Chapter XV

E-Learning:
An Investigation into Students’ Reactions to Investment into IT at Tertiary Institutions

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Abstract

Constructivist theories and modern pedagogical concepts emphasize that an activation of students is one of the most influential factors for learning effectiveness. The implementation of those educational concepts in e-learning, especially in distance learning contexts, is a rather difficult challenge. Systems that assist lectures in this intention are required. In this study, a student’s reaction towards e-learning is observed. The focus is on student’s demographics in order to analyze their reaction towards e-learning. Solving tasks and observing and critiquing this solution process, instead of merely assessing the end product of e-learning processes. A sample of 105 students from the University was drawn and the findings suggest that e-learning investment can help address a need for this type of support.

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Introduction

Technology is developing at a high speed and it has an impact on people’s lives, especially the way one shops or does banking online. Gone are those days when one had to stand in long lines to cash money or pay transactions. Students need to study and work at the same time and the answer for that is e-learning. e-learning involves the use of a computer or electronic device (e.g., a mobile phone) in some way to provide training, educational, or learning material. e-learning can involve a greater variety of equipment than online training or education, for as the name implies, “online” involves using the Internet or an Intranet. CD-ROM and DVD can be used to provide learning materials.

The value of this research lies in the fact that it emphasises the importance of technology in teaching. It was therefore with this in mind that the researcher investigated why people need to invest into IT for teaching purposes. The researcher used Google and EBSCO host to look for articles, using the keywords e-learning, investment into IT and digital teaching as basis for searches for relevant literature. This chapter introduces the reader to the study focusing on the establishment of e-learning at a University in South Africa.

Literature Review

Much of the focus in e-learning today—from analysts, industry observers, consultants, and technologists—is on e-learning in the corporate world. But the biggest impact and opportunity for e-learning may be in education. Governments want to raise the skills and education level of its population, but to date e-learning has had little impact in this area.

e-learning can potentially transform education at every level. It can make high-quality educational experiences available to those whose location, economic, and personal constraints have prevented them from pursuing their educational goals. These learners also represent a wider student market for universities and other education establishments (Mkhize et al., 2005).

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