



ELECTRONIC LEARNING: ITS BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS

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Online learning can help scale existing resources without building an entirely new infrastructure by opening more access to education outside of the traditional classroom and providing an opportunity for teachers to reach larger numbers of students online. Through online learning platforms, anybody with a mobile device or internet connection and a desire to pursue a better life can acquire the practical skills they need to achieve their goals.

- **DENNIS YANG, CEO, UDEMY**

(Interviewed by Anisha. Sahijwala THE TIMES OF INDIA, 11 Apr. 2016)

Abstract - Electronic learning offers a number of benefits, especially to people and companies that wish to develop a new content curriculum or programme. Further, electronic learning has the ability to offer relevant training to the learners in different fields at anytime and anywhere. In other words, the learners can undergo training wherever they are, either in the classroom or outside the classroom, at a time that is convenient to them. On the other hand, there are some drawbacks of electronic learning. Electronic learning is expensive. The cost of production of materials is very high. Electronic learning is dependent upon a particular software and course materials. It is hoped by specialists in the field that electronic learning accomplishes much more, in future, for the welfare of mankind.

Keywords - Electronic learning, benefits, education, traditional, online.

INTRODUCTION

Electronic learning makes use of the internet, which is a “global system of interconnected computer networks” to do service to crores of people all over the world. Electronic learning involves a network of networks that includes many thousands of academic, business, private and public networks in the present globalised world. Electronic learning has great value, in some respects, when compared with traditional learning. Electronic learning can easily be accessed by people all over the world. One need not travel extensively, involving a lot of expenditure. Electronic learning can save time, money and energy. In short, electronic learning offers considerable opportunities to help people to learn better and improve better and thus achieve success in life. In fact, *what is electronic learning? What are the benefits of electronic learning? What are the drawbacks of electronic learning? In the field of digital education, what is the role of Talent edge? What about the study conducted by Talent edge? What did the study conducted by Talent edge reveal? What are the reasons for many learners to refrain from taking online courses? What are the barriers for online education in Hyderabad, according to experts? How to climate the barriers to online education? What are the opinions of writers? What is the conclusion? What is needed today?* All these current and significant issues are discussed, in detail, hereunder.

WHAT IS ELECTRONIC LEARNING?

Electronic learning or e-learning is a wide set of applications and processes of learning, using internet. It is also known as online learning, computer-based learning and web-based learning. It can also be said that electronic learning is learning that makes use of electronic systems such as computers or phones or tablets in order to educate or train learners.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF ELECTRONIC LEARNING?

The following are some of the benefits of electronic learning?

- (1) *Electronic learning provides access to a lot of latest material on different subjects to the learners.*
- (2) *Electronic learning enables learners to gain effective learning experience.*
- (3) *Electronic learning can prepare the learners to achieve excellence in their respective areas.*

- (4) *Electronic learning provides opportunities for collaborative learning. In collaborative learning, learners work together and improve their knowledge and skills, making use of electronic devices.*
- (5) *Electronic learning facilitates availability of standardised material on any subject to all learners. There is equality of opportunity to all learners to get the standardised material.*
- (6) *In electronic learning, it is possible to observe the performance of learners. Learners, who are weak in learning, can be given necessary support.*

WHAT ARE THE DRAWBACKS OF ELECTRONIC LEARNING?

The following are some of the drawbacks of electronic learning

- (1) *In electronic learning, it is somewhat difficult to teach practical skills to learners in the matter of teaching a language or literature; it is also difficult to teach practical application of the knowledge of pure sciences as physics and chemistry; it is not easy to give training to an engineer or a doctor; it is not possible to impart knowledge regarding carpentry or pottery.*
- (2) *In electronic learning, learners are exposed to using computers and such other devices. As such, learners have to take special care of their health. They have to observe certain do's and don'ts in using computers. Before the computer, they have to sit in a correct posture. They have to maintain certain distance, while viewing pictures and programmes in the computer. They should not sit very close to the computer. They should not sit very far away from the computer.*
- (3) *In electric learning, there is likelihood of learners feeling isolated in learning subjects, unlike in traditional learning.*
- (4) *In electronic learning, learners with visual or physical disabilities are at a disadvantage.*

IN THE FIELD OF DIGITAL EDUCATION, WHAT IS THE ROLE OF TALENT EDGE?

