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Indian Educational Researcher

It is with great excitement that we at Stella Matutina College of Education, Chennai announce the establishment of The Indian Educational Researcher. This research journal, to be published twice a year, will provide a vehicle for research on Education.

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Copyright Policy

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Editorial

Welcome to the third volume of Indian Educational Researcher. This issue has articles on the use of technology in education, along with a book review.

Evidence that technology supports improved student learning can be gained only through credible research, but the way in which research issues are framed play an important role in the results obtained. A large number of schools and colleges offer courses using e-learning in one form or the other. Despite this, research on e-learning adoption suggests, that it has not reached its full potential.

The first three articles of Volume 3 Issue 2 look at different aspects of technology. The first article by Dr. G.Subramonian and S.Sivakkumar discusses the attitude of teacher trainees to Internet Usage. The findings reveal that there is significant gender difference between male and female teacher trainees in their attitude to Internet usage.

The second article Awareness of Digital Learning Among Prospective B.Ed. Teachers by F.L.Jasmine Anne Shyla and F.L. Antony Gracious investigates the awareness of digital learning among prospective B.Ed. teacher trainees. Five hypotheses have been tested. The highlight of this study is the construction of Digital Learning Scale. Tools of this kind will prove useful and can be trial tested over a larger sample.

In the third article, K.K. Sibichen examines the effect of Multimedia Approach on Achievement in English of the students of Standard IX . The findings indicate that multimedia approach enhances self-learning leading to enhancement of logical thinking and creativity among the learners..

The next two articles give an insight into use of technology in classrooms, though with different perspectives. JCT for Learners with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties has been sent in by Dr. Shyamala Muthusubramanian . M-Learning is the Future by K.Thiyagu and Dr. K.Mohanasundaram, is a very informative article on the use of mobiles in the classrooms.

We have also introduced a new section called Musings - where readers can share their thoughts on education. Dr. Kokila Ravi shares her thoughts on Instructor identity in an Online Classroom. Dr. Kokila Ravi teaches English composition and World literature at Atlanta Metropolitan College, a University System of Georgia as well as World literature courses for the online unit of the University System of Georgia's eCore online learning program. Classes are held entirely online using the WebCT platform.

S.Mohan Kumar reviews the book Schools That Learn: A Fifth Discipline Field book for Educators, Parents, and Everyone Who Cares about Education by Peter M. Senge, Nelda H. Cambron McCabe, Timothy Lucas, Art Kleiner, Janis Dutton and Bryan Smith, published by Doubleday Publishing Company. Peter Senge's A Fifth Discipline was a best seller, considered almost a Bible by educational practitioners round the world. This book by Peter Senge et. al is definitely a must read for each one of us practicing teachers.

We once again thank our readers for their continued support. We look forward to active interaction and feedback from you, so that we can reach a wider audience and make a significant impact in the field of education with The Indian Educational Researcher.

Radha Mohan

Associate Editor

Research Article

ATTITUDE OF TEACHER TRAINEES TOWARDS

INTERNET USAGE

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Abstract

The study attempts to find out the attitude of teacher trainees towards internet usage in selected teacher training institutions of Coimbatore district. In the present digital era, internet literacy and positive attitudes toward its use play a vital role in enhancing the teaching-learning process. A survey method was adopted to collect data from teacher trainees across different institutions. The findings of the study revealed that gender and nature of the institutions showed significant differences in their attitude towards internet usage, while other variables such as age, subject specialization, and socio-economic background had no significant influence. The results highlight the growing need for integrating internet-based resources in teacher education programs and ensuring equitable access and training across all categories of teacher trainees. The study further suggests that teacher education institutions should provide adequate infrastructure, training, and guidance to promote effective and meaningful internet usage among prospective teachers.

Keywords: *Attitude, Teacher trainees, Internet usage, Teacher training institutions, Coimbatore district, Gender differences, Institutional type, Educational technology.*

INTRODUCTION

Education has come a long way from the oral tradition of the past to the current focus of education on 'learning to know', 'learning to be', 'learning to do' and learning to live together' as pointed out by the Delor's Commission on the education of 21" century. This is an age of knowledge explosion where traditional methods of verbal instruction will not help to keep pace with the development of knowledge. We are on the threshold of a new information era, which is the mantra of today. Internet is the flower gifted by information technology (IT). It is the latest buzzword among the computer users and users of the information centers nowadays. Everyone is eager to know about Internet and its use.

Internet is a system of connected computers that allows your desktop computers to exchange data, messages and files with any of the millions of other computers with connection to the internet. Internet in India was established almost 12 years ago as ERNET (Educational Research Network). It was the joint undertaking of the Department of Electronics (DOE) of the Government of India and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) which provides technical assistance to developing nations.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A number of research studies have been carried out towards the attitude internet usage. Weinstein (1995) found that adult tend to use. The internet as part of their job and to get employment related information, while teenagers were more likely to use the internet to play games and to listen music. Young (1996), it was found that the persons who are lonely, depressed, introvert and had a history of addiction tended to get addicted to the internet. For this, case studies of 396 dependent internet users and a control group of 100 non-dependent internet users were taken. The length of time spent on using internet differed substantially between dependent and independent internet users.

Karut et.al (1998) held that internet could change the lives of average citizens as much as the TV did in 1950 and 1969. The researcher examined the social and psychological impact of the internet on 169 people. The greater use of the internet was associated with decline of the participant's communications with family members in the family and also decline in the size of social circle. Singh (2005) in his study conducted that 66% Science students of Punjab University prefer to chat on internet and 33 % use it for educational purpose.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The following were the objectives of the study:-

1. To analyze the attitude of the teacher trainees towards the Internet usage.

2. To find out the attitude of teacher trainees towards Internet usage with regard to their Gender.

3. To find out the influence of the locality of teacher trainees towards their attitude of internet usage.

4. To find out the attitude of teacher trainees towards the Internet usage   with regard to their nature of the institutions.

5. To find out the attitude of teacher trainees towards Internet usage with regard to their educational qualification.

HYPOTHESES

The following hypothesis were formulated for the present study:-

➢   There is no significant difference between the male and female teacher trainees with regard to their internet usage.

➢   There is no significant difference between the rural and urban teacher trainees with regard to their internet usage.

➢   There is no significant difference between UG and PG teacher trainees with regard to their internet usage.

➢   There is no significant difference between teacher trainees of Aided College and Government College with regard to their internet usage.

➢   There is no significant difference between teacher trainees of Aided College and Self-financing College with regard to their internet usage.

➢   There is no significant difference between teacher trainees of Government College and Self Financing College with regard to their internet usage.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the objectives of the present investigation, survey method was undertaken. The methodological detail like sample, tool, and analysis of data are given below.

SAMPLE

Three B.Ed. Colleges under different management in Coimbatore District were selected for the present study. The 300 teacher trainees from Government, Government aided and Self

financing colleges of education in Coimbatore District have been selected for this research study by using simple random sampling method.

Table 1

Distribution of Sample

Gender		Locality		Nature of Institution			Qualification	
Male	Female	Rural	Urban	Govt	Aided	SF	U.G.	P.G.
133	167	185	115	100	100	100	167	133

TOOL USED

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the investigators used a self-prepared questionnaire.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

For analysis and interpretation of data the study has been analyzed in different tables. The same is presented here.

