Chapter 16
Challenges Facing E-Learning

Vannie Naidoo
University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

ABSTRACT

The rapid advancement in technology has set the stage to change teaching dynamics worldwide. Today’s learners are very techno savvy. To enhance teaching and learning outcomes it is important to focus on using this new technology to engage with learners. E-learning is part of the new technological advancement taking place in teaching. Khan (2005, pp. 6-7) argues that the success of an e-learning system involves a systematic process of planning, designing, evaluating and implementing online learning environments where learning is actively fostered and supported. An e-learning system should be meaningful to all stakeholder groups including instructors, support service staff, and the institution. E-learning introduces learners to a new environment. In this system, learners are independent and must be self-motivated and committed to their learning. E-learners need to know how to use and manipulate software. According to Jones (2003), e-learning technologies bring as much change to instructors as they do to students, again requiring a new set of skills for success.

INTRODUCTION

The volatile nature of higher education environments is creating a shift in teaching and learning. Technology has breached all areas of society and higher education now has to respond to the new demands placed on its teachers and university management. In response to this rapidly changing university environment, e-learning is being implemented more and more by universities throughout the world. Technologic developments play a crucial role in affecting education in the language discipline. Technology can change the teaching experience, introduce more learning styles or bring about faster marking of scripts in certain instances. E-learning is a new technological advancement in higher education that can provide opportunities to learners, academics and the university. This chapter layout will explore the following five important themes in great detail:

1. Historical review on E-learning,
2. Conceptualizing what is E-learning,

In this chapter the author will begin the discussion by looking at the historical review of E-learning.

**Historical Review on E-Learning**

E-learning is a combination of two important constructs namely learning and technology. Learning is a cognitive process where a student filters knowledge that he retains. Technology if used properly in this era can be used as a teaching tool to enable learning. This is what makes e-learning such a potent learning system that can assist students in their studies.


As Davis, Bagozzi and Warshaw (1989) note: ‘A wide body of research focuses on identifying factors affecting people’s intentions to use new technologies and how these intentions predict actual usage’. Davis developed the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) in 1986. This theory emanated from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA: Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Tan (2015) argues that the TAM models the hypothesis that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use positively affect attitudes toward using (ATU), which subsequently positively affect behavioural intention to use (BIU) and actual system use (ASU).

Online learning, is known to have a history of access beginning in the 1980’s whereas another term, referred to as e-Learning, does not have its origins fully disclosed (Harasim, 2000). Moore Dickson Deane and Galyen (2011) adds that although the origins of the term e-Learning is not certain, although it is suggested that the term most likely originated during the 1980’s, within the similar time frame of another delivery mode online learning.

After providing a brief overview on the historical review on e-learning the next discussion topic will focus on conceptualising what is e-learning.

**Conceptualizing What Is E-Learning**

E-learning is very complex and each stakeholder involved with e-learning has his/her own perception regarding it. Therefore since it is perceived by stakeholders in different ways there is no one definition that e-learning can be labelled with. In this section various definitions are put forward by different authors on what E-learning means.