

MATTERS ARISING FROM E-LEARNING AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF BENUE STATE UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

There are matters arising from E-learning, particularly as exhibited by undergraduate students. Although E-learning is one of the effective methods of learning, it has some dark sides too. The need to overcome these odds called for this work. In order to address these shortcomings, analytical method was employed to tackle it. The findings uncovered that, undergraduate students often received unsolicited E-mails, usually that arise when learning via the internet and it caused distraction and millions of sites provided endless opportunities to connect with friends, download games and music which are not always part of their course work. The misuse of blog also posed a threat to E-learning. It offered the undergraduate students opportunities to write about themselves, their thoughts, passions and activities dwelling more on issues that have little or nothing to do with their area of study. It is therefore clear that, matters arising from E-learning are capable of undermining its usefulness to the undergraduate students. Against this background, these recommendations were made. The universities should design and teach ethical principles that can guide the users; institute a body to check the use of online facilities in library and publicized guiding ethical principles by pasting it at strategic places in the library and beyond.

Keywords: E- library, undergraduates

At any given moment, millions of students are online, whether at home, at schools, at a friend's house or if they have internet access in a handheld device or cell-phone. Almost anywhere they learn online perhaps at will and any content of their choice. The students are probably more comfortable in this new cyber world than before noted *Awake*, magazine (2018). Does this call for concern? Of course yes, since the matters arising from e-learning is partly an expression of lack of ethical commitment to live with the people we meet online as neighbors as well as other numerous anti-social behaviors. Again, most of the matters arising from e-learning are dangers students often encountered online like moral values that in turn shape their moral values.

These odds trends drag us into the purpose of this study. For a time, it seemed that, electronic learning or internet safety was simply a matter of computer location. To such persons, when computers, electronic devices are kept in the public areas, it was thought university students will be less likely to veer towards the dark sides of cyberspace. We are not disputing the fact that, that notion is not completely wrong; that notion is still valid. However, common sense dictates against giving students access to the cyber world without caution since it is not the final world in safety. This is because these days, wireless connection makes it possible for students to take the internet with them wherever they go.

E-learning can take place anywhere, since many cell phones are equipped with online access. There are also internet cafes, internet kiosks, libraries and so on. These are some places that students engage in activities that afford students opportunities to learn online notably, e-mails, web-sites, chat rooms, instant messages and online social networking. This paper also highlights some practical steps to curb the menace emanating from electronic learning by undergraduate students, and recommendations were made accordingly, followed by conclusion that is based on the central idea of this paper.

Clarification of Terms

There are key concepts that need to be clarified in the context of this paper; attempt is made to explain the concept-learning in relation to university under-graduate students with the hope of eliminating any existing contradiction and ambiguity inherent in their usage.

Electronic Learning (E-learning)

There are various explanations on the meaning of electronic learning; however Ugbagir and Abele (2017) explained that, electronic and learning are two different words. Electronic is used here as a noun as well as learning but the root word is learning. As a result, emphasis is laid mostly on the concept: "learning." Learning is an acquisition of knowledge or skills through study, experience or being taught. The ability to learn is possessed by humans, animals and some machines. There is also evidence that, some kinds of learning is containing in some plants. When these knowledge and skills are acquired, it accompanied changes. These changes in behavior are usually in all

the three behavior domains, cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. This experience or training can be acquired through electronic devices.

In view of the above, e-learning as used here entails the acquisition of experience or training through audio-visual materials. The full benefits of these materials are received when the “learning” implores both listening and viewing skills. Some of the resources that are audio-visual in nature include television and videodisks. Advancement in information communication technology (ICT) has provided other video-visual materials such as computer aided compact discs (CD), video compact discs (VCD), smart phones and so on. Against this notion, in simple terms, it is the non-printed materials.

