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Strategies for enhancing the competitiveness of higher education through E-learning

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Abstract
This paper argues that the growth of the Internet is important for teaching and learning in that it facilitates education in ways that were previously challenging. It recognizes the growth of social media as an emerging Internet technology that can add value and benefit existing methods of online or distance education if they are systematically and homogeneously applied. It explores the adult learning context, examines the characteristics of adult learning, describes social media and its affordances, aligns adult learning characteristics to social media.

Keywords: e-learning, education

Introduction

E-learning is a medium, not a methodology. It is a modern learning feature in the information society. It is the delivery of individualized, comprehensive, dynamic learning content in real time, aiding the development of communities of knowledge, linking learners, and practitioners with experts. The notion of e-learning is generally interpreted as the process of learning with the help of software that is installed locally on the learner's computer. Structurally perceived, it is defined as technology based learning in which learning materials are delivered electronically to remote learners via a computer network, particularly the Internet. Whether user access is achieved through a browser (internet or intranet) or other media such as CD-ROM, the idea is to enhance flexibility and availability by taking advantage of the World Wide Web continuous expansion.

E-learning or online learning stands for all forms of internet enabled and /or computer supported learning. It refers to the use of computer and computer network technologies to create, deliver, manage and support learning, usually independent of specific locations or times. The main key dimensions of e-learning include:

a. Connectivity: Access to information is available on a global scale.
b. Flexibility: Learning can take place any time, any place.
c. Interactivity: Assessment of learning can be immediate and autonomous.
d. Collaboration: Use of discussion tools can support collaborative beyond the classroom.
e. Extended: e-content can reinforce and extend classroom based learning.

There were differences in using e-Learning depending on the types, sizes, and locations of the universities. The national and public universities received more support for development and management through the provision of supportive policies compared to private universities or national universities of education. There is also some difference found in terms of support for curriculum development and the provision of specialized organizations for e-Learning internal to universities. Such differences indicate that in order to establish effective policies, there needs to be differential support based on the types, sizes, and locations of the universities. At a government level, policies should be implemented that aim to provide better conditions for using e-Learning and adequate funding needed to establish organizations which are specifically and exclusively in charge of e-Learning.

Review of Literature

Adrian Kirkwood, (2014) reported; The term Technology-enhanced learning (TEL) is used to describe the application of information and communication technologies to teaching and learning. Explicit statements about what the term is understood to mean are rare and it is not evident that a shared understanding has been developed in higher education of what constitutes an enhancement of the student learning experience. This article presents a critical review and assessment of how TEL is interpreted in recent literature. It examines the purpose of technology interventions, the approaches adopted to demonstrate the role of technology in enhancing the learning experience, differing ways in which enhancement is conceived and the use of various forms evidence to substantiate claims about TEL. Thematic analysis enabled categories to be developed and relationships explored between the aims of TEL interventions, the evidence presented, and the ways in which enhancement is conceived.

Yasmin Ansari *et al.*, (2012) The emerging trends of hybrid e-learning and web 2.0 technologies are a byproduct of the unprecedented advancements of information technology. Understanding and experimenting on how technology fits into

the complex realities of classrooms has resulted in significant shifts in learning trends towards a more web based environment as opposed to the previous general teacher-student environment. The education sector in Saudi Arabia has seen massive progress in the past decades with specific efforts put into educating the female population to empower women. Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University (PMU), a newly established not-for-profit university licensed by the Ministry of Higher Education, having a campus specifically dedicated to female students has been chosen for case study. This research is an attempt to understand the benefits and challenges of implementing hybrid e-learning and web 2.0 application based environment to educate female students. Results of the investigation prove that introducing such learning environments can have significant impacts on improvement of students' evaluation process, research capabilities, and communication skills. Finally, we show how this technology can also yield similar successful results in other countries and other institutes.

Helen Beetham, (2005) [2] e-Learning research is an expanding and diversifying field of study. Specialist research units and departments proliferate. Postgraduate courses recruit well in the UK and overseas, with an increasing focus on critical and research-based aspects of the field, as well as the more obvious professional development requirements. Following this year's launch of a National e-Learning Research Centre, it is timely to debate what the field of study should be prioritising for the future. This discussion piece suggests that the focus should fall on questions that are both clear and tractable for researchers, and likely to have a real impact on learners and practitioners. Suggested questions are based on early findings from a series of JISC-funded projects on e-learning and pedagogy.

Development of knowledge sharing systems and collaborative contents

E-learning raises the level of education, literacy and economic development in countries where technical education is expensive, opportunities are limited and economic disparities exist. While Einstein's words may have been intended in good humor, they aptly reflect the fact that effective education is constant and always evolving. In fact, the face of education has experienced a sea change over the decades. Once characterized by the traditional classroom model, education has metamorphosed into learning that is instant, online, self-driven and on the go. The journey of education in India, too, has been dotted with innumerable milestones-the most recent among these is e-learning. The reform push the government is a strong supporter of e-learning and the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (Deit Y) has been actively developing tools and technologies to promote it. Deit Y has supported e-learning-focused R&D projects at various academic educational institutes. These include content development, R&D/technology initiatives, HRD projects and faculty training initiatives to improve literacy through distance education. With the number of internet users in India expected to reach 250 million, rivaling the US and second only to China, India's potential as a huge market for e-learning is enormous. A large number of new users are accessing the internet for the first time from their smart phones, which is an ideal, personalized and commerce-enabled platform for e-learning adoption. Although the foundation of education is still reading, writing and arithmetic, today's students need broader education. So, what can e-learning deliver?

Live instruction: Certain curricula may require specialized instructors. By using live broadcasts, these instructors can remain in one location and provide instruction to many students in other locations. This type of specialization increases as students move into higher levels of education, for example towards advanced degrees in medicine. Video content delivery: Pre-recorded content such as lectures, documentaries and other video content may be delivered in a store and forward model so that the material can be viewed when needed. Student-to-student interactions (video-conferencing): Students may learn just as much from each other as they do from teachers. So communications technology can be used to connect students.

Remote test administration: In some countries, standardized tests are used to evaluate students on a level-playing field. These tests must be delivered securely and on-time to meet testing schedules. In Indonesia, this is a daunting task simply because of geography and population size. Digital delivery could be the solution. Up-to-date materials: Basics seldom change. However, virtually all textbooks must be updated. Textbooks are expensive to purchase, maintain and deliver. Digital delivery solves this issue when coupled with e-readers. Self-learning: Computer-based training or self-paced learning is common in higher education and trade-oriented learning. Kiosks to support this may be located close to under-served areas where populations already work.

Conclusion

Learner support tends to be more readily available at large universities than mid-/small-sized universities who tend not to provide more robust, interactive forms of learner support. And even though learner support is implemented on a university level, support at the policy level remains vitally necessary. Such support could include the offering of mutual degrees, or the creation of a 'credit banking' system that enable students to transfer any credits earned between universities. In this manner, learners can freely take e-Learning classes and acquire credits, which they can apply towards a degree or diploma. To rationalize information, the Korean Government should also develop a national e-Learning portal, which provides tutorial services between universities, and provide a centralized place to assist learners when they encounter difficulties taking e-Learning courses or classes.

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