Table 2

Difference between Attitude of Male and Female teacher trainees towards Internet Usage.

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	't' Value
Male Female	133 167	234.61 211.71	2031 4836	553*

*Significant at 0.05 level

It can be observed from the Table 2 the calculated't' value (5.53) is greater than that of the table value at 0.05 % level of significance. It indicates that there is a significant difference in the attitude of male and female teacher trainees towards the internet usage. Hence the null hypothesis "There is no significant difference between the male and female teacher trainees with regard to their internet usage" is rejected.

Table 3

Difference between the Attitude of Rural and Urban teacher trainees towards Internet Usage.

VariabJes	N	Mean	SD	t VaJue
Rural	185	223.8	3813	0 J.432*
Urban	115	218.6	43 J.3	

* NS - Not Significant

Table 3 indicates that the calculated't' value (0.1432) is lower than that of the table value at 0.05 % level of significance. It indicates that there is no significant difference in the attitude of rural and urban teacher trainees towards the internet usage. Hence the null hypothesis "There is no significant difference between the rural and urban teacher trainees with regard to their internet usage" is accepted.

Table 4

Difference between the UG and PG teacher trainees on their attitude towards Internet Usage.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t Value
UG	167	219 .09	4038	1344*
PG	133	22534	39 .69	

* NS - Not Significant

It can be observed from the table 4 that the calculated't' value (1.34) is lower than that of the table value at 0.05 % level of significance. It indicates that there is no significant difference in the attitude of teacher trainees who possess UG and PG with regard to the internet usage. Hence, the null hypothesis "There is no significant difference between UG and PG teacher trainees with regard to their internet usage" is accepted.

Table 5

Difference between the Aided and Government teacher trainees on their attitude towards Internet Usage.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t Value
Aided	100	23622	21.07	71.7*
Government	100	195.84	5222	

* Significant at 0.05 level

Table 5 shows that the calculated't' value (7.17) is greater than that of the table value at 0.05 % level of significance. It indicates that there is a significant difference in the attitude of-Aided and Government- College of education teacher trainees with regard to their internet usage. Hence the null hypothesis, "There is no significant difference between teacher trainees of Aided College and Government College with regard to their internet usage• is rejected.

Table 6

Difference between the Aided and Self finance teacher trainees on their attitude towards Internet Usage

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t Value
Aided	100	23622	21.07	0.8052*
Self-finance	100	23354	25.76	

* NS - Not Significant

Table 6 shows that the calculated't' value (0.80) is lower than that of the table value at 0.05 % level of significance. It indicates that there is an insignificant difference in the attitude of aided and Self Finance College of education teacher trainees with regard to their internet usage. Hence the null hypothesis "There is no significant difference be- tween teacher trainees of Aided College and Self-financing College with regard.to their internet usage" is accepted.

Table - 7

Difference between the Government and Self finance teacher trainees on their attitude towards Internet Usage.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t Value
Government	100	195 .84	522	6.47*
Self finance	100	23354	25.76	

* Significant at 0.05 level

Table 7 shows that the calculated't' value (6.47) is greater than that of the table value at 0.05 % level of significance. It indicates that there is a significant difference in the attitude of Government and Self Finance College of education teacher trainees with regard to their internet usage. Hence the null hypothesis "There is no significant difference between teacher trainees

of Government College and Self Financing College with regard to their internet usage" is rejected.

Major findings of the study

1. The result of the study indicates that the male and female teacher trainees differ in their attitude towards internet usage.

2. There is no significant difference between the rural and urban teacher trainees with regard to their internet usage.

3. There is no significant difference between UG and PG teacher trainees with regard to their internet usage.

4. There is a significant difference between teacher trainees of Aided College and Government College with regard to their internet usage.

5. There is no significant difference between teacher trainees of Aided College and Self Financing College with regard to their internet usage.

6. Government College and Self Financing College teacher trainees differ in their attitude towards internet usage.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

The internet has made an increasing and powerful impact upon every area and workplace like home, school, _hospital, bank, research etc., It has shown a great impact in the field of education. The teachers and teacher educators should be motivated to get training in the use of internet. It can be done with the help of various types of workshops, which will develop in them a positive attitude towards the use of internet. Moreover, educational planners and administrators should be given proper orientation and practice in the use of internet so that they can benefit from it.

CONCLUSION

The internet literacy should help in defining and implementing futuristic, global, intuitive, critical and holistic thinking. The future of the Nation depend the quality of Education. To enhance the quality of the teacher- training programme, the new innovations like internet usage should be added in the Teacher Education.

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Research Article

Awareness of Digital Learning among Prospective B.Ed Teachers

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Abstract

The progress of Science is marked as an accumulation and emergence of scientific method and digital learning. Science would provide an intellectual atmosphere for the pupils to be developed by providing the problem solving activities for every day. In such situations, it is essential to understand Hence, Awareness of Digital Learning is an offshoot to know about the awareness of /CT application in education by the prospective B.Ed teachers is the need of our present day. The problem has been stated as "AWARENESS OF DIGITAL LEARNING AMONG PROSPECTIVE B.Ed TEACHERS". The population of the study is prospective B.Ed teachers studying in Colleges of Education from Kanyakumari, Tuticorin and Tirunelveli districts affiliated with Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli. The investigators has used random sampling technique for selec;:.ting the sample for the investigation. The investigator randomly selected 242 Prospective B.Ed teachers studying in College of Education from Kanyakumari, Tuticorin and Tirunelveli ·districts affiliated with Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli. Digital Learning Scale prepared by the investigator was used for collecting data for this survey method. The investigator has used arithmetic mean, 't'-test; standard deviation and ANOVA for analysing the data. The findings of the study shows that male are better than female prospective B.Ed teachers, rural prospective B.Ed teachers are better than urban Prospective B.Ed teachers and day scholar are better than hostel students in their digital awareness and it may be due to their curiosity to know the innovative and new things their environment and also their freedom to know new things of this digital world.

Keywords: *Digital Learning, ICT Awareness, Prospective B.Ed Teachers, Gender Differences, Rural and Urban Students, Day Scholars and Hostel Students, Teacher Education, Digital Competency.*

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Science is an accumulated and systematised learning. The -progress of Science is marked as an accumulation and the emergence of scientific method and digital learning. Science would provide an intellectual atmosphere for the pupils to be developed by providing the problem solving activities for every day. The student teachers of today's digital world need scientific knowledge not only t9 understand the nature of the planet on which they live and its relationship to the rest of the universe, but also they should have computer skills to enhance their teaching skills. Every student teacher. Should have awareness and adequate knowledge of computer and its advancement, in order to take intelligent decisions and for solving personal as well as classroom problems. For that, the student teachers should know about advantages of digital learning, limitations of digital learning, digital learning and its components, role of digital learning, fundamentals of e-learning and fundamental of internet.

