E – LEARNING FOR VALUE RE-ORIENTATION, POVERTY ERADICATION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

By

James O. Ezema, Ph.D
Department of Adult and Continuing Education,
Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Agbani,
Enugu State.

And

Christopher Aba Ugwuoke
Department of Adult Education and Extra – Mural Studies,
University of Nigeria, Nsukka,
Enugu State.

Abstract
The growing use of Internet technologies for distance education opens new educational possibilities that move well beyond the provision of more sophisticated delivering tools. The communication and instruction possibilities made feasible by the interconnected network foster exchanges among students and instructors, and among students in the classroom. The open navigation opportunities increase Learner Control of the instructional experiences. These elements render the Internet a unique tool for distance education, one that allows a real shift from an instructor-centred learning paradigm to a real student – centred learning domain. With students’ access to a variety of resources, the need arises to render a more flexible course design process taking into account learner exigencies, and shaping the instructional elements. This paper revered the meaning of e-learning, the history of e-learning, online learning of toady, types of e-learning, synchronous and asynchronies learning, linear learning and different ways e-learning can contribute to value re-orientation, poverty, and national development.

Keywords: e-learning, value, re-orientation, poverty and national development

The universal conventional method of imparting knowledge from an educator to an educatee has usually been through the conventional method of teaching in which the teacher teaches while the recipients or students or learners listen. This has been the accredited and acknowledged method of teaching for many decades. Suddenly,
however, with the coming of information and communications technology, an alternative method of teaching and learning began to emerge. The emergence of ICT in education revolutionized teaching and learning.

One of the most astonishing aspect of the application of ICT in education is e-learning. The change impact of the application and acceptance of e-learning in education, in commerce, in training programmes and in development education generally has heralded a change agenda especially, in developing countries.

The term “e-learning has only been in existence since 1999, when the word was first utilized at a CBT students seminar. Other words also began to spring up in search of an accurate description such as “online learning” and “Virtual Learning.”

However, the understanding of the principles behind e-learning and also publication to value re-orientation and poverty reeducation for national development calls for re-examination of the advantages of e-Learning and as well as the challenges facing e-Learning concept especially, in the Third World Environment.

What is E-learning?

The world e-learning appeared in ICT Literature in the 19th century. For ordinary meaning of e-learning, in essence, e-learning is a Computer-based educational tool or system that enables you to learn anywhere and at any time (Tabor, 2015). Today, e-learning is mostly delivered through the internet, although in the past it was delivered using a blend of computer-based methods like CD-ROM.

E-Learning (or e-Learning) is the use of electronic media, educational technology and information and communication technologies (ICT) in education. E-learning includes numerous types of media that deliver text, audio, images, animation, and stream video, and includes technology applications and processes such as audio or video tape, satellite TV, CD-ROM, and Computer-based learning, as well as local intranet/extranet and Web-base learning. Information and Communication systems, whether free-standing or based on either local networks or the Internet in networked learning, unduly many e-learning process (Tawangarian, Leypold & Roser, 2014).

E-learning includes, and is broadly synonymous with multimedia learning, Technology–Enhanced Learning (TEL), Computer-based instruction (CBI), Computer Managed Instruction (Lontchhko, Kurbel & Aleted, 2012), Computer-Based Training (CBT), Computer Assisted Instruction or Computer Aided Instruction (CAI), Internet Based Training (IBT), Flexible Learning, Web-Based Training (WBT), online education, Virtual education, Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) (which are also called learning platforms) M-learning, and digital education. These alternative names individually emphasize a particular digitization approach, Component or delivery method, but Conflate to the broad domain of e-learning. For example, M-learning emphasizes mobility, but is otherwise indistinguishable in principle from e-learning.

Technology has advanced so much that the geographical gap is bridged with the use of tools that make you feel as if you are inside the classroom. E-learning offers the
ability to share material in all kinds of formats such as videos, slide shows, word documents and PDFs (Portable Data Formats).

There is a plethora of different e-learning systems (otherwise known as learning Management Systems (LMS) and methods which allow for courses to be delivered. with the right tool, various processes can be automated such as the marking of tests or the creation of engaging content. E-learning provides the learners with the ability to fit learning around their lifestyle, effectively allowing even the busiest person to further a career and gain new qualifications.

Some of the most important developments in education have happened since the launch of the internet. These days’ learners are well versed in the use of smart phones, text messaging and using the internet so participating in and running an online course has become a simple affair. Message boards, Social media and various other means of online communication allow learners to keep in touch and discuss course related matters, whilst providing for a sense of community.

In the fast-paced world of e-learning the available technology to make a course exciting are always changing, and course content can and should be updated quickly to give students the very latest information. This is especially important if the e-learning training is being given to employees in a sector where keeping up-to-date on industry developments is of the most importance. This is one of the reasons why many businesses are now offering training via e-learning. Other reasons include low costs and the ability for employees to study in their own time and place.

