to stay.

Though a certain learning curve is to be expected in adjusting to the new reality of learning and some hesitance is understandable, there are many benefits to embracing the marriage of technology and education. For one, technology goes a long way in helping students learn much more efficiently.

According to a past survey done by learning science company McGraw-Hill, up to 81% of students found digital learning technology to be a big help in improving their grades while 69% reported that digital learning technology made it easier for them to focus. An overwhelming majority of college students- -85%-even expressed that using technology helped them with their career readiness.

There are many reasons why utilizing technology has such a positive effect. For one, students and teachers have access to a wider set of material: consider the almost limitless storage capacity of the Internet vs. having to rely solely on printed materials such as

handouts and textbooks. Technology has also made it so that anyone wanting to review certain information, such a lesson plan from a particular module, can now do so with just a few clicks. This ready access to an abundance of information also lets students learn at much quicker rates than before.

Going online also makes it easier for teachers to collaborate and share resources/ideas. They can communicate with each other anytime and anywhere to refine lesson plans as they see fit, even adjusting teaching material according to the progress their students make and any learning trends they might detect. Thus, learning can even become tailored to fit individual student needs.

Finally, developments such as virtual reality (VR) demonstrates just how much more technology can still do for education. VR tech can enable students learning at home to view realistic models of the planet Mars, visit world-renowned museums such as the Louvre and even visit labs for their STEM subjects all without leaving the comfort of their own home. As VR continues to slowly gain ground amongst various lesson plans, it stands as a shining example of the bright future technology can give the educational world.

Indeed, although the edtech of today seems like a decidedly modern phenomena, the truth is that it is a natural step in a progression that dates back to the beginnings of education as an institution. In the 18th century, blackboards replaced traditional writing slates as a far more economical solution that allowed teachers to present ideas and problems to the entire class, instead of having them write it down one-by-one. TV and radio have long been used for decades now to broadcast learning material to hard-to-reach places. The fusion of technology and education is nothing new, in this sense.

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This is why it should also be clear that the idea that edtech will “replace” standard education is most definitely a misconception. None of the mentioned edtech developments will ever completely replace teachers or even the classroom; at the end of the day, the strength of a class will still hinge on the teacher presenting it and the material being discussed. Instead of a substitute for traditional learning, edtech is an effective tool that supplements and enhances traditional learning approaches.

Nowhere is the idea of integrating traditional learning in an online platform demonstrated better than with the MILES program. The “Mastery Path” component of the program shows this well as its framework allows a teacher to design the curriculum in such a way that automatically assigns coursework, depending on the student’s previous results. Students cannot move on to the next module unless they earn sufficient marks, and teachers can see exactly where they are having trouble. This lets them hone in on specific student’s progress while still acknowledging the needs of the rest of the class. Even if MILES is a platform for learning remotely, teachers can also schedule video call consultations or chats to guide students more effectively. MILES is not a replacement for the teacher- -it’s a tool to bolster their teaching arsenal.

In conclusion, although the future of education clearly lies with edtech, that does not mean education as we know it today will be completely obsolete. Rather, edtech is a way for education to level up and make learning easier, more efficient and more enjoyable than ever before. With the MILES program leading the way in showing how technology and education go hand in hand, the future of learning is brighter than ever.

THE MILES VOCABULARY

Set for release in the FEU Tech, Diliman and Alabang campuses in August, the Mastery-based Individualized Learning Enhancement System (or MILES for short) is certainly one of a kind. That’s why it’s important for each of the program’s unique components to be clearly defined and avoid confusion later on.

The first are the **modules**, basically the learning materials, assessments and study guides that facilitate course mastery. For the student’s convenience, these will be uploaded onto Canvas or in the digital learning packets and will then be divided into subtopics, which are made to make the learning content more digestible.

These tie into the next term, the **Mastery Network**. This is a model incorporated into MILES that ensures students master one topic before moving to the next. Under this, students must pass a final assessment before accessing the next set of lessons. If a student fails the assessment, teachers will be available to help.

The **Mastery Path** is another MILES framework meant to improve learning outcomes. It works to give students assignments based on their past performances. This lets MILES adapt to students’ individual needs, while allowing everyone to achieve intended learning outcomes.

On top of mandatory assignments, students can access **supplemental and reinforcement materials/activities**. These are optional exercises, activities and miscellaneous resources that are meant to bolster a student’s comprehension of their main course subjects.