Some Online Activities by Students as Learning Tool

Some of the online activities that many students are attracted to and used as learning tools or aids to learning in this online learning environment of 21st century Nigeria include but not limited to:

E-mails: - this is written messages that are sent electronically. It is a fast and inexpensive way to correspond with friends, families and even learn from them a wide range of contents. However, when students engage in this process, they encountered unsolicited, e-mails; often they contain suggestive or blatantly obscene content. Links inside messages may cause the user-including an unsuspecting student to volunteer personal information which sometimes caused identity theft. Again, efforts to replay to such e-mails will confirm that the user has an active e-mail address, which may lead to further unsolicited e-mails that may have little or apparently nothing in common with his or her course content. This distraction interferes with the learning process.

Web-site: - This is the collection of electronic pages created and maintained by organizations, educational institutions, business and individuals, (Awake 2008). Millions of sites are available and accessible, providing students with endless opportunities to shop, do research, connect with friends, down load games and play music. According to Ashaver and Tsegba (2012), the webs have been enriched by all manner of unscrupulous individuals. Many websites feature explicit sex and these are easy for the unwary to stumble upon. It is also a common believe that, no university would like to teach her students suchfor the fear of moral breakdown and other anti-social behaviors. It is also a common experience that, students had unintentionally encountered pornography online-in most cases while doing their assignments or other academic works.

We are quick to state that, the term “pornography” refers to sexually explicit material that is designed to arouse the viewers, readers or listeners a sexual lust. It can include pictures as well as written and audio-materials. Again, the web also provides easy access to sites that promote team gambling. There are also so-called pro-Hollywood websites that glorify, “the immoral lifestyles”. Meanwhile, hatemongering

sites target minority religious and ethnic groups. Some sites teach how to make bombs, concoct poisons and conduct terrorist operations. Depictions of extreme violence and bloody gore are prevalent in online games.

Chat Rooms:-Electronic spaces for line text conversation usually centered around a specific topic or interest of individuals whom he or she may never have met but who share a common interest. Predators commonly frequent chat rooms hoping to lure someone into online or even a face to face sexual encounter. Even when someone or a student did not know how to get into a private chat room, helpful new friends walked her through the process. Most new friends often offer to have (online) sex, thus attacking the viewers' moral credentials. Of course we are aware of moral relativism and as such did not intend to prescribe one for any student in this paper but to establish that such is one of the matters arising from the electronic learning. This is more common among the under graduate students.

Instant Messages: - Line text conversations between two or more individuals with instant messages, a user (student) can choose which of his friend, fellow students, or online teacher he will converse with, selecting from a contact list he has created. The dark sides of these activities are also glaring. Instant messages conversations can be distracting if the student is supposed to be studying or engaging in another activity that requires concentration. In addition, one may not be sure with whom the student is communicating". After all, the student's lecturer cannot hear the conversation.

Blogs: - This is online diaries. Abele (2010) opined that, blogging gives students the opportunity to write about their thoughts, peruse and embark on various activities. Most blogs allows space for readers to leave comments and many students thrilled to know that someone has responded to their writings. However, it is sad to note that, a blog is open to the public; some youth's carelessly review information that can be used to identify their family, school or home address. Another factor is that, blogs can harm reputations, including the blogger's own reputations.

Online Social Networks: - These are sites that allow youths to create a web page and enhance it with pictures, videos and blogs. Creating and enhancing a web page enable a student to express his or her identity. Online social networks allow young ones to meet many new friends though as pleasant and appealing as it is, the social network site is like an online party. Some very scary people can show up. The personal information posted on social networks can be exploited by unscrupulous youths, and adults. This site can be likening to a "one stop" where people shop for sexual predators and friendships tend to be superficial on their web pages. Some youths accumulate a number of online contacts when they have never met face to face simply to appear popular to others who visit their sites. It really comes down to judging a person's social stock value merely by

how many other people like him or her. This commodity trading style of relating reduces some students to nonhuman entities and places an inordinate amount of pressure to represent themselves in whatever way will gain them more friends. It is in view of this that one is compare to ask; how do one makes it clear that students need to develop empathy and compassion when the electronic world allows them to meet and discard people at the drop of a hat? A reaction to this question can be found in the next sub-summed heading.

These six examples are some of the online activities that most university students embark upon and learn a wide range of morals and civic life styles. What are the matters that arise from these activities that are problems or obstacles to healthy learning process? The next sub-theme provides the answer(s).

