

TOWARDS E-LEARNING: IDENTIFYING AND OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS

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ABSTRACT

Technology is playing a crucial role in the educational world today. In this context e-learning plays a crucial role. It has linked the educational and the technological world. However, the development and adoption of e-learning is being hampered because of different factors. E-learning is being compelled to tussle against a well established barometer of teaching learning mechanism that is complicating the situation. To overcome these barriers, feasible practical attempts should be made. Endeavours are going on to surmount the predicaments, ranging from altering the psychological prejudices to solve problems pertaining to infrastructural and human resources in the e-learning arena.

Keywords: E-learning, Education, Technology, Barriers

INTRODUCTION

Revolution has come in the world of technology. It is wise to apply technology in the field of education, so that optimum benefit can be achieved. In this context e-learning is an important factor. E-learning has become an essential part of the instructional process, instructional materials and in every aspect of education system. It has opened several new dimensions in the world of education. But the advancement of the e-learning in the present education system is at less satisfactory level. Progress is going on. Still substantial development is being hampered by different resisting factors. Through this paper the author is trying to critically engage with the concepts of e-learning, challenges in implementing e-learning and also the possible remedies to overcome these challenges.

CONCEPT

E-learning is learning using electronic resources or technologies. It is something different from traditional classroom. . It has opened several new dimensions in the world of education.

E-learning can be defined as an innovative technique or a form of information and communication technology used in providing learning experiences to the students on-line through the use of Internet services and Web technology of the computers on the same lines as witnessed by us in the form of e-mail, e-banking, e-booking and e-commerce in our day-to-day life (Mangal & Mangal, 2016).

E-learning is a wider concept than ideas like on-line learning, computer-based learning and computer aided instruction .On the other hand, audio-visual learning, multimedia learning, distance learning etc. are often erroneously taken to be same as e-learning whereas they are only complementary to the concept of learning.

A well assisted e-room in an educational institution may be considered as ammunitions to compete with the requirements of variation out there in the modern day learning mechanism. Alacrity and heterogeneity are the trademarks of e-learning. It is an operation performed by e-devices. Here programmes are installed in such a way that the modern technological and educational implications are at its best. A student can log in from any part of world to interact and to access his/her class materials.

BARRIERS

The advancement of the e-learning in the present education system is at less satisfactory level. Betterment of the situation is being hampered by different resisting factors.

1. Negative attitude

Some people show negative attitude towards e-learning. They consider it as an inferior mode of learning as it is devoid of traditional face to face interaction-this type of mental set up is creating obstacles towards appreciation of it.

2. Insufficient knowledge and skill

The teachers, students and supporting staff suffer from lack of knowledge and skill required to operate the advanced technological tools. As a result, the multimedia appliances remain unutilized in many institutions.

3. Prejudiced mental make up

Sometimes people suffer from inferiority complex that they are not suitable for using the web-technology and multimedia facilities. Huge knowledge is required for using these types of equipments. These wrong concepts act as a demotivating agent.

4. Language problem

Computer, laptop, internet, and web-technology –all these have English as their functional and operating language. These appear as a problem for the new learners who are habituated only with their respective mother tongue.

5. Neglected in teacher education programme

In teacher education programmes, the scope of practicing and using e-learning is very narrow in the present scenario. The trainee teacher cannot make themselves familiar with it.

6. Happiness in installation, not in use

Sometimes institutions restrict their happiness only in the installation of the technological apparatus, not in their uses. Despite having all the facilities, the institution does not use the technology. This is very unfortunate scenario.

7. Lack of awareness

There are many people, who do not know about the facilities, opportunities. They are also unaware of the possibilities and potentials associated with e-learning. As a consequence, they do not find any interest towards e-learning.

8. Lack of infrastructure

Often the schools are suffering from the lack of infrastructures, resources like computers, laptops, multimedia facilities, internet and web services. These are very effective in creating a favourable situation for e-learning

9. Competitor of traditional education system

Some people take e-learning as competitor of traditional education system. This kind of misconceptions still exists in our society. But the actual fact is opposite. There is no conflict between traditional education system and e-learning. Rather e-learning can act as complementary system of traditional teaching learning process.

