E-Learning and Associated Issues in Iran

A. Bahreininejad, Tarbiat Modarres University, Iran

INTRODUCTION

According to the survey and statistical information for higher education (HE) in Iran, more than 1.6 million people took part in the Iranian national HE entrance examination in 2002 (Statistics of Higher Education in Iran, Institute of Research and Planning of Iran, 2001). Also, data show that 177,665 people were registered at HE institutions in the period 2000-2001 with a growth of 8.8% compared with the previous period. In the same period (2000-2001), a total of 46,747 educational instructors were employed at HE institutions in Iran with a growth of 2.65% compared with the previous period. From statistical data, the number of students at HE institutions rose from 67,268 in the period of 1949-1950 to 733,527 in the period of 2000-2001 which indicates an average annual growth of 7.75%. The 70 or so universities and HE institutions in Iran are incapable of accommodating the great number of demanding students wishing to pursue higher education in Iran.

The roots of Internet/Web-based education goes back to distance-based learning where participating learners receive learning materials (e.g., books, audio/video tapes, CDs, etc.) to pursue an educational/training course. E-learning may be defined as education that is delivered or learning that is conducted using Web techniques. Technologies and extensive activities have been focused on improving the flexibility, durability, efficiency, quality and various other aspects of e-learning around the globe.

Many articles articulate the advantages and disadvantages of e-learning; however, among the advantages gained from e-learning one may refer to the considerable contribution to not only the promotion of higher education by advocating opportunities, but also decreasing the burden of extensive academic and administrational tasks performed by traditional HE institutions.

Unfortunately, like most Web innovations, the views towards e-learning have been focused solely on financial gains rather than the emphasis on all aspects of educational/learning qualities. Numerous e-learning programs have been launched around the globe in recent years. Few programs focus on the flexibility, durability, efficiency, quality and various other aspects of e-learning. Instead, some offer high quality Internet/Web technologies such as high quality video-conferencing requiring high bandwidth, while others go to the extent to offer fancy high class learning contents. Many programs use the existing learning portals such as WebCT or Blackboard; still others use open source e-learning systems which are freely available on the Internet to provide Web-based learning.

What we must bear in mind is that education/learning differs considerably from simply shopping on the Internet. Prior to launching...
Open Book Examinations in a Distance (Teacher) Education Programme: South African Teacher-Learners’ Experiences
Vuyisile Msila (2013). *System and Technology Advancements in Distance Learning* (pp. 176-188).
www.igi-global.com/chapter/open-book-examinations-distance-teacher/68760?camid=4v1a