The History of E-Learning

The term “e-learning “ has only been in existence since 1999 when the word was first utilized at a CBT systems Seminar. Other words began to spring up in search of an accurate description such as “online learning “and “Virtual learning “ However, the principles behind e-learning have been well documented throughout history, and there is even evidence which suggests that early forms of e-learning existed as far back as the 19th Century (Madaus, Mcckown, Gelbar & Banerjee, 2012).

Long before the internet was launched, distance courses were being offered to provide students education or particular subjects or skills. In the 1840’s Isaac Pitman taught his students/pupils’ shorthand via correspondence. This form of symbolic writing was designed to improve writing speed and was popular amongst secretaries, journalists, and other individuals who did a great deal of note taking or writing. Pitman was a qualified teacher, he sent completed assignment by mail and he would then send his students more work to be finished using the same system.

In 1924, the first testing machine was invented (Batas & Poole, 2013). B.F. Skinner, a Harvard professor, invented the “teaching machine,” which enabled schools to administer programmed instruction to their students (Bates & Poole, 2013). It was not until 1960, however, that the first computer based training of programme (or CBT programme) was known as PLATO-programmed logic for Automated Teaching
Operations. It was originally designed for students attending the University of Illinois, but ended up being used in schools throughout the area.

The first e-learning systems were really only set up to deliver information to students but as we entered the 70s e-learning started to become more interactive (OECD, 2015). In Britain the Open University was keen to take advantage of e-learning. Their system of education had always been primary focused on learning at a distance. In the past, course materials were delivered by post and correspondence while tutors was via mails. With the internet the Open University began to offer a wider range of interactive educational experiences as well as faster correspondence with student via email.

Online Learning Today

With the introduction of the computer and internet in the late 20th century, e-learning tools and delivery methods expanded. The first MAC in the 1980s enabled individuals to have computers in their homes, making it easier for them to learn about particular subjects and develop certain skill sets (Bates & Poole, 2013). Then, in the following decade, virtual learning environments began to truly thrive, with people gaining access to a wealth of online information and e-learning opportunities.

By the early 90s several schools had been set up that delivered courses online only, making the most of the internet and bringing education to people who would not previously have been able to attend a college due to geographical or time constraints. Technological advancements also helped educational establishments reduce the costs of distance learning, a saving that would also be passed on to the student- helping bring education to a wider audience.

In the 2000s, businesses began using e-learning to train their employees. New and experienced workers alike, now had the opportunity to improve upon their industry knowledge base and expand their skills.

Types of E-Learning

E-learning is an exclusive term that describes educational technology that electronically or technologically supports learning and teaching. Bernard Luskin, a pioneer of e-learning, advocates that the “E” should be interpreted to mean “exciting, energetic, enthusiastic, emotional, extended, excellent, and educational” in addition to “electronic”. This broad interpretation focuses on new applications and developments, and also brings learning and media psychology into consideration (Parks, 2013). Parks suggested that the “e” should refer to “everything, everyone, engaging, easy”.

Synchronous and Asynchronous

E-learning may either be synchronous or asynchronous. Synchronous learning occurs in real-time, with all participants interacting at the same time, while asynchronous learning is self-paced and allows participants to engage in the exchange of
Synchronous learning refers to the exchange of ideas and information with one or more participant during the same period of time. Examples are face-to-face discussion, online real-time live teacher instruction and feedback, Skype conversations, and that rooms or virtual classrooms where everyone is online and working collaboratively at the same time.

Asynchronous learning many use technologies such as email, blogs, wikis, and discussion boards, as well as Web-supported textbooks (Loutko, Kurbel & Aleti, 2012), hypertext documents, audio (Trentim, 2010), video courses and social networking using web 2.0. At the professional educational level, training may include virtual operating rooms (Johnson, 2016). Asynchronous learning is particularly beneficial for students who have health problems or have child care responsibilities and regularly leaving the home to attend lectures is difficult. They have the opportunity to complete their work in a low stress environment and within a more flexible time frame (Levering, 2013).

In asynchronous online courses, students proceed at their own pace. If they need to listen to a lecture a second time, or think about a question for a while, they may do so without fearing that they will hold back the rest of the class. Through online courses, students can earn their diplomas more quickly, or repeat failed courses without the embarrassment of being in a class with younger students. Students also have access to an incredible variety of enrichment courses in online learning, and can participate in college courses, internships, sports, or work and still graduate with their class. Both the asynchronous and synchronous methods rely heavily on self-motivation, Self-discipline, and the ability to communicate in writing effectively (Byrne, 2014).

E-Learning for Value...

ideas or information with the dependency of other participants’ involvement at the same time.

Linear Learning

Computer-based learning or training (CBT) refers to self-paced learning activities delivered on a computer or handheld device such as a tablet or smart phone. CBT often delivers content via CD-ROM, and typically presents content in a linear fashion, much like reaching an online book or manual. For this reason, CBT is often used to teach static processes such as using software or completing mathematical equations. Computer-based training is conceptually similar to web-based training (WBT), the primary difference being that WBTs are delivered via internet using a web browser (Stanton, 2015).

