

THE ROLE OF LEARNING PLATFORM (LP) IN EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT: Learning platform as a tool of educational technology helps teachers and students in teaching- learning process. Not only is it practical in education but also it improves everyone to its career in every aspects and useful for him/her.

Keywords: e-learning platform, education, educational technology.

INTRODUCTION

An e-learning platform (LP) is a computer program used to enhance course instruction via computers and the Internet. When an LP became embedded in the school, it proved to be supportive not only of efficiency gains, but it also stimulated new ways of working. This was true for both teachers and learners. In this sense, the LP was seen as a transformational technology.

The key characteristics of a functional LP:

Works with and not against current pedagogic practice; the chosen LP supports the working practices within the school. This is an entry-level criterion which resonates with the ease of adoption of IWB technology.

Easy-to-negotiate, reliable and intuitive; It was clear that LPs were deemed user-friendly and provided the support needed, had higher rates of use within the schools.

Many colleges and universities have adopted e-learning platforms to utilize computers as an instructional tool in developmental courses. For example, Allegany College of Maryland is currently using the e-learning platform "Blackboard" to teach developmental mathematics in a Mastery Learning format. Mastery Learning is a teaching technique in which students do not advance in the curriculum until a specified level of subject mastery is attained. Mastery Learning is defined by the Department of Mathematics at Allegany College of Maryland as passing a test or other assignment with a score of seventy percent or greater. There are other e-learning platforms available, such as "Web-CT" and "Angle Soft", "Blackboard" are named as viable methods of instruction enhancement for Mastery Learning in developmental mathematics courses by Boggs, (2004).

While educational independence can be a boon, the cost

In time, money and goodwill of such aborted implementations is a concern.

Three or four-year programme of implementation: Schools agreed that it took several years to embed the LP in their practices.

Staff training:

While staff training for the IWB was seen as desirable, it was seen as essential in using the LP.

Time scheduled to develop LP materials: One head teacher was building time into staff schedules to update and maintain their areas on the LP. Without this, workloads could have been increased greatly.

Learner-centred:

A common complaint of rejected LPs was that they were teacher-oriented. Although such LPs facilitate planning and delivering lessons, teachers felt that such tools were in conflict with the personalising learning agenda. It was argued that there should be the opportunity for learners to set their own targets and workloads and use the LP to organise their learning effectively.

Interactive:

Teachers and learners should be able to upload, mark and provide feedback online. Other examples of positive interactive areas on LPs include discussion forums (enabling the learner voice to be heard), email and social networking facilities.

Flexible:

There should be opportunity for teachers to build a resource base tailored their teaching objectives. Open source systems, such as those that were Moodle-based, were viewed positively. Such systems were popular as they are content-free on delivery, enabling schools to create a personal LP within a usable framework.

Embedded: In those schools where the LP was used school-wide, reports from teachers and learners were increasingly positive.

Supported:

One school trained ex-learners as e-moderators to provide LP support to learners outside school hours. They regulated forum discussions, suggested useful links, monitored language, and content and etc. This high level of learner support was well received and the LP is a major resource in the school.

Maintained:

Whether this is done by a school technician, an ICT co-ordinator, the head teacher, the local authority or the company providing the portal, a reliable system is essential to encourage effective learning and positive attitudes toward the LP.

Accessed remotely:

If the system is being used to provide and store work, it needs to be accessible from home. This also provides the opportunity for families to become involved in children's teaching (Underwood, 2010).

A number of studies have indicated that the successful pedagogical use of technology.

Yuen and Ma (2008) attempts to explore a model to understand teacher acceptance of e-learning technology. Data were collected from 152 in-service teachers who were studying in a part- time teacher education program in Hong Kong. It was found that subjective norm and computer self-efficacy serve as the two significant perception anchors of the fundamental constructs in The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Perceived ease of use became the sole determinant to the prediction of intention to use, while perceived usefulness was non-significant to the prediction of intention to use. Altogether, subjective norm, computer self-efficacy and perceived ease of use were able to explain 68% of the variance observed in users' intention to use the e-learning system.

Gilbert, (2007) survey e-Learning: The student experience .The paper draws on in-depth qualitative comments from student evaluation of an e-learning module on an MSc in Information Technologies and Management, to develop a picture of their perspective on the experience.

The criteria used by students when expressing satisfaction are:

- synergy between theory and practice;
- specific subject themes;
- discussion forums and other student interaction; and,
- other learning support.