Digital technology makes informative content easier to find, to access, to manipulate and remix, and to disseminate. All of these steps are central to teaching, scholarship and study. Together they constitute a dynamic process of "digital learning." Digital learning can be stated in the words of C. H. Aswani Kumar and S. Srinivas as 'electronic information made available to the users by interconnected environments like internet and corporate intranets.' Hence, Awareness of Digital Learning is an offshoot to know about the awareness of ICT application in education by the prospective B.Ed teachers is the need of our present day.   •

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem has been stated as **"AWARENESS OF DIGITAL LEARNING AMONG PROSPECTIVE B.Ed TEACHERS".**

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

To study the awareness of digital learning among prospective B.Ed teachers

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

To study the awareness of digital learning between prospective B.Ed teachers in terms of demographic variables like: -

- Gender (Male/Female)
- Locality (Rural/Urban)
- Optional Subject (Arts/Science)

- Residence (Hosteller/Day Scholar) and

- Marital Status (Married/Unmarried)

HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female prospective B.Ed teachers in the factor of digital learning awareness.

2. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of rural and urban prospective B.Ed teachers in the factor of digital learning awareness.

3. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of. arts and science prospective B.Ed teachers in the factor of digital learning awareness.

4. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of hosteller and day scholar prospective B.Ed teachers in the factor of digital learning awareness.

5. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of married and unmarried B.Ed teachers in the factor of digital learning awareness.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population of the study is Prospective B.Ed teachers studying in College of Education from Kanyakumari, Tuticorin and Tirunelveli districts affiliated with Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli. The investigator has used random sampling technique for selecting the sample for her investigation. The investigator randomly selected 242 Prospective B.Ed teachers studying in College of Education from Kanyakumari, Tuticorin and Tirunelveli districts affiliated with Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli.

TOOL

Digital Learning Scale prepared by the investigator was used for collecting data.

Construction and validation of Digital learning Scale:

As the first step towards the preparation of the Digital Learning Scale, the investigator has gone through many computer science books, magazines, research journals and discussions with computer science teachers of colleges and computer science teacher educators for collecting statements for the Digital Learning Scale. The items, thus collected were restricted to the topic. The topic Digital Learning of prospective B.Ed teacher has many dimensions, but the investigator had selected only six important dimensions. The dimensions are as follows: 1) Advantages of digital learning, 2) Limitations of digital learning, 3) Digital learning and its

components, 4) Role of digital learning, 5) Fundamentals of e-learning and 6) Fundamentals of Internet

Under these six dimensions, there were 90 items in the Digital learning. The investigator has modified certain items and finalized the scale, based on the expert opinion. The investigator established validity and reliability of the tool on final draft of Digital learning scale.

Establishing the validity and reliability:

To establish validity, the tool was submitted to experts of different colleges of Education. In accordance with their suggestions and opinions, they modified a few items the finalized scale contains 70 items. Thus the content validity has been established. The· finalized tool was administered to 40 prospective B.Ed teachers, studying in Dr. Sivanthi Aditanar College of Education, Tiruchendur. The tool was administered. After 10 days, it was re-administered. The tool was administered to the same set of prospective B.Ed teachers. The responses were scored and the co-efficient of correlation between two sets of scores was calculated. The reliability co-efficient was found to be 0.81. The reliability of the tool has been established by test-retest method.

Final study:

The investigator went to Colleges and met the Head of the institutions and· got their permission. The investigator distributed the tools to the prospective B.Ed teachers, after giving instructions to them. The prospective B.Ed teachers completed the tools at the prescribed time.

STATISTICS

The investigator has used arithmetic mean, 't'-test; standard deviation and ANOVA for analysing the data.

FINDINGS

Difference between the mean scores of male and female prospective B.Ed teachers in digital learning awareness

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	't' value	Remarks at 5% level
Female Male	158 84	10.95	12.64 46.76	3.05 11.72	Significant

Difference between the mean scores of rural and urban prospective 8.Ed teachers in digital learning awareness

Locality	N	Mean	S.D	't' value	Remarks at 5% level
Rural Urban	179 63	50.73 47.49	11.53 10.95	1.99	Significant

Difference between the mean scores of arts and science prospective B.Ed teachers in digital learning awareness

Optional Subject	N	Mean	S.D	't' value	Remarks at 5% level
Arts Science	84 158	49.15 50.21	11.38 11.47	0.6881	Not Significant

Difference between the mean scores of hosteller and day scholar prospective B.Ed teachers in digital learning awareness

Residence	N	Mean	S.D	't' value	Remarks at 5% level
Day scholar Hosteller	133 109	51.46 47.87	10.16 12.56	2.40	Significant

Difference between the mean scores of married and unmarried prospective B.Ed teachers in digital learning awareness

Marital Status	N	Mean	S.D.	't' value	Remarks at 5% level
Married Un Married	36 206	50.38 49.75	11.31 11.47	0.3108	Not Significant

INTERPRETATIONS

1. There is a Significant difference between the mean scores of male and female prospective B.Ed teachers in Dignital learning awareness

2. There is a significant difference between the mean scores of digital learning awareness of rural and urban prospective B.Ed teachers.

3. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of digital learning awareness of arts and science prospective B.Ed teachers.

4. There is a significant difference· between the mean scores of digital learning awareness of hosteller and day scholar prospective B.Ed teachers.

5. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of digital learning awareness of married and unmarried B.Ed teachers.

Conclusion

The't'-test result shows that male are better than the female prospective B.Ed teachers, rural prospective B.Ed teachers are better than urban Prospective B.Ed teachers and day scholar are better than hosteller in their digital awareness and it may be due to their curiosity to know the innovative and new things and their environment and also their freedom to know new things of this digital world.

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Research Article

EFFECT OF MULTIMEDIA APPROACH ON ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH OF THE STUDENTS OF STANDARD IX

*SIBICHEN K.K.

Abstract

The aim of the present study is to find out the Effect of Multimedia Approach on Achievement in English of the Students of Standard IX. In order to conduct the experiment, a sample of 80 Standard IX students was selected. The sample was divided into two groups, experimental and control groups for the study. The investigator conducted study in non-equivalent intact classroom groups. The results indicate that, the experimental and control group differs significantly in their achievement in English Language. Thus, it can be concluded that multimedia approach is more effective than conventional method in the teaching of English Language at High School Level.

Keywords: *Multimedia approach, achievement in English, experimental study, control group, high school students, conventional method, English language teaching*

INTRODUCTION

English is the world's widely spoken language. It is the common means of communication between the peoples of different nations. Randolph Quirk points out: NThere is now something like 250 million people for whom English is the mother tongue or first language". The process of acquiring any language involves the process of acquiring the basic factors of language learning. The following are the three basic skills of learning a language such as Grammar, Vocabulary, and Reading.

The future of Multimedia in Education

The casual use and authoring of interactive media will be made accessible to ever widening sectors of society through the spread of low cost intelligent devices and authoring tools that are greatly simplified.

This will not reduce the demand for professionally produced content. Just as purchasing a pen does not make one a writer, there will always be a difference between interactive media that is professionally produced and distributed, but the transition in technology to enable anyone should be welcomed by educators for the potential it offers them and their students.