Matters Arising From E-learning Processes

When historically establish methods in any industry are challenged, re - imagined, developed and redistributed; a period of acclimatization for everyone involved is inevitable. This was obtainable even when the first industrial revolution initially fell flat due to the opposition of skeptics, those who were features of change, and the machine smashing indicts. However, there do exist irresponsible waves of change, and if the modernization of traditional education is a requirement to move into the current fourth industrial revolution, prevalent electronic education is something we should very much start getting use to it and accept with eagerness and enthusiasm. Here are five problems (matters arising) from active studies online or e – learning. After problems have been identified, we will include ways to overcome these problems so that students can get the best out of it or make the very best of one’s online learning opportunities.

Students struggling to adopt: the prospect of having an entire university experience compacted into a personal electronic device is unusual to say the least especially to students that are studying for online programs exclusively. Ajakpo, (2017) observes that, it can be uneven for students who have only known traditional classroom settings. Traditionally, a degree of passivity is expected during lectures, particularly when note taking and listening, while discussing with tutors is allotted a limited time. Online learning demands; spraying into options, accepting course materials in a variety of multimedia formats, and taking part in online discussions which can continue indefinitely.

Another issue is the **student’s credibility:** often, the worth of online learning is not fully trusted, nor given the respect it deserves. This is also more common when the entire program is online. However, qualifications are accredited by esteemed university institutions, validity and credibility is met with skepticism because the format is relatively new and the progress of students is not overseen in the flash. The perceived value in attending a campus institution, the social education, is also viewed as

something not to miss, which can lead to cynics when considering enrolling for online degree programme.

The third problem is that, online learning makes **standardized education accessible to students all around the globe**: this is an advantage for online education without the funds to commence traditional campus study programmes where fees and students' debt frequently mar the joy of learning. However e-learning does require the necessary computer equipment to run online learning platforms. This can potentially pose problems for students and software.

The issue of **time management**: - while learning online offers the ultimate freedom to organize your studies around your private and professional commitments, it can lead to complacency and a false sense of security if the appropriate dedication and time is not set aside for serious study. Online courses are every bit as detailed and demanding as their offline counterparts, though this realization may not be fully formed in the self-managed time of a giving student. The intangible digital nature of e-learning means that bad time-management could lead to academic failure or poor performance of the student.

Discipline and motivation: working towards any goal requires dedication and motivation. As it is, studying online can seem fraught with opportunities to lose their qualities. For one, there is the unlimited distraction of already being on the internet, social media, YouTube and new websites. A lot of valuable study time can pass if you don't monitor your internet usage closely. Given the abstract nature of online learning, motivation in particular can take a hit especially if you have already spent the day at work in front of a computer screen.

Practical Situations to Manage the Issues

Here are five practical suggestions to curb the negative issues arising from online learning by students. These solutions are designed to overcome those matters that arise from e-learning by undergraduate students.

The first solution is ways on how to overcome the issue of adoptability. Naturally, an open heart and mind is necessary to be able to accept change and reap the many benefits of e-learning. Again, online education, particularly e-learning programs are essential. You can then utilize all of the benefits e-learning can afford you. In the course of empowering the learner, flexible personal tutor, guidance, worldwide contact network can be of help. Once one gets started on an online course, he or she may wonder if one can ever learn any other way better than studying online, opined Atakpo (2018).

Another practical solution is to respond to the problem of incredibility. As far as the worth of online education is concerned, employers tend to see the benefits of learning online. Those who have succeeded online because of the implicit job skill; e-learning is something incredible to them. It requires discipline, initiative and time management, as well as technological familiarity from the learner, (undergraduate student). This also includes accreditation from institutions like the universities that recognized and

promote online programs and accepted it. No matter if you are on campus or studying online, you are into the sociability of online learning; you have the flexibility to study anywhere, anytime. The student must learn to manage his or her time well, and he or she might end up with even more time to socialize than your on-campus counterparts.

