

MOBILE LEARNING AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge is converted into wealth for social good by using innovation. Since, innovation is an important factor to develop the competitiveness of both service and manufacturing sectors. Innovation tends to emanate less from R & D and more for other sources including organizational change. Hence, there is an urgent need to establish an innovation system in the country. Such a system would involve creation of clusters, which are networks. The network can include inter-dependent firms, knowledge producing universities, research institutes and distance education centres. However, in the present scenario, the learner in the distance education system deliberately demands more and more interaction not only with the teacher/counselors but also with the distance institutions providing education. Online teaching is much more reflective and demanding than the traditional classroom instruction. Many teachers who are very effective in face to face training programmes may not make good online teachers.

Keywords: Mobile Learning, Distance Education.

Digital Learning

Today, India has recognized the enormous potential of the internet in almost every field of life. Emergence of new technologies helped to initiate the process of speedy and better connectivity, higher access to information and critical understanding of phenomenon. The Internet has brought revolution in the field of education system. Now internet based methodologies are used in conventional and also non-conventional education systems for training and teaching/learning processes. Electronic learning or E-learning is becoming more and more popular.

Distance education institutions, having accumulated vast data, but they are not exploiting it as is done in the commercial sector. The competition among the distance institutions has also increased with growth in their numbers, which in turn, provide a pool of resources to the learners to pick best among them. So that we are in need of electronic dissemination content to the students. The studies in the electronic-mediated distance education are more anecdotal than systematically empirical and critical.

Open Learning

To be a viable and sustaining situation of now-a-days, it is essential to fully exploit the potential of open learning facilities. With the introduction of affordable e-learning technologies, open-learning mode has become more attractive. "E-learning" can provide much more freedom to learners regarding place and time for learning. Therefore, flexibility makes learning an attractive activity particularly for housewives and employed students.

Online Education

Advancements in ICT provide opportunities to design learner-centered, interactive, efficient, easily accessible and flexible learning devices, which help teachers to update and upgrade their content and pedagogical skills in their own time. Online education has all the strong points of face to face learning at the same time it has the flexibility of time, pace and place.

Mobile Learning

M-learning technologies include handheld computers, MP3 players, notebooks, mobile phones

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and tablets. M-learning focuses on the mobility of the learner, interacting with portable technologies. Using mobile tools for creating learning aids and materials becomes an important part of informal learning.

Mobile learning is any sort of learning that happens when the learner is not at a fixed, predetermined location, or learning that happens when the learner takes advantage of the learning opportunities offered by mobile technologies. In other words, with the use of mobile devices, learners can learn from various locations.

Education planners and educationalists all over the world have expressed concern about the growth of mobile learning education initiative. Few research studies findings shows that followings are the major concern:

- The need for substantial start-up funds,
- The need for additional knowledge to use new technologies and to makes students to learn effectively of mobile education through mobile learning,
- The need to introduce new administrative methods and organizational procedures that meet the requirements of mobile learning learners,
- The need for students to be psychologically and financially able to embrace the new methods of course delivery,
- The need to transfer the course credits among students support activities,
- The need to design the function effectively in a virtual education environment,
- The need to merge the conventional education methodologies and distance education methodologies are slowly merging and converging,
- The need for a high level of technical skills and awareness.

M-learning in the context of work can embrace a variety of different forms of learning. It has been defined as the “processes of coming to know, and of being able to operate successfully in, and across, new and ever changing contexts, including learning for, at and through work, by means of mobile devices”.

- M-learning for work
- M-learning at and through work
- Cross-contextual m-learning

Need of Online Learning in Distance Education

The key to online learning is availability of computers and access to the internet. A NASSCOM survey in 2000 showed that at that time in India, there were 4.3 million personal computers, 0.77 million internet users. Make powerful new internal courses, especially broadband access, widely and equitable and affordable for all trainers;

- Build a new research framework of how people learn in the internet age;
- Develop high quality online education content that the highest standards of educational excellence;
- Revise outdated regulations that impede innovation and replace them with approaches that embrace anytime, anywhere and any place learning.
- Project mobile learners and ensure their privacy.

Objectives of E-Learning in Distance Education

E-learning aims to provide excellent learning support to the students, which is as good as face to face teaching. This support will be available anywhere anytime on the internet. Master trainers will prepare in advance, clear multimedia presentations in modular from on the web. These presentations will offer much better learning effectiveness and quality due to clarity of communication and interaction during discussions or tutorials with real teachers and fellow students. Textbooks written in self instructional format, which are suitable for self-study, are still the primary media due to its convenience of use. In addition to this, e-learning is highly cost effective, without compromising with quality. Hence, objectives of e-learning may be summarized as-

- Effective learning
- Improved quality
- Reduced duration
- Cost effectiveness
- flexibility

Future

Technologies currently being researched for mobile learning include:

- Location aware learning
- Point-and-shoot learning with camera phones and 2D codes
- Near Field Communications (NFC) secure transactions
- Sensors and accelerometers in mobile devices in behavioral based learning
- Mobile content creation (including user generated content)
- Games and simulation for learning on mobile devices
- Context-aware ubiquitous learning
- Augmented reality on mobile devices
- Mobile performance support

Advantages of Mobile Learning

- **Educational Support-** Using smartphones and tablet computers, students have easy access to knowledge. They use their devices as supportive educational tools. They now have access to diagrams, articles, essays and other academic information which can improve student performance in the classroom.

- **Interaction-** We all know that when a teacher calls upon a student, the student gets the jitters, thinking that he or she might be in trouble. With mobile learning, communication between teacher and student is easy. It can even encourage shy students to communicate more openly when they are in class. Teachers can also use mobile devices to interact with students that require special attention.

- **Management-** No two students are the same. Each has their own way of absorbing information. Several educators note that each student requires different pedagogies or strategies for learning. Through mobile learning, students are able to learn in their own way. They can now personalize and enjoy learning.

- **Wider Access-** Other than having access to educational tools online using their smartphones and tablet computers, students now have access to industry experts. Students can read

reviews and blogs by field experts. They can also follow conferences and “webinars” (online seminars). They also now have a chance to interact with professionals even from their homes or classrooms. Using gadgets, they can overcome distance and expenses too.

- **Special Education-** More and more gadgets are being developed every day to help students with learning disabilities. Mobile technology can also benefit those with special needs. Now that there are several apps that cater to learning disabilities and physical impairments, we can say that learning-challenged students have a chance to be equal to those who are normal.

Conclusion

Research shows that educational technology, when properly applied, can provide means for learning. India has a good percentage have qualified and experience professionals. What are needed are willingness, seriousness and lot of effort to make the venture successful. In technology is made available, many education institutions may come forward to utilize the same purposefully. EDUSAT will help in taking education to advantage of video on demand, data broadcasting, easy storage and retrieval, examination open learning systems for higher education could be the biggest beneficiaries of EDUSAT. Educators and policy makers of distance education institutions need to set thoughtful and coherent policies on issues surrounding the electronic technology for delivering messages to their students whether in audio/video or any other forms.

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