Need and Significance of the Study

Multimedia is a very effective means of presentation and sales tool. Schools are perhaps the neediest destination for multimedia. Use of technology in education and training of population for which formal systems are either not available or are inadequate to meet the needs, should be explored. More work is needed in assessing the cost effectiveness of various uses of technology. This made the investigator to choose multimedia, which has a chance to go with the pace of the pupil. The students themselves can operate it and learn themselves. Learning through Multimedia also enhances interest among the pupil, creates an urge to be anxious of what will be the next moment. Thus as it constantly sustains the interest of the pupil, they can learn more through this media.

The present study aims to test the effectiveness of Multimedia approach in teaching English at High school level. Most of the schools in Kerala are following the traditional method in teaching English language. So the study envisages the comparison of lecture method with the Multimedia Approach of teaching. Teaching implies the exercise of skills in carrying out teachers' plans and to derive minimum benefit through instruction. The investigator hopes that the study would be helpful to improve educational practice in Kerala.

The present study is an attempt to develop multimedia packages for English in class IX that incorporated the audio and visual media along with the psychological principles of learning.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM EFFECT OF MULTIMEDIA APPROACH ON ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH OF THE STUDENTS OF STANDARD IX

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives were set for the study.

1. To prepare an Interactive Multimedia software for English language learning.
2. To compare the experimental group and control group with respect to their gain in performance.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

In order to realize aforesaid objectives the present study was designed in such a way as to test the following hypotheses.

1. There is significant difference between the means of scores of pre test of experimental and control group in achievement.

2. There is significant difference between the means of post test scores of experimental and control group in achievement.

3. There is significant difference between the experimental group and control group with respect to their gain in performance.

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SAMPLE

In order to conduct the experiment, a sample of 80 Standard IX students was selected from St. Ephrem's High school, Mannanam, Kottayam District. The sample was divided into two groups, experimental and control groups for the study.

PROCEDURE

The investigator selected experimental method for the present study. The sample consisted of 80 students of standard IX, selected from St. Ephrem's High school, Mannanam, Kottayam District. They were divided into two groups and a pre test given to them to assess their entry behaviour. The investigator conducted the study in non-equivalent intact classroom groups. One group was selected at random as experimental group, Who was taught through Multimedia Approach. The second group was taught through Conventional Method. After completing experimental teaching, the same achievement test was repeated to the two groups. The marks obtained were subjected to appropriate statistical techniques to determine the effectiveness.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED

The following statistics were computed:

Mean, Median, Quartile deviation, Standard deviation, Skewness,Kurtosis, Critical Ratio and Analysis of Co-variance.

FINDINGS

The major findings of the study were placed in three sections.

Section I: Conclusion drawn, based on the findings of the effectiveness of multimedia approach in comparison with the conventional method based on student's performance

The conclusion is that the multimedia approach is more effective than conventional method in teaching English Language at High School Level.

Following findings supports the above conclusion.

1) Pupil's performance in the Achievement test

a) Before the experiment

The pre-test scores of pupils in the two groups were compared. The maximum score of the test is 25. The arithmetic mean of the scores obtained by the experimental group is 8.77 and that of control group is 8.94. Cursorily this indicates that the pupils in the experimental and control group did not achieve high scores in the pre-test.

Also, the difference between the means is 0.15. This shows that the two groups did not differ very much in their achievement in the pre-test.

The median of the experimental and control group are 8.84 and 8.99 respectively. These values show that 50% of the experimental group got scores above 8.84 and 50% of the control group got scores above 8.99.

The low values of quartile deviation and standard deviation for both the groups show that the scores do not differ ver·y much from the average in the pre-test.

The value of skewness for experimental and control groups are -.07 and   -0.13,   which indicates that both the groups are negatively skewed. The negative values of • skewness indicate that the students who scored high marks are more than those who scored low marks in the group.

b) After the experiment

A post-test was administered after the conduct of the experiment. The maximum score of the test is 25. The arithmetic mean of the scores obtained by the. Experimental group is 19.4 and that of the control group is 15.16. The difference between them is 4.12. This indicates that the students in the experimental group achieved high scores in the post-test when compared to performance of control group.

The median of the experimental and control group are 19.55 and 15.67 respectively. These values show that 50% of the experimental group got scores above 19.55 and 50% of the control group got scores above 15.67.

The quartile deviation. And standard deviation of the experimental group are 1.66 and 2.33 and that of control group are 2.35 and 2.99 respectively. The moderate values of the quartile

deviation and standard deviation for both the groups show that the scores do not very much differ from the average.

The skewness obtained from the post-test scores of the experimental and control group are 0.04 and -0.52. This indicates that the distribution of test scores is slightly positively skewed in the experimental group and negatively skewed in the control group.

c) Gain in performance

The gain scores are computed from pre-test and post-test scores. The arithmetic mean of the scores obtained by experimental group is 11.2 and that of control group is 6.99. The difference between them is 4.17. This indicates that students in experimental group achieved high scores in the post-test than that of control group. This clearly indicates that Multimedia Approach has a greater effect on student's academic achievement than that of conventional method.

The median for experimental and control group are 11.46 and 7.23 respectively. This shows that 50% of the experimental group got scores above 11.36 and 50% of the control group got scores above 7.13.

The quartile deviation and standard deviation of the experimental group are 2.11 and 2.11 and that of control group are 2.83 and 2.93 respectively. This moderate value of quartile deviation and standard deviation indicates that the scores do not very much differ from the average.

The skewness for experimental and control group are -0.28 and -0.16 respectively which indicates that the distribution of test scores in both the groups are negatively skewed.

2) Comparison of performance of pupils in the Experimental and Control groups

a) Before the Experiment

From the computation of the critical ratio, (CR = 0.33; p > 0.01) it can be concluded that the experimental and control groups are more or less of the same ability.

b) After Experiment

Here the difference between the mean scores of pupils in the experimental and control groups was found to.be statistically significant (CR = 7.37; p<0.01). It can be tentatively concluded that multimedia approach is more effective than conventional method for teaching English Language at High School Level.

3) Comparison of gain scores of pupils in the Experimental and Control groups

When the gain scores. of pupils in the experimental and control groups were compared, the difference between their means was found to be statistically significant (CR = 6.38; p <0.01).It can be inferred that Multimedia Approach is more effective than Conventional Method of teaching English Language at High School Level.

4) Comparison of the effectiveness of Multimedia Approach over Conventional Method in teaching English Language

The Analysis of Co-variance (ANCOVA) applied to the pre-test and post-test scores with experimental and control groups showed that, the two groups differ significantly in their post-test achievement in English Language (Fy = 57.29; p < 0.01). When the adjusted mean for the post-test scores corresponding to the groups were tested for significance, it was found highly significant.

[M1=19.68, M2=15.18, Difference"" 4.6, p<0.01)

 Table 4.11.

Summary of Analysis of Co-Variance of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores Of Pupils in Experimental and Control Variables.

Sources Of Variation	Df	Ssx	Ssy	Ssx,Y	Ssy,X	Msy,X *(Vyx)*	S.Dy,X
Among Means	1	0.45	374.13	-13.03	400.59	400.59	
With In Means	77	302.55	509.27	309.23	193.21	2.51	1.58
Total	78	303	883.4	296.21	593.8		

Fyx = 400.59/2.51 159.59. From Table, For Df = 1/77 F At 0.05 Level = 3.92

F At 0.01 Level = 6.85

The obtained Fyx ratio was tested for significance. since the table value of F Ratio for Of 1/77 Is 6.85 at 0.01 Level, the calculated value is highly greater than the table value. Thus the obtained Fyx ratio is highly significant (Fyx = 159.59; P < 0.01) It is clear from the significant Fyx ratio that the two final Means which depend upon experimental and control variables differ, after they have been adjusted for initial differences in the pre-test scores.

