

Chapter 18

E– Learning: Practices in Distance Education

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to provide the circumstance by outlining a short history of distance education, describing the media used in providing far-flung education, and to review explore literature on achievement, attitude, barricade to gain knowledge of education and learner characteristics. This paper explains little disparity in achievement between distance and traditional learners, although using a multiplicity of media, both to deliver pedagogic material and to make smooth the progress of communication, does give the impression to boost up the learning. Similarly, outlook the studies appear to show that the greater number of channels offered, the more positive students are about their experiences. With regard to barriers to completing courses, the main problems appear to be family or work obligations. Current research being carried out by the authors should enhance the findings accrued by the literature, by exploring the impact of “on-demand” video material, delivered by something no previous research appears to have examined. Discusses different electronic systems and their exploitation for distance education, and cross-references these with several aspects evaluated in the literature: achievement, attitude, and barriers to take-up or success, to provide a holistic picture hitherto missing from the literature.

INTRODUCTION

The content of the educational package consists principally of the video recording of lectures and seminars for viewing either via PCs with a satellite link decoder. Course materials available electronically at the study centres supplement many recordings. Organisations are funded to produce the filmed material and do not take any payment either from the course providers, for

having filmed the courses, or from the learning centres where the courses are run. Teaching aids and one if the project becomes a regular service, be the main clients for students to Learn. Some of the courses are accessible from students’ workplaces and others at academic institutions, which already run nursing/medical courses.

Transmission times are agreed with the course purchasers. One important aspect of the service is that the broadcasting times are not the times

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at which students view the programmes. They are stored locally and available for a period of approximately minimum two weeks time to allow for on-demand access. Learning centres can decide their own schedules, either allowing individual viewing or timetabling in group sessions at specific times. The courses are of varied length, from one hour (e.g. "Introduction to risk assessment") and to cover a wide range of topics of all levels. Many of the courses are suitable, for example, to ancillary workers. Course assessment ranges from confirmation that a programme has been viewed and materials read, to a formal test or practical examination. At present, one course will go towards a Masters degree, and form of part of the course award.

The evaluation of present learning scenario an opportunity for the team studies and to evaluate the efficacy of one form of distance learning as an important development in the drive to provide training for working staff. In this regard, it will have important implications for future strategy and planning within the staff development and training programme. The study aims to provide comprehensive evaluative feedback from students attending the regular contact class and to learn courses at all the sites to which they are being delivered. This paper is also exploring the potential benefits and costs of digital television as a delivery platform for training working personnels. The research will also make recommendations about how remote provision of training utilising television/video and Web support can most fruitfully evolve across the personnel development. It may also include the implications and lessons for such training applications for other government departments and agencies that have pressing training needs.

This paper also attempts to provide the context in terms of a short history of distance education, followed by an account of the media used in providing remote education currently, and research that has been undertaken, on achievement, attitude, barriers and learner characteristics.

DEFINITION AND SCOPE

E-learning is commonly referred to the intentional use of networked information and communications technology in teaching and learning. A number of other terms are also used to describe this mode of teaching and learning. They include online learning, virtual learning, distributed learning, network and web-based learning. Fundamentally, they all refer to educational processes that utilize information and communications technology to mediate asynchronous as well as synchronous learning and teaching activities. On closer scrutiny, however, it will be clear that these labels refer to slightly different educational processes and as such they cannot be used synonymously with the term e-learning.

The term e-learning comprises a lot more than online learning, virtual learning, distributed learning, networked or web-based learning. As the letter "e" in e-learning stands for the word "electronic", e-learning would incorporate all educational activities that are carried out by individuals or groups working online or offline, and synchronously or asynchronously via networked or standalone computers and other electronic devices. These various types or modalities of e-learning activity are represented in Table 1.

Individualized self-paced e-learning online refers to situations where an individual learner is accessing learning resources such as a database or course content online via an Intranet or the Internet. A typical example of this is a learner studying alone or conducting some research on the Internet or a local network.

Individualized self-paced e-learning offline refers to situations where an individual learner is using learning resources such as a database or a computer-assisted learning package offline (i.e., while not connected to an Intranet or the Internet). An example of this is a learner working alone off a hard drive, a CD or DVD.

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