Chapter XXIX

Obstacles Encountered by Learners, Instructors, Technical Support, and Librarians

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Introduction

To create a successful flexible learning system, one with a flexible learning environment where learning is actively fostered and supported, a systematic process of planning, design, development, evaluation, and implementation is needed. A flexible learning system should be meaningful not only to learners, but also to all stakeholder groups, including instructors and support services staff. For example, a flexible learning system
is meaningful to learners when it is easily accessible, well designed, learner centered, affordable, and efficient and has a facilitated learning environment. When learners display a high level of participation and success in meeting a course’s goals and objectives, this can make learning meaningful to instructors. In turn, when learners enjoy all available technical and library support services provided in the course without any interruptions, it makes technical and library support services staff happy as they strive to provide easy-to-use, reliable services.

In this chapter, we compiled major obstacles encountered by learners, instructors, technical support, and librarians during online learning. In compiling these lists, we communicated with learners, instructors, and technical and library support services staff involved in flexible learning all over the world. We researched flexible learning issues discussed in professional discussion forums, and reviewed literature on the topic.

The obstacles for each stakeholder group were compiled and selected after rigorous research efforts, including face-to-face and online discussions with subject matter experts (SMEs), and a thorough examination of the many responses obtained from posting an inquiry on the Distance Education Online Symposium (DEOS) Listserv and Instructional Technology (IT) Forum. The posting queried individuals about the many diverse issues that learners might encounter before, during, and after taking a course via an online format. Many of the obstacles fell into the dimensions and sub-dimensions of the Flexible Learning Framework by Khan (see Chapter I). The information was then compiled and arranged for each of the stakeholder groups (learners, instructors, technical and library support staff) and arranged in a format suitable for use as an evaluation tool.

Please note that these lists can serve as Obstacles Instruments; however, we would like to caution that none of these lists are empirically validated. Our future endeavor is to validate these obstacles for development of Obstacles Instruments (http://BadrulKhan.com/obstacles).

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**E-Learning Obstacles Survey**

The purpose of this survey is to gather information from learners, instructors, technical support staff, and librarians about obstacles they have encountered while receiving, instructing, or supporting e-learning. Identification of various obstacles, as well as recognition of which obstacles are encountered most frequently, may assist organizations involved in e-learning as their staff members plan, design, and implement e-learning programs. In addition, individuals involved in e-learning may benefit knowing about various obstacles so they can plan accordingly before and during their e-learning experience.

We define e-learning as technology-delivered instruction presented in well designed, learner centered, interactive, and facilitated learning environments to anyone, anyplace, anytime. E-learning includes, but is not limited to, Web-based learning and computer-
Transforming Classrooms through Game-Based Learning: A Feasibility Study in a Developing Country
www.igi-global.com/article/transforming-classrooms-through-game-based-learning/125573?camid=4v1a