These results indicate that, the experimental and control group differs significantly in their achievement in English language. Thus, it can be concluded that multimedia approach is

more effective than conventional method in the teaching of English Language at High School Level.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

a. Multimedia Approach enhances the self-learning among the learners, which develops logical thinking and creativity among the learners.

b. For practicing complex skills, simulation activities, Multimedia Approach can be effectively used.

c. In teacher training programmes, especially in English Language, Multimedia Approach can be effectively practiced, to provide simulation to the trainees.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. In the wake of global changes and challenges, there is an urgent need for developing a self-learning, Multimedia package for learning English language.

2. Studies can be conducted to determine the effectiveness of different combinations of various instructional methods and learning experiences to Multimedia Approach with students in other educational stages such as Higher Secondary, Graduate and Post-Graduate levels.

3. The investigation in the present study can be extended to include teachers of English communication skills.

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ICT FOR LEARNERS WITH EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES

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Abstract

Technology has a growing impact on the school. This paper gives an insight into the role of Information and Communications Technology (JCT) in facilitating education of learners with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBO). Presenting a vivid account of the characteristics of learners with EBO, the author dwells into the advantages of using of JCT. The paper concludes with a note that teachers play a fundamental role in capitalizing on the opportunities offered by new technologies to support the full inclusion of all students in mainstream education systems.

Keywords: Inclusive education, /CT, Learners with EBO, Advantages of /CT·

INTRODUCTION

The term Inclusive education implies that the school must provide good education to all pupils irrespective of their varying abilities. All children should be treated with respect and given equal opportunities to learn together. Inclusive education is an on- going process. The key role of teachers in giving birth to and maintaining a truly inclusive classroom is unquestionable (Anderson et al., 2007), but such an important mission also requires that suitable, effective and barrier-free educational means should be employed. From this perspective, Information and Communication Technology resources are promising; there are grounds for maintaining that they help most students overcome barriers to learning,

Thus increasing their school achievement, together with their autonomy, willingness and self-esteem.

USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION

ICT includes a diverse set of technological tools and resources used to communicate, and to create, disseminate, store, and manage information. These technologies include computers, the Internet, broadcasting technologies (radio and television), and telephony. Haddad and Draxler (2002) identified at least five levels of technology use in education: presentation, demonstration, drill and practice, interaction, and collaboration. All forms of ICT may in general be used for presentation and demonstration, the most basic of the five levels. Except for video technologies, drill and practice may likewise be performed using the whole range of technologies. On the other hand, networked computers and the Internet are the ICTs that enable interactive and collaborative learning best; their full potential as educational tools will remain unrealized if they are used merely for presentation or demonstration.

There were times when high cost of hardware, a limited amount of developmentally appropriate software, limited funds to investigate the potential of computers as a teaching tool, lack of skill on the part of professionals in creating a range of response modes, lack of training and skill in computer use by special educators and parents, and the fear that technology would overshadow the human aspects of early intervention (Berhmann, 1988; Hutinger, 1986) were· all cited as reasons for non- utilization of ICT in the classrooms.

Computers are now more affordable, a wide range of developmentally appropriate software is available, and a variety of response modes have been developed which allow almost any child to access a computer (Burkhart, 1980; Charlebois- Marois, 1985; Goossens and Crain, 1987). ICT is valuable to all because learners can control the pace of multi-sensory experience. It encourages social interaction. 'Unlike people, computers are non-judgmental (they do not shout, and have no fav.ourites). ICT has been widely used with pupils with disabilities for many years, with considerable success. That is why they come in handy for inclusive education, more so of learners with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties.

CHARACTERISTICS OF LEARNERS WITH EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES (EBO}

EBD in learners may be apparent in a variety of forms, including:

- Social withdrawal, isolation or underachievement

- Low self-esteem or depression School phobia

- Hyperactivity and lack of concentration

- Disruptive, anti-social and uncooperative behaviour

- Frustration, anger and threat of or actual violence

- Emotional damage resulting from abuse, neglect or psychological trauma.

A learner with EBO may demonstrate one or more of these learning barriers, all of which may disrupt the learning process and may require high levels of professional support and guidance (Becta, 2001). Poor literacy and numeracy skills often result from inability to maintain concentration and persevere with tasks.

ICT FOR LEARNERS WITH EBO

Many teachers, parents, and administrators used to believe that learners with EBD will not be able to use ICT for the following reasons:

- Teachers will find less time to learn to use the computers themselves and then to teach the kids to use computers properly - This fear might have been based on misconceptions about the difficulties of using computers or due to their own experiences with poorly designed software;

- Educators and parents also· expressed concern that since special education learners often produce messy work, wear out their books, and break crayons and pencils, they are likely to damage computers;

- Computers are too complex - learners will only lose patience and become frustrated trying to make them work. They might deteriorate in communication skills.

Today, ICT has come to stay. One of the best liked features of the widely used form of ICT - computers - is that it does not tear, or wrinkle even when handled by the learners with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties. While working on the computer, the children are kept busy entering answers, changing mistakes, or moving on to the next part of the lesson.. They receive frequent and immediate feed-back about their answers and continued working on each word until they spell it correctly. They participate more actively in learning than in most of their other lessons. Using ICT allows the learners to be more independent with their work. This will help reduce the competition between learners for teachers' attention and improve the overall quality of teacher-student interactions.

ICT-AN EMPOWERING TOOL

ICT usually improves the productivity of individuals. For learners with EBD, it represents more: It is an opportunity to communicate and gain access to education services. ICT can provide a non-threatening environment in which they can achieve success. For many, learning may have become associated with the fear of failure, both in their own eyes and in the eyes of those around them. The computer presents a calm setting in which learners with EBD control the pace and level of work. It can help them tackle writing tasks with more confidence and produce works that look very competent. ICT can enable learners to realize - and accept - that they are good at something.

Many learners with EBD find it hard to establish relationships, and have little abilicy or perceived need to relate to others. They may find group work, turn taking and being part of a class quite stressful. The use of ICT may remove discipline problems, and can often offer an entry point for another person to join in alongside, thus teaching them the skills of interaction.

Technology has proven its worth as an effective tool in supporting learners with EBD and enhancing their access to the curriculum. Educational programs and games encourage them to interact with the computer. These could be in the form of simple question answering, such as mathematical problems, controlling an object on the screen by entering the correct commands, or being a participator in an adventure game. Interactive talking books and music technology help them judge their own performance instead of being on the receiving end of judgement or criticism from others. Simulations of actual situations which students are likely to face can provide a secure environment in which to experiment with a variety of responses.