10. Rapidly changing technology

The technological world is changing rapidly day by day. New things are replacing the old ones. It creates psychological fear in the new learner in their habituation process with the technology. To remain updated always about these changes is very difficult.

11. Lack of support service

In today's situation the practical scope for providing support to the e-learner is very narrow.

12. Lack of adaptability and assimilation

People are habituated with brain –eye coordination with text book. So they have the vague belief that e-learning does not have the capability to meet the need of strong basic building of a student.

13. The difference between acquisition and implementation

Recently, RMSA has taken the initiative to make familiarity of the teachers with the e-learning and ICT through the five days orientation programme . The teachers are participating on that programme .But the cultural differences in the school scenario are so different that they are not able to make it up to the mark.

14. Dependability

Sometimes success of e-learning depends on the cultural background, caste, religion, financial condition and on the social condition of a student. So the negativity of these factors makes the e-learning infertile as a tool.

15. Limitation of attachment with the e-learning devices

A student can utilize his books apart from his classroom and institutional arena (at home). But most of the guardians are unable to afford the costly e-learning devices for their children to use at home. So the period of attachment with the e-learning device for a student is limited.

16. Establishment of validity and reliability in place of creativity

Often people, even the teachers have the notion that e-learning is a destroyer of creativity from the concerning students and the teachers .It only depends on validity and reliability. Individual implications are being neglected.

17. Subject to co-curricular activity

Most of the educational institutions consider e-learning as a subject of co-curricular activities. So, in class routine very little is left for e-learning and its re-inforcement.

18. Curriculum and education policy

Often the ongoing curriculum is set in such a way that rather the textbook should have been given the priority at the classroom teaching as the assessment would be done to evaluate the bookish knowledge based on the syllabus. So, in order to complete the syllabus in time, the efficient teachers are also unable to give emphasis on e-learning.

19. Restricted needs

Some educational institutions situated in rural areas, are unwilling to give emphasis on e-learning due to their restricted range of necessities.

20. Availability of options

So far as the e-learning will remain optional, the negligence would prevail. The need of switching it on should be given upper hand.

THE POSSIBLE WAYS OUT

To overcome these barriers is always a difficult task for an educator. The following possible remedies can be effective to address all of these hurdles.

1. Positive attitude towards e-learning should be cultivated.
2. Importance should be given on e-learning in teacher training curriculum.
3. Awareness should be propagated about the possibilities and facilities related to e-learning.

4. There should be provision of different facilities like – email, chat, audio-video conferencing, and forum. These facilities can act as a support system by creating the scope of communication and interaction among the students and the teachers.
5. Government should take initiative through the curriculum to make e-learning mandatory.
6. Co-curricular activities like quiz, seminar presentation, debate etc. should be programmed through computer.
7. Some parts of the evaluation process should be on the mode of computer programming .And without it, e-learning may not be effective.
8. Government should take initiative to avail the e-learning devices to the poor and middle class students by reducing its price and by decreasing the tax of the items.
9. Enough grants should be given to the institution so that they may afford enough e-learning devices according to their student strength.
10. The classrooms need to be updated to use the e-learning devices by replacing or modifying its older equipments.

CONCLUSION

E-learning is the demand of time. Standing on the 21st century, we cannot ignore it. It has still been deemed as a novel approach in teaching learning process. By keeping in mind its popularity, effectiveness, positive impact, attempts should be taken to eradicate the obstacles associated with the e-learning. So it has to ravine through the experimental stage to the stage of professional endowment that in terms of continuances, would infer as a well accepted norms of learning which will be capable of accomplishing the momentum of the prevailing century. Lots of problems are there. The problems are substantially centered round on the acceptability, the infrastructure and on the utility. But still the progress is going on. These are the relative hindrances that, it can be hoped, would diminish with time.

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