

Chapter 25

E-Learning and Management Education at African Universities

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ABSTRACT

Technology has bridged all areas in society from government, corporate, society and education. Technology has changed the classroom dynamics in higher education institutions. Management education attracts the most elite students into our programs. These students join the faculty so that they can acquire qualifications and skills and one day join the business, entrepreneurship or corporate world. The new technologies are teaching tools that can be used to assist academics to enhance their teaching in the classroom. Some of these technologies are: desktop and laptop computers; notepads, Software; including assistive software; interactive whiteboards; digital cameras; mobile and wireless tools, including mobile phones; Electronic communication tools, including e-mail, discussion; Virtual learning Environments and Learning activity management systems e.g. E-Learning. Management educators should embrace technology in their curriculum and program offerings.

INTRODUCTION

Students who pursue a degree in management education have in their mind a goal of being part of business, entrepreneurship or corporate. According to Balaji (2013:1259) Management education is becoming increasingly important and the most sought after post-graduate degree among graduates. Industry requires competent managers all the times--in times of recession, to revive the economy; and in the times of growth, to frog-leap the competition. Students at universities in Africa also pursue management education as it is perceived by many of them as an ever-green source of job opportunities. With the changing technology, management students are living in a digital world and favour new technology being used to teach and guide them at university. The integration of new technology in the classroom has opened up the minds of students. It has also helped to add value to management education students' teaching and learning experiences. This chapter will start with offering a background into e-learning by

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reviewing literature on the evolution of E-learning, E-learning in African universities and exploring theories of E-learning. The author will thereafter contextualising what is the digital classroom and then move on to discuss different theorist's perceptions on using new technologies in the classroom, followed by a discussion on the new technologies in classroom education. Physical infrastructure for sustainable handling of E-learning at universities in Africa will be discussed. This will be followed by a discussion on how African universities in management education use technology to improve the skills for global leaders. The benefits / shortfalls of using new technology in teaching at Africa universities will be highlighted, followed by a set of recommendations as a way forward will be highlighted. Lastly, direction for future research would be put forward.

EVOLUTION OF E-LEARNING

The roots of present day E-learning within higher education can be traced back to conventional distance education or Online learning. Harasim (2000) argues that Online learning, is known to have a history of access beginning in the 1980's whereas another term, referred to as e-Learning, does not have its origins fully disclosed. According to Moore, Dickson-Deane and Galyen (2011) the origins of the term e-Learning is not certain, although it is suggested that the term most likely originated during the 1980's, within the similar time frame of another delivery mode online learning. Nichols (2003) defines E-learning as the use of various technological tools that are Web-based, Web-distributed or Web-capable for the purposes of education. According to Daly and Pachler (2010) E-learning is a set of practices which enhance the potential of people to learn with others via technology-aided interaction, in contexts which can be "free" of barriers of time and place. It involves the utilisation of a range of digital resources-visual, auditory and text-based- which enable learners to access, create and publish material which serves educational purposes... this material can be shared electronically with fellow learners and teachers both within and beyond the bounds of formal education contexts. Moll et al. (2007) defined e-Learning as 'flexible learning using ICT resources, tools and applications, focusing on accessing information, interaction among teachers, learners, and the online environment collaborative learning, and production of materials, resources and learning experiences'.

In the 1990s, e-learning, that is, learning facilitated online through network technologies emerged across South African Higher education institutions (Ravjee, 2007). Bagarukayo and Kalema (2015) indicate that eLearning is an ICT-enhanced practice in universities ranging from e-mail provision, online journals, and networked libraries, to development of creative software solutions for information management tasks in teaching, research and administrative systems. Wilson (2001) adds that E-learning is construed in a variety of contexts, such as distance learning, online learning and networked learning. The traditional classroom setting has changed and evolved over time with the introduction of E-learning. Darling (2002) advocates that E-learning is a valuable strategic business tool, that when implemented 'properly' could modernise higher education, but when deciding an effective strategy it is imperative to consider that distance learning is a means to an end, not the end itself. More recently, the advent of the Internet has enabled tremendous innovation in the delivery of post-secondary education (Gunasekaran, McNeil and Shaul, 2002; Teo and Gay, 2006). Education does not finish once a student becomes employed or when he/she reaches a certain age or achieves marital status or becomes a parent. Since E-learning removes time and location constraints on university students, it actively encourages lifelong learning. Holley (2002) explains that the opportunities given by eLearning, such as the removal of time and location

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