Many types of programs can be used which allow the learners with EBD to become aware of another person's point of view or feelings and how their actions and reactions will affect others. The control offered by simulation prevents difficulties that can arise due to inappropriate responses. Personification and Role-play of characters with emotional intelligence help them understand social interaction. Thus ICT aims to provide innovative social emotional learning environment. Thus skills required for good relationships such as initiating and terminating interactions, turn taking and waiting for turn, attending to an object or person, following one-step directions are all learnt.

Many learners will accept and understand that a computer is non-judgmental and treats everyone in the same way. For some learners, the frustration of additional difficulties such as a specific spelling difficulty or poor co-ordination can intensify the feelings of defeat and low

self-esteem. For these, ICT can remove the barriers to writing accurately and change their attitude to learning as a whole. It is also highly motivating, can help build learner's confidence in his/her abilities and is an excellent focus for social interaction.

The teachers now use ICT well to improve lesson planning, to enhance the production and presentation of resources and to produce individual learning materials of a very high standard including, for example, talking books. The use of digital cameras and multi-media presentation software to enhance lessons is common and teachers use the internet effectively. Software that is designed to allow learners to practice skills, such as those associated with spelling or comprehension may prove less confrontational for learners than having the teacher highlight their mistakes. Word processing is an excellent way of eliminating this sense of failure. The dictionary within the program enables them to check their spelling, and the range of fonts available means that they can produce attractive work, which is as good, and sometimes better than other pupils. Thus, with the help of ICT, it is possible to provide safe, secure, effective experiential learning using virtual learning environments, synthetic characters, and interesting, relevant storylines to usher in credible, believable character behaviours.

Learners who have EBD are often reluctant to take risks, test out ideas or enter into unfamiliar situations. Adventure games allow learners to develop their problem solving skills, test out ideas and think logically. They can be highly motivating for young people and are intended to be fun and encourage concentration, memory, recall and hypothesis. Adventure games can also help learners to develop language skills and problem-solving strategies.

ICT enables experiential safe and secure learning platform for those with EBD to overcome qualities such as low-self-esteem, disruptive behaviour, frustration, hyperactivity or emotional difficulties. While working with learners with EBD, giving praise (when earned) and rewarding positive steps either in terms of academic attainment or in attitude and behaviour will act as great boosters. These can be conveniently achieved by teachers with the aid of computers. Of course, ICT will not be the only strategy for engaging learners with EBD in learning. It can circumvent the whole spectrum of human interaction which they find so difficult. However, its perceived high status, its flexibility, the ever improving software, its privacy and ability to aid self-expression of pupils with poor literacy skills make ICT an especially valuable literary too (Howarth and Fischer, 2005).

CONCLUSION

ICT provides considerable opportunity for learners with EBD to explore social, personal and emotional experiences. In India, introducing technology to children with EBD is still quite early in its development. The success of using ICT for learners with EBD depends on three factors. First, the computer must be treated as a tool for learning, not as a toy for playing games. Second, the teachers and children must be given sufficient training in operating computers. Third, the software must be well designed and easy to use.

Inclusion of learners with EBD is to be regarded as a long-lasting process which requires time, effort, competence and strong conviction by all those involved in learners' education, first and foremost, by teachers. Innovations cannot cross the school's threshold without teachers' deep and active involvement. Educational effectiveness of any technological means mainly depends on the choices the teachers make (Moseley et al., 1999). Teachers must play a fundamental role in capitalising on the opportunities offered by ICT. They need to appropriately plan, carefully select, and conceptually integrate ICT in mainstream activities for better inclusion of all learners. The ball is in their court.

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Conceptual Article

M-LEARNING IS THE FUTURE

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Abstract

The successful development of mobile learning is dependent on human factors in the use of new mobile and wireless technologies. The majority of mobile learning activity continues to take place on devices that were not designed with educational applications in mind, and usability issues are often reported. This paper provides an introduction to the application of mobile technology in education, otherwise known as 'M-learning'. It serves as a starting point for possible development of the use of M-learning in support of learning & teaching in the College.

Keywords: *Mobile learning (M-learning), human factors, wireless technologies, usability issues, educational applications, technology in education, teaching and learning support, and college education.*

INTRODUCTION

Mlearning is the acquisition of any knowledge and skill through using mobile technology, anywhere, anytime, that results in an alteration in behaviour. The following points are to be noted from mobile learning definition.

- The term 'mobile technology' refers to any device that is designed to provide access to information in any location, or while on the move. Specifically this would include, but not be limited to mobile phones, personal digital assistants (PDA), tablet computers and laptops.

- It is not suggested that these methods of facilitating learning will disappear, however, greater emphasis will be placed on self-directed learning.
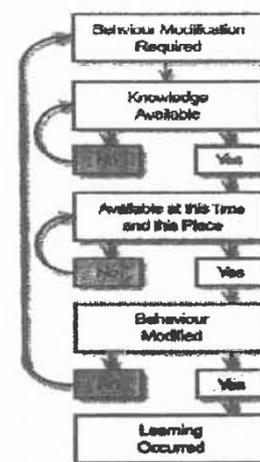
The behaviourist idea of an 'alteration in behaviour' is used because as the information age continues to progress, more people will be gaining more knowledge, more often and more easily. However, without an alteration in behaviour, it is not deemed to be learning.Fig.1. Graphic representation of Leaming

Figure 1 is a graphic representation of m Learning, which in this instance is synonymous with flexible learning. It details the time issue by showing that if information is a) not available, b) not available at a certain time or place, or c) is the incorrect information, and does not result in the required behavioural change, then time is expended unproductively.

M-LEARNING VS E-LEARNING

Ally (2004) defines M-learning as the delivery of electronic learning materials, with built-in earning strategies, on mobile computing devices to allow access from anywhere and at any time. On the other hand, E-learning is the delivery of electronic learning materials qn desktop and notebook computers. The main difference between M-learning and E-learning is that M-learning allows learning to occur anywhere and at any time while in E-learning the mobility of the learner is more restricted. Also, because of the small input and output components of mobile technology, there are design implications for learning materials for M learning. For example, rather than scrolling for more information on the screen, users of mobile technology must be able to go directly to the information and move back and forth with ease.

To compensate for the small screen size on mobile technology, learning strategies must use rich medium to convey the message to the user. For example, rather than present information in textual format, graphics and pictures can be used in such a way to convey the message using the least amount of text.

M-LEARNING ACCESS TECHNOLOGY

Mobile access devices are generally used to access electronic learning resources such as e-mail, simple web sites and Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs). Devices may either access these resources on-line or off-line.

ON-LINE:

When on-line, the device is connected directly to learning resources via a network, typically the Internet. This can be achieved in a number of ways including:

▶ Mobile phone connection (GSM, GPRS, UMTS '3G') - a mobile phone is used to connect to the internet and either access learning resources via the phone's built in screen or via connecting the phone in turn to a laptop or PDA. GSM, GPRS and UMTS (or '3G') are different mobile phone connection methods.

▶ Wireless LAN connection (Wifi) - a laptop or PDA is connected to the Internet through a wireless Local Area Network (LAN). With wireless LANs the network connection between the laptop or PDA and the wall is simply replaced by a radio link. WiFi is emerging as a popular wireless LAN standard and is becoming increasingly available in conference centres, hotels, learning centres and other business venues - even on the beach at Brighton!