Speaking of “**Blended Online**”, MILES offers this plan for students with extremely limited internet access

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so students can still learn without being fully online. Lessons will be primarily distributed through learning packets, and internet connection will only be necessary for online consultations and submitting assessments.

Speaking of **learning packets**, they'll contain both supplementary and primary materials—on top of the usual textbooks. These self-paced modules are distributed in digital (flash drives) format. These come with the “Blended Online” option, but any student can request for one, provided they pay a fee.

THE SOFT SKILLS

Soft skills are traits that highlight one's interpersonal traits to be able to adapt to a brand new environment and work well with peers and colleagues. These include attitude, communication skills, work ethic, decision-making, critical thinking, empathy and problem-solving; qualities that shine when interacting with people. Most companies have put an emphasis on these interactions, and they even invest in team-building to create an easy atmosphere for their employees.

This makes it all the more important that young people today should know about soft skills. Indeed, students now must realize soft skills are as essential as hard skills and it's one of the most important qualities needed to succeed when scouting for internships. Aside from the technical skills that a job may require, managers look at an intern's ability to connect and mesh well with their current staff and factor this into whether they'll grant them an invite aboard their ranks.

With much of the country's workforce shifting to remote operations due to the pandemic, soft skills have been thrust into the limelight once again. FEU Alabang, FEU Diliman, and FEU Tech are about to join in on this change through the MILES Program, assisting everyone

who chooses to enroll and experience a blended learning style for the upcoming school year.

Harnessing one's potential through said skills is necessary. Here are some things that we think will help students the most going into a virtual working environment.

CRITICAL THINKING

This is the skill that allows employees to help finish tasks, solve problems and make decisions in the workplace. If anything, this is one of the top qualities an employer looks for in an applicant. A critical thinker will be able to help the company in just about any situation possible, even in the most chaotic scenario possible in the office when all hands are needed to be on deck, due to their ability to absorb the necessary information and come up with an outcome that would benefit them the most. They will be the most reliable people in the workforce.

This skill is now even more important with the ongoing pandemic as people need to organize a plan of action in such an uncertain time. The MILES program is designed to enable the students to develop their critical thinking skills even when learning in a remote setting, making the students think out of the box and connect to factual information to connect to lessons.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Communication has always been the backbone of a company's success, whether it may be internally amongst employees or externally to the target audience. Having it flow constantly and openly allows the staff to connect with one another and form trust, and in turn can boost the productivity rate and morale among themselves as a valuable resource to the company. However, with remote work being the new normal in

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this circumstance, it can be jarring to have only emails and video calls as the sole forms of communication, especially for those who prefer doing so verbally.

A good practice to start in improving communications skills in this virtual setting would be to listen more actively and emphatically. In connection with being transparent with your current situation, keep an open mind about theirs as well and understand what they're going through. In MILES, communication between teacher and student is given a bigger emphasis to ensure the latter's mastery of the topic before they can move onto difficult lessons, forming a communication line through mentorship to make sure that no student gets left behind.

TIME MANAGEMENT

The shift to a remote setting is part of quarantine measures put in place by the government to keep the public safe from the pandemic. As a result, people now have the freedom to choose which one activity gets their attention for the day.

However, it would be wiser to put some of the vacant time to good and productive use. You can dedicate a good chunk of your day for any obligations like work or chores, and still have enough time to rest afterwards; use this to your advantage and make a schedule on when you should clock in your studying hours and focus on your tasks at hand during that time. The MILES learning management system makes this easier for students by granting the enrolling students flexibility of their time while still being able to master the topics of the curriculum. However, you need to manage your time well with this much freedom, otherwise you might end up behind in lessons. There is no professor to monitor you physically, so time management becomes a skill students must adopt.

WORK ETHIC

Of course, a sure way to stay productive would be to develop a steady work ethic. It allows employees to get used to getting the job done no matter how hard it is, finishing on a strong note and staying focused throughout. In a regular academic or professional setting, this can be achieved easily, but offices around the country are mostly closed to avoid their staff from compromising their health. Students especially are having the same problem, not being able to study well unless they are in an academic setting like a classroom; something that the MILES program acknowledges as students come from all walks of life with different study habits. It is counting on you to be able to study under minimal supervision, but remains open if guidance is needed.

Indeed, students under the MILES program will have to realize their destiny is truly in their hands. They can work hard and reap the benefits of remote learning, or slack off and face the consequences. Here, students who truly want to succeed will develop a work ethic like no other, a definite asset in any company they join in the future.

