

E-CONTENT: A CLASSROOM ANYWHERE – ANYTIME

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ABSTRACT

Since the inception of the Information Age, students have started preferring E-learning over/with classroom learning. Today almost every student has an access to Internet by any medium. Thus, access to E-content is easy and much more feasible as compared to the conventional way. Because of this, even the universities and institutes have started adopting and adapting the technologies. Best example of this is the not-so-recent initiative taken up by many schools and colleges of introducing the “Smart Class” concept, where the students are taught on a projector screen which enhances their learning experience.

This study talks about how E-content or E-learning becomes helpful to the school/college going students, when a student has missed some of his/her lecture or has a doubt in some topic and couldn't reach to his/her teacher. Via E-content he/she can easily clear doubts, can get deeper knowledge in any topic and understand a concept better, without going to the classroom. Thus it acts as a classroom , anywhere-anytime! In spite of it having some disadvantages and pre-requisites, this is an emerging way of imparting knowledge to the students now-a-days. The paper also discusses the effects of E-content and E-learning in today's higher education.

Keywords: E-learning, E-content, Smart Class, Class room

1.INTRODUCTION

Now-a-days the entire world is racing speedily towards digitization and it has become a necessity for us to learn new things using new technologies. The evolution of computers, especially the internet has affected all spheres of our lives. Couple of years ago, we used to invest our time in the library for searching good information from the books, magazines and journals available there. Today we search for the same information on the web sites available on the Web platform. Access to information has become very easy as people have been sharing the information and updates on such Web platforms like on World Wide Web (www). Quality learning is what counts and matters more. The knowledge and skills of students are determined by the quality of teaching they have been provided by the teachers who teach them, along with the students' own skills and ability. Well trained teachers with sufficient knowledge, skills, willingness and commitment can develop scientific and critical thinking, can promote tolerance, and develop cultural, social and spiritual values in them and thus satisfy them. The Informationage not only makes it possible to achieve these by providing new ways to teachers but also makes the conventional way easier. Anyhow, these new technologies do place more challenging demands on teachers as to learn how to use them in their teaching and learning processes and enhance it. This great transformation from traditional way to technical way poses challenges to teachers and educators in using technologies in creative, productive and enlightening ways. Hence, the teachers now have to cope up with these new upcoming difficulties they may face by continuously acquiring new knowledge and skills to impart knowledge effectively and keep up with the trend. E-content offers tremendous opportunities for creating, editing/updating, storing, disseminating and communicating tons of information at a time at so many levels and platforms. Due to the rapid expansion of sound knowledge, availability of variety of formats for information and easy accessibility of E-platform has made inclusion and integration of ICT in teaching and learning inevitable now. Moreover, ICT also provides an option to promote international collaboration and networking in education and provide more easy, flexible, effective and feasible ways for professional development for teachers too.

Electronic content (E-content) which is also known as digital content refers to the content or information delivered over network based electronic devices/gadgets or that is made available using computer network such as internet. According to Oxford dictionary 'E-content is the digital text and images designed to display on web pages'. According to Saxena Anurag(2011) 'E-content is basically a package that satisfies the conditions like minimization of distance, cost effectiveness, user friendliness and adaptability to local conditions'.

Well-developed E-content can be distributed many times to different learners, worldwide. Individual course components i.e. units, lessons and media elements such as graphics and animations can be re-used in different contexts. Thus, E-content comprises of all sorts of formats of information that can be placed on a digital platform like text, audio, video, graphics, animation etc.

2. PROS OF E-CONTENT

2.1 Mobility

You do not need to be in the same place as your faculty member to obtain your course material. You can access your online university classroom at any time and interact with your classmates throughout the day and night.

Online education breaks down the walls of the traditional classroom by engaging students anywhere at any time. Students can learn at a self-paced rate on their mobile devices.

2.2 Feasible interaction with faculties

One of the benefits of online learning is the accessibility of faculty members. You can take advantage of online learning models to discuss projects or ask a question via email or message board, and you don't have to commit to typical classroom hours.

2.3 Convenient and flexible

Whether it's attending a board meeting, delivering a presentation, cooking dinner, finding time to go to the gym, helping the kids with their homework or just taking the dog for a walk, for today's busy working professionals, it's almost impossible to earn a degree and continue advancing your career unless you do it online. Online education allows you to access your classroom at any time that suits you. You can plan a study schedule that fits around your other commitments rather than vice versa.

2.4 Experts anytime, from anywhere

Back in the day, if you wanted to attend a lecture with a world-renowned expert in your field, you were required to travel – perhaps even move – to study with that individual. Thanks to the benefits of E-content learning, that you can now study with specialists all over the world from the comfort of your own living room.

2.5 Encourages new ways of learning

Another surprising, ever-evolving benefit of E-content learning is the way it has opened up new ways of gaining and sharing knowledge and information. Virtual learning environments such as Blackboard Learn encourage collaboration, allowing students to solve problems, create documents and debate topics online. They can create blogs, Wikis and online portfolios. They can join online communities and network with others from different disciplines.

With this type of cutting-edge technology, learning through E-content can be an adventure, breathing new life into learning and helping reach those of us who may not learn best in traditional, classroom-based environments.