As for the outdated hardware and software issue, the solution lays here that, while a host of obvious solutions may spring up in the mind: getting a newer computer, for example for some that simply may not be able may pose a challenge to the student. However, there are solutions offered by e-learning experts for students with such problems. For instance, course materials are downloadable which means, an entire course can be downloaded and the materials studied offline. Learning platforms may also employ a nifty videos that can feature what we called, “Dynamic Stream Switching” which allow for varying strength of connections. This implies that, the content will always stream, no matter what speed of internet connection is available to you.

The management of time that constituted a problem has a solution too. Time management is something that can be practiced, and with a little-discipline, can eventually become a vital asset in the overall skills. Set of a professional keeping priority list tagged, “to-do lists”. It may require making a study calendar, keeping a diary, using a phone applications may all be a good habit to nurture. Moreover, the learning platforms themselves are nearly always designed to help you do just this-with platform notifications on upcoming deadlines, email reminders, progress tracking on assignments and handy tutor feedback directed to one’s inbox. The student may only need to consult his mobile phone (android phone) to find out exactly where he or she is as the course get down to a desired conclusion.

Lack of discipline and motivation constituted serious problems. Advice for staying motivated and disciplined when working towards a good can be extremely general, when it comes to online education. The student can benefit from some specialized tips to keep his or her eyes on the prize. First, whether admitted or not, or yet to be admitted; while undertaking an online studies, it is prudent to treat your studies as if they were an extra-part-time job, complete with working hours and repercussions for arriving late and underperformance. Another reason is that, because of the flexibility of online learning, you can choose a location that you love; a café, a park, a museum or your favorite library, the choices are endless.

By overcoming these common e-learning challenges, you have the power to create effective and enlightening e-learning course, program, or personal study package. The student will adjust his time to meet the challenges. If one is able to address all of these hurdles, he or she may help others to see that though, e-learning has its dark sides, it can be handled and the e-learning program retains its glory.

Conclusion

It is based on this that this conclusion is made. There is no evidence to show that e-learning has outlived its usefulness, it is not immune to some shortcomings that are

capable to affect education negatively. It is therefore obvious that, those measures presented as recommendations if followed strictly by appropriate bodies, persons, the identified issues will be overcome within a reasonable period. It is also established that, learning is faster and more effective when learners study electronically. In view of this uncontested position particularly in the 21st century, interdisciplinary measures can be an added advantage.

Recommendations

Below are some of the recommendations to overcome the e-learning challenges or matters arising from e-learning. They are:

One of the most common e-learning palavers students must overcome is an overall lack of learner's motivation. It might stem from learners who are not enthusiastic or are not interested in the subject matter. To overcome these hurdle, it is important to make e-learning course as engaging and inspiring as possible. Even topics that are dry or boring have the potentials to become exciting and effective if the student knows how to make them relevant and interesting for the e-learners. Scenarios of e-learning like; games and videos are great ways to achieve this. All of these give e-learners the opportunity to immerse themselves within the subject matter, rather than just reading about it.

Most students have busy schedules; this is common in this days and age. It seems, every undergraduate student is running short of time. For many undergraduate students today, there are no enough hours in the day and there is no any room in their schedule for learning. Many undergraduate students are hesitant to take an e-learning course because they think that they would not be able to go at their own space or that it will require a great deal of their time. The student can overcome this by ensuring that, the e-learning course is in a bite-sized that one can access whenever and wherever his or she is ready to learn. The student should also avoid lengthy text, blocks or clustered pages within the e-learning modules. By doing this, it will give them the chance to more effectively acquire and retain useful information.

It is a general misconception that e-learning courses offer no support for their e-learners. In fact this belief prevents many individuals from anything even if they are highly motivated to e-learning and have the time to do so. To overcome this e-learning challenge, the undergraduate students should be sure to have a solid support system in place for all of their studies.

Sometimes a learner is not able to see the value or benefits of the e-learning course, and especially how the subject matter is going to help him/her in the real world. For learners to become truly engaged in the overall e-learning process, they have to be aware of how the content is going to translate in real world settings. Even the most informative digital contents aren't going to be effective if learners aren't made aware of how the material can help to improve their lives either personally or professionally.

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