International Journal of Arts & Education Research

E-LEARNING IN TEACHER EDUCATION- A FUTURE PERSPECTIVE

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INTRODUCTION

Computers with their unimaginable working and functioning capacity coupled with a tremendous progress in the field of electronics and communication technology have yielded so much power, abilities and capacities to us human beings that we can boast to do anything and everything imaginable or unimaginable on this earth.

E-learning (also called electronic learning) is any type of learning that takes place through or with a computer. E-learning is primarily facilitated through the Internet but can also be accomplished with CD-ROMs and DVDs, streaming audio or video and other media. The purpose of e-learning is to allow people to learn for personal accomplishment or to earn a professional degree, without physically attending a traditional university or academic setting. E-learning can be applied for all levels of schooling from grade school to graduate degrees, and is versatile enough to accommodate all learning styles.

DEFINITION OF E-LEARNING

The delivery of a **learning**, training or **education** program by **electronic means**. **E-learning** involves the use of a computer or **electronic** device(mobile phone) in some way to provide training, **educational** or **learning** material.

E-learning can be defined as learning carried out, supported and facilitated by the advanced multi-media facilities as well as internet and web technology delivered to the end users via computers, laptops and mobile ICT appliances.

E-learning is a learning environment which uses information and communication technologies (ICT's) as a platform for teaching and learning activities. It has been defined as pedagogy empowered by technology though **digital technology** is more accurate. Note that, due to the difference in terms of institutional goals, higher education and the industry have very different ideas about what E-learning is and how E-learning should be used.

E-learning has its root in distance learning and is part of the revolution brought by the new media: the Web. Educators and trainers soon found the potentials to advance learning at the advent of the new Web technologies. The advocates of E-learning voice for the breakdown of barriers to learning (especially for adult learners in higher education) such as the limitations in time and distance. Research on media comparison '**proves**' that there is no difference in the learning outcome of E-learning from traditional face-to-face instruction. Over time, more and more instructors and institutions are incorporating E-learning components in the practice of instruction in higher education as a way of facilitating learning.

IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERN LEARNERS

Every modern learner is unique. Each may come from a different cultural and educational background, but there are also common characteristics that they tend to share. Knowing these characteristics can give E-learning professionals the opportunity to turn E-learning courses into customized E-learning experiences. In

this article, I'll present seven important characteristics of modern learners E-learning professionals should have in mind when designing E-learning courses for that particular audience.

1. Easily distracted

Modern learners have a lot on their proverbial plates. They are thinking about any number of things at one given time, making it easy to get distracted when they are trying to complete an online course. As E-learning professionals, this can present quite a challenge. However, we can get over this trait hurdle by creating E-learning courses that engage right from the start and hold it all throughout. Ask compelling questions that make them reflect upon the topic. Tell an emotional story that pulls at their heart strings or gets them fascinated about the subject matter. Integrate image and videos that evoke specific feelings, as well as characters with whom they can relate.

2. Social learners-

Without a doubt, modern learners are more social than any previous generation. They spend a good portion of their day on social media networks, catching up with friends and reaching out to business contacts. In fact, in many respects, social networking has taken the place of face-to-face communication. Modern learners are more likely to post on a Face book page or respond to a tweet than make a call. This means that eLearning experiences must be collaborative and social. To cater to your modern learning audience, you have to include online group projects and social learning online experiences via project management platforms and social media sites to adapt to the way students will learn.

3. Crave constant knowledge-

This generation of learners demands information anytime and anywhere. If they want to learn more about a topic, they simply hop on their mobile or tablets and find out everything they need to know to satisfy their curiosity. While previous generations had to venture to the nearest library to expand their knowledge, now knowledge is always at the modern learner's fingertips. In terms of E-learning, we can quench this constant craving for knowledge by giving them supplemental eLearning resources that they can explore on their own. We can provide them with tutorials, walkthroughs that help them in their **moment of need**.

4. Always on-the-go-

Your eLearning course must be mobile-friendly. Your learners aren't going to have the time to sit at home on their PCs and complete online modules on a regular basis, which means that you have to give them learning wherever they are. You can achieve this by choosing a Learning Management System that features a responsive design and automatically detects the learner's device and offers the optimal display. However, you must also ensure that you don't overload your learners by presenting too much information at once. Make it easily digestible by offering short bursts of information on a regular basis, such as five minute modules that each covers a specific sub-topic.