2.6 Encourages collaboration

Many learning platform tools help facilitate collaboration amongst students. Think of Facebook. There are so many photos, messages, links, chats and videos that are continuously shared. Similarly—though in more of a scholarly sense—students can share and collaborate in their online courses via E-content.

2.7 Avails lifelong learning

Once you're officially out of school and working, have a family, chances are you may not have time to go back to school. On the other hand, with institutions and teachers beginning to make their courses available for free through online lectures and E-content readily available, you have the opportunity to learn on your own timetable and from the comfort of your home.

2.8 Savings

With online learning you could, in fact, save money. As in, no travel costs, no parking meters, no grabbing lunch or dinner on the way – if you have a computer, you have a classroom.

2.9 It's unrestricted

With E-learning culture and nationality barriers have also been prevailed over. Translating and customizing your online courses to address different cultures in various languages makes possible for your E-Learning content to travel all around the world and reach the widest possible learners. This is particularly effective for an online training program/internship, as you can use the same training material for a globally distributed workforce and ensure that all of the interns are aligned with your company's brand, values, and vision.

2.10 Higher retention rate

Blended learning results in a higher knowledge rate, appealing to a wider range of learning styles with the added ability to go back and refresh their memory at any time or place.

2.11 Immediate updates

Today's online learning is better than yesterday's; and online learning of tomorrow will be better than today's. Multimedia, gamification, interactivity, constantly improves technology in general, provides a wide variety of applications and tools that not only update online learning, but also they make it more effective. The best part is that you know that once you update your eLearning course, all the learners will have immediate access to the updated version as soon as they click a mouse button.

2.12 No tear or wear

As compared to the conventional way which involves usage of printed material/books that has the obvious possibility of tear and wear; that's never in the case of E-content. E-content can never deteriorate by more and more usage. It can be updated regularly with time but it never has the option of getting physically deteriorated. Thus, E-content proves to be more effective for usage as to the printed material.

3. CONS OF E-CONTENT

3.1 Lack of encouragement

Sometimes learners with low motivation can quickly fall behind in an online course. With no fixed schedule or routine, eLearning through E-content can become difficult for people to meet specific deadlines or goals. Thus disorganized structure can lead to failure of E-learning concept.

3.2 Isolation

Learning through the Internet on individual computers allows for wider access, but it can also easily lead to isolation. Learning face-to-face means employees can ask questions and have them answered right away, which is not the case with e-learning. Employees have the freedom to learn on their own time wherever they are, but this may leave them with a feeling of isolation and discouragement for support. The lack of a physical classroom and instructor can be frustrating and demotivating.

3.3 Technology issues

It is important to lay out your technological requirements at the very beginning of your course; your learners need to have devices that are compatible with the eLearning software. Of course, there is always the risk of having technology issues when using computers so heavily, such as internet connection or power reliability.

3.4 Computer proficiency

Some learners or employees may not be comfortable using computers. Even if the software is user friendly, it may be a unnerving task for some. These particular learners may struggle, and would probably be more successful in a traditional classroom setting.

3.5 It can be impersonal sometimes

No matter how hard we try to fully transfer human communication to online platforms, no matter how natural it seems to form relationships behind computer screens, a virtual environment is just not human. Nothing can replace human contact ever.

4. INFLUENCE OF E-CONTENT/E-LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

As a result of the increased integration of Internet and web-based communication technologies, which we refer to as simply "E-learning," higher education has moved into a third decade of change in how the courses and programs are framed and delivered. During this time, E-learning technologies have made an intense, immediate, and disruptive transformation on higher education (Archer, Garrison and Anderson, 1999). Passionate prompt adopters of e-learning argued that there are many new possibilities offered by these technologies for educators in higher education. These enthusiastic accounts were soon followed by the creation of task forces to assess E-learning's potential.

The literature reviews concluded that the research has been uneven, but there are evidences that educators in higher education believe that e-learning technologies:

- (1) have a positive impact on course delivery and student learning,
- (2) are effective at achieving greater student participation and student interest, and (3) allow opportunities to improve critical thinking (Saunders and Cooper, 2003).

Consistent with these insights, a good deal of the literature also suggests that E-learning can transform learning experiences in positive ways, resulting in an increase in the quality of learning experiences (Garrison & Anderson, 2003; Heckman and Annabi, 2005; McKnight, 2001). In particular, it has been argued that E-learning technologies facilitate the development of argument formation capabilities, improve written communication skills, require greater complex problem solving abilities, and increase opportunities for critical and reflective thinking (Abrami and Bures, 1996; Garrison, Anderson, and Archer, 2001; Hawkes, 2001; Winkelmann, 1995).

5. CONCLUSION

The demand of E-Content is likely to grow in future. E-Content and E-learning resources will help students throughout the world to learn effectively at their own pace, place and convenience. This augmenting method of E-learning will bridge the gap of communication and accessibility of quantity knowledge by the students and teachers. Thus, we should encourage and promote such impartment of knowledge via E-content and build the new generation's capacity through the widespread use of technology.

6. REFERENCES

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