Talent edge is an education interactive company in the field of digital education. It “provides online learning to over 20 top institutions like the Indian Institute of Technology, Indian Institute of Management and Indian Institute of Fashion Technology, among many others”.(THE TIMES OF INDIA 10 Aug.2015)

WHAT ABOUT THE STUDY CONDUCTED BY TALENT EDGE?

Talent edge conducted the study in July 2015. The study “covered six metro cities – Mumbai, New Delhi, Chennai, Pune, Hyderabad and Bengaluru”.

WHAT DID THE STUDY CONDUCTED BY TALENT EDGE REVEAL?

The study conducted by Talentedge revealed the following.

While South India enjoys the highest population in digital learning at 37%, only 8% people in Hyderabad go the online way. On the contrary, Hyderabadis are still hooked to the traditional brick and mortar system of learning and are highly hesitant to switch to the online mode of education. ...The highest number of enrolments for online courses were reported from Mumbai (30%) followed by Bengaluru (28%) and then New Delhi (19%).(THE TIMES OF INDIA 10 Aug. 2015)

WHAT ARE THE REASONS FOR MANY LEARNERS TO REFRAIN FROM TAKING ONLINE COURSES?

The reasons for many learners to refrain from taking online courses are “lack of credibility of online course providers” “step rate cards and absence of productivity”.

WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO ONLINE EDUCATION IN HYDERABAD, ACCORDING TO EXPERTS?

The barriers for online education in Hyderabad, according to experts are “limited interactivity and engagement, poor awareness and issues related to internet and broadband connectivity.

HOW TO ELIMINATE THE BARRIERS TO ONLINE EDUCATION?

To eliminate the barriers to online education, it is necessary to provide adequate knowledge regarding interactivity and engagement, awareness, internet and broadband connectivity. Further,

We need to build the trust of those looking at taking up online courses. For that, we have to tie-up with companies and get the courses certified by known universities, said Atul Jain, who runs an online training centre in Begumpet. (THE TIMES OF INDIA 10 Aug.2015)

WHAT ARE THE OPINIONS OF WRITERS?

- (1) About the factors that made online learning an attractive alternative to the traditional training format, Dr. Kalpana Dixit, Principal, VNS College of Education, Neelbud, Bhopal is of the opinion: “Promises of reduced costs, anytime-anywhere accessibility and learning at one’s own pace have made online learning an attractive alternative to the traditional training format”.(2011)
- (2) About teachers, students, projects, research, e-mail and computer, Vijay Aggarwal writes thus:
School teachers coordinate projects with classroom all over the globe. College students and their families exchange e-mail to facilitate letter writing and keep the cost of phone calls down. Students do research from their home computer. The latest encyclopaedias are online.(2011)

CONCLUSION

Electronic learning is different from traditional learning, in many respects. Electronic learning, however sophisticated it may be, is not a substitute to a teacher. The living presence of a teacher cannot be replaced by any modern technology. There are some people, who argue that electronic learning encourages learners to put off till tomorrow, what they can do today. Some others argue that electronic learning may draw away one's attention. However, one cannot deny that there are benefits of electronic learning. It is better to enjoy the benefits, by viewing the positive side of electronic learning than losing the benefits by viewing the negative side of electronic learning. Of course, it is essential to take necessary precautions, while using computers and such other electronic devices.

What is needed today is: (1) to know that electronic learning has been transforming the way learners learn different subjects of their choice, (2) to be able to derive profit and pleasure from electronic learning and (3) to give due importance to the words of Sravanthi Reddy, Director, Requelford International School, about global networking and interactive learning:

Global networking and interactive learning has been one of the biggest games. It is easy to impart knowledge in this way to a generation that loves to spend time on tablets or smart phones. It gives a 360 degree approach. Children are able to learn using visuals and experiment on their ideas and apply the practicality of the knowledge they have gained (quoted by c-avipsha. sengupta in *Sunday Times of India*. 23 Oct. 2016)

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