International Journal of Applied Research

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(Special Issue- 4)
One Day National Seminar
"DIGITALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION"
(2nd March, 2019)

Digitalization in distance education

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Abstract
Increasingly, students who have met all the requirements for graduation from high school or who have earned their GED find themselves unprepared for even basic level college classes - even courses that should be a simple step up from their public school curricula. Many are forced to enroll in remedial classes, while others simply perform poorly, limiting their opportunities for getting post-graduate appointments or landing the best jobs following school. The education system has two distinct options: to improve the quality and scope of education in high schools and primary systems, or to lower the standards in the universities. The latter is unacceptable, so forward thinking educators lean on technology to accomplish the formed. In the present paper we discuss about.

Keywords: Digitalization, Digitalization in distance education

Introduction
Education
Education is a systematic process through which a child or an adult acquires knowledge, experience, skill and sound attitude. It makes an individual civilized, refined, cultured and educated. For a civilized and socialized society, education is the only means. Its goal is to make an individual perfect. Every society gives importance to education because it is a panacea for all evils. It is the key to solve the various problems of life. Education has been described as a process of waking up to life.

Etymological meaning of education
The word 'Education' has been derived from different Latin words:
a) 'educare' which means 'to bring out' or 'to nourish'.
b) 'educere' which means 'to lead out' or 'to draw out'.
c) 'educatum' which means 'act of teaching' or 'training'.
d) 'educatus' which means 'to bring up, rear, educate'.
e) 'educatio' which means "a breeding, a bringing up, a rearing."

Synonymous of education
Pedagogy, shiksha, vidya, teaching, schoolings, training, instruction, guidance, cultivation, improvement, development etc.

Definitions of education
According to western thinkers

Froebel -"Education is enfoldment of what is already enfolded in the germ. It is the process through which the child makes internal external."
John Dewey – "Education is the process of living through a continuous reconstruction of experiences."

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Pestalozzi – "Education is natural, harmonious and progressive development of man's innate powers."

Indian thinkers

Mahatma Gandhi – "By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in man – body, mind and spirit."

Rabindranath Tagore – "Education enables the mind to find out the ultimate truth, which gives us the wealth of inner light and love and gives significance to life."

Swami Vivekananda – "Education is the manifestation of divine perfection already existing in man."

Distance education

Distance education delivers classes (live or pre-taped) to students in their home, office, or classroom. Distance Education "is a process to create and provide access to learning when the source of information and the learners are separated by time and distance, or both." In other words, distance learning is the process of creating an educational experience of equal qualitative value for the learner to best suit their needs outside the classroom.

Distance education places students and their instructors in separate locations using some form of technology to communicate and interact. The student may be located in the classroom, home, office or learning center. The instructor may be located in a media classroom, studio, office or home.

A few years ago, online education was the latest trend, people discovering that you can enjoy a great education from the comfort of your own home, drastically cheaper and one thousand times more convenient

The key to success in distance learning is the teacher. If the teacher is good, the technology can become almost transparent. No technology can overcome poor teaching which is actually exacerbated in distance education applications. When skilled teachers are involved, enthusiasm, expertise, and creative use of the media can enrich students beyond the four walls of their classroom.

Advantages of distance education

1. You can enjoy your studies from the comfort of your couch, in your favourite pyjama**.**
2. The application process is a thousand times easier.
3. You get to meet people you wouldn't normally get to know.
4. A diploma is a diploma, no matter from where you study.
5. You get to practice some skills that campus degrees wouldn't test.

Digitalization in distance education

Digitalization in distance education means use of technology in distance education. In 21st century use of internet works as catalyst in the field of education.

According to the Oxford English dictionary the first recorded use of the term Information Technology was in 1958 when Leavitt and Whisler wrote in the Harvard Business review (41/1) "The new technology does not have a single established name. We shall call it Information Technology.

UNESCO (1973) defined, Information Technology as "Scientific, technological and engineering disciplines and management techniques used in information handling and processing, their applications, computers and their interaction with men and machines and associated social, economic and cultural matters".

The information is a dynamic and unending resource that affects all disciplines and all walks of life. It supports education, research and development. Technology in its broad sense is the main factor determining the development of information. Information Technology (IT) is the biggest achievement in the evolution of mankind.

Distance-learning providers already use virtual learning environments (VLEs) to enable students to read documents online, contact tutors, submit coursework, or engage in discussions with other students. But the increasing popularity of smartphones, iPads and Kindles means that universities are now responding to student demand to access those resources from their mobile devices.

The Open University (OU), for example, is developing a new generation of interactive course materials for tablet computers and has just launched OU Anywhere, a tablet and smartphone app that enables students to download all the course materials they need on to their mobile devices. The app also allows users to access the university's VLE to interact with fellow students and tutors. For distance learners, who often struggle to combine studying with full-time work, this provides a new flexibility. Prof Mike Sharples, chair in educational technology at the OU, says mobile devices are ideal for students who want to study during lunchbreaks or quiet moments at work, or on the train home.