5. Independent-

Though they thrive in social learning environments, modern learners are also fiercely independent. They are not afraid to set out on their own to find the knowledge they need to achieve their goals, even if that means devoting all of their free time to the endeavor. If they are not finding the information they are looking for in their online course, then they will simply look elsewhere. They also search for learning experiences that give them control over the process, such as being able to choose when they complete the online modules and the nature of the E-learning activity. For example, some may gravitate toward based online courses while others may prefer interactive scenarios. As a result, E-learning pros must design E-learning courses that are customized for each learner by doing thorough audience research and providing many different types of eLearning activities.

6. Impatient-

The simple truth is that we live in a busy world where nobody really has the time or patience to sit through a lengthy E-learning course. However, modern learners are particularly impatient. They are so used to getting

information at a moment's notice that you have to grab their attention and manage time effectively, or you run the risk of disengaging them. They know that there is an abundance of information just waiting for them on the internet, so they won't waste their time with an online course that doesn't cater to their needs.

7. Overworked-

One of the most prevalent traits of modern learners is that they are overworked and overwhelmed. Many carry out a wide variety of job responsibilities, making it difficult to balance their home life with their careers. This means that they don't have a great deal of energy or effort to devote to E-learning. They are also overwhelmed by the abundance of information that is online today. Give them time to take it all in and look for signs that your learners are actually absorbing the key ideas and able to retain them for future use.

While some modern learners may possess atypical characteristics, many will share these core traits. However, it's always wise to carry out a detailed learner analysis before designing the eLearning course, just to ensure that the needs of every individual are being considered.

NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF E-LEARNING

The conclusions can be drawn about the nature, meaning, characteristics and functioning of the term E-learning as it exists now a day's among us.

1. E-learning or electronic learning is a generic term used to refer to computer enhanced learning.
2. The use of the term E-learning should be strictly limited to **'on line learning'** carried out through internet or web-enabled technology of the computer science.
3. The term E-learning conveys broader meaning than the term computer based learning or computer aided instruction
4. It is also broader in its meaning than conveyed through the simple terms like **'on line learning'** or **'on line education'** (that may call for the absolute web-based learning without any follow up, communication and interaction between the teacher and students).
5. It should not be taken as synonymous to audio-visual learning, multi-media learning, distance education or distance learning. It is true that the audio-visual and multi-media technology and distance education programs rest heavily now days on the use of internet and web services provided through the computers, yet these are not identical but complementary.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OFE-LEARNING

All of us have access to the internet and we use it for many different things like researching for some information for school and college projects, downloading music, pictures, wallpapers, and screen-savers, to get updates on the latest happenings all over the world, emails, instant messaging, chats, and many other things. But do you know there is one more advantage of the internet, and that is learning? Yes! You can educate yourself in the comfort of your own home and get a degree through the internet now. With the latest technology, even the impossible seems possible now.

WEB-BASED LEARNING AT A GLANCE

Web-based learning is commonly referred to as E-learning or online learning. It essentially includes learning online through the courses that are offered on the net. Emails, live lectures, and video-conferencing are all possible through the net. This enables all the participants to give their views on a particular topic and then discuss them further. They also offer static pages like course materials that are printed for the benefit of all the participants. One of the main advantages of accessing pages on the web is that most of the web pages have hyperlinks that will lead you to another page and thus opens up a vast amount of information on the net.

You don't have the time to actually go to a University and attend classes. Earlier it would have been a major problem, as you wouldn't know how to manage that, but not anymore. With the several courses available online, you can actually sit at home and learn. No more of waking up early and attending classes or that

irritating class mate. Now take whichever course at peace and at your convenience. A web-based course would typically include course information, timetable, notice board, curriculum map, teaching materials like articles, slides, and handouts, communication through discussion boards and email, summative and formative assessments, student management tools like statistics, records, and student tracking, and also links to external and internal websites that are very useful. But besides the benefits, are there any limitations of this practice? Let us have a look at the advantages and disadvantages of E-learning.