OFF-LINE:

When off-line, learning resources must first be downloaded from the source e-mail server, web site or VLE to a laptop, PDA or mobile phone then taken out on the move. They can then only be used as standalone resources. The process of downloading (and possibly uploading after modification) learning resources is called synchronisation. Laptops are generally synchronised with learning resources by plugging them directly into a network when back at base. Mobile phones and PDAs are typically synchronised by connecting them to a PC back at base, which is in turn connected to the network. Many phones and PDAs now come with cables and software for doing this.

APPLICATION OF MOBILE PHONE TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION

The most obvious application of M-learning is in extending 24/7 access to conventional e-learning resources and activities such as on-line programme information, lecture notes, reading, discussions etc. Several additional applications for M-learning in learning and teaching include:

1. **Location-specific learning support:**

For field-trips, museum visits and on-the-job training - anywhere where access to a PC may not be possible or desirable. For example:

▶ Multimedia resources viewed on PDAs can guide learners through exhibits in a museum,

▶ Mobile phones can be used to co-ordinate groups of learners on field trips and observations can be submitted by learners

▶ Student nurses on hospital placement may use a PDA to look up details of a medical procedure, look up reference texts or refer to their own notes whilst on a ward.

▶ Recording observations on location for on-the-street questionnaires, for example, or for observing learners' practice in the workplace

2.   Bite-size, on the move learning:

Learning resources may be broken down into bite-size 'nuggets' so that a day or weeks' worth, say, of resources can be downloaded from a learning management system on to a mobile phone, PDA or laptop and taken away for study during spare time. Perhaps on the train, during a lunch-break or just in a more relaxed atmosphere maybe outside in the garden. Smarter learning management systems may in future be able to personalise nuggets for learners based on awareness of their programme of study, understanding and progress.

3.   Interactivity in contact sessions:

On-line, wirelessly connected PDAs and laptops can facilitate a greater level of interaction when used in contact sessions. Opportunities for polling groups' opinion on various issues exist. Learners can vote to choose alternative activities and topics for discussion during lectures. Anonymous contributions to discussions and brainstorms can be made encouraging greater participation. Ultimately, wireless access allows the full functionality of VLEs into the contact situation.

4.   Study organisation and support:

PDAs and laptops can support learners and help to organise their studies in contact sessions and on the move through:

▶ Note-taking facilities e.g., digital pens used with tablet PCs

▶ Reference materials look-up e.g. viewing pre-loaded notes/readings during lectures

▶ Mind-mapping and out-lining facilities

▶ Assistive features e.g. screen readers, dictionaries

▶ Planning facilities e.g. diary and calendar functions, tasks and reminders

BENEFITS OF M-LEARNING:

Mobile technologies are useful in education both as administration, organization and teaching aids for practitioners, and also as learning support tools for students.

▶ Easy to work,

▶ Increase speed of delivery of contents,

▶ Increase learners productivity,

- ▸ Reduce cost,
- ▸ Improve learners achievement,
- ▸ Accommodate /earners needs,
- ▸ Accommodate learners styles,
- ▸ Increase learner access.

DISADVANTAGES OF M-LEARNING:

- ▸ Low Storage,
- ▸ Limited bandwidth,
- ▸ Screen size of the device is too small,
- ▸ Limited memory,
- ▸ Variety of devices causes inconsistency,
- ▸ Easily lost.

CONCLUSION:

Mobile learning is currently the most useful as a supplement of ICT, online learning and other traditional learning methods, and is playing a central role in enriching the learning experience. It is now widely believed and has been proven in various countries that mobile learning could and has been a huge factor in getting disaffected young adults to engage in learning, where traditional methods have failed. This is the new world and everything is changing - the market, the need, the people. M-learning is the future.

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Musings

IDENTITY IN CONTEMPORARY COMMUNITY: INSTRUCTOR IDENTITY IN AN ONLINE CLASSROOM
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Abstract

This paper explores the evolving identity of instructors in online classrooms, drawing from the author's extensive experience in developing and teaching courses within the University System of Georgia's eCore. The study highlights the pedagogical, managerial, social, and technical roles that online instructors must assume to create dynamic learning communities and ensure student engagement. It reflects on the challenges of disembodiment, technological limitations, and high dropout rates, while emphasizing the opportunities for instructors to redefine their professional identity in virtual spaces free from traditional markers such as race, gender, or nationality. The author argues that effective online teaching requires a balance between technical expertise, consistent online presence, and the ability to foster collaboration, critical reflection, and community building among learners. By leveraging asynchronous communication, personal narratives, and collaborative activities, instructors can transform the online environment into a space of meaningful interaction, identity formation, and academic growth.

Keywords: *Instructor identity, online classroom, e-learning, asynchronous learning, pedagogical roles, community building, virtual education, digital pedagogy, instructional design, distance education.*

My exposure to online instruction began in Spring 2001when the University System of Georgia's eCore issued a call for instructional faculty to develop English 2111 World Literature course. In preparation for online teaching, I was asked to enroll as a student in an online class that exposed us to the basic pedagogical and technological issues involved in online learning. Following that, I taught the newly developed, entirely online World Literature 2111 class.

While teaching online, I also participated as a coder in Georgia Institute of Technology's Artificial Neural Network Project where human coders were used to categorize and analyze discussion board messages to assess students' cognitive efforts. The project hoped to develop an evaluation tool that would eventually facilitate online instructors to assess the volu- minous body of discussion board messages in their classes. Two years into online instruction, I worked on a Learning Outcomes Assessment Project sponsored by the Institute of Higher Education, University of Georgia, and analyzed how learning objectives were met within the entire course content and evaluation tools in two online courses. Active engagement in key aspects of online instruction has inevitably influenced my perception of asynchronous learners and the learning process. I believe that online education affords instructors more control and a range of possible options in assuming an identity. Disembodied and surely disoriented as a novice, the instruct- tor can eventually shape her identity without the hindrance of visible markers like race, gender, and nationality. Teaching a composition class online where the written text is the only mode of communication, the instructor can also assume multiple avatars to reach a diverse array of students, and thus empower herself to reach beyond her known and comfortable zone of expertise. I presume this is why I am drawn to online instruction semester after semester despite long hours in front of the computer screen, imperfect technology, (sometimes) apathetic students, and dubious recognition among peers and administration.

The World Literature (2111) course development experience gained as part of a six member team comprising of four content experts (faculty) drawn from four different System institutions and one instructional designer and a web design expert, was invaluable in understanding the full scope of the project and the instructor's role in the evolution of the course. This collaboration afforded the opportunity to conceptualize students as the seminal part of the learning process and aided us in negotiating content areas and appropriate course management tools. During our course development exercises, one important concern for all faculty was the creation of adequate room for instructors to choose and establish their own identity within the course. Interaction with instructional designers afforded us the unique opportunity to stretch the limits of technology to present "the real thing" to students, and certainly made us appear technically savy. Oftentimes, when students assume that the instructor is their only online saviour and address their technical problems, experience in instructional design saves time and avoids frustration. The instructor's frequent online presence, quick assistance, and eager coop-

eration during the first few weeks of class is critical as the dropout rate in online learning is high during the initial few weeks of enrolment as students are frustrated when faced with a new learning platform. University System of Georgia offers solid technical assistance for eCore through their Online Support Network that provides live technical advice via phone as well as online, and this certainly lends credibility and validates the instructor's presence in the online community.

