Chapter 8
Technology Adoption as a Student–Driven Learning Strategy

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ABSTRACT

The use of technology for learning and teaching brings optimism and opportunity for education. It liberates both the teacher and the student in the scholarly enterprise by removing traditional boundaries and restrictions to knowledge. However, it also challenges us to consider the best possible uses of that technology for our students and, more fundamentally, our actions as educators. The term technology enhanced learning is used extensively throughout the educational world; it is the latest in an assortment of terms that have been used to describe the application of information and communication technologies (ICT) to learning and teaching. Through exhaustive literature review and grounded theory approach this chapter reflects on the teaching–technology nexus, the use of technology as a student driven learning strategy with focus on augmenting student learning. The findings indicate that there is a strong nexus between teaching and technology in today’s world. Further, adopting technology would aid better to put students in the driver’s seat.

INTRODUCTION

Passivity still seems to be the norm for most college courses: students passively try to learn information from teachers who unwittingly cultivate a passive attitude in their learners. As the subject matter experts, faculty is sometimes reluctant to give up some control. Moreover, the faculty knows the material, there is a lot to cover, and honestly speaking, going the lecture route is often just plain easier for everyone. Teacher and student thus become complicit in creating a passive learning environment. This affects the teaching learning process adversely apart from hindering development of requisite skills in the students (Baporikar, 2012a). Hence, education institutions world over are adopting technology with a hope to enhancing the effectiveness of teaching learning process and also ensure to make the education process
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student centred (Baporikar, 2012b). However, the evidence supporting these is tangential. Even the proof illustrating improvement in student learning through use of technology is sometimes still questioned. This makes technology adoption in the field of higher education tough and sometimes even cumbrous. Yet, the use of technology for learning and teaching brings optimism and opportunity for education. It liberates both the teacher and the student in the scholarly enterprise by removing traditional boundaries and restrictions to knowledge via the open and ubiquitous access that it offers (Katz, 2010). However, it also challenges us to consider the best possible uses of that technology for our students and, more fundamentally, our actions as educators in the process of exploiting technology for pedagogical advantage (Kirkwood & Price, 2005).

The term technology enhanced learning is used extensively throughout the educational world; it is the latest in an assortment of terms that have been used to describe the application of information and communication technologies (ICT) to learning and teaching (Baporikar, 2014a). Unlike other terms such as e-Learning or online learning, technology enhanced learning implies a value judgement: the word “enhancement” suggests an improvement or betterment some way. However, it is rare to find explicit statements about its meaning.

Further sometimes, technology also becomes an accomplice in the crime of passivity. When teachers think about technology, the goal is often to have students interact with instructor-created multimedia (Baporikar, 2013). Learners will watch a screencast or complete an online quiz. Sometimes the learner will interact with technology by doing a simulation or completing homework online. The assignments themselves are distinctly teacher-directed. All of this direction by the teacher equates to students learning to drive by sitting in the passenger seat. What if we let students drive?

For example: By creating a video and then teaching a 50-minute class students, created their own flipped learning environment. Students responded positively and took ownership of the project which mirrored what researchers have dubbed “The IKEA Effect” in which people attach greater value to something they have had a hand in creating (Mochon & Norton, 2012). Thus, adopting technology may enable student easier shift in the driver’s seat. Though in the beginning, putting students in control may seem a bit frightening. The students will not be nearly as smooth in their driving as we are, nor will be able to reach the brake if things go badly. But learning to drive requires time behind the wheel, and learning course material requires that students become co-creators of knowledge rather than recipients of information.

BACKGROUND

The term technology enhanced learning is used extensively throughout the educational world; it is the latest in an assortment of terms that have been used to describe the application of information and communication technologies (ICT) to learning and teaching. Unlike other terms such as e-Learning or online learning, technology enhanced learning implies a value judgement: the word “enhancement” suggests an improvement or betterment some way. However, it is rare to find explicit statements about its meaning. How does technology enhance learning – what is the “value added”? What learning is being enhanced and in what ways – is the enhancement quantitative and/or qualitative? A more fundamental question is whether there is a generally accepted view of what constitutes learning in higher education and of how it can be enhanced?