E-LEARNING: BOON FOR OPEN LEARNERS

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Abstract

E-learning refers to the acquisition of knowledge and skills with the use of electronic means for the training, teaching and educating a mass. E-learning is the unifying term to describe the field of online learning, web based learning and technology delivered instructions. E-learning does not require physical classroom attendance. This paper describes E-learning concept its scope, need, use, importance and factors influencing E-learning. It also attempts to describe the advantages and disadvantages of E-learning.

Keywords: E-Learning, Open Learners, online Learning, E-learning tools.

Introduction

The word "E-Learning "was formulated in the late 1990s to elucidate the use of technology to deliver learning and training programs. E-Learning concerns to acquisition of knowledge and skills with the use of electronic means for the training, teaching and educating a mass. E-Learning is the web to describe the field of online learning, web based learning and technology delivered instructions. There is no need of physical classroom requirements for e-learning. Through the Internet, the learning experience is delivered to the user personally and effectively. Today, the conventional 'lecture classes' are being replaced by 'laboratories' where in the learning process is not just limited to 'hearing', but also subject to 'visualizing' and experiencing'. The do it yourself' concept has gained importance in the e-learning process. Improvements in Internet and multimedia technologies are the basic empowered of E-Learning, with content, technologies and services being identified as the three key sectors of the E-Learning industry. Online education is briskly increasing because it integrates tools like video conferencing, audio streaming and chatting is gaining opinion among the student community for its flexible structure which allows them to access lessons and take tests from anywhere in the world.

E-Learning can accommodate independent, facilitated or collaborative approaches to learning. Independent learning is a learning that is self-directed. The learning is defined, organized and completed by the individual learner. Experts may act as facilitators or guides however the learner is encouraged to plot their own path.

Facilitated learning is designed to be completed through interaction with instruction or coaches. Collaborative learning is an educational approach to searching and learning that involves groups of students working together to solve a problem. E-learning finds its applications in virtual surgeries carried out for medical students using computer graphics and virtual reality technology, through multimedia applications. The E-Learning process is found to be very effective to stimulate the minds of kids with wide imagination and they are found to memorize the events also well.

Scope of E-Learning

This new mode of learning promises to transform the experience of the class room in a number of fundamental ways by augmenting traditional textbook materials with online resources. Lectures through the use of rich multimedia and interactive content and by extending student discussion beyond the walls of the class through a wide range of new communication platforms supporting inter class room collaboration. E-Learning offers us benefits like less expensive, more convenient, effective, efficient and richer ways of becoming educated, and of coming into contact with more diverse groups of fellow learners than ever before.

Need of E-Learning

The need of E-Learning is to allow people to learn personal accomplishment or to earn a professional degree, without physically attending a traditional university or academic setting. Course work and materials are gained electronically through e-mail, websites, online forms and CDs or DVD-ROMs. Ease of location is also beneficial t students who are home-schooled, as they can gain social interaction through online communications as well as educational material

Importance of E-Learning

- Enables students to become learners/thinkers.
- Teaches digital literacy
- Allows a mobile learning environment, anywhere, anytime, anyhow!
- Developing the quality of learning.
- Improving access to education and training.
- Declines the cost of education.
- Improving the cost effectiveness of education.

Use of E-Learning

E-Learning is the use of technology to enable people to learn anytime and anywhere. E-Learning can include training, the delivery of just-in-time information and guidance from experts. E-Learning includes numerous types of media that deliver text, audio, images, video, and includes technology applications and processes such as audio or video tape, satellite TV, CD-ROM, Mobile Learning and computer-based learning, as well as local intranet/extranet and web-based learning. The learning materials can be re-used, shared by allowing providers to deliver learning experiences in a uniformity high stand.

E-Learning Tools

▪ **Virtual Learning Environment (VLE):** It is a term that contains the online learning services. This is also called learning platform. This platform organizes and provides access to online learning services for students, teachers and administrators. All forms of digital media can be delivered using its various tools. There is a wide range of VLEs on the market.

▪ **Face -to- Face Teaching:** A method of importing teaching and learning that is normally used to differentiate the classroom teaching environments and online.

▪ **E-learning 2.0:** It concerns to new ways of thinking about E-learning. It is influenced by the development of Web 2.0. It significance on use of social learning, and tools such as blogs, wikis, podcasts, and virtual world such as second life.

▪ **Mobile Learning:** Utilization of mobile devices along with mobile phones to facilitate teaching and learning.

▪ **Wikis**: It is a piece of software where individuals under the control of an editorial board, can upload contents or modify existing contents. Wikis is a useful source for getting information and extensive links to information.

Categories of E-Learning

- Informal learning
- Blended learning
- Networked learning
- Work based learning

Factors Influencing E-Learning

Some factors are essential for the successful implementation of the E-learning

Interpretation: The performance of training needs, enumeration of learning objectives selecting and understanding the audience on the methods of learning.

Design: Creation of own be spoke application by selecting content, media, type of interactivity available to learners and user interface.

Growth: Putting the design into action which involves production of audio/video programming of software, authoring of materials and testing.

Administration: Promoting the programmed collecting management information and appointing skilled mentors.

Evaluation: Scrutinizing the execution of the program against its objectives in terms of take-up productiveness and return on investment.

Advantages of E-Learning

➢ Online learning can be updated.

➢ Online learning is more affordable than traditional learning.

➢ No limitations for educational materials.

- No need to tense about attendance.

- Online courses can be accessed 24x7.

- The learners can practically take the courses at a convenient time.

- It can be quick and consistent.

- It is easy to send, and no threat of stealing.

- E-Learning benefits to learn multiple at a time.

Disadvantages of E-Learning

- Lack of awareness of E-Learning in rural areas.

- Lack of face to face communication is missing in the type learning and teaching.

- Lack of infrastructure facilities like Internet.

- Competition between colleagues can be very stimulating and students will only benefit from traditional learning.

- Time taken to learn how to use the e-resources.

- Requirement of e-tutoring skills.

E-Learning in Indian Scenario

When we talk about Indian scenario, it is still doubtful to make E-Learning a useful media in our education program. The approach to its use network using computers. But again many educational institutes are still without computer facilities or computer networking. Hence, the benefits of 'E-Learning' in India remain largely inaccessible for large number of students. Instant message systems often have friend or buddy lists that watch to see when one of the people on your list comes online so that you know the instant when you can start messaging them. It has been noticed that there is a 25 percent to 50 percent higher retention of knowledge due to E-Learning.

Future of E-Learning

The world is shrinking rapidly. Education today is certainly a diamond in the rough and E-Learning could the polish that cleans up sub-par teaching, provides equality across socioeconomic groups, and makes learning a whole lot more exciting. There are a large number of companies which need a workforce that is educated and understands the need of technology. The Indian government has also taken significant steps towards the dissemination of information through a number if E-learning projects, not only for rural students but for the community at large.

Conclusion

E-learning ensures more courseware at significantly less costs. E-learning in India has to improve its quality and service. The quality of the E-learning experience follows from the quality of the course modules and of the interactions among students and instructors that make up online courses. E-learning is emerging as the future trend of learning in India would be dominant in the times ahead. E–learning has created new dimensions in education, both within and beyond the curriculum and is still looking at further opportunities of becoming more useful through emerging technologies. The habit of improving skills for the best use of E-learning sources to

update professional knowledge is advisable for ensuring better and new services to the users. E-learning can be used as a powerful supplement as conventional teaching methods.

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