It is well documented in the published literature and on Internet sites that on a worldwide basis the ICT an increasingly important role in education and training.

Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that the use of ICT can improve the quality of the student learning experiences and make education and training opportunities available to a broader spectrum of the population in developing countries. At present educators are excited by the success of information technologies and want to implant them into instruction. They extol information technologies as the solution to break the barriers of time and space and fulfil the dream of life long education.

The status and image of open and distance learning is, however, slowly changing. New communication technologies have provided creative and motivating ways of presenting information and providing opportunities for interaction. The increased mobility of these technologies is opening up possibilities for learners in remoted, often rural, locations that previously were impossible. One of the most fascinating developments in the last few years has been the open content or open educational resource (OER) movement.

Digitalization of education means use of computer and other technology in the field of education. With the help of these technologies there is a facility students can teach from anywhere and at any time. Online teaching and learning concept is also a part of digitalization of education.

In the system of online teaching and learning there are two types of classes:

Synchronous: This type of teaching involves a real time online teaching experience. This includes time bound sessions where both the teacher and the student have to be online at a specific instant of time such as *Instructor-led online classes.*

Asynchronous: In this type, unlike the one discussed above, courses are not conducted in real time. This means that the engagement between the teacher and student can occur as per their convenience. *Recorded training sessions* are a good example of such teaching.

Uses of online or digital teaching
1. **Time and Location Flexibility:** A teacher can choose to teach at any time that suits him/her. Especially for working professionals and homemakers, Online Teaching is a boon, where classes can be taken in evenings or on weekends. There's no time wastage, unlike the traditional classroom teaching where a teacher has to travel all the way to a coaching centre/institute for taking classes.
2. **Convenience:** Online teaching doesn't require any travelling overhead. A teacher can teach right while sitting at his/her home. Online teaching could thus be perceived as a work from home with flexible schedules.
3. **More Teaching Opportunities:** An education medium without any time and location constraints obviously paves the way significantly more opportunities for the teachers, as compare to the traditional classroom teaching.
4. **Administration:** Online teaching also helps in a better administration. One can clearly imagine the administrative challenges to teacher in a traditional classroom than while teaching online.
5. **Better Organization:** Another major benefit of teaching online is that everything is well organized, avoiding any mismanagement.
6. **Diverse Teaching Experiences:** The online medium of teaching gives a teacher an opportunity and experience to connect with students from different disciplines, backgrounds and cultures. Online teaching can thus take the teaching experience from a regional level to national level, and even further to an international level.
7. **Easier Access and Sharing of Information:** It's obvious that any study resource or information in digital format is very easy to be accessed and shared. While teaching online, one take help from digital libraries, search engines and also social media channels for searching, accessing and sharing resources and information.
8. **Student Engagement:** Online teachers report that online teaching incorporates more engagement between student and the teacher. Unlike the interaction in a classroom of numerous students, an online medium provides them with a more close one-on-one session.
9. **Increased student learning:** Online teachers often report that students usually perform better and also show more participation in discussions during an online course.
10. Cost Effective This is directed to both learners and teachers, but there is a good chance that whatever your role you had to pay exorbitant amounts of money at some point to acquire updated versions of textbooks for school or college. While textbooks often become obsolete after a certain period of time, the need to constantly acquire new editions is not present in e-learning

Limitations of online or digital teaching
1. **It may be a "solo" act.**
   It is true that, although online learning might be convenient and flexible, it is also a solo act. It will not be easy for all of your learners to feel comfortable when participating in online discussions and engaging more actively with their online instructors or their virtual classrooms.
2. **It may be impersonal.**
   No matter how hard we try to fully transfer human communication to online platforms, no matter how natural it seems to form relationships behind computer screens, a virtual environment is just not human. Nothing can replace human contact.
3. **Too much time spent in front of a computer screen may be harmful.**
   Being constantly online is the new reality, but the truth is that using a computer or a tablet all the time can cause poor vision, strain injuries, and other physical problems. Consider sending guidelines about right sitting posture, desk height, etc. along with your eLearning course; it might be very useful to your audience.
4. **It requires self-discipline.**
   If your eLearning audience lacks self-discipline, it is unlikely that they will be motivated to self study. Traditional learning and training have the benefit of easily tracking both progress and falling behind; this works for many learners as well, as some people prefer their progress to be closely monitored in order to perform.
5. **Possible lack of control.**
   No matter how carefully you design your eLearning course, there is no guarantee that your messages will get across. You offer your learners control over their eLearning experience and this is great, but are they going to use it effectively? There is always the risk of your learners just going through the material without paying any attention.
6. **Health-Related Concerns**
   E-learning requires the use of a computer and other such devices; this means that eyestrain, bad posture, and other physical problems may affect the learner. When running an online course it's a good practice to send out guidelines about correct sitting posture, desk height, and recommendations for regular breaks

Conclusion
In conclusion, online learning should be seen as a complement and extension of classical forms of learning. Not even the best online course can fully replace the personal contact with a teacher, or the human relationships that develop in a group. So, traditional classes shouldn't be replaced with online learning.

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