ADVANTAGES OF E-LEARNING
1. You are able to link the various resources in several varying formats.
2. It is a very efficient way of delivering courses online.
3. Due to its convenience and flexibility, the resources are available from anywhere and at any time.
4. Everyone, who are part time students or are working full time, can take advantage of web-based learning.
5. Web-based learning promotes active and independent learning.
6. As you have access to the net 24x7, you can train yourself anytime and from anywhere also.
7. It is a very convenient and flexible option; above all, you don't have to depend on anyone for anything.
8. Not only can you train yourself on a day to day basis, but also on weekends or whenever you have the free time to. There is no hard and fast rule.
9. Through discussion boards and chats, you are able to interact with everyone online and also clear your doubts if any.
10. The video instructions that are provided for audio and video learning can be rewound and seen and heard again and again if you do not happen to understand the topic first time around.

DISADVANTAGES OF E-LEARNING
Well, there are not many disadvantages of E-learning, the main one being that you get knowledge only on a theoretical basis and when it comes to putting to use whatever you have learnt, it may be a little different. The face-to-face learning experience is missing, which may matter to some of you.
1. Most of the online assessments are limited to questions that are only objective in nature.
2. There is also the problem of the extent of security of online learning programs.
3. The authenticity of a particular student's work is also a problem as online just about anyone can do a project rather than the actual student itself.
4. The assessments that are computer marked generally have a tendency of being only knowledge-based and not necessarily practicality-based.

IMPEDIMENTS IN ONLINE LEARNING
1. **Lack of devices**-
   UNESCO found in its survey that students-to-computer ration is no adequate to suffice the requirements of on-line learning. International agencies and Universities have started using text messaging and on-line services in teacher's training programme.

2. **Lack of training**-
   E-learning requires a sufficient level of knowledge and skills for the use of multimedia, internet and web technology on the part of its users. Lack of knowledge and skills on this account may prove futile in taking advantages from the valuable services of E-learning.

3. **Ease of access to resources**-
   The use of E-learning as a technique and tool on the part of the students require that they must have a proper, easy and timely access to the needed resources, tools and equipment's those facilitate, internet and web services quite affordable to them in terms of the cost involved.

4. **Acceptability to using E-learning**-

Teacher Education Institutions are not willing and equipped for making use of E-learning in the proper interest of the teachers and students. In such a situation how can we expect from the students and teachers of our schools to reap the desired benefits from E-learning.

5. Lack of equipment's in pre-service or in-service training-
There is no provision of equipping the teachers in their pre-service or in-service programme for getting acquainted with the knowledge and skill required on their part of use of E-learning at their work place. So, the teachers neither have any inclination towards E-learning nor have any competence for its organization in institutions.

6. Isolation of users of E-learning-
The feeling of isolation experienced by the users of E-learning is one of the major drawbacks quite visible in any system of distance learning including E-learning. The lack of opportunities for co-curricular, social and other activities may prove effect less to the students of E-learning in their proper physical, social and emotional development.

7. A negative attitude by users-
The attitude of the students, teachers, parents, educational authorities and society is usually found quite negative towards the process and products of   E-learning due to disfiguring of cost effectiveness.

HOW TO PROMOTE AND ARRANGE FOR E-LEARNING
1. A positive attitude
2. Facilities for teachers and training students
3. Proper orientation of the teachers
4. Better provisions for internet facilities
5. Adequate technical support

CONCLUSION
E-learning is a wide set of applications and processes that include web based, computer based learning and digital collaboration by the use of internet/intranet or extranet. Today we are entering the globalized era where training teachers is not only for a nation but caters to a worldwide arena of education. Teacher education programme needs to be diversified in the sense of training teachers for technology fused classes and for students with special needs. E-learning makes learning interesting, interactive and fun. It has the right blend of content and cutting-edge technologies that offer the best benefits.

E-learning has become a strategy for imparting knowledge and skills in an organization. Its effectiveness and potential to deliver results to organize depends largely on how it is designed, delivered and evaluated. The chief reasons of E-learning includes introductory and orientation training, certificate training, to deliver academic course and to provide remedial and shorter training time. Disadvantages include learner motivation, technological limitations and lower level of interactivity. Written words and face-to-face types of training still works. World Wide Web has brought an entirely new learning format including a blend of textual, visual and kinesthetic. Although E-learning is not the panacea for all learning and training needs but this integrated and blended learning is emerging as an effective tool to meet all types of training and learning objectives of organizations for various purposes in all domains of educational institutions.

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