Assessing learning in a CBT is often by assessments that can be easily scored by a computer such as multiple choice questions, drag and drop, radio button, simulating or other interactive means. Assessments are easily scored and recorded via online software,
providing immediate end-user feedback and completion status. Users are often able to print completion records in the form of certificates.

CBTs provide learning stimulus beyond traditional learning methodology from textbook, manually, or classroom –based instruction. For example, CBTs offer user-friendly solutions for satisfying continuing education requirements. Instead of limiting students to attending courses or reading printed manuals, students are able to acquire skills through methods that are much more conducive to individual learning preferences (Yuan & Gay, 2012). For example, CBTs offer visual learning benefits through animation or video, not typically offered by any other means (White, 2012). CBTs can be a good alternative to printed learning materials since rich media, including videos or animations, can easily be embedded to enhance the learning.

E-learning for Value Re-orientation, Poverty and National Development

Value indicates the quality of being useful or important. E-learning contributes so much in value re-orientation, reduces poverty and national development such as:

Corporate and Professional

E-learning has now been adopted and used by various companies to inform and educate both their employees and customers. Companies with large and spread out distribution chains use it to educate their sales staff about the latest developments without the need of organizing physical on site courses. Compliance has also been a big field of growth with banks using it to keep their staff’s Compliance Personal Development (CPD) levels up. Another area of growth is staff development, where employees can learn valuable workplace skills.

Public Health

There is an important need for recent, reliable, and high –quality health information to be made available to the public as well as in summarized form of public health providers (Clark & Mayer, 2015). Providers have indicated the need for automatic notification of the latest research, a single searchable portal of information, and access to Grey literature (Simpson & Prusak, 2015).

The Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Library is funded by the U.S. Maternal and Child Health Bureau to screen the latest research and develop automatic notifications to providers through the MCH Alert. Another application in public health is the development of MHealth (use of mobile telecommunication and multimedia into global public health). MHealth has been used to promote prenatal and newborn services, with positive outcomes.

In addition, “Health Systems have implemented mHealth programmes to facilitate emergency medical responses, point – of – care Support, health promotion and data Collection. (Tarrat & Kachnowski, 2012). In low income countries, MHealth is
E-Learning for Value…

most frequently used as one-way test messaged or phone reminders to promote treatment adherence and gather data (Madaus, Mckeown, Gelbar & Banerjee, 2012).

ASHD

There has been a growing interest in e-learning as a beneficial educational method for students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). With the growing popularity in e-learning among K-12 and higher education, the opportunity to take online classes is becoming increasingly important for students of all ages (Grabinger, Aplin & Ponnappa-Brenaer, 2014).

Lornaine (2014) lists 12 executive function skills necessary for students to succeed in post secondary education: plan, set goals, organize, initiate, sustain attention/effort, flexibility, monitor, use feedback, structure, manage time, marriage materials, and follow through. These skills according him, along with strong independent and self-regulated learning, are especially pronounced in online environment and as many ADHD students suffer from a deficit in one or more of these executive functions, this presents a significant challenge and accessibility barrier to the current e-learning approach (Cull, Read, & Kirk, 2010).

Some have noted that current e-learning models are moving towards applying a constructivism learning theory (Sajadi & Khan, 2011).

Conclusion

E-learning is increasingly being utilized by students who may not want to go to traditional brick and mortar schools due to severe allergies or medical issues fear of school violence and school bullying and students whose parents would like to go to home school but do not feel qualified. Online schools create a safe haven for students to receive a quality education while almost completely avoiding the common problems. Online charter schools also often are not limited by location, income level or class size in the way brick and mortar charter schools are.

E-Learning also has been rising as a supplement to the traditional classroom. Students with special talents or interests outside of the available curricula use e-learning to advance their skills or exceed grade restrictions. Some online institutions connect students with instructors via web conference technology to form a digital classroom. These institutions borrow many of the technologies that have popularized online course at the university level.

National private schools are also available online. These provide the benefits of e-learning to students in states where charter online schools are not available. They may allow students greater flexibility and exemption from state testing.

Virtual education in K-12 schooling often refers to virtual schools and in higher education to visual universities. Virtual schools are “cyber charters schools” with innovative administrative models and course delivery technology.
Academic Excellence

Recommendation

The following recommendations have been made for this paper. They are:

1. Improved open access to education, including access to full degree programmes.
2. Better integration for non-full-time students, particularly in continuing education.
3. Improved interactions between students and instructors.
4. Provision of tools to enable students to independently solve problems.
5. Acquisition of technological skills through practice with tools and computers.
6. No age-based restrictions on difficulty level, i.e. students can go at their own pace.
7. Is cost effective.

References


E-Learning for Value…