The themes that are associated with dissatisfaction include:

- robustness and usability of platform;
- access to resources (such as articles and books);
- currency of study materials; and,
- student work scheduling.

Aspects of the student learning experience that should inform the development of e-learning include:

- each student engages differently;
- printing means that students use the integrated learning environment as a menu;
- discussion threads and interaction are appreciated, but students are unsure in making contributions; and,
- expectations about the tutor's role in e-learning are unformed.

Gumińska and Madejski (2007) examine scalable model of e-learning platform. The issue of distance learning is presented in the work, and especially the development stages of the educational platform of the Internet Teaching Centre for Students (further referred to as ICKS), which is planned to be used for implementation of the e-learning didactic process.

The following programming technologies were used for development of the educational platform: HTML, CSS, JavaScript, PHP and SQL. The relational database was designed using the DFD and ERD models, and created in MySQL using the SQL language. PHP language was used to develop the relevant interface so that the user can access and modify data in the database; scripts in this language form the MySQL database front-end making it possible to carry out operations on data. The ICKS web page interface, including the Administrative Panel, Student Rooms, and Teacher Rooms, was developed using the HTML language and the CSS cascading style sheets. Detailed e-learning site specification requirements were put forth and the contemporary technologies were applied to develop the framework for the scalable e-learning platform.

Deakin Studies Online (DSO) completed in Nov 2004, this case study was conducted by Raitman (2005) to test the wiki platform as a means of online collaboration in the tertiary education environment. A full analysis of the results is presented, as are recommendations for improving the platform in an effort to employ wikis and utilize them to their full and absolute potential *Employing Wikis for Online Collaboration in the E-Learning Environment*.

Juntunen and Heikkinen (2004) believe that interprofessional education has been suggested as a means of meeting this challenge. Four Finnish polytechnics providing education for nurses, social workers and physiotherapists wished to develop the content and methods of teaching the care of the elderly by collaboratively creating and implementing an interprofessional module of 15 European Credit Transfer units, using e-learning. This paper examines the planning and assessment of the impact of the pilot module. The web-based environment eminently suited teaching interprofessional care of the elderly. It supported content and methodological development and renewal of the module. It enabled discussion and collaboration between nursing, social work and rehabilitation teachers and students from the Polytechnics which are located in different parts of Finland. However, it became evident during the pilot that the most crucial challenges of the web-based pedagogy were in the ability of the teacher to supervise, support and motivate students and the organisation of interprofessional learning offered by collaborating institutions.

The surveys are not just at school and universities. There are a lot of studies in other fields for example Collins, (2003) conduct investigates small and medium-sized tourist enterprises (SMTEs) in the European hotel sector and their utilisation of the Internet and their perception of online learning systems. Aims to demonstrate to SMTEs that training is imperative and that information and communication technologies (ICTs) can enable them to improve their inventory management strengthen their marketing and communications strategies and develop their internal business processes. The survey demonstrates that SMTEs are not utilising information technology in their businesses to its full potential. They primarily see the Internet as a mechanism for promoting their hotel rather than for training, inter-, intra-organisational and e-commerce purposes. Respondents have recognised that integrating technology with training will become a management challenge in the future, but at present it is not considered a priority. However, respondents did identify their highest preference for content to be incorporated into the online course modules to be ICT trends and issues. Concludes that SMTEs are willing to engage in online learning and that the ability of SMTEs in embracing e-learning can become crucial determinants of their success. Enhancing SMTEs' business performance through the Internet and e-learning platforms.

However, many schools have reported trialling this technology and it failed to offer the attributes of an LP identified. Negative experiences of LPs resulted in a level of disillusionment. Recovery of goodwill often proved difficult. Early identification of a usable platform maintained enthusiasm among staff and learners.

CONCLUSION

Despite of some negative experiences in using e-learning platform in educational systems, the use of e-learning platform is a method for improving education in all levels. "The LP has been a major influence in developing the personalisation agenda. Teachers can tap into or tailor for small groups of learners. The parents are involved therefore there is a whole group approach to learning, and it helps parents to understand where the learners are. The teachers' planning and assessment has always been good, but the LP has focused the mind and sharpened the offerings" (Underwood, 2010).

SUGESSTION

According to different studies and experiences, e-learning platform is a useful tool for improving students' learning. Hence, the government should apply it at schools, universities, or each section for training people and encourage teachers and professors to use it in teaching – learning process.

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