While many instructors worry about the paradigmatic shift that has occurred in the online classroom where the instructor is relegated to a "guide on the side" rather than the "all knowing sage on stage", researchers have identified four main roles that instructors assume in online learning - the pedagogical, managerial, social, and technical (Berge et al.1996) and the subcategories within these broad roles include but are not limited to "direct instruction; direct questioning; providing modelling or examples; giving advice or suggestions; fostering student reflection or self-aware- ness; pushing students to explore other sources of information; prompting feedback or praise; weaving students' contributions into a single summary in order to capture and re-focus students on the essence of ongoing or completed discussions... managing individual students, managing discussion and working groups; and managing course functions" (Harasim et al. 1995). Juggling these different roles, the online instructor expands her range of skills and evolves an identity allowing only her online cohorts and their engagement with the course to define her limits. Teaching simultaneously online and on ground, oftentimes the same course, I thrive in the expanding domain of online instruction and am excited as a new facet of my own identity unfolds and dispels my fear of anonymity in the online world. Students' individual talents and interests oftentimes generate parallel discussion threads where animated exchange on a variety of topics emerging from their professional and personal lives enrich the participants, thus building a community of learners who are willing to acknowledge each other's' presence and share and learn from each other. The asynchronous presence of their wisdom eventually draws in reluctant onlookers and thereby generates a rich teaching opportunity.

  Building a successful learning community is another fundamental responsibility of an online instructor. While some assignments are built in with the specific intent of developing learning communities, challenging students to work in groups and report the findings to the larger class also affords vibrant communication. As elaborated by Robert Woods and Samuel Ebersole (2003), personalized email, online group discussions, and live chat function as successful

"Community Building Activities"' and enable members to trust and share information in a non-threatening manner.

After the initial rules of engagement are laid out, students feel safe to express them- selves and engage in creative dialogue that furthers their understanding of the material outlined. The instructor as the architect plays a critical role through regular responses, frequent feedback, and relevant updates, thus maintaining a balance between the all-knowing expert who has the final word and the silent grade stamping tool whose presence is rarely seen on the discussion board but only validated in the My Grades section of the course. Online instructors have to "... recognize the strong connection demonstrated in the research between positive social dynamic and cognitive learning. Practitioners must also recognize that a positive social dynamic requires intentionality that is, community just doesn't happen but is created through a variety of verbal and nonverbal communication cues" (2003, p.11). Careful strategy and patience on the instructor's part sometimes will draw forth brilliant responses from students. On the other hand, constant prodding is also necessary sometimes to get reluctant participants into the fold. Timely responses indicate to the students that the instructor cares about them and what they say; Established policies and clear guidelines regarding the quality and quantity of online postings certainly aid in the building and nurturing of a solid network of learners.

Primarily written mode of communication in online learning offers several perks in a writing class. Initial student postings invariably include emoticons, acronyms, and text message lingo, however, once students observe that carefully thought out responses evoke more comments from peers than hastily penned acronyms, they gradually adapt to a more formal writing environment. It is amusing to see this change reflected in the community forum which is exclusively devoted to students. When students realize that their postings are taken seriously and have a place within a larger context of communal knowledge sharing, they .are inspired to compose more deliberate, thoughtful, and well edited responses, thus creating an exclusive identity within their peer group. It is my observation that fewer incidences of cheating or plagiarism happen in an online classroom than in the face to face class. Having invested significantly in ·the creation of their own identity, students hesitate to com- promise it. The written text is the heart of the online class and we know each other only through our writing.

Personal narratives work well as initial assignments in the online class. Conceived as an icebreaker, on the first day of class students are asked to post a brief biography and the constant online presence of their biography provides them unlimited opportunities to get_ to know each

other. The first assignment students write in my English 1101 class is a personal narrative that asks them to write about:

   a. an experience you have had that seemed insignificant at the time but later you discovered had been very important.

   b. an experience you had in which you were the outsider.

   c. an experience that involved a minor event, which provided insight into your life or social conditions.

   d. a moral dilemma in which you were forced to make a major decision.

   e. a brief but dramatic narrative about an event you experienced or witnessed.

Publishing these assignments for the whole class to respond adds significantly to their knowledge base and strengthens community building efforts undertaken via discussion board postings.

The asynchronous mode promotes collaborative learning as students work at different segments during the day, and when a peer posts a help question, oftentimes the query is answered within minutes even before the instructor responds. Freed from the constraints of time and place and blessed with free and continued access to learning resources, online students tend to approach their education with a more positive attitude - especially after the first few weeks of class by which time, most students who find themselves unsuited to online learning drop out. Course manage- ment tools - learning units, discussion board, assessment and assignment tools, chat board, white board, and email provide students unlimited learning potential and serve as fertile sources of knowledge. Abundant online references and URLs listed within the course, further challenge the student's interest in the material. The hypertext format facilitates intuitive navigation within the course and students have some choice regarding the sequence of inquiry they choose to pursue. I see a higher percentage of students earning As and Bs in my online classes than in the face to face class I teach, which could very well be attributed to the high dropout rate in online courses and a number of other contributing factors that I blissfully choose to ignore.

In the future, I plan to explore other possibilities - personal homepage, podcasting and video streaming - in my efforts to create more spaces within online classes for students to seek and shape their online identity. Online classes, like face to face classes, have taught me more about myself and have helped me step out of the comfort zone that body language and visual identity provide, and have enabled me to explore and nurture a virtual identity.

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Book Review

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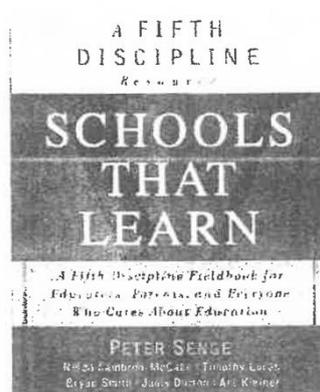
Schools That Learn: A Fifth Discipline Field book for Educators, Parents, and Everyone Who Cares about Education by Peter M. Senge, Nelda H. Cambron McCabe, Timothy Lucas, Art Kleiner, Janis Dutton and Bryan Smith, published by Doubleday Publishing Company. 2000 Peter Senge, the famous author of the book Fifth Discipline, reinforces the field book format as an extremely effective teaching tool. With theory, tools for improvement, tips and traps to beware, SCHOOLS THAT LEARN, with examples, out- lines an effective strategy for creating a strategic alliance between learners, schools, administrators and communities. The action plan suggested by Senge et al will definitely yield results.

Throughout the book, the authors succeed in keeping readers informed, challenged to get involved, and made to feel how important an issue like lifelong learning is. Instead of finding scapegoats, SCHOOLS THAT LEARN simply acknowledge the "opportunities" that are before the learners, schools, administrators, and communities to harness the same for common good. Senge et al then use this "gap" between the desired states of learning and the current state to motivate stakeholders to take corrective and improvement measures.

This is a book that should be read by all the above stakeholders. The debate it will initiate has the potential to create, sustain and improve learning throughout all areas of our lives.

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