

E-LEARNING: STRATEGIES AND SOCIAL BENEFITS

BY

EZEANYEJI PETER C.**pc.ezeanyeji@coou.edu.ng****Department of Computer Science, coou, uli****NDIGWE CHINWE****franchy_dex@yahoo.com****Department of Computer Science, coou, uli****ANTHONY NWAFOR****Anthonynewafor981@gmail.com****Department of Computer Science, coou, uli****ABSTRACT**

E-learning is an emerging concepts of modern information and communication technology(ICT) that are introduced and implemented at Institutional and government levels for promotion of effective and efficient communication and transformation of information electronically. It is increasingly becoming hard to maintain the standards of education due to limitations of infrastructure, finance, and other resources, including skilled manpower. Learning empowered through information technology, to some extent ensures high quality learning by providing necessary techniques and information. It concentrates on utilizing knowledge of teachers in a way that academic courses can be delivered anywhere. This paper looks at e-learning strategies and social benefits, reviews some contributions made by various scholars. The paper acknowledges that e-learning is learner controlled, not instructor controlled. Contents and information delivered is consistent to all users and hence no misinterpretations. It is clearly observed that e-learning systems and web-based learning emphasis on quality and effective presentation of information. Individuals can choose contents and change according to one's strength or weakness. In e-learning, 'e' may denote evolution, effective and ease of learning in terms of person, time , money and location. E-learning is for knowledge management and facilitate knowledge gathering. E-learning enhances multinational and cross-country partnership. E-learning is digital age strategy of choice for providing information and promoting education. The rapid development of information and communication technology had shown significant effect on current teaching and learning methods. The methodology adopted in this issue is explanatory research method which helps to increase our understanding of fundamental principles.

Keywords: e-learning, strategies, social, and, benefits

1. INTRODUCTION:

Learning is commonly defined as a process that brings together cognitive, emotional, and environmental influences and experiences for acquiring, enhancing, or making changes in one's knowledge, skill, values, and world views. It is the process of gaining knowledge or skill by reading and studying from experience, from being taught, etc. Learning system refers to the method or way of impacting knowledge. According to Oluwaniyi, N.O. et al (2015), E-learning is a general term used to refer to a form of learning in which the instructor and student are separated by space or time where the gap between the two is bridged through the use of online technologies. An e-learning system is a powerful integrated system that supports a number of activities performed by teachers and students during the e-learning process.

It could also be referred to as learning and teaching online through network technologies, and is arguably one of the most powerful responses to the growing need for education. E-learning and web-based is just- in- time education integrated with high velocity value chains. 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.

2. RELATED WORKS

Technology-based-learning encompasses the use of the internet and other important technologies to produce materials for learning, teach learners, and also regulate courses in an organization (Fry, 2001). E-learning as a concept covers a range of applications, learning methods and processes (Rossi, 2009).

It is therefore difficult to find a commonly accepted definition for the term e-learning. In some definitions, e-learning encompasses more than just the offering of wholly on-line courses. For instance, Oblinger, and Hawkins (2005) noted that e-learning has transformed from a fully on-line course to using technology to deliver part or all of a course independent of permanent time and place. Abbad et al (2009), defined e-learning to mean any learning that is enabled electronically. They however, narrowed down this definition to mean learning that is empowered by the use of digital technologies. It is referred as any learning that is internet – enabled or web – based . E-learning, according to OECD (2005) is defined as the use of information and communication technologies in diverse processes of education to support and enhance learning in institutions of higher education, and includes the usage of information and communication technology as a complement to traditional classrooms, online learning or mixing the two .Twigg (2002) , in his view, described e-learning approach as centered on the learner as well as its design as involving a system that is iterative, repetitious, self-paced, and customized.

The main constructs that have made e-learning the most promising educational technology, according to Hammer and Champy (2001) and Liaw et al (2007) include service, cost, quality, and speed. It is apparent that e-learning can empower students at higher educational levels to acquire their education, while at the same time, pursuing their personal objectives as well as maintaining their own careers, with no need to attend or be subjected to rigid schedule (Borstorff and Lowe, 2007). Kartha (2006) in support of this thought reported

that the number of courses online has vividly increased as a result of the attained benefits for both learners and universities.

2.1 TYPES OF E-LEARNING:

Algahtani(2011) divided e-learning into two basic types, consisting of computer-based and the internet-based e-learning.

According to Algahtani (2011), the computer-based learning comprises the use of a full range of hardware and software generally that are available for the use of information and communication technology and also each component can be used in either of two ways: computer managed instruction and computer-assisted-learning. Computer-assisted-learning, to him, are used instead of the traditional methods by providing interactive software as a support tool within the class or as a tool for self-learning outside the class. In the computer-managed instruction, however, computers are employed for the purpose of storing and retrieving information to aid in the management of education.

The internet-based learning, according to Almosa (2001), is a further improvement of the computer-based learning, and it makes the content available on the internet, with the readiness of links to related knowledge sources. For example, e-mail services and references which could be used by learners at any time and place as well as the availability or absence of teachers or instructors.