Studying from home is surely a different experience, but that's no reason our students should be robbed of opportunities for growth. In fact, the opposite may happen and students can come out of the pandemic with a new set of skills they'll carry with them for life.

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Student Activities For July 2020 - Student Services Office

The following are events that are to be held in FEU Tech, FEU Diliman and FEU Alabang for the month of July. Due to the social distancing rules still set in place, all events listed are to be done online on various platforms.

The first event is a two-part Sports Webinar conducted as a joint effort by the Recreation and Athletics Club and the Student Coordinating Council. The first one will be held on July 4, and the second on July 15. Held virtually via Google Meet for FEU Tech and Diliman, this focuses on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines' sports programs.

Starting on July 9 until the end of the month, FEU Diliman's Student Activities and Development Unit (SADU) will be holding their Recognized Student Organization's (RSO) online elections for the new set of officers.

On July 11, an Online Concert for a Cause called "Liwanag" will be held via Facebook Live at 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. by artistic talents from all three campuses, as an effort to help the victims of the pandemic.

Youth For Christ will be holding a praise concert called "Rejoice Vol. 5: One Praise Concert" through Facebook Live on July 25, propagating the idea of multi-faith practices for both Tech and Diliman.

A prelude to the 7th National Technology Festival, FEU Tech's Engineering Summit 2020 will be held on July 31 (1:00 to 6:00 p.m.). Coordinated through Google Meet, this is an online summit that will discuss notable start-

up projects and companies within the field.

Another fund-raising effort in Tech and Diliman called "Kapit Kamay Bayanihan sa Bayan ni Juan" will be conducted by all RSOs to help the pandemic. The event will last for the entire month.

FEU Tech and Diliman are continuing the effort for acknowledging selfless Filipinos during the COVID-19 pandemic by an ongoing nomination of deserving individuals through the iTam Bayani Awards: Filipino Spirit Lives On.

HERE FOR YOU

Our home is our safe space, where we are free to drop all responsibility and rest up for another day at work.

However, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has forced everyone into their homes to keep everyone safe. Quarantine measures have been put in place to reduce the risk of contracting the virus and going out is highly discouraged unless absolutely necessary. This puts students in a peculiar situation where they are to continue their education within their own homes instead, as campuses remain closed to avoid the spreading of the virus.

The adjustment to this new normal may be challenging for some, which might snowball into a slump in productivity. Thus, FEU Tech has moved to help the students adjust to the new normal through the introduction of the MILES learning management system. With this in mind, here are some of our tips on how to make the most out of studying at home.

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RELATE LESSONS TO ONGOING EVENTS

It's often said that the youth is the hope of the country, and with innovative ideas the young bring to the table it has proven this over and over. This comes through being aware of the happenings in the country and looking forward to improving the future once given the opportunity. With the pandemic confining us to our homes, awareness about the news has been more important than ever, especially now with so much information in the palm of our hands through the internet.

Do not let the four corners of your room restrain your pursuit of knowledge, for it will give you the necessary tools and information to claim the better future people have been wishing for. You can do this by trying to connect the dots between current social issues and relevant events to your course. This will give you additional insight to your studies while granting you awareness about the root cause of the problem.

SETTING GOALS AND LIMITATIONS

Goal-setting is an essential part of planning, identifying benchmarks that have to be achieved in a certain time or way. It turns a lengthy task into a step-by-step process, helping students build from previous lessons to connect to the current one. This can already be seen through a course's curriculum syllabus, outlining the topics that are to be tackled in each meeting and dedicating certain days to them.

The MILES program, for the most part, lets you have full control of your schedule when going for the Fully Online or Blended Online style of curriculum in the upcoming school year. Use this to your advantage by planning out the steps necessary to master the fundamentals of each lesson. Breaking it down into manageable steps should

give you a better experience in your studies.

However, it's important to remember to take a break and give the brain a rest to allow better retention of information. Also, considering that computers and cellphones will be used to open digital materials, give your eyes a rest as well. With the flexible nature of learning under MILES, time is on your side and there is no need to rush if you're diligent with your studies. This should leave ample time to rest.

CREATE A CONDUCTIVE STUDY SPACE

It is admittedly far easier for students to get distracted in the comfort of their home, compared to the usual classroom setting that is designed to be as productive of a workspace as possible for a student. Unlike in a classroom, you are in charge of yourself to remain focused in studying the lessons of the week. There is nothing stopping you from dropping any work and instead relax for the entire day (though there will be consequences later on). However, if you want to get some work done without anything stopping you, a clean workspace should give you that classroom-like ambiance that might help you stay on track.

The workspace has to feel like you've gone and taken a seat in your usual armchair whenever you start the tasks of the day. A clean tabletop or desk with nothing but your essentials in reach just in case they are needed--no distractions should be anywhere in sight. Also, have some snacks that help fuel and stimulate your brain as you continually process information; some of the most recommended are fruits, nuts, yogurt and dark chocolate.

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NOTES ARE STILL A SAVING GRACE

One cannot deny the convenience of having a book's worth of information all stored in a PDF file in your device, all ready to open and skip to the page of your choosing. At any point, you can continue where you last left off in reading. However, there may be times where the huge paragraphs and blocks of text might be a little taxing to the eyes, and a pain to read through repeatedly as you look for the focal points of the lesson. It's in this case where taking down footnotes is still the king of studying methods.

Since you'll be given much more freedom in this unique setting, you don't have to constrain yourself with simply jotting down important phrases and ideas in bullet point form. For the more artistically-inclined, a word map might be more effective, letting ideas branch out into sub-notes and addendums that can be furthered through research. Hard copy owners of the deliverables can also use a highlighter to single out the aforementioned summaries, making the succeeding reading sessions a little more tolerable than having to go through paragraphs again. Whatever the style may be, the important thing is the summarization of what you've learned into compact phrases encompassing the entire lesson.

MANAGE YOUR OWN SCHEDULE

On a regular school day, all of a student's plans would normally revolve around the school hours. It becomes especially harder for those who are balancing things like work schedule or family obligations. However, with the pandemic forcing physical classes to be cancelled until it is safe for people to come out again, academic institutions understand some adjustment is needed.

The upcoming school year will feature universities

across the country introducing their take on blended learning styles for enrolling students. In the case of FEU Tech, the MILES program aims to help students keep up with prerequisite topics before moving onto succeeding lessons. As this will become a student-centric style of learning, the Institute will be providing two styles of education that should fit any circumstance the student might be in:

1. The Fully Online mode where discussions to consultation can be done online, giving you the most flexibility in schedule as long as you have internet access;
2. The Blended Online mode where internet access is more of a supplement that is mixed with individualized learning through Digital Learning Packets that will contain everything you need for the semester;

The choice of education mode rests solely on the student's decision at the start of the semester, letting the students tackle their courses however they see fit. Now more than ever, studying has become flexible to a student's learning style and circumstances. While this gives more responsibility to the students, parents need not fear as teachers will remain the guiding light that is just a click away.

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FEU ALABANG: "STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE MULTIMEDIA ARTS"



A Bachelor in Multimedia Arts, with a specialization in Animation and Digital Film. A Bachelor of Arts in Information Technology with the chance to specialize in Digital Arts.

With these courses being offered in the FEU Alabang campus, demonstrates how much they value the arts.

Yet another thing worth noting is the school's official Facebook page. It showcases works from students in photography, video/film, visual arts and shares material from the performing arts groups Tamaraw Media Operations Group (also known as TMOG, operating at the high school level) and Feuture Arts (college level). These online platforms serve as a way for the world to see the artistic brilliance of the "Tamaraws of the South".

Specifically, TMOG focuses on multimedia arts while providing an outlet for artistic expression for students from any course. This stands in stark contrast to other campuses, for example, where these platforms may be active but only geared towards students from explicitly designated arts courses. Here, any student can be recognized for their creative streak.

Feuture Arts also offers a multitude of artwork to feast your eyes upon, with no limits on the kind of artwork that gets featured on their own Facebook page each day. Ranging from richly detailed 3D renders of gothic Disney princesses to classic portrayals of still life, the page is truly a pleasure to even simply browse through.

Far from being just a pretty display of art however, all of these platforms are evidence of just how close the arts are to the heart of FEU Alabang and how students on the campus are being groomed to shape the art world in the future. Though they are just students today, the creators of these works of art are sure to be some of the most notable artists of tomorrow.

Even FEU Tech students have their own initiatives in innovation in the recent weeks. Official FEU Tech student media organization "The Innovator" has started its own #PhotoChallenge, wherein students are encouraged to harness their photography skills and capture imaginative photos according to a set theme. The Association of Civil Engineering Students, or ACES, has even hosted an online bridge building competition held over Zoom.

From the board of directors to the student body, innovation is truly a closely held principle everywhere at FEU Tech. It's more than just lip service- -it's the spirit of the campus.