Algahtani (2011) described completely online mode as “synchronous” or “asynchronous” by the application of optional timing of interaction. The synchronous timing comprises alternate online access between teachers or instructors and learners, and the asynchronous, to him allows all participants to post communications to any other participant over the internet (Algahtani, 2011; Almosa and Almubarak, 2005). The synchronous type allows learners to discuss with the instructors and also among themselves via the internet at the same time with the use of tools such as the video conference and chat rooms. This type, according to Almosa and Almubarak (2005) offers the advantage of instantaneous feedback. The asynchronous mode also allows learners to discuss with the instructors or teachers as well as among themselves over the internet at different times. It is therefore not interaction at the same moment but later, with the use of tools such as thread discussion and emails (Almosa and Almubarak, 2005; Algahtani, 2011), with an advantage that learners are able to learn at a time that suits them whilst a disadvantage is that the learners will not be able to receive instant feedback from instructors as well as their colleague learners (Almosa and Almubarak, 2005).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1: E-LEARNING STRATEGIES:

There are also different strategies and ways of employing the techniques in education. Multimedia and information techniques, as well as the use of internet as strategies and techniques of e-learning has made radical changes in the traditional process of teaching (Wang et al, 2007). Development in information technology, according to Yang and Arjomand (1999), has generated more choices for today’s education. Agendas of schools and

educational institutions have recognized e-learning as having the prospect to transform people, knowledge, skills and performance (Henry, 2001).

3.2: SOCIAL BENEFITS OF E-LEARNING:

The adoption of E-learning in education, especially for higher educational institutions has several benefits, and given its several advantages and benefits, e-learning is considered among the best methods of education. Several studies and authors have provided benefits and advantages derived from the adoption of e-learning technologies in schools. Some of the benefits that the adoption of e-learning in education, obtained from review of literature includes:

1. E-LEARNING FACILITATES ANYWHERE AND ANYTIME LEARNING:

It is flexible when issues of time and place are taken into consideration. Every student has the luxury of choosing the place and time that suits him/her. According to Smedley (2010), the adoption of e-learning provides the institutions as well as their students or learners the flexibility of time and place of delivery or receipt of information.

2. EASY AND FAST DISTRIBUTION OF LEARNING MATERIAL:

E-Learning enhances the efficacy of knowledge and qualifications via ease of access to a huge amount of information.

3. JUST-IN-TIME LEARNING:

Just-In-Time learning allows individuals to learn on an as-needed basis. Employees or students can access information closer to the time the knowledge is needed rather than obtaining information that may never be used or may be used in the long-term. The use of e-learning allows self-pacing. For instance, the asynchronous way permits each student to study at his/her own pace and speed whether slow or quick. It therefore increases satisfaction and decreases stress (Codone, 2001; Amer, 2007; Urdan and Weggen, 2000; Algahtani, 2011; Marc, 2002; Klein and Ware, 2003).

4. OVERCROWDING IN CLASSROOMS:

Learning no longer become effective when there is overcrowding in classrooms resulting in unnecessary noise and distraction, inconveniences, and lack of concentration. E-learning helps eliminate barriers that have the potential of hindering participation including the fear of talking to other learners. E-learning motivates students to interact with others, as well as exchange and respect different point of views. E-learning eases communication and also improves the relationships that sustain learning. Wagner et al (2008), noted that e-learning makes available extra prospects for interactivity between students and teachers during content delivery.

5. TRAVEL CONSIDERATIONS/COSTS:

A considerable amount of time allocated to attending campus, travel time and risk of life and travel expenses are eliminated. Also, students must physically attend the courses to get credit for attendance and when combined with the cost of education, may present an issue to financially challenged students. E-learning is cost effective in the sense that there is no need for the students or learners to travel. It is also cost effective in the sense that it offers opportunities for learning for maximum number of learners with no need for many buildings.

4. RESULTS:

The result is an improvement in the environmental influences in the experiences for acquiring knowledge, skills, values and world views. An improved method of impacting knowledge to the learners, as well as the ease for instructors to deliver their lectures. The number of activities performed by both teachers and students during e-learning process is integrated into a single system.

5. DISCUSSION:

E-Learning is a technology that has to be introduced and a concept which requires changes in the organization to work fast and efficiently. It (E-learning) involves the use of digital tools for teaching and learning. It makes use of technological tools to enable learners study anytime and anywhere, and involves the training, delivery of knowledge and motivates students to interact with each other, as well as exchange and respect different points of views. E-Learning eases communication and improves the relationships that sustain learning.

REFERENCES:

- Abbad, M. M, D.,& de Nahlik, C. (2009). Looking under the Bonnet: Factors Affecting Students Adoption of E-Learning Systems in Jordan. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*.
- Algahtani, A.F. (2011). Evaluating the Effectiveness of the E-learning Experience in some Universities in Saudi Arabia from Male Students' Perceptions, Durham theses, Durham University.
- Almosa, a, (2002). Use of Computer in Education, (2nd ed), Riyadh: Future Education Library.
- Almosa, A. & Almubarak, A. (2005). E-learning Foundation and Applications, Saudi Arabia; Riyadh.
- Alsalem, A. (2004). Educational Technology and E-learning, Riyadh: Alroshd Publication.
- Amer, T. (2007). E-learning and Education, Cairo: Dar Alshehab publication.

Arabasz, P., Pirani, J & Faweett, D. (2003). Supporting e-learning in higher education. [Online] Available at <http://net.educause.edu>.

Awidi, I.T., (2008). Developing an e-learning Strategy for Public Universities in Ghana.

Borstorff, P.C., & Lowe, S.L., (2007). Student perceptions and opinions toward e-learning in the college environment. *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal*, 11(2), 13-30.

Oluwaniyi, N.O., Afeni, B.O. and O.O., (2015). Development of an Asynchronous Web-Based E-learning System. *Journal of Computer and Communications*, 3, 84 – 99. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/jcc.2015.312008>.